

New

July/August 2025 | Vol. 46 | No. 7



Earth

The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you."

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of hope and joy

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Aug. 25-26	Bus tour of six jubilee sites, begins and end at Maryvale
Sept 5-7	Men's retreat (ages 21-38) with Bishop Folda
Sept. 12-14	Women's silent retreat with St. Therese of Lisieux
Oct. 3-5	iSurrender: When life doesn't go as planned
Oct. 17-19	Women's reading retreat



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JUBILEE 2025 EVENTS



Prairie Pilgrimage

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Aug. 25-26

Bus pilgrimage to all six Jubilee sites in the Diocese of Fargo. Includes Man of the Shroud presentation.

Man of the Shroud Exhibit

Cathedral of St. Mary - Aug. 24-31

Exhibit features a full-size replica of the Shroud of Turin, presenting the results of a comprehensive, scientific, historical, and forensic study. Special presentation by expert Jim Bertrand Aug. 24-25.



www.fargodiocese.org/jubilee



ON THE COVER:

Newly ordained Father Timothy Kraemer is assisted by his brother Father Matthew Kraemer being vested for the first time. (Ann Losinski Photography)

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NEW EARTH

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Our ongoing Eucharistic Revival

Dear friends in Christ, I hope you are having a blessed summer! It is a beautiful time of year, but as always, the weeks of sun and warm weather pass too quickly. One of the highlights of summer is our annual celebration of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ—*Corpus Christi*—which recalls the beauty and grace of the Eucharist in our lives as Catholics. And with this year's *Corpus Christi* celebration, we also came to the official end of the Eucharistic Revival that has been underway for the past three years in the United States. I say "official end" because the Eucharistic Revival isn't really over at all. In fact, I think you could say it is just beginning.

You may remember that three years ago the bishops of the United States called for a "Eucharistic revival" to reinvigorate Eucharistic faith among the faithful. Far too many Catholics, even those who regularly practice the faith, have an incomplete or incorrect understanding of the Eucharist. And so, for the past three years, we have put added emphasis on the Eucharist as the center of the life of the Church. To quote Pope St. John Paul II, "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist." And the reason for this centrality is the key point of our Eucharistic faith: the Eucharist is Christ. It is the real presence of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. He has given himself to us in the Eucharist so that we may always be in communion with him, and so that we may always share in the victory he has already won for us through his death and resurrection.

Over the course of these three years, we have had diocesan Eucharistic congresses, Eucharistic preaching and catechesis, parish missions and retreats based on the Eucharist, Eucharistic processions, and additional emphasis on Eucharistic adoration. Most importantly, we have emphasized participation in the Eucharist through the Mass. Attendance at Mass has declined nationwide in recent years, especially after the recent pandemic. If people don't understand what the Mass is about, or what the Eucharist is about, we shouldn't be surprised that they stop coming. But attendance at Mass has rebounded in many places, and I hope that our renewed emphasis on the Eucharist has contributed to this trend.

Several other fruits of the Eucharistic Revival come to mind. This past year, many of our parishes and other dioceses around the country reported larger than usual numbers entering the Church at Easter. I firmly believe that our fervent love and devotion for Christ in the Eucharist has drawn many brothers and sisters into the Church, and I have no doubt that a vast number of souls are still waiting to encounter him there.

Many of our parishes have Eucharistic adoration on a regular basis, and this too is a fruit of our renewed love for Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The time we spend in his presence is itself an act of adoration. But our prayer before the Eucharist can also be an occasion of powerful intercession for so many needs and hopes: for the Church, for families and loved ones, for priestly and religious vocations, and on and on.

Last summer, the Church throughout the United States launched an epic Eucharistic pilgrimage. From four different directions, pilgrims processed across the country with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and hundreds of thousands of people came out to participate in the pilgrimage. It was an extraordinary endeavor, and it culminated in the magnificent Tenth National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. Once again, huge numbers of people were drawn together in a joyful and prayerful celebration of our Eucharistic faith. This was one of the most moving and significant events in all my years as a priest and bishop, and I believe it will continue to bear fruit for the entire Church for years to come. In fact, the enthusiasm for this event was so great that plans are already underway for another national Eucharistic congress in 2029.

The Eucharistic Revival has been enormously fruitful, but even though the three years have run their course, I believe the Revival continues. Now, we are called to put our Eucharistic faith into action. If we desire to see the fruitfulness of the Revival endure, then we must persevere in our prayer and participation in the Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council taught us that the Eucharistic liturgy is the "source and summit" of our faith. So, it stands to reason that we should desire to participate as often and as fully as possible in the Eucharist at Mass. The Mass is our greatest prayer, and nothing should ever be allowed to draw us away from the Mass, especially on Sunday, the Lord's Day.

The Eucharist also forms us to be witnesses to others. By our living faith, we give testimony to those around us that God is with us and that he loves us with an infinite love. The more completely we live our Eucharistic faith, the more vivid our witness and selflessness will be. Christ sends us out to others just as he sent the apostles, with a mission to share the gift of our faith with the entire world. Pope Leo XIV recently said, "Strengthened by the food that God gives us, let us bring Jesus to the hearts of all, because Jesus involves everyone in his work of salvation by calling each of us to sit at his table. Blessed are those who are called, for they become witnesses of this love."

I don't think we'll ever really be done with our Eucharistic Revival. It has been a time of enormous grace, and it is ongoing. Let us make Christ in the Eucharist the center of our lives, and go out into the world as his witnesses.

Prayer Intention of Pope Leo XIV



JULY: For formation in discernment

Let us pray that we might again learn how to discern, to know how to choose paths of life and reject everything that leads us away from Christ and the Gospel.

AUGUST: For mutual coexistence

Let us pray that societies where coexistence seems more difficult might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious, or ideological reasons.

BISHOP FOLDA'S CALENDAR

July 12 at 11 a.m.

Mass for 60th Jubilee for Srs. Roselima Decosta and Sharon Altendorf, Riverview Place, Fargo

Aug. 4

Putt 4 a Purpose, Rose Creek Golf Course, Fargo

Aug. 5-7

Knights of Columbus Convention, Washington, D.C.

Aug. 8 at 5:15 p.m.

Mass for seminarian installation of lectors and acolytes, St. Anthony, Fargo

Aug. 14

All Saints Catholic Schools Board Meeting, St. Michael, Grand Forks

Aug. 15

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Aug. 15

Pastoral Center closed

Aug. 17 at 5 p.m.

Field Mass, Carmel of Mary, Wahpeton

Aug. 28-30

Region VIII Gathering, Rapid City, S.D.

Sept. 1

Labor Day, Pastoral Center closed

Sept. 5-7

Men's Retreat, Maryvale

Sept. 9 at noon

Catholic Charities Board Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

Sept. 10 at 9 a.m.

All Saints School Mass, Holy Family, Grand Forks



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MONTHLY EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLE

Eucharistic miracle of Augsburg, Germany

From miracolieucaristici.org (edited for content)

In 1194 in Augsburg, a woman who was devoted to the Holy Eucharist received communion at Mass, but secretly took the Host home and put it in a container of wax to use for daily adoration, since at that time Eucharistic worship wasn't practiced in many churches.

Five years had passed and the woman, filled with remorse, took the Host to a priest at the local convent. When the priest opened the wax container, he saw that the Host had been transformed into bleeding flesh. It appeared divided in two,

with the parts connected together by thin threads of bleeding flesh. The priest took the bleeding Host to the local bishop, who then ordered the miraculous Host to be transferred, accompanied by local clergy and townspeople, to the cathedral to be exhibited for public worship.

While on display, the Host began to grow and swell, and stayed in this state from Easter to the Feast of St. John the Baptist. The bishop, marveling at what had occurred, declared that there be a special commemoration each year in honor of the holy relic.



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Diocese of Fargo celebrates the rural way of life

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

God sent a beautiful warm day, perfect weather for growing crops, to southeastern North Dakota on June 29 as the Diocese of Fargo held its 8th annual Rural Life Celebration near Marion. The day was in sharp contrast to the volatile weather that hit the region the week before, bringing tornados, high winds, hail, and heavy rain to this mostly rural region of the state. Three people were tragically killed in these storms as well.

Weather is the one constant that most affects the lives of those who make their living on the land, and it was the main topic of conversation among the estimated 200 people at the Cal and Linda Leyendecker farm. Bishop Folda celebrated Mass, which fell on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. In his homily, Bishop Folda alluded to how those who farm and ranch must trust in God for their livelihood.

"Like Peter and Paul, we need faith to live out the vocations God has given us," said Bishop Folda. "And you who are farmers know how important faith is. You plow the land, you plant your seed, and trust that God will bring forth a good crop. We can't make the seed grow, we can't make it rain, and we can't control the sun. There are some things we can manage in rural life, but there are a lot of things that are out of our control, so we just have to put our faith in God."

Bishop Folda went on to emphasize the importance of those who work the land and affect the lives of those who live in smaller towns and larger cities in the state.

"Our diocese is a largely rural diocese, and even those who live in towns and cities have connections to rural life," said Bishop Folda. "It is here on the land that the faith was established by our ancestors who settled here. They handed it on to their children and grandchildren, they built parish communities and churches. They witnessed that faith to others, so others could share in the gift we have received. As we celebrate the two greatest apostles today, I invite you to follow their example of faith, patience, and courage as you follow our Lord on the farms, ranches, and rural communities of our state. Let us give thanks for the blessings we have received, and may they continue to bear fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold."

After Mass, Bishop Folda continued a popular rural life celebration tradition of blessing soils and seeds, livestock, and machinery, asking God to bless the land that bring forth the crops we need, for the health of the animals raised, and for the safety of those operating farm machinery.

The blessings were followed by dinner and socializing, where once again the hot topic of conversation continued to be the weather and the beautiful day provided by the creator of all things.



The blessing of seeds and soils is a popular tradition at the Rural Life Celebration. (Paul Braun | New Earth)



Some of the faithful brought livestock to be blessed, including this horse, two pigs, two lambs and two goats. (Paul Braun | New Earth)



Cal and Linda Leyendecker, standing with Bishop Folda, were the gracious hosts for this year's Rural Life Celebration. (Paul Braun | New Earth)

Honoring the peaceful and restless phase of life

By Fariba Roughead | Parishioner of Holy Cross, West Fargo

One sure sign of being on the narrow Godly path is when we find ourselves walking in opposite direction to the modern culture. One example of this is the stark contrast between the secular and the sacred beliefs and attitudes toward getting older and the elderly.

Worldly wisdom pursues youth and physical beauty and measures human worth based on productivity and usefulness. The world pressures us into fighting the aging process. We can see this by following the money. According to Statista, Americans spend \$1,760 per year on beauty products and services (this excludes procedure such as botox injections and plastic surgery).

The opposite path, guided by Godly wisdom, honors the elderly as evidenced by the many exhortations throughout the Old and the New Testament:

- “Stand up in the presence of the elderly, and show respect for the aged” (Lev. 19:32).
- “Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by living a godly life.” (Prov. 16:31).
- “Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father” (1 Tim. 5:1-2).

Sadly, many elderly spend their final years in a nursing home. While their physical and emotional needs may be met, they are isolated from their faith community, and there is an intense need for spiritual support. Sensitive to this need, Holy Cross in West Fargo regularly provides Mass and communion services at six senior living facilities in the area. This is made possible by a group of volunteer extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who rotate to assist the priests and deacons during the services and bring communion to those unable to attend.

I am privileged to be one of these ministers. Every visit, I encounter the reality of the loss of independence and the struggles that come with frailty and infirmity of the body. I also sense a restlessness and longing for God along with a deep peace and humble surrender—surely the fruit of a long, faith-filled, sacramental life with Our Lord.

This final season of our earthly life can be summed up as “peaceful and restless.” St. Augustine of Hippo acknowledges this human condition in his *Confessions*: “Thou hast made us for yourself, O Lord, and we are restless until we rest in thee.”

On Easter Sunday, I took communion to a bedridden resident. His heart’s treasure, his family, is on display on the walls of his room. He is proud of the gallery of pictures of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and excitedly showed me the sonogram of his soon-to-be great-grandchild. His wife died suddenly long ago, but her memory is ever-present in our conversations. We talked about the miracle of the empty tomb and resurrection of Our Lord and Savior. The good news that death



Priests and Senior Living Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion from Holy Cross: Back row: Wendy Paulson, Mary Kay Willits, Fr. Kevin Lorsung, Fr. Phil Ackerman, Fr. Jayaraj Koddala, Mike Kiernan. Front Row: Pam Hartwig, Fariba Roughead, Susan Klabunde, Jill Nelson, Jane Wirth. Not Pictured: Annie Varghese, Deacon Tony Finneman, Deacon Jim Eggl, Robin Knudson, Justin Paulson, Lori Bachmeier, Barb Sinner, Mark Nelson. (submitted photo)

has died and that Jesus transformed the grave into a gateway to heaven. He became animated and exclaimed making a knocking motion with his hand saying, “Then, hurry up Jesus! Open the gate!” We chuckled. I told him that God wasn’t done with him yet. I asked him to pray for me, for the unity of Christians, and the poor souls in the purgatory.

