

WYOMING CATHOLIC REGISTER

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He is Risen!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

David Dibert-Pexels Photo

Sowing Peace in a Violent World

Bishop Steven Biegler

As I write this column in mid-March, the world is on edge because of Russia's armed aggression and unprovoked war against Ukraine, resulting in thousands killed and millions of refugees. I join my voice with Pope Francis, Orthodox, and Catholic bishops, and urge you to pray for the cessation of violence and for peace to be restored.

I support the statement issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that all people would "contribute generously and

sacrificially to Catholic and other humanitarian agencies" aiding refugees and those who remain in Ukraine. Catholic Relief Society (CRS) is on the ground in Ukraine at dozens of locations as well as in bordering nations, and this is the most effective organization for humanitarian aid. CRS is fully aligned with Catholic teaching, and they network with other international Catholic charitable agencies.

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What we see taking place in Ukraine serves as a metaphor of the collective turmoil throughout the world, which becomes increasingly combative with disordered aggression fueled by misinformation. The media illustrate Russia's attack on Ukraine with photos showing the assault on civilians, hospitals,

schools, and residential structures. Meanwhile, President Putin stated that the goal of the war is to protect people subjected to genocide and for the "de-Nazification" of Ukraine.

Yet, President Zelenskyy is Jewish; his great grandfather and three brothers died in the Holocaust. It would be unthinkable for him to promote a Nazi political agenda! Furthermore, there has been no genocide in Ukraine; it is a vibrant but young democracy, begun in 1991. Nonetheless, the misinformation about the political situation in Ukraine, which fosters confusion and discord, is a pattern throughout the world. Also, the fratricidal war in Ukraine is a sign of the times, as relatives attack relatives.

In our nation, the political discourse is often poisoned by anger, narrow partisan views, and inaccurate news reports. All of this contributes to an ever more contentious and violent society. The Church is not immune to the misinformation and ensuing combativeness. Divergent viewpoints about Catholic teaching, promoted in both secular and some Catholic media, lead to divisions in families, parishes, and the Church.

For example, some Catholics reject the Church's teaching on abortion, while others speak out against Pope Francis regarding his directives on the 1962 Latin Mass. Over the last two years, people have written to me stating that they could not accept Church teaching that taking the COVID-19 vaccine does not promote killing the unborn, even though the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Pope Francis, and bishops throughout the world have taught that receiving the vaccine is in accord with the Catholic faith.

The constant vitriol that peppers countless conversations, and the general sense of distrust held by so many people leads me to ask how we can find the way beyond the misinformation, bickering, and hostility in the world. How can we overcome divisions in the Church, hardened political impasse, and the fratricidal war in Ukraine? What will help us to bring healing after the pandemic? How might we witness to the world as Catholics in *Communion for Mission*, the theme for Vision 2030?

Finding answers to these questions might begin by recalling that we belong to the Mystical Body of Christ. As St. Paul wrote in the First Letter to the Corinthians: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part shares in its joy" (12:13, 26). Our shared suffering is heartbreaking due to the war in Ukraine, as we see millions of people in agony and desolation. The medical term for this is referred pain, which describes the phenomenon of pain perceived at a location other than the site of the source of pain, such as pain in the left shoulder just prior to a heart attack.

That horrible war is not the only cause of referred pain distressing society. Misinformation poisons society at-large, and that poison finds its way into the Mystical Body of Christ, hindering us from living in communion. There is, however, a more insidious influence on the personal level. It is hardening of the heart through individualism. The desire to do things my way. The attitude that I am the ultimate authority.

Right now Catholic individualism is in vogue. An example is when Catholics rejected the consistent teaching of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church from the local Bishop all the way to the Pope, as they did regarding the vaccine for Covid-19. Even as they rejected the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, many saw themselves as conservative. While in reality, a Catholic who rejects any and all authority of the Church has failed to conserve Tradition. In the end, that individual recognizes the self as the ultimate authority, which reflects the rampant individualism in secular society.

In other words, they have chosen an "alternative magisterium" in lieu of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Often, the alternative source self-identified as "true teaching" is a media source that aligns with an individual's personal outlook, or with his or her elite clique. Instead of fostering communion, these individuals or cliques promote elitism and closed groups looking down on others. At times, they mirror the angry strident political discord in society.

Individualism is reactionary and "enemy-centered." It is so easy to react, especially when we are stressed. When we react, we get caught up in hurtful comments or angry outbursts. We focus on how we were offended, and the hurt occupies a central space in our hearts. By thinking about a wrong more than anything else, we live an "enemy-centered" life.

The opposite is a "God-centered" life. This is what Jesus modeled on the cross when he said, "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do*" (Lk. 23:34). He did not react with anger and say, "Father, crush my enemies." Jesus never merely reacted to those who hurt him; rather, he acted out of his relationship with his Father. He was Father-centered. Jesus redeemed the world by being God-centered, doing the will of the Father.

In a world marked by angry strident individualism, we are called to promote reconciliation. Being God-centered cultivates

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SOWING PEACE IN A VIOLENT WORLD, CONTINUED...

communion with others; it brings healing to the Mystical Body of Christ. It fosters harmony in relationships. It is the way to sow peace in a violent world.

Pray for the grace to be God-centered and a person in *communion for mission*. I pray often for the grace not to react to what people do or say, but to act with the goodness of Christ. This is possible only

through daily prayer where I am refreshed by the Spirit and recentered in God. One of the things that the world needs most is leaders grounded in an enduring relationship with the Lord and who imitate the kindness of God.



March 1, 2022: Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are fleeing the war in their country. Hundreds to thousands of people come to the Republic of Moldova (Moldova) every day at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border in search of safety, such as those pictured (at left) at the Palanca border crossing. (*Photo courtesy of Marijn Fiddler/Caritas International*)

Suffering continues both within Ukraine and for those who are fleeing to neighboring countries for safety. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Caritas International partners are on the ground and need immediate support to meet ongoing needs. With your gift, families in Ukraine and the surrounding countries receive food, clothing, transport to safe shelter, cash assistance, counseling, and care for children. To give, go to: <https://www.crs.org/>

Sembrando Paz en un Mundo Violento

Obispo Steven Biegler

Mientras escribo esta columna a mediados de marzo, el mundo está nervioso debido a la agresión armada de Rusia y la guerra no provocada contra Ucrania, que ha provocado miles de muertos y millones de refugiados. Uno mi voz con la del Papa Francisco, los obispos ortodoxos y católicos, y los impulso a rezar por el cese de la violencia y por el restablecimiento de la paz.

