



# Dakota Catholic Action

Reporting on Catholic action in western ND since 1941



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

At transitional diaconate ordination last summer, Bishop Kagan with the four men to be ordained to the priesthood on June 11—(l-r) Ben Franchuk, Nick Vetter, Jacob Degele and Greg Hilzendeger.

## Four men to be ordained priests June 11

**By Sonia Mullally**  
DCA Editor

Four men will be ordained to the holy priesthood on June 11—the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. It’s a most fitting date for priestly ordination as these four young men join their brother priests in fully transforming their heart to Jesus Christ and His Church.

Deacons Jacob Degele, Ben Franchuk, Greg Hilzendeger and Nick Vetter enter the brotherhood of priests at the Mass of Holy Ordination at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit beginning at 3 p.m. The Mass will be livestreamed from the Cathedral for those who would like to join online.

This class of four is the largest ordained by Bishop Kagan since the group of six men ordained in 2013. All four men have been studying in seminary for several years and will now be assigned as priests in the diocese.

**Rev. Mr. Jacob Degele**

Jacob, whose home parish is St. Joseph in Dickinson, said the

priesthood first came to his mind when he witnessed the faith on fire in Fr. Josh Ehli, now rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.

Jacob was a sophomore in high school at Dickinson Trinity and Fr. Ehli was the chaplain there.

While his faith was strengthening during high school, Jesus flooded Jacob’s mind with thoughts of the priesthood. Serving morning Mass at the high school three days a week cemented the desire. During his first year of college at the University of North Dakota, he decided to join the seminary.

“As I approach ordination, I am amazed at how quickly my seven years in formation have gone by,” Jacob shared. “Reflecting on my time, leaves me in awe about the work which



Rev. Mr. Jacob Degele

God has done in my life. It can be summarized as being seven years of learning to love Jesus. This process of learning to love Him has certainly been one of great consolation and encouragement, but also one of suffering and sacrifice.”

After ordination, Jacob heads to Minot to serve as parochial vicar at one of the parishes and as religion instructor at the Catholic high school there.

“I can’t wait to begin my assignment at Our Lady of Grace and Bishop Ryan in Minot. It has been beautiful praying for the parishioners and students for the past few months. My heart is being prepared daily to love them with the Heart of Christ.”

Jacob is ready to put his years of formation and desire to serve God’s people into practice.

“I see my role at Bishop Ryan

and Our Lady of Grace quite simply as being leading people to encounter the Person of Jesus Christ and to love them with His Heart.”

**Rev. Mr. Ben Franchuk**

Ben’s vocation story began in high school in Dickinson while he was an avid participant in the SEARCH program.

He went on to college, earned a degree in mechanical engineering and landed his dream job, all while hearing the whisper of the calling to the priesthood in the very back of his mind. In prayer, Ben never stopped asking for



Rev. Mr. Ben Franchuk

*Continued on page 3*

### A LOOK INSIDE



**Parable of the Talents**

Bismarck St. Mary’s Academy students raised over \$18,000 for the diocesan African Mission water filter project .....Page 6

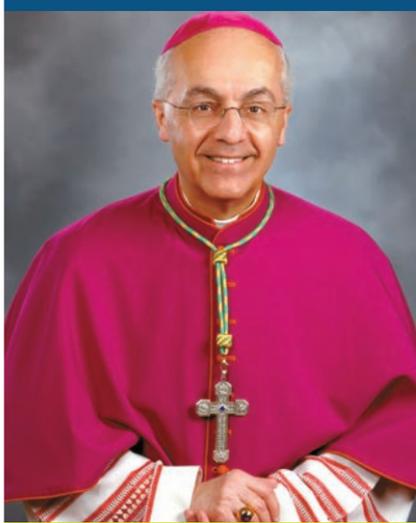


**Pietà statue placed**

A life-size marble casting of Michelangelo’s Pietà will have a home at the campus of St. Mary’s Central High School in Bismarck .....Page 8

# Summer blessings bestowed upon us

## FROM THE BISHOP



**Bishop David D. Kagan**

As we arrive at the month of June, we Catholics have so much to be grateful to God for in our personal lives and in our lives as members of His Church. When we examine carefully and prayerfully our own lives, we discover the many blessings we have received. More often than not these blessings came to us in the moments of our daily lives

and perhaps, at first, we missed them, but the blessings were ours, nonetheless.

For a moment, let us look to the blessings the Lord God is and will give to us during this month. The first blessings come to us in the many beautiful feasts we celebrate in our sacred liturgy. The first Sunday of June is the beautiful Solemnity of Corpus Christi which gives us an opportunity to adore Our Blessed Lord present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Blessed Sacrament. We do so at Holy Mass and in solemn procession; in truth, the Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives.

This June 11, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Lord God will bless our entire diocese with His gift of the sacred priesthood as four men are ordained to the priesthood of Jesus Christ for the love and service of God and His Church. What a gift and what a response from God to our fervent prayers for vocations! As these new priests take up their priestly ministry among us, please continue to pray

for them and all of our priests, but also continue to pray that the Lord will send more men to His vineyard because we know that the "harvest is great, but the laborers are few."

Thursday, June 24 is the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. Recall that only two saints in the entire history of the Church have the days of their births and deaths celebrated universally: The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist. The Church wants us to remember that their births and earthly lives were essential to God's plan to redeem us through the Incarnation of His Divine Son Jesus.

The following Tuesday, June 29, we celebrate the Solemnity of SS. Peter and Paul, the first

Pope and the Church's greatest missionary and the co-founders of the Church of Rome. During our just-concluded Easter Season, we have come to know better these two great saints and hopefully, we have come to appreciate even more the Apostolic faith which we have inherited. May we know, understand and live this faith with their spirit of love and devotion!

Since the summer season also begins in June, please do not forget that even though schedules may change and vacations may be taken, your obligation to worship God faithfully every Sunday remains the same. As Saint Teresa of Calcutta said so beautifully: "God does not expect us to be successful, He expects us to be faithful."

## BISHOP IN ACTION



Staff photo

Bismarck resident, Marci Loomis, was honored as the 2021 recipient of the Caritas Award from Catholic Charities North Dakota. Loomis was recognized for her leadership and contributions in service to the poor through the Society of St. Vincent de Paul—Cathedral of the Holy Spirit Conference. Board chairman, Steve Lies (left), and Bishop Kagan presented the award at a luncheon on May 11.

## BISHOP'S SCHEDULE JUNE AND JULY 2021

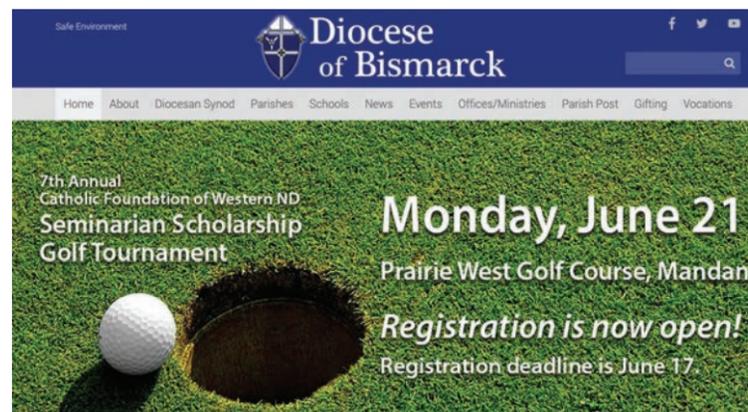
June 1-4	• Clergy Retreat, Assumption Abbey, Richardton	June 24	• Finance Council Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
June 5	• Corpus Christi Vigil Mass with Eucharistic Procession, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 5 p.m.	June 26	• Opus Dei Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
June 7	• Women's Care Center Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck, 5 p.m.	June 28	• Big Smoke benefit, Minot
June 9	• Mass and annual visit at Marillac Manor, Bismarck, 8:30 a.m.	July 7	• Real Presence Radio interview, 9 a.m.
June 10	• Real Presence Radio interview, 9 a.m.	July 11	• Town and Country Mass, Fort Rice, 11:30 a.m.
June 11	• Priestly Ordination, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 3 p.m.	July 16	• Cabinet Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck 10 a.m.
June 17	• Mass for students attending BCYC, Church of the Ascension, Bismarck, 8 a.m.	July 16	• Mass for Cor Christi, University of Mary, 4:30 p.m.
June 18	• Cabinet Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck, 10 a.m.	July 22	• Mass for students attending Steubenville Rochester, Church of St. Joseph, Mandan, 8 a.m.
June 20	• Confirmation at the Church of St. Agnes, Kenmare, 10:30 a.m.	July 22	• First Profession Mass for Sr. Mary Scholastica, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
June 21	• Seminarian Golf Tournament, Prairie West, Mandan, 12 p.m.	July 25	• 60th Anniversary Mass at St. John the Apostle, Minot, 3 p.m.
June 23	• ND Catholic Conference meeting, St. James Basilica, Jamestown, 10 a.m.		

