Venerating *Cure d’Ars* relic can help church ‘heal,’ says head of Knights

**By Richard Szczepanowski**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The incorrupt heart of St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, “reminds us God uses instruments to be ministers of his grace and mercy,” said Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the U.S.

He celebrated Mass last December at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception that opened a four-day public veneration, which he prayed “would help people ask for the grace to change their lives.”

A six-month tour of the holy relic of the saint — popularly known as the *Cure d’Ars* — has started across the United States. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, the “Heart of a Priest” tour was launched in wake of the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church.

Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, said in statement that St. John Vianney offers an example to help the church heal and rebuild.

“We now welcome as providential this opportunity to invoke the intercession of the patron saint of parish priests, whose holiness and integrity is a singular model for clergy,” Anderson said in his statement.

St. John Vianney was born in 1786 and served as a simple parish priest in the French town of Ars. He was known to spend as many as 18 hours a day hearing confessions from people who traveled from throughout Europe to see the priest who was known for his holiness and piety. He also had a great love of and fostered devotion to St. Philomena. He died in 1859.

Pope Pius XI canonized him in 1925 and proclaimed him patron saint of parish priests in 1929. His incorrupt body and heart are displayed at his shrine in Ars.

During the opening Mass, which drew 1,500 people, Archbishop Pierre called St. John Vianney “a man of faith.” He noted the saint “was not a particularly handsome man. He did not have a beautiful voice, and it was well known that he was not very clever or good at studies ... but St. John Vianney had so much love. And, what did he offer the people? Forgiveness and mercy.”

Veneration of the saint’s heart “offers prophetic witness in a country that does not want to hear about forgiveness or mercy,” Archbishop Pierre said. “He (St. John Vianney) was an authentic witness to those who seek a deeper union with God.”

The Catholic Church teaches that a relic, such as the heart of St. John Vianney, is offered to the faithful for veneration, but neither the relic nor the saint is worshipped. Veneration recognizes the fact that God has worked through the saint. A first-class relic was part of a saint’s body or something one touched or wore.
‘Can infanticide be described more clearly than this?’

Where is this country going? I, like many, many others, am outraged and disgusted by the recent legislation passed in the State of New York. The actions of New York Democratic legislators and Governor Andrew Cuomo, a Catholic, must be condemned.

The euphemistically named Reproductive Health Act makes abortion legal, even after the unborn child is viable, so long as the abortionist makes a “reasonable and good-faith judgment” that abortion will protect the pregnant woman’s health. It states that “every individual who becomes pregnant has the fundamental right to choose to carry the pregnancy to term, to give birth to a child, or to have an abortion.” But the law removes any protection for children born alive after abortion. Can infanticide be described more clearly than this?

Similar legislation has been put forth in Virginia, as well as New Mexico, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont, allowing abortions for basically any reason up to birth without any limits. Why are the Democratic leadership in so many states taking these extreme positions?

Allowing the murder of children up to the moment of birth is clearly evil. God is the author of life and for any state government to allow the murder of children is indefensible, deeply immoral and disturbing. The church’s commitment to the protection of human life from conception until natural death is well-founded and grounded in sacred Scripture.

As Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., and Chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, recently wrote, “This legislation is evil, pure and simple. And it shocks the conscience to see such evil legislation greeted with raucous cheers and standing ovations. Most grieving to our Lord of Life is that those who advocate for abortion put their eternal souls in jeopardy.

“It is sickeningly dishonest to claim that women’s lives or health depend on intentionally killing their children. This is especially true for late-term abortion, which always involves the purposeful destruction of a child which could have been born alive, with much less risk to the mother, had they both received real healthcare.”

This extremist position has moved from ‘abortion as a choice’ to ‘abortion is healthcare’ — a women’s health issue. Clearly the subtle influence of Satan is at work in the minds and hearts of those in the pro-choice movement. The Evil One has captured their hearts and minds of pro-abortion advocates, convincing them of this great lie that a woman has the right to do anything with her body.

This divulges a total lie of faith, especially for Christian pro-abortion advocates. The teachings of our faith reveal that we have been created in God’s image and likeness and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. When one removes the spiritual nature of the human person created in God’s image and likeness, which includes their body, this type of cultural chaos ensues.

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:15, 19–20).

Legislation like this shows how far our culture has fallen into depravity, and how far it has moved away from a gospel of love. This level of autonomy flies in the face of the God who is the creator of all life. It is evident that those who create these laws rarely think about how their decisions in this life will affect their eternal life.

