



Dakota Catholic Action

Reporting on Catholic action in western ND since 1941



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

The newly-ordained priests are surrounded and congratulated by their brother priests on the front steps of the Cathedral.

The diocese gains four new priests

The sacred brotherhood of the priesthood gained four more on June 11 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on (most-fittingly) the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The faithful packed the main sanctuary and overflow gathering space to witness the transformation of the hearts of Fathers Jacob Degele, Ben Franchuk, Greg Hilzendegeer and Nicholas Vetter. When the men were asked about their ordination and first Mass, each expressed a sense of wonder and awe.

“After ordination and my first Mass, I felt overwhelmed with joy and gratitude. Looking back, almost everything was a blur!” were Fr. Degele’s words to sum it up.

Fr. Franchuk said his immediate reaction from ordination has been, “Wow! That just happened.”

The sheer amazement is a

feeling that lasts, but not dwelt upon since it’s soon time to move forward on their mission. “From a few days before even to the start of my assignment, I have stayed fairly busy, and I am continually telling myself that ‘This is real.’ It has been great though. I cannot imagine a better life for me than the one I am living right now and will live for the rest of my life,” he added.

For Fr. Hilzendegeer, the final piece of the puzzle to his vocation journey fell into place. “As I reflect on the day of ordination and the brief time since, I keep coming back to the analogy of fitting a puzzle piece into its proper slot. It may take some time and work to find its place, but once it snaps into place, it just fits. It is where it was meant to be, doing what it was made for. That’s how it has felt for me since ordination. There haven’t necessarily been

any extreme emotions. Instead, living the life of a priest just feels right. I’m doing what I was made for. It has been humbling and beautiful to administer the sacraments, watching Jesus work in extraordinary ways through me.”

Father Vetter reflected on the significance of his first Mass. “The day after the ordination was the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This was a special day for me to be able to celebrate my Mass of Thanksgiving. I was ordained a deacon on the Assumption of Mary, so to be able to celebrate a feast of Mary was no coincidence. It was surreal after being ordained and saying Mass. As I have been telling people, at one moment I

was a man who couldn’t celebrate Mass or hear confessions, and a few moments later, I was able to confect the Eucharist. God works so simply, and so beautifully at the same time.

The days were overwhelming in many ways as it was a full schedule of celebrations, but Fr. Vetter added that “it was a blessed day to be able to celebrate the gift of the priesthood with my family, friends and the faithful of the diocese. As I continue to adjust to being a priest, I humbly ask for your prayers for me and my classmates.”

For impressions of their first assignment and a photo recap of the 2021 ordination, see pages 6 and 7.

A LOOK INSIDE



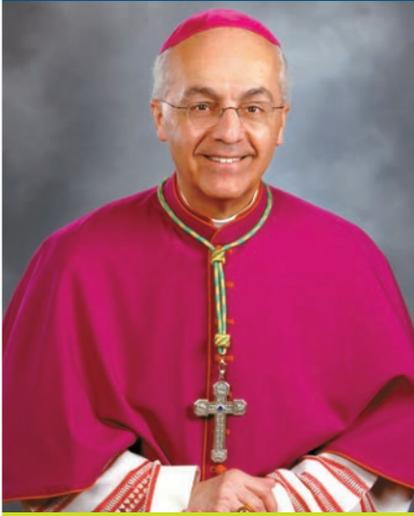
Jesus in the streets
Eucharistic procession involving four parishes evangelizes the city of Minot by bringing Jesus to the people Page 3



BBQ vocations fundraiser
Family, fun and food at The Big Smoke benefit for seminarians and others seeking a religious vocation Page 8

Decision to write a teaching document on the Most Holy Eucharist

FROM THE BISHOP



Bishop David D. Kagan

As we enter the month of August, and the resumption of classes in all of our Catholic schools in the diocese, I urge all Catholic parents to support and be involved in the Catholic education of our children. If you already have your children enrolled in one of our excellent schools, I thank you and encourage you to be involved in all aspects of their education, especially their religious instruction. If you do not have your children enrolled in one of our schools, I urge you to consider doing so. It is a sacrifice to be sure, but I can assure you it

is worth it, for your children and for your entire family.

Since we did not have an issue of our newspaper in July, this is my first opportunity to give you the correct information about what we bishops decided to do at our spring meeting this last June. Unfortunately for all of us, the secular media and even some Catholic media announced that we would be voting to ban politicians who support immoral practices such as abortion and euthanasia from receiving Holy Communion. This was never even on our agenda.

What did we bishops decide to do? First, we decided to continue our efforts to help all of the Catholic faithful understand and live better the reality of the Most Holy Eucharist which we receive. We will write a teaching document on the Most Holy Eucharist having three parts: "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Believed," "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Celebrated" and "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Lived." This document is both broad and specific in scope: it will apply to every single Catholic and it will apply the Church's moral and social teachings to each of us in our vocations as we strive to live them faithfully every day.

This was not a "spur of the moment" decision precipitated by any single Catholic public official; it has been planned for and will be the foundation document for our multi-year Eucharistic Revival Project. Again, the bishops did not ban anyone from receiving Holy Communion nor did we make a national policy on withholding Holy Communion from politicians. To be very clear, the only person who can ban any individual from receiving Holy Communion publicly is that person's own diocesan bishop.

Finally, the Vatican did not prohibit the bishops from moving forward with this document on

the Most Holy Eucharist. It did encourage all of us bishops to discuss it and reach a consensus about the document which we did at length. We reached an overwhelming consensus to write this document for all Catholics by a 168 Yes, 55 No, and 6 Abstention vote.

