

New

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Earth

The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo

ST. CARLO ACUTIS
MIDDLE SCHOOL

From a dream to reality in Grand Forks

Breaking ground for a new Catholic middle school

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bishops plan consecration
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Fargo, North Dakota

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11:30 AM - Shotgun Start
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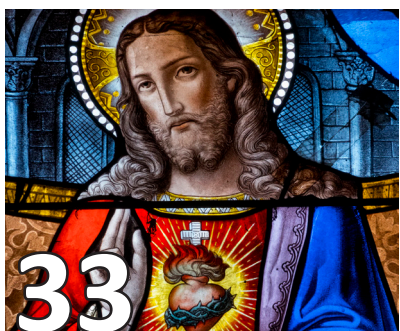
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*Proceeds will benefit seminarian education and youth programs
within the Diocese of Fargo.*

ON THE COVER:

A rendering of St. Carlo Acutis Middle School in Grand Forks (submitted photo)

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NEW EARTH

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Mission

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

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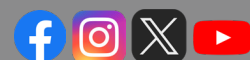
Deadline to submit articles, events, and advertisements for the July/Aug. issue is June 23, 2026. All submissions are subject to editing and placement.

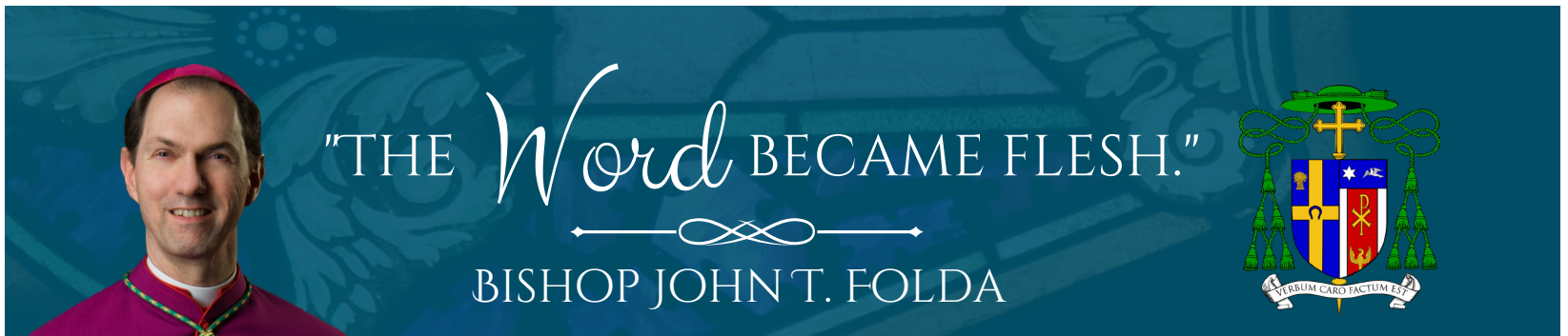
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America at 250!

In a few short weeks, the United States of America will mark its 250th birthday, the anniversary of our independence. This is certainly a cause for celebration, and also for thanksgiving to God for his blessings upon our country.

There is much to be grateful for on this milestone anniversary. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” The notion of innate equality was revolutionary at that time, and it still is. Soon thereafter, our founders recognized and enshrined a right to religious liberty, which is not to be confused with mere freedom of worship. When we consider the vast numbers of people in our world who have no such liberty, we can only thank God for the freedom we have to actively live out our Catholic faith. Our nation also embraced the right to freedom of speech, which allows every one of us to speak up in light of our faith and morals for what is right and good, and to work against what is evil and harmful. Once again, vast numbers of people around the world do not enjoy this freedom.

Needless to say, our nation is not perfect and has great need for self-examination and reform. We are still afflicted by racism and bigotry of various kinds. We have seen a decline in morals throughout our population. There is a cultural and popular tendency toward secularization, a false notion that religious faith and expression have no place in the public square, a concept that our founders would consider ridiculous. It seems that violence and crime have become more widespread, and are even defended by certain public figures. And perhaps most egregious of all, the practice of abortion is widespread, and undermines our nation’s commitment to equality and the right to life.

But even with these faults and flaws, the United States of America is truly blessed, and we are blessed to be a part of this great nation. We have endured many trials and divisions, but as a nation we have persevered. The question before us is this: how will we preserve this union, this nation of peoples, and how can we lift it up to greater peace, prosperity, and integrity?

One way to assure our flourishing is for every member of the Church to be actively engaged in public life and active in living out our Catholic faith. Christians are called to be witnesses to Christ in the world, and in this nation that we call our home. We are called to support the common good and defend the innate dignity of every human person. We are not called to retreat and to hide in a bunker, afraid to speak up or act in accord with our faith. We are called to live our faith actively and to bring the truths of our faith to bear on the culture and society in which we live. There is no greater program for the public life of our nation than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and even a nation that has no official religion can benefit from the leaven of Christian believers who are committed to the well-being of their country. Even in small ways, every individual believer can work for truth, goodness, and beauty, and can elevate the life of our nation by their works of charity and justice.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we must also pray for this nation. Our founders were unapologetic in their prayers for the new nation, and they expressed trust and reliance on Divine Providence. We too must pray fervently for God’s blessing and for the healing of our many faults and wounds. Some would say that our nation has drifted too far and cannot be recovered, but God’s grace is great enough to bring light out of darkness and good out of evil. Our prayers for our nation are never wasted and will always make a difference if we are faithful.

Ultimately, we are completely dependent on the mercy of God, and for this reason, in observance of our 250th anniversary, the bishops of the United States will consecrate our nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11, the eve of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. Christ’s Sacred Heart has always been a symbol of his mercy, his divine love, his healing grace, and his deep care for souls. I invite and encourage every member of the Diocese of Fargo to join in this prayer of consecration and to intercede for our nation. As we turn to the Heart of our Merciful Lord, let us ask him to bless the United States of America, and let us thank him for the grace he has shed upon us over these 250 years.

“How will we preserve this union, this nation of peoples, and how can we lift it up to greater peace, prosperity, and integrity?”



Official Appointments/ Announcements

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

I hereby grant:

Rev. Stephen Giljum incardination in the Diocese of Fargo effective March 31, 2026.

Rev. Phillip J. Ackerman permission to retire from active ministry as a priest of the Diocese of Fargo effective June 23, 2026.

Rev. James R. Ermer permission to retire from active ministry as a priest of the Diocese of Fargo effective June 23, 2026.

Rev. K.S. Kopacz permission to retire from active ministry as a priest of the Diocese of Fargo effective June 23, 2026.

Deacon John Bredemeier permission to retire from active ministry as a Deacon of the Diocese of Fargo effective October 31, 2026.

I hereby appoint:

Pastor Renewals

Msgr. Brian G. Donahue, Pastor of St. Philip's Church, Hankinson and St. Anthony, Fairmount for a second term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Andrew M. Jasinski, Pastor of St. Benedict's Church, Horace for a second term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Paul R. Schuster, Pastor of St. Michael's Indian Catholic Mission, Saint Michael for a third term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026

Rev. Peter J. Sharpe, Pastor of St. Francis Church, Steele, St. Mary, Medina and St. Paul, Tappen for a second term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Pastors

Rev. Edwin Arul, Pastor of St. Boniface Church, Walhalla and Sts. Nereus and Achilleus, Neche for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Karmalraj Balasamy, Pastor of St. Boniface Church, Wimbledon, St. Mary, Dazey and Sacred Heart Church, Sanborn for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.
Rev. Anthony Cruz, Pastor of St. Mark's Church, Bottineau and St. Andrew, Westhope for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Jeffrey S. Eppler, Pastor of St. John Nepomucene's Church, Pisek, Sts. Peter and Paul, Bechyne and St. Joseph, Lankin for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Msgr. Joseph P. Goering, Pastor of Holy Cross Church, West Fargo for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Jason V. Lefor, Pastor of St. John's Church, Grafton and Sacred Heart Church, Oakwood for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Kevin D. Lorsung, Pastor of St. John's Church, New Rockford and Sts. Peter and Paul, McHenry for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Franklin D. Miller, Pastor of St. Stephen's Church, Larimore for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Sean P. Mulligan, Pastor of St. Leo's Church, Casselton and St. Thomas, Buffalo for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Jared C. Kadlec, Rector of Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Rev. Reese J. Weber, Pastor of St. Therese Church, Rugby, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Balta and St. Mary, Knox for a term of six-years, beginning June 24, 2026.

Parochial Vicars

Rev. Garrett A. Aberle, Parochial vicar of St. Michael's Church, Grand Forks, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Rev. Robert J. Keller, Parochial vicar of Sts. Anne and Joachim Church, Fargo, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*. He continues his assignment as a Shanley Religion teacher.

Rev. Peter F. Nau, Parochial vicar of St. Therese Church, Rugby, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Balta and St. Mary, Knox, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Rev. Brendon P. Schneibel, Parochial vicar of Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Rev. Seth Skjervheim, Parochial vicar of St. Joseph's Church, Devils Lake, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Rev. Patrick A. Sorrells, Parochial vicar of Holy Spirit Church, Fargo, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

(continued on next page)



Official Appointments/ Announcements (cont.)

Rev. Richard L. Stenger, Parochial vicar of Nativity Church, Fargo, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Rev. Taylor M. Ternes, Parochial vicar of Holy Cross Church, West Fargo, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

Special Ministries

Reverend Luke D. Meyer, Vicar General, Vicar for Clergy, and Moderator of the Curia, beginning June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*. He remains pastor of Sts. Anne & Joachim.

Rev. Joseph P. Barrett, chaplain to the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation (SMP), Valley City, to Maryvale retreat center, and to the North Dakota State Hospital & James River Correctional Facility, Jamestown, effective June 24, 2026, and continuing *ad nutum episcopi*.

BISHOP FOLDA'S CALENDAR

June 8-12

USCCB Spring Conference, Orlando, Florida

June 14 at 4 p.m.

Rural Life Mass and Celebration, Blanchard

June 16 at 3 p.m.

Diocesan Finance Council, Pastoral Center, Fargo

June 17 at 3 p.m.

St. JPII Schools Board Meeting, Pastoral Center, Fargo

June 18

North Dakota Catholic Conference Meeting, Jamestown

June 21 at 10:30 a.m.

