“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”

The Father’s grace and glory appeared on that first Christmas morning. This season of Christmas invites us to enter deeply into this mystery of love. This mystery leads us into gratitude, into giving, and into love.

May Jesus always be your joy, your hope, your greatest desire. And may this Christmas and each day of the new year be directed by His guiding hand of love!

*Merry Christmas to all of you.*

*+Bishop Robert Gruss*

*Jn 1:14*
Pope calls Coptic Pope Tawadros to express condolences after Cairo attack

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis phoned Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria Dec. 12, expressing his prayers and condolences for the previous day’s terrorist attack at the Cairo cathedral that left 25 people dead.

“We are united in the blood of our martyrs,” the pope told the Orthodox patriarch, according to a Vatican statement.

The patriarch thanked Pope Francis for his closeness at such a sad time and asked his continued prayers for the Copts and for peace in Egypt, the statement said.

On a December weekend bloodied by terrorist attacks in Egypt and Turkey, Pope Francis condemned the violence and urged people to hold fast to their faith and renew their commitment to upholding basic human values.

After reciting the Angelus Dec. 11, Pope Francis offered prayers for the “victims of savage terrorist attacks” in Egypt, which also wounded dozens, and Dec. 10 in Istanbul, which killed close to 40 people, mainly police.

“The places are different, but the violence is the same,” Pope Francis said. In response to the “death and destruction,” there is only one response: “faith in God and unity in human and civil values.”

The pope also told the crowd in St. Peter’s Square that each day in prayer he is close to the people of the besieged city of Aleppo, Syria.

“We must not forget that Aleppo is a city and that there are people there: families, children, elderly, sick,” he said. “Unfortunately we have become used to the war and destruction, but we must not forget that Syria is a country full of history, culture and faith. We cannot allow this to be negated by war, which is a pile of abuse and falsity.”

Around the world, Christians reacted to the bombing at St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral complex with messages of condolences.

In Washington, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a statement, “We draw near to our Coptic brothers and sisters in prayer, sorrow and comfort. And we are confident in the healing power of our Lord Jesus Christ. The lives lost strengthen the faith of Christians everywhere and offer a testament to the great privilege of worshiping God in peace.”

He, too, referred to attacks in other countries.

Police arrive at the site of an explosion Dec. 10 in Istanbul, which killed close to 40 people, mainly police. (CNS photo/Murad Sezer, Reuters)
New Chief Finance Officer Hired

Rick Soulek, Rapid City, has been hired as the new Chief Finance Officer for the Diocese of Rapid City. He graduated from Wagner Community School, Wagner. Soulek earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of South Dakota, Vermillion, in 1986. Also at USD, he earned his MBA in 1991. Soulek has experience in finance, operations and management. He began serving the diocese Dec. 1. He and his wife, Lynn, are members of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Rapid City.

He takes over for Suzie Lambert who is leaving after 27 years. See page 16.
(WRC photo)

Married Sweethearts Mass & Dinner-Dance
Saturday, February 11, 2017
Terra Sancta Retreat Center, Rapid City

Mass 5:30 p.m.
Holy Cross Chapel.
Dinner and dance to follow.

Tickets $65 per couple

Registration deadline
Wednesday, January 29, 2017.

Sponsored by
Family Life Ministries
2101 City Springs Rd., Ste 200,
Rapid City, SD 57702

Contact Amy Julian
Director of Family Life Ministries,
605-712-5214 x236

Vatican Nativity Scene

The Nativity scene is pictured in St. Peter's Square during a Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the Vatican Dec. 9. The Christmas tree and Nativity scene are symbols of God’s love and hope, reminding us to contemplate the beauty of creation and welcome the marginalized, Pope Francis said. Baby Jesus, whose parents could find no decent shelter and had to flee persecution, is a reminder of the “painful experience” of so many migrants today, he said. “Nativity scenes all over the world are an invitation to make room in our life and society for God — hidden in the gaze of so many people who are living in need, poverty or suffering.” (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
It is with hearts of gratitude that we submit this snapshot of the past year at the retreat center. Based on use of the retreat center, programs and ministries of the diocese are flourishing. Your continued support of our mission providing hospitality to diocesan and parish spiritual renewal is essential and very appreciated. The staff and volunteers of the retreat center extend our thanks to all who have been our guests … We look forward to having you “Come Away and Rest in God” at Terra Sancta Retreat Center — soon and often!

“This (September) was the first time that our priests from the Diocese of Grand Island gathered at Terra Sancta for our annual retreat. It was a wonderful and blessed experience. Some of the blessings came in the form of the beauty of the area, the peacefulness of the chapel, the ability to walk around outdoors, the quality food, and the abundant hospitality offered to us by the staff of the retreat center. Our priests found this an ideal place to gather in community and to pray. We plan to return to Terra Sancta and are grateful that a quality retreat center such as this is located in our region.”

Fr. Jim Golka
Diocese of Grand Island (Nebraska) Annual Priest Retreat
Pastor, Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Grand Island

“Terra Sancta was a great place to host Young Adult events, for example — board game tournaments! Here we can get all the necessary ingredients: comfortable space, snacks and drinks, and most importantly, Jesus! Being so close to a chapel makes it easy to include Christ in all we do.”

Randy Vette
Director of Young Adult & Youth Ministries
Diocese of Rapid City

“Getting married and having our reception at Terra Sancta Retreat Center was a wonderful experience. After spending a few moments in awe of the beauty of Holy Cross Chapel, we were certain that it was where we wanted to say our vows. The sense of joy and peace that we experienced on our wedding day was incredible. We felt God’s presence as we stood under the crucifix and pledged to love and honor one another for all the days of our lives. The staff of Terra Sancta was extremely helpful and accommodating. They were involved throughout our planning process and helped us turn our ideas into reality. We were thrilled that we could have our wedding and reception in the same place and also have lodging options available for our guests. Terra Sancta will always be a special place to us.”

Jake & Jacqui Thiesse
Wedding & Reception
Billings, Montana

“Terra Sancta has been a great place to host Young Adult events, for example — board game tournaments! Here we can get all the necessary ingredients: comfortable space, snacks and drinks, and most importantly, Jesus! Being so close to a chapel makes it easy to include Christ in all we do.”

Randy Vette
Director of Young Adult & Youth Ministries
Diocese of Rapid City

“A Note from our Neighbors …
The Sisters of St. Martin Monastery

Five years ago, in preparation for the opening of Terra Sancta Retreat Center, several of us sisters rolled up our sleeves and washed walls, cupboards and lavatory sinks in December for the opening of Nazareth Hall and again in April, when the Cloister area opened. This included helping make innumerable beds to prepare for the first occupants. We were eager to know whether our renovated monastery would attract enough people to make all the work and financial outlay worthwhile. Today we rejoice that God has blessed TSRC beyond anyone’s imagining. It has truly fulfilled our hope that the legacy of prayer and care for others we received from the Benedictine sisters who came before us would continue to flourish in our old home. May God continue to bless its dedicated staff and all who come to be refreshed and nurtured at Terra Sancta.

*percentage based on event days (some days there were multiple events). There were 46 days of no events during the past fiscal year.

“This past year the Mulloy Family had their reunion at Terra Sancta. It was fantastic. The staff treated us so well, the food was excellent and for those who stayed at the center, the rooms were the best. The greatest part of the experience was being able to celebrate Mass in Holy Cross Chapel. My relatives kept talking about what a great place this was for a reunion.

