Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Easter Greetings. As the apostles found out, the empty tomb was not the end, but the fulfillment of a promise, the beginning of something far beyond their imagination. And like them, the power of this life giving and saving event propels us into the world with a new sense of who we are and to what we are called to proclaim and give witness.

How blessed we are! “Christ rose triumphantly from the grave.” At the core of this miracle stands a God who embraces a fragile world with a love so deep, a love so undeserved, but so freely offered and given. May this love bring about peace in our torn world.

My prayers remain with you and your families as we celebrate this Easter joy. May Jesus set your hearts afire with His love so that we all become bearers of Christ’s radiant glory, filling the world with this new life.

Peace and love in Christ,
+Bishop Robert Gruss

The Resurrection is depicted in a stained-glass window at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Greenlawn, N.Y. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)
‘What would happen if parents began teaching the psalms to their little ones?’

Last month I was in Davenport, Iowa, my former diocese, to give a four-night Parish Renewal on Stewardship at St. Anthony Catholic Church, the oldest parish in the Diocese of Davenport. It was a great joy to be back amongst many people whom I have come to know through my years of ministry in that diocese. Having never given a parish renewal before, I was not sure what to expect. Many questions came to my mind: Would people show up? How would they hear my message? Is a prophet welcome in his native place? Any concerns that I had quickly went by the wayside. My message was well received and I deeply enjoyed the experience.

But my experience went beyond just giving one-hour talks on various aspects of stewardship. One afternoon, a woman from the church who faithfully attended each evening talk, as well as the talks that I gave following the daily Mass, invited me to come and bless her office. She was a local chiropractor and her office was not far from the church. When I showed up at her office, I also found her mother and her almost five-year-old nephew. They were not unfamiliar to me because they had all been at Mass on Sunday. But this gave me an opportunity to get to know them a little better.

What I experienced was beautiful and deeply moving. The little boy was very active, but a little shy in my presence, at least for a little while. It didn’t take him long to warm up to me. The next thing I experienced was something unexpected. His aunt asked him to pray with me the 23rd Psalm. As a four-year-old, this little boy could not yet read, but he began to recite Psalm 23 for me by heart. Remarkable! I was blown away. During the visit, he later recited Psalm 91 for me as well. But if that was not enough, there was more.

Prior to me leaving his aunt’s chiropractic office to go next door for a cup of coffee at his mother’s café, this little boy was asked to pray a prayer of blessing over me from his heart. Out of his mouth came this beautiful extemporaneous prayer, asking God to bless the bishop with many blessings and to grant me a safe trip home. Again, I was deeply moved, even to tears. I have never experienced anything like this before.

It revealed to me not only his faith, but the faith of the parents, the aunt and the grandmother. They were intentional about working with this child and sharing with him the importance of prayer and a relationship with Jesus.

As I reflected upon this experience, it reminded me of two core values in the Diocesan Priority Plan — Prayer and Family. The first Core Value is prayer, which is the very foundation of the Catholic life. “As the primary educators of their children in the faith, it is imperative that parents teach their children how to engage in a relationship with Jesus through prayer. It is the one way in which they will build a strong and secure foundation, leading to an intimacy with the Lord based on faith and trust. The active engagement of family prayer is also what builds strong, healthy marriages and families. Daily family prayer is what best models the life of the Holy Family. It should be the practice of every Christian family.” (Through Him, With Him, and In Him – A Spiritual Guide to the Diocesan Priority Plan, pg. 32).

This family was living out this Core Value of Prayer, but also the Core Value of Family. It was clear that they had created the “domestic church,” a place where we first learn about who God is and how we encounter him in prayer; a place where Christ is encountered within a community, an individual Christian family where each member plays a role in the mission of evangelization. We evangelize when we share faith, teach faith and live faith. The Christian family is where this begins and should continue, lifelong” (Through Him, With Him, and In Him – A Spiritual Guide to the Diocesan Priority Plan, pg. 51).

There is no doubt that these family members took seriously their role in the evangelization of their little four-year-old. I found myself thinking what society would be like if this was the norm rather than the exception. Imagine what would happen if parents began teaching the psalms to their little ones; if they began teaching them how to pray from their heart at this early age. This little boy was no doubt very smart, but his gifts for prayer came alive and were developed because family members took the time to share their faith and teach him the importance of God in his life.

To learn more about the Core Values which provide the basis for living an authentic Catholic way of life, read and reflect upon the Spiritual Guide to the Diocesan Priority Plan – Through Him, With Him, and In Him.

(Egypt’s attacks won’t stop pope’s visit, says Vatican official)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Despite recent and repeated terrorist attacks against Egypt’s minority Christian communities, Pope Francis will not cancel his visit to Egypt. “The pope’s trip to Egypt proceeds as scheduled,” Greg Burke, Vatican spokesman, told Catholic News Service by email April 10. The pope is scheduled to meet governmental and inter-faith leaders during an April 28-29 visit to Cairo. “Egyptians are looking forward to Pope Francis’ visit, although the atmosphere at present is heavy,” Father Rafic Grieche, spokesman for the Egyptian bishops, told CNS April 10, the day after the attacks. “The pope’s mission is to be beside his brothers at the time of difficulty. Now is the real time that he can bring peace and hope to the Egyptian people as a whole and to the Christians of the East, in particular,” Father Grieche added. He said people were uneasy entering churches with metal detectors and other security measures. “It’s not like going to a normal church. But we need these measures to keep people safe,” he said.

(Pictured) A veiled Egyptian woman stands in front of a poster of Pope Francis during an April 6 news conference ahead of the pope’s visit in Cairo. Despite recent and repeated terrorist attacks against Egypt’s minority Christian communities, Pope Francis will not cancel his April 28-29 visit to Cairo.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18, Tuesday</td>
<td>8 a.m. Staff Mass, Terra Sancta</td>
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<td>8:30 a.m. All Staff Meeting, Terra Sancta</td>
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<td>April 19, Wednesday</td>
<td>5:15 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Francis, Sturgis</td>
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<td>6:15 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Francis, Sturgis</td>
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<td>April 20, Thursday</td>
<td>7 a.m. Mass at Cathedral</td>
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<td>9 a.m. Chancery Re-Envisioning Meeting, Terra Sancta</td>
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<td>4 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Mary, Newell</td>
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<td>5 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Mary, Newell</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21, Friday</td>
<td>5 p.m. CT S.D. KC Convention Clergy Mass/Banquet, Sioux Falls</td>
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<td>April 22, Saturday</td>
<td>4:30 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. John, New Underwood</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. John, New Underwood</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23, Sunday</td>
<td>9:30 a.m. CT Pre-Confirmation Meeting, Christ the King, Presho</td>
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<td>10:30 a.m. CT Confirmation Mass, Christ the King, Presho</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24, Monday</td>
<td>4 p.m. Rapid City Catholic School System Board Meeting/Staff Banquet, Terra Sancta</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25, Tuesday</td>
<td>7 a.m. Mass at Cathedral</td>
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<td>9:30 a.m. Live Interview with Real Presence Radio</td>
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<td>11 a.m. Catholic Social Services Staff/Board Retreat/Meeting, Terra Sancta</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26, Wednesday</td>
<td>11 a.m. Diocesan Staff Appreciation Mass/Luncheon, Terra Sancta</td>
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<td>6 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Isaac Jogues, Rapid City</td>
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<td>7 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Isaac Jogues, Rapid City</td>
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<td>April 27, Thursday</td>
<td>10:45 a.m. Culture of Vocations Workshop, St. Thomas More Middle School</td>
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<td>April 29, Saturday</td>
<td>6:30 a.m. Catholic Medical Association Guild Meeting, Rapid City</td>
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<td>4:30 p.m. CT Pre-Confirmation Meeting, Sacred Heart, Burke</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. CT Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart, Burke</td>
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<td>April 30, Sunday</td>
<td>9:30 a.m. CT Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Joseph, Gregory</td>
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<td>10:30 a.m. CT Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph, Gregory</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1, Monday</td>
<td>3 p.m. Priests Open House for Bishop-elect Biegler, Rapid City</td>
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<td>May 2, Tuesday</td>
<td>8 a.m. Staff Mass/Breakfast, Terra Sancta</td>
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<td>9:15 a.m. Department Head Meeting, Terra Sancta</td>
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<td>May 3, Wednesday</td>
<td>4:30 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting (includes Belle Fourche Candidates), St. Joseph, Spearfish</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph, Spearfish</td>
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<td>May 5, Friday</td>
<td>5 p.m. CT Catholic Daughters State Convention Mass/Banquet, Yankton</td>
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<td>May 6, Saturday</td>
<td>1:15 p.m. Veritatis Splendor Institute, Terra Sancta</td>
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<td>6 p.m. Mayfest Banquet/Auction for Rapid City Catholic Schools, Rapid City</td>
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<td>May 7, Sunday</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. Mass, Anniversary of Dedication of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help</td>
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<td>3 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, Pine Ridge</td>
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<td>4 p.m. Confirmation Mass, Pine Ridge</td>
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<td>May 10, Wednesday</td>
<td>10 a.m. Terra Sancta Guild Leadership Committee, Rapid City</td>
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<td>6 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, Blessed Sacrament 8th Grade, Rapid City</td>
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<td>7 p.m. Confirmation Mass, Blessed Sacrament 8th Grade, Rapid City</td>
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<td>May 11, Thursday</td>
<td>6:30 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Paul, Belle Fourche</td>
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<td>May 12, Friday</td>
<td>2:30 p.m. Live Interview with Real Presence Radio</td>
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<td>May 13, Saturday</td>
<td>6:30 a.m. Catholic Medical Association Guild Meeting, Rapid City</td>
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<td>4:30 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Therese, Rapid City</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Therese, Rapid City</td>
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<td>May 14, Sunday</td>
<td>9:30 a.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, Blessed Sacrament, Bison</td>
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<td>10:30 a.m. Confirmation Mass, Blessed Sacrament, Bison</td>
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April 23, Divine Mercy Sunday

A life-size Station in the Stations of the Cross is seen April 9 on the grounds of the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass. Locally, programs featuring Dr. Bryan Thatcher, founder of the Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy, and singer Kristin Taylor are planned at St. John Church, New Underwood, and Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. See page 7 for a schedule of events. (CNS photo/Octavio Duran)

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Lord of the harvest to send out workers in His harvest.”