Apoyo la declaración emitida por la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de EE. UU. De que todas las personas “contribuirían generosamente y con sacrificio a las agencias humanitarias católicas y de otro tipo” para ayudar a los refugiados y a quienes permanecen en Ucrania. La Sociedad Católica de Socorro (CRS) está presente en Ucrania en docenas de lugares, así como en las naciones limítrofes, y esta es la organización más eficaz para la ayuda humanitaria. CRS está completamente alineado con la enseñanza católica y se conecta con otras agencias caritativas católicas internacionales.

Lo que vemos que ocurre en Ucrania sirve como metáfora de la agitación colectiva en todo el mundo, que se vuelve cada vez más combative con una agresión desordenada alimentada por la desinformación. Los medios ilustran el ataque de Rusia a Ucrania con fotos que muestran el ataque a civiles, hospitales, escuelas y estructuras residenciales. Por su parte, el presidente Putin afirmó que el objetivo de la guerra es proteger a las personas sometidas al genocidio y por la “desnazificación” de Ucrania.

Sin embargo, el presidente Zelenskyy es judío; su bisabuelo y tres hermanos murieron en el Holocausto. ¿Sería impensable para él promover una agenda política Nazi! Además, no ha habido genocidio en Ucrania; es una democracia vibrante pero joven, iniciada en 1991. No obstante, la desinformación sobre la situación política en Ucrania, que fomenta la confusión y la discordia, es un patrón en todo el mundo. Además, la guerra fratricida en Ucrania es un signo de los tiempos, ya que como parientes atacan a parientes.

En nuestra nación, el discurso político a menudo está envenenado por la ira, las opiniones partidistas estrechas y los informes de noticias inexactos. Todo esto contribuye a una sociedad cada vez más conflictiva y violenta. La Iglesia no es ajena a la desinformación y la consiguiente combatividad. Los puntos de vista divergentes sobre la enseñanza católica, promovidos tanto en los medios seculares como en algunos católicos, conducen a divisiones en las familias, las parroquias y la Iglesia.

Por ejemplo, algunos católicos rechazan la enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre el aborto, mientras que otros hablan en contra del Papa Francisco con respecto a sus directivas sobre la Misa en latín de 1962. En los últimos dos años, la gente me ha escrito para decirme que no podían aceptar la enseñanza de

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VIENE DE LA PÁGINA 3...



la Iglesia de que vacunarse contra el COVID-19 no promueve la muerte de los no nacidos, a pesar de que la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe, el Papa Francisco y los obispos de todo el mundo han enseñado que recibir la vacuna está de acuerdo con la fe católica.

El vitriolo constante que salpica innumerables conversaciones,

y la sensación general de desconfianza que tiene tanta gente me lleva a preguntarme cómo podemos encontrar el camino más allá de la desinformación, las disputas y la hostilidad en el mundo. ¿Cómo podemos superar las divisiones en la Iglesia, el estancamiento político endurecido y la guerra fratricida en Ucrania? ¿Qué nos ayudará a traer sanidad después de la pandemia? ¿Cómo podemos testimoniar al mundo como católicos en Comunión para la Misión, el tema de la Visión 2030?

Encontrar respuestas a estas preguntas podría comenzar recordando que pertenecemos al Cuerpo Místico de Cristo. Como escribió San Pablo en la Primera Carta a los Corintios: “Fuimos bautizados para formar un solo cuerpo por medio de un solo Espíritu... Si una parte del cuerpo sufre, todas las demás sufren también; y si una parte recibe atención especial, todas las demás comparten su alegría” (12:13,26). Nuestro sufrimiento compartido es desgarrador debido a la guerra en Ucrania, ya que vemos a millones de personas en agonía y desolación. El término médico para esto es dolor referido, que describe el fenómeno del dolor percibido en un lugar distinto al lugar de la fuente del dolor, como el dolor en el hombro izquierdo justo antes de un ataque al corazón.

Esa horrible guerra no es la única causa del dolor referido que angustia a la sociedad. La desinformación envenena a la sociedad en general, y ese veneno llega al Cuerpo Místico de Cristo, impidiéndonos vivir en comunión. Hay, sin embargo, una influencia más insidiosa en el nivel personal. Es el endurecimiento del corazón a través del individualismo. El deseo de hacer las cosas a mi manera. La actitud de que yo soy la máxima autoridad.

Ahora mismo está de moda el individualismo católico. Un ejemplo es cuando los católicos rechazaron la enseñanza constante

del Magisterio de la Iglesia Católica desde el obispo local hasta el Papa, como lo hicieron con respecto a la vacuna para el Covid-19. Incluso cuando rechazaron el Magisterio de la Iglesia Católica, muchos se vieron a sí mismos como conservadores. Mientras que en realidad, un católico que rechaza cualquier y toda autoridad de la Iglesia ha fallado en conservar la Tradición. Al final, ese individuo se reconoce a sí mismo como la máxima autoridad, lo que refleja el individualismo desenfrenado en la sociedad secular.

En otras palabras, han elegido un “magisterio alternativo” en lugar del Magisterio de la Iglesia Católica. A menudo, la fuente alternativa autoidentificada como “verdadera enseñanza” es una fuente de medios que se alinea con la perspectiva personal de un individuo o con su camarilla de élite. En lugar de fomentar la comunión, estos individuos o camarillas promueven elitismo y grupos cerrados que desprecian a los demás. A veces, reflejan la enojada y fuerte discordia política en la sociedad.

El individualismo es reaccionario y “centrado en el enemigo”. Es tan fácil reaccionar, especialmente cuando estamos estresados. Cuando reaccionamos, nos vemos atrapados en comentarios hirientes o arrebatos de ira. Nos enfocamos en cómo fuimos ofendidos, y el dolor ocupa un espacio central en nuestros corazones. Al pensar en un mal más que en cualquier otra cosa, vivimos una vida “centrada en el enemigo”.

Lo opuesto es una vida “centrada en Dios”. Esto es lo que Jesús modeló en la cruz cuando dijo, “Padre, perdónalos, porque no saben lo que hacen” (Lk. 23:34). No reaccionó con ira y dijo: “Padre, aplasta a mis enemigos”. Jesús nunca reaccionó ante aquellos que lo lastimaron; más bien, actuó a partir de su relación con su Padre. Estaba centrado en el Padre. Jesús redimió al mundo estando centrado en Dios, haciendo la voluntad del Padre.

En un mundo marcado por un individualismo enojado y fuerte, estamos llamados a promover la reconciliación. Estar centrado en Dios cultiva la comunión con los demás; trae sanación al Cuerpo Místico de Cristo. Fomenta la armonía en las relaciones. Es la forma de sembrar paz en un mundo violento.