Fr Michel Mulloy
Mulloy Family Reunion
McLaughlin, South Dakota

Photo courtesy of http://www.danielphotodesign.com/
“When we decided to get married, location was a big issue for us. We both were from different states, with family all over the world so it was incredibly difficult to pick a community to celebrate the sacrament of matrimony with all of our family. We talked and prayed on it for a long time! The Lord presented the opportunity for us to have our wedding at Terra Sancta and we could not have been more excited! Hands down, the staff was incredible. I am a full-time nursing student and Reid, my husband, was working full time managing the mill at a feedlot. Neither of us had the time to work out every detail of the wedding. The staff at Terra Sancta made it their mission to fill in the details we were missing and helped create a wedding we could have only dreamed about. Wherever one went around Terra Sancta, it was impossible not to feel the divine presence in motion.”

Annawynn & Reid Drury
Wedding & Reception
Eckley, Colorado

The wedding of our daughter Annawynn Blankenship Drury at Terra Sancta was blessed and perfect. With the need to join two families living all over the United States and Europe within the sacrament of matrimony, Annawynn sought a spiritual home in the Black Hills; we found this at Terra Sancta. Annawynn wanted the focus to be sacred and God-centered while allowing family from all over the world to be reunited and celebrate this wondrous event. I arrived from Stuttgart, Germany, and Annawynn from Oklahoma, we had five days to attend to the endless details that a wedding requires. The support and assistance provided by the staff were both service orientated and blessed, the presence of God felt in all the details. A welcome relief in the stressful preparations that a wedding demands. The staff’s attention to detail and needs were notable. With them we never lost sight of God or the sacrament in all Annawynn’s wedding details. The staff provided above and beyond service and it made for the most beautiful wedding. We will forever be grateful to the staff at Terra Sancta for caring so deeply that our sacred moment in time is just that ... holy, beautiful and blessed. P.S. The food was superb, the best BBQ beef brisket I have ever had.”

Shana LaLomia Blankenship
Mother of the Bride
Stuttgart, Germany

Annawynn is the granddaughter of Mary Ellen & Joe LaLomia, long-time parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Church. Mary Ellen, former diocesan librarian, and her husband Joe now reside in Florida.
BALTIMORE (CNS) — A new strategic plan adopted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 15 during its fall general assembly reflects the efforts of Pope Francis to establish a more merciful and accompanying church, said the archbishop who led the planning process. The plan, adopted by a vote of 199-4 with two abstentions, will govern the work of the conference and its committees from 2017 through 2020. It takes effect in January.

“We have adapted these priorities to coincide with the priorities of Pope Francis,” Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans and chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Priorities and Plans, told the assembled bishops before their vote. The plan incorporates the theme “Encountering the Mercy of Christ and Accompanying His People With Joy” in setting five priorities: evangelization, marriage and family life, human life and dignity, vocations, and religious freedom. In total, the five priorities identify more than 740 individual projects to accomplish during the next four years.

The plan, more than a year under discussion by the bishops through their committees, subcommittees and an ad hoc committee, stems in large part from Pope Francis’ message to the bishops when he visited the U.S. in 2015.

The 28-page document offers an overview of the plan and outlines several specific areas to address under each priority. Much of the plan was developed to support individuals of all ages as well as families as people go through daily life and to encourage actions that carry out what is described as “missionary discipleship.”

Another passage in the plan stresses that it charts “a path of hope for the people in need of a loving embrace as they face the challenges of the world.”

Further, the document states, “The USCCB strategic plan exists to serve the mission of evangelization entrusted in a particular way to each bishop; it is the tool the U.S. bishops rely upon to prioritize, organize, optimize and resource good works which will allow the conference to fulfill its mission.”

The strategic plan also mentions that the early projects being undertaken will help the bishops as they prepare a pastoral letter on race relations that is planned for the 50th anniversary of the death of civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in 2018.

In his presentation Nov. 14, Atlanta Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, as chairman of the USCCB Task Force to Promote Peace in Our Communities, urged his brother bishops to issue the statement on racism sooner than scheduled. The archbishop said such a statement would help address postelection tensions.
December 23, Friday

- Christmas Taizé: A celebration of Christmas through song, scripture, and silence. Begin at 7 p.m., Holy Cross Chapel, Terra Sancta.

December 27, Tuesday

- Christian Prayer Labyrinth: Enter into a deeper relationship with Christ using the indoor Christian prayer labyrinth at Terra Sancta. Open daily from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., December 27-30.

January 3, Tuesday

- WRC Deadline for submissions. Paper mailed Tuesday, January 17. 605-343-3541. LHallstrom@diorc.org or BBereth@diorc.org

January 6, Friday

- Bishop’s Mass and Luncheon: Has been canceled for the month of January.

- World Apostolate of Fatima: First Friday Mass at 5:30 p.m. with prayers and devotions. First Saturday, January 7, begins with prayers at 7:45 a.m. followed by 8 a.m. Mass and exposition. Both in Our Lady’s Chapel, Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Dr. Kopriva 605-343-6202.

January 11, Wednesday

- Taizé: Experience the sacred through song, silence, and scripture. Held at 7 p.m. in Holy Cross Chapel, Terra Sancta.

January 13, Friday

- Heart to Heart Retreat Weekend for the Engaged: For engaged couples to deepen their relationship with each other and God by exploring the Catholic Church’s vision of marriage. Attendance is required for couples doing marriage prep in the diocese. Ends January 15. Register at terrasancta.org/heart2heart/ or Amy 605-716-5214 x236.

January 16, Monday

- Chancery Office Closed: In observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

January 19, Thursday

- Beginning Experience, Separated, Divorced & Widowed Support Group — Coping with Life Alone: Nine-week, non-denominational group open to all Christian men and women who are hurting following a separation, divorce or death of a spouse. Begins at 7 p.m. at St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rapid City. Registration fee: $30, scholarship available. Family Life Ministries, 605-716-5214 x236.

January 20, Friday

- Refuel: For all involved in evangelization and catechesis. Speaker Jessi Kary, AO, national director of the Pro Sanctity Movement in the U.S. The movement is dedicated to spreading the universal call to holiness through the formation of internal holiness. Registration $65. Ends January 21. terrasancta.org/refuel2017.

January 28, Saturday

- Natural Family Planning: Seminar for engaged couples or anyone wanting to learn more about natural family planning. To be held at St. Therese the Little Flower, Rapid City. Preregistration required. Amy at Family Life Ministries, 605-716-5214 x236 or ajulian@diorc.org.

January 30, Monday

- “Heal your Grief” Bereavement Support Group: Eight-week, non-denominational support group for Christian adults grieving the loss of a loved one. Begins at 7 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. Janece Rieman, 605-343-5547, or Family Life Ministries, 605-716-5214 x236.

- Men in Black Basketball: Held at St. Thomas More High School from 5:30-8:30 p.m. The evening includes dinner and basketball games featuring students vs. faculty and high school boys vs. the priests of the diocese.

February 3, Friday

- Young Women’s Discernment Retreat: An opportunity to spend time with consecrated women and priests to learn more about discernment and vocations. For young women ages 16-30. Held at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. Ends February 5.


