

New Earth

April 2023 | Vol. 44 | No. 4



The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo

The mission of an Indian Mission

St. Ann's in service to
the Belcourt community

From Bishop Folda:
The Eucharist at Easter

Christopher Dodson
receives papal honor

10 years as pope: Pushing
the church to bring the
Gospel to the world

DRAW FROM THE **LIFE** OF GRACE

Certificate in Prayer and Spiritual Direction

This summer, embark on a journey to deepen your connection with Jesus Christ. With courses taught by **Monsignor Thomas J. Richter, Monsignor James P. Shea, and Father Wayne Sattler**, the University of Mary's certificate program in Prayer and Spiritual Direction will equip you to receive fruitfully from the life of grace and build a foundation for leading yourself and others into a deeper relationship with the Triune God.

Participants will earn a graduate certificate upon successful completion of all three courses. Certificate recipients can easily stack their earned credits into a master's degree plan.



UNIVERSITY
of MARY

Online

View our program and course descriptions at umary.edu/Prayer

A Portfolio of Protection

Permanent Life Insurance — Our signature product. Insure your life for life.

Term Life Insurance — Affordable protection for temporary needs.

Retirement Annuities — Retirement income you can count on. Guaranteed.

Long-Term Care Insurance — Protect your assets. Get quality care. Prepare for the future.

Disability Income Insurance — Receive an income even when you are sick or can't work.

The Knights of Columbus offers a full-line of quality, flexible products backed by our highly-rated financial strength* to help protect your Catholic family.

* As of 01/2021, rated A+ Superior by A.M. Best



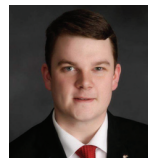
Wayne Cherney, FIC, LUTCF
Devils Lake
701-662-4420
701-739-8143
wayne.cherney@kofc.org



Jamison Fettig
Napoleon
701-325-0712
jamison.fettig@kofc.org



Joel Herman, FICF
Wahpeton, Jamestown
701-219-5847
joel.herman@kofc.org



Sam Owan, FIC
Williston/Minot
701-609-1918
samuel.owan@kofc.org



Don Willey, FIC
Bismarck
701-202-9089
don.willey@kofc.org



This Could Be You!
Contact Jon for Career Opportunities

LIFE INSURANCE • DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE • LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE • RETIREMENT ANNUITIES



**Knights of
Columbus®**

Jon Beebe
General Agent
(605) 882-8689
jon.beebe@kofc.org

www.kofcbeebeagency.com



ON THE COVER:

Grotto from outside St. Ann's Church in Belcourt. (Paul Braun | *New Earth*)

Mission

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

Publisher

Most Rev. John T. Folda
Bishop of Fargo

Editor

Paul Braun

Assistant editor & designer

Kristina Lahr

Subscriptions

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

Contact *New Earth* staff

news@fargodiocese.org

(701) 356-7900

New Earth

5201 Bishops Blvd, Suite A

Fargo, ND 58104

Deadlines

Deadline to submit articles, events, and advertisements for the May issue is Apr. 25, 2023. All submissions are subject to editing and placement.

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

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

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

Member of the Catholic Media Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS



FROM BISHOP FOLDA

- 4 The Eucharist at Easter

FOCUS ON FAITH

- 7 During the Eucharistic Revival, this familiar Mass text is worth a closer look

LOCAL

- 10 Christopher Dodson receives papal honor

NEXT GEN

- 15 Maddock teens fundraise to assist the homeless

COVER STORY

- 16 The mission of an Indian Mission: St. Ann's in service to Belcourt community

FAITH AND CULTURE

- 20 *Dressing with Dignity* challenges women to change culture through how they dress

OUR CATHOLIC LIFE

- 23 Seeking the spiritual side of dementia

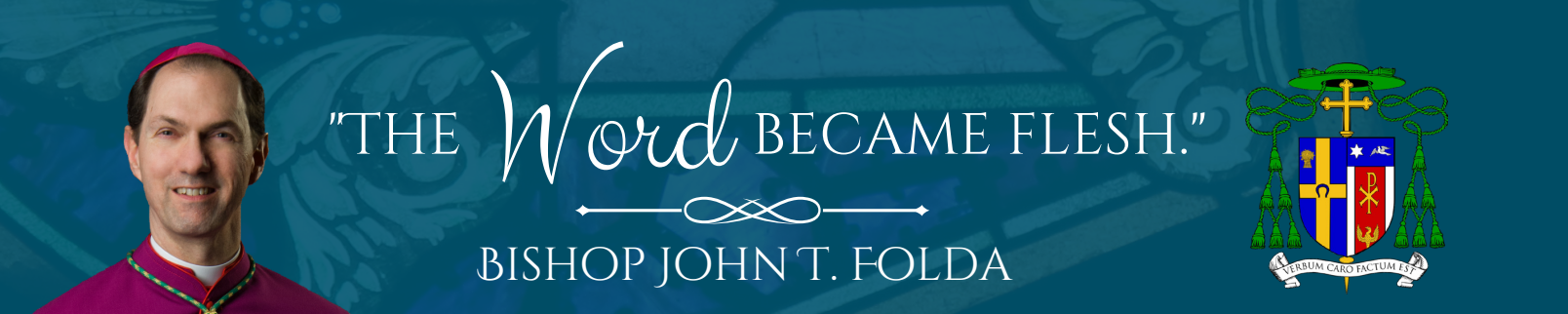
US/WORLD NEWS

- 32 10 years as pope: Pushing the church to bring the Gospel to the world

SIDEWALK STORIES

- 35 The lessons I've learned praying on the sidewalk





"THE Word BECAME FLESH."

—∞—

BISHOP JOHN T. FOLDA



The Eucharist at Easter

Brothers and sisters, we are at the threshold of Easter, so I proclaim to you what Christians have proclaimed with great joy over the last two millennia: "The Lord is risen, he is risen indeed! Alleluia!"

One of the most beautiful and moving liturgies of the year is the Easter Vigil. This is the first celebration of our Lord's Resurrection after the solemn season of Lent and the awesome liturgies of Holy Week. With an outburst of joy, the faithful rejoice once again that Christ has risen, and he calls us to share in his risen life. A central part of this great Vigil is the sacramental initiation of Catechumens and Candidates into communion with the Catholic Church. First the Catechumens are baptized with the newly blessed Easter water. Then they, along with the Candidates, are confirmed with sacred chrism in the Holy Spirit. And finally, as the culmination of their initiation, they all come to the altar and receive their first Holy Eucharist. It is a unique privilege to offer our Lord's Body and Blood to those who have looked forward to this moment with such great expectation and prayer. The expressions of awe, joy, and gratitude that I see on their faces every year are a reminder to me of the sublime gift we have in this great Sacrament.

All of this happens in our celebration of Easter, because the Eucharist is a sacrament of resurrection, of new life in Christ. It is the *risen* Christ whose Body and Blood we receive in Holy Communion, and who gives us in this Easter sacrament the pledge and promise of our own resurrection. Every celebration of the Mass is a re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ, but it is also a participation in his resurrection. In a very real way, every Mass recalls the event of Easter, because the Eucharist is the risen Christ.

Pope St. John Paul II wrote: "The Eucharistic Sacrifice makes present not only the mystery of the Savior's passion and death, but also the mystery of the resurrection which crowned his sacrifice. It is as the living and risen One that Christ can become in the Eucharist the 'bread of life' (John 6:35, 48) and 'the living bread' (John 6:51). St. Ambrose reminded the newly initiated that the Eucharist applies the event of the resurrection to their lives: 'Today Christ is yours, yet each day he rises again for you.'"

The great St. Thomas Aquinas, in one of his well-loved Eucharistic hymns, calls the Eucharist "a pledge of future glory." Jesus offered perfect worship to God, not just on the cross, but also in his Resurrection. When we attend Mass, and especially when we receive the Eucharist, we share in what Christ won for us on the cross, and in the promise of partaking in the victory of his Resurrection. Remember what Jesus said to his disciples: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:54). If we have any doubts about the importance of the Eucharist for our eternal destiny, these words of Jesus should dispel them.

One of the precepts of the Church requires that we receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2042). This ensures that all the faithful at the minimum receive our Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery. Of course it makes sense that we should receive our Risen Lord in the Eucharist at Easter if at all possible. But rather than thinking in terms of a mere precept or obligation at Easter, we should see our participation in the Eucharist as a privilege, as an opportunity not to be missed. If the Eucharist is an encounter with Christ risen from the dead, then who wouldn't want to encounter him in this way every Sunday, and every Holy Day, and as often as possible?

The celebration of Easter also entails a mission for all of us. In our celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, we receive him in the Eucharist, and then we are sent forth as his witnesses in the world. By our living faith and the example of our lives, we announce what has happened and what we have received: Christ is risen, and he lives among us. Through our communion with Christ in the Eucharist, we are strengthened and nourished by the grace of his Resurrection. But we are also blessed with the joy of knowing that our Lord lives within us. He sends us out to share with others the joy of this new life in the Risen Christ. This is the call that we hear so often from Pope Francis, a call to be "missionary disciples." Even in a hostile culture, the early Christians couldn't hold back their joy at the Resurrection of Christ, and neither should we.

The great St. Thomas Aquinas, in one of his well-loved Eucharistic hymns, calls the Eucharist "a pledge of future glory."

—Bishop John T. Folda

As we continue this time of Eucharistic Revival in the Church, it's good to remember that the celebration of Easter is one with the celebration of the Eucharist. If we wish to share in the life of the Risen Christ, we have a supreme opportunity in every Mass we attend. Many of us try to attend Mass or Eucharistic adoration a little more often during Lent, but there is no reason that this has to end with Easter Sunday. In fact, there is no better way to continue the spirit of Easter than to remain close to our Risen Lord in the holy Eucharist, the sacrament of his Resurrection.

So once again, to all the good people of the Diocese of Fargo, "The Lord is risen, he is risen indeed! Alleluia!" Happy Easter to all!



Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

For a culture of peace and non-violence

We pray for the spread of peace and non-violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens.

BISHOP FOLDA'S CALENDAR

Apr. 8 at 8:30 p.m.

Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Apr. 9 at 10 a.m.

Easter Sunday Mass, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Apr. 10-11

Ordination and Installation of Most Rev. Michael Izen, Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis

Apr. 14 at 6 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Joseph, Devils Lake

Apr. 15 at 10 a.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Therese, Rugby

Apr. 15 at 7 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Francis Xavier, Anamoose

Apr. 16 at 2 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, Sacred Heart, Carrington

Apr. 17-18 at 10 a.m.

Spring Education Days, Maryvale, Valley City

Apr. 20 at 2 p.m.

Diocesan Pastoral Council, Pastoral Center, Fargo

Apr. 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Myriam Dinner, Bishop's Residence, Fargo

Apr. 21 at 6 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Catherine, Valley City

Apr. 22 at 10 a.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Leo, Casselton

Apr. 22 at 4:30 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, Holy Cross, West Fargo

Apr. 29 at 10 a.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, Nativity, Fargo

Apr. 29 at 6 p.m.

Shanley Dinner and Auction, Delta by Marriott, Fargo

Apr. 30 at 11 a.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, Holy Spirit, Fargo

Apr. 30 at 5 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. James Basilica, Jamestown

May 2 at 11 a.m.

Diocesan Principals and Pastors Meeting, Maryvale

May 4 at 6:30 p.m.

Synod Regional Listening Session, St. John, Grafton

May 5 at 7 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Stanislaus, Warsaw

May 6 at 10 a.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Alphonsus, Langdon

May 6 at 5 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Ann, Belcourt

May 7 at 2 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. Joachim, Rolla

May 13 at 10 a.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, St. John. Wahpeton

May 13 at 5 p.m.

Confirmation and First Eucharist, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

MONTHLY EUCHARIST MIRACLE

The Eucharistic Miracle of Blanot, France

Republished from therealpresence.org (edited for content)



Blanot was a small village in the center of France and part of the Diocese of Autun when the miracle occurred on Easter Sunday, March 31, 1331. One of the last people to receive Communion was a woman named Jacquette. The priest placed the Host on her tongue, turned, and started walking toward the altar. He did not notice that a particle from the Host fell and landed upon a cloth that covered the woman's hands.

When he learned the Host had fallen, the priest immediately went to the woman, still kneeling at the railing, but instead of finding the Host on the cloth, he saw a small spot of blood. When Mass was over, the priest took the cloth into the sacristy and placed the stained area in a basin filled with clear water. After washing the spot and scrubbing it numerous times, he found that it had become darker and larger (reaching about the size

and shape of a Host). Moreover, the water in the basin turned bloody.

