



Dakota Catholic Action

Reporting on Catholic action in western ND since 1941

Live a life worthy of the calling you have received



... I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:1-6).

The Diocese of Bismarck is working toward forming men to live a life worthy of their calling in the 22 men studying for the priesthood.

Four of the diocesan seminarians, Jacob Degele, Ben Franchuk, Greg Hilzendeger and Nick Vetter, were ordained to the transitional diaconate this summer in Bismarck before returning to the seminary, reaching the final stages toward ordination to the holy priesthood. They are scheduled to be ordained priests for the diocese this summer by Bishop Kagan at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. Deacons Degele, Franchuk and Hilzendeger continue their studies at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis. Deacon Nick Vetter is studying in Rome at the Pontifical North American College, along with diocesan seminarians Grant

Dvorak, Jake Magnuson, Josh Hill, Steven Vetter and Isaiah Fischer.

Three more men joined these ranks as the newest diocesan seminarians—Charles Reichert, Joseph Richter and Joe Schon—and began their first year of formation for the priesthood this fall. The men are studying at St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Diocesan seminarian Isaiah Jilek is also studying at St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C. There is a large contingent of seminarians at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis including: Paul Gardner, Logan Obrigewitch, Dustin Johns, Ben Wanner, John Windsor, Ryan Martire, Eric Artz and Colton Steiner. Seminarian Konnor Peterson is enrolled at St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver.

Get to know our newest seminarians

In an effort to give the faithful of the diocese an opportunity to get to know our newest seminarians, each man was asked a series of questions about who and what influenced his decision to answer to the will of God and what their seminary experience has been like so far.

Charles Reichert, College II

Diocesan seminarian Charles Reichert grew up as a member of Bismarck's Corpus Christi parish. The seeds of a possible call to the priesthood were starting to take root for Charles in the later years of high school.



Charles Reichert

“My Catholic education has influenced me by providing me a solid foundation in understanding

the Catholic faith and has given me the ability to let me pass on the faith to others,” he said.

It was here that he was able to see priests as faith-filled, joyful men, not the odd men who seemed somewhat disconnected from “normal” life.

“My early thoughts on the priesthood before high school was that I thought priests were weird, unless I knew them really well,” he shared. “But the first time I felt the call to become a priest was in my freshman year at St. Mary's Central High School. I had many good, holy men in my life entering high school, mainly teachers and chaplains, which guided my heart towards this call. At the time, I chose not to acknowledge this desire though because I desired my will over God's. I went throughout the course of high school trying to run from His will because I wanted the more worldly and secular things of life.”

Continued on page 6

A LOOK INSIDE



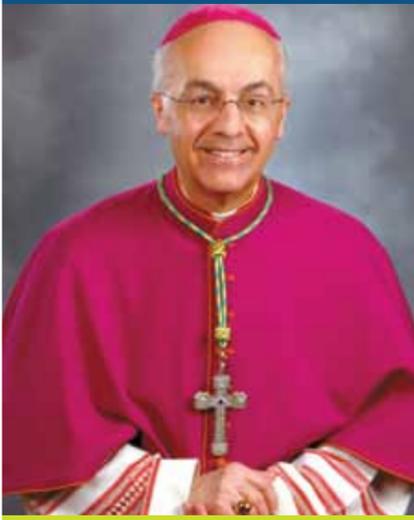
New military chaplain
Father Justin Waltz was sworn in as a chaplain for North Dakota Army National GuardPage 3



Profession of simple vows
Sr. Chiara Thérèse Jacobson professed simple vows on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the LordPage 5

Resolve to keep the discipline of Lent going

FROM THE BISHOP



Bishop David D. Kagan

In February, we will be fully engaged in our great penitential season of Lent which begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17. In my experience as a priest and bishop, Lent is one of those seasons during which my resolve on Ash Wednesday to keep the real discipline of Lent is immediately attacked by Satan to tempt me to alter that resolve, not to give up my resolve.

Satan is a fallen and evil angel, but he remains an angel with high intelligence and a free will. It is the Lord Jesus Who identifies him as the “prince of lies,” and that is exactly who Satan is and that is why he is very cunning in how he tempts us to not follow the Lord. You and I can readily reject very obvious temptations to sin but the subtle temptations which make things seem to be good when they are evil are a whole different story.

Here are a few examples and I will use our traditional Lenten discipline of prayer, fasting and almsgiving or good works. Whatever we resolve to do to keep the discipline of prayer, Satan will tempt us to cut corners, not to just stop praying. His temptations may come in the form of me thinking that I am busy and I will catch up on my prayers later which usually doesn’t happen; I may feel really tired and worn out and just skipping my prayers this once won’t be a big deal; or I think I have other things to do so I will rush through my prayers and

then get on to something else.

Fasting in Lent is for those of the proper age on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and the Church encourages us to choose other days to fast as well. Satan won’t tempt us not to fast, but he will tempt us to eat between meals, or he will tempt us to eat meat on these days and on the Fridays of Lent when we are to abstain from eating meat. What can it hurt, right? I can always get back to my fasting and penance next Friday. Again, he tempts us to not follow Jesus faithfully and unconditionally, he tempts us to the sin of spiritual laziness.

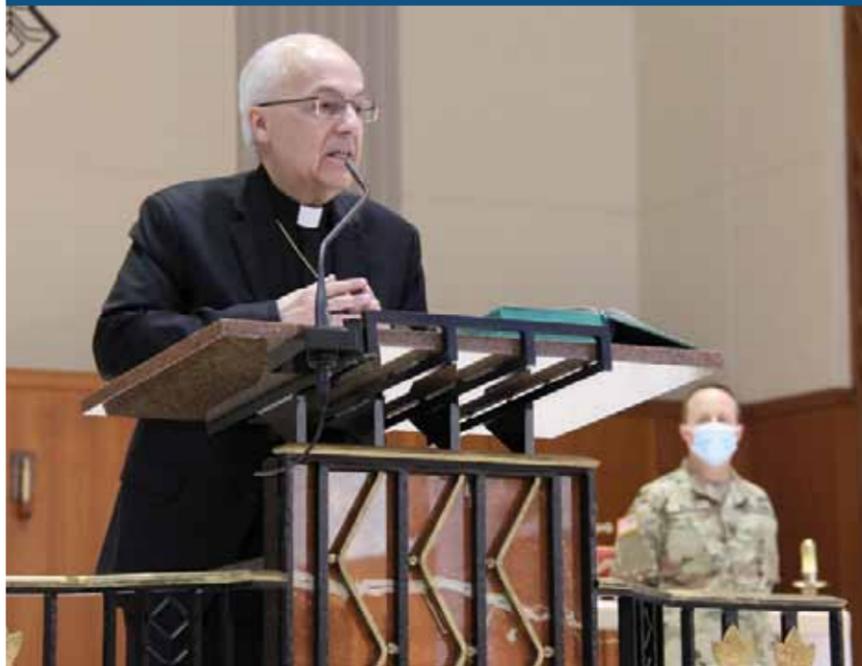
Finally, Satan will tempt us to cut corners and to not be truly generous with our good works of mercy and charity. He won’t tempt us not to be charitable, but he will tempt us to do as little as possible and to treat these works as an inconvenience. In other words, he will tempt us to not be Christ-like in our charity which then is not real charity.

All this being said, how

strong is your resolve to keep the discipline of Lent? That should be a question each of us asks ourselves every day of Lent and our answer should be honest. While Satan is very active in Lent to tempt us away from the Lord, the Lord’s grace is even more abundant for us in Lent. All we need do is ask Him for it and He gives His grace to us lavishly. Be like the leper who comes to Jesus and kneels at His feet and simply says “If You wish, You can heal me.” Jesus responded immediately and touched him and healed him of his disease, but He also strengthened his faith to such an extent that he went away rejoicing and telling others about Jesus.