(Luke 10:2)

Encouraged by Bishop Gruss’ call to pray more fervently and intentionally for an increase in vocations to priesthood to serve our diocese, Fr. Mark McCormick, Director of Vocations, invites you to join him in fasting on Thursdays. In his February article, Fr. Mark says, “I am going to fast every Thursday as a reminder of the Last Supper and as a way to fervently beg the Lord to send us more seminarians and priests.”

If you are interested in joining Fr. Mark in this endeavor, please send your name, address, email and phone number to the Office of Vocations: shanson@diorc.org or 716-5214 ext. 233.

From Father to Son: Helping Boys Embrace Authentic Masculinity

Wednesday, April 26th 5:30 - 8:30
Dinner and talk for Fathers and Sons at Terra Sancta Retreat Center

Learn more and Register at: www.Gods-Call.org
Chrism Mass

(Top) April 3, priests process into the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. At the Mass, the holy oils used throughout the diocese are blessed and the priests renew their vows.

(Center) Deacons Larry Kopriva, Lloyd Frein and Craig Pearson bring in the urns of oil. (Lower right) Bishop Robert Gruss mixes balsam and olive oil to create the sacred Chrism Oil.

(Lower left) The oils are poured into bottles for each priest to take back to their parishes for use in various sacramental celebrations. (WRC photos by Becky Berreth)
Fr. Arnold Kari honored for 40th anniversary

An open house was held March 26, at St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rapid City. The guest of honor was Fr. Arnold Kari who was ordained March 28, 1977.

Fr. Kari retired December 31, 2016. He has served parishes in Rapid City, Oelrichs, Winner, Edgemont, Ardmore, Colome, Philip, Milesville, Midland, Belle Fourche, Newell, Mud Butte, Sturgis, and New Underwood. He was a part-time chaplain at the VA Medical Center in Hot Springs. Cards maybe sent to St. Therese the Little Flower Church, 532 Adams St. Rapid City, SD 57701.

Farewell Open House

for Bishop-elect Steven Biegler

12-3 p.m., Sunday, May 7

Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

520 Cathedral Dr.
Rapid City, SD

Episcopal Ordination & Installation of

Most Rev. Steven Biegler as Bishop of Cheyenne

2 p.m., Monday, June 5
Cheyenne Civic Center
510 W 20th St., Cheyenne, WY

Open to the public

The Cheyenne Civic Center has only 1,500 seats. Because of limited seating the Diocese of Cheyenne will offer live-streaming. If you are interested in viewing the live-stream coverage at the Cathedral in Rapid City call 605-342-0507.

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April 18, Tuesday

The Life in the Spirit Seminar: Designed as an evangelistic tool, a formation experience, and an introduction to a life lived in the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit. The eight weeks of sessions help participants realize the fire, the breath, the gifts, fruits and the charisms of the Spirit, preparing us for a very personal Pentecost. Held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Holy Cross Chapel, Terra Sancta. terrasanta.org/lifeinthespirit/  

April 23, Sunday

• Divine Mercy Sunday Celebrations: St. John Church, New Underwood — Dr. Bryan Thatcher, founder of Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy, and Kristin Taylor, singer, will present “Divine Mercy: It's a Way of Life” from 1-3:30 p.m. Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City — Begins with Eucharistic Exposition at 2:45 p.m., followed by Divine Mercy Chaplet, blessing of religious articles and veneration of St. Faustina relic. Dr. Thatcher and Taylor presentation at 4:15 p.m.

• Centennial Dinner: St. Patrick Church, Wall, is celebrating 100 years with a roast beef dinner at the church, 701 Norris Street, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. See page 22.

April 26, Wednesday

• From Father to Son — Helping Boys Embrace Authentic Masculinity: Presentation by Fr. Brett Brannen. No Charge, but registration is required. See page 4.

April 27, Thursday

• Women's Cursillo Weekend: Open to all Catholic women desiring a deeper understanding of God's call for their lives. Held at Cedar Canyon Wesleyan Church Camp, Rapid City. Ends April 30. Richard Rangle 605-391-4187 or Dave Elker 605-721-1033.

• How to Build a Culture of Vocations in our Parishes and Homes: Speaker is Fr. Brett Brannen. Two opportunities to attend: 5:30 p.m. CT, St. John the Evangelist Church, Ft. Pierre, and April 28 at Terra Sancta. No charge. See page 20.

April 28, Friday

• Heart to Heart 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 April 30. Next weekend, July 21-23. Register at terrasanta.org/heart2heart/ or Amy 605-716-5214 x236.

April 29, Saturday

• Fight the Good Fight — A Catholic Men's Conference: Speaker Mark Houck. Held from 8 a.m.-4p.m. at Terra Sancta. $30 includes two meals. See page 19.

May 4, Thursday

• Men's Cursillo Weekend: Open to all Catholic men who hunger to grow deeper in their faith and desire to lead their families spiritually. Held at Storm Mountain Center, Rapid City. Ends May 7. Richard Rangle 605-391-4187 or Dave Elker 605-721-1033.

May 5, Friday


May 6, Saturday

• World Apostolate of Fatima: First Friday, Mass at 5:30 p.m. with prayers and devotions. First Saturday, May 6, 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.

May 10, Wednesday

• Prayerful Painting: Theme is “Scripture.” You need not be an artist for God to speak to you through creative expression. Held at St. Martin Monastery. $20 includes lunch. Sr. Therese Marie 605-343-8011.

May 19, Friday

• Niobrara River Young Adult Retreat: Join us for a weekend retreat with Fr. Mark McCormick. We will camp and kayak down the Niobrara River in northern Nebr, and talk about prayer and discernment, celebrate daily Mass, and spend time in prayer and fellowship. Cost $80. Registration deadline May 12. Sponsored by the Office of Vocations. Open to young adults age 18-35. Ends May 21. www.gods-call.org/events or 605-716-5114 x 233

May 22, Monday


June 12, Monday


• Office of Vocations 605-716-5214 x233 or shanson@diorc.org.

June 17, Saturday

• Natural Family Planning: Seminar for engaged couples or anyone wanting to learn more about natural family planning. To be held at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. Preregistration required. Next seminar, September 16, at St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rapid City. Mark Biggs 605-343-2467.

• Vocation Discernment Retreats: Sister Mary Wegher, OSB, 605-343-8011.

• Spiritual Direction: At St. Martin Monastery. Margaret Hinker, OSB, Sr. Florence McManamen, OSB, or Sr. Edna Marie Stephenson, OSB, 605-343-8011.

• Divine Mercy Image: Would you like to host a traveling Divine Mercy Image in your home for up to 27 days to pray the Divine Chaplet/Novena? A rosary and information about the image are included. Georgine 605-441-8140.

• Spanish Faith Study: Learn about the Catholic faith, from 5:45-7 p.m., at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City, room 107. Everyone welcome. Aprendiendo nuestra Fe Catolica los Miércoles de 5:45-7p.m. Todos estan Bienvenidos, salon 107. Maria Munoz 605-791-3430.

• Tutors Volunteers Needed: Overcoming the language barrier ministry at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City, is looking for volunteers interested in helping adults with English reading, writing, and speaking skills. Participants will be introduced to the Lauback Way to Reading with an emphasis on English language learners. Christine Leichtnam 605-342-8598, cleicht@rap.midco.net or Maria Munoz 605-791-3430.

Standing Events

• Centering Prayer: Held Wednesdays at 5 p.m. at Terra Sancta. Led by Sandi Ohlen. Please use south patio entrance and join the group in the Solarium at Terra Sancta.


• Prayer and Lectio: Thursdays 6:30 p.m., St. Martin Monastery. Sister Marmion Howe, OSB, 605-343-8011.

• Patriotic Rosary: Thursdays 6 p.m., Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. Dr. Ellen Robertson 605-718-9909.

• Divine Mercy Chaplet: Sundays, 3 p.m., Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Followed by the patriotic rosary. Dr. Ellen Robertson 605-718-9909.

