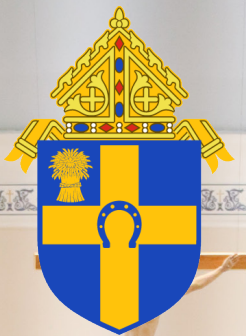


New Earth

December 2025 | Vol. 46 | No. 11

The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo



A visible icon of Christ the Servant

Bishop Folda ordains five men to the permanent diaconate



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From Bishop Folda:
Jesus: The source
of our hope

14

The "Miracle at Dazey" that
spared a historic church from
a devastating windstorm

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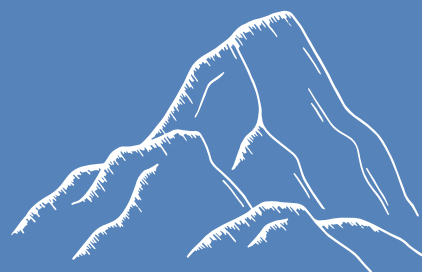
U.S. bishops to
consecrate nation to
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Feb. 27 - Mar. 1	SEARCH retreat for youth and young adults
Mar. 6 - 8	Men's silent retreat
Mar. 20 - 22	Marriage Encounter weekend
Apr. 10 - 12	SEARCH retreat for youth and young adults
Apr. 18	Evangelization Training: St. Paul's Street Evangelization
May 7 - 9	Women's silent retreat
May 29 - 31	Father Wade Menezes retreat

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Keith Nester
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Down to Earth
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This Made for Greatness Winter Men's Retreat will provide an honest analysis of the challenges to greatness that men face at each of the stages of life. We will also identify foundations upon which we can build a flexibility that allows us to adapt and thrive no matter what stage of life we are in.

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ON THE COVER:

Soon to be ordained deacons lay prostrate before the altar during the Litany of Saints at the Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo, Nov. 15. (Tyson Kuznia)

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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.

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Jesus: The source of our hope

Dear friends, soon we will celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ at Christmas. In these last days of Advent, we are filled with anticipation at the coming celebration, knowing that the birth of Jesus nearly two thousand years ago was the beginning of God's redeeming work among his people. This is a time of joy and expectation, and in my opinion, these are some of the most beautiful days in the life of the Church.

We are also approaching the conclusion of the Jubilee Year that the entire Church has been observing over the past twelve months. When he proclaimed this holy year, Pope Francis declared that its theme would be "Pilgrims of Hope." And indeed, we have been on a pilgrimage throughout this year, journeying forward towards our Lord in the hope of eternal life. In the last months before he died, Pope Francis drew our attention to the words of St. Paul, who tells us, "Hope does not disappoint." A hope that is based on Christ, that has Christ himself as its foundation, is the assurance of God's love and saving grace. Every one of us is on this pilgrimage, placing our trust in Jesus, whose life, death, and resurrection are the definitive sign of God's gift of salvation.

As part of this Jubilee Year, I designated six pilgrimage sites throughout our diocese. I have been amazed at the number of people who made a pilgrimage to one or more of these sites and received the commemorative coins to mark the completion of their journey. People often speak of making pilgrimages to famous places like the Holy Land, or Rome, or Lourdes, places that have obvious spiritual and historical significance in the life of the Church. But our pilgrimage sites around the Diocese of Fargo are just as significant for those who visit them, because Christ himself can be found in each one of these holy places. Jesus is the final goal of every pilgrimage, because in him alone do we find the fulfillment of all our hopes.

If you haven't yet made a Jubilee pilgrimage, there is still time before the conclusion of the Holy Year. The pilgrimage sites in our diocese are St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo, St. Michael's Church in Grand Forks, St. James Basilica in Jamestown, St. Therese (Little Flower) Church in Rugby, Maryvale Retreat Center in Valley City, and the Carmel of Mary just outside of Wahpeton. The Jubilee indulgence can be obtained at these sites by reciting the Creed and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father, followed by the sacrament of Reconciliation and attendance at Mass, even at another location. The pilgrimage itself is simply a sign of our desire to seek Christ, our determination to leave behind the bondage of sin and whatever separates us from him. For those who are not physically able to make this pilgrimage because of illness or old age, you may make a spiritual pilgrimage wherever you are, spiritually journeying with our Lord and united with all those fellow pilgrims who seek him in their hearts.

Another aspect of this Jubilee Year and "pilgrimage of hope" has been the call to share this hope with others. There are many who do not know the love of God in their lives, who have no knowledge or understanding of our salvation in Jesus Christ. We can perform no greater work of charity than to share with them the gift we have received and gently introduce them to our loving Savior. Many are deprived of even the ordinary experience of human love and concern. Far too many are alone and isolated, sad or in despair. Our Lord sends us to them and asks us to offer the gift of our friendship, companionship, compassion, and a listening ear. Many others suffer from real destitution and can find no reason for hope. To all of these, and others that you might know, Jesus asks us to be emissaries of hope, assuring them that they are loved and they are not alone.

“A hope that is based on Christ, that has Christ himself as its foundation, is the assurance of God's love and saving grace. Every one of us is on this pilgrimage, placing our trust in Jesus, whose life, death, and resurrection are the definitive sign of God's gift of salvation.”

-Bishop John T. Folda

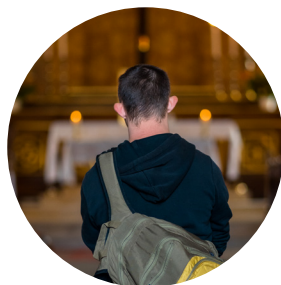
In these final days of Advent, allow me to suggest that you join in pilgrimage with two solitary figures who quietly made their way to a little town not far from Jerusalem called Bethlehem. Those two travelers were Mary and Joseph. Like us, they were also pilgrims, obeying the call of God and awaiting the coming of a child who would be the Savior of the world. Mary and Joseph were on the road at the orders of Caesar Augustus, who commanded a census of his empire. But they were actually led by the hand of God, who chose them out of all people to welcome his own Son into this world. They were probably unsure about where this whole experience would lead, and they certainly faced many obstacles along the way. But they placed their hope and trust in God, who promised that the child to be born of Mary would be *Emmanuel*, God with us. At the conclusion of their pilgrimage, they were able to look upon the newborn child, Jesus, the One who is the source of our hope. In him we encounter the incarnate love of God, and our hope for salvation.

Dear friends, as pilgrims of hope, let us prepare to welcome Christ the Lord into our lives. And as we look upon him with wonder and awe along with Mary and Joseph, let us remember once again what Paul promised: "Hope does not disappoint." May this Advent and Christmas bring joy and hope to you and all your loved ones.

Jubilee 2025 Prayer

Father in heaven, may the *faith* you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of *charity* enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed *hope* for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.



May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

Prayer Intention of Pope Leo XIV



For Christians in areas of conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.



Official Appointments/Announcements

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

I hereby recognize the election of

Rev. Luke Meyer, to a first term, as a member of the Presbyteral Council. This appointment is effective September 29, 2025 and concludes September 2028.

Rev. Timothy Schroeder, to a second term, as a member of the Presbyteral Council. This appointment is effective September 29, 2025 and concludes September 2028.

BISHOP FOLDA'S CALENDAR

Dec. 8

Holy Day of Obligation, Pastoral Center closed

Dec. 11 at 5 p.m.

Real Presence Radio Banquet, Olive Ann Hotel, Grand Forks

Dec. 16 at 3 p.m.

Diocesan Finance Council, Pastoral Center

Dec. 17 at 10 a.m.

North Dakota Catholic conference, Jamestown

Dec. 24 at 11 p.m.

Office of Readings, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Dec. 25 at midnight

Mass for the Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord, Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

Jan. 3–9

Region VIII Bishop Retreat, Venice, Fla.

Jan. 14

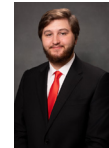
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How does Catholic social teaching apply to modern society?



ASK A PRIEST

FATHER DALE KINZLER

Retired priest of the Diocese of Fargo

Our magisterium, the Church's official teaching body, has kept a watchful eye on the developments of contemporary society, especially since the beginning of the Industrial Age. Catholic social teaching emphasizes the principles of common good and human dignity, as well as subsidiarity and solidarity.

By common good we mean "the sum total of conditions which allow people, as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." It requires public authorities to "respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person" to fulfill each one's vocation and act according to their informed conscience, while respecting privacy and freedom of religion. It calls for those things which enhance the well-being of the individual and of society, such as food, clothing, health, work, education, culture, and the right to establish a family. It also requires a peaceful and secure environment, established by morally legitimate means. "It is the role of the state to defend the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 1906-1910).

We can readily see how this general principle of the common good finds multiple applications to the complex and varied problems facing us today, just as it did in the past century. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued his landmark encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (On New Things) to address the condition of the working classes. He discussed the rights and duties of both labor and capital, supported the right to private property, and rejected socialism while calling for a just balance between workers, employers, and the state. His encyclical established the foundation for modern Catholic social teaching. Later papal encyclicals, such as *Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Fortieth Year) in 1931 and *Centesimus Annus* (100th year) in 1991, continued to build on this foundation and further apply the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity to concerns of the day.

Our *Catechism of the Catholic Church* spells out, briefly, several of the issues of contemporary concern, in a well-reasoned and balanced fashion. For example, on the issue of borders and immigration, it is understood that each nation has a right and

a duty to protect its citizens. This includes establishing secure borders, as well as welcoming the immigrant with conditions:

"Political authorities, for the sake of the common good... may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants' duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens" (CCC 2241).

As another example, on the seeming tug of war between the ideologies of capitalism and socialism, we read:

"The *right to private property*, acquired or received in a just way, does not do away with the original gift of the earth to the whole of mankind. The *universal destination of goods* remains primordial..." (CCC 2403).

"The Church has rejected the totalitarian and atheistic ideologies associated in modern times with 'communism' or 'socialism.' She has likewise refused to accept, in the practice of 'capitalism,' individualism and the absolute primacy of the law of the marketplace over human labor... for there are many human needs which cannot be satisfied by the market" (CCC 2425).

With such general norms in mind, for current application of our Catholic social teaching to the problems of the day, we would also do well to pay attention to the regular *New Earth* column submitted by the North Dakota Catholic Conference (NDCC). We can also go to the NDCC website to read about our position on legislative issues under consideration at the state and national levels. With prayerful discernment, we can then contact our legislators to voice our personal views on the issues, hopefully in line with statements of our universal Church and local bishops.

Watch for Bishop Folda's twice monthly emails/text messages (sign up to receive these at fargodiocese.flocknote.com) on important issues as they arise. We can also access the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for their past and present statements on the matters of concern in our day. We can listen to relevant podcasts on Real Presence Radio, live or archived.

The oft-quoted adage, "Think globally and act locally," is highly relevant to our own life today. Global thinking is the expertise of our Catholic magisterium and its social teaching. Acting locally is the right and the duty of every citizen, and of every human being. It is part of our very essence as persons of dignity.

Advent is a season for traditions

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

My memories of the season of Advent growing up meant waiting. Waiting for those magical days of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It seemed like those four weeks of lighting candles took forever, and I never really gave the reasons for observing Advent a second thought (I was a kid dreaming of Santa and toys).

Now that I am grown and have a family of my own, I have a much greater sense of what the season of Advent really means, and what my parents were trying to instill in us as children about our faith. For the Catholic faithful, Advent is a four-week season of joyful preparation and spiritual anticipation for the coming of the birth of Jesus, usually marked by prayer, reflection, and family traditions.

One of the most popular traditions Catholic families observe, and one my parents handed down to me and my siblings, is the use of an Advent wreath and lighting the three purple and one rose candles during the four Sundays of Advent. My mother would lead us in singing a chorus of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” as the candle was lit. For my family currently, we also include a reading from the Mass we attended earlier that day.

Another fun Advent tradition that my mother brought to our family was the observance of the feast of St. Nicholas. On the morning of Dec. 6, we kids would find paper plates on the kitchen table filled with peppermint candy, peanut brittle, and a big, juicy orange. Our tradition held that St. Nicholas visited us in the night as a pre-visit to Christmas to make sure we were being good and getting ready for Jesus’s birthday. I did something that I don’t think my other siblings did. I would leave a note for St. Nicholas before going to bed the night before with a list of what I wanted for Christmas. Not really an Advent tradition, but I was a kid. I wasn’t taking any chances of a miscommunication!

A popular tradition most families honor is the use of an Advent calendar. These calendars list the 24 days in December leading up to Christmas Eve and are mostly for young children. When the door pertaining to the day is opened, a small toy or a piece of candy is revealed. Many so-called “Advent” calendars you find in stores are secular-themed. You can find religious-themed calendars online or at the religious goods stores in the area.

When our son and the youngest of his cousins were very young or pre-teens, we would purchase religious-themed calendars for each to help them to understand the “reason for the coming season.” Our son delighted in opening his daily square at breakfast. Behind each door, besides the piece of chocolate, was a short bible text, usually from the Book of Isaiah, pronouncing the coming of the Christ child. When he was old enough, he would read the text aloud before he ate his chocolate treat.



A typical Advent wreath. (Catholic)

Other families have their own traditions, like the Burrell family from St. Patrick’s parish in Crystal. They have passed on one tradition in particular from their parents to their current family.

“When my husband and I got married, my mother-in-law gave us a large felt Jesse Tree,” said Christina Burrell. “All of the ‘ornaments’ are felt and it comes with the Bible readings to go with each day. Since we have 14 children from ages 2 to 26 years old, we continue to use a children’s Bible, but it has brought such great conversations with the older kids. I have even been blessed to make the same Jesse tree for our two married children.”

One of my favorite Advent observances that a few parishes in the diocese use is displaying a statue of the Blessed Virgin, pregnant with the Christ Child. My parish of Holy Cross in West Fargo places this beautiful statue in the center of the parish Advent wreath. At home, we place a large, white candle in the center of our wreath, and we light it on Christmas Eve, bringing to a close that wonderful, joyous season of anticipation of our coming salvation we call Advent.