We bishops will continue to prayerfully discuss this and, at our general meeting in November, we will have ample time to address this matter in person. Please pray for all of us and please be faithful to your obligation as Catholics to be properly disposed to receive Our Lord worthily in Holy Communion.

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE AUGUST 2021

- Aug. 1 • Installation Mass for Fr. Gregory Luger at St. Jerome, Mohall, 11 a.m.
- Aug. 2 • Women's Care Center Board Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck, 5 p.m.
- Aug. 3 • Presbyteral Council, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
- Aug. 5 • Keynote Speaker at Legatus, Radisson, Bismarck, 7 p.m.
- Aug. 6 • Serra Club Summer Gathering, Christ the King, Mandan, 5:30 p.m.
- Aug. 7 • Champions Ride Fundraiser for Home on the Range, Sentinel Butte, 1 p.m. MT
- Aug. 8 • Installation Mass for Fr. Jarad Wolf at St. Charles, Bowman, 10 a.m. MT
- Aug. 9 • Catholic Home Educators Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 5 p.m.
- Aug. 11 • Real Presence Radio Interview, 9 a.m.
- Aug. 12 • Staff Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
- Aug. 13 • Cabinet Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
- Aug. 15 • Installation Mass for Fr. Adam Maus at Our Lady of Grace, Minot, 10:30 a.m.
- Aug. 22 • Installation Mass for Fr. Stephen Folorunso at St. Pius, New Salem, 10:30 a.m.
- Aug. 26-27 • Provincial Meeting, Archdiocese of St. Paul
- Aug. 28 • Mass at Holy Family Parish, Rockford, Ill., 4:30 p.m.
- Aug. 30 • Women's Care Center Board Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck, 5 p.m.

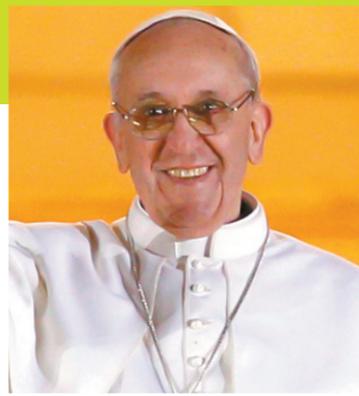
BISHOP IN ACTION



Photo by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

The Town and Country Celebration was held July 11 at the Gumbo Flats Ranch near Fort Rice. The event, which included Mass with Bishop Kagan, blessing of land and animals, a meal and entertainment, was hosted by the Matthew and Lisa Rebenitsch family, and the parishes of the Church of St. Martin in Huff and St. Anthony in St. Anthony.

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions for August



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.

SOCIAL MEDIA



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



Bishop David Kagan

Following

@VescovoDDK

Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time, Sunday: Jesus gives to each bishop, priest and deacon the standard for our vocation - Himself. If we do not completely conform ourselves as shepherds of His people to Him, then we betray Him and His Church. Pray for us!



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.



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

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



Reporting on Catholic action in western ND since 1941

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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.

Jesus in the streets

Eucharistic procession evangelizes the city of Minot

By Jeff Case

Special Contributor to the DCA

The Catholic Church has a long and rich tradition of Eucharistic processions, especially on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). On this June 6 feast, priests and parishioners of the four Minot Catholic parishes processed through the city carrying the Blessed Sacrament.

In the words of Fr. Gregory Crane, Chaplain at Bishop Ryan Catholic Schools, “The Eucharistic procession is an attempt to make manifest to the world, in a physical way, the glory of God.”

The procession was prompted by the belief that our nation is in need of healing prayer and peace. Consider this: “The ideal of the Christian religion is peace, and peace is God’s ultimate plan. But we live in an imperfect world that is tainted with evil. Therefore, we must often fight for truth and goodness. This fight may take many forms, internal and external, and will be different for each of us. No one, though, is exempt from service in the fight.” (Magnificat, Sunday, June 13, 2021, Prayer for Morning, page 179.) In that same issue, on page 178, we see this quote from Scripture: “Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice.” (Is 41:10)

Despite the turmoil, violence and division in our country, we cannot despair. It is because of our belief in Jesus Christ, and recognizing His presence—body, blood, soul and divinity—in the Blessed Sacrament, that we boldly and courageously bring Jesus into our streets and among the people to bring His blessing and healing to our community. The world needs Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church needs to bring Jesus Christ to our communities, out in the open where He can be seen.

It is truly gratifying for us as laity to witness the depth and sincerity of the faith of our priests. The community of Minot is blessed with these good men who said “yes” to the call to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Their expression of faith and belief in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist strengthens our faith

and our resolve to more dramatically live out our faith on a daily basis. We thank them for their support, encouragement and efforts to help make it a success. Working alongside our priests and listening to their testimonies has helped to strengthen the bond between us and these spiritual fathers.

The event began with Mass at Our Lady of Grace with Fr. Bruce Krebs as celebrant and homilist. Outside, after Mass, he recited prayers of minor exorcism to cast out Satan and other evil spirits that occupy our institutions and plague our communities.

Led by the Knights of Columbus 4th Degree carrying the American flag and the flag of the Vatican, with additional Knights on either side of the Blessed Sacrament, the procession began the two-mile journey to St. Leo the Great. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament took place in each of the churches, and parishioners who did not process were encouraged to spend time in adoration.

Father Justin Waltz from St. Leo the Great, Fr. Ken Phillips from St. Therese of the Little Flower and Fr. David Richter from St. John the Apostle repeated the process of reciting the prayers of exorcism before each leg and at the conclusion that culminated at St. John the Apostle with benediction.

