



Dakota Catholic Action

Reporting on Catholic action in western ND since 1941

Public association established

First-ever focused on Montessori education

By Sonia Mullally
DCA Editor

The Bismarck Diocese is home to the very-first public association in the world dedicated to the Montessori method of education.

Bishop Kagan established the Servants of the Children of Light, a Public Association of the Christian Faithful for Women in view of becoming a religious institute of diocesan rite. The new public association is dedicated to contemplative prayer and focused on Catholic Montessori education.

The foundress and first member, Julie Jacobson, serves as a catechist in the atrium at the Christ the King Catholic Montessori School. She's taken the new religious name Sister Chiara Thérèse and received her habit during an investiture Mass with Bishop Kagan on Oct. 1. She will take her first vows on Jan. 3, the Feast of the Epiphany. There, her white veil will be replaced with a black one signifying that she is professed.

Historic development

This is a historic development for the diocese and for Catholic Montessori education.

The Italian physician and educator, Maria Montessori, is best known for the philosophy of education, bearing her name, that she studied and perfected more than 100 years ago. The Servants of the Children of Light is the very-first in the world devoted to the Montessori method of education.

Montessori's method was founded on the observation that children who have the freedom to act independently



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

Bishop Kagan bestows a blessing upon Sr. Chiara Thérèse, the foundress and first member of the newly-established Servants of the Children of Light during the investiture Mass.

in their learning space can succeed based on their personal educational needs. The guide's role is to remove obstacles to this natural development and provide the children with opportunities to move forward and grow. Children become independent thinkers and problem-solvers through a hands-on learning method when they work at their

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Catholic giving event Dec. 1-3

Bishop David Kagan and Bishop John Folda have announced a special giving opportunity for all Catholics in North Dakota called #GiveNDCatholic. This first-ever, joint fundraising event for the Diocese of Bismarck and the Diocese of Fargo gives all Catholics in North Dakota an opportunity to support their favorite Catholic organizations and charities on Dec. 1-3.

A designated, secure website link will be created and featured on both dioceses' websites which will allow anyone to click and choose Catholic organizations and charities being highlighted by each diocese. Both bishops have selected the Catholic organizations and charities they wanted to focus on for this inaugural #GiveNDCatholic event.

This special three-day donation event helps kick off the charitable season, promotes year-end giving and brings the North Dakota Catholic Community together to give thanks for all the blessings God has bestowed upon them and an opportunity to share their blessings with good Catholic organizations and charities. The event is being held at the same time as the #GivingTuesday event, which is a 24-hour, global day of online giving held on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

An exciting benefit of donating to this inaugural #GiveNDCatholic event is that \$25,000 has been secured to be used as matching gifts for the first \$25,000 raised in each diocese. Donations of any size are allowed, and all donations qualify for a charitable tax contribution. Donations may be made online or mailed directly to each diocese. More information and a list of the Catholic organizations and charities will appear in the next issue of the *Dakota Catholic Action*.



Sister Chiara Thérèse after the investiture Mass on Oct. 1.

A LOOK INSIDE



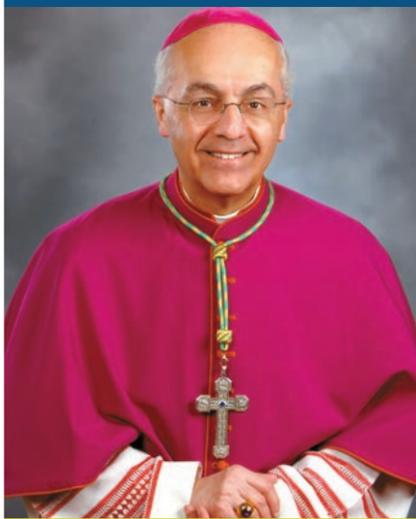
Eucharistic procession
Four Minot parishes led a Eucharistic procession through the city with a message of prayer and peace....Page 5



School addition
Light of Christ Catholic Schools officially opened the new addition at Saint Anne School.....Page 7

Membership in the communion of saints

FROM THE BISHOP



Bishop David D. Kagan

The month of November by a long tradition has been the month in the Church's year of grace and favor from the Lord when we celebrate liturgically the article of Catholic faith regarding the Communion of Saints. In fact, Nov. 1 is the Solemnity of All Saints, followed by Nov. 2, the Feast

of All Souls; both days recall for us the eternal destiny Almighty God wills for each of us if we but listen to Him and act on His word in the course of our lives.

To be clear, when we profess our faith in the communion of saints, we are stating clearly that we believe and know to be true that there are four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell. When we profess our faith in the communion of saints, we are stating clearly that our earthly lives are the times given to each of us during which we either accept by a holy and virtuous life or reject by a sinful life God's gift of faith for the salvation of our souls.

From an early age, we should have learned that the communion of saints is composed of the saints in heaven who possess perfect and eternal joy in seeing God face to face, that is, the saints possess the beatific vision and therefore need nothing else. The communion of saints is

also composed of all who in their earthly lives were faithful to God and His Church, but died with some of the effects of their sins still attached to them and thus, while judged worthy of heaven, need to be cleansed or purged of these effects of sins in purgatory and they will go to heaven when their time of purification is complete. The communion of saints is also composed of all of us who are alive and still striving to be faithful to our baptismal vocation to be holy and still striving to be holy and virtuous in the particular vocations God has given us.

What makes us a communion of saints is our common faith received in baptism, ratified and completed in confirmation, sustained, renewed and strengthened in the Most Holy Eucharist, restored in reconciliation, and made manifest in lives of true and abiding charity in imitation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every saint in heaven, every holy soul in purgatory,

and each of us living now has been and will be judged justly and mercifully by the same Lord Jesus at the moment of our deaths not on our good intentions, but on what we did or did not do for and to Him in the least of His brethren.

So, we come to this month of the communion of saints and what should we do? Pray to the saints to intercede for us with the Lord, pray for the holy souls in purgatory who cannot any longer help themselves, but rely on the prayers and sacrifices of others to sustain them and hasten the day of their entrance into heaven. Pray for ourselves in all sincerity and truth for greater fidelity to God and His Church and strive daily to imitate the lives of the saints who have gone before us in faith.

These two wonderful days remind us of the great inheritance we have received but also remind us that we must not squander this inheritance. Our eternity depends on it!

BISHOP IN ACTION



Photo by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

Bishop Kagan stands before the faithful with his crozier in hand at the investiture Mass for the newly-established Servants of the Children of Light at Christ the King in Mandan. The crozier, or officially the pastoral staff, symbolizes the role of bishop as the good shepherd leading his faithful flock along the path of salvation, disciplining and protecting them as needed. Our Lord is the model Shepherd for the apostles and their successors, the bishops.

