From Bishop Folda: A decision for life
Fargo locals become extras for The Chosen feeding of the 5,000 scene
Bismarck couple restores North Dakota history

The cause for Michelle
Process underway for possible sainthood of young woman with Eastern North Dakota ties
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"MY FLESH FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD." JOHN 6:51

Redeemed
Diocese of Fargo
ON THE COVER:
Michelle Duppong, whose process is underway for possible sainthood. (Dakota Catholic Action)

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

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A decision for life

The country and world awoke on June 24 to the news that the U.S. Supreme Court had handed down its decision in the Dobbs vs. Jackson case that deals with state laws on abortion. To our amazement and joy, the Court voted to uphold the Mississippi law in question and finally to overturn the infamous Roe vs. Wade decision from 1973 that invented a right to abortion throughout the United States. That decision had ushered in an era of nearly unbridled abortion in this country and enshrined the grave moral evil of abortion as a sort of super-right which no law or regulation could touch. I've always wondered what the framers of our Constitution would say about such a preposterous notion, but that's a discussion for another day.

We can only be thankful to God for this great step forward in rebuilding a culture of life in our land. Roe vs. Wade was the most egregious part of the culture of death that has been steadily gaining ground in this country for many decades. That one tragic decision opened the way for the deaths of more than 62 million unborn children in a nation that declares its commitment to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The death and damage caused by the Roe decision have been staggering, and led to a general degradation of our nation and our culture.

This Supreme Court decision overturning Roe has been a long time coming. Millions of people have been praying, marching, advocating, and sacrificing for the right to life of every child, including the unborn, and I thank God for their witness and constancy. When others wanted them to go away quietly, they continued to stand their ground, convinced that a day of vindication would come. And, as you know, the Catholic Church has been at the forefront of the pro-life cause. The sanctity of all human life has always been a clear tenet of Catholic teaching, and we as a Church have devoted enormous spiritual, human, and material resources to this truth. The pro-abortion lobby would like to convince you that the Church only cares about the child before birth, but then abandons both mother and child afterwards. This has always been a lie, and it still is. Apart from the government, the Church in this country is the largest provider of care and services to people in need, and that includes assistance to children, mothers, and families. In the Diocese of Fargo, I think of the exceptional work done by Catholic Charities of North Dakota and the St. Gianna Maternity Home. I think of the various women’s pregnancy centers in our diocese that respect the sanctity of life, as well as the pro-life initiatives of many of our parishes. No one should doubt the Church’s commitment to life.

It is important to realize, however, that even after this landmark Supreme Court ruling, our work is not done. It will still be necessary to defend and work for pro-life laws in our own state and throughout the nation. Even though North Dakota can now become a sanctuary for the lives of unborn children, other states will still continue to protect the practice of abortion. Politicians, the mass media, and many cultural leaders will push harder for even more extreme pro-abortion laws and regulations, and the pro-life cause will come under even greater attack. Already we have seen a crescendo of violence against churches and pro-life pregnancy centers around the country. One U.S. senator even threatened that all pro-life pregnancy centers should be shut down. We need to take these threats and attacks seriously and do what we must to defend our people and property. But rather than responding with bitterness, we must respond with peace, determination, and faith. The evil one tries to sow discord, so we must respond with prayer, mercy, and compassion. And now we will also need to redouble our efforts to assist women and couples who face challenging pregnancies. Through initiatives like Walking with Moms in Need, we must renew our commitment to the mothers and families who need help bringing a new life into the world. We must support them and accompany them so they know that they are not alone and realize that abortion is never their only alternative. In fact, now we must work even harder to make abortion unthinkable.

May we continue to pray and work for the cause of life, so that every child, created in the image and likeness of God, will be given a chance to live and grow as a cherished member of our human family. -Bishop John T. Folda
The Supreme Court has at last decided to allow for the protection of unborn children, and that is a victory for law and justice. But the spiritual battle for life will go on. As people of faith, we will continue to turn to our Lord and pray for a conversion of hearts. We will continue to kneel before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, asking him to protect the unborn and their vulnerable mothers and fathers. We will pray in reparation for the vast numbers of lives lost and for the healing of all victims of abortion: infants, parents, families, and yes, even abortion providers. We will keep praying, and fasting, and marching for life until every life is recognized as sacred. Our most powerful weapon is the Lord Jesus himself, who entered this world as an infant, who faced death and rose to new life. And we should turn also to Mary, the Mother of our Lord, who intercedes for every mother and child in the womb.

This is our time to create a new culture of life in America. May we continue to pray and work for the cause of life, so that every child, created in the image and likeness of God, will be given a chance to live and grow as a cherished member of our human family. Let us go forward with hope, courage, and compassion, giving thanks to God for the beautiful gift of life.

FROM BISHOP FOLDA

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

August - Small Businesses
We pray for small and medium sized businesses; in the midst of economic and social crisis, may they find ways to continue operating, and serving their communities.

BISHOP FOLDA’S CALENDAR

Aug. 5 • 4:45 p.m.
Vespers for Candidacy of seminarians, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

Aug. 5 • 5:15 p.m.
Mass for Institution of Lector and Acolytes of seminarians, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

Aug. 7 • 10 a.m.
Mass of Installation of pastor, St. Rose of Lima, Hillsboro

Aug. 12 • 6 p.m.
Knights of Columbus Red Hawks game for altar servers, Fargo

Aug. 14 • 4 p.m.
Field Mass, Carmel of Mary, Wahpeton

Aug. 17 • 4 p.m.
All Schools Picnic, Fargo

Aug. 18 • 8 a.m.
Mass for St. JPII Schools Staff development day, Shanley Chapel, Fargo

Aug. 20 • 10:30 a.m.
Candidacy Mass for permanent deacon candidates, St. Anthony, Fargo

Aug. 24 • 3 p.m.
St. JPII Schools Board meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

Aug. 25–27
Region VIII gathering, Duluth, Minn.

Sept. 5
Labor Day, Pastoral Center closed

Sept. 6 • 2 p.m.
Priest Pension Board meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

Sept. 6 • 3 p.m.
Diocesan Finance Council meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

Sept. 7 • 5 p.m.
Deanery II Catechists training, St. Anthony, Fargo
In the Basilica of San Francesco in Siena, Italy, 223 consecrated hosts have remained miraculously fresh and intact for nearly 300 years.

The miracle happened on Aug. 14, 1730. Thieves infiltrated the basilica and stole the tabernacle containing 351 consecrated hosts. Three days later, all 351 hosts appeared in the alms box of the sanctuary of St. Mary of Provenzano, where they had been taken. The holy hosts were carried back in procession to the Basilica of San Francisco. They were then dusted and venerated in reparation.

Over the years, the hosts showed no sign of corruption or decay. On Apr. 14, 1780, the Superior General of the Franciscan Order, Father Carlo Vipera, consumed one of the hosts and found that it was fresh and uncorrupted. As some of them had been distributed in previous years, the Superior ordered the remaining 230 to be saved, enshrined, and never distributed.

Hoping to further test the inexplicable phenomenon, in 1789 the Archbishop of Siena, D. Tibério Borghese, kept some unconsecrated hosts in a box under similar conditions of the consecrated hosts. After ten years, a committee of scientists specially chosen to study the case opened the box and found only worms and rotted fragments. Meanwhile, the consecrated hosts have maintained their integrity, against all physical and biological laws.

Perhaps the most impressive verification took place in 1914, when Pope St. Pius X authorized a test that involved experts in food science, hygiene, chemistry, and pharmaceuticals. The scientists concluded that the hosts were not prepared in any special way and had been stored in common conditions of humidity and light, which should have caused them to deteriorate naturally. However, they were in good condition and quite consumable, 184 years after their recovery. In 1922, 1950, and 1951, new analyses were undertaken, all with the same result. During a pastoral visit to the city of Siena on Sept. 14, 1980, Pope St. John Paul II said of the sacred hosts: “It’s the Presence.”

Citizens of Siena continue to perform numerous acts in honor of the Holy Communion hosts. Among them, the homage of the Contradas, and the gifts offered by children making their First Communion, the solemn procession on the Feast of Corpus Christi, and Eucharistic adoration on the 17th of each month, in memory of the recovery that took place on Aug. 17, 1730.

Editor’s note: This month we begin to observe the three-year observation of Eucharistic Revival by featuring stories of confirmed Eucharistic miracles around the world.

MONTHLY EUCHARIST MIRACLE
The miraculous hosts of Siena
Originally published from Aleteia.org
6/20/2015

August 17 commemorates the theft, recovery, and continued integrity of Consecrated Hosts

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)
FOCUS ON THE FAITH

Upcoming speaker, Monsignor Shea, shares experience with the Eucharist

By Kristina Lahr | Assistant editor of New Earth

Monsignor James Shea is one of several speakers at the upcoming Redeemed Eucharistic Conference Sept. 23–24 in Fargo. New Earth interviewed him to learn about his role in the three-year Eucharistic Revival and to hear his experience with the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Why did you decide to be a Eucharistic preacher?

I received a letter of invitation from Bishop Cozzens, who is leading the Revival for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. I prayed with the invitation and felt called to assist in this vital effort for the renewal of faith among American Catholics.

What kind of formation did you go through to become a Eucharistic preacher?

I’ve been a priest for 20 years this summer, so daily Eucharistic devotion and the celebration of Mass have been deeply formative for me. All the Eucharistic preachers participated in a retreat in Chicago this past April, where we learned more deeply about the hopes for the Revival and the principles of Eucharistic theology we would be highlighting.

The Eucharistic Revival is a big undertaking in the Church today. What are your hopes for these next three years?

The gift of the Holy Eucharist is the great treasure of the Catholic Church, and that reality of communion and divine life are desperately needed in the broken world in which we live. Christ’s presence among us in our worship and in our churches is the most compelling and consoling reality in the midst of all of our sorrows, joys, pain, and hope. I pray in particular that our college-age students will come to see in new ways the power and wonder of the Eucharist.

All saints seem to have a strong devotion to the Eucharist. Are there any saints in particular that stand out to you with exceptional examples of Eucharistic devotion?

Of course, St. Thomas Aquinas composed the Mass of Corpus Christi and wrote beautifully of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Body and Blood. He’s also the patron saint of students and universities, so I love him! Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati also had a dynamic and abiding devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and he inspires me.

