

# New

September 2023 | Vol. 44 | No. 8



# Earth

The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo

## Living our Faith, Building our Future

New diocesan capital  
campaign to benefit  
retreats, retired priests,  
and parishes



From Bishop Folda:  
“Living our Faith,  
Building our Future”

Summer youth events show  
the goodness of God

“Be not afraid,” Pope Francis  
tells young people at end  
of World Youth Day





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## ON THE COVER:

The steeple of the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. (Guidance in Giving)

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# NEW EARTH

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### Mission

Our mission is to inform, teach, and inspire readers about the Catholic faith and the life of parishioners in Eastern North Dakota.

*New Earth* is the official monthly publication of the Diocese of Fargo.

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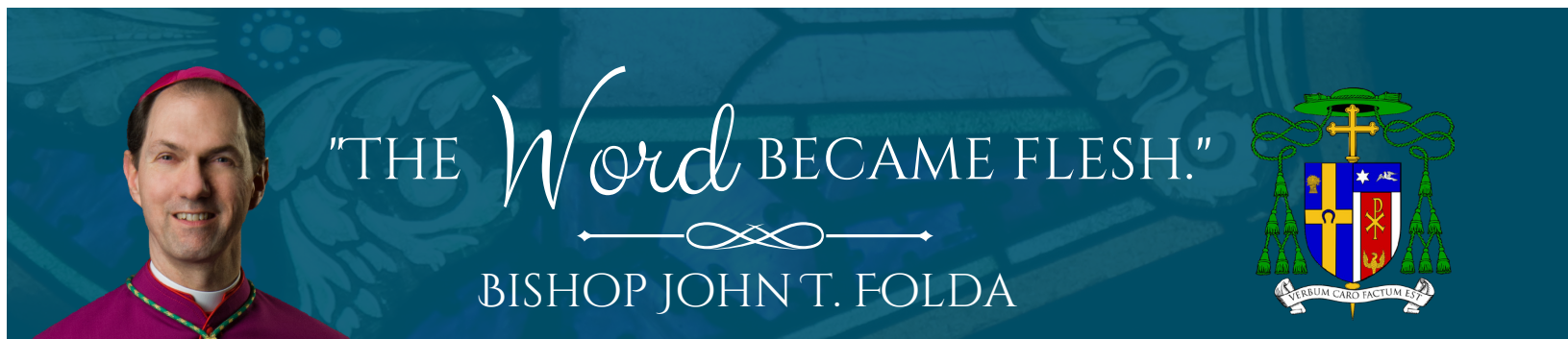
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## “Living our Faith, Building our Future”

**D**ear friends, in my role as Bishop of Fargo, I must always think about the needs of our diocese, both spiritual and material. We are already engaged in preparation for a diocesan Synod, which, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, will set a course for our diocese in the coming years. We are also engaged in a nationwide Eucharistic Revival that invites all the faithful to a renewed encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. And now, after a number of years of prayer and planning, I am happy to announce that we will soon begin the first capital campaign to be held in the Diocese of Fargo in more than thirty years. As you will see later in this issue, the campaign is called “Living our Faith, Building our Future.” The threefold aim of this campaign is to help our parishes thrive, to build up opportunities for spiritual growth and evangelization, and to provide for the needs of our retired priests.

Some might ask why we are launching this campaign now. We already support our parishes and the annual diocesan God’s Gift Appeal. And my first response is a hearty “thank you” for your generosity! But that generosity supports the ordinary ongoing work of our parishes and diocese, and this campaign will address some extraordinary needs and opportunities that now lie before us. I have no doubt that we can accomplish more when we join together in a common purpose than if we try to carry on in isolation from one another. This campaign will hopefully live up to its name, both to foster a living faith in the here and now, and to prepare and build up the Catholic faith in the years to come.

The campaign focuses on three major areas. The first I will mention is for the support of our retired priests. In our last diocesan campaign in 1993, the people of the diocese generously raised funds for the pension plan that assures our retired priests are cared for in their senior years. That campaign was very successful, and the pension fund is working. Now, thirty years later, we need to add to that pension fund so that benefits can keep pace with the increasing expenses of our

retired priests. We also need to plan for the future. In addition to those who are already retired, we have more than thirty active priests over the age of sixty. In the near future, many of those priests will also retire, so we need to provide for them too. I also believe the time has come to offer a stable home for our retired priests, so the campaign will provide funding to build a residence and sustain its operation. Throughout their priestly lives, we provide a place for priests to live, so it is only fitting that we should also do so after they retire. Not all will choose to live in this residence, but for many it will be a welcome and necessary alternative in their later years.

Spiritual growth and vitality are essential if the faith is to thrive in our diocese, so another focus of the campaign is our diocesan retreat center at Maryvale. During the past year, we received an extraordinary gift. The Sisters of Mary of the Presentation offered their motherhouse near Valley City to the diocese so that we could continue to operate it as a place for retreats and other spiritual and Church related activities. For many years, Maryvale has offered retreat opportunities for the people of the diocese, and the spiritual blessings have been incalculable. It is my hope that with improvements at Maryvale we can build up this ministry and offer even more opportunities for spiritual growth and evangelization. The Sisters also gave a very generous trust fund to support the operation of Maryvale. Now we as a diocese need to do our part to respond to the generosity of the Sisters.

Parish life is the backbone of every diocese, and our diocesan Church is only as healthy as the parishes within it. The parish is where we worship together, learn our Catholic faith, celebrate the sacraments, and welcome others to a relationship with Jesus Christ. So, the final and most significant portion of our campaign will focus on our parishes. In my travels around the diocese, I have seen that every one of our parishes has significant needs. Our campaign will give each parish the opportunity to dream and raise significant funding for their

**“Pope Francis and all of his recent predecessors have emphasized the mission of the Church that Jesus gave to his first followers, a mission to be salt and light, a mission to live the Gospel and make disciples for his Kingdom.”** -Bishop John T. Folda



own projects, whether these are for the parish buildings, educational opportunities, evangelization, or spiritual growth. While supporting the broader initiatives of the campaign, we will also be able to build up the spiritual home of our own local parish communities and set them up for future growth.

Pope Francis and all of his recent predecessors have emphasized the mission of the Church that Jesus gave to his first followers, a mission to be salt and light, a mission to live the Gospel and make disciples for his Kingdom. This isn't a mission that is carried out once and then is finished; it will continue on until the Lord returns in glory at the end of days. This mission isn't the responsibility of a select group of people; it is the mission given to all of us. I believe the "Living our Faith,

Building our Future" campaign will help us to accomplish this mission in the Diocese of Fargo, and I hope you will join me in carrying it to completion. Over the years, the faithful of the Diocese of Fargo have been exceptionally generous in supporting the work of the Church. It is my hope and prayer that together we will continue to do great things for our Lord.

## BISHOP FOLDA'S CALENDAR

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

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

### Sept. 15–18

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, St. Louis, Mo.

### Sept. 18–21

2023 Mission Bishops' Conference, Chicago, Ill.

### Sept. 22 at 9:30 a.m.

Consecration Mass for St. Joseph Chapel, Devils Lake

### Sept. 24–27

Presbyterate Days, Maryvale, Valley City

### Sept. 27 at 3 p.m.

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

### Sept. 29 at noon

Blue Mass, St. Anthony Church, Fargo

### Oct. 1 at 12:30 p.m.

Re-Consecration of Stations of the Cross, St. Michael Church, Grand Forks

### Oct. 6–8

Retreat Master at Women's Retreat, Maryvale, Valley City

### Oct. 9 at 6 p.m.

Luxury Bingo for Women's Care Center, Delta by Marriott, Fargo

### Oct. 14 at 5:30 p.m.

St. John School Hope Dinner Auction, St. John Academy, Jamestown



## Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

### September - For people living on the margins

We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance.

## 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)





## MONTHLY EUCHARIST MIRACLE

### Hartford Archdiocese asks Vatican to investigate possible Eucharistic miracle

*By Joe Bukuras – Catholic News Agency (edited for content)*

**T**he Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, is appealing to the Vatican for guidance on how to proceed with its investigation of a possible Eucharistic miracle at St. Thomas Catholic Church in Thomaston, Connecticut.

The referral is the first public update by the archdiocese since it was first reported on March 5, 2023, that Jesus, truly present in the holy Eucharist, appeared to multiply himself in the ciborium, typically a gold vessel that holds the Eucharistic body of Christ. Since news of the possible Eucharistic miracle spread, a number of pilgrims have flocked to the church where Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, was once the pastor.

At the conclusion of Mass that day, Father Joseph Crowley announced that a Eucharistic minister witnessed something unexplainable as he was distributing Communion. "One of our Eucharistic ministers was running out of hosts and suddenly there were more hosts in the ciborium. God just duplicated

himself in the ciborium," an emotional Father Crowley told the faithful. "It's really, really cool when God does these things, and it's really, really cool when we realize what he's done, and it just happened today," the priest said.

On March 28, the Archdiocese of Hartford put out a statement saying: "As people of faith we know that miracles can and do happen, as they did during Christ's earthly ministry. Miracles are divine signs calling us to faith or to deepen our faith. What has been reported to have occurred at our parish church in Thomaston, of which Blessed Michael McGivney was once pastor, if verified, would constitute a sign or wonder that can only be attributed to divine power to strengthen our faith in the daily miracle of the Most Holy Eucharist. It would also be a source of blessing from heaven for the effort that the U.S. bishops are making to renew and deepen the faith and practice of our Catholic people with regard to this great Sacrament," the statement said.



## Visit: [MaryvaleND.Org](https://MaryvaleND.Org)



#### UPCOMING OPEN RETREATS

- Women's Retreat with Bishop Folda - Oct. 6-8, 2023 (a few spots left)
- Beloved Husband - Men's Retreat - Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 2023 (filling up fast!)
- 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

We are Growing...Come work with us!  
Information on job openings available on our website.

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



# Cathedral parishioners travel to Peru to serve poor

By Father Riley Durkin | Pastor of churches in Lisbon and Gwinner



**Eleven people from the Cathedral of St. Mary and members of *Asociación Civil Apoyo Familiar* built homes for families in Chimbote, Peru. The mission was planned with the help of Friends of Chimbote. (submitted photo)**

In 1995, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, Pope St. John Paul II published his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae: On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*. In it, he reaffirmed the importance of the church's teaching on the dignity of all human life. He writes, "Every individual, precisely by reason of the mystery of the Word of God who was made flesh, is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church. Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church's very heart; it cannot but affect her at the core of her faith in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God, and engage her in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature" (EV, 3).

It was with this in mind that this July, I and 10 others from St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo, set out on mission—a mission to promote this Gospel of life by acknowledging the God-given dignity of the poorest of the poor in Chimbote, Peru.

During our 10-day mission, our group was able to construct two houses, buy and distribute groceries to the community, and host a meal and party. All these things are very basic ways of acknowledging the dignity of the human person but were very needed in this community. St. Mary's was doing only a little bit to help empower two families to become the people God is calling them to be.