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER 2020

- | | | | |
|--------|---|---------|--|
| Nov. 1 | • Confirmation Mass at Church of Queen of Peace, Dickinson, 12 p.m. MT | Nov. 13 | • Cabinet Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck, 10 a.m. |
| | • Confirmation Mass at Church of St. Joseph, Dickinson, 2 p.m. MT | Nov. 18 | • Catholic Charities Board of Directors Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 12 p.m. |
| Nov. 3 | • Mass for Deceased Clergy, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 11 a.m. | Nov. 19 | • Real Presence Radio Banquet, Bismarck Event Center, 6:30 p.m. |
| Nov. 4 | • Gold Mass, University of Mary, Bismarck, 10 a.m. | Nov. 20 | • Diaconate Ordination, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 2 p.m. |
| Nov. 5 | • Director's Staff Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 10 a.m. | Nov. 22 | • Confirmation Mass at Church of St. Martin, Hazen, 10 a.m. |
| Nov. 8 | • Confirmation Mass at Church of St. Mary, Foxholm, 10:30 a.m. | Nov. 24 | • Real Presence Radio Interview, 9 a.m. |
| | • Confirmation Mass at Church of St. Leo the Great, Minot, 2 p.m. | Nov. 26 | • Thanksgiving Day Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 8 a.m. |

SOCIAL MEDIA



Follow the Diocese on Twitter @BisDiocese and follow Bishop Kagan @VescovoDDK



Bishop David Kagan
@VescovoDDK

Following

Twenty-Ninth Week, Sunday: today's Gospel is famous but is it understood properly? We must not substitute caesar for God in anything we do in life. It is God first, last and always and then caesar is in the proper place.



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Ministering to COVID patients

Monsignor Schumacher brings the sacraments to the sick and dying

By Patti Armstrong
DCA Writer

Shortly after Msgr. Patrick Schumacher became the pastor at Corpus Christi parish in Bismarck this past July, he became sick with COVID-19. Now that he has recovered, visiting Catholic patients with the virus at senior living facilities has become a new ministry for him.

Msgr. Schumacher began his new priestly assignment on July 1, coming from St. Wenceslaus in Dickinson and before that, the Church of St. Joseph in Mandan from 2001-2011. On July 24, he awoke with flu-like symptoms so he did not go into work that day.

"I had a slight cough," Msgr. Schumacher said. "It felt like I could not clear my throat." He was tested, then quarantined at home. On July 27, the results came back positive. "I immediately notified Bishop Kagan as to how we should proceed and I directed our staff to go in for immediate testing," he wrote on his Facebook page to let others know of the situation.

Contained

Fortunately, since he had stayed home, Msgr. Schumacher had not celebrated any of the weekend Masses at the parish. Because his last contact with the parish was Thursday the 23rd, the State Health Department determined that the church did not need to close.

"I had some fever and fatigue, but it did not seem too bad," he said. "I thought, okay, so this is COVID. But seven days into it, I felt like I had been hit by a truck." He had tremendous fatigue causing him to sleep 15-16 hours a day, fevers and low oxygen levels. Monsignor Schumacher did not lose his sense of smell, which is typical, but strangely, everything smelled like fish—even his soap.

Ten days after the symptoms had begun, Msgr. Schumacher was no longer contagious. "The body might still slough off COVID cells, but they cannot be cultured so you are no longer considered contagious," he explained. He slowly ventured back into the world on Aug. 12, but after his first Mass, he was exhausted. It took almost a month before he felt his energy return. "I lost six pounds and not until mid-September was I back where I had been with my exercise routine," he said. His only treatment was eating well and lots of sleep.

Visiting others

Six weeks after Msgr. Schumacher was back celebrating Mass, a parishioner told him about a relative dying of COVID in one of the community senior living facilities. Family members were not allowed in to visit. It occurred to him that having already had COVID, perhaps he could go into the facility and offer the sacrament of the anointing of the sick and an apostolic pardon. The apostolic pardon is an indulgence given for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin for those

who have already been sacramentally forgiven.

Monsignor Schumacher received permission to enter the facility and despite already having had COVID, it was still required that he be completely covered in personal protective equipment. He had his own N95 masks which offer the highest level of filtration of airborne particles. In addition, he dressed up in booties on his shoes, a gown, a face shield, a cap and gloves. He was then able to reach the patient in time to bless her before she died. He later presided at the funeral.

While at the facility, Msgr. Schumacher wanted to visit other Catholic patients. Sister Idelle Badt, a pastoral care associate at Corpus Christi parish, found the names of other Catholic residents of senior living facilities who would appreciate a visit with monsignor. "Then, when I came back, I called the families to let them know what I had done," he said. Since that first visit, he has continued seeing COVID patients in different facilities around Bismarck and Mandan.

"The nurses physically take me to patients," he said. Many families are unable to visit with their loved ones. Those with rooms on the first floor often have family members visiting outside their windows.

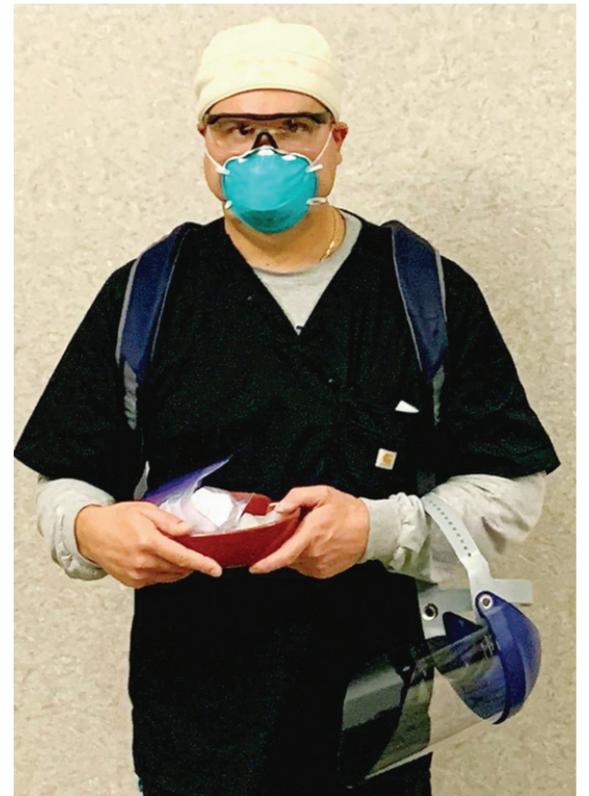
Sometimes the last contact

"I'm often the last contact for their loved ones aside from health care professionals," Msgr. Schumacher explained. "Some die shortly after and families want to know, 'Was dad at peace?' It's the last memory of their mother or father or loved one."

While at the senior living facilities, Msgr. Schumacher visits residents who are in the COVID section, as well as those who are not. Moving around a COVID unit is easy because they all have it so he can walk around freely, although with so much of his face covered, he has to identify himself to people. It is the non-COVID units where he begins the visits. There, the extra precautions required to follow going from room to room is especially exhausting, according to him.

One woman he anointed had been a parishioner while he was pastor at St. Joseph's in Mandan. "Some of these people were my parishioners who I met 20 years ago that I have not seen for a while and they are dying. I just had a funeral for one of them in Mandan, at St. Joe's. Anointing my parishioners, breaks my heart."

He added, "By the time I get to the COVID unit, I am hot and trying to communicate with people talking through an N95 mask." When Msgr. Schumacher returns home, his clothes go directly into the washing machine and he showers right way. The amount of energy it takes for his typical three-hour visits has given him tremendous appreciation and admiration for the men and women in the medical



Submitted photo

Having recovered from COVID-19, visiting Catholic patients with the virus at senior living facilities has become a new ministry for Msgr. Patrick Schumacher.

community. "A lot of people say, 'This is their job,' but the fact is that it's a job I don't want to do and don't think I could do. They are doing a remarkable job."

Grace of the sacrament

Msgr. Schumacher sees anywhere from 7-20 people per visit and estimates that he has probably anointed more than 100. Anointing of the sick can be administered to anyone who is sick, so a patient need not be near death, he explained. "Some are horrified at first," he said. "One lady sitting up in her chair, was told, 'This is Msgr. Schumacher.' She responded, 'Oh great!' As if to say, 'Am I that bad?'"

