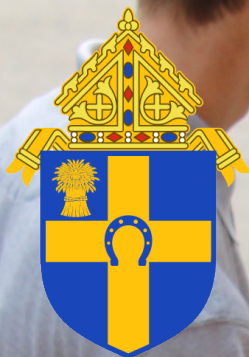


# New

July/August 2023 | Vol. 44 | No. 7



# Earth

The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo

## *A decade of service*

**Bishop John Folda  
marks 10 years as  
Bishop of Fargo**



**From Bishop Folda:  
Ten years as a bishop**

**Jennie Korsmo receives papal  
award following 25 years  
of service to the Diocese**

**Stories of Faith: Local woman  
visits "incorruptible"  
Missouri nun**



Join the Diocese of Fargo and 80,000 Catholics across the country for the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 years!



# National Eucharistic Congress

July 16-22, 2024  
Indianapolis, Indiana

## Schedule

**July 16:** Bus from Fargo to Mundelein, IL to Our Lady of the Lake Retreat Center to visit the shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe. Supper and overnight at retreat center.

**July 17:** Visit to Marytown, IL. Arrive at Hotel Hampton Inn, Indianapolis, within walking distance to the conference.

**July 17-21:** Conference

**July 21:** Supper in Rockford, IL and travel to Mauston, WI for the night.

**July 22:** Arrive in Fargo mid-afternoon

## Featuring

The Diocese of Fargo is offering a pilgrimage to the Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. The Congress will include five days of talks, Mass, Eucharistic procession, Adoration, and much more. There are only 100 spots available for the pilgrimage route to the Congress.

## Register

[fargodiocese.org/congress-pilgrimage](https://fargodiocese.org/congress-pilgrimage)

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NATIONAL  
Eucharistic  
Revival



## ON THE COVER:

Bishop Folda during a celebration of his 60th birthday Aug. 8, 2021 outside the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)

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# NEW EARTH

(ISSN# 10676406)

### Mission

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

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Bishop of Fargo

### Editor

Paul Braun

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Kristina Bloomsburg

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## Ten years as a bishop

**O**n June 19 I observed the tenth anniversary of my ordination as Bishop of Fargo. It may sound trite, but those years have flown by! That kind of milestone leads one to reminisce and reflect, so I beg your indulgence as I share a few thoughts with you, the good people of the Diocese of Fargo.

At the risk of leaving something out, and in no particular order, certain events have been memorable and especially joyful. The Eucharistic Conference that we held last September was particularly blessed, and it was beautiful to see the love and devotion of so many people for our Lord in the Eucharist. Several years ago we held a Convocation of Parish Leaders, where representatives from all our parishes dug into the call given to all the baptized to evangelize, to share the faith with others. Breaking ground for new churches and schools, and then dedicating those new facilities has been a blessing and a source of encouragement. I was deeply moved last year by the outpouring of prayer when our Diocese joined our Holy Father and the universal Church in the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Speaking of the Holy Father, it was a privilege to meet Pope Francis during his visit to the United States in 2015 and again in 2020 during our *ad limina* visit to Rome. Walking with the students from Shanley High School as they led the 2015 National March for Life in Washington D.C. was also unforgettable. It was amazing to walk at the head of such a vast crowd, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, all marching and praying for the protection of every innocent human life. In 2016, I also traveled to Poland for World Youth Day, and spent time with over 200 pilgrims from the Diocese of Fargo. Our celebration of Mass in Krakow as a diocesan family was a special moment for all of us. Even as I write this, more and more events come to mind, and I could go on and on!

I can't deny that there have been hard moments too. The COVID outbreak in 2020 and its lasting effects on the Church and our society were especially difficult. Dealing with sexual abuse issues in the Church has been painful for everyone. Closing and merging parishes, though necessary, is always a

sad occasion. But suffering has been a part of the Church's life since its beginning, so I put my trust in God and try to navigate through the challenges as they come.

People occasionally ask me what the best part of being a bishop is, and the answer is simple: visiting our people in parishes, schools, nursing homes, etc. I have been able to celebrate Mass in every parish of our diocese, and joining the faithful in our Lord's sacrifice is always a joy and a privilege. There are certain annual events that are also a highlight. The ordination of priests and deacons is a joyful occasion for the entire diocese, but especially for the bishop! It's a great sign of hope that God continues to call forth dedicated men who hear his call and lay down their lives in pastoral love for his people. It is always heartwarming to welcome catechumens and candidates from across the diocese at the Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent, when they begin their final preparation to receive the sacraments of initiation at Easter. It's uplifting to see that God continues to call people into the family of his Church! In recent years we have held an annual Rural Life Mass during the summer, where we give thanks for the blessings of our Creator and pray for a rich harvest in the fall. And of course the round of Confirmations and First Eucharist celebrations every spring gives me great joy.

As I continue my service as Bishop of Fargo, the next big initiatives will be our Diocesan Synod and the ongoing Eucharistic Revival. I hope to join with all of the faithful in a deeper love for our Lord in the Eucharist, especially through the celebration of the Mass. I pray that many who have drifted from joining the Church at Mass will soon find their way back. I am excited for our upcoming Synod, the first to be held in our diocese since 1951. I enjoyed the many listening sessions that we held throughout the diocese this past spring, and I appreciate the contribution of all who participated. Through the Synod, I hope we as a diocese can experience a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit and renew our dedication to the mission that Christ gave us to live our faith more fervently and share that faith with others.

**"I will always be grateful to our Lord for his call to serve as a bishop in the Diocese of Fargo. I certainly never expected such a mission, but he is a God of surprises!"** -Bishop John T. Folda



I will always be grateful to our Lord for his call to serve as a bishop in the Diocese of Fargo. I certainly never expected such a mission, but he is a God of surprises! And I will also be forever grateful to you, the good people of this diocese, who welcomed me so warmly and live your faith so fervently. You are an inspiration to me, and I am profoundly aware of

the many prayers you offer for me. We have done some good things together, and we have much more yet to do! May God bless us as we journey together in faith, and may our Blessed Mother Mary lead us always to her Son. Please pray that I will be a good bishop and shepherd for the Diocese of Fargo, and know that you are all in my prayers every day.

## BISHOP FOLDA'S CALENDAR

### Aug. 6 at 4 p.m.

Mass for Msgr. Laliberte 50th Anniversary, St. Anthony, Fargo

### Aug. 7 at 11 a.m.

Putt for a Purpose, Rose Creek, Fargo

### Aug. 11 at 4:30 p.m.

Vespers for Candidacy of seminarians, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

### Aug. 11 at 5:15 p.m.

Mass for Institution of lectors and acolytes of seminarians, Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

### Aug. 12 at 5 p.m.

Installation Mass for Father Riley Durkin, St. Alphonsus, Lisbon

### Aug. 13 at 5 p.m.

Field Mass, Carmel of Mary, Wahpeton

### Aug. 19 at 10:30 a.m.

Mass for Institution of lectors for permanent diaconate candidates, St. Anthony, Fargo

### Aug. 20 at 10:30 a.m.

Mass, St. Edward Church, Drayton

### Aug. 23 at 3 p.m.

St. JP II Schools Board meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

### Aug. 24-26

Region VIII Gathering, Duluth, Minn.

### Sept. 12 at 9 a.m.

Diocesan Pastors and Principals Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

### Sept. 12 at 3 p.m.

Diocesan Finance Council Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

### Sept. 13 at 3 p.m.

St. JP II Schools Board Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo



## Diocese of Fargo Official Appointments/Announcements

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

Rev. Joseph P. Barrett is appointed parochial vicar of Nativity Church, Fargo, effective August 2, 2023 and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Rev. Riley J. Durkin is appointed Pastor of St. Aloysius Church, Lisbon and St. Vincent's Church, Gwinner, for a term of six-years, beginning June 28, 2023.

Rev. Stephen P. Giljum is appointed parochial vicar of the Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo, effective August 14, 2023 and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Very Rev. Dale F. Lagodinski is granted retirement from active ministry effective June 28, 2023.

Rev. John C. Ejike is granted retirement from active ministry effective June 28, 2023.



## Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

### August - For World Youth Day

We pray the World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.





## MONTHLY EUCHARIST MIRACLE

### The Eucharistic Miracle of Hasselt, Belgium

*Republished from DeeperTruthCatholic.com, edited for content*

In the Cathedral of St. Quintinus in Hasselt is exposed the relic of the Eucharistic miracle that took place in Herkenrode in 1317. During the course of the centuries, many tests were done to ascertain the miraculous preservation of the consecrated Host from which Blood flowed.

On July 25, 1317, the pastor of the church in Viversel was called to the bedside of one his parishioners who was seriously ill, to receive the holy sacraments. Upon his arrival at the house of the sick person, he rested his handbag containing the consecrated Host on a table at the entrance and went to hear the confession of the sick person. One of the family members, curious about the handbag, opened it without being noticed. From it he pulled out the pyx, opened the cover and put his hand into it. As soon as he realized that inside there was a Host, he put everything back in order.

In the meantime, the priest came out from the room of the sick person to take out the Host with which to give him Communion. He took the handbag with the pyx inside, and when he opened it he saw that the Host he himself had consecrated during Mass was stained with Blood and was in some way stuck to the linen that covered the bottom of the container. Troubled and panic-stricken with the excuse that he had forgotten something, he rushed out of the house and went to the pastor of nearby Lumen to tell him what had happened. The latter advised him to bring the Particle to the Abbey of Herkenrode.

It was Aug. 1, 1317. The priest left, taking the pyx with him. Along the road, extraordinary things happened. As soon as he arrived at the Benedictine monastery, he showed everybody the Host stained with Blood. Then, the face of Christ crowned with thorns appeared on the Host. This was attested to by numerous witnesses.

In the Cathedral of Hasselt there is a painting in which there is depicted a flock kneeling as the priest, carrying the sacred relic, passes by. In this place, called Sacramentsberg, a chapel was built as a perpetual memorial. From that time on, "the Blessed Sacrament of the Miracle," which had been placed in a reliquary and exposed to public veneration, more than once protected the monastery of Herkenrode from fire. The reliquary of the miracle was kept at the Abbey until 1796, and in 1804, it was transferred to the Church of St. Quintinus in Hasselt.

## 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)**



### Job opening: PT Receptionist



Diocese of Fargo is accepting applications for a part-time receptionist. Answering the main phone line, directing calls, and hospitality are the primary duties. Assists with conference room schedules and performs assigned clerical duties as assigned. Hours will be Monday through Friday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Successful candidate will be professional, friendly with a servant heart, have a commitment to confidentiality, good organizational skills, and fluency with Microsoft Office and various social media platforms. Send cover letter and resume with three references to: [Barbara.augdahl@fargodiocese.org](mailto:Barbara.augdahl@fargodiocese.org) apply immediately, position open until filled.



## Did we deserve this disaster?



### ASK A PRIEST

#### FATHER DALE KINZLER

Pastor of churches in Cooperstown, Aneta, Finley, and Jessie

I ask this question of myself, on behalf of the many victims of loss I have encountered over the years. Most recently, a devastating hailstorm wiped out the corn and bean crops over a wide area northwest of Cooperstown, the community I currently serve. It was heartbreaking to view the barren fields as I drove to visit some of my own parish members from St. Lawrence of Jessie. There will most likely be insurance adjustments, but the loss of time, energy, and finances invested in their agricultural endeavors can never be fully recovered.

We experience the pains of loss in many ways. Fires, floods, tornadoes, and other destructive forces can devastate the homes and property we have labored life-long to secure. While these can eventually be replaced, there is no recovery of the lives of the loved ones we lose to death. We most especially grieve those we lose far too early to sudden fatal illness, accident, and perhaps even suicide or homicide. Daily news reports remind us of our collective vulnerability to such loss.

Where is God in all of this? How do we respond? Is God punishing us for some misdeed? Do we harbor anger against our Creator for allowing, if not causing, such disaster? Take note of the Book of Job, which offers a faith perspective on these very questions. Job, a just man, had done nothing wrong to deserve his devastating losses of personal health, family, and property. God allowed Satan to test him, trusting his servant Job to remain faithful.

Our personal losses become moments of trial like unto that of Job. When put to the test, we may either fold up our flimsy tent of faith, or shore up the foundation of a house built on rock. Jesus himself assures us that the evils we suffer are not necessarily a temporal punishment for sin.

"Those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did" (Luke 13:4-5)!

So, on the one hand, we need not punish ourselves with guilt nor harbor anger against God who permits such things to happen. On the other hand, we need to use such occasions of temporary loss to reevaluate our relationship with God, and cling ever more closely to the only one who can save us from the ultimate disaster of the loss of eternal life in heaven.

I recommend the prayer of the Rosary, particularly the Sorrowful Mysteries, as well as the Divine Mercy Chaplet, when we encounter personal devastation. We can go with Christ into the Garden of Gethsemane to share in his agony. We may experience his pain while tethered to the pillar of our own scourging. In his crowning with thorns, he identifies with us in every thorn of mental anguish plunged into our skulls today. His bearing of the cross on the road to Calvary offers consolation to us who bear the heavy load of our current catastrophe.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Christ, from the cross to which he was nailed, entrusted John to the care of his mother Mary, and mother Mary to the care of his beloved disciple John. We can entrust our concerns to the watchful care of Mary, our spiritual mother, in the recitation of those five decades.