Fr. Crane, master of ceremonies for the event, recruited students to serve for the procession.



The faithful gathered outside after Mass at Our Lady of Grace with Fr. Bruce Krebs as the first leg of the procession.

Photos by Harrison Foltz, Harrison Foltz Photography



Fr. Gregory Crane, chaplain of Bishop Ryan School, walked with the faithful as they processed from St. Leo the Great.



Fr. Ken Phillips, pastor of St. Therese of the Little Flower, carried Jesus through the streets.

Deacon Jacob Degele, now Fr. Degele, Parochial Vicar at Our Lady Of Grace, also carried the Blessed Sacrament.

A core committee made up of representatives from each parish included Lucas DeMers of St. John the Apostle, Deacon Hans Gayzur from St. Therese, Dr. Paul and Sue MacLeod of St. Leo’s, and Jeff Case, from Our Lady of Grace.

Lucas DeMers also filmed a video about the procession. He said, “It was a privilege to film the procession. The video included

interviews from the priests and lay people from the parishes. It was amazing to hear the deep love and devotion each person has towards the Blessed Sacrament and the time they spend with Jesus in adoration. The Holy Spirit was guiding the whole procession as well as the making of the video.”

Photos and drone footage of the procession arriving at St. John’s are provided by Harrison Foltz. The video can be viewed at St. Leo the Great website or the St. Leo’s YouTube channel.



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

An invitation from the Bismarck-Mandan Serra Club

Aug. 1 Fr. Joseph Deichert
 Aug. 2 Deacon Leonard Krebs
 Aug. 3 Sr. Madelyn Loutitt, OSB
 Aug. 4 Br. Jacob Deiss, OSB
 Aug. 5 Seminarian Joseph Richter
 Aug. 6 Fr. Jordan Dosch
 Aug. 7 Deacon Lloyd Krueger
 Aug. 8 Sr. Gerard Wald, OSB

Aug. 9 All Lay Ministers
 Aug. 10 FOCUS Missionaries
 Aug. 11 Fr. Paul Eberle
 Aug. 12 Deacon Joe Krupinsky
 Aug. 13 Br. John Patrick Arnett, OSB
 Aug. 14 All Seminarians
 Aug. 15 Fr. Leonard Eckroth
 Aug. 16 Fr. Josh Ehli

Aug. 17 All Religious in Formation
 Aug. 18 Deacon Tom Magnuson
 Aug. 19 Sr. Renee Zastoupil, OSB
 Aug. 20 Seminarian Grant Dvorak
 Aug. 21 Fr. Joseph Evinger
 Aug. 22 Deacon Michael Marback

Aug. 23 Deacon Gerald Martin
 Aug. 24 Fr. Basil Atwell, OSB
 Aug. 25 Sr. Barbara Weber, OSB
 Aug. 26 Fr. Benedict Fischer, OSB
 Aug. 27 Deacon John Paul Martin
 Aug. 28 Deacon Joseph Mathern
 Aug. 29 Assumption Abbey Monks in Bogata
 Aug. 30 All Liturgical Ministers
 Aug. 31 Fr. Stephen Folorunso

“... Live a Life Worthy of the Calling You Have Received...”

A pastoral letter from Bishop Kagan

With this issue of our Dakota Catholic Action, I plan to devote some space to the pastoral letter I published recently to all of the Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Bismarck. Of the five pastoral letters I have written since becoming Bishop of Bismarck, it is the longest and thus, I would like to explain it a bit further section by section.

I will begin by reviewing what I said in both the preface and introduction (pp. 1-4) and then I will conclude with one or two questions about our Faith and the Church. I do this so you can test your own knowledge and feel free to use both Sacred Scripture and The Catechism of the Catholic Church in answering the questions. I will publish the correct answers in the next month's issue.

There is a common saying that “knowledge is power;” however, for Catholics, “faith infused with knowledge is even more powerful.” The difference for us is that knowledge alone without a foundation in faith is sterile and can be lifeless. Faith upon which we gain knowledge has a double benefit; first, faith reinforced with knowledge becomes the anchor of our daily lives and we can rely on our faith in every circumstance. Second, knowledge grounded in faith gives us a confident hope that what we believe and do in daily life generates in us real virtue and increases our desire for greater virtue.

Thus, faith and knowledge for Catholics go together and when they are separated, confusion reigns. As I said in the preface, the pandemic revealed to me that there is good faith among Catholics but a lack of real knowledge of the faith, why we believe what we do and how and

why we put what we believe into practice. This is not a reason to despair but a reason for all of us to recommit ourselves to the prayerful study of both Sacred Scripture and Holy Tradition which are the two sources for our Apostolic Faith and its daily living.

In the introduction, I said that the constant in every pastoral letter is the Person of Jesus Christ and His life and teaching. This pastoral letter is meant to help each Catholic understand this and to conform his or her daily life to Christ's life. We cannot do this unless we know Him, His Church and the Faith we received as His gift to us in baptism. This takes regular prayer and study, and every Catholic has an obligation before God and the Church to strengthen their Faith and increase their knowledge of it throughout their lives. This is true discipleship because this is our life as baptized and confirmed Catholics.