Describe an encounter you’ve had with the Eucharist.

When I was a freshman in college my youngest brother died in a farm accident. He was almost 5 years old. I missed him very much, but some months after his funeral I had a deeply healing experience while in Adoration. It came to me in prayer that he could not come back to me, that I needed to go to him. In the meantime, as he was with Jesus and I was with Jesus in the Eucharist, Adoration was the closest I could come to him until we met again. It was a sustaining encounter of faith.

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11 a.m. - Bismarck, KNDX, Ch 26 or Minot, KXND, Ch 24
It all started with a family visit ten years ago. Serenus and Jan Hoffner were in Esmond visiting Serenus’s brother, when it was suggested they take a trip to the cemetery where their great-grandmother was buried. That cemetery, known as St. Maria’s of Strassburg, is located about ten miles north of Selz just a mile east of Highway 3 in Pierce County. Upon arrival, Serenus was disturbed at what he saw.

“Most of the grave markers you couldn’t read any of the lettering or the numbers,” said Serenus. “You know, sometimes God asks you to do things that you normally wouldn’t do and he says ‘just take care of this,’ so we decided to do something about it.”

Serenus and Jan knew they had to do what they could to restore the old markers in the century-old cemetery. The sacred place serves as a permanent reminder of the small community known as Strassburg and the former Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (St. Maria Kirche zu Strassburg, as it was once known by locals), that was once located there, serving the small community of Germans from Russian between 1899 and 1931. The cemetery has a permanent monument to those who settled the area, which was erected in 1974, and a local couple, Doug and Jackie Wolfe, mow and trim around the grave markers. But the Hoffners were called to do more.

“I sprayed every single stone and metal grave marker with a substance I found in a local hardware store to remove the mildew and other organic materials they were covered in,” said Serenus. “I sprayed them all using a portable pressure washer system I developed that operates on a generator, and I power-washed them all clean. You don’t want to use a wire brush or anything that will scratch the markers or you’ll destroy the writing on the markers, so we used the pressure washer to clean and protect them. You just need to be patient.”

One marker that appeared beyond restoration was the marker of Serenus’s great-grandmother, Eulalia Miller. Serenus and his family decided that, in order to preserve her memory beyond their lifetimes, they would put a new marker in front of her original stone.

“Her old one was in pretty rough shape, so I had to guess at what was written on the original,” said Serenus. “When I cleaned it up, I found I got the wording exactly right without knowing for sure what was originally written. That was providence!”

Serenus and Jan realize they don’t own the gravestones and markers, and they are aware of their historical significance, so they are careful not to damage them. Serenus had to caulk and do other repairs as best he could to some of the concrete markers that had fallen into disrepair. Visitors who can find the cemetery are also treated to a large sign that explains the history of the area and the people who settled there. That was a labor of love from Serenus and Jan as well. And they’re not done yet.

Later this summer Serenus and Jan will finish work on the cemetery where both sets of their parents are buried and where they will be laid to rest as well—St. Boniface’s Cemetery in Esmond.
Ground was broken for another new parish complex in the Fargo area. On July 11, Bishop Folda, joined by Father Andrew Jasinski, pastor of St. Benedict’s Church of Wild Rice, and parish leadership broke ground at their new location. Due to the Fargo flood diversion project, the parish is being relocated to a site near the new Horace High School. Phase One of the project will be a parish social hall and parish offices. Parish office operations and Masses will be moved from the existing church to the new location once the Phase One project is complete in late 2023 or early 2024 at a cost of $9 million. Phase Two, the building of a new church and education wing, will start at a later date. (Kristina Lahr | New Earth)

Fighting hunger on the Turtle Mountain Reservation

This spring, representatives from Turtle Mountain Community College, Rolette County Public Health, St. Ann’s Turtle Mountain Chippewa Foodbank, and the Dunseith area food bank, gathered at the St. Ann’s Knights of Columbus Hall in Belcourt to brainstorm ways to fight hunger on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. The groups discussed improving access to food and services and coordinating access between the various groups of food providers. One of the most important topics discussed were programs to help provide food to school students on weekends and during summer session when school is out. (submitted photo)
It all began at a Bible study led by Farther Robert Keller at Holy Spirit Church. It was 2021, and we were studying the gospel of Mark. Farther mentioned *The Chosen* and suggested we watch the series. My friend Mary Kerbaugh and I watched it and were captivated from the first episode.

*The Chosen* is a viewer-funded production of Angel Studios and is the first-ever multi-season series about the life of Christ. It has a worldwide audience of many faiths. They are currently filming season three, which will feature the story of the feeding of the 5,000 with the miracle of the five loaves and two fish.

In 2021, the director of *The Chosen*, Dallas Jenkins, started talking about this episode and extended an opportunity to 5,000 fans of the show to be extras for this scene. I immediately jumped at the chance, my friend Mary Kerbaugh and I watched it and were captivated from the first episode.

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The director set up the scene for us then went behind the camera. The co-director gave us commands with a megaphone in this order: “Pictures Up, Sound, Rolling, Action, and Cut.” When he said, “pictures up,” our sunglasses, umbrellas, cell phones, etc. were to be hidden away as cameras would soon be rolling.

We watched as the actors portraying the apostles were huddled together, wondering what to do with this large crowd listening to Jesus when they had no food on hand to feed them. Then they walked over to the actor portraying Jesus and told him to send the crowd home. Instead, Jesus blesses the five loaves of bread and two fish and feeds everyone!

We watched as they came into the crowd sitting with baskets full of bread and fish and handed them to us (we were not to eat it however). We even had two lines to say. Jesus tells the parable of the two sons. When he said, “which one did the will of his father?” we were to say, “the first!”

It was like traveling in a time machine, back to when Jesus walked this earth doing his ministry. Everywhere you looked, you saw people in authentic costumes. Everyone was kind, polite, and as awestruck as we were to be part of the experience.

It’s going to be so exciting to watch season three, see this episode, and know we were part of it. There were fans (extras) from every state and over 30 countries. It was a long drive to Texas, and it was hot, dusty, and miserable being outside filming. However, would we do it again? Of course! A Bible story we all know came to life for us that day. Thank you, Father Keller. Your Bible studies are so interesting that they started us on our brief but fabulous film career!
Christopher Dodson given St. Juan Diego Leadership for the World award

By Tepeyac Leadership Initiative

An international organization dedicated to forming lay Catholic leaders has awarded North Dakota Catholic Conference’s Executive Director, Christopher Dodson, its St. Juan Diego Leadership for the World award.

Tepeyac Leadership, Inc. (TLI) works to equip Catholic professionals to become virtuous leaders, influence the culture, and serve the common good. Its main initiative is the Tepeyac Leadership Initiative, through which participants go through intensive study, reflection, and dialogue to form their minds on how to integrate the truths and values of their Catholic faith into every aspect of their lives.

Each year TLI presents the St. Juan Diego Leadership for the World award to a lay Catholic leader “in any field of social, professional, cultural, and political life, for acting in accordance with—and courageously promoting—the truth and the law brought by Jesus Christ to mankind.”

TLI chose Dodson for the award based on his work as a constitutional lawyer and lobbyist for the North Dakota Catholic Conference. His work on pro-life issues and handling the church’s response to the University of North Dakota’s controversial gender policy proposal were highlighted by TLI as examples of Dodson’s work as a lay Catholic professional.

Author and Bismarck news anchor Monica Hannan, who serves on TLI’s Central Regional Advisory Board, presented the award to Dodson.

For more about the Tepeyac Leadership Initiative, go to tliprogram.org.

Monica Hannan presents the St. Juan Diego Leadership for the World award to Christopher Dodson. (submitted photo)

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Access to abortion is no longer the law of the land in the United States. With the Supreme Court of the United States overturning of Roe vs. Wade June 24, individual states were given the freedom to enact their own laws concerning abortion. With a changing landscape for abortion access, many questions arise, one of which is: what about the health of the mother? What does health care look like in difficult circumstances for a pregnant patient?

New Earth asked Father Tad Pacholczyk, director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center, and Christopher Dodson, executive director of the ND Catholic Conference, to answer a few questions to shine light on the situation.

Father Tad Pacholczyk
Priest of the diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. He earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did postdoctoral work at Harvard.

What is the Church’s position on using treatment that may be harmful for the unborn fetus if the treatment may be helpful for the mother?

The Catholic Church offers very nuanced and compassionate guidance for decision-making that safeguards human dignity even in complex pregnancies. In situations of mother-child conflicts, the interests of both patients must be protected to the greatest extent possible. Although direct abortion is sometimes counseled to pregnant women who face life-threatening difficulties from a pregnancy, such a choice can never be morally acceptable. In these circumstances, medical strategies, which seek to care for both mother and child, need to be energetically pursued, as they can often provide satisfactory outcomes for both.

It’s a great urban myth that banning elective abortions will decrease access to appropriate care for mothers. As Catholic hospitals treat and care for both the mother and her unborn child, they remain committed never to crossing an important line: they may not directly take the life of an innocent human being as they care for both patients. Good healthcare respects the equal dignity of the mother and child, and acknowledges that every pregnancy involves at least two individuals, two patients, with the goal of good medical care providing as much as possible for the needs of both.

Catholic hospitals, nonetheless, are able to provide appropriate medical treatments that may result in the indirect loss of unborn life, tolerating that unintended loss when other alternatives are not available. This is an example of the Principle of Double Effect. The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops phrases it clearly in n. 47: “Operations, treatments, and medications that have as their direct purpose the cure of a proportionately serious pathological condition of a pregnant woman are permitted when they cannot be safely postponed until the unborn child is viable, even if they will result in the death of the unborn child.” In such cases, it is worth noting, the treatment is always a treatment done to the mother’s body, like removing her uterus, and never a direct attack on the body-person of the child.

Those admitted to Catholic healthcare institutions know one indisputable fact: they and their children will always receive the highest standards of medical care, even as they remain safe from a direct assault upon either of their lives.

Pro-life legislation similarly should prohibit direct attacks on unborn human life, but should not preclude medical interventions that indirectly result in a loss of unborn life when the intention is to save the life of the mother and suitable alternatives are not available.