Do we have these same issues in the United States, or even more locally in the city of Fargo? Of course! However, the advantage of an international mission trip is twofold: Firstly, we are able to make a real difference in the lives of others who may not otherwise have it. Peru doesn't have the social programs or volunteer culture that exists in the United States, and often international NGOs are the only way they have hope of receiving any sort of help. Secondly, it is important for the missionaries to witness and experience how poverty is experienced in a different culture and participate in the global missionary activity of the Catholic Church.

Elizabeth Norberg, a 16-year-old Dilworth resident and parishioner of St. Mary's, noted this about her time in Chim-

bote: "My experience in Chimbote was like nothing I've ever done. I've volunteered in a homeless shelter and helped out at a food pantry, but this was different. Not only were we able to help build a house for a family, we had a food distribution, and held a dinner for the parishioners. Everyone was so joyful even though they had so little, and were in unlivable conditions. There was hardly even a language barrier, and even though most of us spoke little or no Spanish, it was incredible how well we could communicate with the Peruvians."

To fulfill the church's call for solidarity with the poor, it is important to see and experience poverty in all its forms. It's important to enter into a place where we don't know the language or culture, but we still speak the universal language of love. How often do many of us ignore the person sleeping on the streets or dismiss the panhandler on the side of the road? Our dignity is not found in money or things, but rather whether or not we have the ability to intentionally place ourselves in the position to be in the presence of God in prayer and become the people we are called to be. For our families in Peru, the lack of reliable food, clean water, and proper shelter prevented them from growing in the ever-important relationship with Jesus Christ.

After finishing and furnishing the house we built, Elizabeth mused, "As I was finishing the paint in the boys' room, they came and were peeking into their new room with the biggest smiles on their faces. They were so happy to have their own room, each to have their own bed, which for most of us is not something we even think about." This is an acknowledgment of dignity that these boys may never have experienced.

Mission, dignity, and love all go hand in hand. Love guides mission, and part of mission is acknowledging dignity. Words cannot express my gratitude for the people of St. Mary's and the sacrifice they made for these two Peruvian families. As John Paul II writes, "It is in fact these 'works of charity' that reveal the soul of all missionary activity: Love" (*Redemptoris Missio*, 60).



# Anonymous recommendations lead Brother Stephen Johnson, OSB, to Benedictine order

Interview by Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

*Fargo native, Brother Stephen Johnson, OSB, professed his solemn vows as a Benedictine monk on July 22. New Earth interviewed Brother Stephen for a deeper understanding of his journey to Assumption Abbey in Richardton, N.D.*

**When did you first hear the call to religious life? What was that like for you?**

I only vaguely considered religious life, a call to the priesthood, or marriage during my childhood and adolescence. I did not spend much energy thinking about my vocation until I was attending NDSU. While there, I got a call from Father Kyle Metzger asking me if I wanted to join a program called the Melchizedek Project. This was a group of young men who met with Father Metzger every week to discuss potential vocations to the priesthood. Apparently, he had been receiving comments from people in the diocese about me and how I might make a good priest. Who made these comments is still a mystery to me, but I thank them! Though I did not discern into the diocesan priesthood, these meetings were very helpful in making me take my vocation more seriously. I began to spend more time thinking and praying about it, while God was slowly moving me towards joining a religious order. After I graduated from university and worked for several months, I felt God calling me very forcefully to visit a monastery or else I might regret never seriously looking into it.

**Why the Benedictines? How did you get connected with them and come to know God was calling you there?**

I started looking online for places near me. I saw that Assumption Abbey was in North Dakota, that it had beautiful buildings and scenery, and what I had read about the history of the Benedictines interested me. The Rule of Saint Benedict was written in the 6th century, so I knew that if I decided to be a monk, I would be joining a very long tradition. I contacted the vocation director of the Abbey, Brother Michael Taffe, in the late summer of 2018 and we arranged that I should come for a weekend visit. I don't remember that first visit very well because everything was so new, but I know I liked it enough that I came for another weekend visit and eventually a week long live-in for an immersive experience of daily life. During my second visit to Assumption Abbey, I went for a walk in the evening down to the monks' cemetery where I sat on the foot of the grotto with a crucifixion scene and prayed to Jesus about what he wanted me to sacrifice for Him. I felt strongly in that moment that He wanted me to offer my life as a monk in that place. After my live-in, I decided to apply to become a candidate and moved into the cloister in January 2019.



**Brother Stephen Johnson, OSB, professed his solemn vows July 22 at the Assumption Abbey in Richardton, N.D. Brother Johnson's parents, Mark and Loriann Johnson, are parishioners at Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo. (submitted photo)**

**What does a day in the life as a Benedictine monk look like?**

On a normal weekday, we meet in the church for Mass and prayers of the Divine Office five times a day. The first prayers are at 6:20 a.m. and the last are at 8:10 p.m. We eat all our meals in common with silence at breakfast and table reading at supper. We work for three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon. My work is varied but is mostly maintenance, cleaning, and gardening. I also took formation classes from my seniors before I took solemn vows. I was instructed in various topics including the Rule of Saint Benedict, Spirituality, Scripture, and History. We have more free time on the weekends. I take walks in the pasture with some other monks every Sunday afternoon.

**What do you want the readers of *New Earth* to know about your experience?**

Though some may say I have limited my options in life by becoming a monk, and in many senses they are right, I also never could have guessed about all of the opportunities I have here. I have learned many skills in music, building maintenance, gardening, prayer, and monastic studies that I probably never would have been able to have otherwise. This autumn, I will have the new experience of beginning seminary studies at St. Meinrad Seminary in Southern Indiana.

## Seminarians named candidate, lectors, acolyte

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth.

**O**n Aug. 11 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fargo, Bishop Folda celebrated various ministerial Rites to mark the deepening confidence of the Diocese of Fargo seminarians' formation progress. A man first enters seminary as an "aspirant," meaning he is in the early stages of discerning the Lord's call. During the natural transition from college philosophy to graduate theology, the seminarian will petition the Bishop to become a formal "candidate." The Rite

of admission to candidacy for Holy Orders took place during vespers, or evening prayer. Bishop Folda then celebrated Mass including the Rite of institution of lectors and acolyte. When installed as a lector, the seminarian is specially tasked to proclaim scripture. An acolyte is preparing for future ordination and is specially tasked to distribute Holy Communion. With each ministry, seminarians take on a deepening priestly identity. (Photos by Father Kyle Metzger)



**New seminarian candidate beginning Theology I, Paul Zach.**



**New seminarian lectors beginning Theology II (l to r): Garrett Aberle, Taylor Ternes, Brendon Schneibel, Patrick Sorrells.**



**New seminarian acolyte beginning Theology III, Timothy Kraemer.**

## Deacon candidates named lectors

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

**O**n Aug. 19 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fargo, Bishop Folda celebrated the Rite of institution of lectors for the deacon candidates. When installed as a

lector, the candidate is specially tasked to proclaim scripture. These seven men are on their way to be ordained permanent deacons in 2025.



**The formation team and deacon candidates (l to r): Deacon Pat Breen, Randy Severinson, Monsignor Joseph Goering, Timothy Mosser, Thomas O'Keefe, Steven Splonskowski, Bishop John Folda, Edward DeKeyser, Theadore LeMier, Brian Herding, Monsignor Gregory Schlesselmann, and Deacon Paul Schneider. (Photo by Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)**



## Something old, something new at Seven Dolors church

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

**S**even Dolors church in Fort Totten is going through a much-needed renovation, showing some beautiful results. The \$1 million project includes several upgrades to the church and rectory, including a new roof, new plastering and painting inside the sanctuary, and repairs of cracks and fallen plaster from the walls and ceilings. Also, an underground tunnel from the rectory to the church has been filled in as it was deemed a safety hazard.

Installation of the new roof began in August. The new roof is metal, replacing the worn-out and weather-beaten shingles that had been on the roof for decades and caused the leaking that damaged ceilings and walls. Seven Dolors also received a gift from the now-closed St. Bernard's church in Oriska. St. Bernard's parishioners donated the beautiful pews, side altars and main altar that were used in the church from the early 1900s until this summer. They were installed in the Seven Dolors sanctuary in July. The \$1 million project is being funded through donations.



**The new roof has been installed above the church entrance. Work continues on the rest of the church and parish rectory. (submitted photo)**



**The sanctuary of Seven Dolors has a new, yet historic feel with the addition of pews and altarpieces from St. Bernard's church in Oriska, which recently closed. (submitted photo)**



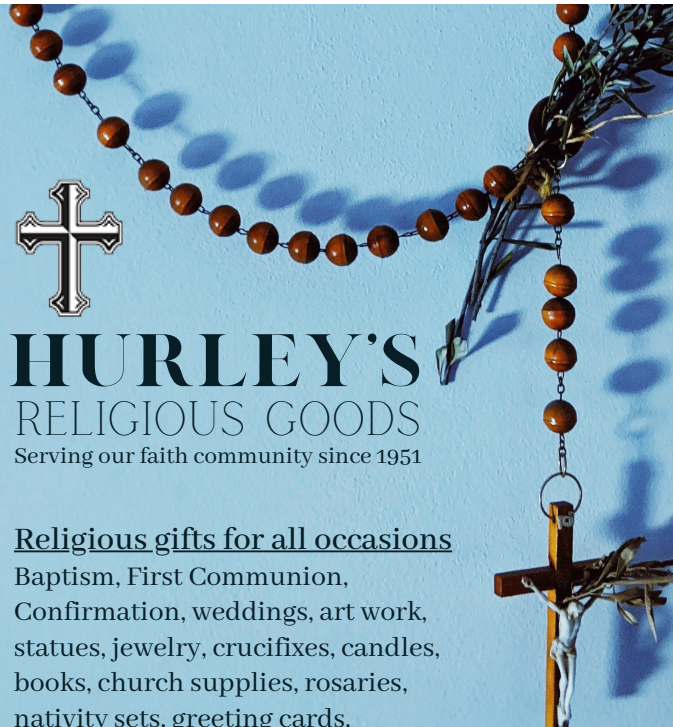
## This year's Putt 4 a Purpose winners!

Thirty-eight teams participated in the 17th annual Bishop's Charity Golf Tournament, Putt 4 a Purpose, at Rose Creek Golf Course in Fargo on Aug 7. The winning team included Paul Wilburn, Phil Zubrod, Father Kevin Lorsung, and Kyle Jaeger. Proceeds from the event benefit seminarian education and youth programs throughout the Diocese, such as March for Life, SEARCH, and youth camps. (Photo by Kristina Bloomsburg | New Earth)



## Summer fun includes Vacation Bible School

St. John's church in New Rockford held a Vacation Bible School in July. The theme was "Jesus, in the Eucharist." The kindergarten through 6th grade students were invited to join in for a day of fun, crafts, games, and Mass. They learned about The Last Supper, Eucharist, Blessed Carlo Acutis, and what happens at Mass. The children completed various art projects including making a monstrance. They also participated in the Mass as altar servers, lectors, gift bearers, and members of the choir, and they learned about vocations. The children heard about Franciscan monks, diocesan priests, the Sisters of Charity, and the Sisters of Life. The highlight of learning about the different vocations was trying on children's sized versions of priests' vestments and the various habits the monks and sisters wear. A special thank you to Andrea Salazar for making the vestments and habits. The students spent time in Adoration before ending the day with water balloon games. (submitted photo)

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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.



www.fargodiocese.org/bishop-retreat  
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# Summer Youth events show the goodness of God

By Brady Borslien | Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Fargo



Youth gather for a photo during Camp Summit at Red Willow Bible Camp near Binford the week of July 9–13. (submitted photo)

As I reflect on the various events for youth that took place over the summer, I am drawn to a song written by Bethel Worship titled *The Goodness of God*. “All my life you have been faithful, all my life you have been so, so good. With every breath that I am able, I will sing of the goodness of God.” Whether we were hosting an event at the Pastoral Center in Fargo or playing games at Camp Summit, we witnessed just how good our God is to us.

