‘Pope Francis: A Man of His Word,’ documentary

By John Mulderig

NEW YORK (CNS) — Veteran filmmaker Wim Wenders respectfully profiles the current successor of St. Peter in the well-crafted, sometimes moving documentary “Pope Francis: A Man of His Word” (Focus). Though Wenders also provides some narration, as his title suggests, he largely lets the pontiff speak for himself.

That approach pays off by allowing the audience to hear Francis’ views on a wide variety of topics of interest to believers and nonbelievers alike. These include the environment, the situation of young people, relations with the Islamic world, economic inequality and the clergy sex abuse crisis. Francis also sets out, in a general way, his vision for the future of the church.

Along with original interviews with the pope conducted at the Vatican, Wenders incorporates footage of his worldwide travels, which have included trips to North and South America, Africa and, closer to Rome, Greece and the southern Italian city of Naples. We also see Francis answering questions from youngsters and, in a particularly touching scene, offering encouragement to the inmates of a prison.

Francis brings warmth to this grim setting and draws an emotional response from its presumably tough inhabitants by reminding his listeners that Christianity’s very first saint was the Good Thief. Moments like that one give viewers an insight into the personality, thinking and global influence of the first pontiff in the long history of the church to hail both from the New World and from the Society of Jesus.

Wenders also dwells on the significance of another precedent-breaking choice, that of the papal name Francis. Luminous images of Assisi and an outline of the life of its most famous son provide context for what his medieval

Film, Continued on page 6

Feast Days

(Above) A scene from Pentecost is depicted in a stained-glass window in Queen of Apostles Chapel at the Maryknoll Society Center in Maryknoll, N.Y. The feast of Pentecost, celebrated May 20 this year, commemorates the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles 50 days after Christ’s resurrection. Pentecost also marks the end of the Easter season. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, headed by Cardinal Robert Sarah, has announced Pope Francis’ decision to add the feast of Mary, Mother of the Church, to the church’s calendar as an “obligatory memorial.” The Monday after Pentecost is May 21 this year. It is not a holy day of obligation. (Left) A statue of Mary and the Christ Child is seen at St. Rafael the Archangel Church in Quebradillas, Puerto Rico. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)
Seize every occasion to act in a loving, holy way

At the State Knights of Columbus Convention a couple of weeks ago, I had the privilege of preaching at the Mass celebrated on Friday evening at St. Joseph Church in Spearfish. During the homily I asked the congregation the question, “How many think you are holy?” I have asked this question before in other settings and the response is always the same — not more than a very few people raise their hands. The reason for this is either they are very humble, or they do not understand what holiness really looks like. Isn’t this the call of all Christians?

Seeking holiness is first and foremost the call of a disciple of Jesus. Chapter Five of the Vatican II document Lumen Gentium (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) takes up this idea that all who believe in Jesus Christ regardless of their vocation in life are called to holiness. The Core Values outlined in the Diocesan Priority Plan stem from this very call — the call we must accept if we are to be living witnesses of Jesus Christ in the world.

I bring this up as a way to encourage people of God across the diocese to read Pope Francis’ recent Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate — The Call to Holiness in Today’s World. This short document was released on March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph. It was not meant to be a treatise on holiness, defining it in some way. Instead, the Holy Father is re-proposing for all of us “the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time. For the Lord has chosen each one of us ’to be holy and blameless before him in love.’ (Eph 1:4).” (#2)

It is easy, with all of the distractions and noise in our world today, to forget or even dismiss this call as unattainable. So often people relate holiness as perfection, thinking that this is the reality of the saints and not the average Christian. How far from the truth! Pope Francis relates, “We should not grow discouraged before examples of holiness that appear unattainable … We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness.” (#11)

In this apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis relates a story about Cardinal Francois-Xavier Nguyen van Thuân’s witness to holiness during his 9 ½ years of imprisonment in North Vietnam, which began in 1976. If you are interested in his story, read “The Road of Hope: A Gospel from Prison.” I would also recommend a short spiritual memoir entitled “Five Loaves and Two Fish.” that shares a bit about his life during his time under house arrest.

During his imprisonment, Cardinal Nguyen van Thuân refused to waste time waiting for the day he would be released. Instead, he chose “to live the present moment, filling it to the brim with love.” He decided to live his life in prison in this way: “I will seize the occasions that present themselves every day; I will accomplish ordinary actions in an extraordinary way.” (#17)

If we do this, led by God’s grace, then the holiness of God becomes the heart of our every action. There are a couple of other points that I would like to highlight from Gaudete et Exsultate in reference to the call of every disciple of Jesus. The first regards our mission. In my Confirmation homily this year I share with the students who are being confirmed that the Spirit defines our life and leads us to our own personal mission for Christ. This is at the heart of this Sacrament of Confirmation.

Pope Francis reiterates this, “A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness, for ‘this is the will of God, your sanctification’ (1 Thes 4:3). Each saint (each of us) is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel.” (#19) I wonder how often we see ourselves as a mission in our moment in history.

The second point that caught my attention is the call of each of us to be a message to the world. “Every saint (every one of us who seeks to live a life of holiness) is a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people.” (#21)

Seeking holiness is not easy. Pope Francis describes how holiness comes through the daily struggles each disciple of Jesus faces. He notes that this spiritual combat is not only with worldly values and our own weaknesses, but is also with a very real enemy, the devil. To aid in that fight, the Holy Father concludes his exhortation by addressing discernment and “recognizing how we can better accomplish the mission entrusted to us at our baptism.” (#174) And this mission, of course, is to be holy. And, yes, this mission is attainable.

“In the end, it is Christ who loves in us, for holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full. As a result, the measure of our holiness stems from the stature that Christ achieves in us, to the extent that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we model our whole life on his.” (#21)

Documents Available
This is the cover of Pope Francis’ new apostolic exhortation, “Gaudete et Exsultate” (Rejoice and Be Glad), on “the call to holiness in today’s world.” The document was released at the Vatican April 9. Copies can be ordered from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at https://bit.ly/2uZNycd. (CNS)
Bishop’s Calendar
May 16-June 7, 2018

May 16, Wednesday
9:30 a.m. Cabinet Chief Meeting, Chancery Conference Room

May 17, Thursday
9 a.m. Crazy Horse Memorial Board Meeting, Crazy Horse Memorial
Noon Black Elk Canonization Cause Committee Meeting, Chancery
Conference Room
2:30 p.m. Sioux Spiritual Center Board Special Meeting, Chancery
Conference Room

May 20, Sunday

Pentecost
7 a.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Bernard, McLaughlin
8 a.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Bernard Church, McLaughlin
2 p.m. Mass, 125th Anniversary of St. Joseph Church, Cherry Creek

May 21, Monday
10 a.m. College of Consultors Meeting, Rapid City
5 p.m. Rapid City Catholic School Board Meeting, Cathedral

May 21-24, Monday-Thursday
Clergy Days, Terra Sancta

May 24, Thursday
1 p.m. St. Thomas More Middle School Graduation, Cathedral
7 p.m. Mass, Transitional Diaconate Ordination of Zane Pekron, Cathedral

May 27, Sunday
2 p.m. St. Thomas More High School Graduation, Cathedral

May 28, Monday
Memorial Day — Chancery closed

May 29, Tuesday
9:05 a.m. Live On-air with Real Presence Radio, FM 89.9/94.7,
www.yourcatholicradiostation.com
11:15 a.m. Mass and lunch with Duc in Altum Team, Terra Sancta
6:30 p.m. Catholic Social Services Board Meeting, Rapid City

May 30, Wednesday
8:30 a.m. Investment Committee Meeting, Chancery
9 a.m. Finance Council Meeting, Chancery

June 1, Friday
Fishing Tournament for Seminarian Fund, Ft. Pierre

June 2, Saturday
1:15 p.m. Veritatis Splendor Institute, Terra Sancta

June 3, Sunday
10:30 a.m. CT Pre-Confirmation Meeting, St. Charles, St. Francis
11:30 a.m. Confirmation Mass, St. Charles Borromeo Church,
St. Francis

June 6, Wednesday
9:30 a.m. Cabinet Chiefs Meeting, Chancery Conference Room

June 7, Thursday
8 a.m. Chancery Staff Mass/Gathering, Terra Sancta
11 a.m. Presbyteral Council Meeting, Chancery

Subject to Change
Without Notice
Priest assignments

After hearing the advice of the Diocesan Consultants, Bishop Robert Gruss has made the following appointments effective June 30, 2018, except as noted:

**Fr. Mark McCormick** is released from assignment as Director of Stewardship. He will retain his assignment as Director of Vocations and be assigned as Chaplain to the Rapid City Catholic School System and the Newman Center at the S.D. School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City.

**Fr. Bryan Sorensen** is released from assignment as Pastor of the Parishes of Holy Cross in Timber Lake, Holy Rosary in Trail City and St. Mary in Isabel and assigned as Pastor of the Parishes of the Cheyenne River Reservation: All Saints in Eagle Butte, Immaculate Conception in Bridger, St. Joseph in Cherry Creek, Sacred Heart in Dupree, St. Catherine in Promise, Sacred Heart in Red Scaffold, St. Joseph in Ridgeview and St. Therese in White Horse.

**Fr. Brian Lane** is released from assignment as Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Rapid City and assigned as Pastor of the Parishes of Holy Cross in Timber Lake, Holy Rosary in Trail City and St. Mary in Isabel.

**Fr. Riccardo Pennati** is released from assignment as Administrator of the Parishes of St. Joseph in Faith, Our Lady of Victory in Plainview, St. Anthony in Red Owl and St. Joseph in Mud Butte. He will return to retirement.