Another resident, who has earned her “crown of glory” with her beautiful silver hair, who is articulate, with a loving heart and seasoned wisdom, shared about the tragic death of her young son years ago. In a dream her son came to her and spoke about his regret of not going to confession. He said that he wished everyone could know how important it is to confess our sins and experience God’s forgiveness. With tear-filled eyes, she said that she wished everyone would hear her son’s message. We spoke about our total confidence in God’s infinite Divine Mercy and how we are a people of hope—the Easter people!

She was thankful that during Lent, the priests from Holy Cross offered confession, and she was able to receive the graces from the sacrament. She prays for the souls in purgatory, for married couples to persevere in hardships, and for young people to say “yes” to marriage and be open to life. She also prays for vocations so we can have more priests. I pointed out that Jesus is closest to us when we are at our weakest. I encouraged her that this is a very sacred stage of her life and that he is not done with her yet. She smiled and said, “Well, I am done with me!” I heard

the same “peaceful and restless” longing in her heart which ministered to my soul. I began to understand how truly holy it is to be patient, obediently waiting while you long to go home.

The source of this sacred desire for our eternal home is God himself. Our Lord’s Sacred Heart, which burns for the love for each of us, relentlessly pursues us. The prophet Jeremiah reassures us that God has a plan for our good (Jer. 29:11) and St. John Cardinal Newman points out that God is not confused and “He knows what he is about.”

I was reminded that time is not ours and that my life belongs to God. In his providence, God chooses perfectly, in fullness of time, to send the invitation for us to go back home.

We, the volunteers, are privileged to serve and have the honor of learning by witnessing how to eagerly await and be ready to say yes! In the meantime, we are ministered to by the peaceful and restless hearts of the elderly.

SMP Health – Ave Maria breaks ground in Jamestown

By Annie Hancock | Development Director for SMP Health – Ave Maria



Corporate leadership, Ave Maria leadership team, key members of the community, and vendors for the project gather for the groundbreaking of its long-awaited private room project. (Photo by Masaki Ova)

Ave Maria in Jamestown held a groundbreaking ceremony on May 23 to celebrate the start of its long-awaited private room project. The \$8.4 million, 12,000-square-foot addition will significantly enhance the quality of care for residents by increasing the number of private rooms from 28 to 60. In addition to constructing new rooms, the project includes renovating 16 semi-private rooms to become private suites. CEO/Administrator Tonie Stoen called the project “essential” and a major step forward in elevating resident comfort and dignity.

Expected to be completed in the fall of 2026, the project aligns with Ave Maria’s ongoing mission to provide compassionate, faith-based care. The facility currently holds a license for 100 beds and offers both long-term skilled nursing care and short-term rehabilitation services, including physical, occupational, speech, and respiratory therapies. It serves individuals of all faiths, rooted in its Catholic healthcare ministry.

Stoen emphasized the community-wide effort behind the campaign, highlighting the generous support from donors. Development Director Annie Hancock added, “Every single

gift, no matter how big or small, has helped us and is treasured because it was given with love and intention,” she said. The project is not only a reflection of the facility’s future vision but also a testament to the generosity and unity of its supporters.

For more information about the Forward in Faith private room project or to give a donation contact Annie Hancock by emailing annie.hancock@smphs.org or by calling (701) 952-5677.



Rendering of the project. (submitted photo)

St. James Basilica, Jamestown to host 2nd annual community corn feed

By Pam Perleberg | Advancement Director of St. James Basilica, Jamestown

On Aug. 24, St. James Basilica will be hosting their 2nd Annual Corn Feed event at the Stutsman County Fairgrounds north of Jamestown. It is their hope to build upon the success of last year's event, which served over 900 people.

It was Father Chad Wilhelm's goal last year to make the Corn Feed a "community" event—to welcome everyone to enjoy a meal together in a fun, family friendly environment. The parish was encouraged to invite their friends and neighbors of all denominations to join in the festivities. Their mission was accomplished with the terrific turnout.

The Knights of Columbus (KCs) of Jamestown worked tirelessly to not only pick the corn but shuck and cook it. Two local parishioners provided the corn from their fields—Chad Kleinknecht and Randy Neva. Over 1,700 ears were picked, shucked and served! The KCs also provided the food to accompany the corn—grilling over 900 burgers from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The Heavenly Homemakers (a young parish mom's group at St. James Basilica) volunteered to provide the bars and cookies for dessert, along with over 75 volunteers helping set up, serve, and keep things running smoothly. Kids were able to enjoy bounce houses, a dunk tank, and corn hole games. Thanks to a beautiful day, people were able to stay and visit on the fairgrounds and enjoy seconds and thirds if they wanted.

All are welcome to join in this year's Community Corn Feed on Sunday, Aug. 24, at the Stutsman County Fairgrounds from 11:30 a.m. (following the 10:30 a.m. Mass) until 1:30 p.m. Burgers, chips, dessert, and corn for \$10 per ticket. Children six and under are free. Each ticket will be entered for prizes with the drawing held on Aug. 25 at the Basilica. Share with your family and friends to join in the fun. For more information, contact Pam Perleberg at advancement@stjamesbasilica.org.



The corn picking crew picked over 1,700 ears of corn for last year's corn feed. (Pam Perleberg)



Parishioners gather to shuck the corn ears prior to last year's event. (Pam Perleberg)



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Third annual pilgrimage to the Prairie Bells Grotto of the Holy Family

By Lori Bichler | Parishioner of St. David, Ashely

On June 7, faithful embarked on the third annual pilgrimage to the Prairie Bells Grotto of the Holy Family, which rests between Linton and Wishek on Highway 13 and one mile north on 23rd Ave SE.

The pilgrimage started at what is called Hope Hill in honor of our Jubilee Year of Hope. Hope Hill is about 3.5 miles cross-country from the grotto on a farmstead with an old red barn and a few corrals. The start point and grotto both have beautiful views overlooking the North Dakota prairie. Hope Hill is in the Diocese of Fargo while the Prairie Bells Grotto is in the Diocese of Bismarck. The pilgrimage took about three hours, and the goal was to end at 1 p.m. As the last pilgrims arrived to the site, persons looking at their watches announced it was exactly 1 p.m.

The people who attended were faithful from surrounding parishes in both the Fargo and Bismarck Dioceses. The pilgrimage offered time to pray, walk, ride, take in scenery, endure hardship, and enjoy fellowship. The day proved a little breezy but this kept the temperatures just right.

A pilgrimage is a journey, one that can be made alone but one that unites people when we journey together. Sometimes in life we end up feeling like we are walking this journey of life alone. Sometimes we find it hard to lean on others for help. This year's walk was so encouraging to see people mixing amongst each other, encouraging each other, and telling their stories.



Pilgrims to the Prairie Bells Grotto of the Holy Family gather for a photo. (submitted photo)

We are a family as Catholics, but we sometimes forget to lean on each other to help us on our journey. God wants to offer more than what we see before us, a life that keeps the heart consoled and joyful.

The Prairie Bells Grotto of the Holy Family was finished Dec. 28, 1992 (the Feast of the Holy Family). To learn more about this site, visit www.bismarckdiocese.com/news/honoring-the-holy-family.

ND Catholic Daughters hold State Convention

By ND Catholic Daughters

The North Dakota Catholic Daughters of the Americas held their 54th Biennial State Convention at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, St. Joseph's O'Neill Hall, and the James Memorial Art Center in Williston May 2-4. The host court was Court St. Therese # 958. The theme of the convention was "Do Ordinary Things with Extraordinary Love."

Many Catholic Daughters from all over the state came together to pray, learn, listen, plan, and enjoy seeing old friends and meeting new ones. It was a wonderful weekend of learning about different ethnic groups. We had an opportunity to learn about Catholicism in Mexico, the Philippines, and in Poland, along with trying some of their delightful foods. We heard from a couple who did a mission trip to Kenya and about the oil industry in North Dakota. It was a superb sisterhood weekend!



Pictured (l-r): State Secretary Marylin Aune, First Vice State Regent Sue Judd-Dyrness, State Regent Deb Johnson, Second Vice State Regent Angela Scheett, State Treasurer Wanda Meyer, and National Representative/National Director Barbara Wiechmann. (submitted photo)

Christopher Dodson continues serving North Dakota while fighting cancer

By Patti Armstrong | Author, Journalist and TV Talk Show Host

“Honestly, I’m 60 years old and have had a lot of positions, but never have I enjoyed working with someone more.” David Tamisiea, current Executive Director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference said of Christopher Dodson who served in that same position for almost 30 years—from 1995 to 2023. Dodson continues as interim co-director and general counsel, helping provide the public policy voice of the North Dakota Catholic bishops, while he also fights a cancer that has dogged him since 2019.

Dodson did not start out as a Catholic. He was raised in Southern California, as a “generic Protestant,” according to him. He received his bachelor’s degree in 1986 from the University of California at Riverside and his law degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1989.

As an undergraduate, feeling depressed after a girlfriend left him and living in a gloomy apartment, a friend took him to a Presbyterian church. “I realized that God had never abandoned me,” Dodson shared. “I began looking around at all kinds of religion from Evangelical to New Age-ish and started reading C.S. Lewis.” He had met his now-wife Rosalie, a Catholic, as an undergraduate. “We would have discussions on faith, and I realized that sometimes I was arguing with myself and losing, not even convincing myself.” During his third year of law school, he entered the Catholic Church.

Dodson and Rosalie married at St. Martin’s Catholic Church on Dec. 22, 1989 in Center, N.D. where her family was living. The newlyweds moved to Riverside where Dodson worked as a litigator for a large law firm while Rosalie attended the California School for Professional Psychology in Los Angeles. But it wasn’t the right fit for him. One thing he did enjoy, however, was writing articles for his diocesan newspaper such as expressing views against a ballot measure supporting assisted suicide. He also became involved in pro-life and social justice causes.

Home to North Dakota

The population and crime in their area was increasing and Dodson was unhappy at his job, so when a friend shared that the North Dakota Catholic Conference had a part-time position for a health care advocate, he applied despite the salary being only \$17,000.

“We had two little boys at the time,” Dodson explained, “so it was really putting our faith in God. I love the Church, and I love the law, and I love politics, so I felt right away it was a good fit. I think if I had not become Catholic, my love of politics would have sent me down the wrong path. I had a good skill in that area when I was young, but politics can become all about you. God

gave me these gifts, but told me, ‘You are going to use them for me.’”

So, they moved to North Dakota in 1994 where Rosalie found a job as a clinical and forensic psychologist at the North Dakota State Hospital in Jamestown, later becoming the superintendent. The following year, Dodson went full time as the Executive Director

and General Counsel for the Catholic Conference. In this position, he drafted and helped shepherd the enactment of legislation on various issues including the protection of human life, religious freedom, the family, and care for the poor, always being guided by Catholic teaching.

“The job as I see it is to take those theological teachings of the Church and interpret them in a way that they meet the civil law,” Dodson explained. “We need to guide and help legislators in the task they have in the temporal order. We also represent the Bishops on public policy matters.”

But following Catholic teaching does not always make supporting or opposing bills a clear-cut decision Dodson pointed out. “Bills dealing with the poor and immigration are not always as simple as they appear. Abortion ban bills are another good example. You have to understand the statutes and where prudential judgment sits and we have to look at the doctrine as a whole and apply it to law. We’ve had proposed abortion ban laws that at the time were unconstitutional. We declined to support them because the state would have ended up paying the other side’s attorney fees if we knew we didn’t have the votes in the Supreme Court. We need to look at the long-term strategy.”

Stepping Down

Dodson stepped down as the conference’s executive director Nov. 1, 2023 to serve as a co-director and general counsel under the directorship of David Tamisiea. David came from the



Christopher Dodson with his wife, Rosalie Dodson (submitted photo)

University of Mary, where he has served as the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences since 2019 and has a background in law, theology, and Catholic social doctrine. “Christopher is a great mentor and became a great friend,” Tamisiea said. “He’s very respected by legislators. He has a very sharp legal mind and is very committed to his faith.”

The two men first met over coffee and quickly hit it off when both their phone alarms went off at twelve noon—the time when they stop whatever they are doing to pray the Angelus. Once Tamisiea took over at the office, he said, “Someone put out a question of having a spiritual practice for our office, so we started doing the Angelus together every day.”