This is what the discipline of Lent is supposed to do for us, and it will do this if we are faithful to keeping it and we are resolved to be Christ-like and to reject Satan and his temptations. May this holy season bring you many blessings!

BISHOP IN ACTION



Staff Photo

Bishop Kagan addressed those in attendance at the swearing-in ceremony for Fr. Justin Waltz on Dec. 14 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. Father Justin Waltz (pictured in background to the right), pastor of St. Leo the Great in Minot, was sworn in as a chaplain for the North Dakota Army National Guard.

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 2021

- | | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feb. 1 | • Catholic Schools Week (CSW) Mass at St. Mary's Academy, Bismarck, 8:15 a.m. | Feb. 7 | • Scouting Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 3 p.m. |
| Feb. 1 | • CSW Mass at Cathedral Elementary School, Bismarck, 10 a.m. | Feb. 9 | • Presbyteral Council, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 10 a.m. |
| Feb. 2 | • CSW Mass at St. Mary's Grade School, Bismarck, 9 a.m. | Feb. 11 | • Parish Expansion Board Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 11 a.m. |
| Feb. 3 | • CSW Mass at St. Mary's Central High School, Bismarck, 8:20 a.m. | Feb. 17 | • Ash Wednesday Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 9:30 a.m. |
| | • Know Your Faith Competition, Bishop Ryan, Minot, 11:30 a.m. | Feb. 21 | • RCIA Rite of Election, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 3 p.m. |
| Feb. 4 | • CSW Mass at Trinity High School, Dickinson, 11:30 a.m. MT | Feb. 28 | • Confirmation at the Church of St. Mary, New England, 1 p.m. MT |
| Feb. 5 | • CSW Mass at Bishop Ryan High School, Minot, 1:45 p.m. | | |

SOCIAL MEDIA



Search “Bismarck Diocese” on YouTube for videos from the Church in western N.D.



Visit our website at www.bismarckdiocese.com
Get news, photos, videos and more from around the diocese.



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



Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BismarckDiocese

Get status updates, photos, videos, and links and share them with your friends.



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Publisher: Most Reverend David D. Kagan, D.D., P.A., J.C.L.,
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www.bismarckdiocese.com

The Dakota Catholic Action (0011-5770) is published monthly except July by the Diocese of Bismarck, PO Box 1575, Bismarck, ND 58502-1575.

Periodical postage paid at Bismarck, ND, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to address below.

Dakota Catholic Action, PO Box 1137, Bismarck, ND 58501-1137

The Dakota Catholic Action is funded in part by the annual God's Share Appeal.

Answering a call within a call

Father Justin Waltz sworn into N.D. National Guard

By Patti Armstrong
DCA Writer

Father Justin Waltz, pastor of St. Leo the Great in Minot, was sworn in as a chaplain for the North Dakota Army National Guard.

After the swearing in ceremony on Dec. 14 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Fr. Justin's dad, Herb, a Navy veteran, gave him his first salute. With his return salute, Fr. Justin presented his father with a silver dollar. The first salute is an old tradition for all U.S. Service Branches in which newly commissioned officers give a silver dollar to the person from whom he receives the very first salute.

In another special moment, Deacon Lloyd Krueger, a veteran military officer and deacon serving at St. Leo the Great in Minot pinned Fr. Waltz with his officer rank (captain). It's customary for an officer whom the soldier knows and respects to have the honor of pinning that soldier.

Fr. Waltz is now a part of the line of military chaplains who have served the spiritual needs of soldiers in the U.S. Army since the Continental Congress in 1775. He is the second priest from the Bismarck Diocese serving as a chaplain in the National Guard, joining Msgr. Chad Gion who became a chaplain in 2013 and also served in Kosovo in 2015 for four and half months during a peace-keeping mission.

As a chaplain, Fr. Waltz will accompany his battalion providing the sacraments and offering spiritual support to every soldier wherever they are called to, regardless of faith.

"I'm coming at it from a servant leadership perspective as opposed to the career angle," Fr. Waltz said. "At my ordination, I gave my life to God and He gave it to His Church. My life is all about His people and His glory. So, this is just another level of the gift of my life to the people of God and those who need me in any way. It's the fullness of the priesthood."

The inspiration to serve in the military began with his dad's Naval service and also both his grandfathers served in World War II. After high school graduation, he thought about joining the Navy, but decided to first go to college in order to enter as an officer.

"It never materialized though," he explained. "Within my studies in college, I ended up in the seminary." But when military recruiters visited the seminary to talk about the chaplaincy, Fr. Waltz was drawn to serving as a chaplain full-time. Bishop Paul Zipfel (bishop of Bismarck from 1997-2011) suggested that seminarian Waltz first get ordained and then consider his options. The idea of the military faded as Fr. Waltz became busy with many priestly duties including being appointed as a delegate to Catholic Education in the diocese by Bishop David Kagan.

But, while attending a national vocation conference to talk about the large number of seminarians coming from the diocese's Catholic high schools, a one-star general spoke about the great need for chaplains given the high rate of suicide in the military. Father Waltz was convinced of this call. "I wanted to serve and support spiritually, mentally and emotionally the brave men and women who so selflessly defend and protect our God-given inalienable rights," he said.

Bishop Kagan's statement

Fr. Waltz proceeded with Bishop Kagan's blessing. "Bishop Kagan has released two priests to be chaplains," he said. "I'm not sure if another diocese in the country has done that. If there was any conflict, we could easily be deployed. It's a big sacrifice for a bishop to make."

In a statement, Bishop Kagan expressed appreciation for Fr. Waltz's service: "On behalf of the Diocese of Bismarck, I am very proud and honored to have Father Justin Waltz sworn into the National Guard Chaplaincy. In addition to his call to the priesthood, Father Waltz accepted the call to serve our country. We are grateful for his service to our diocese and support him as he serves the heroic individuals in the North Dakota National Guard."

The U.S. Military is actually its own Catholic archdiocese, currently served by Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio and assisted by several auxiliary bishops. They oversee Catholic priests serving as chaplains throughout the world, but each chaplain remains incardinated in the diocese for which he was ordained.

Lightening the load

With the addition of Fr. Justin, there are now two Catholic priests in North Dakota's Army Guard and one in the Air Guard full-time—Lt. Col. James Cheney from the Fargo Diocese.

"While we could use more, that is pretty outstanding," according to Msgr. Gion. "There are states that don't have any priests serving in the Guard."

He noted that Fr. Waltz's chaplaincy will also lighten his own load. "With hundreds of Catholic soldiers spread across the state, we will be able to coordinate together to provide pastoral and sacramental care for them," he said.

"Soldiers love their chaplains," Msgr. Gion explained, "especially when they see their chaplain doing the same training they're doing. When we go out into the field and lay in the dirt, put up tents, sweat, freeze, get into it up to our eyeballs with everyone else, lots of good ministry and spiritual care happens. Because that's where soldiers see whether or not we're in this for ourselves or for them. Once they know a chaplain is willing to suffer with them and cares for them, great things



Staff photos

Father Justin Waltz (left) was sworn in on Dec. 14 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck by Major General Alan Dohrmann, Adjutant General of the North Dakota National Guard.

happen."

Fr. Waltz's first order of business is to begin officer basic training in February at Camp Grafton (in northcentral North Dakota near Devils Lake). It will take three months to complete, but can be broken into four sections over the course of two years. He will also have once-a-month drill weekends at the Minot Air Force base and Camp Grafton Educational Center.

"I love my country," he said. "I believe in the people who are serving and protecting it. If anyone out there needs to have our support, it's the people that help to make our country free."

The chaplains, he explained, offer them a sacred space where they

can talk freely and privately with someone who knows God. "I'm a chaplain for everyone," Fr. Waltz said, "whatever they believe, even if they don't believe. I will be approaching it from my perspective, but I will be there for everyone."



