“And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.” (Luke 17:15-16)

The posture of the Samaritan reveals a love for Jesus that comes from a grateful heart. Jesus himself is our greatest of blessing. The celebration of Thanksgiving reminds us of our many blessings, the great abundance around us and the One who provides it all. On this Thanksgiving Day, let us fall at the feet of Jesus, thanking him for all he has given us, and pray for a new outpouring of his Holy Spirit in our lives. Know that my Thanksgiving Mass will be offered for you and your intentions. May the Lord continue to bless you and your families abundantly this day and always.

Wishing you peace and joy in Christ.

+ Bishop Robert D. Gruss
Diocese of Rapid City

Sainthood cause of Lakota catechist moves forward

Baltimore (CNS) — The U.S. bishops voted Nov. 14 to move forward the sainthood cause of Nicholas W. Black Elk, a 19th-century Lakota catechist who is said to have introduced hundreds of Lakota people to the Catholic faith.

At the annual fall assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore, the bishops “approved by voice vote the canonical consultation,” or support for the cause. The episcopal consultation process is “a step in the Catholic Church’s process toward declaring a person a saint.”

Bishop Robert D. Gruss of Rapid City, spoke to the bishops about Black Elk, born into the Oglala Lakota Tribe in 1863 in Wyoming.

“He was widely known among his people as a holy man and mystic,” Bishop Gruss said. “He was given a vision at a very early age.”

The message of that vision was that “we should all live as one.”

“This vision influenced his life over the rest of the years, especially as a catechist, in many ways forming his identity over the rest of his life,” Bishop Gruss said.

He took the name Nicholas, after St. Nicholas, the bishop said, and was baptized on his feast day.

“He became a noted catechist and missionary, working closely with the Jesuits on a number of Indian reservations,” Bishop Gruss said. “He continued celebrating Lakota rituals (and also) fully embracing Catholic life, grounded in the sacramental life of the church.”

He was a witness to the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 in Montana Territory and the great massacre of his people at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, the bishop said.

“With little formal schooling, he learned to read and write and the sacred Scriptures became his friend,” Bishop Gruss said. He is said to have educated more than 400 of his people about the Catholic faith, and many were baptized during his 40 years of his life as a catechist.

“As we know, catechists were the lifeblood of the early faith communities of the Lakota people, leading others to conversion,” Bishop Gruss said.

“Black Elk, Catholic, husband, father and elder, he was an ardent catechist and an internationally admired mystic,” he said, and the missionary disciple that Pope Francis calls others to be.
Mission driven or maintenance driven? This is an important question for all of us. In other words, do we keep doing what we have always done and in the way we have always done it? Or do we step out in faith allowing Jesus to stretch us as we embrace life as his disciple, his living witness in the world?

Let us return to the Diocesan Priority Plan as a reminder of our sacred mission described in this way. “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.”

This mission should drive everything we do — all pastoral ministry, all parish ministry, and all sacramental ministry. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in Gaudium et Spes similarly outlined this same mission: “Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.”

Our Diocesan Priority Plan points our way as we “carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit.” As we all know, essential resources are needed to allow the Diocese of Rapid City to be mission driven rather than maintenance driven. Some of these resources come from the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

In my pastoral letter for the Diocesan Priority Plan, Through Him, With Him and In Him, I shared these words. “Funding the mission of Jesus Christ means that we are a community of believers who seek to live our lives for the Gospel and for others. We therefore embrace this mutually shared vision for the sake of building Christ’s kingdom.”

The 2018 Annual Diocesan Appeal took place the weekend of November 18-19 with an in-pew solicitation, asking you to give generously. This year’s theme is “... who else will give? ... The people rejoiced ... for they had given to the Lord wholeheartedly” (1 Chronicles 29:5,9).

This is an invitation for every Catholic family across the diocese to prayerfully consider what the Lord is asking of them.

When we reflect upon what the Lord has done for us, we realize that he will never be outdone in generosity. And when we give to the Lord wholeheartedly, we imitate his generosity to us.

This year’s annual appeal goal of $1,491,000 represents approximately 37.6 percent of the total diocesan budget. The remainder comes from outside granting sources and other revenues. This is why your support is invaluable for us to carry forward the mission of Jesus Christ. We really do want to live as disciples of Jesus with hearts that are “mission driven.” This is the call of the Gospel!

Over the last many years, three of ten families share a gift in the annual appeal. Imagine what could happen if more Catholic families partnered with us in the mission of Jesus! Imagine if this number increased to 40, 50, 70, 80 percent participation! All families are invited to participate. Some families may feel they are not able to give, but I believe that most all families can find a way to participate in some way. All gifts, large or small, make a difference and touch the lives of the people we serve throughout the diocese.

Generous disciples are never afraid of running out or fearful of not having enough. They live in faith, gratitude and — trusting that God will always provide. Generous disciples realize that God feels responsible for us, even though we are sinners; that God will never be outdone in generosity; that God has invited each of us into his way of life, into his way of being, into his way of generosity.

When we live God’s way of life, we live in the very image of God himself, in whom we have been created. We look and act just like God.

In other words, we view and live life through the lens of abundance instead of scarcity, a lens of provider instead of provision, a lens of gracious giving instead of fearful giving.

We experience God as giving, the moment our hearts say “yes” to God’s desire for relationship with us, giving abundantly to us, endlessly pouring out in His gifts a love greater than our hearts can fathom.

Generosity puts our lives in the proper order. Living a generous life sets us free. We are no longer possessed by what we have and therefore, are free to give it away. This fills us, not with secular happiness, but with true Christian joy — “... who else will give? ... The people rejoiced ... for they had given to the Lord wholeheartedly.”

Over the years, I have discovered this truth — when we step out in faith and generosity, amazing things happen. “When we accept our lives as sheer gifts, the Spirit can use us as apt instruments for spreading the Gospel. Wherever the Spirit works, there is joy.” (“Pastoral Letter on Stewardship: A Disciples Response”)

The Annual Diocesan Appeal is an important way in which every Catholic family can serve one another sacrificially, thereby helping to build up the body of Christ in western South Dakota. Your sacrificial support is important to us, deeply valued and necessary for us to love as mission driven people. The Lord has given us all different gifts, but calls each of us to the same sacrifice. This is why the heart of stewardship is spiritual.

Please prayerfully seek the Lord’s guidance in this regard. Please be generous in pledging both your financial support and your prayers for the mission of our great diocese, so that together we may “rejoice, for we have given to the Lord wholeheartedly.”

May God bless you and your families!
Fr. Chris Johnson, SJ, will be leaving the Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge to begin the final stage of his formal Jesuit formation in Nairobi, Kenya. With the departure of Father Johnson, as of Dec. 3, pastoral care of the Sacred Heart in Pine Ridge; St. Agnes in Manderson; and Christ the King in Porcupine; will be done by Fr. Edmund Yainao, SJ, an associate pastor of the mission.

Priest Assignments

Fr. Chris Johnson, SJ, will be leaving the Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge to begin the final stage of his formal Jesuit formation in Nairobi, Kenya. With the departure of Father Johnson, as of Dec. 3, pastoral care of the Sacred Heart in Pine Ridge; St. Agnes in Manderson; and Christ the King in Porcupine; will be done by Fr. Edmund Yainao, SJ, an associate pastor of the mission.

Catholic Conference office opens

Christopher Motz is in the initial stages of opening the first South Dakota Catholic Conference Office in Sioux Falls. It is jointly sponsored by the Dioceses of Sioux Falls and Rapid City. He has joined the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors, which has members from 40 states. His first meeting will be Nov. 29 to Dec. 2 in Washington, DC, at United States Catholic Conference of Bishops headquarters.

“When I am out there I will also take the opportunity to introduce myself to the S.D. congressional delegation,” said Motz.

He said his job will have internal and external components. Externally he is focused on keeping Bishops Paul J. Swain and Robert D. Gruss informed on current judicial, executive and administrative actions. In addition, he will apprise the bishops of lower level court decisions in cases working up through the appellate process that may eventually have an impact at a broader level.

“Internally, it is important that the Catholic lay people are informed and have a grasp of what the church teaches and believes not only for their own understanding, but also so they might be able to articulate it to their friends and neighbors,” said Motz. An example of an important issue is the physician assisted suicide initiative which failed to garner enough signatures to be on the 2018 state ballot. “It will come again and education will continue to be important,” he said.