Tamisiea credits Dodson with learning how to read proposed bills, learning how to interact with legislators and to advocate for the Churches position. “There are times when on its face, it might be a good idea, but when you get to the nuts and bolts, it’s a bad bill,” Tamisiea explained. “That can be hard when the Church has a strong position, but a particular bill is not going to accomplish that goal.”

Cancer Diagnosis

Dodson was treated for prostate cancer in 2019 but some of the cancer cells must have already spread. In May of 2022, the cancer was diagnosed as metastatic—also known as Stage 4—meaning cells had spread from their original location to other parts of the body. “It’s not curable,” Dodson explained. “You cannot get rid of it once it’s escaped the prostate. You usually live 5-10 years, but doctors don’t usually give a number.”

After only two treatments of chemotherapy at Sanford Clinic in Fargo, it was stopped that following July due to a severe reaction. Dodson then received hormone suppression therapy but explained that only puts the cancer to sleep. “I had little dots everywhere and there were at least twelve tumors spread out,” he said. “In August, a scan showed almost all of the tumors had disappeared. I went to Bishop Kagen and showed him the scan with only three left. I have a whole litany of saints and blessed that I was praying to and added Michelle during that time. [Servant of God Michelle Duppong of the Bismarck Diocese died of cancer in 2015 and her cause for canonization opened Nov. 1, 2021.] I had a new start in this battle of cancer. Then, within nine months of the May diagnosis, the tumors become more aggressive and dangerous, but I have less volume because of whatever happened in the first few months.”

During the first week of May 2024, Dodson traveled with the lay religious group The Order of Malta to the miraculous spring in Lourdes, France where the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858. “I went to the baths,” he said. “It was so beautiful and moving to the point that words cannot describe. That summer, I realized I was walking further and lifting heavier things and feeling better and had more energy. My hobby is flying big show kites. There are heavy bags that I could not lift the summer before or walk around all day. There’s no explanation



Christopher Dodson is a frequent visitor to the state capital during legislative sessions, lobbying on behalf of items important to the faithful. Dodson (right) is with Msgr. Patrick Schumacher, pastor at Corpus Christi Church in Bismarck (left) and Shane Goettle of Mandan, lobbyist for the State Association of Nonpublic Schools (center). (submitted photo)

for how I could have returned energy and strength because usually, you get weaker, and the cancer begins to affect your bones. Something happened at Lourdes.”

As of this past February, Dodson is receiving a new treatment at Mayo, going back every six weeks. “It was not available when I was first diagnosed,” he explained. “A radioactive isotope is injected that goes directly to the cancer cells. It has reduced or eliminated the cancer cells in one-third of the men who have tried it. Thankfully, I have a team at Mayo that does not give up.”

With two grown sons and a daughter and his first grandchild due in July, Dodson says he has a lot to live for. He credited cancer with giving him a greater appreciation for the little things. “You appreciate the extraordinary in the ordinary, whether a flower or a blade of grass or the people around you,” he said. “I’ve always thought that the greatest temptation is to fall into the ordinary and live your life not seeing the beauty of God made possible through his incarnation. The diagnosis has made that all the more.”

“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you,” he quoted from Eph. 5:14. “It’s a temptation to fall into a malaise. We have to remember that the blessings are everywhere. The blessing of my diagnosis is that I was awakened to that, but I won’t lie, I fear pain at the end, but I don’t fear death at all. At first, I thought, I don’t want to die I’m going to miss my life, but then I realized that if I’m in the Beatific Vision and with God, I won’t miss anything here.”

“Together with Leo, our pope...”

By Joshua Gow | Director of Mission for CHI Hospitals in Valley City, Lisbon, and Oakes

“Together with Leo, our pope...” The words were spoken or sung throughout the world on May 10 and 11, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, the first obligatory gathering of the Body of Christ at the Eucharistic celebration. For our diocese and nation, the words evoked excitement; the first American born pope!

But before the first Sunday Mass following Pope Leo XIV’s election, Masses were offered on the weekdays after the conclusion of the conclave. One such Mass took place at 1 p.m. on May 8 in the chapel at CHI Lisbon Health, only 40 minutes after the official announcement. This Mass, a votive Mass offered for the new Pope, was possibly the first in the world where Pope Leo was included by name in the Eucharistic Prayer.

The celebrant for this Mass was Father Riley Durkin, Pastor of St. Aloysius Gonzaga Church in Lisbon, who oversees pastoral care at CHI Lisbon Health. Dr. Kiesha Onyeneho was in attendance. Below are their thoughts on this remarkable occasion.

Describe your day on May 8 as the conclave was occurring. What were you doing when you first heard we had a new pope?

Father Durkin: I looked up the approximate times of the votes and had a livestream going of the chimney on both my computer and phone. When the white smoke came, in a strangely ironic twist of fate, I just sat down to a Lisbon Ministerium meeting in which the other pastors in town were playfully teasing me that I should be watching for smoke instead of attending the meeting. After I saw the white smoke on my phone, I left the meeting early to ring the church bells. I was surprised and edified by the congratulatory wishes from the non-Catholic pastors in Lisbon following the election.

Dr. Onyeneho: I was at work seeing patients. I knew the conclave was going on, but with this being the first conclave that I have been Catholic for, I presumed it would take much longer to reach a decision. I found out about the white smoke in a text message thread with the CHI Lisbon Mission Director.

What was your reaction to the election of Pope Leo XIV?

Father Durkin: I grew up hearing that we would never have an American Pope. When the cardinal announced who was elected, I was shocked. Not only is he from the Midwest, but he is the first Pope in at least a millennium to not come from a historically Catholic country. I am excited to get to know him better and see if there is an uptick in Catholic conversions during his pontificate.

Dr. Onyeneho: I was quite surprised to hear we had an American pope. I did not think I would ever see the day. I did not know much about Pope Leo XIV at first, but now that he has spoken a few times, I am truly excited to see where his Papacy leads us. I feel he will bring more unity to the Church, as that has been strong in his early messages. There is excitement among



The chapel at the CHI Hospital in Lisbon. (submitted photo)

Catholics, and even non-Catholics, which is refreshing.

Did anything from the Mass offered at the hospital on May 8 resonate with you?

Father Durkin: I was excited that this preplanned Mass happened to be only 40 minutes after our new Pontiff’s *Urbi et Orbi* blessing. I celebrated a votive Mass for the Pope and was happy to include his new name. I like to think I was one of the first! This truly was a once in a lifetime experience. Whether it be coincidence or Providence, the Lord works in mysterious ways.

Dr. Onyeneho: The unique part of this Mass was the way it landed on a Thursday afternoon, which was an unusual day and time for this hospital Mass. God obviously had a plan for us to celebrate Mass just after the selection of our new Pope. It was beautifully timed, we could not have done it better ourselves. The Mass was a lovely, peace filled moment of my day, and it truly felt blessed by God.

What are your thoughts on participating in one of the first Masses offered in the world for Pope Leo XIV after his election? Were you aware of the significance of this Mass?

Father Durkin: This really was an act of Providence. Since it was just myself and Dr. Onyeneho at this Mass, I was able to share all sorts of thoughts bouncing around my head before Mass. I have a great love for the previous Pope Leo as he, among other things, was the pope to establish the Diocese of Fargo. Leo XIII also had a heart for the poor, defended the dignity of the human person, and established the St. Michael prayer.

Dr. Onyeneho: It was a quaint, yet beautiful Mass. It was exciting to hear Pope Leo XIV’s name in the Mass, but I didn’t put it together that it was possibly the first Mass said for him. It’s still hard to wrap my head around. I enjoyed learning about the process of electing a Pope, and I’m enjoying the sense of anticipation that is rippling through the Church with Leo XIV’s election.

Priests vs. seminarians softball game results



The priests bested the seminarians 2-1 at the second annual priests vs. seminarians softball game on June 22. The evening began with a picnic served by the Knights of Columbus followed by the 7 p.m. game at Elmwood Park in West Fargo. (Photo by Diocese of Fargo)



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St. Margaret Mary, Buchanan, celebrates 100th anniversary

By Rachel Seefeldt | Parishioner at Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque is a beautiful small-town church with glowing stained-glass windows and warm wood accents, tucked in the trees of Buchanan's Main Street. On June 22, parishioners and guests celebrated the church's 100th anniversary. Dedicated by Bishop O'Reilly in June of 1925, the parish has grown into a faithful and flourishing community.

The celebration began with a rosary, led by the Knights of Columbus from the St. James Basilica in Jamestown. Bishop Folda presided at Mass. During the homily, he boldly stated, "St. Peter's Basilica in Rome has nothing on St. Margaret Mary [Church]." He went on to explain that Jesus was as fully present in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Eucharist there as in St. Peter's Basilica. Encouraging the parish in its efforts to share the love of Christ, he reminded them of the ways the faith has been handed down to them through witness and the sacraments.

It was significant for the parish to be able to have their shepherd, Bishop Folda, lead them in this celebration. For the Bishop, anniversary events like these are inspirational, as they remind him of the "gift of faith" received from God and our ancestors "who started these parishes and persevered through so many challenges but loved the faith enough that they passed it along." St. Margaret's is a spiritual home, both for lifelong members like Craig Neis, whose grandfather Michael helped build the church, and for newer families who are drawn to the faithful community and drive in from the surrounding area.

Following the Mass, a presentation was given on the history of St. Margaret's, narrated by longtime parishioner Jackie Readel. A little over 100 years ago, there were only two Catholics in Buchanan. By 1923, there were 19 Catholic families who dreamed of building their own church. Assisted by donations from Miss Nora Warren, the McCarten sisters, and fundraising through *Extension Magazine*, the community began construction in 1924, leveling the marshy site by hand and with the use of horse-drawn scrapers. The first Mass was celebrated on Christmas day of 1924 in the basement of the current church. The McCarten sisters made their donation contingent on the church being named "St. Margaret's," after their mother. The name "St. Margaret Mary Alacoque" was chosen for the mystic who lived from 1647 to 1690 and promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to whom the parish is entrusted.

St. Margaret Mary Church has fostered religious vocations. Sister Bernadette Trecker, a Presentation Sister in Fargo, who was an honored guest at the anniversary celebration, recalled praying as a young girl in the front pew of the church and participating in the music ministry. She professed her final vows at St. Margaret's

in 1972. A priest, Father Roman Neva, who was ordained in 1935, also grew up in the parish.

Following the presentation, a luncheon was served, and then the parishioners went to the cemetery for the dedication of a new marble cross. Leading the effort to erect the cross was Donna Neis, for whom the project was very personal. After losing both her husband and son within a year, she relied on the support of her "church family," as she calls the St. Margaret's community, who "rallied around" her. Thanks to their fundraising efforts and donations, the beautiful new cross now serves as a reminder that "the Cross is the bridge from the grave to glory," as the church's pastor, Fr. Chad Wilhelm, preached at the dedication. The cross has an image of the crucified Jesus engraved on it, with the words, "Come to me, and I will refresh you" from Matthew 11:28. These words can also be found painted above the arch at the front of the church.

The planning of the celebration itself points to the strength and teamwork of the parish. Father Wilhelm attests that it was a community effort, with everyone chipping in to make the event a success. The devotion the parishioners have to celebrating their spiritual heritage is evident. Even after a devastating storm blew through the town only two days before the anniversary, uprooting trees at the cemetery and throughout the town, church members went out to the cemetery to rake and prepare it for the anniversary and dedication. The cross was raised in the very place that many of the church's founders are buried. For the parishioners, it is a sign of the strong faith that has been passed down to them through each generation.



Mass at the parish on their anniversary celebrated June 22. (Rachel Seefeldt)



Parishioners of St. Margaret Mary in Buchanan gather at the cemetery for the dedication of a new marble cross in honor of their 100th anniversary as a parish. (Rachel Seefeldt)

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All Saints Catholic Schools Network launches in Grand Forks, Sara Dudley named President

By Paul Braun | Editor of New Earth

Bishop John Folda has announced the official formation of the All Saints Catholic Schools Network, a strategic initiative poised to significantly enhance and strengthen Catholic education across the Grand Forks community. This pivotal development unifies Holy Family–St. Mary’s Catholic School and St. Michael’s Catholic School under a single, cohesive educational framework, with exciting plans for a future dedicated middle school.

The formation of the All Saints Catholic Schools Network is the culmination of extensive discussions initiated in 2024 by the pastors of Holy Family Church, St. Mary’s Church, and St. Michael’s Church. Driven by a shared vision and invaluable feedback gathered through numerous parent meetings and community surveys, it was determined that a unified network would best serve the growing needs of Catholic families and students in the region. With increased enrollment at both schools, the All Saints Catholic Schools Network will cultivate resource development, shared mission, and opportunities in Catholic education in Grand Forks.