Mass at St. Patrick, Fullerton

June 21 at 5:30 p.m.

Collar Classic, Elmwood Park, West Fargo

June 28 at 4 p.m.

Mass for 150th Anniversary, St. John, Wahpeton

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Putt 4 a Purpose fundraiser for seminarians and youth programs turns 20 years old

By Kevin J. Jones | Assistant editor, *New Earth*

Registration is open for the Bishop’s Charity Golf Classic: Putt 4 a Purpose, now in its twentieth year.

“We have strong participation every year. That tells us that people really enjoy participating in this event,” Steve Schons, director of stewardship and development at the Diocese of Fargo, told *New Earth*.

This year’s event will take place at Fargo’s Rose Creek Golf Course on Monday, Aug. 3. Registration begins at 10 a.m., while golfing starts at 11:30. A social and banquet follows at 4:30 p.m. at the Rose Creek Event Center.

Up to 36 teams of four people each may register. The event almost reaches capacity every year.

“It’s a great place for Catholic fellowship, and at the same time, it raises money for two important ministries: seminarian education and youth activities,” said Schons.

“Without supporting our seminarians and their education, we wouldn’t have priests,” he added. “A number of our youth that would like to go to camps or attend retreats just don’t have the ability to go because of finances. We provide scholarships, so those that can’t go, can go.”

The Diocese of Fargo fully funds seminarian education in graduate-level theological studies, but the costs can exceed \$35,000 per year. Seminarians pursuing their college degree also receive diocesan scholarships to assist them.



Bishop John Folda and others in the 2025 Putt 4 a Purpose golf classic (Kristina Bloomsburg | *New Earth*)

Among the youth activities supported by the golf tournament are formation for youth ministers and religious education directors; the diocesan middle school camp, Camp Summit; the SEARCH weekend retreats for high school students; and the National March for Life Pilgrimage.

Individual registration for Putt 4 a Purpose is \$150 per person, which includes dinner, while a dinner-only ticket is \$50. Other sponsorships are available and other donations are welcome.

For more information and registration options, visit fargodiocese.org/puttpurpose.

Fun and fashion in Grand Forks

St. Michael’s Altar Society at St. Michael’s Church in Grand Forks hosted a delightful “Fling into Spring” Fashion Show on Saturday, April 25. The event showcased beautiful fashions from Northern Roots Boutique, Mainstream Boutique and Pretty B Boutique, modeled by parish volunteers. Guests also enjoyed a delicious lunch, making it a wonderful afternoon of style, fellowship, and fun.



Participants in the Fling into Spring Fashion Show (submitted photo)

Prayer Intention of Pope Leo XIV



For the Values of Sports

Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity and personal growth.

Cross Catholic Outreach's Effort to Supply Safe Water Supported by US Catholics

Cross Catholic Outreach is on a mission to bless nearly 900 families in Nicaragua with a life-changing gift: clean, abundant water. The ministry, which has been commended by the Vatican and many cardinals and bishops for its programs to relieve poverty, has developed a solid track record for establishing and funding successful water projects around the globe.

"Our objective has always been to empower the priests, religious sisters and lay leaders already working among the poor. We do that by giving them the help and resources they need to be more effective," said Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. "That can involve anything from delivering food for their feeding programs to supplying materials for their homebuilding initiatives. Our biggest focus in Nicaragua right now is supplying safe water. In too many communities, poor families either draw water from contaminated places like rivers or shallow wells, or they lack reliable water sources completely. That breaks my heart. Water is essential, and when it isn't safe, lives are put at risk."



The gift of water truly transforms the lives of Chinandega's residents.

For more than a decade, Cross Catholic Outreach has been funding efforts to install safe, reliable water systems in Chinandega, an area of Nicaragua rife with poverty and short on infrastructure. Today, 31 community water systems testify to the project's success, and the ministry is eager to replicate that success in places not yet reached.

"When families in that area have an alternative to the contaminated water sources they have been using, it has a big impact on other areas of their lives — everything from health to education,"



By focusing on this area of Nicaragua, Cross Catholic Outreach and its supportive U.S. donors hope to break a cycle of poverty that has plagued families for generations.

Sagarino said. "Tainted water is a major cause of serious illnesses, including kidney failure. When these families finally have a safe source of water, their health will improve dramatically. Wage earners won't miss work, and their children won't miss school. The impact will be far greater than you might expect."

Many of Cross Catholic Outreach's longtime donors have been very supportive of this mission of mercy and have funded dozens of water projects in recent years. As word about the campaign spreads, Sagarino hopes other Catholics will also see the importance of this effort and will want to contribute to the cause.

"Poor families in this part of Nicaragua have had to live with water scarcity for generations," Sagarino said. "With the support of compassionate Catholics in the U.S., we can end their suffering. And the benefits created by the water systems we install will bless those families for generations to come."

If Cross Catholic Outreach is successful in securing the contributions it seeks, it will address this need by funding professionally designed water systems capable of delivering safe, filtered water to about 893 households, benefiting as many as 4,465 people.

"After a team drills down hundreds of feet to reach an abundant source of water, they install a powerful electric pump and a large holding tank. Then, with help from the families benefiting from the project, miles of PVC pipes are put in place to connect individual homes to the system. This frees families from having to spend hours

collecting water from distant, contaminated sources. They gain 24-hour access and up to as much as 350 gallons of clean water per family each day," Sagarino said. She directed those interested in learning more to CrossCatholic.org/catalog/water-and-health.

While supplying safe water is the primary goal of Cross Catholic Outreach's current campaign, this effort will provide other important benefits to poor families as well. According to Sagarino, the project will also build modern bathrooms to improve sanitation and install special kitchen equipment to limit smoke inhalation, a common cause of respiratory illnesses among the poor. A program to support the education of children and a microenterprise initiative that will enable families to become more self-sufficient are also planned.

"Since our ultimate goal is to help families break free from the cycle of poverty, we want to do more than address this community's need for water," Sagarino said. "What we are doing will meet their immediate urgent needs and set them on a course to a brighter future."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach water programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC06045, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner.

By Meeting María, US Catholics Learn About Extreme Hardships Faced by Nicaragua's Rural Families

Poverty is more than statistics, and María is more than just a number. She's a person. That's why Michele Sagarino wants you to meet this woman and learn about a crippling challenge she was delivered from in rural Nicaragua.

"We certainly need a technical understanding of a major global issue like poverty, but the huge scope of that subject can leave people feeling insignificant and incapable of providing any meaningful solutions," explained Sagarino, the president of Cross Catholic Outreach. "Once you're introduced to a specific person like María, poverty becomes less about statistics and more about developing a connection with people. You also realize it's very possible to help someone like her in a significant way. We must never let the daunting scale of global poverty keep us from bringing relief and hope to individual people, a family or a community."

Building relationships between needy individuals and compassionate Catholics in the U.S. has been a part of Cross Catholic Outreach's mission since its founding 25 years ago. Another of the ministry's goals is to help American Catholics understand how acts of mercy, directed through the world's existing Catholic missions, can dramatically change lives.

In María's case, Cross Catholic Outreach provided her with safe water — a basic need everyone can easily understand.

"María lives in the rural village of Las Pilas with her father," Sagarino explained. "Like her neighbors, she only used the water she collected from a nearby well for washing and chores because it was contaminated. It would make them sick if they drank it. For drinking and cooking, they either had to buy bottled water by the liter or purchase barrels of water from a supply truck that occasionally came to their village."

Given their level of poverty, buying bottled water would have been an unsustainable solution for María and the other families in Las Pilas. There are very few jobs in the area, and her father is chronically ill and unable to work. Sadly, her father's plight is common. Many capable workers fall prey to kidney disease due to the contaminants and parasites in the local water.

"Here, about 30% of the people have chronic illness, including kidney disease," María said. She added that when no water truck came and they ran out of drinking water, the poor families in Las Pilas boiled the water they collected from the contaminated wells, hoping for the best.

While María endured these hardships, she prayed for a better way of life. She envisioned a day when local children could safely drink water, especially as she dreamed of having a child of her own.

María wasn't just hoping things would improve. She was working to be part of the solution. While she studied in pharmacy school and made constant trips to other villages as part of her



Like the other women in her humble community, María (above left) had to rely on unsafe sources for her water. Some women drew their water from streams, and others from old open wells contaminated with bacteria and parasites.

pharmacy internship, she had also been serving as the secretary and treasurer of the Las Pilas Water Committee, causing her to be even more determined to make the community's dream of having an easily accessible source of safe water a reality.

"I have always loved my community," María said. "I do this for the future and to be an agent of change."

"It's impossible to meet María and not be inspired by her faith, dedication and concern for her neighbors. She strengthened our determination to bring clean water into her community," Sagarino said. "Our hope was that compassionate Catholics in the U.S. would join us in this mission of mercy — and they did so in a big way! As a result, this precious woman and her neighbors now have more clean water than they ever could have imagined."

While Las Pilas' water crisis was solved, many other Nicaraguan communities still lack clean water, and Sagarino is mobilizing Catholic

donors to help. The solution she proposes involves the installation of a simple water system that is also reliable and affordable.

"What these communities need is a professionally drilled deep-water well and a distribution pipeline," Sagarino said. "This is a long-term solution that truly transforms lives. For example, with clean water, children get sick far less often. That has a huge impact on their education because they can attend classes regularly and have the time and energy to study."

These are just some of the reasons women like María have prayed so diligently for God to bless their communities with safe water.

"My hope is that now that more people know about the hardships these women and children have to endure, we will get the support we need to bring the blessing of clean water to more struggling families," Sagarino said. "By answering this urgent need, the Church can illuminate God's love for these families and demonstrate what it means to live like Christ."

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper, or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC06045, P.O. Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than is needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



To help neighbors in need, the St. Vincent de Paul Society reaches out

By Kevin J. Jones | Assistant editor, *New Earth*

When people face financial crisis and can't make ends meet, some are blessed enough to find members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) ready to provide a friendly ear, prayers and concrete help.

"It's about helping those in need in the community." Deb Black, president of the St. Vincent de Paul District Council of Fargo, told *New Earth*. "When we get a call, we go out in pairs to the homes and visit them. We get to know them and see what their needs are."

