Black Elk, Cause for Canonization to open

BY LAURIE HALLSTROM

On October 21, at 4 p.m. Bishop Robert Gruss will celebrate Mass at Holy Rosary Church near Pine Ridge. Everyone in the diocese is invited to attend this celebration, which will mark the opening of the Cause for Canonization of Nicholas Black Elk. A meal will be served after Mass.

Deacon Marlon Leneaugh, diocesan Director of Native Ministry, Rapid City, said, “This Mass is a diocesan-wide celebration. Even though we are in the beginning stages, when someone becomes a saint in the universal church, they become a saint for everyone. Even people from other continents can pray intercessory prayers to Black Elk. I have people who are non-Indians calling and asking if they can come. I say, ‘please do.’”

Black Elk was one of the people who signed a petition for Kateri Tekakwitha to be named a saint. When St. Kateri Tekakwitha was canonized in Rome, Oct. 21, 2012, Black Elk’s eldest grandson, George Looks Twice, met Mark Thiel, of Marquette University Raynor Memorial Libraries, (and archivist for the Tekakwitha Conference and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions). He asked how to begin a cause for his grandfather. Thiel enlisted the endorsement of Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and Episcopal Moderator of the Tekakwitha Conference. Archbishop Chaput is also a former Bishop of Rapid City, 1988-1997. With a letter from Archbishop Chaput, petitions began circulating. Looks Twice, along with other grandchildren of Black Elk, presented a petition with more than 1600 signatures to Bishop Gruss on March 14, 2016.

Last February, Bishop Gruss appointed Bill White, Porcupine, diocesan postulator of the cause. White is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The postulator leads an investigation on the life of the person proposed for sainthood in order to establish the merit of the cause. White said this is part of the early stages of the process. If the cause is found to have merit, Black Elk would be the first person ever canonized from the Diocese of Rapid City. White is being assisted by Fr. Joe Daoust, SJ, Pine Ridge. (The canonization process, which takes many years, is explained on page 6.)

“From everything I’ve read about him I believe he was a saint. I want to be part of the cause,” said White. “I’ve heard a lot of stories about Nicholas, I just have to gather information to prove those stories.” He is searching through writings by and about Black Elk. Currently, Deacon Ben Black Bear from St. Francis Mission is translating some of Black Elk’s writings from Lakota to English.

Black Elk’s date of birth is a mystery, estimated between 1858-1866. He came from a family of medicine men and he carried on their work. “A medicine man is comparable to what we know today as a physician,” said Deacon Leneaugh.

Black Elk, Continued on page 6

See also, “Emulate Black Elk as a model of faith,” page 8 and “Black Elk: he prayed with his pipe and rosary,” page 18.
Our Diocesan Priority Plan was completed and implementation began over a year ago. As you recall, the process of creating a priority plan led to the development of a vision statement. Vision statements reveal the overall vision and mission of an organization. In the words of the late Nelson Mandela, “Vision without action is just a dream, action without vision just passes time, and vision with action can change the world.”

The vision of the Diocese of Rapid City reflects the vision and mission of Jesus in his public ministry: Reconcile — Make Disciples — Live the Mission. These are the foundation stones for moving the diocese forward into the future. Vision with action will tangibly make present the kingdom of God.

The vision statement of the Diocese of Rapid City became the building block for creating the three Diocesan Pastoral Priorities — Reconciliation, Forming Disciples, and Funding the Mission. These priorities serve to guide our diocesan efforts over the next few years. The Priority Plan as a whole describes the mission of the Diocese of Rapid City in many ways. But the mission goes beyond the wonderful ministry that takes place across the diocese. We also have to have sufficient resources, both in terms of facilities and finances, to fulfill our sacred mission. This is why Funding the Mission is one of our priorities.

To move this priority forward, I met with key members of the chancery staff and Rapid City Catholic School System leadership. We discussed the many needs of the chancery, the retreat center and the school. A facility master planning process was engaged over the course of several months, beginning in January and concluding this past June. The purpose of this process was to discern the needs of each entity necessary to continue to live the mission of Jesus Christ throughout the whole diocese.

To backtrack a little bit, much wonderful ministry has happened since we purchased and renovated the former St. Martin Monastery to create the wonderful retreat center and elementary school we currently enjoy. Through the generosity of people across the diocese, we had a very successful campaign in the We Walk by Faith Appeal, raising over 18.5 million dollars. This completed phase one of our diocesan plans. In that process we also helped fund the building of two Newman Centers in our diocese.

But in many ways, our needs have only increased. Our current Chancery staff is located in two places — on Cathedral Drive and at the Terra Sancta Annex. Our spaces in both locations are inadequate and overall ministry is best accomplished when we are all in one place. The retreat center has been a great gift for the diocese. Its use is far beyond what we could have imagined. But for large diocesan events, the retreat center has also become insufficient. The Rapid City Catholic School System has pressing needs as well. High school plays and the many things needed to make them successful are currently taking place in an old, dilapidated gym at St. Elizabeth Seton School. At St. Thomas More Middle School the students begin eating lunch at 10:30 in the morning because of shared space limitations at St. Thomas More High School.

These and other issues were the catalysts for the facility master planning process. This process resulted in the development of a Facility Master Plan for the Terra Sancta Campus looking out many years into the future. This plan includes a new pastoral center and a fine arts/multi-purpose events center at the Terra Sancta campus, as well as additional classrooms for St. Elizabeth Seton School. Rapid City Catholic School System leaders simultaneously engaged in a master planning process for the St. Thomas More campus. This master plan includes a new kitchen and lunch room for the middle school as well as future plans for additional classrooms and a new gymnasium. These are some needs among...
though this master planning process was important in looking to the future, buildings are not the complete story regarding our needs. There is a great need to fully fund our priests’ retirement. It is currently funded at around sixty percent. The Rapid City Catholic School System needs to grow its endowment to support tuition assistance and to make salaries and benefits more competitive so as to retain and attract quality educators. Finally, and no less important, as we seek to properly carry out ministry on the Native American reservations in our diocese, I would like to create an endowment to enable us to provide and expand the personnel and resources for those living on the reservations we serve. Our current outside monetary resources are decreasing each year. These are some of the basic needs as we look to the future that will help us carry out the mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As we know, if we are to live the mission we must be able to fund the mission. Although this master planning process was completed master plans are below my column.

Vision, continued from previous page

As I wrote in Through Him, With Him and In Him – A Spiritual Guide to the Diocesan Priority Plan, “While we are doing many great things in the Diocese and providing many opportunities for people to grow in their faith and step out in mission, it is important that all of our efforts are coordinated toward a more comprehensive vision for the whole diocese.” This master planning process has helped to set a more comprehensive vision aligned with the mission statement of the diocese — We, the Diocese of Rapid City, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are called to attract and form intentional disciples who joyfully, boldly and lovingly proclaim and live the mission of Jesus Christ, leading to eternal life.

As we know, if we are to live the mission we must be able to fund the mission. Although this master planning process was

sponses and interviewed three companies. We have selected Community Consulting Services (CCS) to assist in conducting a feasibility study to help determine what might be possible in terms of raising the money necessary to fund the various needs outlined above. This study will take place over the course of the next three months, with completion, hopefully, by year’s end.

The details of the feasibility study are being worked out at the current time and are not yet completed. A feasibility study will help determine which projects will move forward as well as when and how to proceed with a diocesan-wide campaign aimed at funding our mission.

In conclusion, I would like each of us to remember that first among the Core Values in our Diocesan Priority Plan, which we must embrace in all of our endeavors, is Prayer. In Jesus Christ, the Father has withheld nothing from us, but has given us everything. Nothing is lacking for those who place their faith and hope in him. But without Jesus, encountered through daily prayer, we can do nothing (cf. Jn 15:15). Without sustained prayer we can make no progress in carrying out Christ’s mission.