**A GRACE-FILLED
CHRISTMAS TO
EACH OF YOU!**

Love and prayer,
Mother Madonna
Sister Margaret Mary
Sister Veronica
Sister Jacinta

A photograph of four nuns standing together. They are wearing brown habits and white veils. They are all smiling at the camera. The background is a simple wall.

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Sanctuary restoration at St. Mary's in Grand Forks completed

By Father James Gross | Pastor of St. Mary's, Grand Forks

The people of St. Mary's Church in Grand Forks have finished the restoration of their sanctuary. The project was a long time coming. Father Dan Mrnarevic, a beloved former pastor, arranged for a consultant to provide a rudimentary plan nearly ten years ago. However, a recent project installing a new elevator and church entrance had reduced our available funds, and the project had to wait. The most recent renovation took place in the mid-1960s, incorporating a post-modern design that departed from the building's architectural themes and had not aged well.

When Bishop Folda announced the Diocesan capital campaign, which would benefit both the Diocese and local parishes, our parish decided to use this opportunity to take on this project. In late 2022, we formed an ad hoc subcommittee of parishioners. Paige Stransky, a liturgical consultant involved with several other church renovations in our diocese, guided the process.

Earlier this fall, a crew of workers from Houston, Texas came to St. Mary's to remove the existing flooring and appointments and do the new installation. Masses were held in our social hall during construction. Our former altar will be set up in Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Jamestown, and the Diocese is holding the remaining appointments in storage.

The new flooring is a light beige stone with white marble steps. A parishioner refurbished our tabernacle, now returned to the center of the apse. One highlight of the new altar is a remnant from the original high altar of the Last Supper now placed inside it. An artist originally from Grand Forks, William Rerick, painted and repaired the piece.

Many families gave sacrificial gifts to make our sanctuary restoration project a reality, and we are blessed to have a beautifully restored worship space for God's greater glory and honor. Bishop Folda will join us to consecrate the new altar Feb. 7, 2026.



The restored sanctuary space at St. Mary's Church in Grand Forks. (submitted photo)



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Deacon Rainwater, SJ, ordained to the diaconate

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

Deacon Conan Rainwater, SJ, was ordained a deacon on Sept. 20 at the Church of Saint Ignatius Loyola, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. He grew up in Bismarck, but his parents moved to Fargo about ten years ago and are currently parishioners of Sts. Anne & Joachim Parish. There were eight other Jesuits who were ordained with Deacon Rainwater to the transitional diaconate by the Most Reverend Richard G. Henning, Archbishop of Boston.

One highlight for Deacon Rainwater was the Litany of Saints. Lying prostrate on the ground is an uncommon and humbling position. Praying the Litany of Saints reminds us of the connection between the holy saints and the people of God here on earth. In his homily, Archbishop Henning spoke about this, saying that as deacons, we need to “understand the magnitude of the centrality of this moment, when you will lie down on the floor, dying to self, and give just yourself, just your heart to God, and trust that the Lord will receive that gift and make of it a part of his plan for salvation.” So often, we feel we have to give our accomplishments or trophies to God, when at the end of the day, God just wants ourselves, our heart.

After graduation from the Boston College Clough School of Theology and Ministry with a Master in Divinity and a Master of Theology in May 2026, Deacon Rainwater will be ordained a Jesuit priest in Milwaukee, Wis., on June 13, 2026. Starting August 2026, he will be one of the two vocation promoters for the Midwest Jesuit Province.



Rev. John Baldovin, SJ vests newly ordained Deacon Conan Rainwater, SJ. (Molly Snakenberg)



From left to right, Linda Rainwater; Rev. Trevor Rainwater, SJ; Deacon Conan Rainwater, SJ; and Leslie Rainwater. Not pictured: their sister Ellecia and family. (Molly Snakenberg)

Ariana Onchuck named Novice with Carmelites

As of Nov. 1, Ariana Onchuck is now Sister Jacinta Marie of the Queen of Heaven. She will be a Novice with the Carmel of Mary Monastery in Wahpeton for two years. She is from Wahpeton and her parents are members of St. Anthony's in Mooreton. (submitted photo)



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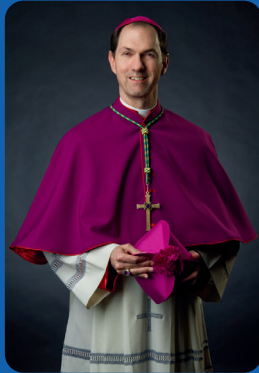


WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL

With Bishop John T. Folda

October 5 - 17, 2026

13 DAY GREECE & TURKEY PILGRIMAGE



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I would like to personally invite you to join me on a pilgrimage to Greece & Turkey, walking in the footsteps of St. Paul. We will visit the holy sites of Corinth, Philippi, Thessaloniki, Ephesus, Meteora, Athens and Istanbul - places forever marked by the Apostle's mission and witness.

I am grateful to offer this opportunity to you, and I hope you will join me. This will be more than a journey through beautiful landscapes - it will be a spiritual pilgrimage that brings Scripture to life.

As we trace the path of St. Paul, we'll reflect on his letters, grow in fellowship, and deepen our personal encounter with Christ.

Come with an open heart - and return renewed in faith.

With God's blessings,

Bishop John T. Folda

Questions?

Contact Mary Hanbury
mary.hanbury@fargodiocese.org,
<https://www.fargodiocese.org/pilgrimages-greece>

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From the prairie to the mountains: Two families pilgrimage to the Lord

By Josh and Jackie Gow, Valley City & Heather and Jacob Hanson, Hankinson

The journey covered over 580 miles, beginning in the valley and prairie of North Dakota, ending at the heights. The trip was over thirteen hours of driving, with countless stops for bathroom breaks, snack distributions, and seating rearrangements to stymie sibling squabbles.

The distance alone is enough to dissuade many, but what drove two families from the Diocese of Fargo to make this trip, with multiple children of various ages to boot? The short answer, to get away on retreat and encounter the Lord in the heights.

In a mysterious way, God seems to speak most clearly to his chosen ones on mountain tops. Moses climbed Sinai to converse with God and receive the Ten Commandments; Elijah ascended Mount Horeb to hear the still small voice of God; even the Lord himself went away on a mountaintop to pray with his Father. For many, God still speaks more clearly on the heights, where heaven and earth are closest in a silent and perpetual embrace.

Making the pilgrimage were the Gow family from Valley City and the Hanson family from Hankinson. The destination for these families was Annunciation Heights, a camp just outside Estes Park, Colorado. A continuation of Camp St. Malo, a youth camp started by the Archdiocese of Denver over a century ago, Annunciation Heights carries on the heritage of leading youth and families into an encounter with God through the beauty of nature. Every year, the camp hosts multiple camps geared towards youth and families, welcoming them into the beauty of the Rocky Mountains and inviting them to grow through adventures like high ropes and low ropes courses, zip lining, and more. Woven throughout these outdoor excursions are core elements of Catholic culture, including Daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration.

“We wanted to go on a retreat as a family, and we also had a desire to be in the mountains,” said Josh and Jackie Gow. “We stumbled across this camp and went for the first time last year. It had all the adventures you would expect in a youth camp, but we got to share in those adventures with our children. Integrated into all of this was our Catholic faith. We had such a wonderful time that we wanted to go back and bring other families to share in the experience.”

“We wanted community with other Catholics and to build our family relationships,” commented Heather Hanson. “I was also attracted by the fact that each family receives the help of one or two counselors during the camp, freeing my husband and me for prayer, time together, and adult fellowship.”

The camp certainly met these expectations for the families, and so much more. As they reflect on their experience, both



The Gow Family prepares for the high ropes course at Annunciation Heights camp in Colorado. (submitted photo)



The Hanson family prepares for the 1,000 foot zip line over the lake. (submitted photo)

the Gows and Hansons recognized tremendous graces received from camp.

Heather Hanson recalls, “Camp was fruitful for me personally, for our marriage, and for our family as a whole. I pushed myself to do something completely out-of-character and braved the 1,000-foot zip line. My husband had a deep encounter with Jesus at Adoration. We learned more about our 9-year old’s personality as she tackled the high ropes course fearlessly!

Family affirmation was poignant. So was family reconciliation, where we saw relationship healing.”

“We loved watching the kids push themselves to grow and do something outside their comfort zones,” the Gows noted. “Being in the mountains and outdoors was a wonderful blessing; it was peaceful and restorative for everyone.”

As they return to the prairies from the heights, the Gow and Hanson families offer an invitation to all families who are interested in the experience of Family Camp at Annunciation Heights.

“If you think you might be interested, pray and seriously consider it. And contact us—we’d love to go at the same time, if possible,” commented the Hansons. “It is quite a pilgrimage, but if he is calling you ‘to the heights,’ the rewards will far outweigh the cost. So as the Lord spoke to my husband at Adoration, and as I learned on the zip line, do not be afraid!”

“Pray about it,” added the Gows. “If you go, it will really transform your family, and it will be a wonderful experience for everyone. If you are looking for a wonderful Christmas gift for someone you love, consider this as a gift that can transform their family.”

For these families, the camp provided all they hoped for and more. They came hoping to encounter the Lord, and they left renewed, encouraged, and forever changed as they continue to live as Christians in the world. For them, the pilgrimage was well worth the effort. Will you consider making the pilgrimage next year, to go away to the heights to be with the Lord?

For more information about Annunciation Heights, go to www.annunciationheights.org. If you are interested in coordinating going to camp with other local families, send an email to us at familycamppilgrimage@gmail.com.

St. Paul’s Newman Center in Fargo expands faith-based student housing

By bisonCatholic

Newman Living, in partnership with St. Paul’s Newman Center (SPNC), proudly announces the acquisition of The View on University Apartments and the adjoining SPNC townhomes in Fargo. This major expansion represents a strategic step in advancing the Newman Center’s mission to foster faith, community, and holistic support for students in Fargo/Moorhead.

The purchase of The View—a modern apartment complex built in 2021—marks the culmination of years of growth and planning aimed at extending the Newman Center’s reach across the Fargo-Moorhead region. The acquisition effectively brings the entire block surrounding the Newman Center under its stewardship, creating a unified hub for faith-based living, learning, and service.

“Our vision is to create not just student housing, but a genuine community where young people can grow spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually,” said Fr. James Cheney, Pastor and Director of St. Paul’s Newman Center. “Purchasing The View allows us to meet the tremendous demand we’ve experienced for high-quality faith-based housing while continuing to offer a supportive environment centered on Catholic values, faith formation, and leadership generation.”

Newman Living will oversee operations at the newly integrated residences, ensuring that students from NDSU and the tri-college community can access well-managed, amenity-rich apartments that also serve as a foundation for vibrant student life. Residents will benefit from proximity to campus, spiritual resources, and community programming designed to build friendships, faith, and purpose.



**The newly-purchased apartment complex on Nov. 6.
(Paul Braun | New Earth)**

The View on University features modern floor plans, in-unit laundry, full utilities, a fitness center, study spaces, and social lounges—amenities that align with Newman Living’s philosophy of integrated student support. Combined with SPNC’s existing residential spaces, the new development strengthens Newman Living’s position as a leading provider of faith-based student housing in North Dakota.

“This expansion allows us to meet and expand students’ needs to include married housing in support of young families,” said Andrew Nielsen, Property Manager of Newman Living. “We’re grateful for the opportunity to continue serving the Fargo-Moorhead higher education community through this next chapter of growth.”

The “Miracle at Dazey” that spared a historic church from a devastating windstorm

By Pat Springer | Fargo Forum (reprinted with permission)

It was one of the busiest and most celebrated weekends of the year for the devout members of St. Mary’s Church. The parish east of Dazey in rural Barnes County has a tradition more than a century old of observing the Feast of Corpus Christi, which celebrates the Eucharist as being composed of the body and blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. German immigrant families brought the tradition of celebrating the feast with them when they started homesteading the land in the rolling hills rising from the Sheyenne River in the 1880s.

Many preparations go before the celebration, which includes an elaborate procession through the wooded churchyard. The priest, walking underneath a canopy held by altar servers, lifts up the monstrance, a vessel that holds the consecrated Host for the adoration of the faithful. Parishioners follow, with most saying the rosary while the choir sings hymns. This was to be St. Mary’s 120th annual celebration of Corpus Christi, an occasion so important that Bishop John Folda was invited to lead the procession, followed by altar servers and the faithful.

On June 20, the men went to work with their chainsaws and pruning shears to trim tree limbs in the path of the procession. Church members also cleaned and decorated two small chapels that hold candles and religious images used in the outdoor ceremony. Women prepared food for the feast and acquired peonies, whose white, pink, red, and yellow petals would be strewn by girls in front of the processioners. Men stocked the concession stand with beer and soft drinks, refreshments for the meal and softball game to follow.

The day was hot and muggy, and there were warnings a storm was possible that night. So as a precaution, Murriel Wieland moved the peonies, which had been refrigerated to preserve their blossoms, to the church basement for safekeeping for the Saturday feast and procession. Still, nobody among the 30 families of the parish could have predicted that the highly anticipated anniversary observance of Corpus Christi would be disrupted in such a catastrophic way. Unseen and many miles away, trouble brewed in the darkening sky. That Friday evening, conditions would come together to spread volatile, destructive weather over much of North Dakota.

In the southeast, supercell thunderstorms developed ahead of an approaching bow-shaped weather complex, spawning multiple tornadoes, including one that would kill three people near Enderlin. The tornadoes were followed by a powerful line of severe thunderstorms known as a derecho—followed in turn by widespread, long-lasting winds that raked the prairie in portions of central and east-central North Dakota and portions



St. Mary’s Church on Oct. 30 after storm-damaged trees were removed. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

of Minnesota. St. Mary’s, with its landmark steeple jutting into the sky, stood right in the path of the oncoming storm.