• Family Rosary: Sundays, 7 p.m., St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rapid City. Mark Biggs 605-343-2467.

• Hope for New Life Jail Ministry: Third Monday, 7 p.m., Catholic Social Services. Tony Galles 605-348-2301 or Mary Sperrich 605-342-9343.

• Vocation Discernment Retreats: Sister Mary Wegher, OSB, 605-343-8011.


• Office of Vocations 605-716-5214 x233 or shanson@diorc.org.

• Septuagesima: Thursdays 6:30 p.m., St. Martin Monastery. Fr. Marmion Howe, OSB, 605-343-8011.

• Totus Tuus Young Adult Retreat: Open to all Catholic young adults who wish to grow deeper in their faith and desire to lead their families spiritually. Held at Storm Mountain Center, Rapid City. Ends May 7. Richard Rangle 605-391-4187 or Dave Elker 605-721-1033.

• Office of Vocations 605-716-5214 x233 or shanson@diorc.org.

• Field Day: For engaged couples to deepen their relationship with each other and God by exploring the Catholic Church’s vision of marriage. Costs $125. Ends April 30. Next weekend, July 21-23. Register at terrasanta.org/heart2heart/ or Amy 605-716-5214 x236.

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Terra Sancta Retreat Center 
highlights, page 12
Serra Club common ground for vocation promotion

In the January West River Catholic, Bishop Robert Gruss wrote an article titled, “Praying for more priests.” He highlighted the severity of the priest shortage we are facing together as the body of Christ in our diocese. The bishop concluded, “While I wanted you to be aware of the situation, I am asking each of you to take seriously the call to pray daily for vocations to priesthood in our diocese. But I am also asking that each of you pray daily for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our diocese and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this endeavor to find more priests to serve here, so that there will not be a shortage in the coming year and the years to follow.”

In Through Him, with Him, and in Him: A Spiritual Guide to the Diocesan Priority Plan, Bishop Gruss notes that “promoting vocations is the responsibility of all of us. It must involve everyone.”

The Code of Canon Law reminds us: “The duty of fostering vocation rests with the entire community so that the needs of the sacred ministry in the universal church are provided for sufficiently ... This duty especially binds Christian families, educators, and, in a special way, priests, particularly pastors.”

As part of the diocesan pastoral plan, each parish or parish grouping has been asked to form a vocation committee in order to encourage and promote a culture of vocations. This was to have been established by this past Jan. 1.

Formation of this committee emphasizes the fact that promoting vocations, in particular those to the priesthood, is the responsibility of all of us. This encouragement begins in our homes, where “married couples live their vocation in the Spirit of Christ so that their families may become a domestic church reflecting the life of the Trinity,” as we pray in our new diocesan vocation prayer: http://rapidcitydiocese.org/

A statue of St. Junipero Serra stands outside San Gabriel Archangel Mission in Los Angeles. The Spanish missionary was canonized by Pope Francis in 2015 under the title of “apostle of California.” St. Junipero’s feast is July 1. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

new-prayer-vocations/

As a way to help promote and raise the awareness of creating a culture of vocations in our families, in our parishes, in our Catholic schools and in our diocese, Bishop Gruss is starting a Serra Club in the Diocese of Rapid City. The Serra Club is a named for the Franciscan Missionary, Junipero Serra, now St. Junipero Serra, who was canonized on September 23, 2015, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in Washington, D.C., by Pope Francis.

Father Serra originally founded nine missions; this expanded to 21 missions established along the El Camino Real, from San Diego to Sonoma, where he ministered. Despite his struggle with asthma and a chronic sore on his leg, St. Junipero Serra did amazing work with the Lord by bringing the Gospel of Christ to life. He was a true evangelizer and heeded the call from Jesus, which we hear at the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20).

The Serra Club is recognized by the Holy See as a lay apostolate dedicated to fostering vocations in the Catholic Church. It is a voluntary association of some 20,000 Catholic laymen and laywomen called Serrans. They are Catholics of all ages and from all walks of life — lawyers, carpenters, doctors, accountants, businesspeople, nurses, engineers, mechanics, salespeople, clerks, retirees, etc. They share a passion for promoting and fostering vocations.

Serrans define their vision as:
To foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood in the Catholic Church as a particular vocation to service, and to support priests in their sacred ministry;
To encourage and affirm vocations to consecrated religious life in the Catholic Church;
To assist its members to recognize and respond in their own lives to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

In September 2000, Pope John Paul II addressed the Serrans with these words: “Dear Serrans, you are committed in a special way to promoting vocations. Never forget that yours must be above all a commitment to prayer, prayer which is constant, unwavering and full of trust. Prayer moves the heart of God. It is the powerful key to resolving the vocations question. But at the same time prayer for vocations is also a school of life, as I had occasion recently to point out: ‘By praying for vocations we learn to look with Gospel wisdom at the world and at each person’s need for life and salvation; it is a way of sharing in Christ’s love and compassion for all mankind...’” (Message for the 38th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, September 14, 2000, No.6).

New Serra Club
If you are interested in being part of founding a Serra Club in the Diocese of Rapid City, please contact Fr. Mark McCormick at the Office of Vocations and Stewardship, (605) 716-5214, ext. 233 or MMcCormick@diorc.org
Archbishop Chaput: A bishop of consequence

When I first met Charles J. Chaput, OFM Cap., more than twenty years ago, I was struck by his boyish demeanor, his exquisite courtesy, and his rock-solid faith. Then the Bishop of Rapid City, South Dakota, a diocese that serves several reservations, Chaput was obviously proud of his Potawatomi heritage without wearing his roots, so to speak, on his sleeve. Moreover, his striking modesty and personal gentleness exemplified the Franciscan vocation he had embraced. Here, I thought, is a real pastor, living out the meaning of his episcopal motto, “As Christ loved the Church.”

He was also a lot of fun. It was no easy business to return service in the rapid-fire repartee led by our host that night, then-Msgr. Timothy Dolan. But Chaput played the rhetorical baseline like a pro.

A few years after we met, he was named archbishop of Denver. And for the next fourteen years, I watched in admiration as Archbishop Chaput led what was, in many people’s judgment, the premier New Evangelization diocese in the country. He was always the bottom line. But he governed the archdiocese in a genuinely collegial manner, which is one reason he drew many highly talented lay collaborators to Denver. No one who knew him doubted that he would have happily spent the rest of his life in the Mile High City.

SVDP regional meeting

The North Central Region of the Society of St. Vincent DePaul has opened registration for our annual regional meeting. The 2017 meeting is being hosted by the Rockford Council of St. Vincent DePaul. Our theme is “Hearts and Hands in God’s Service.” This year our North Central region meeting will be held on June 22 to 24, 2017. The meeting will be held at the Pheasant Run Resort, 4051 East Main Street, St. Charles Ill. Registration is $135 which includes five meals and materials. Registration can be done at https://npotogather.org/ncr2017. Accommodations are available at the resort with a special rate of $115 plus 11 percent tax. These rates are available until June 9. Call the resort directly at 630-584-6300 for room reservations. Many workshops will be available and you will have the opportunity to meet Vincentians from across the Midwest.

Monthly Message From Our Lady

On the 25th of each month, Our Lady appears to the Medjugorje visionary Marija to give us her message.

“Dear children! In this time of grace, I am calling all of you to open your hearts to God’s mercy, to begin a new life through prayer, penance and a decision for holiness. This time of spring moves you to a new life, to a renewal, in your thoughts and hearts. Therefore, little children, I am with you to help you to say ‘yes’ to God and to God’s commandments with resoluteness. You are not alone; I am with you through the grace which the Most High gives me for you and your descendants. Thank you for having responded to my call.” 3/25/17

Prayer Intentions of the Holy Father

MAY

Christians in Africa.

That Christians in Africa, in imitation of the Merciful Jesus, may give prophetic witness to reconciliation, justice, and peace.

For more information, go to: APOSTLESHIPOFPRAYER.ORG
Doing violence in God’s name gives us permission to demonize others

Blaise Pascal once wrote: “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from a religious conviction.” How true! This has been going on since the beginning of time and is showing few signs of disappearing any time soon. We still do violence and evil and justify them in God's name.

We see countless examples of this in history. From the time that we first gained self-consciousness, we’ve done violence in God’s name. It began by sacrificing human persons to try to attain God’s favor and it led to everything from actively persecuting others for religious reasons, to waging war in God’s name, to burning people for heresy at the Inquisition, to practicing capital punishment for religious reasons, and, not least, at one point in history, to handing Jesus over to be crucified out of God's name.

These are some salient historical examples; sadly not much has changed. Today, in its most gross form, we see violence done in God’s name by groups like Al-Qaeda and Isis who, whatever else might be their motivation, believe that they are serving God and cleansing the world in God’s name by brute terrorism and murder. The death of thousands of innocent people can be justified, they believe, by the fact that this is God’s cause, so sacred and urgent that it allows for the bracketing of all basic standards of humanity, decency, and normal religion. When it’s for God’s cause, outright evil is rationalized.