STMC PRIORITY & FUTURE GROWTH PROJECTS: DINING, KITCHEN, & CONCOURSE, NEW GYM, CLASSROOMS

“High school plays and the many things needed to make them successful are currently taking place in an old dilapidated gym at St. Elizabeth Seton School. At St. Thomas Middle School the students begin eating lunch at 10:30 in the morning because of shared space limitations at St. Thomas More High School.”
Advocates urge more awareness about natural family planning options

WASHINGTON (CNS) — There are plenty of myths that surround natural family planning, but advocates say the Catholic Church can help dispel those myths and raise an awareness of which fertility-awareness options exist for married couples that embrace church teaching. “It amazes me how many people are not aware of the multitude of fertility awareness–based methods out there,” said Dr. Marguerite Duane, adjunct professor at Georgetown University and executive director of Fertility Appreciation Collaborative to Teach the Science. Despite the variety of natural family planning methods — the Billings Ovulation Method, Creighton Model, Two Day Method, Marquette Model, Sympto-Thermal, Standard Days Method, among others — and the science involved in their medical application, certain myths continue to circulate regarding the effectiveness and benefits of natural family planning.

The first myth, said Duane, “is that there is ‘only one NFP method,’” i.e., the “rhythm method.” The “rhythm method,” popularized in Dr. Leo J. Latz’s 1932 book “The Rhythm of Sterility and Fertility in Women,” uses none of the biological indicators and symptoms, such as cervical mucus observations and basal body temperature, that modern natural family planning methods — also called fertility awareness–based methods — use today.

For more information, in the Diocese of Rapid City, contact Amy Julian, director of Family Life Ministries, 605-715-5214 x 236.
Summit 2017: Learning to Drop the Net

By Laurie Hallstrom

Using a replica of Vincent Van Gogh’s painting “First Steps” which shows a mother releasing a small child to toddle into the open arms of her father, Fr. Mark McCormick asked “Who is God in your life?” He continued with questions to get participants thinking and discussing their relationships with God.

Father McCormick is the director of the Office of Stewardship and Vocations and he addressed the crowd at the opening of 2017 Summit, Sept. 29-30, held at Terra Sancta, Rapid City. More than 200 people attended the conference which underscores stewardship as a Catholic way of Life with three parts: Hospitality, Faith and Discipleship.

Father McCormick introduced the two keynote speakers from Casting Nets Ministries, Wichita, Kansas — Tony Brandt and Chris Stewart. Both are former teachers who created this ministry and both are family men.

“The spirit is very much moving in my diocese,” said Brandt whose keynote address was “Discipleship: We Cannot Give What We Do Not Have.”

He went on to describe the vibrancy of the Wichita Diocese. He said average age of their priests is 44 years old; they have the highest per capita number of seminarians; 10 priests were ordained this year and 10 transitional deacons were ordained; 42 percent of the parishes have perpetual adoration; the national Sunday Mass attendance hovers around 24 percent, but it is 52 percent in Wichita; and Catholic schooling is tuition free in grades K-12 — there are four Catholic High Schools and numerous elementary schools.

He explained that the free schooling happens because there is a commitment from the bishop, priests and laity. The schools have no janitors and each family is required to clean the bathrooms twice a semester.

“It (tuition free Catholic education) happened because we had people who were living as disciples and making disciples,” said Brandt. “Our discipleship is where the rubber meets the road. Are you and I participating in the mission of the church to make disciples?”

“The first question I have to ask myself is ‘Am I a disciple? Am I really following Jesus?’” said Brandt.

Chris Stewart’s keynote address was “Stewardship: “Practical Ways We Give Ourselves Totally to God.”

He proposed people are afraid of giving themselves whole-heartedly to God because it will change their lives and the lives of those around them. “Changes scare the everything out of us,” he said. “Those most active in stewardship are the people who are in love with Jesus Christ and it is a natural thing to give to those whom you love.”

Every home family member and every church family member has a gift according Stewart. “If gifts are not used our family becomes dysfunctional,” he said.

Stewart said, “Stewardship is a great temperature gage of where we are at with Jesus.” Instead of considering money first in discussions, he encouraged the first thing to think of is “what is God’s will?”

“Money serves as a constant challenge. Time, talent and treasure give you a report card of where you are with Jesus,” he said. “If you look at your online banking statement would people know you are Christian by the way you spend your money?” he asked.

Brandt and Stewart took turns in their closing address “Making Disciples: 7 Pillars of Evangelization”

They showed how Jesus shared the faith using examples from the Gospel.

1st pillar: Prayerful — before every event in Jesus’s life he prays.

2nd pillar: Invitational — Jesus’ public ministry began with personal one-on-one invitations to follow him — it can be about anything — attending the fish fry, having coffee, or watching the big game. The invitation needs to be persistent and personal.

3rd pillar: Hospitable — Christ welcomed everyone. Even the smallest gesture done with sincerity can open someone up to life changing grace.

4th pillar: Inspirational — Christ spoke a message that was radically different than others in his era. He said to pray for those who want to persecute you, spread the faith with passion and conviction, and live for others. The Holy Spirit wants to empower you.

5th pillar: Sacramental — people must be about the Eucharist and confession and we must be leading people to the sacraments. Give others the opportunity to experience the living God and let God take over.

6th pillar: Formational — Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, multiplied the loaves and fishes and talked with his disciples, especially Peter.

7th pillar: Missionful — “As the father has sent me, now I send you,” Jn 21:20. Everything the church does is for the purpose of saving souls — bringing others to Jesus Christ. Do we have fruit to show from our faith? It is never too late to touch the heart of another nor is it in vain.

To experience the Summit go to www.rapidcitydiocese.org. It can be found on the main page by scrolling down to the “Media Resources” section or right click on “What We Do” in the upper right hand corner, select “Stewardship” and scroll down the video and audio recordings.

There are videos of the Summit keynote sessions and Bishop Robert Gruss’ workshop, “Paying attention to the Holy Spirit.” His workshop is about letting the Spirit lead you to new heights.

The following workshops were audio recorded:

Fr. Jonathan Dillon — “#Torch! 2.0” — stories of the lives of saints.

Fr. Mark McCormick and David Elkjer, “Stop the Hemorrhaging!” — drawing young people back in to the church.

Susan Safford and Craig Dyke, “Relational Ministry in the New Evangelization” — sharing God’s love with others.

Bishop Gruss, “Celebrating the Eucharist — True Encounter” — getting more out of Sunday Mass and the Eucharist.

Fr. Jim Kubicki, SJ, “Learn How to Pray, Not Just Say Prayers” — how do we speak and listen in prayer.

Panel Discussion featuring the St. Vincent de Paul Society — “Meeting Jesus in the Margins”

Bishop Gruss — “Generous Giving” changing lives.
Black Elk, Continued from page 1

He added, “Medicine men had several responsibilities. He was a medical doctor, spiritual advisor and counselor. Being in those roles, he was the spiritual leader of the whole camp.”

In violation of the Great Sioux Treaty of 1868, settlers and prospectors began pushing into Dakota Territory looking for gold in 1874. The years 1876-77 are called The Great Sioux War, a time when tribes gathered together trying to push back the fortune seekers. He was at the Battle of Little Big Horn close to the Montana-Wyoming border in 1876.

He was well traveled. Around 1877, he joined Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show and toured in Europe. The show included a command performance for Queen Victoria. He and some of his fellow performers were separated from the troupe in London and they continued touring with another Wild West show. During this time, Black Elk learned about European cultures (England, France, Germany and Italy are listed in his biographies) and he learned to speak some English. He returned to the United States in 1889.

In South Dakota, he was injured at the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. A bullet grazed his thigh.

Black Elk married Katie War Bonnet in 1892 and they had three children. She converted to Catholicism and their children were baptized Catholics. After her death in 1903, Black Elk converted. He was baptized were baptized Catholics. After her death in 1941.

Long before Vatican II encouraged the permanent diaconate, there were men serving similar roles in the Diocese of Rapid City. Jesuit priests selected Lakota men to teach the faith. They were called catechists, and taught the people in their own language. In a place with few paved roads they traveled on foot or by horseback, and later by automobile. They taught lessons and prayed with people, preparing converts for the sacraments. (WRC Oct. 1992)

In 1907 Nicholas Black Elk became a catechist. Deacon Leneaugh said he was selected because of his enthusiasm and excellent memory for learning Scripture and church teachings.

“He traveled to different states and lots of reservations proclaiming the word,” said White. “As a native man travelling off the reservation at the turn of the century he encountered a lot of prejudice. He wasn’t even welcome in restaurants.”

Black Elk died August 19, 1950, at Pine Ridge. He is credited with bringing more than 400 people into the Catholic Church.

According to Deacon Leneaugh, Black Elk is a revered Holy Man among the Lakota. He bridged the gap between traditional native spirituality and Catholicism. “He showed his people that you did not have to choose between the two, you could be both. He did not abandon his native ways when he became a Christian. To him it was together — praying to the one God.”