Jesus, at his last breath, cried out from the cross, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Every loved one who passes away, while gone from our midst, enjoys the gift of an immortal soul joined with the Risen Christ in the communion of saints in heaven, or perhaps with the souls of Purgatory. In either case, it is a holy and noble thought to offer Masses in their intention, "with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness" (2 Macc 12:45).

In every case of catastrophic loss, we do well to thank God for the life we still enjoy, and beg in suppliant prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." It is in our moments of greatest vulnerability and weakness that God will come to the aid of his heavily burdened children.



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To Serve God...

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# Holy Spirit unlocks our greatest needs on retreat

Transcribed by Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor for New Earth

*Blake Ritteman shares his experience from the “Beloved Son” retreat May 25–27 at Maryvale led by Father Jason Lefor. Ritteman is a parishioner of the Cathedral of St. Mary and is the Listener Relations Coordinator for eastern North Dakota and Western Minnesota for Real Presence Radio. The interview was originally published on Real Presence Radio. Edited for content.*

## What made you decide to go on this retreat?

When I saw it advertised, I was excited. I thought it was something I needed. But then life happened, and I completely forgot about it. Later, my wife invited me to pursue it. It’s amazing how many excuses we can make for ourselves. “I have this or that going on.” But as soon as I received that invitation from my wife, giving me permission to go, there was grace in that. I felt like I could go into the retreat completely.

As far as the need for the retreat, I was arrogant going into it. I’ve heard this language “beloved son” before. I’ve had experience with God the Father before. But once I got to the retreat, I realized I don’t know anything. I need God the Father all the time. All of us need to take an intentional time to be stripped away from everything and allow the Lord to love us where we are.

It’s been 10 plus years since I’ve had a directed retreat. There’s something about coming under the authority of the retreat director to lead you through particular meditations, and it was amazing how God the Father uses that direction to have us go deeper. In prayer, you can sometimes “direct” the prayer and decide what you want to look at, but in a retreat, it’s God the Father working through the director to say, “Blake, here’s what I want you to look at” which makes me squirm in my chair a bit. But how necessary is that we are stripped away to allow God to look at the barriers in our hearts.

## Often times the cost of the retreat is a barrier for people. Was that a barrier for you?

It’s hard for me to allow someone to carry a burden for me. My wife had a cost. She had to take care of the kids that weekend. I had the cost of giving up my phone and my Memorial day weekend. St. John Paul II is credited with saying that the more we make a sincere gift of ourselves, the more the Lord reveals to us who we are. When we give ourselves away as a gift, the Lord can use that.

## This was a directed retreat. Do you have any experience with silent retreats?

I’m really excited about silent retreats. When I enter into it, the difficulties begin. You get so attuned to the noise around that you get uncomfortable with silence. This is perhaps my own

sinful self, but you get uncomfortable with yourself because you see some things in your life that need to be corrected or back in right relationship with the Father. But that’s part of the Christian life, isn’t it? There’s a cross we need to go through and accept and surrender to. I’m naturally more introverted, but in this particular retreat, when I was out by myself in this huge 500 acre nature area, I started praying out loud with, “I thank and praise you that I don’t know how to pray as I ought. I thank and praise you that I don’t know what to say to you.” That unlocked the grace for me. So a silent retreat doesn’t mean you have to keep your mouth shut the whole time. It means you’re quieting the phone and quieting the world around you, so the Father can tap into where he lives in your heart.

When you surrender and say “thank you so much for how uncomfortable I am. Thank you that I want to reach for my phone. Thank you I just want to scroll,” what you’re doing is relating to the Father in a real way. And he does the rest.

## What did you take away from this retreat?

I went into this retreat thinking I’d know what it would be. I’d been around Father Lefor a lot. But the Holy Spirit is ever new and present and unlocks what needs to be present. I had this powerful moment of healing with my natural father. Our natural fathers are human. Whether we know it or not, there are going to be wounds we pass on to our children as fathers. So regardless of people’s situation, there’s a need for healing. Through that moment of healing at the retreat, Mary revealed herself and allowed me to be completely open to God the Father’s love for me. She sees Jesus in me, and that gives me the freedom to be bold and remove anxiety. It’s been a real grace for me. I’m so grateful this retreat was offered, for Father Lefor, and for the brothers on retreat with me.

*Father Lefor’s next retreat at Maryvale is Beloved Brother set for Aug. 31–Sept. 2. More details at [MaryvaleND.org](http://MaryvaleND.org).*



**Blake Ritteman with his family at the Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo. (submitted photo)**

## Jennie Korsmo receives papal award following 25 years of service to the Diocese

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

Jennie Korsmo, Marriage Preparation Coordinator and Office of Catholic Education and Formation (CEF), received the *Benemerenti* medal on June 7 during a casual gathering at the Pastoral Center in Fargo. The *Benemerenti* is a medal awarded by the Pope to members of the clergy and laity for service to the Catholic Church. “*Benemerenti*” literally translates to “good merit.”

Bishop John Folda nominated Jennie for the award following her 25 years of service to the Diocese of Fargo.

“I felt that she should be recognized for her service to the Church, especially for her work in support of marriage and families. The *Benemerenti* award is granted by the Holy Father to lay members of the Church in recognition for their exceptional service to Christ and his Church. We petitioned the Holy Father through the apostolic nuncio, and he granted this well-deserved recognition to Jennie.”

The *Benemerenti* depicts the image of Christ on a gold Greek cross. The Savior, depicted in radiant splendor, has his hand raised in blessing. On the left is the tiara and crossed keys symbol of the papacy. On the right is the coat of arms of Pope Francis. On the reverse is the word “*benemerenti*.” The medal is suspended from a ribbon of the papal colors, yellow and white.

Jennie works in the Marriage and Family Life Office and coordinates marriage preparation activities and organizes events such as the Redeemed Conferences and other retreats. When she first started working at the Diocese in 1997, she worked in the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office.



Bishop John Folda presents the papal award, the *Benemerenti* medal, to Jennie Korsmo at the Pastoral Center in Fargo. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

“I’m honored to receive this recognition and blessed to work for the Diocese for over 25 years now in a variety of roles,” said Jennie. “I work with great people and love serving the wonderful people of Eastern North Dakota. It has been a blessing for me to be able to work on all these events that help people encounter Jesus!”



## Rolette parish celebrates namesake, Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart Church in Rolette, celebrated their feast day, Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 25 with a parish picnic. Father Petro Ndunguru, serves the parish of Sacred Heart as well as Notre Dame, Willow City, and Holy Rosary, Bisbee. St. John Paul II, a great devotee of the Sacred Heart, said, “This feast reminds us of the mystery of the love of God for the people of all times.” (submitted photo)



# Gone but not forgotten: Three diocesan parish churches close their doors for good

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth



**Cars line up for the last time in front of St. Michael's Church in Wales. (Paul Braun | New Earth)**

It's a sign of the times in many dioceses across the country. Parishes are being forced to close and realign with other parishes due to several factors, including declining populations, lack of priests, and crumbling infrastructure.

Father Brian Bachmeier knows too well the pain of seeing a church building close down and what remains of the congregation needing to attend Mass elsewhere, having been pastor of three parishes that have closed in the past. Father Bachmeier is the pastor of a fourth closing parish, St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish in Oriska, slated to be torn down after 115 years due to the factors mentioned above and others.



**Della Nawman, longtime organist for St. Bernard's in Oriska, in her familiar seat. (Paul Braun | New Earth)**

"It's hard, you know, because for many there's a lot of emotion connected with it, but they've just really done a good job with it," said Father Bachmeier. "Every single one of the people in this parish, they're all going into other Catholic churches. The faith is continuing and they didn't end it in division. And that's how you want parishes to close."

St. Bernard's, along with St. Thomas's Church in St. Thomas, and St. Michael's Church in Wales, are well beyond their tiny congregations abilities to repair

and maintain the structures (the decrees deciding their collective fates are published on pages 32-35). St. Michael's parish family gathered for a final Mass at their church on July 9, although the church hadn't been used for the celebration of Mass since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Parishioners now attend Mass at St. Alphonsus in Langdon or elsewhere. Likewise, St. Thomas's parish has been closed for some time and parishioners are assigned to St. John's in Grafton.

"It's always disappointing when a church has to close," said Bishop John Folda to those gathered for the closing Mass at St. Michael's church. "But at a certain point, change is necessary. Parishes have come and gone in the history of the Church and in the history of this diocese, but the faith of the people who belong to those parishes endures. I hope there is also determination to keep alive this gift of faith that Jesus has given us, and not just to keep it but to live it and share it."

The closing of a parish can be tough on those who call the church their parish home, especially if they have invested time into the parish. Della Nawman was the organist at St. Bernard's parish nearly every Sunday from 1966 until recently, when failing eyesight made reading music difficult. Della attended the final Mass for St. Bernard's on July 16, not as the organist, but among the congregation.

"I'm gonna miss it," said Della. "But you know while you're doing it, you think, 'oh if I could just get somebody else to do this' you know? It was just like a job that you had. You had to be there every Sunday or if you missed you felt guilty. I'm sure going to be lost. I love this church and I felt like I was doing something for God."

Sacred articles, statues, stained glass windows, and furniture will be preserved or sent to other parishes in and outside of the diocese. The pews at St. Bernard's and other altar furnishings will be used at Seven Dolars Church at Fort Totten. Other



**St. Bernard's Church in Oriska. (Paul Braun | New Earth)**

items like cabinets and dinnerware from the St. Bernard's social hall are either being auctioned off or given away. The rectory will be sold for use as a private residence once the church has been torn down and walls sealed, which is scheduled for mid-to-late August. The church bell will be relocated to the parish cemetery just west of Oriska.

The same is true for St. Michael's and St. Thomas's church before those buildings are removed. In addition, the St. Michael's parish hall, located in downtown Wales, will be given to the local volunteer fire department.



**St. Thomas's Church in St. Thomas.**  
(Paul Braun | New Earth)



## Reverend Michael Donahue, OP, ordained in D.C. May 20

Reverend Michael Joseph Donahue, OP, was ordained a priest for the Order of Preachers - Eastern Province of St. Joseph (Dominicans) on May 20 at the Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. Father Donahue is a Shanley High School graduate in 2012 and is the nephew of Monsignor Brian Donahue, pastor of St. Philip's in Hankinson and St. Anthony's in Fairmount. Father Donahue is pictured here immediately following his ordination with his parents Kevin and Karen Donahue, parishioners of Nativity Church in Fargo. (submitted photo)



## Napoleon native professes final vows

Sister Mary Angela of the Holy Face of Jesus, ACJ, professed her perpetual vows with the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus on June 17 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm, Minn. Sister Mary Angela, baptized as Kayla Gross, is from Napoleon and her parents are Steve and Lori Gross. (Photo by Jeanine McMahon Photography)



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## North Dakota Catholic Conference director to step down

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

**C**hristopher Dodson, the Executive Director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference for 28 years, announced July 5 that

he will step down from that position upon the selection of a replacement.

Dodson has served as the executive director since 1995. As such, he represented the Catholic bishops of North Dakota on public policy matters, including issues involving religious freedom, care for the poor and marginalized, the family, and the protection of human life at all stages.

Conference President Bishop John Folda stated, “Bishop Kagan and I are deeply grateful for Christopher’s service to the Dioceses of Bismarck and Fargo as the Director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference. With expertise, he has worked tirelessly for decades to give Catholic social teaching practical effect in the public square. He has been absolutely instrumental in protecting human life, safeguarding religious liberty, and defending the dignity and needs of the poor and marginalized. Christopher and his family will be in our prayers during this transition.”

Upon his announcement, Dodson stated, “Serving in this position has been a privilege and a blessing. For me, someone who loves the law, the political process, and the Church, I cannot imagine a better vocation. But I have health challenges before me and the time has come to focus on other parts of my time on this earth.”

An attorney by profession, Dodson started with the North Dakota Catholic Conference in 1994 as its health care advocate and began as the executive director in 1995. Dodson immediately worked to channel the power of the internet to extend the reach of the conference. During his tenure at the conference, Dodson drafted and helped shepherd the enactment of legislation on a broad range of issues and gained respect across the political spectrum. In 2023, Pope Francis bestowed Dodson with the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross for distinguished service to the “Church and Pope.” Also known as the “Cross of Honor,” it is one of the highest honors that the Pope can bestow upon a member of the laity.

The conference will begin a search for a new executive director. Interested persons can inquire at: [ndcatholic.org/about/edposition/](http://ndcatholic.org/about/edposition/).