What is equally disturbing is the Senate’s failure to pass the Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (S. 311) to protect babies who are born alive after an abortion. This Act would require any health care practitioner present when a child is born alive following an abortion to give the same degree of care to preserve the life and health of the child as would be given to any other newborn. And, after giving such care, it requires the practitioner to ensure that the child is immediately transported and admitted to a hospital. Why are the Senate Democrats refusing to allow a vote on this important bill?

Children are a gift from God, no matter the circumstances of their conception. Not only do they have a right to life, but if we are to be a civil society, then we have a moral obligation and responsibility to protect them from all harm. A newborn child has a right to the best care possible, regardless of the circumstance of their birth.

How do we as a church respond to these atrocities? We call or write to our legislators and express our pro-life convictions. We continue to pray for the conversion of those in our country who have bought the pro-choice lie. We know that the Gospel of Jesus is about mercy.

As Archbishop Naumann shared in his homily at the March for Life, “Our Lord’s mission is all about mercy. Our pro-life ministry is about mercy: 1) mercy for the innocent and defenseless child in the womb, 2) mercy for frightened and overwhelmed mothers in the midst of a difficult pregnancy, 3) mercy for post-abortive mothers or fathers who deeply regret authorizing the killing of their own child; 4) mercy for the abortion advocates who verbally attack us and label us extremists; 5) mercy for those who wish to disqualify from public office members of the Knight of Columbus or anyone else in whom “the dogma lives loudly”; 6) mercy for abortion clinic workers, volunteers and, yes, even abortionists.”

The pro-life movement has done tremendous work over the last forty-six years of defending children in the womb. We have made great headway in changing many hearts and minds. Perhaps these recent setbacks are happening because the Evil One has taken notice and is urging the pro-abortion movement to greater extremes. In Christ, we will never give up fighting for the unborn, the voiceless and the culture of life. We continue to ask Jesus to fight with us, because he has given his life for all humanity, including the unborn.

‘Resist Infanticide Rally’ in Virginia draws hundreds of pro-lifers

LORTON, Va. (CNS) — Anger and disgust over comments by Virginia politicians supporting abortion even when a woman is delivering her baby inspired hundreds of people with two days’ notice to attend the pro-life Resist Infanticide Rally outside South County High School in Lorton, Feb. 2. Penny Nance of Concerned Women for America is pictured speaking at the Resist Infanticide Rally outside South County High School in Lorton, Va. Rally participants said the callous statements about late-term abortion had shocked them and compelled them to protest though the bill that sparked the controversy failed and the delegate who sponsored the bill and was hosting a town hall meeting in Lorton canceled her event the evening before.

“We are mortified, terrified, horrified, all of the ‘-fieds’ you can think of that Virginia is going to go the same way as New York,” said Erin Caines, a parishioner of Holy Spirit Church in Annandale, who came to the rally with her husband and five children, ages 1 to 13. “We want to make sure that people know Virginians are not for (that bill). Virginians are for life and we don’t want extreme abortion laws passed through our state,” she told the Arlington Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Arlington Diocese. Earlier in the week, Virginia Republicans released a video of Democratic Del. Kathy Tran defending her late-term abortion bill. In the video, Republican Del. Todd Gilbert questions Tran, asking: “How late in the third trimester could a physician perform an abortion if he indicated it would impair the mental health of the woman?” (CNS photo/Joey Cashwell, Arlington Catholic Herald)
Follow-up to Letter regarding “RCF” from Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Rapid City

February 14, 2019

As you can imagine, there has been a very strong reaction regarding my letter that was shared with the people of the Diocese regarding the group “Roman Catholic Faithful” coming to Rapid City on February 23. Many of the vitriolic responses from their supporters have accused me of calling this organization evil and that I am trying to protect Cardinal Cupich. Therefore, my comments in the letter were taken out of context either accidentally or intentionally.

On the website of Church Militant, the headline was: SD Bishop Calls Catholic Group ‘Evil’ for Opposing Cardinal Cupich. This headline takes what was written in my letter out of context to fit a certain narrative.

This is what was written in my letter: “The question on my mind — ‘Is their true goal to rid the Catholic Church of clerical corruption or is it an attempt to destroy the reputation of Cardinal Cupich with whom they disagree regarding his approach to certain Church teachings?’ Based upon what I have read in their materials, their goal is to attempt to destroy the reputation of Cardinal Cupich. Therefore, their mission is evil and guided by the Evil One. Any group that seeks to divide the Church by sharing false information is doing the work of Satan.”