“The center of the community”

The Corpus Christi tradition at St. Mary’s is so ingrained that extended family members who have moved far away return for the feast and celebration. Some families even hold reunions that coincide with the observance. The sense of community fostered by the Corpus Christi gatherings helps to explain why they have become so essential to the life of the St. Mary’s parish, a social bond that started during the early 1900s, when the church was young.

“For the people back then, the church really was the center, not just for spiritual life, but social life,” said Lloyd Wieland. “It was really the center of the community, so they took a lot of pride in it. And everyone went to church.”

Many years ago, when Lloyd Wieland was young, the Corpus Christi celebration compared favorably with Christmas. “They had all kinds of pop and ice cream for it,” he said. “It’s stuff we never had at home.” Also, “There was always a big softball game that day,” and the church choir and band performed during the summer feast celebration. In the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s—before television—the celebration included staging a play. “It was kind of a big deal,” Lloyd Wieland said. “It’s probably not as big now.”

Nowadays, the Corpus Christi procession routinely draws more than 100, but often considerably more come, as many as 250 during a milestone anniversary or when a large family has a reunion. A good turnout, but nothing like the 500 or 600 from years gone by. This year, with the bishop coming to preside, promised to bring a big crowd.

Storms roll in

Bob Wieland, Lloyd's second cousin, found himself hosting 30 relatives and friends during Corpus Christi weekend. His farmstead, which has two houses, is next door to St. Mary's. That's because his pioneer grandfather, John Wieland, donated some of his land to the parish after establishing his homestead in 1889. The Friday afternoon before Corpus Christi was to take place, Bob Wieland was among those who were cleaning up in preparation. He takes care of the church grounds year-round.

The preparations were done around 5:30 p.m., June 20. Around 7 p.m., after storm warnings were issued, Bob Wieland and others moved a dozen vehicles into buildings on the farmstead as a precaution. "I remember thinking, 'Why am I doing this?'" he said. Then, at about 9 p.m., the storm hit. When a tornado warning was issued, his family and guests huddled in the church basement, located 300 yards away. Tornadoes struck nearby, including locations near Sanborn and Litchfield, around 10 p.m.

After the wind and rain stopped, Bob Wieland and his guests returned to the houses. "I felt like it was over," he said. But it was only a lull. Worse was to come. Around 10:30 p.m., "relentless" high winds and lightning started. "We all tried to go to bed," Bob Wieland said. But the weather remained ferociously restless, and another tornado warning was issued. "We just listened to the wind blow," he said. When lightning flashed, he could look out and see tree limbs being blown away. "It was crazy."

Bob Wieland's youngest grown daughter kept asking, "Are we going to be OK? I kept saying it was going to be fine." Not long after those reassuring words were spoken, half of an evergreen tree flew by. The winds sheared off the tops of many of the evergreens in the shelterbelts surrounding Bob Wieland's farmstead and nearby St. Mary's. "It was raining sideways," he said. For more than two hours, wind gusts in the area were clocked at 80 to 120 mph. Atop a 270-foot tower, the peak gale howled at 144 mph. "I can't even explain it," Bob Wieland said. "It was so loud."

Help from above

Finally, after 2 a.m. the exhausted Bob Wieland family and their guest dozed off to sleep. At 4:15 a.m., Bob Wieland was awake and ready to assess the damage. Fallen trees and tree limbs were strewn everywhere. "You couldn't get through the yard, period," he said. "You couldn't walk to the church. I've never seen anything like it." Parish members in surrounding farms woke up to similar damage, with fallen trees and limbs blocking their exit. It would require work just to get out of the driveway. It quickly became apparent the Feast of Corpus Christi would have to wait. Gradually, after clearing their way free, parishioners showed up at St. Mary's. "Everybody was in tears," said Murriel Wieland. "You couldn't believe the damage and the trees were laying down in homage."

All of the trees closest to the church were blown down, including a pair of 80-foot evergreens—which had previously

stood like sentries by the entrance—fell along either side of the church without hitting it. "The trees laid down to surround and protect the church," said Teresa Fewell, president of the St. Mary's Altar Society. A large tree toppled on top of the concession stand used for the Corpus Christi celebration, crushing it. Amazingly, however, the stucco church and its ornate stained windows were unscathed. "You're just aghast," Murriel Wieland said, "and also you're thankful."

Many St. Mary's parishioners believe a providential hand saved the church. "It was a miracle," said the Rev. Sean Mulligan, the parish priest. "It looked like somebody went out with a mower and trimmed all the trees." The two wooden chapels and statues in the churchyard also escaped damage. "All the holy sites were completely spared," Mulligan said.

The unscathed church and chapels in the midst of the wreckage inspired Fewell to call it a Eucharistic miracle, an extraordinary, unexplainable event involving the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist. Murriel Wieland calls it the "Miracle at Dazey." In the lengthy cleanup that followed, tons of trees and limbs were cleared, many deposited in a heaping pile near the devastated shelterbelt by Wieland's farmstead. Nearby stood the squat, crumpled remains of a grain bin, one of three empty bins that the wind tossed in the air.

Except for some torn metal trim, the houses on Bob Wieland's farmstead were undamaged. "Yet we no longer have a shelterbelt," he said. Now the church and farmstead, once well protected by the shelterbelt, will be more vulnerable until new trees that will be planted next spring grow to maturity years from now.

To maintain tradition, St. Mary's held its 120th Corpus Christi procession on Aug. 24, a more subdued observance than usual with the procession through the open churchyard instead of the path through the toppled trees. For some future Corpus Christi feast, the parish will invite the bishop back. But without those beautiful trees, the ceremony won't be the same.

"It'll be different now," Bob Wieland said.



In this June 2019 photo, St. Mary's parishioners begin their annual Corpus Christi procession. (Paul Braun | New Earth)



Left to right, Deacons Thomas O'Keefe, Steven Splonskowski, Edward DeKeyser, Brian Herding, and Theodore LeMier were ordained to the permanent diaconate at the Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo, Nov. 15. (Tyson Kuznia)

A visible icon of Christ the Servant

Bishop Folda ordains five men to the permanent diaconate

By Msgr. Gregory J. Schlesselmann | Director of Permanent Diaconate Formation

For many Catholics, the permanent deacon is a liturgical minister who fulfills his specific role in the celebration of the sacred Liturgy. The deacon proclaims the Gospel, at times gives the homily, and assists in the distribution of Communion. Rightly so, he is perceived as not exactly the same kind of minister as a priest given what he does not do in the Liturgy. However, that is where the understanding of the deacon's role in the life of the Church tends to end. Many are less clear about the wider ministerial impact that the permanent deacon has on the life of the Church. In part, this may be due to the relative recency of the visible ministry of deacons on a prolonged basis.

Among the many decisions of the second Vatican Council was the decision to finally act upon the decree of the Council of Trent in the 16th century concerning the restoration of the permanency of the diaconate in the hierarchy of the Church. The deacon was a prominent minister in the early centuries of the Church's life, however over centuries, the deacon's role became limited to the transitional phase enroute to the priesthood. The modern decree has restored the permanency of the diaconate and it has been implemented widely in our contemporary Church, primarily to promote the urgent missionary work of the new evangelization.

In the mind of the Church, the permanent deacons serves as a visible icon of Christ the Servant, who came "not to be served, but to serve." This humble mission of Christ to serve

broken humanity becomes expressed in the life of the deacon in a variety of ways. Fundamentally, Christ invites the deacon to share in his mission by exercising three major types of service or "diaconia" as the New Testament names it. The first is the one already made mention of—the service of the liturgy. He is to assist in such a way as to facilitate a prayerful and ordered celebration of the sacred rites and an interior participation of the faithful. Secondly, the deacon serves in the proclamation of the Word of God. This service is expressed both in the liturgy (proclamation of the Gospel, homily) but more widely in the various forms of evangelization and catechesis. The deacon is called to be at the service of the Word in such a way as to help all persons hear that Word and come to faith in the one whom the Father sent, Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 17:3). Lastly, the deacon is called to serve in the exercise of the Church's charity to all those in need. This form of diaconal service can take on many different forms, but it is always seeking to bring the love of Christ to others in concrete ways.

The five-year process of prayer, study, and service helps the candidate to become ever more docile to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit so that they may truly be the instrument in the hands of the Lord. Let us all give thanks to God for these men who have generously said "yes" to the call of Christ the Servant. May their diaconal ministry bear abundant fruit for many years to come.



Deacon Edward DeKeyser
Blessed Sacrament,
West Fargo

**Where are you from?
Who is your family?**

I am originally from Lakin, a small town in southwestern Kansas. I have been married to my wife Lori for 34 years. We have four children: Monica, Justin, Braden, and Desi.

**When did you first hear the call to pursue the diaconate?
When did that call become more real to you?**

I came to a point in my life that I realized if I wanted to be happy, I had to do the will of God. At the time I was training for marathons, and once a week I would run a "long run." These long runs were times I would pray, listen to Christian music, or listen to Catholic podcasts. I was on a long run that was 14-16 miles, and I was in my last two miles. I was praying to God to reveal his will to me. It was intense, and I remember coming to a complete stop and crying out to God, "What is your will for my life?" A calm, quiet thought (voice) came to me, "I want you to become a deacon." I knew that thought didn't come from me, because it had never entered my mind before. I was unsure and confused by the thought, so I prayed the following: "God, I know I am not supposed to ask for something like this, but if this is what you want, you are going to have to give me some sort of sign." A short time later, I went to confession behind the screen to a priest that I believe is a good and holy priest. I made my confession, he gave me absolution and my penance, and as I was walking out, he asked me to wait a second. He said the following: "I don't know why, but the Holy Spirit wants me to ask you something... have you ever thought about becoming a deacon?" I haven't looked back since.

What has been your most memorable experience in formation?

The best memories I have from my formation is getting to know my fellow deacon candidates, and discovering the unique calling, talents, and charisms of each.

What advice do you have for others who may be discerning the diaconate?

All I would have to say to those discerning the diaconate is "fear not." Pursue your calling and trust that God will guide you in making the right decision for you and your family, and Christ's Church.



Deacon Brian Herding
St. Anthony of Padua,
Fargo

**Where are you from?
Who is your family?**

I am from West Fargo. I grew up in Hankinson as a young boy. I am married to a beautiful lady named Diane.

When did you first hear the call to pursue the diaconate? When did that call become more real to you?

I have felt a call to it for quite a few years. It became very powerful to me in a short time right before the application process started for my formation group. Within about two weeks, I had two people approach me and simply ask if I was thinking about it. One of them was from Minneapolis and had no connection to the Diocese. Then St. Anthony's Church in Fargo posted an announcement in the bulletin about an evening session in Jamestown that the Diocese sponsored for couples to learn more about it. The process was then rolling.

What has been your most memorable experience in formation?

It's hard to pin down just one experience. I think the program as a whole and having the opportunity for Diane and me to grow with the other couples and the formation team has been a highlight. At times it could be stressful, but overall it was an amazing blessing.

What advice do you have for others who may be discerning the diaconate?

Continue to pray about it. Reach out to a current deacon and ask their experiences. Call the Vocations office to learn some concrete details. Have no fear for God is near!



Bishop Folda gives each of the newly ordained deacons the kiss of peace. (Tyson Kuznia)



Deacon Theodore LeMier
Sts. Anne & Joachim,
Fargo

**Where are you from?
Who is your family?**

I was born in Oakes and lived there until 1982 when we moved to Horace and lived there until 1990. I have been married for 33 years to Susan LeMier (Markovic). We have four children: Alex, Brenna, Claire, and Danielle.

**When did you first hear the call to pursue the diaconate?
When did that call become more real to you?**

I am a convert to the Catholic faith; I entered the Church at the Easter vigil in 2000 at Sts. Anne and Joachim. During my RCIA (now OCIA) journey, my wife mentioned to me: "Maybe the diaconate could be for you?" Fast forward ten years to an overnight adoration hour, I asked the Lord what he wanted of me, and he suggested the diaconate. I applied and was asked to wait until the next class, since I was not yet ready. God's timing was correct. Five years later, I reapplied but had doubts. Again in adoration I asked the Lord to make it clear that this was what he wanted me to do. Within a few days, I was working my job as property manager at Sts. Anne and Joachim Church when a righteous older gentleman called me over and said, "Ted, I am so glad I saw you today. Don't let anything deter you from being a deacon." I took this as an answered prayer.

What has been your most memorable experience in formation?

Although sometimes difficult or tiresome, all of formation was my favorite: the coming together as a brotherhood with my fellow candidates, the classes that we all enjoyed, the instructors and their wealth of knowledge, and the joy of serving at Mass and adoration. Taking a pilgrimage to Italy this February was certainly memorable, but perhaps the time spent on silent retreat and growing in self-knowledge is my most memorable experience. I now know why I was called and know that God has made me for it.

What advice do you have for others who may be discerning the diaconate?

The Lord has always used intermediaries to connect with his chosen people. If people are suggesting you may be a good deacon or are asking you to consider it, don't hesitate to bring it to the Lord in prayer. Then, instead of questioning whether or not the Lord knows what he's doing, take the first step boldly and see where he leads you. If you can do this, you can do the Lord's will, and if it is the diaconate, you will never be happier living out what you were made for.



Deacon Thomas O'Keefe
St. Anthony of Padua,
Fargo

**Where are you from?
Who is your family?**

I am originally from Crystal, attending St. Patrick's Church. Audrey Altendorf and I have been married 40 years. We have three girls, Lindsey, Leah, and Tera. We have five grandchildren.