## SOCIAL MEDIA



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# Four men to be ordained priests June 11

*Continued from page 1*

God's will to lead him on the right path.

When asked what has sustained him throughout the years of formation, Ben said the obvious answer to the question is prayer.

"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for God calling me and sustaining me throughout the last seven years. It has been a fantastic journey of growth of knowledge of myself and growing in a deeper relationship with God," Ben explained. "Secondly, the support of the diocese is huge. Being able to come home for breaks and encounter the people I will be serving as a priest always helped rejuvenate me to keep moving forward. It has been an awesome journey so far and I look forward to serving as a priest for many years."

With excitement and a feeling of readiness, and added humility, Ben is ready to serve God and the people of the diocese.

"Do I think I am ready to be a shepherd for these people leading them to God? No. But at the same time I know, beyond a doubt, that God is calling me to this vocation and that brings a lot of excitement and readiness. I am also very ready to move home and stay in North Dakota for a long time."

Ben will be parochial vicar for the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck and assistant chaplain for St. Mary's Academy (grades 6-8).

"As I said, I am very excited to move back to North Dakota permanently, I am also excited to meet, get to know and aid people in their relationship with God—whether through the sacraments or just personal encounters. I look forward to being able to say Mass and hear confessions,

among all the other aspects of the priesthood. I am also very much looking forward to working at the Academy. It is very important to help the youth grow in their faith life and to have a hand in building their foundation. It will be an awesome experience. Overall, I am looking forward to this next step in the journey and all the joys and challenges it will bring with it."

## Rev. Mr. Greg Hilzendeger

Greg grew up attending Cathedral parish in Bismarck with his family.

It was at the University of Mary when Greg began to get more serious about his faith. He was invited to Mass on campus and that's where his love of

God began to spark the desire for something greater than himself. He also began going to adoration where the call to the priesthood first entered his mind and heart. In prayer, Greg began asking God what He wanted for him.

"Prayer has been the constant foundation of my time in seminary," Greg explained. "I was blessed to begin my seminary formation with the spirituality year in Denver. This was a year dedicated intensely on building the foundation of a prayerful relationship with the Lord, and that year really set the tone for the entirety of my time in seminary. The life of prayer really has made all the difference."

It was this relationship with God through prayer that kept the idea of the priesthood alive in Greg's heart.



Rev. Mr. Greg Hilzendeger

"Remaining close to the heart of Christ has been the strength that has made everything that's happened during formation possible, and without this relationship, I doubt I would have made it a year. I have also been blown away by the prayerful support of all the people in the diocese. There have been so many people praying for me, many I don't even know, and that has been a great source of blessing," Greg noted.

Greg, along with Jacob and Ben, has spent the last few years in formation at the Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis.

"It's hard to believe the seven years of seminary have gone by already. Approaching ordination, I am definitely excited to begin this new adventure which God has placed before me, but I am also aware of the immense responsibility of the priesthood. I am grateful that God has chosen me for this exalted vocation, and I look forward to laying down my life in service of the people of the Diocese of Bismarck."

Bishop Kagan has assigned Greg as parochial vicar for the parishes of St. Joseph in Williston, St. John the Baptist in Trenton and St. Boniface in Grenora.

"I am obviously looking forward to celebrating all the sacraments as a priest," Greg expressed. "It will be a privilege to serve as an instrument of God's grace and love. Generally, I am excited to simply begin the fullness of my vocation and give of myself in love to all those I am called to serve. This is what God made me for, and I'm ready to get started."

## Rev. Mr. Nick Vetter

Nick's first inkling for the priesthood first came around the eighth grade when his Godmother suggested it. That comment always stuck with him. But the calling wasn't exactly clear, until partway through his first year of college when he joined the seminary.

"Throughout my years of formation, I have been sustained by God, the Church, and the faithful," Nick shared. "God has always been good to me, and over my years of formation, I have come to realize and receive more deeply the goodness God intends for me. The Church, through her priests and formation faculty, have always been helpful and supportive of me. Formation is not something negative, but it is the Church helping the seminarian to grow in freedom and virtue to be able to give their life for the Church. In a particular way, I have noticed that the faithful give the unique support of their prayers, financial generosity and their example."

Nick's been studying at the Pontifical North American College

in Rome and is excited to be home to begin serving God's people of the Bismarck Diocese.

"For me, prayers are indispensable, and their financial generosity is very appreciated. The longer I have been in seminary, the more I see my vocation as being for the people of God. Yes, it is because God has given me this vocation, but it is the people of God that my vocation is to be lived for. To give myself as a father to the people of the Diocese of Bismarck is why I want to be a priest."

Nick will be parochial vicar for the Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary in Bismarck and chaplain for St. Mary's Central High School.

"As I approach ordination, I have been working on many of the logistic things that need to be done. God indeed wants to work through these normal circumstances to form me as a priest." He noted. "I feel a greater poverty awaiting ordination as I do not know how to be a priest because I am not a priest yet, and I do not know how it will be to be a full-time teacher as I have never been a teacher before. Yet, at the same time, I experience God's presence and loving care that He never abandons us, especially in time of need. I trust that God has formed me well through His Church to begin this journey. I am excited to begin working and living as a priest!"

Beyond ordination day, Nick is anticipating celebrating the sacraments with the faithful.

"As a priest, I am looking forward to preaching and hearing confessions. In a particular way, these two duties of a priest are the individual moments that people experience the loving mercy of God. To be an instrument in these events is a great honor and privilege for me. As a father, I simply want people to experience the same graces I have received to know and trust Him as their savior and friend.

Like Jacob and Ben, Nick will be part of the long-standing tradition of placing young priests among the students at our Catholic schools.

"Being the chaplain of St. Mary's Central High School is exciting for me. I really do look forward to being a teacher and getting to know all the students and staff of the school. To be able to form and teach young people in the faith is an honor and sacred duty that is important for the Church. The youth of the Church bring so much life and hope to the Church, so to be involved in this work will help to form me as a new priest."

The Lord has chosen four more fine men in Jacob, Ben, Greg and Nick to proclaim His Word. They, and all our good and faithful priests, need our prayers.

"Please keep me in your prayers as all the faithful of the Diocese of Bismarck are in mine," Nick added. "God is doing good work in the diocese and I am honored to be a priest for all of you good people."

## OBITUARY

### Sr. Dolores Wagner, SCSC

Sister Dolores Wagner, a Sister of Mercy of the Holy Cross, age 96, died April 26, 2021 at Bell Tower Residence Assisted Living in Merrill, Wis. A private funeral liturgy was held on May 1 and burial took place at the St. Francis Catholic Cemetery in Merrill.

Betty Jane Louise was born Aug. 12, 1924 in Wallace, Mich., to Fred and Minerva Wagner. She entered Holy Cross Convent in Merrill, Wis., on Feb. 26, 1948 and professed her vows on Jan. 15, 1951. Sister Dolores was in her 70th year of ministry at the time of her death.

She attended Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, Oshkosh, Wis., earned a BSN from Marquette University,

Milwaukee, and an MSN from the University of Pennsylvania.

Sister was a staff nurse at Holy Cross Hospital, Merrill, Wis.; St. Joseph's Hospital, Dickinson, N.D.; St. Joseph's Hospital, Breese, Ill.; and Director of Nursing Services, Breese, Ill. She was a nursing instructor and taught at Kaskaskia College, Centralia, Ill.; St. Cloud School of Nursing, St. Cloud, Minn.; the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh; Northeast WI Tech Institute, Green Bay.

Sister Dolores believed that the most fulfilling aspect of her life was becoming a clinical specialist where she could give better patient care. Some of her greatest satisfactions included: seeing student nurses pass their state boards; teaching English as a second language; and reducing the fear in new expectant mothers.