The society's members make home visits and give financial aid or in-kind assistance for rent, utilities, gas, or food. They sometimes fund motel rooms and train tickets for people passing through. Some of the people they help are on the edge of eviction, while others are homeless.

These are people who "need a little help to get back on their feet," said Black.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society was founded in France in 1833, taking its name and inspiration from the 17th century French priest known for his service to the poor. It expanded to the U.S. in 1845 and arrived in Fargo in 1968.

As of last year, in the Fargo Diocese there were 69 SVdP members in four parish-based groups, called conferences. There are conferences at St. Joseph's Church in Devils Lake, St. Therese the Little Flower Church in Rugby, and Holy Spirit Church and St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fargo. The society's District Council of Fargo oversees and supports these conferences and their members.

Active members visit with people in need at their homes and give of their time, while associate members give financially. Some conferences have food pantries, while others do not.

In fiscal year 2025, SVdP members in the Fargo district collectively helped 1,385 people, Black told *New Earth*. They delivered over \$61,000 in housing assistance and \$48,000 in other financial aid. In-kind assistance, such as food, clothing, or furniture, totaled over \$15,000 in value. The organization collaborates with other organizations in social services or community action to best help neighbors in need.

Black, who is also president of the St. Therese the Little Flower Conference in Rugby, said she joined the St. Vincent de Paul society because "I wanted to help others in need, and give back to my community."

She also appreciated the emphasis on Catholic spirituality. Each conference has two meetings per month: a business meeting and a spirituality meeting.

"We visit the elderly in their homes and the homebound. It's more than just helping with food and money. It's a spirituality,"

Black said. "We usually pray with them, encourage them to go to church, whatever denomination they are, and to have God in their lives."

Diane Moorhouse, a retired nurse, is president of the Holy Spirit Conference based at Holy Spirit Church on the north side of Fargo. Active SVdP membership, Moorhouse said, "helps us to see Christ in everybody that we help."

"We visit with them in their homes. And we pray with them," she said. "We listen to them. We give them encouragement. It gives them a chance to talk to us about their story, which sometimes they've never done before."

People feel less vulnerable when meeting at their homes, Moorhouse explained. Sometimes they don't always communicate their needs directly, so a home visit means SVdP members can better assess if someone has any additional needs.

"We always go in two, so there's always two of us that are there to support them and pray with them," said Moorhouse. "The most important thing is to offer our support and to bring Christ into their homes and to share our ministry and to share our hopes and our dreams with them and to pray with them."

"It warms your heart knowing that you can help somebody stay in their home," she said, remembering "the relief in their



SVdP members Patty Landman, Diane Moorhouse and Anne Schneider at the SVdP North Central Regional Conference in Bloomington, Minn. in June 2025. (SVdP Fargo District Council)

voices and their eyes when you tell them that you can help them with this shut-off notice.”

“They don’t know where to go,” she continued. “Sometimes when we pray with them before we leave, a lot of them tear up and they’re very grateful. We’re able to help them in their crisis.”

“They’re so appreciative that they’re able to stay in their homes, or their electricity is not going to get shut off, or it’s going to get turned back on. They’re so thankful.” Moorhouse repeated.

The SVdP has an evangelistic impact, too.

“Some have come and joined our church,” Moorhouse said. “Some are non-practicing Catholics, but they’ve come back to the Church.”

The work of the SVdP could expand, with enough participation.

“We’d like to grow,” Black, the district president, told *New Earth*. The presence of an SVdP conference “gives the parish priests a little relief.”

“A lot of times those in need come to the rectory, and then the parish priest has to deal with it,” she explained. Where the SVdP is present, the priest can refer the person in need to the society.

Looking ahead, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has begun to explore the prospects for launching new conferences to serve in Grand Forks and Jamestown.

Black said those interested in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul should contact the Fargo District Council. Its website is at holyspiritsvdp.wixsite.com/stvincentdepaul.

Thompson deacon vests son at Duluth ordination



**Deacon Matthew West at his ordination Mass.
(Diocese of Duluth)**

Matthew West, who grew up attending St. Jude Catholic Church in Thompson, was ordained a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Duluth, Minn. on May 1. His father James is a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Fargo and presently serves at St. Jude.

Father John Cavanaugh, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Reynolds and St. Jude in Thompson, reflected on West’s ordination in the May 10 parish bulletin.

“In a deeply meaningful moment, he was vested by his father, Deacon Jim West, a powerful sign of the continuity of vocation within the family and a shared participation in both earthly



**Deacon Jim West helps vest his son,
the newly ordained Deacon Matthew West. (West family)**

and heavenly service. Surrounded by his parents and siblings, Deacon West made his promises, dedicating himself to faithful service in the life of the Church and the local community.”

“We extend our prayers, support, and best wishes as he enters into this sacred ministry,” Father Cavanaugh said. “To his wife, we offer our sincere gratitude and blessings for your steadfast support and witness in his vocation. To his children, we pray that you may walk alongside your father in his calling, always striving to ‘walk humbly with our God’ (Micah 6:8).”

In Gwinner, St. Vincent's comes together to help the Deng family

By Father Riley Durkin | Pastor of St. Aloysius Church in Lisbon and St. Vincent's Church in Gwinner

Spring is a busy time at St. Aloysius. Between the Baccalaureate service, Senior Sunday and the parish reception for our first communicants, we have a lot to be thankful for. But one of my highlights every year is celebrating Confirmation with our third graders from Lisbon and Gwinner. This year, however, was extra special for one family in our parish community. They are the Deng family from Gwinner.

Joseph is the proud father of ten children, but this is the first year they have ever all been together. Since the moment I met him, his story of sacrifice and fatherhood has inspired me. Joseph traveled to the United States from South Sudan several years ago fleeing a civil war and religious persecution. At that time, he didn't have the money or opportunity to bring the rest of his family with him. His plan was to work in the United States and slowly save up money to bring the rest of his family, one-by-one. And that's exactly what he did. His two oldest immigrated to the United States about six years ago and his wife, Adhel, came with a couple of other children about four years later. But then life became more difficult.

Joseph's last six children were still in central Africa staying with family, but political violence in that part of the world was beginning to ramp up. It was becoming increasingly important for the Deng family to live together as a family for the first time ever as soon as possible. So Joseph turned to his parish community to ask for help. And did they ever!



Adut, Aluk and Deng with Bishop John Folda and Father Durkin. (submitted photo)



The Deng family and Father Riley Durkin. (submitted photo)

In a matter of weeks, the little parish of St. Vincent's in Gwinner was able to raise the funds through private donations to purchase flights from South Sudan to the United States for Joseph and his children in time for school to start this past fall.

My friends, the reason I tell you this story is because this is what it means to be part of a pro-life and pro-family church. If we believe that, as Saint Pope John Paul II would say, the family is the building block of society and that life must be protected from conception until natural death, that means that Christians are called to do all that we can to help our brothers and sisters in need. The Dengs are a prime example of a beautiful and devoted Christian family who are finally able to live and worship together as one. Do they still face struggles? Of course. But they are together.

This past weekend three of Joseph and Adhel's children, Adut, Aluk, and Deng, received the sacraments of Confirmation and their first Holy Communion. After a year of private instruction at the parish, they were able to celebrate this momentous milestone as a united family unit for the first time ever. This is something that wouldn't have been possible without their St. Vincent parish family.

This article was written with the permission of the Deng family.

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Ordinations a cause for celebration

By Paul Braun | Editor of *New Earth*

By the time this issue of *New Earth* arrives in homes, the Diocese of Fargo will have ordained five new priests and one transitional deacon in joyous ceremonies held June 5 and 6 at the Cathedral of St. Mary and Sts. Anne and Joachim Church in Fargo. In a previous issue (July/August 2025), we introduced to readers these five new priests when they were seminarians awaiting their ordination to the transitional diaconate.

This past May, we caught up with all five to get their thoughts and feelings as their priestly ordinations approached. We also spoke at length with our new transitional deacon as he prepares for his final year of studies before his ordination to the priesthood in 2027.

Rev. Garrett Aberle, Parochial Vicar – assigned to St. Michael’s parish in Grand Forks



“As ordination approaches, there are some unknowns and natural apprehensions: my life as I have known it will end and a new chapter will begin. I will be called upon to do things as a matter of course which the highest of the angels in all their glory cannot do and would not dare consider. There is a great expectation of holiness in representing Christ to the members of His

body, yet I do not find myself worrying too much about this. While this could stem from lack of piety, I think the Lord does desire me to enter this greater conformity to Himself with a holy detachment.

“What I am asked to do daily will be impossible, humanly speaking, yet the fact that I shall be tasked with the administration of His graces necessitates His help. Jesus will not leave me without the help needed to work the daily miracles of the sacraments in His name. My only task in this time is to fix my eyes upon Jesus and understand that everything else, even the beautiful Churches I will serve in, are passing. Then, I shall truly be able to seek Him first. All else will be given me besides—in ordinary ways through others and my superiors, and in extraordinary ways through prayer.

“My interior experience at this time is something like patient expectation. There is very little necessary other than living the Christian life at this point of proximate preparation. I wait in reverence to be joined in a deeper way to my Savior, which shall include His deep sorrows and pain, along with the joy which no one can take from Him.”

Rev. Brendon Schneibel, Parochial Vicar – assigned to Cathedral of St. Mary, Fargo

“I would say that my feelings right now are mainly just those of gratitude. My time in seminary, and especially my last semester, has provided a lot of time to reflect not only on my vocation but on my whole life. In that reflection, God has helped me to see more and more how the priesthood is and has always

been His will for my life. There are so many moments that He’s helped me recognize His hand at work, making me be a better man, helping me grow in holiness, and preparing me to be a priest.

“Looking forward, I am just filled with an incredulous joy and gratitude. Even with all the preparation and groundwork that God has laid, there is still a surreal feeling as I approach the day of my ordination. I see all the amazing things priests do and have done in my life and the life of the Church, and I can hardly believe that God has chosen me to share in those joys and sorrows, those gifts, and this priestly life. I am beyond grateful to everyone who has walked with me on this journey, but I am infinitely indebted and grateful to God for asking me to be His priest.”