The sacraments are for the living, according to Msgr. Schumacher. "The grace of the sacrament of the anointing unites us with the passion of our Lord and unites us with the community of the Church and the Body of Christ," he said. Sometimes he sees a patient who seems not to be conscious, but will respond to the blessing by making the sign of the cross.

"It is an unexpected reminder to me of the power of the sacrament of anointing and the apostolic pardon," Msgr. Schumacher said. "I have been doing this for 27 years, but the pandemic has become very real when I'm walking around and people are dying and can't have family around them. I realize that I represent the Church in a powerful way. I am the last person that some of these people will see. It is a very memorable time in my priesthood."



PRAY FOR THE PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS, DEACONS SERVING OUR DIOCESE AND THOSE IN FORMATION AND LAY MINISTERS

An invitation from the Bismarck-Mandan Serra Club

Nov. 1	Fr. Jerry Kautzman	Nov. 10	Br. John Patrick Arnett, OSB	Nov. 17	All Religious in Formation	Nov. 24	Deacon Gerald Rustand
Nov. 2	Deacon Ross Reiter	Nov. 11	All Seminarians in Formation	Nov. 18	Fr. David Morman & African Mission	Nov. 25	Br. Louie Bachand
Nov. 3	Sr. Rosanne Zastoupil, OSB	Nov. 12	Fr. Russ Kovash	Nov. 19	Fr. Bruce Krebs	Nov. 26	Sr. Mary Ruth Kayute, OSB
Nov. 4	Sr. Paula Larson, OSB	Nov. 13	Deacon Dennis Rohr	Nov. 20	Seminarian Josh Hill	Nov. 27	All Music Ministers
Nov. 5	Seminarian Ben Wanner	Nov. 14	Fr. Basil Atwell, OSB	Nov. 21	Sr. Krista Ferrell, OSB	Nov. 28	Fr. Todd Kreitinger
Nov. 6	Bishop David Kagan	Nov. 15	Sr. Marena Hoogland, OSB	Nov. 22	Fr. Doug Krebs	Nov. 29	Msgr. Gene Lindemann
Nov. 7	Fr. Marv Klemmer	Nov. 16	Sr. Phoebe Schwartze, OSB	Nov. 23	Seminarian Dustin Johns	Nov. 30	All Liturgical Ministers
Nov. 8	Deacon Kris Ringwall						
Nov. 9	All Lay Ministers						

First-ever focused on Montessori education

Continued from page 1

own pace choosing their path along the way.

Christ the King School transitioned to the Montessori education model five years ago—a move likely credited with saving the school from closure. Enrollment had dropped drastically and the downward trend continued annually. The school at St. Joseph's in Mandan was succumbing to the same fate before they adopted the Montessori model last year with all ages and grades through adolescents (8th grade) now learning under this system. In what Fr. Nick Schneider, who serves as the upper elementary guide and Montessori Mentor at Christ the King, described as both joyful and trying, the culture of the school has been renewed. "Enrollment doubled, and above all, the excitement of seeking holiness enkindled in the hearts of so many children."

Establishment of the association

It was Maria Montessori's dream that a religious institute would be founded upon the principles of the education model she developed, but most importantly to meet the needs of the child—a mission to which Maria devoted her life. The time was right for a Montessori-based public association to meet that need within the Bismarck Diocese.

Many different religious institutes for women with different charisms exist across the world. "Throughout history, we've seen God inspire religious institutes to respond to a need," Fr. Schneider said. "We are blessed to see the seeds of Maria Montessori's desire being actualized in our midst."

Through much prayer and many conversations, Fr. Schneider and Sr. Chiara Thérèse witnessed the Lord's Will manifesting itself in the new association. With Bishop Kagan's support and canonical action, the Servants of the Children of Light was established.

A religious institute is distinguished by several essential characteristics. Namely, a particular charism (gift of the Holy Spirit), profession of the evangelical councils of poverty, chastity and obedience, a special apostolate and form of

contemplative prayer, a rule of life, a distinctive habit and life lived in community.

The Servants will wear a distinct black and white habit. It was modeled after a modified Benedictine habit drawing from the rich spiritual heritage of the Benedictines who have a long and storied history in the diocese having laid the foundation for Catholic education in western North Dakota. Another distinct marker is the medal they wear of the "Madonna of the Chair" by Italian artist, Raphael, that depicts Our Lady holding the Child Jesus signifying her as the throne upon which Christ is seated. It perfectly represents what Maria Montessori wanted her schools to offer.

Discerning religious life

After spending a prolonged period of discernment with the Monastic Fraternity of Jerusalem in Montréal, sister felt the Lord calling her back to the diocese for a mission that was, at the time, unclear. "I'd felt a call for years," she said. "The Lord was asking something of me, but I wasn't sure what it was." After finishing her training in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd a few years ago, it became clearer what the Lord was asking was coming to fruition.

Sister chose the name Chiara for her admiration and devotion to St. Clare of Assisi (Chiara is Clare in Italian) and for St. Thérèse of Lisieux. "I chose Chiara because it means 'light' in Italian and Thérèse for her childlike abandonment, a desire to live a childlike obedience."

The association was established on Oct. 1, the Feast Day of St. Thérèse, one of the new association's patronesses. The Scripture passage, proper to the memorial of St. Therese, proclaimed at the investiture Mass was Matthew 18:1-4. "...Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Even though it wasn't planned, sister said it couldn't have been more fitting Scripture for an apostolate dedicated to serving Christ through the child.

Sister Chiara Thérèse said that, first and foremost, a woman



Photo by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

Bishop Kagan with Sr. Chiara Thérèse after the investiture Mass at Christ the King in Mandan on Oct. 1.

discerning religious life like one with the Servants should ask herself if she desires to be the spouse of Christ in a life of contemplative prayer. "Then, she should ask if the particular apostolate and mission of the order is a good fit," she noted.

Being the first-ever public association with the apostolate focused on Montessori education, the Servants quickly became popular once the word got out. News of the investiture Mass was shared on a Catholic Montessori Facebook page prompting Sr. Chiara Thérèse to receive inquiries from as far away as Indonesia, Australia and Canada as well as several locations around the United States.

"Someone who had contacted us said that they had tried to start a religious institute devoted to Montessori education and it failed for various reasons," Fr. Schneider said. "They said they had been praying for 25 years that Maria's dream would come to fruition."

Sister added, "During Bishop Kagan's homily at the investiture

Mass, he said it was a historic day for the diocese because we have the very first public association devoted to Montessori. It's pretty amazing that the Lord chose this diocese to start it."

The Servants of the Children of Light is open to all Catholic women between the ages of 18-30 years old, have never been married, are a Catholic in good standing with the Church and have sufficient health and emotional maturity. Those seeking more information should contact Sr. Chiara Thérèse at Christ the King Catholic Montessori School, 505 10th Ave. NW, Mandan, ND 58554. More information can be found at servantsofthechildrenoflight.org.

Of note, the Servants are also looking for a residence, ideally a house that is suited for or could be converted to communal living. If anyone has a house in or near the Bismarck/Mandan area that they are willing to donate to the new public association, please contact sister at the above address.



Sr. Chiara Thérèse with Ahriana Gonzalez (left) and Rita Goettle.



Bishop Kagan cut a piece of sister's hair as an ancient rite of investiture. It signifies the woman putting aside her hair as an act of humility, casting off all vain desires and turning her attention to her love for almighty God.