Father Justin's dad, Herb, a Navy veteran, gave him his first salute.



Deacon Lloyd Krueger, a veteran military officer, affixed the officer rank pin on Fr. Justin Waltz during the pinning ceremony. Pinning Fr. Waltz with the cross of the Army chaplain was Msgr. Chad Gion (far right), who is also a diocesan priest currently serving as a military chaplain in the N.D. National Guard.

Local chapter of the Catholic Bar Association established in diocese

By LeAnn Eckroth

DCA Writer

A group of western North Dakota attorneys aspiring to blend the best of their faith with the ideals of justice seeks to create their own branch of the Catholic Bar Association.

Conor Kennelly, Bismarck resident and president of the local affiliate of the St. Raymond Catholic Bar Association, hopes to garner approval by early February in the application process. “We are almost formalized,” he said.

Bishop David Kagan, an early advocate of the group, has already signed a letter of approval as required by the National Catholic Bar Association application and charter process.

A key component of the Catholic Bar Association is to encourage the formation, growth and influence of local associations of Catholic attorneys. The national organization aims to have at least one affiliate in every diocese in the United States.

“Our goal is to promote the Red Mass in October. It is a Mass that celebrates and prays for lawyers and lawmakers,” Kennelly explained.

According to Kennelly, the origins of the Red Mass date back to the 13th Century. In 1245, the first was held at the Cathedral of France. The first in the United States was celebrated in 1877 at the Saints Peter and Paul Church in Detroit.

Bishop Kagan also has appointed Fr. Josh Ehli, rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, as the organization’s chaplain. “My job is to provide spiritual benefits and ecumenical counsel.”

Father Ehli was ordained a priest for the diocese in 2009 and went on to earn his canon law

degree in Rome. He likened the Red Mass to others celebrating special professions such as the Blue Mass honoring those in law enforcement.

“It’s always good to get Catholic professionals together,” Fr. Ehli said.

Participants within the Catholic Bar Association already strive to be moral in justice matters within their jobs and as good Catholics, according to Fr. Ehli. “It encourages accountability,” he said. “They can be a sounding board to one another.”

Kennelly echoes that sentiment and said there is no conflict of interest when it comes to faith. “North Dakota’s Rules for Professional Conduct for lawyers are quite broad and fortunately give a lot of freedom to attorneys to conscientiously practice faith and law.”

Kennelly’s interest in the group was sparked when he was contacted by another local attorney, Ryan Norrel, about its startup. Norrel serves as the new group’s vice president. Organizers began meeting in November.

“Our goal is to be better lawyers, to integrate our faith into our law practices,” Kennelly said.

The local affiliate of the Catholic Bar Association is inspired by St. Raymond of Penyafort, a patron saint of canon and civil lawyers.

Membership of the Catholic Bar Association involve licensed attorneys, judges, those in private practice, civil attorneys, prosecutors, in-house consultants, law makers, law professors and law students.

“It’s an organization to help bring Catholic lawyers, where we can come together as Catholics and be enriched by the Catholic faith,” Kennelly said. “If questions



At the 2017 Red Mass, the gifts were brought forth by North Dakota Supreme Court Justice Gerald VandeWalle and Diocesan Lay Canonist Laton Lohmann.



Father Chris Kadmas (far right) is one of several diocesan priests who holds a degree in canon law. Pictured here in 2019, he concelebrated with Bishop Kagan at the Red Mass for those involved in the administration of justice, assisted by Deacon Randy Schmidt.

arise between living the Catholic faith and our profession, we can bounce ideas off each other.”

At publication, the new group had six members, but Kennelly said more are being sought throughout the diocese in central and western North Dakota.

Long-term goals for the group are still being considered. The

main emphasis for now is the importance of the Red Mass and Jesus Christ being the center of the group, Kennelly said. “Spiritual nourishment is our primary goal.”

For more information about the Catholic Bar Association, contact bismarckredmass@gmail.com or visit catholicbar.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

40 Days for Life begins Feb. 1
On Feb. 17 through March 28, you’re invited to join other Christians for 40 Days for Life—40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. You’re also invited to stand and peacefully pray during a 40-day vigil on the N.D. Capitol grounds at 6th Street and Boulevard Ave. from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day. Help spread the word about this important community outreach. For more information or to volunteer, go to www.40daysforlife.com/bismarck or contact: Diane Huck at 701-527-3265.

Abortion healing group
The Dakota Hope Clinic in Minot is offering a support group called “Discover Peace After Abortion.” Led by a compassionate team that includes an RN and others with personal knowledge of the trauma of abortion, Discover Peace follows a curriculum proven to change the lives of women left broken by a past abortion. The six-week small group will begin Monday, Feb. 8, from 6-8 p.m. Participants will meet by Zoom. Women are not the only ones wounded by abortion. Help is available for men in a separate group. To see if this free and confidential program is right for you, call Dakota Hope Clinic at 701-852-4675 and ask for Shelly, send a confidential text to 978-705-3421, or send an email to shelly@dakotahope.org. The Zoom link will be disclosed only to those who register.

Giving Hearts Day is Feb. 11
Giving Hearts Day, a 24-hour giving event for charities across North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota, will be

held this year on Thursday, Feb. 11. The event is sponsored by Dakota Medical Foundation (DMF), Impact Institute, and the Alex Stern Family Foundation. This is the 14th year for the Giving Hearts event. Founded in 2008, the 24-hour giving event is for charities in North Dakota and northwest Minnesota. It’s important to note that 100% of the donations made on Giving Hearts Day go directly to the charities. The event runs for 24 hours and you can give from anywhere by going online to www.givingheartsday.org. The minimum contribution is \$10 and you can donate to as many charities as you wish. Go to givingheartsday.org to find a list of donors and more information.

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 weekend in the region is Feb. 12-14 in Buffalo, Minn. Early registration is highly recommended. For more information, visit ndwwme.org or Applications@ndwwme.org or 701-347-1998.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd training
There will be new Catechesis of the Good Shepherd training for the summer of 2021. Registration is available at bismarckdiocese.com/goodshepherd. This is for level 1 training at a cost of \$200 per entire course, \$50 deposit due at registration. Level 1/Part 1A will take place Wednesday, June 2 through Saturday, June 5 in Minot; Level 1/

Part 1B is Wednesday, July 21 through Saturday, July 24 in Minot; and Level 1/Part 2: TBD (summer of 2022) in Minot.

Seek Conference
SEEK21 is a one-of-a-kind event where thousands gather as small groups to ask the big questions about joy, peace, hope and salvation. From Feb. 4-7, people will gather across the country in living rooms, campus centers and parishes for a four-day live broadcast event encountering the heart of the Gospel. This year’s speakers include Bishop Robert Barron, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Sr. Miriam James Heidland, Sr. Bethany Madonna, Curtis Martin, Dr. Edward Sri, and our very own, Msgr. James Shea, among others. Come away knowing Jesus Christ and have the confidence and tools to share and live the Gospel in your day-to-day life. For more information, visit <https://seek.focus.org/> or contact Chris at 701-204-7208.

Lenten parish mission March 7-9
Ascension in Bismarck is hosting a Lenten parish mission entitled “Strengthening our Faith When It’s Stormy” presented by: Dr. Chris Burgwald, Director of Adult Discipleship & Evangelization from the Diocese of Sioux Falls. Throughout the centuries the Church has experienced corruption, turmoil, and chaos and yet we cling to our faith because Jesus promised us that the “gates of hell will not prevail” against His Church. In these talks Dr. Chris Burgwald explains how we can strengthen our faith in times of turmoil, and the reasons why we can confidently proclaim “I am proud to be Catholic.” The

schedule is: Sunday, March 7 – 3 p.m. adoration/prayer/music followed by 3:30 p.m. presentation; Monday, March 8 – 6:30 p.m. evening prayer with 7 p.m. presentation; and Tuesday, March 9 – 6:30 p.m. evening prayer and 7 p.m. presentation. Join for an opportunity to have Jesus “calm the storms” in your life. These talks are highly encouraged for adults and teens. No registration required. Free-will offering.