For more information, search for these articles online:

• Making Sense of Bioethics: Column 052: When Pregnancy
Goes Awry
• Making Sense of Bioethics: Column 061: Difficult Pregnancies, Precarious Choices, and the Absolute Value of Innocent Lives
• Making Sense of Bioethics: Column 102: Ethical Directives and the Care of Pregnant Women in Catholic Hospitals

Christopher Dodson
Executive director of the ND Catholic Conference, which acts on behalf of ND Catholic bishops to respond to public policy issues of concern to the Catholic Church.

There’s a common fear that women’s health is threatened without access to abortion. What is your response to this fear?

North Dakota’s laws have exceptions if an abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother. They also exempt treating ectopic pregnancies. Adding “health” to the exemptions is legally problematic. Courts have interpreted “health” to mean just about anything the woman thinks is in her best interest, physically or mentally.

We need to remember that all pregnancies carry some actual health risks and that we have a health care system dedicated to managing those risks and providing the best outcome for mothers and their children. We should not create a broad exemption that ignores the well-being of the unborn child.

Some forms of birth control act as abortifacients. With Roe vs. Wade overturned, would these now be illegal in North Dakota?

No. Under the statutes, and according to most medical terminology, an abortion terminates a pregnancy occurring after the embryo implants in the uterus. Abortifacients stop a fertilized egg—an embryo or zygote—from implanting. The law does not cover anything before implantation.

Although abortifacients destroy a human life, legally prohibiting their use is difficult. At this time there is no drug that works only as an abortifacient every time. They act as either contraceptives—preventing fertilization—or as an abortifacient. This is even true for what is commonly called Plan B. Trying to prohibit abortifacients would require also banning all contraceptives, even for victims of sexual assault.

None of this applies, however, to abortion drugs. They kill the unborn child after implantation. The laws banning abortion still apply to them.

In medical terms, a miscarriage is often labeled as a “spontaneous abortion.” In states where abortion is illegal, will women face repercussions for having a miscarriage or receiving treatments that prevent infection after a miscarriage?

No. There are two reasons why we know this will not happen. First, North Dakota’s laws—and the laws of other states—do not punish the woman. There would be no reason to investigate the woman if she cannot be prosecuted.

Second, we already have many laws that regulate abortion, such as waiting periods, informed consent requirements, parental consent requirements, etc. There are roughly 20 such laws already and they have been on the books for decades. Failure to comply with any of these requirements is a criminal act. States attorneys have not been investigating miscarriages to enforce these laws, so there is no reason to believe they would start doing so now.

There are a lot questions about what a post Roe vs. Wade world looks like. What else do you want those who are concerned about this decision to know?

Concerns about the Dobbs decision are often misplaced and ignore the unborn child. Dobbs not only gave states the ability to protect unborn children, it corrected a serious legal error. Legal scholars on both sides of the abortion debate agreed that Roe and Casey were wrongly decided and created multiple constitutional problems. Dobbs, like Brown vs. Board of Education, showed that our legal system can work to address past errors. In addition to the cause of life, that is something to celebrate.

Where can I go to learn more about the laws of abortion?

The statutes are the best place, but those can be difficult for non-lawyers to decipher. The North Dakota Catholic Conference is willing to answer any questions at ndcatholic.org/about/contactus.
Bismarck Diocese priests win for schools

Monsignor Jeffrey Wald Memorial Slam Dunk for Our Schools basketball game a big success

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

Monsignor Jeffrey Wald would have been proud, and probably would have been at the center of the fun! The late priest from the Diocese of Fargo, who passed away in October 2020, was the inspiration for a basketball game between the priests of the Diocese of Fargo and from the Diocese of Bismarck to benefit Catholic schools.

The first annual Monsignor Jeffrey Wald Memorial Slam Dunk for Our Schools basketball game took place on July 18 at the McDowell Center on the campus of the University of Mary in Bismarck. A large crowd was on hand, mostly Bismarck Diocese fans, to watch the game and help raise money to benefit the winning team’s diocesan Catholic schools. In his opening comments, University of Mary President Monsignor James Shea remarked on Monsignor Wald’s dedication to Catholic education, and his sense of humor, calling him “one of the funniest priests I’ve ever met.”

The game didn’t quite go as planned for the priests of the Fargo Diocese. They held an early lead in the game, but about four minutes into the opening period the size advantage of the Bismarck Diocese priests was just too much to overcome. One of the bright spots for the Fargo Diocese team was the play of newly ordained Father Joseph Littlefield. Although no official stats were kept for the game, Father Littlefield was clearly the high scorer for the Fargo Diocese team, including his conversion of three consecutive free throws after he was fouled attempting a three-point shot late in the game.

When the final buzzer sounded, the Bismarck Diocese defeated the Fargo Diocese 61-22. Their efforts earned $8,010 for Catholic education in the Bismarck Diocese, which included a $5,000 purse offered by the University of Mary. Plans are already underway for a rematch next year and every year in honor of the late Monsignor Wald and his love for Catholic education... and a good laugh.

Father Sean Mulligan gets a lift from Father William Slattery in an attempt to overcome the size advantage of the Bismarck Diocese team.
(Paul Braun | New Earth)

Father Eric Seitz drives against the Bismarck defense.
(Paul Braun | New Earth)
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Life on the family farm in Haymarsh, North Dakota was pretty ordinary, according to Ken and Mary Ann Duppong, but the simplicity and hard work was fertile ground for the seeds of the Catholic faith. So much so, that it was announced in June that a cause for possible canonization was opened for the fourth of their six children, Michelle, who died from cancer at the age of 31 on Christmas Day, 2015.

There is a long process ahead, but if Michelle becomes a canonized saint, it will be a first for North Dakota. As is common among so many of our saints, their ordinarness became extraordinary through their radiant witness of reflecting Christ wherever they went. As the investigation into Michelle’s life proceeds, those who knew her attest that was exactly the way Michelle lived.

Mary Ann explained that Michelle’s childhood included farm chores such as gardening, mowing, pruning, weeding, harvesting and canning. “That exposure to yard and garden work is probably why Michelle and two other daughters—three out of our six children—were horticulture majors. They knew they were an important part of providing homegrown food for our family. If there were extra vegetables, the girls sold them in town after Mass on Saturday mornings.” There was also herding sheep and bottle-feeding lambs, which soon became pets. It was understood that work came first and fun later. “She just buckled down to get any task done,” Mary Ann said.

Although Michelle was valedictorian and president of her senior class, she was not particularly engaged in a peer social life. She was happy to go along with her family to occasional Catholic conferences that included speakers, Mass, and adoration—much like the Thirst Conferences in Bismarck that Michelle was later to help plan in her work as Director of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Bismarck. Prior to taking that job in 2012, she was a FOCUS missionary at four college campuses including the inaugural year at University of Mary in Bismarck, mentoring college students to draw them deeper into the faith.

Mary Ann pointed out that Michelle enjoyed sharing her Jan. 25 birthday with St. Paul, the great evangelizer, a mission she also lived.

It was in the fall of 2014 that Michelle began experiencing sharp pains in her abdomen. Ovarian cysts was the diagnosis. Nothing serious, Michelle was told, and they might even dissolve on their own.

By mid-December Michelle was in agony. After a second ultrasound, outpatient surgery was scheduled for December 29 to remove the cysts. The surgeon opened Michelle and was shocked at the finding. Her abdomen was full of cancer—stage four. “Michelle, there isn’t anything we can do,” she was told by two doctors that she should go home for hospice care. “How long does she have?” Mary Ann asked, horrified. “Two months,” was the answer.

Thus began Michelle’s yearlong journey, fighting for her life while accepting God’s will every step of the way. Her sister Renae, who had a degree in nursing, accompanied her on the...
journey as her personal nurse.

There were many surgeries and hospital stays until Michelle was sent home when there was nothing more that could be done for her. “Michelle was not one to blame anyone for anything,” Mary Ann said. “Her attitude was, ‘If God wants me to go through this, I will go through this.’”

Towards the end of the journey when Michelle was put on hospice care, a family doctor asked Mary Ann if they had to do it over again, did they think all her medical procedures were worth putting Michelle through so much pain to gain another 10 months. “You have no idea of how many lives she touched that last year,” Mary Ann responded. “Not only was Michelle a great witness of her deep faith, she used that time to offer her suffering for others. There were over 230,000 hits on her Caring-Bridge site that year, including strangers from across the country. How do you measure the good from that?”

Mary Ann shared that one of her most precious gifts from Michelle is a relic medal from the Shrine of the North American Martyrs in New York. “Michelle said that she believed a time was coming when we, too, should be ready if we would be asked by our Lord to suffer martyrdom to pass on the faith. She told her that we need to be brave by putting on the armor of faith! This she did to her very last breath. She never talked about death or dying, just about hope of what the future might bring.”

Right up until the end, Michelle still prayed for healing. However, one of the sisters from the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites serving at Spirit of Life Church in Mandan who had helped out during hospice care, later revealed that Michelle had told her that she would die on Christmas Day. In the end, Michelle knew. Family members took turns gathering around her bed the evening of Dec. 25, singing, praying, and expressing their love. Michelle took her last breath at 11:23 p.m.

And now, Michelle may one day be counted among the canonized saints. “She gave everything,” her father Ken said. “Her whole year of suffering, the pain was non-stop. It was hard watching. But it wasn’t just that year. Her whole life was dedicated to whatever Jesus wanted.” When she was in the hospital, he said he would pray the rosary over the phone with Michelle, Mary Ann, and Renae.

He said it was typical for hospital staff to be drawn to Michelle, sometimes sharing personal problems with her. “She would be concerned about their problems, not hers,” Ken said. An example he gave was when someone was upset that her husband had left her. “Michelle told her, ‘Forgive him and pray for him because you are maybe the only one who can help him.’” The woman came back later with joy and shared that she had finally found peace and was finally able to move on.

According to Ken, Michelle’s attitude was that we should do everything we can while on earth to make it to heaven. “She would say to the other FOCUS missionaries, ‘Give everything you’ve got because it might be the only chance to save that person’s soul; you have to show...”

The Duppong family in 2013 celebrating Ken and Mary Ann’s 40th wedding anniversary. Back row: Michelle, Renae, Jeff, Lisa. Front row: Sara, Mary Ann, Ken, Kalene. (Dakota Catholic Action)
them the way.’ Whatever she did, she always did her best.”