## Knights of Columbus host night at RedHawks game



A beautiful night at the ball game! Bishop Folda and many clergy and faithful gathered at Newman Outdoor Field in Fargo for an evening of fun July 7. The night was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. The Fargo Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Assembly 788 Honor Guard presented the colors prior to the start of the game. The Kansas City Monarchs took the game over the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks 5-2. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)





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Beloved Husband Retreat	.....Nov 30-Dec 2, 23
Beloved Father Retreat	.....Feb 1-3, 24

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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

**Cost:** \$200-\$250

**Place:** Maryvale, Valley City, ND

**Please bring:** a Bible and a Journal

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Contact: [Amanda.Kunze@MaryvaleND.org](mailto:Amanda.Kunze@MaryvaleND.org)

## 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Prairies

Sunday, August 13, 2023  
Carmel of Mary Monastery  
Wahpeton, ND

### Agenda

2:00pm - Guest Speaker

3:00pm - Rosary / Confessions

5:00pm - Holy Mass

6:00pm - Picnic

Holy Mass - Main Celebrant  
Most Rev. John T. Folda, Bishop of Fargo

Guest Speaker  
Msgr. Brian Donahue

For more information contact or visit the Monastery ...

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- Beloved Husband - Men's Retreat - Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 2023
- Couples Retreat - Dec. 8-10, 2023
- Made for Greatness Men's Winter Retreat - Jan. 19-21, 2024
- Beloved Father - Men's Retreat - Feb. 1-3, 2024
- Couples Retreat - Feb. 9-11, 2024
- Women's Directed Ignatian Retreat - April 4-7, 2024

If you have questions about upcoming retreats please contact Amanda:  
(701) 845 2864 | [Amanda.Kunze@MaryvaleND.org](mailto:Amanda.Kunze@MaryvaleND.org)



## “The earth is full of your riches, O Lord”

Faithful gathered at the Terry Haman farm east of Devils Lake near Crary on July 2 for the 6th annual Rural Life Celebration. Bishop John Folda celebrated Mass, blessed land, machinery, soil, and seeds and led the faithful in prayers for a safe and fruitful harvest for all farmers.

In his homily, Bishop Folda brought attention to the connection between rural life and the call to faith: “Every time you plow the land and plant your seed, every time you nurture a calf or any kind of livestock, you’re placing your efforts in the hands of God. It takes faith to do this work, to cultivate the land and God’s creatures. It takes hard work, certainly, but it also takes faith in the Lord of the harvest, who holds all of creation in his hands. God is the source of life, and we are constantly reminded by the powers of nature and creation that we are dependent on him.” (Photos by Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)



## Respectful disposal

Priests from Deanery 7 in the Fargo Diocese recently gathered at Maryvale in Valley City for food, fellowship, and a ritual burning of old, damaged and unrepairable sacred items. Father Paul Duchscher, pastor of St. Catherine’s Church in Valley City and the Dean of Deanery 7, said a prayer for the intercession of St. John to bless their priestly duties, and items were then set ablaze, including old palm branches, unrepairable vestments, and sacred oils. (Photo by Paul Braun | New Earth)





## A decade of service

### Bishop John Folda marks 10 years as Bishop of Fargo

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

Bishop Folda with priests  
of the diocese outside the  
Cathedral of St. Mary in  
Fargo after the Chrism Mass  
on May 9, 2023 (Kristina  
Bloomsburg | New Earth)

**M**arch 26, 2013, was a day that Bishop John Folda will never forget. Then Monsignor Folda was sitting in his office as Rector of St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Nebraska when the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Carlo Maria Viganò, to the United States called him, informing him that the newly-elected Pope Francis had named him the 8th Bishop of Fargo, and asking him if he would accept.

That day over ten years ago would change the life and vocation of a man who calls himself a “simple priest,” who loved shepherding his parishes in rural Nebraska before his time as a seminary rector. Monsignor Folda arrived in Fargo on Apr. 7, 2013, to begin preparations for the official announcement of his appointment and for his episcopal ordination and installation in June 19, 2023.

*New Earth* spoke to Bishop Folda about his first ten years as our bishop and about what he envisions for the future of the Fargo Diocese.

**New Earth:** What was your first impression when you arrived in Fargo?

**Bishop Folda:** I remember thinking to myself that it was very much like Nebraska and a lot like Lincoln, so I felt very much at home right away. Obviously, the people that I met were extremely welcoming and very warm. I had never been to either Fargo or North Dakota before, so I really didn’t know what to expect, But it just reminded me of my home state of Nebraska.

**New Earth:** What are some of the challenges that a new bishop can face?

**Bishop Folda:** Right away you realize you need to help the pastors in their ministry to their parishes, and respond to their needs and their questions. That was a very new thing for me. I had been involved with priestly life before that, obviously, but as a bishop, you’re the one they turn to for resolution to questions or challenges they’re facing. I was very fortunate. There were some questions about parishes that perhaps were no longer going to be viable and would have to be merged with other parishes. That’s not surprising in a rural diocese, but it’s not something I had ever dealt with directly before. And that’s always a hard thing, because people, for obvious reasons, don’t want to lose their own parish. I know the Diocese of Fargo is not unique in this regard, but rural life, small town life, has changed quite a bit over the last 100 years. We have fewer people living in our rural communities and our rural parishes. Not all of them, but some of them, so you have to look at the whole picture. You also have to look at the availability of priests. There was a time when there were more priests available to cover all of those small parishes and that’s become more of a challenge recently, too.

**New Earth:** What were some of the issues you needed to face right away?

**Bishop Folda:** What comes to mind is the new location for Holy Cross Church in West Fargo. It was already decided that it was going to relocate, but then on top of that was the discussion of building a school there. At the very first school board meeting that I attended for the St. John Paul II Catholic Schools, that question came up. That was almost an immediate thing that





**Bishop Folda blesses soil brought by farmers to the Rural Life Mass on July 2, 2023. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)**

I had to get up to speed on and make a decision about. I certainly gave them the go ahead and wanted them to get started immediately. There was concern, obviously, about starting a brand new elementary school where there had never been one before. But the other pastors and board members, all agreed that there were so many young Catholic families in West Fargo that those parishes were growing and that we needed to have a school there.

**New Earth:** You spent 14 years at St. Gregory the Great Seminary, so is it safe to assume that vocations are an important issue for you?

**Bishop Folda:** Very much so. I don't know that I've changed a lot in terms of vocations, but I've been very actively involved with our vocations work. As you said, I was the rector of the seminary down in the Diocese of Lincoln for 14 years. So that was something I was very interested in. I felt like I had a pretty good feel for the work of priestly formation. Right away, I made a point to get to know personally all of our seminarians and have a relationship with them, so that going forward through their formation and in their lives as priests, we could build on that relationship. In a lot of ways, it's very much a father-son relationship that a bishop has with his seminarians, and that was something that I certainly wanted to cultivate. I think that we've done fairly well with vocations in our diocese. We need to have more seminarians than we do if we're going to meet the needs of our diocese in the next couple of generations, just because of the demographics of our diocese. I've continued to have dinners in my home and around the diocese to meet with young men who are interested, or at least have been invited to think about a vocation to the priesthood. I think those events have borne fruit. It's just good for them to have an opportunity to meet the bishop and to hear a little bit about

the priesthood from other priests in a relaxed setting, and also have an opportunity to pray together and ask some questions during an enjoyable evening together.

**New Earth:** You taught in Catholic schools, so Catholic education must be of importance for you as well?

**Bishop Folda:** Very much.

**New Earth:** How do you think things are going in the diocese as far as our Catholic schools? Is there something more we can do? Are we happy with the way things are going? What do you see going forward for Catholic schools?

**Bishop Folda:** I'm very happy with our schools, but I don't think I would ever say that things are fine just the way they are. We need to continue building on the mission that we have and fostering growth within our Catholic schools. I was very fortunate



**Bishop Folda confirms the faithful at St. John's Church in Wahpeton in April 18, 2021. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)**





**Bishop Folda greets a pair of young golfers at the Diocese of Fargo Putt for a Purpose golf tournament in Fargo on Aug. 1, 2022. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)**

nate. I attended Catholic schools throughout my childhood and youth. Then after I had spent a few years in college, I went to the seminary and became a priest. But then I was assigned as a teacher, both at the grade school and the high school level in our Catholic schools. So I really have a feel for Catholic education, both on the receiving end, but also on the teaching side of it. And then having administered the seminary, that too is very much a part of Catholic education. I'm convinced that our Catholic schools are one of the most important apostolates of the Church in this diocese.



**Bishop greets a man during Sister Margaret Mary's 60th Jubilee celebration at Carmel of Mary Monastery in Wahpeton in 2017. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)**

We're very blessed in the schools that we have. They provide an excellent education, an excellent faith formation. I see our Catholic schools as one of the principal ministries of our diocese, and I'm very happy with the progress that we've made. But the most important thing is to help our young people, our students, and their families to grow in their closeness, their relationship with God. That's what our schools should be doing and are doing.

**New Earth:** On the other side, we have our religious education programs. Can you speak to the importance of these programs, especially for the kids who don't go to Catholic school, to get together once a week and learn about their faith?

**Bishop Folda:** One of the principal responsibilities of any parish is to teach the faith to our children. Of course, the first responsibility for that falls to parents. But the pastor has a responsibility to actively work to teach the faith. Most of our children and youth don't have the opportunity to go to a Catholic school, so we have an obligation to provide faith formation to all of our young people. And that has to happen at the level of the parishes. So I'm very intent on making sure that all of our parishes do a good job and really have the resources they need to pass on the faith.

**New Earth:** You have said one of your favorite aspects of your work as bishop is to go out and visit parishes. Does that still hold true?

**Bishop Folda:** I don't think it ever gets old. Sometimes it gets tiring, I'll be honest about that. It takes some energy. But I don't get tired of it because I always enjoy the opportunity to visit our parish priests and the faithful in those parishes during special events and Confirmations. And they're always very welcoming and I feel edified by the faith of our people. That's a very encouraging thing to me, to witness the faith of our people in our parishes. Some of these parishes are very, very small, and yet the parishioners are very dedicated to their parish. There's a real family bond that they have. I understand the importance of those parishes in our small towns and even out in the country. Those parishes mean a lot to our people. To me it's always a joy, it's always a pleasure to visit those parishes and to spend time with the people. I think I've gained a lot of friendships through the people that I've met in our parishes.



**Bishop Folda speaks with faithful at St. Philip's Cemetery prior to the Rural Life Celebration in Napoleon in 2020. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)**





**Bishop Samuel Aquila, former Bishop of Fargo, bestows his blessing on Bishop Folda during the ordination Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo, on June 19, 2013. (Diocese of Fargo)**

**New Earth:** We have some big events coming up in the diocese. First of all, nationwide, we're currently in the middle of the Eucharistic Revival. What are you doing to address that in the diocese, to help people understand what is happening on the altar?

**Bishop Folda:** I think a lot of it comes down to drawing people back to Mass. The number of people attending Mass has declined, and it's as true in our diocese as it is around the country. Maybe it's cause and effect, I'm not sure, but if people don't understand the Eucharist then they're less inclined to come and celebrate at the Mass. And so, we must welcome people back to Mass and also really proclaim the faith that we have as a Church in the Eucharist, which is the real presence of Christ. One of the things that I've been struck by in our diocese is the very active practice of Eucharistic adoration that we see in so many parishes. Without the Eucharist, we aren't the church that Jesus calls us to be. We have to strengthen parish communities and we need to again teach with clarity and with zeal that our faith is a Eucharistic faith. Parents need to make attendance at Sunday Mass an absolute priority in their own lives and in the life of their family and not allow anything else to supplant that priority. Nothing should take the place of God, and that includes our worship as a Church that we do together on Sunday.

**New Earth:** We are also in a time of preparation for our Diocesan Synod.

**Bishop Folda:** Yes, we are due. In consultation with the priests

of the diocese and the diocesan pastoral council and various other groups that I've talked to, it just seemed that we have to look at the life of our diocese going forward and to see what the needs are, what our priorities need to be. So I made the decision to call for a diocesan synod that will include representation from all over the diocese, all of our parishes, all of our clergy, to really pray and reflect on the work of the Church in this diocese going forward, and to see where our Lord is leading us.

**New Earth:** So are you hoping to use the synod as a springboard to what you want to see happen in the diocese in your upcoming years as bishop?

**Bishop Folda:** Yes, I am. And not just for myself, but for the diocese as a whole and for bishops after me, to set a course going forward. I've said all along that we have to reinvigorate our sense of the mission of the Church, and we can't be content with things as they are. Again, the number of faithful who are practicing the faith is declining. We have to address that challenge and we have to always have an outward vision looking beyond our walls, and be ready to take our faith to the streets and to go wide and bring people in. So yes, a big part of my thinking in summoning the Synod is that we'll set a course going forward and highlight the importance of the mission of the Church.

**New Earth:** Any last thoughts?

**Bishop Folda:** I guess if I said one thing, I would just say an enormous thank you for the privilege, the blessing, of being the Bishop of Fargo. It really has been an amazing experience, a joyful experience, a challenging experience, but in all those challenges, I've been blessed with the help of so many people. I'm incredibly grateful for the 10 years that I've had here and look forward to however many God gives me to do this work. So I'm grateful. It was a great surprise but also a great blessing.