The upcoming 93rd South Dakota Legislative Session, which opens Jan. 2, 2018, will be his first opportunity to work with S.D. lawmakers. In the future he sees himself being available to give presentations to parishes and on college campuses.

He has already had the opportunity to speak at S.D. State University, Brookings. His topic “Render Unto Caesar,” was based on the book by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Motz said, “At the heart of the message I wanted to convey is that we can be faithful Catholics and good citizens.”

He can be reached at: Christopher J. Motz, Executive Director South Dakota Catholic Conference, 523 North Duluth Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104.

Angel Bazaar

at Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Hall

Saturday, Dec. 2
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Over 40 Craft Booths

Youth group will be selling caramel & cinnamon rolls for breakfast, homemade chili, sloppy joes, and nachos for lunch!

At the corner of 5th St. & Cathedral Drive, Rapid City, SD
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I look around and see how the Diocese of Rapid City has been richly blessed. Much of this has been made possible through the generosity and kindness of many Catholics across the diocese in the Annual Diocesan Appeal. Inspiring ministry takes place and the mission of Jesus Christ continues because of good stewards across western South Dakota. I am deeply grateful.

But imagine how much more we could do if more Catholic families partnered with us in the mission of Jesus. Across the diocese, currently three of ten families make any gift. Imagine if four of five helped! All gifts, large or small, touch the lives of the people we serve here in our diocese. Over the years, I have discovered this truth — when we step out in faith and generosity, amazing things happen. “When we accept our lives as sheer gifts, the Spirit can use us as apt instruments for spreading the Gospel. Wherever the spirit works, there is joy” (Pastoral Letter on Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response).

The theme for the 2018 Annual Diocesan Appeal is “… who else will give? … the people rejoiced … for they had given to the Lord wholeheartedly,” taken from 1 Chronicles 29:5,9. God’s bountiful love is all around us. As we look around we have constant reminders of his presence. When we give to the Lord wholeheartedly, we imitate his generosity to us.

As I wrote in my pastoral letter, Thorough Him, With Him, and In Him, “Funding the mission of Jesus Christ means that we are a community of believers who seek to live our lives for the Gospel and for others. We therefore embrace this mutually shared vision for the sake of building Christ’s kingdom.” Giving to the Lord wholeheartedly means that we fully trust God with our life and our treasure. We are convinced of the goodness of God’s love and our inherent wealth in the kingdom of heaven.

The Annual Diocesan Appeal is an important way in which every Catholic family can serve one another in a sacrificial way, thereby helping to build up the body of Christ in western South Dakota. Your sacrificial support is important to us, deeply valued and necessary for the Lord’s work to continue and grow. The Lord has given us all different gifts, but calls each of us to the same sacrifice. This is why the heart of stewardship is spiritual.

Please prayerfully seek the Lord’s guidance regarding what he is asking of you in light of this year’s appeal. Please be generous in pledging both your financial support and your prayers for the mission of our great diocese and the 2018 Annual Appeal, so that together we may “rejoice, for we have given to the Lord wholeheartedly.” May God bless you and your families!

Sincerely in the peace and joy of Christ,

+ Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Rapid City

Diocese of Rapid City Annual Appeal 2018

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I will pray for the appeal and those it serves.

Please print:

Name ____________________________
Spouse ____________________________
Phone # ____________________________
Street ____________________________
City ____________________________
State ______ Zip __________
Parish ____________________________

Thank you for your prayerful support of our diocesan ministries.

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| Total Pledge | $ |
| Enclosed | $ |
| Pledge Balance* | $ |

Please, no gift is too small.

Make check payable to:
Diocese of Rapid City Annual Appeal
Mail to: P.O. Box 678, Rapid City, SD 57709-0678

If interested in an automatic bank payment or credit card payment, please contact your parish office for a pledge envelope or call Elizabeth Siemieniak, 605-343-3541

*Reminder statements are mailed quarterly.
For a complete listing of diocesan ministries, see the appeal brochure.
Those with Severe Mental Illness Don't Deserve to Be on Death Row

The month of October in the Catholic Church celebrates “Respect Life Month.” Building a culture of life goes beyond this one month a year, or specific events or initiatives. It happens through our daily actions, how we treat one another, and through policies we value and promote.

The greatest failure in our society today is the lack of respect for the human dignity of others from conception to life’s natural end. Human life is valued less now than ever — abortion on demand, increase in all types of violence, racism, the rise in assisted suicide laws — and the continued use of capital punishment.

In his 2015 address to Congress, Pope Francis spoke of his mission to end the death penalty: “The Golden Rule also reminds us of our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development. This conviction has led me, from the beginning of my ministry, to advocate at different levels for the global abolition of the death penalty.”

The death penalty violates the sanctity of life. It is contrary to the Gospel because it promotes the inhumane treatment of a person created in God’s image and likeness as we all are.

Yes, the state has an obligation to hold violent criminals accountable for their actions and to protect society from those who are a threat. Nonlethal means to defend and protect are sufficient in South Dakota. Violence in response to violence doesn’t relieve personal anguish or result in societal protection, but only adds to the cycle of violence that plagues our country. State-sanctioned executions do not heal or redress wounds. Only forgiveness can do so.

The death penalty disproportionately impacts people who are vulnerable and marginalized. These individuals are the ones whom Jesus so loved — and whom we are called to love in spite of what they may have done.

In South Dakota, we depend heavily on the Department of Corrections to care for individuals with severe mental illness who have committed crimes. But according to a 2017 report from the Office of Research and Public Affairs, those living in South Dakota with a severe mental illness who are convicted of felony crimes are not sent to the state hospital for treatment. They are sent to the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls. This misguided policy is tragically compounded by the death penalty because those condemned to die disproportionately suffer from severe mental illness. A 2016 report from the Death Penalty Information Center reveals that at least 60 percent of those executed in the U.S. showed significant evidence of intellectual disability, mental illness or brain impairment. This significant over-representation of our mentally vulnerable brothers and sisters forces us to confront the fact that some of the most marginalized members of society have been put to death.

The death penalty is always an inhumane and inappropriate punishment. In condoning capital punishment we greatly diminish our capacity to embrace Christ’s command to ‘love all’ and respect the dignity of every human life.

All life is sacred. Instead of death, should we not create solutions which are restorative and allow God’s grace and mercy to transform our society into one that is holy? I pray that South Dakota joins the many other States who respect the dignity of life by ending the death penalty, in particular for those with severe mental illnesses.

Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss is the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Rapid City.

Editor’s note: This an Op-Ed piece Bishop Gruss wrote for the Rapid City Journal 11/9/17.
Parents of year-old quadruplets get challenges, smiles times four

BY MARIA WIERING
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

CRYSTAL, Minn. — Four high chairs line the kitchen counter at Justina and Matt Kopp's home in Crystal. Four baby chairs sit on the living room floor adjacent to four stacked baby pillows.

Nearby, four 1-year-olds tumble with one another on the floor, bumble with awkward steps and vie for their parents' arms. Like expert ringmasters, Matt, 26, and Justina, 27, navigate the acrobatics with a certain calm. They simultaneously soften falls and give out hugs, and at the first fussy cries of hunger, prepare and distribute pre-nap bottles with ease.

The babies — Cora, Raph, Theo and Ben — celebrated their first birthdays Oct. 16 and they've been the stars of this family since their parents first heard their heartbeats.

When the Kopp family, parishioners of Holy Family in St. Louis Park, learned they were pregnant in April 2016, they approached their ultrasound with some trepidation. They had recently miscarried their first child and they knew the disappointment and loss that followed a silent ultrasound.

Justina's care was transferred to a perinatologist practice and from the interview their first appointment she felt at odds with her new doctors.

The Kopps knew the specialists would suggest “selective reduction,” a euphemism for the abortion of one or more of the babies, typically the weakest. At their first consultation, they immediately told their doctor that they didn't want to discuss it. The goal, Matt told the doctor, was four healthy babies and a healthy mother.

The doctor said some parents begin with that mindset but later change their minds and said selective reduction would give them the best chance of bringing home babies. The risk of spontaneous pregnancy loss is 40 percent with higher order multiples, Justina said, but they wouldn't consider aborting any of the babies to lower the risk.

Justina was incredulous at the doctor's cognitive dissonance to go from “congratulations” to recommending abortion while calling them “babies.” The Kopps' relationship with the specialist practice never recovered, she said.

“’You've got a target on your back once you don't listen to their advice,” she told The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. “You're the crazy pro-life person then.”