Photo by Anne Houser

Bringing Christ to the people

Eucharistic procession in Minot sends out message of prayer and peace

By Grace Fisher

Special Contributor to the DCA

Billed as a city-wide Eucharistic procession to help bring prayer, peace and healing to the nation, the Sept. 27 event in Minot was extraordinary by any estimation, employing all four Minot pastors leading their parishioners and others through the city on a nearly five-mile trek.

It generated hearts beating anew to fresh life in contrast to the violence and destruction coming from marches and protests across the land, casting a pall over American life and clogging television screens.

It was Priesthood Sunday. And each pastor—Fr. David Richter, St. John the Apostle, Fr. Kenneth Phillips, St. Therese of Little Flower, Fr. Justin Waltz, St. Leo the Great, and Fr. Bruce Krebs, Our Lady of Grace—presided over his parish as the procession moved, starting from St. John the Apostle and proceeding to the other parishes.

It was estimated the procession covered one and a half miles from parish to parish. In addition to marchers, there were carts and other vehicles carrying people. Those who did not march participated through Eucharistic Adoration at each of the churches.

Leading off with Mass at St. John the Apostle, marchers moved outdoors where Fr. Richter offered prayers of minor exorcism, a ritual to drive out evil spirits wherever they dwell. Then, lining up behind him carrying the Blessed Sacrament inside the monstrance, the procession took off behind the American flag and the flag of the Vatican carried by members of the Knights of Columbus. A trumpet fanfare announced their arrival and departure. Juniors and seniors from Bishop Ryan Catholic School, organized by Fr. Gregory Crane, school chaplain, served for Mass and the procession. Father Crane also was the official master of ceremonies for the event.

The procedure followed at each parish with its pastor assuming the lead role of prayers of exorcism and carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the next destination.

The procession concluded with Benediction at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church.

The event had its origins in a men's group at Our Lady of Grace Church. Jeff Case, a member of the group, said they had not been able to meet since the pandemic began. Normally they meet monthly, he said, and they were missing the connection with one another.

"We approached our pastor, Fr. Bruce Krebs, and told him we needed to do something. Finally, on August 21, we sat down and brainstormed about what we might do to combat the problems we are facing. We felt that we should demonstrate some leadership. Eventually, we started talking about a procession. We contacted the pastors of the other Catholic parishes in Minot and got positive responses from all of them."

A committee was formed with representatives from each parish: Beverly Brintnell of St. Leo's, Lucas DeMers of St. John's, Hans Gayzur, a deacon at Little Flower, and Case.

"Our main purpose," Case said, "is that we believe we need to return to the Lord in prayer. We'd like to cultivate a community of prayer in Minot, asking everyone to recognize we need to respond to the Lord. We have so many problems in the country. The politicians aren't solving them. How about someone more powerful? How about the Lord?"

The committee began meeting Sept. 2. "There were so many logistics to deal with," DeMers noted. He served as official videographer. "I walked or ran the whole way in order to capture this historic event" he said.

Case noted the procession was a block long with people dropping off at various points and others joining in. He estimates at least one thousand people participated in the event.

At its conclusion, the priests in the Minot region were guests at a dinner arranged by the Serra Club of North Central North Dakota in observance of Priesthood Sunday.

There is a YouTube video of the procession to view on all the Minot parish websites and Facebook pages.



Photo by Anne Houser

A crowd gathered in front of St. Leo the Great parish during the procession.



Photo by Hannah Marquardt

The Blessed Sacrament inside the monstrance is held up before the crowd by Fr. Justin Waltz, on the front steps of St. Leo the Great parish.



Photo by Hannah Marquardt

Members of the Knights of Columbus led the procession.

Red Mass

The Red Mass is a long and venerable custom in the Church to celebrate for those involved in the administration of justice— judges, attorneys, law professors, law students and government officials. The term derives from the color of the red vestments worn by the priest-celebrant as well as from the red robes traditionally worn by judges in the Middle Ages. This custom originated in Europe in the 13th century. In the U.S., the first Red Mass was celebrated on Oct. 6, 1928 in New York City at old St. Andrew's Catholic Church. It was attended by the judges of the New York Court of Appeals, members of the New York Supreme Court, many other judges, professors of law, attorneys and legislators. The Red Mass is the celebration of the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit. It invokes the guidance of God and the Holy Spirit Who is the source of wisdom, counsel, understanding and fortitude, graces bestowed on all those who exercise judicial authority.



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky
Carrying the book of the Gospels, Deacon Randy Schmidt leads the procession into the Red Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on Oct. 5. Concelebrating with Bishop Kagan was Fr. Josh Ehli (left) and Fr. Chris Kadrmaz.



Bishop Kagan, assisted at the altar by Deacon Randy Schmidt, holds up the Blessed Sacrament during the Red Mass on Oct. 5.



Holy Father's Prayer Intentions for November

Artificial Intelligence

We pray that the progress of robotics and artificial intelligence may always serve humankind.

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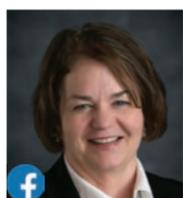
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Light of Christ Catholic Schools officially opened new addition at Saint Anne School

Light of Christ Catholic Schools in Bismarck invited Saint Anne School teachers, staff and students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5 to witness a special moment for their school on Oct. 9. Attendees gathered to bless and cut the official ribbon to open their new school addition, which includes seven classrooms, a remodeled art room, library and secure front entrance.

This new addition to Saint Anne School is the final completed project of the Keep the Promise Capital Campaign, a \$46.5 million project from Light of Christ Catholic Schools.

The Keep the Promise Capital Campaign has also accomplished the following projects:

- The new St. Mary's Central High School campus - opened in 2019;
- Remodeling and building improvements at St. Mary's Academy - the original SMCHS campus at 1025 N. 2nd Street;
- A new addition at St. Mary's Grade School, with five new classrooms, library and music room;
- A secure front entrance, library and remodeling projects at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit

Elementary.

The brief program included: a welcome and opening remarks from Jess Pathroff, Saint Anne School Principal; official dedication, blessing and ribbon cutting by Bishop Kagan; and a blessing of students, teachers and staff by Fr. Wayne Sattler, pastor of the Church of Saint Anne.

"This is an incredible day for Saint Anne School and Light of Christ Catholic Schools," states President Gerald T. Vetter. "This marks a historic moment as the Keep the Promise Capital Campaign has completed all of the academic construction projects at all five of our schools. We are grateful for these additional spaces that were needed to accommodate the large increase in student population since Light of Christ Catholic Schools was formed in 2012. With these beautiful new spaces for our students, teachers and families, we will continue our mission of encountering Christ in our Catholic faith through living, learning and serving. We intend to keep that promise of a Catholic education in our community for many generations."

-Submitted information



Bishop Kagan (far right) was on hand to give the official blessing and dedication with Fr. Wayne Sattler, pastor, and Jess Pathroff, Saint Anne School Principal.



Attendees gathered at the blessing and ribbon cutting to open the new school addition, which includes seven classrooms, a remodeled art room, library and secure front entrance.



Submitted photos

Students outside the new school addition at Saint Anne School in Bismarck.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Prayer retreat Nov. 10

Fr. Wayne Sattler Pastor of the Church of St. Anne in Bismarck is leading a mini retreat on his recently-published book "And You Will Find Rest." The retreat will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 10 at Saint Anne's at 6:30 p.m. with Fr. Sattler talking about what God does in prayer and what St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa Of Avila teach on this topic. Following the discussion, Fr. Sattler will have copies of his book available for purchase (\$22/copy), and he will do a short book signing.