Whether one likes Cardinal Cupich or not, whether one likes his style of leadership or the decisions he has made throughout his Episcopacy, every person has a right to their reputation. Yes, this group or any other group has the right to challenge Church leadership and seek to hold them accountable. I do not refute this proposition. No bishop or anyone else is above the law and they should be held accountable for their choices if it is criminal or immoral. If they have committed a criminal offense, they should be made to suffer the consequences of their decisions. I do not promote the covering up of any offense.

When anyone or any group seeks to intentionally destroy the reputation of another person, their motives are not in line with the will of God. So I ask the question of Roman Catholic Faithful: Is your goal to destroy the reputation of Cardinal Cupich?

On the website of RCF.org you will find these words. “We are seeking information on Blazing Cupcake. If you know who this is, please contact Stephen Brady.” Is this respectful to the human dignity of another person? From whose heart does this come? Is it from the heart of Christ? Is this type of language “seeking the truth in love so that all things may grow into Christ who is our Head” (Ephesians 4:15)?

We all have been created in God’s image and likeness. We are all sinners who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Each person has been given human dignity by God, our Creator. All people have an inherent and immeasurable worth and dignity that is considered sacred even if they believe something different from what you believe and regardless of any sin they have committed. Offering constructive criticism of the expressed thoughts or actions of another person is one thing, but this must never result in the destruction of their reputation.

To intentionally destroy another person is to tear down God who is within them. Jesus in the Gospel challenged the church leaders of his day, but did not seek to destroy them. He loved them. Isn’t that the call of all of his disciples? “He who is without sin, cast the first stone.”

In the end, an examination of our own conscience will reveal our motives for anything we say or do. And the purpose of my letter was to challenge the motives of people whom I believe are not seeking the truth in charity. Their websites speak of other motives. “Ubi caritas est vera; Deus ibi est.” The Gospel is a proclamation of truth, love and mercy. This is my only desire.

Please pray for our Church.

Update on the trial of Fr. John Praveen

On February 5, Father John Praveen pled guilty in a court hearing to one count of sexual contact with a minor. He will remain in the Pennington County Jail until his sentencing hearing on April 4.

Bishop Robert Gruss issued the following statement: “This kind of abuse by a member of the clergy or anyone is unconscionable and should never happen. We remain deeply saddened by these events. The Diocese of Rapid City will continue to offer our assistance to the victim and the victim’s family. We are grateful that the legal process has led to this revelation of the truth. Our hope is that this decision and the subsequent sentencing will begin the process of healing for all those involved. We will continue to pray for the victim, the victim’s family, and for all victims of sexual abuse as well as for Father Praveen.”

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Jesus is waiting to minister to your needs

BY LAURIE HALLSTROM

“As God’s beloved sons and daughters, made in his image and likeness, and as baptized men and women, we are called to a life of intimacy with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” said Fr. Scott Traynor.

He underscored how much God loves us and wants to be in our lives at the Refuel Conference, “Source and Summit: Encountering Jesus in the holy Eucharist.” He is a priest from the Diocese of Sioux Falls, serving at St. Benedict Church in Yankton. The Jan. 25-26 conference was sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation. Father Traynor was addressing a crowd of 109 people — many of whom lead religious education classes and youth groups in their parishes.

“Prayer is a relationship of growing intimacy with God,” he said. “Encountering Jesus Christ in Mass is related to my personal prayer like inhaling and exhaling.”

Emphasizing the Eucharist is the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, he said, “Jesus is humbly waiting to touch us, to encounter him in person, waiting to minister to your needs. We don’t ‘take’ Communion — in lovingly ‘receiving’ Communion we say to God, ‘I love you,’” said Fr. Traynor.

Kay Birkholt from St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Hot Springs, said that the conference helped her understand the importance of receiving Christ and responding to him.

Father Traynor explained, to respond to Christ is to develop a personal relationship with him. “What does it mean to have a close personal relationship with Jesus? When you have an intimate relationship with someone you pay attention to them and they know your thoughts, feelings, moods, and desires.”

He listed four habits of growing in intimacy:

1. Acknowledge — pay attention to what is going on in our own hearts
2. Relate — thoughts feelings and desires honestly to God
3. Pray — when anything gets stirred up in your heart go tell God about it
4. Receive — be maximally receptive to what God wants to give

“Jesus makes our life holy because he enters in it, he wants to scatter every last remnant of darkness in our hearts,” he continued, “The penitential rite is grace poured out into us. God ministers to us in our misery; mercy is much broader than the forgiveness of sins. We ask God to provide something better, to enter into the joy of the Father, but a lot of us hang onto self-re- criminations and self-doubt. We count ourselves out of the fullness God wants to give us,” he said. “Jesus desires to heal us in mind and body and spirit.”