The priest took a knife and, after washing the cloth, cut from it the piece bearing the bloody imprint of the Host. He held up the Sacred Host and said: "Good people: here is the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I sought in every way to wash and to wring the stain from the cloth, and in no way was I able to do so."

This square of cloth was reverently placed in the tabernacle. Every year, on the feast of Corpus Christi, the relic is solemnly exposed in the church of Blanot. In addition, the Hosts that remained in the ciborium after the distribution of Holy Communion on that Easter Sunday were also returned to the tabernacle, never to be distributed. Hundreds of years later, they were found to have been perfectly preserved.

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)*



"The Father and I are One"

BECOMING MATURE IN CHRIST

Men's Retreats with Fr. Jason Lefor

Beloved Son RetreatMay 25-27, 23
Beloved Brother RetreatAug 31-Sept 2, 23
Beloved Husband RetreatNov 30-Dec 2, 23
Beloved Father RetreatFeb 1-3, 24

All men are welcome—single, married, consecrated, or ordained. Presentations identifying and examining the natural relationships of sonship, brotherhood, nuptial love and fatherhood will alternate with times for quiet reflection, for praise and thanksgiving, and for personal conferences. The more we grow in maturity and openness to the Holy Spirit's healing work in these areas of our lives, the more barriers between self and God's Fatherly love are transformed into avenues of reconciling grace.

Attend one retreat or all of them. Each retreat, while focusing on a particular relationship, will also be presenting that relationship in the context of the whole. This is an opportunity for growing in self-knowledge and drawing closer to God the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Fr. Jason Lefor is a priest of the Diocese of Fargo, pastor of St. John Nepomucene—Pisek, Sts. Peter & Paul—Bechyne, St. Joseph—Lankin



Registration: \$50

Place: Maryvale, Valley City, ND

Cost: \$200-\$250

Please bring: a Bible and a Journal

Begins with lunch, Thursday, May 25 at Noon
Ends after lunch, Saturday, May 27 at 1:00 PM

REGISTER by May 15, 2023

www.MaryvaleND.org

Contact: Amanda.Kunze@MaryvaleND.org

“The supper of the Lamb”

During the Eucharistic Revival, this familiar Mass text is worth a closer look



DIOCESE OF ST. CLOUD

FATHER TOM KNOBLACH

Pastor of Sacred Heart in Sauk Rapids and Annunciation in Mayhew Lake, Minn. He also serves as consultant for health care ethics for the Diocese of St. Cloud.

The Priest genuflects, takes the host, and holding it slightly raised above the paten or above the chalice, while facing the people, says aloud: “Behold, the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”

So reads the Roman Missal as we prepare for Communion with the Body of Christ in the Eucharist.

Lent leads us to Holy Week and the Paschal Mystery. During the Eucharistic Revival, this familiar Mass text is worth a look.

The two sentences in the invitation to look upon the Lamb of God are straight out of Scripture, though from different sources. The first is from John the Baptist, whose mission was to point out the Messiah, the Anointed One. As the Gospel records, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” And then the following day—significantly, the third day featured in this Gospel passage, a subtle reference to the Resurrection—two of John’s own disciples were with him, “and as he watched Jesus walk by he said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God.’”

The title “Lamb of God,” of course, links to the Paschal lamb from the book of Exodus. The blood of this lamb was to mark the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites who partake of the flesh of the lamb, sparing them from the 10th plague on Egypt—the death of the firstborn in every household.

Tracing the deep and intricate historical and theological connections of the “Lamb who was slain” is beyond this brief column. But the record of the Passover event was decisive in shaping Christian understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus: The Lamb of God is the eternal only-begotten Son of God, whose freely-offered sacrificial death destroys the power of sin and death. Christians consume the Body of the Lamb of God and drink of his Blood and thus share in the life he brings beyond death.

That brief outline summarizes the first sentence of that invitation at Mass. But the second line is richer still: “Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.”

It is natural and correct to connect the liturgy’s “Supper of the Lamb” with the Last Supper; even the celebration of Holy

Thursday is entitled “The Mass of the Lord’s Supper.” We are blessed indeed to be able to share in this eucharistic banquet and receive the glorified Body and Blood of Jesus himself, uniting us to him and to one another in a communion of life and love. Yet there is another related phrase like this in Scripture, from the Book of Revelation (19:6-9).

There we read: “The Lord has established his reign... let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come; his bride has made herself ready.... Then the angel said to me, “Write this: “Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb.”

At Mass, then, we are linked not only to past events—the Exodus and the Paschal Mystery of Jesus’ dying and rising—but also to the future life of glory they foreshadow and make possible. St. Paul uses this image of Jesus the Bridegroom and the Church as his bride because this relationship is the prototype for the sacrament of marriage: a perfect interpersonal communion of life and love expressed through the body (to borrow the words of St. John Paul II’s “theology of the body”).

The Eucharist is the fullness of that communion, where we are joined to the life and love of God through the risen Body of Christ. Mass is the “wedding feast of the Lamb.” We are made one with Jesus, and one another, in his Body. We receive him, and he receives us, in a communion of love. Like a wedding, it establishes an enduring relationship but does not exhaust that relationship. It is only the beginning of “all the days of my life.”

This leads us to yet one more element. After the Resurrection, John’s Gospel tells us, Jesus appeared to the Eleven on the shore. Unrecognized by them, this stranger directed them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat, resulting in a catch of overwhelming abundance. Overjoyed at now knowing their Lord, they bring the fish to shore to find that Jesus has already prepared for them a meal of bread and fish. (In Greek, fish is “*ikthus*,” which early Christians adopted as an acronym for “*Iēsoûs Khrīstós, Theoû Huiós, Sōtēr*” (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior). It is John’s way to indicate that the Eucharistic bread is truly the saving Body of Christ.

When the Eleven come to shore, Jesus invites them: “Come, have breakfast.” Breakfast begins a new day with all that lies ahead. John tells us that the Eucharist is this sacred nourishment, only the beginning of the new day that has no end. That journey is not complete, but we set out with Jesus at our side.

Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb: the Lord’s Supper, the wedding feast and breaking our fast to share already the beginning of the endless day of joy.

Reprinted with permission from The Central Minnesota Catholic, Diocese of St. Cloud, Minn.

It's not a race: The life, learning, and achievement of my brother with Down Syndrome

By Jacinta Hamilton | Student at the University of Mary, Bismarck, Master of Education in School Administration

March 21 marked the observance of World Down Syndrome Day—a celebration of the countless individuals that bless our world with this condition.

However, the fight to recognize the value of all life continues, and the statistics are staggering. 95% of babies with Down Syndrome in Ireland are reportedly aborted. Iceland claims to have “eliminated” Down Syndrome by killing 100% of babies with Down Syndrome by abortion. In the U.S, approximately 74% of expectant parents abort a child with Down Syndrome. This brutal landscape is in stark opposition to the beautiful experiences of families who choose to give life to babies with Down Syndrome.

The reality is Trisomy 21 is not a death sentence. It's a blessing. I believe that we are at a moment of grace in this country where we can call deeper and more profound attention to human life with special needs. I think the personal stories and the faces attached to the diagnosis are how hearts will be changed.

Words cannot express the blessing that Gabriel is to his parents, siblings, and many other family members and friends. This young man has had an overwhelmingly powerful influence on those who know and love him. He makes life fuller and richer in every way! Gabriel is the most loving and self-giving person I know, and I believe he has his finger on the pulse of what life is truly about. There is not a thing about him I would change. The fullness of Gabriel's life is not measured by his external abilities, but rather his eternal value as a child of God.

Just before we entered the hospital room, my dad told my siblings and me that there was something *extra special* about our new brother, Gabriel. In his words, we had a beautiful and healthy baby brother who was truly a blessing to our family. Dad told us that Gabriel had what is called Down Syndrome. He

said that Gabriel was perfect and needed lots of our love. He also said that it may take him longer to learn how to do certain things. Dad said it was not really a big deal because we were all going to help Gabriel. I distinctly recall telling him in a matter-of-fact way: “Well, it's not a race, Dad!” Where that came from, I cannot tell you. But I do know that this mantra that life, learning, and achievement are not diminished by a “disability” still holds true today.

Not knowing what Down Syndrome was at the time, I can now undoubtedly say that my knowledge of it would not have mattered. Without being able to express it at the time, I somehow knew Gabriel's Down Syndrome was only a small part of him; it was not his identity.

“I just felt blessed,” was my mom's response to what she felt when she learned of Gabriel's diagnosis at birth. This was a grace. This is not meant to indicate that other responses are not genuine or appropriate. However, my mom's response shows that a special needs diagnosis does not need to be a moment of grief, but rather a celebration of life. My own experiences tell me that yes, a child with special needs will affect your family life, but in the best possible way! Even though Gabriel may not conform to the “ideals of society,” he clearly teaches me that life, learning, and achievement are not a race, and this has permeated all aspects of my life.

For far too long, persons with special needs have been targeted as not worthy of life. We were endowed by the Creator to reverence all human life. Seeing all life through a lens that celebrates the dignity, self-worth, intrinsic value, and above all the immortal soul of each person, will enable us to defend all human life from conception until natural death. The right to life is uncompromisable and is an exercise of our free will in defense of the most vulnerable. I echo the words of St. John Paul II who said, “Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought” (Apostolic Journey to the United States of America, 1995). My hope is that Gabriel's story will inspire others to see the infinite value of individuals with special needs in their own lives.



Gabriel Hamilton on his 14th birthday.
(submitted photo)



Jacinta (far right) with her siblings Christmas 2022.
(submitted photo)



We'll spring for two months rent!

Rent a lovely one or two bedroom Independent Living or Assisted Living apartment before Wednesday, May 31 and receive your first and third month FREE.

Spring into action and call 701.237.4700 for a tour today.

5300 12th Street South | Fargo, North Dakota
Independent Living | Assisted Living

CHILivingCommunities.org/Riverview

Hello humankindness®



Not willing to let go of your marriage?



Weekend for couples Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2023

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

MADE FOR GREATNESS

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

Men's
Retreat

July
14-16
2023

Stiklestad Lodge,
Fort Ransom

Cost
\$250

In a fully masculine context, this event will help men encounter God in a deeper way, through the gift of the Eucharist. Guided by Bishop John Folda, we will dive into what it means to have life in Jesus as men and how the Eucharist is that path to a fulfilling life. The retreat will feature profound spiritual insights by His Excellency, Mass, confession, prayer and reflection, and time for growing as brothers in Christ.

Stiklestad Lodge is a corporate hunting retreat lodge that features trap shooting, campfires, and outdoor games. Food will be cooked on an outdoor smoker throughout the weekend.



Register at:

www.fargodiocese.org/mfg-retreat
brad.gray@fargodiocese.org
(701) 356-7903



DIOCESE OF
FARGO

For distinguished service to the Church

Christopher Dodson receives papal honor

By Sonia Mullay | Editor of Dakota Catholic Action

The bishops of the Bismarck and Fargo Dioceses announced Christopher Dodson as the recipient of the *Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*—among the highest honors the Holy Father can confer on laypeople, deacons, and religious.

Dodson was lauded for this service as the executive director and general counsel for the North Dakota Catholic Conference that serves as the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops of the state. Dodson, a University of California-Berkely Law School graduate, has been the conference director since 1995.

The *Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* is given for distinguished service to the Church by lay people and clergy. It is the highest honor that can be awarded to laity by the pope. The award, established by Pope Leo XIII in 1888, means “For Church and Pope” in Latin. The diocesan bishop petitions the Holy See with the name and biographical information of the person whom he wishes to receive the award.

Dodson resides in Jamestown within the Diocese of Fargo so his diocesan bishop, Bishop John Folda, petitioned the Holy See for the award.

In his endorsement letter, Bishop Folda wrote of Dodson, “He is a married man of outstanding virtue who has spent his adult life in the service of the Church. In particular, he has

served the Dioceses of Bismarck and Fargo as the Director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference. He has been instrumental in giving Catholic social teaching practical effect through his tireless work and expertise.”

Accompanying Bishop Folda’s letter was a letter of support from Bishop (David) Kagan regarding Dodson that stated, “Mr. Dodson has offered valuable service to the bishops of North Dakota for nearly three decades.



Christopher Dodson (far right) was presented with the *Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* by Bishop John Folda and Bishop David Kagan at the dinner following the legislative Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck on Feb. 9. (submitted photo)



The *Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* depicts the Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul with the inscription *Pro Ecclesia* (for Church) on the left and *et Pontifice* (and Pope) on the right. (submitted photo)

He has been absolutely instrumental in protecting the interests of the unborn, safeguarding religious liberty, and promoting the Church’s social teachings in the public square. I know him to be a man of upright character and Catholic values.”

