My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We enter into the holiest period of the Church year where death and life meet through love. The Lord Jesus, victorious in life and death, leads us in triumph through the gates of holiness into the eternal Kingdom of our God.

Christ banished the darkness of sin and rose triumphantly from the grave. In this greatest act of mercy, God embraces a fragile world with a love so deep, a love so undeserved, but so freely offered and given. May this saving love bring about a true and lasting peace in our broken world.

The Father has saved us through his Son, thereby sending us into the world with a new sense of purpose, calling us to proclaim and give witness to this saving event.

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

Peace and love in Christ,

+Bishop Robert Gruss

“...No Greater Love...”

—Jn 15:13
Many people have very special days or periods of time in their lives that are not only significant, but because of their meaning, are celebrated each and every year with great intention and anticipation. Those could be birthdays, anniversaries or other events that are meaningful in the sense that they bring deep joy, happiness and fulfillment. These celebrations help us recall in a special way something personal, something life-giving or perhaps something life-changing.

For the Christian, a disciple of Jesus Christ, those special days are Holy Week — Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday. For the Christian, Holy Week is the most important and the most significant week in the church's liturgical year. And the summit of the week is the Easter Triduum — the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the celebration of the Lord's passion on Good Friday, and the great liturgy of the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. Though celebrated over three days, they are liturgically for us one day unfolding the unity of Christ's Paschal Mystery.

About five weeks ago we began a season of grace. Our Holy Father has encouraged us to “once again turn our eyes to (the Father's) mercy. Lent is a path: it leads to the triumph of mercy over all that would crush us or reduce us to something unworthy of our dignity as God's children.”

So now we find ourselves on the cusp of Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum. It is a week like no other in the church. From the very beginning of time, God has desired to share his love for humanity, to share the fullness of his Trinitarian life with us — that deep love between the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit. And he wants this even more so after the fall of Adam and Eve, where sin entered into the world. He wants fallen humanity to come to know the depth of his love. Because of this desire, he sent Jesus to show this love for us and to save us from sin, reconciling us to the Father so that we could be partakers of this divine life shared between the Father and Son, not just when we die, but here and now, in this current age. Holy Week, and in particular, the Sacred Triduum, not only expresses this reality, but makes this love real for us once again.

In the Passion narrative from St. Mark, we read, “Peter followed at a distance ...” We also read that when Jesus returned from prayer, he found his apostles asleep. We can be like Peter sometimes, following Jesus at a distance. We don't want to get too close to him. Is it because we are afraid of what he may ask? Is it because we fear getting too close? Is it because he doesn't excite us too much? Is it because we are not convinced of what he offers to us? Is our faith asleep, like the disciples who were asleep in the garden? Will we remain close to Jesus all week?

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Letter, The Joy of the Gospel, extended to us a challenging invitation: “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her since no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord” (The Joy of the Gospel, #2).

The celebration of Holy Week is all about accepting this invitation. I hear people often say that they wish they had a deeper relationship with the Lord. But often they do not make use of the opportunities available to them. No amount of casual contact with God will draw us into this mystery of love. No amount of routine contact with the Lord can bring about this deeper encounter.

During the first Holy Week, 2000 years ago, Jesus achieved victory over sin and evil. During this Holy Week, he wants to extend that victory into our lives, into the parts of our lives that still need it, that still haven't learned how to live the paradox of Palm Sunday. Jesus knows what he wants to say to each one of us this week, uniquely and individually. So we cannot follow at a distance, like Peter.

In drawing us close to him, Jesus wants to share with each of us the benefits of the cross, personally and intimately. In doing so, we will come to experience that the crosses we carry are not empty burdens with little value, but that every cross we carry can be an opportunity to bring God's redeeming love into the world and to embrace the grace of suffering for which we see new meaning and hope.

We can never come to fully understand or grasp the depth of Christ's love for us, but each time we enter into this sacred week as a response to his saving love, we experience more deeply the benefits of this mystery — a love that transforms the suffering and sin in our own lives, allowing us to participate in his Paschal Mystery. This is precisely why each year Holy Week is a gift to us, to be unwrapped and opened.

It is my hope and prayer that all of us will make this Holy Week the greatest priority of our lives, entering into the mystery of Christ's love. It is my hope and prayer that our churches will be filled to capacity during this Sacred Triduum — a faith community gathered, celebrating and giving thanks for this profound love. We will discover anew the joy of Christ's unlimited love amidst the most profound sorrow and deepest joy in our lives.

My friends, let us not watch at a distance, but give Jesus the time and attention he deserves. Let Jesus speak to you in the quiet of your hearts as he unfolds the mystery of his love for you — because whatever he shares will be exactly what you most need.

Have a blessed Holy Week and a joy-filled Easter.
Men’s & Women’s 3-day *Cursillo* Weekends

**Women’s Weekend**
April 26-29 Cedar Canyon Retreat Center.

**Men’s Weekend**
May 3-6 Storm Mountain Center.

Application fee $25.
A free-will offering is taken at the end of the weekends.

Applications: [http://www.natl-cursillo.org/rapidecity](http://www.natl-cursillo.org/rapidecity)

For questions contact:
Richard Rangel 605-391-4187 richard.rangel@rushmore.com
or David Elkjer 605-209-6782 delkjer@vastbb.net.

*Cursillo*, Spanish for short course, is a world-wide personal enrichment program that concentrates on Christian piety, study and action. See the website for more information.

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**Bishop’s Calendar**
**March 19-April 17, 2018**

**March 19-20, Monday-Tuesday**
Pastoral Ministry Days, Terra Sancta

**March 21, Wednesday**
8 a.m. College of Consultants Meeting, Rapid City

**March 22, Thursday**
6:30 p.m. Serra Club Meeting, Terra Sancta

**March 24, Saturday**
5-7 p.m. Reception for CSS Brunch Sponsors, Rapid City

**March 25, Palm Sunday**
8 a.m. Mass, Cathedral
11:30 a.m. Palm Sunday Catholic Social Services Brunch, Ramkota Hotel Ballroom

**March 26, Monday**
5 p.m. Rapid City Catholic School Board Meeting, Cathedral

**March 27, Tuesday**
6:30 p.m. Catholic Social Services Board Meeting, CSS office

**March 29, Holy Thursday**
8:40 a.m. Real Presence Radio Interview, Live, On-Air
7 p.m. Holy Thursday Mass, Cathedral

**March 30, Good Friday**
7 p.m. Good Friday Service, Cathedral

**March 31, Holy Saturday**
8:05 p.m. Easter Vigil Mass, Cathedral

**April 4, Wednesday**
9:30 a.m. Cabinet Chiefs, Chancery
4:30 p.m. CT Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Anthony, Fairfax
5:30 p.m. CT Mass, Confirmation, St. Anthony, Fairfax

**April 5, Thursday**
8 a.m. Staff Mass/Gathering, Terra Sancta

**April 6, Friday**
11:15 a.m. First Friday Mass/Luncheon, Cathedral
4 p.m. Healing & Deliverance Team Training, Terra Sancta

**April 7, Saturday**
Healing & Deliverance Team Training, Terra Sancta
4 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, All Saints, Eagle Butte
5 p.m. Confirmation Mass, All Saints, Eagle Butte

**April 8, Sunday**
9:30 a.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Bonaventure, McIntosh
10:30 a.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Bonaventure, McIntosh
3 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Anthony, Red Owl
4 p.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Anthony, Red Owl

**April 9, Monday**
Healing & Deliverance Training for Priests, Terra Sancta

**April 15, Sunday**
5 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont
6 p.m. Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont

**April 17, Tuesday**
11:30 a.m. Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation Executive Council Meeting, Chancery

Subject to Change Without Notice
**WWI Year of Remembrance**

BERLIN (CNS) — The Austrian bishops’ conference held its general assembly in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in 1914, sparking World War I. The war ended in 1918, and the meeting was part of the bishops’ decision to designate 2018 as a “Year of Remembrance.” During the meeting, they met with Bosnian bishops. “One hundred years ago, the First World War came to an end. Millions of people had lost their lives. The remembrance of this catastrophe and the massive suffering should strengthen the goodwill of Christians and all people to strive for a peaceful coexistence,” the Austrian bishops said in a statement after the meeting ended March 8.

Paul Wuthe, spokesman for the Austrian bishops, said they wanted to show support for people of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Catholic Church there. He said the Year of Remembrance “is centered above all on the founding of the republic Nov. 12, 1918, and the end of Austria through the ‘Anschluss’ (forced annexation by Germany) in 1938.”