**When did you first hear the call to pursue the diaconate?
When did that call become more real to you?**

My call to the diaconate is a little convoluted. I began my reversion experience in 2010, intentionally seeking out a community of Catholic men who could mentor me in the faith. That small group of men I joined at Holy Cross in West Fargo are still with me today. That led me to the Made for Greatness Men's Ministry, introducing me to other holy men. About that time, I started attending daily Mass. One morning outside the chapel, I was introducing myself to Deacon Pat Breen. His daughter for some reason told me that I should be a deacon too. I smiled at her and thought to myself, "You have no idea who you are talking to!" Then I met Deacon Bruce Dahl and got involved in his Men of the Cross ministry. He was the kind of man I wanted to be like. As I continued to get involved with Catholic ministries and events, I met men like Deacon Ken Votova, Deacon James Eggl, and Deacon Stu Longtin. Their combined witness to the faith was an inspiration in my heart to the discernment to the diaconate. The call to the diaconate didn't truly become real to me until I attended the five-day silent Canonical retreat this past October. It involved my surrender to God's will and putting my total trust in his providence. Abandonment of my self-reliance took me that long and will probably need to be repeated from time-to-time.

What has been your most memorable experience in formation?

I had so many good instructors during formation and developed a bond with the other candidates and their wives. Most significantly, I will be forever grateful to the formation team and process for what it has done for my faith and my marriage. Ordering my own life and that of my marriage to one that is rooted in prayer, the sacraments, and the Mass has changed everything.

What advice do you have for others who may be discerning the diaconate?

It is a discernment, not a decision. As I said above, even if for some reason I was not to be ordained, I am forever grateful for what formation has done for Audrey and me. If you are thinking about this, it is because the Lord has put the desire in your heart. Follow your heart.



**Deacon Steven Splonskowski
Cathedral of St. Mary,
Fargo**

**Where are you from?
Who is your family?**

I am originally from Lake Park, Minn. We became parishioners of St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo in 1993. I currently reside near Rollag, Minn. with my wife, Jacinta where we raised our seven children: Gregory, Therese, Claire, Stephen, Francesca, Lucia, and Damien.

**When did you first hear the call to pursue the diaconate?
When did that call become more real to you?**

I felt the call to Holy Orders as a young boy. I attended seminary from 1997–99 at Cardinal Muench Seminary in Fargo. There I discerned a call to marriage, but when I left Monsignor Robert Laliberte, my formation director said, "Don't forget to discern the call to diaconate when the time comes." I didn't think about that for 20 years. While leading a pilgrimage for Real Presence Radio to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in LaCrosse, Wis., I lectured at Mass and inadvertently read the Gospel instead of the First Reading. Father James Gross was the Spiritual Director for that pilgrimage and during his homily he said, "Steve, you accidentally read the Gospel; that may be an invitation for you to consider a call to the diaconate." I took that as the reminder to begin to discern that call.

What has been your most memorable experience in formation?

The annual retreats and 5-day canonical retreat at Maryvale were highlights and times of significance for me. I started attending retreats at Maryvale (SEARCH) when I was 15-years-old. Then during seminary, we had annual retreats there, so I felt like the Lord was just continuing a conversation that started there. Many of us Deacon Candidates took a pilgrimage to Rome in 2025. That was a blessed time for us and our wives. The monthly classes included great instructors, prayer, and the opportunity to soak in the beauty of our Catholic faith!

What advice do you have for others who may be discerning the diaconate?

Do not be afraid! The Lord will fill up your lack and give you the strength to follow him as St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Let Christ be your guide, your strength, your everything!



Monsignor Goering assists Deacon Splonskowski with vesting with the stole and dalmatic, which are signs of the office of Deacon. (Tyson Kuznia)



Deacons O'Keefe (left) and LeMier (right) while Bishop Folda incenses the altar. (Tyson Kuznia)



Deacon Samuel Pupino, along with other deacons, give Deacon Herding and all newly ordained deacons the kiss of peace. (Tyson Kuznia)

TATTERED PAGES

A review of books, movies, music

Silence and the suffering Christian

By Hope Hageman | Parishioner of Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

Often regarded as a controversial piece of literature, *Silence* by Shūsaku Endō addresses apostasy in a haunting and troubling way. The fictitious novel written in 1966 depicts the persecution of Japanese Christians in the 17th Century, focusing on a Portuguese Jesuit priest named Rodrigues who journeys to the island to tend to the flock. After his eventual capture (spoiler alert!) he is forced to watch Japanese Christians suffer; to save them, he must renounce his faith by trampling the *fumi-e*, a carved image of Christ. The main question of the novel, raised in its latter half, is whether Rodrigues will allow the torture of others to stay true to the faith or comply with the state and renounce his faith to save them.

Please be warned of the brutal nature of this book. It is certainly not an easy, comforting read, but a challenging and formative one. Rodrigues depicts his struggle with the silence of God in his prayer, crying out to our Lord, asking how he could be so silent in the face of such turmoil. Rodrigues is met with spiritual dryness and silence. He continues to pray, but says, “I did pray, I kept on praying. But prayer did nothing to alleviate their suffering.”

How often do we beg God to speak, and are met with seemingly nothing? How often do we pray feverishly for a cause only for no miracle to occur? Does this lead us to question our God, even momentarily? Do we doubt our Savior in his silence?

Like Job, we often cry out in our adversity for the mercy of Christ. If God allows that suffering for reasons unknown, do we abandon him? Or do we allow the suffering and pain to be the “kiss of Jesus,” as St. Theresa of Calcutta explains: “Suffering, pain, sorrow, humiliation, feelings of loneliness, are nothing but the kiss of Jesus, a sign that you have come so close that he can kiss you.”

For the sake of not spoiling the book, I’ll allow the reader to discover what path Rodrigues chose. But whether our suffering is that of martyrdom, of grief, of exhaustion, of sickness, or any sort of sorrow—do we let our God kiss us, even when it hurts? Do we lay the pain at the foot of the cross? Most challenging of all, can we accept God’s will even if he allows our pain to continue? Or, like countless great saints, can we allow even the darkest of trials to sanctify us?

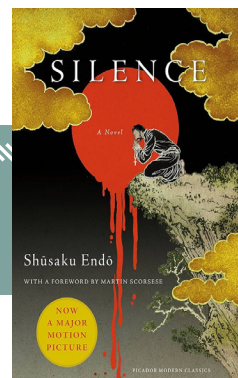
Many saints endured periods of unfathomable suffering and seemingly unanswered prayers. St. Theresa of Calcutta endured decades of spiritual dryness and silence. St. Monica prayed

feverishly for the conversion of her son for years before her prayers were answered. The 12 apostles witnessed Christ’s death and endured his absence for those three long days, unsure of how the faith would continue. The list goes on and on.

What made them saints is that they clung to God in these periods. They didn’t turn away, believing God turned his back on them. They knew that each horrible, dark thing can be made beautiful by one simple divine touch.

Can we endure in the silence? Can we keep our feet planted at the foot of the cross, handing every sweet and bitter thing to Christ? Even when all seems lost, can we trust in our Lord God and his plan?

“Faith flourishes in the dark: trials, temptations, spiritual dryness and suffering are all opportunities for our faith to grow stronger. We can, of course, neglect these opportunities and allow our faith to wither and die. But those who praise God in life’s difficulties will experience the opposite effect.” —St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi



“Silence” by Shūsaku Endō,
1966.

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The Pilgrims Page

A look at Catholic pilgrimage sites

Crossing the Tiber River: the Bridge of the Angels

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

The last stop on our pilgrimage to Rome is the Ponte Sant'Angelo Bridge, the Angels Bridge. This is not just an ordinary bridge, but in times past it was the only bridge across the Tiber River by which pilgrims would reach their destination of St. Peter's Basilica.

The bridge was constructed in 134 AD by the Roman Emperor Hadrian. It was used to reach his newly constructed mausoleum. The mausoleum was later turned into a papal fortress during the Early Middle Ages. Its name changed to Castle San Angelo due to an appearance of St. Michael the Archangel during the plague in the 6th Century. It was Pope Gregory I who made a procession through Rome to pray for the end of the plague. As he approached the castle, he recounts a vision in which he saw the angel sheath a bloody sword, which he took as a sign that the plague that had been ravaging Rome for years was finally over. A sculpture of St. Michael was placed on top of the castle as a constant reminder of God's mercy through the intercession of the Archangel.

In the Jubilee year of 1450 the number of pilgrims crossing the bridge became too much and the railings on the side collapsed. An estimated 200 people fell and drowned in the river. In response to the tragedy, the pope ordered two chapels to be placed at the end of the bridge so that Masses would be offered for those who died. In 1535 the chapels were torn down, and statues of St. Peter and St. Paul were set in place.

Through the years, various sculptures were placed on the bridge, including the evangelists, patriarchs, and angels. However, they were not made of the sturdiest material and eventually fell into ruin. In 1669, Pope Clemente IX commissioned one of the greatest sculptors in all of Europe, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, to sculpt ten angels with each one holding an instrument of the passion. Pope Clement IX wanted the approach from central Rome towards the Basilica of St. Peter to be a spiritual path for pilgrims to reflect on the passion of Christ. The angels tell the story of the Passion chronologically, beginning at the righthand side of the southern end of the bridge. The Latin inscription below each angel describes that moment in the Passion. For example, the inscription below the first angel who holds a piece of the column that Christ was scourged upon reads, TRONUS MEUS IN COLONNA, My throne is upon the column. It continues as such:

IN FLAGELLA PARATUS SUM (I am prepared for the scourge)
IN AERUMNA MEA DUM CONFIGITUR SPINA (In my pain, the thorn is fastened upon me)



Bridge of the Angels crossing the Tiber River. (Mary Hanbury)

RESPICE FACIEM CHRISTI TUI
(Look at the face of your Christ)
SUPER VESTIMENTUM MEUM
MISERUNT SORTEM (For my
clothing, they cast lots) (Ps 22)
ASPICIENT AD ME QUEM
CONFIXERUNT (They will look
at me, whom they have pierced)
(Zach 12:10)

CUIUS PRINCIPATUS SUPER
HUMERUM EIUS (Dominion rests
on his shoulders) (Isa 9:6)

REGNAVIT A LIGNO DEUS (God
reigned from the tree) (Ps 96:10)

POTAVERUNT ME ACETO (They gave me vinegar to drink)

VULNERASTI COR MEUM (You have pierced my heart)



One angel on the bridge.
(Mary Hanbury)

In the end, Bernini, actually only completed two of the angels himself and left the rest to his assistants. All the angels are still there today. The two angels he carved were moved to the church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte in Rome and copies were made to replace them on the bridge.

The next time you are in Rome be sure to gaze upon the angels as you cross the Tiber River. The angels are more than just beautiful artwork but a powerful reminder for all Christians that their path in this life is toward the Eternal City of God. It is only by Christ's passion and his way of the cross that we have access. This too becomes our path. Jesus assured his followers that "unless you take up your cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciples." However, Christ shares the burden with us and becomes our strength and pilgrim guide along the way.



Deceased relatives and saints breathe life to those on earth

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

In January 2022, I met my now husband Sam. Within two and half months, I was convinced he was the one. But it wasn't the fun and the butterflies in my stomach that convinced me. It was in the midst of tragedy that I knew I wanted to be with Sam for better or for worse.

In March, Sam flew to Spokane, Wash. to be with his father, Pete, before and during a triple by-pass surgery. While he accompanied his father, I went about my usual week in Fargo, praying for them both.

Unfortunately, Pete had a stroke shortly after the surgery and passed away a few days later. Those days were an emotional ride. I so wanted to meet Pete in person and felt cheated that I couldn't. I was grateful that Sam was able to see him before the surgery. Sam was very sweet during this time, consoling me in my attempts to console him over the phone.

It was during these conversations when I first hoped to marry him. He told me a story about when his dad's level of communication was to squeeze once for yes and twice for no, even though they weren't sure if he could understand them. But when Sam mused out-loud if he should call me, Pete squeezed once for an emphatic yes. I didn't want to read too much into it, but I hoped this single yes went deeper. I had met Pete briefly once via zoom, but I hoped it was enough that he might hope I'd be his daughter-in-law someday. I prayed that if I wasn't to meet Pete in person, that God would show me Pete's approval. It was a strange prayer because I had no concept of how God could possibly answer it.

Sometimes God has us wait for years before answering our prayers, but this time, he answered my prayer that evening, when I dreamed I was in the hospital room with Pete. It was just the two of us, and while Pete was clearly at the end of his life, he was smiling and radiant as if he was already one step in heaven. Then he squeezed my hand once to say "yes." I was truly assured in that moment that not only did Pete love me and wanted me to marry his son, but that God would soon welcome him to heaven.

The summer prior to this incident, my godfather, Loren, passed away. Several weeks after he died, while I prayed for the repose of his soul, I thought: "Loren, when you get to heaven, can you let Jesus know that I'm ready to meet my husband now? I've asked him, I've asked the saints, I've prayed lots of novenas. But you're part of my family, and maybe if you ask him, that will convince him."

Sam moved to Fargo that same summer and while we didn't meet until the winter, I think Loren too had his say in bringing Sam and me together. I now wonder to what extent those who've gone before us still breathe life in the world. How deeply do their prayers in heaven affect our lives?

Shortly after Sam came back to Fargo, we talked about getting married. I was excited but also worried we were taking things too quickly. I hate to say it, but I wanted another sign. Every day, I felt this prodding from the Holy Spirit to pray for a rose.

I'd heard of people asking for St. Therese's intercession to receive a rose, usually for confirmation to take a certain direction in life. For example, I heard a story about a discouraged seminarian thinking about leaving seminary. He prayed for a rose as he was sitting in front of a statue of Mary when a religious sister placed a bouquet of roses in Mary's arms. A friend of mine was considering switching colleges and prayed to receive a purple rose specifically. Shortly after, she ventured into a church basement, which was decorated for an event with purple roses at each table.

I thought these stories were all very nice, but I'm skeptical. Because I didn't need a yellow rose to verify whether or not I should marry Sam. Not receiving a yellow rose wasn't going to stop me, especially since I already received a pretty powerful "yes." But I couldn't stop thinking about this novena and God's invitation to pray it. It was as if he was saying, "I have a gift for you, but I want you to ask for it. It's not just about receiving consolation you don't need but about increasing your faith."