**Vicar General Monsignor Joseph Goering and Bishop Folda supervise the placement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue outside the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo on May 25, 2018. (Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)**



# TATTERED PAGES

A review of Catholic books, movies, music

## *By Love Refined* combines the mystery and practical of marriage preparation

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

**B**y *Love Refined: Letters to a Young Bride* was among a flurry of marriage books recommended to me when I was engaged to be married. Among them were *Three to Get Married* by Archbishop Fulton Sheen, *The Good News about Sex and Marriage* by Christopher West, and *Marriage: The Mystery of Faithful Love* by Dietrich von Hildebrand. All of these were great witnesses to the theology, morality, and spiritual mystery of marriage, and I'm glad I made time for these books as part of my preparation for the sacrament.

What set *By Love Refined* apart for me is its focus on the practical ways to live the high ideals everyone longs for in their marriage. The author, Alice von Hildebrand, writes several short letters to Julie, a young newlywed learning how to adjust to married life and love her husband, Michael, as best she can. Each chapter begins with the author responding to something Julie wrote to her, and either affirms or gently corrects her while extrapolating on the idea or challenge that's arisen. The excerpts from Julie's letters are realistic, things I found that either I've said or heard other engaged or newlywed couples say. They're as bright as "Love is a great thing!" and "He's the right man for me." to the mundane and disappointed, "All this mindless housework," and "I thought I knew how to love."

I read this book when I was knee-deep in wedding planning, house hunting, and mentally adjusting to what my life would be like when I was married. In the midst of sifting through wedding details, I found myself getting frustrated and anxious because none of these things were as important to me as my upcoming marriage, yet they still needed my attention. Prayer was often difficult because I was easily distracted with these details. I had the growing sense that my life was changing in a significant way, yet I still felt a little lost concerning what I was actually supposed to be doing to prepare for marriage, beyond prayer, frequenting the sacraments, and communicating with my fiancé of course.

This book helped fill the void I was experiencing. Not only was it a quick, simple read, but it was full of elegant and simple wisdom that helped keep my focus on what was most important. Allow me to share a few notable quotes:

"Contentment with ourselves condemns us to mediocrity; likewise, contentment with a mediocre marriage condemns it to mediocrity. A deep longing for a beautiful marriage—tempered

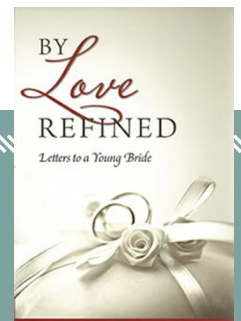
by patience and good will—will lift your marriage to ever more sublime heights as time goes by."

"Try to beware of over-reacting against Michael's shortcomings because they make you suffer. In other words, oppose his faults because they offend God and hurt Michael, not because they get on your nerves and you 'can't take it anymore.' As you know well, it's amazing how sensitive Michael is when your criticism is motivated by selfish reasons. On the other hand, when he knows your criticism springs from tender love for him, it makes a great impression on him. The more selfless you are in opposing Michael's faults, the better your chances are of helping him overcome them."

*By Love Refined* seamlessly speaks to the beauty and mystery of marriage in the same breath of practical and simple wisdom. Its highly approachable and timeless nature makes it a true treasure for any woman engaged to be married or newly married regardless of her involvement in her faith. This would be a wonderful bridal shower or wedding gift for the next woman with wedding bells in her future.

"By Love Refined: Letters to a Young Bride"

by Alice von Hildebrand, 1989.



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# Gaze on the Lord's beauty

A look at Catholic images

## The Breaking of the Bread

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



***Fractio panis*, 2nd century fresco.**  
(Photo from Wikimedia Commons)

This month we go down into the catacombs of Rome where we see this Eucharistic image referred to as *Fractio panis* (breaking bread). The image is in the oldest section, around 2nd century, in a chapel referred to as the Greek chapel in the catacombs of Priscilla.

The image, or properly called “fresco,” was discovered by Joseph Wilpert in 1893. It shows a table with a bearded man sitting on a stool at the end of the table; the place of honor. He stretches out his arms on the table and breaks the bread. In front of the man is a goblet and two dishes, one with two fish and one with five loaves. Not shown on the catacomb image, are seven baskets containing loaves of bread. It is a reference that connects the stories of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the Last Supper, and the Mass celebrated by early Christians.

The images found in the catacombs are the first type of Christian art known in the early church and give us a glimpse into how early Christians gathered and worshiped. There are also images on the sides of this chapel (not shown) of Abraham's sacrifice and Daniel among the lions. Both are Old Testament types or foreshadowing of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. The room where this image resides is called a chapel because the early Christians would celebrate the Mass here. The theme is sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Mass, the sacrifice of Daniel and the sacrifice of Isaac.

The mosaic shown of the same image was made in 1954 by Lorenzo Camerino as a gift of thanksgiving to the Benedictine sisters who reside in a convent above the catacombs. Lorenzo and his family were allowed to hide in the catacombs during WWII. He was a Jewish artist who worked in mosaics, so as a thanksgiving he made this mosaic and later even converted to Catholicism. The scene occupies the entire back wall of the chapel.



**Mosaic by Lorenzo Camerino, 1954.**  
Photo by Mary Hanbury)

It is hard to see, but the central plate with the fish is placed on the door of the tabernacle. Lorenzo was inspired to place the fish, a symbol of Christianity, on that particular spot as a sign hinting to his own conversion, but also of thanksgiving, which is what the word “Eucharist” means.

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## Local woman visits “incorruptible” Missouri nun

By Roxane B. Salonen | Originally published in *The Forum*

Visiting her son Preston and his family near Chicago the end of May, Patti Alex looked forward to an art show the group planned to attend before her return train trip to Fargo.

But instead, on May 28—the day of the event—Patti found herself in the midst of a packed, 12-passenger van with the family of 10 and a friend, bound for Gower, Missouri, to see the body of a Benedictine nun who’d died four years earlier.

The evening prior, her daughter-in-law, Kym, caught a social-media post about Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster, whose body, recently exhumed by the order she founded, was discovered intact.

When someone suggested they go view the body, the idea was quickly dismissed as impractical. But Patti’s heart stirred. “I want to go see her!” she’d announced, despite that it would also mean canceling a party they’d planned for that weekend.

“Most people would consider (such a trip) an insane idea, and even more insane with eight kids,” Preston admits. Yet, for years, he’d been telling youngsters, as a religious-formation instructor, about incorruptible saints. “They’re all in Europe, though. I always thought it would be cool if we ever had one in America, to see that tangible evidence of God working in the world.”

On a whim, at 10:30 p.m., they all jumped into the van and started down the road. But the kids were tired and cranky, so they returned home, resigned. Struggling to sleep, Patti prayed: “Lord, if you want us to do this, open the doors and let it happen. If not, let us be at peace.”

By morning, “everyone was on the same page,” she says, finding the idea of visiting a potential incorrupt saint too intriguing to pass up.

They reloaded the van for what they thought would be a day trip, and eight hours later, pulled onto the grounds of the Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus, joining hundreds of other curious pilgrims. Her body was set to be encased in glass the next day. For just a short time, public viewing up close would be permitted.

“If she is eventually canonized as a saint, anything that touched her hands or cloak would become a third-class relic,” Preston explains. “We knew that if we were going to make the trip, it would be best to go in the next 24 hours so we could be next to her, and, honestly, find out if it’s real or not.”

Catholics have long paid attention to often canonized saints who, upon being unearthed for various reasons, have been found not to have disintegrated as expected, and believe incorruptibility to signal potential holiness.

“The experience of being close to her body will mean more when the Church approves it,” says Preston, admitting he’s somewhat skeptical, despite his firm faith. “I would always hold back that super joy and enthusiasm until it’s official. But obviously it was profound enough for me to go. My actions speak more than my emotions.”

Father Jayson Miller, a priest for the Fargo Diocese, has been following the story of Sr. Wilhelmina, and believes God is trying to communicate something through “upholding this body—to show us what kind of life leads to eternity.”

All our bodies will ultimately go into the earth and rot away, he continues, “but the Lord will raise them up again, joining our souls, in their glorified states.”

Monsignor Gregory Schlesselmann says that before the Church declares anyone incorrupt, it initiates a scientific investigation to rule out a natural cause.

According to a mortician local to the area, Sr. Wilhelmina wasn’t embalmed, and was placed in a simple wooden casket before burial. Patti says the lining of the casket was disintegrated, while the nun’s habit was not, and no foul smell emanated, despite four years of burial.



**The sisters are pictured preparing to place Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster in a glass encasement at the Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus May 29, in Gower, Missouri. (Photo by Patti Alex)**



"If no natural cause is discovered, the Church might—and I say might—declare her incorrupt by simply allowing it to be known," Schlesselmann says, explaining that incorruptibility is a simpler, less formal process than that of canonization.

It's an interesting prospect, he admits. "We're drawn to evident signs of God's presence and activity," clarifying that incorruptibility doesn't mean fully preserved. "They don't look fresh as a daisy; there's a certain measure of drying out, but not decay in the normal, scientific sense."

Potential holiness should be the focus, he says, adding that while most of the incorruptible saints have been found in Europe, "it's entirely possible that saints could grow up on American soil and live their entire lives here."

Until recently, Schlesselmann hadn't heard of the nun, nor the order she founded. "But she definitely could have been an amazing saint."

The fact that she's African American seems another indicator of God's grace, he says. "The Church has plenty of non-white saints. The grace of God is not discriminatory...race has nothing to do with holiness," he adds. "Holiness has to do with living a godly life that allows God's goodness to work through them."

The timing also seems fitting, he says, given our society's current focus on our separateness in the name of racism. "Yet here's an example of someone who actually brought people together, and the Church is happy to see where that might lead."

Craig Stich, a Catholic deacon from Battle Lake, Minnesota, wrote on a social media post about the nun that incorruptibility "is a grace from God to help us contemplate (a person's) hidden life in Christ."

As a Catholic News Agency article reported, Sr. Wilhelmina's life was one of conviction, despite having grown up during challenging times, and whose fidelity to Christ, and special love for his mother, Mary, was profound.

Patti wasn't expecting to be given such a close view of Sr. Wilhelmina, so when encouraged to get in a line bringing her within inches of her body, she was overwhelmed. "Her whole habit, everything was intact. And her nails—I kept looking at her nails. Her fingernails were just perfect."

Because air will deteriorate the skin, she explains, a light layer of wax had been applied to her exterior, but by appearance, it seemed Sr. Wilhelmina had died just hours ago. "Her clothes were dirty of course; they'd been in a coffin. But they, too, were perfect, and there was a Rosary in her hands."

By then, day nine of the exhumation, around 500 people a day had been on the grounds to see her body, and police cars and some media, though not a lot, were present, Preston says. Volunteers supplied the pilgrims with fruit and water, and the Knights of Columbus guarded the body as intrigued visitors drew near.



**Patti Alex and her family by Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster, whose body, recently exhumed by the order she founded, was discovered intact. Lancaster's body was on display May 28. (Photo by Patti Alex)**

Patti likens the experience to when St. Thomas needed to touch Jesus' wounds after the Resurrection to believe he was real. "God gives these things to us as a sign of his love for us, to lead us to have more faith and hope, and remind us that heaven is real, and that while life ends, there's more to it (than earthly life)."

Moved by the experience, including visiting her original gravesite, the family decided to stay for the encasement ceremony the following day, making a Wal-Mart run to buy toothbrushes and delaying Patti's train trip home.

Miller says, "I think it's significant that she fought during her life to preserve her habit—her religious garb and her veil—and that those share in the preservation," adding, "It signals to the world that in religious life, you are not living for this world, but for eternity, and it's a sign of your consecration to God."

During her life, he notes, Sr. Wilhelmina was "under attack from various forces that tried to undermine that sign of consecration, trying to equalize religious life with any other common life," despite it being extraordinary. "I think the fact that she had a deep love for the traditional Mass, the breviary, and the way of Benedictine life, is very significant for our times; a sign of hope and a reminder that the true, good, and beautiful bring us to God."

As we've "strenuously tried to remove any reference or hint of God's presence in our world," Schlesselmann adds, we're left increasingly empty. "We are not whole unless we allow God to be with us. Something is fundamentally missing, and we're going to long for it" until it is fulfilled by God.

The irony here, he says, is that Sr. Wilhelmina's body should have dried out and decomposed, yet, "it would appear God is keeping it fresh to a certain extent, which is miraculous. That's spiritually what God does for our hearts. Otherwise, without him and his life in us, we, too, will just dry up and decompose."



## “Fully alive:” the summertime invitation to glorify God



### TWENTY SOMETHING

#### CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

Freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

**T**he idea came on my birthday, one of those fully formed thoughts that arrives unbidden, a cerebral click.

The day began with a brief summer rain, and a chill still hung in the air. I headed to the gym, rolling down my windows and cranking up the radio. Bruce Springsteen crooned “Dancing in the Dark,” the ballad of a listless young man searching for inspiration.

“Man, I’m just tired and bored with myself.”

As the wind blew my hair and my body shivered from the cold, the words formed in my head: “I want to feel alive.” They had the weight of a New Year’s Resolution set on a birthday, the kind of goal-setting I crave each time I blow out candles. And the goal instantly gave me direction, a compass for the year ahead.

So much of our modern quest for wellness hinges on good versus bad, indulgence versus deprivation. It is a reward system that never settles itself out, doling out guilt and gold stars in uneasy patterns.