Justina continued to see specialists but she also had regular check-ins with her doctor at the Christian-based clinic.

“I had to learn throughout that pregnancy how to advocate for myself,” she said, adding that she was grateful she studied biology so she could read studies and understand her options.

After the babies were born, the family received generous help from family and friends. They are also fortunate that both sets of grandparents live nearby.

Matt is the fifth child in a family of 10, so a large family doesn't faze him but he said he “can't imagine raising quadruplets without a sense of faith.”

Having quadruplets compounds the sacrifice of becoming parents, Justina said, noting the challenges of just leaving the house with four little ones.

But the couple also said it means four times the joy.

“I get four times the smiles and four times the laughs. I get to see my kids' first steps like bam, bam, bam — one right after the other,” Justina said. “Watching them interact and learn to love one another and depend on one another and fight with one another, it's really fun.”

Matt and Justina have also prioritized a regular date night, in part because divorce rates are higher among parents of multiples. They're both in Facebook groups for parents of multiples and they frequently read disheartening posts of marriages falling apart.

They were ardently pro-life before the pregnancy and their commitment has only deepened. Without the church's teachings, Justina said she may have been tempted to have a tubal ligation. They are open to adding to their family down the road, but they've been shocked at how many people assume they're “done”— and say it aloud.

While having four kids at one time has helped the couple trust more deeply in God they can't help but ask: “why us?”

In the months since the babies' births, Justina said she asks “why” less than she asks “how.”

“Like, how, God, are you going to help us get through this? How are you going to show us the way in all of this and provide for us in all of this?” she said. “I ask it every day.”

Wiering is editor of The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.
December 1, Friday


- **World Apostolate of Fatima**: First Friday prayers and devotions 6 p.m. in the Sacred Heart Chapel, Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. First Saturday, December 2, begins with prayers at 7:45 a.m. followed by a 8 a.m. Mass and exposition in Our Lady’s Chapel, Cathedral. 🌟 Dr. Kopriva 605-346-6202.

December 2, Saturday

- **Advent Prayerful Painting**: Held from 9:15 a.m.-3 p.m. at St. Martin Monastery. $20 includes lunch. Preregistration requested. 🌟 Sr. Therese Marie 605-343-8011.

- **Bilingual Choir**: The United in Christ/Unidos en Cristo bilingual choir will sing at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass. Rehearsal at Blessed Sacrament Church, at 1-3 p.m. Other rehearsals are December 3, 3-5 p.m., December 10, 3-5 p.m., and December 12, 4:30 p.m. 🌟 Terry Schroeder 605-341-1143 or Maria 605-791-3430. Everyone is welcome to sing with us/Todos estan bienvenidos a cantar con nosotros.

December 11, Monday


- **Divorced, & Widowed Support Group**: A non-denominational group open to all Christian men and women hurting following a separation, divorce or death of a spouse. Begins at 7 p.m. at St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rapid City. $30 registration fee, scholarships available. 🌟 Amy 605-716-5214.

- **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.
  - **OLPH Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy**: First Saturday, 9 a.m., Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. 🌟 Pam Ekberg 605-719-9669.
  - **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. 🌟 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 Sperlich 605-342-9343.
  - **Vocation Discernment Retreats**: 🌟 Sister Mary Wegher, OSB, 605-343-8011.
  - **Spiritual Direction**: At St. Martin Monastery. 🌟 Sr. Margaret Hinker, 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 Bible Study**: Learn about the Catholic faith, from 5:45-7:30 p.m., at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City, room 107. Everyone welcome. 🌟 Aprendiendo nuestra Fe Catolica los Miércoles de 5:45-7:30 p.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.
For Advent, focus on reconciliation

At the end of October, Jesuit Father Jim Kubicki, president of St. Francis Mission, led the chancery staff retreat. In the talks he shared with us, he focused on the diocesan vision statement: Reconciliation — Make Disciples — Live the Mission. These six words are the foundation stones, the building blocks that will help to move our diocese in a new direction, helping us to reorient our lives to be reconciling disciples.

Father Kubicki said “the heart of the Gospel is reconciliation itself.” In 2 Corinthians 5:18, we hear that Christ was sent by the Father to reconcile us to him, and so now Christ gives us the ministry of reconciliation.

We are called to be a reconciling people, to not only extend forgiveness to one another, but also to receive forgiveness from others and to learn to forgive ourselves in and through Christ.

In 2006, speaking in Australia, Pope Benedict XVI said, “Commitment to truth opens the way to lasting reconciliation through the healing process of asking for forgiveness and granting forgiveness — two indispensable elements for peace.”

In our Pastoral Priority Plan, we hear this: “As God has reconciled us through Jesus Christ, so we will promote forgiveness and healing within families; within and between communities; among racial groups; with the Church. We will invite others to experience the good news of God’s love through encounter with Jesus Christ.”

To help us live out this vision of reconciliation in our parishes and diocese, we are called as parish communities to identify areas where reconciliation and unity are strong and areas where reconciliation is needed. Also, each parish or group of parishes were asked to submit to Bishop Gruss a plan which engages and promotes reconciliation and includes an implementation process that will help us live intentionally in the heart of the Gospel as Jesus did.

In October, the priests of our diocese were on retreat at Terra Sancta. Our director was Jesuit Father John Horn. He is the co-founder of the Institute of Priestly Formation at Creighton University in Omaha, and currently serves as professor of spiritual theology and spiritual director at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Florida. Father Horn, like Father Kubicki, focused the priest retreat on the theme of reconciliation. One of the things Father Horn shared with us was a new guide for confessors and receiving God’s mercy. As we approach Advent, we will have a number of opportunities in our parishes to ask, to receive, to grant forgiveness in and through Christ and to become the reconciling disciples that we hear about in Second Corinthians.

This new reconciliation guide bases our examination of conscience on the seven deadly sins: pride, envy, greed, gluttony, lust, anger and sloth. Father Horn reminded us that these sins always lead us to isolation from Christ and one another. Living in isolation then leads to “bad fruit” — immorality, impurity … idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy … and the like” (Gal 5:19-21).

The guide suggests possible penances that focus on heavenly virtues which lead us out of isolation and into communion with Christ: humility/loving obedience, kindness/admiration, charity/generosity, temperance/self-control, chastity/purity, patience/forgiveness and diligence/zeal.

When we are living in communion with Christ, the good “fruit of the Spirit” is born in our midst, namely “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 4:22-23).

This Advent could be a good time to use this new guide for penitents and priests, titled “Confession and Receiving God’s Mercy.” It would be a good addition to your parish’s reconciliation plan and one more resource for helping to fulfill the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

This guide is put out by the Institute for Ongoing Clergy Formation at St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. I have ordered 5,000 of these guides. I know a number of parishes have already ordered them as well through the Office of Stewardship and Vocations, but if you or your parishes are interested, but have not already ordered some, please let me know and I would be happy to get them out to you.

I wanted to leave you with the Act of Contrition contained in this new guide. It speaks beautifully of this desire to live a life focused on reconciliation and mercy.

An Act of Contrition

Lord Jesus, to know You is eternal life. I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. I love You and I place my trust in You.

I am sorry for all my sins and for withholding myself in any way from you. Please forgive me and heal any pain I have caused others. I forgive anyone who has hurt me, and I ask You to bless them. In Your name, Jesus, I renounce anything in my life that is not of You that I have welcomed into my mind or heart. Wash me in mercy and fill me with Your Precious Blood and the Holy Spirit.

Father, of all my need for love and affection is found in Your embrace. May I never leave my home in Your heart again. By Your grace, I resolve to remain in Your shelter and abide in Your shade, where You restore to me the joy of Your salvation (Ps. 91, Ps.51). Amen.
As the Bard might say....

Four centuries after his death, Shakespeare remains a peerless playwright because of his remarkable insight into the human condition. Love, ambition, fear, guilt, nobility, pomposity, patriotism, absurdity, sheer wickedness — you name it, Will grasped something of its essence. His work continues to help us understand ourselves better because, whatever the changing of times and seasons, human nature changes very little.

Take, for example, the human propensity to dodge disagreeable arguments by way of evasion. In "As You Like It," the Bard neatly dissected the anatomy of evasion through the words of a clown, Touchstone, who outlines "the degrees of the lie:"

"The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Countercheck Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct."