During the meeting of the Austrian and Bosnian bishops, Bosnian Cardinal Vinko Puljic was presented with a relic of Blessed Karl of Austria who, as Charles I, was Austria’s last emperor. The relic, encased in a shell-splinter cross made by Austrian soldiers, was a special gift from the Kaiser Karl League of Prayers for Peace.

The Austrian bishops met with Metropolitan Hrizostom, head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Bosnia, and discussed ecumenical dialogue and cooperation. The bishops also met with the grand mufti of Sarajevo, Husein effendi Kavazovic, and Jakob Finci, chairman of Sarajevo’s Jewish community. The bishops said interreligious dialogue is an opportunity to achieve greater understanding with others and is of utmost importance.

“The Christian faith teaches us not to see one another as the stranger or the enemy, but rather as a person — specifically, as the image and likeness that God created like ourselves,” the bishops said. *(Pictured)* Cardinal Puljic, holds a relic and picture of Emperor Charles I of Austria. The emperor was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2004. *(CNS photo/Paul Wuthe, courtesy Katholische Presseagentur Osterreich)*

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**DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Applications are being accepted for the full time position of **Receptionist** for the Diocese of Rapid City beginning in late March. Open until filled.

**FUNCTION:** Full responsibility for all aspects of the receptionist function in a positive and hospitable manner. The receptionist also processes incoming and outgoing mail, maintains general office supply inventory and provides departmental support as needed.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Practicing Catholic, excellent communication and public relations skills with the ability to project a calm demeanor both in person and on the telephone, administrative, secretarial and computer skills, detail oriented, high degree of confidentiality and dependability, ability to multi-task.

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** A job description and a diocesan application form can be found on the website by clicking on the employment icon at https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/

Interested individuals should submit via e-mail or regular mail, a letter of application along with their resume listing three professional references and a completed application form to:

- msimonson@diorc.org
- Office of the Chancellor, Diocese of Rapid City, 606 Cathedral Drive, Rapid City SD 57701

The Diocese of Rapid City offers a competitive salary and benefits package.
VATICAN CITY — A good confessor is a good listener, Pope Francis said.

By truly listening to the penitent during confession, “we listen to Jesus himself, poor and humble; by listening to the Holy Spirit, we put ourselves in attentive obedience, becoming listeners of the Word” in order to know what God wants to be done, he said.

This is how priests can offer “the greatest service” to all penitents, especially the young, because “we put them in touch with Jesus himself,” he said March 9.

The pope spoke to hundreds of confessors and other participants attending an annual course on the sacrament of reconciliation, sponsored by the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court that handles issues related to the absolution of sin.

He warned confessors to avoid the temptation of becoming “masters” over other people’s consciences, especially the young, who are very easily influenced.

A confessor must never forget his is not the source of mercy or grace, but he is, however, an “indispensable instrument, but always just an instrument,” the pope said.

Being a conduit between the Holy Spirit and the penitent does not diminish this ministry, rather it leads to its fulfillment, he said.

The more the priest “disappears and Christ, the supreme and eternal priest, appears more clearly,” the more the priest fulfills his vocation as “unprofitable servants.”

In light of the October Synod of Bishops on young people, faith and vocational discernment, the course this year looked at the relationship between the sacrament of reconciliation and helping others discern their vocation.

The pope said young people should be able to hear what God is saying to them, both in their own conscience and by listening to the word. To achieve this, young people need wise accompaniment by a confessor, he added.

With priest and penitent both prayerfully listening to God’s will, confession can become an occasion for discovering God’s plan for the individual, he said. Vocations, he added, are never about what form they take, but are about building a life-giving and inseparable relationship with Jesus.

The pope asked confessors to be witnesses of mercy, “humble listeners of young people and of God’s will for them; always be respectful of the conscience and freedom of those who come to the confessional, because God himself loves their freedom.”

A clergyman hears confession from Pope Francis during a Lenten penance service March 9 in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. The service marked the start of the worldwide celebration of “24 Hours for the Lord,” a period when at least one church in every diocese was invited to be open all night — or at least for extended hours — for confession and eucharistic adoration.

(CNS photo/Stefano Rellandini, Reuters)
2018 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering: Black Bears discuss local needs in D.C.

BY BECKY BERRETH

Catholic advocates visited Capitol Hill in early February hoping members of Congress were ready to listen to their push for a federal budget that makes the needs of poor and vulnerable people a priority.

Coming at the end of the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, their visits took on greater urgency as Congress faced a Feb. 8 deadline to pass a budget deal or approve another stopgap spending measure to keep the government operating.

Ben and Jenny Black Bear, St. Francis Mission, served as the South Dakota delegation for the week-long gathering “Building Community: A Call to the Common Good. A Catholic Message to Congress.”

“It was really exciting. We were able not only to represent South Dakota but the tribe as well,” said Ben.

The group was given instructions to contact their state senators and representatives before arriving in Washington, to meet with them about programs deemed the most vulnerable: Medicare and Medicaid; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps; The Emergency Food Assistance Program, or TEFAP; and international humanitarian and poverty-reducing assistance.

Other “asks” included a path to citizenship for 1.8 million young adults who were brought illegally into the country as children; increasing the value of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, a primary vehicle that helps finance new affordable housing projects; and maintaining “strong and vibrant investments” in diplomacy and overseas development that leads to peaceful societies.

The Black Bears were surprised at how open the state delegation was to their visit. “We were able to meet with Senator John Thune for about 40 minutes. We hit the talking points that were given to us in addition to the work being done at the St. Francis Mission. We were able to talk about the Catholic faith and how we are trying to bring people to the faith and our work with the youth group.”

“He was very open to what we had to say. Toward the end, he was asking what our reservation needs,” added Ben. “I was throwing ideas out to help families.”

“Representative Kristi Noem was just as open to us and even offered to come down,” said Jenny. “One of her staffers even emailed us to find out when a good time to come visit would be.”

In addition to the Capital visits, participants heard testimonies and stories from groups working to build community and strengthen the common good for programs that help those living in poverty at home and abroad.

While the Black Bears found the presentations informative, one stood out in their minds. “One of the presentations that we had to endure was about the Pine Ridge Reservation,” said Ben. “They talked about how bad things were on the reservation. I had to stand up at the end and tell them we are products of the reservation. We told them about our youth group and different fundraisers they were doing, gave them information on our alcohol recovery program, and what we are doing on the reservation for the community.”

“People came up to us afterward and were handing us their cards — they wanted to know more. We teach religious education to 280 kids a week. We are doing great things; it’s not all what they saw in the presentation,” added Jenny. “One of the women that was there said that it was really sad until Ben stood up and spoke about the good things which are happening.”

“We are boots on the ground. We are working on another fundraiser for the youth; we’ve got 25 people who will be baptized next week; we do sacramental prep for confirmations and RCIA,” added Ben.

In a panel discussion, Sr. Patricia Chappell, executive director of Pax Christi USA and a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, said that encounter and understanding can be served by spreading the tenets of faith found in the church’s “strongest resource,” Catholic social teaching.

“These principles actually apply to the dignity of every person regardless of how we as a society, sad to say regardless how we as a church, often have classified people by race, sexual orientation, gender, income levels, philosophy as well as theologies,” Sister Chappell said. “But this Catholic social teaching is the foundation, is the mandate by which we as Catholic Christians need to operate from.”

She also called for the church to be on the ground in day and day out listening to people’s struggles and challenges. If the church takes such teaching to heart, she explained, differences among people will lessen and the unity of the body of Christ will be strengthened because no one will be pushed aside.

“It was a great opportunity for everyone to meet and go to the capital with the same message. We are Catholics and proud and we are out there. We all have the same message and we are advocating together,” said Jenny.

“We are Catholics on the reservation that are doing things not only spiritually, but health-wise, family-wise. We are helping our community thrive using the Catholic faith,” added Ben. “For us as Native Americans we should be up there too. We are doing something positive on the reservations — helping our youth carry on there to the next generation.”

(Portions of this story were drawn from Catholic News Service coverage of the 2018 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering)
Events Schedule

March 29, Thursday
• Deadline for submissions.
Paper mailed Tuesday, April 17.
✉ 605-343-3541
✉ hallstrom@diorc.org
✉ bberreth@diorc.org

March 30, Friday
• Chancery Office Closed: In observance of Good Friday.