February 4, Saturday

- NPM Winter Meeting: Held at Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont. Featured speaker Father Michel Mullow will talk about the new Marriage Rite. Afternoon session features parishes demonstrating wedding appropriate psalms. Jackie Schnittgrund, jschnitt@rap.midco.net, if you or your choir would be interested in sharing a psalm.

Diocesan Masses for Life Matching Grant

Prayer is essential to ensuring a culture of life in South Dakota and throughout the nation. Again this year, the Diocesan Social Justice Commission will match total donations made for the Diocesan Masses for Life project, up to a total of $250. The Masses are coordinated by the Blessed Sacrament Parish Pro-Life Committee, but are offered daily at parishes throughout the diocese. This is the ninth year the diocese has matched funds for these Masses for the protection of all life. Please send donations to: Diocesan Masses for Life, c/o Mary Mitchell, 113 Berry Pine Rd., Rapid City, SD 57702. Donations must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2016.

Terra Sancta Retreat Center Highlights — January 2017

Jan 6-7: St. John the Evangelist (Ft. Pierre) Confirmation Retreat
Jan 13-15: Heart to Heart: Weekend for the Engaged
Jan 18-20: Youth and Family Services Staff Retreat
Jan 28: Bishop’s Mass and Luncheon
Jan 29-30: Social Justice Commission Workshop

“Terra Sancta offers a place of true healing, reconciliation and hope. God does his miracles with my clients when we’re here! Thanks for providing a place for us to meet.”

—Laura Longville, Walking in Grace, Inc.

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This past year, while I was in filling in at Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont, Deacon John and Joni Osnes invited me to be part of their Sunday adult faith formation class after Mass. They were studying “The Disciple as Steward” by Sharon Hueckel, which is a six-week, small group study based on the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship titled, “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response.”

One of the questions that was asked was, “Who am I?” As we went around the room, the answers to that question went something like this: I am an engineer, I am a mother, I am a dad, I am a teacher.

Jacque Osnes, a college student, surprised us all when she said, “First, I am a child of God. That is who I am, first and foremost a child of God.”

Wow, what a great answer. I wished I would have come up with that: “First, I am a child of God. That is who I am, first and foremost a child of God.”

The answer to the question of “Who am I?” is not about what we do or even what we possess or own, but the truth is found in answering another question: “Whose we are?”

Jacque was right; first and foremost we are children of God. Through our baptism in Christ we have been adopted as sons and daughters of God the Father; we become partakers of his divine nature and we are temples of the Holy Spirit (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1265).

What defines us a person is the fact that we have been made in the image and likeness of God, and because of that we are called to love, know and serve him.

Fr. Paul Hoesing, in his pamphlet on prayer, Have I Been With You? Personal Prayer For Young Disciples, says, “Our relationship gives us an identity, and our identity gives us a mission. What we do (our mission) flows from our identity (who we are), and who we are begins with our hearts in communion with Jesus.” Fr. Paul is emphasizing three key words in his description of who we are: Relationship — Identity — Mission (RIM).

Relationship — Identity — Mission is rooted in the vine and branches passage in Jn 15:4, “Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.”

However, we often get this order reversed by putting mission first, then identity and lastly relationship. When we put mission first, it is easy to lose our way and our identity because our focus and gaze is not on Christ, but rather on the mission and on ourselves.

When we get this upside down, the mission inevitably takes up all of our time and energy, and in the end we have no time for a personal relationship with Christ. It is much easier and less challenging for us to focus on the mission rather than on our relationship and identity with Jesus.

Let’s face it: being people of prayer is difficult because it requires us to be disciplined and to have a spirit of constancy in our lives when it comes to giving time to building and maintaining a personal intimacy with the Lord.

This is why in our diocesan priority plan prayer is our first core value. Bishop Robert Gruss indicates, “Prayer is listed first because it provides us a secure foundation” as we read in the story of the wise and foolish builders in Lk 6:46-49.

Since March, we have been focusing on the second lens of our stewardship initiative lively faith: prayer, study and formation. Both Msgr. Thomas Richter at Pastoral Ministry Days and Jim Beckman at the Stewardship Summit focused on RIM: Relationship — Identity — Mission in their talks.

Msgr. Richter describes RIM in the context of the experience of Jesus’ life: “Relationship with the Father for 30 years, then at Jesus’ baptism the Father proclaims his Identity, ‘This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.’ Then the Spirit sends Jesus on Mission.”

I encourage you to go to our diocesan webpage and listen to both Msgr. Richter’s and Jim Beckman’s talks on lively faith. (Msgr. Richter) http://rapidcitydiocese.org/pmd-2016-video-resources and (Jim Beckman)

Fr. Mark McCormick
Director
Office of Stewardship and Vocations
MMcCormick @diorc.org

With the Advent/Christmas seasons upon us, spend some time re-examining your relationship with Christ
On our need for the real Thomas More

Next month marks the 50th anniversary of the film, “A Man for All Seasons.” And if it’s impossible to imagine such a picture on such a theme winning Oscars today, then let’s be grateful that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences got it right by giving Fred Zinnemann’s splendid movie six of its awards in 1967 — when, reputedly, Audrey Hepburn lifted her eyes to heaven before announcing with obvious pleasure that this cinematic celebration of the witness and martyrdom of Sir Thomas More had beaten “The Sand Pebbles,” “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,” “Alfie,” and “The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming,” for Best Picture.

Intriguingly, though, “A Man for All Seasons” is a magnificent religious film — perhaps the best ever — despite its author’s stated intentions.

Robert Bolt’s introduction to his play, which led to the movie, makes it rather clear that author Bolt saw More less as a Catholic martyr than as an existential hero, an approach befitting the hot philosophical movement of the day (which was, of course, the Sixties). As Bolt put it:

“Thomas More … became for me a man with an adamantine sense of his own self. He knew where he began and left off, what areas of himself he could yield to the encroachments of his enemies, and what to the encroachments of those he loved. It was a substantial area in both cases, for he had a proper sense of fear and was a busy lover. Since he was a clever man and a great lawyer he was able to retire from those areas in wonderfully good order, but at last he was asked to retreat from that final area where he located his self. And there this supple, humorous, unassuming, and sophisticated person set like metal, was overtaken by an absolutely primitive rigor, and could no more be budged than a cliff …

“What attracted me was a person who could not be accused of any incapacity for life, who indeed seized life in great variety and almost greedy quantities, who nevertheless found something in himself without which life was valueless and when that was denied him was able to grasp his death.”

Yet this portrait of Thomas-More-as-Tudor-era-existentialist doesn’t quite convince, because Bolt, perhaps in spite of himself, gave us a different More in his drama and later in his screenplay – a More who “grasps” his death, not as an existential stalwart, a courageously autonomous “self,” but as a Catholic willing to die for the truth, which has grasped him as the love of God in Christ. Thus when More’s intellectually gifted daughter Margaret, having failed to argue him out of his refusal to countenance Henry VIII’s divorce and subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn, plays her final card and cries, “But in reason! Haven’t you done as much as God can reasonably want?”, More replies, haltingly, “Well … finally … it isn’t a matter of reason; finally it’s a matter of love.”

And not love of self, but love of God and love of the truth. For the God who is truth all the way through is also, St. John the Evangelist teaches us, love itself. And to be transformed by that love is to live in the truth — the truth that sets us free in the deepest and noblest meaning of human liberation.