Patriotic rosary at Spirit of Life
Come in prayer to heal our nation. A patriotic rosary dedicates one Hail Mary in a traditional Catholic rosary to each state of the United States and asks God’s protection and guidance of our nation. This will be said the 3rd Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at Spirit of Life in Mandan. Please join as we come together and unite to strengthen our nation.

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.

Profession of simple vows

Sister Chiara Thérèse serves as part of the Servants of the Children of Light

By Sr. Chiara Thérèse

Editor's note: On Jan. 3, Sr. Chiara Thérèse Jacobson professed her simple vows before Bishop Kagan at a Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. In her own words, she reflects upon her vocation to the consecrated life for our diocese and the newly-established Servants of the Children of Light.

On Epiphany, as the three magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Our Lord, I too, on that day, brought the gift of my life to Him. It was a gift I had given to Him many years ago, perhaps, in some way, ever since college. I knew He wanted me to be His bride, and as the years progressed, I deeply desired to receive this gift from Him.

With the establishment of the public association of the Servants of the Children of Light, I knew I would have the great privilege of professing the evangelical councils of poverty, chastity and obedience, as well as the fourth vow characteristic to our community, that to serve Christ in the child. The desire to conform my life more to that of Christ's increased as the days neared. Although this way of life may seem that one is leaving everything behind, in truth, it is quite the

opposite! One is actually gaining everything. A life of total consecration to the Lord is one that blesses the soul of the one called with great joy and peace. It truly is a peace that is not of this world; it can belong only to the Heavenly Kingdom! Withdrawing from the world, in a certain sense, allows the consecrated to return into the world with greater zeal for the salvation of souls, a heart purified to love God above all

things and the joy to carry out the mission He has given her.

I continue to reflect on the great gift the Lord has given to our diocese through the establishment of new charisms to serve a particular need and desire of the good people of this area. In returning to home to Bismarck after many years abroad, I remember remaining in awe over all that the Lord has bestowed on His people in western North Dakota. The faith I witnessed was truly overwhelming! The great mission of our Catholic schools and the University of Mary was bearing so much fruit in our communities. One can see His Hand in all the good work that has been accomplished. I feel truly honored that God has brought about this new public association to be a part of this great work in the Diocese of Bismarck.

Mary's words to Her Son, "Do whatever He tells you," (John 2:5) echoed in my heart as I professed the evangelical councils on Jan. 3. Truly a gift, a great responsibility and a heart full of gratitude for what He has done and what He will do. With the three magi, I bow down to adore Him, God, Three in One, asking Him to make my heart worthy of the call I have received.



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

Sr. Chiara Thérèse Jacobson professed her simple vows before Bishop Kagan at a Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on Jan. 3.



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

An invitation from the Bismarck-Mandan Serra Club

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Feb. 1 Deacon Bob Wingenbach | Feb. 7 Deacon Mike Woiwode | Feb. 15 Lay Ministers in the Diocese | Feb. 21 Sr. Susan Lardy, OSB |
| Feb. 2 Br. Maximilian Kenny, OSB | Feb. 8 Fr. James Kilzer, OSB | Feb. 16 Sr. Nicole Kunze, OSB | Feb. 22 Sr. Ruth Fox, OSB |
| Feb. 3 Seminarian Colton Steiner | Feb. 9 Sr. JoAnn Krebsbach, OSB | Feb. 17 Seminarian Isaiah Jilek | Feb. 23 Fr. David Richter |
| Feb. 4 Sr. Ruth Margaret Karabensh, OSB | Feb. 10 All Liturgical Ministers | Feb. 18 Fr. Dave Morman and African Mission in Kenya | Feb. 24 Deacon John Bachmeier |
| Feb. 5 Sr. Michael Emond, OSB | Feb. 11 Fr. George Pruys | Feb. 19 Deacon Ben Auch | Feb. 25 Br. Charles McDaniels, OSB |
| Feb. 6 Fr. Ken Phillips | Feb. 12 Seminarians and those in Religious Formation | Feb. 20 Abbot Daniel Maloney | Feb. 26 Msgr. Thomas Richter |
| | Feb. 13 Deacon Ken Wolbaum | | Feb. 27 Deacon James Baker |
| | Feb. 14 Br. Herman Kim, OSB | | Feb. 28 All Lay Ministers |

Live a life worthy of the calling you have received

Continued from page 1

In his senior year of high school, he was in a relationship with a girl and decided to attend college for a year at Montana State University. He had strayed away from his faith at college, but eventually realized he was profoundly lonely in this lifestyle, being far away from home and his faith.

“During my first semester, I became rather dry in my faith,” Charles explained. “I was only going to Mass once a week and my prayer life was almost non-existent. I eventually realized how unhappy I was and needed to change my life back into a life of holiness. Though as I started to take my faith more seriously again, I felt the call [to the priesthood] again, only much louder than before. I was confused because I felt the call to marriage, yet I also felt the call to priesthood.”

Charles and his girlfriend broke up and after talking to quite a few people about the seminary, he contacted the diocesan director of vocations at the time, Fr. Josh Waltz, who helped him with his application to seminary.

He credits Fr. Josh among the influential priests in his life along with Fr. Paul Becker, Fr. John Guthrie, Fr. Jared Johnson, Fr. Dominick Bouck, and Fr. Jarad Wolf. Teachers and family members have also played a big role in forming him in his faith including religion teachers Reed Ruggles and Nick Emmel and family members, his parents, Mathew and Shelly Reichert, and his confirmation sponsor and grandfather, Charles M. Reichert.

“All of these men and women have been role models of holiness and have inspired me as well to live a holy life in accordance with God’s will.”

A strong foundation at home has allowed him to fully immerse himself into seminary life.

“My experience at seminary has been life changing. I have many brother seminarians who have become some of my closest friends, mainly because our friendship is founded on the most important thing in our lives, which is Jesus Christ. In my short time there, I have grown so much in my relationship with my brothers as well as in relationship with Christ. I find my prayer life has become much more fulfilling because my desire for Jesus in my life has increased. I have been able to have

this desire through the help of the incredible formators we have in Washington D.C.”

His advice for anyone seeking seminary or religious life is to answer the call without hesitation.

“I would say that if there are any men or women who have felt the call to the religious life, do not hesitate to answer God’s call. You will not have any regrets when you give God permission to work in your life.”

Joseph Richter, College II

You could maybe say that the priesthood runs in the family with Joseph Richter as the nephew of diocesan priests, Fr. David Richter and Msgr. Thomas Richter. He credits his family for giving him a strong faith foundation that he’s carried with him through his young life.



Joseph Richter

In fact, he remembers watching his uncle, Msgr. Richter, at Mass at the Church of Saint Anne and thinking it might be pretty cool to be a priest. Encountering solid religion teachers at St. Mary’s High School also helped to further his faith journey.

“These men showed me what it looks like to live a life for Christ, and I was able to see how attractive it was to live a life for Christ,” he said.

It was witnessing the priests in his life and forming friendships with them that played a key role.

“I grew up going to Mass at St. Anne’s and ended up growing very close with the associate pastor there while I was in middle school. This friendship with my parish priest was very important because it showed me that priests are normal people and they enjoyed the things that I enjoyed like playing pinochle, hunting and playing sports. This was a big step in my realization that I might be called to seminary.”

Joseph’s decision to join the seminary had developed over many years.

“The final push came through conversation with [diocesan vocations director] Fr. Dosch and other influential people. It was a realization that this attraction to the priesthood was something that I had to really discern, which led

me to seminary.”