Her sister, Lisa Gray [a parishioner at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo], shared that Michelle’s example has shown her how to live an amazing life in ordinary ways. “She lived her life in conformity to Christ. When I saw her taking her last breath, I was so happy for her,” Lisa explained. “I was so proud of her. I had the feeling of her running to Jesus. It was not just the tragedy of the cancer story; people knew that Michelle was marked; it was just part of her journey. I had a heart of knowledge that she was going to heaven on Christmas night.” Early the next morning, Lisa received confirmation. “As I woke up, I heard her voice, ‘Leese, it’s beautiful.’ Her voice was radiant.”

Since then, the family has heard from many people who believe they have had prayers answered through Michelle’s intercession. They request that people who have such stories, to contact the Diocese of Bismarck at (701) 222-3035 to share them.

**Bishop David Kagan, Diocese of Bismarck, on the cause for Michelle Duppong**

“Michelle’s holiness of life and love for God certainly touched us here in the Diocese of Bismarck, at the University of Mary, and throughout FOCUS, but hers is a witness which should also be shared with the Universal Church. What inspired me about Michelle and prompted me to take this first step was her two most obvious virtues: her joyful faith and her unconditional acceptance of God’s will for her. As time goes on and our investigation progresses, that will be even more evident to all. Even her last illness in which she suffered mightily did not, in any way, diminish her faith and her obedience to God’s will for her. Our Church and especially our culture needs models of everyday holiness just as Michelle has shown us. Especially our young men and women, married or single, need Michelle’s example of faith, hope, and charity. They need to know and see that real virtue is something for them and it is never outdated. To cultivate a joyful faith and an obedience to God’s will in life just as Michelle did is for all of us.”

**How is someone declared a saint?**

We are all called to be saints. A saint is someone who has gained heaven (officially canonized or not) by living a faithful, virtuous life and who are worthy of imitation. The process of investigating the life for the possibility that the Catholic Church would canonize a person which means declaring him/her to be a saint begins by opening a case known as a “cause.”

While it’s uncertain how long a canonization process can take, it often lasts many years. The American Church has been blessed with numerous people declared saint, blessed, and venerable, all of whom in their own unique way witness to Christ’s love. Currently, there are 11 American saints.

Five years must pass after the death of the candidate for there to be time to verify their reputation for holiness. Once the cause begins, the candidate receives the title “servant of God.”

The process begins with the bishop of the diocese appointing a postulator to assist in the promotion and nominating officials for a tribunal, to gather all the evidence for and against the canonization. The candidate’s writings are examined by theologians and witnesses who knew the candidate are interviewed.

If the cause is deemed worthy, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation informs the pope that the servant of God either was a true martyr or has lived a life of extraordinary and heroic virtue worthy of imitation. The pope orders the congregation to issue the decree either of martyrdom or of heroic virtue, and the candidate is given the title “venerable.”

There must be one miracle received through the intercession of the venerable servant of God—which has no scientific explanation—for the candidate to be beautified and thus called “blessed.”

To be canonized a saint, there must be another miracle that took place through the intercession of the candidate after becoming “blessed.” Through being declared a saint, the Church declares that the person is in heaven, worthy of universal veneration, and is a powerful intercessor. They are not worshiped, but we call on them to pray for us.
New book helps those with loved ones who have turned from the faith

Most of us know someone who was raised in the Catholic faith, but no longer practice their faith. They may have switched to a Christian denomination, or quit practicing any faith all together. Some of these people are members of our own families. For the faithful, it can be frustrating and may leave one feeling powerless over how to bring the fallen back to the fold.

A new book co-written by two North Dakota Catholic authors explores the challenges faced by those who have loved ones or friends who are no longer practicing Catholics. Roxane Beauclair Salonen of Fargo, author and monthly contributor to New Earth through her “Sidewalk Stories” series of articles, and Patti Maguire Armstrong of Bismarck, host of the TV talk show “Ladies of Another View” and author, teamed together to write the book What Would Monica Do? St. Monica is the mother of the great theologian St. Augustine, who prayed for years for the conversion of her son.

In anticipation of the book’s release, New Earth asked each author a series of questions regarding the book and why they hope readers will take the message offered to heart.

What is the basic premise of this book, and why did you want to write it?
Salonen: The basic premise for our book, What Would Monica Do?, can be found in the book’s subtitle: “Consolation, hope and inspiration in the spirit of St. Monica for those bearing the cross of a loved one who is away from the Faith.” We wanted to write it to console and encourage parents and others whose loved ones have left the Catholic faith. Our Lord has a special affinity for the broken-hearted, so we are at the Lord’s service in trying to offer perspective and companionship in this vale of tears. To help us do so, we have a fitting guide in St. Monica, who has trod this road before us, and came out the other side rejoicing.

Armstrong: Many Catholics are familiar with St. Monica but not all know about her or they simply know that she prayed for her son for many years. By delving into her life and seeing her as a flesh and blood mother praying for her wayward son, the centuries melt away and we are sisters in Christ. The beautiful part about our sister Monica is her powerful example of perseverance and the fact that as a saint in heaven, she can intercede for us in our own situations.

Who is the book written for?
Armstrong: I’ve met children praying desperately for their parents who are far from the Church, so they too would be able to relate. There are Godparents, aunts and uncles, siblings, friends... so many concerned for loved ones. Ultimately, since this book inspires us to nurture relationships, let go of anger, give and receive forgiveness and mercy, and go deeper in our own faith, every Catholic can benefit.

Does Monica’s story speak to you personally as an author?
Salonen: Yes, or we wouldn’t have written the book. We are both in this predicament, with some of our 15 combined children not currently practicing the faith that we have tried to pass onto them as the gift given to us. As much as we wish our earlier efforts would have been enough, free will is real! And the world ravages, and waits to consume our children. But we are not left without a defense, and in Monica’s story, we find clues to how we, in this time and place, can respond, in love and in faith.

What did you learn about St. Monica during your research—her pain, heartache, steadfast faith, and eventually jubilation?
Salonen: We want readers to discover that for themselves in reading our book. We hope they will approach the book with curiosity to learn more about Monica and her life, but our book isn’t just about Monica. It’s filled with stories from everyday people who have shared their heartbreaking experiences with us and how they have managed to take up this cross with tenacity, as did Monica. It also features stories of other saints, perspectives of what is happening in the culture to cause this exodus of faith in the young, and, hopefully, some powerful doses of inspiration, shared by other holy and wise people of yesterday and today.

Armstrong: I learned not to count the days but just to proceed in faith and prayer entrusting all of our family—regardless of where they are in their faith life—into God’s hands through his Blessed Mother and all the angels and saints. We can try our best when raising our children, but we cannot control everything. Rather than throw up our arms and quit trying, we need to instead, put our energies where they will now count the most.
Meg Hunter-Kilmer isn’t an ordinary Catholic author and speaker, and yet she isn’t extraordinary either. She’s an ordinary woman who responded to God’s call to live in a remarkable way. After graduating college with two degrees in theology, she taught religion for five years in a Catholic school. During that time, she felt an interior nudge to leave her classroom and embark on a new journey and she said yes. Since 2012, Hunter-Kilmer has been traveling around the country in her car, the self-proclaimed “hobo for Christ,” in order to lead retreats, give parish talks, and any other speaking events she’s invited to do.

In 2020 when there weren’t many speaking opportunities, Hunter-Kilmer saw it as her chance to work on another project she felt called to do. Write. The fruits of those efforts were two books on the saints, one for adults and one for children. Each shines in their genre by making the saints relatable, fascinating, and inspiring.

Pray for Us: 75 Saints Who Sinned, Suffered, and Struggled on Their Way to Holiness is a collection of saints, blesseds, servants of God, and venerables written for adults. It’s probable that most people won’t recognize the majority of the saints highlighted in the book, and it’s wonderful because of that! Seeing the breadth of paths there are to holiness is consoling. There is no one single way to become a saint. There are as many ways to live out holiness as there are people, but their common thread is heroic love of God and neighbor.

Through her years as an itinerant speaker, she’s sharpened her storytelling skills. She draws you in, beginning with headings for each saint, such as, “Bl. Catherine Jarrige: A Mischiefous Woman Who Smuggled Priests to Safety” or “St. Mark Ji Tianxiang: An Opium Addict Who Never Got Clean.” Each saint biography averages only two to three pages, which makes reading one or two a day quite doable regardless of busy schedules.

When I began reading the book, I read one of the stories aloud to my husband and when I finished he looked over at me, smiled, and said, “Another!” When the second story finished he said, “Another!” I’m not sure how many saints we read through that evening, but we finished the time both feeling exhilarated and renewed in our desires to live heroically for the Lord in our own little family.

Hunter-Kilmer also wrote a children’s book on saints titled Saints Around the World which also has a unique collection of saints and blesseds that are different from the ones highlighted in Pray for Us. Hunter-Kilmer adeptly recounted the stories of the saints at an age-appropriate level while remaining captivating to all ages. This book would be good for a nightly read-aloud as a family or for a third grader amid the search for a Confirmation saint.

The book begins with a world map of locations of the saints included in the book. Illustrator Lindsey Sanders created pieces of artwork for each saint that includes a myriad of symbolic references that are explained below each picture. Another gem of the book is the collection of indices which include collections of lists by geography, feast day, chronology, and a helpful topical index.

Both books are permeated with the hope and the truth that all of us, no matter our vocation, our past, or our struggles, are called to holiness. Whether through heroic feats or in mundane household work, each of us is called to be a saint.
The First Eucharist shines light on realities of faith

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

The painting The First Eucharist was commissioned during the Renaissance for the main altarpiece in the church of San Esteban in Valencia, Spain. It now hangs in the Prado Museum in Madrid. The artist Juan de Juanes, was a devout Catholic and Spanish painter in 16th Century Spain. It was said he never painted before receiving Holy Communion and that he found painting to be a spiritual exercise, one that consisted of prayers and fasting.

This painting of the Last Supper shows Jesus front and center with the apostles gathered around him. Conveniently, Juanes added the names of the apostles to their halos. However, Judas stands out since he has no halo. His name is carved in the bench he sits on. Yet, there is more to this painting than just a snapshot of a Spanish Renaissance rendition of the Last Supper.