April 3, Tuesday
• Catholics Returning Home: Six-week program for those who have been away from the church and are thinking about returning. Begins at 7 p.m. at St. Therese the Little Flower. Second series begins April 5, beginning at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick Church. Lead. No charge. ✉ Dcn. Greg Sass gsass@diorc.org or ReturningCatholics.net.

April 6, 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, April 7, begins with prayers at 7:45 a.m. followed by 8 a.m. Mass and exposition in Our Lady’s Chapel, Cathedral. ✉ Dr. Kopriva 605-343-6202.

April 21, Saturday
• Natural Family Planning: Seminar for engaged couples or anyone wanting to learn more about natural family planning. Held at Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont, from 9 a.m.-noon. Next seminar May 12, St. Therese the Little Flower, Rapid City. Preregistration required. ✉ Amy 605-716-5214 or ajulian@diorc.org.
• Citywide Youth Event, Easter Encounter: Monthly food, faith and fellowship. For all youth grades 8-12 and youth ministers. Begins at 7:30 p.m. at Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City. Preregistration required. ✉ cdyke@diorc.org or 605-716-5214.

April 26, Thursday
• Women’s Cursillo Weekend: Open to all Catholic women desiring a deeper understanding of God’s call for their lives. Held at Cedar Canyon Wesleyan Church Camp, Rapid City. Ends April 29. Men’s Weekend is May 3-6 at Storm Mountain, Rockerville. ✉ Richard Rangle 605-391-4187 or Dave Elkjer at 605-721-1033 or delkjer@vastbb.net.
• 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. Required for couples doing marriage prep in the diocese. Ends April 29. ✉ terrasancta.org/heart2heart.

April 27, Friday
• Benedictine Weekends: An opportunity to come and see religious and community life. Weekend begins at 4 p.m. and ends at 2 p.m. Sunday. Open to single, divorced or widowed Catholic women ages 18 and older. Held at St. Martin Monastery. Next weekend, May 18-20. ✉ Sr. Mary Wegher 605-343-8011 or smarywegher@yahoo.com.

DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications are being accepted for the full time (40 hours per week) position of Accountant to include Parish Accounts for the Diocese of Rapid City.

FUNCTIONS: To perform accounting activities for assigned entities and parishes

QUALIFICATIONS: High School Diploma, training and/or experience in the accounting field, demonstrated high degree of accuracy, detail oriented person

APPLICATION PROCESS:
A job description and a diocesan application form can be found on the website by clicking on the employment icon at https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/
Interested individuals should submit via e-mail or regular mail, a letter of application along with their resume listing three professional references and a completed application form to: msimonson@diorc.org or:
Office of the Chancellor
Diocese of Rapid City
606 Cathedral Drive
Rapid City SD 57701

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

Easter is more than just chocolate eggs and Easter baskets. As Catholics, we need to encourage the truth of the season by giving gifts and other reminders of faith to our friends and loved ones.

We invite you to stop in at the Mustard Seed where we have greeting cards, books, Bibles and devotional materials for adults and children that will enhance your Easter experience.

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*Remember your RCIA Candidates and Catechumens*

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A Better Experience
At the end of February, Adam Johnson, a first-year theologian at St. Paul Seminary, was installed as a lector. As reader and bearer of God’s Word, Adam will proclaim God’s Word in the liturgical assembly, instruct children and adults in the faith, and bring the message of salvation to those who have not yet received it. (From the Rite of Institution of Lector)

Andrew Sullivan, who also is a first-year theologian, at Kenrick Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, will be installed as a lector in April with our Bishop Robert Gruss presiding.

Adam’s pastor, Father Brian Lane from Blessed Sacrament Church in Rapid City, along with Adam’s parents, Mike and Kathy, were able to attend this celebration of the Ministry of Lector. After the celebration, I sent a text to Adam, his parents and Father Lane congratulating Adam and asking them to send pictures from the installation, which they did.

Father Lane also texted a picture of the seminarian poster for the Archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul — 59 in all! A true vocation boom. I smiled as I read Father Lane’s text: “Why is our poster so small?”

“More work to be done. More invitations to be extended,” I replied.

One of the goals in our diocesan Priority Plan calls for the formation of a vocation committee in each parish or parish grouping to encourage and promote a culture of vocations.

Father Varghese Srambickal, a Vincentian priest from Kerala, India, describes a culture of vocation in this way: “God’s first call for every person is to simply follow him. You were created to be in relationship with God, and that is his greatest desire for you. As your relationship with God grows, he will continue to draw you deeper into this relationship, and call you to become more like Christ, to love him more, and to love others through service. In all these things, you will experience God calling you to a particular vocation.”

Building a culture of vocations, as we hear and pray our diocesan vocation prayer every Sunday in our parishes, begins by creating an environment where all disciples will seek the will of Christ. This is what the church means by the universal call to holiness. Fostering a culture of vocations in our lives, families and parishes begins with the call to holiness — a deep, personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord, Savior, and friend.

Father Brett Brennan, author of “Save a Thousand Souls,” echoes this as well when he says that our primary vocation in life is holiness, and holiness is simply doing the will of God. When we live a life of holiness, we truly live a life of happiness. He goes on to say that “the primary and universal vocation of every person in the world is to be holy — to become like Jesus Christ. Christ-likeness is the only success recognized by God.”

As Pope Francis said: “to be a saint is not a privilege for the few, but a vocation for everyone.” He continued: “We must remember that holiness is a gift from God — it is not something we can achieve on our own.” Holiness, he continued, is living with love and offering Christian witness in our daily tasks that we are called to become saints... “Always and everywhere you can become a saint, that is, by being receptive to the grace that is working in us and leads us to holiness” (General Audience, September 2014).

The key to encouraging and promoting a culture of vocations begins in the family and is nourished and supported in our parish communities. We know the family is the primary community for the transmission of the Christian faith.

Our primary vocation, and the heart of building a culture of vocations in the parishes of our diocese is by living our faith with courage and joy. St. John Paul II said, “Our Christian communities must become genuine schools of prayer where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just as an imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion until the heart truly falls in love” (Novissimo Millennio Ineunte).

Our first step in encouraging and promoting a culture of vocations in our lives, families, parishes and diocese is helping our people to fall in love with Jesus. We must live our faith with courage and joy and be willing to share with others our personal friendship with Christ.
Conscience cannot be ignored — learning from the White Rose

Seventy-five years ago last month, Sophie and Hans Scholl and their friend Christian Probst were executed by guillotine at Munich's Stadelheim Prison for high treason. Their crime? They were the leaders of an anti-Nazi student organization, the White Rose, and had been caught distributing leaflets at their university in the Bavarian capital; the leaflets condemned the Third Reich, its genocide of the Jews, and its futile war.

How did young people once active in the Hitler Youth come to recognize the evil of the Nazi regime and risk their lives to oppose it?

The 2005 Oscar-nominated film, “Sophie Scholl: The Final Days,” offers a part of the answer. The garish brutality of the Nazis, not least at its Nuremberg party rallies, was a first hint to serious young people that something was wrong here. The White Rose produced and distributed six leaflets urging others to nonviolent resistance against the Nazi regime. To stand by silently, they claimed, was to be complicit in “the most horrible of crimes — crimes that infinitely outdistance every human measure.” To do nothing was to truckle to Hitler; and “every word that comes out of Hitler’s mouth is a lie.”

The fourth pamphlet made a promise: “We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace.” And therein lies a clue to another inspiration for the Scholls and their friends: John Henry Newman and his writings on conscience.

In Britain’s Catholic Herald, Paul Shrimpton notes that the youngsters of the White Rose were deeply influenced by Augustine’s Confessions and George Bernanos’s Diary of a Country Priest. But it was Newman’s sermons, recommended to the White Rose students by a philosopher who had converted to Catholicism after reading Newman’s Grammar of Assent, which prompted that fourth pamphlet with its call to heed the demanding voice of conscience.

Shrimpton reports that when Sophie Scholl’s boyfriend, Fritz Hartnagel, was assigned to the Russian front in 1942, Sophie gave him two volumes of Newman’s sermons. He later wrote her that “we know by whom we are created, and that we stand in a relationship of moral obligation to our creator. Conscience gives us the capacity to distinguish between good and evil” — words, Shrimpton notes, that “were taken almost verbatim from a famous sermon of Newman’s called ‘The Testimony of Conscience.’” On the witness stand before the notorious Nazi “People’s Court” judge Rudolph Freisler, 21-year-old Sophie Scholl testified that it was her conscience, and her Christian conviction, that had led her to nonviolent resistance against Hitler and his gangsters. That Christian conscience, we now know, was formed in part by a serious intellectual and spiritual encounter with Blessed John Henry Newman.