He’s enjoying his first year of seminary and allowing his faith life to flourish there.

“My time out in Washington D.C. has been one of great joy. Having the structure of seminary has been fruitful for not only my human formation but it has also helped me grow immensely in my prayer life. We have incredible faculty who help us grow in all areas of our life.”

He added, “What I enjoy most about seminary life is the emphasis on the importance of prayer and receiving the sacraments. Our formators have shown us how vital it is for our day to be anchored around our holy hour and Mass rather than anchoring our lives on school or other activities.”

Joe Schon, College I

Both his Catholic education and time spent serving at Mass brought about thoughts of the

priesthood very early on for Joe Schon. Having just graduated from high school in 2020, the choice of seminary or the traditional college experience was clear.

“My Catholic education has influenced who I am in many ways,” he said. “The first is that I learned what the Catholic faith was, strictly on the basic level. Second, as my high school education at St. Mary’s continued, I learned why the Catholic faith mattered to me. The Church and learning of the faith should have the utmost priority because it is the means to our salvation. The Church is our vehicle to heaven. The final reason is that I saw that my teachers were great men and women. Their lived example of what a holy life could look like was attractive. They were great role models of what I could become if I pursued God.”

Being a server at Mass played a key role to opening his eyes to how he could better serve God. He grew up attending Spirit of Life in Mandan and then later his family joined Ascension parish in

Bismarck.

“I always enjoyed altar serving because it made Mass less boring. It also naturally led to a better knowledge and appreciation for the Holy Mass. When my family moved to Ascension parish, I continued to serve Mass and also hospitality ministering with my parents and grandparents. I now see that from an early age, altar serving (and eventually hospitality ministry) instilled an attitude of service in me that would continue to grow into an attraction towards the self-giving service to the Church that a priest does.”

He remembers the idea of possibly serving the church as an ordained minister started in second grade when he began to consider the permanent diaconate so he could still keep the door to marriage open. But that idea faded and gave way to a different calling.

“During my sophomore year of high school, during adoration, I got the call again to join the seminary. I thought and prayed about it. I then went on the Rome trip after my junior year. This is where the call really took a hold in my heart.”

In his senior year, a profound experience would set him further in the direction of the priesthood.

“This is when I started talking to our chaplain about joining seminary. My final push to join the seminary was in early November 2019 when I had the opportunity to go to Bishop Austin Vetter’s ordination. It was after the ordination that I contacted the vocations director to start the application process.

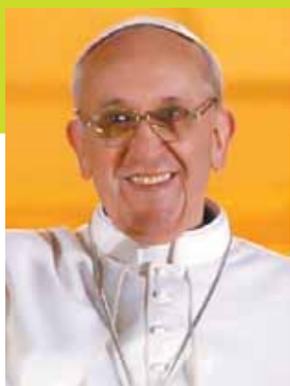
Joe credits his parents, grandparents and extended family for his strong faith foundation. It was cemented by the influential priests he’s encountered.

“All of the priests in my life, especially the chaplains at St. Mary’s, showed me that priests were normal and great men. Seeing priests as normal people (instead of holding them up on a pedestal) helped me see that I could become a priest and strive in my own personal holiness.”

Seminary life, so far, has been a good fit for Joe.

“I honestly cannot say that I don’t like anything about the seminary. There have obviously

Continued on page 7



Holy Father’s Prayer Intentions for February

Universal intention - Violence against women

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

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>.

Live a life worthy of the calling

Continued from page 6

been many struggles, but, as with any struggle, can come knowledge about oneself and growth. I have definitely grown a lot more than I was expecting in my first semester of seminary formation. My favorite part about seminary life is the interior life that we are

able to have. My relationship with Jesus has grown a lot during these last few months. Every part of my life has changed due to this relationship with Jesus. I can go through anything (struggles, sacrifices, joys, etc.) with a new outlook that can always bring me to Jesus and holiness. This is by far the best part about seminary.”

All three of the new seminarians expressed gratitude to the people of the Bismarck Diocese for their continued prayers and financial support.

“Prayers really do help, and I think that this is evident in the holiness and success in the Diocese of Bismarck,” Joe said. “We are very blessed by God

to have all that we have in this diocese.”

For more on their personal journey, you can view videos of the vocation stories of these new seminarians, as well as all of the diocesan seminarians studying for the priesthood, visit bismarckdiocese.com/vocations-1.



LIVE A LIFE WORTHY OF THE CALLING YOU HAVE RECEIVED EPH 4:1

DIOCESE OF BISMARCK 2020-2021 SEMINARIANS



DCN. JACOB DEGELE
Theology IV
St. Joseph, Dickinson



DCN. BEN FRANCHUK
Theology IV
Queen of Peace, Dickinson



DCN. GREG HILZENDEGER
Theology IV
Cathedral, Bismarck



DCN. NICHOLAS VETTER
Theology IV
St. Anthony, Linton



GRANT DVORAK
Theology III
Cathedral, Bismarck



PAUL GARDNER
Theology III
St. Mary, New England



JAKE MAGNUSON
Theology III
St. Therese, Minot



LOGAN OBRIGEWITCH
Theology III
St. Joseph, Beulah



BENJAMIN WANNER
Theology III
St. Joseph, Mandan



JOSH HILL
Theology II
Cathedral, Bismarck



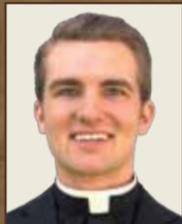
DUSTIN JOHNS
Theology II
St. Leo the Great, Minot



RYAN MARTIRE
Theology II
Cathedral, Bismarck



STEVEN VETTER
Theology II
St. Bernard, Belfield



JOHN WINDSOR
Theology II
St. Mary, Bismarck



ERIC ARTZ
Theology I
St. Therese, Minot



ISAIAH FISCHER
Theology I
Cathedral, Bismarck



COLTON STEINER
Theology I
St. Joseph, Dickinson



KONNOR PETERSON
Pre-Theology II
Spirit of Life, Mandan



ISAIAH JILEK
College II
St. Wenceslaus, Dickinson



CHARLES REICHERT
College II
Corpus Christi, Bismarck



JOSEPH RICHTER
College II
St. Anne, Bismarck



JOSEPH SCHON
College I
Ascension, Bismarck



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FR. DOMINIC BOUCK
Assistant Vocation Director
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MOST REV. DAVID KAGAN
Bishop of Bismarck

CONSIDER THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST
BISMARCKVOICATIONS.ORG

The mother of all

Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe placed in Cathedral of the Holy Spirit

By **Sonia Mullally**
DCA Editor

An image of Our Lady of Guadalupe has been given a prominent place at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.

After her feast day Mass on Dec. 12, Fr. Josh Ehli, rector of the Cathedral, placed a large, framed image of Our Mother in the corner of the Marian chapel just off the north side of the main body of the church.

The image was brought back from a family trip to Mexico marking Cathedral parishioners, Mark and Patti Armstrong's, 25th wedding anniversary in 2006. The image was present at the canonization ceremony of Juan Diego in 2002 and had been hanging in the Armstrong's home since returning from their trip. During the past 14 years, Mark had been bringing the image along while giving informational talks on the story of our Lady of Guadalupe at over 50 diocesan parishes and to CCD classes, as well as adult and school groups.

The Armstrongs had been thinking about making the image available for others to appreciate. Recently, Mark took that thought a step further.

"One day in early December while praying [at the Cathedral], I texted Father Ehli and asked him if he would be interested in displaying it for the feast day," Mark explained. "I knew that there was not going to be any big presentations to do (as I have done in past years), because of the restrictions with COVID, so I thought it would be nice to have

for the Mass on the 12th.

A few days later Fr Ehli asked Mark to bring the image to the Marian side chapel to see how it would look. "Then, quite unexpectedly, Father asked if we would consider donating it to be displayed permanently. I said yes of course."