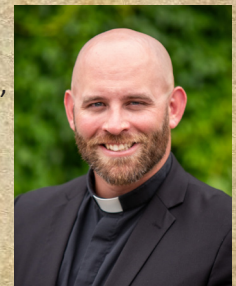
Rev. Patrick Sorrells, Parochial Vicar – assigned to Holy Spirit Church, Fargo

“It’s been hard to think about my upcoming ordination with all that has been going on during these last weeks of class. Although, I am in many ways looking forward to jumping into full-time ministry as a priest of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that I celebrate the sacraments reverently, beautifully, and profoundly, that I inspire people towards living in a deeper relationship with God through mental prayer, and that I can help promote more vocations to the priesthood. I also look forward to the opportunities that ministering and evangelizing in my home city of Fargo will bring.

“Six years of seminary has gone by quickly, but at times it seemed like it took forever. Bishop Folda was right when he said that the days would be long but the years would be short. I am so grateful for being given the opportunity to discern this call to the priesthood. Seminary has been a truly formative and enriching place that has equipped me to begin my many years of ministry in the Diocese of Fargo.”

Rev. Ritchie Stenger, Parochial Vicar – assigned to Nativity Church, Fargo

“Over these last few weeks as I’ve been spending some time reflecting on my life, I can’t help but realize that it’s been a crazy but grace-filled journey that I’ve been on. If you would have told me ten years ago that I’d be a priest, I would have blown that comment off. This vocation was never in my plan and I certainly ran from it. But God’s love and providence has softened my heart and helped me to trust Him in this path. He has given me so much grace over these years to let go of my plans. And now with the



ordination around the corner, I am very excited for this next step to be able to serve God's people and help bring Christ into the world."

Rev. Taylor Ternes, Parochial Vicar – assigned to Holy Cross Church, West Fargo

"As I reflect upon my discernment and time in seminary, I am ecstatic to become a priest! I have received tremendous blessings from the Lord throughout my life, and I look forward to seeing the many blessings he will pour out throughout my priesthood.



"My prayer is that I can live out my life as a priest in the manner which St. John Vianney, patron of parish priests, described: 'The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.' In loving the Lord to the best of my ability, I trust that he will use me as an instrument of his grace, to be the Light shining in the darkness."

Meet Deacon Paul Zach

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

I grew up on a farm outside of Rosholt, South Dakota. After High School I went to North Dakota State College of Science for electrical (studies) in Wahpeton, which brought me to the Diocese of Fargo. My parents are Linus and Renee Zach and I am the youngest of six kids: Justin, Juliann, Sarah, Theresa and Jacob.



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

Since I entered seminary, I have received a lot of encouragement from family and friends but the most helpful support I have received is their prayers. The grace of intercessory prayer can be imperceptible at times, but I'm confident the prayers of others have strengthened me through my years of seminary.

When did you first hear the call to pursue the priesthood?

When did that call become more real to you?

The thought of being a priest would come to mind here and there when I was growing up, but I wasn't open to it in any way, shape, or form. In college I had a powerful experience of God's love and mercy which began to soften my heart to the idea of becoming a priest.

What has been your most memorable experience in seminary?

This last January I was able to have the trip of a lifetime as I spent three weeks in Rome. The Eternal City is full of the enduring witness of the Saints, and it showed me that God's call is the sole pursuit worthy of giving your life to.

Who is one of your favorite saints and why?

Saint Faustina. Her example of trust in the Lord, even in the most difficult times of her life, has been edifying and inspires me to have the same trust.

What advice do you have for others discerning their vocation?

Put aside all your worries and fears, you don't have to have an answer for them to take the first step. Jesus loves you and He will answer them in due time, trust Him! Just listen for that small still voice in prayer and act on that.

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A rendition of the new building for St. Carlo Acutis Middle School.
(submitted photo)

From a dream to reality in Grand Forks

Breaking ground for a new Catholic middle school

By Paul Braun | Editor of *New Earth*

It was a day that Catholic parents and educators only dreamed about but has now come to fruition. On Monday, May 18, ground was broken for the long-awaited Catholic middle school in Grand Forks. According to Sara Dudley, president of the All Saints Catholic School Network in Grand Forks, the new school has been named after St. Carlo Acutis, a modern saint who exemplified how young people can live their faith authentically in today's world with Jesus Christ as their guide. A teenager who used technology to spread the Gospel and lived a life of deep Eucharistic devotion, and the perfect patron for today's middle school students.

"This is a leap of faith, but it is one grounded in over 140 years of Catholic education in Grand Forks and carried forward by three parishes united in purpose," said Dudley. "We are not starting something new. We are building on everything that has come before. This is the next chapter of Catholic education in Grand Forks."

To mark the beginning of construction for the new middle school, Bishop John Folda of Fargo presided over the ceremonial "first shovels." The event took place in the St. Michael's school gym due to the wet conditions at the construction site, located across the street from the existing St. Michael's Catholic Elementary School. Also in attendance were Mike Hagstrom, Director of

Schools for the Diocese of Fargo, and representatives of the general contractor for the project, McGough Construction of Grand Forks.

"This is just a magnificent endeavor and a challenge to be sure, but one worth every effort that we make to bring it to completion," said Bishop Folda. "I have no doubt that this new school named for St. Carlo Acutis will touch the hearts, the minds, the souls of young people, not just for a year or two years or ten years, but for generations to come. And in touching those young people, it will touch their families, our parishes, and our entire community."

The new middle school building is only the most recent chapter in the establishment of St. Carlo Acutis school. Classes began this school year for sixth graders, who are temporarily studying at St. Michael's elementary school. A seventh-grade class will be added for the 2026-2027 school year, with eighth grade starting during the 2027-2028 school year.

The new middle school is the next campus for the newly established All Saints Catholic School network in Grand Forks, joining St. Michael's and Holy Trinity-St. Mary elementary schools.

"The All Saints Catholic Schools Network was formed to



Bishop Folda, Grand Forks area clergy and All Saints Schools officials turn the first shovelfuls of dirt for the new St. Carlo Acutis Middle School. (Paul Braun | *New Earth*)

unite and strengthen Catholic education across Grand Forks by bringing together the schools and parishes that have sustained this mission for over 140 years,” said Dudley. “Catholic education in Grand Forks dates back to 1884, and the network represents the next chapter in that story. By working together rather than independently, the schools can offer families a more cohesive, PreK through eighth grade Catholic educational experience with greater consistency in curriculum, stronger stewardship of resources, and a unified commitment to academic excellence and faith formation.”

According to Dudley, the new school will feature six classrooms



A rendition of a typical classroom in the new middle school. (submitted photo)

built to support the academic rigor and collaborative learning that middle school students need as they prepare for high school. They are spaces designed specifically for adolescents, allowing for the kind of instruction, discussion, and engagement that this age group thrives on.

A dedicated STEAM classroom will give students hands-on opportunities in science, technology, engineering, art, and math, equipping them with the critical thinking and problem-solving skills that today’s world demands while reinforcing the Catholic understanding that faith and intellect are not at odds but deeply complementary. The media center will serve as a hub for research, reading, and digital literacy, giving students the tools and resources they need to become thoughtful, discerning learners in an information-rich world.

“At the heart of the school’s design is its Catholic identity,” said Dudley. “A prayer room will provide students with a sacred space for daily encounter with Christ, quiet reflection, and spiritual growth during the very years when young people are beginning to make their faith their own. It is central to who we are and why this school exists.”

Before the establishment of St. Carlo Acutis middle school, parents who wanted to continue their child’s Catholic education past fifth grade would enroll students at Sacred Heart Middle School across the river in East Grand Forks, Minn., part of the Diocese of Crookston. Now, with the new middle school in Grand Forks, parents have a choice.

“Catholic education has always been more than a choice for our family, it is part of who we are,” said Meghan Stegman, the mother of two children in the All Saints School Network. “Our daughter is finishing fifth grade, and choosing St. Carlo Acutis Middle School for her was an easy decision, but one we hold deeply. Middle school is such a formative time, and we wanted her anchored in her faith, surrounded by a community that knows her, loves her, and holds her to the values she has been raised with. To keep both of our children in Catholic education right here in Grand Forks, continuing a legacy that began with my own parents, genuinely moves me to tears. Now, the same gift my parents gave me is passed on to both of my children.”

The school building is expected to be completed in November 2027, at a cost to estimated at about \$13 million. A capital fundraising campaign is underway to help pay for the cost of construction. More information on the campaign may be found at www.allsaintscatholicschools.org/schools/st-carlo-acutis.



The atrium in the new school will be spacious and welcoming. (submitted photo)



A banner marks the site of the new middle school across the street from St. Michael’s school. (Paul Braun | *New Earth*)



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Quotable

St. Anthony
of Padua

Feast Day June 13

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Join the Sister Annella Guild as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB. Together we will honor her life and witness to the Catholic faith and support her cause for canonization through prayer, fellowship, and celebration.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Monument Blessing

3:45 p.m.

Zervas Family Tombs,
St. Joseph's Cemetery
2700 N. 11th St.
Moorhead, MN 56560

*St. Joseph's Cemetery is located
along 11th Street, on the north side
of the Crystal Sugar Plant.*

Mass with Bishop Cozzens

5:00 p.m.

St. Francis De Sales
Catholic Church
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Reception

6:00 p.m.

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OUR BODIES TELL HIS STORY

Theology of the Body and You



A total vision of Man

By Timothy Mosser | Respect Life Director of the Diocese of Fargo

I have had the privilege of teaching Fargo Shanley High School students a series of classes on Pope St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body (TOB) over the last couple of years. One of John Paul II's concepts is what he calls the Total Vision of Man – meaning the total vision of all human persons, male and female. Our culture today is plagued with inaccurate and incomplete ideas about the human person that lead to intentional as well as unintentional violations of human dignity such as contraception, in vitro fertilization, frozen embryos, gay “marriage,” gender confusion, assisted suicide, and so forth. Today, let's look at John Paul II's teaching on the total vision of the human person.

Picture a simple timeline drawn on a whiteboard. On the left side is Creation, the beginning of the world. I put a mark for the Fall close to Creation. In the middle is Jesus and the far right side is eternal life in the Resurrection. John Paul calls his total vision of man an “adequate anthropology” and he spends about half of the whole teaching of TOB carefully explaining this comprehensive “big picture” of the human person.