Bishop John Folda also announced the appointment of Sara Dudley, principal of St. Michael’s School in Grand Forks, as the inaugural President of the newly incorporated All Saints Catholic Schools Network. Dudley, a seasoned Catholic educator with a proven track record of leadership and vision, will lead the network’s mission to enhance and strengthen Catholic education across Grand Forks. Dudley will retain her role as principal.

Dudley brings 11 years of dedicated service and leadership from St. Michael’s Catholic School, where she worked tirelessly to grow its mission and foster a vibrant faith-based learning environment. Her extensive experience is complemented by academic credentials, including a Master’s Degree in Education Leadership, a Department of Public Instruction Principal and Superintendent Credential, and a specialized micro-credential in executive leadership from the Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College.

“I am incredibly grateful and humbled by this opportunity to serve the All Saints Catholic Schools Network,” said Dudley. “Having dedicated over a decade to growing Catholic education at St. Michael’s, I am excited to bring that same passion and vision to our entire network. Together, with our committed pastors, school communities, and the grace of God, we will ignite the mission, building a powerful future for our students rooted in faith, academic excellence, and community.”

Further inspiring this new chapter, Bishop Folda has also announced the network’s future middle school will be named for Carlo Acutis. This future facility will serve as a dedicated

environment for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, offering specialized curriculum, robust faith formation, and a nurturing atmosphere tailored to the unique developmental needs of adolescents.

Carlo Acutis, who will be canonized by Pope Leo in September, was a young, digitally-savvy Catholic who serves as a powerful patron, embodying a joyful and modern example of faith for today’s youth. The Grand Forks community is invited to embrace this transformative vision as the All Saints Catholic Schools Network embarks on its goal to “IGNITE THE MISSION” and build a vibrant future for Catholic education for generations to come.

The middle school will open its doors by adding one grade at a time, beginning with 6th grade in the 2025-2026 school year, followed by 7th grade in the 2026-2027 school year. Planning and fundraising is in progress for the new middle school, to be located across the street from St. Michael’s School.



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Dress solidifies special bond

By Jessica Wald | Reporter/Graphic Designer for Napoleon Homestead

Originally printed in Napoleon Homestead

After 61 years a wedding dress made its second debut, but for a different celebration. Barb Braun, Napoleon, was honored to let her granddaughter, Preché McDurfee (daughter of Danielle and Palmer McDurfee, Napoleon), wear the dress for her Confirmation and First Communion.

Braun said a while ago she and her daughter Danielle McDurfee were chatting about finding a dress for Preché's confirmation and that's when Danielle questioned what her mom was going to do with her wedding dress. After Preché tried on the dress, Barb said her daughter chimed in, "Oh my gosh it's beautiful, Mom."

The trio felt it needed to be altered just a bit, along with being hemmed, to fit perfectly and found a neighbor to help them. Braun reassured her daughter it was ok to alter the dress, and she'd rather it be put to good use, rather than be stored away.

After alterations and trying the dress on several times, "Preché would put it on and dance around the kitchen. It was so, so, so special," she emotionally said about seeing her granddaughter in her dress.

Preché, who is 9, said, "I was really happy that I got to wear my grandma's dress." Not only did she wear her grandma's wedding dress for the St. Philip Neri Church's Confirmation/First Communion on May 3, but Preché also asked her grandma Barb to be her sponsor.

"She is special to me," Preché said of her grandma. "She bakes and we do stuff together. We bake treats and she's special."

Danielle said not only was Preché able to wear the dress, but also how, on her own, Preché chose her grandma to be her sponsor. McDurfee also noted that Preché chose Barb's mom's name, Clara, as her saint name for the Confirmation.

"It's such a blessing; I'm grateful she can make these memories with her grandma," noted Danielle of the duo's special bond and time together.

Barbara (Weigel), who married her husband Tony on Aug. 29, 1964, said she went with both her parents to buy her wedding dress. "My dad had great

taste for clothes and I told him I wanted a flowing, princess dress," added Barb. She said she found a dress she loved at Penney's. "I loved it and I remember twirling around in it."

They decided to look at one more place for a dress and her dad urged her to try on the latest style. "It had handkerchief sleeves," Barb explained of the new style dress in the early 60s. As she tried on the second dress at Morey Allen's shop, she said they all knew it was perfect. Although it was \$10 more than the other dress, Barb and her parents loved it and she said it would be the first of its kind to be worn in the area.

Danielle said it was such an honor that her mom allowed Preché to wear the dress 61 years later. "Preché and my mom have a very, very unique, close relationship; they are super close and it was super special."



Preché McDurfee with her Grandma Barb Braun and mom Danielle McDurfee. Preché wears her Grandma Barb's wedding dress for her Confirmation/First Communion. (submitted photo)



Barb (Weigel) and Tony Braun on their wedding day, August 29, 1964. (submitted photo)



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Father Timothy Kraemer blesses Bishop Folda.
(Ann Losinski Photography)



Left to right, Deacons Richie Stenger, Taylor Ternes, Brendon Schneibel, Patrick Sorrells, and Garrett Aberle were ordained to the diaconate at Holy Cross in West Fargo June 6.
(Ann Losinski Photography)

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.”

Ordinations a beautiful occasion of hope and joy

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

Bishop John Folda ordained Father Timothy Kraemer to the priesthood on June 7 at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. Family and friends along with many of their brother priests from the diocese joined in the celebration.

In his homily during the solemn ordination Mass, Bishop John Folda reminded those gathered that the newly ordained Father Kraemer remains their son, brother, and friend and will now also be a priest after the heart of Christ.

“As Pope Leo explained in an ordination homily,” said Bishop Folda, “the ordination of a priest doesn’t separate him from you or from the people he will serve. On the contrary, through his ordination, he is given to us and to the Church even more fully as a gift of God.”

Bishop Folda urged Father Kraemer to be “a minister of hope to others.”

“Your priesthood will be an assurance that Christ remains with his Church and continues to offer us every grace we need to attain salvation. Your priesthood will be a validation of what St. Paul tells us: ‘Hope does not disappoint’ when its foundation is Christ.”

Father Timothy Kraemer will begin his priestly ministry as parochial vicar of St. James Basilica, Jamestown; St. Margaret Mary, Buchanan; and St. Mathias, Windsor.

The evening prior, Bishop Folda ordained five men to the Diaconate: Deacon Garrett Aberle, Deacon Brendon Schneibel, Deacon Patrick Sorrells, Deacon Richie Stenger, and Deacon Taylor Ternes.

With a larger ordination class comes more family, friends, and faithful to the celebration, so the ordination took place at Holy Cross in West Fargo in order to accommodate more people.

In his homily, Bishop Folda urged these men to “Be men of prayer, not only for yourself, but for the Church that you serve, the Church that you love, the Church that is the Body of Christ.

“By your prayer every day, especially in the Liturgy of the Hours and the Mass, lift up to God the people whom you serve, and be present to them in body and in spirit, a witness to the hope that is within you,” Bishop Folda said.

These men will continue their studies in seminary for the 2025–2026 school year, with anticipated ordination to the priesthood next summer.



Father Timothy Kraemer

Where are you from? Who are you parents and siblings?

I am from Grand Forks. My parents are Phil and Laurie. My siblings are Sarah Komprood (Matthew, brother in law), Fr. Matthew Kraemer, Peter (and Monique) Kraemer, Daniel (and Sarah) Kraemer, Marie Kraemer, and Rose Kraemer.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?

All of my family and friends have always been very supportive. However, I did not spend a lot of time talking to them about it.

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

When I was 11. It was time to make a move when I turned 28.

What has been your most memorable experience in seminary?

Honestly... The unexpected one was having real mountain bike trails just a few minutes' drive away from seminary. When not in class, I spent a lot of time in the woods of the Appalachians.

Who is one of your favorite saints and why?

One of my favorite saints is Joan of Arc. She had to follow what God directed her even though it was not the normal kind of vocation. Her tenacity and faith were something I hope for.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation?

There is something to living the present moment. God daily calls us to live in his presence whether we are in our main vocation or not. When the opportunity comes, take it to investigate where you think God might be calling you. You don't get anywhere if you don't go.



Deacon Richie Stenger

Where are you from? Who are you parents and siblings?

I grew up in Minnesota but came to North Dakota when I went to college at NDSU and was in the ND Air National Guard. My parents are Kenny and Kim and I have a younger sister Katie.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?

I was fortunate that I received a great deal of support. My family had questions early on, but they have been supportive the whole way.

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

I had passing thoughts about the priesthood probably as early as 2nd grade as far as I can remember. The call however didn't become real for me though until around my 28th birthday.

What has been your most memorable experience in seminary?

I would say that some of my favorite memories of seminary is our talent show at the Christmas party. Some men have different talents that you don't see much of otherwise. My favorite was a ventriloquist comedy act.

Who is one of your favorite saints and why?

St. Peter. He's an inspiration for me because he was able to lead the Church through his trust in the Lord even though his credentials made him seem completely unfit for the job. Also, I really love fishing.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation?

Just trust the Lord and give it a try. Like anything in life, you will never know if something is right for you unless you try. Go to seminary for one year. If it isn't right, it'll be clear.



Soon-to-be ordained Father Timothy Kraemer promises obedience to Bishop Folda and his successors.
(Ann Losinski Photography)



Bishop Folda greets Laurie and Phil Kraemer, parents of Father Timothy Kraemer, who brought the gifts to the altar during the ordination Mass. (Ann Losinski Photography)



Deacon Brendon Schneibel

Where are you from? Who are you parents and siblings?

I grew up in Lakota, but during junior high, my family moved to Wasilla, AK, and in High School we moved back to N. D., living first in Reynolds and finally Marvel, where my parents Kevin and Mary Kaye Schneibel live now. I have one older sister, Casey

Barclay in New Salem with her husband and their four children. I have a younger brother, Thomas in West Fargo, and my brother Gabriel and my sister Jennifer.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?

I've been very blessed to only receive support and encouragement from my family and friends. Sometimes the support comes in very simple words of encouragement: "we're praying for you." Other times it is very personal and touching, like when my new sister-in-law said, "Brendon, I just think it is awesome that my kids will be able to have an uncle who's a priest."

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

I grew up in a very Catholic family, so it is hard to say the first time that I thought about becoming a priest, but the first call probably would have been when I was around 9 or 10 as I started receiving comments about how people thought I should be a priest, especially when I had been altar serving. I don't think I really considered this call though until I heard it more clearly in prayer during my sophomore year of high school.

What has been your most memorable experience in seminary?

Going for a rosary walk on an 8-day silent retreat during a seminary summer spirituality program as a thunderstorm rolled in.

Who is one of your favorite saints and why?

St. Maximilian Kolbe. He has been present in various ways for some very important events, and his example of self-less love is very inspiring to me.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation?

There is a hard balance to find sometimes between stepping out boldly and being patient. If God opens a door for you, walk through it, even if you're nervous; in the words of Fr. Rob Galea, "Do it scared." At the same time, if God isn't opening a door right now, in the words of our own Bishop John Folda, "Be patient with your vocation;" God will get you where he wants you to be if you surrender to him.



Deacon Garrett Aberle

Where are you from? Who are you parents and siblings?

I am the oldest of four in my family. My parents are Rick and Christine. I have two sisters, Danielle and Isabelle, and one brother, Everett. Although we lived for a while in Puerto Rico, my parents both hail from North Dakota, and we moved to North Dakota when I was in 8th grade. Ever since, my family has lived in Minot.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?

My friends and family have always been supportive of my vocation.

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

I first heard the call to the priesthood when I was in high school at a Steubenville conference. There, I had a powerful experience in prayer and the sacraments. From this new place of spiritual intimacy, I knew I needed to discern a vocation to the priesthood. However, the call for me became much more real for me in my last year of college seminary. Then I was wrestling with God on what he wanted of me. The answer was not what I was expecting. What I received was a window into his love for me. Compared to this, everything seemed secondary.

What has been your most memorable experience in seminary?

My most memorable experience in seminary is the experience in prayer I had in college seminary, where I was confirmed in my vocation and saw a glimpse of God's love for me. This love is what has kept me in seminary.

Who is one of your favorite saints and why?

One of my favorite saints is St. Bruno. While he founded a community of hermits (the Carthusians), he actually lived much of his life in the world. This former professor, who wanted to be a hermit, served as a papal advisor. He kept Christ crucified at the center of everything, knowing that everything in the world will pass away.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation?

My main advice for those discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life is to not worry too much about it. There are certainly times when one may need to take a life-changing step, but, for the most part, it is hard to go astray if you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus in daily prayer.



Deacon Taylor Ternes

Where are you from? Who are you parents and siblings?