Mass for Deceased Clergy Nov. 3

The public is invited to attend the annual Mass for Deceased Bishops, Priests and Deacons celebrated by Bishop Kagan on Tuesday, Nov. 3 at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck. This Mass honors members of the clergy who have passed away in the previous year. This year, we remember in our prayers: Deacon Ray Jilek (3-16-20),

Deacon John Tharladsen (7-14-20 and Father Henry Schneider (10-14-20).

Marriage Encounter Weekends

A Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend is a private weekend away from the distractions of daily life for couples in good marriages. Give your marriage this gift. The next weekends are Nov. 13-15 (virtual weekend) and Feb. 12-14, 2021 in Buffalo, Minn. Early registration is highly recommended. For more information, visit ndwwme.org or Applications@ndwwme.org or 701-347-1998.

Matt Fradd virtual event Nov. 18

Matt Fradd, a nationally known speaker, is coming to the people of the Diocese of Bismarck virtually, via a livestream event. This talk will be offered for parents, grandparents, future parents and any adults interested in the topic of safeguarding our internet generation. The livestream will be available on Wednesday, Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. Matt

Fradd will take a detailed look at the way pornography harms us and offer practical strategies that adults and parents can implement to protect children from the lies of an over-sexualized culture. The link to the livestream will be available on the Diocese of Bismarck social media channels and website prior to the event.

SEARCH reCONNECT Dec. 5

The fall Search season will not look as it has traditionally in the past. There are single-day Search "re-CONNECTs" offered by the diocese that will be filled with the sacraments, fellowship, leadership training and worship. The next Search event is Saturday, Dec. 5 in Dickinson. Registration and more info can be found at bismarckdiocese.com/search1. Contact Dean at 701-471-3403 or Chris at 701-204-7208 with any questions.

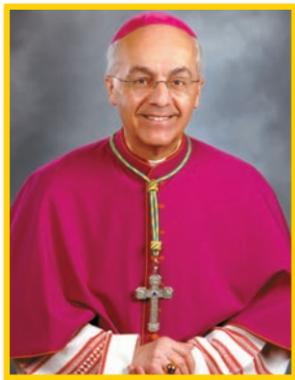
Corazon weekend Dec. 11-13

Have you lost hope in your marriage? You are not alone! For couples in

crisis, the Corazon (Spanish for heart) program can help you begin to put the pieces back together again. The diocese is offering a Corazon weekend Dec. 11-13. For more information or to register, visit bismarckdiocese.com/Corazon or call Amanda at 701-204-7205.

Hannah's Hope infertility support group

Are you and your spouse, or someone you know, struggling with infertility? The Diocese of Bismarck Office of Respect Life facilitates a support group for couples suffering with infertility. The group is made up of other couples also walking the infertility path and is based on the teachings of the Church regarding infertility. The focus is on spiritual healing and moral support. Daily prayers are offered for all members by an appointed chaplain. For more information or to sign up, go to bismarckdiocese.com/hope or call Amanda at 701-204-7205.



Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

You may recall that in October 2012 and again in October 2016, I wrote you about the right and privilege we have as citizens to vote. In this election year of 2020, I repeat that each Catholic citizen has the privilege and duty to participate in our nation's governing by the exercise of our constitutional right to vote in national, state and local elections. As your bishop, I urge you again to exercise this cherished right.

As Catholics, I remind you that along with the right to vote comes the equally grave responsibility to make certain that your vote will best serve and defend the common good of us all. What is the common good? The Second Vatican Council teaches that it is "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (Gaudium et spes, n. 26a). That "sum total of social conditions" takes in many concerns and

the "fulfillment" which the common good helps us to attain is not our personal, private self-fulfillment. It is rather the fulfillment of God's plan and destiny for us and for His world.

In considering the "sum total of social conditions" which make up our common good, there is a real and objective order of priority which we must know, accept and vote to uphold and follow. Conditions upon which other social conditions depend must come first in our consideration. In all things, the first consideration for us is the protection of human life from its first moment of conception to natural death. This consideration must govern every law and action so that the person's life and dignity are always and everywhere protected and defended. Without this, it makes no sense to consider any other social conditions. The common good as the Church teaches is founded on the inviolable good of the individual person's unique and unrepeatable dignity as created by God Himself.

For this reason, there are some actions that are never acceptable and should not be made so by any civil law, they include: abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, the attempt to redefine the unique human relationship of marriage as the union of one man and one woman and racism. Each of these grave sins is an immediate attack upon Almighty God and on the person created by Him and there is never any reason that would justify any of these mortal sins. These intrinsic evils are such because they are directly opposed to the love of God and our neighbor, they are always opposed to the authentic good of every person and therefore they are the enemies of our common good.

In this election year, the positions of the political parties and their candidates are very well known. What I ask each of you to do before you vote is to consider what our Catholic Church teaches about the issues and then consider how your vote for a candidate will contribute to the defense and strengthening of our common good. I ask you, please, vote as a Catholic citizen with your conscience informed by the Church's clear teaching. Those for whom we vote are supposed to represent us as Catholic citizens.

In closing, I recall the powerful words of Pope Saint John Paul II: "The common outcry which is justly made on behalf of human rights - for example the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture - is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination" (Christifideles Laici, 38).

May God the Holy Spirit inspire each of you to do your duty as Catholic citizens who cherish and respect every human life as a gift from God, the Father of us all, so precious to Him that He gave us His Only Son to be our Lord and Savior.

May Our Blessed Mother continue to pray and intercede for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David D. Kagan
Bishop of Bismarck



White Mass

The annual White Mass was celebrated by Bishop Kagan on Oct. 19 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. (Priests wore red vestments on this liturgical calendar day in celebration of martyr-saints.) The Mass is organized by the diocese's Catholic Physicians Guild to honor physicians and those involved in the medical field. The guild was founded on Feb. 3, 2010 by Bishop Paul Zipfel's letter of intent allowing the Guild to execute their charter. Several local physicians, through the Catholic Medical Association, applied and were then granted the charter. Made up of Catholic physicians of the United States and Canada, the Catholic Medical Association allows medical professionals to grow in the spirit of Christ in their personal and professional lives and extend that to their patients. Guild members take an oath to uphold the principles of the Catholic faith and morality related to the science and practice of medicine.

Concelebrating priests were Msgr. Tom Richter (front right) and Fathers Josh Ehli (front left), John Paul Gardner (back left) and Jordan Dosch.



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

Deacon Harvey Hanel assisted Bishop Kagan at the altar for the White Mass honoring those in the medical field and members of the Bismarck Catholic Physicians Guild. As a pharmacist in Bismarck, Deacon Hanel is a member of the guild and serves as deacon at St. Mary's parish.



Members of the guild attend to renew their oath to uphold the principles of the Catholic faith and morality related to the science and practice of medicine.

Balancing Church & State

CHRISTOPHER DODSON



Called to be politicians of love

On Oct. 3, Pope Francis signed *Fratelli Tutti*, his encyclical on fraternity and social friendship. In the United States, this event from Assisi fell in the middle of a rancorous election season in a country bitterly divided.

The contrast between the message of the pope's encyclical and the state of our nation is striking. Pope Francis calls for a politics of love. We are living in, and have even become accustomed to, a politics of hostility.

How did we get here? Animosity and factional fighting might result from the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Primitive societies were marked not only by violence, but a politics based on "us versus them."