In the center is Jesus holding the consecrated host as the apostle’s eyes gaze on. We can see that the Eucharistic host is different from the bread that is on the table. This was so that you, as the audience, would understand that the Eucharistic bread you receive was given to us at the Last Supper and is truly the Eucharistic Lord. Although it is hard to see, the host has an image of the crucifixion on it. So we have the Last Supper, the crucifixion, and a host familiar to us all, brought together for one message—the Eucharistic host you receive today is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. We can also see the chalice on the table, known by legend as the Holy Grail. The chalice is modeled after the supposed Holy Grail kept in the Valencia Cathedral in Spain since Medieval times.

There are other subtle messages in this painting. The apostles all gather around Jesus but have different poses and facial expressions. Peter and John both sit next to Jesus gazing at the Eucharistic host with faces of loving adoration. James the Less is looking at Thomas and pointing to the Eucharist. Thomas is most often singled out in art as the doubter and one who needs help believing. Notice the expression on Andrew’s face (the older man standing on Peter’s left). His face remains peaceful and calm as if he had been adoring Jesus in the Eucharist for some time. It is as if holy wisdom shines forth from his face. He may represent all the faithful who throughout their lives have adored and received Jesus in the Eucharist while growing in holy wisdom. Meanwhile, Philip (far right) has a youthful look of astonishment; his journey is just beginning.

Judas has the disposition of turning away from Christ while clutching the moneybag. He is counterbalanced with Jude Thaddeus, who shows what a faithful follower would do at this point during the Mass; kneel and adore Jesus. In Hebrew and Greek Judas and Jude are the same name and people in the early church did not want to mistakenly pray to Judas, so St. Jude was often left out of prayers. This is why he became the saint of the impossible causes. We see other clues that tell us Judas is up to no good. The knife is pointing toward him. There is a citrus fruit by him. Oranges along with apples in sacred art refer to the Original Sin. The salt container was made popular by Leonardo’s Last Supper version in which he showed a fallen saltshaker next to Judas—meaning bad luck.

Jesus does not look at the host, but is looking straight out at you. He leaves the scene of the Last Supper and comes to offer himself to you personally in the Eucharist.

The water bowl and serving pitcher in the forefront remind us of our call to serve one another. Jesus showed us this when he washed the disciples feet: “I have given you a model to follow so that as I have done for you, you should also do” (John 13:15). The apostles were sent out to serve and to proclaim the Gospel message, and so we are also sent out after Mass to do the same.
Many students and young adults are faced with difficult questions, and oftentimes they feel ill equipped to answer them. “What’s your major? What are you planning to do with the rest of your life? Have you discovered your vocation yet?” These questions are good, but I think there is a better way to ask these questions—or perhaps a better mindset to have that will help better our interior lives. Instead the question should be, “When the Lord reveals his will for your life, will you say yes?”

My wife and I live in Fargo. Maggie teaches religion at Sacred Heart Middle School, and I work as a pediatric optometrist. We are parishioners at Sts. Anne & Joachim Church. We have an awesome group of holy friends. We love watching college football. There’s really nothing extraordinary about our lives, but in saying yes to the Lord, we’ve found ourselves on a journey better than either of us could have written.

The most profound moment of God’s direct appeal to me came in September 2004. I woke up on a Saturday morning without any vision in my right eye. It was like looking through frosted glass, but without any distinguishable shapes. Over the course of the next three days, I also lost vision in my left eye. My optometrist referred me to Fargo’s MeritCare (now Sanford) hospital for further testing. I spent about a week in the hospital, having countless blood draws, imaging, and other tests performed to determine possible causes and possible treatments. The tentative diagnosis was optic neuritis.

Most of my doctors weren’t certain I would get my vision back. This didn’t happen to kids, they said; this was much more common in elderly patients with underlying health conditions. I remember one specific conversation my parents had with an ophthalmologist who told them Portland, N.D. was not a great place to raise a blind teenager. Nursing staff and occupational therapists started teaching me mobility skills with a walking cane and a guide dog. I learned the Braille alphabet. I was being prepared for life without sight.

Then, something miraculous happened.

My vision slowly came back. In a span of three days, I regained fully functional vision in both eyes, thanks to the prayers of my friends and family, and an experimental treatment (now the standard of care) that reduced the inflammation quicker than expected.

It was because of this moment, at just 12 years old, that I discovered what the Lord would ask of me in my career. I knew I needed to be a pediatric optometrist. Jesus showed himself in the midst of a trial, and through my suffering, allowed me to learn his will for my life. This isn’t to say the suffering wasn’t difficult (I was most devastated that I wouldn’t be able to play video games anymore!), but—with the right intentions—the Lord can transform suffering to an even more amazing story. We need not look much farther than the lives of the saints to learn this truth.

After finishing high school and graduating from the University of Mary, I was off to optometry school in Glendale, Ariz. Graduate school was extremely challenging but very fruitful for me. I was fortunate that my school was only a block away from my apartment, so I didn’t need to use a car very often. I drove the same car from my senior year in high school to my second year as a licensed optometrist. When it was time for a new car, I knew I wanted to remind myself (and evangelize others) of the incredible things God can do if we just say yes. So I chose MK 1052 as my license plate for my new car.

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way” (Mark 10:52).
Effective evangelization commences with joy

**CATHOLIC ACTION**

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

One of the great icons in the Catholic Church today is Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York making his way up the aisle to commence Sunday Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. While the congregation belts out the opening hymn, the good cardinal thumps his episcopal crozier on the ground, beams at all and sundry, kisses babies, embraces young and old, calls out the names of friends he recognizes, and generally speaking, spreads good cheer in every direction. One would have to be either catatonic or positively Scroogian in temperament not to find the scene utterly delightful.

And this is far more than effective PR. In point of fact, it’s one of the reasons why Timothy Dolan is, arguably, the most persuasive Catholic evangelist in the country today. The Cardinal of New York is a remarkably intelligent man (his principle academic interest being American Catholic church history), and he brings his significant gifts of mind to whatever he says and does; but he also knows that radiating a sense of the joy that comes from friendship with Christ is the key to bringing others to the Lord. In the opening chapter of the Gospel of John, we hear about two young men who, at the prompting of the Lord, come and stay with Jesus. So thrilled are they by this encounter that they immediately begin to announce to anyone who would listen that they had “found the Messiah.” In that little episode, we see the fundamental rhythm of effective evangelization: they meet Jesus, they find the experience life-enhancing, they want to tell everyone about it. The very best bearers of the Gospel are those whose joy in Christ is contagious.

The second part of Thomas Aquinas’s masterpiece the *Summa Theologiae* deals with ethics, the question of how precisely we ought to live. It is most instructive to note that this massive treatment of Christian morality begins with joy, what Thomas called “beatitudo.” Ethics is all about what makes us happy. After determining that wealth, pleasure, power, and honor, though good, are not the source of true joy, Thomas argues that only the infinite good of God satisfies the deepest longing of the human heart. Next, Aquinas analyzes the habits and virtues that inculcate in us the moves that properly order us to our ultimate good. And finally, in question number ninety, Thomas broaches for the first time the issue of the law—and thereupon hangs a tale. Laws, he argues, are those prescriptions and prohibitions that place in us the habits that produce the virtues that in turn give rise to joy. The relegation to question ninety shows clearly that moral laws are not the heart of the matter, nor are they the starting-point for ethical deliberation. They are utterly subordinate to and ordered around happiness.

When I was coming of age in the Catholic Church—in the seventies and eighties of the last century—Catholics were utterly preoccupied with law. What I mean is that they focused relentlessly on ethical matters, especially in the area of sexuality. And this was true whether one was on the right or on the left. I think of the endless disputes around the morality of birth control, divorce and re-marriage, pre-marital sex, etc. that ripped the church apart in those days.

Mind you, I’m not suggesting for a moment that those issues were unimportant or that the people who staked out positions on both sides were unserious. But I am indeed suggesting that a church battling with itself over ethical law presented a deeply disedifying and unattractive face to the wider world. And that is precisely why the church of that period proved so evangelically ineffective. It was so preoccupied with defending (or changing) the Church’s teaching on sexual matters that it forgot how to invite people into joyful friendship with Christ Jesus. The huge number of people from my generation who have either left the church for other Christian denominations or, more likely, drifted into a bland secularism testifies to this failure.

Am I subtly implying here that sexual ethics doesn’t matter? By no means! I am arguing that moral law follows and attends upon something far more basic, namely, the happiness that comes from intimate union with God. Once one has caught the zest of Christian life, one wants to know how to maintain that life. We might compare it to someone who has experienced the exuberance of a baseball game well played and who then endeavors, on his own and with enthusiasm, to search out the rules and disciplines of the game. Ethics is important; but joy is more important. And when the joy is in place, the ethics won’t be shunned; it will be embraced.

If I might return to my original image, I would say that a good Catholic evangelist could commence with the contagious joy of Cardinal Dolan walking up the aisle at St. Patrick’s. Once he has drawn someone in, he might say, “did you ever wonder how he got that way? Let me show you.” First the joy, then the ethics. Getting this right makes all the difference.

*This piece was originally published on February 8, 2012 on WordonFire.org.*
As I completed my second year of seminary, I received a pastoral assignment to live in a parish of the diocese for eight weeks in the summer. The point of a pastoral assignment is to get a taste of parish life and to see the ins and outs of running a parish. For eight weeks, I shadowed a pastor. This was the first time I was assigned to a parish. I didn’t know what to expect. I was assigned to the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo.

There were three different aspects of priestly life I observed: administrative, pastoral, and spiritual.

There were many things that showed me the administrative side of being a priest. I attended a parish council meeting, finance meeting, staff meetings, deanery meetings, and helped with several projects at the cathedral. I quickly found that there are many people behind the scenes making the parish work. Having the opportunity to get to know the staff made me appreciate everything they do to help the parish run smoothly.

I also experienced the pastoral side of priestly life. I sat in on a funeral planning meeting, marriage preparation, religious education classes, RCIA, and brought communion to the homebound. I was grateful to do these things because it showed me how to connect with people in various circumstances. I especially appreciated being able to bring the Eucharist to the homebound and visit the elderly. Seeing their devotion to our Lord in the Eucharist was inspiring and I am thankful to have played a small part in helping them receive him.