**Fr. Dan Jueiffs** is released from assignment as Pastor of the Parishes of the Cheyenne River Reservation: All Saints in Eagle Butte, Immaculate Conception in Bridger, St. Joseph in Cherry Creek, Sacred Heart in Dupree, St. Catherine in Promise, Sacred Heart in Red Scaffold, St. Joseph in Ridgeview and St. Therese in White Horse effective June 30, 2018. Following a sabbatical, he is assigned as Pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Wall and St. Margaret Parish in Lakeside effective September 4, 2018, through June 30, 2019.

**Fr. Janusz Korban** is released from assignment as Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Keystone and St. Rose of Lima in Hill City and assigned as Pastor of the Parishes of St. Joseph in Faith, Our Lady of Victory in Plainview, St. Anthony in Red Owl and St. Joseph in Mud Butte, as well as Chaplain for the Sioux Spiritual Center. He will retain responsibility as Vicar for Hispanic Ministry.

**Msgr. Michael Woster’s** assignment as Pastor of the Parishes of St. Joseph in Spearfish and St. Paul in Belle Fourche is extended for two years.

**Mr. Jonathan Dillon** is assigned as Pastor of the Parishes of St. Joseph in Gregory, Immaculate Conception in Bonesteel, Sacred Heart in Burke and St. Anthony in Fairfax for five years in addition to the past year during which he served as Administrator.

**Fr. Mark Horn** will return from Canon Law studies in Rome and is assigned as Administrator of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Keystone and St. Rose of Lima in Hill City. In addition he will serve part-time in the diocesan Tribunal and cover the Sunday Spanish Masses at Blessed Sacrament Church in Rapid City.

**Fr. Tim Hoag** is released from assignment as Pastor of the Parishes of St. Patrick in Wall and St. Margaret in Lakeside and assigned as Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church in Rapid City. He will retain responsibilities as Judicial Vicar for the diocesan Tribunal.

**Fr. Ed Vanorny’s** assignment as Administrator for the Parishes of St. Anthony in Buffalo, St. Isidore in Ralph and Blessed Sacrament in Bison is extended through June 30, 2019.

**Speaker Paul Ryan gives House chaplain his job back**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Jesuit Father Patrick Conroy, chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives who said he had been forced to resign, was reinstated to his post by House Speaker Paul Ryan May 3. The priest was reinstated after a letter he wrote to Ryan, R-Wisconsin, became public. In the letter, Father Conroy said he wished to retract his resignation letter and continue working during this Congress “and beyond. I have never been disciplined, nor reprimanded, nor have I ever heard a complaint about my ministry during my time as House Chaplain,” his letter said.

He also mentioned displeasure that Ryan hadn’t spoken to him directly but had his chief of staff ask for his resignation. In a statement, Ryan said his original decision was made with what he thought was in the best interest of the House.
On May 24, Zane Pekron will be ordained a transitional deacon at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City, at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend. He recently spoke to the West River Catholic about his experiences.

**WRC:** When was the first time you thought about the priesthood?

The first time the priesthood was brought up to me was around my sophomore year in high school. Our parish priest at the time, Father Ron Garry, encouraged me to attend the Totus Tuus Boys Camp put on by the diocese. I remember being at camp and around the seminarians who kept saying, ‘You are not here by chance. You are where God wants you to be.’ That stuck with me, but I shelved it until I was a senior in high school.

After camp, I noticed that the priesthood was something that came up, but I didn’t want to think about it a lot. In the time between camp and my senior year in high school, people mentioned in passing that I would make a really good priest. This kept the thought in the back of my mind.

I started thinking about it more seriously the summer before my senior year in high school. Our new parish priest, Father Kevin Achbach, started visiting with me. My mom had brought up the priesthood too. That’s what got the ball rolling. They convinced me to go on a seminary visit in November. I went and had a good experience. So much so, I went back in March for the second visit of the academic year.

I was debating either priesthood or taking over the family ranch — there were some challenges with that. It was towards the end of the senior year that I really felt the Lord working in my life. I wasn’t sure what I was going to study, but I thought I would go to seminary for a year, and see where the Lord would lead me. Each year I felt the Lord calling me back.

**WRC:** What has been your seminary experience?

Being in seminary in both Winona and St. Paul have been some of the best years of my life — coming to know the Lord and drawing closer to him, the lifelong friendships I have made — I wouldn’t do it differently. It was by far the best decision I could have made.

**WRC:** How would you describe your prayer life?

Consistent and slow growing. There have been some really high moments, but a lot of times there is a steady consistency of coming to greater knowledge and trust in the Lord and how he’s leading me and where he’s asking me to go.

**WRC:** What are you most excited for during your last year of formation?

I’m really just excited to be drawing closer to becoming a priest. I want to live that life of service that the Lord is calling me to. I have a joy and excitement to be in that ministry of sharing the love of Christ and the Gospel with those that I meet.

Zane Pekron

**Age:** 25  
**Home Parish:** St. Mary, Milesville  
**Parents:** Steve and Nina Pekron  
**Education:** Minor seminary Immaculate Heart of Mary, Winona, Minn.; major seminary St. Paul School of Divinity, St. Paul, Minn.  
**Pastoral Learning:** Duc in Altum, Institute for Priestly formation, worked on the Pine Ridge Reservation with Jesuits, and hospital ministry program through the seminary  
**Summer Learning Experience:** St. Joseph, Spearfish; St. Paul, Belle Fourche  
**Hobbies:** I grew up on a cattle ranch so I like working with horses — roping and riding. I also enjoy playing different sports.  
**Favorite Book:** Lone Cowboy by Will James

---

Bishop Robert Gruss invites you to join him on a Pilgrimage to

**The Holy Land & Jordan**

**January 14-25, 2019**

Visit [bit.ly/GrussHL](http://bit.ly/GrussHL) for more information!

---

*Based on double occupancy*
Hanson named new Director of Stewardship

Fr. Mark McCormick has served as the Director of the Office of Stewardship for the past four years. His service to the diocese has been invaluable in bringing about a deep awareness across western South Dakota of what it means to live a life of stewardship. One parish has already been designated as a stewardship parish and several others are moving towards that same goal. Bishop Robert Gruss is thankful for Fr. Mark’s great service and generosity in this stewardship ministry. As Fr. Mark leaves the Stewardship Office on June 30, Shawna Hanson, his current assistant, will become the new director effective July 1. She is well acquainted with the full vision and scope of the Office of Stewardship from her experience and is well equipped to not only take over the role as director, but to help move the stewardship process forward in the Diocese of Rapid City.

SHAWNA HANSON

Diocese of Rapid City Employment Opportunities

Applications are being accepted for the half time (20 hours per week) position of Filing Clerk for the Office of the Chancellor.
FUNCTION: Responsible for maintaining the filing system in an organized manner for the function of the Chancellor’s office.
QUALIFICATIONS: Excellent clerical skills with an emphasis on details, organization and logical thinking. Must possess a high level of confidentiality and discretion. Competency with computers is required. Must demonstrate a willingness to learn the filing system and maintain it. Familiarity with the Catholic Faith and the operation of the Catholic Church preferred. Open until filled.

Applications are being accepted for the part time (20 hours per week) position of Accounting Clerk to include Parish Accounts.
FUNCTIONS: To perform accounting activities for assigned entities and parishes.
QUALIFICATIONS: High School Diploma, training and/or experience in the bookkeeping field with some knowledge of accounting, demonstrated high degree of accuracy, detail oriented person.

APPLICATION PROCESS
Job descriptions 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: email: msimonson@diorc.org or by mail: 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.

Film, Continued from page 1______
namesake likely represents to the 21st-century pope.

While Wenders is unstinting in his appreciation of Francis, he sometimes misguidedly attempts to highlight this pope’s qualities by contrasting them, at least implicitly, with what he perceives to be the shortcomings of Francis’ predecessors or of some members of the hierarchy. Thus the lavishly decorated public rooms of the Apostolic Palace are rather naively set out as unspoken evidence that previous popes liked to “live large.”

Overall, nonetheless, this is a work of high quality that can be recommended for a wide range of age groups. Much of the discussion would be over the heads of small children, of course. And they might also be disturbed by the tragic images that accompany Francis’ reflections on one of the subjects closest to his heart, the plight of refugees.

For older kids, by contrast, “Pope Francis: A Man of His Word” will make educational viewing, whether seen in the company of parents or teachers. And, once released on video, the movie will provide a valuable resource for both schools and parishes.

Rogation Days

Fr. Tim Hoag, pastor of St. Patrick Parish, Wall, blessing the Bielmaier Ranch April 22. Father Hoag has been going to area ranches and farms for a couple weeks blessing the grounds and livestock. Rogation Days are held in the spring to pray for blessings on the land and good crop yields. (Courtesy photo)
May 24, Thursday
• Serra Club Ordination Rosary: Join the Serra Club for a rosary, May 24, at 6:30 p.m. (before the Diaconate Ordination Mass) for Zane Pekron at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City.  ☎️ 605-343-3541  📧 hallstrom@diorc.org  📧 berreth@diorc.org

May 29, Tuesday
• Deadline for submissions. Paper mailed Tuesday, June 19.  📧 605-343-3541  📧 hallstrom@diorc.org  📧 berreth@diorc.org

June 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, June 2, 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.

• Sixth Annual Bishop’s Fishing Tournament: Begins at 7:30am (CDT) at St. John the Evangelist Church, Ft. Pierre. Day ends with Mass, fish fry and silent auction. See page 22. ☎️ www.wsdcf.org. To donate to the silent auction ⊕ Elizabeth 605-343-3541.