Question:

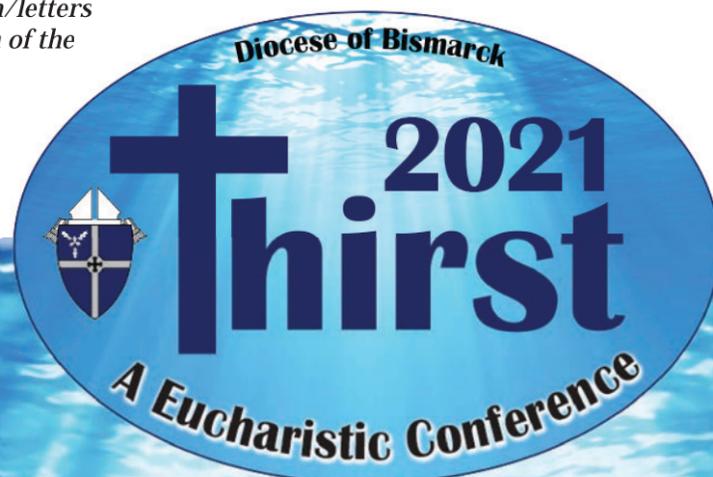
Name the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To read the pastoral letter online go to the diocesan website at bismarckdiocese.com/letters and scroll to the bottom of the page.

“... Live a Life Worthy of the Calling You Have Received...”



A Pastoral Letter
The Most Reverend David D. Kagan, D.D.,
P.A., J.C.L.
Bishop of Bismarck



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:



Dr. Ben Akers is the Executive Director of FORMED.org, a streaming platform providing trustworthy and inspiring Catholic video, audio, and eBook content from the Augustine Institute, Ignatius Press, and more than 60 other partners, helping parishes, families, and individuals explore their faith anywhere. He is also an Associate Professor of Theology at the Augustine Institute Graduate School in Denver, Colorado. He and his wife are blessed to have five children.



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 and bismarckdiocese.com/youthconference.

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>.

Deacon Seminararians

Paul Gardner – Logan Obrigewitch – Ben Wanner



Bishop Kagan prays before the men during the rite of ordination.

Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

Bishop Kagan ordained diocesan seminarians (l-r) Ben Wanner, Logan Obrigewitch and Paul Gardner to the transitional diaconate on May 24 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.



Deacon Paul Gardner is handed the Book of Gospels from Bishop Kagan as he is commissioned as a herald of Christ.



Bishop Kagan handed the Book of Gospels to Deacon Logan Obrigewitch as he is commissioned as a herald of Christ.



Deacon Ben Wanner served in his ministry as a deacon for the first time alongside Bishop Kagan at the altar.

Visiting bishop

Monsignor Patrick Schumacher welcomed Bishop Jerome Feudjio, Bishop of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, to celebrate daily Mass at Corpus Christi Parish in Bismarck on July 1. An informal meet-and-greet and a light reception followed. Bishop Jerome was in town visiting family members—his niece and family who are members of Corpus Christi parish. The Bismarck-Mandan SERRA Club and a private benefactor helped to organize and fund the visit.

Photo by Deacon Joe Krupinsky



7th Annual Seminarian Scholarship Golf Tournament



2021 winner was the team of: Mike Bichler, Trenton Schwerr, Nick Nustad and Troy Ressler with the Bismarck Diocese seminarians in attendance (in the red shirts) and diocesan vocations director, Fr. Jordan Dosch. (Trenton Schwerr is not pictured.)

A big thanks to all of the sponsors, donors, volunteer organizers and golfers who made the event a big success!

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- Ordination -



Father Jacob Degele at the altar for the first time during the Eucharistic Prayer.



Bishop Kagan rubs the hands of Fr. Ben Franchuk after anointing them with sacred chrism oil.



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky

The newest priests of the Bismarck Diocese (l-r)—Father Greg Hilzendeger, Father Nick Vetter, Father Ben Franchuk and Father Jacob Degele—ordained June 11 by Bishop Kagan at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck.



Bishop Kagan pours the sacred chrism oil on Fr. Jacob Degele's hands anointing them for pastoral ministry of building up the Body of Christ and offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.



Visiting bishops with Bishop Kagan before Mass (l-r): Bishop Austin Vetter, Diocese of Helena (Mont.); Bishop William Byrne, Diocese of Springfield (Mass.) and Bishop James Checchio, Diocese of Metuchen (New Jersey).



Father Nicholas Vetter offers a blessing to the three visiting bishops including his uncle Bishop Austin Vetter (foreground), Diocese of Helena (Mont.); Bishop William Byrne, Diocese of Springfield (Mass.) and Bishop James Checchio, Diocese of Metuchen (New Jersey).



Father Jacob Degele (foreground) and Father Ben Franchuk impart blessings on the faithful.



Father Greg Hilzendeger offers a blessing to his family after Mass.



Diocesan seminarians Grant Dvorak (front), Josh Hill (second row, left), Steven Vetter (second row, right), Isaiah Jilek (back left) and Joseph Richter led the procession into the ordination Mass.



Father Greg Hilzendeger at the altar for the first time during the Eucharistic Prayer.



The chalice of wine is presented to Fr. Nicholas Vetter by Bishop Kagan.



Bishop Kagan received a blessing at the conclusion of the Mass from the newly-ordained Fr. Ben Franchuk.

Mass of Thanksgiving

Priestly ordination on June 11 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit was the culmination of years of prayer and preparation for the diocese's four new priests, but the next day was also momentous.

They celebrated their first Mass often called the Mass of Thanksgiving in their respective home churches—Fr. Jacob at St. Joseph

in Dickinson, Fr. Ben at Queen of Peace in Dickinson, Fr. Greg at the Cathedral and Fr. Nicholas at St. Anthony in Linton.