Some twenty years ago, Fr. David Beauregard, a literarily-inclined Oblate of the Virgin Mary, used Touchstone’s taxonomy to challenge critics of John Paul II’s 1993 encyclical on the reform of Catholic moral theology, Veritatis Splendor. Reading Father Beauregard’s Shakespearean take on theological controversy recently, I was struck by how closely Touchstone’s catalogue of evasion tracks the dodgeball played by those who criticize the critics of Pope Francis’s apostolic exhortation on marriage, Amoris Laetitia, but who never engage the substance of the critics’ criticisms.

The Retort Courteous has come a little late to the game, but we now hear it from some of the shrewder and less edgy protagonists of Amoris Laetitia: The critics of the exhortation are well-meaning people, but a tad behind the curve theologically and pastorally.

As for the Quip Modest, well, that’s been in play for months: The critics, or so the line goes, misrepresent what the Holy Father was actually saying and what we, his defenders, have been saying the Holy Father’s been saying; there’s nobody here but us doctrinally solid, pastorally sensitive folk.

The Reply Churlish has not been lacking, as evidenced by several recent academic seminars: Why should we proponents of Amoris Laetitia engage its critics? We’re the future; the wind is in our sails; get used to it.

As for the Reproof Valiant, it comes in the familiar form of academic snark: Amoris Laetitia, its protagonists insist, is the Catholic tradition, and anyone who even suggests that elements of the exhortation may be in conflict with seemingly-settled matters in the tradition, or in conflict with revelation itself, is a dolt who doesn’t understand how to interpret Scripture or tradition.

The Countercheck Quarrelsome is rare in Rome, where bella figura remains prized. But one senior Vatican official, in an unguarded moment, has let it be known that there are those who agree with and understand Pope Francis, and there are those who are stupid. Quarrelsome, indeed.

Then there are protagonists of the exhortation, including bishops, who claim that Amoris Laetitia leads the Catholic Church into a bright future because it jetisons the notion of intrinsically evil acts: actions that are always wrong, irrespective of the circumstances. How would Touchstone categorize them? Here we are through the looking glass, for the claim itself might seem a defense, however porous, against the suggestion of an indulgence here in the Lie Circumstantial or the Lie Direct. Perhaps Shakespeare fails us at this point. I certainly hope so.

No doubt some criticisms of Amoris Laetitia have been crude and ill-tempered, assuming a malign intention on the pope’s part that no serious Catholic should assume. But to hint, suggest, or assert that virtually all criticisms of the exhortation are stupid, or malicious, or pastorally insensitive is a very strange position for the Party of Dialogue in the church to take. In the debate over Amoris Laetitia, we are dealing with matters of considerable doctrinal and pastoral importance. And what is at stake are not just arguments and academic egos but the happiness and beatitude that are the goal of the moral life. Surely sorting that out requires a spirit of tolerance.

Tolerance comes from the Latin verb tolerare, which means “to bear with.” So genuine tolerance does not avoid or evade or dismiss differences; it engages differences with charity and civility. Perhaps revisiting “As You Like It” will encourage those protagonists of Amoris Laetitia who’ve been avoiding a real debate to reconsider.
Nobel-prizing winning author, Toni Morrison, assessing the times, asks this question: “Why should we want to know a stranger when it is easier to estrange another? Why should we want to close the distance when we can close the gate?” Except this isn’t a question, it’s a judgment.

It’s a negative judgment on both our society and our churches. Where are our hearts really at? Are we trying more to close the distance between us and what’s foreign, or are we into closing gates to keep strangers estranged?

In fairness, it might be pointed out that there has always been a struggle. There hasn’t been a golden age within which people wholeheartedly welcomed the stranger. There have been golden individuals and even golden communities who were welcoming, but never society or church as a whole.

Much as this issue is so front and center in our politics today, as countries everywhere struggle with their immigration policies and with what to do with millions of refugees and migrants wanting to enter their country, I want to take Morrison’s challenge, to close the distance rather than close the gate, to our churches: Are we inviting in the stranger? Or, are we content to let the estranged remain outside?

There is a challenging motif within Jesus’ parable of the over-generous vineyard owner which can easily be missed because of the overall lesson within the story. It concerns the question that the vineyard owner asks the last group of workers, those who will work for only one hour. Unlike the first group, he doesn’t ask them: “Do you want to work in my vineyard?” Rather he asks them: “Why aren’t you working?” Their answer: “Because no one has hired us!” Notice they don’t answer by saying that their non-employment is because they are lazy, incompetent, or disinterested. Neither does the vineyard owner’s question imply that. They aren’t working simply because no one has given them the invitation to work!

Sadly, I believe this is the case for so many people who are seemingly cold or indifferent to religion and our churches. Nobody has invited them in! And that was true too at the time of Jesus. Whole groups of people were seen as being indifferent and hostile to religion and were deemed simply as sinners. This included prostitutes, tax collectors, foreigners, and criminals. Jesus invited them in and many of them responded with a sincerity, contrition, and devotion that shamed those who considered themselves true believers. For the so-called sinners, all that stood between them and entry into the kingdom was a genuine invitation.

Why aren’t you practicing a faith? No one has invited us!

Just in my own, admittedly limited, pastoral experience, I have seen a number of individuals who from childhood to early or late mid-life were indifferent to, and even hostile to, religion and church. It was a world from which they had always felt excluded. But, thanks to some gracious person or fortunate circumstance, at a moment, they felt invited in and they gave themselves over to their new religious family with a disarming warmth, fervor, and gratitude, often taking a fierce pride in their new identity. Witnessing this several times, I now understand why the prostitutes and tax collectors, more than the church people at the time, believed in Jesus. He was the first religious person to truly invite them in.

Sadly, too, there’s a reverse side to this is where, using exclusively in all religious sincerity, we not only don’t invite certain others in, we positively close the gates on them. We see that, for example, a number of times in the Gospels where those around Jesus block others from having access to him, as is the case in that rather colorful story where some people are trying to bring a paralytic to Jesus but are blocked by the crowds surrounding him and consequently have to make a hole in the roof in order to lower the paralytic into Jesus’ presence.

Too frequently, unknowingly, sincerely, but blindly, we are that crowd around Jesus, blocking access to him by our presence. This is an occupational danger especially for all of us who are in ministry. We so easily, in all sincerity, in the name of Christ, in the name of orthodox theology, and in the name of sound pastoral practice set ourselves up as gatekeepers, as guardians of our churches, through whom others must pass in order to have access to God. We need to more clearly remember that Christ is the gatekeeper, and the only gatekeeper, and we need to refresh ourselves on what that means by looking at why Jesus chased the moneychangers out of the temple in John’s Gospel. They, the moneychangers, had set themselves up as a medium through which people had to pass in order to offer worship to God. Jesus would have none of it.

Our mission as disciples of Jesus is not to be gatekeepers. We need instead to work at closing the distance rather than closing the gate.
Join the Hispanic community as we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with a bilingual Mass. Bishop Robert Gruss, celebrant. “Priests wanting to concelebrate, contact Lisa, 605-342-3336.” December 12, 5:30 pm. Blessed Sacrament Church (4500 Jackson Blvd., Rapid City)

ATTENTION MUSICIANS
Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass Choir Rehearsals for the bilingual choir (United in Christ/Unidos en Cristo) at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City: Saturday, Dec. 2 from 1-3 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 3 from 3-5 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 10 from 3-5 p.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 4:30 p.m.

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In September parishioners and clergy throughout the diocese completed a questionnaire about the celebration of the Mass. The questionnaire, designed by the Liturgy Commission of the Diocese of Rapid City, recorded the experience of parishioners as they celebrate Mass in their various parishes. The questionnaire was the fulfillment of the second goal of the Diocesan Priority Plan for the foundational ministry of Sacraments and Worship.

The commission was created “to inspire and foster transformation of the clergy and laity, in all our diversity, in our celebration of the liturgy, so that all will encounter Christ in union with one another, by the power of the Holy Spirit for the praise and glory of God.”

We wanted to start by understanding what parishioners who attend Mass are experiencing. With that understanding the Liturgy Commission will develop further goals in pursuit of liturgical renewal in the Diocese of Rapid City.

The majority of the 1851 who answered the questionnaire were parishioners over 45 years old who attend Mass regularly and participate actively in the life of the church. Missing from the responses are those who attend Mass rarely or never. It would be good to understand what keeps Catholics away from Mass, but the scope of this questionnaire was aimed at those who come most, if not all the time. The study did receive a fairly good response rate from children age 12 to 18, but young adults were significantly underrepresented. The results of the assessment, therefore, can be reviewed primarily for insight into the experience of those who regularly attend Mass.