June 15, Friday
• Ambassadors for Christ, A Stewardship Leadership Training: Chris Stewart and Tony Brandt will share ways you can live generous hospitality, lively faith and dedicated discipleship in your personal life and in your parish. Learn the key characteristics present in any vibrant, growing parish and leave with the tools and inspiration needed to help make your parish a place where people encounter Jesus and become intentional disciples. ⊕ Office of Stewardship 605-716-5214 or  📧 shanson@diorc.org.

June 24, Sunday
• Totus Tuus Girls: An opportunity to reflect on God’s call with religious sisters and priests. Includes hiking, campfires, swimming, games, Mass, adoration, and more. Held at Terra Sancta. Discipleship camp, for girls who have completed grades 9-12 ends June 29. Grades 6-8, June 26-29. ☎️ www.gods-call.org for registration forms. ⊕ Craig Dyke 605-716-5214 or  📧 cdyke@diorc.org.

July 9, Monday
• Silent Retreat: Includes time for adoration, confession, rosary, Mass and quiet. Sponsored by the Offices of Faith Formation and Family Life Ministries. Ends July 12. ⊕ Amy 605-716-5214 or  📧 ajulian@diorc.org.

July 15, Sunday
• Totus Tuus Boys: An opportunity to reflect on God’s call with seminarians and priests. Includes hiking, campfires, swimming, games, Mass, adoration, and more. Held at Terra Sancta. Discipleship camp, for boys who have completed grades 9-12 ends July 20. Grades 6-8, July 17-20. ☎️ www.gods-call.org for registration forms. ⊕ Craig Dyke 605-716-5214 or  📧 cdyke@diorc.org.

July 21, Saturday
• Natural Family Planning: Seminar for engaged couples or anyone wanting to learn more about natural family planning. Held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City, from 9 a.m. – noon. Pre-registration required. ⊕ Amy 605-716-5214 or  📧 ajulian@diorc.org.

July 27, Friday
• Heart to Heart Weekend for the Engaged: For engaged Couples to deepen their relationship with each other and God by exploring the Catholic church’s vision of marriage. Required for couples doing marriage prep in the diocese. Ends July 30. ☎️ terrasancta.org/heart2heart.

July 29, Sunday
• Verso d’Alto: Join Father Mark McCormick and seminarians on this Rocky Mountain expedition. Includes white water rafting, hiking a 14,000 ft. peak, camping, Mass, confession, adoration, Liturgy of the Hours and rosary. Open to young men 16 and older. Cost $350. Registration deadline July 15. ☎️ www.gods-call.org or  📧 Shawna Hanson 605-716-5214.

Welcome to Our Lord’s Table
Send your group first Communion photo with parish name and town to:
Attn: Becky Berreth
West River Catholic
PO Box 678
Rapid City, SD 57709
or e-mail to  berreth@diorc.org
by June 4
for publication in the June West River Catholic

Diocesan Choir Rehearsals for the Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate of Zane Pekron

May 24, 2018 ~ 7 p.m.
Choir rehearsals for this Mass will be held on the following dates:

Thursday, May 17 6:30pm-8:00pm
Sunday, May 20 1:00pm-3:00pm

All choir rehearsals will be held in the choir loft at the Cathedral.
All local musicians are asked attend at least one rehearsal prior to the Ordination Mass.
If you are interested in participating please contact Amber Larsen at 605-342-0507 or at amber@cathedralolph.org.

Duc In Altum 2018

Duc In Altum is a program sponsored by the Office of Vocations to provide parishes with a week-long parish “mission” for youth that strives to teach the faith and inspire participants to live it more fully.

JUNE 3-7
OUR LADY OF THE BLACK HILLS, PIEDMONT
ST. PATRICK, WALL
ST. FRANCIS, STURGIS

JUNE 10-14
ST. JOSEPH, SPEARFISH
SACRED HEART, PHILIP
ST. BONAVENTURE, MCINTOSH

JUNE 17-21
ST. JOSEPH, GREGORY
BLESSSED SACRAMENT, BISON
ST. MARY, LEMMON

JULY 22-26
ST. PATRICK, LEAD
ST. MARY STAR OF THE SEA, NEWELL
CATHEDRAL OLPH, RAPID CITY

JULY 29-AUG 2
OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART, MARTIN
ST. JOHN, FT. PIERRE
ST. THERESE, RAPID CITY

CONTACT YOUR PARISH FOR REGISTRATION
In a January article in the *West River Catholic*, Father Michel Mulloy described how the Diocesan Priority Plan and Stewardship Initiative are actually two sides of the same coin.

“The Diocesan Priority Plan and the Stewardship Initiative are two ways of expressing the same mission. First of all both are grounded in a relationship with Jesus. A relationship with Jesus is what drives us and shapes the rest of our life,” he wrote. “At the heart of being a disciple is meeting Jesus. Once this happens, everything in life flows from and leads to that relationship. We encounter Jesus in prayer, in the sacraments and in those who have already encountered him.”

The important questions we must constantly ask ourselves are these:

• How are we encountering the person of Christ and what difference is our relationship with Jesus making in our lives?
• Are we more loving, more forgiving, more joyful, more truthful, in our actions and in our words?
• Do people see Jesus in us?
• Are they attracted to Jesus because of the way we live our lives in love?
• Have we truly trusted our lives to Christ?

These are the questions that the Stewardship Initiative and the Diocesan Priority Plan continue to lay before our eyes and our hearts. Do we know Jesus and have we given our total life to him?

There are some alarming statistics that say we do not know Jesus as we should personally know him as our Lord, Savior and friend. For instance, Sherry Weddell in her book “Forming Intentional Disciples” writes: “The majority of adult Catholics are not even certain that a personal relationship with God is possible.”

Pope St. John Paul II in “Catechesi Treadenda” (On Catechesis in Our Time) writes: “It is possible for baptized Catholics to be still without any explicit personal attachment to Jesus Christ; they only have the capacity to believe placed within them by baptism and the presence of the Holy Spirit.”

Brandon Vogt in his book, “Return: How to Draw Your Child Back to the Church,” reports that 79 percent of former Catholics leave the church before age 23 (Pew Research) and 50 percent of millennials raised Catholic no longer identify as Catholic today, i.e., half of the babies you’ve seen baptized in the last 30 years, half of the kids you’ve seen confirmed, half of the Catholic young people you’ve seen get married.

The Office of Stewardship is fighting back against these alarming statistics that hinder and plague our families, our parishes and our diocese when it comes to knowing and living Christ in our lives. By lifting up the Diocesan Priority Plan and the Stewardship Initiative, the Office of Stewardship is working to help form the Catholic imagination in Western South Dakota.

Bishop Robert Morneau, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay, remarked: “Whoever forms the imagination forms a culture.” At this point, it seems that the secular media is doing a much more effective job of forming our imagination than Christ and his Church are doing. This seriously impedes people’s ability to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.

As a way to support families, parishioners and parishes in our diocese living Christ more intentionally, we will be hosting a Stewardship Leadership Training, Friday and Saturday, June 15 and 16, at Terra Sancta with Chris Stewart and Tony Brandt of Casting Nets Ministries. You might recall that Chris and Tony were here for last year’s Summit and their presentations were very well received.

Chris and Tony have generously agreed to develop this training specifically for us as a way to help all of us understand and implement the Stewardship Initiative and the Bishop’s Priority Plan, and through them help our parishes become more vibrant and meet more fully the needs of the people in our communities.

In addition to giving participants practical tools to help them in their role as parish leaders, this training will be directly tied to the Summit Conference to be held Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21-22. Participants will be asked — and trained — to personally invite other parishioners to the Summit.

The Summit is being re-designed to focus on encouraging a personal encounter with Christ. It will include inspirational talks, adoration, Mass and generous times for confession, as well as a healing service.

Those leaders who participate in the training in June will be encouraged to accompany parishioners to the Summit and also to provide follow-up afterward by inviting participants to become more involved in the parish — to attend a Bible study, prayer group or class in the parish which will help them to deepen their discipleship.

For more information on the Stewardship Leadership Training and the Summit please visit our website https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/stewardship/ or contact Shawna Hanson SHanson@diorc.org or Fr. Mark McCormick at MMcCormick@diorc.org or call the stewardship/vocations office at (605) 716-5214, ext. 233.

Locally owned & operated by the Isburg Family
Faithful parishioners of the Catholic community
605-642-2633 Spearfish & Lead, South Dakota Sundance, Wyoming

[Image: Fidler-Irsburg Funeral Chapels & Crematory Service]
Freedom is never free

When I first visited Lviv, the principal city of western Ukraine, in 2002, the transportation from plane to airport terminal was an old bus towed by a Soviet-era tractor; today, the airport is a model of cleanliness and efficiency. In 2002, the Old Town was shabby and begrimed; today, it’s become a major tourist destination, and while there is still more clean-up to do, the charms of an old Habsburg city are beginning to reveal themselves. To sit in a downtown restaurant and speak with the city’s mayor about his plans for further development, it’s easy to forget that you’re in a country at war.

But then you come to the Garrison Church of Sts. Peter and Paul. There, Father Stepan Sus of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is running an urban ministry so dynamic that he has twenty other priests working with him. The church itself is full of architectural and decorative interest: built in the Baroque style, the early seventeenth century as the city’s “Jesuit Church” (and therefore modeled on the Church of the Gesù in Rome), Sts. Peter and Paul long served as a center of military chaplaincy for the Austrian and Polish troops garrisoned in Lviv. Then, in 1946, the property was seized by the Soviet regime and the church was turned into a book depository in which some two million volumes were stored. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and Ukraine achieved independence, there was a fuss over ownership and it was not until 2010 that the church was deemed the property of the Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Lviv.