John Paul II divides his “adequate anthropology” into three parts that cover the totality of human existence: Original Man, Historical Man and Eschatological Man.

Original Man: Christ Appeals to the Beginning

John Paul II makes it clear that we need to understand God's original plan for life and love if we are to have a total vision of man. In response to the Pharisees' questions about divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19, Jesus reminds them that from the beginning God made them male and female and that is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and the two become one flesh and what God has joined, no one must separate. It is clear that in the beginning God established marriage as the original sacrament that is meant to be a permanent and indissoluble covenant between one man and one woman open to the gift of life. In addition, Adam and Eve experienced complete harmony with God, within themselves, between each other and with all creation. The first two chapters of Genesis paint a wonderful picture of love, harmony and peace. However, all of this changed with the Fall in Genesis 3.

Historical Man: Christ Appeals to the Human Heart

The second part of John Paul II's anthropology I called historical man. This is the time from the Fall through our Resurrection. Notice this means that we are not only fallen but we are also redeemed by Jesus. Because of his Paschal Mystery and the New Covenant, we now have access to power that the Old

Covenant could not provide. For example, Jesus says in Matthew 19 that Moses allowed divorce because of hard hearts, but in the beginning it was not so. We now have the Holy Spirit, the Sacraments and the Church among other things. These provide us the grace we need to be holy, if we avail ourselves of them. Here John Paul II reflects on the human heart, focusing on Matt. 5:27: “You have heard it said that you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” John Paul II moves the conversation from an external law (the Sixth Commandment, which is a good and necessary start) to the internal disposition of our heart: the place of encounter, truth, decision and covenant (cf. CCC 2563). Jesus is basically saying, “You have heard the external law, but now I call you to freely conform the desires of your heart to that law.” We need new hearts! Jesus invites us to change our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (Ezek. 36:26). When we freely choose, through grace and a life of virtue, to desire what is good and true and holy, we “free ourselves” from the law because we no longer desire to break it. We move from a life of law to a life of love!

Eschatological Man: Christ Appeals to the Resurrection

In this last part of his “adequate anthropology” John Paul II reflects on our life in the Resurrection by reflecting on Matt. 22:30 where he tells his audience that in the Resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage. He says this in response to the question of who would be the husband of a woman in heaven who was widowed seven times on earth. Now, I admit, that at first glance this idea of not being married to my wife in heaven is a little mysterious. However, as John Paul II explains, marriage on earth is but a foretaste of heaven. Marriage is good to be sure – it is the analogy that St. Paul uses in Ephesians 5 for Christ's love for His spouse, the Church. Yes, marriage is a good thing but it points to our ultimate union: our communion with the Trinity for all eternity. This is the fulfillment of all our human desires!

Love is the Answer. We are created in love and for love by God himself who is love (cf. John 4:8). We are created to love and be loved and to spend eternity united to God himself. John Paul II's teaching on the total vision of man gives us a roadmap for this vitally important journey from love to love. As one Shanley student put it to me, “This makes total sense. Now I know where I come from, who I am, how I should live and who I am destined to be with for eternity!” That, in a nutshell is the total vision of man!



TATTERED PAGES

A review of books, movies, music

A doctor's case for the Shroud of Turin

By Father Dale Kinzler | Retired priest of the Diocese of Fargo
is not standing on any surface, since his feet are still crossed as they were at burial.

The Holy Shroud of Turin has intrigued millions around the world, as an object of study by forensic scientists, and as an object of faith for believers in Our Lord Jesus Christ. The more it is studied, the stronger the evidence for its authenticity becomes.

I have read several books and viewed several films on the Holy Shroud over the past fifty years. Last year's retreat at Maryvale on the Man of the Shroud, and the exhibit presented at St. Mary's Cathedral, inspired me to purchase some of the new books to which the presenter referred. One I found most enlightening is *The Shroud of Jesus: And the Sign John Ingeniously Concealed* by Doctor Gilbert Lavoie (Sophia Institute Press, 2023).

In his review of Lavoie's book, Dr. Scott Hahn writes, "There is no more comprehensive book for those who are curious – or skeptical – about the Shroud." I concur with his statement. In just under 200 pages, Dr. Lavoie presents a convincing set of images and statements summarizing his findings, followed by a beautifully insightful reflection on passages from the Gospel of John bearing on Jesus' death and resurrection.

Gilbert Lavoie is both a doctor of internal medicine and a devoted Catholic. He studied blood marks on the shroud for forty years. He shares what he believes his discoveries reveal to the objective observer.

As you read the first half of the book, put on your Sherlock Holmes' hat to follow the forensic evidence leading to the logical conclusion the Man of the Shroud -- scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to a cross -- died in an upright position, and was laid supine on the burial cloth whose blood stains prove it was a three-dimensional covering of the body. Then follow the trail of evidence showing the image was formed later, with the body being lifted to an upright position and suspended as if in midair!

For the second half of the book, put on your prayer shawl for an insightful summary of John's Gospel and the clues John cleverly places before us. Lavoie will lead us to conclude that the Risen Son of God and the lifted-up Man of the Shroud are one and the same.

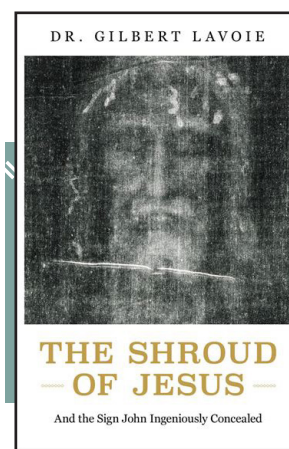
While the blood stains are consistent with those of a crucified man lying horizontally in the tomb, the image's formation is an entirely different matter. This, for me, was the greatest eye opener in his chapter titled "The Image of an Upright Man." It makes sense that the hair on the image, flowing to the shoulders, is typical of a man standing in an upright position. And his back does not appear flattened as it would if he were still supine. He

The author connects this awareness to John's record of Jesus' words, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). The image's formation, Lavoie concludes, must be a supernatural event, "outside of our ordinary understanding of time and space (p. 116)."

John wrote of Jesus' scourging and crowning with thorns (19:1-3). The crucified Jesus' legs were not broken, but to confirm his death a soldier pierced his side, from which blood and water flowed out (John 19:33-34). The beloved disciple witnessed this at Calvary but would also have seen the same evidence on the burial cloth, without saying so directly.

When John and Peter ran to the tomb that Sunday morning, and found the burial cloth lying there, they must have seen whatever stains and image it bore. But, as Lavoie contends, John most likely says nothing of this because of the strong Jewish aversion to placing any human image on coins or other artifacts. Had John reported what he saw, his countrymen would likely have sought out and destroyed the cloth as an object of idolatry. (Cf. Exod. 20:4)

I deeply appreciated this book, for both the thorough review of scientific findings and the reflections on John's Gospel. Whether you are a long-time Shroud enthusiast or newly curious, you are sure to benefit from Lavoie's book as I did. May it help us grow deeper in our love for Christ who endured his suffering out of love for us, "so that we may not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).



*The Shroud of Jesus:
And the Sign John
Ingeniously Concealed*
by Dr. Gilbert Lavoie

What to know about Catholic Just War Doctrine



CATHOLIC ACTION

DAVID TAMISIEA, J.D., PH.D.

Executive Director
North Dakota Catholic Conference

Peace on earth is one of the greatest gifts God can bestow on mankind. Peace is not merely the absence of war, but rather, as St. Augustine defines it, the “tranquility of order” (*City of God*, Book XIX), that is, the harmony within man, among men, and between God and man, that is the fruit of justice and charity. While peace is ultimately a divine gift, every person is called by God to be a peacemaker: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9). The Church therefore urges everyone to work and pray for peace in the world, while striving to avoid war, violence, and conflict (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2307-2308).

Because men are sinners, however, the threat of war and conflict is always present. Despite the grave dangers of modern warfare, the Church recognizes that nations may have to take up arms as a last resort to defend themselves against an unjust aggressor. While most commentators today justify American involvement in war for strategic reasons, the Church’s just war doctrine offers a moral framework for Christians to assess war in a way that prioritizes peace and the dignity of all persons, while at the same time recognizing a nation’s duty and right to defend its people and protect its homeland. Given our country’s ongoing war with Iran and involvement in other conflicts around the world, it is an opportune time to review Catholic just war doctrine.

The just war doctrine is divided into two distinct assessments: The first assessment, *ius ad bellum* (“right to go to war”), determines whether a nation can be morally justified in going to war. The second assessment, *ius in bello* (“right conduct in war”), regulates and limits the kind of fighting that is morally permissible during war. As the *Catechism* teaches, this assessment belongs to the prudential judgment of the governmental authority responsible for the common good (CCC 2309), even though these judgments can be challenged and criticized.

There are six criteria that must be met to justify a nation going to war (*ius ad bellum*):

Legitimate Authority: The first criterion to justify entering war is that the decision must be made by the legitimate governing authority, not by an individual or group that has unlawfully seized or retained control of the state. This is because it is the government’s duty to promote the common good of its citizens. As St. Thomas Aquinas explains, just as it is lawful

for the governing authority to have recourse to the sword in defending the common good against internal disturbances by criminals (Rom. 13:4), “it is their business to have recourse to the sword of war in defending the common good against external enemies” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 40, a. 1).

Just Cause: A second criterion for entering war is it can only be for a just cause. The clearest case of a just cause is when a nation acts in self-defense against an unjust aggressor that has attacked it first. Another reason that might justify going to war is to put a stop to severe human rights violations in another country. While there is no clear consensus, some moral theologians and ethicists also contend that a preemptive war might be morally justified if it is necessary to prevent an imminent and certain attack on the homeland.

Right Intention: A third criterion for entering war justly is that those responsible for the decision must have a morally good intention. Right intention consists of correcting the injustice and restoring the peace. War should not be entered into for unjust aims such as territorial expansion, pursuit of strategic advantage, demonstrating military power, or exacting vengeance for past wrongs.