The questions began with demographic information and then walked through the Mass. The basis of the questions was the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. The GIRM offers an explanation of what is supposed to be happening in the various parts of the Mass. The questions posed basically asked the person filling it out if they actually experience what the GIRM says they should experience.

The results came from all over the diocese. Twelve parishes had 30 or more responses. Dr. John Usera, who helped the commission craft the questionnaire and assess the results, noted that it is not possible to make any inferences from the data for individual parishes with less than 30 responses because an inadequate sample size is too easily skewed by a single response. Therefore those parishes will receive a compilation of their data without the analysis that the parishes with more than 30 responses will receive.

All the results will be posted on the diocesan web site. Dr. Usera will also analyze the results for each deanery and for the individual parishes with 30 responses or more. Those reports will be available in December.

The quantifiable data collected through the questionnaire indicates that a majority of those who attend Mass regularly report a consistently positive experience of the Mass. Parishioners indicated that they are frequently experiencing what the GIRM describes as the expected movement of the minds and hearts of participants during each aspect of the Mass. There are some areas where there appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the experience at Mass. Those are the areas that the commission will focus on as future goals are established for Sacraments and Worship. There are also pages of comments which the commission will review. Needless to say, it will take longer to assess the comments.

The Liturgy Commission is deeply grateful to those who took the time to complete this questionnaire. The information gathered will be invaluable in providing direction for the work of the Commission. If you have any questions about the results of the questionnaire or the work of the Liturgy Commission, please call Father Michel Mulloy, the Office of Worship Director at 343-3541 or by email at mmulloy@diorc.org.
In an August 2015 column in The Washington Post, George F. Will argued in favor of physician-assisted suicide, summing up his perspective this way: “There is nobility in … affirming at the end the distinctive human dignity of autonomous choice.”

His conclusion, however, raises several important questions: Shouldn’t death-dealing actions directed against ourselves be seen as a deep repudiation of our autonomy, insofar as suicide eliminates our personal freedom once and for all? If our ability to freely make choices is among the highest of our human faculties, isn’t it a radical contradiction to mount an attack on that autonomy through suicidal acts? If our ability to freely make choices is among the highest of our human faculties, isn’t it a radical contradiction to mount an attack on that autonomy through suicidal acts? Isn’t there a certain absurdity to marshaling our freedom to obliterate our freedom?

Freedom and autonomy regarding what we eat and drink, to consider another example, doesn’t mean we can consume anything at all. We can legitimately choose between apples and oranges, but not between milk and drain cleaner. If, in the name of autonomy, we were to declare that we’re free to do whatever we want with our bodies, and we ingested drain cleaner on purpose to make ourselves ill, we would actually undermine and surrender our personal autonomy. We would no longer be able to do what we might wish to do, as our body rebelled and constrained us to a stretcher on our way to the emergency room or poison control center.

Looking at a misguided choice of this kind reminds us how our autonomy is never absolute. This kind of choice would also raise doubts in the minds of those who cared about us regarding our mental and moral sanity. To deem self-inflicted sickness to be desirable would itself be a sickness, a kind of lie, spoken in the name of a perverted sense of being free to do whatever I want, even to the point of self-harm or self-annihilation.

The decision to intentionally end our own life by an act of suicide (whether alone or with the assistance of others) pivots our uniquely human power to make sound choices into a seditious power directed against our own good. To self-inflict death in collusion with a physician would constitute a profoundly disordered decision, and a radically corrosive attack on our autonomy. Rather than something dignified, this abuse of freedom is ethically indefensible.

If sane people can recognize that drinking poison to get ourselves sick is wrong, how can we feign that ingesting drugs or using other means to kill ourselves is somehow right and noble? Abusing our own freedom or autonomy isn’t free or autonomous; instead, it enslaves and diminishes us. When medical professionals pivot in their role of healing and curing, and instead become accomplices in terminating the sick and vulnerable, they, too, undermine their own autonomy and corrupt their own professional freedom to genuinely care and “first do no harm.”

True autonomy is not limitless or absolute, but is necessarily conditioned by the truth of who we are and the way we function. Properly exercised, our personal freedom manifests a genuine nobility and a real dignity. We should never will that our final “autonomous choice” be directed against that noble dignity. Rather, we must flee the tyranny of false autonomy if our lives are to be authentically marked by human freedom in its full splendor.
A community approach to caring for creation

BY STEPHANIE CLARY, MANAGER OF MISSION OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION, DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT.

When Pope Francis talks about care for creation, he almost always pairs it with conversations of unity amongst humanity. In his 2015 encyclical, Laudato Si’, he makes strong statements about the necessity of Christians, theists, and all humans working together to care for our common home. Furthermore, since the encyclical’s release, Pope Francis has consistently modeled how creation care provides a common-ground initiative on which people of faith can and must collaborate.

In the fall of 2015, a few months after Laudato Si’s release, the Catholic Church officially joined the Orthodox Church and other Christian denominations in their tradition of a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1, with a Season of Creation that extends from that day until the feast day of the patron of ecology, St. Francis of Assisi, on October 4. This year, Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew issued the first ever joint message on the World Day of Prayer for Creation.

The collaboration that Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew call for reaches beyond faith communities to include social, economic, political, and cultural spheres. “The urgent call and challenge to care for creation are an invitation for all of humanity to work towards sustainable and integral development,” say the faith leaders. “We are convinced that there can be no sincere and enduring resolution to the challenge of the ecological crisis and climate change unless the response is concerted and collective, unless the responsibility is shared and accountable, unless we give priority to solidarity and service.”

During 2017, Bishop Christopher Coyne of the Diocese of Burlington invited the faithful of Vermont to celebrate a Year of Creation, an intentional, heightened focus on embracing the message of Laudato Si’. The initiative began with the convening of an interfaith and professionally diverse Year of Creation committee that would meet monthly to discuss, plan, and reflect upon events that would be welcoming and encouraging to all. Through these events and initiatives, the Diocese of Burlington collaborated with other community groups that are working toward a common goal of sustainability.

As we move forward from this year’s Season of Creation, consider ways that your church can engage with the local community in caring for the earth and all who call it home. Here are a few ideas of ways to get started:

1. Form a relationship with a public purpose energy service company … to bring affordable energy efficiency audits and projects to diocesan buildings.
2. Connect with local faith and ecology organizations and affiliates.
3. Learn from your solid waste management district … (learn) what happens to something after it’s thrown in the trash and how properly disposing of materials saves time, money, resources, and the planet! … (learn) the importance of reaching for reusable options (metal silverware, ceramic coffee mugs, etc.), rather than disposable ones, to counteract “throwaway culture.”
4. Eat locally … serving and promoting a combination locally-sourced, and organic options during presentations on the history of fasting and fasting for justice efforts.

Medical profession celebrated at White Mass

(Right) Cecilia and David Lang present the gifts to Bishop Robert Gruss assisted by Phillip Daniel, during the White Mass at Terra Sancta. The October 18 Mass was held on the feast of St. Luke, the Physician, to honor doctors, nurses, other health care professionals for their service to the community. Mass was followed by a meeting of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Guild of the Catholic Medical Association. Speaker Bill Peterson, director of the Friends of San Lucas — a Guatemalan mission — was the featured speaker. His presentation, “Power of Community,” was about one of his visits to the mission and how the community worked together to create a french drain.

The Catholic Medical Guild is open to all medical professionals is in the diocese. The goal of the group is to inspire physicians and all members to imitate the life of Jesus through humility, love and forgiveness, while following the Catholic social values and embracing the dignity of human life from conception to natural death. Visit https://shjcmaguild.com to learn more. (WRC photo)
There are 22 counties in western South Dakota and 21 of them don’t have enough mental health providers to meet the needs of their residents.

Thanks to a new telehealth initiative from Catholic Social Services, access to a licensed, professional counselor may soon be only a computer screen away in those counties.

“We know that thousands of South Dakotans who live in remote, rural areas of the diocese lack access to mental healthcare services. The miles are long and the providers are few,” said Cathy Larsen, director of counseling at CSS. “Now, using a confidential online telehealth platform, those folks will be able to access a mental health therapist without driving hundreds of miles to do so.”