Happily, it’s impossible for most of us to justify this kind of violence and murder in our minds and hearts, but most of us still justify this kind of sacral violence in more subtle modes. Many of us, for instance, still justify capital punishment in the name of divine justice, believing that God’s purposes demand that we kill someone. Many too justify abortion by an appeal to our God-given freedoms. Not least, virtually all of us justify certain violence in our language and discourse because we feel that our cause is so special and sacred that it gives us the right to bracket some of the fundamentals of Christian charity in our dealings with those who disagree with us, namely, respect and graciousness.

Our language, in both the circles of the right and the left, is rife with a violence we justify in God’s name. On the right, issues like abortion and the defense of dogma are deemed so important as to give us permission to demonize others. On the left, issues of economic and ecological injustice, because they so directly affect the poor, similarly give us permission to bracket respect and graciousness. Both sides like to justify themselves with an appeal to God’s righteous anger.

There’s a story in John’s Gospel, delicious in its irony, which helps expose how we are so often blind to the violence we do in God’s name. It’s the famous incident of the woman who is caught in adultery. They bring her to Jesus and tell him that they caught her in the very act of committing adultery and that Moses commanded, in God’s name, that women like this be stoned to death. Jesus, for his part, says nothing. He bends down and writes with his finger, twice, on the ground and then tells them the one among them who’s without sin might cast the first stone. They understand the gesture: why he is writing on the ground, why he is writing twice, and what that means. What does it mean?

Moses went up a mountain and God, with his finger, wrote the Ten Commandments into two tablets of stone. As Moses approached the Israelite camp on his return, carrying the two tablets of stone, he caught the people in the very act of committing idolatry. What did he do? In a fit of religious fervor, he broke the Commandments, literally, physically, over the golden calf and then picked up the fragments and threw those stones at the people.

So here’s the irony from which to draw a lesson: Moses was the first person to break the Ten Commandments. He broke them in God’s name and then took the fragments and stoned the people. He did this violence in all sincerity, caught up in religious fervor. Of course, afterwards, he had to go back up the mountain and have the Commandments written a second time. However before giving Moses the Commandments a second time, God also gave him a lecture: Don’t stone people with the Commandments! Don’t do violence in my name!

We’ve been very slow to grasp this mandate and take it seriously. We still find every sort of moral and religious justification for doing violence in God’s name. We are still, like Moses, smashing the Commandments on what we consider idolatrous and then stoning others with the fragments. This is evident everywhere in our religious and moral discourse, particularly in how we, as Pascal might put it, in God’s name, “completely and cheerfully” bracket charity as it pertains to graciousness and respect.
Fr. D. Craig Cower, 90, a priest of the Diocese of Rapid City

Fr. D. Craig Cower, 90, died Sunday, April 2, at Westhills Village Health Care, Rapid City.

He was born March 2, 1927, in Roxbury, N.Y., to Robert H. and Blanche (Hebert) Cower.

During his senior year of high school, he attended St. Andrew Preparatory Seminary in Rochester, N.Y. Later, he spent a year in what had been a Lutheran Seminary at Hartwick College in Oneonta, N.Y., where his father was Superintendent of Campus Housing and Grounds. He then went on to St. Francis Seminary in Loretto, Pa. He graduated from there and finished Theology at St. John University in Collegeville, Minn.

Father Cower was ordained for the Diocese of Rapid City, in Albany, N.Y., with 29 other young men in 1954. His first assignment was Immaculate Conception Church, the former diocesan cathedral in Rapid City. Father Cower was subsequently assigned to Ardmore, Edgemont and Oelrichs; Buffalo, Camp Crook, Cox, Vessey, Ralph, Redig and Drew; Faith, Opal, Plainview and Pedro; then Wall and Scenic. For health reasons he retired as a parish priest in 1987, after serving the Hot Springs and Oelrichs parishes. He continued to substitute for parish priests until 1997.

While he was working in Faith, his parents moved there to help him and stayed with him for 25 years. While he was serving in Wall a new St. Patrick Church was built. He donated his art collection — mostly crucifixes — to that parish.

In 1991, he was appointed to be Executive Secretary of the Priest Retirement and Aid Association and in 1993, Vicar for Retired Priests. He served on numerous boards, including Black Hills Chamber Music Society.

Fr. D. Craig Cower

He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Rod.

April 5, Christian funeral Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City, with Bishop Robert D. Gruss presiding.

Burial is in the family plot at St. Patrick Cemetery (near Sioux Spiritual Center), Plainview. Fr. Peter Etzel, SJ, conducted burial rites.

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.

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

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DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY

DIRECTOR OF SIOUX SPIRITUAL CENTER RETREAT FACILITY

FUNCTION:
Provides Catholic leadership for all areas of operation of the Sioux Spiritual Retreat Center. Establishes an environment that respects and supports Native cultures and spirituality.

QUALIFICATIONS:
Practicing Catholic; Prefer college degree with training and/or experience in church and retreat center ministry. Must have excellent organizational, communication, and leadership skills. General knowledge of operating and managing a small business, practical use of technology, strong knowledge and experience of working with Native Americans preferred. Successful candidate must live at the Sioux Spiritual Center, Howes, S.D.

Complete job description is available on the diocesan website at:
http://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/director-ssc

APPLICATION PROCESS:
Interested individuals should send a resumé and letter by e-mail or postal mail listing three professional references along with a completed application form that can be downloaded from the diocesan website at:
http://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/director-ssc

The Diocese of Rapid City offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

Office of the Chancellor
Diocese of Rapid City
606 Cathedral Drive
Rapid City SD 57701
msimonson@diorc.org
Abide in Me: Building the kingdom of God in your zip code

BY LAURIE HALLSTROM

Genuine spiritual renewal was the core premise during Pastoral Ministry Days. Speakers Fr. Michael White, pastor, and Tom Corcoran, assistant to the pastor, from Church of the Nativity, Timonium Md., addressed more than 250 people at the annual gathering. It was held April 3-4 at Terra Sancta Retreat Center, Rapid City.

During Father White’s tenure at his church, Mass attendance has risen from 1,400 people to more than 4,000 on weekends. He and Corcoran have written several books illustrating what did and did not meet the needs of the parish. “Rebuilt,” “Tools for Rebuilding,” and “Rebuilding Your Message,” are among their titles.

Prior to making changes in the Maryland parish, the men visited thriving evangelical churches to learn about their practices. They knew they had to change the weekend experience, including hospitality, the message, and the music. They came up with five steps to revitalize their church. To grow disciples, people need to serve, they need to give, to engage in small groups, to participate in prayer and the sacraments, and to share their faith or evangelize others.

“Why” is the most important component of ministry, according to Corcoran. “When you lose your why, you lose your way,” he said.

He cited The Great Commission, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19), as the answer to the question, “why?”

“Look at the church from the point of view of the people who are not attending,” he said. “What keeps people away from church is they don’t think they will be welcomed.”

At his parish, welcoming begins in the parking lot with greeters directing drivers to spots. They are welcomed at the door by more greeters and hosts who help them find a place to sit.

He underscored the importance of children’s formation that allows the parents to focus on the Liturgy of the Word. At his church they have three programs — Kids Zone, All Stars and Time Travelers. All of which encourage the children to share their faith. He said empty-nesters and teens work well in that ministry. For children with disabilities the church has a buddy ministry — volunteers who sit with them during the children’s formation. Before the Liturgy of the Eucharist, hosts shepherd children back to their seats.

Another important component of ministry is music. “Music can reach people’s hearts,” he said, advising parishes to invest resources in skilled musicians — he acknowledged finding both talent and a heart for ministry is hard, but “the history of God’s people includes singing.”

Fr. Michael White said, “We are trying to advance the kingdom of God in our generation. This is the fundamental, indispensable work of the whole church.”

According to Father White the parish is more than a church building; it is a geographical term, your zip code including people you have never met. The majority of people not attending church are unchurched Catholics. He asked, “Who are the people not currently in the pews? What are they like? What language do they speak? How do they spend their time, their money? What is their culture? What do they think about God, faith and religion?”

While discussing ministry he said to ask the church leaders:

1. Are we making a measurable difference in the community or simply serving our members?
2. Are we mobilized for mission or insisting on business as usual?
3. Are we here to preserve our broken systems or are we willing to go where God is blessing?
4. Are we simply meeting or are we moving?

He told the story of Nehemiah, rebuilding the fire damaged walls around the city of Jerusalem, to make several points. Nehemiah was an educated, sophisticated Jewish man who first prayed to God for the king’s permission to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah surveyed the situation, then he tackled projects one at a time. He drafted teams to help him. Then, when his critics accused him of treason he redoubled his efforts.

“When we are making progress critics come forward, don’t be surprised,” said Father White.

