



Dakota **Catholic Action**

Vol. 84 No. 7 **AUGUST 2025**



A WALK WITH JESUS:
REAFFIRMING OUR FAITH

www.bismarckdiocese.com



August is National Make-A-Will Month!

Protect what matters to you most – create your own will today!

Did you know that August is National Make-A-Will Month? It's an annual observance that emphasizes the importance of creating your own will. There are several important reasons why you might want to complete this important task.

Security: Creating your own will and estate plan allows you to communicate important financial and healthcare decisions so you are prepared for whatever the future may hold.

Peace of mind: A will allows you to provide for the people and pets you love, so you know that no matter what, they will be supported, the way you want them to be supported

In less than 20 minutes, write or update your will for free!

The Bismarck Diocese has a partnership with FreeWill, an online service that makes it simple, cost-free and accessible to create your own will. Nearly 67% of American adults do not have an estate plan, missing a crucial element of Catholic stewardship.

Here's how it works:

1. From the convenience of your home, log in at FreeWill.com/bismarckdiocese.
2. Select a username and password.
3. Begin typing your information.
4. Once completed, your free will is ready to print.
5. You sign and notarize with a local notary public.*
6. DONE!

Takes about 20 minutes to complete. **It's easy and 100% FREE!**

If your circumstances should ever change, it's easy and FREE to log back into FreeWill and change your will, then print the updated copy and have it notarized again.

**In the state of N.D., for a will to be legal, you MUST sign your will in front of a notary public. Most banks, insurance offices, investment offices and public libraries have notary publics who can witness your signature.*

For more information, contact Ron Schatz at (701) 204-7202 or rschatz@bismarckdiocese.com or Bryan Winterberg at (701) 415-0399 or bwinterberg@bismarckdiocese.com.

IN THIS ISSUE

Reporting on Catholic Action
In Western ND Since 1941

6 DIACONATE ORDINATION 2025

Deacon Colton Steiner

8 50TH ANNIVERSARY

'My priesthood is everything to me and for me'

13 SERVANT OF GOD

New book offers a compilation of Michelle Duppong's writing and talks

By Sonia Mullally

16 PROFESSION OF VOWS

Sister Marena makes perpetual monastic profession as a Benedictine

Sister of Annunciation Monastery

By Jill Ackerman

20 CHAPEL IN THE BADLANDS

North Dakota's oldest church has a connection to one of the Church's newest saints

By Luke Larson

26 CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE

University of Mary launches groundbreaking diocesan Chapter of National Association of Catholic Nurses

By Tom Ackerman

30 OBITUARY

Sister Joseph Dukart, OSB



ON THE COVER: Corpus Christi Eucharistic procession on June 21 from the Church of Saint Anne to the Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary.



PAGE 16: Sister Marena Hoogland made her perpetual monastic profession as a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery on July 11.



Dakota Catholic Action



Reporting on Catholic action in western ND since 1941

Publisher: Most Reverend David D. Kagan, D.D., P.A., J.C.L., Bishop of Bismarck

Editor: Sonia Mullally, smullally@bismarckdiocese.com

Center for Pastoral Ministry - Bismarck Diocese USPS0011-5770

520 N. Washington Street, PO Box 1137, Bismarck, ND 58501-1137

Phone: 701-222-3035 Fax: 701-222-0269

www.bismarckdiocese.com

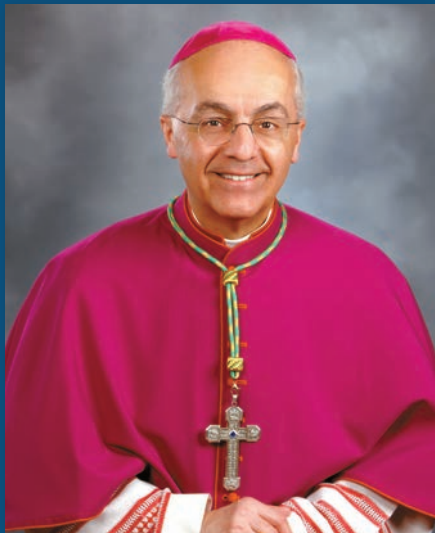
The Dakota Catholic Action (0011-5770) is published monthly except July by the Bismarck Diocese, PO Box 1575, Bismarck, ND 58502-1575.

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.



FROM THE BISHOP

*Solemnity of Assumption
reminds us of our hope
to join her in heaven*

Bishop David D. Kagan

With the month of August upon us once again, our Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Assumption. Since 1950, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been an official dogma of our Catholic faith and thus, it must be believed with our unconditional assent of intellect and will.

What Pope Pius XII made official the Catholic Church had already believed and celebrated for many centuries about the Blessed Virgin Mary. The pope's bull declaring the Assumption an article of Catholic faith is readily available, and I would encourage all to read it. It is truly inspiring and it captures our age-old faith in the Blessed Mother's Assumption into heaven at the moment of her death and the re-infusing of her soul into her body so that as she was Immaculately Conceived at the beginning of her life, so at the end of her earthly life her body would not experience the corruption of the grave and have to await the final day of judgment to be united body and soul in heaven with Almighty God.

The solemn Mass which we celebrate on August 15 is truly beautiful. The Mass propers (collect, secret and post-Communion prayers) express the Church's faith in Our Blessed Lady's Assumption. The special preface for this solemn Mass does the same but it also highlights further our own faith and hope. Our Blessed Mother already enjoys what we hope and pray to have at the Final Judgment, that perfect

union in heaven of body and soul for eternity in the presence of God.

The Solemnity of the Assumption as a consequence of being declared a dogma of Catholic faith is also a holy day of obligation. All of us know what this means. The obligation to attend and participate at Holy Mass on the Assumption is the very same as it is for every Sunday. The Church has always taught and still teaches that for any Catholic who has achieved the age of reason, to miss Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day through one's own fault, that person has committed a mortal sin. To receive Holy Communion worthily, that person must go to confession and receive sacramental absolution from a priest first. The reason I mention this is that it seems some Catholics do not consider this a sin at all, no less a mortal sin. Thus, they neither go to confession nor refrain from receiving Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin.

This year the Solemnity of the Assumption falls on a Friday. Most of our parishes in the Bismarck Diocese will have a Vigil Mass on Thursday evening and then Masses on the day to celebrate this great event in the life of the Blessed Mother and in the life of the Church for whom she is Mother. Please plan now to be at Mass not just to fulfill your obligation but to celebrate what you hope to have and enjoy and which Our Mother has and enjoys and for which she prays for us to join her. †



Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 15 – A Holy Day of Obligation

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 974) teaches, "The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son's Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of his Body." Mary, Queen of Heaven, pray for us!

BISHOP IN ACTION



Staff photo: Bishop Kagan led the prayer before the start of the 11th Annual Seminarian Scholarship Golf Tournament held in mid-June at Prairie West Golf Course in Mandan.



Holy Father's Prayer Intentions for August

FOR MUTUAL COEXISTENCE

Let us pray that societies where coexistence seems more difficult might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious, or ideological reasons.

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE

AUGUST 2025

Aug. 5	Presbyteral Council Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
Aug. 7	Parish Expansion Board Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 10:30 a.m.
Aug. 7	Legatus Meeting, Bismarck, 5:15 p.m.
Aug. 8	Cabinet Meeting, Chancery, Bismarck, 10 a.m.
Aug. 27-31	Region VIII Bishop's Meeting, Rapid City, South Dakota

Deacon
 Colton Steiner

Photos by: Deacon Joe Krupinsky



Diocesan seminarian Colton Steiner was ordained a transitional deacon on May 27 by Bishop Kagan at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. The transitional diaconate is a stage in the formation of men who are preparing for ordination to the priesthood. This man, called a transitional deacon, is ordained a deacon for a period (typically a year) before his priestly ordination. He serves as a deacon as he transitions toward the priesthood. This summer, Deacon Colton is serving at Our Lady of Grace in Minot before returning to Kenrick-Glennon seminary in St. Louis this fall for his final year of priestly formation. Please continue to pray for Deacon Colton and all the men in formation for our diocese.



The candidate was called upon to stand and declare his intention.



The candidate stood before Bishop Kagan during the ordination Mass.



As part of the ordination rite, Deacon Colton placed his hands between Bishop Kagan's promising respect and obedience to him and his successors.



In the company of the saints, Bishop Kagan imposed hands upon the candidate in silence—an ancient gesture designating the conferral of the gift of the Holy Spirit.



Father Ben Franchuk (center) had the honor of vesting Deacon Colton with the deacon's stole and dalmatic.



Deacon Colton prepares the altar for the first time.



Deacon Colton incensed the bishop, priests and congregation before the Liturgy of the Eucharist began.



The new deacon for the first time with Bishop Kagan at the altar.

‘My priesthood is everything to me and for me’

Bishop David Kagan recently celebrated 50 years as a priest marking the anniversary of his ordination on June 14, 1975.