Telehealth technology can provide outpatient therapy and other behavioral health services delivered electronically by a counselor in Rapid City to a client who is accessing the appointment via computer, cell phone or other mobile device at a remote location. Telehealth is an innovative way to help solve the problem of limited access to mental health care that exists in western South Dakota, Larsen said.

Two at-risk populations who stand to benefit from telehealth services are middle-age white males living in rural regions and young Native Americans. In South Dakota, these groups are among the high risk populations for suicide and have experienced record numbers of losses to suicide in the past three years, according to the S.D. Department of Health’s 2017 Suicide Surveillance Survey.

“This initiative will allow us to more effectively reach out to those groups using telecommunications technology and help two of the most underserved areas in our state: Native American reservations and rural ranching communities,” said Jim Kinyon, executive director of CSS.

In the western half of the state, only Pennington County, where CSS’s main Rapid City office is located, has sufficient mental health professionals to meet demand for services. CSS also staffs satellite offices part-time in Sturgis and Spearfish, and in the more remote communities of Pine Ridge, Porcupine and Eagle Butte. On the Cheyenne River Reservation, where a CSS counselor works two days per week, the ratio is 1 mental health provider for every 2,840 residents.

“While Catholic Social Services would love to extend face-to-face services everywhere, the reality is that given many of the remote regions of our diocese this is not feasible. However, through telehealth, we reduce the windshield time and travel expenses and this improves access for those needing services,” Kinyon said.

Telehealth counseling costs are being supported by a two-year, $50,000 grant from Catholic Extension. This strategic initiative funding is designed to improve health ministry in the Diocese of Rapid City and other mission dioceses in the U.S. CSS is working with numerous parishes across the diocese that will serve as locations for anyone who wants to access telehealth services from the agency but may lack the technology or high-quality internet connection in their home that it requires.

To learn more about telehealth services or to schedule a counseling appointment, contact CSS at 605-348-6086.
Holy Spirit breathe new life into us

By Deacon Marlone Lenaugh
Director of Native Ministry

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you” (Jn 14:15-18 NRVS).

From the Book of Acts, Chapter 2 verses 1-4 we read, “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Heaven came down as the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. The Jewish feast of Pentecost had celebrated the wheat harvest. Now the Apostles received the harvest of the Holy Spirit; the courage, confidence and zeal to go out into the world proclaiming God’s salvation in Jesus Christ. No matter what their language, everyone present understood the Apostles’ message. It was a holy day to build up God’s people.” (NRVS)

Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Christian church. It is celebrated approximately fifty days after Easter. In fact, the term “pente” means fifty. It continues to be an important feast to celebrate unity and diversity among all Christians. In the United States alone the Gospel is preached in more than a hundred languages to people of different cultures.

In Hebrew, there is one word that shares three meanings. The word is “ruah” and it means “the wind sent from God that swept over the face of the water at the time of creation.” It also means “the breath of life that God breathed into the lifeless clay figure to bring the first human to life.” And it is also “the spirit of God that dwells in the hearts of men.”

In Ezekiel 37: 1-14, we read about the Valley of the Dry Bones. The Lord commands the winds come from the four directions to breathe life into the dry bones. Likewise in Lakota culture, we pray that Tunkasila (God) send forth his Spirit to cleanse and purify and breathe new life into us who have come in prayer. The Tato’Oto Olowan (Four Directions Song) invites Woniya Wakan (Holy Spirit) to come and bless all those gathered and unite us through the one God.

I recall being in an alcohol treatment program, (Onsight) located then at Rockerville, in the sacred Black Hills. I went there to confirm my calling to become a deacon in the Catholic Church and to address my alcohol addiction. One morning while I was praying with the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Spirit came to me and a voice spoke to me saying, “this is my beloved son on whom my favor rests.” This was definitely the confirmation I needed and went on to be ordained a Permanent Deacon. The Spirit blows in mysterious ways.

I would like to close with a prayer to invoke the Holy Spirit; Woniya Wakan Wacikiya (Holy Spirit Prayer): Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth.

NPM Fall Meeting: Recognizing Music Ministers

On October 7, the Rapid City Chapter of National Pastoral Musicians held a fall meeting at St. Therese of the Little Flower Church, Rapid City. The meeting featured a concert, “Name that Tune,” and speakers Colleen Mahr, St. John the Baptist Parish, Custer, and Father Kerry Prendiville, St. Therese.

The Chapter acknowledged members for their service: 25 years — Phoebe Lemke, Linda Dahlgren, Jim Keller and Barb Gross; 40 years — Margaret Lindskov, Carlotta Aberle, Gerilynn Ahnne, Colleen Keller, Marlene Biegler, and Sheila Schweitzer; and 50 years — Joan Bachmeier. Two new awards were introduced this year. Kaleb Wilkening received the Emerging Youth Music Minister Award, and Rob Danielson accepted the Emerging Music Minister Award. Other awardees were: Jessica Hicks, Peggy Langenfeld Award; Joan Bachmeier, Rose Comp, and Angela Weber, St. Cecilia Awards for Laity; and Fr. Brian Lane, St. Cecilia Award for Clergy.

The next meeting will be on Saturday, January 27, at St. Isaac Jogues Church, Rapid City. Presenters are Maria Munoz and Toni Wilkins, “Successful Approaches to Music Ministry in a Bilingual and Multicultural Environment”; Amber Larson, “Compiling, Formatting, and Publishing Worship Aids with Copyright Permission”; and Jackie Schnittgron on “Demonstrating the Next National NPM Website in Real Time.” During the business meeting, the group will finalize a vote on bilingual songs that members will be encouraged to incorporate in liturgies.

To register, contact Pat McDowell at 605-787-0638 or patmcdowell@gmail.com by Monday, January 22 for lunch count. There is no charge for the event. Visit our website www.npmrc.org or Facebook page www.facebook.com/NPMRapidCityChapter for more information.
The Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation was created to insure the financial stability of ministries within the Diocese of Rapid City. It was established on December 30, 1992.

At the time of incorporation, Grant Trotter, Stewardship Director, was named executive director and Linda Batman assisted him. The mission of the foundation was established as promoting and strengthening the Catholic Church by providing people an opportunity to contribute to a permanent endowment fund, and make other types of gifts that will provide financial resources for meeting the spiritual needs of future generations of Catholics in the diocese.

The foundation is primarily the project of laity and it was encouraged by then-Bishop Charles J. Chaput. Among the steps in establishing the foundation was the lengthy process of writing a constitution and by-laws that would govern the organization. A silent fundraising phase was immediately started by the newly formed organization with an original goal of $4 million.

Msgr. Michael Woster, serving as Diocesan Administrator at the time, continued with the silent phase with the help of foundation leadership, after Bishop Chaput was appointed Archbishop of Denver in 1997. President Ray Hillenbrand, with the support of Pat Goetzinger and Harvey Krautschun, conducted estate planning seminars and promoted the purpose of the foundation throughout the diocese. A significant portion of the original $4 million goal was raised between 1992 and 1998.

**Endowment 2000**

When Blase J. Cupich was ordained Bishop of Rapid City in September of 1998, the foundation began their campaign titled “Endowment 2000.” The initial strategy was to raise the remainder of the $4 million in five-year pledges. In December 1998, the newly ordained bishop said everyone contributing to the growth of the WSDCF should consider themselves “new founders of the future” of the church in the Diocese of Rapid City. “In working toward self-sufficiency for the ministries in the diocese, I sense that, people are willing to change their viewpoint from being a mission diocese, to a diocese with a mission,” he said.

At that time, the foundation’s first president, Ray Hillenbrand reminded everyone saying, “A large majority of the foundation’s annual fund distributions will go to seminarian education, priest retirement, Catholic Social Services and the *West River Catholic* newspaper — programs that impact all areas of the diocese.”

Harvey Krautschun of Spearfish was the chairman of Endowment 2000. He was also elected the treasurer of the WSDCF board. At that time he said, “Foundations intrigue me, especially this one, because it reflects my spiritual beliefs. All too often people have the perception foundation work is driven by dollars. The reality is the opposite; what drives foundations and endowments is a common belief in our spirituality and our humanity as they come together; we can do more by uniting than by standing alone.

“The question is not, does the church need more money,” Krautschun said. “The question is, do we want to be active participants in making sure that what we have been blessed with continues for our children and grandchildren.”

People are encouraged to remember the foundation in their retirement and estate planning. The foundation incorporated the slogan, “Remember God’s Will in Yours.”