The story of Our Lady of Guadalupe story dates back to Dec. 12, 1531 when the Virgin Mary appeared to an indigenous Mexican man named Juan Diego.

On a winter day in 1531, Our Blessed Mother first appeared to the lowly peasant on a hill side near present-day Mexico City. She spoke to Juan Diego in his native language asking him to build her a church on the hill. Twice, Juan Diego visited the local bishop, who didn't believe him. The second time, the bishop asked for proof.

At this request, Juan Diego returned to the bishop with his cloak filled with roses that he had picked from the hillside where the Virgin Mother had appeared to him. As the roses were presented to the bishop as evidence spilling onto the floor before them, they discovered a life-sized image of the Virgin Mary on the inside of his cloak. This image is known as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Our Lady of Guadalupe remains a powerful symbol of Mexican identity and faith, associated with everything from motherhood to social justice. It's a universally recognized symbol of the Blessed Lady clothed in a turquoise blue robe surrounded by images familiar to the Mexican faith life — the sun, the stars, the crescent

moon upon which she stood.

Today, in Mexico City, the Basilica of Guadalupe stands on the site where Our Lady is said to have appeared to Juan Diego. As one of the country's top attractions, it draws millions of pilgrims and tourists each year. The cloak containing the image is on display, its colors not fading or degrading for hundreds of years.

The image displayed at the Cathedral serves as a concrete reminder of the place the Blessed Virgin Mary holds in the Church as Our Mother.

It is the hope of the Armstrongs that when people come to see the image and pray before it, that they are reminded of her compassionate words to Juan Diego as she appeared to him nearly 500 years ago.

Mark said, "That they hear her and let it penetrate our hearts that Mary is the Mother to all people. The words that our Blessed Mother spoke to St. Juan Diego to me are so inspiring and comforting in these crazy times we live in."

Mary said to him, "Am I not



A large, framed image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was placed in the Marian chapel at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on Dec. 12.

here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the fold of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do not be troubled. Is there anything you need?"

Local residents are already planning a large celebration next year on Our Lady of Guadalupe's feast day on Dec. 12 with special music, an array of authentic Mexican food and more.

Nurturing the Faith

CHRIS KRAFT



A young person's amazing capacity

We typically have our children officially begin their educational pursuits through some form of schooling when they are around 5 years of age, give or take a year. In these years, young people begin to experience the excitement and challenges of making friends and learning new things, as well as relish the great joys of snack time, naptime and recess.

Shortly after beginning their school years, we assist our children in preparing for the celebrations of their first sure forgiveness from our Lord since baptism (in first reconciliation) and first physical reception of our Lord (in first Communion). It is our hope that, in these years, young people experience a great deepening in their relationship with God as their spiritual life is intentionally formed and as their initiation into the life of the Church continues.

With formal classroom education for our children beginning around age 5 and

the celebrations of their first reconciliation and first Communion following shortly after, many wonder what can be done to foster the spiritual life of children after the celebration of baptism and before first Communion. To begin exploring what more we can do, let us begin with a few questions for reflection:

- What am I currently doing to contribute to the spiritual growth of the young people in my life? Might there be more I can do?
- How might I be sincere and intentional in nurturing a child's life with Christ given at baptism?

In truth, young people, even as they learn to communicate, walk, eat and use the potty, have an amazing capacity to know, experience and contemplate God. Yes, even before a child is ready to begin school, he/she is ready and capable to grow in relationship with the Lord. To expend efforts and energies toward the endeavor of cultivating the spiritual life of a young person, even one who

is very young, is an especially worthwhile one. Think of how well-off a person would be to have never known his/her life outside of being in relationship with the God who is Love.

I encourage you, take to heart your own scope of influence, and ponder what the Lord may desire for young people in your life by utilizing you as an instrument of His grace and love. Here are some practical suggestions to help you along the way:

- Pray for young people. Pray for them before conception, after conception, before birth, after birth, before baptism, after baptism, so forth and so on to sanctity and fullness of life. May young persons know and live their great call to life with the Lord!
- Foster (and pray for) opportunities for young children to encounter the Lord. Create space and moments for young people to experience, ponder and contemplate Him. Bring them to Church, sit near the front,

encourage their curiosity and wonder of Jesus. May young persons rest and find life in their wonder of God!

On a personal note, much of my appreciation for the amazing capacity of young people was renewed by my time receiving Catechesis of the Good Shepherd training. In this training, I came to realize with greater conviction that the young can encounter, know and grow in relationship with Jesus. I believe we each share in the exciting opportunity to help young people uncover this great capacity for God.

For more information on diocesan Catechesis of the Good Shepherd trainings, you are welcome to visit: www.bismarckdiocese.com/goodshepherd.

■ 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.

Balancing Church & State

CHRISTOPHER DODSON



Questioning the purpose of true politics

From a Catholic perspective, what happened at our nation's capital on January 6 was not true politics. Nor was much of the rhetoric, acrimony and hostility that preceded it.

The political commentator and columnist Mark Shields often said that politics is the peaceable resolution of conflict among legitimate competing interests. I first heard him give that definition at a conference on Catholic social justice and it has always made sense to me.

Politics, at its core, is the act of getting an individual or organization to do what he, she or it would otherwise not have done. If that act of persuasion, however, is not peaceful, it becomes an act of violence. If the competing interests are not legitimate, what passes for politics is really just an exercise to divide, further an evil or serve a narrow self-interest.

It turns out that the definition used by Shields, who is Catholic, is not far off from how politics is viewed in Catholic teaching. The Catholic view of politics is that it should be (1) peaceful, (2) serve the common good and (3) an act of charity.

Pope Francis' 2019 World Day of Peace address was entitled "Good Politics is at the Service of Peace." It begins: "In sending his disciples forth on mission, Jesus told them: 'Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you' (Lk 10:5-6). Bringing peace is central to the mission of Christ's disciples. That peace is offered to all those men and women who long for peace amid the tragedies and violence that mark human history. The 'house' of which Jesus speaks is every family, community, country and continent, in all their diversity and history. It is first and foremost each individual person, without distinction or discrimination. But it is also our 'common home:' the world in which God has placed us and which we are called to care for and cultivate."

Good politics, therefore, is at the "service of peace."

Another principle in Catholic teaching is that ends cannot justify the means. This means that we can never consider violence — and actions that incite violence — as acceptable, even if a person believes it will result in peace or a greater good.

The assault on our nation's capital and the rhetoric leading to it was not an act of peace.

True politics also requires that the purpose be legitimate. In his 2013 apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium," Pope Francis wrote that politics must seek the common good. In his World Day of Peace address, he went further.

He wrote that true politics must build "human community and institutions," serve "society as a whole" and be for the "good of the city, the nation and all mankind."

Politics cannot, he wrote, come from a "thirst for power," "become a means of oppression, marginalization and even destruction" or flout "community rules."

The assault on our nation's capital and the rhetoric leading to it was not in furtherance of the common good or any legitimate purpose.

In "Evangelii Gaudium," Pope Francis wrote that politics should be "one of the highest forms of charity." He quoted Pope Benedict XVI, who wrote that charity "is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-

relationships (social, economic and political ones)."

Charity, therefore, should not only motivate and shape our political life, it should be the very purpose of politics. In his most recent encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti," the pope calls for "political love" that "transcends every individualistic mindset." There is no place for "us vs. them," division or demagoguery in authentic politics.

The assault on our nation's capital and the rhetoric leading to it was not an act of charity.

I have, throughout this column, called attention to the rhetoric leading to the assault on the Capitol because the riot and attack did not come out of nowhere. All of us need to examine our actions and reevaluate the actions of others. Were all the tweets, speeches, Facebook posts,

campaign literature and more acts of true politics marked by peace, legitimate purpose and charity?