In 2016, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names officially changed the name of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak in the Black Hills. Black Elk said he had a powerful religious vision there in 1872. In it, the six grandfathers representing North, East, South, West, Above and Below took him to the center of the earth where he saw a fine looking man, from an unknown people, wearing an eagle feather. The man said, “My life is such that all earthly beings and growing things belong to me.” The man’s body changed to beautiful colors of light.

The Process of Beatification & Canonization

( Editor’s note: The following material is condensed from “The Process of Beatification & Canonization” published by EWTN. Used with permission.)

The process of documenting the life and virtues of a holy man or woman cannot begin until five years after death.

After the five years, the bishop of the diocese in which the individual died can petition the Holy See to allow the initialization of a Cause for Beatification and Canonization. If there are no objections, permission is communicated to the initiating bishop.

**Servant of God**

Once a Cause has begun, the individual is called a Servant of God

**Diocesan Tribunal: Informative Process**

During this first phase the Postulation established by the diocese, or religious institute, to promote the Cause must gather testimony about the life and virtues of the Servant of God. Also, the public and private writings must be collected and examined. This documentary phase of the process can take many years and concludes with the judgment of a diocesan tribunal, and the ultimate decision of the bishop. Bound volumes of documentation, or Acta (Acts) go to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.

**Congregation for the Causes of the Saints: Positio**

The Acta resulting from the documentary are committed by the Congregation to a Relator appointed from among the Congregation’s College of Relators, whose task is to superintend the Cause through the rest of the process. Working with a theological commission established by the Congregation, the Relator ensures that the Positio summarizing the life and virtues of the Servant of God is properly prepared. Then, the theological commission votes affirmatively or negatively on the Cause. This recommendation is then passed to the cardinal, archbishop and bishop members of the Congregation who in turn vote. Their vote determines whether the Cause lives or dies. If the vote is affirmative, the recommendation of a Decree of Heroic Virtues is sent to the Holy Father, whose judgment is final.

**Venerable**

Once the person’s Heroic Virtues have been recognized by the pope, they are called Venerable

**Diocese: First Miracle Proposed in Support of the Cause**

After the diocesan process is concluded the proposed miracle is studied by a scientific and then a theological commission of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. The vote of this commission is forwarded to the bishop members of the Congregation whose affirmative vote is communicated to the Holy Father.

**Supreme Pontiff: Decree of a Miracle**

The consent of the Holy Father to the decision of the Congregation results in a Decree of a Miracle. Canonization is now possible.

**Saint**

Supreme Pontiff: Canonization

By canonization the Pope does not make the person a saint. Rather, he declares that the person is with God and is an example of following Christ worthy of imitation by the faithful.
**October 18, Wednesday**

- **Catholic Medical Association White Mass:** Held on the feast of St. Luke the Physician, Mass 5:30 p.m., Holy Cross Chapel, Terra Sancta, will include a dedication of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Guild and a blessing of physicians and medical professionals, including physicians and other practitioners, nurses, assistants and administrative personnel. Dinner and program to follow. $30 per person. ✉ Amy 605-716-5214 or ✉ajulian@diorc.org.

- **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 October 29. Register at ✉ terra sancta.org/heart2heart/.

- **Diocesan Women’s Retreat:** Open to all women of the diocese desiring to open their hearts to live out their vocation boldly, joyfully, and lovingly. Facilitated by Amy Julian, Director of Family Life Ministries. Ends October 29. ✉ Amy 605-716-5214 or ✉ajulian@diorc.org.

**October 27, Friday**

- **Benedictine Weekend:** For women between the ages of 18 and 59 who are interested in finding out more about monastic life. Join the community for daily life, prayer, and have time for reflection and discussion. Begins at 7 p.m. on Friday and ends November 19 at 2 p.m. ✉ Sister Mary Wegher ✉srmarywegher@yahoo.com or 605-343-8011.

- **Natural Family Planning:** Seminar for engaged couples or anyone wanting to learn more about natural family planning. To be held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City, from 9 a.m.-noon. Preregistration required. ✉ Amy 605-716-5214 or ✉ajulian@diorc.org.

**October 31, Tuesday**

- **WRC Deadline for submissions**

- **Paper mailed Tuesday, November 21**
  ✉ 605-343-3541
  ✉ lhallstrom@diorc.org or ✉ bberreth@diorc.org


- **World Apostolate of Fatima:** First Friday Mass at 5:30 p.m. with prayers and devotions. First Saturday, November 4, 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.

- **Rachel’s Vineyard:** For those hurting due to an abortion. Held in Bismarck, N.D. ✉ Carol Kling 605-374-5639 or ✉ckling@splains.com about the retreat. Ends November 5. ✉ www.rachelsvineyard.org for information about Rachel’s Vineyard.
Emulate Nicholas Black Elk as a model of faith

There are a lot of great things happening in our diocese. I see many ways that we are moving from having simply a culture of maintenance to developing a culture of mission in our parishes. The more we embrace our diocesan priority plan together, the more we will see the abundant fruit of living as missionary disciples.

To lay it before us again, our Sacred Mission as a diocese is: “We, the Diocese of Rapid City, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are called to attract and form intentional disciples who joyfully, boldly and lovingly proclaim and live the mission of Jesus Christ leading to eternal life.” We are called to keep before us our vision statement as well: “Reconcile — Make Disciples — Live the Mission.”

As I reflect on our mission and vision statements for the diocese, I cannot help but think about Nicholas William Black Elk Sr., who was a Lakota catechist in our diocese. I was excited to read in last month’s West River Catholic that Bishop Robert Gruss will be offering a Mass as he opens the cause for sainthood of Nicholas Black Elk, on at Saturday, Oct. 21, 4 p.m., in Holy Rosary Church, Pine Ridge, on the campus of the Red Cloud Indian School.

This Mass is for everyone in our diocese and not just for the Native American community. As the cause for Black Elk’s sainthood is being formally opened, I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 12:26, “If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.”

This is great news for all the people of our diocese. We should be inspired by the story of Nicolas Black Elk who, after converting to Catholicism, spent his time building up the local church. As I read the story of Black Elk, I see our diocesan mission statement and vision statement come to life. I also see Black Elk as a faithful steward who lived stewardship as a way of life.

They say Black Elk watched and studied the Christian faith which grew out of his curiosity for Christianity. The life of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, who was canonized a saint by Pope Benedict the XIV, on Oct. 21, 2012, was a particular inspiration to him. In 1885, he signed the petition supporting her cause for canonization.

In 1904, he met a Jesuit priest who invited him to study Christianity at Holy Rosary Mission near Pine Ridge. I see in this the first lens of our stewardship initiative — generous hospitality: invitation, welcome and fellowship. There is nothing like a personal invitation. This personal invitation by this priest opened the door for Nicholas Black Elk to begin to understand the way of Christ, and on the Feast of St. Nicholas, Dec. 6, 1904, he was baptized.

In 1907, he was appointed as a catechist because of his love for Christ, his enthusiasm and an excellent memory for learning Scripture and Catholic teachings. Deacon Marlon Leneaugh describes Nicholas Black Elk as one might describe St. Paul: “He traveled widely to various reservations; preaching, sharing stories and teaching the Catholic faith with his ‘Two Roads Model’ of the catechism (the black road and the red road — the black road representing evil and the red road representing good).”

Black Elk’s two roads reminds me of St. Ignatius of Loyola’s teaching in the Spiritual Exercises on the meditation of the two standards (flags). As disciples, we are called to choose where we are going to stand — with Jesus or with the world. No matter what life the Spirit has drawn us to, once we are baptized and confirmed, we are called to stand in Jesus’ company under his flag, under his standard.

Deacon Marlon continues: “Black Elk’s mission was to build the faith among his people and to strengthen the relationships between native and non-native people. He did this by promoting his culture as he worked in the Black Hills and by promoting the message of Jesus Christ as love, peace and harmony that was revealed to him at an early age in the vision.”

His mission reminds me of our mission: to Reconcile — Make Disciples — Live the Mission. Today we continue his legacy when we call forth the power of the Holy Spirit to bring a new Pentecost among us as God’s people, native and non-native, working together as the Body of Christ.