There was something worthy and inspiring about certain aspects of existentialism: not the soured existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre, which quickly decomposed into nihilism, but the heroic existentialism of a Camus, who could not abide the anti-clerical Catholic progressives of his day and who sought a world in which we could be, as he put it, “neither victims nor executioners.” But it was Sartrean existentialism that won the day, at least insofar as one can trace a line from Sartre to contemporary narcissism, displayed today in everything from temper tantrums on university campuses by over-privileged and under-educated barbarians to voters across the Western world who seek relief from their grievances — some quite legitimate — in adherence to some pretty dreadful characters.

In this unhappy situation, we need the real Thomas More: the Thomas More who bore witness and ultimately “grasped his death,” not to vindicate his sense of self, but as the final and ultimate act of thanks for his having been granted, and saved, by truth itself, the Thrice-Holy God.
Whenever we have been at our best, as Christians, we have opened our churches as sanctuaries to the poor and the endangered. We have a long, proud history wherein refugees, homeless persons, immigrants facing deportation, and others who are endangered, take shelter inside our churches. If we believe what Jesus tells us about the Last Judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, this should serve us well when we stand before God at the end.

Unfortunately our churches have not always provided that same kind of sanctuary (safety and shelter) to those who are refugees, immigrants, and homeless in their relationship to God and our churches. There are millions of persons, today perhaps the majority within our nations, who are looking for a safe harbor in terms of sorting out their faith and their relationship to the church. Sadly, too often our rigid paradigms of orthodoxy, ecclesiology, ecumenism, liturgy, sacramental practice, and canon law, however well-intentioned, have made our churches places where no such sanctuary is offered and where the wide embrace practiced by Jesus is not mirrored. Instead, our churches are often harbors only for persons who are already safe, already comforted, already church-observing, already solid ecclesial citizens.

That was hardly the situation within Jesus’ own ministry. He was a safe sanctuary for everyone, religious and non-religious alike. While he didn’t ignore the committed religious persons around him, the Scribes and Pharisees, his ministry always reached out and included those whose religious practice was weak or non-existent. Moreover, he reached out especially to those whose moral lives where not in formal harmony with the religious practices of the time, those deemed as sinners. Significantly too, he did not ask for repentance from those deemed as sinners before he sat down at table with them. He set out no moral or ecclesial conditions as a prerequisite to meet or dine with him. Many repented after meeting and dining with him, but that repentance was never a pre-condition. In his person and in his ministry, Jesus did not discriminate. He offered a safe sanctuary for everyone.

We need today in our churches to challenge ourselves on this. From pastors, to parish councils, to pastoral teams, to diocesan regulators, to bishops’ conferences, to those responsible for applying canon and church law, to our own personal attitudes, we all need to ask: Are our churches places of sanctuary for those who are refugees, homeless, and poor ecclesi- sially? Do our pastoral practices mirror Jesus? Is our embrace as wide as that of Jesus?

These are not fanciful ideals. This is the gospel which we can easily lose sight of, for seemingly all the right reasons. I remember a Diocesan Synod within which I participated some twenty years ago. At one stage in the process we were divided in small groups and each group was given the question: What, before all else, should the church be saying to the world today?

The groups returned with their answers and everyone, every single group, proposed as its first priority, appropriate what the church should be saying to the world some moral or ecclesial challenge: We need to challenge the world in terms of justice! We need to challenge people to pray more! We need to speak again of sin! We need to challenge people about the importance of going to church! We need to stop the evil of abortion! All of these suggestions are good and important. But none of the groups dared say: We need to comfort the world!

Handel’s Messiah begins with that wonderful line from Is 40, “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.” That, I believe, is first task of religion. Challenge follows after that, but may not precede it. A mother first comforts her child by assuring it of her love and stilling its chaos. Only after that, in the safe shelter produced by that comfort, can she begin to offer it some hard challenges to grow beyond its own instinctual struggles.

People are swayed a lot by the perception they have of things. Within our churches today we can protest that we are being perceived unfairly by our culture, that is, as narrow, judgmental, hypocritical, and hateful. No doubt this is unfair, but we must have the courage to ask ourselves why this perception abounds, in the academy, in the media, and in the popular culture. Why aren’t we being perceived more as “a field hospital” for the wounded, rather than as places only for those who are already religiously solid and whose religious search is already completed.
Pope calls new cardinals to be agents of unity in divided world

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church’s 17 new cardinals must dedicate their lives to being ministers of forgiveness and reconciliation in a world — and sometimes a church — often marked by hostility and division, Pope Francis said. Even Catholics are not immune from “the virus of polarization and animosity,” the pope told the new cardinals, and “we need to take care lest such attitudes find a place in our hearts.” Creating 17 new cardinals from 14 nations Nov. 19, the pope said the College of Cardinals — and the Catholic Church itself — must be a sign for the world that differences of nationality, skin color, language and social class do not make people enemies, but brothers and sisters with different gifts to offer. Three of the new cardinals created during the prayer service in St. Peter’s Basilica were from the United States: Cardinals Blase J. Cupich of Chicago; Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the new Vatican office for laity, family and life; and Joseph W. Tobin, whom the pope asked to move from being archbishop of Indianapolis to archbishop of Newark, New Jersey. Only 16 of the new cardinals were present for the ceremony. The Vatican said 87-year-old Cardinal Sebastian Koto Khoarai, the retired bishop of Mohale’s Hoek, Lesotho, was created a cardinal although he was unable to travel to Rome.

The Chancery will be closed December 23 and 26 for Christmas & December 31 and January 2 for the Solemnity of Mary

Counting Cardinals

How the College of Cardinals will look after the Nov. 19 consistory

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region/Country</th>
<th>Electors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>US/Canada</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Oceania</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Countries with the most electors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>10</td>
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December is a time to reflect on what has happened and to look ahead with eyes of hope on what is yet to come.

The people of our diocese have been talking about Bishop Robert Gruss’s pastoral letter, “Through Him, With Him and In Him,” in study groups and adult formation sessions, hearing our priests speak about it in their homilies and praying for the work of the priority plan in shaping the future of the Church in our area — nudging us, perhaps, to get off our couches and to step into the mission field to accompany others on their journey into faith. Let’s take a look at the progress we are making in the diocese toward some of the goals included in the priority plan.

RECONCILIATION

Parishes are working on evaluating reconciliation in their parishes — what is working in their parish and what could help them to further foster reconciliation between individuals, families and communities. The reports and parish plans indicate that faith communities are responding to the challenge and mutual encouragement by sharing their experiences. Many parishes are several hours from the Chancery and lack the staff and resources needed to provide the kind of ongoing formation and encouragement that characterizes our vision. Many parishes are beginning to look at ways to promote reconciliation in their parishes — what is working and what needs to be implemented. This past spring Susan Sassoff, diocesan director of the Faith Formation Office, assembled a committee to help plan formation for catechists and parishioners in a distance learning format by January 1, 2017. Obviously, many of our small, rural parishes face several hurdles like the lack of internet and the opportunity to reach out with good Catholic content, both on-the-air and online. The committee is looking for ways to make the program FORMED.org more accessible to parishes through grants and partnerships. Diocesan staff has been looking at ways to make software available for parishioners living and praying in rural parishes. Faith on the Road continues to grow as well. This outreach team from the diocese has served in several parishes in our area — nudging us, perhaps, to get off our couches and to step into the mission field to accompany others on their journey into faith.