Last Resort: A fourth criterion that must be satisfied is that war must be the last resort. As the *Catechism* puts it, governments have the right to lawful self-defense “once all peace efforts have failed” (CCC 2308). Engaging in diplomatic negotiations, exacting economic sanctions, issuing ultimatums prior to using force, and other peaceful alternatives must first have been tried and failed before entering war with another country.

Serious Prospects of Success: A fifth criterion justifying entry into war is there must be serious prospects of succeeding (CCC 2309). The political leaders responsible for military action must assess whether the aims of the war are achievable. Even for a just cause with all the right intentions, government leaders may nevertheless determine that a war is not winnable. Assessing the probability of success prevents an irrational resort to force that risks wreaking havoc and bloodshed on both sides for no good reason.

Proportionality: A sixth criterion that must be met is proportionality: The expected damage to be inflicted and costs to be born must be proportionate to the good to be achieved. If entering war is expected to cause tremendous harm for relatively little gain, it cannot be justified. The *Catechism* warns that this consideration is especially important due to the destructive capacities of modern warfare: “The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition” (CCC 2309).

As the *Catechism* makes clear, the moral law remains intact even during war: “The mere fact that war has regrettably broken out does not mean that everything becomes licit between the

parties” (CCC 2312, quoting Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 79). Once war has begun, there are two chief criteria that must be met to justify how the war is being conducted (*ius in bello*):

Noncombatant Immunity: The first criterion that must be met for conduct during war is noncombatant immunity. In the Catholic tradition, a state of war permits the use of force only against those who are actively engaged in fighting. The moral law prohibits attacking civilians, prisoners of war, enemy soldiers who have surrendered, medical personnel, the wounded, and all others who are unarmed and do not pose an immediate threat. Due to the increased lethality of modern weaponry and threat of mass devastation, the Church is especially insistent in condemning indiscriminate destruction of civilian populations and non-military targets (CCC 2313-2314). For this reason, Pope Leo XIV rightly condemned as “truly unacceptable” President Donald Trump’s threat to destroy Iran’s “whole civilization.”

Proportionality: Proportionality is not just a static principle for determining whether entering war is justified but must constantly be evaluated throughout the war. If the harms and burdens of a war become disproportionately high compared to the good to

be achieved, the war can no longer be morally justified. A classic example where the harms became disproportionately greater than the good to be achieved is the Vietnam War, where over time American involvement no longer made sense because the immense destruction, high casualties, and political divisions at home far outweighed its strategic objectives.

Catholic just war doctrine recognizes that war may at times be necessary in a fallen world yet can only be morally justified under strict conditions ordered toward peace. Far from justifying violence, it places a heavy burden of proof on those who would wage war and insists that, even in conflict, the dignity of every human person must be upheld. Especially in an age marked by unprecedented destructive power, just war doctrine serves as a guide for conscientious Christians to judge whether war is justified and how it must be fought. Ultimately, it reminds us that war is never an end in itself, but a tragic and imperfect means of last resort to achieve a just and lasting peace. At this time of so much war and violence around the world, let us heed Pope Leo’s constant plea to work and pray tirelessly for peace.



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Join Bishop John Folda as we invoke
God's blessing upon our rural communities



ninth annual
RURAL LIFE
celebration



Sunday, June 14, 2026

Cheryl and Kurt Elliott Farm
15154 6th St SE
Blanchard, North Dakota

4 p.m. Welcome

4:30 Mass

5:30 Blessing of Land, Machinery & Animals

6:00 Meal

- Event is free and open to all
- Bring a container of soil or seed from your field or garden to be blessed
- RSVP olpstagnes@midco.net
or 701-788-3234
- For more information, visit www.fargodiocese.org/rural-life





SEMINARIAN LIFE

JOSEPH SPLONSKOWSKI

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

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?”
(Psalm 27:1).

As I reflect back on my life, especially my seminary formation, I can see the Lord in many places. One place especially is prayer. Prayer, to be brief, is something that I need. At times I like to joke that I’m addicted to prayer because when I go to prayer, I experience a lasting peace. When I stop praying or miss a prayer time, there is just a sense that something is missing in my life. The rest of the day feels wasted.

There are many places where I can find the Lord in times of prayer, but ultimately, I know that I seek Him and that He listens to me no matter where I am. The trust that I need in the Lord is that He provides me with everything I need in the present moment. Anything in the future, I leave for Him to take care of because the present is where I experience the Lord.

I find that prayer and trust lead me to a relationship with God. This relationship is growing, and there is a second part to this relationship as well: relationship with others. Now I have at times just made friends, but God wasn’t even thought of in the relationship. Then, it just crumbles. I have experienced this type of what one could call “shallow” friendship. By comparison, I have experienced the friendships where God is the center. The friendships with God as the center are the ones that I can see substantial growth in everything. These are the friendships I want to pursue and have these people as my friends. This leads me to trust these friendships, but first I need to trust in the Lord.

Going to seminary and having a relationship with the Lord was definitely what I needed, but I didn’t know what it looked like to be a friend with God. I knew that God could see everything that I did, but I didn’t know that I could relate it to Him. Relating the good and the bad to God has helped me to not only gain trust in God. It has helped me to feel more at peace with many things. For example, I’m more at peace with my discernment. When I am studying at seminary and I feel it is getting very difficult to study, I just take a few moments to tell the Lord what I’m struggling with and why I feel like it is a struggle. Then I offer this struggle to Him. This usually helps me to overcome whatever I struggle with.

This trust in God as a friend has helped me to see that I do not need to take everything on by myself. Instead, I can and should stop and offer it to God. Good, godly relationships with

Trust in God

other people also help me feel like I’m not taking on all my problems by myself.

Trust in others starts first at birth. This trust can be categorized into four essential things. These four essential things, I have been told, are: feeling safe, seen, soothed, and secure. These four elements are provided for us by parents or guardians, but they can also be given to us by the Lord and our friends. The friendships that can help me to feel peace in the Lord are the ones that increase trust in those friendships. The alternative is I feel like I’m having to “white-knuckle” life or take on everything by myself.

As I continue on in seminary formation, I am learning to trust in God and others. This learning to trust is a growth in love, especially love in God. I have found that my love, however small it is, is received by the Lord and that the love shown to me is greater than I could ever think or imagine. Now I pray: *“One thing I ask of the Lord... To dwell in the house of the Lord”* (Psalm 27:4c).



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Please save the date: Sunday, August 16, 2026
70th Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Prairies at Carmel of Mary

carmelofmary.org
carmelofmary@gmail.com



17765 78th Street SE
Wahpeton, ND 58075

Three reasons to launch your own endowment



STEWARDSHIP

STEVE SCHONS

Director of Stewardship and Development
Diocese of Fargo

There are many reasons to consider establishing an endowment for your parish. Here are three of the most important:

1. Ongoing Annual Support

As a member of your parish, you likely make annual gifts to support the mission of your church. An endowment allows that support to continue long after your lifetime.

Endowment funds are invested in a way that preserves the principal while generating annual earnings. Those earnings are then distributed to support your parish year after year. In many ways, your endowment continues your tradition of giving for generations to come.

2. A Lasting Legacy

One of the most meaningful aspects of an endowment is the lasting legacy it creates. An endowment not only supports your parish financially, but also reflects the values and faith commitments that matter most to you.

Children, grandchildren, and future generations will see the impact of “their” family endowment at work in the life of the parish. If you hope to leave a lasting gift that strengthens your parish and inspires others for years to come, an endowment is a powerful way to do so.

3. Financial Stability for Your Parish

Parishes throughout the Diocese of Fargo benefit from the financial strength provided by endowment funds. Reliable endowment income helps parishes plan more confidently for the future and provides greater financial stability.

In many cases, endowment income allows parishes to expand ministries, maintain facilities, and pursue opportunities that may not otherwise be possible. Strong endowment support can also encourage additional charitable giving from others who value long-term stewardship and sustainability.

Many Ways to Establish an Endowment

There are several ways to establish an endowment.

Some people choose to create an endowment immediately through a significant gift of cash or appreciated assets. Others make arrangements now and fund their endowment later through their estate plan or will.

You may also begin with a modest gift and add to the fund over time. Other options can include charitable gift annuities or charitable trusts.

One of the most meaningful aspects of an endowment is the lasting legacy it creates.

Many families have discovered that building an endowment is one of the most meaningful ways to support the mission and future of their parish. Through the Catholic Development Foundation, endowments may be established to support your local parish, a cemetery, or diocesan ministries. There is great flexibility in directing your gift according to your wishes.

North Dakota Endowment Tax Credit

North Dakota offers a valuable tax incentive for charitable endowment giving. Individuals, businesses, trusts, and estates may qualify for a 40% North Dakota state tax credit for contributions exceeding \$5,000 to qualified charitable endowment funds. Even better, any unused portion of the credit may be carried forward for up to three additional years.

For more information, visit cdfnd.org.

If you would like to learn more about establishing an endowment, please contact Steve Schons, President of the Catholic Development Foundation, at (701) 356-7926.



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Diocesan policy: Reporting child abuse

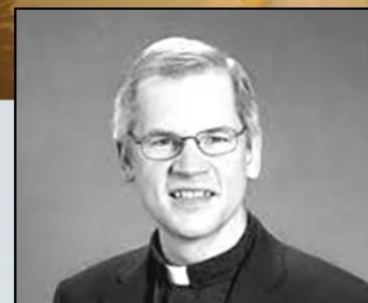
The Diocese of Fargo is committed to the protection of youth. Please report any incident or suspected incidents of child abuse, including sexual abuse, to civil authorities.

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.

Men's Silent Retreat for Beginners

with Fr. Andrew Jasinski



"I am so BUSY.... IF I COULD ONLY carve out a few more minutes each day.... I just don't have the TIME..."

These comments are on the lips of many people, young and old, in our society today. Many of us race from task to task, most of which are very good things but we find ourselves mentally, physically and spiritually exhausted.

Come learn the way to Silence.

"Come away with me to a quiet place and rest awhile."