Mary Harris, St. Mary Church, Isabel, said her perspective of the Liturgy had changed after hearing the workshop sessions. “I learned about the importance of every part of the Mass, and the significance of attending and participating fully in the Mass in order to be transformed by the sacrifice,” she said.

From St. John Church, Ft. Pierre, Carol Pond said she would contribute her new insights to her Marian devotion group, Sharing Mary. “I think any time you can deepen your faith, and share it with others, it is positive. Two others from my group are here so the combined sharing will be great,” she said.

To hear the full recording of Father Traynor’s sessions go to http://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/refuel-2019/.
Letters to the Editor
Attacks concern area faithful

An organization has been buying paid ads in the Rapid City newspaper under the guise of the “Roman Catholic Faithful.” They claim to seek information on “troubling issues” concerning Cardinal Blase Cupich.

Make no mistake about it, these attacks hope to bring down Cardinal Cupich. The ads suggest an agenda that can leave little doubt as to their mission.

Cardinal Blase Cupich led our diocese with uncommon devotion and effort. We the undersigned, in the Diocese of Rapid City, truly consider ourselves the Roman Catholic faithful. We support Cardinal Cupich and renounce any effort to spread untruths and provide non-factual information in an attempt to create havoc in our church.

Please know we reject these efforts, denounce the statements that have been published, and ask for the continued support and prayers for Cardinal Cupich and the leadership of the Catholic Church.

Bernie Boland
Pat Braun
Laurie & Sam Durr
Pamela & Thomas Fritz
Deb & Tim Frost
Erik Goetzinger
Fr. John Hatcher
Bonnie & Joe Hilt
Roger Johnsen

Ronald Johnsen
Marion Klein
Deanie Knutson
Kathleen & Thomas Letner
Catherine Little
Linda & John Maas
Susan & Steve Massopust
Connie & Dennis Meier
Mary Miller

Barb & Jerry Mitzel
Julie Mousel
Marlon Ritter
Marilyn & Chris Schmid
Carman Timmerman
Bernadette & John Usera
Fr. Ed Witt
Vesper Wright

Piedmont girl wins 1st place in RTL essay contest Jr. division

Grace Weaver of Piedmont won first place in the S.D. Right to Life Jr. division essay contest. She also read her essay at the 46th Hour of Reflection held at the state capitol. Here is her essay.

“Why Am I Pro-Life? Every human being should have the right to live. I don’t believe that innocent little children, who haven’t even seen the light of day, should be murdered no matter what the reason is. God has a plan for me and for everyone in this world. We have no right to say who gets to live and who should die.

“Each one of us has a very special gift that we can share with the world. Life is sacred because we are made in the image and likeness of God, and we should never destroy what God has created. A few years ago, I didn’t understand fully what abortion is. I knew of course that abortion was making babies cease to exist and that, the child’s future was demolished.

“One day my mom explained of the horrific terrors of what was happening to these babies, and I was heartbroken. Many times I’ve had to ask myself why a loving God would let these people do this to his children, and the same answer always comes to me: it is that God gave us free will to do what we want to do. He has given us all a chance to change our ways but we choose to ignore it.

“When I was born, my birth mom put me up for adoption. Because she knew she would not have been able to take care of me properly, she made the decision of giving me life and letting me live to do what God has planned for me. At five months of age, I was adopted into my forever family, who have taught me why I should be pro-life.

“I have to be honest, sometimes I don’t understand why I was given a chance to live, while so many other children have been killed for no reason. My parents will always remind me that God must have great plans for me ahead. I am pro-life because I believe everyone should have a chance to be who God wants them to be.”

2019 South Dakota Right to Life Essay Contest winners from West River: Senior Division, Grades 10-12, 4th Bennett Selfridge, Rapid City, $75; Junior Division, Grades 7-9, 1st Grace Weaver, Piedmont, $150; 3rd Scarlet Gimshaw, Rapid City, $100; 5th Tom Solano, Rapid City $50.