Dodson, who was received into the Catholic Church during law school, said he is profoundly grateful to receive this honor for his work with the conference and it “proves God’s love and ever-guiding hand.”

In his capacity as executive director, Dodson primarily works to draft and guide the enactment of legislation on various issues including the protection of human life, religious freedom, the family, and care for the poor.

He expressed gratitude to the bishops of both dioceses. “I feel called to do this work, but without [the bishops’] support, trust and prayers it would be impossible. For that, I am grateful.”

The bishops presented Dodson with the award at the dinner following the legislative Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck on Feb. 9. The gold cross depicts the Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul with the inscription *Pro Ecclesia* (for Church) on the left and *et Pontifice* (and Pope) on the right. The medallion’s ribbon is yellow and white, the colors of the papacy.

Trinity Bible Camp founders honored by Catholic Charities North Dakota

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

In 1978, two North Dakota women had a vision to provide an indoor and outdoor-experience Bible camp to Catholic children in north-central North Dakota. Trinity Bible Camp has been in operation for 45 years and is still going strong.

On March 14, Catholic Charities North Dakota honored the founders of Trinity Bible Camp, Annette Mears and Dorothy Gustafson, with the 2023 Caritas Award. The award is given annually to persons or organizations in recognition of outstanding service and love for humanity.

According to the Catholic Charities award program, “The vision of Annette and Dorothy was to create a Catholic summer camp that ministers to the hearts, minds, and spirits of children in many capacities. By following the will and direction of the Father, Annette and Dorothy have dedicated their lives to building and providing a faith-filled camping experience to Catholic children of North Dakota and children from neighboring states.”

Annette and Dorothy are both parishioners of St. Joachim Church in Rolla.



Bishop John Folda presents the Catholic Charities North Dakota Caritas Award to Dorothy Gustafson (left) and Annette Mears (right) at a luncheon held on March 14 at Sts. Ann and Joachim Church in Fargo.
(Paul Braun | New Earth)



Bishop Folda welcomes those preparing to receive the Sacraments and come into communion with the Catholic Church on Feb. 26 at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo.
(Paul Braun | New Earth)

Faith journey nearly complete for RCIA Candidates, Catechumens

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

Over 80 individuals and their sponsors from across the Diocese of Fargo gathered at the Cathedral of St. Mary on Feb. 26, for the annual Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion ceremony.

Catechumens (those seeking baptism and initiation into the Catholic faith) and Candidates (those who have been baptized in the Christian faith and seek to complete their Christian initiation) presented themselves to Bishop John Folda, who welcomed and recognized them formally.

Earlier in the day, the Catechumens and Candidates experienced a “sending” rite in their home parishes. They will be welcomed into the Catholic faith at the Easter Vigil Masses at their home parishes, where they will receive the sacraments for the first time.

NDSU to premiere new traveling exhibit featuring German-Russian homesteads of North Dakota

By Michael M. Miller | Emeritus Director of the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection



View of Henry Gerving homestead, Glen Ullin. (Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries, Fargo)

The Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC), NDSU Libraries, premieres the new traveling exhibit, “Building Life and Home on the Prairie: German-Russian Homesteads of North Dakota.” The grand opening of the exhibit will be on April 18, 5–7 p.m. at St. Paul’s Newman Center in Fargo. There will be a panel discussion about the exhibit and the life of Father William C. Sherman.

Since its beginnings, North Dakota has been home to numerous ethnic groups with unique cultural and architectural practice. One such group is the Germans from Russia, who emigrated to North Dakota from the Black Sea and Bessarabian German regions of southern Ukraine. An estimated 30-40% of the state’s population has German-Russian ancestry. The Germans from Russia brought a unique culture to North Dakota, and the homes they built represent a foundational part of the material culture of early German-Russian settlers.

The images and documents included in this exhibit are a result of the dedicated work of celebrated religious leader, scholar, and educator, Father William Sherman and his students. In the 1970s, they created over 13,000 images and site survey documents of early settler homesteads. Their work comprises the Father William C. Sherman Photograph Collection, preserved by the GRHC, NDSU Libraries, Fargo. The collection is an essential resource to understand the history of settlement in North Dakota and how the distinct ethnic groups built their homes. You can browse the Father William C. Sherman Collection at digitalhorizonsonline.org.

The goal of this exhibit is to help sustain the memories of early homesteads and the families that built them.

Father William Sherman (1927–2022) taught Sociology of the Great Plains and Religion at North Dakota State University from 1971 to 2001. He was named Professor Emeritus at NDSU. Father Sherman was also awarded two honorary doctorates, one from the University of Mary, Bismarck, and one from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

Father Sherman authored many books including *Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of North Dakota*, a comprehensive account of the many ethnic groups that settled in North Dakota. The second edition was a collaborative effort between the NDSU Press and the GRHC, and includes new photographs, a redesigned cover, and an introduction by Dr. Thomas Isern, NDSU Professor of History and University Distinguished Professor.

In his *Prairie Mosaic* book, Father Sherman wrote, “Sadly it must be said that we know much more about the soil, crop, weed, and water conditions of any particular Dakota township than we know of the national character of the people who reside there.”

Father Sherman wrote about his travel to central and western North Dakota in the 1970s to photograph ethnic homesteads, “For about ten years at NDSU, I’d get the architecture and the history students together and we’d saturate the state studying how the Germans from Russia built out there. They didn’t build sod houses. They didn’t build claim sheds. They built houses out of adobe, just like they did back in the Black Sea area near Odessa, Ukraine.”

In 1995 and 1997, Father Sherman and John Guererro traveled to Odessa, Ukraine, where they took hundreds of color slides of buildings in former Black Sea and Bessarabian German colonies.

Father Sherman was editor of the book, *Plains Folk: An Atlas of North Dakota’s Ethnic History*. Sherman also authored: *African Americans in North Dakota*, *Prairie Peddlers: Syrian-Lebanese in North Dakota*, *Scattered Steeples: The Fargo Diocese, A Written Celebration of Its Centennial*, *Selz, Russia: Home Colony*, *St. Michael’s Church and Native Americans*, *Valerian Paczek: Polish Priest, War Hero*, and *Wagons North: Minnesota to Oregon*.

In the *Grand Forks Herald* of May 6, 2022, Father Jason Lefor of Pisek, shares, “He was larger than life. You can go to any town or village in North Dakota and get stories about him. He was so colorful, so full of life.” An NDSU alumnus, Father Lefor remembered taking sociology courses taught by Sherman, and the research he conducted about people of various ethnic backgrounds and where they settled in North Dakota.

Michael Miller writes, "I have fond memories of Father Sherman from when I began work at NDSU in 1967. He was a dear friend, colleague and mentor to me. I cherish travels together on the North Dakota prairies. Father Bill leaves a living legacy with his research, writing and image work of the homesteads with the Father William C. Sherman Photograph Collection.

Father Sherman served as Pastor of St. Paul's Neman Center at NDSU from 1965 to 1975. He was Pastor of St. Michael's Catholic Church at Grand Forks from 1976 until his retirement in 2003.

In 2012, Father Sherman donated more than 13,000 images to the (GRHC), NDSU Libraries, Fargo, now designated the Father William C. Sherman Photograph Collection at the GRHC. In 2022, GRHC completed the traveling exhibit, "Building Life and Home on the Prairie" based on the North Dakota homestead photographs of Father William Sherman.

The Building Life and Home on the Prairie will be on display at St. Paul's Newman Center from April 18–May 18 and at Prairie Village Museum, Rugby, from June 5–Aug. 1.

For more information about donating family histories and photographs, or how to financially support the GRHC, contact



**The Hutmacher family at their homestead, Fayette.
(Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU
Libraries, Fargo)**

Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, Dept. 2080, PO Box 6050, Fargo ND 58108-6050, (701) 231-8416; michael.miller@ndsu.edu, or go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc.

DIOCESE OF WINONA-ROCHESTER

THIS IS MY BODY

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS 2023

JUNE 10, 2023 | MANKATO CIVIC CENTER

COME AND JOIN THOUSANDS OF CATHOLICS AS WE REJOICE IN THE LORD THROUGH THE EUCHARIST!
EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSION, MASS, SPEAKERS, MUSIC



EARLY BIRD PRICING EXTENDED!

REGISTRATION FOR THOSE OUTSIDE THE DIOCESE BEGINS APRIL 1.
EARLY BIRD PRICES FOR ALL REGISTRANTS EXTENDED THROUGH MAY 15.

WWW.EUCCHARIST.DOWR.ORG

Newman Centers return to Hillsboro for annual UND vs. NDSU bike race

By Deacon Curtis Kaufman | Deacon serving at St. Rose of Lima, Hillsboro and Director of Development at St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center, UND



Bikers from UND race in the annual bike race between the UND and NDSU Newman Centers on Apr. 27, 2019. (submitted photo)

April 29 marks the 38th Annual University of North Dakota (UND) vs. North Dakota State University (NDSU) Newman Center Bike Race. The race challenges teams from the two universities in a fierce battle for bragging rights. It's also a great fundraiser for both Newman Centers, allowing us to continue to provide for students' spiritual and intellectual formation, preparing them to discern their vocation and live a dynamic Catholic life. St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center in Grand Forks was established in 1924 and St. Paul's Newman Center at NDSU in 1928.

While we are constantly told of the decline of faith and religion in the United States, I wish that you could witness the beautiful example of Catholic faith that occurs every day on our campuses. Our young people are seeking the truth. As a recent Harvard Research study discovered, "People are making theological statements with their feet, shuffling to certain churches because they offer what people are seeking: clear, faithful, practical teaching of the scriptures, help in living intimately with and obediently to God, and making friends with others who will challenge and encourage them in their faith." This is exactly what each Newman Center provides our students!

UND student Anissa Kulzer is looking forward to this year's bike race. Anissa, a sophomore and member of the student board, chose UND in part to be close to her brother who graduated from NDSU last year. Although she enjoyed competing against her brother in last year's race, this year she plans to swing him over to her side. She has also made plans to ride with some of

her friends. "You've gotta give back, they give so much to you. Besides that—it's fun with your friends cheering you on. It's something small you can do to give back."

NDSU student peer minister, Kevin Fischer says, "I enjoy the bike race because it's a fun and friendly competition that brings two amazing Newman Centers together. It's also a great opportunity for me to give back to the Newman Center which has given me so much to be thankful for in my life."

The race has evolved over the years. It began with each team leaving their respective University and racing towards the finish line at Hillsboro. Later the teams began in Hillsboro and raced back home. Now the race begins at St. Rose of Lima in Hillsboro and goes to and from Caledonia, approximately 25 miles. In addition to the students, Father Cheney from NDSU and Father Markman at UND will challenge each other to see who can "ride like the wind" and boast, "I'm number one." Due to COVID-19 and inclement weather, the live in-person race hasn't taken place for three years. Everyone at both Newman Centers is anxious for the "real race" to take place this year. Looking out my window after blizzard number 14, we hope for the best. We pray to St. Medard, patron saint of good weather for this year's race.

No matter who wins in 2023, everyone involved in the race and all students from both Newman Centers will be champions for Christ! To bike in person or virtually and for an opportunity to support the work to ignite the fire of faith in these amazing young adults, visit either Newman Center website at undcatholic.org or bisoncatholic.org.

RPR
NETWORK

Real Presence Radio
Your Family of Faith and Hope

Tune in and support our
SPRING LIVE DRIVE!

MAY 10-12
7:00 AM-7:00 PM
877-795-0122
RealPresenceRadio.com



Maddock teens fundraise to assist the homeless

By Rae Ann Lynne | Parishioner of St. William's Church, Maddock

Feb. 22 marked the beginning of Lent with the celebration of the Mass and the distributing of ashes on our foreheads at St. William's Church in Maddock. As we began the 40-day Lenten journey, we were encouraged to pray, fast, and give alms in preparation for the celebration of Easter.

Four teens from St. William's: Brody Sabbe, Keaton Sabbe, Aiden Rodriquez, and James Maddock, decided to organize an activity to serve the homeless in our state. The idea of doing a project flowed from a variety of recognized needs in our world. Following the Mass, they served tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches for our parish. With the help of their families and generous donors, the boys netted a profit of over \$700.