Oren por la gracia de estar centrados en Dios y ser una persona en comunión para la misión. Rezo a menudo por la gracia de no reaccionar a lo que la gente hace o dice, sino de actuar con la bondad de Cristo. Esto es posible solo a través de la oración diaria donde soy refrescado por el Espíritu y centrado en Dios. Una de las cosas que más necesita el mundo son líderes arraigados en una relación duradera con el Señor y que imiten la bondad de Dios.



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Wyoming Legislative Budget Session 2022 Summary

Deacon Mike Leman, Legislative Liaison, Diocese of Cheyenne

The 2022 Budget Session, February 14 through March 11, was jam packed with legislation and brought with it many ups and downs.

Some important bills unfortunately did not make it through the process. One of those was Medicaid Expansion. Based on the enthusiasm that many legislators had, I anticipated that it would get farther than it did, but the 2/3 introduction vote for a non-budget item was too much to overcome this time, and the attempt to introduce a budget amendment was opposed even by legislators who supported expansion. Many legislators are leery of efforts that may be perceived as “going around” the process. Although that outcome was disappointing, I can certainly respect that perception.

On Tuesday, March 15, Governor Gordon signed HB 92 Abortion Prohibition-Supreme Court Decision, with the amendment allowing the exception for rape and incest. Please note that this bill will not take effect unless the Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*. In the meantime, it is critical that we, who advocate for the right to life for the unborn, support pregnancy resource centers, and look for additional ways to support moms and dads experiencing unexpected pregnancies. If you have not visited the USCCB website *Walking with Moms in Need*, I encourage you to do so. Go to the Legislative Liaison webpage to find the link: <https://dcwy.org/legislative-liaison-and-catholic-social-teaching>.

For me, the most regrettable part of the session was the tone of some of the debates; this includes the tone of some legislators, lobbyists, and news organizations. As the representative of the Diocese of Cheyenne at legislative sessions, I have the challenge of calling people to engage in their civic responsibilities while also modeling “how” to engage as Catholics, which is different than the way the rest of the world is free to engage.

One way to improve debate, as well as general media literacy, is to be aware of when people are using logical fallacies. Below is a list of well-known fallacies and

definitions. I have added examples and commentary to the descriptions. Probably everyone has used one or more of these tactics at some time. What is important to know is that when we resort to using these fallacies, it distracts from recognizing the truth. To the keen observer, the debater who resorts to fallacies reveals that his or her position lacks substance.

Ad Hominem: Rather than debate the merits of one’s position, ad hominem questions the character of the person who holds the position. For example, “Do we really want to take the word of a drug addict?”

False Dilemma: This is a statement that presents only two possible outcomes for a position. The example I chose actually came from the *Cheyenne Tribune Eagle’s* editorial board, “We need to decide whether fairness in sports is more important than being a decent human being.” This statement presents two options: be a decent human being, or vote for the bill, and it also subtly incorporates ad hominem.

Loaded Question: Generally, asking questions shows openness to hearing other viewpoints, which can lead to a more respectful debate. A loaded question, however, has a presumption built into it that makes the question impossible to answer without appearing guilty. “You say you are for Medicaid expansion. When did you decide it was acceptable for the government to irresponsibly spend taxpayer dollars?”

Appeal to Emotion: Emotions that debaters often tap into include fear, envy, hatred, pity, and pride. Sometimes a logically coherent argument may inspire emotion, but the fallacy occurs when emotion is used instead of a logical argument. Most people are affected by emotion, so appeals to emotion are a very common and effective tactic, but they’re ultimately dishonest. Similarly, people can appeal to shame and guilt to win a debate. Sometimes, pointing out facts will make people feel guilty. When we point to any population that is experiencing an injustice, people may feel guilty. That is the purpose of the conscience, but I believe what makes the



difference lies within the intent. If the goal is to debate the issue and win hearts and minds, it is not a fallacy. If the goal is to shame the other person, that is a form of manipulation.

Strawman: When people intentionally misrepresent the other person’s position in such a way that it can be easily dismantled, it makes the debater’s position seem superior. Think of this as the opposite of what Aquinas would do. He articulated the very best argument that the opposition had, before explaining why that position was wrong.

Slippery Slope: This fallacy shifts attention to extreme hypotheticals. This doesn’t mean that setting a bad premise won’t lead to extreme, undesired ends. But to avoid the fallacy, the debater should connect the dots between the premise and that undesired end. Several years ago, I heard one legislator say, “If we repeal the death penalty, the next thing you know, they’ll be letting murderers go scot-free.”

Bandwagon: The flaw in this argument is that the popularity of an idea has absolutely no bearing on its validity. You have probably heard, “Vote yes on this bill, and make sure we are on the right side of history.” (I think I have probably been guilty of this one in the past, without realizing what I was doing.)

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WYOMING LEGISLATIVE BUDGET SESSION, CONTINUED...

Middle Ground: Sometimes the truth does lie between two extremes. But if a premise is fundamentally untrue, a person can't say that the middle ground is true. Halfway between truth and a lie is still a lie. And the reason lies are so deceptive is because often a kernel of truth is found within them.

Now for my disclaimer. I understand all of these fallacies, but I am as tempted as

anyone else to resort to them when I sense I may not be making a strong enough case. The goal is to help each other, including me, improve the way we engage in debate. The goal is to better recognize when our tactics become an obstacle to the truth, rather than leading us to the truth. And in the process, we will model that "how" we debate is every bit as important as the topic we are debating.

To sign up for Wyoming Legislation Action Alerts and Updates, go to the Legislative Liaison webpage:

dcwy.org/legislative-liaison-and-catholic-social-teaching

Parish and School Updates

Corpus Christi parish report

Jane Abernathy, Office Administrator, Corpus Christi, Newcastle

Corpus Christi parish is busy! In addition to our ongoing sacramental preparation and religious education sessions for children and youth, several adult parishioners recently spent several weeks studying morality and Theology of the Body topics.

After having purchased a lovely new Yamaha Clavinova for music ministry, we are now preparing to improve the interior of the church with new carpet and changes to the sanctuary space this year. Exterior work is also planned for the summer.

Members of our Pastoral Council hosted two Synod listening sessions, which identified many positive feelings about our parish and some challenges as well. Parishioners love our beautiful church and the active spirituality found here. They appreciate Father Brian and our deacons, as well as the many parishioners who are involved in Right to Life activities and in helping those in our local community who are in need.



Some challenges identified during Synodal sessions include: activities for and increased involvement of teens and young adults, outreach to those who no longer attend Mass, and encouraging more people to get involved in the liturgical ministries and parish activities. The Pastoral Council is now discussing the next phase of the Synod 2021 - 2023 process.