## Cor Christi Missionaries

The Diocese of Fargo welcomed four individuals into the Cor Christi (Heart of Christ) Missionary Program for the summer of 2023. The team consisted of young adults throughout the diocese, who assisted my office by leading weekly events for youth, directing the Service Team at Camp Summit, and facilitating small group discussion at the Steubenville Youth Conference. Along with creating and leading opportunities for the youth to encounter Christ, they were tasked with creating two opportunities for the young adult community to come together for fellowship and formation.

The Cor Christi Missionaries were formed last year as a response to the various discussions that I had throughout the diocese on engaging youth. Their primary task was to work with me in creating a schedule of events for youth (7th through 12th grade), which would invite them into a deeper relationship with Jesus. The main event we led was called XLT (exalt). It consisted of ultimate Frisbee games, dinner, praise and worship with a keynote speaker, Adoration, and Confession. Other nights we learned more about Mary and the Rosary, served at an organization called Farm in the Dell, and traveled

to Park Rapids for the Character Challenge Course, which is a high ropes facility that helps with team/community bonding and leadership formation.

## Camp Summit

Camp Summit completed its second year at Red Willow Bible Camp, and we saw a significant increase in youth attendees and Service Team members. The theme for this year was “Be Not Afraid,” and we unpacked the life of St. John Paul II. Youth attendees heard keynotes on John Paul II’s devotion to Mary, how he embraced the cross during difficult times, the Eucharist, and human love.

Along with listening to speakers, the camp was blessed to have Jon Martin, a musician from California, come and teach us about the desire on our hearts for worship. Each morning he guided us in prayer through music, and in the evening, he would invite us to go a little deeper in our worship while we were in Adoration. During those evening sessions with Jon, you could see that the youth were having an encounter with Jesus. Some were in tears because they experienced a love that they had never felt before, and some were so moved that they began to pray with their friends. These were profound nights that will remain with them forever.

Besides Mass, keynotes, and worship, Camp Summit provided a space for the youth to hang out and have fun. During open time, campers were able to relax, go swimming in the pool or lake, visit the craft house, play schtick (a frisbee game), or visit the canteen for snacks.

Camp Summit could not have happened without all those who gave up their time and talents to put on such a success-



Adoration during Camp Summit. (submitted photo)

ful week. Sixteen young adults served as staff counselors, 13 sophomores and juniors were on our high school leadership team called the Service Team, our cooks kept us well fed, and Father Robert Foertsch was our spiritual director for the week.

#### Steubenville Youth Conference

Another highlight of the summer was the Steubenville Youth Conference, hosted by Franciscan University. Roughly 200 students and chaperones from the Diocese of Fargo joined nearly 2,000 other Catholics across the Midwest to be inspired by national speakers, engage in small group discussion, and learn more about how the Lord is our refuge. Throughout the conference, we heard from various national speakers about how the Lord rescued them from a former way of life and ultimately became their refuge. Each speaker concluded their talk with inviting the attendees to hold fast to the faithfulness and goodness of God.

#### Cor Christi Mission Partners and Scholarship Support

I want to thank all who have spent time praying for the



Cor Christi Missionaries helped facilitate youth events throughout the summer. From l to r: Thomas Hollcraft, Drew Luhning, Zoe Kraft, Laura Funk. (submitted photo)

ministry that we do. Your prayers have significantly impacted our work, and I ask that you please continue to pray for us. Along with the spiritual support, I want to thank all of those who have generously donated to our Diocesan Scholarship Program. This summer we were able to assist 40 families who were in need of financial assistance. As we continue to provide more opportunities for youth to encounter Jesus, we know that there will be a greater need for financial aid. If you would like to make a donation to our scholarship program, please fill out the attached form below and send it back to me at the diocese.

Along with supporting the scholarship program, I want to create a fund to assist our Cor Christi Missionary Team. To help offset their costs, we are looking for mission partners who are willing to support us as we develop and grow this program. If you would like to learn more about the program, call me during normal business hours to learn more about the future of this team.

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# LIVING OUR FAITH, BUILDING OUR FUTURE

## New diocesan capital campaign to benefit retreats, retired priests, and parishes

By Guidance in Giving

It is with great excitement that the Diocese of Fargo announces the beginning of the “Living our Faith, Building our Future” capital campaign, the first diocesan capital campaign in 30 years. The Diocese of Fargo has a long history of deep faith, rooted in the tradition of education, evangelization, and service. This campaign seeks to bring all of these traditions to new levels, now and for our future.

The decision to conduct a capital campaign began with the gift of Maryvale Retreat Center to the diocese by the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. This generous gift, complete with a \$4,000,000 endowment for continued programming and upkeep, sparked the realization that the retreat home could become a touchstone of faith, a location for prayer and reflection for all—but only with modernization and refurbishment.

“There are all kinds of different retreats,” says Sister Suzanne Stahl, Regional Superior for the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. “The word ‘retreat’ means going away from your ordinary. We can pray in our homes and our workplaces, but when we give the gift of our time to go away, we’re giving an openness to God to speak to us in ways that we’re not doing on a daily basis in our homes or our parishes.”

“The Living our Faith, Building our Future” campaign will provide \$5,000,000 for renovations, primarily to the living spaces. Rooms will be reconfigured to accommodate private restrooms and shower facilities.

“We had common bathrooms initially, which was acceptable for 47 years ago,” said Sister Stahl. “Now people are more used to having their own private bathrooms. And if it’s a silent retreat and a person is wanting more space for silent reflection, besides the huge grounds and the large space within the building, if you have your own bedroom and bathroom in your suite, then you can have a little more solitude.”

Renovations also include structural adjustments, and updates to the electrical system, plumbing, and lighting. Plans include

replacement of existing doors, windows, kitchen appliances and equipment as well as the creation of a more welcoming reception area and office spaces.

The campaign will also provide for our retired priests through their pension and their housing. Thirty years ago, the Shepherds Care campaign funded the pension plan for priests still in place today. The plan is still fully funded, a testimony to the generosity of the diocesan faithful and wise stewardship. This campaign seeks to infuse an additional \$4,000,000 into the plan, allowing an increase in the base benefit.

“That plan is still in place and is still functioning exactly as it should,” said Bishop John Folda. “However, the needs are growing. We presently have over 30 priests who are over the age of 60, and so our retirement needs for our priests will grow as the years go on. Our capital campaign will build up our retirement plan and make sure that we have adequate coverage for the needs of our priests as they enter into and live through their retirement years.”

Also critical to the retired life of our priests is a residence that allows community with brother priests, a place to rest after a lifetime of service, and the ability to remain active in the Catholic community, should they so desire.

Monsignor Robert Laliberte, a retired priest of the Diocese of Fargo, says a retired priest home will serve some important purposes.

“There is a vast amount of background we have in common, even if it’s just going through four years of theology. There’s a lot of shared understandings, and we can have a conversation in regard to things that are going on in the church and the world today that you can get a sort of a deeper conversation,” said Monsignor Laliberte. “What’s the alternative? If you’re not living in a rectory, you’re just going to live in an apartment. That can be a very isolated place.”



**An aerial photo of the building and grounds at the Maryvale Retreat Center, located just north of Valley City.  
(submitted photo)**

Construction of an eight-apartment home on the land shared with the Pastoral Center, Sts. Anne and Joachim parish, Shanley High School, and Sacred Heart Middle School, will enable our clergy to take advantage of this retirement home. The apartments and garages will be private, but will share communal spaces to include a chapel, kitchen, dining, office, and guest areas. The “Living our Faith, Building our Future” campaign will earmark \$3,000,000 for construction of this home.

The campaign will also put into place safeguards, in the form of endowments, for expanded programming and upkeep at Maryvale and for the upkeep and maintenance of the Priests Retirement Home. These endowments will be funded at \$1,000,000 each through the campaign, and as the campaign exceeds its goals, will be overfunded. The interest on these endowments will be drawn yearly, allowing the principal to remain intact.

“Endowment funds are considered perpetual in nature. So if we think of a fund that never gets spent, but only the earnings get spent on it, it’s a long-term venture,” said Scott Hoselton, Chief Financial Officer for the Diocese of Fargo.

Finally, the campaign will infuse much needed funds into each parish, helping to fund capital improvements, ministry and evangelization, and education for all ages. Each parish will conduct the campaign in one of three timeframes beginning this fall, and continuing through the end of 2024. Each parish will seek to achieve or surpass their campaign goal and will keep in their parish 30% of all funds they raise up to that goal. When a parish exceeds their goal, they will keep 70% of those funds above the pre-established goal. Parishes are free to use the funds in any way that best helps the parish, and pastors and parish leadership will make these decisions.



**An artist’s rendition of the new priest retirement home. The home could look slightly different after final review.  
(submitted photo)**





**Monsignor Robert Laliberte, Monsignor Daniel Pilon, and Father Richard Goellen, all retired priests of the Fargo Diocese, gathered recently to discuss the benefits of a priest retirement home. (submitted photo)**

“Keeping up a parish, things can add up pretty quickly, and sometimes you have to wait many years before you can fix certain things,” said Father Luke Meyer, pastor of Sts. Anne and Joachim parish in Fargo. “I think the campaign can help us by allowing us to really improve a lot of things at once. And

we probably wouldn’t have done that on our own. But since the diocese is doing a campaign, it gives us a chance to look at what our needs are. Where do we need to develop our own parish? Where do we need to step forward and advance our building needs, our evangelization needs?”

Bishop Folda has asked each family to make this campaign a priority by offering time, talents, and donations in their own parishes. He asks that all come together as a diocesan family and work for the success of the common mission to grow in holiness and bring others to faith in Christ. Your prayers and support will allow this campaign to succeed and for our diocese to grow, to care for our beloved clergy, and to create a center of retreat for us all.

The “Living our Faith, Building our Future” campaign website [fargodiocese.org/lof](http://fargodiocese.org/lof) is an excellent resource for additional information. The campaign leadership team from the Catholic firm, Guidance in Giving, is also available to answer questions. Each parish will be assigned a dedicated campaign representative, working on site in that parish during the active phase of the campaign. For questions about the campaign team outside of your parish’s campaign schedule, please contact Jeff Weber at (979) 549-2640 or [jweber@guidanceingiving.com](mailto:jweber@guidanceingiving.com).