Bishop Kagan came to the Bismarck Diocese in November 2011 having served several parishes in his home Diocese of Rockford, Illinois. Among his other duties there included chancellor, director of the office of communications, misconduct officer for the diocese, diocesan consultor, moderator of the curia and vicar general. Some might say Bishop Kagan has probably seen and done it all.

He’s been our bishop for the past 13 years and, with his 75th birthday last November, submitted his resignation to the pope as required by the Code of Canon Law. He continues to serve our diocese until his successor is named.

This Q&A session is meant to honor his service and help the faithful transition to a new chapter in the life of the diocese.

What inspired you to become a priest?

My solid family life, I realize was the foundation for my vocation to the priesthood. My parents were always very respectful of our parish priests and, once I went to grade school in 1955, the good sisters who taught me and the pastor were major influences on me. Once I learned to serve Mass, I know that made my desire to be a priest even stronger. In those days the usual practice was to go to a seminary right after eighth grade. I went to the Salvatorian Seminary in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin for high school seminary, then to St. Pius X Seminary on the campus of Loras



College in Dubuque, Iowa for the college seminary where I earned a B.A. in Philosophy, and then my bishop assigned me to study theology in Rome. I lived at the Pontifical North American College in Vatican City State and took my theology classes at the Pontifical Gregorian University run by the Jesuits. In total, I was in the Church's seminary system for 12 years at the end of which I was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois on June 14, 1975.

Can you share a key memory from your ordination day?

One of many memories I have from my ordination day was the imparting of my first priestly blessing to my mom and dad at the end of the Ordination Mass. If I live to be a hundred, I will always remember their humble acceptance of my blessing.

How did your vocation unfold throughout the early years of the priesthood?

My first assignment as a priest was to a wonderful parish, St. Patrick Parish, Dixon, Illinois. I was to report to the parish 10 days after ordination, which I did and my first pastor, Father James Malloy, was a wonderful priest from whom I learned a great deal, especially about visiting the sick. That year was his 25th anniversary of priestly ordination, and I thought to myself that is great but he's really old! Little did I realize then! A week after I arrived at the St. Patrick's, Father Malloy went on a three-week vacation with his other classmates to celebrate their anniversary. My vocation to be a parish priest developed very quickly since I was in charge of the parish. It was good as I learned quickly about how to manage a parish, how to meet and counsel different people, and it was a good opportunity for me to get around the entire parish to meet many of our parishioners. An added benefit for me was that St. Patrick's had a parish grade school, and it was my responsibility to be at the school a few days each week to teach religion to the various grades first through eighth. At that time, the bishop also assigned me to teach religion at the Central Catholic High School which was about 20 miles away which I did three days each week. This too had a

formative impact on my priesthood which has lasted to this day. I love and value Catholic schools and I see them as essential to the life of a parish and the diocese.

What aspects of serving the people of God have brought you the most joy?

The greatest joy I have had and continue to have as a priest and bishop is the celebration of the sacraments and preparing children, youth and young adults for the reception of the sacraments. It is all part of the teaching office of being a priest and a bishop. To help them understand and enjoy their faith and being Catholic is all that matters.

How has your ministry changed over the past 50 years?

I think my ministry hasn't really changed over the last 50 years, but it has been deepened by the fact of my episcopal consecration. Possessing the fullness of the three-fold office of teaching, sanctifying and governing, it is now my privilege and responsibility before God and His Church, to assist our good priests to be the best teachers, sanctifiers and shepherds to our faithful that they can be and to do all I can to strengthen them in their priestly vocations.

Can you share a moment or experience where you felt particularly grateful to God to be a priest?

There have been so many moments as a priest when I have been truly grateful to God for my priesthood that it's hard to pick just one. However, I do remember vividly one moment from my first assignment which was a tragedy and, being a priest brought tremendous comfort and consolation. It was the tragic death of a little boy of about two or three who had been run over by a car in front of his house. When I was called to the hospital, I met his young parents, and I could not think of anything to say to them. I sat with them in silence and then I know the Lord inspired me to pray the “Angel of God” prayer out loud. We then went to the emergency room



Bishop Kagan received communion from Pope Paul VI in 1973.



Bishop Kagan as he met Pope John Paul II on Nov. 9, 1978.

where their son was lying dead and I prayed the prayers for the dead and blessed his body. My pastor allowed me to offer the funeral Mass for him. In all my years as a priest and bishop, that was the hardest thing I had to do, to bury a child. This taught me to never take my priesthood for granted and I hope I have not done that.

Q A How have you maintained your personal spiritual life amidst the demands of priesthood?

The first and most important component of priestly formation is the fostering and deepening of the spiritual life. This is a life-long responsibility because the priest is the one chosen by God to lead others to heaven. He simply cannot do that if he himself is not spiritually preparing himself to go to heaven. There are many beautiful elements to the Church's great treasury of spiritual devotions, exercises and prayers, but the principal ways I have used is daily Mass, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, a Holy Hour, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and regular confession. Also, one of the great helps to me is reading the lives of the saints. This is good spiritual reading for meditation and it's an excellent way to learn more of the true history of the Church. All that being said, I have had to make time for this each day, which can be difficult but never impossible.

Q A How has your relationship with God deepened throughout your years of service?

I have always thought that if a priest does not discipline himself to foster his own spiritual life, he will never be happy being a priest. This is the way my personal relationship with the Lord has deepened over these years and I look forward to doing even more as time goes on.

Q A What does your priesthood mean to you, looking back at 50 years?

Looking back over these 50 years, my priesthood is everything to me and for me. It is my life, and I am so grateful to God for this merciful gift. Being a priest for any amount of time and you can ask any priest, is a life filled with blessings, but it is also very humbling. You realize quickly how good God is to you and how unworthy you are of Him.

Q A What message do you have for those considering a vocation to the priesthood?

I would tell any young man who is considering the priesthood to not be timid and do not be afraid. He owes it to God to ask Him what He wants of him,



Bishop Kagan at the altar at his first Mass as the bishop of our diocese on Nov. 30, 2011.

and he will always receive God's answer. The life of a priest is a living gift with all the graces needed to be a good and faithful servant of the Lord and His Church. God does not call everyone to the priesthood, but He does want us to ask Him what He wants for each of us and for His Church.

Q A What are you most grateful for in your 50 years of service to God's people?

I think what I am most grateful for in my years as a priest and now a bishop is the other bishops, priests, deacons and sisters who have been so much a part of my life. Living and dead, they have been the signs to me of God's love and His holy will.

Q A What is/was your most notable memory or accomplishment during your time as bishop?

Since becoming the bishop of Bismarck, I can say in all truthfulness that I have two notable memories. The first is the ordaining of so many of our priests who serve us all with the zeal for souls that Jesus has for us. The second is the large numbers of our young people whom I have confirmed.

Q A What were the biggest challenges you faced as bishop?

The greatest challenge I had and still have as bishop is to provide priests to our good Catholic people so that they will not be without the graces of the sacraments and without the right teaching of our precious Catholic faith. A bishop can never have enough good priests!

50 YEARS ANNIVERSARY



Bishop Kagan as he was introduced to Pope Francis in 2020.

Q A What advice do you have for the next bishop?

My advice to the next bishop is this: pray for and be good to our priests and help them in every way to do the same for our good and holy people.

Q A What are your hopes for the future of the diocese?

My hopes for the future of our diocese are that the faith of our families and all our people continue to grow and that they be the intentional disciples of the Lord in their vocations. That builds up the Church and the good example given to others is priceless.

Q A What are the most important issues facing the diocese today?

There are many important issues facing our diocese today, but I would say the one that every priest, deacon, religious and lay person must address is the

creeping dangers of secularism in our culture. At its root, secularism seeks to eliminate God from daily life. That is not the Catholic faith and life and we all must work to combat it.

Q A How can the faithful support the next bishop?

When our Holy Father appoints our next bishop, all the faithful must support him with our prayers and our cooperation with what he needs to do to advance the faith and preach the Gospel.

Q A What are you most looking forward to in retirement?