To seek out, instead, whatever makes us feel more alive—this fills the lungs with air. This feels simpler. No analysis is required; we immediately know the answer. Does it make me feel alive?

Yes or no. And then we proceed.

It is not hedonistic; it is, in fact, spiritual. It honors the Creator, reverencing the one wild and precious life we are given. It calls to mind ancient words from St. Irenaeus, a great theologian of the Church: “The glory of God is man fully alive.”

God wants us to live our lives to their fullest capacity. He’s yearning for us to embrace the beauty of creation with the gifts He has given us—strong legs, clear eyes, big hearts, nimble fingers. One part Theology of the Body, one part Carpe Diem.

Presented with an iPhone full of apps, a pair of tennis shoes and a cloudless blue sky, what will we choose? Will it make me feel more alive or numb?

This approach naturally finds a balance, combining thrills and comforts, requiring discipline while delivering fun.

Sometimes it points us to a treat—tomato soup and a grilled cheese sandwich savored on a rainy day. Other times it asks us to resist the couch in lieu of a morning walk. Sometimes

it means staying up late to enjoy a fire and fellowship. Other times it means going to bed early because your body needs the rest.

St. Irenaeus’ mantra replaces all the secular metrics: Am I happier? Am I thinner? More popular? More productive?

The overarching question: Am I fully alive? Am I glorifying God?

Summer is the perfect time to pose this question and then enjoy simple childhood delights like walking barefoot in grass. Even if we don’t know the research affirming its health benefits, we know in our hearts: It makes me feel alive.

I’ve been keeping a running list of the little things that make me feel alive. Some are cozy, like an old quilt paired with a good book. But many involve contrasts that tingle, shocking me awake. Putting on a wet swimsuit. Rising early to read Scripture. Pushing myself to swim a few more laps.

Gretchen Rubin, the bestselling author and happiness expert, has landed on the same path. She charted “The Happiness Project,” distilling reams of research alongside personal experiences. Her new book is titled *Life In Five Senses: How Exploring the Senses Got Me Out of My Head and Into the World*.

In an era of mindless scrolling, Rubin recognized, we have become so numb that the notion of embracing the five senses feels novel. And this season bursts with multi-sensory happiness: the smell of fresh-mown grass, the sound of frogs croaking, the swing of a hammock.

May we soak it all in, feeling the tingle of being fully alive, giving God all the glory.



### Quotable

**St. Peter Julian  
Eymard**

Feast day Aug. 2

**“The Eucharist is everything,  
because from the Eucharist,  
everything is.”**



## The step into ordained ministry



### SEMINARIAN LIFE

#### DEACON SETH SKJERVHEIM

Theology III at Mount St. Mary Seminary  
in Emmitsburg, Md.

**A**t the end of this past April, after five years of seminary formation, I received a letter from Bishop Folda that would change my life forever. He wrote, “With this letter I am formally calling you to ordination as a Transitional Deacon for the Diocese of Fargo.” This letter is called a Call to Orders, and every man must receive this call directly from his bishop. My letter had finally arrived.

In the days and weeks leading up to the ordination, I wasn’t quite sure what to expect. I had heard stories from friends of how nervous they were in the lead up to their ordinations. They were certain the Lord was calling them, but there was something daunting to them about the prospect of actually entering the life-long commitment to the requirements of ordained ministry. One even told me he couldn’t sleep at all the night before his ordination!

I was pleasantly surprised to have the exact opposite experience of these friends. The Lord graced me with a deep peace and joy in anticipation of the day. In times of prayer, memories of many of the grace filled moments of encounter with the Lord kept coming up. Through reflecting on these memories, I began to see how Jesus had used all of these moments to call me closer to himself, and in doing so had been calling me down the path of ordination for a very long time.

Jesus was showing me how he had been willing this for as long as I can remember (in fact for *much* longer than I can remember) and had been guiding me through all my life to get me to this point. It became clear to me that Jesus wouldn’t stop his help and guidance after the ordination Mass. He would continue to be with me, and help me to follow him in my new life as a deacon, and eventually as a priest. With that in mind, it was hard to feel anything but peace and joy as I prepared to embark on this new journey of life.

The day of ordination itself began not that different from many others. I woke up (quite well rested, I should add!), got ready for the day, grabbed a cup of coffee, and went to the chapel to pray a morning holy hour and Liturgy of the Hours. The ordination festivities themselves are somewhat of a blur. Part of this was the sheer amount of stuff that happens on an ordination day, with rehearsals, the liturgy itself, and a reception afterwards. Another part of it might have been nerves starting to hit. If there were nerves, they weren’t from being

daunted by entering ordained ministry, but rather from a desire to make through the liturgy without making a mistake. After all, the newly ordained is put to work right away, fulfilling the liturgical responsibilities of the diaconate only minutes after becoming a deacon!

Since ordination, I have been working at my summer parish assignment at Little Flower Church in Rugby, St. Mary’s in Knox, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Balta. The days have been filled with simply learning new things, learning how to serve the deacon’s role at Mass and celebrate liturgies permitted to the deacon such as wake services, how to serve the people of these parishes, how to live this new life of ordained ministry. There have been many moments where things have gone well, and others where my inexperience has shown.

One of the biggest fruits of this process has been learning to be patient with myself as I learn how to live this life. As I learn, Jesus has continued to bless me with the same peace and joy I have been experiencing for months now. Most importantly, he has continued to be with me and guide me down the path he has called me to.

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# A deeper look at the Social Doctrine of the Church



## 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

I often write about Catholic social doctrine in these columns, usually as to how it pertains to a particular issue facing our communities. I have written less about the body of Catholic social doctrine itself.

In my column for last March, I wrote about the roots of Catholic social doctrine. I noted that the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* states: “[Social Doctrine] has its roots in Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels and the apostolic writings, and takes on shape and body beginning from the Fathers of the Church and the great Doctors of the Middle Ages, constituting a doctrine in which, even without explicit and direct Magisterial pronouncements, the Church gradually came to recognize her competence.”

But those are the roots. Where can a person find the official social teachings and what resources summarize or elaborate on those teachings?

Let’s start with the basics. I have long thought that every Catholic house should have a copy of the Bible, the *Catechism*, and the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The *Catechism* has many sections on social issues, especially in Part Three—Life in Christ. The *Compendium*—not to be confused with the *Compendium of the Catechism*—was promulgated by St. Pope John Paul II to summarize the Church’s social doctrine with more detail than the *Catechism*. Both are available in book form and online.

The *Catechism* and the *Compendium* are summaries. They are not official teaching documents themselves. Those teachings usually come from papal encyclicals. These are part of the Church’s magisterium—her teaching authority.

Here are some of the most important social encyclicals:

- *Rerum novarum* (1891)
- *Quadragesimo anno* (1931)
- *Mater et magistra* (1961)
- *Pacem in terris* (1963)
- *Populorum progressio* (1967)
- *Humanae vitae* (1968)

- *Laborem exercens* (1981)
- *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987)
- *Centesimus annus* (1991)
- *Veritatis splendor* (1993)
- *Evangelium vitae* (1995)
- *Fides et Ratio* (1998)
- *Deus caritas est* (2005)
- *Caritas in veritate* (2009)
- *Laudato si* (2015)
- *Gaudete et exsultate* (2018)
- *Fratelli tutti* (2020)

In addition to the encyclicals, the documents of Vatican II are official teachings. Two of the most significant documents in the area of social teaching are: *Dignitatis humanae* and *Gaudium et spes*.

Here are some suggestions for those who want to delve into the social encyclicals. First, some people might find the encyclicals difficult to digest. They can be long and wordy. If that is the case for you, summaries of the encyclicals are available online. Our colleagues at the California Catholic Conference have summaries of each encyclical at: [cacatholic.org/social-encyclicals](http://cacatholic.org/social-encyclicals).

Second, many of the encyclicals address certain issues, such as human life, working conditions, and the environment. Some are responses to political or social issues of the time. Despite this, they should not be compartmentalized. Catholic social doctrine should be viewed as a whole. All of them are connected to each other and should be read in light of each other.

Third, the age of the document is irrelevant with regard to its teaching. The time it was written might help understand the circumstances leading to the document, but the teaching remains. The first social encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, is just as relevant today as it was in 1891.

Fourth, avoid applying personal political views, views about particular popes, or even views about church history to the encyclicals. Pope Benedict XVI warned against this in *Caritas in veritate*. He wrote: “[C]larity is not served by certain abstract subdivisions of the Church’s social doctrine, which apply categories to Papal social teaching that are extraneous to it... [T]here is a single teaching, consistent and at the same time ever new. It is one thing to draw attention to the particular characteristics of one Encyclical or another, of the teaching of one Pope or another, but quite another to lose sight of the coherence of the overall doctrinal corpus” (No. 12).

Pope Benedict’s following words also warrant restating here because they express other fundamental truths about Catholic social doctrine. He continues, “Coherence does not mean a



closed system: on the contrary, it means dynamic faithfulness to a light received. The Church's social doctrine illuminates with an unchanging light the new problems that are constantly emerging. This safeguards the permanent and historical character of the doctrinal 'patrimony' which, with its specific characteristics, is part and parcel of the Church's ever-living Tradition."

In other words, Catholic social doctrine is just that—doctrine. It is not the personal political views of a pope at a particular time. Even as it responds to new social problems, it is part of the Church's permanent teaching protected by the Holy Spirit.

For that reason, every Catholic should try to learn something about Catholic social doctrine.

## Upcoming campaign will fund Maryvale, priests' retirement, and more



### STEWARDSHIP

#### STEVE SCHONS

Director of stewardship and development  
for the Diocese of Fargo

With great anticipation I would like to announce that the Diocese of Fargo will soon launch a \$20,000,000 capital campaign to serve the people and parishes of the Diocese of Fargo. The Living our Faith, Building our Future campaign, conducted over the next year and a half, will infuse much needed funds into the parishes of our diocese. It will also allow the faithful to work together to accomplish five crucial projects, vital to the long-term growth of the Diocese of Fargo.

Each parish will have a chance to conduct the campaign in one of three time frames: Fall 2023, Spring 2024, or Fall 2024. This will allow parishes to choose the timeframe that will flow seamlessly within the structure of parish life. By structuring the campaign so that parishes retain 30% of all funds raised up to their campaign goal, the campaign will infuse \$6,000,000 into the parishes of the diocese. Parishes will also keep 70% of all funds raised above their campaign goal, allowing unlimited potential. These parish funds can be used to make improvements or additions, fund ministries, leave a legacy for future generations, or fulfill other needs of the parish.

Across the diocese, parishioners will work together to fund three crucial projects, each geared at educating, evangelizing, and protecting our Catholic family and those who have given their life in service to us.

The Living our Faith, Building our Future projects are:

- Maryvale Retreat Center Renovations and Improvements – \$5,000,000
- Maryvale Endowment for upkeep and expansion of programming – \$1,000,000

- Construction of a Priests' Retirement Home – \$3,000,000
- Priests' Retirement Home Endowment – \$1,000,000
- Infusion of Funds to the Priests' Pension Fund – \$4,000,000

We ask you to pray for the success of the Living our Faith, Building our Future campaign as we begin this historic endeavor. We know that success will only come from the prayers, devotion, and generosity of all. For more information, please refer to the diocesan website at [fargodiocese.org/lof](http://fargodiocese.org/lof) or contact Jeff Weber, Campaign Executive Director, at [jweber@guidanceingiving.com](mailto:jweber@guidanceingiving.com)

## Catechist Retreats

Aug. 25 or 26  
2023

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Come away for a day where Fr. Andrew Jasinski will direct a retreat with a series of talks reflecting on the Eucharistic saints. These retreats are primarily for those involved in catechesis, however, all are welcome.

The day begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m.



Register by Aug. 18

[www.fargodiocese.org/catechistretreat](http://www.fargodiocese.org/catechistretreat)  
[mary.hanbury@fargodiocese.org](mailto:mary.hanbury@fargodiocese.org)  
(701) 356-7909





# LIFE'S MILESTONES



Steve and Roberta Arndt, parishioners of St. Michael's in Grand Forks, celebrated their 50th anniversary on July 28. They have 3 children and many grandchildren.



Steve and Jane (Ermer) Metzger, parishioners of Sacred Heart in Carrington, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Sept. 1. They were married at St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo and have 5 children and 8 grandchildren.



Bernie and Barb Boyle, parishioners of St. Charles Borromeo in Oakes, celebrated their 50th anniversary July 14. They were married at St. James Basilica in Jamestown. They have 3 sons, 1 daughter, and 11 grandchildren.



Peter and Mary Murtaugh, parishioners of St. Therese the Little Flower in Rugby, celebrated their 50th anniversary on June 22. They were married at St. Boniface in Walhalla. They are blessed with 4 children and 6 grandchildren.



Jim and Sharon Eversvik, parishioners at Sts. Peter and Paul in McHenry, celebrated their 40th anniversary on July 8. They were married at St. Joseph's in Devils Lake. They have been blessed with 3 married children and 10 beautiful grandchildren.



Mark and Jill Nelson, parishioners of St. Augustine in Fessenden, celebrated their 50th anniversary on June 19 with their 5 children, spouses, and 18 grandchildren. They were married at St. Boniface in Walhalla.