The proceeds will be given to Ministry on the Margins, founded by Sister Kathleen Atkinson, OSB, a Benedictine Sister from Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck. Ministry on the Margins is a volunteer-based ecumenical ministry committed to supporting those who fall through the cracks during times of transition. Every week they offer hospitality and coffee, a food pantry, prison-to-society support, an ecumenical Christian worship service, and many other ministries. The site operates nightly from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. and serves everyone who needs a place of safety and rest. They serve 40–50 people each night.



Teens from St. William's Church in Maddock prepare grilled cheese sandwiches as part of a fundraiser to serve the homeless in North Dakota. (Photo by Rae Ann Lynne)



Members of the Fargo South/Shanley boy's hockey team celebrate their state title Feb. 25 at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks. (Tom Mix | NDSHSAA)

Shanley athletes take home another state title

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

Following on the heels of the state champion Shanley Deacons football team, the Fargo South/Shanley boy's hockey team capped off their season with a state championship victory on Feb. 25 at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks, defeating the Grand Forks Red River Roughriders 3-2 in triple overtime.

Shanley senior John Lang scored the tying goal in the third period to send the game into overtime, and he scored the game winner 18 seconds into the third overtime period. The win was the first ever hockey title for Shanley hockey players, who make up the majority of the Fargo South/Shanley co-op team, including all six starters in the championship game.



St. Ann's in service to the Belcourt community

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

Since the mid-18th century and the days of Father George Belcourt, the Church has been serving the spiritual and material needs of the Ojibwe, Cree, and Metis people who lived in the northern Dakota territory. Today, that area is known as the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation, and its largest city, Belcourt, was named after that founding priest who lived among the native peoples those many years ago.

The first log church was built in 1884 under the direction of Father J.B. Malo of St. John, N.D., and it was named St. Ann's Church. Following Father Malo, two French Canadian priests, Father Joseph Quелlette and Father Leonce Ducharme, arrived in 1894. St. Ann's has continued a rich history with religious orders. The Benedictines took care of the area starting in 1933 with Father Hildebrand Elliot. The Benedictine nuns arrived in 1934 and they immediately started building a school that opened in 1936. The school closed in 1973 and when the Benedictines left in 1995, the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (S.O.L.T.), based in Corpus Christi, Texas, arrived. The S.O.L.T. order made it a priority to re-open the school, which happened in 1999. Father Jacque Lee was the first S.O.L.T. priest to arrive in 1995, followed by Father Fred Underwood and finally Father Dale Craig, who became pastor in 1997. It is Father Dale that most people remember as starting the S.O.L.T. era of St. Ann's Mission.

An Indian Mission can best be described as a parish located within a Native American reservation, or close to a reservation, serving the spiritual needs of the local Native American and non-native members of the community. Although providing the sacraments to the local faithful is the primary responsibility of any parish, most Indian Missions are usually located in areas that are economically challenged, which can lead to a myriad of other social and economic problems the mission addresses.

"Two things that define a mission church for me are the extra complexities in the area that mission serves and new ways that the mission Church gets called to meet those complexities," said Father Michael Slovak, current pastor of the churches that comprise the St. Ann's Mission area. "I'm learning about the beautiful culture of my Native American Community, along with the many different variants and different viewpoints of this community. We have everything from war veterans, to Medicine Men, and elders of the community. Plus being rural there are many farmers and ranchers as well. Secondly, in addition to the unique and beautiful culture of our area is the many ways our Church is called upon to respond, interact, and serve. We have three churches that include two thrift stores, a food pantry, a radio station, a school, five cemeteries and a missionary volunteer group."



Father Michael Slovak, pastor of St. Ann's Indian Mission parishes, distributes Holy Communion to students at their school Mass. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

The Belcourt area has its share of challenges, just like many rural areas across the state. High unemployment is the driving factor that is associated with other social challenges including poverty, lack of nutrition, education issues, and substance abuse. St. Ann's Mission has been a constant presence in the community assisting those in need, and doing so with limited resources. The greatest challenge for St. Ann's is funding the church and school operations. There were older structures located on the church premises that had to be torn down due to their deteriorating condition, and remaining structures are still in need of improvements. A primary source of funding for St. Ann's and other Indian missions in the Fargo Diocese is the national Black and Indian Missions grant program. The Fargo Diocese itself also assists financially and supports fundraising efforts for Indian Missions each year. Support also comes locally.

"We are blessed with the ongoing support of our community, as they are able," said Father Slovak. "There are two separate donor programs with one for the Mission as a whole and one specifically for our school, which is tuition free. Our greatest treasure is our local parish volunteers and the volunteers that come from out of town through a S.O.L.T. volunteer program. We cannot afford many staff, so our volunteers are really important. We are actively trying to get our finances more constant and stable, but even with all of this, every year is an exercise in faith and as we wait to see how God will provide for us."

St. Ann's Catholic School is an important part of the St. Ann's Mission. While having to deal with building issues like flooding in the spring, keeping classrooms warm in the winter, and the need for renovations to the kitchen area, the 19 students who currently attend St. Ann's have found, according to the school's principal, "a nurturing and welcoming place to live and grow."



Students at St. Ann's Catholic School work with their teacher. With only 19 enrolled, students get plenty of one-on-one instruction. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

"We have seen great progress among our students academically, particularly in the area of reading," said Principal Mary Beth Lalka. "We have been able to incorporate elements of Montessori education that have really benefited our students. We are able to give them individualized attention to help them succeed. In cooperation with their families, we help them to grow in their relationship with Our Lord. It is beautiful to see the depth of their faith and their love for God. We have been able to offer enrichment activities and enhanced learning experiences to help them to grow in knowledge and understanding."

Lalka says her goals for the next school year are to continue working on the school building's issues and increase enrollment. Lalka says she is very grateful to donors, the Diocese of Fargo, and those serving with S.O.L.T., as well as people in the community, who make this possible.

The St. Ann's Mission has the same parish structure with the same sacraments, liturgical schedule, youth group program, and CCD/RCIA as other churches. Outside of the parish, the church is in constant dialogue with the people, reaching out into the community through the St. Ann's Turtle Mountain Chippewa Food Pantry and the St. Ann's Thrift Store. St. Ann's Mission is grateful for the collaborative relationship that has developed with the Turtle Mountain tribal community and tribal leadership over the years. For example, when St. Ann's needed a new van to pick up donated food items for the food pantry and distribute those items to clients, they turned to the First Nations Development Institute to obtain a grant for a new van. However, the grant couldn't cover the entire cost of the new van, so the Turtle Mountain Tribal Council, recognizing the benefit of having the food pantry available to all residents, made up the shortfall.

Another collaborative effort between the community and St. Ann's was assisting in the establishment of a homeless shelter.

"The Tribal Council wanted a homeless shelter started immediately," said Father Slovak. "They found a building in Belcourt to renovate but it would take several weeks. They called us and asked if homeless clients could stay in our parish hall. I spoke with our parish council, and since we were on Thanksgiving break with no school or CCD for several weeks, we were able to accommodate the tribal leadership and have two to fourteen homeless staying at our Parish Hall, with the tribe running it and providing security, until the shelter could be moved to the renovated building."

That effort led to an entire new ministry. Several volunteers had begun visiting the homeless when they were in the parish hall, and they continue to visit them in the newly renovated building. Volunteers spend time visiting the shelter weekly, and several homeless attend the mission's Men's Cursillo Retreat. Parish volunteers also regularly pick up a few shelter residents to attend Sunday Mass each weekend.

Other successful efforts are ongoing. St. Ann's serves over 60 people who are homebound, elders in the community, who are visited by S.O.L.T. priests every week. Father Slovak is also developing a program where volunteers from the parish with specialized skills can "adopt" an area of the parish grounds for maintenance and upkeep. He hopes this program will help with upkeep and give those volunteers a chance to give back to the mission.

"Some in our community struggle with calling our parish a mission," said Father Slovak. "Some feel that the term 'mission' focuses too much on the challenges of the area or puts it in a bad light. As pastor of this mission, I totally disagree. It is true that missions are often located in areas with a lack of



The new floor shines brightly at St. Ann's Catholic School, one of many improvements the school is implementing. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

access to adequate resources, but the reality is that makes us more resourceful in how we respond. The real reason I believe that we are called a mission is that we are called to be and do more. I see the core of being a mission church in the flexibility that we need to listen and respond to the people. Our focus is not on the struggles, but on the beauty that is present everywhere. I feel privileged to be serving the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, and being a mission just means we are finding as many ways to serve as possible both in the usual Church ways and any other way we can to serve God in serving everyone. It is exciting, it is an adventure, and it is a privilege."



Food Pantry Director Jackie Giron (left) along with Food Pantry volunteer Fern DeCoteau and patrons of the Food Pantry stand in front of the new van used to collect food from local grocery stores and other food providers and deliver food to clients. The van was purchased through a cooperative effort between St. Ann's Indian Mission, First Nations Development Institute, and the Turtle Mountain Tribal Council. (submitted photo)



ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL SPRING CELEBRATION & COUNTRY FAIR

SAT. MAY 6TH
KC BURGER BASKETS 6-8PM
 Live Auction, Silent Auction, Dollar Auction 6-8pm
 Live Band & Dance with
 "The Slapping Skeeters" 8-10pm

SUN. MAY 7TH 11AM-1:30PM
ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL FAMOUS SWEDISH MEATBALL DINNER
 Kids' Carnival, Completion of Silent Auction,
 Dollar Auction, Raffle Drawing at 1:30pm.
 604 North Broadway Fargo

EXPERIENCE THE DEACON TRADITION

Little Deacons-12th Grade



A Community inspiring Excellence through

**FAITH, LEARNING,
AND SERVICE**



ENROLL NOW FOR 2023-24

For more information or personal tour:

Lori Hager

Admissions Director

701-893-3271

Lori.Hager@jp2schools.org

www.jp2schools.org/admissions



NATIVITY
ELEMENTARY



HOLY SPIRIT
ELEMENTARY



TRINITY
ELEMENTARY



SACRED HEART
MIDDLE SCHOOL



SHANLEY
HIGH SCHOOL

CAMP SUMMIT

Red Willow
Bible Camp
BINFORD, ND

**JULY
9-13,
2023**

For youth
entering
GRADES 7-9

Register on or before Feb. 24: \$300

After: \$350

Family rate and scholarships available.

Space is limited.

For more info: fargodiocese.org/campsummit



BE NOT AFRAID

DO NOT BE SATISFIED WITH MEDIOCRITY.
PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP AND LET DOWN
YOUR NETS FOR A CATCH.

-ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II



TATTERED PAGES

A review of Catholic books, movies, music

Dressing with Dignity challenges women to change culture through how they dress

By RyAnne Carr | Mother of six, homeschooler, Woman School Strategist, parishioner of Sts. Anne & Joachim, Fargo

When a friend gave me *Dressing with Dignity*, I was less than excited to read it mainly because the cover looked less than attractive. I'm here to say, don't judge this book by its cover! This short read packed tons of history on the progression of women's clothing throughout time. The author really did her research and gave a good timeline of both the secular progression of fashion as well as the Catholic Church's timeline for women's styles. She traces the journey of modesty back throughout the years and looks in close detail at the past 100 years. Specifically, she combs through what various popes from the last century had to say on women's clothing.

To see the jump women's clothing has made in the last 100 years and its effects on society was eye opening. As someone born in the 1980s, I've rarely stopped to think why I wear the clothes I do. I simply dressed in the typical fashion for women, primarily jeans. *Dressing with Dignity* shows a number of scientific studies that were done to show how men perceive women wearing dresses verses how they perceive women wearing pants. The data was convincing and the author points to it as a way for women to reclaim the culture, simply by dressing in a more feminine way that enhances their natural beauty.

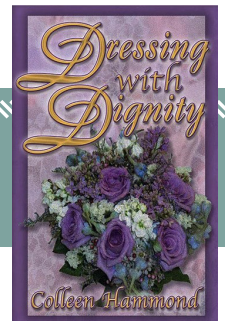
Another aspect of the book I enjoyed was all the evidence and background given to show the reader just how different women's clothing is today from even 50 years ago. Not only are today's fashions for women immodest, they're also very similar to men's fashions, something that would have been unseen in the recent past. Today, more and more of the clothing for women looks undistinguishable from men, a fact that the author points out may be one sly way that the evil one has worked his way in the back door. By convincing women to dress down, immodest, and like their male counterparts, our society has slowly erased femininity little by little. In today's culture where the lines are getting more and more blurred between what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a man, this book lays out a path forward for women to reclaim their dignity and dress.

The second half of the book is dedicated mostly to answering this question: how do we make this jump from our current fashions to ones that are more feminine and dignifying? What does that even look like to a current culture that is far removed

from seeing the differences between the sexes? The approach given was practical and challenging. In my own life, I've slowly started to implement the changes she suggests and have seen positive outcomes interiorly as well as exteriorly.