(Top) Fr. Timothy Castor, Sturgis; Deacon Greg Sass, Piedmont; and Pastoral Ministry Days guest speaker Tom Corcoran, Parkville, Maryland; visit during a break. (Above) Fr. Michael White, pastor of the Church of the Nativity in Timonium, Maryland, held a special session for clergy. Corcoran and Father White co-authored books on increasing attendance and participation at church. (WRC photos by Becky Berreth)

Terra Sancta Retreat Center Highlights — May 2017

May 1-11: St. Thomas More AP Testing
May 8: AdvancED Training
May 8-11: Southwest Liturgical Conference Board Retreat
May 20: Cornerstone Mission Volunteer Breakfast
May 21-24: Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota Seminarian Retreat

Terra Sancta Retreat Center has become part of the spiritual life of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota. We will be holding our annual clergy retreat here for the fourth year in a row in May 2017. We have also held other diocesan gatherings at Terra Sancta and we have always found the staff very accommodating. The hospitality is amazing and the location and spiritual atmosphere are inspiring. The grounds offer opportunity for quiet walks and peaceful prayer. I often use Terra Sancta as my home base when I need to spend the night in Rapid City. I thank God for the stewardship of this holy place and devotion of the staff who offer their ministry through their work at Terra Sancta.

—The Rt. Rev. John Tarrant, Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota
The Five Goals of Courage
The founding members of Courage developed five goals as the foundation of the apostolate:
1. Chastity: To live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching on homosexuality.
2. Prayer and Dedication: To dedicate our entire lives to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass, and the frequent reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.
3. Fellowship: To foster a spirit of fellowship in which we may share with one another our thoughts and experiences and so ensure that none of us has to face the problems of homosexuality alone.
4. Support: To be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in chaste Christian life; and to encourage one another in forming and sustaining these friendships.
5. Good Example: To live lives that may serve as good examples and role models to others.

The Five Goals of EnCourage
1. To grow spiritually through spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass, and the frequent reception of the Sacraments of reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.
2. To gain a deeper understanding of the needs, difficulties, and challenges experienced by men and women with Same-Sex Attraction.
3. To establish and maintain a healthy and wholesome relationship with our loved ones who experience SSA.
4. To assist other family members and friends to reach out with compassion and truth to, and not to reject, our loved ones who experience SSA.
5. To witness to loved ones by our own lives that fulfillment is to be found in Jesus Christ through his body, the church.

Confidential support groups for those with same-sex attraction

BY WRC STAFF
Courage and EnCourage support groups are getting started in the Diocese of Rapid City. Courage is a Roman Catholic Apostolate to people with same-sex attraction. Cardinal Terrance Cook founded it in 1980, in the Archdiocese of New York. The founding director was Fr. John Harvey. At the root of the ministry it says persons experiencing same-sex attraction must be treated with respect, compassion and sensitivity as people created and loved by God. EnCourage, a ministry to family and friends of SSA individuals, was started in 1992 to provide peer support and spiritual growth for its members.

Like all single Catholics, members of Courage are urged to live chaste lives and participate fully in the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Courage proclaims that holiness and happiness are possible for its members who strive to know Christ profoundly and seek to follow him in the Gospel way of life.

The program requires compassionate chaplains to guide the ministry. Two priests from the Diocese of Rapid City, Msgr. Michael Woster, Spearfish, and Fr. Jim Hoerter, Faith, will be coordinating the efforts to start a chapter (or chapters) in western South Dakota. The two priests attended the Courage and EnCourage national meeting July 19-24, 2016, in Washington, D.C. “The Courage apostolate is a wonderful opportunity for those experiencing same-sex attraction in our diocese to know personally Christ is walking with them. Through community and the riches of the church, participants come to know Jesus’ very real concern, his friendship, joy and his call particular to their own life,” said Father Hoerter. “Through Courage members can come to know Jesus Christ concretely. He is the One we desire in the depths of our being. He really is the ‘good news’ for all of us.”

Msgr. Woster said, “I was really impressed with the people I met at the national meeting in Washington. Some tended to be older, people who had gone through some pretty rough times, and maybe had gone through several relationships. Many were people who had some connection to spirituality or to the church earlier in their life. They went down one road after another and nothing worked out and they have found their way back. They found reconciliation, forgiveness, friendship, and support through Courage. Christ is real to them — they rely upon him.”

He said the people at the national meeting were strong Catholic Christians — many have been in Courage for several years. “I was touched in listening to many of their stories. They are wonderful examples of God’s love and God’s grace.”

“At the convention we learned Courage members love their priests. Fr. Jim and I felt very affirmed by Courage members. Our celibacy is a sign to them that living a chaste life and having chaste friendships are possible,” said Msgr. Woster. While at the conference, Msgr. Woster also attended a joint meeting of Courage and EnCourage members. The EnCourage parents told how hard it was when they learned their son (or daughter) was questioning their sexually identity or experiencing SSA. They spoke of their confusion about how best to respond to them and their fears about their child’s future. The Courage members shared with EnCourage family members what they were looking for in their parents and siblings that would help support them and help them find healing and reconciliation.

“It was amazing to see the compassion and growth toward understanding between Courage and EnCourage members,” Msgr. Woster said.

The chaplains can be reached by phone. To protect anonymity, a contact number for the chaplains is given. Callers can leave a message, and a chaplain will contact the caller and give them ministry and meeting information as well as assistance in discerning if the ministry will be helpful to them.

Call Courage at 605-646-3363 or EnCourage at 605-519-8688.

To learn more about this ministry go to http://couragerc.org or email office@couragerc.org.

H O E R T E R

FR. JIM HOERTER

‘Courage is doing the work of God.’
— St. John Paul II

MSGR. MICHAEL WOSTER
Who are you in the story of the Good Samaritan?

CHARLOTTE VERHEY
DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR

Regarding child abuse, the Catholic Church has made a “promise to protect” and “pledge to heal.” Through our Diocesan Safe Environment Program we promote child abuse prevention daily. There are times that any person may be vulnerable for a period of time in their life experience, which our diocese acknowledges in our policies.

Catholic social teaching is an essential element of our faith, with its roots in the Hebrew prophets. These teachings are inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity. Each person is created in the image of God; each person is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family. Our diocese has adult safe environment training for all our clergy members, all employees, and volunteers who work with our children. We also have two annual lessons, for our children and youth, to promote foundations of safety and qualities of healthy relationships. Each Catholic is called to reach out and to build relationships of love and justice. As adults, we are the ones that are entrusted to keep children and youth safe from harm.

I said “yes” to this ministry as the Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator because of my strong belief in the previous paragraph. I bring all of my experiences of life: the way I was raised in my family, as a parent raising our family, involvement in the education field for over thirty years, and the blessings and growth of my faith life throughout this journey to this ministry.

In my teaching career there has been more than one occasion where I witnessed a call to the Department of Social Services to request an inquiry of a situation, either observed or disclosed. Even when an assault or abuse occurs only once, a life is changed. When individuals are abused, it is not something that is quickly resolved. Even after counseling, it may re-surface at other times throughout life.

Sexual abuse is not only a physical violation; it is a violation of trust and/or authority. The best way I know to prevent abuse from happening is through education to stop it before it occurs. This takes our belief in the sacredness of life and the need to take action to protect those in need.

Adults are encouraged and welcomed to participate in the adult safe environment training to raise awareness on what to look for and how we can protect our children and vulnerable adults around us. We can start to learn how to be watchful, what to do, and how to respond. The program first started in response to the sexual abuse caused by some members of the clergy. According to the Child and Youth Protection Office of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, an effective safe environment program will have the following components:

- A code of conduct for clergy, paid personnel, and volunteers who have regular contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults.
- Training for all adults consists of:
  - Signs an adult may see in a child who is abused
  - Signs an adult may see in a person who abuses children
  - What actions an adult should take when they believe child abuse of any kind may be occurring
  - How to respond if someone discloses abuse to you as a trusted adult
  - How do we “go and do likewise.”

How do we “go and do likewise.”

- Pray. You can pray that survivors of abuse are offered counseling and healing, that one day they may seek reconciliation with affected communities, and pray for protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Use this prayer card (alone or with others) to pray for victims of abuse:
  - Use this prayer card (alone or with others) to prayer for victims of abuse: http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/resources/upload/Bilingual-PC.pdf
  - Ask your pastor to pray for these needs in the Prayers of the Faithful in April.
  - Reflect on Bible verses related to the dignity of children:
    - Matthew 18: 2-6
    - Matthew 18:10
    - Mark 9: 36-37
    - Mark 10: 13-16
  - Participate. Take the adult safe environment training. Learn more about who to call about abuse. Make a resource listing of places people can contact for further assistance. Report abuse. Read to better inform yourself on child abuse and elderly abuse.
  - Ways you can help keep children safe:
    - Develop appropriate and loving relationships with your children
    - Be involved in the child’s life
    - Teach your children safety and healthy boundaries
    - Encourage children to speak up when something is not right
    - Know who has access to your children
    - Learn the warning signs of abuse
    - Report abuse to appropriate authorities
    - Support and encourage safe environment programs and activities for your parish

- Prepare. Be ready to take action when needed; do not leave it for someone else to do. I encourage everyone to read (or reread) the two policies posted on the diocesan website — Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Code of Conduct of the Diocese of Rapid City. They are found at: http://rapidcitydiocese.org/safe-environment/policy-documents/

They remind us how we can be diligent in protecting others. They provide us with information on how the interactions between children may look, but more so, the interaction between adults and children. As Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) states about perpetrators of child sexual abuse, “The majority of perpetrators are someone the child or family knows. As many as 93 percent of victims under the age of 18 know the abuser.”