She is survived by her family of Holy Cross Sisters and associates, nieces, nephews and cousins. Preceding her in death were her parents, sisters, Ellen, Joyce, Eleanor, and brother Norman.



Sr. Dolores Wagner, SCSC



Rev. Mr. Nick Vetter

# Big Smoke benefit for seminarians returns in Minot

## June 28 event features cook-off contest

By Grace Fisher

Special Contributor to the DCA

The Big Smoke—the competitive, meat smoking event created in 2017 by the Serra Club of North Central North Dakota as a benefit to seminarians and others in religious vocation in the Bismarck Diocese—will rise again from the ashes of the pandemic on Monday, June 28 in Minot.

Last held in 2019, the 2021 version will be in a new venue with some new features the club president, Mike Ruelle, feels will add to its interest and draw more patrons.

“We are grateful to North Dakota State Fair officials for making it possible for us to stage the Big Smoke in the Flickertail Gardens on the State Fairgrounds this year. The layout of the facility will allow traffic to flow more smoothly both inside and outside, and at the same time enable competitors to roast their entries as competition judges and patrons move among them,” Ruelle said.

Members of the Minot Knights of Columbus, longtime supporters of seminarians, will assist Serra Club members in the competition.

“The Big Smoke is a great opportunity for people to visit with priests, deacons, seminarians and monks in an informal setting,” Ruelle added.

A Mass for religious vocations will be celebrated at 12:15 p.m. at St. Leo the Great. According to Fr. Jordan Dosch, vocations director for the diocese, there currently

are 22 young men from the diocese studying for the priesthood. He expects several of them to be in Minot for the Mass and to participate in Big Smoke activities. A contingent of monks from Assumption Abbey at Richardton also is expected to be on hand for the Big Smoke.

The event will get under way at 5 p.m. Brisket is the meat chosen for roasting competition. Competitors will provide samples of their brisket in the hope of obtaining guests’ votes for the People’s Choice Award. Ribs and pulled pork will be served for the dinner, along with the usual accompaniments and beverages. Meats for the Big Smoke come from Valley Custom Meats in Minot.

A new and separate entry in the competition this year is the sauce that accompanies the meat. Ruelle emphasized the sauce must be homemade; commercial sauces will not be allowed. Entry is open to anyone interested and is not limited to the teams competing in the major event. Judges will



The Big Smoke event offers an opportunity to visit and mingle with priests, deacons, seminarians and monks in an informal setting. Here, Fr. Brandon Wolf (center) visits with others in attendance at the 2018 event. The 2021 vocations fundraiser is set for June 28 at the N.D. State Fairgrounds in Minot.

sample the sauce as well as the brisket.

Also new this year is a door prize—donated from I. Keating Furniture World in Minot—of an outdoor patio set that includes a sofa, loveseat and two chairs.

### Event details include:

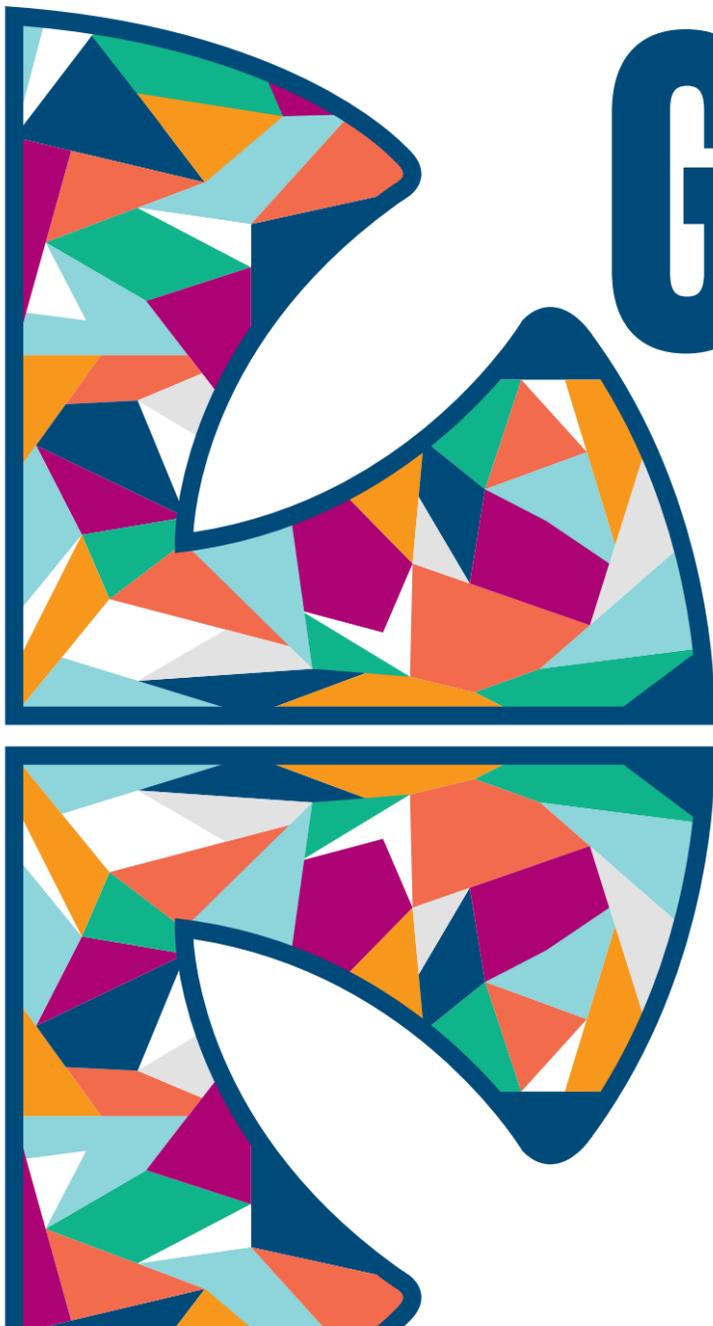
- Currently, 10 teams are committed to the competition. Others interested in forming a team may contact Tom Magnuson at 701-509-4916 or 701-389-0572. The entry fee is \$100 per team; entry in the sauce competition is \$25.

- Tickets to the Big Smoke are

\$35 per adult and \$80 per family that includes parents with children up to age 18. For tickets, contact Ruelle at 701-839-4365 or 701-340-2915, or Karen Johnson at 701-240-5561.

- Cash prizes of \$250 for first place and \$150 for runner-up in both judges and people’s choice categories in the meat competition will be awarded. Cash prizes in the sauce competition will be \$200 and \$100.

In past years, attendance at the Big Smoke has been close to 400, and the event has garnered up to \$11,000 for seminarians and other religious groups.



# GENUINE. TOGETHER.

“I truly feel that everyone who works at Benedictine-Bismarck abides by the scripture, *‘Let all be received by Christ,’* meaning the staff genuinely care for all residents at all points in their life. Employees are respectful to the families and residents. They truly welcome the dignity of the person.”

**FATHER MARK AUNE**  
Family Member of Current Resident



 **Benedictine**  
LIVING COMMUNITY | BISMARCK  
Formerly St. Gabriel’s Community

# Covering priests in prayer

## Seven Sisters Apostolate aims to strengthen the Church

By Sonia Mullally  
DCA Editor

The founder of the Seven Sisters Apostolate said the Lord chose to invite her into His work of intentionally praying for the strengthening and sanctity of priests back in 2011. Now, ten years later, the apostolate has spread to six continents, 23 countries and all 50 states.



The apostolate began in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. The founder, Janette Howe, has recruited women all over the world to sign on for a holy hour each day of the week for the sole intention of a specific priest or bishop. Each priest is to have seven women praying for him for at least one hour each day of the week. Janette discerned in prayer that bishops need intercessors morning, noon and night—21 women praying for him each week.

Parishioner of Minot's Our Lady of Grace, Bev Cushing, is making it her mission to accomplish this goal of finding 21 prayer warriors, as she calls them, for Bishop Kagan. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Bev is seeking a group from across the diocese to cover him in prayer.