There is a lot of talk in the church these days about “conscience,” and Newman is invoked by many prominent personalities in those debates. So it might be useful for all concerned, including church leaders in the Munich where the White Rose youngsters gave their lives for the truth, to ponder Newman’s influence on these contemporary martyrs.

What did the members of the White Rose learn from Newman about conscience? They learned that conscience could not be ignored or manipulated. They learned that the voice of God speaking through our consciences sets before us what is life-giving and what is death-dealing. They learned that conscience can be stern, but that in submitting to the truths it conveys, we are liberated in the deepest meaning of human freedom.

They learned that obedience to conscience can make us courageous, and that to strive to live an ideal with the help of grace is to live a truly noble life with an undivided heart.
Our ache for earthly immortality

We share the world with more than seven-and-a-half billion people and each of us has the irrepressible, innate sense that we are special and uniquely destined. This isn’t surprising since each one of us is indeed unique and special. But how does one feel special among seven-and-a-half billion others?

We try to stand out. Generally we don’t succeed, and so, as Allan Jones puts it, “We nurse within our hearts the hope that we are different, that we are special, that we are extraordinary. We long for the assurance that our birth was no accident, that we exist by divine fiat. We ache for a cure for the ultimate disease of mortality. Our madness comes when the pressure is too great and we fabricate a vital lie to cover up the fact that we are mediocre, accidental, mortal. We fail to see the glory of the Good News. The vital lie is unnecessary because all the things we truly long for have been freely given us.”

All of us know what those words mean: We sense that we are extraordinary, precious, and significant, irrespective of our practical fortunes in life. Deep down we have the feeling that we are uniquely loved and specially called to a life of meaning and significance. We know too, though more in faith than in feeling, that we are precious not on the basis of what we accomplish but rather on the basis of having been created and loved by God.

But this intuition, however deep in our souls, invariably wilts in the face of trying to live a life that’s unique and special in a world in which billions of others are also trying to do the same thing. And so we can be overwhelmed by a sense of our mediocrity, anonymity, and mortality and begin to fear that we’re not precious but are merely another-among-many, nobody special, one of billions, living among billions. When we feel like this, we are tempted to believe that we are precious and unique only when we accomplish something which precisely sets us apart and ensures that we will be remembered. For most of us, the task of our lives then becomes that of guaranteeing our own preciousness, meaning, and immortality because, at the end of the day, we believe that this is contingent upon our own accomplishments, on creating our own specialization.

And so we struggle to be content with ordinary lives of anonymity, hidden in God. Rather we try to stand out, to leave a mark, to accomplish something extraordinary, and so ensure that we will be recognized and remembered. Few things impede our peace and happiness as does this effort. We set for ourselves the impossible, frustrating task of assuring for ourselves something which only God can give us, significance and immortality. Ordinary life then never seems enough for us, and we live restless, competitive, driven lives. Why isn’t ordinary life enough for us? Why do our lives always seem too small and not exciting enough? Why do we habitually feel dissatisfied at not being special?

Why our need to leave a mark? Why does our own situation often feel so suffocating? Why can’t we more easily embrace each other as sisters and brothers and rejoice in each other’s gifts and each other’s existence? Why the perennial feeling that the other is a rival? Why the need for masks, for pretense, to project a certain image about ourselves?

The answer: We do all of these things to try to set ourselves apart because we are trying to give ourselves something that only God can give us, significance and immortality.

Preciousness, meaning, significance and immortality are free gifts from God and we would be a whole lot more restful, peaceful, humble, grateful, happy, and less competitive if we could believe that. A humble, ordinary life, shared with billions of others, would then contain enough to give us a sense of our preciousness, meaning, and significance.

Thomas Merton, on one of his less restless days wrote: “It is enough to be, in an ordinary human mode, with one’s hunger and sleep, one’s cold and warmth, rising and going to bed. Putting on blankets and taking them off, making coffee and then drinking it. Defrosting the refrigerator, reading, meditating, working, praying. I live as my Fathers have lived on this earth, until eventually I die. Amen. There is no need to make an assertion of my life, especially so about it as mine, though doubtless it is not somebody else’s. I must learn to live so as to gradually forget program and artifice.”

Ordinary life is enough. There isn’t any need to make an assertion of my life, especially so about it as mine, though doubtless it is not somebody else’s. I must learn to live so as to gradually forget program and artifice.”

Ordinary life is enough.
Gifts for Veterans

Parishioners from St. Ambrose and St. Patrick Churches in Deadwood and Lead recently gathered to make gifts for local veterans and deployed service members. The group made special lap blankets for residents at the VA Black Hills Health Care System at Fort Meade, and younger parishioners made Valentine cards for the vets. “Even if you don’t have someone connected with the military, there is a realization that we live in this country and have these freedoms because of the people in the military,” said parishioner Judy Javersak, who gave a short presentation. During the service night, older children also learned how to make twine rosaries that were sent to active duty service members in Kuwait, where troops are working and living in tents while enduring 70 miles-per-hour winds in sand storms. Javersak, whose daughter Heather is currently serving in Kuwait, said more than 60 percent of her daughter’s fellow soldiers are Catholic, and the rosaries are welcome gifts of faith. (Pictured) Pam Sullivan and Roberta Milkman work on tying blankets to be donated to veterans at the Fort Meade medical center. (Photo by Judy Javersak)
POPE FRANCIS
The First Five Years

July 8
Travels to Lampedusa, Italy, praying for immigrants and those who lost lives trying to cross Mediterranean Sea

July 22-29
First foreign trip: World Youth Day in Brazil

Nov. 24

Feb. 22
Creates his first cardinals, tapping 19 churchmen from 12 countries

March 13
First Jesuit and first Latin American elected pope

April 13
Appoints Council of Cardinals to advise him on church governance, reorganization of Roman Curia

March 28
Breaks with protocol during Lenten penance service; before hearing confessions, he goes to confession

April 27
Canonizes Blessed John Paul II and John XXIII

July 7
Meets with six survivors of clerical sexual abuse, reiterates message of zero tolerance, accountability and continued commitment to prevention

Dec. 2
Joins interfaith leaders, signs Declaration Against Slavery

May 24
Signs encyclical “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home”

Sept. 19-28
Visits Cuba and U.S., addressing Congress and U.N.

Oct. 4-25
Synod of Bishops on the family

Dec. 8
Opens Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica to begin Year of Mercy

April 8
Releases “Amoris Laetitia,” apostolic exhortation on marriage and family life

Sept. 4
Canonizes Blessed Teresa of Kolkata

April 26
Delivers TED Talk via video on “The Future You”

Oct. 26
Holds live satellite link-up with crew aboard International Space Station

Nov. 19
Celebrates Mass for first World Day of the Poor, hosts Vatican lunch for people assisted by Catholic Charities

Jan. 18
Convalidates marriage of two flight-crew members on plane during Chile visit

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Two bills of note in this year’s state legislature

**SB 110**
Senate Bill 110 was signed into law by Gov. Dennis Daugaard on March 7 after strong support in both legislative chambers. The bill strengthens the responsibilities of pregnancy help centers, which seek to support mothers and fathers facing unplanned pregnancies. Contrary to reports in some media outlets, the law neither adds to nor removes from communications provided to women by abortionists.

Senate Bill 110 builds on a foundation laid by previous pro-life legislation in South Dakota. In 2005, the legislature required abortionists to tell moms that an abortion would terminate “the life of a whole, separate, unique human being.” Despite the self-evident nature of this statement, Planned Parenthood, which provides 98 percent of abortions in the state, fought and lost a nearly seven-year court battle over this statement.

In 2011, the legislature passed a law requiring basic protections be in place to protect pregnant moms from coercion; among them, that only a physician — not a receptionist — could schedule an abortion, and then only following a preliminary, in-person screening with the physician and a 72-hour waiting period. Planned Parenthood again fought this law in the courts, and again lost.

Even with these legislative successes, our ongoing prayers and joyful witness for life remain vitally important.