When examining our actions, we should avoid the "you also" argument. What the "other" side did never justifies the actions of another.

Politics, true politics, is not a team sport where the purpose is to defeat the other side. The purpose of politics is to find, not to win and destroy at all costs, but to peacefully resolve legitimate differences in the name of love.

Somehow, somewhere, we lost sight of that purpose and only with serious reflection, conversion and acceptance of God's love can we regain it.

■ 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 Teens Define Their Personal Rights

Believe it or not, many teens who get caught up in an inappropriate relationship with an adult, or even someone their own age, who is an abuser blame themselves. Teach your children that it is okay to say no and that they do not have to do anything they do not want to do. Often, kids think they are supposed to respect their elders and be nice, so they go along with things that make them uncomfortable because they feel obligated. Help teens to understand:

- Who they hang out with matters. Spending time with people who share your values is a good predictor of your future behavior
- Even though they are teens your supervision of them is still important. They're minds and bodies are growing and changing and that you want to be there to guide them and support them
- How their relationships make them feel is important. If someone makes you feel unsure of yourself, less than or not enough then that relationship is not okay
- Their bodies are theirs and it is okay to say no to unwanted advances
- Past permission does not obligate them to future activity
- They should trust their instincts
- It is not okay for them to engage in sexual behavior with adults
- It is not okay for anyone to take/request pictures or videos of them in sexual positions or unclothed
- Regardless of how they dress or talk, it does not constitute permission
- Pornography is not an accurate depiction of real life
- They deserve to be spoken to with respect and never feel coerced
- Alcohol and drugs may make it hard for them to maintain their boundaries and can cloud their judgment
- Touching someone sexually while they are drunk is abuse
- No one has the right to touch them without their permission

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



Catholic Charities

CHAD PROSOSKI



Wishing you a happier new year in 2021

Much has been said about the past year, and much more will be said looking back in the future. And, once we think we have it all figured out, they change the rules on us again. Therefore, as we approach this new year here are some final thoughts from 2020. What a strange time and a strange year it was!

Who would have thought so many people could be affected by Covid-19? Our assisted living facilities and nursing homes have been some of the hardest hit as it continues to disproportionately affect the elderly. Our young people have been deeply affected as well, with entire lives put on hold and futures in jeopardy. People of all ages have lost job opportunities, faced uncertainty with their schooling and had to step back in their interactions with others.

As always, we look back at those who have recently passed away. There are many who have been close to the Catholic Charities North Dakota's mission to serve those in need, including our former executive director Larry Bernhardt, some well-known religious such as our 2013 Caritas Service Award recipient Sr. Thomas Welder and Sr. Petronilla Metzger, and clergy including Msgr. Jeffrey Wald, Msgr. Val Gross, and Msgr. Joseph Senger. It was especially tough on loved

ones who could not attend their funerals in person.

As difficult as illnesses and physical losses have been, do you ever wonder about the toll on so many of us from learning to live with such changes in our human interaction? Our faith and Catholic social teaching remind us that from the very beginning, "Man was not meant to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Rather, part of our innate human dignity of being created in the image and likeness of God is that we were made for relationship with Him and others. As God is relational, a community of three persons in one through the Blessed Trinity, so too are we meant to live in relationship with God and with others.

It's not just social isolation either, but sometimes it's too much togetherness. Those working from home can be presented with their own challenges. We've had husbands and wives in counseling with difficulties from spending much more time together, often in very limited spaces. Those with children at home may have the further challenge of attending to them while trying to work at the same time.

Given all of the social changes due to isolating and quarantines, is it any wonder depression and anxiety continue taking a toll? Will we ever go back to the way it was? A recent Blue Cross Blue Shield

Association survey indicates that nearly a third of the Millennial generation now suffer from mental health concerns, and over 90% of the young adults acknowledge the pandemic has harmed their mental health. If you or someone you know needs someone to talk with, please know our services continue despite the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions as our counselors use social distancing and telehealth to safely serve those in need in your communities.

Even the holidays were very limited, from Easter to Thanksgiving and Christmas. This is so difficult for families who are apart, and especially those who are older and alone. But someone shared the best explanation or response I've heard on why they were cancelling their Thanksgiving plans. They simply told their aging parents something like this, "Mom and Dad, I love you, and I'm staying home this year because I want to spend many more Thanksgivings and Christmases with you."

Despite everything, I am amazed at how engaged people are with their parishes and faith even if they may not be attending in person right now. With the rises in COVID cases this fall in our cities of Fargo, Bismarck, and so many others, people are often hesitant to return to Mass. Yet, the ways churches reached out to them is

incredible, and some of the stories I hear when I speak with our supporters warms the heart. There are glimmers of hope out there to encourage us along the way.

For Catholic Charities, one of those great rays of sunshine is your support in this difficult time. We have heard some great comments back about our video this year and are also currently over \$155,000 toward our goal of \$175,000 which we couldn't have done without all of you! We have received wonderful feedback on our video for Catholic Charities Sunday, which you can watch anytime at: www.CatholicCharitiesND.org to learn more and make an online gift as supporting Catholic Charities North Dakota is a concrete way to help others in need.

Many people who may not have a lot of wealth have been more generous than ever, and they are supporting the organizations they care most about. It is so encouraging when you believe in us and support what we are doing here in all the work we do. On behalf of Catholic Charities North Dakota, may you all have an even happier new year in 2021.

■ Prososki is the Director of Development and Community Relations for Catholic Charities North Dakota (CCND). For more than 90 years, CCND and its supporters have been putting their faith in action helping people and changing lives. Chad can be reached at info@catholiccharitiesnd.org or 701-235-4457.

Questions

I was afraid to ask

FR. GREG LUGER



Q: What does the word "amen" mean and what am I affirming when I say it?

A: Although it's not unheard of for a priest to answer this question, the circumstances in which it now arises is certainly unprecedented.

In a rather embarrassing moment recently, U.S. Congressman Emanuel Clever II closed an opening prayer in Congress by saying "amen and a woman." I'm sure that it came as obvious to most Catholics that the word "amen" contains no reference at all to men (not to mention the grammatical error of placing the singular "a" in front of the plural "men").

I've noticed in recent years that there has been a battle over language and those who engage in it do so with an ideology in mind (as the saying goes, "He who controls the language controls the masses."). That said, we need to understand that words have meaning, and that they should be used with their proper meaning, especially when they touch on matters of our faith.

That said, what does "amen" really mean? This word, Hebrew

in origin (and assimilated directly into ancient Greek, Latin and nearly every modern language), simply means "so be it." Furthermore, it has the same root as the Hebrew word for "believe." It was used by the Jews in order to indicate their affirmation of prayers, blessings and curses.

This is precisely what we do whenever we pray. So, whenever you say "amen" at the end of your prayers, you are basically saying, "and I mean it!" Further, as the Catechism puts it, "Amen...express[es] both God's faithfulness towards us and our trust in him" (CCC 1062).

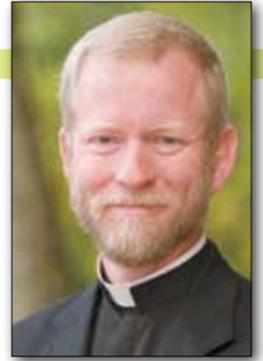
This word is also used to affirm the truth of what someone is saying. In fact, Our Lord did this often (think of the times when Jesus said "Amen, amen, I say to you..."). Certainly, this is not a usual way of speaking today and there is really only one instance in which we use it in this way: the Creed. Every time we recite the Creed (be it the Nicene or Apostles' Creed), we always end it by saying "Amen," which is to say, "What I have just said is true and I believe it!"

That might not seem like the most in-depth answer, but sometimes things really are that simple and this is one of those times (although I could write about how Jesus is the Amen, but I won't get into that in this article). Let's not over-complicate it. Amen.