Currently all priests in Minot are "covered"—those in parishes and a few retired priests. Included is Fr. Jady Nelson, president of Bishop Ryan Catholic Schools, who Bev prays for. Bev used to teach in the Catholic school system in Minot, and her children graduated from there, so she's always felt a connection. She's the group coordinator—referred to as anchoress—for Fr. Jady and has been praying for him for three years.

"When I decided to pray for Fr. Nelson a few years ago, I thought I would be doing such a wonderful thing for him, but I've realized that when you pray for God's chosen, He blesses you," Bev said. "God has blessed my family beyond measure."

Fellow prayer warrior, Dione Bohl is the anchoress for the group that prays for Fr. Ken Phillips. Prior to that, the parishioner at Minot's St. Therese, Church of the Little Flower, was praying for the former pastor, Fr. Fred Harvey for two years.

About four years ago, Dione was approached to be part of the Seven Sister Apostolate and it was an easy, "yes."

"It's about trust in the Holy Spirit that we understand that prayer for priests is essential," she said. "They need our prayers for the big tasks they deal with daily."

What stood out to Dione was the statement by the apostolate that describes their mission: A call to strengthen the Church by ensuring that a holy hour is prayed each day of the week for the sole intention of a specific priest or bishop—a "holy wasting" (cf. Mt. 26:10) or lavishing of prayer for his deeper conformity to Christ.

"What stood out to me," she added, "is that holy wasting of yourself for your parish and parish priest. There's a holy purpose for that hour you spend strengthening the Church and the holy foundation. It's a gift of ourselves to this mission."

Father Bruce Krebs, currently pastor of Our Lady of Grace in Minot, thinks both parties—the sister in prayer and the priest—benefit from the Seven Sisters Apostolate. He certainly is strengthened by the prayers and he has been told by the women that it's fulfilling for them.

He hadn't heard about the apostolate prior to being assigned there in 2007. He's grateful to be covered in prayer by the Seven Sisters and was very much in favor of the idea, acknowledging the need.

"We definitely need it these days to stay true to the call amidst all the worldly temptations to live for oneself," he said. "It's always been encouraging and supportive for me to know people are praying for me and sacrificing for my sake."

He said that when people pray for priests, they are extending the benefit to the lay people that the priest serves. "Priests are tempted



Submitted photo

For his retirement on July 1, Fr. Bruce Krebs was presented with a quilt by Seven Sisters Apostolate made by Bev Cushing, Parishioner of Minot's Our Lady of Grace. All the sisters' names who have prayed for him the last three years are embroidered on the back.

even more than lay people because the evil one wants to subvert us even more from helping lay people by bringing them to God," Fr. Bruce said.

Bev can see the benefits of the apostolate and agrees that priests need our prayers now more than ever. "When you start praying for someone, you start seeing them in a different light," she explained. "I see priests grow in holiness. They have a tough job."

Father Bruce is set to retire on July 1 after 43 years as a priest for the diocese. He's not sure if there will be a Seven Sisters group praying for him in retirement, but he'd welcome it. "Any priest knowing that someone is praying for him in this way will be a spiritual and emotional boost for him," Fr. Bruce added.

The group praying for him recently presented him with a retirement gift of a handmade quilt. Bev made the quilt and included all the Sisters' names who have prayed for him the last three years embroidered on the back.

Father Adam Maus has been appointed the new pastor of Our Lady of Grace beginning July 1. The Seven Sisters currently praying for Fr. Bruce will be "transferred" to Fr. Maus. If enough women come forward, Fr. Bruce will have a group praying for him again in retirement.

While it would be ideal to have all priests covered in prayer, the primary goal is to have parish priests covered first. Women are asked to commit to the apostolate for one year. May is the month

that sisters discern to pray for a priest/bishop. In June, around the feast day of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, sisters make their commitment to pray a holy hour, one day a week, for one hour in front of the tabernacle in adoration, for a priest/bishop for one year.

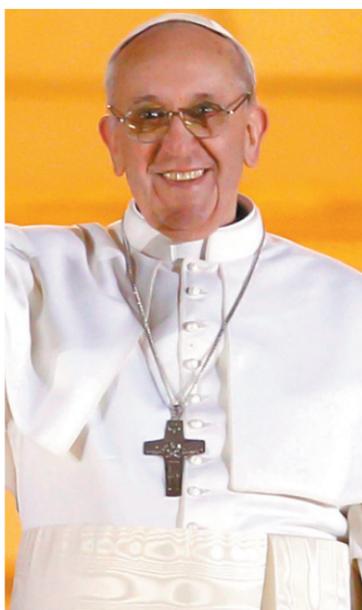
Generally, women join by being asked by another sister. "I'm always on the lookout, especially in adoration," explained Dione. "I feel like I'm led by the Holy Spirit. I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to me who might be willing to answer the call to participate."

Dione added that simplicity is the biggest draw—it is for her and for most women she knows. Most women, moms especially, are over scheduled. To commit to the group, you choose a day, the hour and stay with it for a year. Most groups have substitutes available for backup.

Most women find their own path on how to spend the hour. The group provides suggestions and prayer cards. Sometimes a priest will reach out to the anchoress with a special intention. "He knows we're out there," Dione added.

Anyone interested in more information or willing to join a Seven Sisters Apostolate group to pray for a diocesan priest or Bishop Kagan, can reach out by sending an email to [sevensistersbismarck@gmail.com](mailto:sevensistersbismarck@gmail.com) or calling Kathy at 701-389-2253. More information on the Seven Sisters Apostolate can be found at [sevensistersapostolate.org](http://sevensistersapostolate.org).

### Holy Father's Prayer Intentions for June and July



#### Intention for evangelization - The beauty of marriage

Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.

#### Universal intention - Social friendship

We pray that, in social, economic and political situations of conflict, we may be courageous and passionate architects of dialogue and friendship.

# Using talents to help others

## Academy students' efforts benefit African Mission

As a result of the incredible efforts of our St. Mary's Academy students, \$18,750 was donated to the Diocese of Bismarck African Mission, to purchase water filtration systems for families in Kenya.

Through the creativity and ingenuity of the 7th grade students, plus 28 8th grade students who volunteered, more than 900 families in Kenya will have water filter kits and clean water for many years to come. The students presented the money from this Parable of Talents project to Bishop Kagan at the weekly Academy Mass on April 28.

Academy religion teacher, Duane Eichele led this project, inspired by the bible story of the Parable of the Talents. The project uses Jesus' teachings as a springboard to affect change and make a difference in the world by paying it forward.

Here's how it works: with the cooperation of an anonymous donor, each student was given a talent (\$10) and a period of time in which they will use their creativity to increase the talent/money with which they've been entrusted. At the appointed time, each student was summoned to give an account of what they did with their talent/money and return it, as was required in the Parable of the Talents.

The variety of projects was incredible including bake sales, arts/crafts, car washes, and so many other items were made, or services were provided to raise these funds. The hope of the project is that the students would be good stewards and return more than they were given.

The other amazing part of this project is how it connects all areas of education. Each teacher got involved:

- English Language Arts: students created a business plan taking a critical look at their idea and to identify what set their idea apart from the others. They also kept a reflection journal recording the steps they took to launch and execute their plan, as well as how it went and any items they would change in the future.

- Health: students not only learned the connection between water and health but kept a journal of their own water consumption.



Bishop Kagan and Chuck Reichert, director of the Bismarck African Mission, with the St. Mary's Academy students, staff, clergy after Mass on April 28 where they presented the money from their "Parable of the Talents" project.

- Math: students created a financial plan, recording expenses and income. Math class also counted all the incoming money, verified the totals and documented the results for transparency.

- Religion: students learned about the social teachings of the Catholic Church, as well as the Works of Mercy. They created a promotional poster that captured the purpose of why they did the project.

- Science: students designed and tested their own water filters. This taught them to use their critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities to create the most effective design.

- Social Studies: for two weeks, the students had to think like a geographer looking at Kenya, East Africa (where the Bismarck Mission is located) through many lenses—political geography, government, physical geography, history, culture and resources.

Eichele explained, "There is so much more to this story than the money we raised. I was witness to the joy in their eyes, the enthusiasm in their voices, the energy in their pace and the charity in their hearts. Our students were inventors, innovators and entrepreneurs. The stories, reflections, and life lessons they shared were truly amazing. I was reminded yet again of a lesson I learned many years ago—invite



St. Mary's Academy students presented a check to Bishop Kagan and Fr. David Morman for the Bismarck African Mission water filter systems distribution and training in Kenya.