**HB 1123**
House Bill 1123 was defeated in the Senate after first passing through the House. This bill would have prevented the seriously mentally ill from receiving the death penalty if convicted of capital crimes. In visiting with citizens about this bill, I was a little surprised to find that even some Catholics were unfamiliar with the teaching of the church, which is found at paragraph 2267 in the Catechism: “Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm ... the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity are very rare, if not practically nonexistent.”

Some persons struggle with this teaching, especially if they through work or other circumstances have been confronted with evil acts. Their hearts rightfully desire to protect the innocent and punish the evildoer. The best answer to give such persons, I believe, is the witness of St. John Paul II, the pope who worked so tirelessly for a Culture of Life. Remember that much of his life was lived under the evil of the Hitler and Stalin regimes. He saw and experienced evil up close, a systematized evil that is hard for us to comprehend. It is this saint who gave the church Evangelium Vitae and insisted that with the death penalty, we are called to a better way.

Would you like to help in the work of the SDCC? Join our email list at sd catholicconference.org.

The Chancery Offices will be closed, Friday, March 30.

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A Safe Environment for Children and Young People

The Catholic Diocese of Rapid City is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and young people. To report allegations of sexual abuse by church personnel, contact 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 diocese website at www.rapidcitydiocese.org.

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Contingency Board improves parish interest rates

The Catholic Parish Association Contingency Fund, Inc. Board met February 23 in Rapid City. Since September 2017, parish deposits have earned 1.85 percent interest and parish loans were charged 3.4 percent interest. Effective March 1, 2018, the Contingency Board voted to increase the rate on parish deposits to 2.0 percent and decrease the rate charged on parish loans to 3.25 percent. This move in interest rates was due to better than expected investment returns for the past 12 months on contingency fund investments.

The Catholic Parish Association Contingency Fund is a centrally managed pool of funds created by parishes in our diocese for the benefit of all parishes. Any deposits not loaned to parishes are invested by First Interstate Wealth Management.

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

The Catholic Parish Association Contingency Fund, Inc. Board meets quarterly to review financial statements, investments and to approve interest rates for the upcoming quarter. Each deanery in our diocese is represented on the contingency board. If you would like to be considered serving on this board, please contact Rick Soulek the Chief Financial Officer of the Diocese of Rapid City.

50th Anniversary of U. S. Permanent Diaconate

One of the great legacies of the Second Vatican Council was its renewal and encouragement of the order of deacons throughout the entire Catholic Church.

Following the closing of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI formally implemented the renewal of the diaconate. Since the Second Vatican Council consigned the decision of the restoration of the diaconate to individual episcopal conferences, the bishops of the United States voted in the spring of 1968 to petition the Holy See for authorization. On August 30, 1968, the Apostolic Delegate informed the United States bishops that Pope Paul VI had agreed to their request. To commemorate this anniversary the West River Catholic will feature active deacons monthly throughout the year.

Assigned to: Sacred Heart Church, Philip
Duties: Ministering to residents of nursing homes & assisted living; training lay ministers; Returning Catholics facilitator assisting at wake services, funerals & burials
Ministry Highlight: Baptizing a good friend’s great-grandchildren; giving the homily at a neighbor’s funeral and assisting the family in the grieving process.
Work: Rancher

Deacon Lloyd & Marianne Frein
Ordained March 31, 2016 by Bishop Robert Gruss.

Assigned to: Our Lady of the Black Hills Church, Piedmont
Duties: Adult formation catechist, preaching & assisting at Masses; St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary 1st grade adopted deacon; minister at funerals, baptisms & weddings; marriage preparation (sponsor couple); homebound minister; pastoral council, stewardship council, pastoral planning team; Returning Catholic facilitator; janitor
Ministry Highlight: Bringing the light of Christ to families in the midst of chronic illness or death
Work: Retired

Deacon John & Joni Osnes
Ordained October 24, 2001 by Bishop Blase Cupich

See the WRC on Facebook.com/DioceseofRapidCity
Obituary

Sister Joan Newhart, BVM, 89,

Sister Joan Newhart, BVM (Joan Michael), 89, died March 13, at Marian Hall in Dubuque, Iowa. Burial is in Mount Carmel cemetery, Dubuque.

In the Diocese of Rapid City, Sister Joan taught at St. Patrick High School in Lead. She also taught secondary school in Illinois, Iowa; and Bogotá, Colombia. She served as Mundelein College Director of Academic Computing and Coordinator for Loyola University Chicago Computer Center. She was born in Oak Park, Ill., on March 21, 1928, to George and Pauline Burns Newhart. She entered the BVM congregation Sept. 8, 1949, from St. Catherine of Siena, Oak Park. She professed first vows on March 19, 1952, and final vows on July 16, 1957.

She was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by a brother, George Robert (Bob) Newhart and his wife Virginia Quinn, Los Angeles; sisters Pauline (James) Quan, Hoffman Estates, Ill., and Virginia (William) Brittain, Naperville, Ill.; nieces; nephews; and the Sisters of Charity, BVM, with whom she shared life for 68 years. Memorials may be given to the Sisters of Charity, BVM Support Fund, 1100 Carmel Drive, Dubuque, Iowa 52003.

Update: Church leaders praise Hawking for contribution to science

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, who said he did not believe in God, was still an esteemed member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and fostered a fruitful dialogue between science and faith. The academy, which Pope Pius IX established in 1847, tweeted, “We are deeply saddened about the passing of our remarkable Academician Stephen #Hawking who was so faithful to our Academy. He told the four popes he met that he wanted to advance the relationship between faith and scientific reason. We pray the Lord to welcome him in his glory,” @CasinaPioIV, the academy, tweeted March 14. The Vatican observatory, @SpecolaVaticana, also expressed its condolences to Hawking’s family. “We value the enormous scientific contribution he has made to quantum cosmology and the courage he had in facing illness,” the observatory tweeted in Italian. The British-born theoretical physicist, cosmologist and popular author died March 14 at the age of 76. In this photo, Pope Francis greets British theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking, during an audience with participants attending a plenary session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at the Vatican Nov. 28, 2018. (CNS photo/L’Osservatore Romano)

Notre Dame club sponsors lecture

The Notre Dame Club of the Black Hills and the Diocese of Rapid City are co-hosting a free event at the Terra Sancta Retreat Center, which is located at 2101 City Springs Road in Rapid City. The Hesburgh Lecture Series has brought Notre Dame faculty to its alumni clubs and their local communities since 1986. Monday, April 30, 7p.m. the lecture is “Serving the Least, the Last and the Lonely.” This year’s local lecture will feature Rev. David T. Link, a former Law School Dean and the co-founder of the South Bend Center for the Homeless. It will be followed by light refreshments. All West River parishioners and the general public are welcome to attend. Please RSVP online at the following website: http://blackhills.undclub.org/hesburgh2018.
Parents are the first line of protection against child sexual abuse

Charlotte Verhey
Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator

As a parent raising three children in the 1980s, 90s, and 2000s, most of what I knew about child sexual abuse and neglect came from what I was taught as an educator. Incidents in the news, or various media sources, have shown us more and more on this issue and we have tried to work through possible solutions. Today, through my involvement in the Diocesan Safe Environment Program, and continually doing more research, that knowledge has thankfully grown considerably.

For the past fifteen years, the Catholic Church has integrated into church life the principles and procedures from the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Our call as Catholics is to follow Christ’s teachings and the Tradition of the church. These teachings model for us our actions in the area of helping those that have been victims and survivors of sexual abuse, and lead us to do all we can to prevent abuse from happening.

As part of our Diocesan Safe Environment Program, we include and promote ways that parents can be part of the learning. We know the importance and influence parents have on your children’s lives. Parents, as the first and primary educators for their children, are instrumental in helping prevent child sexual abuse.

An informational sheet available through the National Children’s Advocacy Center, shares well-referenced information on this topic.1 Knowledge about sexual abuse helps protect children. Lack of knowledge leaves children vulnerable.2

Why are parents the right people to teach their children about sexual abuse?
Parents:
• Influence children’s knowledge and values.
• Teach children the facts.
• Have more influence on children’s decisions about sex than their friends.3

How do you talk to children about sexual abuse?
• Start at an early age.4
• Keep discussions developmentally appropriate, with an awareness of normal behaviors.
• Repeat the message.5
• Promote healthy sexuality by teaching respect and value of body and gender.6
• Teach correct names for body parts, to reduce children’s vulnerability.6
• Establish touching boundaries so children understand they can say “no” to unwanted touch.6
• Establish privacy rules in the home and away from home.
• Talk about secrets/tricks/threats that a perpetrator may use to keep children from telling.7
• Educate children beyond “Stranger Danger” because approximately 90 percent of sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows.7
• Give children permission to tell about anything happening to them.