Overall, this short book was informative, eye opening, and challenging. There were times when I wish I had not read it because of the call to action it then required. When I finished it, I knew I would hand it on because I wanted others to hear the message. There is a way to dress with dignity and by doing so we can change the culture.

"Dressing with Dignity"
by Colleen Hammond, 2005.



SUNDAY, APRIL 30th 2023

ORA PRO
NOBIS

WORLD DAY
of PRAYER
for VOCATIONS

WORLDDAYOFPRAYERFORVOCATIONS.COM



Gaze on the Lord's beauty

A look at Catholic images

The Entombment of Christ with Eucharistic clues to be found

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

This painting is one of Caravaggio's masterpieces, *The Entombment of Christ*. Caravaggio is known for his ability to capture a moment of great importance frozen in time in an incredibly realistic manner. In this painting, we see St. John the Evangelist and Nicodemus lowering the body of Christ on a slab while Mary the Mother of Jesus lowers her head toward him with outstretched hands. It should remind us of Michelangelo's *Pieta*. In that sculpture, Mary is cradling Jesus in her lap. In this painting with her arms outstretched, she is going to bend down to cradle his body like in the *Pieta*. The chapel where this originally hung was dedicated to that sculpture. Caravaggio often used Michelangelo as his inspiration. In fact, in the face of Nicodemus is the face of Michelangelo. Yet, there are some differences in this work of art and also a different message.

First, there are more characters added than just Mary and Jesus. The two women in the background are Mary Magdalene and Mary Clopas, however, Caravaggio does not tell us who is who. Perhaps that was intentional. Maybe Caravaggio was more interested in showing us different emotions of grief—one of hysteria and one of silent tears—rather than showing their identity. In the *Pieta*, the grieving mother cradles her son but does not touch him. However, here we see St. John touch the wound of Christ on his side causing us to cringe and to remind us of St. Thomas who later doubts that Christ rose from the dead until he touches his finger in the side of Christ. This painting weighs heavy on the viewer. The whole composition is a struggle.

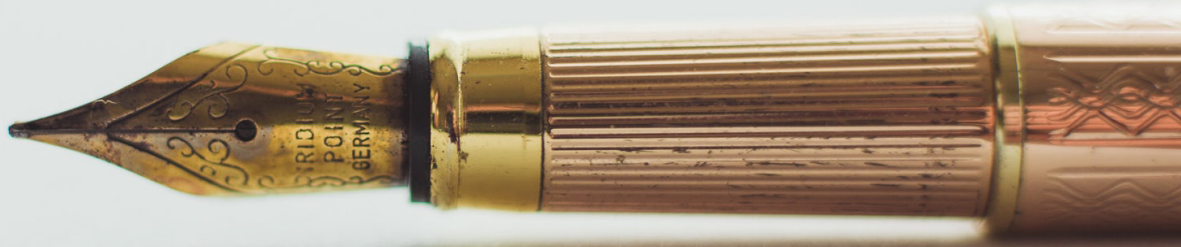
The theme of paintings that have been featured in *New Earth* since the fall 2022 has been Eucharistic, so you might ask, what makes this painting Eucharistic? Out of context, it's hard to grasp, but this painting was meant to hang over an altar in the Church of Santa Maria in Vallicella in Rome. As the people knelt during the Eucharistic prayers, they would have adored the Holy Eucharist as the priest lifted it up at the moment of Consecration. As he lowered the Eucharist back down, their eyes would be drawn to gaze on the backdrop of Nicodemus looking out at them. Like the priest, he also lowers the body of Jesus down on an altar.

The composition reminds us that the Eucharist is indeed the body of Christ. There is a plant on the bottom left, a juxta-



The Entombment of Christ. Caravaggio c.1602–1603.

position perhaps, to symbolize the life that will come back up into Jesus at the Resurrection. Therefore, it is not a dead body received in the Eucharist, but Jesus Christ alive!



God can use anything, even our stubbornness, to draw us to him

By Nichole Haugen | Mother of six, RN, life coach for Catholic nurses and parishioner at St. Boniface, Wimbledon

My faith has always been present in my life. Sometimes a bright burning flame. Other times, it was a low flicker. Yet, it was always there, a part of me.

I was born into a ranching family where my mom had a strong Catholic faith. My dad was not Catholic, but would always attend Mass with us because he knew it was important. It was in the vows he took when he married my mom, and he respected my mom's faith.

In high school, my mom required that each of my siblings attend one retreat event. At the time, my faith had grown a little dim. I was questioning why the Mass was so boring, since some of my friends had churches that seemed more "fun." I wondered, "what was the point?" and "why are there so many rules?" My parents however, did not waiver. While I lived in their house, their rules were to attend Mass, and pick a retreat. Out of rebellion, I picked attending a youth Steubenville Conference at St. Paul, Minn. because it was the most expensive. If I was going to go, they were going to pay.

I soon regretted my decision when the day came to go. Even though there were only six or seven of us, a deacon (now Father Kurtis Gunwall), and a woman from the Diocesan office, Jennie Korsmo, I am shy by nature and didn't know anyone. I also had rarely been away from home that long without family.

Sometimes, though, that is exactly where God wants us so he can reach our hearts.

The first few hours felt like torture. However, as the speakers shared their testimonies, and the band played uplifting Gospel music, it started to get better. I was listening more intensely to God in my heart, because I wasn't distracted by outside chatter.

On the final evening, we had adoration. I had never been to adoration before, or if I had, I don't remember it. It was beautiful. The priest processed around the whole auditorium going up in the bleachers and all around so Jesus could be near each person. I had been sitting, eyes closed in prayer. All of a sudden I felt, not a physical push, but something in my mind telling me to kneel. So I did, and when I looked up I saw our Lord coming down my aisle in the monstrance. Tears flowed from my eyes. I felt his loving gaze upon me, loving me exactly where I was in life. The love was so tangible and so pure.

When I returned home, I was on fire with love for our Lord. However, being a teenager and human, it still dimmed for a time. However, that moment has been one that I have often called upon during the years. It was the first time that I remember having such a personal encounter with God. God of course, knew exactly what I needed. Being a middle child, I needed an experience that was just mine. Not my siblings, not my parents, but all mine.

I still try to go to adoration when I can. It has looked different over the years. Sometimes I go with my small children in tow, as a family of eight, or by myself. Just as I can reflect and appreciate the way my dad put aside his pride and work to make sure we went to Mass as a family, I can appreciate the way God used my stubbornness, shyness, and loneliness to meet me exactly where I was, and show me the beauty of adoration. I am eternally grateful for that gift.



Nichole Haugen.
(submitted photo)

Jesus, our beloved Lord, You said:

"When I am lifted up I will draw all people to Myself."

Jesus, when You were lifted up on the Cross, Your gaze was fixed on those whom You would call to enter our Community. Let Your gaze also be rays of grace powerfully drawing them with Your irresistible love to answer Your invitation to leave all and answer Your loving invitation.

May they become fervent Carmelites in our Community.

Mary, Queen of Carmel, pray for them and for us. Amen.



CARMEL of MARY

17765 78th Street SE,
Wahpeton, ND 58075

carmelofmary.org
carmelofmary@gmail.com

Seeking the spiritual side of dementia



MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

FATHER TAD PACHOLCZYK, Ph.D

Director of Education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia

The possibility of suffering from dementia later in life is a worrisome and unpleasant prospect for many of us. Most people I know would like to remain in possession of their mental faculties until the end. Stephen Post, Director of the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care and Bioethics at Stonybrook University describes it this way:

“The leading symptoms of dementia are, frankly, terrifying: loss of memory, of language, and of reasoning ability. We all feel at least a slight anxiety about dementia because these dreaded symptoms seem to assault our very identities, to dissolve the autobiographical narratives that constitute the very story of our lives.”

The dreaded symptoms of dementia may lead to spiritual temptations. The prospect of losing autonomy and control can lead some to despair and even attempt suicide.

What can we say about the meaning of a life-changing reality like dementia for ourselves and our loved ones? Could it be that God is seeking to carry out a particular spiritual work?

For some who face dementia, it can have the effect of getting them off the treadmill and detaching them from those aspects of their lives that may be binding them, whether it's work and career, hobbies or pastimes, or something else that may be drawing them away from a needed spiritual focus.

In one of his articles, Stephen Post mentions Peter, who through his struggle with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's, experienced a spiritual reawakening and encountered the Lord's grace:

“I'd say, 'Why did you let this happen to me? I had such a good career. Everything was going fine for me.' He would say to me probably, 'Well, why did you fight it? I was trying to lead you in this direction.' Oh, I didn't realize that. Well, I've come to the conclusion that everything has a purpose, so the Good Lord, He knows the best for you. So maybe this was to slow me down to enjoy life and to enjoy my family and to enjoy what's out there. And right now, I can say that I'm a better person for it, in appreciation of other people's needs and illnesses, than I ever was when I was working that rat race.”

It can be very hard for a family, especially a spouse, to watch the slow destruction of a loved one's faculties. At times, the person suffering from dementia can become so frustrated they are aggressive towards those around them. There is need for a great deal of patience and spiritual and social support in these

situations.

The lives of caregivers tend to be upended and changed profoundly by caring for a family member, relative or friend with dementia, and the generous love they share is itself often sustained by faith in God. As caregivers watch their loved ones with “deep forgetfulness” disengage from the people around them, and from other previously important reference points in their lives, they also witness the emergence of an unmistakable simplicity in those they care for.

In a 2010 essay, Mary Anne Moresco beautifully sums up her dad's and her family's transformative spiritual journey this way:

“My 83-year-old father has dementia. He can remember things that happened a lifetime ago like it was yesterday, but he often can't remember yesterday at all... My father needs this time in life. And we, his children, need it too. We need to glimpse into his past days, as he journeys backward. We need to show him love, as best as we can. We need to offer up our prayers for him. This time is useful. It is valuable. For everything there is a season, and this winter season of my father's life is part of what will help guide his soul into eternity. Dad, through his dementia, is working out his salvation. He isn't doing that the way his children wanted him to do it. He isn't doing that the way he wanted to do it. He is doing it the way God has deemed that he must do it. ‘...unless you become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.’ (Matt: 18:3)... With each passing month, my father grows more humble and more childlike, more dependent and more trusting, and I do not doubt, closer to our Lord and to Heaven.”

As the symptoms and complications of dementia unfold, the challenges we face from the disease can unexpectedly become an invitation from God. Although dementia can contribute to spiritual growth, it almost always involves suffering for all concerned, and the challenges should not be underestimated. Such moments, nevertheless, offer important opportunities to grow in grace, to slow down, to reevaluate our priorities, and to enter into a profound relationship with him who is our final destination and abiding hope.



**WANT TO
ADVERTISE
IN NEW EARTH?**

Contact Kristina Lahr
(701) 356-7900
newearthads@
fargodiocese.org

Unexpected pathways: Seeds of faith



CATHOLIC ACTION

SISTER ANNE GERMAINE, SMP

Sister of Mary of the Presentation

Our International Religious Congregation of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation regularly discern the directions that God seems to be asking of us. Currently it's: "Let us humbly accept our vulnerability, moving forward together with perseverance on unexpected paths, so that life may spring forth." Although we are few Sisters in the United States at this time, the mission is the same... we say yes to God and go wherever God sends us.

Through the years, God has led us on many unexpected paths. For example, Father Joachim Fleury began after religious persecution in France, to be the pastor of a small rural parish in Broons. Because of government persecution, the young girls were receiving no education, the sick, the poor, the elderly were forsaken, and religious practices were abandoned. Father Fleury reached out in faith to two young women of his parish who he thought God might be calling to meet these needs. They immediately took in orphans, opened schools for young girls, brought relief to the poor and the sick and taught the Catholic faith.

The young women, Louise and Laurence Lemarchand, agreed to carry out Father Fleury's dream while they also carried out their own dream, of saying yes to God and becoming religious sisters. They, along with Father Fleury, became the founders of our Religious Congregation in 1828. The seeds sown were those of prayer, education of youth, care of the sick, and evangelization. Further religious persecution in the late 19th and early 20th centuries led the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation to go to other countries, including the United States. Unexpected pathways and seeds of faith led to us spreading the faith to other countries.

Further religious persecution in France led to our Congregation being dissolved by the government. On Jan. 31, 1914, the Decree of Dissolution was signed and the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation were no more. The Sisters were free to leave and go back to their families. No one left. After nine years of perseverance, our congregation was reinstated. This year we are remembering the 100th anniversary of this event Dec. 8, 1923.

