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Christmas 2018

Some give by going to the Missions

Some go by giving to the Missions

Without both there are no Missions

A Christmas Message From Bishop Chad Zielinski The Nativity through St. Joseph's Eyes



Editor's Note: When Bishop Chad Zielinski produced this piece on St. Joseph and the importance of the father, I was overjoyed. There is little known about St. Joseph, but we know from his actions that he was "a righteous man." (Matthew 1:18) We know that the angel from heaven addressed him as "son of David" a royal title also used for Jesus. We know that when his family was in danger, as warned by an angel, he left everything to get them to safety. We know that he waited faithfully in Egypt until it was safe to return. We know he protected and loved Mary and Jesus and he was not concerned whether his status or role suffered.

Bishop Chad's motto "He must increase: I must decrease," (John 3:30) perfectly aligns with St. Joseph's own actions. Just as John the Baptist proclaimed his cousin's divineness by saying, "He that cometh from above is above all," St. Joseph proclaims the same message in his deeds and faithfulness to his family. I am happy to share with you a photo by Kristyn Brown from her *The Saints Project-A Modern Portrayal of Catholic Saints* entitled "Jesus with Joseph," printed with special approval. I find it the perfect additon to an article written by a bishop who believes Christ is always the focus. For even though this picture features St. Joseph...Jesus is the focus. Merry Christmas.

—Patty Walter

As a child, I recall the excitement as we approached Christmas. Though decorations did not make it out until well after Thanksgiving, we still had time to bake cookies, listen to Advent songs, and decorate the house. We even had incredible Christmas pageants in the public schools that proclaimed the birth of Christ.

I especially remember the live Nativity at the Lutheran Church. Every Advent, we'd make the 10-mile trek to town and drive by the real animals, the lovely and beautiful Mary, and the living Jesus and shepherds. I would see that scene and know it really did happen as told in the Bible.

One person who always caught my attention was St. Joseph. He was sitting in that scene so quietly in the

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shadows, yet still had such a prominent presence. How did *he* experience the birth of Christ? I wondered then and still do about the earthly father of Jesus. Who is this quiet man that we see captured so silently in sacred art over the centuries?

Silence

Fascinatingly, Matthew's Gospel lists St. Joseph at the end of 52 generations from Abraham to Jesus. We see in this human genealogy that God remained faithful to his covenant amidst the brokenness of our human condition. Yet nowhere in Scripture do we read even one recorded word of this man who had such an important place in Christ's family tree.

St. Joseph is described as a just man betrothed to Mary. Before they lived together, however, she is found with child. An angel appears and addresses St. Joseph as "[Son] of David." As a man of faith whose family worshipped at the temple every Sabbath, St. Joseph would have been familiar with Scripture and the incredible stories of God working in the lives of those he called. When the angel appeared, he was likely fearful, but his posture was open and listening. Something in the message resonated with St. Joseph and he knew the angel and dream were the workings of God. Like Mary, he pondered these things in his heart.

We see more silence at the birth of Christ, with St. Joseph poised peacefully in the manger scene or in a painting of the Nativity. He contemplates the great gift of God in the newborn Christ child. Michael Card, a contemporary singer, articulates this beautifully in his piece, *St. Joseph's Song*:

*♪How could it be this baby in my arms
Sleeping now, so peacefully
The Son of God, the angel said
How could it be
Lord I know He's not my own
Not of my flesh, not of my bone
Still Father let this baby be
The son of my love♪*

I believe St. Joseph's silence and pondering reflect a holy response. It also contains an invitation for us to enter into Christmas with that same riveted focus on Christ, with our own silence and pondering. At least on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, let's make a commitment to reduce that 2,716 times per day the average person interacts with a device by turning off the phones and putting them away. Instead, gather together and pray before a simple nativity

scene. Enjoy the company of loved ones and revel in the personal connections you were made for by God.