After a two-year hiatus, the Catholic Women's group hosted its annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner on March 13 to a large and appreciative crowd (see the photo above).

With warmer weather in the forecast, Father Brian soon will be training for three 100-mile races this summer!

Parish and School Updates always are welcome!

For more information or to submit your update, send email to Diana Marie Waggener: dwaggener@dcwy.org.

Parish and School Updates

Church of Saint Ann Youth Group enjoys bonfire

Jaden Campbell, high school senior, Church of Saint Ann, Saratoga



Pexels Photo

For the past seven years, Saint Ann's Catholic Church Youth Group has participated in a bonfire event put on by locals, Jan and Bill Young.

This year, the Youth Group met the Youngs at their ranch and were treated to a tractor ride in the snow to the bonfire.

The group enjoyed chili, hot cocoa, and s'mores as they sat before the fire, and were able to spend time with one another and enjoy the winter weather.

Before eating, Father Jason led the group in prayer and allowed everyone to consider their relationship with God. The Youth Group is greatly appreciative of the Youngs for this yearly bonfire and hope to do it again next year.

Cathedral of Saint Mary hosts youth choir event

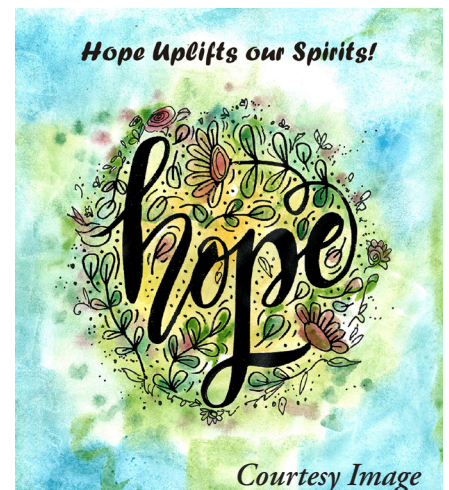
Patrick Stolz, Director of Music, Cathedral of Saint Mary, Cheyenne

For the past three years, I envisioned having a city-wide Festival of Youth Choirs from various denominations. The idea came about after the cathedral hosted the Rocky Mountain Chorister Guild Festival in 2018, in which church choirs from the Rocky Mountain region, including a children's choir and a youth choir, came together to participate in a prayer service with musical offerings, and congregational singing of traditional hymns.

Once the cathedral hosted this event, I began planning for a possible city-wide event. Due to COVID, the event was canceled in 2020 and took a hit also in 2021.

This year, I invited Ms. Paula Egan-Wright, teacher at Saint Mary's School, to encourage children from her choirs to participate with the Parish Youth choir. Not only did Paula agree to have them participate, but she designed the logo (see the image below), which was used on T-shirts, the cover of the program, and choir folders.

The theme for the event was "Hope Uplifts our Spirits." The readings, universal prayer, and homily reflected on this theme. Musical offerings included, "Come, Christians Join to Sing," "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee," "Spiritual Medley," "Where Can we Find Peace?" and "Everybody's Got a Place in the Choir." Paula also commissioned two songs that she composed, "Hope will Get us Through" and "You are My Hope."



Courtesy Image

Activities at Holy Name Catholic School, Sheridan



Top left: Sister Bernadette and Sister Monica, Salesian Sisters of Saint Bosco, pose with a student during a visit. **Top Right:** Nothing beats skiing in the Big Horn Mountains for physical education class. **Bottom Center:** Holy Name Catholic students, brothers in Christ, enjoy a moment after morning prayer.

(Photos courtesy of Mary Margaret Legler, Principal)

Seminarian Profile: Anthony Richter

Printed with permission from Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary

Anthony Richter grew up surrounded by Catholicism. His grandfather, once a seminarian, ended up raising a family of 14 children, including his father, as well as two uncles who became priests. His mother's side was no less impressive, as she was one of 13 kids. Everyone, to some degree, is still practicing the faith, so it should be no surprise that Richter is discerning a life in service of the Lord. But his road to Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary (IHMS) wasn't a straight one.

Richter, the only Wyomingite at IHMS, admitted that as much as he identified as Catholic, early on, it wasn't personal to him. He likened it to identifying with a political party.

"I knew all the talking points to defend the faith, to provide the right answers," he says. "But I listened to a talk a few months ago, saying that the truth isn't a collection of arguments or the right positions to hold in a certain argument. Rather, the truth is a person, and I don't think I understood that for a long time."

Ever since third grade, Richter loved science, so following high school graduation, he enrolled in the community college in his hometown, Gillette, for a year before transferring to the South Dakota School of Mines to pursue his goal of becoming a mechanical engineer. However, the summer before the move to South Dakota, Richter took "a gigantic step" in learning to make his faith more personal and not, as he says, "something you just do on Sunday."

That summer, Richter attended a retreat organized by his uncle (the priest) for him and several of his cousins. Each man in the family experiences this retreat sometime following high school graduation, and it was a chance for Richter to get to know his other relatives and simply spend time in fraternity.

"The example from a lot of my older cousins and my uncles is really good," he says. "It's a fantastic and beautiful experience to be a part of. I love the big family experience."



*Photo courtesy of
Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary*

While in college, he agreed to take part in a seminary visit, mostly because he was part of a discernment group. He didn't think much of it; after all, he was dating a young woman at the time, but he wanted to be a leader for the younger men who attended, so he followed through on the commitment.

"I was thinking, 'no, this isn't what this is going to be,'" he says with a laugh. "I'm just here for the other guys."

Halfway through the visit, however, he received a text from his girlfriend, asking jokingly if he'd become a priest yet. "I was just like, 'no,' and she said, 'well darn, because you'd be a good one,'" Richter remembers. "That was kind of a freeing moment."

Still, Richter did not experience that instance of clarity, but instead, a more gradual realization that he should apply to enter seminary, so following his sophomore year of college, he took that important step. Once he made that decision—and really committed to the idea—the excitement and anticipation grew.

"There was so much peace about the decision and prayer," he says. "This is what it is, and it's going to be great."

While discerning at IHMS, Richter is mindful of something a pastor from his home parish once told him. "You're a son

before you're a father, and especially at this level (of formation), it's about learning to let yourself be loved," Richter notes. "I think that's the lesson I've really had to learn, that I can't really do much of anything to earn it. I've had to sit with and accept my identity as a beloved son. It's taken almost a year of just slowly working through and breaking down your preset ideas of who God is, and your image of God has to be broken down to realize that He is all-loving, and you're loved no matter where you're at or where you're from."