Father David Morman who serves the diocese at the Bismarck African Mission in Kenya, East Africa, visited with the students at the St. Mary's Academy in April about the programs available to the more than 450 AIDS orphans served by the Mission.

young people to place their hearts in the hands of God...and get out of the way. It is such a grace to have the opportunity to be in the presence of these virtuous young

ladies and men. As in the words of the parable, "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

—Submitted information



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

### An invitation from the Bismarck-Mandan Serra Club

- June 1 Fr. Mark Aune
- June 2 Deacon Ray Grabar
- June 3 Seminarian Logan Obrigewitch
- June 4 All Lay Ministers
- June 5 Fr. Anthony Baker, OSB
- June 6 Br. Samuel Larson, SDS
- June 7 All Liturgical Ministers
- June 8 Sr. Grace Dahmus, OSB

- June 9 Fr. Paul Becker
- June 10 Deacon Lonnie Grabowska
- June 11 Fr. Gary Benz
- June 12 Deacon James Haga
- June 13 All Lay Ministers
- June 14 Br. Benet Tvedten, OSB
- June 15 Sr. Stephanie Dolyniuk, OSB

- June 16 Seminarians & Religious in Formation
- June 17 Sisters of Spirit of Life Convent, Mandan
- June 18 Fr. Dan Berg
- June 19 Deacon Harvey Hanel
- June 20 Br. Bertrand Vogelweide, OSB
- June 21 Seminarian Ben Wanner

- June 22 Fr. Al Bitz
- June 23 Deacon Doug Helbing
- June 24 Sr. Mary Ruth Kayute, OSB
- June 25 Fr. Dominic Bouck
- June 26 Seminarian Josh Hill
- June 27 Msgr. Jame Braaten
- June 28 Deacon Ronald Hogan
- June 29 Sr. Mariah Dietz, OSB
- June 30 Sr. Mary Walker, OSB

# Dickinson family raises funds for African Mission

## Lenten project helps AIDS orphans

By Sonia Mullally  
DCA Editor

Parents often look for ways to make their children appreciate their own abundant blessings and make them aware of those less fortunate. Dickinson family, Jenetta and Rick Padilla and their four children, have found the Bismarck African Mission a perfect place to convey that message and help those in need.

Since 2013, the Padilla family has done a Lenten project for the specific needs of the more than 450 AIDS orphans served by the diocesan mission in Kenya, East Africa.

“Each year since our oldest was in first grade and Clara was a baby, our family has chosen an African Mission Lenten Project,” Jenetta explained. “We’ve contacted the organizers of the African Mission to find something that they would like for the children if they had the funds, something that wasn’t ordinarily covered by the annual mission appeal.”

The Padilla children were on board from the very start.

“Clara excitedly started asking people as soon as she was old enough to ask. She and her brothers (Daniel, Joseph, and Thomas) explained their ‘mission’ and asked for donations from people at our parish, from neighbors and people down our road, from the business across the road and our family,” Jenetta expressed.

The pandemic of 2020 changed the project due to social distancing.

“Clara had just started asking people when the social distancing started,” Jenetta noted. “We could no longer ask people in person

which easily could have canceled our annual Lenten project. Clara had the courage to make phone calls and gladly did so. She made call after call explaining the mission and how she was trying to collect money for animals for kids in Kenya (talking to people “in person” on the other end as well as explaining the mission to many voice mails). She had hopes on being able to donate a pregnant heifer, and she was thrilled when she was able to donate two heifers, as well as 27 goats and 171 chickens!”

Due to the great response last year, the family did the same this year asking for donations for chickens, goats or a pregnant heifer. The success of the project for the last nine years keeps the family motivated in their efforts.

“I really want to help our children be aware of those less fortunate than we are (financially) and appreciate what we have,” Jenetta said. “We aren’t traveling to Africa to either help or to witness third-world poverty firsthand, so this is a little way we can both help our kids’ awareness and help the children in Kenya. We have also found that many people like to help when given a simple opportunity to give.”

Making this different than a usual school fundraiser was key. When potential donors can see photos of the children in Africa and hear their story through the Padilla children, it’s easy to see the need. One year, the children received a water filter kit from the diocese to demonstrate how it works before asking for donations.

“I figured other kids participated in fundraising projects, so as a homeschooling



Jen and Rick Padilla’s children, Joseph, Thomas, Daniel and Clara, have been doing a family Lenten project since 2013 to benefit the Bismarck African Mission

family, we’d make this our family’s project,” Jenetta added. “I make a fundraiser-type form with pictures from our mission to show what we’re collecting and to track donors and their donations. Each year has looked a little different, depending on the ages and personalities of the kids. One year, for example, one of our children demonstrated the sample water filter while another did the talking. Last year, our youngest personalized it by drawing Africa and the animals in order to show people.”

Jenetta estimates the kids have raised approximately \$2,000-\$3,500 each year since 2013.

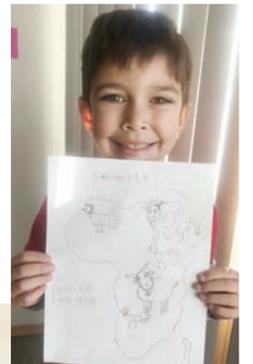
With those funds, the family equates their donation to specific areas of the African Mission made available to the AIDS orphans served by the Mission. Donations have included: in 2013 - 25 goats, 83 chickens, and 300 pairs of underwear; 2014 - tuition for 17 children to attend day school; 2015 - 200 solar lights to read and do homework; 2016 - 200 sweatshirts and 55 mattresses; 2017: 368 solar lights; 2018 - 67 water filters; 2019 - more water

filters; 2020 - 171 chickens, 27 goats and two heifers; 2021 - 115 chickens, 15 goats and one heifer.

“I encourage others to join us, even if they only ask a few people,” Jenetta said. “Every donation helps.”

For more information about the diocesan African Mission, go to [bismarckdiocese.com/african-mission](http://bismarckdiocese.com/african-mission).

Thomas Padilla personalized the fundraising message by drawing Africa and the animals.



The pandemic of 2020 changed the project due to social distancing, so Clara Padilla spent time calling potential donors instead of in-person visits.

**GUMBO FLATS RANCH**  
*Town and Country Celebration*  
**July 11, 2021**

**Gumbo Flats Ranch**  
917 County Road 135  
Fort Rice, ND 58554

Registration begins:  
**11 a.m.**  
Blessing of animals, land and machinery begins:  
**11:30 a.m.**  
Mass with Bishop Kagan:  
**Noon**  
Lunch and entertainment:  
**1 p.m.**

Hosted by Matthew and Lisa Rebenitsch along with Father Todd Kreitinger, Father Brandon Wolf and the parishioners of Saint Martin in Huff, ND and Saint Anthony in Saint Anthony, ND.

*All are welcome-young and old, from town and country!*

Register at [bismarckdiocese.com/townandcountry](http://bismarckdiocese.com/townandcountry) or call Amanda at 204-7205.

Registration required for an accurate meal count.

Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, umbrellas and whatever you need to make it an enjoyable day outside.

## Exact casting of Michelangelo's Pietà coming to Diocese of Bismarck

The Diocese of Bismarck and Arte Divine LLC, have announced that a life-size marble casting of Michelangelo's Pietà will be placed at the Our Lady of Victory Chapel on the campus of St. Mary's Central High School in Bismarck, after being on display for several months at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. The Carrara marble casting of Michelangelo's masterpiece, Pietà, will be the 52nd of only 100 authorized to be created and placed.

Five hundred years ago, Michelangelo unveiled what would come to be regarded as one of the world's greatest masterpieces of inspired art and perhaps the most beautiful sculpture ever created. The Pietà was both the consummate expression of Michelangelo's artistic abilities and an embodiment of the divine inspiration that guided his work.

This famous work of art depicts the body of Jesus on the lap of his mother Mary after the crucifixion. The Pietà is the only piece of art Michelangelo ever signed. Arte Divine has recreated Michelangelo's masterpiece, Pietà, in cast marble using a mold derived from the original Pietà, c1498-99, located at St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome. This posthumous Pietà is a precise "1 to 1" casting that is faithful in every detail to Michelangelo's original. These exquisite castings are being acquired by generous corporate and private benefactors, who then donate these legacy gifts to select

Catholic locations.