Trust in God

St. Joseph also demonstrated great trust in God. In Matthew 1:24, we learn that when he woke from the dream, he "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." His quiet obedience combined with Mary's "yes" were the foundation of the Holy Family's household. Their trust in God was a mighty fortress that would lead them through challenging times. St. Joseph was visited by an angel in a dream a second time and told to lead his family to safety in a foreign land. In a third dream, he obeyed when told to return to Galilee from Egypt. Over and over, St. Joseph demonstrated an unwavering trust in God's plan, even when he could not understand that plan fully.

I have journeyed with many people who faced unexpected challenges like St. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. For example, some were told their unborn child would not be "normal." One couple's doctor told them their child had Down's Syndrome, then explained the condition as if they were being cursed. He advised them to abort the child.

"We had no idea what lay ahead," the couple told me. "But we knew all life was sacred and that if we trusted God, all would be well." Yes, there were heroic sacrifices along the way, but they said "yes" to God as St. Joseph and Mary did. And their son, John, has brought countless blessings that have only strengthened the family.

Purity

In addition to trust, St. Joseph gives us a much-needed model of chastity and purity, virtues that have led countless artists to depict him holding a lily over the centuries. Mary was a virgin before Christ's birth, but she remained a virgin her entire life. Tradition tells us St. Joseph did not feel worthy to accept the holy Mary as his wife, but instructed by the angel, took her into his home and protected her as a husband. St. Joseph would have honored Mary daily with a profound respect and that makes him a powerful intercessor for all married men. He can obtain the graces you need to honor your wife each day through words and actions. Your children, friends, and family will witness this respect and the blessing will carry forward from generation to generation.

We need this witness of respect for women more than ever. It is tragic that the biggest money maker on the Internet is pornography, a poison so ubiquitous that the average boy now first experiences this wound at the tender age of eight.

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This perversion of God’s gift of sexuality destroys the purity of body and soul we are called to live.

In October, I attended a conference in Chicago sponsored by Catholic Extension. One panel consisted of three young people in their 20s. A bishop asked what they were hearing from their peers about the sex abuse crisis in the Church. They all said young people are confused and frustrated, but they are not leaving the Church. They do want priests and bishops to step up as shepherds who share the truth about God’s plan for sexuality clearly as an antidote to our confusing world. As one woman said, “We want our shepherds to teach us a rightly-ordered sexuality.”

May St. Joseph be that vivid reminder of purity that honors and respects both women and the gift of our sexuality that reflects the sacred image and likeness of God.

Fatherhood

St. Joseph also provides us with a blueprint for earthly fatherhood, which desperately needs to be redeemed in our society. When Jesus was 12, Mary and St. Joseph experienced what had to be a nightmare when they searched for days for their son. Though they did not understand Christ’s response to their anxiety when he was found—”Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”—they all returned to Nazareth together, where Jesus was obedient and “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

Growing up, Jesus would have learned the family trade from St. Joseph, who was a carpenter. Like many fathers, St. Joseph would have spent many hours with his divine son, living out his commitment to care for Mary and raise Jesus as his own. Unfortunately, too many children today have lost the ongoing presence of a father, as so many men are eschewing their sacred duty to care for their wives and children.

I have read countless articles about children raised in “fatherless homes” and the statistics are staggering.¹ Fatherless children make up:

- 63% of youth suicides (five times the national average);
- 90% of homeless and runaway children (32 times the average);
- 85% of children with behavioral disorders (20 times the average);
- 80% of rapists (14 times the average); and
- 71% of those who do not finish high school (9 times the average)

Do not despair. These staggering statistics paint a bleak picture but they also point out how it is so vital that we take time to reach out to the single or widowed mother and to

her children. It is essential for good men to step in and offer a fatherly and loving presence. I implore you to pray for these families and actively find ways to lighten their burden.

God the Father and Jesus, his Son, are drawing our attention to the quietness and simplicity of St. Joseph, who was a loving and caring earthly father. This saint is a powerful intercessor who wants to obtain for us the graces to embrace God’s gift of fatherhood this Christmas. He wants to be in the middle of our messy and challenging families, and will be if we ponder his example and ask for his help.