While we are fewer Sisters to serve in ministries today, laity are taking on these roles of service. The seeds of faith bring forth the fruit of holiness for the people of God.

Another pathway is the recent change to the ownership and running of Maryvale, near Valley City, which began as our provincial convent in 1965. It has been a place of evangelization, religious formation, and retreats. To continue this ministry of the church we turned to the Diocese of Fargo to see if they would take over this ministry. They said yes. This apostolic mission continues to be an urgent need of the Church and world. I am grateful that the Diocese is continuing this mission of faith. The Sisters continue to live there and pray for the ministry of Maryvale.

Living in community, we support one another in a life of prayer, dialogue, and mission to be a beacon of the gospel in a world of darkness, violence, lack of belief in God, abortions, etc. I believe the greatest mission of today is prayer and redemptive suffering, which are at the heart of apostolic religious.

"Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit" (John 12:24). These experiences are a death and a resurrection, as I let go of what was and walk in faith as God "leads us on unexpected paths so that life may spring forth."

This is my mission, to be vulnerable, to keep rooting myself in prayer, and to live our "Our Way of Life," which are guidelines for how we live our Religious vows and community life. I place my trust in God, striving to be the presence of Jesus. As a follower of Christ Jesus, I embrace my reality, welcome vulnerability, and move forward with my Religious Community, so that the Gospel can continue to spring forth.



To Know God...
To Love God...
To Serve God...

HOLY FAMILY BOOKSTORE

For Baptisms, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, weddings, and special occasion gifts and books.

Mon.-Fri. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sat. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
1336 25th Ave. S., Fargo 58103
(701) 241-7842

Freedom comes from being vulnerable



SEMINARIAN LIFE

KADE PALMER

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

Life can be hard. There's no way around it. This year, and this semester especially, has been full of some difficult times. The second year of seminary formation is one of the heaviest academically in college seminary. I feel like I'm always scrambling to get even the bare minimum of my homework done before the next class. It feels almost impossible to live a well-balanced life of exercise, prayer, study, pastoral work, rest, formation, relationships, and all the other responsibilities that pile up.

There have been many times this year that I have been tempted to just give up. The thoughts run through my head: "Why do I keep trying to get this homework done if I'm just going to get more the next time I go to class?" "Why should I even try to build this relationship when I know that I either won't have time or it will probably come crashing down like those other relationships?" "Why do I keep trying to stay attentive at Mass and in prayer when it feels like nothing happens? I will just get distracted and beat myself up for it like I always do." "What's the point?"

At this point, I start to shut down. I notice that I start closing the door to my room a lot more to try to keep people out so I can get my work done. Instead of taking care of myself physically, emotionally, and spiritually, I turn into a machine. My whole focus is "just get the next thing done." No breaks, no relationships, no focus on how I'm doing. I am naturally a deep person. God has given me the gift of emotional intelligence which means I feel things on a deep level, I am very empathetic, and I have a hard time just letting things go. I desire to be authentic, to be real, to do everything out of a deep love for God and everyone around me. But in these stressful times, I abandon all of that because I "just don't have time to deal with those things." Instead of living out of the heart like I usually do, I live life on the surface—and it is completely dissatisfying and unfulfilling.

Eventually, I can't take it anymore and I am pushed past my breaking point. I finally stop trying to hold the world on my shoulders and fall to my knees. And there, when I finally admit that I can't do it all by myself, God has room to speak. My Father picks up little Kade in his arms. Through my tears, I look at his face and, instead of the disappointment and scolding that I expect, I see his eyes, full of compassion; I see the tears on his cheeks, because he feels (as every father does) the pain of his

son; I see the reassuring smile on the face; and I rest my weary head on his shoulder. There, in my surrender, he speaks the truth into my heart. "Kade, you are my son. I love you, and I am so proud to be called your Father. Kade, you are not the sum of your failures and weaknesses. Your worth does not come from what you do, but who you are: My beloved, little Kade." And there, I find my rest.

When I go home for breaks, one of my favorite things to do is rock my little three-year-old brother, Camden, to sleep. The last time I did this, I remembered something my mom says to us:

"Kade, guess what."

"What?"

"I love you."

As I was rocking him to sleep, I said this to Camden a couple times (in-between singing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "You Are My Sunshine," which he usually commands me to sing at least twice). I didn't know if he really understood how much I meant those words, but I wanted to say them anyway. My heart was so full of love, just sitting there with him, that I started to tear up. Eventually, I laid him down to sleep and was just about to go out the door when he called, "Kade."

"What Camden?" I answered.

"I love you."

I cannot describe the love that welled up in my heart at that moment. If my broken, human heart can love that much, how can I doubt the infinite love of my Creator, my Father, my Brother? His heart is broken out of love for you, his little child.

In the midst of the storms and trials of life, take a moment to rest on the heart of Jesus. In your passion, walk with him. When it feels like you are being crucified, be crucified with him. When you are buried, be buried with him. Then you will be raised, healed, and glorified with him.

NAPOLÉON + LIVESTOCK



SALE EVERY THURSDAY

1-800-932-8821

napoleonlivestock.com

3 Generations of Livestock Marketing Integrity

Dylan Bitz 321-0672 Paul Bitz 226-6199

Jacob Bitz 329-0315 Jim Bitz 226-6197

George Bitz 226-6198

Protecting the freedom to do as we ought



CATHOLIC ACTION

CHRISTOPHER DODSON

Executive director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference, which acts on behalf of the Catholic bishops of N.D. to respond to public policy issues of concern to the Catholic Church

In North Dakota, entities of the dioceses or affiliated with the Church do great work. One of the tasks of the North Dakota Catholic Conference is to help them do that work.

Catholic Charities North Dakota has several programs connected to legislation and state government. When a court ordered what is now the Life Skills and Transition Center in Grafton to move residents with intellectual disabilities into community settings, it contracted with Catholic Charities so that it could act as guardians for the former residents. Funding for that program is essentially the state's responsibility. The funding must be reconsidered and appropriated by the legislature every session. The funding is, however, never enough.

More recently, the state asked Catholic Charities to serve as guardians for vulnerable adults. This program also needs an appropriation by the state.

Catholic Charities also has a contract with the state to operate the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program. AASK provides services to children in foster care and to the families who adopt them. It is funded mostly by federal funds passing through the state.

Even when the state provides no funding, laws can affect how these programs operate. This is also true with other adoption services Catholic Charities provides. None of it is funded by the state at this time. However, state law specifies many requirements for facilitating an adoption.

Home on the Range is a therapeutic working ranch under the auspices of the Bismarck Diocese. The facility provides education, therapy, spiritual guidance, and recreational and work activities. Some of its residents are within the foster care system. That system is, of course, directed by state laws and regulations. Home on the Range currently focuses on youth who have been or are at risk of being sexually trafficked. The North Dakota Catholic Conference is working with legislators and state administrators to find a way that the ranch can best serve these youth within the state's laws and parameters.

The Catholic Church has 34 Catholic schools in the state. North Dakota ranks near the top when it comes to placing regulations on nonpublic schools. Every nonpublic school must meet all

the same requirements to operate that a public school must meet. Nonpublic school teachers must have the same licenses that public school teachers must have. Every legislative session these requirements might change. The North Dakota Catholic Conference works with the State Association of Nonpublic Schools to monitor and respond to these proposed changes.

We also work to convince the state to provide some financial assistance to the parents who choose to send their children to a nonpublic school. All children have a right to state-supported education. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, have a right to choose the best educational setting for their children. The two rights are not mutually exclusive. School choice is a matter of justice.

North Dakota has 38 Catholic healthcare facilities. None of them are diocesan owned. They are owned by Catholic healthcare systems or religious communities. In recent years, the facilities work with the legislature through their own systems, the North Dakota Hospital Association, or the North Dakota Long-Term Care Association. Sometimes, however, legislation might come up that impacts the ability of Catholic facilities to adhere to the ethical obligations of a Catholic entity. In these cases, the North Dakota Catholic Conference becomes involved. At the same time, the Church's teachings about the right of healthcare for all and the preferential option for the poor necessitate involvement by the conference on broader healthcare legislation.

Some ministries in the state are not officially Catholic but have a close relationship with the Church. Some of the pregnancy resource centers and the Saint Gianna & Pietro Molla Maternity Home are examples. The first priority of the North Dakota Catholic Conference when it comes to these facilities is to ensure that they can do the work they do. Some people want to over-regulate or completely shut down these important pro-life ministries. The Catholic Conference watches for such proposals and works to defeat them.

The second priority for the conference concerning these facilities is to advocate for some financial assistance. The Alternatives to Abortion program was passed in 2005 to provide some financial assistance to these facilities when they help pregnant women choose life. This year, we hope to expand that program so state help is also available when they help new mothers, their infants, and new fathers.

I sometimes look at my work at the Catholic Conference like this: I am a policy guy. I don't "do people service." I probably would not be good at it anyway. God has given others the gift to directly help people. They hold their hands, listen to their stories, protect them, and treat them. My job at the North Dakota Catholic Conference is to do what I can to make sure that they can do the ministries God has gifted them to do.

Wills provide peace of mind



STEWARDSHIP

STEVE SCHONS

Director of stewardship and development
for the Diocese of Fargo

With all the uncertainties we face, it's nice to know we can experience peace of mind regarding one of the most important areas of life—our last will and testament. In this regard, peace of mind is completing a valid will, caring for your loved ones, and creating a legacy to further the Catholic faith.

A valid will

A valid will is one that conforms to the laws of your state and that is acceptable to the probate court. It is also valid since it accurately expresses your wishes.

A will document that is downloaded from the internet or obtained from a stationery store marginally provides a peace of mind. Something this important requires the professional expertise of an estate-planning attorney. It has been said that the average American spends approximately 100,000 hours accumulating their estate and only 8-10 hours deciding how to formally distribute it upon their death. So, taking a day or two to formalize your estate plans is time well spent.

Going through the decision process may seem like a daunting

task. However, once you've completed your legal will it will put you at ease. You can face the future knowing that your estate will be distributed according to your wishes and that people you trust will be in charge.

Caring for loved ones

Your last will and testament provides you with assurance that you have made provisions for family members according to their needs and your wishes. If something should happen to you, they will be cared for.

For example, if you have dependent children, your will can name the guardians and provide trust arrangements for education, health and other needs. Your will can also ensure that certain possessions go to the designated family members and that disbursements are made to benefit those with special needs.

A lasting legacy

Your will can direct your personal representative to set aside a certain percentage of your estate to establish an endowment fund at your parish, the Catholic Development Foundation or other worthy Catholic causes. This fund, if you wish, will bear your name. The fund will also provide a perpetual flow of income for generations to come. Your children and grandchildren—and many others—will be reminded of your Catholic values and your desire to further the teachings of Christ.

If you do not have peace of mind concerning your estate plan, now is the time to act. For a free Will Information Kit, please contact me at (701) 356-7926. You can also request via e-mail at steve.schons@fargodiocese.org.

Keep the TV Mass on the air

Your support is treasured by all who are unable to join in our greatest form of prayer, the Mass.

Name _____

In memory of: _____

Address _____

OR a gift for: _____

City/State/Zip _____

List on the following date(s): _____

Phone _____

Make check payable to: Diocese of Fargo TV Mass, 5201 Bishops Blvd. S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104

Watch Sundays:

10:30 a.m. - Fargo, WDAY, Ch 6 or Grand Forks, WDAZ, Ch 8

11 a.m. - Bismarck, KNDX, Ch 26 or Minot, KXND, Ch 24



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

A photo submission lending itself to the likely title “Come hell or high water” shows the Rev. John Cullen traveling by boat on April 18 between the 9 o’clock Mass at the mission parish in Ardoch and the 10:30 morning Mass at St. Patrick’s in Minto. Father Cullen gives all the credit to his boatmen, Walter Gerzrewski and Allen Sitzler, in aiding his travel over the half mile stretch of the flooded Red River. Bundles of the *Grand Forks Herald* and Minneapolis newspapers can be seen in the front of the boat, leaving little room for the three men.



50 years ago — 1972

Monsignor Lessard is ordained Bishop of Savannah, Georgia in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Raymond William Lessard was born December 1930 in Oakwood, North Dakota. He is the fourth priest of the Diocese of Fargo to be named by the Holy Father to the office of Bishop.