PASTORAL PRIORITY: VOCATIONS AND EVANGELIZATION

This month there was a list of Advent materials and resources posted on the diocesan website at rapidcitydiocese.org. Keep an eye out for future suggestions.

December 2016     WRC 13
[9x19]willingness to take positive action.”
[9x32]parish and community along with the
[9x45]ciliation in our personal life, family,
[9x85]can we be a better instrument of God's
[9x581]come.
[9x610]what has happened and to look
[9x652]By Teresa Spiess
[9x723]12 WRC     December 2016
[9x243]dicate that the Evenings of Reconciliation
[9x269]between individuals, families and com-
[9x296]working in their parish and what could
[9x309]reconciliation in their parishes — what is
[9x382]making in the diocese toward some of the
[9x422]sion field to accompany others on their
[9x435]off our couches and to step into the mis-
[9x448]in our area — nudging us, perhaps, to get
[9x461]plan in shaping the future of the Church
[9x514]In Him,” in study groups and adult for-
[9x527]toral letter, “Through Him, With Him and
[9x541]talking about Bishop Robert Gruss’s pas-
[21x203]For example, St. Joseph in Spearfish,
[21x322]Parishes are working on evaluating
[21x554]The people of our diocese have been
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We are called to love: Mercy by mercy

BY ANNE MCGUIRE

On a recent drive home from work, I pushed “play” on my audiobook to pass the time in traffic. It’s not an unusual activity for me, but what I didn’t anticipate was my own bittersweet heartbeat.

As the author shared stories of her visit to Africa, she spoke of one place preserved from the destitution she had witnessed elsewhere. One building in particular, though small and simple, was nicer than others she had seen. But the reason for its better conditions cuts to the heart: it was a hospice home for children.

In this home lived a little girl, with whom the author became fast friends the day they met, each blessing the other with the love they both needed. As the author continued reading, she shared her desire to do something to help the people she’d fallen in love with. It’s so easy to feel discouraged by the thought of all that is wrong in our world, to feel that our efforts wouldn’t really matter or make a difference. But the author’s reflections reminded me of the incredibly personal nature of large-scale issues. Our world’s tragedies aren’t faceless. They are the experiences of individual people who have faces, names, and their own stories. It’s hard to wrap our heads around large-scale suffering, but its personal nature means that anyone can make a concrete difference—person to person.

One of my favorite parts of Pope Francis’s official Jubilee of Mercy proclamation Misericordiae Vultus describes God’s mercy as “a concrete reality with which he reveals his love as of that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child. ... It gushes forth from the depths naturally, full of tenderness and compassion.”

Having been made in God’s image and likeness, we are called to love as he loves, to be moved as he is moved. Everything we believe and do as Catholics is rooted in this love. Just as God cherishes each person, so too, we are called to cherish one another throughout the year, let’s allow God to move our hearts with mercy for those who are marginalized, ignored, and especially those at risk of losing their lives. How does God want to work through you today?

(Anne McGuire is the Assistant Director for Education and Outreach for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities. Visit www.usccb.org/respectlife for more information.)

Atlantic Canada bishops address pastoral issues linked to assisted dying

By Philippe Vaillancourt

QUEBEC CITY (CNS) — In a pastoral letter addressing medical aid in dying, the Atlantic Episcopal Assembly says that “the pastoral care of souls cannot be reduced to norms for the reception of the sacraments or the celebration of funeral rites.”

The four-page letter, issued in late November, offers a “pastoral reflection” on the challenges the assisted-dying law, passed in June, poses to the Canadian Church.

“In the pastoral care of those who are contemplating medical assistance in dying, we must remember that the purpose of pastoral care is to communicate the compassion of Christ, his healing love and his mercy,” wrote the 10 Catholic bishops from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

“As people of faith, and ministers of God’s grace, we are called to entrust everyone, whatever their decisions may be, to the mercy of God. To one and all we wish to say that the pastoral care of souls cannot be reduced to norms for the reception of the sacraments or the celebration of funeral rites,” added the bishops. “Persons, and their families, who may be considering euthanasia or assisted suicide and who request the ministry of the church, need to be accompanied with dialogue and compassionate prayerful support. The fruit of such a pastoral encounter will shed light on complex pastoral situations and will indicate the most proper action to be taken including whether or not the celebration of sacraments is appropriate.”

However, the letter stresses that the church does not support medical aid in dying, but encourages the development and support of palliative care.

Earlier this fall, the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories said that those considering euthanasia or assisted suicide should not be granted last rites or funeral rites. Other Canadian bishops, such as Cardinal Gerald Lacroix of Quebec, and Archbishop Christian Lepine of Montreal, said they did not intend to refuse funerals.

Vaillancourt is editor of the Montreal-based Presence info.
Popular culture: ‘It’s not wrong, if it feels right!’

Many people today believe that moral judgments and values are merely expressions of sentiment. They deny that moral values are fixed or universally true, and instead, argue that we have changing emotions that may or may not correspond to the moral feelings of those around us.

This can play out in various real-life situations when people say, for example, “You can’t really know what it’s like to have an unexpected pregnancy if you haven’t been in the situation yourself, so you can’t tell me it’s wrong to get an abortion.” The morality of terminating a “problem pregnancy,” according to this view, depends on “being in the moment,” and experiencing the mother’s desperation, fears and sentiments.

Most of us, in fact, have probably granted our emotions leeway to trump our better moral judgment somewhere along the line. We can relate to stories of friends who make various solemn declarations like: “You don’t know how hard it’s been for me in this painful marriage, and you don’t understand how it feels to fall in love with somebody who really cares for you, so you can’t say it’s wrong for me to be in a relationship with someone else.”

Philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre notes that this emotive approach to moral thinking has gained broad societal approval: “To a large degree people now think, talk and act as if emotivism were true, no matter what their avowed theoretical standpoint may be. Emotivism has become embodied in our culture.” In light of our tendency to try to justify our misdeeds, it can be appealing to imagine that ethics are always “first person”—from my vantage point—and to suppose that no one else can identify moral obligations regarding another’s situation. “How do you feel about it?” becomes the guiding principle, and leads to the view that morals are relative, context dependent, and subject to emotional confirmation. Reducing ethics to feelings, however, is a seriously deficient approach to thinking about right and wrong. It also, in the final analysis, doesn’t work.

Imagine what would happen to the practice of medicine if physicians could treat patients only if they personally experienced and felt the diseases their patients had. Consider the miscarriage of justice that would occur if judges ruled only when they could feel and experience everything the perpetrator felt and experienced at the time the crimes were committed, and had to decide cases in line with those feelings. Such sentimentalism completely misses the objective foundations and concerns of morality.

Those objective foundations begin with the recognition that all men and women have a shared human nature, so whatever is always morally bad for one of us will also be bad for any of us. If it is immoral for me to steal the electronics out of your house, it will likewise be wrong for you to rob me or anyone else; and it will be equally wrong for the president of the United States or the pope to do so. If I rob others, it is objectively bad because it harms others by depriving them of their goods, and it transforms me into a thief, the kind of person who cheapens his humanity and degrades his integrity by stealing the goods of others. Even those who believe in a “feelings-based” morality are quick to decry certain actions as always wrong, at least when it comes to their own vehicles and homes being plundered, irrespective of whether the robbers might have their own moral sentiments favoring the practice.