Jesus, however, commanded another way. When asked what was the greatest commandment, He said: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Mt 22:37-39)."

The two great commandments tell us how we should engage in politics. The first tells us we cannot separate politics, including how we engage in politics, from our faith. The second tells us that the purpose of politics is love.

Christ also taught that we should do to others as we would have them do to us, love our enemies, do good to them and expect nothing back (Lk 6:31, 35). Vengeance, demanding favors and wishing defeat on others, therefore, has no place in politics.

Pope Francis' call for a politics

of love, therefore, is not something new or utopian. It comes from the Gospel, from Christ himself.

Politics also means to be in service to all, not oneself or political party. Pope Paul VI taught that "political power . . . must have as its aim the achievement of the common good (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 46)." This is also required through the principle of solidarity, which Saint John Paul II, taught comes from the "common fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all in Christ (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 40)."

The virtue of solidarity means that charity should motivate politics. In *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI wrote that "charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as 'social charity.'" Indeed, "charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine," which includes our political activities (*Caritas in Veritate*, 2). For this reason, Pope Francis is found of repeating Pope Paul VI's reminder that politics is one of the highest forms of charity.

Thus, there is a direct line from the words of Jesus to Pope Francis'

new encyclical, in which he calls on all people of good will to radically re-envision politics through the lens of love. "Radical" is an apt word to use since while it implies a great change, it actually comes from the Latin for "root" (think "radish"). The vision might seem new, but its roots are as old as Jesus' words.

Politics, of course, is marked by hostility, gamesmanship, the desire of power for power's sake, and, of course, hyper-partisanship. How does a politics of love make a difference in such an environment?

At times, it may not. This is especially true since being faithful does not mean merely holding good positions. It also means using good methods.

St. Teresa of Calcutta reminded us that we are not called to be faithful, not successful. In Jesus's words, "What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life (Mk 8:36)?"

Pope Francis wrote more about politics and politicians in his 2019 World Day of Peace address. In it, he included these "Beatitudes of the Politician," proposed by

Vietnamese Cardinal François-Xavier Nguyen Văn Thuan:

Blessed be the politician with a lofty sense and deep understanding of his role.

Blessed be the politician who personally exemplifies credibility.

Blessed be the politician who works for the common good and not his or her own interest.

Blessed be the politician who remains consistent.

Blessed be the politician who works for unity.

Blessed be the politician who works to accomplish radical change.

Blessed be the politician who is capable of listening.

Blessed be the politician who is without fear.

All of us, even if we do not hold public office, are called to be politicians of love. Let us embrace this form of charity.

■ Dodson serves as executive director of the N.D. Catholic Conference, the official liaison for the dioceses of Fargo and Bismarck in matters of public policy.



Help Your Kids Connect Safely

Some of the apps on our kids' smartphones are a gateway for predators to get into their lives. Many of us as parents feel pretty comfortable navigating Facebook, Twitter, and even Instagram, which are some of the safer apps for your children to use. According to Net Nanny, some of the most dangerous apps for your kids to use include:

KIK – this is one of the most popular and dangerous apps for teens, and one continually making headlines. KIK is a messaging app that allows your kids to send messages that you can't see. KIK is also very popular with sexual predators and should be deleted from your child's phone.

Snapchat - Many of us adults are using Snapchat, so you may already know the basics of using the app. Snapchat allows you to send a photo or video from your phone and determine how long the person on the other end can see the image until it self-destructs. The reason that this app is so dangerous is that many teens bypass the self-destruct aspect by capturing screenshots that can be used as fuel for cyberbullying if your teen shares intimate information about themselves.

Ask.fm - this social networking site in question and answer format and is being used by teens to abuse and bully others, made easier by the fact that there is no third party moderation of the content posted. Without adequate privacy settings, the absence of content moderations, and the ability to be used anonymously, Ask.fm has been linked to teen suicides around the globe.

Whisper – this is an anonymous messaging app, which allows users to connect in groups based upon their interests and location, and is used for "telling secrets". Posts are "whispers" and users can search under topics and then reply publicly or open a personal chat. What makes Whisper one of the most dangerous apps for kids is that the anonymous aspect of the platform, paired with the location-based grouping, can easily connect your child with a predator.

Blender - kids can message, exchange photos and videos, and rate the "hotness" of other users, based upon GPS location -- this, alone, poses an obvious issue with teens and tweens who are basing their identity and self-esteem on the feedback they receive from their peers. There is no age restriction, so your children can potentially be having exchanges with adults through this app.

WhatsApp - this is a messaging service that lets users exchange unlimited text, audio, photo and video messages over the Internet. What makes this one of the most dangerous apps for teens is that interactions are not saved on their phones and so cannot be reviewed by parents. WhatsApp appeals to teens for the privacy and freedom to exchange any messages they want; with whomever they want.

The best way to keep your kids both safe AND connected is to arm yourself with information and stay "in-the-know" with the apps your child is using that could be harmful to them. Install a parental control software that includes a report when new apps are downloaded by anyone in your family.

For more information on keeping kids safe, call (701) 323-5626.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The Diocese of Bismarck is firmly committed to the health and protection of our children, young people and vulnerable adults. With the hope of healing the pain and suffering from sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, we encourage anyone who has suffered from this abuse to please come forward and let us know. To report allegations of sexual abuse, please contact: Dale Eberle, Chancellor, Diocese of Bismarck, PO Box 1575, Bismarck, ND 58502-1575. Phone: 701.223.1347 or 1.877.405.7435. Email the victim assistance coordinator, Joyce McDowall, at victimassistance@bismarckdiocese.com.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Catholic Church must be exemplary: Clergy, staff, whether diocesan or parish, and volunteers are held accountable for their behavior. To enable the highest level of accountability, there must be a clear and unambiguous definition of appropriate behavior. To this end, this Code of Conduct is defined for the Diocese of Bismarck and it provides a foundation for implementing effective and enforceable standards for all personnel. View the Code of Conduct at <http://www.bismarckdiocese.com>

Investing in Others

CHRIS KRAFT



Feeling disconnected during these challenging times?

I believe I'm not alone in saying that this time marked by COVID-19 has been challenging and, at times, even difficult. It seems little has not been affected by COVID, except things like how unexplainably fast time tends to go by, how wonderful it is to find rest and feel rested, or how good it is to love and be loved.

It is vital in times like these to be especially aware of our own personal relationships; and to intentionally invest in those the Lord has placed in our lives.

Might there be someone in your life you have not seen or connected with for some time? How about a sibling or family member, friend from college or even high school? Can you remember the last time you visited with your godparent or godchild, confirmation sponsor or the one you sponsored? It may not have been too long or possibly it has been quite some time, regardless, do not give in to shame or simply shrug it off.

Instead, I encourage you to prayerfully ponder the above questions for just a moment. Has the Lord placed someone on your heart? If so, try this simple

three-part method for connecting, cultivating relationship and investing in others: pray, act, and be at peace. (Note: This method may be good for frequent use.)

Pray

- Acknowledge that the Lord, Who stirs the hearts of each, has brought this person to your mind. Considering past experiences and memories, positive, negative and indifferent, thank the Lord for stirring your heart and inviting you to think of this person; it is because God wills it that this person even exists, and it is because of God's loving goodness that this person is indeed made in His image and likeness.

- Pray for the other. It does not have to be extravagant; a simple prayer may even be best. Consider what God desires for this person and ask God for it on his/her behalf. You can include asking Mother Mary to wrap her mantle of graces around this person or that the Archangel St. Michael protect this person in battle.