"We are honored and elated that Bismarck residents, Cathedral parishioners, and Light of Christ benefactors, Ken and Marilyn Keller, have sponsored this donation, which will serve as a perpetual gift to the local church and the community at large. It's final placement at our local Catholic high school will serve to enhance the faith and an appreciation of the arts for our students for years to come," said Fr. Joshua Ehli, Rector of the Cathedral.

"We are very grateful to the Keller family for sponsoring this wonderful gift. It is such an inspirational, iconic image of our Christian faith, and I know it will bring hope, healing, and compassion to all who come to witness its great beauty," said Fr. Ehli.

"We are truly grateful to His Excellency David D. Kagan, Bishop of Bismarck, and the Keller family for the opportunity to place Michelangelo's masterpiece at St. Mary's Central High School," said Pat Kerivan, Arte Divine Director of Sales.

Bishop Kagan celebrated the official unveiling and blessing ceremony of the Pietà at the Cathedral on May 22, following the vigil Mass. It will remain at the Cathedral through summer 2021, after which it will be permanently placed at St. Mary's Central High School. The faithful of the diocese are invited to come and pray



Submitted photo

before this truly moving work of art.

"It is Arte Divine's mission to place Michelangelo's Pietà in 100 sacred and secular settings around the world. In so doing, we hope to elevate the hearts and minds of millions of the faithful who

will never have the opportunity to travel to Saint Peter's Basilica and personally experience the transcendent beauty of this divinely inspired work that is Michelangelo's Pietà," Mr. Kerivan added.

—Submitted information

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ■ Seminarian golf tourney June 21

The 7th Annual Seminarian Scholarship Golf Tournament hosted by the Catholic Foundation of Western North Dakota will be held Monday, June 21 at the Prairie West Golf Course in Mandan. Check in and lunch begins at noon with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. Lunch and dinner are provided. Cost is \$500 per team or \$125 per person. Register by June 17 online at [cfwnd.org/golf](http://cfwnd.org/golf) or contact Mike Bichler at 701-471-0985 or [MichaelBichler6@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelBichler6@gmail.com).

### ■ Mother-daughter days

The Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen in Hankinson, N.D. invite you to join them for their annual "Mother-Daughter Days." Two sessions are offered this summer June 17-19 and July 26-28. The theme is "The Joy of the Lord is My Strength." It's a chance to spend some quality time together, have a little fun, nourish your spiritual life and even learn a bit about the life of the sisters. To register, contact Sr. Jean Louise, OSF by text at 701-208-1245 or email [ndfranciscan@yahoo.com](mailto:ndfranciscan@yahoo.com).

### ■ HOTR golf scramble June 27

The 4th Annual Dakota Scramble for Home On The Range (HOTR) will be on Sunday, June 27 at Bully Pulpit Golf Course in Medora. HOTR is a licensed resident care facility for teenage youth in western North Dakota under the auspices of the Diocese of Bismarck. All proceeds from the tournament will benefit the HOTR spiritual program. Registration begins at 8 a.m. MT with a shotgun start at 10 a.m. Prizes will be awarded on every hole. Fee is \$400 for a team of four golfers. This includes golf and cart, pin prizes, hole and team prizes and dinner. Hole and prize sponsors are also welcome. Register by June 11 by contacting Josh Helvik at [josh@hotrnd.com](mailto:josh@hotrnd.com) or go to the HOTR

website at [hotrnd.com/category/news-events](http://hotrnd.com/category/news-events) for details.

### ■ Big Smoke BBQ cook off June 28

The Serra Club of North Central North Dakota present the Big Smoke BBQ cook off on Monday, June 28 at Flickertail Gardens on the State Fairgrounds, Minot. A Mass for religious vocations will be celebrated at 12:15 p.m. at St. Leo the Great. The event, starting at 5 p.m., features the cooking talents of priests, deacons, and monks from across the diocese. The public is invited to enjoy food, fun and prizes. Tickets to the Big Smoke are \$35 per adult and \$80 per family that includes parents with children up to age 18. For tickets, contact Mike Ruelle at 701-839-4365 or 701-340-2915 or Karen Johnson at 701-240-5561.

### ■ Town and Country Celebration July 11

You are invited to the annual Town and Country Celebration on Sunday, July 11. The event will be held at the Gumbo Flats Ranch, 917 County Road 135 near Fort Rice. The day will begin with a blessing of land and equipment at 11:30 a.m. with Mass celebrated by Bishop Kagan at noon. All are invited to participate in lunch and entertainment after Mass. The event is hosted by Matthew and Lisa Rebenitsch, with Fr. Todd Kreitingger and Fr. Brandon Wolf and the parishioners of the Church of St. Martin in Huff and St. Anthony in St. Anthony. Register at [bismarckdiocese.com/townandcountry](http://bismarckdiocese.com/townandcountry) or call Amanda at 701-204-7205. Registration is required for an accurate meal count.

### ■ Volunteers needed for camp in Mandaree

Christian Life Camp will be held at St. Anthony Church in Mandaree on July 12-16 for children in grades 1-4 and

July 19-23 for children grade 5 through age 14. Volunteer counselors are needed. Adult counselors (18 years old or older) will supervise campers and help where needed. Junior counselors (16-17 years old) will help the team as needed, such as clean up lead/play games, work with crafts, etc. For more information, contact Bobbi Shegrud at 701-720-3998.

### ■ Champion's Ride is Aug. 7

Everyone's invited to the 65th Champion's Ride Match on Saturday, Aug. 7 at 1 p.m. (MT). The Match is celebrating its 7th year as a sanctioned "extreme bronc riding" event by the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association (PRCA). Thirty-two cowboys ride a bronc and compete in the long go round. The top 12 highest scores advance to the short-round to compete for the title and money. The prize money that a cowboy wins counts towards their earnings to qualify for the Wrangler National Finals in Las Vegas. The Champions Ride not only has a rich history of cowboys, but also as a major fundraiser

for the organization Home On The Range (HOTR). HOTR is a nonprofit organization which helps abused, neglected and traumatized teenage boys and girls. Tickets are available at the gate. For more information, go to [hotrnd.com](http://hotrnd.com).

### ■ THIRST conference Oct. 30

Join us Oct. 30 at the Bismarck Event Center for THIRST 2021. This exciting and free event has something for all ages and backgrounds. Featured keynote speakers include Dr. Ray Guarendi and Matt Fradd. The Diocesan Youth Conference (for students in grades 6-12) will be held in conjunction with the conference again this year. New this year is Vacation Bible School for younger children. Watch for more details at [bismarckdiocese.com/thirst](http://bismarckdiocese.com/thirst). General questions can be directed to Amanda at [ajensen@bismarckdiocese.com](mailto:ajensen@bismarckdiocese.com) or 701-204-7205 or Chris at [ckraft@bismarckdiocese.com](mailto:ckraft@bismarckdiocese.com) or 701-204-7208.

### 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](mailto:victimassistance@bismarckdiocese.com).

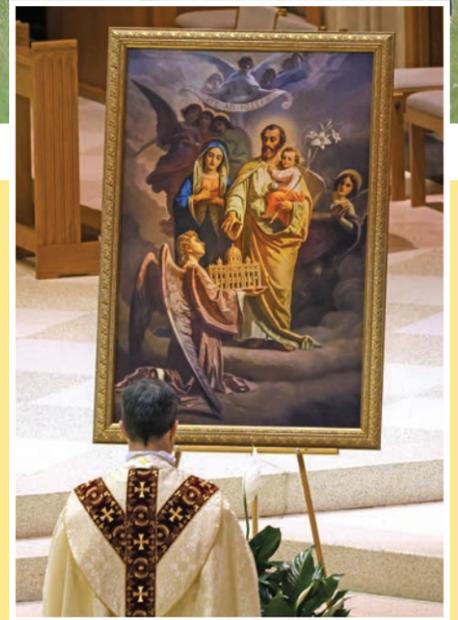
### CODE OF CONDUCT

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>.