Richter, though considered a senior, will return to IHMS to finish his studies at Saint Mary's University and IHMS.

"The fraternity and community of the seminary is unlike any other," he says. "The authenticity of men when the central focus is the same, when you're all coming to love Christ in a deeper way—the depth of relationships that comes from that is just incredible. Being around these guys has helped mold and shape me."

What is Walking with Moms in Need?

Pregnant and parenting moms in need are in our parishes and our neighborhoods.

Walking with Moms in Need is a USCCB program that helps Catholic parishes and communities "walk in the shoes" of local pregnant and parenting women in need.

Everyone should know how to help moms in difficult circumstances. While not trying to turn Catholic parishes into pregnancy centers, we can support local pregnancy centers where they exist, and we can also find and share other resources with pregnant and parenting women.

To learn more, go to:
www.walkingwithmoms.com/

Joined to God's people: Ministry for the ministers

Joseph Wotawa, Director of Pastoral Formation

and Theresa J. Meuer, Associate Director of Pastoral Formation: Youth and Vocations, Diocese of Cheyenne

“Tend to your humanity” is an encouragement that the former rector of the Jesuit Community of Santa Clara University’s divinity school would share with his brother Jesuits while on retreat.

The simplicity of this statement can have multiple effects. For a busy minister of the Church, a first response might be, “I don’t have time.” Another might respond, “Yes, but I’d rather learn new skills.” Both comments have emerged from people who care deeply about the life of the Church and the teaching of our faith, but they can also serve as warning signals of a troubled spiritual life. Another insight from a professor of moral theology at the same school is that if a minister does not prioritize prayer, the quality of the person’s life and ministry will deteriorate. Even Jesus stepped away in solitude or with his inner circle to pray.

Lay ministers bring with them great zeal, connection to their communities, and a desire to serve God and the Church in a particular way. The act of serving in a public role, however, makes taking time to retreat and spend time with Christ in a more focused manner – time wherein they need not produce or accomplish anything – an essential aspect of sustaining their personal lives and ministries.

To meet this need of lay ministers, the Office of Pastoral Formation has begun offering its first retreat series: “Joined to God’s Holy People.” This retreat focuses on what God does for us in baptism. To use a refrain that many Black Catholic parishes use, retreats aim to remind lay ministers of “who they are and whose they are.”

When we remember what God does in baptism, we remember that Christ incorporates us into himself. We share in Christ’s offices of priest, prophet, and king, and we have an unbreakable connection to God’s people. This focus on baptism brings retreatants to the beginning of the story of salvation that God works in their lives, and at the same time it helps them look outward and know that God joins the salvation stories of others to their own.

Among the selections from the Order of Baptism with which retreatants pray and discuss in spiritual conversation, the following has particular importance to the goal of the day:

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
has freed you from sin,
given you new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,
and joined you to his people.
He now anoints you with the Chrism of salvation,
so that you may remain as a member of Christ, Priest,
Prophet and King,
unto eternal life.

God joins us to his people in the same act of freeing us from sin. No one has singular responsibility for her or his spiritual well-being, and as parishioners, we expect that our ministers will have the opportunity to sustain themselves spiritually. Granting our leaders this permission and opportunity to spend time away and tend to the humanity that God has given them allows them to, in turn, help us live similarly.

At our first retreat weekend, retreatants responded to the question: “what are you seeking today?” The responses reflected the needs and aches of our ministers and volunteers. Many echoed the desire to sit down with community. Some came to learn, several others seeking rest. One attendee who serves many different ministries said, “I have my finger in so many pies, and I am always the one making the pie. Today, I am so excited to just eat the pie.” She spoke to the ache of our ministers to literally be fed in the spiritual sense.

So many have not had the opportunity to reflect on the beauty of our baptism or have simply become numb to the gift. In this retreat, ministers feel awakened to the sense of commissioning, being chosen, and being family. Many also have heard that God has given them the strength to do what he has asked, and that they are not asked to do everything alone.

The Office of Pastoral Formation commits to caring for the generous souls that continuously give of themselves and their substance to serve the Church. This retreat series will not be the last opportunity for lay ministers to fill their cups, and we will continue to serve those who serve others. We just ask that you prioritize your prayer life and wellbeing to hear the Lord say, “with you I am well-pleased.”

**The Diocese of Cheyenne annual appeal
begins in all parishes April 30/May 1.**

2022
Living and Giving
In Christ Unity through
Diocesan Ministries

*Gifts to Living and Giving in Christ are received in gratitude,
responsibly managed, and returned to each giver, as those funds
support the infrastructure behind every parish in the
Diocese of Cheyenne.*

*As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one
another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.
(1 Peter 4:10)*

At the service of communion: A new way to journey with couples

Joseph Wotawa, Director of Pastoral Formation, Diocese of Cheyenne

Serving in parishes across the United States, has given me the opportunity to witness some common ways people interact with their parishes.

One of the most frequent responses I have noticed occurs when working with an engaged couple and I, or another minister, introduce the topic of preparation for marriage.

Often, the couples' response is silence, followed not long after by delicate, precise, and non-descript wording that indicates they will comply with what the parish asks of them.

I do not blame couples who have had this response.

In my experiences, people develop their thoughts about their parishes in much the same way that people develop opinions in small towns: they talk to each other. If their friends have had positive experiences, couples will develop their initial expectations based off of those. If their friends feel like they had to "jump through hoops" to celebrate matrimony, then engaged couples will develop reluctance and guarded compliance in how they prepare to celebrate matrimony.

For as many times as priests, deacons, and lay ministers experience couples who have fear or hesitancy about preparation for marriage, just as often parishes experience the reality that couples do not return to celebrate Eucharist with them after celebrating matrimony.

Couples experience hesitance, and parishes experience absence. Neither reality emerges from ill will or malintent, but both experiences nevertheless remain.

A difficult consideration emerges: how to support couples as they journey toward a healthy and holy marriage in a way that does not burden them or greet them with judgment.

Pope Francis, in the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, quotes a 2007 text from the International Theological Commission that helps re-frame the situation in our Church:

"At times we find it hard to make room for God's unconditional love in our pastoral activity. We put so many conditions on mercy that we empty it of its concrete meaning and real significance. That is the worst way of watering down the Gospel. It is true, for example, that mercy does not exclude justice and truth, but first and foremost we have to say that mercy is the fullness of justice and the most radiant manifestation of God's truth. For this reason, we should always consider 'inadequate any theological conception which in the end puts in doubt the omnipotence of God and, especially, his mercy.'"

Rather than expect couples to have perfect lives, we can receive them in a way that builds trust and communicates God's mercy. Relationships grow and change, and



Pexels Photo

mercy remains a foundational disposition that the Church can impart. Modeling that mercy for couples as they prepare to marry helps them for the rest of their lives.