What I look forward to most in retirement is having even more time to pray and I have several books which I will now have the time to read. Also, Bishop Zipfel was so good about being available to me when I had questions to ask or his advice to seek and I would want to do the same for our next bishop. †

SERVANT OF GOD

New book offers a compilation of Michelle Duppong's writing and talks

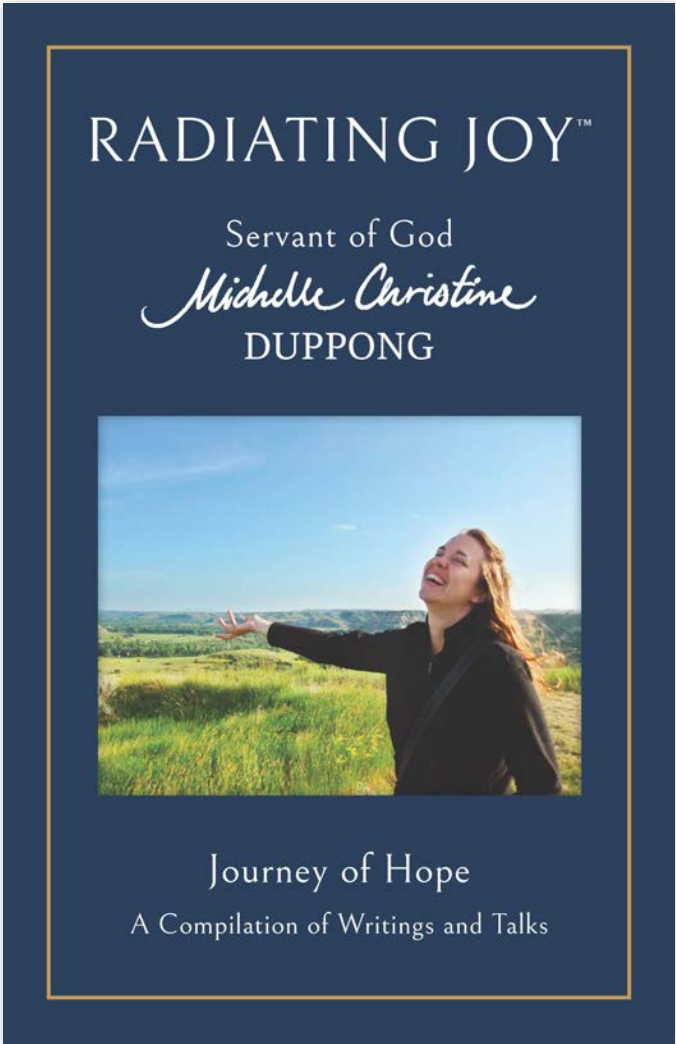
Sonia Mullally
DCA Editor

A new book offers a glimpse into the faith-filled life and journey of Servant of God Michelle Duppong.

Members of the guild, a group of individuals who work to promote the cause for sainthood, have recently published a book titled, "Radiating Joy: Servant of God Michelle Duppong—Journey of Hope." The 274-page book is a collection of Michelle's speeches and articles for the *Dakota Catholic Action* while she worked in the office of faith formation at the Bismarck Diocese.

On page 73 of the book, the entry dated January 30, 2015, Michelle wrote to tell the news of her cancer diagnosis. With these words she shared, "On December 29, I had surgery to have an ovarian cyst removed. Much to my surprise and shock, along with that of my family and doctors, I awoke to my mom and sister telling me that I didn't actually have a cyst but that my abdomen is riddled with an aggressive gastro-intestinal cancer. All were flabbergasted at this news."

The immediate next sentence of her writing revealed her true nature, "Upon hearing this, I knew that this was God's will and that He would be with me in the midst of whatever would happen..." Later in this writing, she explained, "We have no idea how God's plan will unfold in our lives and how He is using us to reach others. We know that we're all in this together and that we're all on the same team in the body of Christ, so I see the present suffering



as taking one for the team. May God be glorified by all the good that comes through this!"

The last portion of the book contains writings from Michelle's last year of life which encompasses her entries for the Caring Bridge website, a site used to update followers about her journey through her



cancer battle. While most of the health journey entries on the site during this time were written by family members, Michelle did offer some updates herself and those are included in the book. Her entries depicted the often-extreme ups and downs that come with cancer treatments filled with hope followed by disappointments and pain, only to be propped up with hope again as doctors guided Michelle through her diagnosis, procedures and surgeries.

Michelle's final entry for the Caring Bridge website was dated October 19, 2015. It began with her ever-present gratitude to those reading for their prayers and acts of charity that are carrying her and her family through the recent "trials we've undergone." The entry went on to describe an infection, one of many setbacks she fought off during treatment.

This final website journal entry concluded by echoing her constant reminder of the end goal.

"Heaven will be so wonderful with no more pain and suffering," Michelle wrote. "Let's all keep our eyes on the prize so we can enjoy it together!"

Letter to Jesus

At the end of the book is Michelle's last known writing—a beautiful hand-written, personal letter to Jesus dated October 21, 2015—65 days before she died.

Her letter to Jesus began with gratitude for her life, her faith and her family and friends. She expressed her greatest desire as she wrote, "I not only want to be a saint, but I want to be a great saint that leads others to You all for Your greater honor and glory, of course!" She went on to ask for the Lord's forgiveness and thank Him for the grace of confession.

With the final paragraph of Michelle's letter, she asked of the Lord, "If you take me home soon, please fill my family and friends along with the multitudes who have been lifting me up in prayer with joy and peace knowing that Your love wins in the end."

Her final written words revealed her pure faith, "Jesus, I love You and I trust in You, but please help me to trust and love You more!" The letter is signed, "Your daughter, Michelle Christine."

Get the book

The book is available for purchase at michelleduppongcause.org along with various other items. All donations made to the cause and all proceeds from the sale of items listed under this link go towards moving Michelle's cause forward. Items can be picked up locally at the diocesan Center for Pastoral Ministry or shipped directly. †

Are you looking for an opportunity to serve couples of the Bismarck Diocese?

Are you passionate about how Natural Family Planning (NFP) strengthened **your** marriage?

Become an NFP instructor to share this great gift.



Bismarck Diocese

Contact Katie in the Office of Family Ministry and Respect Life at kkostelecky@bismarckdiocese.com or 701-712-0418.




Your faith guides your life, why not your insurance and retirement planning?

With Knights of Columbus, you can protect your family and plan for your retirement – while preserving your Catholic principles and values.

Thank you for your business and continued support. Contact your agent to learn more.



Mark Gaydos
Field Agent
701-805-1706
mark.gaydos@kofc.org



Don Willey
Field Agent
701-202-9089
don.willey@kofc.org



Sam Owan
Field Agent
701-609-1918
samuel.owen@kofc.org



Jeremy Norby
Field Agent
701-290-0647
jeremy.norby@kofc.org



Wayne Cherney
Field Agent
701-290-0647
wayne.cherney@kofc.org



Joel Herman
Field Agent
701-219-5847
joel.herman@kofc.org



Ethan Beebe
Field Agent
701-799-5324
ethan.beebe@kofc.org



Joel Balko
Field Agent
701-831-1993
joel.balko@kofc.org

LIFE INSURANCE • DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE • LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE • RETIREMENT ANNUITIES



Knights of Columbus

Knights of Columbus ("KofC") offers life insurance, annuities, long-term care insurance and disability income insurance products. For costs, terms, conditions and complete details regarding these products, please contact your agent directly or call KofC at 1-800-380-9995. Products may vary by state. Insurance solutions are available to eligible KofC members in the U.S. and Canada. Knights of Columbus is located at: 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510.

Sister Marena makes perpetual monastic profession as a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery

Jill Ackerman
Annunciation Monastery

On July 11, Sister Marena Hoogland made her perpetual monastic profession (final vows) as a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery. The public joined Sr. Marena and the monastic community for Eucharistic Liturgy at Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel at the University of Mary, followed by a reception at the monastery.

The day was proof that sometimes math and monastics just add up! Numbers and equations are a part of her DNA. Sister Marena Hoogland’s logic and passion for mathematics wasn’t initially what led her to becoming a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery, but as she looks back over the past years, experiences along the way just added up!

While growing up on a dairy farm in northern Wisconsin, Sr. Marena and her six siblings attended Mass every Sunday. The children were altar servers; their father was a Eucharistic minister and mother taught catechism. A car drive that lasted over 20 minutes was “an automatic rosary,” recalled Hoogland. Her encounters with sisters stem back to third grade when her catechism teacher brought the students to visit the Servants of Mary (Servites) to join them for Mass and dinner. Perhaps it was their joy and spirituality that made an impression, but Sr. Marena doesn’t rule out the possibility of the delicious spaghetti dinner followed by s’mores outside that may have attracted her. “I just knew that these sisters were special in the Church, and I had a notion that maybe I should become one too.”



Sister Marena Hoogland with (l-r) Fr. Anthony Baker, OSB, Msgr. James Shea and Fr. Paul Gardner.

Time and adventures led Hoogland on paths that brought her to attend a public university in Wisconsin to get a degree in elementary education. She soon realized, this was not her calling and she took a break from college and worked full-time at a library. She recalled being drawn to a plaque in the office that had a prayer on it about “letting God use you.” She prayed that God would use her for His purpose every day. She gave the library a year and discerned about what to do next—volunteer, enter the Peace Corps, something that had meaning.



Sister Marena with a group of her students from St. Mary’s Academy.

She inquired about the “Benedictine volunteers program” at Annunciation Monastery with the monastery vocation director. It sounded like something she wanted to do in a year or so. During that year, she followed her father’s suggestion to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering. After all, her brother was an engineer, and she also excelled at math and critical thinking. She even did trigonometry problems for fun.

A few months into the engineering program, she had an email from the vocation director who she had talked to earlier about the volunteer program opportunity at the monastery. Through prayer, discernment and asking God to help her trust His plan for her life, Hoogland left the engineering program and sent in her application to volunteer at the monastery for six months.