Nicholas Black Elk also came to mind as I read the book “Return: How to Draw Your Child Back to the Church” by Brandon Vogt. In chapter six, Vogt talks about the importance of learning to equip ourselves in the faith. That was very much part of Black Elk’s conversion as he watched and studied the Catholic faith.

This, too, is at the heart of our stewardship initiative (lively faith: prayer, study and formation). Vogt contends that it is important that we equip ourselves, learning our faith through the study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible, but we also need to know our testimony and be willing to give it.

Nicholas Black Elk equipped himself to know the Catholic faith and to live it in the context of being Lakota. He also inspired others to live Christ by his own story.

This opening of the cause for sainthood inspires us to continue to equip ourselves with a solid understanding of the teachings of our faith and in the giving of our testimony to what Christ is doing in our lives. After Oct. 21 Nicholas Black Elk will be called Servant of God. His consistent faith as a catechist and his teaching in joyfully living the Catholic way of life has become a beacon for all of us in our diocese and for the church as a whole. May he model for us a way of walking on the road with Christ, leading us to reconciliation and peace among all God’s people.
The Catechism of the Catholic Church 25 years later

John Paul II called the Extraordinary Synod of 1985 to assess what had gone right and what had gone wrong in two decades of implementing the Second Vatican Council. In Vaticanese, it was styled “extraordinary” because it fell outside the normal sequence of synods. But Synod-1985 was extraordinary in the ordinary sense of the word, too.

It occasioned an almighty row over a book-length interview, The Ratzinger Report, that pretty well set the terms of debate in the Synod hall. It was the Synod that came up with an interpretive key that linked the sixteen documents of Vatican II, through the image of the church as a community, a communion of disciples in mission; thus Synod-1985 accelerated the Church’s transition to the church of the New Evangelization. And it gave us the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

At a press conference shortly after the Synod, Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, the president of the U.S. bishops conference, was asked about the new catechism the Synod fathers recommended. “Don’t worry,” Bishop Malone, replied, “you’ll never live to see it.” The bishop was, of course, wrong about that, and Pope John Paul II promulgated the Catechism of the Catholic Church on October 11, 1992.

For those expecting a Q&A format like the old Baltimore Catechism, the Catechism of the Catholic Church was a surprise. While divided into 2,865 bite-size sections, the Catechism is a discursive exposition of Catholic faith in full. Its structure, which mirrors the Catechism of the Council of Trent, reaches back to the early church and the patristic catechumenate. Thus the Catechism’s four parts reflect the four pillars of Christian initiation: the “Profession of Faith” (the Creed); the “Celebration of the Christian Mystery” (the Sacraments); “Life in Christ” (Christian Morality); and “Christian Prayer.”

Each of these four parts is then subdivided. Part One begins with a reflection on revelation and our response to it before examining the twelve articles of the Apostles Creed, the baptismal creed of the ancient Roman Church. Part Two is structured around the seven sacraments. Part Three vastly enriches the Tridentine pattern by beginning with the Beatitudes and our vocation to beatitude or happiness, which sets the framework for the exposition of the Ten Commandments. Part Four begins with a meditation on Jesus and the Samaritan woman, explaining the Lord’s “thirst” for souls as the beginning of prayer, before illustrating Christian prayer through the seven petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.

Thus Parts One and Two of the Catechism illuminate God’s action in seeking us out — the Catechism’s very first section speaks of the divine invitation to communion, while the sacraments are described at the beginning of Part Two as the extension of Christ’s earthly life in us: as Pope Leo the Great put it, “what was visible in our Savior has passed over into his mysteries.” Parts Three and Four then outline our response to God’s action through the moral life and prayer. Part Three is a rebuff to those rigorists and laxists who continue to misconstrue Christian morality as a form of legalism: the moral law is important, the Catechism insists, because these are the guideposts provided by revelation and reason for the pilgrimage to beatitude and happiness, the goals of the moral life. Part Four speaks forcefully of “the battle of prayer,” the fight “against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has made a considerable difference over the past twenty-five years, because it was one crucial answer to the question posed to me in 1996 by a great first-generation Christian, Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria. Speaking of one problem Synod-1985 was called to address, the cardinal asked, “How can (anyone) join a group of permanently confused people who don’t know where they’re going?” And while there’s still considerable work to be done to deepen the reform and renewal of catechetics, the mere fact of the Catechism helped end the silly season in religious education while establishing a compelling, and in many cases quite beautifully written, benchmark and pattern for the future.

If you’ve not read it, this silver jubilee is a good occasion to do so. Then share the Catechism with a friend.

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! I am calling you to be generous in renunciation, fasting and prayer for all those who are in temptation, and are your brothers and sisters. In a special way I am imploring you to pray for priests and for all the consecrated, that they may love Jesus still more fervently, that the Holy Spirit may fill their hearts with joy; that they may witness Heaven and Heavenly mysteries. Many souls are in sin, because there are not those who sacrifice themselves and pray for their conversion. I am with you and am praying that your hearts may be filled with joy. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

9/25/17
A Prayer for Stillness

Be still and know that I am God. Scripture assures us that if we are still we will come to know God, but arriving at stillness is easier said than done. As Blaise Pascal once stated, “All the miseries of the human person come from the fact that no one can sit still for one hour.” Achieving stillness seems beyond us and this leaves us with a certain dilemma, we need stillness to find God, but we need God’s help to find stillness. With this in mind, I offer a prayer for stillness.

God of stillness and of quiet …

- Still the restlessness of my youth: still that hunger that would have me be everywhere, that hunger to be connected to everyone, that wants to see and taste all that is, that robs me of peace on a Friday night. Quiet those grandiose dreams that want me to stand out, to be special. Give me the grace to live more contentedly inside my own skin.

- Still the fever I inhale from all the energy that surrounds me, that makes my life feel small. Let me know that my own life is enough, that I need not make an assertion of myself, even as the whole world beckons this of me from a million electronic screens. Give me the grace to sit at peace inside my own life.

- Still my anxiety, my heartaches, my worries, and stop me from always being outside the present moment. Let each day’s worries be sufficient onto themselves. Give me the grace to know that you have pronounced my name in love, that my name is written in heaven, that I am free to live without anxiety.

- Still my unrelenting need to be busy all the time, to occupy myself, to be always planning for tomorrow, to fill every minute with some activity, to seek distraction rather than quiet. Give me the grace to sit in a quiet that lets me savor a sunset and actually taste the water I’m drinking.

- Still the disappointment that comes with age. Soothe the unacknowledged anger I feel from not achieving much of what I’ve wanted in life, the failure that I feel in the face of all that I’ve left untried and unfinished. Still in me the bitterness that comes from failure. Save me from the jealousy that comes unbidden as I begrudgingly accept the limits of my life. Give me the grace to accept what circumstance and failure have dealt me.

- Still in me the fear of my own shadow, the fear I feel in the face of the powerful, dark forces that unconsciously threaten me. Give me the courage to face my darkness as well as my luminosity. Give me the grace to not be fearful before my own complexity.

- Still in me my doubts, my anxieties about your existence, about your concern, and about your fidelity. Calm inside me the compulsion to leave a mark, to plant a tree, to have a child, to write a book, to create some form of immortality for myself. Give me the grace to trust, even in darkness and doubt, that you will give me immortality.

- Still my heart so that I may know that you are God, that I may know that you create and sustain my every breath, that you breathe the whole universe into existence every second, that everyone, myself no less than everyone else, is your beloved, that you want our lives to flourish, that you desire our happiness, that nothing falls outside your love and care, and that everything and everybody is safe in your gentle, caring hands, in this world and the next.
“...who else will give...? The people rejoiced... for they had given to the Lord”

1 Chronicles 29:5&9
Who Else...?

Giving IS giving to the Lord. The Lord continues his saving work among us through the gifts of each disciple. Without these gifts we cannot continue to attract and form intentional disciples who joyfully, boldly and lovingly live and proclaim the gospel. Will you give to the annual appeal this year? Will you allow your gift to become a place of peace. There’s only one God and Christus Victor helped me realize that conflict completely. It does transform love. You can see it as it happens. You can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. You see a lot of people blossoming and growing in their faith at Christus Victor and they want to return to give something back, completing the circle.