On February 14, Bishop Steven Biegler promulgated new Instructions for marriage that support this vision of formation for married life. These Instructions describe new ways of building trust and drawing the people of God closer together in a way that helps our Church live what the *Catechism* states namely, that marriage is "at the service of communion." To read these Instructions, go to the Administrative Handbook, Book Four 1100 at <https://dcwy.org/administrative-handbook>



Pictured above is Deacon Seth Hostetler during the priestly ordinations of Fathers Dan Kostelc and Linh Vu, June 24, 2021, The Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist. (Denise Hawkins Photo)

The Diocese of Cheyenne is Pleased to Announce
the
Priestly Ordination
of
Deacon Seth Hostetler

Friday, May 27, 2022
2 p.m.
Cathedral of Saint Mary

Summary of diocesan finances

Dan Placke, Chief Financial Officer, Diocese of Cheyenne

Due to the generous support of the faithful, the Diocese of Cheyenne (DOC) is financially sound. As shown in Exhibit 1 (at right), the change in DOC's Net Assets was an increase of \$1.2 million. However, as calculated in Exhibit 2 (below, at right), the net cash from operations was \$264,000 including \$282,000 in CARES Act funding. Without such funding, DOC would have operated at a deficit. This CARES Act funding is included in Other Income in Exhibit 1 and drives the increase in this line item from the prior year.

Thanks to the generous support of Catholics across the diocese, DOC recently reached the 97 percent mark of the 2021 *Living and Giving in Christ* goals.

Attaining the goal is critical for sustaining and growing the ministries that the Chancery Office provides to the diocese. In addition, the Wyoming Catholic Ministries Foundation (WCMF) and the Catholic Extension Society continue to provide the largest grant- and endowment-sourced funding to DOC.

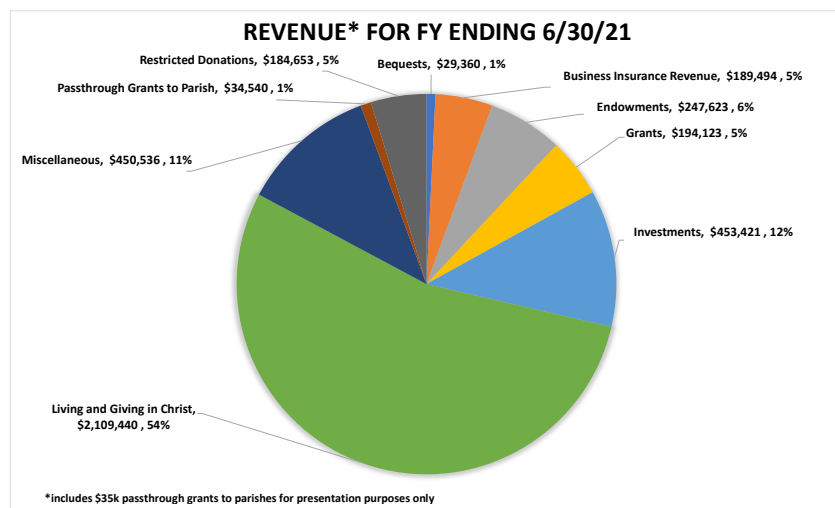
Pie charts on the facing page illustrate Revenue and Expenses for this past fiscal year.

A copy of the full audit, complete with notes to the financial statements, is available at <https://dcwy.org/office-of-finance>.

Direct questions or requests to Dan Placke, PO Box 1468, Cheyenne, WY 82003, (307) 638-1530 ext. 111.

Exhibit 1				
DIOCESE OF CHEYENNE				
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR: 7/01/2020 - 6/30/2021				
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total Fiscal Year 2021	Total Fiscal Year 2020*
Revenue and Support				
Contributions	\$ 98,081	\$ 57,764	\$ 155,845	\$ 410,914
Living & Giving In Christ	986,399	1,123,041	2,109,440	1,884,081
Grant/Program Revenue, Net of Pass-through Payments	27,028	506,010	533,038	556,194
Investment Income	466,749		466,749	291,167
Other Income	593,578		593,578	313,262
Net Assets Released From Restrictions	1,496,828	(1,496,828)	-	-
Total Revenue and Support	\$ 3,668,663	\$ 189,987	\$ 3,858,650	\$ 3,455,618
Expenses				
Evangelization and Outreach			501,945	519,554
Vocations, Seminarian and Diaconate Formation			411,459	366,594
Other Program Services			126,823	148,204
Chancery			837,035	881,467
Management and General			608,902	1,483,396
Fundraising			146,160	155,232
Total Expenses			2,632,324	3,554,447
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS			\$ 1,226,326	\$ (98,829)
*Certain reclassifications have been made on the Statement of Activities for the fiscal year 2020 to be consistent with the classifications adopted for the fiscal year 2021, with no effect on change in net assets.				
Please go to the website at https://dcwy.org/office-of-finance for notes and the statement of financial position as well as for the complete audited financial report.				

Exhibit 2	
DIOCESE OF CHEYENNE	
CASH FROM OPERATIONS	
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR: 7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021	
	Total Fiscal Year 2021 (Rounded)
Increase in Net Assets	\$ 1,226,000
Primary Adjustments for Deriving Cash from Operations*:	
Minus Unrealized Gains	(363,000)
Minus Decrease in Post-retirement Clergy Benefit Obligation	(221,000)
Add Depreciation	106,000
Cash from Operations	748,000
Less Cash Used In Renovation of the Future Chancery Office	(484,000)
Cash from Operations Less Renovation Costs**	\$ 264,000
*Fluctuations in other assets and liabilities are not considered here	
**Includes \$282,000 in CARES Act funding; without such, DOC would have operated at a deficit	



Revenue

Living and Giving in Christ (54 percent)

This appeal funds the Bishop and his staff to provide the infrastructure behind all of the parishes—doing what single parishes could not do alone and enabling them to function.

Endowments (6 percent) and Grants (5 percent)

Funds totaling \$442,000 were received from the Wyoming Catholic Ministries Foundation (WCMF), Catholic Extension Society, Catholic Home Missions, and other grant funding sources.

Business Insurance Revenue (5 percent)

The Diocese of Cheyenne (DOC) received nearly \$190,000 in insurance premiums and insurance related items from parishes and schools. Most of this revenue was offset by expenses for submitted property damage claims throughout the diocese.