Father Sus is full of energy, and on both weekdays and Sundays, the church celebrates the Divine Liturgy several times, with confessions available for over 11 hours each day. But when Father Sus takes you to a small memorial to the left of the church’s entrance, his mien becomes more sober and you begin to understand that the vibrant ministry underway at this site of ecclesial entrance, his mien becomes more sober and you begin to understand that the vibrant ministry underway at this site of ecclesial resurrection has its costs. For there, amidst shell casings, bits of shrapnel, spent bullets, and an icon, are the pictures of the young men of the parish who have been killed in the war Russia has been conducting in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine since 2014. Since the invasion of the Donbass by Russian “little green men,” Father Sus has conducted 76 funerals in the garrison church. Each of those young lives, sacrificed to defend a country against an aggression the West would prefer to ignore, is a powerful and poignant reminder that freedom is never free.

So is the memorial to Bohdan Solchanyk in the foyer of one of the sparkling new buildings that grace the campus of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. UKU (as it’s known from its initials in transliterated Ukrainian) is another marvel. The only Catholic institution of higher learning in the former Soviet space, UKU was a dream 25 years ago. Today, it’s a stunning reality — the most highly-rated university in Ukraine on several indices of accomplishment, thanks to the work of an extraordinary faculty and administrative team first assembled by Bishop Borys Gudziak.

UKU is a university that takes Catholic mission with utmost seriousness: in this case, the mission to heal and evangelize a society still traumatized by more than seven decades of communism, war, and the Soviet attempt to destroy Ukraine’s national identity. The university has long understood that one of its foundations is martyrdom, for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was brutally persecuted after World War II and gave the faith thousands of many witnesses- unto-death. When Bohdan Solchanyk, a history lecturer at UKU preparing his doctoral and engaged to be married went to Kyiv in 2013 to participate in the nonviolent demonstrations we now know as the Maidan Revolution of Dignity, he was certainly aware of that foundation. Then he, too, became a martyr, shot through the head by a sniper as he peacefully called for a Ukraine cleansed of corruption in society, culture, politics, and economics.

The vibrant ministry at Lviv’s garrison church and the exceptional university being built at UKU are signs of hope in a world where the bad news sometimes seems to be all the news there is. The war in the Donbass is real, however, and the West needs to take it far more seriously.

Appreciating the fleetingness of the moment

On the surface, Roma Downey has enjoyed an enviable level of success: Starring in the CBS television hit “Touched by an Angel,” she played the angel Monica for nine seasons. Downey went on to co-produce with her husband, Mark Burnett, the 10-hour miniseries “The Bible,” as well as “A.D. The Bible Continues,” and the feature film “Son of God.” She even has her own star on Hollywood Boulevard.

Yet her new book, “Box of Butterflies” (Howard Books/Atria) is suffused with stories not just of success and blessing, but of pain and loss.

“Box of Butterflies” is a lavishly designed “scrapbook” of favorite poems and pictures, memories and friendships. At its heart, however, the lesson is that life — like a butterfly — is a fragile gift that must be appreciated and never taken for granted.

This is the cover of “Box of Butterflies” by Roma Downey.

(CNS photo/courtesy Simon & Schuster)
The shortcomings of a digital immigrant

Information technology and social media aren’t my mother tongue. I’m a digital immigrant. I wasn’t born into the world of information technology but migrated into it, piecemeal. I first lived in some foreign territories.

I was nine years old before I lived with electricity. I had seen it before; but neither our home, our school, nor our neighbors had electricity. Electricity, when I first saw it, was a huge revelation. And manna for my adolescent hunger for connection to the larger world. Electricity and television quickly became a mother tongue, one lit our home and other brought the big world into it. But the phone was still foreign. I was seventeen when I left home and our family had never had a phone.

The phone wasn’t much to master, but it would be a goodly number of years before I mastered much in the brave new world of information technology: Computers, the internet, websites, mobile phones, smart phones, television and movie access through the internet, cloud storage, social media, virtual assistants, and the world of myriad apps. It’s been a journey! I was thirty-eight when I first used a VCR, forty-two before I first owned a computer, fifty before I first accessed the web and used email, fifty-eight when I owned my first mobile phone, the same age when I first set up a website, sixty-two before I first texted, and sixty-five before I joined Facebook. With email, texting, and Facebook being all I can handle, I still do not have either an Instagram or Twitter account. I’m the only person in my immediate religious community who still prays the office of the church out of a book rather than off a mobile device.

I protest that paper has soul while digital devices do not. The responses I get are not particularly sympathetic. But it’s for reasons of soul that I much prefer to have a book in my hand than a kindle device. I’m not against information technology; mainly it’s just that I’m not very good at it. I struggle with the language. It’s hard to master a new language as an adult and I envy the young who can speak this language well.

What’s to be said about the revolution in information technology? Is it good or bad?

Obviously, it has many positives: It’s making us the most informed people ever in the history of this world. Information is power and the internet and social media have leveled the playing field in terms of access to information and this is serving well the developing nations in the world. Moreover it’s creating one global village out of the whole world. We now know all of our neighbors, not just those who live nearby. We’re the best-informed and best-connected people ever.

But all of this also has a pejorative underbelly: We talk to each other less than we are engaging others face to face. We watch nature on a screen more than we ever physically touch it. We spend more time looking at a device in our hands than actually engaging others face to face. I walk through an airport or basically any other public space and I see the majority of people staring at their phones. Is this a good thing? Does it foster for friendship and community or is it their substitute? It’s too early to tell. The initial generations who lived through the industrial revolution did not have any way of knowing what the effects of this would be long-range. The technological revolution, I believe, is just as radical as the industrial revolution and we are its initial generation. At this time we have no way of knowing where this will ultimately take us, for good or bad.

But one negative that seems already evident is that the revolution within information technology we are living through is destroying the few remaining remnants we still retain in terms of keeping “Sabbath” in our lives. The 13th century mystic, Rumi, once lamented: “I have lived too long where I can be reached.” That’s infinitely truer of us today than it was for those living in the 13th century. Thanks to the electronic devices we carry around with us we can be reached all the time — and, too often, let ourselves be reached all time. The result is that now we no longer have any time apart from what we regularly do. Our family times, our recreational times, our vacation periods, and even our prayer times are constantly rendered regular time by our “being reached.” My fear is that we are going to be the most informed people ever, but the least contemplative people ever.

But I’m an outsider on this, a digital immigrant. I need to bow to the judgments of those who speak this language as their mother tongue.
Ways to help the Serra Club support vocations

BY STEPHEN AND LISA WESOLICK

A new organization is being formed to promote vocations in the Diocese of Rapid City: The Saint Serra Club or Serra International.

The decline in vocations is staggering and the situation is dire. In 1965 there were 58,632 ordained U.S. priests. In 2017 the number was 37,181. That is a 37 percent decline. Priestly ordinations declined by 55 percent between 1965 and 2000 but since then, led by millennial men, have increased slightly. All the while, the U.S. Catholic population has increased 48 percent to a current 68.5 million. Sadly, the number of parishes without a resident priest pastor has increased 547 percent.

Serra Clubs organize and serve through meetings, vocational programs, or personal involvement in schools, parishes and diocesan activities, and members accept the challenge of fostering vocations and encouraging spiritual growth. We start with prayer. As Pope Francis has said, “there can be no promotion of vocations or Christian mission apart from constant contemplative prayer.”

Some of our activities include “Called by Name,” altar service awards, “traveling” chalice and crucifix programs, rosaries for vocations and rosaries before ordinations, organized visits to seminaries and religious convents, special St. Andrew and Miriam dinners (to connect young men and women with active vocations); and we support local parish vocations committees. The 31 Club allows prayer partners to commit to one day every month for prayer for increased vocations — anything from a rosary, to adoration, to a Mass intention — in many cases something that is already being done. Our goal is to have hundreds of prayer partners committing to one day per month so that every day of the calendar year is covered in all the parishes. Resources for vocations rosaries can be found at http://www.serraspark.org/12-rosaries-for-vocations.html.

We invite every active Catholic to join us in our mission. Our goal is to charter in September with 25 to 50 active members. We have different levels of participation — from prayer partners to full membership — that you can select depending on your available time and interest level.

We currently host the program meeting at 6:30 p.m. the fourth Thursday of every month at the Terra Sancta Retreat Center, Rapid City, unless special circumstances suggest otherwise, such as the Transitional Diaconate Ordination Mass of Zane Pekron on May 24, which we will attend.

For more information about becoming a member of Serra or participating in the 31 Club, please contact the vocations office at (605) 716-5214, ext. 233 or us at sjwesolick@gmail.com.

If you are asking yourself, “really, what difference can I make?” then consider this — candidates live among us, in our homes, in our schools, at our work, and in our neighborhoods. Please pray for and encourage young men and women who God has already called to the priesthood and religious life.

Fun and fresh book appeals to hipster Catholics with spiritual swagger

BY REGINA LORDAN, CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE


Are you a Catholic hipster? Are you a bespectacled foodie, black skinny jeans and Chucks-wearing Catholic “sneaking a peek at your breviary app during your work meeting,” as the book teases?

Then yes, you are a Catholic hipster, and yes, “The Catholic Hipster Handbook: Rediscovering Cool Saints, Forgotten Prayers, and Other Weird but Sacred Stuff” by Tommy Tighe is for you. This book will speak to the Catholic who is ready to appreciate the absolute coolness of Catholicism: It is countercultural, it’s ancient (more ancient than those ancient grains on your avocado toast), and there is so much to celebrate, discover and explore within the faith to deepen spirituality and life.