So I asked for a yellow rose. I prayed the novena to St. Therese, and I'm embarrassed to say that I was half-hearted about it. I was afraid of being let down. In hindsight, it's very silly to be afraid of God's invitation for a gift. He already said he had a gift for me, but I was still scared he might hold out on me.

A few days after praying the novena, it was "administrative assistant's appreciation day." Every year, all the admin assistants at the Pastoral Center receive a bouquet of flowers. I forget about it every year until bouquets for all the assistants show up at the front desk. Each bouquet had a name on it. The one with my name was the only one with yellow roses.

I don't understand God's goodness. One wouldn't think goodness and suffering would go together but in my experience and the experience of others, I've learned that it is through suffering that God's goodness shines most fully, assuming we have the courage and humility to call out to him.

Be part of *New Earth*!

The diocesan publication, *New Earth*, aims to provide informational, educational, and inspirational stories about the people and places of the Diocese of Fargo. You are invited to submit articles, photos, and story ideas for consideration. The following are the 2026 printing deadlines. Submission deadline is the second Tuesday and expected arrival in homes is the first Friday of the month unless designated with an asterisk. Submitted articles must meet approval before being published. No item is guaranteed except for paid advertising.

- **Email:** paul.braun@fargodiocese.org
- **Phone:** (701) 356-7958
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Issue Month	Submission Deadline	Expected Arrival
January 2026	Dec. 9, 2025	Jan. 2, 2026
February 2026	Jan. 13	Feb. 6
March 2026	Feb. 10	Mar. 6
April 2026	Mar. 10	Apr. 3
May 2026	Apr. 14	May 8*
June 2026	May 12	June 5
July/August 2026	June 23*	July 17*
September 2026	Aug. 11	Sept. 4
October 2026	Sept. 15*	Oct. 9*
November 2026	Oct. 13	Nov. 6
December 2026	Nov. 10	Dec. 4

We Remember

A call to pray for those who have gone before us

Please remember in prayer the faithful departed from our parishes, our diocese and throughout the world. These names and corrections were submitted after the November *New Earth* deadline. Included are those who passed away between Oct. 1, 2024 and Sept. 30, 2025.

KINDRED—St. Maurice: Michael Lindsey—Apr 28, 2025; Curtis Vangness—Jul 14, 2025.

LANGDON—St. Alphonsus: Sandy Stevens—Oct 6, 2024; Marlene Miller—Oct 12, 2024; Cyrilla Kartes—Nov 19, 2024; Grace Hoffarth—Nov 30, 2024; Michael Bata—Dec 9, 2024; Theresa Marcotte—Dec 21, 2024; Dennis Hell—Dec 25, 2024; Lois Magnusson—Jan 24, 2025; Donna Waltz—Feb 11, 2025; Darlene Mikkelsen—Feb 22, 2025; Judy Tetrault—Apr 29, 2025; Lorne Tetrault—May 30, 2025; Ray Borho—May 31, 2025; Thomas Kram—Jul 8, 2025; Lisa Bodnar—Aug 2, 2025.

TOWNER—St. Cecilia: Kathy Bunce—Apr 19, 2025; Richard Stigen—Jun 14, 2025.



WALHALLA—St. Boniface: Mary A Urlaub—Sep 24, 2025.
WIMBLEDON—St. Boniface: Robert “Bob” Goffe—Jun 21, 2025.
ZEELAND—St. Andrew: Bernese A Rempfer—Feb 28, 2025.

18 Stars	14 Eve	9 Mexico	5 Rwanda	16 Word	8 Lourdes	3 Assumption	2 Fatima
17 Gabriel	15 Sword	11 Carmel	7 Immaculate	12 Soul	4 Heaven	1 Champion	10 Sea
13 John	11 Carmel	5 Rwanda	10 Soul	6 Grace	10 Sea	2 Fatima	10 Sea
13 John	11 Carmel	5 Rwanda	10 Soul	6 Grace	10 Sea	2 Fatima	10 Sea

The current status of North Dakota's ban on transgender interventions on minors



CATHOLIC ACTION

DAVID TAMISIEA, JD, PHD

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

During the 2023 legislative session, the North Dakota Legislature passed a law making it a crime for a health care provider to give any drug or to perform certain surgeries for the purpose of changing a minor's sex to match the child's internal sense of gender (the "ban"). The ban prohibits the use of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, gender-reassignment surgeries, and the like, on minors seeking to alter their biological sex. The ban, however, excludes interventions meant to alleviate medically verifiable genetic disorders of sexual development, such as sex chromosomal abnormalities. The ban was signed by Governor Doug Burgum in April 2023 and became the law of North Dakota.

In September 2023, three families and Dr. Luis Casas, a pediatric endocrinologist at Sanford Children's Medical Center in Fargo, filed a lawsuit in Burleigh County against the State of North Dakota, alleging that the state's ban on transgender interventions on minors violates their rights under the North Dakota Constitution. Because no sex reassignment surgeries are currently being done on minors in North Dakota, only the ban on medical interventions was being challenged.

After a period of pre-trial discovery, the three families were dismissed from the lawsuit for lack of standing, because the ban had a grandfather clause that allowed minors already receiving these medical interventions to continue to receive these medicines. Before trial, the trial court also rendered summary judgment against Dr. Casas on his claim that the ban was unconstitutionally vague and violated his due process rights. Dr. Casas, however, continued as the lone plaintiff in the suit, acting on behalf of his minor patients who would still be affected by the ban based on claims that it violates their rights under the North Dakota Constitution.

The case went to trial this past February 2025 before Judge Jackson Lofgren in Bismarck, in a bench trial where the parties agreed that the judge, and not a jury, should decide the case. The trial included testimony from children and their families, testimony from expert witnesses, and hundreds of documents offered as evidence by both sides. After the trial ended, the judge

took the case under advisement to examine the voluminous evidence, consider the legal arguments, conduct his own legal research, and carefully deliberate about the case before making his final decision.

In October of this year, the judge issued an extensive Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for Judgment in the case, followed closely by a final Judgment dismissing the plaintiffs' claims seeking to declare the ban unconstitutional under North Dakota's Constitution and stop its enforcement. While this ruling goes a long way toward upholding North Dakota's ban on transgender interventions on minors, the case is not necessarily over since the plaintiffs have the option to file an appeal within 60 days of the trial court's entry of the final Judgment, which falls around mid-December 2025.

In coming to his decision, the judge held that the State of North Dakota has the authority to regulate the practice of medicine in the state, including prohibiting certain procedures deemed harmful to minors. Following similar reasoning as the U.S. Supreme Court in the recent *Skrmetti* case (2025) upholding Tennessee's ban on transgender treatments for minors, the judge rejected the argument that North Dakota's ban creates an arbitrary sex-based classification that violates the right to equal protection under the North Dakota Constitution of those seeking these kinds of interventions. Instead, the court found that North Dakota's ban has a rational basis for protecting minors from certain harmful medical procedures. The court also rejected the plaintiffs' claim that preventing minors from obtaining these medical interventions violates their fundamental right to personal autonomy and self-determination. The judge reasoned that, while it is true that individuals have a fundamental right to refuse unwanted medical treatment based upon personal autonomy and self-determination, this does not mean they have a right to demand medical interventions determined by the state to be harmful, especially minors who lack the maturity to clearly understand the risks and benefits of the procedures.

There was ample evidence presented at trial to indicate a rational basis for North Dakota's ban prohibiting transgender treatments on minors. Some of the reasons recognized by the judge include: (1) legitimate concerns regarding the serious medical risks associated with providing puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to minors, including the high likelihood of causing irreversible sterility; (2) evidence that many individuals who received these treatments as minors later express regret over this as adults; (3) evidence that many minors experiencing distress over their sexual identity resolve these issues over time; (4) the fact that minors often lack the maturity and experience to fully understand and appreciate the life-altering consequences

of these treatments; (5) the ongoing international debate among medical experts over the safety and effectiveness of these treatments; (6) the weak evidence and poor quality of the studies offered to show the benefits of these treatments compared to the harms; and (7) the questionable value of positions taken by medical associations like the American Medical Association, American Association of Pediatricians, and others in support of transgender interventions that are highly politicized and do not represent the views of all doctors or even their own members.

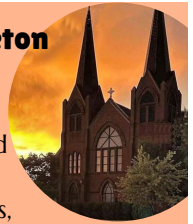
While the Catholic Church insists that individuals who are struggling with their sexual identity must be treated with compassion and respect, the Church also must always “speak the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). As Pope Francis emphasized on many occasions, gender ideology—which claims that a person can be born in the wrong body and can transition to the opposite sex through drugs and surgeries—is false and dangerous. The Church has always rejected dualistic accounts of human nature: the human person is not a soul in a body, and does not merely have a body, but is both body and soul, inseparably united. The Church also teaches that human nature is sexually differentiated as male or female, and that this sexual identity is constitutive of the person and not something one can change through medical and surgical interventions. Instead, human beings as

creatures must respect the work of the Creator in making us male or female.

The tide seems to be turning against the widespread and unthinking acceptance of gender ideology and transgenderism. Let us hope that the trial court’s decision in this case marks a new beginning in North Dakota of clear-sighted recognition that human persons are body/soul unities created as male or female, and that our healthcare must be consistent with this reality and follow the most fundamental principle of medical ethics, “first, do no harm.”

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Give thanks for God's presence



GUEST COLUMNIST

SISTER CONSTANCE VEIT, Lsp

Communications director for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.

As we look toward Christmas, I realize that 2025 is quickly coming to an end, and so is the Jubilee Year of Hope. What will be our take-aways from this special time of grace?

Hope has become more real for me this year thanks to this quote from Pope Francis, "For a Christian, to hope means the certainty of being on a journey with Christ toward the Father who awaits us. Hope is never still; hope is always journeying and it makes us journey."

In his encyclical *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict XVI defined hope in a similar way with a quote from St. Josephine Bakhita, a former Sudanese slave: "I am definitively loved and whatever happens to me—I am awaited by this Love. And so, my life is good."

Benedict elaborated, "We see as a distinguishing mark of Christians the fact that they have a future: it is not that they know the details of what awaits them but they know in general terms that their life will not end in emptiness. Only when the future is certain as a positive reality does it become possible to live the present as well."

Finally, this famous line from Pope Benedict XVI is one that often comes to mind, "The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life."

And so, as the close of this Jubilee Year draws near, let us ask ourselves how we will live differently thanks to hope. How will we live our lives more fully in the present, while also looking forward in hope to the certain future that awaits us?

One of this year's defining moments for me was a talk given by a young religious sister to a group of teens and young women at a discernment event this summer.

She suggested that we employ two interrelated practices to prepare the soil of our souls to receive the gift of hope. They are memory and gratitude. She suggested that we make a list of 15 or so extraordinary moments in our lives and that we read through them on a regular basis to bring to mind the presence of God on our journey and to express our gratitude to him.

Through gratitude, she said, we fix our gaze on God; we see him at work in our lives, creating for us a positive reality and a certain future.

Each of us has a number of these extraordinary events in our lives—when Jesus became real to us in a personal way, when he showed us our vocation, or changed us in some way, when the Lord visited us at a difficult time.

Pope Francis also encouraged the faithful to think back on such moments of inspiration and to relive them in order to find strength and to be able to continue moving forward, even when the journey is difficult.

"Christian memory is the salt of life," he said.

There are a number of passages from Scripture that can help us to remember and give thanks. Psalm 103 invites us, "Bless the Lord my soul, and do not forget all his gifts..." and Psalm 136 repeatedly evokes the everlasting mercy of God.

We can make both psalms our own as we incorporate our experiences into the texts.

An uplifting passage from the prophet Isaiah (63:7 ff) may serve as an introduction to our own prayers of gratitude: "The loving deeds of the LORD I will recall, the glorious acts of the LORD, because of all the LORD has done for us, the immense goodness to the house of Israel which he has granted according to his mercy and his many loving deeds."

But my favorite Scripture passage for remembering and expressing gratitude is Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), in which Our Lady recalls the amazing things God has done for her and her people. May each of us be able to say, "The Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name!"

As you prepare for Christmas this year, take time to remember and give thanks for God's loving presence in your life. Encourage those with whom you gather to do the same.

And may you take hold of hope in a future of unending life with God!

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“Come, let us sing to the Lord and shout with joy”



SEMINARIAN LIFE

QUINCY MARCHAND

Pre-Theology I; Mount St. Mary Seminary;
Emmitsburg, Md.

“Come, let us sing to the Lord and shout with joy to the rock who saves us!” These are the opening words to the invitatory psalm, which is prayed every morning all across the earth in the Roman Catholic Church. As seminarians, we often sing hymns, whether in the liturgies, or throughout the day!

This year, as a philosopher, I have had the privilege of joining Mount St. Mary’s Schola Cantorum, which is the Vespers chorus at the seminary. Throughout the semester, we as a group have sung a multitude of beautiful songs, as well as led the psalmody for Solemn Vespers on Sunday evenings. Yet, as we sing, I found myself being drawn into this idea of “singing together.”

Ever since I have been young, I have been surrounded by music, especially at church. We Catholics are so blessed to have such a strong tradition of music. But the one aspect of singing I always enjoyed most was doing it with other people. Whether at baptisms or Mass, fall festival gatherings, religious education classes, or even funerals and burials, we Catholics come together as a family to celebrate life and the Lord through song.

In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, it states, “The musical

tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art.” We have dove even deeper into this meaning in our liturgy seminar under the direction of our schola director, Father Michael O’Conner. It is absolutely certain that sacred song and music are understood by the Church to be valuable, but also, communal! From the very foundations of the Church, to the time of Moses, to even the prose of Adam to his beloved wife Eve, song has been a part of who we are.