Ash Wednesday 2019 Collection

“Let us love, not with words but with deeds.” These words from Pope Francis sum up the Gospel message. The season of Lent is a time of grace and renewal for the whole church, for each community and every person of faith. Ash Wednesday sets us off on this journey of conversion, reminding us of our call to repentance and conversion, but also of God’s fidelity. Embarking upon this journey leads us to greater holiness and compassion for the least among us. Your Lenten sacrifice reveals your “love, not with words, but deeds” for the poor among us across western South Dakota. Please give generously to Catholic Social Services so that others may experience your love in action.

Bishop Robert Gruss
Diocese of Rapid City

As the Executive Director of Catholic Social Services I would like to thank you for helping us reach out to those in need in western South Dakota. Support like yours helps us offer these kinds of services:

• Suicide prevention training throughout our region
• Work with troubled youth at our regional Juvenile Services Center
• Assist 12 schools to offer our Lakota Circles of Hope Program
• Reach out to pregnant teens and young adults
• Help single moms obtain an education to get a job that provides them with a living wage
• Assist families impacted by disaster

James T. Kinyon
Executive Director
Catholic Social Services

Ash Wednesday, March 6, 2019

We are called to serve.

In modern life, with its conflicting shouts and cries and storms and thunders, Christ is a clear, quiet presence ... an ear that hears, a hand that helps. When you support Catholic Social Services and its mission, you help become the ears and hands of Christ.

You extend your faith and your life to others in need. You are answering the Call to Serve.
Rapid City Catholic Schools
2019-2020 Registration

Returning Family and New Sibling Registration - Jan. 25-Feb. 8, 2019
New Family Registration - begins Feb. 19th
Preschool & Kindergarten OPEN HOUSE - Tuesday, Feb. 12 4-6pm

For a tour or more information please contact Marcia Werner at (605) 343-8484 x. 1203 mwerner@rccss.org ~ www.RCCSS.org

Class Sizes are Limited - Enroll Today!

Major relic of priest renowned for holiness to visit diocese

A major relic of the saint who is held up as the ideal of what a Catholic priest should be, will be available at St. John the Evangelist Church, Ft. Pierre (Saturday, March 23) and the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City (Sunday, March 24). The incorrupt heart of France’s St. John Vianney will be available for veneration at parishes.

A national relic pilgrimage was announced by Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Carl Anderson last summer in a letter to K of C chaplains and members. The relic pilgrimage will run well into the spring and will include stops throughout the country.

The tour has been dubbed “Heart of a Priest,” which refers to the physical heart of John Vianney that has resisted decay for more than 150 years and to the good character that should belong to every priest.

“The possibility of a pilgrimage was offered to us by the Shrine at Ars some months ago,” Anderson said recently. “We now welcome as providential this opportunity to invoke the intercession of the patron saint of parish priests, whose holiness and integrity is a singular model for clergy.”

(Icon photo courtesy of Knights of Columbus)

Relic Schedule in the Diocese of Rapid City

Saturday, March 23, St John the Evangelist Church, Ft. Pierre,
Noon – Veneration will be held throughout the afternoon with priest confessors available until 5 p.m.
5:30 p.m. – Mass

Sunday, March 24, Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City.
8 a.m. – Mass with Reception of Relic, celebrant, Bishop Robert Gruss
9 a.m. – Veneration of Relic
10:30 a.m. – Mass
11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Veneration of Relic
2 p.m. Confessions
3 p.m. Holy Hour for Vocations led by Diocesan Director of Vocations Fr. Mark McCormick
4 p.m. Divine Mercy (sung)
Holy Hour for Sanctification of Priests led by Bishop Gruss
5:30 p.m. – Mass

The Black and Indian Mission Collection (BIMC) exists to help diocesan communities build the Church and preach the Gospel of Jesus among the African American, Native American, and Alaska Native people of God. Join us in our Mission to the Missions.

SUPPORT THE BLACK AND INDIAN MISSION
Special collection March 9-10, 2019

www.blackandindianmission.org

Photo courtesy Sioux Spiritual Center, Howes
Living the Mission update:
Block 2 Set to begin week of March 4

BY MATTHEW FADDEN
COMMUNITY COUNSELING SERVICES

The Living the Mission capital campaign has been greatly supported by the generosity of the entire diocese in its Pilot and Block 1 phases. As of February 9, $5,892,619.74 has been pledged toward the campaign’s $12,000,000 goal. With 49% raised to date, momentum is building toward Commitment Weekend for most of Block 1 parishes on Feb. 23-24. Commitment Weekend will be an opportunity for Block 1 parishioners who have not yet pledged to Living the Mission to make a commitment spread over five years. Ahead of this weekend, please pray about how you have been blessed and how you can participate in this extraordinary effort.