Fathers, what a beautiful blessing you can give your wives and children this Christmas! Turn toward your family with a greater desire to live out your fatherhood like St. Joseph did, being present to these loved ones in a way that better reflects the beauty, goodness, and truth of God the Father.

As St. Joseph silently embraced his call as the earthly father of Jesus, may we embrace silence as a gift to contemplate the birth of Christ. As a man of faith who trusted God’s plan even in the most difficult moments, may we also trust in Our Lord. As a loving father and husband, who honored Mary and Jesus with the utmost respect, may we also encourage our families like St. Joseph. And may we all embrace the joy of Christmas that St. Joseph and Mary carried within their hearts, with the peace of Christ born anew in our families.

As missionary disciples, may we go forth in the joyful, reverent spirit of this great saint to bring hope and healing to our Church and world.

A very Merry Christmas to you and to your families!

†Most Reverend Chad W. Zielinski

+ Chad W. Zielinski



Reference

1. The Fatherless Generation—www.thefatherlessgeneration.wordpress.com/statistics/

A YEAR OF BLESSINGS

Over the past year, the Diocese of Fairbanks has been truly blessed. Shepherding a diocese of our size and with our challenges can be daunting. Thank you for your generous donations this past year! It is only with your support and the sacrifices of our priests, religious, and lay ministers that we are able to fulfill our mission to bring Jesus and the sacraments to the people of northern Alaska.

JANUARY

Bishop Chad attended the Region XII Retreat in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. January 15-19 Bishop Chad conducted a retreat for Active Duty Navy Chaplains in North Palm Beach, FL. The last week of January, Bishop Chad celebrated Catholic Schools Week at Immaculate Conception and Monroe Catholic Junior/Senior High in Fairbanks.

FEBRUARY

The diocese hosted its first major conference, "Families Fully Alive: Strengthening Marriages and Families." The event took place from February 9-11 at the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks, and featured nationally known speakers and authors. Headliners included Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput, Mary Rice Hasson, Fr. Leo Patalinghug, Steve Ray, and Meg Hunter-Kilmer. On the 13th, Bishop held a St. Andrew's Dinner at his residence for young men considering the priesthood. On the 18th, he celebrated the Rite of Election for catechumens at Sacred Heart Cathedral. February 19-22 found him at the Annual Priest Convocation in Anchorage, joined by the diocese's 19 priests from all over northern Alaska.

MARCH

March 3-7, Bishop Chad attended a special conference at Notre Dame: *Cultures of Formation: Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*. On March 8, Bishop Chad and his priests gathered at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Fairbanks for the Chrism Mass. From March 14-17, he traveled to Bethel to distribute the Holy Oils to the village parish representatives at a Distribution of Oils Mass. Holy Week found Bishop Chad at Sacred Heart Cathedral, where he heard confessions, led the Stations of the Cross, and celebrated Mass and Easter Vigil.

APRIL

On April 12, Bishop Chad celebrated a healing Mass for those who have suffered abuse at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Fairbanks. He visited Immaculate Conception Church in Bethel and St. Mary's in the YK-Delta Region during the weekend of April 15. As part of his visit to Saint Mary's he celebrated confirmations and a wedding. On April 26, Bishop instituted the first All-Day of Adoration in the Diocese at Sacred Heart Cathedral. On April 28-29, he confirmed students at St. John Berchmans Church in the bush village of Galena.

MAY

The relics of Saint Padre Pio arrived at Sacred Heart Cathedral on May 3. On May 5, urban deacon candidates Warren Lucero and Peter Shier were instituted to the Ministry of Lector for the diocese. Bishop held Clergy Days for all priests in the diocese May 1-4 at the St. Ignatius Residence in Fairbanks. On May 6, Bishop Chad traveled to Delta Junction to celebrate confirmations. On May 7, he celebrated a special Blue Mass for First Responders at Sacred Heart

Cathedral. He traveled to Mt. Angel Seminary May 8-10 to visit with seminarian Ben Doudna. On the 11th, he celebrated Baccalaureate Mass and Graduation at Monroe Catholic High School for the Class of 2018 in Fairbanks. The 12-17th found him in St. Paul, MN, and Frisco, TX, on Mission Appeals speaking about the diocese's needs at weekend Masses. He was back in Alaska the 19th to confirm students at St. Raphael parish, in Fairbanks; on the 20th, he confirmed students at Sacred Heart Cathedral parish and St. Nicholas parish in North Pole; and on the 22nd at Immaculate Conception parish in Fairbanks.