What do you do if a child discloses sexual abuse?
• Stay calm and listen to the child.
• Tell the child you believe him/her and are glad they told you.
• Tell the child that what happened is not their fault.
• Report the disclosure to professionals for investigation and help.
• Do not ask a lot of questions. Do not conduct your own investigation.

Parents, you are always encouraged to attend the adult safe environment training held in your parish or one nearby. You are also invited to participate in the two safe environment lessons that are presented to the children and youth in the parish’s faith formation program. These lessons change annually to provide developmentally appropriate information to our youth. You are also urged to read the quarterly Safe Environment Newsletter sent to the pastor and parish safe environment coordinator as part of our on-going learning. If you have not yet done so, I also encourage you to explore the pages of our Diocesan Safe Environment Website at https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/safe-environment/.

How can we help you? If you have thoughts, concerns, or questions that may help us provide more information or support to you as parents, please contact me and share them. I may be reached by email through cverhey@diorc.org or by phone at 605-343-3541. My regular office hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Thursday 8 a.m.-noon mountain time. Together we will have greater success for our children and families!

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Make a commitment to yourself and your children to learn something more to prevent abuse from happening in our community. Please see the “Prayer for Healing Victims of Abuse” at the left. During April, please pray for all those who have been victims/survivors of abuse. Thank you.

Prayer for Healing Victims of Abuse

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,always present, always just:You gave your only Son
to save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear our cries as we agonize over the harm done to our brothers and sisters. Breathe wisdom into our prayers, soothe restless hearts with hope, steady shaken spirits with faith:Show us the way to justice and wholeness, enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people’s wounds and transform our brokenness. Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace, so that we may act with justice and find peace in you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Source: www.usccb.org

References:
Palliative care is pro-life response to euthanasia, panelists say

BY CINDY WOODEN
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

ROME — Intentionally causing a patient’s death is different from accepting that a patient is dying, then providing emotional and spiritual support and pain relief, said a doctor who practices and promotes palliative care.

Dr. Eduardo Bruera, medical director of the Department of Supportive Care Center at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, was one of the speakers at a Feb. 28-March 1 international congress on palliative care sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life.

“The reality is that, in medicine, we have focused much more on disease than on patients,” Bruera said. For example, he said, patients who report a “high-symptom burden” may be suffering from their cancer or from the toxicity of their treatment, but their situation also may be approaching the unbearable because they lost their job or are worrying about the impact of their illness on their families.

Palliative care, Bruera said, asks the medical team, the patient and the family to work together to alleviate suffering, whether it is physical, emotional or spiritual.

In a message to the conference at Rome’s Augustinian Patristic Institute, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said palliative care involves “a rediscovery of the most profound vocation of medicine, which consists first of all in taking care of the patient. The doctor’s task always is to care, even when it is not possible to heal.”

Obviously, he said, medicine and medical research have an enduring commitment to discovering new cures and defeating illness, but palliative care shows an awareness that, when everything medical has been attempted, limits must be “recognized and accepted.”

“When all the resources of ‘doing’ seem to be exhausted,” he said, “then comes the most important aspect of human relations, that of ‘being’: being present, being near, being accepting.”

For Christians, he said, that means “sharing the impotence of those reaching the end of life,” and making sure that the final phase of a person’s life on earth “is no longer a place of separation and solitude, but an occasion of encounter and communion.”

“Pain therapy” is a particularly sensitive area of palliative care, he said, noting that “already Pope Pius XII, distinguishing it from euthanasia, clearly gave legitimacy to the administration of analgesics to alleviate unbearable pain that could not be treated in any other way even when, in the phase of imminent death, it could cause a shortening of life.”

“Attentive discernment and much prudence” also is needed when determining the appropriate use of pharmacological sedation, “especially when prolonged and profound,” because it “annuls the relational and communicative dimension” of palliative care, especially its emphasis on family and community.

Prolonged sedation at the end of life, he said, “is, therefore, always partially unsatisfactory and so should be considered an extreme measure to be taken only after having examined and clarified its implications attentively.”

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Academy for Life, said palliative care’s focus on communication among caregivers, patients and family members is essential for overcoming the confusion and debate about “therapeutic obstinacy,” which is using “an excess of treatments that lead to useless suffering.”

“In other words,” he said, “doing everything possible — when understood in the sense of always using every means available — can mean doing too much.”

“Doing more does not always mean doing better,” the archbishop said.

Archbishop Paglia told the conference that experience has shown that people who support or request euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide focus on “two fears: that of being abandoned and that of pain.”

Palliative care, he said, is an attempt to respond to and allay such fears and, as such, “is a fundamental part of our pro-life work.”

Bishop Kevin W. Vann of Orange, California, attended the meeting on behalf of the California Catholic Conference, which is working closely with the Alliance of Catholic Health Care to educate people about palliative care and offer it in every Catholic hospital in California, which made physician-assisted suicide legal in 2016.

The Catholic program is called “Whole Person Care” and has the mission of showing every person they are “loved, wanted and worthy and will be prepared for and supported in health and serious illness through the end of life,” according to the project outline.

Bishop Vann told Catholic News Service the project offers “an alternative to physician-assisted suicide” by “improving all of our pastoral care and outreach.”

“Being present to folks” who experiencing the fragility of the end of life, “being on the journey with them to explain to them and teach them” the sacred value of life at every stage and, particularly, showing them that they are not alone are essential for combating euthanasia, the bishop said.

When the California legislation passed, he said, fear of dying alone and in pain and a desire to exercise autonomy at the last moments of life seemed to be the primary motivations for supporting the measure.

The reason the church and Catholic hospitals launched their project, he said, “is to show folks they are not alone.”

Transformation

I have had 4 abortions. I have a history of addiction. All of this from the time I was 18-30 years of age. I felt that I was a loser, that I had nothing to offer anyone. I did get clean, got married when I was 32 and had two, sons but I still didn’t feel good about myself or deserving of my husband or children.

I had buried the abortions so deep inside of me that I never even considered that could be part of my problem. I always felt like a fake, that I could never really be honest because if people knew who I really was, they would think I was a terrible person.

My mother was Catholic. She never knew of the abortions. 20 years ago, I stopped going to church. Last year I decided to go back to Mass as my New Year’s Resolution. I felt empty and knew that I had pushed God out of my life. I cried at every Mass I attended.

One Sunday, I noticed in the bulletin that there was a retreat called Rachel’s Vineyard that was for women who had abortions. I called them up and made arrangements to go which I did. At the time, I began to think that quite possibly God quietly had me go to Mass and knew that I had pushed God out of my life. I cried at every Mass I attended.

One Sunday, I noticed in the bulletin that there was a retreat called Rachel’s Vineyard that was for women who had abortions. I called them up and made arrangements to go which I did. At the time, I began to think that quite possibly God quietly had me go to Mass so that I would find Rachel’s Vineyard.

I can only say that it was a weekend of transformation for me. A weekend of taking responsibility for my actions, a weekend of being forgiven and a weekend of allowing the beautiful people to care and love me like I had never known before. Rachael’s Vineyard has given me the opportunity to be loved and love. To know that Jesus forgives me and loves me and that my children are with him and being loved and cared for.

(Source: http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/emotions/stories.aspx)
Forming relationships is one of the most basic functions or needs that human beings have. We are social creatures, and we desire the interaction and socialization that occurs with our various relationships. We don’t have to think hard about how we form relationships; they just happen naturally.

Our relationship building began before we first came into the world. Tunkasila formed us. In Ps 139:13-16 we read, “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.” We knew the Creator before any human being saw us.

According to “Lakota Thought and Philosophy,” written by Victor Douville; when a child is conceived, its soul comes out of a hole in the bowl of the Big Dipper. The Big Dipper is a sacred place where Towin, “a human” pulled a tinsila (a wild turnip) and created a hole in the center of the Big Dipper. From there she could see the earth and became homesick. One day she braided the turnips to form a rope in hopes of climbing down to earth. During her descent, the braid broke, and she fell, she was with child, and she did not survive the fall, but the little baby boy lived and became Star Boy, who is a cultural hero.

Our first and primary relationships were with our mother and father, especially our mother because we needed her to survive. As we grew, so did our relationships, we had brothers and sisters as our nuclear family and met our entire tiospaye, (extended family). The relationships with our siblings are the longest relationships we will ever have in our life.