Kathy and Charlie Hanish, parishioners of Sts. Anne and Joachim in Fargo, will celebrate their 50th anniversary Aug. 4. They have been blessed with 5 daughters and 14 grandchildren. They were married at Sacred Heart Church in Aberdeen, S.D.



Frank and Pat Paumen, parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua in Fargo, recently celebrated their 65th anniversary with family and close friends. They were married at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo on Aug. 30, 1958.



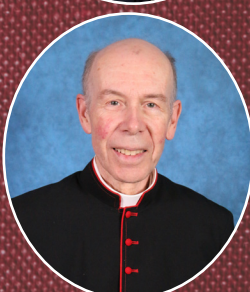
Vic and Sherry Risovi, parishioners of Sacred Heart in Cando, will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Aug. 3. They were married at St. John's in New Rockford. They have 3 children and are expecting their 12th grandchild.



Paul and Mary Jean Schulz, parishioners of Sts. Anne and Joachim in Fargo, will celebrate their 65th anniversary on Aug. 23. They were married at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. They raised their 3 children at Holy Spirit in Fargo. They have 2 granddaughters and 2 great-grandchildren.



Patrick and Janie Wolfe, parishioners of St. Boniface in Esmond, celebrated their 65th anniversary on July 3. They have been blessed with 2 sons and a daughter, 10 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.



Monsignor Robert Laliberte will celebrate his 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood with a Mass on Aug. 6 at 4 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fargo.

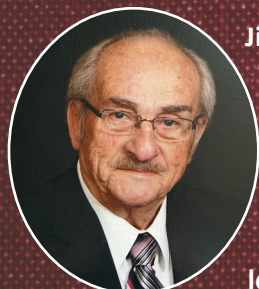




Sister Mary Agnes of the Blessed Sacrament, O. Carm. will celebrate her 25th silver jubilee anniversary on Aug. 15. A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated on June 27.



Marianne Braaten will celebrate her 90th birthday on Aug. 5. She is a life-long parishioner of St. Timothy's in Manvel. Marianne raised 6 children, has 15 grandchildren, and 27 great-grandchildren.



Jim Weber, life-long parishioner of St. Jude's in Thompson, celebrated his 90th birthday on July 24. Jim and his late wife, Donna, have 6 children, 15 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren with 2 more on the way. A family gathering will be held to celebrate his legacy.



Marie Bosch, parishioner of St. Joseph's in Devils Lake, celebrated her 95th birthday on July 2. She and her late husband, Joseph, of 71 years were blessed with 9 children, 20 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, 1 great-great grandchild, 6 step-grandchildren, 11 step-great-grandchildren, and 1 step-great-great-grandchild.



Sister Philip Zimmer celebrated her 90th birthday on Aug. 14. She's the daughter of Peter and Hilda Zimmer of Munich. She entered religious life at St. Benedict's Monastery at St. Joseph, Minn. After 50 years as an elementary educator, she now lives the communal life at the Monastery. Sister Philip is a great aunt to Father Steven Wirth.



Arlene Rieder, parishioner of Sacred Heart in Cando, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Aug. 6. Arlene and her late husband, Terence were blessed with 8 children, 20 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren.



Patricia Jensen, parishioner of St. Michael's in Grand Forks, will celebrate her 90th birthday Aug. 23. Patricia and her late husband, Waldon, were blessed with 6 children, 8 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandsons. She resides at Edgewood Grand Forks.

## JOB OPENING: LIVE-IN HOUSEMOTHER



Be a part of this beautiful Pro-Life Apostolate. We are seeking mature and balanced young women to serve the mothers and children of Saint Gianna and Pietro Molla Maternity Home. We will have 3 positions open in July or August. Applicants must be joyful, confident, and be able to work with others. They must also believe in the teachings of the Catholic Church, especially regarding life, and have a valid driver's license. Duties vary but include, running errands, simple meal prep, cleaning, classes, childcare, and mentoring these young mothers as they make big decisions. Room and Board included as well as 8 days off per month. Contact Mary Pat or Morgan to learn more about joining our Saint Gianna and Pietro Family.

[sgpmollahome@outlook.com](mailto:sgpmollahome@outlook.com)  
[www.sgpmhome.org](http://www.sgpmhome.org)  
(701) 248-3077

## 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](mailto: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 Sept. issue is Aug. 16, and the deadline for the Oct. issue is Sept. 19.



## Sister Mary Louise Jundt, OSF, passes away July 4



Sister Mary Louise Jundt, OSF, peacefully passed away at the age of 92 in her home, St. Francis Convent, Hankinson, July 4. Her funeral was held July 10 at St. Francis Convent. For several weeks prior to her death she was attended around the clock by her Sisters, the staff of St. Mary's Infirmary Unit at the convent, and CHI Home Health and Hospice nurses.

Sister Mary Louise (Rosie) was born to John and Stephina (Voeller) Jundt in Rugby on May 17, 1931. When she was seven years old, the family of six boys and three girls moved to a farm in the Fulda area. When Sister was ready for second grade, she attended German School District 1, a rural school, where she finished 8th grade. Having been given a strong Catholic formation, Sr. Mary Louise then entered the candidature at St. Francis Convent, Hankinson. She graduated from St. Francis Academy in May 1949 and entered the Novitiate July 14, 1949.

Sister Mary Louise was a professed Sister for nearly 73 years, having made her First Profession of Religious Vows on Aug. 12, 1950. She was trained as an elementary school teacher and

taught at Catholic schools in Rugby, Lidgerwood, and Hankinson. In 1970, she was elected Provincial Superior of her community and held the position for 18 years.

Following three terms as Provincial Superior, standing firmly on the foundation of daily Mass and prayer, she generously accepted the call to serve her Province in the formation of new members for what became the next 12 years. At the same time, she was on the Provincial Council, on the boards of St. Gerard's Nursing Home and Oakes Community Hospital, and was a department head at the Provincial House in Hankinson overseeing housekeeping personnel.

From 2000 on, she served at St. Gerard's. She loved best giving her time to residents, their families, and staff who needed a listening heart or gentle advice. Precious to her were times praying at the bedsides of the dying.

Sister Mary Louise is survived by her Franciscan Community in Hankinson and Grand Forks; her brothers Nick Jundt; Joe (Janice) Jundt; sister Carol Jundt and sister-in-laws Ramona Jundt; Joan Jundt, and many devoted nieces and nephews. Preceding in death are her parents, John and Stephina (Voeller) Jundt, her brothers, John, Peter, Roy, and Leo Jundt and her sister Mary Burkhard.

## A glimpse of the past

These news items, compiled by Kristina Bloomsburg, were found in *New Earth* and its predecessor, *Catholic Action News*.

### 75 years ago — 1948

A different kind of a Fourth of July took place at 11:30 p.m. the evening before, when lightning struck the steeple of the church at Fried and caused a fire and damage estimated at \$1,500. The interior of the Church was not touched, reports Father Lambert, who quickly removed the Blessed Sacrament and spread the alarm by ringing the church bell. In a short time ten or twelve men of the parish came to help extinguish the flames and soon had it under control, with the help of a rainfall that "God chose to send at that very time" says Father Lambert.

### 50 years ago — 1973

St. Raphael's Parish, Verona, celebrated its 75th anniversary observance with a concelebrated Mass by Bishop Justin A. Driscoll, Rev. John A. Bacevicius, Rev. Antonio J. Preske, former priests of the Parish, on Sunday July 1, 1973. Father Louis Veit, Pastor, because of illness attended in person in the sacristy.

### 20 years ago — 2003

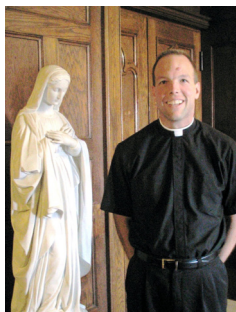
The grand opening celebration of Blessed Gianna's Maternity Home in Warsaw on Aug. 16 was a true celebration of life in every way, shape and form. The completion of the residential shelter for pregnant women was marked by reflection and gratitude, as well as great fanfare and song. "This is a day of great joy for the church of Fargo and the community of Warsaw," Bishop Samuel Aquila told an overflowing congregation packed to the rafters in St. Stanislaus Catholic Church. As members of the neighboring parishes joined in song in the choir loft, an estimated 800 to 1,000 faithful from Warsaw, surrounding communities, and as far away as California and Kentucky, joined in the celebration.

### 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](mailto:victimassistance@fargodiocese.org). To make a report of sexual abuse of a minor and related misconduct by bishops, go to [ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://ReportBishopAbuse.org) or call 1-800-276-1562.



## Events



### Father Darin Didier 17th Annual Memorial Mass

Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fargo invites you to attend the 17th Annual Father Darin Didier Memorial Mass on Sept. 4 (Labor Day) at 5:30 p.m. A meal will be served following Mass. A free-will offering will be collected to fund the Father Didier Memorial Scholarship

Fund at Holy Spirit. For more info, call the parish office at (701) 232-5900. Father Didier was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Fargo on June 4, 2005, and served as parochial vicar at Holy Spirit Church until his death on Sept. 6, 2005. For more info on Father Didier, visit the website: [www.fatherdarin.com](http://www.fatherdarin.com).



### Carol Everett to speak at Dakota Hope banquets in Minot and Bottineau

Dakota Hope Clinic, a pregnancy help center in Minot, with a satellite in Tioga and another satellite to open in Bottineau Sept. 13, will hold two fundraising banquets in September. Carol Everett,

whose life has been entrenched in women's reproductive choices since her unplanned pregnancy at age 16, is the keynote speaker for both events.

The Minot banquet will be Sept. 18, at the State Fair Center. On Sept. 19, a banquet will be held in Bottineau at the Cobblestone Inn. Guests will have the opportunity to partner with Dakota Hope to save and change more lives with a one-time gift and/or a pledge for monthly giving.

Six years of selling abortions to other women to justify her own brought Carol to a crossroads. She experienced a life-altering change when she came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in 1983. Since then, she has been a fierce advocate for the life affirming movement, working to make this nation safe for unborn babies and their mothers. Carol's efforts have given her a platform to serve the unborn and those in pain from a previous abortion. Her story is detailed in the book, *Blood Money - Getting Rich off a Woman's Right to Choose*.

Reservations are required by Sept. 8 for these adult only fundraisers. For more information or to register to attend a banquet, call (701) 852-4675 or visit [dakotahope.org/events](http://dakotahope.org/events).

### Catholic women's group offers spiritual opportunities, upcoming retreat

Grand Forks Area Catholic Women invites you to a women's retreat at St. Francis Retreat Center in Hankinson Sept. 22-24. The theme will be "Living in the Presence of God," with talks given by Sister Mary Ruth Huhn, OSF. Beginning in February 2019, a group of local women in Grand Forks began gathering for faith and fellowship on a monthly basis. Their gatherings, held on the first Saturday of each month at St. Anne's Living Center in Grand Forks, include rosary, Mass, a short talk and small group discussions. For more information on the retreat or Grand Forks Area Catholic Women, contact Sister Christina at [gfacwomen@gmail.com](mailto:gfacwomen@gmail.com).

### National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children

Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo is sponsoring a National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children prayer service on Sept. 9 at 11 a.m. at Holy Cross Cemetery North, Fargo. This will be a time to honor the gravesites of our unborn brothers and sisters.

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**DECREE****Consenting to the Alienation of Farmland**

*In Nomine Domini. Amen.*

*Whereas* the immovable property at N½ of NW¼ Sec. 25-53-10 is property of the Parish of St. Martin's Catholic Church in Geneseo, ND, a subject of the Bishop of Fargo;

*Whereas* just cause exists to alienate this property, namely, state law prevents the retention of this land (ND Cent Code 10-06.1-02; 10-06.1-11; c. 1293 §1, 1°);

*Whereas* the apparent market value for the property is over the defined minimum for juridic persons subject to the diocesan bishop (c.1292 §1, USCCB Complementary Norm);

*Whereas* I have received at least two written appraisals of the property (c. 1293 §1, 2°);

*Whereas* the College of Consultors on 11 July 2023 and the Diocesan Finance Council on 28 March 2023 consented to the alienation;

*Whereas* those concerned, namely Fr. Peter Anderl, pastor, consented to the alienation of the property (c. 1292 §1);

**Therefore**, the requirements of the law having been fulfilled, I consent to the alienation of the immovable property of N½ of NW¼ Sec. 25-53-10. In accord with c. 1294 §2, the proceeds received by St. Martin's Catholic Church as a result of the alienation are to be invested carefully or expended prudently for the advantage of the Church.

†Most Rev. John T. Folda  
*Bishop of Fargo*

Given at the Chancery  
This 11th day of July, 2023.