Yet, in modern times, frequently we are dissuaded from singing. Whether due to societal norms, or even our own insecurity at times, we often lose our inner song. But we should not be discouraged. I find more and more here at the Mount with my brothers, the true beauty of a song of praise, especially one sung as a family. Why silence the stirring of our hearts? The Lord delights in our praises! Yet, it is true, not all of us are like King David who wrote many beautiful psalms, and many of us are not professional singers. Even so, the Lord delights in our voices. Whether it is the sound of a professional opera singer or a child crying during the middle of a homily, the Lord hears the songs of his people. Together our voices make one melody, one written by the Lord in our hearts.

As we enter this season of Advent, let us cry out to the Lord. Together as one family, let us offer up our prayers and needs in anticipation for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. As we wait in solemn hope for the coming of our savior, let us ring out with one voice a prayer of thanksgiving and happiness. “Come, let us sing to the Lord and shout with joy to the rock who saves us! Let us approach him with praise and thanksgiving, and sing joyful songs to the Lord” (Psalm 95:1-2).



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Sister Leonida Schmidt, O.S.F. passes away Oct. 21



Sister M. Leonida Schmidt, O.S.F., 94, quietly passed away at her home, St. Francis Convent, Hankinson, Oct. 21. A Mass of Christian Burial took place Oct. 25 at St. Francis Convent Chapel, Hankinson.

Following a profound life of prayer for others and service to the Church, Sr. Leonida courageously accepted her declining health for many years. We can only

imagine the pure joy and peace she must have experienced as she looked with eyes that could again see with unimaginable clarity and moved with perfect freedom of the release from every limitation she offered up to God without complaint.

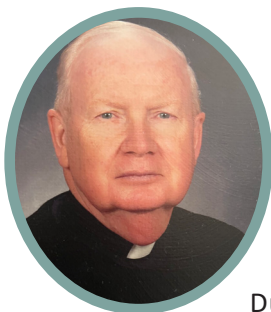
Sister Leonida, born Regina Philomena, was the fifth of ten children born to Benedict and Carolina (Hoffert) Schmidt, on Jan. 15, 1931, on the family farm at Blumenfeld, N.D. She loved the rural Germans from Russian heritage she grew up in.

Sister Leonida taught for over 60 years and loved being in

the classroom. In her own words, “I had no trouble finding and seeing Jesus there. He smiled at me through every eager face. I saw His light in the eyes of a child especially when understanding entered their mind after hours of struggle.” In the fall of 1949 at the age of 18, she was sent to her first teaching mission at Collegeville, Minn. For another 55 years Sister Leonida taught at a number of schools, parochial and public, across the Fargo Diocese. In 1989 Sister Leonida received the National Catholic Education Association’s Distinguished Principal’s Award at their national conference in Baltimore.

As busy as her life was, Sister Leonida was totally devoted to her prayer life. Until just two weeks before her death she was at every Mass and kept the communal prayer schedule. Her tenacity for service was surpassed only by her tenacity for prayer and her absolute trust in Jesus and our Blessed Mother. After the loss of her vision, she was still a voice of wisdom and insight at Saturday morning scripture studies. Her mind was clear and her life of meditation before the Blessed Sacrament was a treasure.

Father William Callery passes away Nov. 6



Reverend William Vincent Callery Jr., affectionately known as Father Bill, passed away peacefully on Nov. 6 at the age of 84.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Father Bill attended St. Rosalia Grade School and Central Catholic High School, graduating in 1958. He graduated from Duquesne University in 1962 with a degree in Business Administration. Following

graduation, he served as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army, with assignments across various military bases, including a Nike missile site in Seoul, South Korea. Years later, Father Bill answered a deeper calling and began his journey toward the priesthood. He studied at Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, Conn., from 1996 to 1998 and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wis., from 1998 to 2001, and was ordained in the Diocese of Fargo in 2001.

He served parishes in Langdon, Bremen, Fessenden, Dickey, LaMoure, and Verona. Over the years, he faithfully served as pastor, offering spiritual guidance, compassion, and unwavering dedication to his congregations. Even in retirement, as a resident of Emmaus Place of the Diocese of Bismarck since 2018, Father Bill remained a devoted servant, always willing to assist when called upon.

Father Bill never lost touch with his Pittsburgh roots. He liked to talk about both the Pirates and the Steelers. On trips back to Pittsburgh, Father Bill always found the time to visit the St. Paul of the Cross Monastery. He found that St. Paul’s offered him peace and calm for prayer, as he overlooked the panoramic view of the City of Pittsburgh and its Three Rivers.

Father Bill will be remembered for his humility, generosity, and steadfast devotion to God and his people. His life was a testament to faith, service, and love. Those who knew him were touched by his kindness and inspired by his commitment to living out his beliefs.

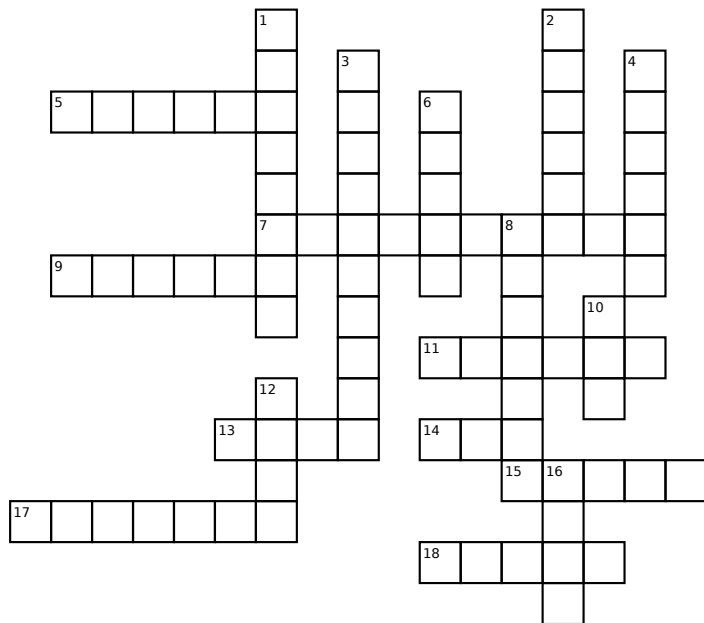
He was preceded in death by his parents, William Vincent and Nora Coyne Callery; his sister, Mary Virginia Orner; his brother-in-law, Amos B. Orner Jr.; and Carolyn Sue Callery. He is survived by his brother, John Coyne Callery; his sister-in-law, Joan Mongello Callery; his children, Michael Thomas Callery, John Marvin Callery, and Cheryl Callery Hicks; his daughter-in-law, Debbie Lynn Callery; his son-in-law, Brian Scott Hicks; his grandchildren, Cassandra Lee Callery, Hannah Louise Callery, Elijah Malcolm Hicks, Keira Lynn Callery, Benjamin James Callery, Caroline Mary Hicks, and Adam Daniel Callery; his great-granddaughter, Abigail Rose Callery; and many nephews, nieces, and cousins.

Funeral Mass was held Nov. 14 at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Fargo. He was buried at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery North in Fargo.

Our Lady

Level Medium

Answers on page 23



Down:

- 1 Marian apparition in Wisconsin, Our Lady of ____.
- 2 Marian apparition in Portugal, Our Lady of ____.
- 3 The 4th Glorious mystery of the rosary is the ____ of Mary.
- 4 Queen of ____ and earth
- 6 "Hail Mary, full of ____."
- 8 Marian apparition in France, Our Lady of ____.
- 10 Our Lady Star of the ____.
- 12 "My ____ proclaims the greatness of the Lord."
- 16 "May it be done to me according to your ____."

Across:

- 5 Our Lady of Kibeho appeared in this African country
- 7 In Lourdes, Mary declared, "I am the ____ Conception."
- 9 Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared in this country.
- 11 Our Lady of Mount ____.
- 13 At the crucifixion, Jesus tells this disciple to take Mary into his home.
- 14 Jesus is the new Adam, Mary is the new ____.
- 15 Simeon foretells that this will pierce Mary's heart.
- 17 This angel tells Mary she has found favor with God.
- 18 "...a woman... with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of 12 ____" (Rev. 12:1).

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LIFE'S MILESTONES



Jerome and Mary Hoffart, parishioners of St. Joseph's in Devils Lake, will celebrate 60 years of marriage Dec. 31. They were married at St. Vincent de Paul in Leeds. They have 2 sons and 3 grandchildren.



Rod and Joan Schanilec, parishioners of Sacred Heart in Minto, will celebrate their 50th anniversary Dec. 13. They were married at St. Luke's in Veseleyville. They are blessed with 4 daughters, 4 sons-in-law, and 15 grandchildren.



Randy and Evy Ressler, lifelong parishioners of St. Lawrence in Jessie, will celebrate 50 years of marriage on Dec. 12. They were married at St. Lawrence and are blessed with 5 children and 13 grandchildren.



Terry and Susan Schostag, parishioners of Sts. Anne & Joachim in Fargo, will celebrate their 50th anniversary Dec. 27. Fifty years ago, they were both active duty with the US Army, stationed in Germany. They have been blessed with 4 children and 6 grandchildren.



Mary Frances Becker, parishioner of St. Joseph's in Devils Lake, will celebrate her 95th birthday Dec. 15. Mary was one of 14 children. Mary married Gerald Becker in 1953. They had 9 children. Mary and Gerald were parishioners of St. Benedict's in rural Crary until it closed.



Lela Bergemann, parishioner of St. Aloysius in Lisbon, celebrated her 80th birthday Nov. 5. She is blessed with 4 children, 14 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild with two on the way. Lela loves spending time with her family and volunteering at her parish.



Marge Helten, parishioner of St. Joseph's in Devils Lake, will celebrate her 90th birthday Dec. 25. She was married to the love of her life for 52 years until his passing on Oct. 27, 2010. She is blessed with 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren, and 5 great-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, two months prior, or one month following. Send a photo with text to Susan.Noah@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 Jan. issue is Dec. 9. Deadline for the Feb. issue is Jan. 13.



Quotable

**St. Alphonsus
Ligouri**

"If we would please this Divine Infant, we too must become children, simple and humble; we must carry to Him flowers of virtue, of meekness, of mortification, of charity; we must clasp him in the arms of our love."

Events

Milnor: St. Arnold's will hold their annual Christmas Pantry Dec. 10, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Shop for holiday cookies, candies, and other Christmas goodies plus cookie gift plates. Enjoy coffee, cider, and tasting samples. Treat yourself to fried bread tacos. Raffle tickets will be for sale.

Grand Forks: St. Mary's Social Concerns is hosting their annual Christmas Cookie Walk Dec. 13 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. All Christmas baking done in one place. \$9/lb. Breads and specialty items sold separately. Cider & coffee served.

Catholic Man Night: The event moves to a different parish each month from September to May. The evenings begin at 6 p.m. with adoration and confession. A light, free-will offering meal is served at 7 p.m. Speakers begin at approximately 7:30 p.m. This a great opportunity for men to share in prayer and fellowship.
Dec. 9: Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo. Speaker Father Eric Seitz.
Jan. 15: St. Anthony, Fargo. Speaker Father Robert Keller.
Feb. 19: Nativity, Fargo. Speaker Father Kevin Lorsung.

For all diocesan events,
go to www.fargodiocese.org
and click on the "events" tab.



Not willing to let go of your marriage?



RE|TROUVAILLE
A LIFELINE FOR MARRIED COUPLES

In Fargo
Mar 13-15, 2026

In Minneapolis
Apr 17-19, 2026
June 5-7, 2026

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

For more information,
Call (701) 356-7903 or visit HelpOurMarriage.com

A glimpse of the past

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

75 years ago — 1950

The new St. Patrick's church of Crystal was blessed and dedicated Nov. 7 of this year with the Most Rev. Leo Dworschak officiating. Solemn Mass was offered in St. Patrick's at 10am with the children of the parish singing the Mass, and then a parish festive dinner was served by the ladies of the parish. The exterior design of the church was inspired by the ecclesiastical architecture of the early English period, which depended for effect on proportions, well-defined outlines, and simplicity in form and ornament.

50 years ago — 1975

For its 60th anniversary celebration, St. Mary's in Grand Forks, was recently redecorated with new carpeting and fresh paint. The crucifix and stations of the cross, which are also new, gives it a less modern look. On Dec. 7, Bishop Justin Driscoll celebrated the anniversary Mass at St. Mary's where he paid tribute to all the priests, religious, and laity who had labored in St. Mary's Parish during those sixty years. He called them men and women of faith and courage, and he expressed gratitude to God for the wonderful things given to St. Mary's Parish. Fr. Michael O'Driscoll celebrated the first Mass in the present St. Mary's on Christmas Day, 1915.

20 years ago — 2005

Immaculate Heart of Mary church in Dunseith was destroyed by fire Dec. 23. Only the shell of the building remained once the fire was extinguished. The cause of the fire was ruled as arson, according to a Dec. 31 report in the Turtle Mountain Times in Belcourt. The building had been broken into and vandalized before the fire began. On Dec. 31, the parish conducted a service at St. Mary's Cemetery to burn and bury the holy articles that were removed from the building after the fire.



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or paul.braun@fargodiocese.org



Cathedral of St. Mary,
Fargo, during the
permanent diaconate
ordination Nov. 15.
(Tyson Kuznia)

Diocesan Financial Report 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With praise and thanksgiving to God, I am deeply grateful for your generosity during the past fiscal year. In spite of the many worldly issues that try to distract us from our faith life, including international wars and economic issues in our own country, we are called to look beyond these earthly concerns, and remain focused on Jesus.

Your support helps us to be Christ to others, and provides for catechesis, Catholic education, charity, justice, worship, personal spiritual growth, and pastoral ministry.

What follows is the annual accountability report, which covers the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. The Diocesan Finance Council, which includes 10 laypersons from throughout the diocese and five diocesan representatives, assists me in the painstaking task of overseeing diocesan finances. We are thankful for your generous and consistent financial support. May God bless you and reward you for your financial assistance, prayers and acts of service in response to his call.