I am from Devils Lake. My dad and mom are Kyle and Allison. I have three younger siblings: Alexis, Andrew, and Trinity.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?

My family has been incredibly supportive. My parents from a very young age instilled in each of us that we each have a calling from God, promising to support us no matter what that calling was. I am truly indebted to them for all the support they've given me throughout these years of discernment.

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

The first whisperings of a call to the priesthood occurred around the second grade. I thought that I could see myself being a priest someday. This call was strengthened and confirmed in high school. Over time, I knew the Lord was asking me to dedicate my life to work in his vineyard and I rejoiced in such a tremendous calling.

What has been your most memorable experience in seminary?

It is a tie between my pilgrimage to Rome and my pilgrimage to Lisieux and Lourdes. Rome was amazing and there's so much we as Catholics can see in the eternal city. My pilgrimage to Lisieux and Lourdes was spectacular. I found much time to pray, and this trip deepened my relationship with both St. Therese and the Blessed Mother.

Who is one of your favorite saints and why?

St. Gregory the Great has been a strong patron for me. I originally chose him as my confirmation saint in the third grade because of his connection to music. I look up to him as a great model and intercessor, especially in the face of great difficulties. He was one of the saints I was praying to fervently during the Litany of Saints at the ordination Mass.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation?

To quote St. John Paul the Great: "Be not afraid." Discerning a vocation to the priesthood may seem scary and there may even be challenges along the way, but do not be afraid. Trust in the Lord, he will take care of you through it all.



Deacon Patrick Sorrells

Where are you from? Who are you parents and siblings?

I am from Fargo. My parents are Scot and Debbie Sorrells. I have two siblings. My older brother is Cameron and my younger sister is Rachel.

What kind of support for your vocation did you receive from family and friends?

I have received support from my family and friends from the very beginning.

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

I first heard the call to priesthood when I was going through OCIA my senior year of college. I started to seriously discern that call about two years later.

What has been your most memorable experience in seminary?

Being ordained a deacon.

Who is one of your favorite saints and why?

St. Louis de Montfort. His radical devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is very inspiring.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation?

If you're thinking about seminary, just try it out. You won't regret it.



Those to be ordained deacons lay prostrate before the altar during the Litany of Saints. (Ann Losinski Photography)

Homeschool community inspires religious vocations, life-long faith

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant editor of New Earth

Newly ordained Father Timothy Kraemer and Deacon Brendon Schneibel are both alumni of the St. Joseph Pillar of Families Catholic Homeschool Support Group (SJPF), which is based in Grand Forks and supports the surrounding area. They join a growing crew of ordained and religious who received their primary education and early experiences of the faith thanks to this community: Father Matthew Kraemer, Father Sean Mulligan, Father Jayson Miller, and Sister Miryam Vandal. Additional alumni include Zavior Franck and Kade Palmer, who will both be attending major seminary this upcoming school year.

While vocations to the priesthood and religious life show some of the fruitfulness of this group, the benefits of this group go far deeper.

Laurie Kraemer, mother to Fathers Matthew and Timothy Kraemer, is an alumni parent of SJPF after 35 years of homeschooling, and was part of its founding in 1997. In the beginning, the families met in Warsaw once a month with Father Damien Hils as their spiritual director.

"Most of the families were already homeschooling their children and some were involved in Protestant support groups, but they wanted to be able to come together for distinctly Catholic activities and devotions," said Laurie. "We came together for Mass, a 'half Holy hour' and a potluck, and then we branched out into doing an All Saints Day Party and May Crowning. Many of the families were introduced to the elements of Catholic culture for the first time. They wholeheartedly embraced them, and brought them into their own families and then passed them onto other families through the support group and through heavy involvement in their own parishes."

Currently, the group also organizes a beautiful graduation Mass each year for the area Catholic home school graduates as well as several other activities. Throughout the years, Father Lefor, Father Moen, Father Kleinschmidt, and Father Joseph Christensen (and many others) provided spiritual support and encouragement for the families.

"Many of the home educated students have become active as altar servers, in music ministry, and as leaders in SEARCH retreats," said Laurie. "Some of the group members are 'second generation' families, wanting to raise their families in the ways that their parents did."

Another family of the St. Joseph Pillar of Families Catholic Homeschool Support Group is Brent and Amy Lahr and their six children (ages 5 to 17), parishioners of St. Michael's in Grand Forks.

"As a mother to six children there is a lot of schooling that gets done in a day!" said Amy. "A homeschool family is blessed

with the gift of time. We are able to be flexible when the day needs it, but most days have a routine feel. In a typical day we begin all together with the daily Mass readings and a story about the saint of the day. The younger children have a saint coloring page to work on while they listen. Afterwards, I work with the youngest one in his workbooks. He is finished by mid-morning and then is able to play."

As the children get older, they become more independent and are able to do more subjects on their own. Amy said she likes to sit at the kitchen table so she can be available when one of her children needs help or if it's their turn to work with her independently.

"Since we are able to finish most of our school by lunchtime or bring it along with us, we can fit things in during the afternoon," said Amy. "One day the oldest five have piano lessons, another day we might have an appointment, a different day we might take a break when Grandma and Grandpa visit. We enjoy the time that homeschooling opens up for our family. Our evenings are free to be together since we don't have 'homework' to get done. We are grateful for the blessing that homeschooling has been to our family."

Beyond their homeschooling curriculum, Amy says there are several practical customs they do to encourage the faith for their family: regular Mass, adoration, and confession, praying the rosary, novenas, and chaplets celebrating feast days, displaying Baptismal candles and celebrating Baptism days, praying mealtime and evening prayers together, and hanging holy artwork of pictures of the saints in the home.

"Homeschooling is a distinct way of life that brings the principle of 'parents as the first and foremost teachers of their children' to its fulfillment," said Laurie. "Homeschooling is a calling, and parents must pray and discern if God is calling them to it. Find a support group! We are all made for community, and we all need support to grow in the Catholic faith and to raise our children to know, love, and serve the Lord."

The group welcomes new members. Interested families can contact eleri.kerian@gmail.com for more information. Visit www.homeschool-life.com/2096/.



Father Timothy Kraemer celebrates his First Mass and Deacon Schneibel assists his first Mass at St. Michael's Church in Grand Forks on June 8. (Matt Komprood)



GUEST COLUMN

**ANDREJ K. NOYSZEWSKI,
Ph.D.**

Parishioner of Cathedral
of St. Mary, Fargo

Seeking perfection: Classical wisdom and Christian truth

“Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). Jesus calls us to perfection, but what does this truly mean? We will begin by exploring the idea of perfection through the non-Christian perspective of Plato’s concept of the Forms, then move to what Jesus revealed about the Father and Himself, and conclude with St. Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason). My hope is that this reflection will help us see that, in our desire for perfection, we catch a glimpse of something transcendent—a desire that ultimately originates and finds its fulfillment in God.

Have you ever tried to draw a perfect circle? First, you probably attempted to do it freehand. Then, you may have used a jar lid or something round, and while that was much better, it still wasn’t quite right. Where does this desire for a perfect circle come from? Now, imagine trying to find a perfect spouse, a perfect home, or achieving a perfect sports score. Deep down, we know what these should look like. Even if we can’t achieve perfection—whether in drawings or in perfecting our desires, things, or actions—we still have an innate sense of and desire for it. It’s as if the idea of perfection is written in our hearts and souls, guiding us back to its source, which lies beyond what we experience in the world.

In Plato’s view, the perfect circle would be described as the *Form* of a circle—an ideal that cannot be fully manifested in the material world but exists in a realm beyond physical reality. Plato, an ancient Greek philosopher who lived around 427 to 347 B.C., was a student of Socrates. His teaching on the Forms is well illustrated in the *Allegory of the Cave*, where prisoners, trapped in a cave, can only see shadows on a wall—imperfect reflections of true reality. The Forms, like the perfect circle, are the true realities, and everything we encounter in this world is merely an imperfect representation (shadow) of those perfect ideals. Plato focused particularly on the Forms of Beauty and Justice, though his understanding of these realities was impersonal.

While Plato’s understanding of the Forms was the product of reason and philosophical inquiry, Jesus brings us something even greater—divine revelation. When Jesus calls us to be perfect, it may seem as impossible as trying to draw a perfect circle by hand. However, Jesus’ words in Matthew—“Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect”—reveal that perfection is not merely a philosophical ideal or Form but a personal and relational call from God, made achievable through grace and

communion with Him. No matter how hard we try, on our own we can only come close, but never fully achieve perfection in this material world. Similarly, if we wish to leave Plato’s cave and seek the true reality beyond the shadows, we need a guide—someone who knows the reality outside the cave. In Plato’s framework, a person who leaves the cave would return to help others escape, having seen the true Forms. But what if, in Platonic terms, Jesus could be understood as someone who didn’t merely leave the cave but came directly from the realm of the Forms—the true and perfect reality? Jesus didn’t just glimpse the truth and come back to guide us; He is the truth and the light itself. He was never chained or imprisoned. As He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

I invite you to continue exploring the connection between philosophy and faith by referring to St. Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. As he writes, “It is an innate property of human reason to ask why things are as they are... The Church remains profoundly convinced that faith and reason ‘mutually support each other;’ each influences the other, as they offer to each other a purifying critique and a stimulus to pursue the search for deeper understanding.” (*Fides et Ratio*, sections 3 and 100). In this letter, John Paul II explores the deep relationship between human understanding and faith, emphasizing that while reason allows us to grasp truths about the material world and glimpses (shadows) of immaterial reality, it is only through faith that we are able to reach the fullness of Truth. Just as reason leads us toward ideals like Plato’s Forms, it is faith that opens the way to a higher, divine reality where those ideals find their ultimate fulfillment.

It seems that while our earthly efforts at perfection—whether in drawing perfect circles, finding perfect relationships, or fulfilling our desires—are a reflection of a greater truth, they are ultimately limited. True perfection, as revealed by Jesus, is only fully attainable in the light of God’s grace and eternal communion with God the Father, where our imperfect desires for perfection will finally be fulfilled and last for eternity.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does your personal pursuit of perfection, whether in interpersonal relationships or professional achievements, mirror a deeper, transcendent yearning for something beyond the confines of this world?
2. How does the promise of eternal life with God the Father transform your comprehension of perfection in the present moment?

TATTERED PAGES

A review of books, movies, music

Two coming of age stories celebrating faith and family

By Kristina Bloomsburg | Assistant Editor of New Earth

H*heart of a Shepherd* tells the story of “Brother,” a 12-year-old boy living on a ranch in Oregon. With his father deployed to Iraq and his four older brothers away at school, the operation of the ranch falls to him and his grandparents. He likes the ranch well-enough but does the work more for his father’s sake than for his own.

Brother is a determined and kind-hearted kid with concerns about school, friends, and how to make his family proud. In addition, he struggles with the emotions related to his father’s absence, the morality of war, and his tender heart that feels the death of each ranch animal deeply.

Brother’s story feels both familiar and foreign. Each chapter features a month of Brother’s life while his father is absent, which also brings the reader on a celebratory journey of farm life through the changing seasons. Though the setting is the mid-2000s, not so long ago, the remote landscape gives the story the feel of a slower, simpler time. While Brother is perhaps more introspective than the average 12-year-old, his “normalness” draws the reader to relate to the growing challenges he faces throughout the story.

What I liked best about this book was the author’s attention to detail. Brother is an altar server in a small parish that’s part of a tri-parish cluster. It’s clear that the author writes with some familiarity with Catholic parish life and paints an accurate and positive picture of it. The faith of Brother’s family is discussed frequently, and Brother’s growth in his own faith was quite moving and thought provoking. I was pleasantly surprised how the author was able to express the faith of a child so deeply.

Heart of a Shepherd is a classic coming of age story with discussions on war, fear, family, and searching for one’s calling in life. It’s appropriate for its target audience and deep enough to keep adults interested.

My Family and Other Skaters follows the life of a family with six children living in England who are all competitive skaters. They have a busy life juggling practice times, school, friends, and taking care of their chickens and pet alpaca. The book reads almost like a series of episodes, each chapter nearly standing alone as its own story, while leading into the bigger picture of the novel.

The main character, Rosaria, is loyal, spunky, and blunt. Her bluntness is often the source of humorous antics. At Christmas dinner, one of Rosaria’s aunts casually asks her how she’s

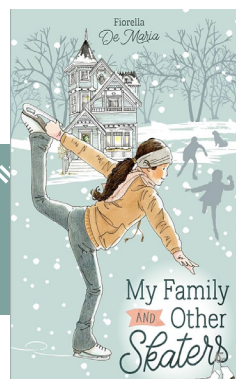
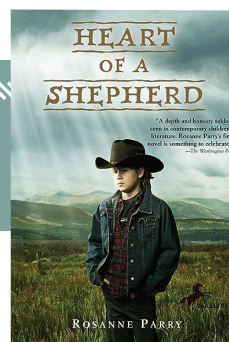
enjoying school, and she responds, “I hate it. I don’t want to go to school anymore.” Her mother initially reprimands her for being so negative at Christmas, but the moment later sparked an important conversation between Rosaria and her mother about Rosaria’s priorities and future. The book features several open and honest conversations, showing a healthy family dynamic.