- Example prayer: "Lord, You have brought [name] into my thoughts. By Your grace, help me

to consider [name]'s life, how You have created [name] in Your image and likeness and made them for holiness. You desire to draw [name] into everlasting communion with Yourself. I want this, too; please bless [name] with the graces and virtues needed this day and always to enjoy eternal happiness with You."

Act

- Consider this: how might the Lord be inviting you to reach out to this person that He has placed on your heart? Remember, the answer to this question is always rooted in the motivation of love, in other words, the will of God in your connecting with another is never absent of your desiring what is good for the other (which is what it means to love the other).

- It can be deeply moving to hear that someone is thinking of and praying for you, others may appreciate a friendly conversation with someone who desires good things for them, yet others greatly benefit from a simple, "Have a blessed day!" Trust that the Lord has placed this person on your heart and has something good,

true and beautiful for you to share with him/her.

- We have been blessed with many modes of communication: in-person conversation, phone call, text messaging, email, digital media, written letter to name a few. Pick one and connect as you feel called by the Lord.

Be at peace

- You have prayerfully acted; you have responded to the promptings of the Lord. This is no small thing! God Himself has stirred your heart, and, by His Spirit of love, He has guided you to respond with action. Make sure to thank Him for His presence, workings and love.

- God uses every ounce of love for the good and, indeed, He works all things for good with those who love Him. Trust God and be at peace.

■ Kraft is the director of the Office of Catechesis and Youth which serves as a religious education resource for parishes; provides annual events for all ages promoting faith formation; and offers training, workshops and retreats for pastors and parish staff.

Questions

I was afraid to ask

FR. GREG LUGER



Q: Why does the Church say marriage is permanent when the court says I can end it with a divorce?

A: The answer to this question is actually quite simple: because Jesus said so.

We must remember that since Jesus is our Lord, the Church can never change or contradict His teachings. That said, we still might be wondering why Jesus teaches this about marriage. What if they don't love each other anymore or what if the marriage just simply isn't working?

Let's look at Scripture. We find Jesus talking about marriage and divorce in Matthew 19 and Mark 10. Here, the Pharisees ask Jesus if a man can divorce his wife for any reason. At this time, there was a debate among the Jews. Some said that a man could only divorce his wife if she committed certain sins, while others said he could divorce her for simply burning his food!

Jesus then asked them what the Torah said. When they told Him that Moses permitted bills of divorce, Jesus said that this was for the hardness of their hearts. But, as Jesus says, "from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

So here we see that Jesus is reestablishing His Father's intent for marriage. What this means is that when a couple has married, God has joined husband and wife together in a bond that cannot be dissolved. This means that once the bond is formed, it is impossible to break it. Once the couple is married, they are married, for better or for worse, until death do they part. This is why Jesus then goes on to say that whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery (and vice versa).

Applying this to today, we all too readily abandon things when they don't make us happy (don't get me wrong on this point, happiness is important, but we, ironically, often make big mistakes that make us, and others, less happy in the name of pursuing happiness). That said, many couples will abandon their marriage at the first sign of difficulty, whereas previous generations would have worked through it and grown from it. We need to remember that words have meaning, especially those said by a couple at their wedding.

Jesus knew what he was doing when he made marriage indissoluble, let us follow Him.

■ Fr. Greg Luger is parochial vicar at the Churches of St. Joseph in Williston, St. John the Baptist in Trenton and St. Boniface in Grenora. If you have a question you were afraid to ask, now is the time to ask it! Simply email your question to info@bismarckdiocese.com with the "Question Afraid to Ask" in the subject line.

OBITUARY

The Reverend Henry Schneider

The Reverend Henry W. Schneider passed away on October 14, 2020, at Trinity Health, Minot, at the age of 93.

Mass of Christian burial was held Monday, October 19 at the Church of St.

Leo the Great in Minot with The Most Reverend David D. Kagan, Bishop of the Diocese of Bismarck, officiating. The priests of the Diocese of Bismarck concelebrated. He was buried at the Riverview Cemetery in Williston.

Henry William Schneider was born on March 8, 1927, in Ray, N.D., to Henry William Schneider, Sr. and Theresa (Tessar) Schneider. He was raised in Ray where he attended grade school and graduated from Ray High School in 1945. He furthered his education by attending Crosier Seminary in Onamia, Minn. He then continued his studies at Catholic University receiving a master's degree in education. He also received a master's degree in guidance from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks. Father Schneider was ordained to the priesthood on June 4, 1953 by Bishop Lambert A. Hoch at St. Joseph's Church in Williston.

Father Schneider's first assignment in the Diocese of Bismarck was assistant pastor at the Church of St. Leo, Minot,

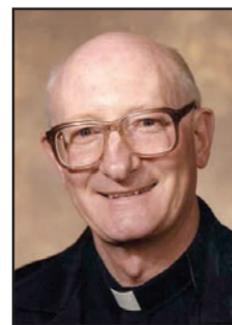
from 1953 to 1958. In 1955, he was named principal of St. Leo's Elementary. He then became pastor of the Church of St. Ann in Berthold and St. Vincent de Paul in Des Lacs until August 1962. He was then assigned pastor of St. Mary in Foxholm and St. Henry in Questad until September 1969. He served as pastor of St. Thomas in Tioga until being named pastor of St. John the Apostle in Minot where he served until July 10, 2002. He also served as the Chaplain of the Minot Serra Club for a time beginning in 1988. Father retired to Somerset Court in Minot and resided there until his death. He celebrated daily Mass at Somerset Court.

Father Schneider enjoyed reading and telling stories of past trips that he had taken, and one would often see him walking and biking all over Minot. Father Schneider belonged to the St. John's Knights of Columbus. He was a priest for 67 years.

Father Schneider is survived by his nephews, John (Lucia) Schneider, Michael (Andy) Schneider; nieces, Trish (Steve) Broe, Theresa (Bo) Bolinske and Mary Allard; great nephews, Caelin Schneider, Austin (Lindsey) Schneider, Jaxson, Stevie Broe, Shawn(Stephanie)Broe, Ben Bolinske, Dale(Amanda) Allard, Donald Allard; great nieces, Misty (Nate) Pile, Payton Schneider, Danielle Bolinske, Alex Bolinske, Trisha (Jason) Wuori.

Father Schneider was preceded in death by his father and mother, Henry and Theresa, and his brother Jack.

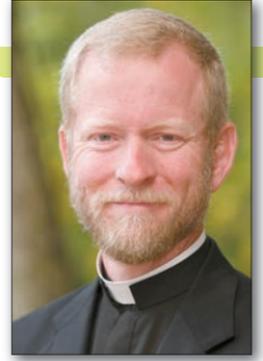
An endowment in his name has been established at Bishop Ryan Catholic School, Minot.



Rev. Henry W. Schneider

Making Sense out of Bioethics

FR. TAD PACHOLCZYK



Is mandating a COVID-19 vaccine ethical?

Virginia State Health Commissioner, Dr. Norman Oliver, told a local news station in August 2020 that he planned to mandate COVID-19 immunizations for Virginians once a vaccine becomes available to the public. The following day, the Governor, Ralph Northam, pulled rank on the Commissioner and announced there would be no vaccine mandate after all. The Health Department walked back the Commissioner's earlier comments while the Governor's Office issued a statement focusing on vaccine accessibility and fair distribution, not a mandate.