Rawly and Miranda Benson
St. Mary Church, Lemmon

Veritatis Splendor Institute

“Faith On The Road: Faith On The Road was a terrific experience for the entire parish. It brought some new insights to parishioners here. It’s a special opportunity that we wouldn’t get any other way. Adoration, with Fr. Mark (McCormick) leading it, was really a powerful experience. But where it really affected the parish was in lifting up and filling up the volunteers and lay ministers here, so we could continue doing God’s work in the parish.”

Germaine Little Bear
St. Isidore Jesiun Church, Rapid City

Native American Ministries

“I believe that looking deeper into our relationship with God through a group experience like Faith On The Road has helped our faith to blossom and grow in its own way.”

Rowdy and Miranda Benson
St. Mary Church, Lemmon

Vocations

“Faith On The Road was a terrific experience for the entire parish. It brought some new insights to parishioners here. It’s a special opportunity that we wouldn’t get any other way. Adoration, with Fr. Mark (McCormick) leading it, was really a powerful experience. But where it really affected the parish was in lifting up and filling up the volunteers and lay ministers here, so we could continue doing God’s work in the parish.”

Germaine Little Bear
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Faith On The Road

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Germaine Little Bear
St. Isidore Jesiun Church, Rapid City

Faith On The Road

“The culture of my parish really helped me to discern the vocation. So I was really needing and searching for back then. It enhanced my spirituality. It brought me to a place of peace. There’s only one God and Christus Victor helped me realize that conflict completely. It does transform love. You can see it as it happens. You can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. You see a lot of people blossoming and growing in their faith at Christus Victor and they want to return to give something back, completing the circle.”

Rowdy and Miranda Benson
St. Mary Church, Lemmon

BUDGETED 17/18 OPERATING INCOME

Western 50 Catholic Foundation
$500,000
Black & Indian Mission Office
120,000
Catholic Extension Society
92,280
Committee on Home Missions
80,000
Other
49,082
Total Gifts from Outside Sources
$841,362
Diocesan Programs
$779,431
Terra Sancta Retreat Center Income
371,000
Adopt a Seminarian Funds
141,000
Terra Sancta Guild Annual Giving Society
120,000
Investment Income
85,604
Other Gifts
53,566
Total Other Income
$1,306,461
Annual Appeal Gifts
$1,416,450
Total Diocesan Income
$3,764,273

BUDGETED 17/18 OPERATING EXPENSES

Terra Sancta Retreat Center
$743,101
Spiritual Development (Ministry Formation)
50,233
Vocations Office and Seminary Education
416,688
Social Concerns & Family Life
(Native Concerns, Catholic Social Services)
302,836
Chancellor Administration
307,993
Evangelization - Communications
263,066
Development & Stewardship
254,194
Pastoral Programs
210,297
Family Life
19,004
Parish Accounting Office
176,328
Grants to Parishes
125,800
Office of Stewardship
18,423
Office of Bishop
61,345
Safe Environment Office
50,062
U.S. Bishop & Vatican Assessments
21,465
Total Operating Expenses
$3,764,373
John “Pete” & Judy Ackley
St. John the Evangelist, Ft. Pierre
Married in Ft. Pierre
November 25, 1967

David & Gloria Allardyce
Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont
Married in Rapid City
April 29, 1967

Edward & Donna Carpenter
Blessed Sacrament, Rapid City
Married in Pierre
December 26, 1967

Deacon Cal & Joan Clifford
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Martin
Married in Rapid City
September 9, 1967

Bud & Arlene Kopp
St. Francis of Assisi, Sturgis
Married in Sturgis
June 3, 1967

Larry & Betty Leitzke
Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City
Married in Lansford, N.D.
October 6, 1967

Terry & Lorraine Liewer
St. Anthony, Fairfax
Married in Fairfax
August 12, 1967

Chuck & Caroline Farrar
Blessed Sacrament, Rapid City
Married in Chicago, Ill.
June 24, 1967

Tom & Irene Giesinger
St. Joseph, Ridgeview
Married in Milwaukee, Wis.
July 22, 1967

Charles & June Gross
St. Paul, Belle Fourche
Married in Kimball
March 27, 1967

Hugh & JoAnn Hart
St. Therese the Little Flower, Rapid City
Married in Philip
July 15, 1967

Jay & Rosemary Hogan
Blessed Sacrament, Rapid City
Married in Lead
September 30, 1967

George & Retta Jackson
Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City
Married in Presho
September 30, 1967

Bud & Arlene Kopp
St. Francis of Assisi, Sturgis
Married in Sturgis
June 3, 1967

Larry & Betty Leitzke
Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City
Married in Lansford, N.D.
October 6, 1967

Terry & Lorraine Liewer
St. Anthony, Fairfax
Married in Fairfax
August 12, 1967

Larry and Julie Meyer
Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City
Married in Barnum, Iowa
November 11, 1967

Wes & Gelene Moke
St. Paul, Belle Fourche
Married in Kimball
October 14, 1967

Bill & Karen Richards
Blessed Sacrament, Rapid City
Married in Seneca
July 3, 1967

Paul & Ardie Ruder
Blessed Sacrament, Rapid City
Married in Stevens Point, Wis.
August 5, 1967

Val & Sheila Schweitzer
Holy Cross, Timber Lake
Married in Timmer Lake
May 27, 1967

Kenneth & Donna Wetz
St. Mary Star of the Sea, Newell
Married in Newell
December 30, 1967

(Photos provided by parishioners and the West River Catholic)
When is it a sin to make a referral?

During World War II, if a contractor had been asked to construct a building knowing that it would serve as a gas chamber in Auschwitz, it goes without saying that he ought not agree to do it. By laying the foundation and supervising the plumbing, electrical and duct work, he would be contributing to, or enabling, the subsequent commission of atrocities against prisoners in the concentration camp.

But significant concerns would also arise if he were to reply: “I'm sorry, I have a moral objection to building this structure, but let me put in a call to a colleague who is a contractor, and he will do it for you.” By placing the call, he would still be a part of the causal chain leading to the building of the facility, and to the subsequent evils that would be carried out in it. By making a referral to engage someone else’s services for something immoral, we can still be involved in, responsible for, the commission of grave evils.

Among medical professionals, situations can likewise arise in which they may be tempted to make a referral for an immoral procedure, supposing that because they are not doing the procedure themselves, they are now morally “in the clear.”

For example, a pharmacist who lives and works in a state or jurisdiction where physician-assisted suicide has been legalized may be asked to fill a prescription for suicide pills. By declining to fill that prescription, he or she avoids immediately cooperating with a customer’s immoral decision to commit suicide. But it would still raise moral concerns if the pharmacist said to the customer: “Let me pass this prescription to my co-worker, because, although I cannot fill it, he can help you out.” The first pharmacist remains a contributor in the chain of events leading up to the carrying out of the evil act, and he would be cooperating in evil by making the referral to his co-worker.

A “referral” in moral terms is when the person who refuses to do the immoral procedure himself or herself directs the requesting person to another individual or institution because the other individual or institution is known or believed to be willing to provide the immoral procedure in question. The decision to offer the referral indicates that the one doing it is choosing, at least implicitly, to help the requester carry out the evil act, and such implicit willing of evil acts can never be morally acceptable.

Making a referral can also convey a sense of tacit acceptance and approval of that evil, and therefore the referring provider can also become guilty of wrongdoing by giving scandal. Someone who gives scandal helps to form the immoral will of another. In fact, the term “scandal” in theology refers to any situation. A conscientious pharmacist could also say to the customer, “There may be other pharmacies around here that can assist you,” or even, “there may be others working at this pharmacy who can assist you,” and leave it at that. This would not be a referral, but a simple statement regarding commonly available public knowledge. The pharmacist could then return the prescription to the customer, rather than passing it to a co-worker, and the customer would then have to initiate a new “causal chain” or series of choices as he or she seeks to obtain the immoral medications, looking around and inquiring about who might fill the prescription. This removes the original pharmacist from the causal chain, avoids making a referral to a colleague, and diminishes or eliminates responsibility for any subsequent evils that the customer may end up committing.

Regrettably, pharmacists and other health care professionals today are coming under increasing fire from the culture around them as they are being told, as part of their job description, that they have to ignore their well-formed consciences and fill prescriptions for suicide pills, the abortion pill or contraception. Yet a double-standard is clearly at work, for if the prescription were for something a pharmacist knew would be used as a date rape drug to take advantage of a woman at a party, everyone would declare the pharmacist to be a moral hero for refusing.