To think clearly about morality, we need to start by acknowledging that certain moral duties do not depend on context or emotion, but are universally binding on us, having even a “commandment-like” quality.
Suzie,
We appreciate your hard work, dedication and generous spirit. We wish you the best in your future endeavors,

—Bishop Robert D. Gruss
& the Chancery Staff
Rapid City Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Outlet in Box Elder, Dec. 1. Store manager Andrew Shepard used giant gold scissors for the occasion. (WRC story and photo by Laurie Hallstrom)

Outlet store offers shopping by the pound

A Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony was held Dec. 1, for the St. Vincent de Paul Conference Thrift Outlet in Box Elder. Following the success of the SVDP Thrift Store in Spearfish, the society opened the outlet store. The location is 640 Box Elder Rd. W., Box Elder. (Coming from Rapid City, at I-90 exit 63, take the first left turn, about one block from the interstate.)

The outlet store is unique place to shop because everything, except furniture and mattresses, is sold by the pound. According to JoBeth Meyer, executive director for Store Development, opening day prices for clothing and other goods were 99-cents per pound. The regular rate is $1.49. Check Facebook for specials.

The store carries low cost mattresses are individually priced. The mattresses are stripped to the springs and recovered in Chicago, Ill; however, the thrift outlet cannot accept mattresses as donations in this area. The mattresses and box springs range from $150 to $249 for double pillow top set. Full sets are $200, Queen sets $250 and King sets $395, and bed frames start at $39.95. Meyer said, “For the month of December, mattresses are 25 percent off these low prices to celebrate the Christmas Season and our grand opening. Delivery is available for $20 extra.”

The store is accepting donations of clothing and household items. Since there is no washer on site, the store personnel appreciate having clothes washed before donating. To have furniture or large items picked up call 605-791-0707. Store hours 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Sunday. Also, the store does not accept electronics more than five-years old. Video tapes, CDs, DVDs and records go for 50 cents each. Donations of canned and boxed foods are given out on Vincentian home visits to people in need.

The thrift outlet operates with a combination of paid workers and volunteers. It has created employment opportunities in Box Elder. Proceeds from the Spearfish and Box Elder stores help fund SVDP outreach.

“We are very close to having given out $100,000 of assistance since May 2016 between the three conferences (located at Rapid City Cathedral, Piedmont and Spearfish-Belle Fourche-Newell.) Each conference does fundraising and receives cash donations as well as funds from the stores. The need seems to be especially great this holiday season and we are in need of both cash donations and goods,” said Meyer.

She said the SVDP stores are a great place to use conference vouchers. “The conferences will help a friend with a voucher to get the household items and clothing they need. Because our prices are so low a friend can get a lot for even just $25,” she said.

There are plans to open more stores in the area.
Vucurevich Foundation community impact recognized

The Grant Professionals Association (GPA) presented its international Pioneer Award to the John T. Vucurevich Foundation, Rapid City, on Nov. 11 at the annual GPA conference in Atlanta, Ga.

The Pioneer Award recognizes the visionary contributions in grant making by a grant-maker that positively impacts their communities and the field of grantsmanship while improving the way grant professionals do their work.

The Vucurevich Foundation uses its public profile and $5 million in annual funding to create a shared sense of responsibility among non-profits, institutions, local governments, and philanthropists to promote long-term, sustainable change in western South Dakota, according to GPA. The Rapid City-based foundation was nominated for the award by Catholic Social Services of Rapid City.

(At right) Vucurevich Foundation President Sandy Diegel with the GPA Pioneer Award. She is standing in front of a portrait of the late John T. Vucurevich. (Courtesy photo)
We are all made in the image of God

BY DEACON MARLON LENEAEUHG
DIRECTOR OF NATIVE MINISTRIES

The month of December marks the 126th anniversary of the Wounded Knee Massacre. A time in history when indigenous people were considered a hindrance to progress in the “wild west.” In the 1800s the real motivation for the government treaties and attempts to make peace were ploys to take the land. The native people were considered trouble makers who stood in the way of making money in the Dakotas — especially panning for gold.

Once again a century and a quarter later, we witness native peoples blocking progress. On the Standing Rock Reservation, we have seen a standoff between energy companies, which want to transport oil, and the native people and sympathizers who want to protect the environment, especially the right to clean water. The native people still feel the loss of the lands — their source of self-sufficiency. The news media decides what we hear about the parties involved.

I know there are good people on both sides and they are judged with all the rest. Guilty by association, I guess. The good ones are the true peace makers, who live out the beatitudes and desire a peaceful resolution. They struggle with the violence and the cruel words.

There are white people and native people on both sides of this conflict. I wonder what Jesus’s position would be on the issue. Jesus sought fairness in all dealings. What is hard about this issue is that it is causing good Christian folks to speak badly about one another. Friends have become enemies and people have been hurt in many ways.

When this is all over, we once again will have to live with each other, pass each other on the street and allow our children to play together. Each of us, no matter how poor or wealthy, big or tall, short or stocky, are made in the image and likeness of God and in the eyes of God we are equal, no one is greater than another in the Kingdom of Heaven. We will be judged by the way we treat one another.

Job Opportunity

Diocese of Rapid City: Due to continued growth, applications are being accepted for a full time Accounting Clerk position in the Parish Financial Services Accounting Office. Duties include providing bookkeeping services to parishes in the diocese. Applicants should possess high level of accuracy and attention to details. Education, training, and/or experience in the accounting field are desired. Interested individuals should submit a letter of application and a resume to:
Accounting Manager, PO Box 678, Rapid City SD 57709-0678
www.rapidcitydiocese.org/accounting-clerk/. Questions? Please call Linda Stepanek at 605-343-3541 or email lstepanek@diorc.org

The 2017 Kateri Tekakwitha Conference

to be held in Rapid City, July 19-23, is soliciting donations and memorials to defray conference expenses.

To donate, contact the conference treasurer, Deacon Marlon Leneaugh at 605-343-3541 or mleneaughsr@diorc.org

In the November memorials for the conference, in memory of Eva Witt, the last daughter listed should have been Wanda Standing Bear.

Statue of St. Kateri Tekakwitha at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual, Rapid City

Merry Christmas
from the Mustard Seed
Catholic Store

Shop our Christmas and Advent Clearance Sale!
Up to 75% off select items: gift items, nativity sets, books, ornaments

708 Main Street • Rapid City, SD • 605-348-5228

Job Opportunity
Stand Aside, Superheroes

No web slinging Spiderman, karate chopping Turtles, or “look up in the sky,” Metropolis’ man of steel for Bishop Gracen Gill, who is 5 years old. He has a different plan for saving people in peril. His parents are Bryan and Kristen Gill. According to his mother, “He has aspirations of someday being a ‘Father.’ He loves to play Mass at home.” He has a family role model — his uncle is Father Mark Horn — currently studying in Rome.

Gracen is a member of the Holy Cross Parish, Timber Lake. This photo was taken at a local Halloween carnival put on by the area 4-H groups on Oct. 30. Watch out, Gotham’s caped crusader.

(Courtesy photo)
**Jubilee Year of Mercy concludes**

Story and Photos by Laurie Hallstrom

The final diocesan pilgrimage for the Jubilee Year of Mercy was hosted by the parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Church, Nov. 19, in Sturgis.