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# TATTERED PAGES

A review of Catholic books, movies, music

## Mormon to Catholic: a conversion story

By Matt Komprood | Parishioner of St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center, Grand Forks

Although there are 16 Latter-Day Saint congregations in North Dakota, the closest most of us will ever get to interacting with a Mormon on a faith level is to say “sorry, not interested” before quickly closing the door as they come knocking, two-by-two, dressed conservatively in shirts and ties, or long dresses. As an aside, the term “Latter-Day Saint” is the preferred usage, but many members of the Church continue to refer to themselves as “Mormons,” “Mormon” being the name of the supposed primary author of the *Book of Mormon*, the Church’s most important theological text.

Growing up, I had a close friend who was Mormon. I never learned much about his faith as we were too busy building snow forts, but his family always struck me as very close and warm. I was occasionally invited over for family home evening, which was a once per week time for family religious study and prayer that all Mormon families are encouraged to do, but I never really understood the differences between their faith and mine.

In his book, *From the Susquehanna to the Tiber*, Jeremy Christiansen, a convert to the Catholic faith, brings us an insider’s look inside the Mormon religion. Christiansen, a Utah native, grew up a faithful Latter-Day Saint. Utah is the center of the Mormon faith with 66% of the population claiming membership compared to 2% of the U.S. population. Despite common teenage challenges and questions, he left for two years on a mission to spread the gospel after graduating high school. This is something that all Mormon boys, and increasingly, girls, are strongly encouraged to do as a rite of passage. He returned from his mission strengthened in his testimony of faith, with no plans to leave. When he attended law school, he began to interact with a more diverse group of Mormons and realized not all followed orthodox beliefs. Some stayed for cultural reasons or followed “nuanced” beliefs, accepting certain moral teachings but accepting that, perhaps, not all the history and theology of the Latter-Day Saint Church was as true as it claimed to be. Ultimately, Christiansen’s legal training forced him to reconsider the veracity of the church’s truth claims.

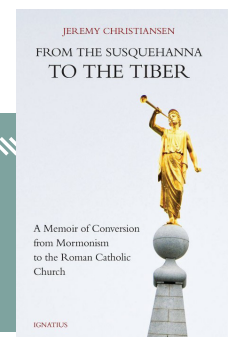
While Christiansen spends a lot of time on his biography, most of the book is devoted to explaining Latter-Day Saint theology to a Catholic audience. For those unfamiliar, Mormons believe that a “restored gospel” was given to the prophet Joseph Smith in the form of the *Book of Mormon*, which tells of the early days

on the North American continent, where the Jewish people landed after fleeing Babylonian persecution. Subsequent to landfall in North America, Jesus appeared and gave them the “true gospel,” which was eventually lost until it was recovered hundreds of years later, unearthed by Joseph Smith, written on golden plates, underneath a tree near Palmyra, New York. While the Latter-Day Saints religion considers itself a Christian faith, both its theology and Christology differ significantly from traditional Christian understanding. They teach that God the Father is an exalted human who eventually attained a high enough degree of holiness that he was able to become god of his own world. This divination and ongoing creation of new worlds will continue indefinitely, as more and more people achieve glory and are able to rise to godhood. Latter-Day Saint doctrine rejects the traditional concept of the Trinity. According to the Church’s official website: “We believe They are three distinct personages, not one singular being.”

Mormon theology teaches that not only Jesus, but God the Father has a physical body, being a deified man, and continues to live a physical, eternal existence in our universe. Further, God the Father is only the god of this world, there are other worlds, other planets, with other gods over them, who once were humans. Thus, the ultimate end of a Latter-Day Saint is not to live together *with* God in heaven, but to *become* a god.

Throughout *From the Susquehanna* Christiansen traces his own gradual conversion to Catholicism. Like many converts, Christiansen read his way into the Church, discovering the early Church fathers and, with them, the Church that Jesus Christ established. As an attorney, Christiansen knows how to lay out an argument and does so quite well in this book, detailing conflicting doctrines and logical problems within the Mormon church. This book is insightful reading for anyone wanting to learn more about their Latter-Day Saints neighbors and friends’ faith, providing important insights into a fascinating subset of American religion.

“From the Susquehanna  
to the Tiber”  
by Jeremy Christiansen, 2022.







## Gaze on the Lord's beauty

A look at Catholic images

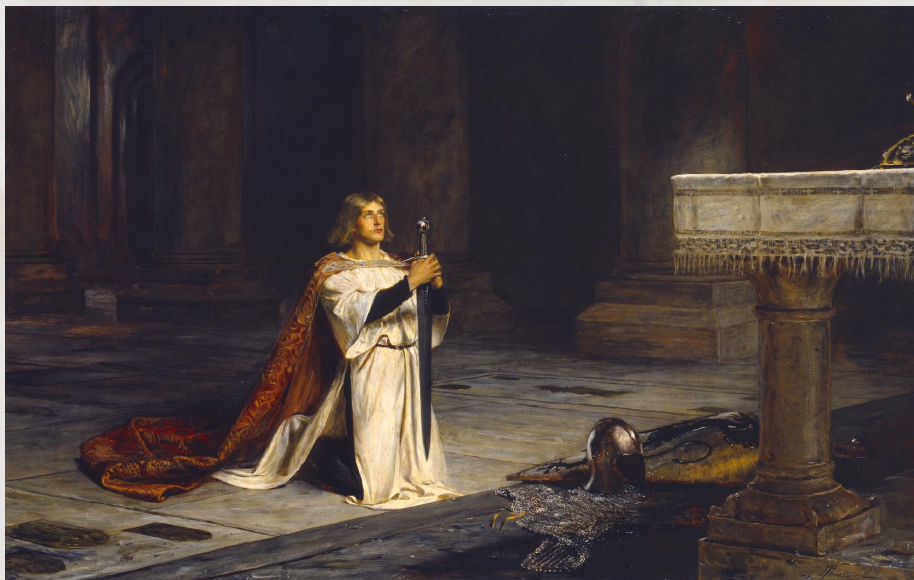
### A soon-to-be knight gazing upon the Lord

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

**T**he Scottish painter, John Pettie painted this picture in 1884 at a time when Christian art had shifted from depicting heavenly scenes of Jesus, Mary, and the saints to focusing on us as the receiver and our response to God in faith. Therefore, a common theme was to show people in the act of piety. It is called the era of Romanticism. This is why you don't fully see what the man is gazing at; the focus is on him.

The subject which Pettie used comes from inspiration through popular novels at the time. In this painting he depicts a squire soon to be knighted, in a kneeling pose before an altar. The mood of this painting is subdued. The church is darkened with a single light on the squire. The pillars of the church resemble the pillar shown holding up the altar and the floor tile is similar to the altar cloth. It all just flows together as one, yet our gaze is on him and most especially his face. The squire is gazing at our Eucharistic Lord in the Monstrance placed on the altar. You can barely see the edge of the monstrance on the altar.

It was custom for a squire to be in vigil before the Eucharistic Lord the night before the great event. The Vigil is performed in a quiet location and permits the squire to mediate and focus his attention on our Lord and his calling. As per custom, the young man would put on white clothes, a symbol of his baptism and a red cloak, a symbol of martyrdom if it comes to that. He would lay his suit of armor and sword at the foot of the altar. The scene presented to us in this painting is the part where the squire is offering his sword before he lays it in front of the altar. He knows the battle that lies ahead, and he knows from where his strength will come to overcome it. The next morning, the priest would come for Mass along with many knights and ladies. The priest would bless the sword and fasten it round his waist. The squire would take a solemn oath to God and his king to fight against those who do evil or wrong and to protect the innocent. The priest would then dub him a Knight. This is a fictional knight, but the shadow from his arms and sword makes a particular cross on his chest resembling the red cross of the crusader knights reminding us again of the religious aspect of the painting.



**The Vigil by John Pettie, 1884. Image released under Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND. (3.0 Unported)**

The thing most striking about this picture is the squire's gaze and that is exactly what the artist wants you to focus on. Our position in this painting is on the side of the altar and we too must be kneeling since our eyesight is level with the squire. We are invited to be there with him in this vigil and enter into the prayer of the soon-to-be knight. We take our inspiration from him and are reminded that we too can be strengthened for the battles in our lives and temptations yet to come when we come to our Lord in adoration.

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# Artist paints Stations of the Cross, “bringing life” to iconic images at St. Michael’s Church

By Pamela Knudson | Grand Forks Herald (reprinted with permission)

Last December, Father Raymond Courtright of St. Michael’s Church was on the hunt for someone to paint the Stations of the Cross, Biblical scenes that have adorned niches in the walls of the sanctuary for more than a century. William Rerick, who grew up here and now teaches high school art in San Antonio, Texas, was encouraged by a relative to contact Courtright about the project. When they met, Courtright handed Rerick a 2-foot-long plaster replica of Jesus as an infant and asked him to paint it.

The replica—which had been stored in an attic for who knows how long—was in rough condition, deteriorating from neglect, Courtright said. “Some of the fingers and toes had broken off.” It was on the verge of being discarded. Rerick came back an hour-and-a-half later with the Baby Jesus,” Courtright recalled, noting how impressed he was by how intricately the figure was painted and how the toes and fingers had been replaced. “He described the colors he used” and his technique, Courtright remembered. “I said, ‘You’re the man for the job.’”

Rerick, who has never tackled a job of this kind, said, “I had to prove myself” with the infant model. “Look at how many colors are in the hair,” Courtright said, holding the figure when the Herald visited the church earlier this week. “There must be five colors, at least.”

Rerick began working on the 14 scenes in early June, he said. (The project was completed in August.) “I wanted people to see the faces and expressions and (the figures) being alive,” Courtright said, to increase their understanding of “what’s going on at these stations.”

The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ’s last day on Earth as a man. The series, which represents specific events and begins with His condemnation, is often used as a short-form pilgrimage as the individual moves from station to station, reciting specific prayers at each. The prayers are commonly spoken during Lent on Wednesdays and Fridays, and especially on Good Friday, the day of the year on which the events occurred.

## Influenced by the masters

“It’s incredible,” Courtright said of Rerick’s work. In late July, a few more Stations had yet to be re-installed in the niches that line the church sanctuary. They range from 100 to 200 pounds each.

The 14th Station, representing the deposition of Christ—the point when Christ is brought down from the cross after crucifixion—is the last to be completely painted, and is based on



**Father Raymond Courtright, pastor at St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks, studies the Stations of the Cross that were being painted July 25 in the basement of the church. (Eric Hylden | Grand Forks Herald)**

one of Caravaggio’s masterpiece paintings.

“What color will you make the cloth?” Courtright asked Rerick as they stood in the work area sectioned off behind heavy plastic sheeting in the church basement. The priest has left this and other artistic decisions to the artist, who has exhibited his expertise in the use of paint color, technique, and tools, Courtright said.