She smiles as she remembered, “I made it very clear to the sisters that I was NOT discerning becoming a sister. However, I did want to make the most of my experience, so I engaged with every aspect open to me in community life.”

In a message to a friend, she wrote, “I’m still amazed at how normal monastic life is. I guess nuns are normal people, too. Some of the sisters were teachers, some were nurses and some were social workers, artists and gardeners. There are sisters who earned their doctorate degrees and served in capacities from university president to pharmacist, cook, baker and laundry worker.”

As she pondered the unique types of individuals in community, she realized she is also a “type” of person, and maybe God was calling her to become a sister.



Sister Marena Hoogland processed into Mass.



Newly professed Sister Marena Hoogland.

“The support of the sisters, my family and friends, is a blessing. The sisters are a constant source of wisdom, inspiration and faith for me. When God calls me to take the next step, they also walk with me. They pray for me and encourage me,” Hoogland said with appreciation.

Her openness to God and the prayerful women who supported her and each other, was becoming part of her personal equation.

One day, she tiptoed around the possibility with the vocation director, inquiring “for a friend,” about what the steps to become a sister. Realizing that the “friend” was Hoogland herself, the journey through the formation process began.

Sister Marena approached each step of the formation process with careful consideration, like she does when solving a math problem. She prayed for trust and openness to where God was leading next.

“My call was not like a lightning strike or a clap of thunder, like one would think,” she explained. “It was more like a feeling of rightness.”

She felt encouraged and supported with each step. In the fall of 2019, Hoogland made her temporary

vows, which is a period of three to six years. She attended the University of Mary, graduating with a degree in teaching mathematics. Following in the ministry of many sisters before her, Sr. Marena currently teaches math at St. Mary’s Academy in Bismarck.

“Every day I teach is a constant reminder of God’s providence and how His ways are better than my own ways. I have a new relationship with Christ as a teacher, and I would have never imagined how much I love my students and the joy they bring into my life,” she marveled.

“The support of the sisters, my family and friends, is a blessing. The sisters are a constant source of wisdom, inspiration and faith for me. When God calls me to take the next step, they also walk with me. They pray for me and encourage me,” Hoogland said with appreciation. The equation in her formation process is now complete. †

UPCOMING EVENTS



St. Hildegard fall dinner Sept. 7

St. Hildegard’s Church in Menoken will host their annual fall dinner on Sunday, Sept. 7 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The homemade dinner will feature traditional sausage, roast beef, pies, buns and all the trimmings. There will be fun for all ages including games, bingo, sale of home baked goods and fresh garden produce. Cost is \$15 for adults, \$8 for children ages 4 to 10 years; free for children ages 3 and under. Raffle tickets are available for \$5 each, or 5 for \$20, with over \$10,000 in prizes. Winners will be drawn at 4 p.m. St. Hildegard is located at 17200 Hwy 10, Menoken (10 miles east of Bismarck).



St. Mary’s social and raffle in Hague

St. Mary’s in Hague is having a social and raffle on Sunday, Sept. 7 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Hague. Knights of Columbus members will be serving hamburgers, hot dogs, salads, desserts and refreshments starting at 5 p.m., with proceeds to benefit St. Mary’s Church. Bingo starts at 7 p.m., followed by the raffle drawing. Raffle tickets will be available for purchase.



Dakota Hope Clinic fundraising banquets in September

Support Dakota Hope Clinic by attending a fundraising banquet at three different locations. Events are Sept. 15 in Minot, Sept. 16 in Tioga and Sept. 22 in Bottineau. Guests will hear real-life stories of how lives have been saved and transformed thanks to generous donations. Attendees will learn how donations of money, baby items, time and prayer have facilitated the clinic’s mission of providing life-affirming pregnancy, parenting and family services. Reservations are required by Sept. 5 for these adult-only fundraisers. New this year, there are no formal table hosts and no assigned seating. Reserve free tickets by visiting dakotahope.org/events/ or by calling 701-852-4675. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with dinner starting at 6:30 p.m.



Serra Club breakfast Sept. 21

The St. Serra Vocations Apostolate of Bismarck-Mandan is having their annual fundraising breakfast and bake sale for religious vocations on Sunday, Sept. 21 at the St. Mary’s Academy cafeteria (1025 N. 2nd St.). The meal is served from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The menu includes pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, coffee and juice. Soft serve ice cream will also be available with an assortment of toppings. Cost is \$10 for adults; \$5 for children (10 and under) and free for children under age 3. There will also be a bake sale. Donations are welcome for the bake sale and can be dropped off on Saturday, Sept. 20 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.



Corazon weekends

Are you or someone you know struggling in a marriage? The diocesan program for troubled marriages called Corazon (Spanish for heart) is available the weekend of Sept. 26-28. Couples who may be in a marriage in crisis are encouraged to attend a weekend. All confidences are kept and privacy for anyone inquiring about or attending a Corazon weekend is a priority. For questions, contact Amanda at 204-7205. For couple registration or additional information, visit bismarckdiocese.com/corazon.



Marriage Encounter weekends

The mission of Worldwide Marriage Encounter is to proclaim the value of Marriage and Holy Orders in the Church and in the world. Experience a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend and discover the beauty of your relationship. The next Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend in the region is Nov. 7-9 in Medora. Early registration is highly recommended. For more information visit ndwwme.org or contact Rob and Angie at Applications@ndwwme.org or 701-347-1998.



Patriotic rosary at Spirit of Life

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



Rome Pilgrimage Nov. 13-22

Father Benjamin Wanner, at St. Joseph in Williston and Father Gregory Crane, at St. Patrick in Crosby, will serve as spiritual directors for a pilgrimage to Rome taking place Nov. 13-22. The trip, “Ten Days of the Shrines of Italy: Rome, Florence, Assisi,” is open to anyone in the diocese. The pilgrimage will also feature a papal audience with Pope Leo XIV. For more information, visit trip.nativitypilgrimage.com/wanner-2025, email info@nativitypilgrimage.com or call 832-406-7050 or 1-844-400-9559.

North Dakota’s oldest church has a connection to one of the Church’s newest saints

Luke Larson
DCA Writer

The small brick Saint Mary’s church in Medora may look simple, but its story is anything but. It is one of North Dakota’s most unique and historic Catholic sites and receives many visitors from North Dakota and around the world each year.

This treasure of North Dakota Catholic heritage is the oldest Catholic church still in use in the state, it was commissioned by North Dakota’s only aristocratic family, and it has a unique connection to Charles de Foucauld, one of the Church’s newest canonized saints.

Fascinating history

The town of Medora was founded in 1883 by Antoine Vallombrosa, the Marquis de Mores, an eccentric French nobleman with a dream of building a flourishing city on the edge of the cattle range. His plan to send refrigerated beef direct to market by railroad, though ahead of its time, was short-lived. But in the four years that he and his wife Medora Von Hoffman (the town’s namesake) spent in Dakota Territory, they left an indelible mark. Today, Medora is one of North Dakota’s top tourist attractions and the gateway to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, named for the future president who lived and ranched in the area alongside the Marquis.

Saint Mary’s Church is one example of that indelible mark. The Marquis and the Marquise (Medora Von Hoffman’s noble title) were Catholic. The Marquise saw to it that a Catholic church was



The Athenias Chapel in Medora was built in the 1880s and donated to the Catholics of Medora in 1920. (Photo credit: State Historical Society of North Dakota)

established in the fledgling town, paying for its construction with her own money.

“That little church is really [a] testimony to her,” says Ed Sahlstrom, a local history expert who served as assistant site supervisor at the Chateau De Mores State Historic Site. “She is for the people. They need a church, they need schools and so on. She is responsible for bringing that to civilize this town.”

The Marquise’s generosity also extended to St. Mary’s church in Bismarck. After the death of her husband in 1896, she paid for a large stained-glass window depicting Our Lady in his honor. That stained-glass window remains in a prominent place



Saint Mary’s in Medora the oldest building in use as a Catholic church in the diocese.

today at the Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary above the original main entrance.

Builders broke ground on St. Mary’s—the brick structure first called Athenias Chapel named after the Marquise’s daughter—in September 1884. The first Mass was celebrated on All Souls’ Day that year. The first baptism and marriage took place the following month. Today visitors can still see the original church structure, altar and first two rows of pews from the 1880s. Mass was celebrated regularly, though not weekly, by Fr. Martin Schmitt, a Benedictine from St. John’s Abbey in Minnesota. He served as missionary priest in the tiny frontier towns that had popped up along the newly-constructed portion of the Northern Pacific Railroad west of Bismarck. When the church was constructed, it also briefly doubled as the town’s first school and the Marquise paid the teacher’s salary.

The city of Medora, with its growing population and brand-new meatpacking plant, was one of the most important missions in the region.