JUNE

Bishop Chad attended the Alaska Catholic Youth Conference in Anchorage from June 3-6, and in mid-June, he attended the USCCB Spring Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. On June 7, he attended the second annual Catholic Daughter's Priest Dinner in Fairbanks. He visited the Diocese of San Diego from June 16-24 with Deacon Les Maiman to speak about the needs of the diocese at two churches in the area. In late June, he visited the bush village parish of Sacred Heart in Emmonak.

JULY

Bishop Chad visited the interior village churches of Our Lady of the Snows, in Nulato and St. Patrick in Koyukuk July 5-9, to confirm students. Fr. Jonathan Dellinger from the Archdiocese of Denver arrived and was named pastor of St. Nicholas Church in North Pole. Fr. Szymon Czuwara from Poland was named pastor of both Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Delta Junction and of Holy Rosary Church, in Tok. Fr. Thomas Sagili was named vicar at St. Patrick Church in Barrow. The diocese was fortunate to acquire two more seminarians, Piotr Oprych and Nick Shamrell. Piotr is originally from Poland and spent the last year studying at Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, MI. He began his pastoral year serving in the parish of Immaculate Conception in Fairbanks. Nick is originally from Vancouver, WA. He is a graduate of West Point and served nine years in the U.S. Army. In mid-July, Bishop Chad traveled with Deacon Les Maiman to Seattle to participate in two Mission Appeals. And on July 22, he installed Fr. Jonathan Dellinger as pastor of St. Nicholas Parish in North Pole. July 23-26 Bishop James Conley from the Diocese of Lincoln visited Fr. Tom Kuffel. Bishop Conley assigned Fr. Kuffel in 2016 to serve as a missionary priest for three years in Alaska. At the end of July, Fr. Ross Tozzi continued a previously shortened sabbatical. He will complete his remaining 5-month sabbatical in January. Fr. Joe Townsend from the Diocese of Tulsa, on his own sabbatical, arrived to help at the cathedral.

AUGUST

Seminarian Josh Miller returned to Mundelein Seminary outside of Chicago to continue his studies in Pre-Theology II. Seminarian Ben Doudna returned from Creighton University where he attended classes on Priestly Formation. He began his pastoral year serving the parish of St. Nicholas in North Pole. In August, we held our third annual Seminarian Benefit Dinner at St. Raphael's parish in Fairbanks, raising over \$40,000 toward seminarian education. The diocese also held the first Coming Home Mass and Picnic at the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks. We completed and passed the USCCB Child Safety Audit. August 7-9 Bishop Chad attended the Knights of Columbus Supreme Convention, in Baltimore, MD.

Blessings continued from page 4...

From the 11-12th he was in Raleigh, NC, with Deacon Les Maiman to thank the parishioners of St. Michael the Archangel Parish for their previous gifts to the diocese. He made a pastoral visit to the bush village of Nulato, Our Lady of the Snow's Parish, August 17-19. He hosted Clergy Days for all priests in the diocese at the St. Ignatius Residence, in Fairbanks, August 21-23.

SEPTEMBER

On September 16-17th. Fr. Szymon Czuwara was installed by Bishop Chad as pastor at Holy Rosary Church in Tok and at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Delta Junction. Bishop Chad visited the bush village of Sacred Heart Parish, in Emmonak. He also attended the Road System Deacon Retreat, in North Pole and the Rural Deacon Retreat, in Bethel. Bishop Chad visited Mt. Angel Seminary September 19-21.