In the Stations of the Cross at other churches, “pastel colors, happy colors have usually been used,” said Rerick, a 2012 graduate of Red River High School and 2016 alumnus of UND, where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in visual arts. He also holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, earned in 2020. “The colors should be melancholic,” he said, so dark and rich shades have been used.

“I try to look at icons” of the art world, revered painters of the past, Rerick said, “and the history of how these figures have been painted.”

He uses artist-grade acrylic paint and sometimes mixes them to “make alternatives.” Brushes, rather than spray paint, are used to achieve his desired effect, he said. With brushes, the end result “is not the same” as spray paint, Courtright said. He



**Artist William Rerick works to restore the Stations of the Cross in St. Michael's Church.**  
(Eric Hylden | Grand Forks Herald)

creates an effect whereby "the eyes will be shiny," said Rerick. "You can see tears on some of them. On Mary, you can see her crying." Courtright said, "The tears are something I've never seen on Stations. It's something I wouldn't have thought of, but it looks good."

#### Not always colorless

Originally, the Stations of the Cross at St. Michael's were painted with color, Courtright said. Years ago, probably in the late '50s or early '60s—a period marked by a desire for change—they were whitewashed, making their features less discernible, as they blended into the background. Explaining to parishioners why he was "so irked to see them whitewashed," Courtright said, he pointed to the first station, featuring Pontius Pilate's judgment of Jesus. A man with a club stands to the side as Pilate washes his hands, symbolic of avoiding blame for Jesus' murder. "It looks like Jesus is going out to play baseball with his friends," he said. "Pilate looks like he's pouring oil into his mitt."

Painting the statues makes their expressions, gestures and body language stand out more, he said. "It helps connect us back to Jesus' suffering and death. It connects us to our suffering. The images are deeply moving, he said. "They tell the story again and again."

#### Volunteers lend a hand

Courtright, who came to St. Michael's Church two years ago, said he's been talking to parishioners about painting the Stations of the Cross for about a year. "I've talked about: what are they and why do we have them?" Not all of the feedback

was positive. One parishioner, a church member for many years, "was upset with me, and wanted to know, why are you changing things?" Courtright said. "I said I'm not changing things; I'm bringing them back to the way they used to be." Once Courtright explained the drawbacks of colorless figures, the parishioner sat in a pew to see for himself and then wrote a check to pay the cost of painting one of the stations.

The vast majority, about 95%, of parishioners "are just ecstatic" about the project, Courtright said. The decision to go ahead with it was unanimously endorsed by the church council and its financial council. It costs about \$3,000 per station "to bring life into them," he said. In this project, "lots of volunteers" have come forward to work with Rerick "on cleaning and simple tasks," he said. "I am so blessed that way. There's so many helpful people, including high school students. I teach (them) as well, which has been fun." For some parishioners, it's a heartfelt experience. "My aunt was cleaning the face of Jesus and started crying," Rerick said.

After the surfaces were cleaned, a layer of gesso, a type of primer, was applied. Then the painting began. "Some parishioners have said, 'I got to paint some of the statues,'" Courtright said. "I ask them what part, and they say, 'Oh, the back part.'"

#### "Meaningful" project

For Rerick, this project has been especially meaningful. And the gravity of it is not lost on him.

"I grew up here. I was used to them without color. I knew (they) needed color," he said. But "there was always that chance I wouldn't like what I did." Rerick is happy with the outcome, he said. "I am blessed to have the job. I'm blessed to have my art. And it feels really good to do something meaningful with it."

"This is my dream: to do art for the Church," Rerick said. "I've been painting for 10 years, and have never done religious painting—although I've done religion-influenced art," inspired by the works of masters such as Rubens and Botticelli. "I think art for God is the best kind of art."



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## A life of prayer with the help of saints



### SISTER'S PERSPECTIVE

**SISTER MARY THEODORA  
THERESE OF THE MOST BLESSED  
SACRAMENT, O. CARM.**

**T**he beauty of a life of prayer is that it brings God into every moment of life. God becomes immediately accessible no matter how one may be feeling or what one may be experiencing at the time, no matter how elated or discouraged. From my personal experience, the reason for this grace is not just my vocation as a Carmelite nun. It is also the grace of having a “crowd of witnesses” who are always ready and willing to help us whenever we ask. The crowd I am speaking of is the Communion of Saints, mostly ordinary people, whose eternal lives are dedicated to the glory of God through Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest gifts of my faith, after the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Confession, has been these friends of God, holy guides prompt to assist at every turn and in any difficulty, or whenever peace in the present moment is needed. Then I can reflect on and receive the love of God into my innermost heart. These special friends have lived heroic, sacrificial lives and know how to help their brothers and sisters on earth in our journey of faith in Christ.

Two saints I depend on are St. Titus Brandsma, who was recently canonized this year on May 15, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, also known as the Little Flower, the youngest Doctor of the Church.

St. Titus Brandsma, a martyr of the Dachau concentration camp in Holland during World War II, is best known for his steadfastness to the Faith in openly defying the Nazis for which he gave up his life. St. Titus was a Carmelite priest, mystic, philosopher, and journalist. Praying to Father Titus for his intercession brought me deep insights and inner peace. I could feel him stepping in and helping me during challenging periods of my religious formation. During my prayer times and throughout the day, he showed me how to see God's light in those around me and to be forgiving whenever I felt misunderstood.

In fact, Father Titus was very compassionate and known for truly loving his enemies. His show of heroic love of neighbor ultimately transformed the heart of the very nurse who injected him with the lethal dose that took his life. Later, she not only returned to the Faith but also was a witness for his beatification. Moments before he died, Titus gave the nurse his rosary.

The other saint I depend on is St. Thérèse of Lisieux. It seems she is always a step ahead of me, clearing the way for my spiritual growth and personal maturity. “Little Thérèse,” as she sometimes called herself, wanted to be a great saint but knew she could never reach the heights of sainthood on her own. Instead, she discovered the power of making little, hidden sacrifices, what I think of as “little prayers” throughout the day, all for God and neighbor, always looking for a chance to shower Jesus' love on others. This method of prayer became known as her Little Way of Spiritual Childhood, detailed in her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*.

St. Thérèse entered Carmel at the tender age of 15 years old and died at the age of 24. What she accomplished in such a short time is incomprehensible, especially since she did it all in the silence and solitude of the Carmelite cloister. Unless her prioress had asked her to write her life's story, her doctrine, the science of divine love, as Pope Saint John Paul II named it when he declared her a Doctor of the Church, we would never have known. Thérèse's science of divine love is a prayerful act of responding to God's mercy by opening one's heart to listen to what God has to say, and being willing to offer one's attention and faithfulness to the One who loves us more than we can imagine. To Thérèse, it is a simple act of trust and confidence. *Walking the Little Way of Thérèse of Lisieux: Discovering the Path of Love* by Joseph Schmidt, FSC is my favorite book on her.

Living a life of prayer, as a Carmelite nun at Carmel of Mary here in Wahpeton, is a grace beyond telling. The gift of offering one's entire life in the practice of silence and solitude in imitation of our Blessed Mother, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, like St. Thérèse of Lisieux did, is a dream come true. We are here to support you in your journey of faith by our prayers. We receive prayer requests online, by mail, and by phone. Together let us be prayer partners in the work of salvation, especially for priests, and for the uplifting of the world.



Thank you to Msgr. Donahue and St. Philip's in Hankinson for hosting the Pilgrimage at Carmel of Mary.

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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).



# Thoughts on World Youth Day in Lisbon



## WORD ON FIRE

### BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

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

I've just returned from World Youth Day in Lisbon, my fourth experience of this unique gathering. I had attended the celebrations in Madrid (2011), Krakow (2016), and Panama (2019), but in many ways, this one was, for me, the most memorable.

First, a few general remarks. I believe that World Youth Day is one of Pope John Paul II's greatest gifts to the Catholic Church, its appeal continuing unabated some 40 years after it was launched. Though naysayers have consistently predicted, or even called for, its demise, this international confab of young Catholics shows no signs of running out of steam. As is always the case, this World Youth Day in Lisbon featured armies of kids from practically every nation on earth, simultaneously celebrating their nationalities and their common Catholic affiliation, effortlessly resolving the potential tension between those identities. And as always before, this one centered around the presence of the successor St. Peter, the visible sign of the Church's unity. Though Pope Francis is, by any measure, an old man, he, by virtue of his office and his personal charisma, drew young people to him like a magnet. By some estimates, a million and a half people showed up for the closing Mass.

I had the privilege of speaking on five separate occasions in Lisbon. My first engagement was with a huge crowd of young people from France. Because I had studied in Paris for my doctorate and hence had some facility in the language, the French bishops had asked me to address this group. When I arrived at the venue—an expansive area near the Tagus River—the French kids were dancing to and singing with a very energetic band onstage. Then, they were regaled by a video presentation from a very popular French footballer, who evidently lives his Catholic faith with enthusiasm. Judging from their boisterous reaction, I gathered that they were delighted that this sports hero was on their own spiritual team. Next, I came out, clutching my prepared text more than a little nervously since I hadn't spoken French in public for nearly 30 years. But the kids seemed able to tolerate my American accent. I spoke to them of their own marvelous spiritual heritage, expressed so richly in the great cathedrals of Amiens, Reims, Notre Dame de Paris, and Chartres, buildings that had sung so powerfully to me when I was a student in their country. And I urged them not to cave into the fashionable secularism of our age, an ideology that effectively kills the spirit.

My next talk took place the following day in a charming auditorium at the University of Lisbon. At the invitation of the Vatican Dicastery on Education and Culture, I had been asked to address a group of teachers, professors, and administrators on the topic of Catholic education. Taking my cues from St. Bonaventure and St. John Henry Newman, I argued that Christ the Logos must stand at the heart of the circle of university disciplines and that he does so noncompetitively, not compromising the integrity of the other subjects, but rather making them more luminous and beautiful. I was particularly moved by the eagerness and enthusiasm of the young scholars and aspiring teachers who listened to me that afternoon.

Then, that evening, I gave an extended homily at the Benediction service offered to over 12,000 young Americans who had assembled in a large park in the northern section of Lisbon. The weather was perfect, the mood was festive and yet prayerful, and when the Eucharist was brought forth, a very moving silence fell over the massive throng. I spoke to the young people about proclaiming the real Christ and not a watered-down simulacrum. When the real Jesus is declared, I said, hearts are set on fire. I concluded my remarks that night with the reminder that, though our culture is obsessed with safety, a religion that places before our eyes on a regular basis the image of a man nailed to a cross is not a religion that puts a high premium on safety! The Church is not interested so much in keeping us safe as preparing us for spiritual adventure and the embrace of our mission.