The Marquis and Marquise worked hard to bring civilization and prosperity, but life on the frontier was still rough-and-tumble. It was certainly a far cry from their wealthy upbringings in France and New York City. Legend has it that local troublemaker Mike “Bad Man” Finnegan once took target practice at the windows of St. Mary’s. Father Raymond Backes, pastor of St. Mary’s in the 1960s and author of a booklet on the church’s history, asked one early inhabitant about the faith life of the area. “Religion?” he replied. “I s’pose there wasn’t very much of it!” A 1880s newspaper editor Arthur Packard, though, wrote that Medora’s churches were well attended.

Saintly connection

The Marquis and Marquise knew Theodore Roosevelt and invited him to dine with them in their grand hilltop hunting lodge, the “Chateau de Mores,” on several occasions. While Roosevelt is certainly the most famous figure associated with Medora, he was not the only famous personal contact of the Marquis. While in military school as a young man in Saumur, France, the Marquis was the roommate and best friend of St. Charles de Foucauld. A humble hero of the faith canonized by Pope Francis in May 2022, St. Charles went on to spend much of his life as a hermit in Nazareth and the Sahara Desert.

The Marquis and Charles were both lively personalities who shared a flare for adventure. As North Dakota historian, the late Jerome Tweton, explained in the biography of the Marquis, they fenced, hosted grand parties lasting late into the night and occasionally journeyed to Paris by dropping from a bridge onto the top of train cars. While the Marquis was a loyal Catholic, Charles abandoned the faith at a young age and became an atheist. The two often debated and discussed philosophy.

When the Marquis began his business ventures in Dakota Territory, Charles considered joining him. He decided instead to go on a French espionage mission in Morocco. While there, he was impressed by the devotion the Muslims had to their religion. It caused him to think more deeply about the Catholic faith he had left behind. During a conversation with a priest at St. Augustine Church in Paris at the age of 28, he had a profound conversion experience.

He later wrote that, “as soon as I came to believe that there is a God, I understood that I could not do otherwise than live only for him.”

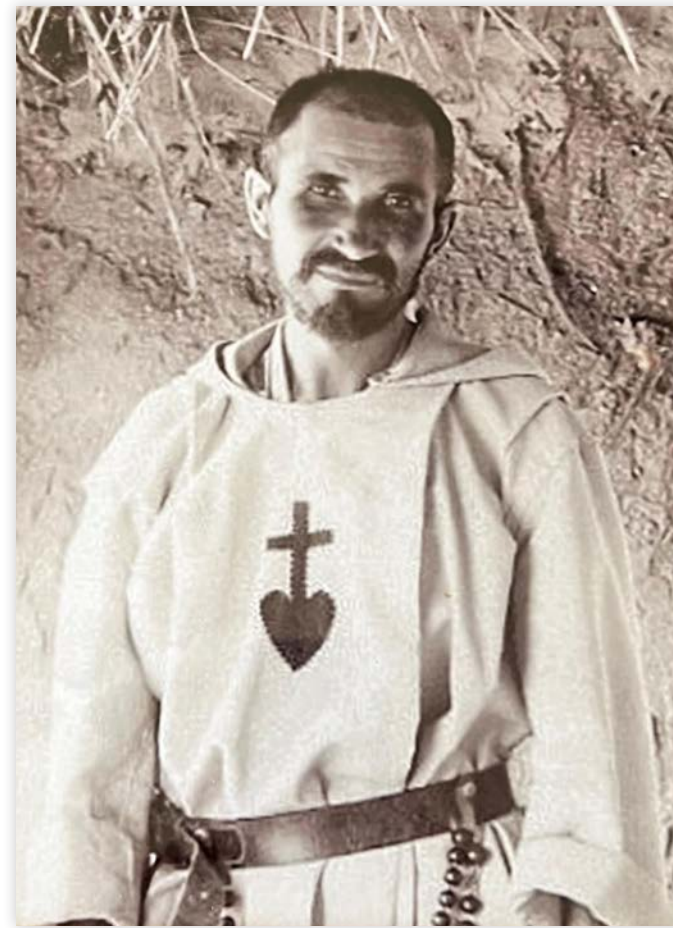
He dedicated himself to a radical life of poverty, service and prayer. He entered the Trappists and then, motivated by a deep desire to imitate the simple life of Christ in the Holy Land, worked as a



Medora, Marquis de Mores, with her son, Louis, and daughter, Athenias, in 1889. (Photo credit: State Historical Society of North Dakota)

servant at a convent in Nazareth. The day before taking his vows as a Trappist, he sent a letter to the Marquis, writing, “I pray from afar for all those I love. I pray for you.” In 1901, he moved to the Sahara Desert in Algeria, to be “where the souls are in greatest need.” He eventually settled near the remote desert town of Tamanrasset, where he lived as a hermit, evangelizing and serving the local Tuareg people. He was killed there in 1916 by bandits and is recognized as a martyr for the faith.

A small plaque honoring St. Charles’ life hangs in St. Mary’s Church today. While he never visited Medora, the town’s founder played a major role in his life and his decision not to join the Marquis in Dakota was a turning point in his life. Twenty years before St. Charles’ death, the Marquis too was killed in the Sahara Desert while on expedition in Tunisia.



A portrait of St. Charles de Foucauld hangs in the church, along with information on his connection to the Marquis de Mores.

The Marquis and his early death were often on Charles’ mind. “This dear Morès, whom I think about and pray for every day, is helping me,” he wrote in a 1903 letter. “In heaven, at the heart of eternity, the immense charity in which he is immersed, he has nothing but prayer and love for those Muslims who shed his blood and who will probably shed mine.”

Spiritual home for travelers

The Marquis and Marquise were only in Medora for the first two years of the now nearly 140-year history of the church. For most of that history, St. Mary’s served as the parish of a sleepy western boom-to-bust town. Masses were held infrequently. Today, it welcomes thousands of tourists each

summer and travelers from around the country and the world sign its guestbook in a tiny vestibule in the back of church.

Medora experienced a boom again in the 1960s thanks to the efforts of Bismarck businessman Harold Schafer. He invested in the town’s revitalization and in 1965 established the famous nightly Medora Musical in an outdoor amphitheater. By the 1980s, St. Mary’s Church—with an occupancy of about 50—was overflowing to the point that attendees crowded outside and peered through the windows at each of its three Sunday Masses. Today, St. Mary’s is part of a tri-parish cluster with St. Bernard in Belfield and St. Mary in South Heart. The one weekly Mass in Medora—a Saturday vigil—is held in the original church only in May and October. During the summer tourist season, Mass is held at the town community center’s theater. In the winter, the tri-parish offers Masses only at its churches in Belfield and South Heart.

The original church building remains open throughout the summer, and many people visit each day to spend time in prayer before the tabernacle.

“It’s just a very intimate, quiet setting [where] you can feel God’s presence anytime you walk in the front doors,” said parishioner Clarence Sitter, CEO of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation. “You can feel like you went back in time to what it was like in the late 1800s, early 1900s. You get a perspective of how our faith is timeless.”

Sitter and his family have been active members of the parish community since 2012, assisting with altar serving, lecturing and ushering. Today, only 10 families belong to St. Mary’s. In summer, though, about 100 attend Mass each weekend.

“It’s just a privilege to serve people and provide an opportunity for them to worship on vacation,” he said. “God doesn’t take vacations and so [for] those of us who really want to live out our faith, it’s nice to be able to have that opportunity.”

Each year, roughly 200,000 people visit Medora—population 155—for the beauty of the Badlands, the history of Theodore Roosevelt and the Marquis de Mores, and the fun to be had at the musical, the waterpark and the golf course. A visit to St. Mary’s Church, though, can turn a vacation to Medora into a pilgrimage.

Humble St. Mary’s is a treasure of North Dakota’s Catholic heritage, harkening back to a time when the Gospel was still new in the state.

“[The] church is really representative—throughout the prairie of North Dakota—of how these people had faith and built their churches,” said Fr. Shane Campbell, pastor of the tri-parish cluster that includes St. Mary’s in Medora. “In most of the towns across the state [and] across the Midwest, [the church] was one of the first things that they wanted to [build].”

A visit to Saint Mary’s is also a unique opportunity to honor St. Charles de Foucauld. Although he was from France and his abandonment to God’s will took him to faraway places like the Holy Land and the Sahara, his life was touched, in a small but significant way, by little Medora.

Little St. Mary’s—the quiet, peaceful home of the Blessed Sacrament in the wide wilderness of buttes



The interior of St. Mary’s as it appears today welcoming visitors and tourists.

and valleys—continues to touch the lives of many from far and wide today. †

TOWN AND COUNTRY CELEBRATION 2025

Bishop Kagan celebrated the annual Town and Country Mass on July 13 at the Dukart Angus Ranch near Manning, N.D. The day began with a blessing of land, animals and equipment followed with Mass. Special thanks to our gracious hosts Derrick and Angie Dukart, Doug and Sandy Dukart and their extended family with Fr. Joseph Evinger and the parishioners of the churches of St. Joseph in Killdeer, St. Paul in Halliday and St. Joseph in Twin Buttes.