OCTOBER

The first days of October found Bishop Chad in Juneau for the Alaska Conference of Catholic Bishops. From October 5-7, Bishop Chad instituted the first Rosary Congress in the diocese. It was held at Sacred Heart Cathedral. October 12-13 was the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks annual operational fundraiser, HIPOW (Happiness Is Paying Our Way). The event raised over \$700,000 for the schools. Bishop Chad attended the Catholic Extension Mission Conference in Chicago. He also visited Seminarian Josh Miller at Mundelein and served on the Episcopal Consultors Board at Mt. Angel Seminary where Seminarian Nick Shamrell is studying. The end of the month had him in his home area of Petoskey, MI, at a Marian Conference as a guest speaker.

NOVEMBER

On November 3, with former Fairbanks Bishop Donald J. Kettler, Bishop Chad celebrated the funeral Mass of Fr. John Martinek who retired in 2012 after 22 years of service to the Diocese of Fairbanks. Bishop Chad hosted Clergy Spiritual Formation Days in Fairbanks, November 6-8. He headed to the USCCB General Meeting in Baltimore mid-month. At the end of November, (through to December 9) Bishop Chad has a pastoral visit scheduled to Blessed Sacrament Church, in Scammon Bay; Sacred Heart Church, in Chevak; and to Little Flower of Jesus Church, in Hooper Bay.

DECEMBER

Bishop Chad will visit the bush villages in St. Catherine of Siena Parish, in Chefornak and Holy Family Parish, in Newtok, at end of December.

The Alaskan Shepherd Newsletter



HERO ALERT

DIVINE CHILD HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2020



Alaskan Shepherd donor Marc Sierra was so moved that village Catholics in northern Alaska only receive the Mass and sacraments every two months due to our lack of clergy that he shared our story with students at Divine Child High School in Dearborn, Michigan. The story prompted the school's junior class to pick the Diocese of Fairbanks as the recipient of its "Faith in Action" fundraising campaign this past fall. Divine Child's juniors raised \$10,054 in just one month. Some members of the junior class are seen here enjoying a "uniform break" to celebrate reaching their fundraising goals for the diocese. "I wanted students to understand there really is a 'universal' Church," said Sierra, who is the school's campus minister. "I also hoped this would help them see not everybody gets Mass as often as we do and we shouldn't take that for granted." Providentially, Sierra's daughter and son-in-law were recently stationed at Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks.

Thank you, students of Divine Child High School, for your incredible support of our missionary work in northern Alaska.

You are the light of Christ!



DIVINE
CHILD
HIGH SCHOOL



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Please remember my intentions: _____



Our Lady of the Arctic Snows

NOVENA FOR FAMILIES: December 30-January 7

You are invited to join us beginning December 30 on the feast of the Holy Family and the nine days following through January 7 to pray especially for families and for your intentions.

Heavenly Father, through the intercession of ***Our Lady of the Arctic Snows***, please bless my family with a shower of graces from your merciful heart. Give us strength to overcome our struggles and guide us to unite ourselves to one another in devotion to the Gospel. May the example of the Holy Family, with the aid of your Holy Spirit, protect us against all difficulties we may encounter and urge us to live truthful, compassionate and faith-filled lives. May the love that binds us only grow stronger as we walk closer with you. Please help us to actively encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life within our homes. Grant me and my family forgiveness for any sins we have committed and help us to forgive each other. Lord please grant a return to the church and sacraments for any of my family who have drifted away. During this special family novena to Mary under her title ***Our Lady of the Arctic Snows***, I humbly ask for this special

intention: _____ . Amen.

Our Father; Hail Mary; Glory Be to the Father.

Our Lady of the Arctic Snows, Pray For Us.



GIVING

End of Year

Will the New Tax Law Change the Way You Give?

•The charitable income tax deduction was preserved, and the amount a person is allowed to deduct was expanded for some.

•Fewer people will be subject to the federal estate tax than ever before.

•The tax advantages of giving from retirement plans and giving certain types of assets remain the same.