Then one day we found a most wonderful relationship. The person we wanted to spend the rest of our life with was standing in front of us, and we were immediately attracted to them, infatuated to be exact. We were falling in love, and there are no instructions on what to do. We just wanted to be with this other person, forever.

“But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female’ For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Mk 10. 6-9).

This is the bond of marriage, a commitment that is “till death do us part.” Matrimony is a holy sacrament of the church where two people become one. The relationship requires trust, honesty and deep respect for the other person. Jesus has to be at the center of this relationship in order to have a bond that will survive the long road. This becomes one of the most important relationships we form as an adult.

Another relationship that we formed was the relationship with Tunkasila. All of us need God. We might not know it, but it is there: a God-shaped hole in our soul that no one can fill. Without God, we will always feel empty and be searching for that which fills the void. Like Elijah, we look for loud and spectacular things to fill the void, but we still feel empty and unsatisfied. The irony is that through all of it God is present, in the quiet depths of our heart waiting for our invitation, our “yes” to enter our lives and be an active participant. This relationship also takes trust and courage in giving our will over to the Father and praying for guidance on how we give our lives over to him.

Where does all this lead us? I think that it leads us back to the place we come from, the home of God. We are sent into this world for a short time to say the great “yes” to the love that has been given to us. We return to the One who sent us with a big “yes” engraved on our heart, only if our life has been a constant journey back to the One who calls us the Beloved. We come back to the Creator as our work on this earth is completed.

**Canku Wakan**

Canku Wakan is an opportunity to grow closer to God through Native American Spirituality and Catholic teachings experiences. To be held April 19-22 at Sioux Spiritual Center, Howes. For information or an application contact Deacon Marlon Leneaugh, 605-716-5215, ext. 237, or email mleneaughsr@diorc.org.

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New Testament prof sorts out plausible, implausible in new ‘Paul’ movie

BY MARK PATTISON
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — Don’t take everything you see in the new movie “Paul, Apostle of Christ” as, well, gospel. Even the filmmakers have said much of what is on screen is conjecture.

Compared to today’s information-saturated age, little is definitively known about St. Paul and St. Luke, the film’s two main characters. A bit more is known about the time of Roman Emperor Nero, under whose rule the movie is set.

Even the identity of those credited with writing more than half of the books of the New Testament is up for grabs, according to Dominican Sister Laurie Brink, an associate professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

How much of Paul’s letters can be attributed to him “depends on who you ask,” Sister Brink told Catholic News Service in a March 7 telephone interview. “There are disputed ones and undisputed ones.”

In the undisputed category are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians and Philemon. The others, she said, are “variously dated much later than we know Paul lived,” although they originated “from a later Pauline community.” Scholars can make that distinction, Sister Brink said, based on vocabulary, sentence structure and the topics that are addressed.

As for the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, both of which are attributed to St. Luke, “that’s a larger question,” she said. “Who was St. Luke? Tradition has the person named as Luke, and tradition suggests he was a companion of Paul, from a citation based on Colossians.” But beyond that, the trail grows murky.

“In order to understand the historical author of any of our texts, the only thing we have to go by is the texts themselves. What can we know about this person based on what they wrote?” said Sister Brink, adding that learning about a person based mainly on their writings is akin to “looking at it in a mirror.”

“The person who wrote Luke is very well-educated,” Sister Brink said. “He’s Greek, his diction is very good, his use of the language is very good. He improves on Mark’s Gospel, which he uses as his source. He seems to be familiar with the patron-client system.”

Theophilus, who is mentioned in both Luke and Acts, was Luke’s patron.

“Paul, Apostle of Christ,” which is to be released in theaters nationwide March 23, has Luke visiting Paul in a prison in Rome. “That makes good cinematography, but since we don’t know the identity of Luke — we just know that tradition has named him that. We don’t see that (prison visit) in the text,” Sister Brink said.

Paul is jailed in the movie after having been accused of setting the blaze that destroyed a good chunk of Rome.

“The fire in Rome, according to Tacitus, a Roman historian, was likely started by the minions of Nero, who had his eye set on a particular piece of property,” Sister Brink said. “But everybody already had all that property. The only way to get that was to burn the property, accuse the Christians, make them scapegoats, and acquire the property.”

Another fire-related element in the film is solid fact: Christians were burned alive to bring light to the dark city. “Yes, that is true!” Sister Brink told CNS. “They were crucified and they were set on fire. They were like lamplights on the side of the road. Now, this is according to Tacitus, and Tacitus didn’t like Nero.”

A small, beleaguered Christian community is shown hiding in an otherwise-deserted Roman compound in “Paul, Apostle of Christ.” One thing of which moviegoers can be sure, Sister Brink said, is that they didn’t live in the catacombs.

“That’s a long trope that the Christians were hiding in the catacombs,” she said. “None of that is true. Christians were buried in the catacombs and they often had

James Faulkner as Paul and Jim Caviezel as Luke are seen in the film “Paul, Apostle of Christ.” In an interview with Catholic News Service, Dominican Sister Laurie Brink, an associate professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, sorts out the plausible and the implausible in the movie, to be released nationwide March 23.

(CNS photo/Sony Pictures)

The Rapid City Catholic School System will be hiring a full time, year round Finance Director. Position available June 1st, 2018. Duties include maintaining accounting system, financial reporting, budgeting, and tuition billing.

Job Description available at rccss.org/district-information/employment-opportunities

worry there,” Sister Brink added, but they did not use it as a hideout from the Roman Empire.

But by this point in history, though, one plot point in the film rings true: “The Our Father would have been known to this community,” according to Sister Brink.

Some scenes in the film mimic events elsewhere in the Bible.

Luke’s healing of the Roman prison warden’s daughter, while not miraculous, is reminiscent of Jesus’ healing of Roman centurion Jairus’ daughter. The warden and Paul, by this point a condemned prisoner, have an extended chat in the warden’s courtyard; by the end of Acts, Sister Brink said, “Paul is under house arrest. He is staying in some rental property, and there is a soldier guarding him.”

“They didn’t have prisons” as we know them today, she noted. Also, a band of younger, agitated Christians stages a raid on the prison to free Paul, but he refuses to leave; in the New Testament, an earthquake wrecks Paul’s jail, but he declined to escape.

Sister Brink, who had not seen the film at the time of the interview, said, “Some of this (drama) is probably coming from ‘The Acts of Paul and Thecla’ and ‘The Martyrdom of Paul.’ They are not canonical texts but they are great reads. They’re kind of like early Christian novels.”

Still, she gave the filmmakers credit. “Even if it’s not biblically or historically accurate, it gives people an opportunity to think about Paul, to know about Paul,” Sister Brink said. “For too long, Catholics have not paid any attention to Paul. Catholics have been Jesus-focused, and that’s good, but the apostle of Paul is a pretty significant figure in our faith history. So good on them for trying.”
ROME — Listening, playing and having an afternoon snack, Pope Francis spent time March 2 at a group home for women prisoners with small children.

He also left as a gift for the kids large, hollow chocolate eggs, each with a surprise inside. They are a standard part of Italian Easter celebrations.

The pope left the Vatican about 4 p.m. and “without any advance notice” arrived at the Casa di Leda in Rome’s EUR neighborhood, the Vatican press office said. The group home is located in a building confiscated from the mafia under an Italian program to turn former mafia properties into socially beneficial enterprises.

Casa di Leda is the first group home in Italy for incarcerated women with small children. The Vatican press office said some 4,500 Italian children have a mother in prison; some 90,000 have a father incarcerated. Italian law allows children to live in prison with their mothers until the age of 6, although the law allows the use of house arrest or group homes for mothers of small children.

Pope Francis’ visit was part of an ongoing “Mercy Friday” initiative he began in the 2015-16 Year of Mercy.

Casa di Leda currently is home to five mothers and their children. Volunteers help staff the home, and other prisoners sentenced to community service work there as well.

After playing with the pope, the Vatican said, the children invited him to have a snack with them.

The mothers talked to him about the opportunities that come with being able to raise their children in the home, the Vatican said. Even though there are limits on what they can do, they are allowed to accompany their children to school in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon, and they have opportunities to learn skills that will allow them to get jobs once their sentences are completed.