“A perpetrator does not have to be an adult to harm a child. They can have any relationship to the child including an older sibling or playmate, family member, a teacher, a coach or instructor, a caretaker, or the parent of another child.” Please keep your eyes and ears open.

Thank you to those who have been a rescuer and taken action. Whether it’s happening to your child or a child you know, or to a vulnerable adult in your family or another person you know, you have the potential to make a big difference in that person’s life by stepping in and speaking up.

Thank you for considering how to learn more; please contact me if you would like other links and resources. If you have comments, concerns, or would like to visit with me, please contact me at the Chancery Office (605-343-3541). My office hours are 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and 8 a.m.–noon Thursdays. I can also be reached through email at everheyc@diorc.org.
WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Donald Trump signed a bill into law April 13 that allows states to redirect Title X family planning funding away from clinics that perform abortions and to community clinics that provide comprehensive health care for women and children.

The new law overrides a rule change made in the last days of the Obama administration that prevented states from doing so.

“The clear purpose of this Title X rule change was to benefit abortion providers like Planned Parenthood,” said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

“Congress has done well to reverse this very bad public policy, and to restore the ability of states to stop one stream of our tax dollars going to Planned Parenthood and redirect it to community health centers that provide comprehensive primary and preventive health care,” he said in a March 31 statement a day after the Senate voted for the measure.

Vice President Mike Pence, as president of the Senate, cast a tiebreaking vote March 30 allowing passage of a joint resolution to block the Obama-era regulation that went into effect Jan. 18, just two days before Trump was sworn in.

Title X of the Public Health Services Act was passed by Congress in 1970 to control population growth by distributing contraceptives to low-income families. Planned Parenthood is the largest recipient of Title X funding. Planned Parenthood also is the nation’s largest abortion network — performing over a third of all abortions in the U.S. It receives more than half a billion dollars in federal funding each year.

Under the Hyde Amendment, federal funding for abortion already is prohibited, but federal family planning funds were allowed to go to clinics and facilities for other health services. States had been acting on their own to prohibit Title X funding to agencies performing abortions, until the Obama regulation.

The joint resolution is one of a series of bills Congress has passed under the Congressional Review Act, which allows federal regulations put in place during the final days of the previous administration to be rescinded by simple majority passage.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, counted Trump’s signature on the bill as the second of “two huge victories” she said the pro-life movement saw in a week. The first was the April 10 swearing-in of Justice Neil Gorsuch, who fills the seat left vacant by the death of Antonin Scalia in February 2016.

By signing the bill, Trump is undoing former President Barack Obama’s “parting gift to the abortion industry,” Dannenfelser said in a statement. “The resolution signed today simply ensures that states are not forced to fund an abortion business with taxpayer dollars. Rather, states have the option to spend Title X money on comprehensive health care clinics that better serve women and girls.”

American Life League president Judie Brown stated: “President Trump is expressing the sentiment many of us feel about Planned Parenthood receiving our tax dollars to assault the souls and sensibilities of our children.”
Encyclical’s influence on church’s social action work continues

(Populorum Progressio released March 26, 1967, 50 years ago)

BY DENNIS SADOWSK
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Blessed Paul VI’s encyclical Populorum Progressio (The Progress of Peoples) institutionalized social action efforts in the U.S. Catholic Church that continue in one form or another today.

Many dioceses nationwide that had not already established an office to address urban affairs or social action office did so in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Their inspiration came from Blessed Paul, who announced in the encyclical of March 26, 1967 that the Vatican would have a Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

What was then the U.S. Catholic Conference responded within three months of the release of Populorum Progressio by establishing its own Office of World Justice and Peace. Today, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops continues the work in its Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development.

“Catholic Charities could do a lot (with social services), but they couldn’t do the kind of things that needed to be done interagency and with social reform groups,” David J. O’Brien, retired professor of history, told CNS. “(Social action offices) could supplement Catholic Charities and be for the bishop the kind of contact for social action stirring in the city.”

The Pontifical Council continues its work today through a broader initiative established by Pope Francis last August when he formed the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

(In) April of (1968), the U.S. bishops adopted a policy paper titled “A Statement on the National Race Crisis.” It identified three key areas for society to address: self-determination for poor people, changed attitudes about race and poverty, and reforms in unjust social structures.

Social action offices take many forms today after expanding to address rural and even suburban poverty beginning in the 1980s … Today, many diocesan offices have experienced cutbacks or consolidations with respect life and other social ministries to continue what in many cases are scaled back advocacy efforts.


Knights of Columbus again aid Syrian and Iraqi Christian Refugees

A year after the U.S. House of Representatives and State Department declared ISIS was committing genocide against Christians and other religious minorities, the Knights of Columbus is continuing its humanitarian support for persecuted Christian communities in the region.

Supreme Knight Carl Anderson announced the organization’s $1.9 million in new assistance, noting: “A year ago, our country declared with one voice that genocide was occurring to Christians and other religious minority communities, but words are not enough.” He added: “Those targeted for genocide continue to need our assistance, especially since many have received no funding from the U.S. government or from the United Nations…”

Supreme Knight Anderson has said 2017 may be “the decisive year in determining whether many Christian communities throughout the Middle East will continue to exist,” and has called for aid from the U.S. government and the international community. He has also urged prayer for “those who are being persecuted and killed for their faith.”

Donations can be made at www.christiansatrisk.org and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. All donations assist Christians and other religious minorities, primarily from Iraq and Syria.


Hurting after an abortion?
Let your heartache turn to love and peace on a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat weekend.

Rapid City area retreat
April 21-23, 2017

Contact Carol 605-374-5639 or cking@sdplains.com

Healing after abortion
www.RachelsVineyard.org

Final S.D. bills of interest signed by Governor

“...as Catholics we are called to participate in public life in a manner consistent with the mission of our Lord, a mission that he has called us to share”
(2015 Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, #1)

Family Issues: SB 43 allows up to $603,740 for expanded intensive meth treatment services within the S.D. Dept. of Social Services; emergency.

Immigration: SB 124 repeals the ability of S.D. Dept of Social Services to enter into agreements to participate in the Refugee Act of 1980; requires an annual report from private agencies providing refugee services in S.D., until 12/31/2020.
We can make love and kindness real

BY LAURIE HALLSTROM

“The people we serve on average make less than $1.25 a day. They are the poorest of the poor and they live in fragile situations,” said Dr. Carolyn Woo.

More than 800 people gathered in Rapid City for the Catholic Social Services Palm Sunday Brunch, the charity’s largest fundraising effort of the year. The guest speaker, Woo, served as president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services From 2012 to 2016. The international relief agency was established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington D.C., after World War II to help refugees. The agency will have its 75th anniversary in 2018.

Woo’s family emigrated from Hong Kong. She attended Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind., where she earned her bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees and she was a member of the faculty. She served as dean of the Mendoza School of Business at Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Ind., before joining CRS.

She said CRS partners with 1,200 organizations across the world and 600 of those are Catholic. Workers are active all over the globe in about 100 countries. In the countries where CRS workers are, they are not allowed to evangelize, or they would be killed. “Our role is to let people know what Catholicism is all about — it is by the way we love, by the way we treat each other. That is the good news. We are people who can love and care and we actually make the choice (to share) it,” she said.

“People ask if I am depressed with my work and I just want to say, ‘on the contrary.’ There is a lot of suffering, sometimes I feel like we are sent to the foot of the cross,” said Woo. “We are face to face with suffering people — children who are hit by shrapnel and have no access to care. We run into people who have been trafficked, women whose daughters were captured and sons were killed. We are often visited by women whose children died of malnutrition. There are a lot of crosses people bear. But I am not at all depressed.”

She explained that at the foot of the cross, after the horrific torture, the suffering and the crucifixion, the good news began.

Woo led a retreat with Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25. She shared that message about the invitation from God. “He invites not only Mary, but God invites us to be a part of the plan of salvation. He hopes sometimes we say ‘yes,’ said Woo. “God issues invitations each and every day, to make his kingdom known, to bring about salvation.”

In December, as she was finishing her work at CRS, she told her colleagues, “What is the work that we do? What is our role in God’s plan? We are the answers to people’s prayers. It sounds so arrogant — it is not meant to be. The reason I say that is the people we work with don’t have a home, food, or medicine. Sometimes they don’t have money and they pray, whatever religion they are, they say ‘God please send help, please send food and medicine, my child needs milk.’

“Somehow, when we show up that’s what we bring. It is more than formula, food, shelter, and medication; we also bring longer term solutions as you do in Catholic Social Services. We bring a way for people to find a new path, to rebuild their lives.”

Woo explained sometimes social work is tangible, someone needs something and it can be given to them. “Not all needs are tangible — the deep need of loneliness for example, low self concept or a sense of having no hope, those things are not always tangible; but we are sitting next to people (family and coworkers) who could benefit from kindness,” she said. “Prayers are made to God, we have a chance to be working as God’s answers.