I especially liked the mother of the family who clearly has a charisma for hospitality and expresses it in eccentric and humorous ways. The youngest of the family are 5-year-old twins with dwarfism, which leads to discussions about celebrating and respecting all people. Ice skaters will enjoy the scenes of Rosaria and her siblings’ practices and shows and the attention to detail for the names of individual skating moves.

Like all families, Rosaria’s family isn’t perfect, but they strive to listen and encourage each other through the joys and challenges of life. Their Catholic faith is clearly important to them despite their busyness, and throughout the story, the family goes to Mass, prays the rosary, celebrates Advent and Christmas, and Rosaria prays for St. Jude’s intercession for the success of her innocent schemes.

The target age for both *Heart of a Shepherd* and *My Family and Other Skaters* is 8 to 12, but don’t let that stop you if you’re older than that. Both books are a quick and uplifting read for any age.

“Heart of a Shepherd” by
Rosanne Parry, 2009.



“My Family and Other Skaters”
by Fiorella De Maria, 2023.



The Pilgrims Page

A look at Catholic pilgrimage sites

The Basilica of the Santa Croce and Venerable Antonietta

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

The Basilica of the Santa Croce (Holy Cross) in Gerusalemme (Jerusalem) is part of the route that many pilgrims visit while in Rome.

The name of the basilica comes from the story of St. Helena, the mother of the emperor Constantine. She received from our Lord a vision as to where the sacred relics of his crucifixion would be found in Jerusalem. The image in the apse of the church tells the story of how St. Helena traveled to Jerusalem and found the sacred relics. The True Cross was found by miracles attributed to it, as were some of the other sacred relics. Jesus is shown in the almond shape above the scene. If you take two circles and put them together overlapping, you get an almond shape in the middle. It's a reference to the Trinity.

St. Helena returned to Rome with the sacred relics along with soil that she dispersed on the foundation of the basilica to be built to house the sacred relics. The basilica was consecrated in 325 AD. There is not much of the original structure that remains, having been rebuilt and restored throughout the centuries. The soil from Jerusalem is how the basilica's name became Santa Croce in Jerusalem even though the basilica is in Rome just down the street from the pope's cathedral, St. John Lateran.

The relics in the basilica include the name plate that was hung on the cross, two thorns from the Crown of Thorns, part of a nail, the index finger of St. Thomas and three pieces of the True Cross. To see the relics, the pilgrim ascends the stairs reading about each relic on signs that describe them before entering the chapel to pray before them. No photos are allowed in the chapel. It is reserved for veneration and prayer.

Another stop for pilgrims before ascending the staircase is a little room off to the left. This room holds the tomb of Antonietta Meo along with a display of her toys and letters. Antonietta was born in 1930, and this was her home parish. She suffered from bone cancer even having her leg amputated at five years old only to pass a year later. Catholic theologians have called her a "mystic" because she wrote "extraordinary" letters to Jesus Christ and Mary during her short life. One letter said, "Dear Jesus, I love you very much. I want to abandon myself in your hands [...] I want to abandon myself in your arms. Do with me what you want. [...] Help me with your grace. You help me, since without your grace, I can do nothing." She wrote or dictated over 100 letters



The apse in the Basilica of the Santa Croce. (Mary Hanbury)

to Jesus or the Virgin Mary, describing "holy visions" in many of them.

Antonietta was declared Venerable in 2007 by Pope Benedict XVI. She is one to ask for intercession in the healing of sick children and for those who suffer from cancer.



Venerable Antonietta Meo.
(Wikipedia Commons)

The Catholic “both/and” approach to immigration



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.

Over the years, I have come to appreciate the Catholic “both/and” approach to many complex doctrinal and moral issues. Instead of taking an “either/or” approach that stresses one position to the exclusion of all others, the Church frequently emphasizes that seemingly contradictory truths can be held together in harmony, revealing a more complete understanding of the truth on any given issue.

Take faith and reason for example. Some fundamentalist Christians take the position that faith alone is the only way to understand the truth about God and the world, whereas secular atheists maintain that reason is the sole path toward understanding all reality. The Catholic Church, however, recognizes that God has given us both faith and reason to arrive at the fullness of truth about God, human beings, and the world.

The Catholic Church’s both/and approach can be found in many other areas of Christian life: Jesus Christ is both fully divine and fully human. God communicates to us through both Scripture and Tradition. Human salvation is accomplished in us by both divine grace and human freedom. Our moral decision-making must be guided by both magisterial authority and individual judgments of conscience. The list could go on and on. The Church’s both/and approach reflects the depth, nuance, and balance of Catholic thinking that rejects overly simplistic answers to complex questions.

Immigration has been a controversial issue in the United States for decades. Some people favor more open borders, while others desire greater restrictions on immigrants entering our country. People also hold differing opinions about how best to deal with immigrants here illegally, especially when it comes to those who are fleeing desperate circumstances or have lived in our country for a long time.

The Catholic Church has a both/and approach to immigration expressed in two basic principles. On the one hand, the Church teaches that every person has a natural right to emigrate from his or her homeland and move to a new country for a better and more secure life (CCC 2211, 2241). On the other hand, the Church teaches that governments have an obligation to protect their own citizens and foster the common good by establishing and enforcing laws regulating and limiting the

entry of immigrants into their territories (CCC 2241). And yet, enforcement of these laws must always respect the innate dignity of the immigrant and their basic human rights. In other words, the Church recognizes *both* an individual’s right to immigrate to another country in pursuit of a better life *and* the right of a nation to protect its own citizens by regulating immigrants who enter their homeland.

While applying these principles to our country’s immigration situation is no easy task, the Church opposes absolutist positions on either side of the debate that would either advocate for open borders without any restrictions at all or those that would reject the natural right of migrants fleeing poverty and oppression in their home countries to seek a better life in another country.

The Catholic both/and approach to immigration can be situated within the wider context of the Church’s teaching on the universal destination of goods and the right to private property (CCC 2401-2406). The universal destination of goods refers to the fact that from the beginning God created the world and everything in it for the benefit of the whole human race. Even so, God willed that the earth be divided up among individuals to ensure the security of their lives, so that by owning private property people can meet their own needs and those of their dependents.

Our right to private property does not do away with the more primordial principle of the universal destination of goods that requires us to be generous to others. As many saints remind us, there is a sense in which our excess “belongs” to the poor. St. John Chrysostom, for example, preached in a famous homily, “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.” (*Hom. in Lazaro* 2,5, cited in the CCC 2446). Likewise, Pope St. Gregory the Great taught “When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice” (*Regula Pastoralis* 3,21, cited in CCC 2446). While we have the right to private property, we also have a moral duty to share our goods with others in need to the extent we can.

The interplay between the right to private property and the universal destination of goods has implications for how Catholics ought to approach the issue of immigration. Just as every individual person has the right to own private property, nations have the right to maintain their own borders, regulate immigration, and restrict who can enter their country. At the same time, the land and goods of a wealthy nation are not meant solely for itself but are destined to be shared with others, especially the poor.

The Catholic both/and approach to immigration hit home for me about a year ago when I visited the Texas/Mexican border for a dialogue on immigration. At a shelter for legal

immigrants seeking asylum from persecution in their home countries, I met a family who had fled Venezuela to cross the border into the United States. Through an interpreter, I learned that the father had been an election official, and the socialist government had demanded he gather 10 votes per child for each of his four children for the ruling party, or else the children would “disappear.” The man and his wife knew this was no idle threat and fled the country. As a father of six, I fought back tears listening to this family’s heart-wrenching story, knowing I would have done the same thing. Later in the visit, however, we all learned the horrifying news about a 12-year-old girl in Houston who had been sexually assaulted and murdered by two immigrants here illegally from Venezuela. Both men had

entered the country illegally and were caught by U.S. Border Patrol but then released pending a court appearance. At the time, I felt deep anger at the lack of enforcement of our borders that had become our nation’s standard policy at that time.

While there are no easy answers to the problem of immigration, the Catholic both/and principles are clear: We must have an attitude of openness and generosity to immigrants in great need who seek to enter our country in pursuit of a better life, while at the same time vigorous in enforcing our laws and vetting those who enter our country to protect our own citizens. Let us pray for wisdom for our leaders and keep both principles in mind as we make decisions as a nation on how best to resolve our immigration crisis.

Pilgrim of Hope: 65 Years of Religious Life



SISTER’S PERSPECTIVE

**SISTER ANNE GERMAINE
PICARD, SMP**

This year I am celebrating 65 years since I made the step of faith of saying “YES,” to God in living a life of Religious Consecration as a Sister of Mary of the Presentation.

This pilgrimage journey has taken me on many paths of faith, trust, and of denying myself. This has led me to new life in Christ and service to God’s people. The pathway has had many rough roads in obedience to God’s will and many smooth roads through prayer and grace. God has given me the strength to never turn back on this pilgrimage. It has been and is grace-filled because of the abundant life God has given and continues to give to me, through my saying, “YES.” I am assured by St. Paul’s words: “... hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).

The seed of my vocation was planted by my parents through their deep faith, prayer, service in the Church and the love they showed to the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation at Notre Dame Academy in Willow City. I met the Sisters at the Academy and observed their life of Consecration to God as educators of us students. Some Sisters used to talk to me about becoming one of them, but I fought my call for a long time. Nonetheless, I continued my pilgrimage with God as I prayed for vision and courage to walk the pathway of God and not my own desires. One day, after we students had a retreat day at school, the road became clear to me when a Sister walked up to me and

invited me to become one of them. This time I was obedient, and a “YES” broke forth within me. I left my home farm near Dunseith when I was 16 years old and went to Spring Valley, Ill. for formation studies to become a Sister.

My positive response to God’s call has never changed. God has been the guide on my journey through prayer, self-sacrifice and going where there was and is a need of me. Walking with God has given me unceasing strength to be a witness of love and mercy through the various ministries that have been part of my journey as a Woman Religious. I have walked many paths of ministry through my vow of obedience. Some of them have been: X-ray technologist, Vocation and Formation Director, Newman ministry at the University of North Dakota, Pastoral care in health care (hospital, nursing home and hospice) and presently, parish ministry.

I deeply love my vocation as a consecrated woman in today’s world. I give thanks to God for His enduring grace. This pathway of HOPE is my daily pilgrimage and has been these 65 years of God’s grace.

With Mary, the patron of our Religious congregation, I say, I “treasured up all these things and pondered them in [my] heart” (Luke 2:19).



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Listening and responding to the call of stewardship



STEWARDSHIP

STEVE SCHONS

Director of stewardship and development
for the Diocese of Fargo.

A pastor once took the pulpit and told his parishioners: “We have a problem. The roof is leaking again. It has been repaired time and time again. But this time, it needs to be replaced. The cost will be \$200,000.” There was an audible gasp in the congregation. Then the pastor said, “Furthermore, I have some good news and bad news. The good news: We have the money! The bad news: It’s still in your pockets.”

This is one of my favorite pulpit stories. For one, it makes me laugh every time I hear it. But, secondly, for such a simple story, it provides us with such a powerful message. In our earthly existence, there are many roofs that need to be fixed. Thankfully, we have an abundance of God given resources to meet those needs. Our proverbial pockets are overflowing with gifts from God.

There is also a story about being attentive and listening. There was a man who lived in a house which was inevitably going to be flooded by the surging river. After his neighbors, the fire department and coast guard helicopters consecutively came to his rescue, he dismissed them all saying that his faith in God is strong and he will save me. As the story goes, the flood waters came, the house was washed away and the man died and went to heaven. After joyfully expressing his pleasure of being in heaven, he asked God why he didn’t save him from the flood. And, God’s reply was, “I sent your neighbors, fire

department, and coast guard. What more did you want me to do?”

I don’t think we need to be a rocket scientist to understand the meaning of this story. Simply, I think we need to step back occasionally and ask ourselves, “Am I listening to how God is calling me, and more importantly, am I responding?”

As we are in the midst of God’s Gift Appeal 2025, it gives us an opportunity to be reflective of the gifts we have and how we can give them back to God with increase. Truly, that is what being a good Catholic steward is ultimately about. Stewardship is not a simple, one-time act of generosity. It is a way of living a faith filled life. When we choose to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ, stewardship is not an option.