From there, each began their first priestly assignment on July 1. Father Jacob is at Our Lady of Grace, Minot, and religion instructor at Bishop Ryan Catholic School. Father Ben has been assigned to Cathedral of the Holy

Spirit, Bismarck, and religion instructor at St. Mary's Central High School. Father Greg has begun at St. Joseph, Williston, St. John the Baptist, Trenton, and St. Boniface, Grenora. Father Nicholas is at the Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary, Bismarck, and Chaplain for St. Mary's Central High School.

Here are each man's comments about his first assignment.

Fr. Jacob: To say the words of consecration or to give absolution in the confessional is incredibly humbling and life-giving. Our Lady of Grace is a wonderful parish with lots of things going on! I will most certainly be kept on my toes this year. The parish staff and parishioners have all given me a very warm welcome and I am excited to serve them as their priest.

Fr. Ben: I am very excited to be at the Cathedral and St. Mary's High School. The Cathedral is constantly busy and is throwing me into the mix as a priest right away. The number of confessions heard here is awesome and I am happy to be able to bestow the forgiveness of God through this sacrament. I am also excited to be teaching at St. Mary's. I remember at Trinity High School how much of an impact the chaplain made in my life, and he was not there as much as I and Fr. Vetter will be at St. Mary's. We may not see the impact, but I know there will be a big impact in the students, and I look forward to it.

Fr. Greg: It has been a great joy to begin my assignment in Williston, Trenton and Grenora. I've been very warmly welcomed, and it has been great immersing myself in the life of a parish which will be my home for the foreseeable future. I've enjoyed meeting parishioners and taking up the role of a spiritual father to the people entrusted to my care.

Fr. Nicholas: The people of God have been so gracious to me during these days of learning so many new things. Father Jared Johnson is my first pastor, and he has been very helpful in getting me comfortable in the parish. He has been particularly generous in answering my questions. I have a lot of them! I am looking forward to working with him and to calling him a friend. As I moved into the high school, Mr. Reed Ruggles has been a helpful guide as he showed me around the school and described the structure, culture and tradition there. The teachers, in particular Mr. Nick Emmel, have been a great support in discussing the year ahead and the structure of the assistant chaplains. I am excited to be a part of both assignments. Many people contribute to making my priesthood fruitful and for this, I am grateful!



BBQ vocations fundraiser

Family, fun and food spelled success at The Big Smoke

By Grace Fisher

Special Contributor to the DCA

While the proceeds aren't as great as in previous years of The Big Smoke benefit for seminarians and others seeking a religious vocation, it was an "outstanding success," said Mike Ruelle, president of the Serra Club of North Central North Dakota that sponsors it. Members of the Minot Knights of Columbus, longtime supporters of seminarians, provided major assistance at the event.

"Everyone there was having a great time, and that's what we want," he said of the June 28 benefit at the Flickertail Gardens on the North Dakota State Fairgrounds in Minot. "We had a lot more children and that's one of the things we were striving for. We characterize this as a family-friendly event, and we scored a big hit with that."

Preliminary figures indicate a profit of \$4,400, he said. Close to 300 people attended the meat smoking competition. Nine teams participated.

Ruelle spoke of factors that he feels bode well for the future and will have a positive effect in years ahead. The location was a switch from the three previous Big Smoke celebrations—a feature Ruelle believes affected attendance figures. "It was a new venue, and continuing concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic still linger. We have some kinks to iron out, but we will be back there next year—no doubt about it."

The setting was an ideal combination of sun and shade on a day that allowed ample space for all the activity, Ruelle said. "It all felt like a great slice of Americana. Children could romp in the grass. Competitors had more room to operate their smokers. So did the adult patrons as they circulated in the heady aroma while sampling each smoker's offering and voted their choice for the best chunk of smoked meat." Brisket was the meat selected for the competition. Spareribs and pulled pork were served for the meal that was part of the event.

He expressed gratitude to the North Dakota State Fair Association for making it possible to stage The Big Smoke at that location. It cost the Serra Club \$800 for rental of the facility. At previous competitions set up on the grounds of St. John the Apostle Church, it was necessary to rent a tent. That cost the club \$1,200.

The competing teams and their members:

• **St. Thomas Smokers** – Fr. Corey Nelson, pastor of St. Thomas in Tioga, Luke and Joseph Richter.

• **The Spiritual Engineers** - Fr. David Richter, pastor of St. John the Apostle in Minot, and Lance Meyer.

• **St. Jerome's Smokers** - Fr. Adam Maus, Brian and Kristie Michels, Mohall, and their sons, Alan, Matthew and Luke.

• **The Burning Bush Barbecue Team, Our Lady of Grace, Minot** - Cody Eisenbraun, Mike Nilson, Joe Buch and Jeff Schmidt.

• **Smoking With Faith, Faith United Methodist, Minot** - Chris Rehder.

• **St. Leo the Great, Minot, Brew Team** - Ed Steckler, Kevin Sebastian and Mike Vetter.

• **Holy Smokers, Our Lady of Grace and Little Flower** - Perry and Jake Erdmann.

• **Non-Smokers** - Tom Magnuson and Dave Aleshire, Little Flower.

• **Team Little Flower** – Fr. Ken Phillips, pastor of Little Flower, Bob Artz, Kirk Bahle and Paul Phillips.

Serving as judges for the winning entries were Susan Willson, Bruce Kramer and Shane Feland, all of Minot.

Team Little Flower was declared first place winner in the brisket competition and was awarded a \$250 cash prize. Runner-up for a \$150 cash prize was the Holy Smokers team.

The Burning Bush Barbecue Team won the first prize of \$200 for the winning barbecue sauce entry—the first year for that category. The \$100 second prize went to Daniel and Shanley Jung.