Mark 6:31

JUNE 25-28th, 2026
Maryvale in Valley City

Other Upcoming Retreats

July 24-26, 2026 Couple's Retreat with Dr. Ray Guarendi

July 29-31, 2026 Men's Silent Directed Retreat with Fr. Msgr. Thomas Richter



MARYVALE RETREAT CENTER

3150 116A AVE SE, VALLEY CITY, ND 58072
PHONE (701)845-2864 WWW.MARYVALEND.ORG

LIFE'S MILESTONES



Dennis and Wanda Adams, parishioners of Blessed Sacrament in West Fargo, celebrate their fiftieth anniversary June 11. They were married at St. Jude's in Thompson. They are blessed with three daughters and one grandson.



Ted and Eleanor Harles celebrate their seventieth anniversary June 6. They are parishioners of St. Boniface in Lidgerwood. They are blessed with ten children, 18 grandchildren, and 29 great-grandchildren.



Don and Dorothy (Schneider) Jordan, parishioners of St. Anthony's in Fargo, celebrate their fiftieth anniversary June 12. They were married at Holy Spirit in Fargo. They are blessed with three sons, one daughter and four grandchildren.



Bob and Pam Kuster, parishioners of Holy Family in Grand Forks, celebrated their fiftieth anniversary June 4. They were married in Minot. They are parents of two boys and two grandchildren.



Maynard and Rita Loibl, parishioners of St. Lawrence in Jessie, celebrate their sixtieth anniversary June 11. They were married at St. Francis de Sales in Steele. They were blessed with three children, Steven, Ross, and Bethany; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.



Andrew and Ruth Richard, parishioners of St. Benedict's in Horace, celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary June 17. They were married at St. Benedict's in Wild Rice. They are blessed with three daughters, eight grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren plus three on the way.



Keith and Pam Schrader, parishioners of Transfiguration in Edgeley, were also married at Transfiguration and will celebrate their fiftieth anniversary June 11. They are blessed with two daughters, two sons-in-law, and four grandsons!



Arnold and Rose Seefeld, parishioners of St Cecilia's in Harvey, celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary May 2. They have been blessed with four children, eleven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.



Mary Ellen Berg, parishioner of Saint Anthony's in Mooreton, celebrates her 95th birthday June 30. She is blessed with four children, 11 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild and one on the way. Her husband Alvin, passed away in 2011 after 60 years of marriage.



Clara Horak, a parishioner of St. John the Baptist in Wyndmere, celebrates her 100th birthday June 24. She was married to her husband, Tim for 53 years before his passing in 2008. She is blessed with three daughters and three grandchildren.



Mary Sears, currently a sacristan at Sacred Heart in Carrington, celebrates her 80th birthday June 27. She was married to James from Aneta for 46 years until his death in 2021. Mary has five children, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



Archbishop emeritus Samuel J. Aquila of Denver, the former Bishop of Fargo, celebrates the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood June 5.

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 only accepted for milestones occurring during the month of publication, two months prior, or one month following.

Send photo and text announcement to Susan.Noah@fargodiocese.org or to Diocese of Fargo, *New Earth*, 5201 Bishops Blvd S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104. If you would like your photo returned, please include a self-addressed stamped return envelope (that fits your photo) and phone number. Deadline for the July/Aug. issue is June 23.

Events

Between Linton and Wishek: June 6 Pilgrimage to The Grotto of the Bells. Start at the Bichler Farm located NE of the Grotto, signs easily visible. 9:30 a.m. registration. 10 a.m. Walk and/or drive ATV to assist with transportation. Lunch/fellowship: 12:30 to 1 p.m. Please volunteer with your ATV. For additional information, contact Lori Bichler at bichlers@drtel.net.

Dazey: St. Mary's 121st Eucharistic Procession for the Feast of Corpus Christi June 7, 2026. 10:30 a.m. Mass followed by Eucharistic procession, outdoor rosary, freewill offering meal, fellowship and kids games. Please plan for outdoor activities and weather conditions. St. Mary's Catholic Church, six miles east of Dazey. 1624 115th Ave SE.

Blanchard: Rural Life Celebration June 14. Join Bishop Folda as we invoke God's blessing upon our rural communities. Cheryl and Kurt Elliott Farm 15154 6th St SE. Starts with 4 p.m. Welcome, 4:30 Mass, 5:30 Blessing of Land, Machinery and Animals. 6 p.m. meal. Event is free and open to all. RSVP olpstagnes@midco.net or 701-788-3234. For more information, visit www.fargodiocese.org/rural-life

Carrington: Sacred Heart Parish Feast Day. On Sunday, June 14, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart! Mass at 11 a.m. followed by potluck picnic at the parish hall! Hamburgers and hot dogs provided by the KofC's and Altar Society.

West Fargo:

Holy Cross Church is throwing a going away/retirement party for Fr. Phil Ackerman on Wednesday, June 17 from 6-8 p.m. at the church social hall.

Collar Classic: Priests v. Seminarians Softball exhibition game, June 21 at Elmwood Park, 500 13th Ave W. 5:30 pm picnic with burgers 7 p.m. softball game. Please bring lawn chairs.

Casselton: Retirement celebration for Fr. James Ermer Sunday, June 21 at St. Leo's Church in Casselton. Evening prayer at 4 p.m. followed by a picnic. Hosted by parishes of St. Leo's.

Aneta: Sacred Heart Brunch. Free Will brunch will be held at the Aneta Auditorium on Sunday, June 21 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. All are welcome.

Hankinson / Online: Deepen your prayer life. Join Sr. Mary Ruth for a weekly series, "Lord, Teach Me to Pray," based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Mondays from 6 to 7:15 a.m. at St. Francis Retreat Center(or online). For more information or to register, contact Sr. Mary Ruth: (701) 242-7195 or srmaryruth@scretreats.org.

Aneta: Sacred Heart Brunch. Free Will brunch will be held at the Aneta Auditorium on Sunday, June 21 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. All are welcome.

Crookston, Minn./ Online: Rome Pilgrimage Information Night with the Sister Annella Guild. June 30 7-8 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Crookston. Learn about the Guild's Rome pilgrimage planned for this November. Zoom meeting available. More information at sisterannella.org/rome-pilgrimage

Binford: Camp Summit: Middle School Camp July 12-16. Red Willow Bible Camp 1651 Jacob Rd. An unforgettable Catholic Youth Camp to step away from the noise of everyday life and draw closer to God as we grow together in faith and friendship. \$400/camper, financial assistance available. www.fargodiocese.org/campsummit

Belcourt: St. Ann's Day July 26. Eucharistic rosary procession at 10 a.m. followed by Mass in outdoor grotto. Community meal and bingo to follow. Outdoor fair with lawn games and hot dogs for the kids. Bring your lawn chairs! St. Ann Catholic Church 1115 Louis Riel Drive.

(Continued on next page)

Events(cont.)

Hankinson:

Silent Directed Retreats. July 1-8, and August 12-19. Enjoy daily spiritual direction, our beautiful chapels & grounds, Mass & Adoration (optional) and comfortable accommodations.

Franciscan Sisters Mother-Daughter Days. June 11-13 and July 9-11, 2026. For more information contact Sr. Mary Ruth at srmaryruth@sfcretreats.org. Register at ndfranciscans.org.

A Beginning Experience Weekend. A program for widowed, separated and divorced. June 26-28 at the St. Francis Retreat Center. For more information and an application, contact Bonnie (Fargo) at 701-318-0949 or leave a message at 701-277-8784.

Franciscan Sisters Come & See Weekend. Young women, "Come & See" what life is like as a Hankinson Franciscan. Explore your vocation. June 26-28 and Aug. 21-23. 102 6th St SE, Hankinson. Sign up at our website at ndfranciscans.org/vocation-events.html If you wish to arrange another time, please reach out to Sr. Mary Ruth at srmaryruth@sfcretreats.org

Fargo: Putt for a Purpose: Bishop's 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic. Faith. Fellowship. Fairways. Monday Aug. 3 Rose Creek Golf Course, Fargo. 10 a.m. registration. 11:30 Shotgun Start. Social and dinner begin about 4 p.m. Proceeds benefit Fargo diocese's seminarian education and youth programs. Register online: www.fargodiocese.org/puttpurpose or call 701-356-7928

Moorhead, Minn.: Aug. 8 Sister Annella Guild Centennial Celebration Day. Join us as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB. We will honor her life and witness to the Catholic faith and support her cause for canonization through prayer, fellowship, and celebration. 3:45 p.m. blessing at St. Joseph's Cemetery followed by 5 p.m. Mass with Bishop Cozzens at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church. 6 p.m. Reception at parish hall. Reception ticket \$30/person, please purchase in advance. Register at sisterannella.org/centennial-celebration-day/

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



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 — 1951

Archbishop Muench writes about his sight-seeing with visiting Auxiliary Bishop Leo Dworschak, who flew into Frankfurt from Paris. "The Bishop had two perfect days for his trip to Cologne, Maria Laach, and Treves... The things we saw or heard about the Church in Germany gave us many opportunities, in the hours that we sat together in the car, to chat about affairs in our Diocese. We talked about our building program: churches, hospitals, the Shanley High School, the addition to the Academy at Jamestown, the Student Chapel and Center at the University of North Dakota. The vision and courage of our pastors, the loyalty and generosity of our people are amazing and comforting too. The progress that is being made in the Diocese under unprecedented postwar conditions is truly heartening. The Diocese is in good hands. For me that is a special source of comfort... On June 3 we shall share together in the graces and blessings of the long-awaited day of the beatification of the saintly Vicar of Christ, Pius X. Need it be said that we shall also make it a day of grace and blessing for the priests and people of our beloved Diocese."

50 years ago — 1976

On June 28 at St. Francis Convent in Hankinson 19 Sisters renewed their religious vows in the largest jubilee celebration ever at Hankinson. Bishop Justin Driscoll was the main celebrant of the 4 p.m. Liturgy and Fr. John Anderson, Chancellor, was homilist. Four Sisters were Golden Jubilarians, 13 celebrated 40 years and two were Silver Jubilarians. 16 of these Sisters came to the United States from Germany to help care for the needs of the Church. Many relatives and friends attended the reception, the ceremony and were guests at the dinner that followed the Mass.