Mr. Timothy M. Olson, JCL  
*Chancellor*

**DECREE****Consenting to the Alienation of St. Michael's Hall**

*In Nomine Domini. Amen.*

*Whereas* the immovable property of St. Michael's Hall, 221 2nd Ave, Wales, is property of the Parish of St. Michael, a subject of the Bishop of Fargo;

*Whereas* just cause exists to alienate this property, namely, the structure is of no further utility to the parish, but can continue to serve the local community by being donated to the local volunteer fire department;

*Whereas* parishioners have indicated their preference that the hall continue to serve the community;

*Whereas* the apparent market value for the property is over the defined minimum for juridic persons subject to the diocesan bishop (c.1292 §1, USCCB Complementary Norm);

*Whereas* I have received at least two written appraisals of the property (c. 1293 §1, 2°);

*Whereas* on 20 June 2023 the Finance Council consented to the alienation of the property (c.1292 §1);

*Whereas* on 11 July 2023 the College of Consultors consented to the alienation of the property (c. 1292 §1);

*Whereas* those concerned, namely Fr. Kurt Gunwall, pastor, consented to the alienation of the property (c. 1292 §1);

*Whereas* the sale of the property at appraised value would not necessarily fulfill the purpose of the alienation;

**Therefore**, the requirements of the law having been fulfilled, I consent to the alienation of the immovable property of St. Michael's Hall, 221 2nd Ave, Wales. Further, should it be alienated to Wales Fire Department, it may be alienated for less than appraised value. In accord with c. 1294 §2, proceeds, if any, received by the Parish of St. Michael as a result of the alienation are to be invested carefully or expended prudently for the advantage of the Church.

†Most Rev. John T. Folda  
*Bishop of Fargo*

Given at the Chancery  
This 11th day of July, 2023.

Mr. Timothy M. Olson, JCL  
*Chancellor*

**DECREE****Relegating St. Michael's Church to Profane but Not Sordid Use and Authorizing Its Alienation**

*In Nomine Domini. Amen.*

*Whereas* the Parish of St. Michael in Wales, is a subject of the Bishop of Fargo;

*Whereas* the church itself, located at 221 2nd Ave, Wales, ND is property of the Parish of St. Michael;

*Whereas* sacred places lose their dedication or blessing if they have been turned over permanently to profane use by the decree of the competent ordinary (cf. c. 1212);

*Whereas* the competent superior can relegate a church to profane but not sordid use provided that he has heard the presbyteral council, received the consent of those who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church, and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment thereby (cf. c. 1222 §2);

*Whereas* I have heard those whose rights could be injured, namely Fr. Kurt Gunwall, Pastor of St. Michael, and the parish council of St. Michael's on 26 January 2021 and 3 March 2021 (c. 50);

*Whereas* I have received the consent of those whose rights might be legitimately harmed, namely, Fr. Kurt Gunwall, the pastor of the Parish of St. Michael;

*Whereas* grave causes suggest that this church no longer be used for divine worship: it is approximately 30 miles from a population center. Its remote location puts it at serious risk of desecration unless continuously occupied. There are no local personnel willing and able to suitably maintain the edifice. Further, it is a wooden structure which continues to decay, particularly in winter conditions.

*Whereas* I have provided the presbyteral council sufficient information to judge the appropriateness and legitimacy of the relegation of this church to profane but not sordid use;

*Whereas* consultation regarding this matter occurred with the presbyteral council on 26 September 2022, according to the norms of canons 127 and 166;



Whereas I have received two written appraisals for the church building (c. 1293 §1, 2°);

Whereas the College of Consultors on 11 July 2023 and the Diocesan Finance Council on 20 June 2023 consented to the pious destruction of the church building (c. 1292 §1);

Whereas I have ensured that the altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts will be safeguarded;

Whereas I have made appropriate provision to assure that good of souls will not suffer any detriment as a result of this relegation, namely, that the faithful may continue to worship at the Parish of St. Alphonsus, Langdon;

**Therefore**, the requirements of law having been fulfilled (cf. c. 1222 §2) I hereby relegate the Church of St. Michael, located at 221 2nd Ave, Wales, ND, to profane but not sordid use. It thus loses its blessing, dedication and consecration and may no longer be used for divine worship. I likewise consent to the demolition of the church building.

This decree is to be published by means of the diocesan periodical, *New Earth*. It may be challenged within the peremptory time limit of ten days from the legitimate notification of the decree and in accordance with the norm of law (cf. c. 1734).

†Most Rev. John T. Folda  
*Bishop of Fargo*

Given at the Chancery  
This 11th day of July, 2023.

Mr. Timothy M. Olson, JCL  
*Chancellor*

## Made for Greatness

Men's Winter Retreat



Jan. 19-21  
2024

Maryvale Retreat  
Center, Valley City

Cost  
\$250-300

With spiritual wisdom, sacramental strength, and energizing brotherhood, this retreat will equip husbands and fathers with the inspiration and tools needed to thrive as spiritual leaders in their homes. The retreat will feature spiritual insights, Mass, confession, prayer and reflection, and time for growing as brothers in Christ.

Devin Schadt will lead the retreat.



[www.fargodiocese.org/mfg-winter](http://www.fargodiocese.org/mfg-winter)  
[brad.gray@fargodiocese.org](mailto:brad.gray@fargodiocese.org)  
(701) 356-7903



Devin Schadt is the executive director of the Fathers of St. Joseph, an apostolate that labors for the restoration, redemption, and revitalization of fatherhood. Devin is the author of several books and is the creator of the video-devotional system LEAD: The Four Marks of Fatherly Greatness. Devin lives with his wife and five daughters in the Midwest. Learn more at [fathersofstjoseph.org](http://fathersofstjoseph.org).



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BOTTINEAU	SMP Health - St. Andrew's
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HARVEY	SMP Health - St. Aloisius
JAMESTOWN	SMP Health - Ave Maria
ROLLA	SMP Health - St. Kateri
VALLEY CITY	SMP Health - St. Raphael





## DECREE

**Uniting the Parishes of St. Michael, Wales and St. Alphonsus, Langdon**

*In Nomine Domini. Amen.*

*Whereas* the parishes of St. Michael in Wales, ND and St. Alphonsus in Langdon, ND are subject to the Bishop of Fargo;

*Whereas* the diocesan bishop can alter parishes if he has heard the presbyteral council (c. 515 §2);

*Whereas* I have heard those whose rights could be injured, namely Fr. Kurt Gunwall, Pastor of St. Michael and St. Alphonsus, the parish finance council of St. Alphonsus on 19 January 2023 and 13 April 2023, and the parish council of St. Michael's on 26 January 2021 and 3 March 2021 (c.50);

*Whereas* I have provided the presbyteral council sufficient information to judge the appropriateness and legitimacy of uniting the parishes of St. Michael and St. Alphonsus;

*Whereas* consultation regarding this matter occurred with the presbyteral council on 26 September 2022 according to the norms of canons 127 and 166.

*Whereas* just causes suggest that the Parish of St. Michael be united to the Parish of St. Alphonsus, namely, that St. Michael's has a very small membership, and is unable to continue to sustain itself. The relative proximity of the parishes provides the minimal possible disruption for those who regularly attended at St. Michael's.

*Whereas* I have determined that the good of souls requires it;

**Therefore**, the requirements of law having been fulfilled, I decree that the Parish of St. Michael in Wales, ND with all its rights, obligations, and privileges is hereby united to and amalgamated with the parish of St. Alphonsus in Langdon.

On account of this extinctive-union and amalgamation, this newly amalgamated parish is to be known as the Parish of St. Alphonsus. It comprises the territory of the former Parish of St. Michael in addition to the current territory of the Parish of St. Alphonsus. The Parish of St. Alphonsus remains in Deanery IV.

The temporal goods and patrimonial rights proper to St. Michael are allocated to the Parish of St. Alphonsus, and the intentions of the founders and donors must be respected (cf. c. 121). All the parish and sacramental records of the extinct Parish of St. Michael are to be properly preserved and safeguarded by the Parish of St. Alphonsus.

This decree is to be published by means of the diocesan periodical, *New Earth*. It may be challenged within the peremptory time limit of ten days from the legitimate notification of the decree and in accordance with the norm of law (cf. c. 1734).

I take this opportunity to give thanks to God for the nearly 120 years that St. Michael's has witnessed to the truth of the gospel in faith, hope, and love, and the blessings that this community has received through the gift of God in the sacraments and Mass which have nourished them for the past century.

†Most Rev. John T. Folda  
*Bishop of Fargo*

Given at the Chancery  
This 11th day of July, 2023.

Mr. Timothy M. Olson, JCL  
*Chancellor*



## DECREE

**Relegating St. Thomas Church to Profane but Not Sordid Use and Authorizing Its Alienation**

*In Nomine Domini. Amen.*

*Whereas* the Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Grafton, ND is a subject of the Bishop of Fargo

*Whereas* St. Thomas Church, located at 640 Main Street, St. Thomas is property of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist;

*Whereas* sacred places lose their dedication or blessing if they have been turned over permanently to profane use by the decree of the competent ordinary (cf. c. 1212);

*Whereas* the competent superior can relegate a church to profane but not sordid use provided that he has heard the presbyteral council, received the consent of those who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church, and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment thereby (cf. c. 1222 §2);

*Whereas* I have heard the pastor and people of the parish territory in which the church is located on 10 June 2014, and subsequently, from time to time, received personal contacts through my delegate, the local pastor, and by correspondence (c. 50);

*Whereas* I have received the consent of those whose rights might be legitimately harmed, namely, Rev. Jeff Eppler, the pastor of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist;

*Whereas* grave causes suggest that this church no longer be used for divine worship, namely, the edifice is in worsening condition, particularly as a result of serious water damage and mold; a lack of necessary resources, including personnel, to maintain the edifice in a suitable manner; an inability to provide appropriate security, ongoing maintenance, and oversight due to the edifice's distance from the pastor responsible for its upkeep; and to safeguard the sacred art and items from neglect;

*Whereas* I have provided the presbyteral council sufficient information to judge the appropriateness and legitimacy of the relegation of this church to profane but not sordid use;

*Whereas* consultation regarding this matter occurred with the presbyteral council on 28 September 2021 and 11 July 2023, according to the norms of canons 127 and 166;

*Whereas* I have received two written appraisals for the church building (c. 1293 §1, 2°);

*Whereas* the College of Consultors on 11 July 2023 and the Diocesan Finance Council on 20 June 2023 consented to the alienation and/or pious destruction of the church building;

*Whereas* I have ensured that the altar, sacred objects, and religious artifacts will be safeguarded;

*Whereas* I have made appropriate provision to assure that good of souls will not suffer any detriment as a result of this relegation, namely, that the faithful may continue to worship at their proper parish church, St. John the Evangelist, Grafton;

**Therefore**, the requirements of law having been fulfilled (cf. c. 1222 §2) I hereby relegate the Church of St. Thomas, located at 640 Main St, St. Thomas, to profane but not sordid use. It thus loses its blessing, dedication and consecration. It may no longer be used for divine worship. I likewise consent to the demolition and/or other alienation of the church building. In accord with c. 1294 §2, proceeds, if any, received by the Parish of St. John the Evangelist as a result of the alienation are to be invested carefully or expended prudently for the advantage of the Church.



This decree is to be published by means of the diocesan periodical, *New Earth*. It may be challenged within the peremptory time limit of ten days from the legitimate notification of the decree and in accordance with the norm of law (cf. c. 1734).

†Most Rev. John T. Folda  
*Bishop of Fargo*

Given at the Chancery  
This 11th day of July, 2023.

Mr. Timothy M. Olson, JCL  
*Chancellor*



## WANT TO ADVERTISE IN *NEW EARTH*?

Contact Kristina Bloomsburg  
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## “My flesh for the life of the world.” —John 6:51

Women's Retreat	Oct. 6-8 2023	Maryvale, Valley City	Cost \$250 to \$325
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This retreat will help women 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 and how the Eucharist is that path to a fulfilling life.

The retreat will feature spiritual insights by Bishop Folda, Mass, confession, prayer and reflection, and time for growing as sisters in Christ.

Registration opens July 5  
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## Matrimony: A calling to forgive

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

Retrouvaille offers a welcoming and loving space to couples who have been living with the misery of a failing marriage. Retrouvaille offers hope: hope that it is not too late, hope of a different and better marriage. Retrouvaille helps couples to show each other mercy through the opportunities it provides to listen, to forgive, to be reconciled and to move into their futures believing that God loves them and with His help and their efforts, their marriages can be healed and restored. Retrouvaille provides help for marriage problems/difficulties/crises.

For more information,  
Call (701) 356-7903 or visit [HelpOurMarriage.com](http://HelpOurMarriage.com)



# Statement of the NCBC to the Determination of Death Committee of the Uniform Law Commission

By National Catholic Bioethics Center

**W**e write to express serious reservations about the proposed revision to the 1981 Uniform Determination of Death Act (UDDA)—specifically Option 2 of Section 3: The Determination of Death—that would change the current language to “(1) permanent cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions; or (2) permanent (A) coma, (B) cessation of spontaneous respiratory functions, and (C) loss of brainstem reflexes.” The proposed revision would replace the standard of whole brain death with one of partial brain death. Thus, we urge the Commission to retain the current standard of “irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem.”

The basis for our objection is that the clinical guidelines developed by the American Academy of Neurology and others do not assess neuroendocrine function, thus allowing patients with integrated functioning of the hypothalamus to be declared whole brain dead. Rather than seeking to adjust and improve the current clinical protocols, the Uniform Law Commission appears poised to allow patients who exhibit partial brain function to be declared “legally dead.”