“The Catholic Hipster Handbook” augments these glorious features of the church and organizes them into ways to rediscover the church’s attitude, stuff, life and the attraction. The aptly called rediscoveries are explained and unfolded by interesting laypeople, as well by a Salesian sister and diocesan priest. Each topic is given a saint, prayer and activity. Hipsters love homework, right? Well no one really does, but this homework is easy, meaningful and involves pilgrimages, simple matching games, art projects and praying.

“Catholic Puzzles” is a collection of mind-bending but fun quizzes, code scrambles and letter games. The games will hone your Bible and Catholic fact skills as well as provide several hours of entertainment.

“Christian Labyrinths” is a coloring book that marries a love of coloring with intricate tile patterns and Bible verses and prayers. Interestingly, each page contains a hidden mistake adding to the challenge and intrigue of this unique collection of coloring pages for adults.

SELECT International Tours
Proudly celebrating 25 years as a leader in customized group travel!

Reach out to us at 1-800-842-4842

STILL ROOM! Join us in our upcoming trips from our diocese!

Poland: July 30 to August 8, 2018, with Father Andrzej. $3495
Holy Land: October 18-28, 2018, with Father Brian Lane. $3695
Both include air, bags, two meals per day, hotels, fees, and admission to events

Call Rita Dupres 605-381-4988 to reserve your spot today.

Trips are filling fast!

Upcoming in 2019: Ireland in the summer and Holy Land in fall with Father Michel Mulloy

www.selectinternationaltours.com

Protect your loved ones with a Will, Living Trust, or Estate Plan

Call (605) 721-7665 to attend a FREE monthly workshop or for more information.

WESOLICK LAW FIRM
Responsive. Respectful. Resolved.

909 St. Joseph St., Suite 202, Rapid City, SD
www.WesolickLaw.com
St. John the Evangelist celebrated

FT. PIERRE — Fourth graders Clare Madsen and Mason Stoeser portray an angel and St. John during a play based on the life of St. John the Evangelist on April 29. Father Ron Garry and Josie Huck put the program together to teach parishioners about the life of the church’s namesake. Children, grades 3-5, acted out eleven different scenes starting with Jesus calling James and John to come follow him and ending with John living out his life on Patmos writing the book of Revelations.

(Courtesy photo)
I spent last Saturday afternoon with my hands in the dirt. My wife and I just bought a house in town, near where I work and where we worship. It’s about a hundred years old and needs some attention, but it’s got good bones, as they say. The level yard drops off steeply to the sidewalk, and one section of the slope is bare soil and vulnerable to eroding spring rains. With my 5 year-old daughter Franny tagging along, I spent a few hours on the hill raking dirt over grass seed and fertilizer, and then tacked down some biodegradable erosion-control matting and gave it a good soaking with the hose.

Our neighborhood has significant pedestrian traffic on the sidewalks, so as we worked, Franny and I met lots of neighbors. A few homeless folks with backpacks responded to my hellos as they ambled by. A disabled married couple from the Victorian-turned-apartment building next door introduced themselves and complimented my landscaping efforts. “Beautiful day,” I called. “We’ve earned it,” they responded, happy as red-breasted robins that spring had arrived. Franny watched shyly as a trio of older girls strolled and chatted. We met a lady who lives a block south. She walked down the street picking up candy wrappers and aluminum cans. We helped a minute. A couple walked by glistening with sweat; the lady jokingly complained they’d been walking all day. I laughed back, “It’s good for you; it’ll keep you out of the doctor’s office.” She responded with a smile, “That’s what he says,” elbowing her companion. I met the unassuming Good Samaritan — a 60-something mechanic who lives with his wife across the street — who cleared my lengthy sidewalk in the big April blizzard. We traded phone numbers and promises of mutual help for those two-man jobs around the house.

As faithful citizens, we must ask ourselves: Do we love our countrymen, unfiltered, in the flesh?

Faithful citizenship requires bonds of loyalty and affection not just between a citizen and his or her country (a virtue we call patriotism, a “daughter-virtue” of piety), but, as importantly, faithful citizenship requires that such ties of affection exist between citizens themselves. It’s what the Roman statesman Cicero and his Greek predecessors called “civic friendship,” a theme developed by Pope Leo XIII. Pope Pius XI speaks of “social charity,” Bl. Pope Paul VI of a “civilization of love,” and St. John Paul II of “solidarity.”

Each of these terms drives at a simple point: love for our countrymen — as a real, lived experience of affection for and civic friendship with those in our communities — is a necessary condition for a healthy social and political order. It’s the first public thing, and it’s a requisite brick in the foundation for all public things (in Latin, “Res publica” — hence the name of our form of government). It’s the first forum in which we act for the common good, the proper aim of all politics.

And it’s something everyone can choose to do.
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.

Retreatants

A combined Diaconate Formation and Lay Ministry Formation retreat was held April 12-15 at Sioux Spiritual Center, Howes. The topic of the retreat was “Discernment,” directed by Fr. Jim Kubicki, SJ. He incorporated various Ignition Spirituality Rules along with various papal documents including the just released Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and Be Glad) from Pope Francis. The retreat also included daily Mass, adoration, reconciliation and a healing service. (Pictured left-right) Front row: Nancy Sass, Deacon Greg Sass, Fr. Jim Kubicki, Fr. Brian Christensen, and Patricia Catches The Enemy; Middle row: Ralph Dupres, Rich Olsen, Rob Hrabe, and Bill White; Back row: Rita Dupres, Mary Helen Olsen, Natalie Hrabe, and Terri White. (Courtesy photo)

Deacon Raul & Mary Daniel

Ordained August 30, 2004
By Bishop Blase Cupich

Assigned to: Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City

Duties: Ministry to military population of Ellsworth AFB; regular deaconate duties at cathedral, including baptism/marriage preparation & ministry to the Hispanic population of Rapid City

Ministry Highlight:
Presiding over the marriage vow renewal of my godparents.

Deacon James & Joyce Hayes

Ordained May 24, 2007
By Bishop Paul Swain

Assigned to: St. Anthony of Padua, Hot Springs

Duties: Bible Study at the State Veterans Home Spiritual Advisor for Curisillo movement in the Diocese of Rapid City

Favorite Quote:
“Faith without works is useless.”

Work: Retired

I don’t just see a customer. I see you.

State Farm®

Dave Raml, Agent
2130 Jackson Blvd
Rapid City, SD 57702
Bus: 605-342-1827
dave@daveraml.com

While other insurance companies just see a customer, I see a neighbor in my community. I’m here to get to know who you really are so I can help life go right.
LET’S TALK TODAY.

State Farm
Bloomington, IL
1706838
Cowboys, infertility and deeper moral questions

Most people still remember the story of Nadya Suleman, dubbed “Octomom,” a single woman who used in vitro fertilization to become pregnant with eight babies simultaneously. Suleman had asked her fertility specialist, Dr. Michael Kamrava, to implant at least a dozen embryos into her uterus, leading to the birth of the famous octuplets in 2009. Dr. Kamrava’s medical license was later revoked by the California Medical Board. In commenting on the case, Judith Alvarado, Deputy Attorney General in California, concluded that Dr. Kamrava had acted “like a cowboy” in ignoring fertility industry guidelines.

When it comes to the “wild west” of infertility — a field of medicine with little oversight and unbridled profit margins — there are a lot of cowboys out there.

Recently there was the case of Kelli Rowlette who, after having her own DNA analyzed in 2017 through a genealogy website, shockingly discovered that her biological father was actually a fertility specialist who had once treated her mother. Without her mother’s knowledge or consent, the specialist had used his own sperm to impregnate her, while falsely claiming he was using a mixture of sperm from her husband (who had low sperm count) and a donor who was supposed to have been an anonymous university student with features similar to her supposed to have been an anonymous university student with features similar to her. More than seventy years later, based on DNA testing of people who had been conceived at the clinic, it turned out that as many as 600 of the babies born may have relied on sperm from Mr. Wiesner himself.

There was also the troubling story of Dr. Cecil Jacobson of Fairfax County, Virginia. He was accused of a “purposeful pattern of deceit” during the 1980s when he fathered up to 75 children using his own sperm for artificial insemination with his female patients. He was eventually sentenced to five years in prison and had his medical license revoked.

Another notorious episode relied on DNA testing and other evidence gathered by police in Brazil. They discovered that many of the 8000 babies born after IVF treatments at the clinic of Dr. Roger Abdelmassih in Sao Paulo were not genetically related to the couples who were raising them. Authorities believe that Abdelmassih misled many of his clients during the 1990s and early 2000s and implanted them with embryos formed from other people’s eggs and sperm, in a bid to improve his clinic’s statistics for successful implantations and births.

Yet another nefarious incident involved Doctors Ricardo Asch, Jose Bulmaceda and Sergio Stone, three fertility specialists and faculty members at the University of California at Irvine who ran a campus fertility clinic during the 1990s. They were accused of fertilizing eggs they had harvested from women and implanting the resulting embryos into unrelated women, as well as selling some of the embryos to scientists and researchers. Dozens of women and couples filed lawsuits against the doctors and the university.

One of the reasons these acts of deception by fertility specialists are so offensive to us is that we realize how the procreation of our own children is meant to involve a strict exclusivity between husband and wife. Whenever we violate that exclusivity by hiring outsiders to produce our offspring in clinics, or engage strangers to provide their sex cells for these procedures, unthinkable outcomes become possible.

The plethora of these cases reminds us how many of the cavalier approaches to human procreation being promoted by the fertility industry are unethical at their core. We are witnessing an unprecedented burgeoning of laboratory techniques for manufacturing human life, many of which are deeply antagonistic to human dignity and contrary to the parental obligations assumed by spouses when they marry.

The natural exclusivity intended in parenthood is meant to afford protection, security about our origins, and the safety of the home and hearth. In the headlong rush to achieve a pregnancy at any price, many couples, regrettably, are allowing hawkish businessmen to manipulate their sex cells, create their children in glassware, store them in frozen orphanages, and even discard them like medical waste.