“Come and See”

the African Mission in action as a short-term missionary

The Bismarck Mission welcomes people who have a desire to “come and see” the mission and share in its life on a short-term basis (three weeks up to six months). It’s a rare opportunity to be the hands, feet and voice of Christ in Kenya by serving our brothers and sisters through the various programs administered by the mission. It is also an opportunity to allow oneself to be shaped and formed by people of deep faith who live in poverty. The heart of the mission is the education program that serves over 450 orphaned and vulnerable children.

If you are interested in learning more about the Bismarck Diocese African Mission, contact mission director Chuck Reichert, 701-220-0373 or go to bismarckdiocese.com/african-mission for more information.

A photograph of three young children standing outdoors. Two girls and one boy are wearing school uniforms. They are standing in front of a building with a red roof.

University of Mary launches groundbreaking diocesan Chapter of National Association of Catholic Nurses

Tom Ackerman
University of Mary

In a bold and historic move to further integrate faith and healthcare, the University of Mary is proud to announce the formation of the first-ever hybrid diocesan-school chapter of the National Association of Catholic Nurses, USA (NACN)—a national organization with roots dating back to the 1940s. This inaugural hybrid model will be chartered in collaboration with the Bismarck Diocese and led through the University of Mary’s esteemed Larry and Eileen Weigum Division of Nursing under the Saint Gianna School of Health Sciences.

The newly established Bismarck Diocesan-University of Mary Chapter is a first for NACN, which previously recognized only parish-based or diocesan-based chapters. Spearheaded by University of Mary nursing faculty and supported by Bishop Kagan, this pioneering structure is poised to serve as a national blueprint for other Catholic universities and dioceses seeking to form spiritually and ethically grounded nurses. With Bishop Kagan’s formal support, membership is open to Catholic nurses across the diocese.

An inspired vision

At the heart of this groundbreaking initiative is Teresa Bren, assistant professor of nursing at the University of Mary, who conceived the hybrid diocesan-school chapter structure and will serve as its first faculty advisor.

“The University of Mary is honored to support the formation of a diocesan-school based chapter of the National Association of Catholic Nurses (NACN), recognizing the alignment between the values of the NACN, the mission of our university and the teachings of the Catholic Church,” said Bren. “Nurses today face complex challenges that test not only their professional judgment, but also their moral clarity and emotional resilience. The NACN provides a faithful and nourishing space where Catholic nurses, regardless of where they work, can integrate their vocation with their faith, grow spiritually and find joy in knowing they are deeply loved and uniquely called to serve in Christ’s healing ministry.”

Lead with compassion and conviction

This development further elevates the University of Mary’s already acclaimed nursing program, widely recognized as one of the most respected in the country. Under the leadership of Dr. Mary Dockter, dean of the Saint Gianna School of Health Sciences, the university has earned national attention for its unwavering commitment to forming healthcare professionals who are clinically excellent and morally courageous.

“The NACN is a natural extension of our efforts to form healthcare graduates who are not only excellent and skilled providers, but also deeply



Submitted photos: University students learning in a simulation lab.

committed to upholding the dignity and respect of all people,” said Dockter. “We work hard to ensure faculty and students have opportunities to grow their faith and ethical foundation with activities such as our annual Medical Professionals Conference on bioethics in December, a yearly pilgrimage to Europe and meaningful experiences serving the most vulnerable.”

Nationally ranked and rooted in mission

The announcement of this NACN chapter comes on the heels of a string of major milestones for the University of Mary’s nursing program. In Spring 2024, the university was ranked the No. 1 pre-licensure Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in the nation by Mountain Measurement,

out of 1,386 programs evaluated across the country. This national recognition speaks to the program’s clinical excellence, rigorous academic standards and unwavering fidelity to Catholic mission.

In just the past three years, the nursing program has seen a remarkable 55 percent increase in enrollment—a testament to both its growing national reputation and its distinctive approach to forming whole-person caregivers. The program boasts an impressive 98% average NCLEX first-time pass rate over the past seven years, along with a 95% BSN completion rate and a 98% graduate nursing completion rate. These metrics point to a culture of excellence, mentorship and student support.

A key initiative that sets the University of Mary apart is its fully endowed, tuition-free Nursing Academy. This one-of-a-kind program allows qualified

students to earn their BSN in just 2.6 years with no tuition costs, in exchange for three years of service at a sponsoring healthcare agency. It's a model that not only reduces student debt but also addresses critical nursing shortages in the region and beyond.

To support this level of excellence, the university recently completed a \$3 million renovation of its Casey Center for Nursing Education, now home to the state-of-the-art Warren Simulation Center. This cutting-edge facility includes high-fidelity simulation labs, a dedicated skills lab, exam rooms and advanced performance capture technology. Together, these features provide students with real-world, hands-on experiences that prepare them for clinical success.

Additionally, the program is supported by a dedicated full-time student success coach and a simulation coordinator—key roles that ensure students receive personalized guidance from the moment they enroll through the day they graduate and enter the field.

The nursing program's leadership team is equally remarkable for its stability and shared mission. Dockter has served at the University of Mary since 1998, as has Associate Dean Dr. Billie Madler, herself a proud graduate of both the university's BSN and MSN programs. This longstanding leadership continuity has helped shape a culture rooted in Benedictine values and academic excellence.



University student with a young “patient.”

United in purpose

The National Association of Catholic Nurses, USA, has long served as a professional, spiritual, and moral support network for Catholic nurses. Reincorporated in 1993, NACN's mission aligns seamlessly with the University of Mary's commitment to educating servant leaders in healthcare. The association promotes Catholic moral principles within nursing, encourages spiritual growth among members and advocates for the dignity and sanctity of human life.

“We believe this model will not only support the professional and spiritual formation of Catholic nurses throughout our region but also serve as a strong foundation for integrating faith and nursing practice in meaningful ways,” said Dr. Madler. “We are excited to offer this opportunity within the Bismarck Diocese as a warm and welcoming community where nurses can learn, grow, and serve with renewed purpose and strength.”

Model for Catholic health formation

The University of Mary continues to lead as a beacon of innovation in Catholic higher education. By establishing this first-of-its-kind diocesan-school NACN chapter, the university is further fulfilling its mission to educate servant leaders who are prepared to meet the pressing moral and clinical challenges of today's healthcare landscape. In a profession that demands both skill and soul, this new initiative promises to be a sanctuary of support, a catalyst for excellence and a witness to the enduring power of faith in action.

As this chapter takes root, the university is also extending a warm invitation to those who wish to be part of this growing mission. Catholic nurses across the Bismarck Diocese are encouraged to join the newly chartered NACN chapter and participate in a community where faith, vocation and excellence meet.



University students learning in a simulation lab.

The University of Mary also invites all healthcare professionals to attend the annual Saint Gianna Medical Professionals Conference on December 5-6. This powerful gathering is designed to equip medical professionals with the moral clarity and spiritual formation needed to navigate the complexities of modern healthcare through the lens of Catholic bioethics.

Students and prospective nurses are reminded that applications opened on July 1 for the university's 2026 Tuition-Free Nursing Academy—a nationally unique program that combines academic rigor, mission-driven formation and tuition-free access. That same day also marked the start of the application window for the university's renowned legacy BSN and MSN programs, which continue to prepare graduates for excellence in both practice and leadership.

For those currently working in healthcare, the University of Mary offers year-round opportunities for continued growth in the ethical and theological dimensions of Catholic medical care. Graduate students and healthcare professionals are encouraged to enroll in one of the university's respected bioethics seminars or degree programs, including the popular Bioethics Seminar August 8 and 9 created in partnership with the National Catholic Bioethics Center.

Together, these efforts reflect the University of Mary's enduring commitment to forming compassionate, courageous and faithful healthcare leaders for the Church and the world.

For questions or more information please contact the University of Mary at www.umary.edu or by calling 701-355-8030. †

OBITUARY SISTER JOSEPH DUKART, OSB

Sister Joseph Dukart, a member of Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, entered eternal life on May 18, 2025, at St. Vincent’s Care Center where she has been a resident since July 2024. The Mass of Christian Burial was May 23 in the Chapel of Annunciation Monastery.

Sister Joseph (baptized Wilhelmina) was born May 10, 1932, in Dickinson, the seventh of nine children of Joseph and Barbara (Keller) Dukart. Her experience of growing up with her father’s diminished eyesight sensitized her in gentle care for others with special needs. As a student at St. Joseph’s School in Dickinson, “Minnie” loved the sisters and joined the Benedictine Sisters in 1950 and celebrated her 72nd anniversary of monastic profession in 2024.

Prepared as a licensed practical nurse at St. Mary’s Hospital in Pierre, S.D., Sister Joseph’s love of caring for others led her to serve with an infectiously joyful spirit.

She graciously and gratefully served at St. Alexius and Garrison Memorial Hospitals, and as coordinator and nurse in the priory/monastery health center. Sister Joseph generously did whatever was asked of her, whether it was assisting in health care, at switchboard, housekeeping, errands or driving.