The day began with adoration. Susan Safford, director of the diocesan Office of Faith Formation led a *Lectio Divina* reflection for participants. Priests were available throughout the day for the sacrament of reconciliation. In the afternoon, the keynote speaker, Dr. Bryan Thatcher of Tampa, Fla., spoke on “Divine Mercy.” He is the founder of the Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy.

He said 25 years ago, he was a successful gastroenterologist, but his personal life hit bottom. During this time of tribulation, a friend gave him a copy of the “Diary of St. Faustina.”

The Polish nun, a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, was canonized in 2000. The familiar image of Divine Mercy was painted under her guidance. She is known for spreading devotion to Jesus’ divine mercy.

“The Lord doesn’t limit the number of times we can be forgiven,” Dr. Thatcher said. “We will never be able to understand divine mercy, we just have to accept it.” He urged everyone to go to confession.

The day concluded with Mass celebrated by Fr. Timothy Castor and concelebrated by Fr. John Paul Trask.

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**ICC parishioners trying to preserve historic building**

By Laurie Hallstrom

Immaculate Conception Church, also known at the old cathedral, is deteriorating. The cornerstone for the building was laid in 1930 — the same year the see was moved from Lead to Rapid City. The sandstone building served as the cathedral for the Diocese of Rapid City until the early 1960s when the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was built. It has been used in recent years as a church for Latin Mass of the Roman Rite in the previous form. In 1975, the church building was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Father Christopher Hathaway, FSSP, has appointed a building committee for the ICC restoration project. The committee members are consulting experts in historic church restoration as well as the Diocesan Building Commission.

The church has a new roof. According to Jean Carlson, a committee member, “After the water problems were alleviated at ICC, it left significant damage to the plaster throughout the whole interior of the church.”

The restoration is planned in three phases; first update electric knob and tube wiring and new plaster. Second, the Romanesque hand-crafted altar will be cleaned and enhanced with gold and other colors. The carving of the Last Supper on the front of the altar will be painted. Third, deteriorating side altars will be replaced.

Additional updates will include repainting the walls and replacing the sanctuary floor with Carrera marble.

The committee is still consulting experts and gathering bids for the project.

(Above) Water damage has caused cracks to form in the plaster walls, murals, around stained glass windows and in the ceiling. *(WRC photo)* *(Below)* The church viewed from the south side. *(WRC file photo)*
**Catholic Daughters announce 2017 Education Contest**

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas announce the 2017 National Education Contest. The themes of the contest (choose one) “Whatever you do for the least of my brethren, you do for me” Mt 25:40, or “Helping the needy where I live.”

**Divisions and Categories:** 
*Note Students may be Catholic and Non-Catholic*

- Division 1—Grades 4-5 Essay, Poetry, Art, Computer Art
- Division 2—Grades 6-8 Essay, Poetry, Art, Computer Art, Music, Photography
- Division 3—Grades 9-12 Essay, Poetry, Art, Computer Art, Music, Photography
- Division 4—Adult CDA Poetry, Art, Computer Art, Photography

Contestants may enter a category only once, but may submit entries in multiple categories. All entries must be received by the local court deadline of Feb. 15, 2017. Interested applicants may contact the Court St. Rita #916 Contest Chairperson for the particular rules in the categories listed above, and for the Contest Entry Form.

The winning entry for each category in each division (either theme, not both) will be sent to the State Contest Chairperson and the winning entries at the state level will be forwarded to the National Education Contest Chairperson.

There is a monetary award for each first place winner at the local and state level in each division and a first $100, second $50 and third $25 place award at the national level in each division.

**For an entry form:**
Patricia McDowell, Court St. Rita #916 Contest Chairperson  
605-787-0638 or patmcdowell44@gmail.com

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**Contingency Board welcomes new members**

The Catholic Parish Association Contingency Fund, Inc. met on November 11 in Rapid City. *(Front row)* Brett Hanson, Fr. Kevin Achbach and Jim Waterbury. *(Back row)* Rick Soulek, the new diocesan Chief Finance Officer with board members Fr. Andrzej Wyrostek and Fr. Timothy Castor. Board member Mike Lyons from Lemmon joined the meeting by telephone. Hanson, Fr. Achbach and Waterbury are new to the board.

The Catholic Parish Association Contingency Fund is a centrally managed pool of funds created by parishes in the diocese for the benefit of all parishes in the diocese. Currently, parish deposits earn 1.5 percent interest on their savings and parish loans are charged 3.5 percent interest. Any parish deposits not loaned to other parishes are invested by First Interstate Wealth Management.

By pooling their funds, parishes earn a greater amount of interest on their savings than most savings accounts while allowing their fellow parishes to pay less interest on their loans than from outside sources. “The Catholic Parish Association Contingency Fund allows parishes to help parishes in a win-win situation,” said Soulek. *(Courtesy photo)*

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**Terra Sancta offers special Rates**

Come away and rest in God this Advent and Christmas season at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. Stay at the retreat center now through Dec. 31 for just $75 per night per room, (two queen size beds and private bath) including tax. Make your reservation on-line at [http://terrasancta.org/christmas-lodging-2016/](http://terrasancta.org/christmas-lodging-2016/) or call 605-716-0925.

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**A Safe Environment for Children and Young People**

The Catholic Diocese of Rapid City is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and young people. To report allegations of sexual abuse by church personnel, contact the Victim Assistance coordinator, Barbara Scherr. To ensure confidentiality in her outreach to victims, she can be contacted privately at 1-605-209-3418 (cell). Her phone has caller ID and messaging features. All information will be treated confidentially. Alleged victims are advised of their right to report alleged abuse to civil authorities.

*In accordance with diocesan policy, all allegations of sexual misconduct involving children or young people and priests, deacons, lay employees, or volunteers serving the Diocese of Rapid City will be investigated.*

The diocesan sexual misconduct policy and the code of conduct are posted on the diocesan website at [www.rapidcitydiocese.org](http://www.rapidcitydiocese.org).
On December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City, 75 people from three local parishes participated in the Marian consecration, consecrating themselves to Jesus through Mary, our Blessed Mother. During the Mass, Bishop Robert Gruss led the group in the renewal of baptismal promises and the prayer of consecration. The participants were blessed with holy water from the Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine in Lourdes, France.

“For 33 Days, we individually read and were in heart pondering prayer as we reflected on the lives of four Marian saints: St. Louis de Montfort, Maximilian Kolbe, Mother Teresa, and Pope John Paul II from the book, “33 Days to Morning Glory,” by Fr. Michael Gaitley,” said Sherry Braun, a Cathedral parishioner. “We also met weekly to share in a video and small group discussion as we prepared for consecration.”

At the end of the consecration, members of the group placed roses in vases before the altar to signify offering themselves. Tim Shull, St. Therese Church; Patrick Flanigan, Cathedral; and Scott Smallwood, Blessed Sacrament; are pictured. (WRC photo)

“33 Days to Morning Glory” can be done either individually as a self-guided retreat or in a group.

For information on this Marian consecration contact Braun at 605-341-3712 or email, sherry_lrb@peoplepc.com.

Obituary

Fr. Thomas J. Tierney, SJ, 92, served at Hot Springs VA Hospital

Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Antonio, Texas. Fr. Tom had for a long time expressed a desire to devote himself to chaplaincy work. In 1976-77, he participated in Clinical-Pastoral Training at St. Elizabeth, a large psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C. This proved to be a turning point in his ministry.