“The fact that we are given a chance to be God’s answer to people’s prayers is really an incredible privilege,” said Woo. “I think that the whole idea of witness is making God real. Each of our roles is to make generosity and love real. When we do that we are emulating God. That’s how people come to believe in God.”
Responding to the aziliya ritual

BY DEACON MARLON
DIRECTOR OF NATIVE MINISTRY

April 3-4, the diocese celebrated its annual Pastoral Ministry Days and Chrism Mass. Over the two day event the attendees participated in the aziliya ritual (smudging) and sang the *Tate Topa Olowan*, (Four Direction Prayer Song). I was asked by several individuals what the meaning of these things were and why we used them in church or at times of prayer. The following is my response.

The Four Direction Prayer Song derives from the Native American *Inipi* (sweat lodge) Ceremony. The song is a gathering prayer invoking *Woniya Wakan* (the Holy Spirit) to come and be present among us when we pray together. In the song, prayers are offered to the four directions recognizing the omnipotence of *Tunkasila* (God) and all his wondrous creation. The prayer is appropriate to use at Mass because it reflects the Book of Zachariah where *Tunkasila* comes to us from the four directions. “Then I said to the angel who talked with me, 'What are these my Lord?' The angel answered me, ‘These are the four winds of heaven going out, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth’” (Zec 6:4-5).

The aziliya ritual (smudging) is used for purification and blessing those who are gathered to pray. We recognize all as one when we join the circle and ask the Father to bless us and all of our loved ones. The rising smoke represents all the prayers ascending to God. The correct response to the smoke is to pull the smoke over oneself with the hands. If this gesture feels uncomfortable, then stand in a prayerful manner and pray for God to send forth his Spirit to unite us as one people.

The sacred plants: sage, sweet grass and flat cedar were given to the Lakota for prayer. When we pray in this way, using these elements, the sacred smoke cleanses us and removes any negative thoughts or feelings and we pray that our hearts and minds will be united through our prayers. This ritual represents a sign of love and respect for all people, placed in our hearts by *Woniya Wakan*. This ritual is for purification but also gives strength, wholeness and greater harmony in one’s life.

The fragrant smoke rising up and spreading out is a visible sign of our prayers going up to the Creator and the love of God enveloping all his children. It is also a sign of God sending down his blessings upon all those present. The aziliya ritual gives all honor and glory to God for his blessings and love for us.

The fanning of the smoke is done with an eagle feather or an eagle fan made from the wing of an eagle. The eagle is considered the most sacred bird among the Lakota because it is the strongest of the winged creatures and flies the highest and closest to the Creator among all the birds and takes our prayers to *Tunkasila*.

With the Lakota, all prayers are concluded with the phrase; “*Mitakuye Oyasin*” or translated means; “we are all relatives.” We are all one people, created in the image and likeness of the Heavenly Father.
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 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.

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**Our Sunday Visitor Grants to diocese**

A $10,000 grant from the Our Sunday Visitor Institute will allow the Diocese of Rapid City to expand a catechist certification program and other evangelization efforts. The Our Sunday Visitor’s board of directors approved the grant at its March meeting. The money will help the Office of Faith Formation fund the Veritatis Splendor Institute, a rigorous curriculum that has trained more than 120 lay catechists in the diocese since 2013. It also funds Faith On The Road, a parish outreach ministry that brings diocesan religious education resources to mostly smaller outlying parishes.

So far in 2017, OSV has approved 39 grants totaling nearly $800,000. The foundation’s mission is to support and encourage innovative programs and activities that further the legacy of Archbishop John Noll, the founder of the national Catholic newspaper.

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**Corporal Work of Mercy: Feed the Hungry**

On March 24, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul prepared and served dinner at the Cornerstone Rescue Mission, Rapid City. They were assisted by Bishop Robert Gruss. (Left to right) Theresa Treinen, Jenny Spencer, Daryl Gwaltney, Katie Banaszak, Nancy Gwaltney, Laura Peno-Green, Leon Lunders and Bishop Gruss. While at the mission Lysa Allison, mission director and Chad Carpenter, mission board president, gave Bishop Gruss a tour of the Main Street facility. The conference members belong to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City. (Courtesy photo)

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**One of the programs receiving an OSV grant was Faith on the Road. The Office of Faith Formation teams up with the Office of Vocations and other catechists to teach students at all age levels in a parish for an evening. Here, Fr. Mark McCormick explains adoration to students at St. Therese Church, Rapid City. The Faith on Road team visited there in January. (WRC photo by Becky Berreth)**

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WASHINGTON — Catholics and other Christians have grown up believing in the Resurrection, but the Apostles themselves were among the first who were skeptical that Jesus arose from the dead.

They didn’t believe it at first when they were told by the women who had come to anoint the crucified Jesus’ body but instead found an empty tomb.

“To be fair, you can say the men didn’t believe the women, but who could believe that story? Let’s be fair to the men. They would have to see for themselves,” said James Papandrea, a Catholic who is associate professor of church history at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in the Chicago suburb of Evanston, Illinois.

“I think anyone would want to see for themselves. We believe what we see, we believe our senses, and it’s only natural that if somebody says the Lord is alive and you knew he was dead, you’d say, ‘Show me.’ The disciples, even after all of Jesus’ teachings and all his hints about death and resurrection, they seem not to have expected him to rise from the dead. They automatically went into skeptic mode. We have Peter and John running to the tomb, to see that it’s empty,” Papandrea said.

“For believers, the significance of the tomb is that when Christians were talking about the Resurrection, they weren’t just claiming Jesus’ soul went to heaven. Or that Jesus lives on in our heart,” said Brant Pitre, a Scripture professor at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans. “They’re saying something happened to Jesus’ corpse, Jesus’ body. That’s the other essential story of the Resurrection.”

Some skeptics, Pitre told Catholic News Service in an April 11 telephone interview, talk about the concept of life after death as being just “the immortality of Jesus’ soul. They would have said that about anybody in the Old Testament.”

That is what makes the Resurrection not just different, but unique, according to Pitre, author of “The Case for Jesus.”

“The empty tomb is a necessary condition for the Resurrection, but it’s not sufficient,” Pitre said. The other element is Jesus’ appearances to the Apostles. “They needed to see in the flesh that he was alive again in his body, but in a transformed and glorified state,” he added, citing the account in Chapter 24 of St. Luke’s Gospel in which the Apostles initially think “they saw a spirit — which shows you the Apostles believed in ghosts.” But Jesus tells them, “Look at my hands and my feet,” which had been pierced with nails when he was crucified, “for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, but I have.”

The Apostles at first “met with opposition, mockery and even doubt on the part of the disciples,” Pitre said.

“Without Easter Sunday,” Pitre said, “Good Friday would just be one more tragic death, one more tragic execution of one more poor Jewish man crushed by the Roman Empire. Easter Sunday is the vindication of what happened on Good Friday — the atoning death of the son of God for the whole world.”
Traveling Fatima statue scheduled for diocesan visit

The World Apostolate of Fatima’s U.S. Tour for Peace, marking the 100th Anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima, Portugal, is coming to the Diocese of Rapid City. The International Pilgrim Virgin Statue has been taken to more than 100 countries. The tour, sponsored by the World Apostolate of Fatima, USA (The Blue Army), launched from the National Blue Army Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, in the Diocese of Metuchen, NJ, March 20-21, 2016, to coincide with the start of the centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima, Portugal where Pope Francis is expected to visit in May. The statue will travel to parishes, schools, military chapels, and other venues along the tour, with programming to include Masses, confession, talks on Fatima, holy hours, adoration, rosaries and private veneration.

The statue was sculpted in 1947 by José Thedim reflecting the precise instructions of Sister Lucia (the surviving seer at Fatima). Her desire was that the pilgrim image represent Our Lady’s position when she revealed herself as the Immaculate Heart to the Shepherds in 1917.

The schedule for the visit to the Diocese of Rapid City is as follows:
- June 7, morning — Timber Lake
- June 7, evening — Spearfish
- June 8, morning — Custer
- June 8, all-night vigil — Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City
- June 9, morning — Wall
- June 9, evening — Preshoe

Contact the Office of Stewardship and Vocations, 605-716-5214 ext. 233, for more information.

Catholics Returning Home begins

Have you been away from the church for a while? Have you ever thought about returning? Do you know someone who wants to return to the church? If so, there is a special ministry for people who have been away from the church. The six-week “Catholics Returning Home” series begins on Tuesday, April 18, at 7 p.m. at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City. Although it is beneficial to attend all sessions, they are not all required.

- Session 1, April 18 – Welcome/Overview of Series
- Session 2, April 25 – Sharing Stories of Faith
- Session 3, May 2 – The Church Today
- Session 4, May 9 – Explanation of the Mass
- Session 5, May 16 – Explanation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Session 6, May 23 – Creed: What Catholics Believe

For more information contact Deacon Greg Sass at gsass@diorc.org or 605-939-0579, or visit ReturningCatholics.net. There is no charge and pre-registration is not required.

In Your Prayers

Homesteaders began arriving in the Wall area in 1905. Catholic services in Wall were under the spiritual direction of a priest from Ft. Pierre until 1910 and then Philip. Services in Wall were held on Thursdays on the second floor of a local Hardware Store. On April 12, 1917, newly ordained Father John Connolly arrived to serve as the first resident priest. He was in charge of Wall and its three mission parishes: Quinn, Owanka, and New Underwood.