My fourth presentation was the next day at a gorgeous church in downtown Lisbon. Five hundred or so young people were packed into that space for one of the official dialogue-catecheses. This year, Pope Francis wanted the bishops not simply to speak to the youth but to enter into conversation with them. My formal discourse was on the true nature of freedom. In the presence of an eerily lifelike statue of John Paul II perched against the side wall, I told the crowd that authentic freedom is not doing what one pleases but instead the disciplining of desire so as to make the achievement of the good first possible and then effortless. As obvious examples, I laid out the process whereby one becomes a free speaker of a foreign language or a free player of the piano or a free golfer. In all of those cases, freedom is tantamount to the interiorization of the relevant disciplines, laws, and practices—and most certainly not to mere liberty or license. I very much enjoyed the subsequent discussion I had with a panel of young people. Our topic was social media, and I was not altogether surprised to hear that their assessment was decidedly more negative than positive.

The fifth and final talk was a session with a large group of well over a thousand. At the Pope's request, this gathering was to be more contemplative than instructional. Thus, there

was a Eucharistic procession and Benediction, and afterward, I spoke on the nature of prayer. I emphasized that prayer is best construed as a conversation between friends, involving both talking and listening, both words and silence. I made the practical recommendations that they should take up the Rosary and the Jesus Prayer and should make a daily Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament a priority.

In the midst of my pilgrimage, I made a visit to the Shrine at Fatima, located about an hour and a half outside of Lisbon. I found it to be one of those curiously radioactive places—like Lourdes, like Chartres, like Jerusalem—a spot where heaven and earth seemed to meet. Particularly moving to me were the

tombs of the two shepherd children—Jacinta and Francisco—that are located in the basilica, not far from the little grove of trees where the Mother of God spoke to them in 1917.

I will admit that the week was a tad grueling: lots of speeches, lots of walking, enormous crowds of people everywhere. But it was exhilarating as well, and full of grace.

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# “Health of the mother” justifies abortion for almost any reason



## 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

Readers may recall that last spring the North Dakota Supreme Court inexplicably held that the state constitution includes a right to abortion to protect the life or “health” of the mother. The court provided no support for its opinion on health and did not explain what it meant by “health.”

The state legislature responded by enacting a new law that allows abortion when it is necessary “to prevent substantial physical impairment of a major bodily function, not including any psychological or emotional condition.” The legislature thought that if the law must include a health exception, the exception should be limited to instances where an abortion is absolutely necessary to directly treat a serious physical medical condition.

The abortion lobby, however, thinks that “health” should include not only everything that we typically consider health-related, but also familial, economic, and even geographic conditions. We know this because abortion activists have gone back to court asking for exactly that.

Here are some of the “health” reasons for abortion that the plaintiffs—who now include some North Dakota physicians—think should be constitutionally protected: back pain for which surgical treatment would have to wait until after delivery, diabetes, the inability to balance “health treatment with the demands of pregnancy and then caring for an infant,” a history of child abuse or neglect, morning sickness, and the cost and stress associated with traveling to another state for an abortion.

Of course, none of these conditions are directly treated by abortion. But that does not matter to the “abortion for any reason” crowd. In fact, the complaint even asks that “health” include conditions that might arise after the child is born. For example, they want the court to declare a legal right to kill an unborn child if the abortionist thinks that the mother might later suffer from postpartum depression or other mental health conditions.

Indeed, the new complaint focuses a great deal on abortion for reasons of mental health. The strategy is apparent. Advocates for mental health care have made great strides when it comes to treating mental health on par with physical health. The abortion lobby is perverting that good work by trying to wedge mental health into “health” for purposes of abortion law.

While it is true that mental health—which includes substance abuse disorders—should often be treated as a physical condition, the fact remains that there does not exist any clinically diagnosable mental disorder that is medically treated by an abortion. This is not a Catholic belief. It is a medical fact.

The plaintiffs make the often-repeated claim that “mental health is the most frequent underlying cause of pregnancy-related deaths in the United States” and that “approximately 23% of pregnancy-related deaths are associated with mental health conditions...” But a closer look at the claim reveals that it is misleading. The claim comes from reports by 36 state maternal mortality review committees. The first thing to note is that “pregnancy-related” includes during pregnancy and 12 months after pregnancy. We do not know how many of those deaths occurred during pregnancy. Secondly, while it is true that the “mental health” category had more numbers than other categories in the study, the overwhelming majority of deaths were for other reasons.

All mental health deaths in the report were due to suicide or overdose due to a substance abuse disorder. Of all the deaths reported, only 8.4% were determined to be suicide, which is the main argument made in the complaint for a mental health exception. Importantly, another study by the same author notes that nearly three-quarters of people with a pregnancy-related mental health cause of death had a history of depression, and more than two-thirds had past or current substance abuse. In other words, pregnancy itself is not a risk factor for suicide or overdose. Depression or substance abuse are the risk factors. This fact is supported by a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showing that pregnant or recently pregnant women are 50% less likely to commit suicide than all other women of childbearing age.

Some women may experience mental health disorders during pregnancy, but the baby is not the cause. Some women may have a higher possibility of suffering from postpartum depression but killing the baby beforehand is not the answer. Abortion in those circumstances is not just morally wrong, it is bad medicine. Talk therapy, medication, or both are the

standard practices for treating mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Supporters of abortion and even the news media may describe the new legal action as addressing situations where a pregnant woman's life might be in danger. This is not true.

The new complaint itself reveals the abortion lobby's real agenda—a legal right to abortion for any reason under the guise of “health.”

A copy of the new complaint and brief is at [ndcatholic.org/resources/2023compbrief.pdf](https://ndcatholic.org/resources/2023compbrief.pdf).

## Teaching parish illuminates life as a future priest



### SEMINARIAN LIFE

#### PAT SORRELLS

Theology II at St. Paul Seminary;  
St. Paul, Minn.

A year ago, I made the shift to a new seminary. Having completed my studies in philosophy at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., I began my studies in theology at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. With any relocation, there's inevitably a time of transition where one gets used to the new environment. This was true for me, as I knew few people at St. Paul Seminary and had never lived in the Twin Cities before. But after spending the past two years on the East Coast, I looked forward and have enjoyed being back home in the Midwest.

One change that I've thoroughly enjoyed about my new seminary is that I now have a teaching parish. This is a parish not too far from the seminary at which I will be for all four years of my theological studies. Each month I go to the parish for one weekend and one weekday evening. The parish serves as a source of hands-on learning and mentorship as I progress towards my eventual ordination to the priesthood. Each semester at the parish I focus on a different aspect of priestly ministry while under the mentorship of my teaching parish pastor.

Early in my time at my teaching parish, I received multiple comments from the parishioners that I was “learning from the best” when it came to my teaching parish pastor. Additionally, I began to feel a budding healthy love for the people of God there that I had not felt before. Combining this with the fact that my teaching parish was named after my namesake saint, St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Hudson, Wis., I knew that the Lord was watching out for me in this time of transition and had good, formative things in store for me at this parish.

While at my teaching parish, I've had the privilege of singing with one of the choirs for some Sunday Masses, go with my

pastor on multiple communion calls, serve Sunday Masses and funeral Masses, distribute Holy Communion, meet many of the parishioners, attend their annual gala fundraiser, and do some homeless ministry as well. While these activities are not unique to my life as a seminarian, doing them with the idea that I will soon be doing them as an ordained priest of Jesus Christ allows them to take on a new perspective. That mentality of future ordained ministry allows my experiences at my teaching parish to be most fruitful for my future ministry as an effective instrument of the Lord in saving souls. I will undoubtedly pull from these experiences in my future ministry when I am faced with similar circumstances, which will allow me to be adequately prepared to face them as a priest.

All in all, I am very happy to have a teaching parish and be at St. Patrick's Catholic Church during my four years of theological studies. I have enjoyed building long-term relationships with the parishioners there as I slowly get to know them. As I enter my second year of theology this fall, I'm looking forward to the many experiences the Lord has in store for me not only at St. Patrick's but also at St. Paul Seminary.



### Quotable

St. John  
Chrysostom

Feast day Sept. 13

**“Let no one mourn that he  
has fallen again and again;  
for forgiveness has risen  
from the grave.”**



# LIFE'S MILESTONES



Frank and Laura (Wolsky) Biggers, parishioners of St. Thomas in Buffalo, celebrated their 60th anniversary Sept. 7. They were married at Holy Trinity in Fingal and have 5 children, 9 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren.



Richard and Bertha Miller will celebrate their 60th anniversary on Oct. 5. They were married at St. Jude's in Thompson. They have 4 children, 9 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.



Tom and Joyce Pettinger, parishioners of Holy Spirit in Fargo, celebrated their 65th anniversary Aug. 30. They were married at St. Anthony's in Fargo. They have 4 children, 9 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren.



Lowell and Carolyn Siebels, parishioners of St Mary's Cathedral in Fargo, celebrated their 50th anniversary Sept. 1. They were married at St. Thomas Church in Kent, Minn. and have 2 children and 9 grandchildren.



Jerry and Pam Szarkowski, parishioners of St. James Basilica in Jamestown, celebrated their 50th anniversary Aug. 3. They are blessed with 1 daughter, 2 sons, and 6 six grandchildren.



Mark and Joanie (Boutiette) Ward, parishioners of St. John's in Wahpeton, were married on Sept. 7, 1973 at St. Thomas Church in Kent, Minn. They will celebrate their 50th anniversary with family. They have 3 children, 6 grandchildren, and 1 great-granddaughter.



Jim and Betty Zacher, parishioners of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Balta, celebrated their 60th anniversary on Sept 7. They were married at Sacred Heart in Orrin. They have 3 sons, 1 daughter, 11 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.



Norbert and Bernice Schneider, parishioners of St. Alphonsus in Langdon, will celebrate their 60th anniversary Oct. 26. They were married at St. Alphonsus and have 4 children and 9 grandchildren.



Margaret Chaput, parishioner of St. Alphonsus in Langdon, will celebrate her 80th birthday Sept. 15. Margaret and her late husband, LaVern, were blessed with 5 children, 8 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren, and 5 step-great-grandchildren.



Gemma Bachmeier, parishioner of Sacred Heart in Carrington, will celebrate her 90th birthday on Sept. 12. She and her late husband, George, were blessed with 6 children, 9 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Life's Milestones includes anniversaries for marriages, ordinations, and religious vows for 25, 40, 50, 60, 65, and 70+ years and birthdays for 80, 85, 90, 95, and 100+ years for those in the Diocese of Fargo. Submissions will only be accepted for milestones occurring during the month of publication, one month prior, or one month following. Send a photo with text to [news@fargodiocese.org](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 Oct. issue is Sept. 19, and the deadline for the Nov. issue is Oct. 17.





**Julia Herrick-Sorlien**, parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua in Fargo, celebrated her 95th birthday Sept. 4. Julia married Leroy Herrick Feb. 28, 1948 and had 4 children. Leroy died in 1977. Julia married Virgil Sorlien July 20, 1978. Virgil died in 1983. Julia has 6 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and 9 great-great-grandchildren.



**Agnes (Schaan) Lucy**, parishioner of St. Cecilia's in Harvey, will celebrate her 95th birthday on Sept. 18. With her late husband, Dan, they raised their 8 children on a farm near Powers Lake. She has been blessed with 22 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

## Fall dinners

**Ellendale:** St. Helena's turkey dinner with all the trimmings is Sept. 17 in the church center from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Raffle tickets available.