One thing that I didn’t expect going into my assignment was the number of homeless around the cathedral. In a way, it was a blessing to experience this because it gave me the opportunity to try and see Christ in everyone rather than judging or making assumptions based on their circumstances. I found that even the smallest acts of kindness went a long way in brightening someone’s day. Whether it was praying with them, giving them a bottle of water, or simply smiling at them and asking how they’re doing—anything to shine a ray of Christ’s love on their heart—because that is what a pastor should do. He continually reaches out to people on the fringes so that Christ may work through him to bring more people to the love and mercy of God.

The last part of priestly life that I experienced was the spiritual side. I realized that I can do nothing without a deep intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. How do I foster this relationship? By continually going to him in prayer asking for the strength and guidance to do my daily tasks. I can have all the good intentions in the world, but if I am relying on my own strength, I am doomed to fail. I can do nothing without Christ, and sometimes I have to be reminded of that the hard way. The priest is *alter Christus*, “another Christ,” to the world. One cannot live that calling without continually uniting himself to Christ with prayer and sacrifice.

As my summer assignment closed, I came away with a deeper understanding of how the priest is to shepherd his flock. I pray that God will continue to form in me the heart of a shepherd to one day serve him as his priest.

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**Summer assignment a reminder to be “another Christ” to others**

**SEMINARIAN LIFE**

Paul Zach
College III at St. Gregory the Great Seminary, Seward, Neb.

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On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court issued its historic opinion in Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health, overturning Roe vs. Wade and Casey vs. Planned Parenthood. Many discussions about the decision’s impact will follow. The North Dakota Catholic Conference will help clarify laws and provide guidance to both lawmakers and interested persons. There exists much more to do to help women and children and to build a culture of life. For now, though, I want to offer a personal reflection on how we got to Dobbs and some of the people who helped get us there.

The body has many members. The pro-life movement’s members include pregnancy centers, activists, legislators, adoption agencies, post-abortion ministries, physicians, scientists, and many others. My career over the last three decades exposed me to some of the legal minds in the cause for life. They may not be familiar names, even within the pro-life movement, but they influenced me and helped pave the way for Dobbs.

Although I had some pro-life law professors at Berkeley, the first encouragement I received came shortly after I graduated from law school. It came in a letter from Notre Dame law professor Charles Rice, a leader in the pro-life movement dating back to Roe. I had written my first nationally published article on abortion and he had read it. His letter encouraged me to write and do more.

Shortly after that, Helen Alvaré called me and we began a relationship that led me into this work. At the time, Helen was the pro-life spokesperson for the United States Catholic Bishops. While many knew her as a great speaker for the pro-life cause, she is also a brilliant lawyer. After leaving USCCB, she became a law professor, specializing in the defense of life and the family. She helped draft an important “friend of the court” brief submitted in the Dobbs case.

Around this time, Mark Chopko was the general counsel for USCCB. Chopko and Mike Moses—another lawyer with USCCB—published important law review articles examining the weakness of Roe and Casey. Whenever the Supreme Court issued a major abortion case decision, Chopko would summon the best pro-life legal minds to Washington, D.C. to discuss the case. He also wanted some state Catholic conference directors to attend and give a political and legislative perspective. I had the privilege of attending these sessions.

Those sessions included Clarke Forsythe of Americans United for Life, state constitutional law expert Paul Linton, James Bopp of National Right to Life, and law professors Robert Destro, Teresa Collett, Robert George, and Mary Ann Glendon. Included among them was one non-lawyer: Richard Doerflinger. Richard was the policy director for USCCB’s pro-life office and is one of the smartest individuals I have ever met.

These great minds examined the cases and explored what opportunities the Court provided to “push the envelope.” The general strategy among these thinkers was to find ways to chip away at Roe and Casey. Eventually, the Court would have to confront the flawed holding of Roe itself.

Understandably, some in the pro-life movement did not like this strategy. Some wanted to strike at all of Roe immediately. We should remember, however, that for many years we did not have the votes on the Supreme Court and a ruling affirming Roe would make it harder to overturn it in the future.

For my part, I never doubted that Roe would either be explicitly overturned or whittled down so much as to become meaningless. If I said it aloud, people might have thought I was naive, but when I started working for the North Dakota Catholic Conference in 1995, I thought to myself, “Lord, help me do what I can to make North Dakota abortion-free.”

By the time this is published, that day may have arrived. The North Dakota Catholic Conference has dealt with many abortion-related bills since 1995. Some good, some bad, some ill-timed. None was in vain. We often tried to be part of a national strategy shaped in part by the people I mentioned. They helped build what Mississippi eventually took to the finish line on June 24.

This year, June 24 was the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Usually, June 24 celebrates the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, who as an unborn child heard the voice of Mary, leaped in his mother’s womb, and received the Holy Spirit. St. John the Baptist was the forerunner. He helped prepare the way for the coming of Jesus.

I think of these people I have mentioned as helping to prepare the way for Dobbs.
One thing women religious have in common with all members of the human race is that we die. Few of us die young and fewer still have progeny to mourn our passing. Thus, rituals surrounding our passings tend to be more joyful than sad, more imbued with a sense of fulfillment rather than the feeling of a thread cut too soon from the loom. If I do say so myself, we do wakes and funerals rather well.

About 40 years ago at the wake of one of our sisters, I noticed a weeping woman. She was older, about 25 years older than I was at that time and 25 years younger than I now am. The sister whose life we were celebrating was elderly and had no relatives in this country. She was known for her compassion, her teaching excellence, and was considered a model of virtue. I thought the distressed woman must be a past student. I approached her and asked if Sister had taught her in high school. “No,” she said between sobs. “How is it that you know Sister,” I asked. The woman responded, “She saved my life.”

That sounded rather dramatic but the story she related was not. The woman was young when she, her husband, and three small children moved to Fargo. Her husband was working 24/7 to establish the family business, and she neither knew anyone in Fargo nor had the leisure or opportunity to become involved in the community. It is difficult to have meaningful conversations with one, two, and three-year-olds or with a husband who—when he’s home—is exhausted. She was lonely and feeling trapped.

One day, she answered a knock on her door. Two Sisters, one of whom reposed in her coffin beside our conversation, stood there. The Sisters had walked over from the convent a few blocks away. They said they had come to say “hello” and have a cup of tea. After that initial visit, Sister alone or with differing companions often appeared. Sometimes they would have a chat and a cup of tea. Sometimes they would say, “Dear, why don’t you go out for a while. Shop a bit or go to (some event). We’ll watch the children.” This went on regularly for a year or so until the family business stabilized and the woman developed a sense of belonging with Sister as one of her many friends.

In 2022, this “welcome wagon” in a habit does not seem particularly noteworthy. At that time however, the Holy Rule by which we lived forbade us to tramp about to the homes of seculars to drink tea or anything else. We certainly did not go out walking the streets alone. Such activity would have been matter for confession or at least for Chapter of Faults. Sister and her companions were breaking the rules!

Rules are important. They are the boundaries needed for civilization, an ordered life, and healthy human development. The purpose of rules is to protect values. Sister and her companions broke the rules in order to protect the value of compassion. In so doing, they were in good company. It was Jesus who in the Gospel of Mark (2:27-28) reminded us that observances and rules were made for people; people were not made for rules and observances.

The Sister who figures in this story was one of the spiritual daughters of a woman who defied civil law to teach children to read, write, and earn a living. This woman who broke social norms by walking alone dark streets to the sick and incarcerated. She disobeyed church authorities to obey her calling to be of service to the needy of her time.

People who live a consecrated life promise not only to observe certain vows and rules but also to keep a laser focus on the Gospel. Having a cup of tea in an off-limits kitchen doesn’t seem like much, but it made a big difference in someone’s life. When rules protect values, keep them. When they obstruct the value of true compassion, not so much.

“Welcome wagon” prioritizes compassion

SISTER’S PERSPECTIVE
SISTER MARY MARGARET, MOONEY, PBVM

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26 NEW EARTH JULY/AUGUST 2022
There are several reasons you should consider launching your own endowment. Here are just three:

1. **Unending Annual Gifts**
   
   As a member of your parish, you most likely make at least one annual gift to support your church. Our endowment program allows you to make sure that these annual gifts continue in perpetuity long after you are gone.

   Endowment funds are basically investment funds that preserve principal and make payments (or gifts) to your parish from the earnings. In other words, after you are gone your endowment would take your place in providing annual support for your local parish. And this could continue indefinitely.

2. **A Lasting Legacy**
   
   This is one of the most powerful reasons to launch an endowment. The ongoing nature of these funds provides an unending way to not only support your parish but to remind family and friends of one’s values and commitments.

   Grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and further generations will encounter their own heritage as they see “their” endowment at work. If you want to build a lasting legacy to benefit your parish and inspire people for years to come, launch your own endowment.

3. **Financial Stability**
   
   Parishes throughout the Diocese of Fargo derive financial strength from endowment funds. Just knowing a stream of endowment income exists, permits parishes like yours to make better financial projections and to plan for the future more confidently.

   Also, income from endowments allows parishes to do some things they might not otherwise be able to do. Another point: A parish with strong endowment assets tends to draw support from donors who might otherwise pass by your parish.

**Several Possibilities**

You can launch your endowment in several ways. You can do it all at once by making a major gift of cash or marketable assets. Or, you could make all the arrangements now and defer the launch date until activated by your will.