The tragic fallout of these decisions should reignite our natural moral sensibilities, and point us back in the direction of the Creator’s plan for human procreation. Our children are truly safeguarded in the dignity of their origins when they are brought into the world exclusively within the marital embrace of husband and wife. Turning to the lawlessness of modern day fertility “cowboys,” meanwhile, is a quick study for violation and heartache.
Letters to adopted children’s birth mothers draw grateful response

COLUMBUS, Ohio (CNS) — A suggestion that started with an Ohio Catholic school student’s dream has resulted in a nationwide response of support for the birth mothers of adopted children and gratitude from the mothers themselves. The student, Olivia Oyster, is an eighth-grader at St. Mary School in Delaware. She is the oldest of three sisters — one of whom, 3-year-old Gianna, was adopted by Olivia’s parents, Greg and Stacy Oyster, after a local woman gave birth to the child.

“One night I dreamed that I was in school proofreading a bunch of letters that kids at school had written to birth mothers thanking them for the courage it took to make the decision to allow their child to be adopted,” Olivia told the Catholic Times, newspaper of the Columbus Diocese. With her principal’s permission and a teacher’s help, the dream became a reality when she organized a letter-writing campaign by seventh- and eighth-grade students to send birth mothers letters of encouragement with the help of BraveLove, www.bravelove.org. The nonprofit organization advocates through media content and messaging that adoption is a loving option for those in unplanned pregnancies.

Olivia was familiar with the organization known as BraveLove, because her mother had been following it on social media. BraveLove, a Dallas-based nonprofit organization was founded six years ago by an adoptive mother. It is not an adoption agency or a pregnancy resource center, but is primarily dedicated to advocating through media content and messaging that adoption is a loving option for those in unplanned pregnancies. More than 50 letters were written and sent in a package to BraveLove. The organization sent copies of the letters to 260 birth mothers who responded with messages of support for the project.
Scientists, farmers, theologians discuss agriculture as ‘noble vocation’

BY MARIA WIERING
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The story was about a duck — a friendly duck that had been spending time in a man’s yard, and now the man was feeding it. He had asked his pastor, Father Gregory Mastey, if he had time to listen to his story, and Father Mastey had said yes.

“After about 15 minutes of him telling me these stories about this duck that keeps showing up ... then he turned to tears. And I said, ‘What else is happening, George?’ And he says, ‘I’m lonely after my wife passed. My life isn’t the same when I have neighbors so far away. I feel the pains of this.’ And that came out of a duck story.”

This is the reality of pastoral life in rural areas, said Father Mastey at a recent three-day conference in St. Paul on agriculture and vocation. Titled “A Noble Vocation: Integrating Faith, Food and the Environment,” the event was organized by St. Paul-based Catholic Rural Life. A priest of the Diocese of St. Cloud, Father Mastey was one of three panelists speaking on “Faith, Food, and the Environment and the Task of the Pastoral Leader.”

Held in March at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, the conference’s other sessions focused on U.S. agriculture history, environmental challenges and climate change, and included international and indigenous perspectives. The 110 participants from 18 states were drawn together through concerns about what’s happening around agriculture and family farms, what’s happening in our rural communities and our rural life, concerns about food security and how we’re going to feed the world in the future, while caring at the same time for our environment,” Catholic Rural Life executive director James Ennis said.

“There are concerns about retrieving this sense of the nobility of agricultural production and the nobility of the farmer. How do we do that, and what does our faith tell us about that?”

About 60 of the conference’s participants were farmers or worked in agribusiness, Ennis said. Others were scientists, food experts, faith leaders and theologians.

In his keynote address, Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis acknowledged the difficulties many farmers face, as well as the complexities of agricultural production and its environmental impact, but he said that challenges should be faced with hope. He encouraged deeper reflection on agriculture as a vocation. “To refer to the vocation of an agricultural leader means someone who is called and then also listens,” he said. “The commitment to agriculture is a vocation given by God, a unique and privileged way of life. Indeed, of all the occupations undertaken by men and women, the task of ‘tilling and keeping the earth’ reaches to the depths of our relationships with God the Creator, with creation and with all of humanity,” Archbishop Hebda said.

During the panel on pastoral life, Father Mastey said that as the duck-watcher intimated, rural life can be isolating. There used to be four farms on a square-mile of land, but by the 1990s, on average there was only one farm building in that same space, with no guarantee of it being occupied, he said. Because people are “busier and busier,” the social structure that once held rural life together has unraveled, and the economy makes it difficult for young people to take over family farms, even if they want to.

Ministering in rural areas should be rooted in building relationships that understand people’s connection to their land, Father Mastey said. During Minnesota’s warmer months, he holds a weekly Tuesday evening outdoor Mass at his parishioners’ homes, and he asks them to introduce themselves and their land — how they came to call it home — as well as their families. The liturgies bring people together, he said.

Father Mastey, who grew up on a farm, turns outdoor excursions into ministries and is known for offering a canoeing ministry, fishing ministry and hiking ministry. These retreats open the door to relationships, he said. “The pastoral life is really about connecting the dots and relationships and realizing that God is in all these places,” he said.

Also on the panel were the Rev. Brad Roth, a Mennonite pastor from Kansas and author of “God’s Country: Faith, Hope, and the Future of the Rural Church,” and Sister Esther Mary Nickel, who does parish planning in the Diocese of Sioux City, Iowa.

Sister Nickel, a member of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan, has spent time listening to people in rural parishes at risk of closing, and has helped church leaders and parishioners change their perspective from criticism to hope, and from financial concerns to faith, she said.

Shifting demographics and parish merging and closings have “a dramatic effect on community and communion,” she said. “Change can affect a vision, or, with the proper perspective of faith, it can be an occasion to bring a deeper and real communion among the faithful and their pastor. Most often, people just need to be heard,” Sister Nickel said. “The task for pastors and parishes is not to create community but to reveal community,” she said.

The panel was moderated by Christopher Thompson, director of the Center for Theological Formation at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity in St. Paul. He and Ennis drafted the document “Vocation of the Agricultural Leader: Integrating Faith with Agriculture and the Environment,” published in 2016 by Catholic Rural Life and the Vatican-based International Catholic Rural Association.

Ennis said that the importance of listening — including farmers’ listening with humility to the needs of the natural world, as well as listening to God’s will in hard times — was a recurrent theme at the conference.

(Wiering is editor of The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.)

More Americans believe in higher power than in God

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A new Pew Research Center survey has some interesting takeaways. While the majority of Americans say they believe in a higher power, what they are talking about isn’t necessarily God “as described in the Bible.”

Pew’s studies in recent years have shown a decline in the number of Americans who believe in God with absolute certainty and a growing number conversely having doubts in God’s existence. This led researchers to question what exactly people are rejecting: a higher power or spiritual force or the Christian idea of God. Here’s what they found from a survey of more than 4,700 U.S. adults: The vast majority — 90 percent — believe in some kind of higher power. Fifty-six percent profess faith in God as described in the Bible and 33 percent say they believe in another type of higher power or spiritual force. One in 10 Americans say they don’t believe in God or a higher power of any kind.

How these numbers break down by religious traditions gets even more interesting.

Overall, 80 percent of Christians said they believed in God as described in the Bible. This number went up for historically black Protestant traditions, 92 percent, and evangelical traditions, 91 percent, but only 69 percent of Catholics and 72 percent of mainline Protestants had this view.

Looked at another way, 28 percent of Catholics and 26 percent of mainline Protestants said they believe in a higher power or spiritual force, but not in God as described in the Bible.
Respect for God’s creation is important to strive for always

I am writing this column on the fiftieth anniversary of the assignation of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I have witnessed in my lifetime the strides that have been made to combat racism and division but unfortunately old habits are hard to break. There are constant reminders of how one group of people wanted to dominate and subjugate other groups of people. Dr. King spoke of an end to hatred and violence and his message of peace and racial equality have reverberated down through the ages. He is respected for his major contributions and leadership in the Civil Rights Movement.

One of the Lakota values is respect, Wa-wobola. Respect is an important quality for all to strive for regardless of race, gender or religious affiliation. It is something we all desire from one another. Psalm 89: 6-9 speaks of the power and the awesomeness of the Great Spirit. We owe honor and respect to God and his wondrous creation. This includes Mother Earth, all the animals and obviously one another. When everyone lives in respect of one another the earth also lives in peace and harmony.

We see and hear in the news of the day that monuments and statues are being taken down because they represent a time in our history of disrespect and cruelty toward black Americans because the person being memorialized is a slave owner or a member of the confederacy. Well, what about all the statues and monuments that are offensive to Native Americans? The Shrine of Democracy in the homeland of the Lakota people serves as a bitter reminder of the aggression inflicted upon the native population of the Dakotas. It is a painful reminder to Native Americans that their way of life was decimated because of greed, dishonesty and broken treaties. I am not advocating taking down Mt. Rushmore, but I would like people to be aware its symbolism is not seen the same way by everybody.

In a city in California, they are going to remove a statue that is offensive to a Native American tribe living in that area. Also a city in Michigan, the Town Council is considering taking down a statue that portrays a native chief kneeling before a vaquero or cowboy. Also in jeopardy are the statues of Christopher Columbus because of his violent history against Native People.

The “Me Too” movement is also a sign of the times that folks are tired of the violence and abuse perpetrated against women and children. We need to treat each other the way we want to be treated. If we want respect we must be willing to give respect to others regardless of color, religion or gender. How easy to forget that we are all members of the human family. There are no differences or divisions in the eyes of the Creator.