**Horace:** St. Benedict's at 11743 38th St. S will hold its annual fall dinner Sept. 17 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. serving their famous baked ham dinner. Country store and bake sale. Adults \$15, ages 5-10 \$6, and ages 4 and under free. Take-out available.

**Wimbledon:** St. Boniface's Autumn Festival at Wimbledon Park is Sept. 17 from 4 to 7 p.m. Turkey and roast beef meal with all the fixings. Free will offering. Live music from 5 to 6 p.m. by The Homesteaders - Terry & Linda Schwartz, bazaar, farmers market, bounce house, and more. Take-out orders call (701) 320-4509.

**Hope:** St. Agatha's Annual Fall Supper is Sept. 24 from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hope American Legion. Turkey meal with all the fixings. Take-out available.

**Fargo:** St. Anthony's Fall Bazaar is Sept. 24 at 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Games for kids, bake sale, maker's market, book/DVD sale, plants, pie wheel, silent auction. Turkey dinner from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Adults \$15, children \$8, ages 5 and under free, and family \$50. Take-out available.

**Grand Forks:** St. Mary's chicken and meatball dinner is Sept. 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Adults \$15, ages 5-10 \$8, 4 and under free. Take-out available.

**Velva:** St. Cecilia's Fall Supper is Sept. 24, from 4 to 7 p.m. Swiss Steak Meal with all the fixings. Take-out available. Farmers Market with produce and baked goods. Raffle tickets.

**6 miles east of Dazey:** St. Mary's Fall Supper is Oct. 1 from 4 to 7 p.m. Turkey supper with all the trimmings and famous homemade German sauerkraut. Adults \$14, ages 6-12 \$6, and 5 and under free. Take-out available. Gift baskets, pumpkins, and gourds for sale.

**Argusville:** St. William's annual fall turkey dinner, bake sale, country market and raffle at the Argusville Community Center is Oct. 1 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Suggested \$15 donation.

**Kindred:** St. Maurice's Fall Dinner is Oct. 8 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Turkey dinner with mashed potatoes and stuffing. Adults \$15, ages 4 to 10 \$6, ages 3 and under free.

**Fargo:** Holy Spirit's Fall Festival is Oct. 8 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pork dinner, bake sale, bingo, raffle, kids' games, cupcake walk, and more. Free will offering for the meal.

**Hunter:** St. Agnes' turkey dinner is Oct. 8 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Adults \$13, ages 12 and under \$8. Take-out available for extra \$1 by calling (701) 874-2226.

**Milnor:** St. Arnold's chili and pie drive thru is Oct. 11 from 5 to 7 p.m. or until gone. Drive-up and place your order for chili supper or call (701) 427-9288 after 5 p.m. to place an order for pick-up.

**West Fargo:** Blessed Sacrament's Fall Dinner and Bazaar is Oct. 15 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fried chicken dinner, adults \$12, children \$5. There will be baskets to bid on, a country store, bingo and games for all ages. Raffle tickets to win \$2,000.



## Sister Elizabeth Rose passes away July 20



**S**ister Elizabeth Rose (Mabel Therese) Muscha of Valley City died at Maryvale Convent on July 20 at 98 years of age. The Funeral Mass was held July 29 at Maryvale Convent.

Sister Elizabeth Rose was born on May 9, 1925, in Harvey to Ferdinand and Mabel (Specht) Muscha. She attended school at Wells County District #2, graduating from Harvey High School in 1943. On Aug. 22, 1946, she professed her vows as a Sister of Mary of the Presentation in Spring Valley, Ill. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from College of Great Falls, Mont. in 1957. In 1968, she received her Master's Degree from Creighton University, Omaha, Neb. In 1987, she received a Master's in Art at Mundelein College in Chicago, Ill. She held numerous credentials within the Educational System and in 2004 received her Counselor Designate Degree from North Dakota State University.

Sister Elizabeth Rose served in the education field for 55 of her 73 years of ministry: St. Aloysius School in Oakwood from

1946-47, 1949-54, 1957-60. St. Catherine's School in Valley City from 1947-49, 1956-57, 1969-75, and was also the Assistant Principal in 1968-69, and St. Boniface in Walhalla from 1954-56. Principal at Little Flower and St. Leo's Schools, Minot from 1988-91. Superintendent at Esmond Public School in Esmond from 1991-92. She was a Religious Education teacher at St. Mary's Parish in Munich from 1992-95. Superintendent in Upham Public School in Upham from 1995-97. She was a Principal at St. Wenceslaus School in Dickinson from 1997-2000. Her last 13 years of ministry she served as a counselor at Christ the King School in Mandan from 2001-13 and St. Bernard Mission School in Fort Yates from 2013-19. Sister Elizabeth Rose also served on the St. Aloysius Medical Center in Harvey as a Board Member for many years. After 73 years of service, she retired to Maryvale in July of 2019.

Sister Elizabeth Rose Muscha was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Robert and Myron and sister Jean Allmaras.

She is survived by her Religious Community—the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation—brothers Kenneth and Jerry; sisters Lois Martins, Patty Sauter, and Betty Kiser, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

## 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

The chapel of Sacred Heart Academy in Fargo was recently the scene of two impressive ceremonies, one of reception of ten candidates on Aug. 17, the other the profession of temporary and final vows on Aug. 18. His Excellency, Bishop Dworschak, received the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, for life from Sister Grace Marie and Sister Mary Helen of New Rockford, Sister Mary Justina of Cavalier, and Sister Mary Margaret of Fingal.

### 50 years ago — 1973

More than 80 priests of the Diocese of Fargo attended the retreat exercises conducted at Queen of Peace Retreat House September 17 to 20 by Archbishop Sheen. Besides speaking three times with the priests on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Archbishop was dinner speaker and college lecturer each night. The Shanley GROW Club also hosted Archbishop Sheen at a banquet Wednesday at the Fargo Holiday Inn prior to his talk at the Concordia Fieldhouse. Archbishop Fulton Sheen addressed an ecumenical crowd of about 7,000 at Concordia

College's Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

### 20 years ago — 2003

Those whose lives have been touched by Catholic Family Service have much to celebrate. This month, Catholic Family Service marks its 80th anniversary of serving the poor and vulnerable in the state of North Dakota. At the same time, CFS will take on a new name, logo and slogan as the staff continues to delve into the objectives of the agency's new strategic plan.

## Events

### Catholic Man Night coming to Fargo area

Invite a friend, bring your sons, and join us as we deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and learn more about our Catholic faith. The night begins with adoration and confession at 6 p.m., followed by a simple meal and speaker at 7 p.m. Call Willy Gardner (701) 799-0601 with questions. Sept. 14: St. Anthony of Padua, Fargo. Oct. 18: Holy Cross, West Fargo.

# California's new abbey is inspiring young men to join the priesthood

By Francesca Pollio Fenton | Catholic News Agency

**J**ust outside the City of Angels lies an abbey whose residents are praying to the angels. St. Michael's Abbey outside of Los Angeles in Orange County opened in 2021 and is one of the newest abbeys in the world.

"It's sort of the perfect distance between the busyness of the city, where we need to be doing our apostolic work, and the quiet of the desert, where we need to find Jesus in contemplation," Father Ambrose Criste, a priest at the abbey, told EWTN Correspondent Colm Flynn in an interview for "EWTN News In Depth."

The Very Rev. Chrysostom Baer, prior of St. Michael's Abbey, shared that it is like "heaven on earth."

"It's filled with the Catholic truth and the solemn celebration of the liturgy. It's a place to work out your salvation, to grow in virtue, to overcome your vices, and help lead people to heaven," he added.

Despite the recent decline in religious vocations in many parts of the world, St. Michael's Abbey has 42 men studying for the priesthood and many more waiting to enter. This past summer, the order established a new priory in Springfield, Illinois, where seven of the California Norbertine priests now live.

Criste believes young men are being drawn to the community because the abbey has stayed true to the order's traditions.

"We say our prayers; we wear our religious habit; we live according to the charism of our order and the traditions of our order, and we've never given any of that up," he said. "And that's why young people want to come and be a part of it."

The abbey follows the canons of the Norbertines, which was founded in 1121 by St. Norbert in France.

The order's mother abbey is called the Abbey of Csorna, which is in Hungary. In 1950, the police warned the Norbertines in the country that they would be taken away under the Communist regime and never be allowed back into Hungary. A small group of priests then sought and received permission to leave the country in order to keep the order alive elsewhere.

Today, St. Michael's Abbey has 70 men living in it, half of whom are priests and the other half who are seminarians.

"Those religious communities and those seminaries that represent authentic, full-bodied traditional Catholicism — the young people are flocking to it because it's exactly what the young people want," Criste explained. "It's what the world needs."



**A group of men studying to become priests at St. Michael's Abbey in California. (EWTN News In Depth)**

Baer said he hopes, first and foremost, that the abbey will "save souls and be a beacon of light and hope in a very strange land, a land that thinks that it's gone beyond God and doesn't need him anymore."

"We're trying to fill that gap in the human heart with the truth of Christ and the love of the Holy Spirit," he said.

## 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.



# “Be not afraid,” Pope Francis tells young people at end of World Youth Day

By Hannah Brockhaus | Catholic News Agency



**Pope Francis waves at the crowd of 1.5 million people who attended the closing Mass of World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal on Aug. 6. (Vatican Media)**

**“B**e not afraid,” Pope Francis told young Catholics Sunday at the closing Mass of World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal, echoing the well-known call of his predecessor and the founder of the international youth gathering, St. John Paul II.

“Dear young people, I would like to look into the eyes of each one of you and tell you: Be not afraid, be not afraid,” he said Aug. 6 on a sunny morning in what organizers dubbed the “Field of Grace.”

“I tell you something very beautiful: It is no longer me, it is Jesus himself who is looking at you in this moment, he is looking at you,” the pope continued. “He knows you, he knows the heart of each one of you, he knows the life of each one of you, he knows the joys, he knows the sadness, the successes and the failures.”

Jesus, Pope Francis told young people, “knows your hearts. He sees our hearts. And he tells you today here in Lisbon, on this World Youth Day: ‘Be not afraid, be not afraid, take heart, be not afraid.’”

Francis celebrated Mass on the feast of the Transfiguration for an estimated 1.5 million people in Parque Tejo, where young people and their leaders had camped out overnight following a prayer vigil. Approximately 10,000 priests and 700 bishops concelebrated.

The Mass marked the official end of the international youth gathering, which drew hundreds of thousands of teenagers, young adults, and their leaders from almost every country in the world to the Portuguese capital Aug. 1–6.