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**Three reasons to launch your own endowment**

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STEVE SCHONS

Director of stewardship and development for the Diocese of Fargo

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NEW EARTH JULY/AUGUST 2022
**LIFE’S MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Parishioners</th>
<th>Church/Location</th>
<th>Event Celebrated</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 4</td>
<td>Leonard and Inez Hamann Rath, parishioners of Nativity Church in Fargo.</td>
<td>St. Alphonsus Church in Langdon</td>
<td>60th anniversary</td>
<td>Fargo</td>
<td>Married July 29 at St. James Basilica in Jamestown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 4</td>
<td>John and Roseann Kopy, parishioners of Holy Family Church in Grand Forks.</td>
<td>St. Stanislaus Church in Warsaw</td>
<td>60th anniversary</td>
<td>Grand Forks</td>
<td>Married at St. Alphonsus Church in Langdon and are blessed with 3 children and 6 grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 29</td>
<td>Ev (Klose) and Brian Kappel, parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua Church in</td>
<td>St. James Basilica in Jamestown</td>
<td>50th anniversary</td>
<td>Fargo</td>
<td>Married July 29 at St. James Basilica in Jamestown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 21</td>
<td>John and Roseann Kopy, parishioners of Holy Family Church in Grand Forks.</td>
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<td>Married at St. Alphonsus Church in Langdon and are blessed with 3 children and 6 grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 21</td>
<td>Ron and Wanda Kremer, parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Balta.</td>
<td>St. Therese Little Flower in Rugby</td>
<td>50th anniversary</td>
<td>Balta</td>
<td>Married at St. Therese Little Flower in Rugby and have 5 children, 16 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 21</td>
<td>John and Roseann Kopy, parishioners of Holy Family Church in Grand Forks.</td>
<td>St. Stanislaus Church in Warsaw</td>
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<td>Married at St. Alphonsus Church in Langdon and are blessed with 3 children and 6 grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 21</td>
<td>Gary and Ramona Schmitz, parishioners of St. Cecilia Church in Harvey.</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Church in Orrin</td>
<td>60th anniversary</td>
<td>Harvey</td>
<td>Married at Sacred Heart Church in Orrin. They are blessed with 5 children, 13 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 21</td>
<td>Robert and Judith Wilmot, parishioners of Little Flower Church in Rugby.</td>
<td>St. Stephen’s Church in Larimore</td>
<td>50th anniversary</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Married at St. Stephen’s Church in Larimore and are blessed with 4 children and 8 grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 5</td>
<td>Robert and Judith Wilmot, parishioners of Little Flower Church in Rugby.</td>
<td>St. Stephen’s Church in Larimore</td>
<td>50th anniversary</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Married at St. Stephen’s Church in Larimore and are blessed with 4 children and 8 grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 25</td>
<td>Deacon Raymond and Karen (Foster) Desjarlais, parishioners of the Cathedral</td>
<td>Our Lady of Victory Church in Willow City.</td>
<td>50th anniversary</td>
<td>Fargo</td>
<td>Married at Our Lady of Victory Church in Willow City. God has blessed them with 3 sons and 3 grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Bruce and Vicki Larson, parishioners of Holy Spirit Church.</td>
<td>St. James Basilica in Jamestown</td>
<td>50th anniversary</td>
<td>Jamestown</td>
<td>Married in Jamestown and have 2 sons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 22</td>
<td>Leonida and Mike Strande, parishioners of St. Jude’s Church in Thompson.</td>
<td>St. Stephen’s Church in Larimore</td>
<td>50th anniversary</td>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>Married at St. Stephen’s Church in Larimore 50 years ago, July 22. They have 2 children and 4 grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 September issue is Aug. 16.

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
Most Rev. Leo F. Dworschak, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Fargo, blessed and dedicated the new Wick pipe organ recently installed in St. Michael’s church, Grand Forks, on July 20. The $7,000 organ was given by parishioners to the church in memory of the fifteen men of the parish who died during the last war. The new organ replaces the old Kimbel organ which was installed in 1911. A two-manual affair, the new organ’s response to the player’s touch is instantaneous since it uses direct electric action.

And across the northern diocese; the outside niche in front of St. Joachim’s Church in Rolla now holds a statue of the patron saint in time for the feast day of St. Joachim on August 16.

50 years ago — 1972
St. Michael’s Parish in Grand Forks, N.D. celebrated its Centennial Observance on July 16 with a concelebrated Mass by Bishop Justin A. Driscoll and by the current and former priests of the Parish. A dinner-program was held afterwards at the Armory. Featured speakers and guests regaled the audience with humorous stories and incidents of the rich history of St. Michael’s.

20 years ago — 2002
Riverview celebrated its 15th anniversary. The former Sacred Heart Convent was renamed Riverview Place in 1987. At that time, it officially opened its doors to active adults, initiating the first retirement facility in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Bishop Samuel J. Aquila blessed the nine stained-glass windows that were designed by David Hetland and donated by families and residents of Riverview.

Heading south for the winter? Make sure New Earth comes with you!
In most cases, the USPS will not forward New Earth for individuals who record a forwarding/temporary address for their mail. As a result, New Earth does not reach many of our faithful who travel south for the winter. To set up a temporary address for New Earth, go to www.fargodiocese.org/new-earth, call (701) 356-7900, or mail a notice including a temporary address and what months you’ll be living there to: New Earth, 5201 Bishops Blvd, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104
**EVENTS**

**Catechist Retreat at Maryvale, Valley City**

Come away for a one-day retreat on Aug. 26 or Aug. 27 where Father Andrew Jasinski will direct with a series of talks reflecting on the Eucharistic Rival. Both retreats will be held at Maryvale Retreat Center, Valley City from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. These retreats are primarily for those involved in catechesis, however, all are welcome. Register by Aug. 19 at fargodiocese.org catechistretreat. Contact mary.hanbury@fargodiocese.org or (701) 356-7909.

**Women’s Retreat: Spirituality of St. Therese the Little Flower**

Ashley Njaa will lead women on a 3-day retreat using the spirituality and teachings of St. Therese of Lisieux. Ashley completed her Master’s Thesis on St. Therese and has traveled to Lisieux, France. She will be joined by Father Jayson Miller who will be the spiritual director. The retreat will begin Oct. 7 with registration at 6 p.m. and conclude with lunch at noon Oct. 9. Cost is $250. The retreat will be held at the Franciscan Retreat Center, 102 6th St SE, Hankinson. Register at fargodiocese.org/evangelization retreats-workshops.

**Father Darin Didier 17th Annual Memorial Mass**

Holy Spirit Church in Fargo invites you to attend the 17th Annual Father Darin Didier Memorial Mass on Sept. 5 (Labor Day) at 5:30 p.m. A meal will be served following Mass in the Social Hall. A free-will offering will be collected to fund the Father Didier Memorial Scholarship Fund at Holy Spirit. For more information, call the parish office at (701) 232-5900. Father Didier was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Fargo on June 4, 2005, and served as parochial vicar at Holy Spirit Church until his death on Sept. 6, 2005. For more information on Father Didier, visit www.fatherdarin.com.

**Fall dinners**

**Thompson:** St. Jude’s Church will hold a fall dinner and bake sale Sept. 11 from 12 to 5 p.m. Adults and all take-outs—$13, age 6 to 12—$8, ages under 5—$5.

**Langdon:** St. Alphonsus Church will host a fall supper on Oct. 16 from 4 to 7 pm. Takeout meals available.

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**Quotable**

*St. Bernard of Clairvaux*  
Feast day Aug. 20

“We are to love God for Himself, because of a twofold reason; nothing is more reasonable, nothing more profitable.”

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**Diocesan policy: Reporting child abuse**

The Diocese of Fargo is committed to the protection of youth. Please report any incidents or suspected incidents of child abuse, including sexual abuse, to civil authorities. If the situation involves a member of the clergy or a religious order, a seminarian, or an employee of a Catholic school, parish, the diocesan offices or other Catholic entity within the diocese, we ask that you also report the incident or suspected incident to Msgr. Joseph Goering, vicar general, at (701) 356-7945 or the victim assistance coordinator, at (701) 356-7965 or by email at victimassistance@fargodiocese.org. To make a report of sexual abuse of a minor and related misconduct by bishops, go to ReportBishopAbuse.org or call 1-800-276-1562.
Pope Francis: Pray to see others as God sees them

By Hannah Brockhaus | Catholic News Agency

Pray for the grace to see and treat others with the compassion of God, Pope Francis said on July 10.

In his message before the Angelus, the pope spoke about the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the responsibility to help those in need.

Rather than “pointing fingers at others” who do not help the poor, or blaming ourselves for our mistakes, “I would like to suggest another type of exercise to you all,” he said from a window overlooking St. Peter’s Square.

“This is the prayer that I suggest to you today,” he said: “‘Lord, that I might see and have compassion just like you see me and have compassion on me’—that we might have compassion on those whom we encounter along the way, above all on those who suffer and are in need, to draw near to them and do what we can do to give them a hand.”

He explained that we must acknowledge when we have been indifferent towards the needs of others. “Let us ask the Lord,” he said, “to help us overcome our selfish indifference and put ourselves on the Way.”

The pope said the first Christians were called “disciples of the Way,” because they followed Jesus Christ, who is “the way, and the truth, and the life.”

As Christian believers, Francis said, we strongly resemble the Good Samaritan in the parable because we are also on a journey.

“Walking in the footsteps of Christ, the disciple becomes a wayfarer and—like the Samaritan—learns to see and to have compassion,” he said.

To really see, the pope said, means to have eyes open to reality, “not egoistically closed in on the circle of their own thoughts.”

“The Gospel teaches us to see—it leads each of us to correctly understand reality, overcoming preconceptions and dogmatism each day,” he continued, adding that “so many believers take refuge behind dogmatisms to defend themselves from reality.”

Having eyes open to reality “teaches us to follow Jesus, because following Jesus teaches us to have compassion—to see and to have compassion—to become aware of others, especially those who suffer, those who are in need, and to intervene like the Samaritan, not to pass by but to stop,” he said.

Pope Francis also encouraged everyone to not avoid human contact with the people they help.

“If you give alms without touching the reality, without looking into the eyes of the person in need, those alms are for you, not for that person,” he said. “Think about this. Do I touch misery, even the misery that I am helping? Do I look into the eyes of the people who suffer, of the people that I help?”

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NEW EARTH JULY/AUGUST 2022
The bishop of Tilarán-Liberia in Costa Rica, Eugenio Salazar Mora, on July 6 knelt as he greeted the superior of the Missionaries of Charity, who were expelled from Nicaragua by the government of President Daniel Ortega. The sisters of the order founded by St. Teresa of Calcutta were welcomed to Costa Rica at a parish in the town of Cañas.

A video posted by the bishop on Facebook shows him greeting the nuns one by one, who in turn kiss his episcopal ring. When he came to the superior, Salazar knelt down and it was he who kissed the sister’s hand.

The Diocese of Tilarán-Liberia explained that “the sign of reverence that [the bishop] makes toward the mother provincial is a sign of being at her disposal and of service toward this community.”