The condensed summary of our reports, found in this issue, is intended to give you a broad view of the normal operations of our diocese and its ministries, as well as the contributions made by our diocese to the national and international work of the Church. This report summarizes many pages of audit reports on the *Diocese of Fargo*, and the *Catholic Development Foundation*. Complete audited financial reports are available to the faithful of the diocese via links on our website under the Finance Office. A copy of each report may also be reviewed in the Diocesan Finance Office.

In addition to the normal operations, the Living Our Faith, Building Our Future campaign is providing for ministry throughout the diocese that bolsters our faith, cares for our retired priests, and improves the facilities and programs available in every parish. Feature articles in the *New Earth*, and online keep you informed of continuing progress. See www.fargodiocese.org/LOF

These ministries and other diocesan services link together the parishes which constitute the Diocese of Fargo. Good stewardship begins with the faith and understanding that we all are called to give back to God a first portion of the gifts he has bestowed on us. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure are reflected in this annual report. Your trust in God is reflected in your gifts to the Church and your parishes.

As in the past, we planned and evaluated the compelling needs of the diocesan Church against available resources. I believe that responsible and creative stewardship guided this process, and I pledge to continue good stewardship in the future.

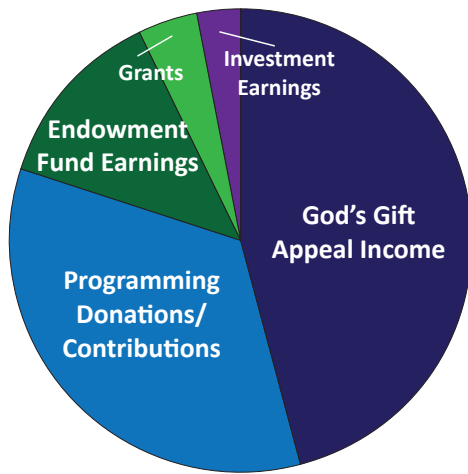
I am convinced that through the goodness and generosity of the Catholics of our diocese, we will continue to rise to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters. Your continued support through prayer, volunteer service, and financial commitment, is a positive sign of a community alive in our Catholic faith. May God generously reward and bless you and your families.

You are in my constant prayers. Please pray for me.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

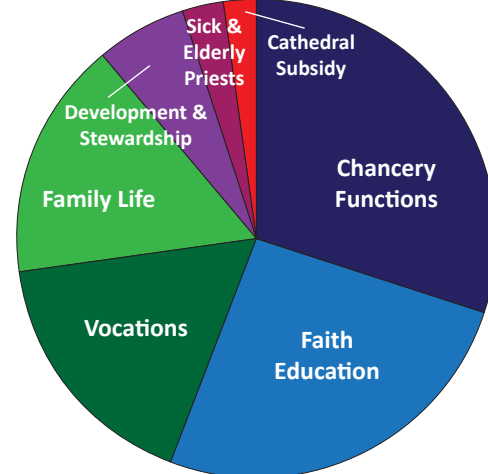
Most Rev. John T. Folda,
Bishop of Fargo

Diocese of Fargo statement of operating income and expenses for year ending June 30, 2025



God's Gift Appeal Income	\$3,176,647	46%
Programming Donations/Contributions	\$2,359,703	34%
Endowment Fund Earnings	\$889,125	13%
Grants	\$246,503	4%
Investment Earnings	\$232,844	3%
TOTAL	\$6,904,822	100%

Complete audited financial statements are available for review at www.fargodiocese.org/finance or by contacting the Finance Office (701) 356-7930 for an appointment.



Chancery Functions	\$2,106,480	30%
Faith Education	\$1,827,098	26%
Vocations	\$1,162,606	17%
Family Life	\$1,021,230	16%
Development & Stewardship	\$402,067	6%
Sick & Elderly Priests	\$235,341	3%
Cathedral Subsidy	\$150,000	2%
TOTAL	\$6,904,822	100%

A message from Catholic Development Foundation

We have all heard the saying, “We reap what we sow.” Since 1985, the Catholic Development Foundation (CDF) has been sowing the seeds of generous Catholics throughout the Diocese of Fargo. Because of this generosity, hundreds of Catholic programs and ministries within the framework of our diocese will continue to grow and strengthen our Catholic faith community for years to come.

CDF is a securely structured organization that was incorporated in 1985. As a publicly supported 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, CDF helps donors achieve their charitable and financial goals. The foundation ensures the security of all donated funds. The funds are used only for their intended purposes as designated by the donors. CDF has produced wonderful benefits for many parishes and diocesan programs over the last five years. Distributions from the CDF for parishes, cemeteries, schools, diocesan programs, clergy/seminarian education and other apostolates have totaled \$18,907,566.

On pages 35-36, you will see a list of endowments currently established for various Catholic ministries and parishes. I encourage you to review this list to see which ones are created in your community or otherwise important to you. All Diocese of Fargo parishes have an endowment established in the CDF.

God has planted within us a desire to give and to receive. The CDF’s ability to easily receive gifts and help donors offer gifts is rewarding both for donors and for those who are assisted. Donors know their gifts are long-term investments for current and future Catholics. I encourage you to become a Catholic Development Foundation donor. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a difference in the lives of Catholics in our diocese. Planning and making a gift now will allow you to witness your charity in action.

Thank you and may your blessings be multiplied through your generosity to the CDF. For more information about Catholic Development Foundation, visit cdfnd.org or call (701) 356-7926.

Sincerely, Steve Schons | President

Other financial funds and related information

CUSTODIAL FUND

The Custodial Fund is used for monies that are from national collections taken up in the parishes, and the Diocesan Insurance Program. When national collections (e.g. Black & Indian Mission, Peter’s Pence/Holy Father, Good Friday/Holy Land, Religious Retirement) are taken, the monies from each parish are sent to the Diocese. Once all the monies from all parishes are received, a single check is sent on behalf of the people of the diocese to the intended national office or agency.

During this past year, the following collections were forwarded to national offices:

Black & Indian Missions.....	\$16,390
Catholic Home Missions.....	\$18,239
Holy Land.....	\$49,583
Catholic Near East Welfare Association.....	\$2,489
Peter’s Pence/Holy Father.....	\$22,164
World Mission/Propagation of the Faith.....	\$25,165
Religious Retirement.....	\$28,353

The Diocese of Fargo received \$71,550 from the Black & Indian Mission Office this year for direct aid to Native American communities in the diocese and Catholic schools with Native American and Black American students.

All parishes participate in the diocesan insurance program through Catholic Mutual. Catholic Mutual sends bills to the parishes based on a \$2,500 deductible. The parishes make payments to the Diocese for these insurance premiums. Catholic Mutual bills the Diocese based on a \$50,000 deductible, and the Diocese makes payments to Catholic Mutual. The premium difference or spread between the \$2,500 and \$50,000 deductibles is retained in the Insurance Reserve and is used to pay insurance claims. Parishes receive a rebate from the fund to bring deductibles down to \$1,000.

CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

The *Catholic Development Foundation* was established in 1985 as a separate entity that exists as an “umbrella Foundation” for Catholic churches and institutions. The Foundation serves as a vehicle for Catholic entities to accumulate endowments, perpetual care funds, and the like through bequests and deferred gift planning. Gift planning tools such as charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder uni-trusts, charitable lead annuity trusts, and other deferred gift plans utilize the Foundation as a means of providing for the Church after our earthly existence.

At June 30, 2025 there were:

Endowments for parishes and agencies.....	\$23,392,627
Endowments for Seminarians/Clergy Education..	\$25,218,015
Perpetual Care Cemetery Funds.....	\$5,316,578
Endowments for Diocesan Programming.....	\$3,605,051
Endowments for Catholic schools.....	\$32,031,718
Other Apostolates.....	\$9,221,054
Annuities/Uni-trusts.....	\$2,884,334
Donor Advised Funds.....	\$5,374,752

The Catholic Development Foundation provides a permanent way for donors to make a positive impact for years to come on the well-being of the Catholic Church and people served through its many ministries. As an umbrella foundation for the Catholic entities in the Diocese of Fargo, the Catholic Development Foundation seeks to support financially the spiritual, educational, and social well-being of our Catholic Faith community and to help donors achieve their charitable and financial goals through a legacy gift. All endowments are qualified endowment funds making contributions eligible for the 40% North Dakota Tax Credit.

North Dakota Tax Credits benefit the Church and you

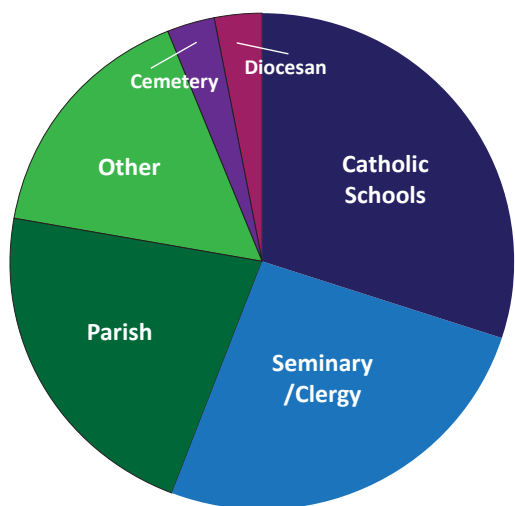
A few years ago, ND legislators passed a bill that allowed a very generous tax credit to those who make a charitable gift to a ND qualified endowment. If you are a North Dakota resident and make a gift of \$5,000 or more to a ND qualified endowment, you are eligible for a 40 percent tax credit on your ND taxes. Tax credits are much different from a tax deduction because they reduce your tax liability dollar for dollar. The maximum tax credit allowed is \$20,000 for individuals or \$40,000 for married couples filing jointly. However, credits may be carried forward up to three years.

The following is an example of how tax credits may benefit you:

GIFT AMOUNT	\$5,000	\$20,000	\$50,000
*Federal tax savings	-\$1,200	-\$6,000	-\$12,000
ND state income tax credit	-\$2,000	-\$10,000	-\$20,000
Net “Cost” of Gift	\$1,800	\$9,000	\$18,000

**Based on individuals that fall in the 24 percent Federal tax bracket. Please consult your own financial or tax advisor for your unique situation.*

Endowments Awarded July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025



Catholic Schools	\$1,307,086	30%
Seminary/Clergy	\$1,119,862	26%
Parish	\$957,948	22%
Other	\$723,239	16%
Cemetery	\$148,837	3%
Diocesan	\$116,890	3%
TOTAL	\$4,373,862	100%

Your guide to giving

Catholic Development Foundation (CDF) offers many ways to give and leave a legacy. CDF accepts gifts of cash, appreciated securities, and real estate. All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. And, you choose the parish, school, or organization which will benefit from your gift.

Gifts that start making a difference today

These are gifts that are easy to make and see immediate impact.

- Existing Endowment Fund
- Donor Advised Fund
- New Endowment Fund

Gifts that give back – Life income gifts

These types of gifts provide income for the donor's lifetime, any remainder goes to the donor's charity of choice.

- Charitable Gift Annuity
- Charitable Remainder Trust
- Charitable Unitrust

Gifts that bear fruits later – Deferred gifts

The benefits an organization receives from these gifts are deferred until a later time, typically after a donor passes away.

- Charitable Bequest
- Life Estate

For more information, please contact Steve at (701) 356-7926 or visit cdfnd.org.

Endowment Funds in the Catholic Development Foundation

The Catholic Development Foundation has 500+ funds supporting a variety of Catholic parishes, cemeteries, schools, ministries, and programs. Because we simply don't have the space to print the entire list, go to cdfnd.org/endowment to review the list established in the name of Parishes, Cemeteries,

Seminarians and Clergy Education, and Catholic Schools.

The following is a partial list of individual, family, and other sponsored endowment funds that are most active. If you have questions, or seek additional information, contact Steve Schons at (701) 356-7926 or email steve.schons@fargodiocese.org.

Endowment Fund Name

Holy Cross Church "R. E. and Youth Ministry" Endowment Fund
 Nativity Faith Formation Endowment Fund
 Nativity Social Justice Endowment Fund
 Reverend Maurice Mueller Endowment Fund
 Real Presence Radio Endowment Fund
 St. Vincent de Paul Society—St. Anthony's Church of Fargo Endowment Fund
 Thomas Gustafson Endowment Fund

For the benefit of:

Holy Cross Church of West Fargo for Religious Education and Youth Ministry
 Nativity Church of Fargo for faith formation ministry
 Nativity Parish, Fargo social justice ministry
 Nativity Church of Fargo
 Real Presence Radio
 St. Anthony's Church of Fargo for St. Vincent de Paul Society
 St. Charles Church of Oakes