Virginia law, nevertheless, does empower the Commissioner to issue a vaccine mandate under certain conditions. Virginia has a religious exemption for vaccines generally, but not if the state declares an "emergency or epidemic of any disease of public health importance for which a vaccine exists." In the emergency situation, the only exemption would be for serious medical reasons, i.e. the vaccine would be detrimental to the health of the recipient, as certified by a physician.

State legislators have been pushing to update the Virginia law to include a religious exemption in an emergency declaration.

The contentious discussions in Virginia raise broader questions about vaccine mandates and exemptions.

It can be helpful to distinguish local vaccine mandates from universal ones.

A local mandate means an immunization is required for services or employment, insisting, for example, that children be vaccinated prior to admission to the local school, or workers in a hospital system be compliant with Centers for Disease Control immunization schedules as a condition for employment.

A universal mandate, meanwhile, involves a demand that all residents of a particular geographical area, such as a township, county, state or country be immunized.

Generally speaking, vaccinations should not be universally mandated, considering the

unique manner in which a vaccine can impose itself upon the inner workings of the human body, and in consideration of the potentially complex set of risks that may accrue.

Especially for newly-developed vaccines with uncertain profiles of efficacy, adverse events, and long-term consequences, universal mandates are ethically problematic.

Only in the face of a highly virulent and deadly pathogen, with few or no alternative treatments available — and it would be doubtful whether any vaccine for COVID-19 could ever qualify in this way — might a broader, universal-type mandate become justifiable.

Even in such high-risk situations, however, only a "soft universal mandate" would be justifiable, one that allowed for at least three exemptions to be liberally available to the populace: a conscience exemption, a religious exemption, and as noted earlier, a medical exemption. These exceptions provide the basis for appropriate "opt outs" to occur, and for basic human freedoms to be duly safeguarded.

A local vaccine mandate to ensure the safety of a school or work environment can be acceptable, and not unduly coercive, in part because no one is compelled to seek employment in the field of healthcare, nor to be educated in one specific school setting. Also, exemptions are oftentimes available within schools or certain healthcare settings.

How would a religious exemption differ from a conscience exemption?

A religious exemption would apply if the teachings of the faith of the individual to be vaccinated held that vaccines in general were immoral and contrary to God's will, as might be the case for members of the Christian Science Church founded by Mary Baker Eddy. Since there is no Catholic teaching that the reception of vaccines, including those that rely on fetal cell lines from abortions that happened long ago, is sinful, Catholics cannot claim a religious exemption from the requirement of immunization.

A conscience exemption, meanwhile, would refer to the situation in which an individual in conscience believed that it was immoral to be vaccinated.

Some individuals might claim a conscience exemption if they were convinced, even following extensive safety and efficacy testing, that the risks of being inoculated outweighed the potential benefits.

It is Catholic teaching that one must follow one's informed judgment of conscience even if one is in error because the conscience is our last best judgment about what is right or wrong.

Some Catholics might claim a conscience exemption out of a mistaken but sincerely held conviction that vaccinations themselves are always wrong, or that it is always immoral to receive vaccines made out of cell lines from abortions when that is the only option available.

Some states and jurisdictions do not distinguish between religious and conscience exemptions. They only make available a religious exemption, by which they often intend to include and subsume under the same heading the exercise of conscientious objection.

In sum, state-sponsored or legislative coercion through a universal vaccine mandate raises ethical concerns, especially when appropriate exemptions are unavailable.

Health officials should instead seek to educate those under their authority, through careful and patient explanation, about the importance of receiving a vaccine, so they might freely choose to do so on their own initiative.

■ Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. He also serves as a professor of bioethics at the University of Mary in Bismarck. See www.ncbcenter.org

Ag Attitudes

JAMES ODERMANN



Giving glory and honor to God is my obligation

The family cell phone pinged in my pocket as I walked through the pen of newly-weaned, bawling calves. "What is that all about?" I asked myself. I thought about not looking because I needed to remove my gloves to see the message.

In the end, I got my gloves off and looked at the screen. It was some update on the news (something that happens regularly and how it got there is a credit to my grandchildren). It was a story regarding some squabble between the "warring parties" about how to run the country.

As I surmised, the message laid out the confrontation between the democrats and republicans regarding the United States Supreme Court. The message was "an unbiased report" about controlling the court, ideological principles that affect the 300 million plus Americans and how personal rights could be compromised.

I moved through the pen checking the calves for runny noses, infections or other ailments. I reflected on the demeanor of the animals, which was more civil towards each other than I see from the people in the news today.

I rhetorically asked, "What will

the future look like?"

The news paints a bleak picture. Conflict is the new normal. The concept of walking in another's shoes (even one step) to understand the emotion, the pain, the hurt of situations does not exist. Egos seem to be the prevalent personality trait and bullying seems to be the customary reaction to disagreement.

There is a preponderance to domination, which is the antithesis of what Jesus taught us. The Gospel readings from St. Matthew throughout the summer and fall growing season talked about faith, commitment, respect and forgiveness.

As I continued my stroll through the pen, my mind drifted to the following from the Gospel of St. Matthew (24th Sunday in Ordinary Time):

"Peter approached Jesus and asked him, 'Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times' (Matthew, 18:21-22).

My life is about honoring God by showing Him the veneration that is due my Creator. God's gifts to me

far exceed anything I could do for Him. Yet, I long to please God—and that is my duty.

I try to fulfill my duty of bringing glory and honor to God's creations—my sisters and brothers in Christ—and caring properly for resources entrusted to my care. This involves practicing faith, showing commitment and

exhibiting respect while asking for forgiveness.

■ Odermann lives with his wife, Leona, on the family farm in Billings County. They are members of the Church of St. Patrick in Dickinson and assist with eucharistic celebrations there as well as at the Churches of St. Bernard (Belfield) and St. Mary (Medora).

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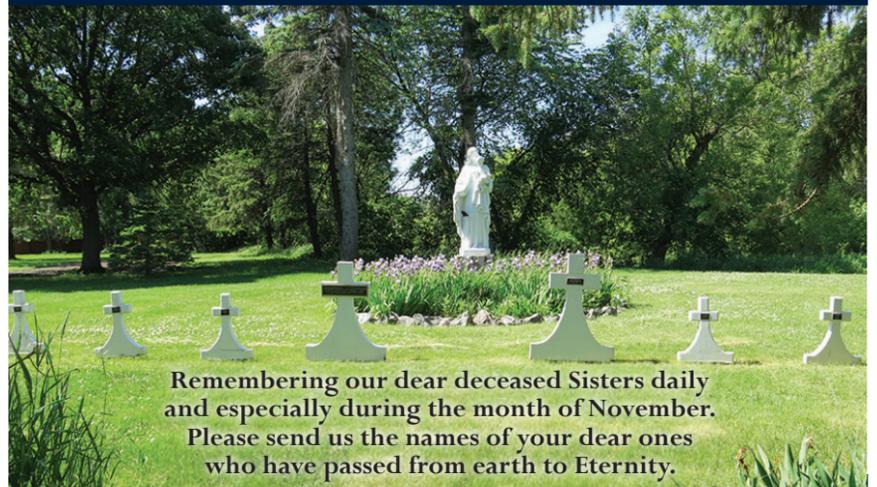
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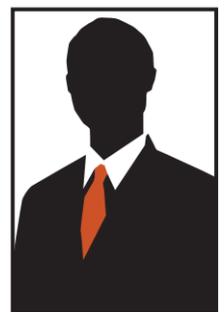
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