Within our parishes, diocese and other programs within our faith filled lives, there are always needs to be met. Thankfully, God lines our pockets endlessly with the resources to meet those needs, and then some. Let’s all take time to listen and respond to God’s call to stewardship in our lives.

Tithing

Tithing is just one spoke in the big wheel of stewardship living. There are many biblical references about tithing (10%) and the importance of doing so. Supporting the Church for divine worship, apostolic and charitable works is a necessity according to Canon Law, Section 222. The following, based on the Catholic Church teachings, is a simple schedule to help you formulate your own plan.

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A meditation on the tension of transition



SEMINARIAN LIFE

KADE PALMER

Theology I; Saint Paul Seminary;
St. Paul, Minn.

The summer is a time of transition—graduations, weddings, funerals, moving houses, new pastoral assignments. These are times of excitement and anticipation—meeting new people, taking the next step, starting a new life. But I want to take a moment to just say honestly: transitions are hard. No matter what from, there's an element of saying goodbye to something familiar, something we've grown to know and, most likely, to love. In short, we have to leave a home. And no matter where the transition leads, there's an element of the unknown, of mystery, that can be heavy and anxiety-inducing. My family and I, having three graduations this spring, have felt this very deeply. I'd like to share a few things I've gleaned from living in the tension of "leaving home" several times over the last few years.

Those who know me know that leaving home to come to seminary was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. It felt like my heart was being torn apart—and it was. Now, after four years at St. Gregory the Great Seminary, the place I dreaded going to, had become a place I dreaded leaving. It had become another home. A few months later, I found myself stuck in what my dad calls a "funk." Everything felt challenging, my emotions were absent, my mind cloudy and stressed, even though I had one of the easiest schedules I've ever had. After a while of frustration and trying harder, I took a step back to figure out what was going on. Then I realized: I miss St. Greg's. I miss home. During graduation, everything was so busy I didn't get a chance to mourn the loss of my brothers and fathers I had come to love and trust.

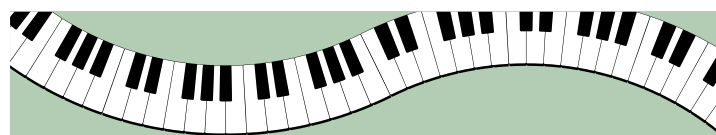
I realized I had begun to feel and act like a spiritual orphan. It felt like, because I'd left St. Greg's, I couldn't rely on those relationships anymore. But I hadn't moved into St. Paul Seminary yet, so I didn't have new relationships to fill the gap. I was mad at God, but too scared to tell him how I felt. So I internalized everything and tried to survive by myself. This is the tension of transition.

The first thing that really helped was telling God exactly how I felt. One night during my silent retreat, I yelled at him for 45 minutes—about all the pain he was asking me to go through, all the times I felt like he wasn't there for me. How did he react? He started bringing to mind all the memories with my brothers

at St. Greg's, the relationships I had come to cherish deep in my heart. I was finally able to feel the joy and sorrow of knowing and leaving such a blessed home. I saw, in my imagination, the Father reaching out and giving my raw heart back to me—childlike and vulnerable, freed from all the walls I had put up in self-protection. He said with a tender smile, "Kade, here is your heart back, thank you for entrusting it to me." I've kept relating my heart to him in brutal, childlike honesty, because in any pain I'm going through, he has been there first.

Second, I started relating my sorrow to those around me—first to the other seminarians I'm spending my summer with. Then I started to call the seminarians I'd left, and my heart rejoiced to hear their voices again. I went back to St. Greg's and talked to the formator I've come to trust with everything. That was a very healing experience. It showed me I didn't have to let go of them completely. It won't be the same as it was—and that's hard to accept—but they're always open to calling when I need to open my heart to someone.

Leaving home, moving on, saying goodbye—it's not final. A phrase that has often come to mind during transition is "someday for all eternity." God is ever-present to our mourning. Go to him and those he has given to you for comfort. Recently, while feeling alone, I sat with the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple, crying because he was without Mary and Joseph, yet knowing he had to be there because it was his Father's will. Jesus had been there first. He felt my pain. While mourning the passing of a loved one or preparing to leave someone behind, it can help to sit beside the deathbed of Joseph with Mary and Jesus and let their love—and their shared pain—penetrate your own soul. In the agony of leaving behind friends, or whatever it is that you're being asked to surrender, cry with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Through the pain of Good Friday, and the bitter silence and solitude of Holy Saturday, comes the glorious, eternal joy of the Resurrection. "Someday for all eternity."



Dr. Jay Hershberger performance

Sept. 21 at 3 p.m. at St. Edward in Drayton

Dr. Hershberger, professor of both the black and white keys, will perform an all Schubert program. He will open with Schubert's "Six Moments Musicaux" followed by the Schubert "Sonata in B-flat, Op. Posthumous." A Classical Dessert's Buffet prepared by Mindy Donovan will be served afterwards. Free will offering.

Father Duaine Cote passes away June 9



Father Duaine Martin Cote at age 89 passed away and entered his eternal home on June 9, the 63rd anniversary of his Priestly Ordination. He was born on Dec. 21, 1935, to Alcid and Louise Cote in Willow City. Father Cote had four siblings: Leatrice Campion, Father Don Cote, Roland Cote, and Sister Maurine Cote. Preceding him in death are Father Cote's parents and his four siblings. Father Cote is survived by his 12 nieces and nephews: Tim Campion, Monte Cote, Brian Cote, Richard Cote, Jon Cote, Marty Cote, Bob Cote, Kathy Hennessy, Marilyn Burke, Linda Lewis, Julie Cote-Halperin, and Robyn Cote. He also has several great-nieces and nephews and countless great-great-grand nieces and nephews.

Father Duaine Cote served as a North Dakota parish priest after graduating from seminary in 1962. He was an assistant pastor at St. Phillip Neri, Napoleon; St. Michael's, Grand Forks; Sacred Heart, Orrin; and St. Anselm's, Fulda from 1962–71. He served as the Spiritual Director at Cardinal Muench Seminary

in Fargo and Vocation Director of Fargo Diocese from 1971–81. Father Cote was Pastor of Holy Spirit in Fargo from 1981–84, and Our Lady of Peace, Mayville and St. Agnes, Hunter from 1984–89. He served at St. Mark's, Bottineau; and St. Andrew's, Hope from 1989–93. He served at Transfiguration, Edgeley and St. Agnes, Hunter from 1993–2009. Father Cote retired to Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo in 2009.

Father Cote moved to Riverview Place in 2018 and called Riverview his home until his passing.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated June 13 at Sts. Anne and Joachim, Fargo. He was buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Edgeley.

Events

Come & See: Do you sometimes wonder: What is it like in the Convent? Am I called to Religious Life? What is the Franciscan charism? Come & See with the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen in Hankinson for a weekend experience Aug. 8–10. Visit ndfranciscans.org/vocation-events or contact Sr. Mary Ruth at srmaryruth@sfcretreats.org or (701) 242-7195.

International Peace Garden Mass: The 61st International Peace Garden Mass, sponsored by the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus of Canada and the United States, will be celebrated Aug. 17 at noon at the Burdick Center building on the grounds of the International Peace gardens, located north of Dunseith on the U.S./Canadian border. A rosary, said in five languages, will begin at 11 a.m. Lunch will be served after the Mass. This is the only place in the world where two countries meet and participate in the Holy Mass to pray for world peace. You will need two of the following forms of ID (passport, birth certificate, or driver's license) to enter the grounds.

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



Quotable

**St. Alphonsus
Liguori**

Feast day Aug. 1

"What does it cost us to say, 'My God help me! Have mercy on me!' Is there anything easier than this? And this little will suffice to save us if we be diligent in doing it."

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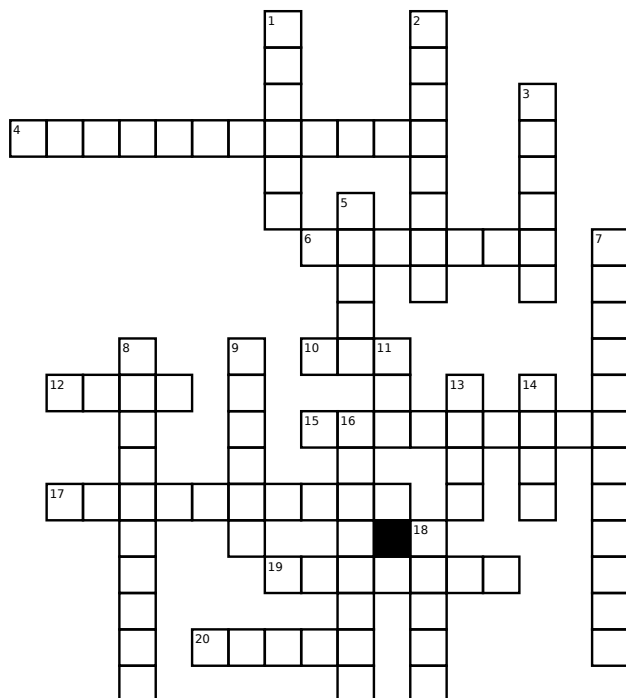
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George Bitz 226-6198

Sacraments

Level Easy

Answers on page 35



Down:

- 1 Type of oil used in confirmation, ordinations, and baptism
- 2 Baptism removes ____ sin.
- 3 "Be ____ with the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- 5 Number of sacraments in the Catholic Church
- 7 The order of priests
- 8 Sacramental act that a man becomes a bishop, priest, or deacon
- 9 The minister of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- 11 "Take this all of you and ____ it."
- 13 Anointing of the ____
- 14 ____ Orders
- 16 The bishop is a successor to the ____.
- 18 The matter used in baptism

Across:

- 4 Meaning of the word "Eucharist"
- 6 What the priest asks you to do once you leave the confessional
- 10 Number of hours to fast before receiving the Eucharist
- 12 The words said by the minister in administering a sacrament
- 15 Another name for the sacrament of marriage
- 17 Another name for the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- 19 "A sacrament is an ____ sign, instituted by Christ to give grace."
- 20 All sacraments give this

Catholic Health Care Ethics:

A Tradition of Compassion and
Care for the Human Person

BIOETHICS TWO-DAY SEMINAR

In partnership with the **National Catholic Bioethics Center** (NCBC), we at the University of Mary invite you to join us this August for a two-day seminar focused on the Church's person-centered approach to health care decision-making.



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LIFE'S MILESTONES



Paul and Janine Carson, parishioners of Holy Spirit in Fargo, celebrated their 40th anniversary July 5. They have 4 children and 3 grandchildren.



Tom and Roberta (Dahl) Henry, parishioners of St. Andrew's in Westhope, celebrated their 40th anniversary July 12. They have 3 children and 2 grandchildren.



Dennis and Gail Danielson celebrated their 50th anniversary June 7. They are parishioners at Little Flower in Rugby, previously Sacred Heart in Rolette. They are blessed with 2 sons, 1 daughter, their spouses, and 8 grandchildren.



Joseph and Darlene Marquart, parishioners of St. Joseph's in Devils Lake, celebrated their 70th anniversary May 9. They were married at St. Joseph's. They were blessed with 2 daughters, 5 grandsons, 10 great-grandchildren, and 1 more great-grandchild due this year.



Chuck and Charlotte Glynn, parishioners of St. Patrick's in Fullerton, will celebrate their 60th anniversary Aug. 15. They were married at St. Helena's in Ellendale. They have 7 children, 25 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren.



Myron and Marilyn Muhle, parishioners of Holy Cross in West Fargo, celebrated their 50th anniversary July 12. They were married at Holy Trinity in Fingal. They have 1 son and 1 daughter.



Maurice and Kathleen (Kelley) Godon, longtime parishioners of Nativity Church in Fargo, celebrated their 60th anniversary June 26. They have been blessed with 6 children and 11 grandchildren.



Lee and Barb Settingsgard, parishioners of Holy Family in Grand Forks, celebrated their 50th anniversary July 11. They were married at St. Jude's in Thompson. They have 2 sons and 2 daughters, and 8 grandchildren.



Richard and Renee (Schreiner) Hauschulz celebrated their 40th anniversary June 1. They are parishioners at St. Michael's in Grand Forks and were married at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Rock Lake. Richard and Renee are parents to a son and a daughter and have been blessed with a grandson.



John and Becky Hardy, parishioners of St. Boniface in Walhalla, will celebrate 40 years of marriage July 27. They were married at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Olga. They have 3 children and 3 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 Sept. issue is Aug. 12. Deadline for the Oct. issue is Sept. 9.



Herb Kappel, parishioner of Nativity in Fargo, will celebrate his 100th birthday Aug. 16. He was married to Dorothy for 76 years before she passed away in April 2025. They have 4 sons, 6 grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.