With the set goal of $4 million, in February 2000, the Endowment 2000 campaign became a parish drive encouraging all families to participate. Parishioners were told only the interest earned from investing the core money would be used to support the diocese and religious education and youth ministries were added to the list of recipients.

By March 2000, $3.5 million had been raised. As the fund grew, people began donating money for specific causes; those donations did not become part of the core investment and were dispersed according to the wishes of the donors.

At that time, Trotter, said, “A number of people have told me they would like to give to Endowment 2000, but are not able to make the kind of gift necessary for the Foundation to reach its goals. They feel they are not able to make a “large enough” gift ...” Recalling the widow’s mite, he went on to say the fund had received gifts ranging from 85 cents up to $500,000.

In March 2001 Dwight Sobczak took over as president. In September that year, Bob Bickett became the executive director. In December the new executive director and foundation members launched a series of diocesan-wide meetings to raise awareness about the foundation and planned giving.

**Catholic Heritage Society**

In 2002, Shirley Stec and Dan Corrin from Stec’s Advertising Specialties designed a logo, which is still in use. Also in 2002, a Catholic Heritage Society was formed to recognize people who made deferred gifts to the foundation. A fund was established for monthly Masses to be celebrated at various locations, to remember the society’s members. Around that same time the foundation began sponsoring a donor reception after the annual Chrism Mass. The Mass is held at the same time as Pastoral Ministry Days and it attracts many people from outside Rapid City. The reception is a way to thank the donors.

In 2006, Doris Bride became the new assistant to Executive Director Bickett. Bishop Cupich was appointed Bishop of Spokane, Washington in 2010 and Bishop Robert Gruss was ordained for the Diocese of Rapid City in 2011. In 2013 Tim Henderson took over as executive director and in 2016 Elizabeth Siemieniak became the assistant. They are the current WSDCF staff.

**New Activities**

Many other fundraising events have been strategized over the years. In 2001, the foundation hosted a Pheasant Hunt for Seminarians. The latest hunt was held October 3-4. In 2011 a fishing tournament was held at Ft. Pierre to benefit the people impacted by Missouri River flooding. In 2012 it evolved into the Bishop’s Fishing Tournament for Seminarian Education. It has been held in four of the past five years. In 2014 a Bishop’s Golf Classic was added to the fund raising events. It is held in conjunction with the Catholic Social Services and the Rapid City Catholic School System. This year the fourth annual golf tournament was held August 14, netting the three entities more than $30,000.

Sobczak stepped down in 2015 and Msgr. Woster of Spearfish became president. Tony Berendse, Rapid City, is currently serving as the foundation’s vice president. They, along with the executive director, are leading the WSDCF Board of Directors through a re-envisioning exercise to develop strategic approaches for improving the structure of the organization, set short and long-term goals, and implement actions that will guide the Foundation for the next 5-10 years.

As of June 30, 2017, the total WSDCF fund balance is $20,148,771, and unrestricted funds totaled $6,449,204. During the past 25 years the WSDCF has given out $9,288,131 to the diocese, parishes and Catholic organizations.

President Msgr. Woster is confident of the foundation’s future, stating, “Through its many donors in the past, the WSDCF has served the needs of the diocese since its inception. It is our belief that our re-envisioning and refocus of the Foundation’s purpose will serve the expanding mission of the Church for the years to come.”

*To find out more about the foundation contact: WSDCF Executive Director Tim Henderson, PO Box 678 Rapid City, SD 57709, phone 605-343-3541 or email THenderson@diorc.org*
Sometimes the inspiration for a holy project comes from a group discussion. Sometimes it comes from personal experiences. And always it comes from God. The Children's Memorial Garden is a combination of all three. Led by Rapid City resident Dionne Eastmo, an area of land on Terra Sancta Campus is in the process of becoming a tribute to children from the Rapid City area who have died.

Spurred into action by the life and death of their eleven-year-old son Jacob, Eastmo and her family have spearheaded the creation of this garden as a holy place where families can celebrate and remember their children who have returned to God. When Jacob died on Easter Sunday 2017, the family dedicated the memorial funds to developing a place to celebrate his life along with the lives of other children who have died.

Jacob was born with severe disabilities—he could not walk, talk, sit up without assistance, and needed 24-hour care. He did not hit most of the milestones expected of children, yet Jacob walked with God every day—witnessing to the world the power of his love. For a child who could not do anything the world deems important, he touched and transformed the lives of many people. Even in his death, Jacob is still teaching important lessons and drawing people to God. The Children’s Memorial Garden is one such example.

The seed for the garden project was planted well before Jacob was born. After moving to Rapid City in 2004, Eastmo joined a Bible study for mothers where she met several women who, when introducing themselves, said they had a child in heaven. Impacted by that reality, the memorial garden project germinated for years in her mind. After Jacob died, the garden concept began to bear fruit: a children’s memorial garden that would offer healing for families who have experienced the death of a child.

Located at the end of the outdoor Stations of the Cross, much of the garden is well underway thanks to the donations and labors of love of many volunteers. Deacon Walt Wilson created a 17-foot high Remember the Children sculpture that mimics the front of Holy Cross chapel and will hold the names of 192 children. A circular sidewalk has been poured so that wheelchairs and strollers can access the Garden, and four benches have been installed. The area inside the circle will feature life-size bronze statues of three children running into the arms of Christ. The Christ and oldest child statues, created by sculptor Tom White, will be installed first.

The final two statues—the young girl and toddler—as well as low-voltage lighting, are awaiting additional funding. The Children’s Memorial Garden needs ~$80,000 to be completed.

To learn more about the Children’s Memorial Garden or to have a child’s name placed on the sculpture visit tsCMG.org.
Youth of all ages from St. Patrick Church, Lead, and St. Ambrose Church, Deadwood, recently learned a lesson about the impact their service has on the community.

Students in grades pre-K through 11th grade gathered in October to assemble hygiene bags to donate to the Lord’s Cupboard in Lead.

The clear plastic bags included shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste, and more items, which parishioners at the two churches donated over the last month. But before they got to work Sharon Narem, director of the Lord’s Cupboard Food Pantry, discussed the importance of their service.

“This is going to be a wonderful donation! We just ran out of everything,” Narem said, referring to the hygiene items, which are sometimes provided as part of the pantry service. The Lord’s Cupboard is divided into two services. Those who meet certain income guidelines are served with the state-run commodities program, which is run through the food pantry. But nobody is ever turned away, Narem said, and those who don’t meet the income guidelines are given food and hygiene items that generous donors provide.

Narem explained that in September the food pantry served 183 families from Lead, Deadwood, and Central City. While the lion’s share of the service is to feed the people, Narem said the Lord’s Cupboard has also provided school supplies and other necessary goods as they are donated.

Currently, Narem said the Lord’s Cupboard needs canned fruit, large family-size boxes of goods such as cereal, crackers, and all other non-perishable items. Monetary donations are often used to take advantage of sales at a local supermarket to purchase perishable items such as eggs and cheese. Narem also invited donors to bring their fresh produce in at the beginning of the month, when the food pantry serves the most people.

In addition to donations, the Lord’s Cupboard is also in need of volunteers, specifically to help the elderly. The Lord’s Cupboard provides food boxes for local senior citizens, and that population is growing. Volunteers are needed to bring boxes to the older patrons of the food pantry.

The Lord’s Cupboard is open on Mondays from 9-11:30 a.m., and on Thursdays from 3-5:30 p.m. For more information about donating, or to volunteer, call Narem at (605) 584-3263.
Fr. Robert G. Gilroy, SJ, 58, served at St. Francis Mission, Sioux Spiritual Center

Fr. Robert G. Gilroy, SJ, was born in Boston on Oct. 19, 1959, and grew up in Weymouth and Canton, suburbs south of Boston. He was one of the seven children of Edward and Dorothy (O’Connell) Gilroy. He attended Boston College High School and Bates College, which he graduated from in 1981. He worked for the Carroll School for the Blind before studying art therapy at Lesley College in Cambridge, Mass.

In 1986, he entered the novitiate of the New England Province, which then was at St. Andrew House in Boston’s Back Bay. After his first vows in 1988, he spent the next two years doing first studies at Loyola University of Chicago. In 1990, he was assigned to St. Francis Mission, on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, a place and a people that would influence much of his later ministry. There he worked as a hospital chaplain, from 1990 to 1992. Then he moved to the Sioux Spiritual Center, near Plainview, where he worked as a spiritual director for a year. In 1993 he returned to New England for theology studies at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif., for a sabbatical. In 2013-2014 he lived in the Jesuit community in Sacramento, and then at Los Gatos, where he continued his art and spiritual-direction ministries for two years.