Perhaps the visions of Black Elk and Crazy Horse are coming to fruition. They envisioned a time when people of all ethnicities would come together in harmony and understanding. We are on the front edge of the “seventh generation” that they both talked about. This generation was chosen to champion the visions of these two great Lakota visionaries, where peace among people will abound and everyone will dance together as friends and relatives.

They envisioned a time when people of all ethnicities would come together in harmony and understanding. We are on the front edge of the “seventh generation” that they both talked about. This generation was chosen to champion the visions of these two great Lakota visionaries, where peace among people will abound and everyone will dance together as friends and relatives.

Their visions are supported by the reading from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 9: 1-7, speaks about the “Peaceable Kingdom.” We are drawn to the image of the peaceable kingdom because natural predators such as wolves and lions living together in harmony with lambs and calves is an extraordinary image that gives us insight into the reign of God. Imagine two groups of people who have been enemies and at war for generations coming together and putting aside their differences and weapons, what a miracle from God! Harmony, peace and gentleness make this scene an inspiration to all who desire to live a harmonious life. It is a worthy ideal we all aspire to while we do our best to resist all the things that divide and separate us. We are all in this together, and need to advance the concept of the peaceable kingdom envisioned by the prophets of old and our ancestors.
Welcome to the Diocese of Rapid City
To those who were received into the Catholic Church at Easter Vigil or at Easter time.

Buffalo, St. Anthony
Bill Henderson
Josh Paige

Custer, St. John the Baptist
Arthur Baily
Trapper Lappe
Roy Stanford
Rebecca Steadman

Ft. Pierre, St. John
LeTisha Pederson
Stephen Pederson
Tiffany Stoeser

Hot Springs, St. Anthony
Natalie Hooper
Emma Payton

Lead, St. Patrick
Lee Pidgeon
Beau Voegeli

Oglala, Our Lady of the Sioux Church
Abigail Wotton

Philip, Sacred Heart
Brock Hanson

Piedmont, Our Lady of the Black Hills
Lori Blake
Christopher Holloway
Sarah Whealy
Dustin Whiteside
Bethany Wilson

Pine Ridge, Sacred Heart
Jesse Carlow
Jennifer Stover
Joseph Kerbaugh

St. Patrick Chuch, Wall, held a reception to welcome the new members of the church. (Left to Right) Susie Kjerstad Radigan, Gene Patterson and their pastor, Fr. Tim Hoag. (Courtesy photo)

Rapid City, Blessed Sacrament
Jens Christensen
Daniela Escobar
Karla Escobar
Yuritzi Escobar
Sandra Fernandez
Betty Gehrke
Madison Giroux
Silas Giroux
Morgan Gorman
Andy Hallock
Ross Johnson
Kalli Kusiek
Daniela Medina
Beverly Parker-Greer
Jesse Riemenschneider
Koen Riemenschneider
Robert Ryland
Breanna Sanchez
Brittany Sanchez
Jessica Sonn
Rebecca Spangler
Ben Thompson
Turner Thompson

Rapid City, Cathedral
Ryan Anderson
Katherine Arrambide
Kristina Arrambide
Kyle Brodeur
Jason Brewer
Marilyn “Faith” Buck Elk
Andrew Burgess
Alicia Caprielian
Brittany Fuelling
Carrie May
Coy May
Ronald Randle
Christopher Sailors
Jay Swaby
Dalton Walker
Mark Wiley
Daniel Williams

Rapid City, St Isaac Jogues
Sallie Cuny
Samantha Westover

Rapid City, St. Therese
Jacob St. Amand
Stephen Vernon

Spearfish, St. Joseph
Zachary Carter
Lucy Conklin
McAmis Conklin
Savannah Conklin
Brextin Garza
Kaylin Garza
Collen Harford
Aaron Hunsley
Sierra Thompson
Dulce Mendez
Sean Mowell
Zoey Wagner

Wall, St. Patrick
Gene Patterson
Susie Kjerstad Radigan

New Employee
Dionne Eastmo joined the chancery staff April 30 as the Administrative Assistant to the Office of Pastoral Ministry and Faith Formation. Eastmo has spent the last nine years serving on the Rapid City Catholic Schools Board of Directors and oversaw the development, fundraising, and completion of the Children's Memorial Garden at Terra Sancta. Her office is located at the Chancery Annex at Terra Sancta. She and her husband Eric are members of Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. (WRC photo)

Diamond Wedding Anniversary
Bob and Arlene Ellis will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on June 21. The couple was married in Mitchell. They are members of St. Mary Church, Reliance. Cards can be mailed to 25851 SD Hwy 47, Reliance, SD 57569. (Courtesy photo)
Serra Club receives donation from KCs

Father Mark McCormick receives a check from Stephen Wesolick, representing the Knights of Columbus Council #8844, Blessed Sacrament, Rapid City, for the newly founded diocesan Serra Club. The council raised more than $1,500 during a pancake breakfast in early April. According to the Wesolick, vocations and support for priests is a top priority for the KCs. The Serra Club was founded to support vocations and more information can be found at https://www.facebook.com/serraclubrapidcity/. (Courtesy photo)

The Diocese of Rapid City is now on Instagram. Follow us at rapidcitydiorc

What are you worth to your family?
Help protect your life with life insurance from the Knights of Columbus.

Mark DiSanto
Rapid City
(605) 391-5694
mark.disanto@kofc.org

Mark Hegge
Platte
(605) 207-0276
mark.hegge@kofc.org

Jeff Mollman
Lead
(605) 641-4690
jeff.mollman@kofc.org

Curtis Anthony
Watertown
(605) 881-6545
curtis.anthony@kofc.org

Tom Bechen
Mitchell
(605) 770-9798
thomas.bechen@kofc.org

Jason Bellrichard
Sioux Falls
(605) 305-0736
jason.bellrichard@kofc.org

Phil Carlson
Brookings
(605) 695-4793
phil.carlson@kofc.org

Heath Dickelman
Sioux Falls
(605) 351-7978
heath.dickelman@kofc.org

Jon Beebe
General Agent
(605) 882-8689
jon.beebe@kofc.org

Knights of Columbus INSURANCE
YOUR SHIELD FOR LIFE
www.kofcbeeagency.com

LIFE INSURANCE • DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE • LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE • RETIREMENT ANNUITIES

In Your Prayers

Birthdays: June 5, Fr. Vincent Suparman, SCJ; June 7, Dcn. Craig Pearson; June 17, Fr. John Heying; June 25, Bishop Robert Gruss; June 26, Fr. Tony Grossenburg; June 27, Fr. Ed Witt, SJ.


Ameriprise Financial

Are you a faithful steward of your finances?
When it comes to planning for your financial goals, you want an advisor who understands and supports your Christian world view.
I can help. As a Christian advisor, I offer financial planning and advice based on biblical principles of stewardship. I’ll help you plan for your goals in a way that’s consistent with your Christian faith.

Our Advisors. Your Dreams. MORE WITHIN REACH

Call me today at (605) 791-5321
Ted Norman, CFP® Practitioner Financial Advisor
709 Main Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 791-5321
ted.j.norman@ampf.com

Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA and SIPC. Ameriprise Financial provides financial services without regard to religious affiliation or cultural background.
© Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.
Sioux Falls will be abuzz, July 17-22, with revelry and devotion and a great deal of purple robes. For the first time, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas will hold their National Convention in South Dakota. The convention theme will be “Serve the Lord with gladness.” More than one thousand members from North and South America and Kenya are scheduled to attend the biennial meeting. Daughters will participate in Masses, Eucharistic adoration, business meetings, officer elections, and a variety of celebratory events.

It is important for Daughters to gather together to pray and to deliberate on important issues for our organization. Delegates will have the opportunity to vote on proposed amendments to the organization’s by-law changes as well as passing new resolutions. Most importantly, there will be the election of the new national leaders for the next two years. All in attendance will gain knowledge while meeting old friends and making new ones during the celebration.

The event coincides with the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the South Dakota state court. The state court encourages all attendees and South Dakota CDA members to join in the Friday, July 20, fun night festivities, during which this milestone will be celebrated. CDA members are encouraged to wear their red, white, and blue as they celebrate all things South Dakota at the Sanford Premier Center.

Over and above the fun night, the conference will also feature music and motivations. Registered members will have the opportunity to attend a concert by award winning Catholic vocalist Kathy Troccoli on Tuesday, July 17, at 7 p.m. During liturgies, members will enjoy choral worship music from CDA members of the U.S. and beyond. A walk/run will be held at 6:30 a.m. Friday, July 20 at Veteran’s Park to raise funds for numerous charities. A variety of keynote speakers will share messages of hope and motivation. Topics range from spirituality to social justice.

Workshops will feature Circle of Love project areas. These include the CDA’s core focus commitment to: Family, Leadership, Membership, Legislation, Youth, Education, and Quality of Life. Members will share their court successes with others.

In addition to the business meetings and entertainment, the conference has several important traditions. A memorial Mass is offered to honor deceased CDA members and another Mass is offered to celebrate God and Country. Each state hosts a dinner for their delegation throughout Sioux Falls. On Saturday, July 21, Daughters will gather at the St. Joseph Cathedral in Sioux Falls for the Installation Mass during which the newly elected officers will take their pledge of office, after which all return to the convention center for the Appreciation Banquet.

The Knights of Columbus have offered to support the event through various activities including assistance with luggage and transportation, serving as honor guard during Installation Mass, as well as hosting some events for spouses of the attendees. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in pre-convention and post-convention tours such as Canaries baseball, nature lovers tour, mystery room adventure, fine dining, and Black Hills Road trips.