■ 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.

Making Sense out of Bioethics

FR. TAD PACHOLCZYK



Vaccines and other entanglements with abortion

As the new COVID-19 vaccines are being rolled out, several people have told me, “I don’t want a vaccine with any connection to abortion.”

This is a valid sentiment that most of us would likely echo. At a minimum, it should serve as an important “call to action” for each of us during the course of this pandemic. Even if we decide to get inoculated with a vaccine that was produced using abortion-derived human cell lines — which for a serious reason and in the absence of alternatives would not be unethical — we still face a real duty to push back and make known our disagreement with the continued use of these cells by researchers in the pharmaceutical industry and academia.

We can do this in several ways.

We can write a letter to the editor to heighten public awareness, or contact the pharmaceutical companies that make vaccines, urging them to discontinue their use of abortion-derived cell lines. If they do so, we should also thank them.

We can similarly initiate discussions with friends or relatives who work in research labs about whether their company or university uses cells derived from abortions.

One of the “silver linings” of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it affords us the opportunity to raise awareness about these moral concerns and improve the way that biomedical research is conducted by scientists.

As one bishop I was speaking with reminded me recently: “We need to teach, educate and confront this issue more widely. It’s everyone’s duty.” Such efforts will help build real momentum for change.

I’m often asked whether sample letters are available to help with writing to vaccine manufacturers who use abortion-derived cell lines. An example would be:

“I am writing in regard to your COVID-19 vaccine. It is my understanding that a cell

line originally derived from an abortion is being used in the production of your vaccine. I am contacting you to request that your company stop relying on these cells in the pharmaceutical work that you carry out. Please understand that as one of your potential customers, I am very concerned about these issues. It is my understanding that alternative, non-abortion-derived cell sources are available or could be made available. It is important for all of us to show our respect for the remains of those children whose lives were taken prematurely, and one way we can do this is by avoiding these cell lines in scientific research and pharmaceutical development. Thank you.”

Archbishop Joseph Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City and Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, has also prepared a more detailed letter (available at: <https://www.usccb.org/resources/Letter-to-FDA-urging-ethical-COVID-vaccines.pdf>) that addresses the need to develop vaccines free of entanglements with abortion.

While such entanglements remain a significant concern, we also need to be aware how some of our daily activities may have a much more direct connection to the abortion industry.

Dr. Melissa Moschella recently observed how getting a vaccine made with the help of an abortion-derived cell line has “less connection to the ongoing evil of abortion than other actions we engage in on a regular basis, such as doing business with the many companies that donate money directly or indirectly to Planned Parenthood, including Nike, Heinz, Energizer, Clorox, Facebook, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, CVS, Walmart, Liberty Mutual, Aetna, and hundreds of others.”

To put it another way, each time we purchase Tostitos/Frito Lay products, fill our gas tank with ExxonMobil gas or buy Pepsi products, our contribution to the continuation

of abortion is significantly more direct than when we receive a vaccine manufactured with abortion-derived fetal cell lines. Each of these large consumer-oriented corporations make large financial contributions to Planned Parenthood, which promotes and directly performs the killing of unborn children in the United States and in other countries.

Widespread corporate collusion in the evil of abortion does not, of course, mitigate the ethical concerns about using cell lines taken from fetal cadavers to produce vaccines. But it does represent another important area where letter-writing, boardroom votes, boycotts, and other focused efforts by stockholders, employees and customers can make a difference when it comes to scaling back the support mechanisms that Planned Parenthood and other abortion-minded organizations rely on.

As the Vatican emphasized in its recent “Note on the Morality of Using Some Anti-Covid-19 Vaccines,” the reception of an inoculation made from abortion-derived cells “does not in itself constitute a legitimation” of the practice of abortion. Receiving the stick of the needle today does not mean we are somehow cooperating in an abortion that occurred decades ago and for reasons independent of vaccine production.

Each of us has a serious obligation to witness to the inviolability of human life. We need to take the time to speak up so that future vaccines and medicines will be developed without any reliance on abortion-derived materials.

■ *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



Freedom of choice is perfected in God’s love

Animal agriculture of any species gives one a front-row seat about the realities of life and death. I celebrate the friskiness of little calves and I mourn the loss of young stock, wondering what I could have done to create a better opportunity for the fledgling animal.

Most producers I know do everything possible to create positive outcomes (good nutrition, proper access to quality water, protection from the elements and a place where the newest generation of stock can thrive). The goal is survival for all newborns — and all life. I wondered why the same respect shown to animals is not afforded to humans.

Since 1974, Catholics and Christians from the United States

have gathered in Washington, D.C. as part of the March for Life. This year the event was January 29. North Dakota pro-life advocates held their own event the same day in Bismarck.

The March for Life is in support of the free and unbridled respect for the dignity of human life.

The March for Life is opposed to abortion. Abortion supporters reason such thoughts as follows:

“It is my choice.”

“It is my body.”

“I cannot be bothered at this time in my life.”

“My right to abortion is vital for gender equality: so I can achieve the same freedoms and full political, social and economic equality with men.”

“I have a moral right to decide what to do with my body.”

“The right to an abortion gives me the right to achieve my full potential.”

“I am person. My body is not just a container for a fetus. I have rights.”

“I am unwilling to bear the unwanted.”

“I am not free until I get to choose whether or not I want to be a mother.”

First, if I had been aborted, I could not speak at all. My mother chose life. I am able, and I think duty bound, to speak for the dignity of life, to make a conscious choice to protect life, to advocate for the unborn. Second, pro-abortion logic is contradictory to the example of

Jesus, our Blessed Mother Mary and the saints.

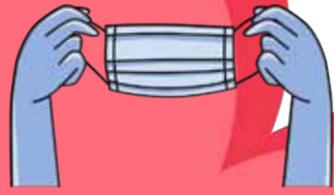
My life belongs to God, Who created me, gives me lessons on the dignity of life, helps me along life’s pathways and unconditionally loves me. I need to be strong, to advocate for and defend the unborn.

Dear God, come into my life; help me to love others as you love me, to look after my sisters and brothers as you support me. I pray for the protection of all—including the unborn.

Care to join me?

■ *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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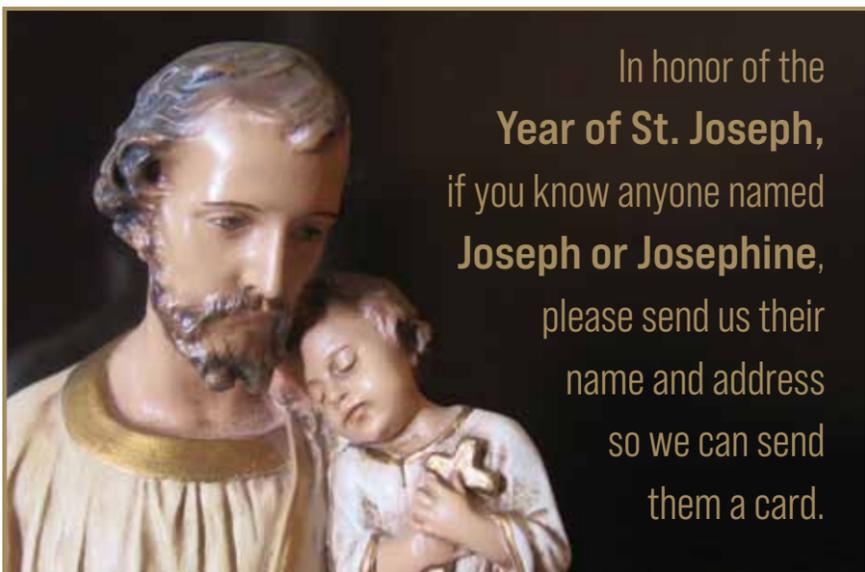
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