Pope Francis visits the Casa di Leda, a group home for women prisoners and their young children, in Rome March 2. The visit was one of the pope’s Friday works of mercy. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)
Retired pope says criticism against Pope Francis is ‘foolish prejudice’

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — On the eve of the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis’ election, retired Pope Benedict XVI defended the continuity of the church’s teaching under his successor and dismissed those who criticize the pope’s theological foundations.

In a letter sent to Msgr. Dario Vigano, prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for Communication, Pope Benedict applauded the publication of a new book series titled, “The Theology of Pope Francis.”

“It contradicts the foolish prejudice of those who see Pope Francis as someone who lacks a particular theological and philosophical formation, while I would have been considered solely a theorist of theology with little understanding of the concrete lives of today’s Christian,” the retired pontiff wrote.

Msgr. Vigano read the letter during a presentation of the 11-volume series March 12. Before reading the letter, Msgr. Vigano said he sent a message to Pope Francis and Pope Benedict regarding the publication of the book series. The retired pontiff “wrote a beautiful, personal letter that I will read to you,” Msgr. Vigano said.

Pope Benedict thanked Msgr. Vigano for having given him a copy of “The Theology of Pope Francis” book series, which was authored by several notable theologians.

“These small volumes reasonably demonstrate that Pope Francis is a man with profound philosophical and theological formation and are helpful to see the interior continuity between the two pontificates, even with all the differences in style and temperament,” he wrote.

Pope Benedict has made no secret of his affection for and admiration of Pope Francis. During a Vatican celebration for the 65th anniversary of Pope Benedict’s priestly ordination June 28, 2016, the retired pope expressed his sincere gratefulness to Pope Francis, saying that his goodness “from the first moment of your election, in every moment of my life here, touches me deeply.”

“More than the beauty found in the Vatican Gardens, your goodness is the place where I live; I feel protected,” Pope Benedict said.
Rite of Election

Sponsor Tyler Stoeser introduces candidate Tiffany Stoeser, both of St. John the Evangelist Church, Ft. Pierre, to Father Michel Mulloy during the Rite of Election, February 18, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City. Candidates from across the diocese seeking confirmation and catechumens seeking all three sacraments of initiation (baptism, first communion and confirmation) attended the Mass. In his homily, Fr. Mulloy reminded the candidates and catechumens "that we need God’s grace. Without his grace we will never repent, we will never move away from sin. It’s a journey that begins over and over again. It is in this moment you renew your commitment to this journey to ultimately become God’s sons and daughters." (WRC photo by Becky Berreth)

Life Savers

Trinity, Catherine and Magnalena Mutchler, children of David and Peggy Sue Mutchler sold candy on behalf of the Catholic Daughters at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Keystone. The Catholic Daughters “Life Savers Against Abuse” program raises money to stop domestic abuse. (Courtesy photo)
GIVING BACK TO HER CLASSROOM

Red Cloud eighth-grader Justina Pourier loves to read. So when she was presented with the opportunity to donate a large collection of new books to her own middle school classroom, she jumped at the chance.

“I didn’t think it would be so many, just a few boxes. But once they all arrived, we realized, that’s a lot of books!” said Justina.

Justina worked with her uncle to locate the collection of books, which are now shelved carefully in the classroom of Pam Lliteras, one of her favorite teachers at Red Cloud Indian School. They were gathered from schools and libraries in Idaho that no longer had use for them. They eventually made their way to Pine Ridge — where Justina finally had a chance to see them all together. In fact, it was more than 10 large boxes — hundreds of books, including everything from textbooks to novels. Justina’s brother helped haul them into the classroom, and then they started to fill the bookshelves, one by one. Her teacher was overwhelmed by the gesture.

“Justina loves to read, and takes her academics very seriously,” she said. “She is a wonderfully outgoing student.”

“You know when you have a teacher and you just know they are going to have an impact on you?” said Justina. “That’s why I wanted to donate the books to her classroom.” (Photo and story courtesy of Red Cloud Indian School. Read more at redcloudschool.org.)

PACKING HOPE

The staff and students at the Rapid City Catholic School System completed their Packing for Hope Campaign. Preschool through eighth grade students spent March 14 packing 104,132 meals to be sent to Honduras. Bags include soy protein, vitamin powder, rice, and dried vegetables. Each bag becomes six meals when boiled in water and has a shelf life of three years. Students raised $20 each, or $20,500 system wide, including parish donations to pay for food, transportation and shipping. (Left) Sophomore Michael Gylten helps kindergartner Crosby Long seal a meal packet. (WRC photo by Becky Berreth)
BY SAMUEL CARROLL

The brilliance of retreats is that we can remove the noise of our everyday lives and focus on the word of God, and how he speaks to us in our lives.

I am the former president of the Newman Club and a current graduate student at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City. I’m currently working on my thesis. If you have worked on a thesis before, you have probably felt like leaving it all behind and running away. I know that’s the feeling I sometimes get while working on mine.

Luckily, the Newman Center offered me just a single day retreat from my thesis work. The February retreat focused on Mk 11:24, “Therefore I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours.”

Approximately 20 students from SDSM&T and Black Hills State University, Spearfish, attended the day long retreat held at the SDSM&T Newman Center, which began with a talk about vocations. Jesse and Emily Herrera talked about their experience meeting while running in the woods and dating long distance. Each spoke to how God affirmed and confirmed those calls.

Throughout the day we also prayed Liturgy of the Hours, some of us for the first time and me realizing it might require more instruction than “just follow along.” We attended Mass celebrated by Father Marcin, and spent time in the presence of the Eucharist and received the sacrament of reconciliation.

Now since we are college students we also needed a little bit of fun during the retreat, and there were some awesome times when we were able to talk with each other (about the retreat or about life in general), as well as a fun game invented by SDSM&T Newman Director Nancy Haugen. I think I most valued the times the retreat attendees were able to sit and discuss how God impacts us in our lives and have those deeper conversations that really bring us closer together in the love of God.

Why is prayer sometimes a struggle?

The spiritual masters of all times have described growth in faith and in love for God as a spiritual, life-and-death combat. The battle field is man’s interior life. The Christian’s weapon is prayer. We can allow ourselves to be defeated by our selfishness and lose ourselves over worthless things — or we can win God (2725-2752).

Often someone who wants to pray must first conquer his/her lack of will power. Even the desert fathers were aquatinted with spiritual sluggishness (acedia). Reluctance to seek God is a big problem in the spiritual life. The spirit of the times sees no point in praying and full calendars leave no room for it. Then there is the battle against the tempter, who will try anything to keep a person from devoting himself/herself to God. If God did not want us to find our way to him in prayer, we would not win the battle.

Is prayer not just a sort of conversation with yourself?

The distinctive feature about prayer is precisely the fact that one goes from me to you, from self-centeredness to radical openness. Someone who is really praying can experience the fact that God speaks — and that often he does not speak as we expect and would like.

Those who are experienced in prayer report that a person very often comes out of a prayer session different from the way he/she went in. Sometimes expectations are met: you are sad and find consolation; you lack confidence and receive new strength. It can also happen, though, that you would like to forget pressures but are made even more uneasy; that you would like to be left in peace and instead receive an assignment. A real encounter with God — the kind that occurs again and again in prayer — can shatter our preconceptions about both God and prayer.

Do not say ‘I am only a youth’

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

voucat.org

MOVIE REVIEW

Tomb Raider (Warner Bros.)

Murky video-game adaptation in which, seven years after the disappearance of her business tycoon-turned-archeologist father (Dominic West), an heiress (Alicia Vikander), who prefers life as a London bicycle courier to enjoying her riches, follows clues he left behind to track him to an almost uncharted island off the coast of Japan where an evil goddess lies buried, and must remain entombed for the welfare of the world. The resourceful lass gets help on her quest, and in her fight against the shadowy organization trying to locate and exploit the deity (served by Walton Goggins), from a hard-drinking Hong Kong sea captain (Daniel Wu). Director Roar Uthaug’s origin story features the same main character played by Angelina Jolie in 2001’s "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" and 2003’s "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life." Whether this familiar figure, who is presented in Geneva Robertson-Dworet and Alastair Siddons’ script as equally capable of holding her own in a kick-boxing match and quoting Shakespeare off-the-cuff, represents female empowerment or sophomoric male wish fulfillment may be debatable. But the high volume of nasty mayhem along her path is not. Occult themes, much harsh violence with some gore, a few gruesome images, and language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Classifications

A Wrinkle in Time.................................A-II
Gringo..................................................A-III
Red Sparrow........................................0

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.