20 years ago — 2002

Bishop Samuel J. Aquila breaks ground for the new Diocesan Pastoral and Administrative Center in a ceremony April 14. The current chancery operates out of the Queen of Peace building at 1310 Broadway which was built in 1915 as a convent for the Presentation Sisters. Three diocesan departments have been in the building for about 30 years and face looming costly mechanical and significant maintenance issues. The new building will house all nine departments and allow for future growth. This will be the first time that all departments will be in the same building; allowing for greater unity, efficiency, and more effective collaboration between the departments.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Bishop John Folda

Oct. 21-31,
2024

\$4,700 from
Chicago

Add on departure airports available.
All inclusive except lunches.



More information at
[www.fargodiocese.org](http://www.fargodiocese.org/events/holy-land)
/events/holy-land



Events

“I Thirst” retreat at Maryvale, Valley City

The Sisters of Mary of the Presentation are sponsoring an “I Thirst,” women’s retreat at Maryvale in Valley City. Come for the weekend and enter the spirit of St. Teresa of Calcutta through prayer, dialogue, adoration, and an input session led by Sister Anne Germaine Picard, SMP and Sharon Eversvik, SMP Associate on July 7–9. Cost is \$130. To register, contact Amanda at (701) 845-2864 or maryvalesmp@gmail.com.

Spring dinner at Holy Trinity, Fingal

Holy Trinity Church in Fingal is hosting a spring dinner Apr. 16 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pork loin, au gratin potatoes and all the fixings. Homemade desserts and a bake sale.

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.

LIFE'S MILESTONES



Dean and Nancy Klein, parishioners of St. Joseph's in Devils Lake, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Apr. 27. They were married at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Rock Lake. They have 1 daughter, 1 son, and 2 grandchildren.



Pat and Glenda Hurley, parishioners of Assumption in Dickey, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Apr. 7. They were married at St. Catherine's in Valley City and have 3 children and 3 grandchildren.



James and Kathryn Gaukler, parishioners of St. Boniface in Lidgerwood, will celebrate their 65th anniversary Apr. 9. They have 3 children, 2 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, and 2 step-great-grandchildren.



Darrel and Vonnie Entzminger, parishioners of St. James Basilica in Jamestown, are pictured with the late Monsignor Wald following the blessing of their 60th anniversary five years ago. They will be celebrating their 65th anniversary Apr. 22.



Phyllis Brunelle, parishioner at St. Mark's in Bottineau, celebrated her 90th birthday on Apr. 1. She and her late husband, Robert, were blessed with 2 children, 5 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren.



Gayle Bailey, parishioner of St. Michael's Church in Grand Forks, will celebrate her 80th birthday Apr. 20. She is blessed with her 6 children, 14 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great grandchildren, and the love of God.



Selina Rohde, parishioner of St. Alphonsus in Langdon, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Apr. 10. Selina and her late husband, Robert, have been blessed with 1 child, 1 grandson, 4 step-grandchildren, and 5 step-great grandchildren.



Rose Krenzel, parishioner of St. Anthony's in Selz, celebrated her 100th birthday on Mar. 9. She and her late husband Pius were blessed with 4 sons, and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Catherine Franklin, parishioner of St. Catherine's in Valley City, celebrated her 101st birthday on Apr. 4. She and her late husband Lyle were blessed with 3 children. She resides at Eventide Nursing Home in Jamestown.



Martha Berube, parishioner of St. Aloysius, Lisbon, will celebrate her 95th birthday on May 3. Martha and her late husband, Gerald, have been blessed with 5 children, 16 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great grandchild.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Life's Milestones includes anniversaries for marriages, ordinations, and religious vows for 25, 40, 50, 60, 65, and 70+ years and birthdays for 80, 85, 90, 95, and 100+ years for those in the Diocese of Fargo. Submissions will only be accepted for milestones occurring during the month of publication, one month prior, or one month following. Send a photo with text to news@fargodiocese.org or to Diocese of Fargo, New Earth, 5201 Bishops Blvd S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104 with a stamped return envelope and phone number. Deadline for the May issue is Apr. 25, and the deadline for the June issue is June 1.

“Mostly dead” is “still alive:” Uniform Declaration of Death Act may soon disagree

By Charlie Camosy | OSV News

As an observing member of the Drafting Committee to Revise the Uniform Declaration of Death Act (UDDA) Dr. Christopher DeCock—talking with Charlie Camosy on behalf of OSV News—discusses an upcoming (and highly problematic) possible revision to the UDDA, one that could subjectivize the all-important issue of when a human being is truly dead.

Dr. DeCock is a board-certified pediatric neurologist and epileptologist who practices at Essentia Health in Fargo. He also is the physician chair of the hospital’s ethics committee and the pediatric clerkship director for the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Charlie Camosy: What’s the church’s current teaching on brain death? What does it mean that some moral theologians and philosophers who are not routine dissenters have new questions about brain death?

Christopher DeCock: Generally, the notion of brain death is supported by the Church. Popes Pius XII, John Paul II and Benedict XVI have all discussed this issue. However, there are caveats. Conclusions should be based on whole-brain death; we need moral certitude in our medical determination; and third, we need to remove vital organs only from patients who are dead. There are patients diagnosed with “chronic brain death,” who—though meeting the current clinical criteria for brain death—are seemingly alive. Perhaps the most famous example is Jahi McMath, who lived for four years after her diagnosis. This is because the current clinical criteria do not test for a vital part of the brain, the hypothalamus, which continues to function and explains why Jahi went through puberty and why some “chronic brain dead” patients can gestate pregnancies. Her whole brain was not dead.

Camosy: The new uncertainty about brain death is not only in the Church. Muslims and Jews have questions. Secular folks have questions. Can you briefly map out this uncertainty?

DeCock: Uncertainty about brain death can be divided into three categories. First: Some do not feel the medical data fits the practice. Secondly, some are religiously concerned and (here I greatly oversimplify their views), they believe that death cannot be related to the brain, but only cardiopulmonary death. The third category is an objection due to a formed conscience which, for one reason or another, has encountered a problem with “brain death.” All of these perspectives are valid and need to be respected.

Personally, I believe that there is such a thing as brain death and that the brain is the master-integrator of the body. It is



(Jess Benitezpy | Catholic)

clear to me that the current clinical criteria do not test for “whole-brain death” and because of this, some “chronic brain dead” diagnoses are mistaken. If the clinical criteria did test for whole-brain death, I believe some “chronic brain dead” patients would be considered alive, since they still have hypothalamic function. Therefore, due to inadequate criteria, we currently do not have moral certitude that the diagnosis of brain death is accurate. We must not harvest vital organs from “chronic brain dead” patients because they might well be alive. This agrees with what Pius XII, John Paul II and Benedict XVI all taught.

Camosy: Into this uncertainty jumps something called the Uniform Law Commission Drafting Committee on Revising the Uniform Determination of Death Act (UDDA). You have been an in-person observer for this committee. What concerns do you have about what this committee may do?

DeCock: First off, it is important to understand what the original UDDA says with regard to brain death. It says that you are legally dead *only* if your whole brain is dead. With the revision, there are two proposals being presented to the committee at large this summer. The first does not change this definition of death, but the second does. This second proposal changes the definition from whole-brain death to only partial-brain death. That worries me. The rationale behind this second proposal is to bring the law in line with the current inadequate clinical criteria for determining brain death. Again, they are inadequate since they do not test for hypothalamic function and that function is what is present in “chronic brain dead” patients.

There is significance to changing the definition of death. Right now, the definition of brain death is a biological one rooted in objective reality. This second proposal is subjective—as if to say, “your brain is dead enough so we will decide that you

are dead.” Death is not something we can decide based on a committee; death is a biological truth. “Mostly dead” will never be dead enough.

Camosy: This is disturbing. Can you game out the medium and longer-term implications if we head in this direction? How can Catholics move to prevent it?

DeCock: It is disturbing. In *The Princess Bride*, Miracle Max famously said, “Mostly dead is slightly alive.” The patients relevant to the second proposal may be considered “slightly alive,” but to take their organs will make them “all dead.” Allowing someone to die is hugely different from actively causing their death. In the first case, the natural course of events can occur, and this is morally licit. In the latter, killing someone by removing their vital organs is homicide, and illicit.

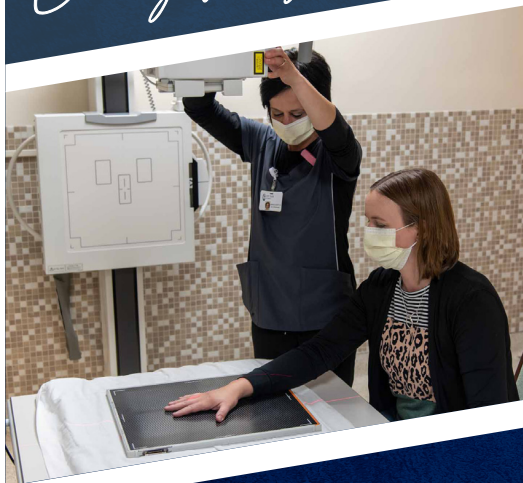
If we know that “chronic brain dead” patients are “slightly alive” and yet still harvest their organs, we are no better than groups committing genocide. We would be creating a subclass of living people we call “dead” who we are objectifying and using in a utilitarian manner. Once you change death from an objective reality to a subjective one, it is easy to move the goalposts again and again. Why not make “consciousness” the new goalpost? Or, if they are in a persistent vegetative state, why not call them “dead” and harvest their organs? How about

those who get euthanized? When their heart stops, we could restart it, clamp off the blood vessels to the brain to cause “chronic brain death” and harvest their organs.

There is a concept called “whole body gestational donation,” that some who support this second proposal think is licit. Basically, since “chronic brain dead” women can gestate pregnancies, you impregnate them via IVF to support someone else’s pregnancy. Basically, this would be like using Jahi as an incubator and then, when she is no longer useful for this, kill her by removing her vital organs. We could see commodification of “chronic brain-dead” young women from future euthanasia cases, meant to generate materials for the surrogacy, IVF, and organ harvest industries. Sorry to be so negative, but this can get really dark, really fast.

As to what Catholics can do—we need to raise hell and stop this second proposal from being accepted by the committee in July. We need to hold medicine accountable for practicing bad medicine and allowing these extremely vulnerable patients to be murdered for their organs. In addition, we need to talk with our local commissioners serving on the Uniform Law Commission and let them know that they cannot change the definition of brain death. To quote Edmund Burke, “Evil is allowed to triumph when good men do nothing.”

Caring for you



SMP Health

smphealth.org

Our NORTH DAKOTA Ministries

BOTTINEAU	SMP Health - St. Andrew's
ENDERLIN	SMP Health - Maryhill
FARGO	SMP Health - St. Catherine North
FARGO	SMP Health - St. Catherine South
HARVEY	SMP Health - St. Aloisius
JAMESTOWN	SMP Health - Ave Maria
ROLLA	SMP Health - St. Kateri
VALLEY CITY	SMP Health - St. Raphael

10 years as pope: Pushing the church to bring the Gospel to the world

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

For a decade, even when discussing the internal workings of the Vatican, Pope Francis has insisted the church is not the church of Christ if it does not reach out, sharing the “joy of the Gospel” and placing the poor at the center of its attention.

Signals that his papacy would be different started the moment he stepped out on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica the evening of March 13, 2013: He was not wearing a red, ermine-trimmed cape, and he bowed as he asked the crowd to pray that God would bless him.

His decision not to live in the Apostolic Palace, his invitations to Vatican trash collectors and gardeners and other employees to join him for his daily morning Mass, his insistence on going to the Italian island of Lampedusa to celebrate Mass and pray for migrants who had drowned in the Mediterranean captivated the attention of the media.

But not everyone was pleased with the seeming ease with which he set aside pomp and protocol. And tensions within the Catholic community grew as he expressed openness to LGBTQ Catholics and to those living in what the church considers irregular marriage situations and when he said in an interview in 2013 that the church cannot talk only about abortion, gay marriage and contraception.

One kind of summary of his first 10 years as pope can be found in numbers: He has made 40 trips abroad, visiting 60 countries; in eight consistories he created 95 cardinals under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave and paid tribute to 26 churchmen over the age of 80; and he has presided over the canonizations of 911 new saints, including a group of more than 800 martyrs, but also Sts. John Paul II, John XXIII, and Paul VI.

In his first major document, the apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, he laid out a program for his papacy, looking inside the church and outside at the world to see what needed to be done to “encourage and guide the whole church in a new phase of evangelization, one marked by enthusiasm and vitality.”