20 years ago — 2006

Most Rev. James Sullivan, 76, retired bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo, died June 12, at Rosewood on Broadway, Fargo. James Sullivan was born July 23, 1929 in Kalamazoo, Mich. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 4, 1955 in Lansing. On Sept. 21, 1972, he was appointed titular bishop of Sicesi and auxiliary bishop of Lansing. In April 1985 he was appointed bishop of Fargo. He was installed as the sixth bishop of Fargo on May 30, 1985. Bishop Sullivan retired March 18, 2002 and resided at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fargo before moving to Rosewood on Broadway in spring 2006.

For America’s 250th, U.S. bishops plan consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

By Kevin J. Jones | Assistant editor, *New Earth*

As the United States of America’s 250th anniversary approaches, this month the U.S. Catholic bishops will consecrate the country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They are inviting everyone to join their prayers.

The consecration takes place June 11, the closing day of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) spring assembly, which falls on the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The bishops encourage Catholic parishes to join the consecration and also encourage praying a Novena to the Sacred Heart from June 3-11.

“As we reflect with gratitude on the blessings God has bestowed on our country, our devotion to the Sacred Heart demands that we consider how we might foster truth, justice, and charity in American life,” Archbishop of Portland, Ore. Alexander K. Sample said in a reflection posted on the USCCB website.

“We are called to bring our faith into the actions we take and the lives we lead in our communities. We celebrate the ways the Church has contributed to a more just world, and we invite all in our society to see the face of Christ reflected in each sister and brother,” said the archbishop, who chairs the U.S. bishops’ Committee for Religious Liberty.

“This anniversary and consecration will be a great opportunity to promote the beautiful devotion to the Sacred Heart and to encourage the laity to offer their lives in service to God and their country,” he added.

The devotion’s current form dates back to 17th century France, when Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque had visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus over an 18-month period. In her vision, Jesus told her to promote a feast of the Sacred Heart and gave her 12 promises to all who venerated the Sacred Heart and promoted devotion to it. According to Catholic News Agency, related devotions include a Holy Hour on Thursdays and the reception of the Holy Eucharist on the first Friday each month.

Blessed Pope Pius IX made the Feast of the Sacred Heart universal in 1856.

Pope Francis’ final encyclical *Dilexit nos* praised devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Archbishop Sample noted.

“In contemplating the pierced heart of the Lord, who ‘took our infirmities and bore our diseases,’ we too are inspired to be more attentive to the sufferings and needs of others and confirmed in our efforts to share in his work of liberation as instruments for the spread of his love,” Pope Francis wrote. “As we meditate on Christ’s self-offering for the sake of all, we are naturally led to ask why we too should not be ready to give our lives for others.”

The U.S. bishops approved the consecration at the fall 2025 USCCB plenary assembly. Full materials on the consecration, the novena and other materials on the Sacred Heart are available at the USCCB website’s special section on the American Semiquincentennial “We Hold These Truths” at usccb.org/weholdthesetruths.



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Leo XIV makes Marian pilgrimage on one-year anniversary as pope

By Marco Mancini and Antonio Tarallo | EWTN News

Pope Leo XIV placed his pontificate under the protection of Mary during a visit to two cities in southern Italy on Friday May 8, 2026, the first anniversary of his election to the papacy.

Leo celebrated Mass for an estimated 20,000 people outside the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, whose feast day is May 8, during the day trip to Pompeii and Naples.

“Exactly one year ago,” the pope said in his homily, amid thunderous applause from the assembled faithful, “when the ministry of successor of Peter was entrusted to me, it was precisely the day of the Supplication to the Virgin, this beautiful day of the Supplication to the Virgin of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii! I therefore had to come here, to place my service under the protection of the Holy Virgin.”

“Having then chosen the name Leo places me in the footsteps of Leo XIII, who, among his many merits, also developed a rich magisterium on the holy rosary. Added to all of this is the recent canonization of St. Bartolo Longo, apostle of the rosary,” Leo added.

Before Mass, the pope, who flew about 150 miles from Rome to Pompeii by helicopter, visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii. Despite forecasts of rain, thousands of people filled Bartolo Longo Square from the first light of dawn.

At the shrine, the Holy Father met the “Temple of Charity,” an organization that welcomes and assists people coming from situations of hardship.

“Good morning, Pompeii! Our Mother Mary, our mom, is always with us,” the pope said, informally greeting the faithful who were waiting for Mass. Before the Eucharistic celebration, Leo also greeted the sick and disabled inside the shrine.

The pope’s homily at the outdoor Mass focused on the power of the rosary.

“The Hail Mary repeated in the holy rosary is an act of love,” he said. “Generations of believers have been shaped and safeguarded by this prayer — simple and popular, yet at the same time capable of mystical heights and a treasure chest of the most essential Christian theology.”

He also called the Hail Mary prayer “an invitation to joy.”

“The Hail Mary repeated in the holy rosary is an act of love... [and] an invitation to joy.”
-Pope Leo XIV



Pope Leo XIV greets people inside the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii in Pompeii, Italy, on May 8, 2026.
(Vatican Media)

“It tells Mary, and in her all of us, that upon the ruins of our humanity, tried by sin and therefore always inclined to abuses, oppression, and war, the caress of God has come — the caress of mercy, which in Jesus takes on a human face. Mary thus becomes the mother of mercy.”

“When St. John Paul II proclaimed the Year of the Rosary [2002–2003], he wished to place it in a special way under the gaze of the Virgin of Pompeii,” Leo XIV continued. “Times have not improved since then. The wars still being fought in so many regions of the world call for renewed commitment, not only economic and political, but also spiritual and religious.”

“Peace is born within the heart,” he added. “We cannot resign ourselves to the images of death that the news presents to us every day. St. Bartolo Longo, reflecting on Mary’s faith, called her ‘omnipotent by grace.’ Through her intercession, may an abundant outpouring of mercy come from the God of peace, touching hearts, calming resentments and fratricidal hatred, and enlightening those who bear special responsibilities of governance. No earthly power will save the world, but only the divine power of love.”

At the conclusion of Mass, Pope Leo prayed together with the faithful the traditional Supplication to the Queen of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii. It was written in 1883 by St. Bartolo Longo. It is solemnly recited twice a year, at noon on May 8 and on the first Sunday of October. The supplication was composed in response to the invitation that Pope Leo XIII addressed to Catholics in his first encyclical on the rosary, *Supremi Apostolatus Officio*, calling for a spiritual commitment to confront the evils of society.

This story has been edited for length



‘Baby Rebecca’ story haunts, but what of abortion?



SIDEWALK STORIES

ROXANE B. SALONEN

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

Recently, *The Forum* newspaper reported on a longtime Devils Lake, North Dakota, resident who relocated to Arizona two years ago and has been charged with the murder of her newborn baby 45 years ago in Valley City.

It’s a haunting scenario, no matter the angle. But it’s important to review the case, because it connects to our local pro-life sidewalk ministry.

Here are the facts, according to *The Forum*’s April 13 report: on April 16, 1981 a dead newborn baby girl was found in a wooded area near Valley City State University. An autopsy showed she died of suffocation one to three days before being discovered.

According to the article, “A plastic bag was found over the child’s head, and the infant’s umbilical cord was still attached to the body.” An investigation never identified a suspect or the child’s parents. She was buried with a headstone bearing these words: “Baby Girl Rebecca, Known to God, April 15, 1981.”

For several decades, the case went quiet. But in 2019, as DNA testing became available, authorities exhumed the body hoping to bring closure to the case, reburial of the baby in 2020. A genetic genealogy report from a third party, obtained by investigators, recently linked the baby girl to Nancy Trottier, 65, who was a VCSU student between 1978 and 1982.

According to court documents, the DNA testing shows “with mathematical certainty” that both Nancy and her husband, Gary, are the baby’s biological parents. Nancy has been arrested and extradited to North Dakota, where she is being held at the correctional center in Jamestown until her next hearing.

A newsletter from the North Dakota School for the Deaf and Resource Center, where Nancy worked for 41 years as a paraprofessional, called her “an incredible asset” to the school, noting that she looked forward to retirement and spending more time with her grandkids, golfing and traveling.

What haunts about this case? Everything. That a child died, and in this way, presumably at the hands of her own mother, for one. But as one reviews the details known at this time, so

many questions arise.

I shared the article on Facebook, commenting that while the mother ought to face justice for the alleged crime, many children are killed in our area weekly in a similarly gruesome way through abortion, yet this is sanctioned by civil law.

Because abortion is “shielded from our eyes,” I added, we pretend the child isn’t actually there and can be eliminated. The death goes quietly ignored. “But that doesn’t change that a human being was killed and disposed of. Just like this precious child.” We see it clearly in the headlines, but not in the equally real, but silent, murders happening weekly in our cities.

One friend on my Facebook post asked why the father wasn’t convicted, too. “You can’t tell me he ‘had no idea,’” she said, adding that society “needs to stop letting (men) off the hook.”

True, but it’s a double-edged sword. On the one hand, we prevent men from having a say in abortion, but in doing so, we allow them to relinquish the responsibility for the children they’ve helped bring into being, creating a dangerous Catch-22.

Another wise friend chimed in by noting, “Location of baby doesn’t matter—inside the mother’s body or outside,” adding, “I’m sure she regrets it. So many women do, decades after...”

A commenter on *The Forum* website remarked that in North Dakota, “they let obvious murderers go free but put a bail that is ridiculous for an elderly woman,” adding, “She shouldn’t have done it. But I am sure in her mind, she’s been in her own prison.”

It’s likely that the mother has been living in a private hell. But it’s also twisted to me that she is being charged with murder while there’s no penalty for abortion, which has the exact same result: a dead child. I am not arguing here that women who abort their children should be criminalized, but we need to be logical and consistent.

I am left feeling bereft and befuddled at this case. What were the circumstances? Why did this mom feel so desperate to do this to her child? How has she lived all these years with this on her soul?

But also, how can we have such a rightfully strong response to the death of this babe but not feel similarly about the classroom-size equivalent of our smallest citizens who die at our area’s abortion facility each week?

I pray for justice for Baby Rebecca, but also for mercy for her accused parents if they are remorseful, and that God reaches their souls. With him, there is always hope.

NEW EARTH

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Do you know
where we are?

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in the July/August *New Earth*.



Where in the diocese are we?

Last month's photo is from
St. Stanislaus in Warsaw