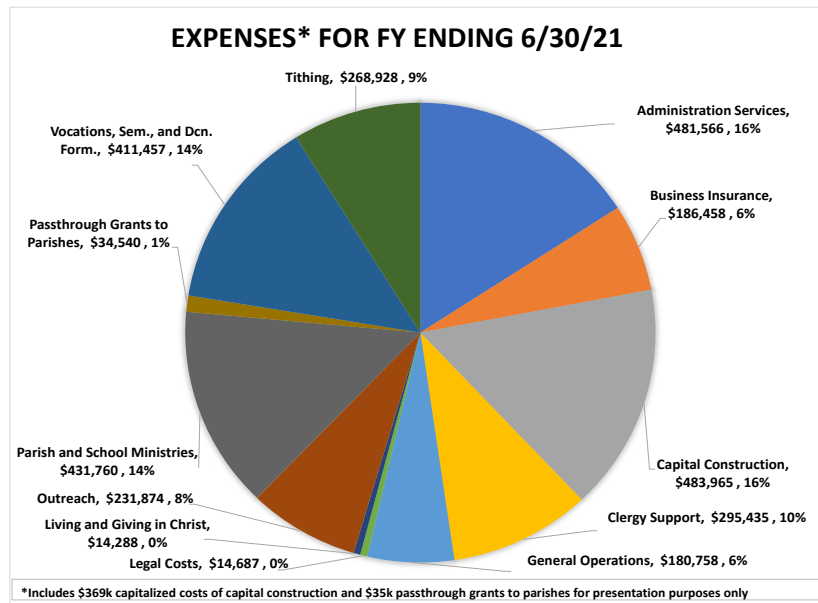
Expenses

Capital Construction (16 percent)

In 2017, DOC purchased a building at 2020 Capitol Avenue to be the future Chancery Office. This project is being done frugally over the course of years. Costs incurred for 2021 included primarily demolition, exterior polishing, and roofing.

Clergy Support (10 percent)

Clergy Support includes costs incurred supporting clergy throughout the diocese. Examples are the costs of the Office of the Bishop,



support of substitute priests, support toward the Latin American sisters' ministry in Casper, and the cost of the unfunded health care benefit plan for retired incardinated clergy.

Parish and School Ministries (14 percent)

Funding for legislative liaison, pastoral ministries, catholic schools, the Tribunal Office, campus ministries, and Hispanic ministries.

Vocations, Seminarian and Diaconate Formation (14 percent)

These expenses consist of the Office of Vocations, seminarian education, and diaconate formation.

Tithing (9 percent)

The DOC contributes 10 percent of the annual *Living and Giving in Christ* appeal total to national collections and to not-for-profit state, national, and international entities. An additional 5 percent of the 2020 *Living and Giving in Christ* gifts was donated for COVID-19 relief efforts.

Outreach (8 percent)

This includes the *Wyoming Catholic Register* and giving \$100,000 to Catholic Charities of Wyoming.

Administration Services (16 percent)

These are the expenses for primarily the Offices of Finance, Parish Services, and the Chancellor, as well as information technology costs.

“Stewardship is not about giving money;
it is about giving everything.”
~Unknown

A message from the Office of the Chancellor

Jean Chrostoski, Chancellor, Diocese of Cheyenne



Courtesy Photo

First of all, let me say, how blessed I feel to be working for the Diocese of Cheyenne. I began my role in October 2019 and have found each day to be both rewarding and challenging at the same time. As the saying goes—if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life.

I am often asked what the duties of a chancellor are in the diocese. In the Diocese of Cheyenne, the chancellor assists with the governance and administration of the diocese and serves as the principal ecclesiastical notary, as well as a notary public. As the diocesan archivist, the chancellor gathers, arranges, and safeguards the acts of the curia in the diocesan archives.

The chancellor often has other duties at the discretion of the bishop and vicar

general. Practically, the smaller the diocese, the more diverse is the role of the chancellor. In the Diocese of Cheyenne some of these responsibilities include drafting and receiving Letters of Suitability, management of the Administrative Handbook, participation on the Clergy Assignment Council, Safe Environment coordinator, and case manager for the Diocesan Review Board.

In this column, I would like to draw your attention to the Diocese of Cheyenne website www.dcw.org. Offices within the Chancery Office, led by the Office of Communications, have been working very hard to make this site user-friendly and to be a resource for all the People of God whom we serve. If you click on the link for the Chancellor page, you will find the Administrative Handbook, which is a work in process.

The Administrative Handbook is similar to a policy manual in other organizations. If you are interested in various protocols of the diocese, the Administrative Handbook section would be the place to start. If you do not find what you are looking for, please feel free to contact me.

Likewise, the diocese has many resources posted under the Safe Environment page and will keep those updated for you. The diocese provides safe environment training to all of its clergy, employees, and volunteers. Annually, the diocese is audited to assure that it is in compliance with this training.

The diocese is also required to report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) any allegations that have been made and the status of those allegations. The diocese has a Diocesan Review Board, which meets no less than four times a year. This review board currently has five lay members, including a pediatrician; a circuit court judge; a retired law enforcement investigator; a licensed professional counselor, specializing in children who have experienced trauma; and a founder of a local advocacy organization.

The role of the Diocesan Review Board is to provide the Bishop of Cheyenne with added perspective and consultation regarding allegations and the procedures related to the prevention and processing of those allegations of the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. If you know someone who has been a victim of sexual abuse and this victim is a minor or a vulnerable adult, please feel free to contact me, regardless of who the alleged abuser might be. We can help locate services for any individual who needs help.

And finally, as the archivist, any historical information you have regarding your parish or diocese is always welcomed.

If at any time I can be of service, please don't hesitate to call me at 307-638-1530, ext. 105 or email me at jchrostoski@dcwy.org.

WELCOME TO THE DIOCESE OF CHEYENNE

We the Catholic Community in the state of Wyoming, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, celebrate the sacraments of salvation, and invite people into a personal relationship with Christ, through prayer, worship, and service of God and neighbor.

[Learn More](#)

Visit the Diocese of Cheyenne website at: <https://dcwy.org/>

Follow us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/dioceseofcheyenne/>

Follow us on Instagram!

<https://www.instagram.com/dioceseofcheyennewy/>

Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary visit 2021

Theresa J. Meuer, Associate Director of Pastoral Formation: Youth and Vocations, Diocese of Cheyenne

For those who don't know me, I have had the honor of working for the diocese since October 2021. After serving many years in parish youth ministry, I have the privilege of working to help support and build up our young Church and the ministers who serve. Part of my work is to help build up the "Culture of Discernment" for vocations. How different would our world look if all holy young men and women asked the radical, counter-cultural questions: "Could God be calling me to holy orders or religious life?" and, "Lord, what are *your* plans for my life?"