The document included a discussion of the need to reform church institutions to highlight their missionary role; to encourage pastoral workers to listen to and stand with the people they were ministering to—his famous line about having “the smell of the sheep;” to deepen an understanding of the church as “the entire people of God” and not as an institution or, worse, a club of the elect; to integrate the poor into the church and



Pope Francis laughs as he jokingly asks the congregation a question while celebrating Mass with bishops, priests, and members of religious orders in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Manila, Philippines, Jan. 16, 2015.
(CNS photo | Paul Haring)

society, rather than simply see them as objects of assistance; and to promote peace and dialogue.

For Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the agenda of Pope Francis is the original agenda of the Second Vatican Council.

Unlike St. John Paul II and the late Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis did not attend any of the council sessions. And, in fact, because he was ordained to the priesthood Dec. 13, 1969, he is the first pope to be ordained a priest after Vatican II.

“After Scripture and tradition, the council is the significant foundation, and I would say, characteristic orientation of this papacy,” the cardinal told Catholic News Service. “He has taken the council not from a collection of decrees, but from the lived experience of the council as implemented, as lived, as tested, as developed, you might say, in the church of Latin America.”

St. John XXIII launched the council with a pastoral focus on what it means to be the church in the modern world, he said. The papacies of St. John Paul and Pope Benedict, he said, “reverted to a more doctrinal understanding of the council” with “some very good results and with some massive, unfinished business.”

While the work of Pope Francis’ predecessors was important, he said, “I don’t think it picked up the primary agenda (of the council), which was implementing a new understanding of church in the modern world, a new way of evangelizing because the world is so different from how it was, let’s say, at the end of World War II.”

Emilce Cuda, an Argentine theologian and secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, agreed that a key to understanding Pope Francis’ pontificate is knowing how Vatican II was lived in Latin America with respect for popular piety and culture, and trust in the “sensus fidei,” the notion that

the baptized together have a “sense of faith” and an ability “to understand what God says to us, to his people, in every moment.”

“There in the popular culture, in the peripheries, and in all the people of God, we can hear what God wants from us, or what God tells us to do in response to social problems and in the church in each moment,” she said. “We are in history and history is a movement, and the situation is not the same (as) in the 20th century or in the 21st century.”

As for disagreements with or even controversies about the papacy of Pope Francis, Cardinal Czerny warned against confusing “loud with representative or loud with majority. Loud doesn’t mean any of those things; it means loud.”

But, he said, “the patience of Pope Francis” leads him and encourages others to recognize that the pope’s critics “are not 100% off beam,” or off track; there usually is a grain of truth in what they say or an important value they hold dear that is being overlooked.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, told CNS he believes the first 10 years of Pope Francis’ pontificate have been preparation for “what’s happening right now, and that’s the synodal conversation.”

The Second Vatican Council called Catholics to read the “signs of the times” and respond. And, the cardinal said, “this notion that we don’t have automatically prepared prescriptions for every challenge that faces us leads us to a fundamental tenet of our belief,” which is belief “in the Holy Spirit, the lord and giver of life.”

The synod process, which began with listening to people around the globe and will move toward two assemblies mainly of bishops, is about listening to the Holy Spirit.

While the synod involves meetings, Cardinal Tobin said, “synodality is a way of being church. It’s an ancient way of being church that is being recovered and lived in the circumstances in which we face ourselves today. And so, to my mind, that’s sort of the capstone of what Pope Francis has been working for over the last decade.”

“I’ve called synodality his long game,” the cardinal said. “He’s convinced that the changed circumstances of our world and our world going forward demand a new appreciation for the role of the Holy Spirit and a way to access that gift that is given to all of us by virtue of our baptism.”

Pope Francis has been laying the foundation for the new synod process since the beginning of his pontificate, said Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago. “There’s an organic whole to all of this.”

“I just wonder if, from the very beginning, he had in his mind that this would be the trajectory of his pontificate, and the synod on synodality I think is, in some way, the opportunity for him to pull everything together,” he said. “There are



Pope Francis bows his head in prayer during his election night appearance on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican March 13, 2013. The crowd joined the pope in silent prayer after he asked them to pray that God would bless him. (CNS photo | Paul Haring)

people who want him to go faster, but he wants things to be held together and the church to be held together.”

Asked what he thought was the most significant aspect of Pope Francis’ pontificate, the cardinal cited his predecessor, the late Cardinal Francis E. George, who participated in the 2013 conclave, and said the best description of Pope Francis was, “He’s free.”

“He’s free in the sense of wanting to listen to different voices in the life of the church,” Cardinal Cupich said. “He’s free in being imaginative, but also he has the kind of freedom that really allows him to be joyful in this ministry.”

“John Paul II told us what we should do. Benedict told us why we should do it. And Francis is saying, ‘Do it,’” the cardinal said. Pope Francis is leading by example in how he cares for the poor, sees God at work in people’s real lives, and reaches out to people often overlooked by the church.

“I think history will look back on this pontificate as historic, as pivotal in the life of the church,” Cardinal Cupich said.



Pope Francis prays for peace with other Christian leaders inside Rome's Colosseum Oct. 25, 2022. Orthodox Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon, the ecumenical patriarch's representative to the European Union (left); Catholicos Awa III, patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East (right). (CNS photo | Vatican Media)

U.S. Bishops draw unambiguous line on gender transitioning in Catholic health care

By The National Catholic Bioethics Center

The ethicists of The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) join the US bishops in unequivocally reiterating that Catholic anthropology and moral teaching are incompatible with medicalized mutilations that hide behind the misnomer of “gender-affirming care.” This guidance is contained in the *Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body*, released by US Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine on Mar. 20.

The body-soul union and human sexual differentiation are principles of human anthropology, whose validity has been demonstrated time and again by medical science. By promoting incorrect gender identities, so-called transitioning interventions tear away from reality and reject the dignity of the body. They put patients on the road to heartache, leading to only apparent happiness with deeper suffering and, for many, a lifetime of destructive chemicals and surgeries.

Against this tidal wave of transgender activism, authentic care for people with gender dysphoria must be rooted in a proper understanding of the order within creation and an accurate application of Catholic ethical principles. When it comes to the truth of one’s identity, the bishops rightly emphasize the foundational grammar of being human and being sexed. Moreover, the principles of totality and integrity cannot be manipulated to make gender ideology consistent with this natural order. First, the altered organs are not pathological. Second, the modifications are not tolerated as a means of protecting the health of the whole body but are the desired result. Applauding the reasoning in the *Doctrinal Note*, NCBC President Joseph Meaney said, “It is very important for the Church to speak clearly on the transgender issue, where there is so much cultural confusion.

Pope Francis has done this many times and most recently said, ‘Gender ideology, today, is one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations.’”

Catholic health care must develop new models of promoting the authentic good of persons and provide a space in which clinicians can find ways to help patients without mutilating their bodies or undermining their well-being. In particular, children and adolescents need help to appreciate the good of their own bodies and protection from misguided advocates who are pushing radical medical interventions. In addition, by clearly stating Catholic teaching, the *Doctrinal Note* bolsters the religious liberty protections of those who are being coerced to violate their beliefs and prudential medical judgment.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center provides education, guidance, and resources to the Church and society to uphold the dignity of the human person in health care and biomedical research, thereby sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ and his Church. The NCBC envisions a world in which the integral understanding of the human person underlying Catholic teaching on respect for human life and dignity is better understood and more widely embraced in America and worldwide. More information can be found at ncbcenter.org.



Full time Administrative Assistant

The Diocese of Fargo is seeking an Administrative Assistant. This is a support position to Finance and Administration, which includes areas of finance, HR, development, properties, and technology. Candidate must have strong computer and critical letter composition skills, with 3-5 years of experience, and knowledge of Catholic Church structure and practices. Work will include data entry, answering phones, accounting, HR, savings and loan, development, events, foundation, legal, insurance, property, brochure design, web page maintenance, and related support to 1-4 individuals. FT position with benefits.

Submit cover letter and resume with three references to: Barbara.augdahl@fargodiocese.org. Position open immediately.



Quotable

St. Gianna Molla

Feast day April 28

“Love and sacrifice are closely linked, like the sun and the light. We cannot love without suffering and we cannot suffer without love.”



Sidewalk Stories

The lessons I've learned praying on the sidewalk



SIDEWALK STORIES

ROXANE B. SALONEN

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

When I first started praying regularly at our area's abortion facility nearly a decade ago, I thought I was doing it for the good of others. I didn't realize then how much I would learn about God and myself.

Gratefully, too, I've discovered that what I've learned standing vigil there isn't confined to that space. My faith has grown so much from this ministry, in ways I couldn't have anticipated when I first stepped into the ring.

Perhaps the most important lesson is that we cannot see the hidden workings of God. We simply have to trust that he is working. On abortion day, it's tempting to feel like our efforts are fruitless. We can go months without seeing any hopeful signs. It's always an encouragement to know that our time, prioritized over myriad other possibilities, has made a difference.

But on the days and in the hours that have seemed pointless, I've had to remind myself that God is much more patient than I, and the fruits may simply be beyond my current range of view.

Perhaps someone drove by and, seeing our presence, decided not to make or go through with an appointment. Maybe a boyfriend's conscience was provoked, and though a change in heart might not come soon enough to save that child, in 10 years, the seeds planted could take root in some incredible way.

We cannot dictate the timing of when God's work will become evident, but we can widen our trust in God and believe our presence and prayers mean something to him. As the Body of Christ, we are his hands and feet. Like Mary's "yes," ours is an act of faith and love. Our presence may simply be the humanity that bridges others to him.

This lesson has become valuable in other situations away from the sidewalk. Whenever I begin to feel that God is not moving quickly enough, or that evil has won, I place myself back there in my mind, and try to recall the wise words of saints, like Padre Pio, "Pray, hope and don't worry." Lord, it's so hard at times, but I will try.

I think, too, of St. Mother Teresa's famous utterance, that we are only asked to be faithful, not successful.

Praying on the sidewalk also has taught me a level of humility I had not grasped before accepting this challenge. It is humbling to be mocked, discounted, derided, ignored, scoffed at, laughed at, yelled at, and to know that responding in kind—despite the human temptation to do so—is not representing Christ well. I'm always amazed at how emotionally draining Wednesdays can be. We must summon superhuman strength to withstand something we're not equipped to endure well. Only by God's grace.

The sidewalk also has helped me begin to take a deeper look at the heart. Oftentimes, "newbies" go through a growth process. Initially, they cannot get over the reality that anyone could seek, not to mention go through with, an abortion, and they might end up stuck there. It is mystifying, to be sure. But the longer we participate, the more we can begin to contemplate what might move someone to land on the sidewalk.

We don't know the situation of the mother, and the various factors that might be playing a role in her oftentimes panicked decision. What kind of pressures are on her? Does she have anyone supporting her into a life-giving decision? Has she ever felt the love of God? Has she been given the gift of faith that could help her endure such a cross?

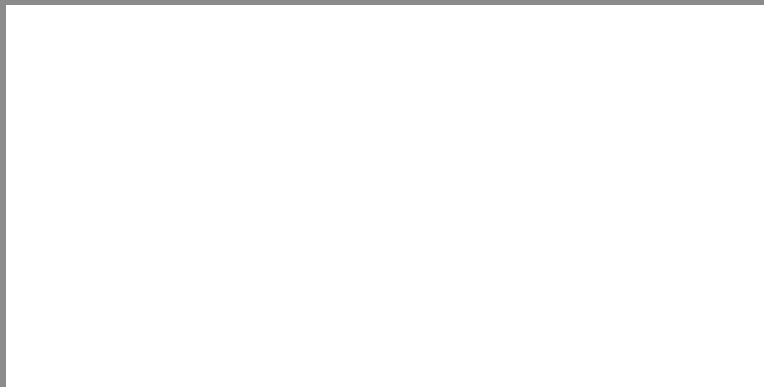
Not just reading about the sidewalk, but actually being there, puts one in the place of having to consider such things. It's not that we could ever conclude that abortion is good, but at the very least, we might begin to see that the woman seeking this procedure is not our adversary, but someone who likely simply lacks the bounty that has been given to us by God.

When we begin to think and see with a merciful gaze—at the clients and also the workers, who are likely deeply wounded in some way—we can begin to see as Christ.

Lent has been a good time to look back at the lessons I've learned on the sidewalk, about patience, humility, and faith. Easter is a good time to remember that no matter what it might look like, death does not have the last word. For indeed, "O death, where is your victory. O death, where is your sting" (1 Cor. 15:55)?

NEW EARTH

Catholic Diocese of Fargo
5201 Bishops Blvd, Ste. A
Fargo, ND 58104



*Do you know
where we are?*

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



Where in the diocese are we?

Last month's photo is
from St. Boniface Church
in Lidgerwood.