Endowment Fund Name	For the benefit of:
St. Charles Church of Oakes "Music" Endowment Fund	St. Charles Church of Oakes for Music ministry
St. Charles Church of Oakes "Teen Life" Endowment Fund	St. Charles Church of Oakes for Teen Life ministry
Dallum Family 2 Endowment Fund	St. Gianna's Maternity Home, Minto
John and Jan Klocke Endowment Fund	St. Gianna's Maternity Home, Real Presence Radio, Women's Care Clinic
St Gianna's Maternity Home	St. Gianna's Maternity Home, Minto
Charles and Mary Ellen Frey Endowment Fund	St. James Basilica of Jamestown
St. John's the Evangelist Church "Education" Endowment Fund	St. John the Evangelist Church of New Rockford for Education ministry
Bob and Dayle Dietz Memorial Endowment Fund	St. John the Evangelist's Church, Wahpeton
St. John's Church of Grafton "Poorest of Poor" Endowment Fund	St. John's Church of Grafton for ministry of the poor
St. John's, Wahpeton, Hunger Fund Endowment	St. John's Church of Wahpeton for Ministry
Sylvester and Shirley Gores Endowment Fund	St. Joseph's Church of Devils Lake
Jeffrey and JoAnn Kitchens Family Endowment Fund	St. Joseph's Church of Devils Lake
Bishop James S. Sullivan 3 Endowment Fund	St. Mary's Cathedral of Fargo
St. Mary's Church of Forman Youth and Education Endowment Fund	St. Mary's Church, Forman for Youth and Education ministry
Chuck and Meghan Breen Family Endowment Fund	St. Rose of Lima Church of Hillsboro
St. Rose of Lima Church "Improvement" Endowment Fund	St. Rose of Lima Church of Hillsboro for improvements
Anawim Endowment Fund	St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center of Grand Forks
Robert and Sally Artz Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo, Catholic Schools, and Catholic parishes
Beginning Experience Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Beginning Experience Ministry
Marriage Tribunal Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Marriage Tribunal Ministry
Miracle of Cana Endowment Fund	Diocese Catholic Education, Respect Life, Marriage, Family, Vocations
Reverend Duane Cote Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Scholarship to Seminarians
Marcella Feist Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education
Cardinal Aloisius Muench Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education
George and Marcella Allmaras Memorial Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education
Paul and Harriet Greving Family Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education
Reverend Donald Leiphon Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education
Reverend Darin Didier Memorial Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education
TV Mass Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for TV Mass Ministry
Young Disciples Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Young Disciples Ministry
Youth Ministry "Scholarship" Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Youth Ministry Scholarships (formerly known as Diane Brooks)
Women's Care Clinic Endowment Fund	Women's Care Clinic (formerly known as First Choice Clinic)
Diocese of Fargo Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for general purposes
Archbishop Samuel Aquila Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for Seminarian Education
Alfred Ritzke Endowment Fund	Diocese of Fargo for scholarships
Catholic Charities ND Endowment Fund	General Endowment for Catholic Charities ND
Thomas U. & Patricia S. Crary Memorial Fund	For the benefit of St. Anthony's Fargo, Richardton Abbey, St. JP II Schools
Enderlin—St. Patrick's Rectory Endowment Fund	St. Patrick's Church of Enderlin Rectory
Hoselton Family Endowment Fund	Perpetual care and upkeep of St. Edward's Cemetery at Drayton
Msgr. Val Gross Memorial Fund	The Diocese of Fargo
<i>Visit cdfnd.org or call (701) 356-7926 for more information.</i>	

U.S. bishops to consecrate nation to Sacred Heart of Jesus

By Tessa Gervasini | Catholic News Agency

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved the consecration of the nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 2026 to accompany the country's 250th anniversary.

At the USCCB Fall Plenary Assembly in Baltimore, bishops voted "to entrust our nation to the love and care of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." Devoting the nation is an opportunity "to remind everyone of our task to serve our nation by perfecting the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel as taught by the Second Vatican Council," Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, said.

"One hundred years ago, in 1925, in his encyclical instituting the feast of Christ the King, Pope Pius XI, drawing on the teaching of Pope Leo XIII, referred to the pious custom of consecrating oneself, families, and even nations to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a way to recognize the kinship of Christ," said Rhoades, who serves on an advisory board for President Donald Trump's Religious Liberty Commission. To help Catholics prepare for the consecration, Rhoades said the bishops will develop prayer resources, including a novena. He said they are already putting together other resources for use by dioceses, parishes, and other groups to engage Catholics.

"In his fourth and last encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*, Pope Francis brought devotion to the Sacred Heart to the forefront of Catholic life as the ultimate symbol of both human and divine love, calling it a wellspring of peace and unity," said Rhoades, who has served as chair of the USCCB Committee on Religious Liberty. Francis "wrote of how the Sacred Heart teaches us to build up in this world God's kingdom of love and justice. Then in his first apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo XIV, following upon Pope Francis' teaching, invites us to contemplate Christ's love, the love that moves us to mission in our suffering world today," Rhoades said.

Before bishops voted to consecrate the U.S. to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Archbishop Paul Etienne of Seattle asked if the bishops will include catechetical materials to guide Catholics, as the devotion "is ultimately inviting people into a deeper relationship with the very person of Jesus himself."

Etienne said the "devotion to the Sacred Heart is such a rich devotion and almost complex."

Rhoades responded they "do intend to have catechetical materials," because "there is such an abundance of beautiful teaching."

At the request of Bishop Arturo Cepeda of San Antonio, Rhoades said the bishops can provide the materials in various languages "to have as many of our people involved as possible." He said the resources will also allow individuals and families to make their own consecration, as the consecration simultaneously happens across the nation.

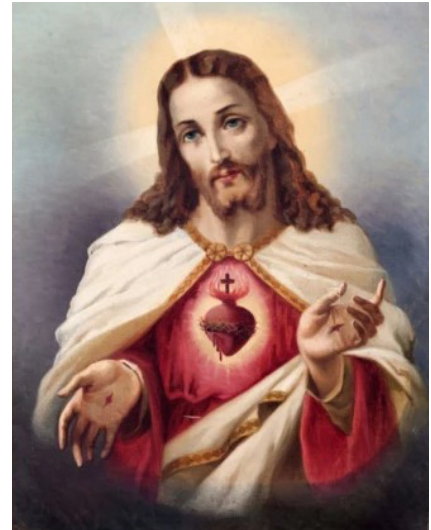
Miami Archbishop Thomas Wenski proposed a celebration during the bishops' spring meeting in Orlando, Florida, in June at the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and suggested inviting (President) Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and other officials to attend.

The story behind the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus dates back to 1673. At a monastery belonging to the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary in eastern France, Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque began experiencing visions of the Sacred Heart that continued for 18 months.

Sister Margaret Mary learned ways to venerate the Sacred Heart of Christ during her visions. These devotions included a Holy Hour on Thursdays, the creation of the feast of the Sacred Heart after Corpus Christi, and the reception of the Eucharist on the first Friday of every month.

On June 16, 1675, Jesus told Sister Margaret Mary to promote a feast that honored his Sacred Heart. He also gave Sister Margaret Mary 12 promises to all who venerated and promoted the devotion of the Sacred Heart.

The Vatican was first hesitant to declare a feast of the Sacred Heart. But as the devotion spread throughout France, the Vatican granted the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to France in 1765. In 1856, Blessed Pius IX designated the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi as the feast of the Sacred Heart for the universal Church.



The Sacred Heart of Jesus.
(Unidentified painter, Wikimedia Commons)

“The Sound of Music” and “It’s a Wonderful Life” among Pope Leo XIV’s favorite films

By Courtney Mares | Catholic News Agency

The Vatican has revealed the names of Pope Leo XIV’s favorite films, including “The Sound of Music” and “It’s a Wonderful Life,” upon announcing the Holy Father’s upcoming meeting with the world of cinema on Nov. 15.

In total, the Vatican shared four titles of the “most significant films” for Leo XIV.

“It’s a Wonderful Life” (1946) by Frank Capra. The Christmas classic stars James Stewart as George Bailey, a man who has sacrificed his dreams because of his sense of responsibility and generosity but feeling like a failure, he contemplates suicide on Christmas Eve. This prompts the intervention of his guardian angel (Henry Travers), who shows him all the good he has done for many people.

“The Sound of Music” (1965) by Robert Wise. The film tells the story of a postulant at a convent in Austria in 1938. After discerning out, the postulant (Julie Andrews) is sent to the home of Captain Von Trapp, a widowed retired naval officer (Christopher Plummer) to be the governess of his seven children. After bringing love and music to the Von Trapp family, she eventually marries the captain. As Von Trapp refuses to accept a commission in the Nazi navy, the family is forced to leave Austria in a dramatic escape.

“Ordinary People” (1980) by Robert Redford. The film tells the story of the breakdown of a wealthy Illinois family after the death of one son in an accident and the suicide attempt of the other. It stars Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore, Judd Hirsch, and Timothy Hutton.

“Life Is Beautiful” (1997) by Roberto Benigni. In this film, Benigni—whose father spent two years in a prisoner-of-war camp—plays Guido Orefice, an Italian Jewish bookstore owner who uses his imagination to protect his young son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp during World War II.

The meeting took place Nov. 15 in the Apostolic Palace of Vatican City, according to a statement from the Dicastery for Culture and Education, in collaboration with the Vatican Museums.

The event follows previous meetings with the world of visual arts (June 2023), comedy (June 2024), and the Jubilee of Artists and the World of Culture in February of this year.

The Vatican statement highlights that Pope Leo XIV “has expressed his desire to deepen the dialogue with the world of cinema, and in particular with actors and directors, exploring the possibilities that artistic creativity offers to the mission of the Church and the promotion of human values.”



Pope Leo XIV blesses a baby in St. Peter’s Square during his general audience on Nov. 5 at the Vatican. (Vatican Media)

Among those who have already confirmed their participation are the Italian actresses Monica Bellucci, famous for her role as Mary Magdalene in Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ,” and Maria Grazia Cucinotta (“Il Postino” and “The World Is Not Enough.”)

Also joining the Holy Father will be, among others, American actress Cate Blanchett (“The Lord of the Rings,” “The Aviator”), the African-American director Spike Lee, the director Gus Van Sant (“Good Will Hunting,” “Elephant”), the Australian director George Miller, creator of the Mad Max saga, and the Italian Giuseppe Tornatore, director of “Cinema Paradiso,” for which he won the Oscar for best foreign film in 1989.

Diocesan policy: Reporting child abuse

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



What happens when evil meets purity and light?



SIDEWALK STORIES

ROXANE B. SALONEN

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

One gray, dreary afternoon during the 40 Days for Life vigil, I witnessed evil meeting purity and light.

Arriving at the sidewalk of our area's abortion facility alone, I was struck by the sight of the escorts gathered like vultures waiting for their next victim, and relieved to see my friend Chris show up in his pickup a few minutes later, with more fortification quickly following. Despite the warmth among us, bleakness pervaded.

Toward the end of my shift, however, everything changed when a van pulled up carrying a swath of adorable little boys. From a distance, as they piled out, I could see their smiling faces and words on their handmade signs.

"Life is fun," said one. "Life is a gift!" said another. "Every baby should have a life!" a third said, showing a bundled baby smiling. "Honk for Life" read a fourth sign colored in orange, and next to that, a small boy held another: "Don't Kill Babies," with a smiley face. Another boy, around 4, proudly held one that said, "We love babies!"

"Those are adorable!" I said to Chris, captivated now by the young ones parading past the escorts on the way to the west end of the sidewalk. Immediately, a happy honk emerged from a passing semi from the highway, followed by the boys' cheers.

The sun stayed hidden but the sidewalk suddenly turned bright. "There's more of us," an older boy said walking toward the others. "We love coming here!"

Another vehicle followed, bringing a group of girls. "We were here earlier," explained one of the mother chaperones. "We left for lunch and Mass, and now we're back." They'd come from Greenbush, Minn., nearly three hours away. "We're so glad you're here," I said.

Life. Joy. Youth. There's nothing better when praying at this lifeless corner. It's as if God called down from heaven: "All right, enough of the grim faces. I'm sending in troops of love."

The honks of support continued intermittently, but in between, several cars passed, windows rolled down, and screamed like

demons might at the kids, even startling an escort. A woman who was alone barreled down the street, did a U-turn right in the middle, and pulled up near the curb alongside the children. She proceeded to yell from her car, accusing them for judging others when our foster-care system is such a hot mess.

I walked over to defend the beautiful crew of young people, experiencing her palpable anger firsthand. She wouldn't relent, until one of the chaperones yelled, gently, "You were made with a purpose!" She drove off soon thereafter with those words ringing in her ears.

Conversing afterward with my friend Ginger, who'd stayed near the facility entrance, she shared that as the kids filled the sidewalk, she noticed how the lead abortion escort seemed tongue-tied. "It was like he wanted to say something," to chastise the youngsters and moms, perhaps, "but few words came."

Later that evening, I shared with my husband, Troy, about what had happened, describing how quickly the sidewalk had brightened, and the spiritual warfare had intensified, as these dear, young souls, showed up with their smiles and laughter.

Pondering this, he offered thoughts about why the escort had quieted at the sight of the kids, and why some passersby could only scream and shout obscenities at their presence. "If they had children of their own and an adult attacked them, their reflex would be to protect them," he said. "But it's as if, in that moment, he realized he was the adult attacking children—these little ones who were pure and without sin—and it silenced him."

It was evil meeting pure innocence and grace, Troy continued, and in such a moment, evil has nothing to offer. "They were caught in their own lie, as if to say, 'I love my own kid, but here I am, fighting to kill someone else's kid.'" The two realities cannot coincide happily.

Anyone with any measure of love in their heart, Troy continued, would respond this way. "It drew out of him the horror of what he was attacking, and he had no words."

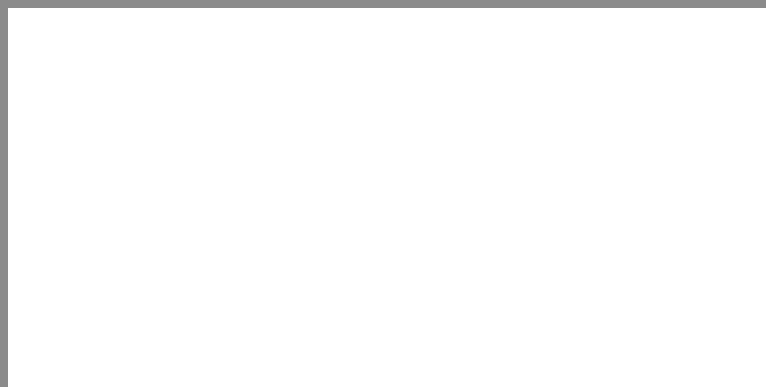
That day, we witnessed it firsthand. When evil meets purity—when the illumination of God's love arrives, and truth with it—evil slithers away.

I am so grateful for the moms who took the time to help their children write words of love from their pure hearts, cram into bustling vehicles, spend nearly six hours on the road, and then, return again to continue praying and spreading hope with us.

Thanks be to God for the little ones who bring light.

NEW EARTH

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Do you know
where we are?

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



Where in the diocese are we?

Last month's photo is of the
chapel in Lisbon Area Health
Services (CHI), Lisbon.