We are also concerned that the substitution of the term “permanent” for “irreversible” will be used to justify protocols that actively occlude blood flow to the brain during controlled circulatory death. Under this controversial protocol, the transplant team would directly cause the death of the donor.

Organ donation can be a “genuine act of love” that entails “a giving something of ourselves.” The Catholic Church allows the faithful to choose this generous act and the NCBC has long supported the practice, assuming the proper conditions are met. Most importantly, vital organs may be procured only after death has been determined with moral certitude. Vital organs may not be procured prior to death and their removal must not be the cause of the donor’s death, as emphasized in the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (ERDs, 63 & 64). As recently as 2008, Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the high clinical and ethical standards that must be met in properly establishing that a donor has indeed died in order for vital organ retrieval to proceed:

In an area such as this, in fact, there cannot be the slightest suspicion of arbitration [arbitrariness] and where certainty has not been attained the principle of precaution must prevail.... [I]n these cases the principal criteria of respect for the life of the donor must always prevail so that the extraction of or-

gans be performed only in the case of his/her true death (cf. *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 476).

If the Commission were to support the idea that partial brain death is sufficient for vital organ retrieval, the NCBC would be obliged to advise Catholics and others that the proposed definition conflicts with a “sound anthropology” as it fails to require “complete and irreversible cessation of all brain activity.” The net effect of the proposed change would likely be to dissuade people from becoming donors and ultimately reduce the number of organs available for transplant.

The Commission should retain the standard of whole brain death by maintaining the current UDDA language. Moreover, it should encourage medical professionals to update clinical testing guidelines to fully comply with the current legal definition of brain death, not change the legal definition to comply with deficient medical criteria.

## This is My Body

**Sept. 9, 2023**

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St. Francis Retreat Center,  
Hankinson

Cost \$20 includes lunch  
and refreshments

This retreat will focus on St. John Paul II's teaching on the human person known as Theology of the Body and its connection to the Eucharist and the way we live.



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(701) 356-7910





# Walking in the footsteps of St. Kateri Tekakwitha at historic shrine

By Isabel Barry | Catholic News Agency

**S**hrines to various saints can be found in every part of the world, including every state in the U.S. Each one is dedicated to faith and prayer, but one shrine in the northeastern United States also has a distinct mission of connecting pilgrims with Native American culture and sharing the fascinating history of Kateri Tekakwitha, the first American Indian to be canonized a saint.

The Saint Kateri Tekakwitha National Shrine and Historic Site in Fonda, New York, honors not only the life of St. Kateri, whose feast day is July 14, but also the life and history of the local Indigenous people to whom she belonged.

"We have cultivated strong ties to both the Catholic Mohawk community and the traditional Mohawk community," said Melissa Miscevic Bramble, director of operations at the St. Kateri Shrine, in an interview with CNA. "We see it as our mission to educate about her Mohawk culture as well as her Catholic faith."

Called the Lily of the Mohawks, Kateri Tekakwitha was the child of a Mohawk father and a Christian Algonquin mother but was orphaned at age 4 when the rest of her family died of smallpox. Her own early bout with the illness left lasting scars and poor vision.

She went to live with an anti-Christian uncle and aunt, but at age 11 she encountered Jesuit missionaries and recognized their teaching as the beliefs of her beloved mother. Desiring to become a Christian, she began to privately practice Christianity. Beginning at about age 13, she experienced pressure from her family to marry, but she wanted to give her life to Jesus instead. A priest who knew her recorded her words: "I have deliberated enough. For a long time, my decision on what I will do has been made. I have consecrated myself entirely to Jesus, son of Mary, I have chosen him for husband, and he alone will take me for wife."

At last, she was baptized at about age 19, and her baptism made public her beliefs, which had been kept private up until then. The event was the catalyst for her ostracism from her village. Some members of her people believed that her beliefs were sorcery, and she was harassed, stoned, and threatened with torture in her home village.

Tekakwitha fled 200 miles to Kahnawake, a Jesuit mission village for Native American converts to Christianity to live together in community. There, she found her mother's close friend, Anastasia Tegonhatsiongo, who was a clan matron of a Kahnawake longhouse. Anastasia and other Mohawk women took Kateri under their wings and taught her about Christianity,

and she lived there happily for several years until her death around age 23 or 24.

Although she never took formal vows, Tekakwitha is considered a consecrated virgin, and the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins took her as its patron. She is also the patron saint of traditional ecology, Indigenous peoples, and care for creation.

The Saint Kateri Tekakwitha National Shrine and Historic Site has a unique mission of archaeological and historical research related to Kateri Tekakwitha and her people. Welcoming several thousand visitors per year, the shrine ministers not only to Christians but also to all American Indians.

According to its website, the shrine and historic site "promotes healing, encourages environmental stewardship, and facilitates peace for all people by offering the natural, cultural, and spiritual resources at this sacred site." Describing itself as a sacred place of peace and healing with a Catholic identity, its ministry and site are intended to be ecumenical and welcome people of all faiths.

In keeping with this mission, the shrine's grounds include an archaeological site, the village of Caughnawaga, which is the only fully excavated Iroquois/Haudenosaunee village in the world. St. Kateri lived in this village, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Visitors can also visit the Kateri Spring, where Kateri Tekakwitha was baptized.

"The water from the Kateri Spring is considered holy water by the Catholic Church," Bramble said. "People are welcome to come take the waters, and we regularly get reports of healing. We've sent that water all over North America to folks who have requested it."

Besides the archaeological site, the main grounds of the shrine include St. Peter's Chapel, housed in a former Dutch barn built in 1782; museum exhibits of Native American culture and history; St. Maximilian Kolbe Pavilion; a Candle Chapel dedicated to St. Kateri; Grassmann Hall and the Shrine office; a friary; a gift shop; an outdoor sanctuary; and maintenance facilities. The 150-acre property includes hiking trails that are open to the public year-round from sunrise to sunset.



**Saint Peter's Chapel and Native American Museum at Saint Kateri Tekakwitha National Shrine and Historic Site in Fonda, New York. (Catholic News Agency)**



# U.S. bishops rebuke group of Catholic Democrats vowing to support abortion

By Francesca Pollio Fenton | Catholic News Agency

The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) has issued a strong response to a group of Catholic lawmakers who signed a letter citing Catholic teaching in support of abortion.

The group of 30 Democrats, led by Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, cited their Catholic faith and St. John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* as reasons to support abortion.

"The fundamental tenets of our Catholic faith—social justice, conscience, and religious freedom—compel us to defend a woman's right to access abortion," the letter stated. "Our faith unfailingly promotes the common good, prioritizes the dignity of every human being, and highlights the need to provide a collective safety net to our most vulnerable."

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the USCCB; Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, chairman of the USCCB's Committee of Pro-Life Activities; and Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Doctrine, issued a joint corrective statement in response:

"Members of Congress who recently invoked teachings of the Catholic faith itself as justifying abortion or supporting a supposed right to abortion grievously distort the faith. It is wrong and incoherent to claim that the taking of innocent human life at its most vulnerable stage can ever be consistent with the values of supporting the dignity and well-being of those in need," the U.S. bishops wrote.

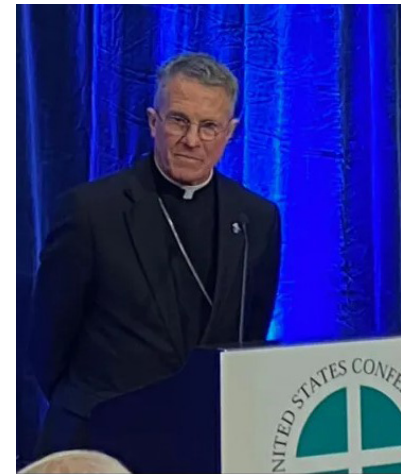
Citing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the bishops added: "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception."

"Abortion violates this with respect to preborn children and brings untold suffering to countless women," they said.

"Conscience rightly enjoys a special regard both in Church teaching and in the public sphere. And policymakers should support the freedom of Catholics and of others to serve the common good in accord with their beliefs in a wide range of areas—from services and assistance to recently arrived migrants, to offering health care and social services."

The bishops stated that "conscience is not a license to commit evil and take innocent lives. Conscience cannot and does not justify the act or support of abortion."

They concluded by imploring Congress to "join us in working toward the true common good by prioritizing authentic, uplifting support for the vulnerable and marginalized, including mothers and families in need."



**Archbishop Timothy Broglio, the newly elected president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, meets with reporters in Baltimore on Nov. 15, 2022.**  
(Joe Bukuras | CNA)



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## Revisiting *Roe*'s fall and my assault, a year later



### SIDEWALK STORIES

#### ROXANE B. SALONÉN

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

What a year it's been in the national debate surrounding abortion! My June 2022 column—in which I anticipated the hopeful overturning of *Roe vs. Wade*—concluded with: “When that day comes, we will celebrate, but we will not toss our signs and brochures. Instead, we will simply follow the facility to its likely new home across the river in Minnesota... doing whatever we can to breach the glaring gap between life and death.”

Soon thereafter, it happened. *Roe* fell, and the abortion facility slinked away to Moorhead. And as promised, we sidewalk advocates followed them. Abortion is abortion, no matter the side of a state line.

That timeframe proved volatile, however, for the nation and me personally. Just before *Roe*'s descent, I was assaulted on the sidewalk of the old Red River Women's Clinic with a punch to the side of the head, suffering a mild concussion and jaw pain. The perpetrator was whisked away by escorts, evading the police, despite the incident having been recorded by the facility's camera.

I flashed back to that shocking moment recently while reading about two elderly sidewalk advocates in Baltimore who were brutally beaten by a passerby, who also got away.

Reading about these attacks may be a deterrent to those who have felt moved to pray with us, onsite, for an end to abortion. But stay with me here, because later in this column, I'm hoping to make the case for why joining us would be worth your time. It's important to note that the current local sidewalk situation is vastly less combative than the former.

Abortion is a violent act, though, so it's not surprising that those promoting or involved in this industry will be more prone to responding to us with violence. Our very presence agitates the conscience.

But that is a good thing. We need more brave souls to take up Christ's cross and be a sign of beauty, truth and goodness in our broken world, and I still see the sidewalk as one of the most accessible ways to be courageous for Christ.

This past year, I had to take a long leave from my spot on the sidewalk, but my return has allowed me to observe the pro-abortion mentality anew. The mindset was conveyed recently in a social media post showing a very pregnant woman and her exposed belly with the words, “Not Yet a Human,” written across her stomach. Herein lies the delusion.

The sidewalk itself, however, belies this sentiment. If the in-utero baby were not yet human, why do most clients avert their eyes as they pass us with our signs and smiles of love? Why do so many speed up as soon as they're able to get out of the parking lot, as if embarrassed? Why would the escorts have such defensive stances toward us if the women they greet are only carrying a benign, inhuman growth?

Brad Youngquist, a fellow advocate, recently shared about a man in a pickup who dropped off a young woman and stayed for over two hours in the parking lot, revving his engine and playing loud music to drown out the advocates' voices as additional women entered the operation. If human lives weren't what's at stake there, why make such a ruckus? Why try to silence us if it's “not yet a human?”

As Brad also said, our presence matters, and we can see it on clients' faces, even if those expressions are filled with shame or even anger. Having us there as a mirror that forces them to face themselves and their actions—to be reminded that we only bother showing up because human beings' lives are at stake—can only be good in the end. Truth is always freeing.

“Even if we don't get to speak directly to them, they see us, and some read our signs offering help,” Brad commented. “Many of these people driving past are ‘good’ people,” but held captive “by their demons. Just seeing the group presence on the sidewalk is a ‘picture that says 1,000 words.’”

A year ago, the conversation changed. *Roe* ducked, and the void was filled with a lot of ugliness. But good things are coming. I believe this, because I believe in a good God who keeps his promises, and he promised that if we are faithful to him, he will reward us.

I return, then, to the invitation mentioned earlier. Consider joining us on the sidewalk this summer. Email me at [roxanebsalonen@gmail.com](mailto:roxanebsalonen@gmail.com) if you'd like guidance. The facility usually performs abortions from around 8 a.m. to around 4 p.m., so come any time during that span, even if just for an hour. You only have to pray a while in silence, but our good Lord, who sees and hears all, will bless you for your sacrifice.



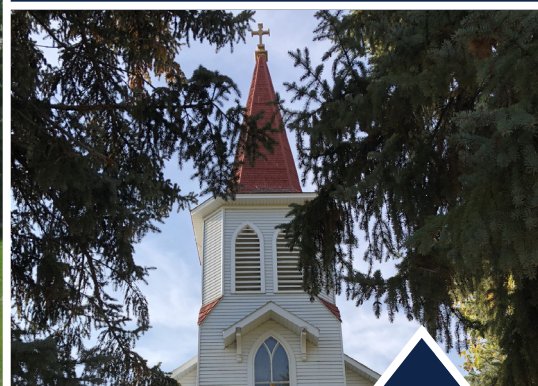
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*Where in the diocese are we?*

Last month's photo is from  
Sts. Peter and Paul's Church  
in Karlsruhe.