To sum up, then, a great deal of care, vigilance and determination is needed not only for us to avoid committing certain evils, but also to avoid making a referral for those evils to be carried out by others.
Cardinal Dolan Launches 2017-18 Program with Respect Life Month Statement

WASHINGTON—In a statement to mark Respect Life Month, October 2017, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York reiterated the need to build a culture of life throughout the year. Cardinal Dolan chairs the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The Cardinal’s statement launches the year-long 2017-18 Respect Life Program (www.usccb.org/respectlife), which provides materials exploring the theme, “Be Not Afraid.”

“Looking back over the last year, there’s been a lot of uncertainty, suffering, and heartache. Between tragedies that occur in the public eye and trials that take place in our personal lives, there’s no shortage of reasons we cry out to God,” Cardinal Dolan said. “At such times, we may feel alone and unequipped ... But we have an anchor of hope to cling to. ... God says to us, ‘Do not fear; I am with you’ (Isaiah 41:10).”

“There are times we may doubt the value of our own lives or falter at the thought of welcoming and embracing the life of another. But ... He makes all things beautiful. He makes all things new. He is the God of redemption,” the cardinal said.

“That’s powerful. That’s something to hold onto.”

“As followers of Jesus Christ. ... we are called to be missionary disciples ... commissioned to reach out to one another, especially to the weak and vulnerable,” Cardinal Dolan said.

Begun in 1972, the Respect Life Program highlights the value and dignity of human life throughout the year. Materials are intended for use across the spectrum of Catholic life, work, ministry, and education. The 2017-18 Respect Life Program features six articles on a range of issues. They address practical steps to build a culture of life, compelling reasons to oppose assisted suicide, principles to consider at the end of life, an overview of the role of conscience, offering genuine support to a friend who’s considering abortion, and a Catholic Q & A on the death penalty. Many digital and print resources are offered, including tool kits for priests and deacons, parishes, Catholic education, Respect Life ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, faith formation, and communications.

The full text of Cardinal Dolan’s statement is available along with many other resources at www.usccb.org/respectlife.

Men pray Oct. 4 at a makeshift memorial for victims of a mass shooting along the Las Vegas Strip. A gunman, identified as Stephen Craig Paddock, 64, was perched in a room on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay casino resort hotel, he fired off hundreds of rounds of bullets down on the crowd below, ultimately leaving at least 59 people dead and more than 500 injured. It is the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history. (CNS photo/Mike Blake, Reuters)

Do not let hate, violence ‘have the last word,’ says Las Vegas bishop

LAS VEGAS (CNS) — At an emotional interfaith prayer service at Guardian Angel Cathedral, Las Vegas Bishop Joseph A. Pepe told those filling the pews Oct. 2 that “in the face of tragedy we need each other. And in the face of violence we stand together because we cannot let hate and violence have the last word,” he said in his remarks at the evening service. “We gather from all faiths and walks of life. We pray and sing and listen to the word of God to remind ourselves that amidst this tragedy God is with us,” Bishop Pepe said. “God cries with our tears.” The service at the cathedral brought people together as they were still trying to fathom what had occurred barely 24 hours earlier: A gunman, later identified by law enforcement officials as Stephen Craig Paddock, 64, showered a crowd of about 22,000 attending a country music festival in a venue on the Las Vegas Strip the evening of Oct. 1. From his perch in a room high on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay casino resort hotel, he fired off hundreds of rounds of bullets down on the crowd below, ultimately leaving at least 59 people dead and more than 500 injured. It is the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

A Safe Environment for Children and Young People

The Catholic Diocese of Rapid City is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and young people. To report allegations of sexual abuse by church personnel, contact 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.
Strengthening Family Ties

CSS honors Richard Thompson — recipient of the 2017 Founder’s Award

**By Laurie Hallstrom**

Catholic Social Services held their annual banquet on October 1 in Rapid City. The Founder’s Award, given in honor of the late Msgr. William O’Connell, went to Richard Thompson, former Superintendent for the Rapid City Catholic School System.

Thompson was instrumental in getting St. Thomas More High School started in 1991. Before the current building was completed in 1995, classes were held in the basement of National American University. He worked as a principal, superintendent and fundraiser for a new building.

Three people gave testimonials on behalf of Thompson. Barbara Honeycutt is the current Superintendent of the RCSS. She previously served in the development department for the schools when Thompson was superintendent.

She roasted him on the conditions of the new Catholic high school: “In the fall of 1993, my family and I moved to Rapid City from Grand Island, Nebraska. It was important to us that there be a Catholic School System in the town we relocated to. I learned about St. Thomas More High School and we decided we had found our new home. When I inquired about the school I don’t remember being told that the students ate lunch on the floor in the hallways, that every clock in the building had a different time on it, or that students had to crawl over their desks in Wayne Sullivan’s math class in order to be seated.”

His daughter, Kara Thompson, who teaches at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia, spoke second. She was attending with her sister Tammy and brother Brian. (Their brother Kevin passed away in 1986.) “I am a 1996 graduate of St. Thomas More. Msgr. O’Connell was a dear member of our family, of Kevin's especially. The Founder’s Award contains special significance for all the Thompsons.”

She lauded her father’s sense of fairness and justice and his work toward seeing underprivileged students get a Catholic education.

Archbishop of Philadelphia Charles J. Chaput, OFM Cap, gave his congratulations to Thompson via video testimony. Thompson worked for Archbishop Chaput in the Diocese of Rapid City and the Archdiocese of Denver. “Dick Thompson is one of my heroes. He is a great man; he served the Diocese of Rapid City in extraordinary ways. Back in the early days of St. Thomas More (High School) I don’t think we could have survived without the encouragement and hard work he committed to education, to the church, to the Diocese of Rapid City, and to his family. I can’t think of anybody who deserves this honor more.”

Jim Kinyon, executive director of CSS, and Susan Raposa, president of the CSS board, presented the Founders Award.

When Thompson took the stage he thanked Honeycutt and her staff for keeping the school going.

He thanked his children for coming and his wife of 55 years, Judy, for keeping him going. “This award acknowledges that by the grace of God and the hard work of hundreds of people great things can be accomplished and continued,” he said. “It means so much because in reflecting on the life and spirit of O’C what better priestly model of Christ to the community of the faithful could we have than O’C? He’s a very special member of many families here I know, and certainly of ours,” said Thompson. He recalled all the support Msgr. O’Connell had given his family — especially when his son Kevin had gone through treatment for Ewing’s sarcoma of the spine.

John Garvey, president, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., a nationally recognized expert in constitutional law, religious liberty, and the 1st amendment, gave the keynote address.

Garvey said, “Most universities promote the idea that there are no good or bad choices. I am the judge of my own good; you are the judge of yours. If you mean to do good, that’s what matters most.”

That brings up two areas of concern — moral ambiguity and moral complexity. He gave examples of moral ambiguity themes promoted in pop culture. One is where physician assisted suicide is looked at as heroic and another where non-traditional family structures are held up as just as good as old-fashioned ones. In contrast, he used the Catechism and teachings of Pope Francis to illustrate Catholic moral tradition offers clear counter-cultural answers.

For moral complexity, he addressed a personal issue — the decision to attend a family wedding wherein a person had not gotten their previous marriage annulled. There was a lot of family discussion on whether attending would give young family members the impression they approved of the union. Garvey said he attended and was following Pope Francis’ position on staying close to a person in a messy real life situation. When the time was right, family members encouraged the groom to get an annulment and then be married in the church. Which is what happened.

Garvey said, “The Holy Father says to error on the side of charity. In Francis's words, “Heal the wounds and warm the hearts of the faithful.”

The Order of St. Benedict Awards are given to those who exemplify the spirit of the Sisters of St. Martin Monastery, Rapid City. This year CSS recognized Susan Meyer, Dan Duffy, and the student council of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Elementary, St. Thomas More Middle School and St. Thomas More High School.
Black Elk: he prayed with his pipe and his rosary

BY DEACON MARLON LENEAUGH
DIRECTOR OF NATIVE MINISTRY

In an historic event on Saturday, October 21, Bishop Robert Gruss will open the Cause for Canonization for Oglala Holy Man, Nicholas Black Elk at a Mass in Holy Rosary Church on the campus of Red Cloud Indian School. The Mass will begin at 4 p.m.