Childhood diabetes bothered him all his life and brought with it a series of health problems. One of his brothers donated a kidney when he needed a transplant. His characteristic cheerfulness and distinctive laugh seldom deserted him. He seemed to be improving in 2016, when he went to live at the Murray-Weigel-Kohlmann Community on the Fordham campus, where he worked as a campus minister and continued his art work with students. An infection led to his being hospitalized and he died there unexpectedly on Oct. 29, 2017.

His visual art and spirituality were influenced by the time he spent among the Lakota. He reached a wider audience through his website, prayerwindows.com.

Prayer Rallies Conclude

Since August 2013 a group of people from the parishes of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Therese and Blessed Sacrament have been gathering in front of the Federal building in downtown Rapid City every Friday at 4 p.m. for an hour of prayer for religious freedom. Both the Patriotic Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy along with other prayers were led each week by a priest from the diocese or Bishop Robert Gruss when his schedule allowed. This gathering originated with Fathers Tim Hoag and Jonathan Dillon who felt the need to put into action a defense against the Health and Human Services mandate requiring all employers to cover contraceptives and abortifacients in their employee health insurance plans. Numerous members of the local Knights of Columbus councils 1489, 8025 and 8844 and members of the local Catholic Daughters Court St. Rita attended. The prayer warriors were not deterred by the weather including frigid winter weather with snow and wind and the hot summer days with occasional hail and rain. The only time that they did not gather was during Blizzard Atlas October 4, 2013. Prayers have been answered since a presidential order was issued allowing employers including religious organizations to opt out of the Health and Human Services mandate. The final gathering was held October 20 led by Fathers Tim Hoag and Timothy Castor with about 40 people present to offer prayers and songs of thanksgiving. (Courtesy photo)

In Your Prayers

Ordinations: December 13, Edmund Yainao, SJ; Birthdays: December 7, Fr. Ron Garry; December 13, Fr. Kerry Prendiville; December 27, Fr. Brian Lane; December 28, Fr. Bryan Sorensen. Necrology: December 1, 1958, Robert Dube; December 2, 1975, Robert Ready, OSB; December 6, 2014, James Michalski, SJ; December 7, 1925, Joseph Spangemacher, SJ; December 7, 1953, Vincent Christie; December 8, 1957, Matthew Connell, SJ; December 9, 2002, James Becht; December 12, 1936, Matthias Schmidt, SJ; December 13, 1887, Bishop Harold J. Dimmerling; December 14, 1955, John Groell; December 17, 1989, Michael Roach; December 18, 1967, Albert Grueter, SJ; December 19, 1946, Francis Besendorfer; December 20, 1899, Joachim Huwylet, OSB; December 20, 1946, Louis Gall, SJ; December 20, 2001, Richard Plante; December 22, 1924, Charles Weisenhorn, SJ; December 23, 1931, Florentine Digmann, SJ; December 24, 1968, James Walsh; December 24, 2000, William Philibin; December 28, 1948, James Creahen; December 29, 1978, Ralph Muldoon; December 30, 1980, Cornelius Meade; December 31, 1922, John Jutz, SJ; December 31, 1936, James Sampson.
Unstoppable: a retreat for post-confirmation teens

By Becky Berreth

“Any retreat is an opportunity to step away from the world briefly and dedicate time to deliberately be with Jesus,” said Father Tyler Dennis, Martin. “In a world filled with noise and distraction, a retreat is a place where the environment helps us to listen with our hearts and to hear the voice of Jesus as he declares his infinite love.”

This year, Deanery 3 and the Office of Youth and Young Adults are hosting a post-confirmation retreat for post-confirmation teens grades 8-12, December 28-30 at Terra Sancta Retreat Center.

The idea for the retreat originated when Father Dennis and Father Tim Hoag, Wall, were brainstorming ways to share confirmation resources.

“With the younger age of confirmation now, it is important to provide something for those who have already received that sacrament,” said Father Dennis. “If young people do not know Jesus and want to meet him, if they feel like they have known him, but he has grown distant, or if they want to deepen an already strong relationship with our Lord, they should come to this retreat.”

The theme — Unstoppable — will focus on the significant moments in the life of St. Paul the Apostle as an analogy of the process for conversion in the lives of individual Christians. Presenters will include young adults from the diocese who have lived experiences of the various topics that will be discussed during the retreat.

“Our focus is to provide a place where the young people of our diocese, and especially those from the prairie, can take advantage of the resources of Terra Sancta, meet other committed young Catholics, and know Jesus more powerfully. There is no agenda except to make Jesus known and loved,” said Father Dennis.

The retreat begins with check-in and dinner December 28 at 5:30 p.m. and concludes Saturday at 1 p.m. Registration forms can be found online at www.rapidcitydiocese.org/yya. Deadline for registration is December 15. Cost for the retreat is $105 which covers retreat materials, food, and lodging. (Teens will stay in rooms with 1-2 roommates.) For more information call Craig Dyke or Linda Batman at 605-716-5214 or email lbatman@diorc.org or cdyke@diorc.org.
Twentysomething

No baby yet, but still giving thanks for other blessings

Even before she was married, Emily Stimpson Chapman asked for baby prayers.

“Td be in an antique store buying little trinkets for the wedding decorations, and I would be asking strangers: Pray that we have a baby!” she said.

“If I’ve talked to you over the past two years, I’ve asked you to pray for us to have a baby,” she added. “Every conference I go to, every talk I give!”

The Pittsburgh-based Catholic writer — a petite redhead with short hair and a huge smile — had long yearned to enter into motherhood, so when the love of her life got down on bended knee, she began dispensing prayer requests. She was 40, and math was not on her side.

Emily and Chris dated 13 months and were engaged for five. Although her hormone levels appear excellent and on her side.

When is the use of military force allowed?

The use of military force is possible only in an extreme emergency. There are several criteria for a “just war”:

(1) Authorization by the competent authority;
(2) a just cause; (3) a just purpose;
(4) war must be the last resort;
(5) the methods used must be proportionate;
(6) there must be a prospect of success (2307-2309).

Why do we need God, if we want peace?

Peace is first of all an attribute of God before it is a task for us human beings. Anyone who tries to bring about peace without God is forgetting that we no longer live in paradise but are sinners. Our lack of peace on earth is a sign that the unity between God and mankind has disintegrated. Human history is characterized by violence, divisions, and bloodshed. People yearn for peace that they have lost through sin; in doing so, they are silently yearning for God as well.

电影评论

Wonder (Lionsgate)

By John Muldering
Catholic News Service

Gentle, moving drama about a 10-year-old boy (Jacob Tremblay) born with facial deformities and his struggle to win acceptance from his peers as he transitions from being educated at home to attending the fifth grade of his local middle school. His sympathetic parents (Julia Roberts and Owen Wilson) offer support as does his older sister (Izabela Vidovic), despite the fact that his emotional needs have left her feeling overlooked by Mom and Dad.

Though reluctant to subject Auggie — who usually goes out in public wearing an astronaut’s helmet that conceals his face from view — to the potential ordeal of school life, Nate and Isabel know it will be the best thing for him in the long run. They find an ally in Auggie’s principal, Mr. Tushman (Mandy Patinkin), a rabbi-like figure who serves as the movie’s ethical core.

The attitudes of his fellow students (most prominently Noah Jupe, Bryce Gheisar and Milie Davis) range from open friendliness to cruel hostility with Jupe’s character representing a case study in moral subtlety and the negative effects of peer pressure. When circumstances enable Auggie to overhear some heartless remarks about him that Jack makes simply in order to fit in with the crowd, the effect is devastating. A later scene in which Julian comes to recognize the full impact of his bullying also carries a wallop. In adapting R.J. Palacio’s best-seller, director and co-writer Stephen Chbosky has created a winning and memorable film about the significance of ordinary life and the lasting impact of everyday choices.

Despite a few mature elements, the movie’s ethical lessons make it appropriate and valuable fare for most teens. A scene vaguely referencing married sexuality, fleeting scatological material, a couple of fistfights, one use of profanity, one single mildly 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

Murder on the Orient Express ........A-III
Thor: Ragnarok ..........................A-III

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.