First prize for the People's Choice Award went to Fr. Adam Maus and his team for a \$250 cash award. The Non-Smokers was the runner-up team for that award.

The door prize—an outdoor patio set donated by I. Keating Furniture World of Minot—was won by Alane and Joe Ferrara of Minot.

Close to 20 seminarians were in attendance at the event. Father Jordan Dosch, director of vocations for the diocese, introduced them as the evening drew to a close. He noted it is expensive to educate a man for the priesthood, costing an average \$40,000 per year per seminarian.

"But the beautiful thing about our diocese is that it is so easy to get acquainted with priests and to learn that they are normal people. Until I got to know priests on a personal level and saw that they were regular people like anyone else, I thought that somehow, they were of a different type of guy. I found out otherwise and became one of them." He thanked the crowd for their support and expressed the hope that they would continue that in years to come.

Father Maus, who is the club's chaplain, expressed the priests' gratitude for sponsoring the event and urged those present to "pass the word along" about The Big Smoke. "We need to keep praying for vocations. This was a good evening and a good time. Let's get more people coming."



Photos by Lucas DeMers

Team Little Flower, Fr. Ken Phillips, pastor of Little Flower, Bob Artz, Kirk Bahle and Paul Phillips, work on their first-place winning brisket earning them the \$250 cash prize.



Several diocesan seminarians were in attendance at the event including (l-r): Isaiah Jilek, Joe Schon, Charles Reichert, Joseph Richter, Grant Dvorak, Deacon Paul Gardner, Jake Magnuson and Steven Vetter.



St. Jerome's Smokers team of Fr. Adam Maus, Brian and Kristie Michels, Mohall, and their sons were awarded first prize for the People's Choice Award and a \$250 cash prize.



The Spiritual Engineers—Fr. David Richter (left), pastor of St. John the Apostle, and Lance Meyer—were among the teams that took part.

Town & Country Celebration 2021



Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky
Bishop Kagan with the host family Matthew and Lisa Rebenitsch and their family of the Fort Rice area.



Bishop Kagan celebrated Mass on the prairie.



Fathers Todd Kreitinger (front left) and Brandon Wolf (front right) led the procession into Mass at the Town & Country Celebration. Their parishioners of the Church of St. Martin in Huff and St. Anthony in St. Anthony helped to organize the event.



The July 11 event included Bishop Kagan blessing of land and animals.



Bishop Kagan at the altar assisted by Deacon Ben Wanner (left) and Nicholas Quallich.



Questions

I was afraid to ask

FR. JOSEPH EVINGER



Q: Do people turn into angels when they die?

A: Fr. Raphael Stovik, OSB was driving on the roads of North Dakota through a blizzard when he heard a quiet voice that said, "Pull over." There surely was no one in the car. He knew he wasn't insane, so he ignored the voice as a mere thought passing through his mind.

Again, the voice came. This time it was as clear as another person next to him. "Pull over!" Knowing exactly what the voice meant he pulled over to the side of the road. The visibility was quite low. Just then a snowplow with a police officer in the passing lane drove by in the opposite direction.

Folks, we all know that angels exist. There are stories of them among our families and friends. Some we doubt, but others are undeniably true.

Who are these angels? Are they people who have died?

According to the definition found in the Catechism, an angel is a "spiritual, personal, and immortal creature, with intelligence and free will, who glorifies God without ceasing and who serves God as a messenger of his saving plan."

People on the other hand are created by God with a body, the physical aspect and a soul which is spiritual. Both the soul and the body make up the human being. Angels do not have bodies as we do, nor did they have bodies, nor will they have bodies. As defined by the Catechism they are spiritual and immortal creatures. Yet we know they can appear in a body, as did the biblical three Archangels, Michael, Raphael and Gabriel.

Many of us, when someone dies, whether it's grandma, a child, a friend or any human being, have heard it said, "She is now an angel in heaven," or "Heaven just got another angel." Part of this belief that people turn into angels comes from the music of pop culture. Donna Taggart's song "Jealous of the Angels" and Gordan Garner's song "Heaven Got Another Angel" are just a couple that come to mind. Many of these songs are beautiful but not theologically accurate. They are in fact heretical if not understood poetically and figuratively.

A second reason people could think we turn into angels comes from a misunderstanding of Matthew 22:30 when Jesus says, "At the resurrection they [men and women] neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven." Notice that Jesus says they are "like the angels" not "are

angels." Simply put, people don't turn into angels.

Before the missal of St. Paul VI was released in 1970 it was common that when a child died, having received the grace of baptism one did not offer a funeral Mass for the child per se. Since the child was baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, thus having the Original Sin of Adam and Eve washed away, and since the child could not have committed any personal sins, there was no reason to pray for the repose of the soul of the child.

Instead, a Mass was celebrated in thanksgiving to God for the life of the child. The common Mass setting for music used was "The Mass of the Angels." Some then made the assumption that the child became an angel, when in fact every Mass tells us that we join the angels in song and adoration before God. Children don't turn into angels when they die. Rather they join the angels in song as does everyone else who enters heaven.

On a different note, though similar and less common, some people believe that we once were angels in heaven, that is, we pre-existed as spirits. According to this belief, God, at some point, then gave us bodies turning us into human beings. The Church of Latter Day Saints also known informally as Mormons believe this. George Strait's song "Heaven is Missing an Angel" also displays this heresy. In truth, every human being was created with a body and soul at the moment of his or her conception. We did not exist prior to that moment when our life began nor do we turn into another creature when we die, not a cat, not a dog, not a butterfly, nor an angel. We are purely human beings who "look forward to the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come" as we proclaim in the Nicene Creed.