In March 2016 a petition was presented to Bishop Gruss by the grandchildren of Nicholas Black Elk. The petition had more than 1600 signatures from people across the country and across the diocese. The petition asks Bishop Gruss to open the Cause for Canonization for Nicholas Black Elk.

Nicholas Black Elk was a prominent medicine man who overcame many obstacles and embraced Catholicism. He was the fourth generation named Black Elk and was the third in succeeding his father and grandfather as a medicine man. While growing up, he listened to stories told by his elders and in doing so he learned bravery and courage and developed a strong cultural and spiritual identity.

Tunkasila blessed him with a great vision at an early age. He recalled, “I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and all around, and beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being.” His gifts were later affirmed as he went on to become a renowned healer and respected medicine man at a very young age.

Feast day of St. Nicholas, December 6, is a day to remember. Nicholas Black Elk was a prominent medicine man who overcame many obstacles and embraced Catholicism. He was the fourth generation named Black Elk and was the third in succeeding his father and grandfather as a medicine man.

Black Elk’s gifts were affirmed as he went on to become a renowned healer and respected medicine man at a very young age.

Being a spiritual leader, he was curious about Christianity and began to study and watched others who participated. In 1904 he met a Jesuit priest from Holy Rosary Mission who invited him to study Christianity at the mission. He was a great student and quick learner. On the feast of St. Nicholas, December 6, he was baptized and took Nicholas as his baptismal name, because St. Nicholas’s generosiy and Christian charity appealed to him. He followed in his grandfather’s footsteps as a traditional spiritual leader in service to the native people.

He was appointed a catechist by the Jesuits because of his love for Christ, his enthusiasm and zeal for learning scripture and church teachings. He loved preaching and teaching, and like St. Paul traveled widely to various reservations; sharing stories of faith and teaching catechism from Lacombe’s Ladder, also known as, “The Two Roads Catechism Model.” Through his efforts and model lifestyle he is attributed to bringing more than 400 individuals to baptism, and since then books about his life have inspired countless others on their spiritual journeys.

Some of his preaching was telling others that God sent his son, to restore order and peace upon the earth and that Jesus the Christ was crucified, but he will come again at the final judgement. He believed this and spread this message to all who would listen to him.

He was a spiritual man who saw Christ in both worlds, the Lakota and the Christian. He prayed with his pipe and his rosary. He might have been one of the first evangelists to show others that you can be native and Catholic and didn’t have to choose one over the other. He modeled inculcated prayer and lived a lifestyle that valued and respected both spiritualities. He served as a bridge between two worlds as he traveled to promote understanding and harmony between races of people and the Catholic Church and Lakota spirituality. He will continue to unite peoples from different cultures and backgrounds and bring them to the one Lord of us all.

Nicholas Black Elk is a gift to the universal church and his canonization would be an extraordinary event for all who call upon him for intercessory prayers. It’s very exciting to imagine a possible Native American saint from the Diocese of Rapid City.

Giving Thanks ....

Since 1889, the Sisters of St. Martin Monastery have ministered to the people of western South Dakota through prayer, education and health care as identified in the Articles of Incorporation in 1895.

Join us in November as we take time to reflect on all that the Benedictine Sisters of St. Martin Monastery founded throughout our diocese — schools, hospitals, and more!

Look for more information in the November issue of the West River Catholic. Highlights will be sent out to your local parish for bulletins or check out Terra Sancta Retreat Center’s Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest post for more ways to give thanks for these wonderful women serving our Lord through their ministry for us!
When people talk about potential famine, they mention South Sudan. But about 1 million people who live just over the border, in Sudan's Nuba Mountains, also face a food emergency.

“I call it famine,” said Bishop Macram Max Gassis, retired bishop of El Obeid, Sudan. The “hunger the people are experiencing” in the Nuba Mountains is “not totally due to the cruelty of nature but, unfortunately, is man-made.”

A survey in the diocese’s area of operation, published in June, found that 74 percent of respondents had no food in their homes and 55 percent had, in the previous 30 days, at least one member of the household go a whole day and night without eating at least once.

South Sudan won its independence from Sudan in 2011, and Nuba was a disputed region that remained in Sudan, despite its people’s affiliations with the South.

Today, people in Sudan’s Nuba Mountains are being bombed by their own government, Bishop Gassis told Catholic News Service.

The Diocese of El Obeid issued a statement in early August stating that Nuba communities “are surrounded by battle lines, effectively isolated.” It said delivery of basic services by the Sudanese government and international humanitarian organizations stopped in mid-2011.

The diocese “is one of a handful of humanitarian actors delivering critical and life-saving assistance in the area under extremely difficult conditions characterized by high levels of insecurity,” its statement said.

The suffering “is evident in the vast number” of people needing food aid and is worse than any previous suffering in the memory of any diocesan staff member, the statement said.

“Here, I have shed tears watching emaciated women with babies on their backs being turned away when they get to the front of the long line because there is nothing left for them,” Oliver Waindi, executive director of the Bishop Gassis Relief and Rescue Foundation, told CNS. “The suffering is as I imagine hell to be.”

“There are a lot of children dying here,” Waindi said, noting that before the changed weather patterns of the past two years, “people had very little to eat, but now they have nothing at all.”

Bishop Gassis said last year, the rainy season was poor, and this year floods have ruined what little people were able to plant.

Residents of the Nuba Mountains are walking for weeks to seek refuge in South Sudan, Waindi said.

“They do that because, in South Sudan, when their turn comes to get a simple bowl of grain, they are more likely to get it,” he said.

California communities hit hard by wildfires

SANTA ROSA, Calif. (CNS) — The Diocese of Santa Rosa “has been hit hard” and “is in an ongoing state of uncertainty” because of Northern California wildfires that began the night of Oct. 8, said Bishop Robert F. Vasa. As of Oct 12, at least 12 major fires were raging across the region, according to news reports. Of those 12, at least five were zero to 5 percent contained, and the rest were 15 to 70 percent contained. Fanned by warm winds, the fires forced 20,000 to evacuate, and left at least 23 people dead, with hundreds of others missing. Over 17 fires were burning across the state, including in Southern California; more than 115,000 acres had burned.

In a statement Oct. 12, the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ domestic policy committee called for prayer for all impacted by the fires. “Today we ask for the intercession of Almighty God as wildfires rage in Northern California,” said Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, quoting from Verse 10, from Isaiah 41. “Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious. I am your God.”

“As brave men and women respond to these disasters, battling the fires and helping people to safety, we call upon God for improved weather, for the blessing of rain and favorable winds, to assist them,” the bishop said. “We pray that those who are missing or are still in harm’s way will be found and protected. May God grant eternal rest to those who have died, and bring them into glory with him forever.”
In Your Prayers is designed to help us remember the birthdays, ordination and death anniversaries of the priests who serve us.

Ordinations: November 29, Fr. Vincent Suparman, SCJ.


Veritatis Splendor Institute Certification

Sandy Stukel, Gregory, was commissioned as a graduate of the Veritatis Splendor Institute master program September 17. Bishop Robert Gruss awarded certificates to 22 people completing the basic certification program and 14 people completing the master certification course. The classes are sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation to prepare disciples of Christ for the mission of the Catholic Church. The Mass was held at the Terra Sancta Retreat Center, Holy Cross Chapel, Rapid City. For more information on the program contact Director Susan Safford at 716-5214 ext. 230 or Administrative Assistant Susan Thompson at the same phone number, ext. 221. Those receiving certificates included: (Basic) Dianne Aultmann, Rapid City; Paula Blasius, Wall; Douglas Cahoy, Spearfish; Jan Carlson, Spearfish; Elizabeth Erk, Newell; Dan Gutierrez, Martin; David Gutierrez, Martin; Grace Gutierrez, Martin; Brett Hanson, Rapid City; Bo Johnson, Rapid City; Mary Kjerstad, Wall; Kathleen Melloh, Rapid City; Jeania Middleton, Rapid City; Nina Pekron, Milesville; Wendy Pittick, Lead; Brenda Schneider, McIntosh; Sheila Schweitzer, Timber Lake; Patrick Seager, Philip; Linda Stangle, Milesville; Jeremy Thompson, Piedmont; Susan Wagner, Rapid City; and Dennis Wier, Wall. (Master) Margaret Anderson, Spearfish; Rose Marie Anderson, Ft. Pierre; Brad Blauvelt, Piedmont; Kristine Engelhardt, Rapid City; Bridgette Fode, Piedmont; Margaret Jackson, Rapid City; Donna Larson, Rapid City; Patty Lihs, Ft. Pierre; Thomas Olsen, Jr., Rapid City; Carol Pond, Ft. Pierre; Doug Stukel, Gregory; Sandy Stukel, Gregory; LeAnn Vette, Spearfish; and Belinda Wickham, Custer. (WRC photo by Becky Berreth)