He spent the next thirty-one years (1977-2008) as a chaplain at the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Hot Springs. When he moved to Hot Springs to take on the chaplaincy at the VA hospital there, he was expected to find his own living arrangements. Appalled by the high rents, he decided to live in a mobile home. He had simple needs and that suited him fine. A man who loved the outdoors, he enjoyed the opportunities that South Dakota offered for hunting and golf, as well as swimming in the hot springs. When he retired from chaplaincy, he remained active as long as he could, living at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Hot Springs and helping with the pastoral ministry there. In 2013, he moved to the St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion in Grand Coteau, La.

Mass of Christian burial was held Dec. 17 at St. Charles College Chapel Grand Coteau, La. Burial is in Jesuit Cemetery, St. Charles College.

STM Legacy Brick Memorial

The goal of Campus Ministry is to connect students to Jesus and to the larger community of believers, to help students grow in faith and their life of prayer, to equip them for living and sharing their faith, teaching them to serve one another in love, and to glorify God with their lives.

We invite you to join the mission of Campus Ministry with a personalized brick. Bricks are available for a $250 donation. Each brick will be personalized to your specifications. Your donation and personalized brick will be a permanent part of our STM Legacy Brick Memorial. Your sponsorship of a brick will allow our ministry to continue to grow to meet the needs of our students.

A Mass will be celebrated every month for the intentions for those whose names are inscribed in the STM Legacy Brick Memorial. In addition during each November when the church remembers all the deceased, an outdoor Mass will be offered on the memorial grounds.

For a West River Catholic advertising rate sheet contact Laurie at lhallstrom@diorc.org or phone 605-343-3541.

To purchase a brick visit www.RCCSS.org/campusministry

Born to Eternal Life

This is an addition to the list printed in the November West River Catholic — family and friends we have lost from Oct. 1, 2015, to Sept. 30, 2016. Names and dates provided by parishes.

Lower Brule, St. Mary

10/10/15 Mary Jane Bad Horse (Powell) 1/12/16 Helen Smith
11/19/15 Gyla Jandreau 1/20/16 Jamie Crazy Bull
12/18/15 Maza Wakntou Grass Rope 3/20/16 Scott Jones (Ta Sunke Wankapi)
Outreach Team visits STM high school

Jenny Scherr, Piedmont; Randy Vette, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry; Jake Davis, Rapid City; and Father Mark McCormick, director of Vocations and Stewardship; pose for a photo before lunch with students at St. Thomas More High school, December 8. The four are part of the Outreach Team focused on entering into the lives of high school students and loving them where they are at.

“The goal is to build genuine relationships that will allow us to mentor young people in the faith by simply being a presence,” explained Vette. “This idea for the team came from a desire to work with high school students in the best, most fruitful way possible. Jesus showed us how; we simply desire to imitate Christ and his love. He didn’t wait for us to come to him, but first took on flesh and came to be with us. We believe that is the model youth ministry should follow. There is great potential with this new ministry and a lot of students we can be a joyful witness to.”

After a weekend of attending basketball games, the team went back to the school to have lunch on December 14.

Corporal Works of Mercy

In November, the youth group at St. Francis of Assisi, Sturgis, had a winter clothing drive and went to downtown Rapid City on a “Clothe the Naked” Mission Trip. All the clothing went to the Cornerstone Mission to help those in need. Youth group members are: (Back row) Jacob West, Charlie Casteel, John Fischer, Josh West, and Stevie Fischer. (Middle row) Megan Andersen, Tayghen McGrath, Molly Buchholz, Ainsley Sabers, Emily Pi, Nate Andersen, Tegan Thomson, Brett Konst, Blane Breth, Jaedra Woldt, and Reegin Kehn. (Front row) Kiara Brown, Kenzie Krcl, Mairen McGrath, and Maggie Reeve.

The “Clothe the Naked” Committee: Reegin Kehn-chair, Kenzie Krcl and Jaedra Woldt organized the drive, spoke to the parish and collected the donations. (Courtesy photo)

Movie Review: Rogue One: A Star Wars Story

By John Mulderig


Interstellar derring-do is once again the order of the day as this latest film in the series provides a rousing prequel to writer-director George Lucas’ 1977 original, subsequently dubbed “Episode IV — A New Hope.”

“A New Worry” might be an apt subtitle for “Rogue One” since its plot is driven by the fact that the evil Empire — served, most prominently, by Grand Moff Tarkin (a computer-generated projection of the late Peter Cushing) and Orson Krennic (Ben Mendelsohn) — is on the verge of deploying a game-changing new weapon, the Death Star.

With its potential to wipe out entire planets, the Death Star could doom the efforts of the gallant Rebel Alliance, headed by Mon Mothma (Genevieve O’Reilly), to resist subjugation.

This crisis draws the movie’s main character, Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones), to center stage. As the daughter of Galen Erso (Mads Mikkelsen), the brilliant scientist who unwillingly developed the technology behind the Death Star while being held captive, she has reason to believe that the armament can be sabotaged from within.

To prove this, she’ll need the help of intrepid Alliance officer Capt. Cassian Andor (Diego Luna) as well as that of his mechanical sidekick, K-2SO (Alan Tudyk). An amusingly straight-talking android, K-2SO is the source of most of the movie’s wry comic relief.

In crafting an exciting epic, director Gareth Edwards keeps the mayhem inherent in his story of armed conflict virtually bloodless. And the script, by Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy, celebrates altruism while also briefly tackling the morality of obeying some military orders.

But the ambiguous nature of the spiritual “Force” cultivated primarily, in this installment, by blind Buddhist-style monk Chirrut Imwe (Donnie Yen) may be a source of concern for the parents of some teens. Since the Force can be interpreted in any number of ways, including a vaguely Christian one — the famous blessing it inspires having an almost liturgical ring to it — youngsters may need guidance to arrive at sound conclusions.

For all others, “Rogue One” offers old-fashioned entertainment in the best sense: an engaging showdown between plucky goodness and elegant villainy with a bit of delightfully innocent romance thrown in for good measure.

The film contains frequent but thoroughly stylized combat violence, religious elements requiring mature discernment and some frightening images including a scene leading up to mental torture. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. (CNS photo/Lucasfilm Ltd.)

Believe (Freestyle)

Evangelical Christian faith hovers in the background of this holiday-themed drama about a cash-strapped factory owner (Ryan O’Quinn) facing both the collapse of his business and the end of the annual Christmas fair his family has long sponsored in his hometown. As he struggles to decide whether to sell his company to save the festival — from which many of his neighbors make a substantial profit, though he puts it on for free — he draws support from his best friend since childhood (Shawnee Smith) and from a duo of newfound acquaintances: an impoverished, ailing mother (Danielle Nicolet) and her indefatigably cheerful little boy (Issac Ryan Brown). As its Job-like protagonist doggedly holds out for a Capraesque happy ending, writer-director Billy Dickson’s film mostly avoids preachiness and keeps the imperative of its title Bible-based but non-denominational. Though not as rose-colored in its outlook as some religiously-inspired projects — O’Quinn’s character doesn’t shy away from confrontation — the movie, which is suitable for most age groups, lacks polish. Some nonlethal violence, a single cuss term. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.