Summer leisure time drew her to outdoor activities including taking care of the trees on monastery property and at the lake in Garrison. She happily invited other sisters to share vacation time at her sister, Bridget’s, lake cabin in Montana.

Sister Joseph brightened others’ days with her nursing stories and mischievous sense of humor. It was her delight to fool the unsuspecting on April Fools’ Day. Her care and concern for others was ever present, even when she was the one needing care herself. Her deep faith and prayerful example were an inspiration. God was a steady refuge for Sister Joseph as she explained and exclaimed, “He’s there all the time, whenever you need Him!”

Sister Joseph is survived by nieces and nephews and the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. She was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters Rose Wiley, Ann Daubert, Clara Karniss, Bridget Obernolte, and Mary Mussehl, and brothers John, Ralph, and Henry. †



Servant of God
Michelle Christine
DUPPONG

Jan 25, 1984 – Dec 25, 2015

A laywoman who dedicated her life to evangelization and showed Jesus to others while suffering with cancer

Jesus, I praise and thank You for the life of Your servant Michelle Duppong. In her life and suffering, she joined You in Your thirst for souls and embraced the cross offered to her. Following her example, I ask for the special grace of... and, if it brings You greater glory, that she be honored by Your Church. Jesus, I ask this in Your Holy Name. Amen.

With ecclesiastical approval of Bishop David D. Kagan
Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota

Please report any special favors granted to
duppongcause@bismarckdiocese.com

QUESTIONS I WAS AFRAID TO ASK



Fr. Joseph Evinger

If you’ve ever submitted a question to be answered on the pages of the *Dakota Catholic Action*, this might be your lucky day. Possibly.

If an infant is baptized in the hospital by a nurse in the case of an emergency, can the baby be baptized “again” by a priest later?

If the nurse baptized the baby using water and the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” then it’s a valid baptism. The child is baptized, a child of God, full of God’s grace. Therefore, there is no need to give the child what he or she already has. What happens later in the baptismal liturgy at the Church are readings from Scripture and symbolic rituals which help understand what baptism is. The white garment symbolizes the purity a person receives in baptism. The flame lit from the Easter candle shows the child has been given light from God. And the child is anointed with Chrism which points to the need for the sacrament of confirmation given by the bishop.

Why would I take marriage advice from a priest?

This is an honest question. The answer is quite simple. A doctor doesn’t need to have a broken bone to treat a broken bone. A mother doesn’t need to have an earache to treat her child’s earache. A carpenter doesn’t need to have his own house to build a house. There are many things a priest can know about marriage even though he’s not married. After all, he hears the struggles of marriage in the confessional or pastoral counseling which the average person does not know or hear. This doesn’t mean that all priests give good marriage advice. And I would not recommend you get all your marriage advice from a priest. There are many good marriage counselors and marriage coaches who do this for a living and are more equipped than many priests.

Why does the Catholic Church have so many traditions and rules that are not anywhere in the Bible?

Many traditions and rules of the Catholic Church are in the Bible which the Church does not have the power to change.

Q: Is this the month my question will be answered?

Here are some examples. The command to attend Mass: “Do this in memory of me.” (1 Cor 11:24). Marriage is indissoluble: “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery” (Luke 16:18). St. Paul lists a number of sins that keep a person out of heaven, (that is, if one does not repent of them and turn to God): “Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 6:9-10). But then there are rules and traditions that the Church does have the power to change. Two examples are: which language can be used to celebrate the Mass and whether married men can become priests. There are many more. This is similar to the rules parents make for their families. There are some rules parents must follow, and there are others they have the authority to make or change.

I’m Catholic and my spouse is not. If I die first, how can I ensure that my funeral will be a Catholic Mass?

My first recommendation is to have this conversation with your spouse, if you haven’t already. Tell him or her that you want a Catholic funeral and ask them to promise you he or she will have a Catholic funeral Mass for you. If your spouse is opposed to it, my next recommendation is to talk to your parish priest asking that if your family does not have a Catholic funeral Mass that he offer a Mass for the repose of your soul when you die. Requesting it in writing and reminding the priest from time to time of this request is also helpful to your parish priest to remember your request.

How can anyone recognize if the devil is behind something?

Here’s a good example: If he’s behind a living room chair, you’ll likely see his horns sticking out the top of the backrest, his red pointy viper tail wagging back and forth on the floor or tangled up in the lamp cord, and he’ll probably be clucking like a chicken.

Questions I was afraid to ask continues on page 33

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 “Question Afraid to Ask” in the subject line.



AG ATTITUDES

Loving my sisters and brothers brings me closer to God

James Odermann

Summertime on the farm/ranch is a hectic period. There is so much to be done that one hardly has time to plan for anything. There is a grind (or nostalgia if you enjoy the blossoming of new creation) putting one in a trance-like state, a sort of auto pilot mindset.

For most, this means getting up with the sun and (hopefully) getting to bed when the skies darken. This reminds me of a placard I saw that read “there is so much to do and so little time to do it.”

This axiom really reflects life. In agricultural production, life is steady by seasonal demands on time: seeding, feeding, calving, fencing, spraying, branding, haying, more fencing, harvesting, etc. There is always something to do that relates to the outdoors and an opportunity to witness the awe of nature.

Yet, the latter part of the axiom “little time to do it” really reaches across all vocations. As I age, I have come face-to-face with the reality my time as a living, breathing resident of the earth is minimal. I could work myself into a state of anxiety by worrying about the timelessness of infinity.

I mulled this thought over for a while as I enjoyed the bounty of this year’s agricultural production. I savored the chance to cut, bale and/or haul hay production in preparation for the coming winter season.

At the same time, I reflected on the status of the repetition in my life: spring, summer, fall, winter—and then all over again next year. This annual routine could be boring but, to me, God’s handiwork is never dull, especially if I appreciate the opportunities (and challenges) God places daily in front of me.

Enter St. Benedict, whose feast day the Catholic Church celebrated on July 11. Saint Benedict wrote the template for having a daily routine in life. Saint Benedict’s routine, however,

was more grace-filled than mine. It was St. Benedict who noted “ora et labora,” Latin for pray and work.

His mixture of prayer, work and rest is the classical manuscript providing the roadmap to rhythm for human tempo, which brings health, happiness and holiness. The “Rule of St. Benedict” is the model for all ages of humanity.

Benedictine monks adopt the philosophy of equally balancing life with prayer, work and rest. Each is important to understand and celebrate the unconditional commitment God made by sending Jesus to save humanity.

As I circled the fields, I recalled the only drudgery in my life is brought about by self-pity. I thought about this in the context of using daily routines as a way to reinvigorate myself through positive thoughts, words and deeds.

In short, do I use my daily (weekly, monthly or annual) routines as ways to make myself and the world a better place? Or would it be more correct to ask: do I make the world a better place, which makes me better?

The saints of the Church set standards to follow, offering phenomenal inspiration in their daily lives that I need to emulate. Several months ago, I referenced a “God moment” when I started receiving a daily electronic message about the saint of the day.

The saints have uprooted the temptation, the sin, the negativity of humanity. Read the lives of saints and see first-hand how saints have focused on the needs of their sisters and brothers through multitudes of corporal and spiritual assistance.

God doesn’t write or call me personally and tell me how to plan my life. Rather, God placed part of Himself in me (a soul) and gave me the free will to make conscious choices where I care

for my spiritual development. This means God, through His unconditional love, wants me to return love to and for the Holy Trinity and make God the center of my universe.

I am called to humbly share time, talent and treasure along the trail of life. As I do this in the spirit of the Holy Trinity, my choices and interactions with my sisters and brothers should help them experience God’s infinite love. God asks for that.

It is up to me to complete the circle of unconditional love I receive from the Holy Trinity. Saint Francis of Assisi so well capsulized this concept: “For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.”

Can I do it? I pray I am able to love and accept my sisters and brothers in the forgiving and loving way God loves me.


Care to join me? †

QUESTIONS I WAS AFRAID TO ASK *(continued)*

But in all seriousness, we know that the devil is in some way behind all the evil in the world. Since Adam and Eve handed humanity over to the serpent, we now experience evil. Yet, you must always remember that Jesus has conquered the devil. The devil is merely a creature. Jesus is the Creator. By consistently praying, reading Scripture and receiving the sacraments—especially confession and Holy Communion—God protects us from the devil. Yet, God doesn’t always keep us from suffering since suffering can be a way to conquer the devil, but He will always keep us safe. God is always a hundred moves ahead of the devil. If you’re constantly lifting your mind and heart to God, there’s no need to worry the devil is behind anything, because God already has a better plan.

Why are there different versions of the Bible if it’s the true Word of God?

The books of the Bible that we read here in North Dakota are usually in English or Spanish. But these were not the languages which the Holy Spirit used when the books of the Bible were originally written. If at Mass, or otherwise, the Bible was read in its original languages of Hebrew or Greek, we would not understand what is being spoken. So, the Church has had the Bible translated into the vernacular or language of the people so that we can come to know what the Bible is saying. There are many translations of the Bible because no one translation is able to say fully what the original says. My Greek professor said in seminary, “Reading a translation of the Bible is like looking at a sunset in black and white. A black and white sunset may be beautiful, but a sunset in color is so much better.”