This past November, I accompanied 13 young men on a visit to Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary. With Father Steve Titus (Director of Vocations) and Father Brian Hess (Associate Director of Vocations), my husband and I helped pilot a three-vehicle caravan with young men from different parts of Wyoming to Winona, Minnesota. These young men are outstanding witnesses of discipleship and had the courage to ask these counter-cultural questions.

These young men are devout, intelligent, and likable. Some are athletic, some are jokesters, some are musicians. They all are unique, all bearing the image of God, and all brave enough to invite the Lord into their lives. This 12-plus hour trip brought



Courtesy Photo

about laughter and community, and gave these young men a great chance to have spiritual conversations. And, of course, we also had some fun that included visiting the Jolly Green Giant and playing ping-pong and basketball with the seminarians. (Just a side note: Father Steve still holds his own on the basketball court!) All the men on this visit were at various stages in life and discernment, but their diversity enriched the experience.

A visit to seminary is like a cross between a college visit and going on a first date.

Just as you must date someone to discern marriage, you need to get to know the consecrated states in life. By participating in this experience, our young discerners were able to see what seminary is like, hear the call of God in the stories of seminarians, and allow this experience to clarify how God is speaking in their own lives. For a few, it magnified the attraction. For others, it was what they needed to hear to pursue other paths. Not all of these men will attend seminary. And not all men truly called to seminary will be called to the priesthood. Discernment done well will lead to peace and simply to the next right step.

To all of our young Church, I say: you owe it to yourself to honestly ask the question whether you might be called to the priesthood or to religious life. It is the most radical and awesome move you can make in a wildly self-obsessed culture. God always wants what is best for us and he knows where we will truly be fulfilled. Only he knows the depths of who we were created to be, but so many of us are afraid to trust God and allow him to be enough to fulfill us. If you give your life to God, he will bless you one-hundredfold.

Trust that the Lord is enough for you! For if God is not enough, nothing and no one ever will be.

The Chancery Office welcomes Heather Rhoads

Heather Rhoads, the new accounts receivable/data entry specialist, recently joined the Office of Finance.

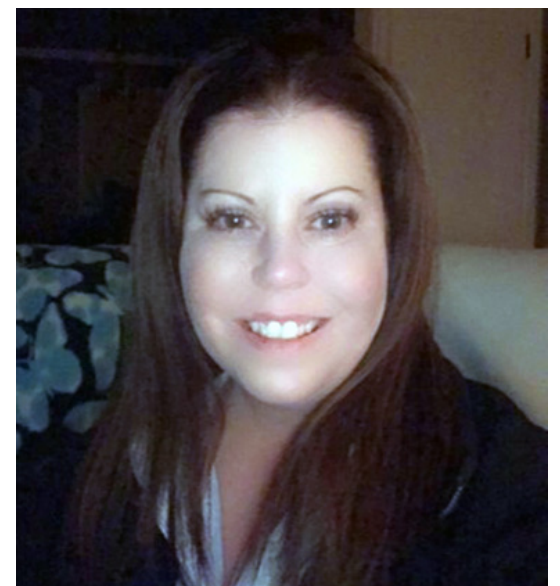
Heather was born and raised in Cheyenne and is the only child to Mark and the late Pam Sulzer. She graduated from Central High School in 1996.

After working at the Airport Golf Club for 18 years, she changed careers. "I was blessed to work a couple years for Catholic Charities of Wyoming, helping those in need," she says.

Heather has been married to her husband Willy since December 2009, and their fur baby is a miniature Australian Shepard named Oreo.

She enjoys fishing with her dad and golfing with her husband and friends. She also likes watching sports and is a Cubs, Chiefs, and Notre Dame fan.

"I am very excited to start a new career at the diocese," Heather says.



Courtesy Photo

Diocese of Cheyenne Prayer for Vision 2030 Pastoral Planning

Loving Father, we praise you for sending your Son as the
Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.
By the Light of your Holy Spirit, guide our pastoral planning.
Open our minds to your vision and mission.

Refresh us with the spirit of wisdom, understanding, right
judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence,
and fear of the Lord.

May the fire of your Spirit enflame the hearts
of the disciples in the Diocese of Cheyenne.

Help us to be shepherds after the heart of Jesus,
who came to seek out and save the lost.

May your Spirit impel us to make disciples of all nations.

As we recall how the Risen Lord commissioned Peter
to "tend my sheep," may we be mindful of the least
brothers and sisters of Jesus; the hungry and homeless, the
sick and sinners, prisoners, and immigrants.

Show us how to be a field hospital for those on the margins,
like your Son who was sent
"to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim
liberty to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let
the oppressed go free" (Luke 4:18).

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen



Register today!



REDEEMING ADMINISTRATION with Ann Garrido

Most of our jobs--whether we work for the church
or in the business world--have some degree of
administrative work involved in them. We often talk
about this aspect of our work with some disdain: It
takes us away from the work that we most want to
be doing! But opportunities for spiritual growth
abound, even in the most unexpected of places.

June
9-10
2022

1pm-5pm | 9am-5pm
Thursday | Friday

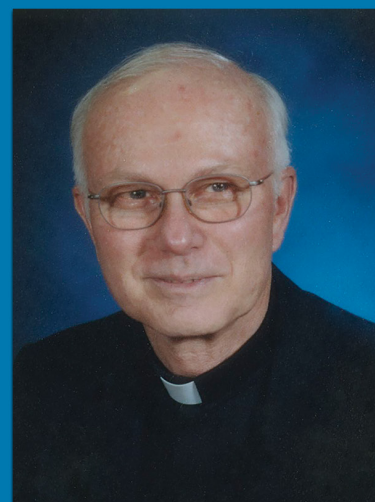
TERRASANCTA.ORG/REDEEMING

Terra Sancta Retreat Center | Rapid City, South Dakota | 605-716-0925



It's true!

Father Mike Carr is turning
80 on May 30
and celebrating 54 years of
priesthood on May 29.



He will celebrate Mass at St. Joseph's parish, Cheyenne
Saturday, May 28 at 5 p.m. and Sunday, May 29 at 8 a.m.

A reception will be held at the
Kiwanis Community House
4603 Lions Park Drive, Cheyenne
Saturday, May 28
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

No gifts please.

In lieu of gifts, donations to St. Joseph's Food Pantry
or St. Joseph's Society are welcome.

Who are the Secular Franciscans?

Say "Yes"

*Visit the Secular Franciscans,
Get to Know Us and*

Ask Yourself "Is God calling me?"

1-800-FRANCIS

www.secularFranciscansUSA.org

In Wyoming Francis1003Saint@gmail.com