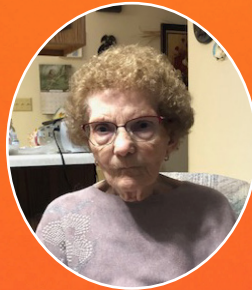
Donna Lipetzky, parishioner of St. James Basilica, Jamestown, celebrated her 90th birthday June 29. Donna was married to Paul for 54 years before his passing in 2009. They were blessed with 7 children, 18 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren (1 on the way), and 2 great-great-grandchildren.



Ed Pecka, parishioner of St. Joseph's in Lankin, celebrated his 90th birthday on May 19. A family celebration was held in June. Ed has been married to Eunice for 65 years and they have been blessed with 5 children (1 deceased), 9 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.



Caroline Schaffer, parishioner of Nativity in Fargo, celebrated her 90th birthday on June 27. Caroline is blessed with 9 children, 16 grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.



Eugenia Rose (Novak) Dvorak, parishioner of St. John's in Grafton, will celebrate her 90th birthday July 24. She resides at Lutheran Sunset Home in Grafton. Her husband of 65 years passed away several years ago.

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

Park River's \$409,000 hospital project was launched with the turning of three shovels full of earth at groundbreaking ceremonies. First to handle the shovel was Mother M. Scholastica, of the Order of the Presentation of Mary, which will operate the new hospital. Earth was also turned by Mayor M.L. Johnson and His Excellency Leo Dworschak. Work on the project actually began seven years ago when preliminary plans were made. Following the war, planning was resumed and it is now anticipated that the building will be completed within the next 12 months.

50 years ago — 1975

Archbishop Jean Jadot, the personal representative of Pope Paul VI to the US, visited the Fargo Diocese July 17 & 18. This was Archbishop Jadot's first visit to North Dakota. During his stay in the Diocese, the Archbishop visited Fargo's retired bishop, Most Rev. Leo Dworschak; celebrated Mass at the Cloistered Carmelite Monastery near Wahpeton; and met with many priests, sisters, and lay people at several sites in the Diocese.

20 years ago — 2005

A group of 94 pilgrims from the Diocese of Fargo attended World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany in August. It was the first World Youth Day for Pope Benedict XVI, who was warmly and festively greeted by huge crowds from every corner of the world. The Fargo Diocese group spent Aug. 11–23 traveling, praying, touring, and worshipping throughout Germany, Switzerland, and France.

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.

Down 1 Christ 2 Original 3 Sealed 5 Seven 7 Presbyterate 9 Priest 11 Eat 13 Sick 14 Holy 16 Apostles 18 Water Across 10 One 12 Form 15 Matrimony 17 Confession 19 Outward 20 Grace

Christ is God's answer to humanity's hunger, Pope Leo XIV affirms on Corpus Christi

By Victoria Cardiel | Catholic News Agency

Pope Leo XIV on June 22, called on the faithful to “share the bread”—a sign of the gift of divine salvation—to “multiply hope and to proclaim the coming of God’s kingdom” as he presided for the first time as pope over Mass for the solemnity of Corpus Christi.

On the feast when the Catholic Church especially celebrates the mystery of the Eucharist—namely, the real presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated bread and wine—the pontiff declared: “Christ is God’s answer to our human hunger, because his body is the bread of eternal life: Take this and eat of it, all of you!”

The pope traveled from the Vatican to the Basilica of St. John Lateran, his cathedral as bishop of Rome, to celebrate the Mass on Sunday afternoon. The Mass was followed by a Eucharistic procession along the city’s streets.

In his homily, Leo XIV reflected on the meaning of the Eucharist and the value of sharing. The celebration took place outside the basilica.

Commenting on the day’s Gospel, which recounts the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the pope noted that by saving the crowds from hunger, “Jesus proclaims that he will save everyone from death.”

In doing so, he established the foundation of the “mystery of faith, which we celebrate in the sacrament of the Eucharist,” the Holy Father said, adding: “Just as hunger is a sign of our radical needs in this life, so breaking bread is a sign of God’s gift of salvation.”

Leo said that Jesus’ compassion for the suffering “shows us the loving closeness of God, who comes into our world to save us.”

He added: “Where God reigns, we are set free from all evil.” In the face of human finitude, he said, “when we partake of Jesus, the living and true bread, we live for him.”

Referring again to the Gospel miracle, Leo said that the people’s hunger is a profound sign, because “at that hour of need and of gathering shadows, Jesus remains present in our midst.”

When the apostles suggest sending the crowd away, the pope pointed out, Jesus teaches a contrary logic, “because hunger is not foreign to the preaching of the kingdom and the message of salvation.”

The pope continued: “He feels compassion for those who are hungry, and he invites his disciples to provide for them.”

The disciples offered only five loaves and two fish—a seemingly reasonable calculation that in fact “reveal their lack of faith,” he



Pope Leo XIV leads a Eucharistic procession in Rome on June 22 for the feast of Corpus Christi. (Daniel Ibañez/EWTN)

said. “For where the Lord is present, we find all that we need to give strength and meaning to our lives.”

Jesus’ gesture of breaking the bread, the pope explained, “is not some complicated magical rite; they simply show his gratitude to the Father, his filial prayer and the fraternal communion sustained by the Holy Spirit.”

“To multiply the loaves and fishes, Jesus shares what is available. As a result, there is enough for everyone. In fact, more than enough,” he said.

The pope denounced current global inequalities and criticized “the accumulation by a few” as a sign “of an arrogant indifference that produces pain and injustice.”

“Today, in place of the crowds mentioned in the Gospel, entire peoples are suffering more as a result of the greed of others than from their own hunger,” he stated.

In this light, he called on the faithful to follow the Lord’s example and to live out this teaching with concrete actions, especially during the Jubilee of Hope.

“Especially in this jubilee year, the Lord’s example is a yardstick that should guide our actions and our service: We are called to share our bread, to multiply hope, and to proclaim the coming of God’s kingdom,” he said.

The Augustinian pope also quoted St. Augustine’s description of the Eucharist as “bread that restores and does not run short; bread that can be eaten but not exhausted,” observing that the Eucharist “in fact, is the true, real, and substantial presence of the Savior, who transforms bread into himself in order to

transform us into himself.”

The pope referred to the existential root of communion with Christ, saying: “Our hungry nature bears the mark of a need that is satisfied by the grace of the Eucharist.”

Leo reminded the faithful that “Living and life-giving, the *Corpus Domini* makes us, the Church herself, the body of the Lord.” Quoting *Lumen Gentium*, the dogmatic constitution of the Second Vatican Council, he added: “All are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world, from whom we come, through whom we live, and toward whom we direct our lives.”

Before beginning the Eucharistic procession to the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the pope explained its spiritual and missionary meaning.

“Together, as shepherds and flock, we will feed on the Blessed Sacrament, adore him, and carry him through the streets,” he said. “In doing so, we will present him before the eyes, the consciences, and the hearts of the people.”

Leo concluded with an invitation to all the faithful: “Strengthened by the food that God gives us, let us bring Jesus to the hearts of all, because Jesus involves everyone in his work of salvation by calling each of us to sit at his table. Blessed are those who are called, for they become witnesses of this love!”

— 69th ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE —

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Pontifical Mission Societies USA visits Vietnamese leper colony

By Jonah McKeown | Catholic News Agency

In the Vietnamese highlands lives a colony of people suffering from a chronic infectious disease that often leads to a loss of sense of touch and pain, physical deformities, and life-altering social prejudice—leprosy.

But when Monsignor Roger Landry—director of the Pontifical Mission Societies USA—visited the colony in April, he said it was an honor.

At a leper colony in the Kon Tum area in Vietnam, Landry celebrated Mass, brought Communion to people, and distributed food and sandals, working with St. Joseph's Mission Charity.

In one striking video he shared on social media, Landry helped create a cast of one man's foot so that it could be made into a perfectly fitting sandal.

"Jesus anointed the feet of his beloved Apostles at the upper room, and he sent us out to do the same," Landry said. "It's one of the great honors of my life to be able to do this." "Each sandal needs to be sculpted to each foot," he explained in the April 7 post. "They are so grateful. If their feet bleed, the[y] could pass on the disease to others."

Despite being relatively treatable now, at least 250,000 people suffer from leprosy across the world—and many still experience social isolation, as they did in the time of Christ.

After Mass at "a beautifully packed" church at 5 a.m., Landry recalled Communion visits to various people with leprosy who were physically unable to come to Mass.

"The first leper whom we visited with great hunger looked up to the Lord through watery eyes and received the Lord on his tongue because he no longer had hands," Landry said. "He received with great faith."

Another woman, unable to walk, crawled forward to receive Jesus "and then received him with great love," Landry said.

"She was so excited to be able to receive the Lord Jesus," Landry recalled.

The purpose of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Landry added, is this: "bringing Jesus, the light of the world, to people—no matter what they're suffering."



At a leper colony in the Kon Tum area in Vietnam, Monsignor Roger Landry celebrated Mass, brought Communion to people, and distributed food and sandals. (The Pontifical Mission Societies/Margaret Murray)

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Mom credits advocates for abortion cancellation



SIDEWALK STORIES

ROXANE B. SALONEN

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

I was so tired that day and was tempted to abandon my afternoon commitment to stand vigil on the sidewalk of our local abortion facility. “Dear Lord,” I prayed on the way, “I am going to need you to carry me through this today.”

When my prayer buddy Ann and I showed up, we noticed a flurry of activity. A handful of youth had come with a chaperone from Grand Forks. Three young gals from the group were finishing up sidewalk chalk drawings of flowers, hearts and a website offering help, while their two male counterparts stood to the west by the highway with signs: “Honk for Life!” and “Love Both: Child, not Choice.”

“They’re boisterous today,” my pastor friend said, referencing the escorts, updating me on the “temperature” of the afternoon. He pointed to a large, darkened area on the sidewalk where the escorts had already sprayed away the girls’ earlier attempts to draw encouraging messages to clients.

As the youth group departed, I walked across the street to say goodbye to Pastor Tom and over to where Ann was staking a sign in the ground offering help. Just then, a car moving slowly began driving past us. The driver, a young woman, was looking at her phone, as if searching her GPS, with her window rolled down.

“Hello!” I said, just feet from her, bending down to address her. “If you’re here for an abortion...” I’ve learned to be direct in such moments. “Oh, no, I’m not here for that. I’m just looking for my friend’s house,” she said. “Okay,” I responded. “Well, they’re doing abortions over there, and we’re just here to offer help, if you know of anyone...”

She kept driving, so we crossed the street to our spot on the sidewalk. With the youth now gone, a male escort walked to where they’d been with a long hose to erase their beautiful work. Within minutes, the rest of the earlier crew had also left. “I guess we’re it now,” I said to Ann. The nice weather had brought

out more escorts than usual, and we were well outnumbered.

As we readied to start praying the Divine Mercy chaplet, the woman we’d just seen driving past pulled up on the curb behind us, and came out, approaching us. “I lied to you,” she said to me. “I was going to have an abortion, but I just can’t do it.”

And now, another flurry unfolded: tears, hugs, offers of help, and affirmations of her very good decision. We learned that there are two other children, and a father who had not supported her decision to abort. And now, she had come around, too.

“I don’t know what I would have done if you weren’t here!” she said through glad tears. “It’s not for me to take a life that God created.” More hugs. More encouragement for her bravery. After one last embrace, she promised to call Women’s Care Center after getting some food. I gave her my phone number. “Call if you ever just want to talk.”

Ann and I were left jubilantly stunned by what had just happened. The escorts could have ranted and railed for the rest of our time there. We would not have cared. Nothing mattered now. God won! We’d seen it with our own eyes, heard it with our ears, and experienced the joy of victory of a life saved. His grace was enough, and the grateful tears in this young mom’s eyes would carry us forward.

These are moments we wait for, for months, even years. Not only was this a glorious save at the most unexpected time, but the mom had left no doubt, beginning with her confession. “I lied to you.” With that truth laid out plainly, God moved in to claim the victory.

There are so many lessons to take from this most excellent moment: our human need to have a clear conscience, the truth that the escorts have become something of a clown show and are scaring some clients away (the mom indicated being offput by them), and the reality that deep down, these women just need to know they’re not alone.

To make this story all the more beautiful, guess what the mom’s name was? LOVE. “I just couldn’t do it; I couldn’t,” Love told us, to which I responded, “Someday, when you are old, that baby is going to take care of you. You will never regret this day.”

I can’t help but think of the song, *Oh Happy Day*. “Oh happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away. He taught me how to watch, fight and pray. Oh happy day!”

NEW EARTH

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Do you know
where we are?

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

Where in the diocese are we?



Last month's photo is of St.
George's Church in Cooperstown.