“In receiving you we have received Jesus Christ”

In another video, posted July 7, the bishop said he didn’t know the reasons for the expulsion of the nuns, who “remain silent because they are religious, because of their spirituality of not seeking recognition, not getting involved in controversies, and they offer their pain for the Costa Rican people.”

“They have had difficult times, fearful for their personal safety, knowing that they are of several different nationalities and some of them are older. They were very worried until they arrived on Costa Rican territory,” the prelate noted.

“If it had been up to them, they would stay in Nicaragua; they love Nicaragua, the Nicaraguan people, especially those most in need,” the bishop noted.

“I don’t see any fault on their part, they’re just women, spouses of Jesus Christ, consecrated religious, who only aim to serve the poor, to do many things that many others don’t do,” he stressed.

“But, well, that’s the life of the Christian; also the dimension of martyrdom is part of Christian spirituality. The Church of Jesus Christ is the persecuted Church—otherwise it would not belong to Christ,” Salazar said.

Following the example of St. Teresa of Calcutta, “they only seek one privilege: to love and serve the poor, the most needy,” he said.

After requesting prayers for Nicaragua, the prelate stressed that “in receiving you we have received Jesus Christ. You are valiant women, of simplicity. Count on us, we are at your service.”

Ortega’s regime, in power for 15 years, expelled 18 Missionaries of Charity from the Central American country on July 6.

According to the EFE news agency, the dissolution of the Missionaries of Charity and another 100 NGOs in Nicaragua was approved June 29 by the National Assembly on an “urgent” basis and without any debate.

The National Assembly, Nicaragua’s legislative body, is controlled by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, led by Ortega.

Of the 18 sisters, there are seven Indians, two Mexicans, two Filipinos, two Guatemalans, two Nicaraguans, one Spaniard, one Ecuadorian, and one Vietnamese.

At the end of his message, Salazar said that “love will overcome, love will triumph. God has the last word and not man. Onward Nicaragua, onward Nicaraguan Christians! Long live Christ the King!”
Pope Francis on July 12 appointed former Air Force chaplain and Fairbanks Bishop Chad Zielinski to lead the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota.

The seat of the Diocese of New Ulm, which covers almost 10,000 square miles southwest of Minneapolis, has been vacant since August 2020, when Bishop John M. LeVoir resigned at age 74 for health reasons.

Zielinski, 57, has been bishop of Fairbanks since 2014. He will be installed in the Diocese of New Ulm on Sept. 27.

Before becoming a bishop, Zielinski served for 12 years as an Air Force chaplain; his final two years he was stationed at the Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska, 26 miles southeast of Fairbanks. He is an avid fisherman.

The Diocese of Fairbanks covers over 409,000 square miles in northern Alaska. The diocese with the largest geographical spread in the U.S., Fairbanks has around 11,500 Catholics and 46 Catholic parishes, only nine of which can be reached by car. The area’s total population is around 166,800.

The Diocese of New Ulm has 59 parishes and serves almost 51,000 Catholics.

Bishop Zielinski was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1964, and is the oldest of five children.

He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force after high school. During his military career, he served tours of duty in war zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

While attending university in Ohio, he felt a call to the priesthood, and after a tour of duty in 1986, entered the seminary. He was ordained a priest in 1996 at the age of 31, and then served for a time in parishes in Empire and Maple City, Michigan.

After the 2001 terrorist attacks, he felt a call to help those in the military, and his bishop allowed him to join the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

As a military chaplain, he was stationed at different Air Force bases across the U.S., and in Suffolk, England.

“As I leave the vast expanse of Northern Alaska, I am fully aware of the countless blessings I received from 46 parishes,” Zielinski said in a July 12 statement.

“The faithful of the entire Diocese of Fairbanks patiently helped form me to be the shepherd I am today,” he added. “Our Native Alaskan brothers and sisters have opened my mind and heart to the cultural beauty and richness of their traditional way of life.”

“I come to the Diocese of New Ulm with the same open heart and mind, eager to learn and encounter new blessings as I visit parishes and families in this beautiful prairie land of south and west-central Minnesota,” he said.
What started out as a hobby of collecting presidential autographs, turned into a papal passion for Duluth native, Father Richard Kunst. Through the years, his love of his faith propelled him to build what is believed to be the largest collection of Papal artifacts outside of Rome. The full collection is staggering and includes rarities connected to the papacy, canonized saints, and notable individuals in history—including Napoleon.

Father Kunst started this collection while working for the U.S. Senate. Over the years, it continued to grow and became so substantial that colleagues encouraged him to share these significant artifacts through a public viewing.

“My mission is to educate people about the Church, to help grow an appreciation for the papacy, and to share the beauty of our faith,” said Father Kunst, curator of the exhibit. “For many people, this is the closest they will ever get to a Pope or the Vatican. It’s my belief that you cannot love what you know little about.”

The Vatican Collection has been viewed by the likes of George Weigel, a leading Catholic theologian, and Crux editor, John Allen Jr. The Papacy: A Living History, (a series about the collection and hosted by Father Kunst) aired for two seasons on EWTN and was part of numerous media outlets covering stories about the Collection over the past many years.

The collection has grown immeasurably since 2004 and now includes:

- Cross from Mother Teresa’s habit
- Relics of the True Cross owned by Pope Clement XI
- Many notable items from the life of Pope St. John Paul II
- Signed letter from Napoleon Bonaparte discussing his strategy for managing Pope Pius VII during his assault on the Papal States
- Items from Pope Francis to Pope St. Victor I (189–199)
- A relic from the original chair of St. Peter himself
- Rare treasures from historic Conclaves and Swiss Guard

Not only will Father Kunst be sharing his collection with the world, he’s turned it into a fundraiser that will benefit Stella Maris Academy, Catholic schools of Duluth, and Star of the North Maternity Home, with locations in the Twin Ports and the Iron Range.

The event will be held at the DECC, in Duluth, Minn., Aug. 19–21. It will include over 200 artifacts, presentations by Father Kunst, a Vatican store with memorabilia, a sponsors’ gala dinner at the Kitchi Gammi Club, and a VIP Evening at the DECC hosted by Mark Hall Patton of the famed TV show, Pawn Stars.

Purchase tickets at vaticanunveiled.com. For more information email hello@vaticanunveiled.com or call (218) 348-2268.

Not willing to let go of your marriage?

Retrouvaille is a program designed to help struggling marriages regain their health. It helps husband and wife rediscover or re-awaken the love and commitment that originally brought them together. The program is highly successful in saving hurting marriages, even bringing reconciliation to couples who have already separated or divorced. Retrouvaille is a peer ministry of volunteer couples that can help you learn the tools of healthy communication and healing.

For more information, call (701) 356-7903 or visit HelpOurMarriage.com
After years of prayer, sacrifice, we can celebrate

SIDEWALK STORIES

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

In New Earth’s June issue, I asked whether the end of abortion in North Dakota might be near. Even before the press ink had dried, the question had been gloriously answered: “Yes!”

To all who’ve been praying for this day, we’ve finally reached a time of celebration!

How tempting, though, to not savor the moment. As of this writing, lawsuits are springing up everywhere to thwart the valiant efforts of so many to reach this day, a day when our state’s only abortion facility would be forced to close down.

Just hours after the news of Roe vs. Wade being overturned broke, I began seeing sentiments like “Well yeah, but…” These melancholy notes so early on frustrated me.

I had to stifle my own enthusiasm by necessity, for I was participating that morning in a national conference with other professional communicators gathered in Fargo from across the country, and I knew many would not be as thrilled as I.

Seeing Negative Ned and Nellie coming out of the woodworks on social media made me wonder if we’re capable of savoring a victory anymore. Daily headlines remind us of just how fallen our world is, with every piece of good news seemingly matched by a dozen bad ones.

I’d like to encourage a different response. I think we need to take time to give thanks to God for this momentous decision, and let it linger a bit. Despite the flurry that’s followed, this is a solid victory, with positive implications yet to be seen.

Several years ago, while on the sidewalk, I approached a father who’d driven his wife to have an abortion. I could see a toddler in a car seat in the back of his pickup, and felt moved to ask, “Why would you do this knowing the value of a life, as evidenced in your backseat?” His answer: “Because we can.”

We can because it’s legal, in other words. I realized then that, in the absence of a moral base, we humans fall to something else to determine right from wrong. And in our country, that something else tends to be—as this dad demonstrated—the civil law.

You and I know that God’s law supersedes that, but for some others, if it’s legal, it’s moral. I could point to slavery as an example of how civil law isn’t always moral, but I digress.

Roe vs. Wade was a very poorly decided—and devastatingly so—decision. Despite the backlash we’re now witnessing, we shouldn’t relinquish the moment that’s ours to claim. In this decision, we are affirmed that God has heard our cries, along with the silenced whimpers of our tiniest, pre-born citizens and their broken families.

Certainly, we understand the complexity of this issue and that the hard work has only begun. But it matters that Roe vs. Wade has not only been challenged but kicked to the curb. It was wrong from the beginning, and our whole world needed to see the lies called out into the light of day.

Just days after the Supreme Court ruling, a national Harvard/Harris poll was taken that, as reported in an article by Catholic Vote, showed a surge in public support for abortion restrictions. The change of law is already affecting public perception of abortion, and as more honest conversations ensue, that likely will continue.

Despite my inability to let out an immediate cheer of gladness the day the news broke free, I will never forget that moment, nor what followed as I gazed out the south windows of the Radisson hotel in Fargo. Three stories below, I had a perfect view of the Kopelman building where so many babies had died of abortion in recent decades, and where I had stood many Wednesdays with others, including some of you, against this travesty.

It seemed symbolic, because normally on abortion day, we view the same hotel looming in the near distance to the north while standing on the sidewalk in prayer. With my vantage point now reversed, it was as if God were saying, “I’m giving you a chance to look at this anew. I heard the prayers of you and your friends, Roxane, and I want you to know, no matter how hard it might get from here, I am with you, just as I am in this moment.”

We have experienced a major victory. Even as we begin to gird our loins for the coming days, we must pause properly, taking necessary time to gather, celebrate, and love. Then, after refreshment, we can resume the necessary charge and let God continue to lead us into life.
Do you know where we are?

The answer will be revealed in the September New Earth.

Where in the diocese are we?

Last month’s photo is of St. Timothy’s Church in Manvel.