The first building was an old, empty Congregational Church purchase for $1000. With money from Catholic Extension, the church was renovated and remodeled. A new altar and sacristy were added, and the church was dedicated November 4, 1919.

The rectory was purchased in the fall of 1917. Until then, Father Connolly rented a room in an old telephone office and ate his meals at a local hotel. Later, he boarded with parishioners.

In the fall of 1925, the church was moved from its old site to the other side of the rectory — one block east. Electric lights, stained glass windows and a choir loft were added. The following summer sidewalks around the parish and rectory were added.

In 1953 the building was moved into the street to accommodate the addition of a full basement. Once the church was placed on the new foundation, a new brick façade was added and improvements were made to the interior of the building. It was rededicated September 29, 1953.

In 1964, following the death of Msgr. Connolly, a new rectory was built and a campaign for a new church began.

In 1970, Father D. Craig Cowher, “bearing gifts,” he said. Ella Ferris had established a trust in memory of her bother that was given to the parish for a new building. Father Cowher had also sold the silver his parents had given him for his college graduation and was donating those funds.

On May 11, 1975, Bishop Harold Dimmering laid the cornerstone of the new building. An article from the September 1973 *West River Catholic* describes the plans for the new worship space will, “accommodate graciously the meditation of a single individual or an entire celebration of up to 325 participants…. The result is a building which can house more activities in less space.”

The St. Patrick Women's Club raised enough money to furnish a new kitchen, purchase a piano, and donate a large amount to the building fund. They raised the money by running a St. Patrick's Gift Shop, selling a cookbook, and cooking and serving a St. Patrick's Day dinner.

During the course of the construction, services were held in the Methodist Church. Two years later, on April 28, 1977, the new church was dedicated using the new Rite for Dedication of a Church, for the first time in the U.S.

(History adapted from “Catholic Church established in 1917” Pennington County Courant; “St. Patrick's Church” by Esther Bielmaier; and West River Catholic and diocesan archives.)
Seven Red Cloud students awarded the 2017 Horatio Alger Scholarship

PINE RIDGE — Seven seniors at Red Cloud High School received the news they were waiting for — they will each be awarded a $10,000 Horatio Alger Scholarship to support the next steps of their education.

"Each one of these students has worked so incredibly hard to get to where they are today. They truly deserve to be recognized not only for their academic achievements here at Red Cloud but for their commitment to pursuing a college education that will propel them toward their dreams" said Clare Huerter, principal of Red Cloud High School.

The Horatio Alger Association began funding a range of scholarships in 1984. Today it stands as one of the nation’s largest need-based scholarship programs, having awarded more than $125 million to over 20,000 students across the country. It focuses on supporting young people who have "exhibited determination, integrity, and perseverance in overcoming adversity" and who are committed to pursuing a college education.

According to Nakina Mills, Red Cloud’s director of student advancement and alumni support, students who earn the Horatio Alger Scholarship must demonstrate more than academic promise. Eligibility is also based on a student’s leadership potential and involvement in community service activities.

“At Red Cloud, we’re committed to giving our students the space and opportunity to explore their passions and to devote time and energy to their community — in addition to learning all that they need to in the classroom,” said Nakina. “I know that will contribute to their future success, in college and beyond.”

(Article and photo courtesy of Red Cloud Indian School, www.redcloudschool.org)
TWENTY SOMETHING

Evangelization by hitchhiking: how to find an on-ramp

The place infants nod off and teens open up is also where road-weary adults will probe their spirituality: in the car.

That’s the secret behind a new religious community, the Little Poor Friars and Poor Nuns of Jesus and Mary, who dress and live like St. Francis of Assisi: in poverty, entirely dependent on God’s providence. They were founded in 1999 by a 25-year-old Sicilian and approved by the Catholic Church in 2014.

They are a throwback order, offering something that feels like the original to young adults wary of cheap imitations. Thirty-some Catholics already have joined, fulfilling a bold mission: to make like the apostles and spread the Good News. So they stand at the edge of a road, with fingers outstretched, waiting for God to bring them to him.

Evangelization by hitchhiking. Sister Effata was 24 when she set out hitchhiking for the first time as a Little Nun, intending to travel with two friars from Sicily to France, their community’s new home. She stopped outside and promptly asked: “OK, do we have to go to the right or the left?”

Surrendering to the unknown thrilled her. “I had that radical call in my heart,” she said. “I wanted to be all in.”

Born Mirjam, the young German chose the Hebrew name Effata as her religious name because it means “be open.”

To hitchhike as a Little Nun was to embrace the open road, she felt, to be born of the Spirit, like the wind: “you do not know where it comes from or where it goes” (Jn 3:8).

“It’s an experience of letting yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit,” Sister Effata said. “It’s amazing to have that freedom, to go in the direction of the highway, stand there and stick out your thumb and wait till someone stops and can give you a ride to the next town.”

One morning during her first hitchhike, Sister Effata had a premonition that she would meet someone who had attempted suicide. This was close to her heart: as a teen, she had plunged into anorexia and depression and attempted suicide before finding God.

Sure enough, the trio soon encountered a young woman who had tried to take her life the day before. Her name was Miriam.

“God works mysteriously,” Sister Effata said. “When we pay attention, we can catch those moments when we can really touch people’s hearts.”

Now 37 and working toward a master’s of theology from the Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Sister Effata has spent thousands of days hitchhiking. “People will bring up their most profound struggles. When we enter their car and say, ‘Peace to this car and peace to all who enter it,’ sometimes people will respond, ‘I need some peace.’ It can happen quickly. They get emotional or share a struggle.”

In turn, Sister Effata has learned to accept the invitation of strangers to join them for a warm meal and to sleep on the couch. “I have seen how God’s providence works through people. God takes care of us all.”

“There is so much evil in the world, but when we hitchhike, we meet so much goodness. You have to dig for it. You have to make a sacrifice to reach it. It’s why we need to evangelize: to bring that good forth, to make it shine.”

Do not say ‘I am only a youth’

A “YouCat” nugget courtesy of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

How did the disciples come to believe that Jesus is risen?

The disciples, who before had lost all hope, came to believe in Jesus’ resurrection because they saw him in a different way after his death, spoke with him, and experienced him as being alive.

The Easter events that took place in Jerusalem in the year 30 are not a made up story. Following the death of Jesus and the defeat of their whole cause, the disciples fled (“we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel,” Lk 24:21) or else barricaded themselves behind locked doors. Only their encounter with the risen Christ freed them from the paralysis and filled them with an enthusiastic faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and death.

Are there proofs for the Resurrection of Jesus?

There are no proofs for the resurrection of Jesus in the scientific sense. There are, however, very strong individual and collective testimonies by a large number of contemporaries of those events in Jerusalem (639-644, 647, 656-657).

The oldest written testimony to the resurrection is a letter that St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians around twenty years after Christ’s death: “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:3-6). Paul is recording here a living tradition that was present in the original Christian community two or three years after Jesus’ death and resurrection when he himself became a Christian — on the basis of his own staggering encounter with the risen Lord. The disciples took the fact of the empty tomb (Lk 24:2-3) as the first indication of the reality of the resurrection. Women, of all people, discovered it — according to the law of that time they were not allowed to testify. Although we read about the apostle John that he “saw and believed” (Jn 20:8b) already at the empty tomb, full assurance that Jesus was alive came about only after a series of appearances. The many encounters with the risen Lord ended with Christ’s ascension into heaven. Nevertheless, there were afterward and there are even today encounters with the living Lord: Jesus Christ lives.

Movie Review

The Case for Christ

(Pure Flix)

BY JOHN MULDERIG

(CNS) Christian apologetics, the branch of theology devoted to proving the reasonableness of belief in Jesus, is almost as old as the faith itself. Three documents in this genre, for instance, survive from the writings of St. Justin Martyr, who died in the middle of the second century. In 1998, former journalist Lee Strobel published a memoir of his spiritual odyssey from aggressive atheism to evangelical Christianity that also grounded his faith in objectively assessed evidence.

Set in 1980, the film charts Strobel’s (Mike Vogel) effort to use his investigative skills — he was a rising star on the staff of the Chicago Tribune at the time — to disprove the Resurrection and thereby debunk the faith as a whole. He was provoked to do this by wife Leslie’s (Erika Christensen) recent conversion, an event that sparked discord in their previously serene marriage.

While not as heavy handed as many message movies, “The Case for Christ” — which is acceptable for a wide audience — succeeds more as a vindication of the rationality of belief than as entertainment. On the other hand, those looking for an informal way to bolster their religious education during the holiest of seasons could hardly find a more fitting choice.

Graphic descriptions and images of scourging and crucifixion, a single crass term. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

Classifications

Boss Baby........................................... A-I
Fate of the Furious.......................... A-III
Going in Style.............................. A-III
Smurfs: The Lost Village............... A-I

Classifications used by the USCCB are: A-I, general patronage; A-II, adults and adolescents; A-III, adults; L, limited adult audiences, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling; O, morally offensive. For more information, visit: http://www.catholicnews.com/movies.htm.