Leave a Legacy

Just as you would provide for your own personal family in your will, you can provide for your family of faith as well. Only with a will or trust are your wishes known and followed after death. As Christians, we know that charitable giving is not just a matter of tax deductions, but also a matter of sharing the many blessings God has bestowed upon us. Your thoughtfulness in this matter means so much for the continued growth of this mission diocese in the far northern reaches of Alaska.

If you wish to make a charitable bequest, please use the legal name, Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska. As an example, you may wish to use the wording similar to: "I give the sum of \$_____ to the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska, 1316 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709"; or "I leave all (or a portion) of the rest, residue and remainder of my property of every kind and character, including personal property and real estate and wheresoever the same may be situated, I give and devise to the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska ...".

If you already have a will, you can add an Addendum or Codicil with similar wording as stated above.

More Information:

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Recent tax law changes have left many with questions such as: How will the new law impact making my charitable gifts? What are now some of the most effective ways to make my gifts to the Diocese of Fairbanks this year and in the future?

The answers to these questions will depend on your individual circumstances, so it is always wise to discuss any giving ideas with your accountant or other advisors. Generally speaking, there are a number of positives in the law where charitable gifts are concerned:

For example: If you are age 70½ or older, you can make tax-free gifts directly to the diocese from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA). This is a tax-effective way to make charitable gifts—in any amount totaling up to \$100,000 per person per year—whether or not you deduct your gifts on your tax return. You can even count these gifts toward any amount you are required to withdraw each year.

Another example: Making gifts of stocks or mutual funds that have increased in value may be particularly attractive. When you give this way your tax deduction is based on the current value of the shares, not just the amount you paid for them. As an added benefit, no capital gains tax will be owed on the increased value. This also allows you to conserve your cash for other uses.



MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT



Coming Soon: The Diocese of Fairbanks' First Alaskan Grown Priest Seminarian Ben Doudna

Ben Doudna is in his third year of formation for the priesthood, and is currently serving his pastoral year at St. Nicholas Catholic Church in North Pole, Alaska. Once ordained, Ben will have the unique distinction of being our diocese's first-ever completely "homegrown" priest, since he was born and raised in Alaska. Between his duties at St. Nick's, he shared with the Alaskan Shepherd about his journey to the priesthood in his home diocese.

What most strongly influenced you as a Catholic growing up?

I grew up in a close-knit, homeschooled family. My father also runs a business out of our home, so we were always together. We were immersed in the faith—we learned about it through our schoolwork, prayed the rosary most days, and by the time I was 11, the family was attending daily Masses several times a week. In fact, the liturgy became a big part of my life as a teenager because I was often altar serving during the week. There was a strong movement of grace within our family.

How were you called to the priesthood?

I first felt the call when I was about eight and watching the priests renew their vows of obedience to the bishop at a Chrism Mass. Definitely, however, it was a retreat I went on my last semester of college that firmly put me on the path to being a priest in this diocese. I was at a cloistered Carmelite monastery to discern whether I was called to join their community, when a family with children came in to attend the Mass. I watched the parents trying to keep their children focused and it suddenly hit me what a battle good Catholics have to pass on our beautiful faith to their kids, especially in our culture. I knew then I needed to be on their side of the grille instead of cloistered, to help families as a diocesan priest.

How did growing up in Alaska influence your desire to be a priest here?

My father's business is selling freight sleds and a lot of his sales are to people in bush Alaska. So I always had a strong awareness that our diocese was vast and had a lot more churches than just around Fairbanks. I've also always liked being in the outdoors; even when I considered other paths as a teenager, I was drawn to "careers" like full-time trapping or being a bush pilot. Loving Alaska, being close to my family, and knowing we desperately needed more priests...it all played into my decision to serve here.

What advice would you have for a young man who thinks he might be called to the priesthood?

First, pray before a crucifix, often. That has kept me on track so many times. Talk to Jesus and he will let you know the next step. That's all you really need, even if you don't know the whole plan. Second, try seminary, even if you're not sure. If you honestly desire to give your whole life to God, he will honor your willingness to try it out and *will* tell you his plan for your life.