Submitted photos

An image of St. Joseph, Patron of the Church, was recently processed from St. Joseph's Church in Mandan to the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck, where the image was permanently installed. The 6-mile procession began at St. Joseph's Church on the evening of April 30. Upon arrival at the Cathedral, the Litany of St. Joseph was recited, followed by Night Prayer. On May 1 (Feast of St. Joseph the Worker), the day began at the Cathedral with a rosary, Mass, a presentation on St. Joseph by local Catholic speaker Tom Perna and installation of the image in the Marian Chapel. The event was an initiative of the Bismarck-Mandan Troops of Saint George and the Knights of Columbus in honor of the Year of St. Joseph.



## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS



Bishop of Bismarck  
David D. Kagan,  
D.D., P.A., J.C.L.

The following appointments, with the permission of Bishop David D. Kagan, are effective July 1, 2021.

**The Reverend Father John G. Guthrie**, at the request of the Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago and with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop to be a faculty member for Mundelein Major Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois.



Fr. John G. Guthrie

**The Reverend Father Stephen O. Folorunso** to be Pastor of St. Pius V, New Salem, St. Mary Queen of Peace, Almont and St. Martin, Center.

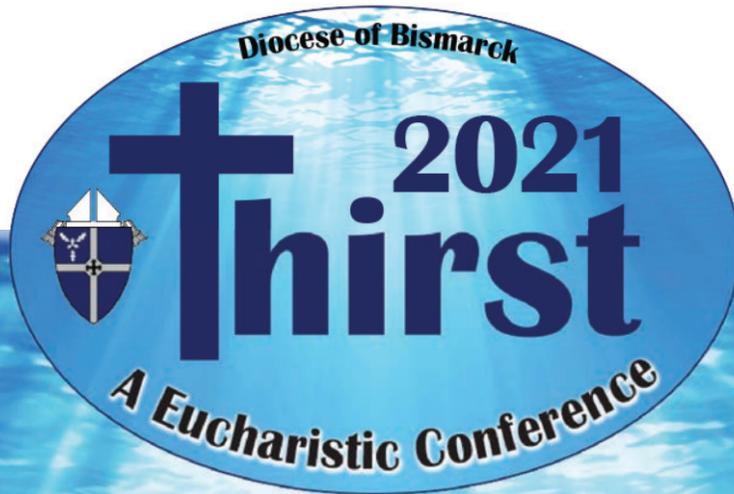


Fr. Stephen O. Folorunso

**The Reverend Father Jolly George** to be Parochial Vicar for St. Peter, Fort Yates, St. Elizabeth, Cannon Ball, St. James, Porcupine, St. Philomena, Selfridge and Sacred Heart, Solen.



Fr. Jolly George



# Saturday, October 30

A free one day Eucharistic Conference at the Bismarck Event Center to include keynote and breakout speakers and the celebration of Vigil Mass with Bishop David Kagan

### Featured speakers:



**Matt Fradd** is the creator and host of the "Pints With Aquinas" podcast. He is the author and coauthor of several books including, *Does God Exist? A Socratic Dialogue on the Five Ways of Thomas Aquinas*. Matt earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in philosophy from Holy Apostles College & Seminary which also awarded him an honorary doctorate. He lives in Steubenville, Ohio, with his wife Cameron and their four kids.



**Dr. Ray Guarendi** is a Catholic father of ten adopted children, a clinical psychologist, author, professional speaker, and national radio and television host. His radio show, "The Dr. Is In" can be heard on over 440 stations and Sirius XM channel 130. His TV show, "Living Right With Dr. Ray" can be seen on EWTN Global Catholic Network and is aired in 140 countries.

The event will also include the **Diocesan Youth Conference** and a special **Vacation Bible School** for the youngest attendees.

Opportunities for adoration of our Lord and confessions will be available for all.

Registration will open August 2. For regularly updated information visit [bismarckdiocese.com/thirst](http://bismarckdiocese.com/thirst) and [bismarckdiocese.com/youthconference](http://bismarckdiocese.com/youthconference).

## Balancing Church & State

CHRISTOPHER DODSON



### Legislative 2021 session summary

Legislators introduced over 900 bills and resolutions during the 2021 legislative session. The North Dakota Catholic Conference followed about 100 of them. Here is a look at the work of the legislature on just some of the bills and resolutions.

#### The legislature:

- Defeated a bill to mandate insurance coverage for fertility treatments, some of which are contrary to Catholic teaching and threaten human life. However, the legislature might study implementing such a mandate during the interim.
- Provided new services for youth at risk of homelessness.
- Passed a fairness in sports bill requiring that only biological girls can participate in girls' sports, only to have the bill vetoed by Governor Burgum. The Senate failed to override the veto.
- Trounced a bill to legalize physician-assisted suicide by a vote of 9 yeas and 85 nays.
- Increased funding for county-run guardianship programs.
- Faced an unprecedented bill to mandate priests violate the seal of confession. The bill, however, was withdrawn following an outpouring of opposition from Catholics and non-Catholics alike.
- Prohibited institutions of the North Dakota University System from partnering with abortion providers. The Governor vetoed a section of the bill. The remaining sections require that any institution receiving the popular matching grants for foundations cannot

partner with an abortion provider on anything.

- Defeated tax credits for contributions to a scholarship granting organization to help lower-income students. A bill to provide an income tax credit directly to parents with children in nonpublic schools also failed.
- Put off, for now, building a new State Hospital in Jamestown to replace the old and rapidly declining facilities there.
- Defeated several proposals to expand gambling in the state, particularly sports gambling and internet poker.
- Turned back a plan to legalize recreational marijuana in North Dakota.
- Added 10 slots to the corporate guardianship program run by Catholic Charities of North Dakota.
- Merged the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health.
- Rejected a chance to create education empowerment grants that could be used by public or nonpublic school students to help cover the costs of tuition or supplemental needs.
- Authorized the Department of Human Services to assume the refugee resettlement program following the collapse of Lutheran Social Services.
- Defeated a bill to allow someone to use deadly force even when not necessary to protect human life. However, the legislature then passed a differently worded bill that might allow the same use of such force.
- Provided grants to expand

substance abuse treatment in underserved areas.

- Approved an expansion to the tax credit for contributions to nonpublic schools and private universities.
- Protected religious freedom during emergency orders.
- Protected religious freedom for persons in state institutions such as prisons, jails and the State Hospital.
- Allowed for a process to remove restrictions placed by a guardian on visiting and communicating with a ward.
- Clarified and hopefully finally settled questions concerning what church property local governments can tax.
- Protected the free speech and religious rights of students and student organizations on the state-run college campuses.
- Made known that North Dakota's ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment had expired.
- Prohibited municipalities from enacting paid family leave policies and zoning ordinances relating to firearms. It also limited their ability to assist federal law enforcement with enforcing some gun laws.
- Changed to a study a bill that would have allowed 20 new weapons to be brought without permission into churches and other public gatherings.
- Turned a paid family-leave plan into a study and then defeated the study.
- Expanded the income tax credit for employment of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Rejected a bill that would have

exposed private schools and churches to old claims of child sexual abuse without doing the same for public schools and government agencies.

- Created a new childhood education grant for four-year olds.
- Rejected a proposal to create a guardianship commission. Many legislators felt the plan was premature.
- Authorized the Ethics Commission to give advisory opinions.
- Secured access to residents of a long-term care facility by an essential caregiver during an emergency.
- Targeted downsizing the Life Skills Transition Center in favor of more community services.

The North Dakota Catholic Conference appreciates all the calls, emails and letters sent to legislators and the governor this year.

There is still more to come. In addition to needing to redistrict, the legislature will need to decide what to do with millions of dollars in COVID-19 relief money coming from the federal government. The federal government has not yet set the rules for using this money. Stay tuned and pray for our elected leaders and public servants.

■ 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.

## Guest Columnist

SAMANTHA NELSON

### Max's Mission brings comfort to grieving parents

Being a mother is one of the greatest callings in life that I can imagine. Every child is a miracle, a gift from God.

Sadly, sometimes bringing a child into the world is not always easy, nor is it always successful. In May of 2017, I felt the Lord place upon my heart a desire to start a mission for those who have lost a child. At first, I wasn't sure why the Lord was prompting me to begin this mission, since my husband and I didn't have experience with the loss of a child. I had just moved to Mandan with my husband and two boys and life was a whirlwind; so, I put off this prompt and figured that if the Lord truly wanted me to do something with this, He would clarify this desire.

In September of 2017, I finally understood why the Lord placed this mission on my heart. It was at this time that my sister-in-law and her husband, Paxtyn and Zach Steckler, found out that they were expecting their first child.