DEEPEN YOUR FAITH

Beyond Sunday

with

Real Presence Radio

91.7 FM



Why must married couples be open to children when that’s really none of the Church’s business?

One of the great things about the Catholic Church is that we don’t have “Church police” who go from door to door making sure people are living Catholic lives. There aren’t any fines or Church jail for those who aren’t fully living Catholic lives. If the Church had a jail or fines, most would be in that jail or be paying fines; we all are sinners. But what God has put into each of us is a conscience. Our consciences remind us of what is right and wrong. Clergy, religious and laity alike, are called to remind us of what is right and wrong.

In regard to being open to children, the Church simply reminds married couples to “be fruitful and multiply”—God’s first commandment in the Bible found in Genesis. God made the sexual act for two purposes: to unify the man and woman and to bring forth new human life. We can see this and know this at the scientific level too.

Can I hang a rosary from my car’s rear-view mirror or is that sacrilegious?

If you’re in a state which allows things hanging from the rearview mirror, you certainly can. North Dakota is one of those states. I have one hanging from mine as a reminder to lift my heart and mind to God while I’m on the road. And because it’s hanging there in clear view, it also reminds me to pray the rosary too. If someone has it hanging there as jewelry rather than a reminder to pray, then there could be problem. †

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).



BALANCING CHURCH & STATE

The Catholic Church’s both/and approach to immigration

David Tamisiea

Over the years, I have come to appreciate the Catholic “both/and” approach to many complex doctrinal and moral issues. Instead of taking an “either/or” approach that stresses one position to the exclusion of all others, the Church frequently emphasizes that seemingly contradictory truths can be held together in harmony, revealing a more complete understanding of the truth on any given issue.

Take faith and reason for example. Some fundamentalist Christians take the position that faith alone is the only way to understand the truth about God and the world, whereas secular atheists maintain that reason is the sole path toward understanding all reality. The Catholic Church, however, recognizes that God has given us both faith and reason to arrive at the fullness of truth about God, human beings, and the world.

The Catholic Church’s both/and approach can be found in many other areas of Christian life: Jesus Christ is both fully divine and fully human. God communicates to us through both Scripture and Tradition. Human salvation is accomplished in us by both divine grace and human freedom. Our moral decision-making must be guided by both magisterial authority and individual judgments of conscience. The list could go on and on. The Church’s both/and approach reflects the depth, nuance, and balance of Catholic thinking that rejects overly simplistic answers to complex questions.

Immigration has been a controversial issue in the United States for decades. Some people favor more open borders, while others desire greater restrictions on immigrants entering our country. People also hold differing opinions about how best to deal with immigrants here illegally, especially when it comes to those who are fleeing desperate circumstances or have lived in our country for a long time.

The Catholic Church has a both/and approach to immigration expressed in two basic principles. On the one hand, the Church teaches that every person has a natural right to emigrate from his or her homeland and move to a new country for a better and

more secure life (CCC 2211, 2241). On the other hand, the Church teaches that governments have an obligation to protect their own citizens and foster the common good by establishing and enforcing laws regulating and limiting the entry of immigrants into their territories (CCC 2241). And yet, enforcement of these laws must always respect the innate dignity of the immigrant and their basic human rights. In other words, the Church recognizes *both* an individual’s right to immigrate to another country in pursuit of a better life *and* the right of a nation to protect its own citizens by regulating immigrants who enter their homeland.

While applying these principles to our country’s immigration situation is no easy task, the Church opposes absolutist positions on either side of the debate that would either advocate for open borders without any restrictions at all or those that would reject the natural right of migrants fleeing poverty and oppression in their home countries to seek a better life in another country.

The Catholic both/and approach to immigration can be situated within the wider context of the Church’s teaching on the universal destination of goods and the right to private property (CCC 2401-2406). The universal destination of goods refers to the fact that from the beginning God created the world and everything in it for the benefit of the whole human race. Even so, God willed that the earth be divided up among individuals to ensure the security of their lives, so that by owning private property people can meet their own needs and those of their dependents.

Our right to private property does not do away with the more primordial principle of the universal destination of goods that requires us to be generous to others. As many saints remind us, there is a sense in which our excess “belongs” to the poor. St. John Chrysostom, for example, preached in a famous homily, “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.” (*Hom. in Lazaro* 2,5, cited in the CCC 2446). Likewise, Pope St. Gregory the Great taught “When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours.

More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice” (*Regula Pastoralis* 3,21, cited in CCC 2446). While we have the right to private property, we also have a moral duty to share our goods with others in need to the extent we can.

The interplay between the right to private property and the universal destination of goods has implications for how Catholics ought to approach the issue of immigration. Just as every individual person has the right to own private property, nations have the right to maintain their own borders, regulate immigration, and restrict who can enter their country. At the same time, the land and goods of a wealthy nation are not meant solely for itself but are destined to be shared with others, especially the poor.

The Catholic both/and approach to immigration hit home for me about a year ago when I visited the Texas/Mexican border for a dialogue on immigration. At a shelter for legal immigrants seeking asylum from persecution in their home countries, I met a family who had fled Venezuela to cross the border into the United States. Through an interpreter, I learned that the father had been an election official, and the socialist government had demanded he gather 10 votes per child for each of his four children for the

ruling party, or else the children would “disappear.” The man and his wife knew this was no idle threat and fled the country. As a father of six, I fought back tears listening to this family’s heart-wrenching story, knowing I would have done the same thing. Later in the visit, however, we all learned the horrifying news about a 12-year-old girl in Houston who had been sexually assaulted and murdered by two immigrants here illegally from Venezuela. Both men had entered the country illegally and were caught by U.S. Border Patrol but then released pending a court appearance. At the time, I felt deep anger at the lack of enforcement of our borders that had become our nation’s standard policy at that time.

While there are no easy answers to the problem of immigration, the Catholic both/and principles are clear: We must have an attitude of openness and generosity to immigrants in great need who seek to enter our country in pursuit of a better life, while at the same time vigorous in enforcing our laws and vetting those who enter our country to protect our own citizens. Let us pray for wisdom for our leaders and keep both principles in mind as we make decisions as a nation on how best to resolve our immigration crisis. †

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



An invitation from the St. Serra Vocations Apostolate of Bismarck Mandan

Aug. 1	Deacon Doug Helbling	Aug. 17	Fr. Paul Eberle
Aug. 2	Fr. Jordan Dosch	Aug. 18	Deacon Ronald Keller
Aug. 3	Fr. Odo Muggli, OSB	Aug. 19	Fr. Julian Nix, OSB
Aug. 4	Lay Ministers	Aug. 20	Deacon Kenneth Klein
Aug. 5	FOCUS Missionaries	Aug. 21	Fr. Leonard Eckroth
Aug. 6	Deacon Ronald Hogan	Aug. 22	Deacon Mohn Koble
Aug. 7	Fr. Dinoy Rebera	Aug. 23	Fr. Joshua Ehli
Aug. 8	Sr. Barbara Weber, OSB	Aug. 24	Sr. Renee Zastoupil, OSB
Aug. 9	Diocesan Seminarians	Aug. 25	Fr. Joseph Evinger
Aug. 10	Fr. Grant Dvorak	Aug. 26	Deacon Leonard Kordonowy
Aug. 11	Deacon Wayne Jundt	Aug. 27	Br. Alban Petesch, OSB
Aug. 12	Religious in Formation	Aug. 28	Fr. Stephen Folorunso
Aug. 13	Fr. Patrick Ojedeji	Aug. 29	Deacon Loren Kordonowy
Aug. 14	Sr. Janet Zander, OSB	Aug. 30	Fr. Ben Franchuk
Aug. 15	Bishop David Kagan	Aug. 31	Deacon Leonard Krebs
Aug. 16	Liturgical Ministers		

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

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The Bismarck Diocese 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: Deacon Brent Naslund, Chancellor, Bismarck Diocese, 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 Bismarck Diocese and it provides a foundation for implementing effective and enforceable standards for all personnel. View the Code of Conduct at www.bismarckdiocese.com.



Staff photo

Seminarian scholarship golf tournament winners

The winners of the 11th Annual Seminarian Scholarship Golf Tournament held in June were (l to r): Brian Quintus, Zachary Dosch, Brennan Quintus and Fr. Jordan Dosch with diocesan seminarians in the red shirts. Seminarians present were (l to r): Tyler Selzler, Aidan Schaeffbauer, Aaron Ripplinger, Griffin Schaeffer, Joseph Schweitzer, Thomas Kraljic, Ben Weigum, Joseph Richter, Deacon Colton Steiner, Taylen Thomas, Greyson Miller, Alex Wilson. Proceeds from the tournament coordinated by the Catholic Foundation of Western North Dakota help to form and educate our diocesan seminarians to one day become your priests. Find more information at cfwnd.org.