Let’s welcome these Daughters in purple to our state, and pray for their safe travel as they serve the Lord with their gladness and love of their faith. For further information please go to the state CDA website at https://www.cdasouthdakota.com or visit the local CDA courts.

Submitted by Erica Knippling, State CDA PR Chairman
Friday, June 1, 2018
Lakes Oahe and Sharpe, Ft. Pierre, SD
Benefiting Seminarian Education

Tournament Schedule

7-11 a.m. CDT Registration
Padre Hall, St. John the Evangelist Church, Ft. Pierre

3 p.m. Weigh-in and Silent Auction

5:30 p.m. Mass with Bishop Robert Gruss

6 p.m. Awards & Fish Fry Dinner

Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men
Matthew 4:19

Register at
www.wsdcf.org
or scan the QR code
St. Joseph Parish, Cherry Creek: 125 years of parish life on the Cheyenne River

In 1891, a Benedictine missionary living on Standing Rock Reservation would travel to Cherry Creek to say Mass but due to the long distance it was not very often. Records show the first Mass in Cherry Creek was at the Little Bear Cabin. The first priests to attend to St. Joseph Church came from the Cheyenne Agency. In 1892, a new priest to the Cheyenne Agency arranged for a church to be built. Lumber was hauled from Pierre. The church was completed in 1893 and served as the location for the Indian Congress that year. Mass was said monthly or as often as a priest could travel to the town.

It was during this time, Indian Catechists were introduced to the parishioners. The catechists would gather people for prayer and religious instruction on Sundays when no priest were available.

In 1911, Father John Vogel, a diocesan priest, was assigned to Eagle Butte and its missions. He never drove a car, instead, he used saddle horses (Specky and Spotty) and a buggy to travel around to communities saying Mass and giving religious instruction.

Father Vogel was beloved by the Cheyenne River people. He was given the Indian name Zintcala (Bird). Later, in the early 1980s, a church hall was built at Cherry Creek. It was name “Zintcala Hall.”

When Father Vogel left the area in 1937 the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ) were asked by the Diocese of Rapid City to serve Cherry Creek and the other missions since they had already taken on the rest of the reservation.

Since the early 1980s, sisters from several religious orders provided religious studies for children and served as part of the reservation ministries. In 1990, a “Team Ministry” approach was set up between the priests, deacons and sisters that lasted until the early 2000s. In 2004, due to a lack of vocations, the SCJ priests could no longer minister to the reservation and the diocese again began ministering to the missions of Eagle Butte. In 2017, after accepting an invitation by Bishop Robert Gruss, the Holy Spirit Priests from India came to minster to the Cheyenne River Parishes joining current pastor Father Dan Juelfs.

(Historical information courtesy of Marquette University, Diocese of Rapid City, Crusading Along Sioux Trails, letters and other resources.)

St. Joseph, Cherry Creek 125th Celebration
Sunday
May 20, 2018
2 p.m. Mass
with Bishop Robert Gruss
Dinner to follow.

Receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit 2018 Confirmation photos
Visit our Facebook page
www.facebook.com/DioceseofRapidCity
Photo album “ Confirmation 2018’’
Want your confirmation class photo included?
Email your group photo to bberreth@diorc.org

Infinity EyeCare
Family Focused • Vision for Life

5734 Sheridan Lake Road, Ste 202
Rapid City, SD 57702
605-342-0258
Schedule Online 24/7
www.eyes4infinity.com

Shane A. Clark, OD, FAAO
Optometrist

DANA DENTAL ARTS
A General & Cosmetic Practice
Rapid City
200 Federal Avenue 605.342.6038
Spearfish
1306 Main Street 605.642.7727

Michael R. Dana, DDS, PC
Nicole D. Dana, DDS, FICOI, MICOI
Bradly R. Dana, DDS FICOI, MICOI
Monique M. Dana, DDS FICOI, MICOI

www.danadentalarts.com

Find Peace With Us.
Catholic Owned and Operated
343-0145
Toll Free 1-888-366-2800
632 St. Francis St.
Rapid City
behrenswilson.com

Behrens Wilson
Funeral Home
Since 1879
Wade H. Wilson
Funeral Director
Owner
Telling our stories and knowing for sure

When Oprah Winfrey was first asked the question, the talk-show queen was left tongue-tied.

She was doing a live television interview with the late film critic Gene Siskel to promote her film “Beloved,” and he concluded by asking, “Tell me, what do you know for sure?”

“I got all flustered and started stuttering and couldn’t come up with an answer,” Oprah later wrote. But since that day, she’s never stopped posing that question — to others and to herself.

If she can borrow the question from Siskel, so can I.

In my journalism career, I have never ceased to be astounded by the generosity of strangers when I request an interview — a cold call disrupting a hot dinner, a knock on the door on a Saturday morning, a formal sit-down or a quick conversation in the back of a church or the corner of a store, or the middle of a long line outside in the wee hours of a blustery Black Friday.

One minute we’ve never met, the next they’re entrusting me with their last name and age and occupation, fielding questions they can’t possibly prepare for or predict.

I don’t know exactly what to make of this great goodness except to say we crave conversation, connection, and we want to be helpful.

Whatever the reason, it fills me with gratitude and allows me to be — of all things — a student of the human race. What a fountain of youth, a lifelong adventure.

But you don’t need a press badge to witness the storytelling. When you give someone your full attention, undergirded by genuine curiosity, it will almost always be rewarded. If you can come up with good questions, you won’t be disappointed.

It is the Catholic response, the simplest and surest way to affirm the dignity of another. What’s your name? Where are you from? How long have you been here?

Every now and then I encounter a kindred spirit, a fellow interviewer masquerading in scrubs, an apron or tattered gardening jeans. My sister-in-law is among them. She works in palliative care, a difficult field to which she brings a bouquet of compassion, listening with the utmost sensitivity. Just as steadily as she amasses medical knowledge, so too does she patch together a more complete understanding of humanity.

This spring I’ve posed Gene Siskel’s question to a variety of people, seeking bread crumbs from the communion of future saints here on earth.

What do you know for sure?

I asked a retired bishop, who immediately spoke of service. “It empties the heart of selfishness and then fills it up with love, if you are open to that. You cannot look upon service as a drudgery, you must look upon it as a beautiful opportunity of loving, and that is all there is to it.”

I asked a well-traveled, high-profile Catholic sister. “We’re called to be God’s love in the world,” she told me. When you answer that call, she added with a laugh, prepare for “surprises.”

I asked my mom and her mom.

“I know that once the heart has stretched, you never quite are the same person,” my mom answered.

“I know for sure that through my long life, I have been guided and protected by an amazing God, who has loved and understood and forgiven me every step of my journey,” my grandma replied.

I asked a 101-year-old nun, who cast her eyes aside and flashed a half-grin before she spoke. “I know for sure that I’m going to die. That’s the only thing I know for sure.”

If I may add my own, it would be this: I know for sure we are here to lean on and learn from each other.

What does the Holy Spirit do in the church?

The Holy Spirit builds up the church and impels her. He reminds her of her mission. He calls people into her service and sends them the necessary gifts. He leads us ever deeper into communion with the Triune God (733-741, 747).

Even though the church, during her long history, has often seemed “abandoned by all good spirits,” the Holy Spirit has been at work in her despite all the human failings and inadequacies. The mere fact of her two-thousand-year existence and the many saints of all eras and cultures are the visible proof of his presence. The Holy Spirit is the one who maintains the church as a whole in the truth and leads her ever deeper into the knowledge of God. It is the Holy Spirit who works in the sacraments and brings sacred Scripture to life for us. Even today he gives his gifts of grace (charisms) to those who are completely receptive to him.

What does sacred Scripture say about the sacrament of Confirmation?

In the Old Testament, the people of God expected the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Messiah. Jesus lived his life in a special Spirit of love and of perfect unity with his father in heaven. This Spirit of Jesus was the “Holy Spirit” for whom the people of Israel longed; this was the same spirit whom Jesus promised to his disciples, the same spirit who descended upon the disciples fifty days after Easter, on the feast of Pentecost. And it is again this same Holy Spirit of Jesus who descends upon everyone who receives the Sacrament of Confirmation (185-1288, 1315).

In the Acts of the Apostles, which were written in a few decades after the death of Jesus, we see Peter and John traveling about to confirm new Christians by imposing hands on those who previously “had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,” so that their hearts might be filled with the Holy Spirit (113-120, 301-311).

Do not say ‘I am only a youth’

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

youcat.org

Overboard (MGM)

No need to throw a lifeline to “Overboard” (MGM), a surprisingly buoyant remake of the 1987 romantic comedy. The original film is best remembered for the chemistry between its stars, real-life partners Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell.

Director Rob Greenberg is also well-served by the pairing of comedians Anna Faris and Eugenio Derbez — as well as by the switching of the gender roles, which gives a fresh take on the zany forgotten-identity plot.

The spoiled scion (Eugenio Derbez) of one of Mexico’s richest families wakes away his days on a luxury yacht, awash in booze and surrounded by lovelies. He clashes with a sensible but cash-strapped single mother of three (Anna Faris) when she comes to clean the vessel’s carpets. When he subsequently falls overboard and awakens with amnesia, she sees press coverage of the situation and, with the encouragement of her boss (Eva Longoria), decides to take advantage of it by posing as his wife and taking him home. As the wastrel adjusts to his new, impoverished lifestyle, a transformation is in store.

Taken strictly as a comic fantasy — the abduction and deception are not to be condoned, though viewers are hardly likely to imitate the heroine’s actions — the film offers an entertaining parable about redemption. Implied premarital sexual activity, fleeting male rear nudity, some sexual banter, occasional crude language, an obscene gesture.

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

Avengers: Infinity War.............A-III
Traffik..............................................L
Tully..................................................L

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.