You might ask, so then can people, after they have died, appear to us and tell us things? There are stories of this happening. One such is Moses speaking with Jesus on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured before the apostles. It must be noted that from the passage it is clear Moses had not been turned into an angel.

In conclusion, we profess as Christians that God has given his angels charge over us to guard us in all our ways (see Ps 91). We have guardian angels, certain spiritual beings created beforehand by God who protect us and inspire us to do God's will.

Without that angelic voice telling him to pull over on those North Dakota roads so many years ago, Fr. Raphael Stovik knew he would have had a head on collision with the officer, and possibly not survived. My family's lives would have been so very different without him as our beloved pastor at Sts. Peter and Paul in New Hradec when I was growing up had Fr. Raphael had not listened to that angel.

One day, we may be surprised at how often our guardian angels protect us. Pray to them for help daily.

■ Fr. Evinger is pastor of St. Joseph in Killdeer, St. Paul in Halliday and St. Joseph in Twin Buttes. 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.

Balancing Church & State

CHRISTOPHER DODSON



Government officials demonstrate the ridiculous

California Attorney General Rob Bonta put North Dakota on a list of states to which California employees may not travel using state funds. Bonta acted pursuant to a 2016 California law that prohibits state-funded travel to states that have laws that discriminate or allow discrimination against people because of their “sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.”

The offending new North Dakota law, according to Bonta, is HB 1503, the bill to protect student free speech, association and religious rights. The bill had strong support from the North Dakota Catholic Conference, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and various religious groups. Although no Democrat voted for the bill, it had support across the wide ideological spectrum that makes up North Dakota’s Republican Party.

The bill did not address issues of sexual orientation, gender identity or discrimination. Most of the bill set forth protections for student expression of speech. The portion of the bill that apparently offends the state of California is this: “An institution may not discriminate against a student organization with respect to a benefit available to any other student organization based on a requirement of the organization that leaders or voting members of the organization:

(1) Adhere to the organization’s viewpoints or sincerely held beliefs; or (2) Be committed to furthering the organization’s beliefs or religious missions.”

In other words, a state university cannot prohibit a student club from asking its members to agree with club’s viewpoints or beliefs. A Catholic club can be Catholic. A Marxist club can be Marxist. A Democratic club can consist of Democrats.

Apparently, that was too much for Bonta, who somehow concluded that the new law would allow clubs to discriminate against people based on sexual orientation. In truth, the law does no such thing. It only allows exclusion from a club based on beliefs, not anything else.

Ironically, Bonta and the state of California apparently have no trouble with the alternative of mandating that student clubs accept everyone, even if that undermines that very purpose of having a club in the first place. So much for freedom of association and free speech from the birthplace of the Free Speech Movement.

The absurdity, however, does not stop there. Last year, the federal government adopted a regulation that, with regards to religious clubs on campuses, does exactly the same thing as North Dakota’s new law. In other words, every college campus in the nation, including every college and university in

California, has to protect the right of religious clubs to preserve their own identity. If California’s travel ban was more than political show it would apply to every college and university in the country, including the over 200 campuses in California.

Unfortunately, we don’t have to look as far as California to find inexplicable behavior by state government.

The North Dakota Department of Health decided that North Dakotans should affirm and celebrate multiple sexual orientations and gender identity by posting a calendar of “pride” events around the state. The events listed celebrate same-sex relationships, same-sex marriage, gender fluidity and even drag shows. That’s right, the department of health website promoted drag shows.

Whatever one thinks of these types of activities, it is difficult to see what “pride” events and drag shows have to do with public health and why the state used taxpayer money, even if nominal, to promote these events.

The department of health falls under Governor Burgum. Eventually, word got out about the department’s web page, and it was taken down. Radio host Scott Hennen asked the governor’s office for an explanation. The only response he received was that the calendar was there for “Pride

Month” and was temporary. The explanation is not satisfactory. Pride Month was in June and the events listed ran through September. Moreover, it does not explain the ultimate question of why the calendar was ever posted in the first place.

The health department might have removed the calendar, but it still has a “A Guide to Using Personal Pronouns” which tells North Dakotans that they should address people by their preferred pronoun, even if it doesn’t match their biological sex and, apparently, even if it means engaging in a lie. The pronouns include ze/hir/hirs, ze/zir/zirs. It may be one thing for the health department to direct its employees to use these new creations in our lexicon, though even that might infringe upon an employee’s religious rights and sensibility. It is another thing, however, to pronounce to the people of North Dakota that they should use these words. Moreover, again, what does it have to do with public health? That web page is still up.

Ridiculousness abounds.

■ 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.

Stewardship

RON SCHATZ



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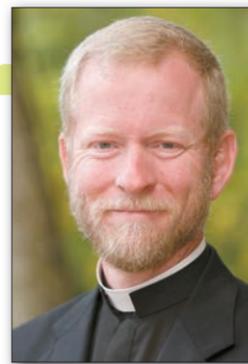
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■ Ron Schatz is the director of the diocesan Office of Stewardship and Resource Development. He has worked for the diocese for more than 29 years.

Making Sense out of Bioethics

FR. TAD PACHOLCZYK



Challenging the establishment on childhood gender transitions

A 23-year-old woman named Keira Bell recently brought a pivotal lawsuit against the National Health Services Gender Identity Development Clinic in London, better known as the Tavistock Clinic. Keira experienced significant personal harm from puberty blockers, testosterone and an operation to remove her breasts. She claims the medical staff at the clinic failed to challenge her seriously about her decision as a teenager to transition to a male. In a landmark ruling delivered in December 2020, a British court upheld her claim that she'd been rushed through gender reassignment without proper safeguards.