Recognizing Marriage

A Celebration of Marriage Mass was held at Terra Sancta, Rapid City, September 17. Following Mass, a luncheon was hosted by the Diocesan Office of Family Life Ministries. In attendance were couples celebrating 25, 40, 50 or more years of marriage in 2017. Bishop Robert Gruss presented certificates to the couples who were honored. Robert and Genevieve Brechtel, from Vale, members St. Francis of Assisi Church, Sturgis, were the longest married couple in attendance. They were married May 20, 1946. (WRC photo by Becky Berreth)

Blackrobes Honored During Ft. Pierre Bicentennial

High school student Austin Hand dressed as a “Black Robe” missionary for the Ft. Pierre Bicentennial Historical Parade in September. Joe Thorne steered the horse drawn carriage. A statue in commemoration of the mission priest Fr. Christian Hoecken, SJ, who “first administered the sacrament of baptism west of the Missouri River in South Dakota” was also painted for the celebration. (Courtesy photo)

In Your Prayers


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The feast of All Saints Wednesday, November 1 is a Holy Day of Obligation

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
Poverty, violence hinder progress for many women, girls, says nuncio

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — Conditions in many parts of the world force women and girls to bear the burden of carrying out everyday chores for their families and communities, keeping many of them from getting even a basic education, the Vatican’s U.N. nuncio said Oct. 6.

Females are often the victims of sexual and other violence, which prevents them from improving life for themselves and their families, said Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Vatican’s permanent observer to the United Nations. Migrant women and girls are particularly vulnerable to these situations, he added. He addressed the issue of women’s advancement during a session at the United Nations of the Third Committee, which focuses on social, humanitarian and cultural issues.

“Young women in rural areas are disproportionately involved in unpaid domestic work and especially bear the greatest burden when access to clean water and sanitation is not readily available,” Archbishop Auza said. “They are forced to spend considerable time and effort collecting water for the community, and in doing so, their access to basic education is often thwarted, not to mention that, in many isolated places, they are also exposed to risks of violence.” Failure to achieve “that basic human right” of universal access to safe drinkable water “can undermine other human rights, as it is a prerequisite for their realization,” he said.

At right, A Palestinian woman harvests wheat by hand on a farm near Salfit, West Bank, in 2016. Education is essential in enabling women in every country “to become dignified agents of their own development,” said Archbishop Auza, at U.N. headquarters in New York. (CNS photo/Alaa Badrneh, EPA)
“I find people with anxiety and fear rarely have their eyes on the Lord. They put everything else in the place of God,” said Sean Forrest. “I know you guys are young, but I’m telling you. Keep your eyes on God.”

Using anecdotes from growing up in a protestant church, reading the Bible as a preteen, and the day he decided to follow Jesus, Forrest spoke to the more than 300 students and attending the Diocesan Youth Rally, October 8, at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. Partnered with Bob Rice, the two national speakers collaborated on the theme, based on John 1:38, “Encounter: What are you looking for?”

“When I was 12 years old I needed to know that God existed,” Forrest explained. “So I started reading the Bible. When I read the Bible I try to put myself into the story and it becomes alive for me.

“I pictured Jesus coming towards the boat (John, chapter 6). The apostles don’t know it’s God — they think it’s a ghost. He didn’t show up at the side of the boat and say ‘Dudes!’ He stayed in the distance. Why? Because Jesus wanted to scare them, and suddenly I’m imagining myself walking on water and scaring the disciples.

“Then the story gets to the part where he invites Peter to walk towards him,” Forrest continued. “I imagine his walking to Jesus like a toddler — starting off strong until he realizes what he’s doing and sinking and Jesus saves him. The world wants you to sink, but you can walk on water. The world wants to keep you numb. Learn to say yes to Jesus.

“Turn to God,” Forrest said. “Jesus did not ask you to sit in the boat. He asked you to set the world on fire.”

Rice kicked off the daylong event with his accordion and his guitar, asking the students if they had ever seen people who have faith and wondered what they were doing. He told the group about growing up in an Irish Catholic home, attending Catholic schools, and attending church every Sunday.

“I was enthusiastic about soccer and theater. I didn’t mind God,” he said. “I used to hear people talk about encountering Jesus and I knew I was missing something. God was not with me on the pitch; God was not with me on stage. I was living my own life and just checking in from time to time.

“In John, chapter 21, Jesus asks Simon to go out into the deep water and fish in the middle of the day, he could have said no. I might have said no — if you can’t catch fish in the shallows before the sun comes up why would you be able to catch fish in the middle of the day in the deepest waters?” he asked the group.

“Jesus is giving Simon what sounds like bad fishing advice on the surface,” he said. “Jesus wants to give us relationship advice and it might sound like bad advice compared to what the world is giving us, and yet Simon trusted him. And it says when Simon followed him he caught a great number of fish.”

Then he challenged the students to think about being on the shore, “probably laughing and being grateful they were not in the boat. Then they see the nets nearly pulling the boat into the sea and the nets nearly tearing,” he said.

“The world tells us we should be ourselves. So we ask the world how and it tells us to be our selves and to shop. God wants you to be you because you are the only you he’s ever made. Getting to know Jesus brings that out,” he explained. “We aren’t just his creation, he wants us to be his children. He wants us to have a deeper loving relationship with him, and that’s how we become people of faith.”
WASHINGTON (CNS) — The proverbial call of the wild sounds more like a roar in “The Mountain Between Us,” a trapped-in-the-wilderness survival drama based on the 2011 novel by Charles Martin.

At an Idaho airport, Alex Martin (Kate Winslet) is desperate. The high-strung photojournalist is getting married in New York the next day, but her flight has been canceled due to an approaching storm. She bumps into dashing surgeon Ben Bass (Idris Elba), who’s in the same predicament. He’s not heading to the altar, but scheduled to perform life-saving surgery.

Alex decides to charter a propeller plane to Denver, where a flight connection to New York awaits. Ben has misgivings about the bumbling pilot, Walter (Beau Bridges), but decides to throw caution to the wind and share the ride. Bad move.

With storm clouds looming, the trio sets off, joined by Walter’s dog. There’s barely time to admire the gorgeous mountain scenery before Walter has a stroke and the plane goes down, crashing on a remote snowy peak.

Walter is killed, but the passengers — and pooch — survive. The outlook is bleak — it’s freezing and they’re in the middle of nowhere, with no food, water, or cellphone service, and as Walter never filed a flight plan, no one knows they are missing. They set off, dog in tow, battling Mother Nature and Father Time. Weeks pass, and the two strangers get to know each other very well.

Do not say ‘I am only a youth’

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

youcat.org

What does communion of saints mean?

The communion of saints is made up of all men who have placed their hope in Christ and belong to him through baptism, whether they have already died or are still alive. Because in Christ we are one body; we live in a communion that encompasses heaven and earth (946-962).

The church is larger and more alive than we think. Among her members are the living and the deceased (whether they are still undergoing a process of purification or are already in the glory of God), individuals known and unknown, great saints and inconspicuous persons. We can help one another even beyond the grave. We can call on our patrons and favorite saints, but also our departed relatives and friends whom we believe are already with God. Conversely, by our intercessory prayer, we can come to the aid of our dear departed who are still undergoing purification. Whatever the individual does or suffers in and for Christ benefits all. Conversely, this unfortunately means also that every sin harms the communion (126).

Why does Mary have such a preeminent place in the communion of saints?

Mary is the Mother of God. She was united with Jesus on earth as no other human being was or could be — in an intimacy that does not cease in heaven. Mary is the Queen of Heaven, and in her motherhood she is quite close to us (972).

Because she committed herself, body and soul, to a divine yet dangerous undertaking, Mary was taken up body and soul into heaven. Anyone who lives and believes as Mary did will get to heaven (80-85).

“Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death, and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life.”

— St. Dominic

(ca. 1170-1221, founder of the Dominicans), to his confreres as he was dying.