Not long after the news of

their pregnancy, the Steckler's were informed that there were complications with their pregnancy, and that their son would not survive outside of the womb for very long. Thirty-six weeks into the pregnancy, Maximilian Pio Steckler was born.

He lived for a mere 30 seconds, just long enough for him to be baptized and confirmed.

Being a part of the difficult journey of Maximilian's short life is something I will never forget. It was a journey that brought our entire family closer. To this day, my children pray to Maximilian and we all keep his memory. Going through the process of infant loss with Paxtyn and Zach was the clarification I needed from God and

reignited the desire in my heart to start a mission dealing with the loss of a child. That is when I reached out to the Diocese of Bismarck for help starting Max's Mission.

One of the ways we accomplish the goals of Max's Mission is giving boxes to those dealing with the loss

the grieving process.

We hope that by honoring the life of every child lost early, we could, in some small way, help facilitate the healing of broken hearts and remember the joy that these babies brought to those who will always love and remember them.

Every parish in the Diocese of Bismarck has access to these boxes. If you or someone you know is dealing with the loss of a child, feel free to request one of the Max's Mission boxes from your local parish. Additionally, the resources are available on the Diocese of Bismarck website at [bismarckdiocese.com/maxsmmission](http://bismarckdiocese.com/maxsmmission) or you can request a box from the Office of Family Ministry and Respect Life at the Diocese of Bismarck.

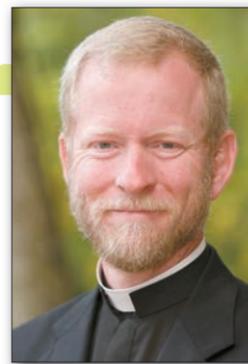
If you feel called to support our mission, contact Amanda at the diocese at 701-204-7205 or [ajensen@bismarckdiocese.com](mailto:ajensen@bismarckdiocese.com), or contact Samantha Nelson at 218-280-8327.



of a child—to offer some comfort. The boxes contain a candle, a prayerful image of Mary with Jesus in her womb, tissues, a journal, a stuffed animal, informational materials and two baby blankets. One of the blankets is newborn sized and one is premie sized; with the idea that one could be used for wrapping the baby, and one to be kept as a memento. The box also contains information and resources to guide them through

## Making Sense out of Bioethics

FR. TAD PACHOLCZYK



### Vaccine mandates and Catholic colleges

In a recent statement from the National Catholic Bioethics Center on COVID-19 vaccines, we noted that the Catholic Church “neither requires nor forbids” the use of vaccines, but instead urges people to “form their consciences and to carefully discern the moral and prudential issues involved.”

A 2020 Vatican statement offers a similar conclusion: “vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation,” and “therefore, it must be voluntary.”

That’s why, when Catholic colleges and universities mandate COVID-19 vaccines as a condition for enrollment, as several have recently done, important ethical conflicts and prudential concerns arise.

Vaccine mandates run counter to the wisdom of encouraging individuals to make careful and case-specific determinations regarding their personal health needs. Such mandates bolster the idea that the judgment of a higher authority, say a university president or a politician, should be substituted for their own free and informed consent.

In general, when I become sick, I ought to function as the decision-maker regarding my medical treatments, even as I work closely with my health care providers to receive the information, I need to make the best decision. Similarly, if I am healthy, but face the risk of exposure to a new disease, I must weigh the benefits and burdens of prophylactic measures like vaccines.

Early in a pandemic, there can be a lot of questions and uncertainty because of shifting sets of medical data or a growing sense of alarm and panic. We may be tempted to think we can or should sideline ethical or prudential concerns.

Yet it is at precisely such a time that our ethics and prudential judgments become paramount, as we seek to temper urgency with due diligence, and to confront our fears with reason and discernment. It is in such a crisis

moment that calm, careful and case-by-case discernment becomes crucial.

Mandating vaccines for everyone involves a flawed assumption that there are only benefits, and no significant burdens, associated with getting vaccinated. The history of vaccine development reminds us how vaccines, which constitute a breakthrough technology and life-saving remedy in the battle to improve public health, are nevertheless not a risk-free endeavor.

Some individuals have allergies to vaccine ingredients. Others have immune systems that cannot tolerate vaccines. Some vaccine recipients encounter unanticipated reactions and side effects, whether it’s headaches, muscle aches, several days of exhaustion or nausea, anaphylaxis, or the rare blood clots seen among those who received the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

When deciding about vaccinations, other considerations besides safety and side effects also come into play.

There are ethical concerns about the way certain COVID-19 vaccines are connected to cell lines derived from abortions.

Certain populations, statistically speaking, will face low risk from diseases like COVID-19, including otherwise healthy college-age students and children, many thousands of whom have tested positive but most of whom have experienced only mild symptoms or may have been entirely asymptomatic. Those who have been previously exposed to COVID-19 may decide to delay or decline vaccination, since they already have acquired some immunity.

For those, meanwhile, who are more vulnerable to the coronavirus and its potentially damaging effects, like those who are elderly, obese, diabetic, or facing other comorbidities, it makes sense for them to consider the potentially safer path of vaccination, rather than risking a harmful (or

deadly) encounter with the virus itself. The same would hold for young people who are obese or diabetic, or have regular contact with vulnerable groups like the elderly.

Finally, mandates can sometimes have an effect opposite to what is intended. People can stubbornly dig in their heels when certain behaviors are compelled.

Jonah Berger, a marketing professor at the Wharton School, has noted that there is some evidence that telling people what to do can backfire, as with “Just Say No” style anti-drug campaigns that may actually increase drug use among certain subgroups of young people.

“People want to feel like they’re in control of their choices,” Berger says.

He notes, however, that once people have described what they care about and believe others have addressed those concerns, it’s much harder for them to push back merely for the sake of resisting: “They’re [now] a participant in the process rather than being forced to do something.”

Especially at Catholic universities and colleges, where we are seeking to form the next generation of society’s leaders and thinkers, instead of imposing the requirement to get vaccinated, leaders would do better to share and explain to students the benefits and risks of vaccinations—scientific and ethical—to help them decide.

By offering evidence-based information and moral principles, rather than mandates, college students will be helped to clarify their own processes of intellectual and personal discernment, and acquire the habit of making more prudent and informed choices.

■ 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](http://www.ncbcenter.org)

## Ag Attitudes

JAMES ODERMANN



### You are what you eat—making spiritual diet Jesus’ reflection

The approach to spring’s work this year is different. With all the Bismarck Diocese in the “extreme drought” category (and the entire state experiencing some degree of drought), the attitude of hesitancy seems prevalent.

Some of the restraint is caused by the investment that producers need to make to generate a crop. Another part of the equation is that farmers today can get done in one hour what used to take a day (at least when I was young riding around on the John Deere “R” tractor). Stopping at the fence row and visiting with the neighbor takes on a whole different meaning.

The bottom line, however, is that the crop will get planted because people need to eat—and

agricultural producers are the front-line workers to supply food. The world depends on production from rural fields and pastures.

So, as I thought about how mechanization has moved agriculture forward, I rhetorically wondered if interpersonal relationships have advanced at the same speed. It seems “my way or the highway” is the chosen method.

While walking the fence lines on pastures for livestock turnout, checking on young stock or crisscrossing fields putting seed in the ground, I reflected on Jesus’ words to the disciples: “As the Father loves me, so I also love you . . . I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my

commandment: love one another as I love you.”

As I contemplated on these words from the gospel of St. John, I reflected on my own life and four things that really require attention: 1) Condemnation is easy; 2) Communication takes effort; 3) Collaboration requires energy; 4) Consensus needs empathy.

Sadly, for whatever reason, point one is the default action. Points two and three are seldom-invoked corrective action steps and point four really shows one’s commitment to God’s love, to my sisters and brothers in Christ.

I contemplated the call by Jesus to be His disciple, which really ties back to my chosen vocation: “you are what you eat.” This is especially

true for my spiritual life.

The lights went on for me. Is my spiritual diet a reflection of the Church’s call for community, for interaction through the scriptures, prayer, Mass and the Eucharist? Is my diet filled with empathy for others? I need my diet to be one of reaching out to understand, to help, to love as Christ did.

I need to be more Christ-like. This means reform, changing attitudes.

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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