Keira represents the leading edge of a new class of young people struggling with gender dysphoria who, as they become adults, are starting to push back against various "gender affirmation" interventions perpetrated against them, even, in some cases, seeking legal recourse and financial redress. As these intrepid individuals challenge the status quo, they are becoming known as "trans-desisters" or "detransitioners."

When Keira was 16 and struggling with gender dysphoria, she was referred to the Tavistock Clinic and was almost immediately launched down the medical path. After three one-hour long visits to the medical facility, she was prescribed puberty blockers, powerful drugs that delay the development of signs of puberty. In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation, she stated that there hadn't been adequate investigation or therapy prior to that stage.

"I should have been challenged on the proposals or the claims that I was making for myself," she said. "I think that would have made a big difference."

Later she was prescribed the male hormone testosterone, to help her develop male features like a beard, moustache and a deep voice. A few years later she underwent a mastectomy.

"Initially I felt very relieved and happy

about things, but I think as the years go on, you start to feel less and less enthusiastic or even happy about things."

"You can continue to dig yourself deeper into this hole or you can choose to come out of it and have the weight lifted off your shoulders."

She stopped taking the cross-sex hormones at age 22 and says she has come to accept being female now. She remains upset, however, about what had happened to her over the last decade.

"I was allowed to run with this idea that I had, almost like a fantasy, as a teenager.... and it has affected me in the long run as an adult."

Vulnerable young people, caught up in the pressure of the moment, have too easily been drawn into life-altering pathways involving medications and scalpels with their frequently irreversible effects. Puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and complex surgeries can all lead to permanent damage, even the destruction of a young person's reproductive organs and fertility.

Now in her early 20s, Keira soberly observes, "I'm very young. I've only just stepped into adulthood and I have to deal with this kind of burden or radical difference."

Parents have a serious obligation to protect their children from the gender-reassignment industry, which profits handsomely from the lucrative, long term hormone prescriptions and the multiple complex surgeries. When parents give consent for cross-sex interventions on their children, they will often do so under pressure from clinicians and professional societies like the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Keira and other detransitioners insist that extended waiting periods, with appropriate questioning and challenging of young people, need to occur as part of a good psychotherapeutic response to claims of gender dysphoria. The AAP, meanwhile, strongly discourages such approaches,

telling pediatric primary care providers, in an official statement, "to be a reliable source of validation, support, and reassurance," and exclusively to pursue "affirmation-based approaches" for children's mental health services, including pharmacological and surgical interventions.

As James Cantor, Director of the Toronto Sexuality Centre, noted in a critical review of the AAP statement, "Although almost all clinics and professional associations in the world use what's called the watchful waiting approach to helping gender-diverse children, the AAP statement instead rejected that consensus, endorsing gender affirmation as the only acceptable approach."

The available studies reveal, moreover, that the majority of pre-adolescent children who present as "trans" eventually revert to the identity that accords with their biological sex. Those studies indicate at least 67 percent of gender diverse children cease wanting to transition by puberty as long as "gender affirmation" approaches are not pursued or advocated.

Keira sums up her experience this way: "I look back with a lot of sadness. There was nothing wrong with my body. I was just lost and without proper support. Transition gave me the facility to hide from myself even more than before. It was a temporary fix."

These first-hand testimonies from brave and outspoken detransitioners like Keira Bell should prompt us to listen closely to their stories and beware of "affirmation-based approaches" that often cloak the betrayal of our gender-confused youth.

■ 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



Tightening the belt is reality of drought

Talk about the lack of moisture has permeated discussions among ag producers and the general public. Temperature records are being broken regularly as winds fan the fields and prairies of the diocese and heat waves (those imaginary wavy lines one sees on a hot summer day) bake the landscape.

Every day potential crop yields slip a little. Producers, however, are resilient; most have a long-term, big-picture look. There will be another opportunity (next year?) and it is important to be prepared. But, optimism only goes so far—and, while it helps one keep moving forward, it does little to pay the bills, which in today's world for

ag producers can be oppressive.

I pondered this a long time as I circled the field harvesting hay, which yielded about 12-15% of normal. I put on my smiley face as I counted bales on a 50-acre field, "That's three days of feed for this winter, only 177 to go," I mused to myself.

I shared the story with my wife, adding "We'll just have to tighten the belt this year." It was a story she had heard many times before, often remarking there is no more room for "notches" on the belt. I had to agree but I also knew this was not a time of despair.

A reflection I received from a friend was so appropriate. God often challenges me in ways that I

do not expect, much to my chagrin. I have, however, come to realize that as time marched on sometimes a little difficulty, a little discomfort was just what was needed to realign priorities. God never abandons me but rather God helps me recalibrate attitudes and/or perspectives.

I know full well I am not alone in this situation. While ag producers are less than 2% of the population nationwide, the food sector (production, processing, distribution, etc.) employs almost 11% of the United States population and 100% of the population is involved in food consumption.

The same 100% of the population also receives the gifts God has given and perhaps a

little "belt tightening" (spiritual and corporal) might be good. I am reminded, however, that who am I to judge? God provided free will. The judgement on how the resources of time, talent and treasure are used is reserved for God.

There are roadblocks, but it is my responsibility to realize my way is not God's way. It is important I listen and do my best to follow and implement God's way.

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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