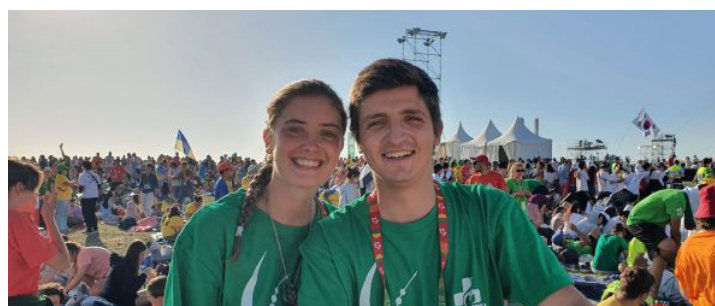
The week included prayer, Mass, music concerts, religious talks, and cultural events, among other activities.

Luis Graca, 23, from Portugal, told CNA Sunday morning that a highlight of the week for him was visiting the “City of Joy,” where there was a vocational fair and park with priests hearing confessions.

“We could see a lot of different people all trying to seek Jesus and that was really amazing to see,” he said. “It was also amazing seeing the amount of people going [to the reconciliation park], the amount of priests there. It was beautiful.”

He said the prayer vigil the night before was also a good experience: “It was really calm, everyone could pray... everything was beautiful.”

Graca and his wife, Leanor, also 23, got married just 18 days ago. Graca described World Youth Day as “another bomb of the Holy Spirit after our marriage. One bomb with our marriage and now another bomb, so let’s live the Holy Spirit from now on.”



**Portuguese married couple, Leanor and Luis Graca, both 23, attended World Youth Day in Lisbon right after their honeymoon in Italy. (Hannah Brockhaus | CNA)**

"Lord, it is good that we are here!' (Matt. 17:4)," Pope Francis said in his homily, quoting from the day's Gospel reading. "We also want to make these words that the apostle Peter said to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration our own after these intense days."

"It is beautiful what we are experiencing with Jesus, what we have lived together, and it is beautiful how we have prayed with so much joy in our hearts. And then we can ask ourselves: What do we take with us when we return to everyday life?" he said.

Marina Aleykseyeva, 31, from Kiev, Ukraine, was also present for the vigil and Mass with Pope Francis.

"We are here to pray for the country, to pray for peace," she told CNA. "This World Youth Day is very, very special because all [of us] Ukrainians came here to pray for peace, to pray for the soldiers and for our families."

Aleykseyeva, a Latin Catholic, said she and the other members of her group were checking their phones during the vigil to follow the news of another air raid on Ukraine overnight. The Ukrainians were joined in prayer by some young women from Italy who were nearby them in the field.

She said she was touched by how many people came up to them during the week to say they were praying for Ukraine.

"Now we can return to our country and tell everyone that so many people who believe in God are praying for us from all over the world," she said.

Pope Francis also made an appeal for peace in the world and in Ukraine during a short address before the Angelus at the end of Mass.

"Let us accompany with our thoughts and prayers those who could not be with us because of armed conflicts and wars," he said. "Indeed, there are many of them in our world. In thinking of this continent, I feel great sorrow for beloved Ukraine, which continues to suffer greatly."

"Allow me, as an older person, to share with you young people a dream that I carry within me: It is the dream of peace, the dream of young people praying for peace, living in peace and building a peaceful future," he continued.

"As we pray the Angelus, let us place the future of humanity into the hands of Mary, Queen of Peace. As you return home, please continue to pray for peace."

Francis told young people: "You are a sign of peace for the world, showing how different nationalities, languages, and histories can unite instead of divide. You are the hope of a different world. Thank you for this. Onwards!"

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# Pope Francis: The Eucharist can fill “the wounds and voids produced by sin”

By Tyler Arnold | Catholic News Agency

Jesus’ healing presence in the Eucharist can “fill with tenderness” the voids and wounds produced by sin in individual lives and in society, Pope Francis said on Aug. 25.

In a meeting at the Vatican with a pilgrimage group led by the Sister Disciples of Jesus in the Eucharist on Aug. 25, the pope noted that in the eyes of the world, it might appear “absurd” to begin confronting societal problems by prayers on one’s knees in “adoration and reparation,” but that it is always effective.

Pope Francis pointed out that the story behind the founding of the sisters’ religious order and the revival it sparked gives witness to this reality. The Sister Disciples of Jesus in the Eucharist were founded in one of the poorest dioceses in southern Italy by Servant of God Bishop Raffaello Delle Nocche in the wake of World War I and the devastating Spanish flu pandemic.

The sisters were to be “poor servants of a poor people.” Pope Francis explained: “At the center of their lives was the Eucharist, ‘a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity,’ as the Second Vatican Council teaches us (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47).”

“Love, unity, and charity. What does this mean? To adore, to serve, and to repair, that is, to fill with tenderness ... to fill with tenderness the wounds and voids produced by sin in man and society, beginning by kneeling before Jesus in the Consecrated Host, and remaining there for a long time,” he said.

Bishop Nocche recommended that the sisters remain in prayer before the Eucharist “even when we seem to feel nothing, in quiet and trusting abandonment, because ‘Magister adest,’ (‘the Master is here’ (John 11:28)).”

“By the world’s standards this strategy of action seemed absurd: in the face of immense needs and with almost no resources available, what sense could there be in telling the sisters to get down on their knees for ‘adoration and reparation’? Yet, as always, the way of faith and self-offering worked in this case too,” Pope Francis said.

“The prayers of those courageous women indeed generated a contagious force, which soon led them to undertake and promote works of material, cultural, and spiritual redemption far exceeding all expectations.”

“They awakened the faith and commitment of parish communities and families, founded schools of various levels and grades, and rekindled devotion and a sense of their own dignity in so many people, men and women, young people, adults and the elderly, who were too often and for too long



**Pope Francis meets with a pilgrimage group led by the Sister Disciples of Jesus in the Eucharist in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall on Aug. 25. (Vatican Media)**

oppressed by inhumane living conditions and the contempt and indifference of the surrounding world, which saw in them nothing but rejects of society. They unleashed a different ‘war’—that against poverty and injustice, and they spread a different ‘epidemic’—that of love.”

Today, the Sister Disciples of Jesus in the Eucharist have about 400 professed sisters, as well as postulants in houses of formation in Brazil, the Philippines, Rwanda, and Italy. The congregation continues to have a strong presence in southern Italy with 38 communities.

“Dear sisters, you are the witnesses and heirs of all this ... with your presence in the five continents, with the Eucharistic Centers, schools, missions, and all the services you carry out,” Pope Francis said.

“Therefore, starting from pausing before Jesus in the Eucharist, the Bread broken and the Master who washes the disciples’ feet (cf. Jn. 13:3-15), may you also learn to look at your brothers and sisters through the magnifying glass of the consecrated Host.”



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## “It’s not the end of their story!”



### SIDEWALK STORIES

#### ROXANE B. SALONÉN

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

As my co-author Patti Armstrong and I were leaving the EWTN studios’ green room in Irondale, Alabama, recently, having concluded an interview for the “At Home with Jim and Joy” show, Joy Pinto looked at us sternly, one finger pointing emphatically—but in the most motherly way possible—“Remembah,” she said, her New Jersey origins detectable, “it’s not the end of they-ah stawry!”

Her words and insistent expression were coming from the depths of her soul, and I knew to hang on tight to each.

Both before and after the show, we’d been conversing with this dynamic duo about the travails of raising Catholic children in today’s world, and how easily discouraged we can become when our hopes for them seem dashed. The topic of the show, after all, was about how to cope when loved ones leave the Faith, and the Pintos were no strangers to children “taking a detour,” as they’d put it.

Our hosts understood the plight we were exposing to the world. In ways unique to their family, they’d been there, too. Despite their fervent leadership in pro-life ministry, they’d experienced unplanned pregnancies within their fold. Surely, the Devil laughed at what appeared a fail on their parts.

And it might have been, without the reality of God and his mercy. Continuing her story, Joy shared how, in a moment of grief, she found herself succumbing to feelings of defeat, slipping into a place of despair.

Just then, however, the heavens seemed to interrupt her dark thoughts. She sensed two angels conversing about the situation that had her tormented, one saying to the other, “Oh, she doesn’t know...” *Know what?* Joy wondered. “Right,” the second angel chimed in. “She thinks this is the end of the story!”

Realizing now that this moment was just that—a moment in time—and that other, more hopeful, moments might come, Joy stood up, supernaturally fortified and renewed in hope. Soon, she would see what had been lost to her in that dip into

darkness: a new, young relative who would become endeared to her and Jim; another who would go through a conversion process; a succession of second chances, bound together by God’s grace.

“Payday eventually came!” Joy declared happily. God had heard their prayers, after all, and what seemed like a loss became a victory. Now, Joy wanted to remind Patti and me that when we feel like the world has won, that’s exactly the time at which God stands ready to charge in with grace—if we let him. It’s the time we are asked to hand over our worries into his heart, where they should have been all along.

I think of her wise words now in connection with our ministry here in Fargo-Moorhead, specifically our sidewalk advocacy at the Red River Women’s Clinic. If only we had more chances to talk to the women seeking abortion as a solution to their problems, I might say, “You think this is the end of the story, sweet child, but your story has just begun!” Or, “The story of your child’s life has barely begun. Please don’t shred it before it’s had a chance to be told!”

Our attempts to reach those who come from broken situations can feel like an exercise in futility. It demands that we question whether our faithfulness is at its optimal level. Do we really trust God? Or are we relying on our own will and ways only?

A few weeks before our visit to EWTN, I had the thrill of witnessing what some advocates believe to be the first confirmed “save” at the Moorhead abortion facility location; the first in our area since *Roe vs. Wade* fell. That’s a long time to wait for a victory—about a year. But it happened.

The mom, wearing a medical facemask, had come out of the facility without a bag of post-abortion instructions and pills. When one of the advocates called out to her, her response was muffled. “I can’t hear you!” he yelled. As she got into the waiting car, which came past us, mask now removed, she said through the open window, “I didn’t do it.”

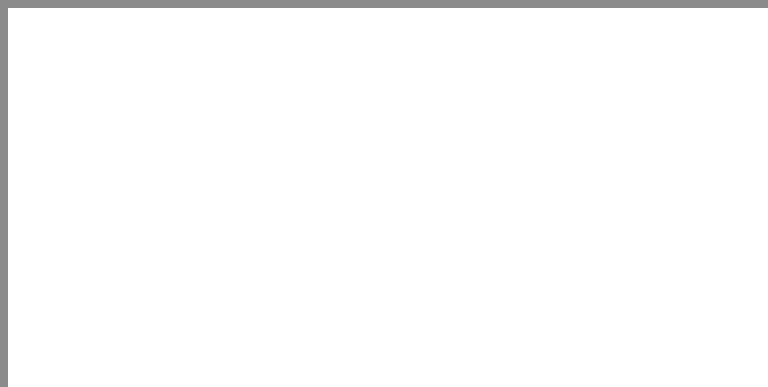
“You didn’t?!” I asked in disbelief. “No,” she answered, smiling with relief as the car advanced toward the street, two adorable, bright-eyed children chattered happily from the backseat.

If you think it’s the end of the story, think again. God died on a cross, but he rose three days later. Yes, life can seem impossible at times, but wait for it, because truly, his holy will for the world will triumph in time!



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*Where in the diocese are we?*

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St. Mary's Church in Knox.