With Block 1 in its final weeks before Commitment Weekend, Block 2 is set to begin the week of March 4. There will be many ways for Block 2 parishioners to participate in Living the Mission, and these will be communicated by our pastors and local campaign volunteer leadership. Please begin by praying for the success of the campaign, your brothers and sisters in Christ across 77 parishes unified in this effort, and the community we have fostered in this diocese. Parishioners can view when their parishes are participating in the campaign, along with other campaign education and materials, at www.livingthemissionsd.com.

A reminder: all parishes that reach their campaign goal and successfully fulfill their pledges will receive 20 percent of their parish’s pledges to Living the Mission. All parishes that fundraise over their campaign goal will receive 60 percent of additional pledged commitments when they are successfully fulfilled. Thank you to all parishes that have been working diligently to support their own local and larger church communities.

Several parishes exceed their goal for the Living the Mission campaign

BY FR. MICHEL MULLOY
VICAR GENERAL

Twenty-eight parishes have completed or are finishing up their work on the Living the Mission Campaign. Several of those parishes have reached and exceeded their goal. One such parish is St. Joseph in Faith which is at 134 percent of their goal. A couple of the parishioners from St. Joseph reflected on their discernment in responding to the invitation to be a part of this campaign.

Brad and Mandy Lemmel said:

“As husband and wife, we sometimes have different perspectives when making a decision like this. Initially we were hesitant, because we weren’t certain of the priorities of some of the individual projects in the campaign. After prayerful reflection we decided to trust in our faithful Bishop and his staff, and what they decided was important for our diocese. We decided to give as generously and joyfully as was recommended. Our parish representative reminded us that giving for the church’s purpose isn’t supposed to be easy. We have plenty of wants and needs, but trust that God will provide for us, especially when we make sacrifices such as these.”

Greg Fisher, who was one of the volunteers who helped with the campaign at St. Joseph, also had doubts about the elements of the campaign put forward by the bishop and his staff. He shared:

“My support for Bishop Gruss’ Campaign was skeptical at first, but I agreed to engage in it after Bishop Gruss reiterated what I had let slip from my mind, that the name of the church I am a member of in western South Dakota is the Diocese of Rapid City and not the parish of St. Joseph in Faith. This allowed my acceptance of all the elements of the bishop’s campaign rather than focusing on those that I felt minimal need to support it. An added support for this campaign came after witnessing a couple of families, who had every reason not to contribute monetarily due to existing constraints, prayed and listened to the Holy Spirit and agreed to engage the entire amount of their suggested pledge. (This) … gave me the drive to push harder in my efforts to secure pledges.

These stories are echoed through the diocese as people consider their response to the Living the Mission Campaign. Each parishioner is asked to listen to the presentation, ask questions for clarification and understanding, receive the invitation to give to the campaign, and then, prayerfully, consider a gift. It is all rooted in prayer. We are building the kingdom of God in western South Dakota. We are giving to the vision and the mission of our diocese under the leadership of Bishop Gruss. If we prayerfully consider this invitation, then we will experience peace and joy through our participation.
Be attentive to growing in good and holy habits

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.”

—Eph 4:29.

In our diocese, a parish striving to be a Stewardship Parish is asked to “regularly discuss virtue, set forth examples of heroic virtue, and evaluate programs and policies in light of how they foster virtue.”

Virtue, though, can be a challenging thing to teach, and it is made more difficult by the reality that culturally, we rarely talk about virtue. If we do, it is only mentioned in very general terms. “Be nice!” the culture tells us. The church, however, calls us not to embrace some ill-defined standard of “niceness,” but to be virtuous, even heroically so.

What does this mean? And how can we foster virtue in ourselves and in others?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines virtue as “a habitual and firm disposition to do the good” (1833). Virtues, then, are good habits we develop over time until they become our natural response. So, to foster a life of virtue means to be attentive to growing in good and holy habits. We must be intentional in our efforts both for ourselves and for those we teach.

I have the great grace to have the opportunity to meet weekly with a group of women who are serious about growing in virtue. Recently, one expressed a frustration experienced by us all: that she becomes discouraged when she must relate the same sins over and over in confession.

This opened up a wonderful discussion about how we root out those persistent areas of sin in our lives. One area many of us struggle with is gossip: talking about others or situations in ways that are less than edifying, talking about problems we don’t have the power to solve, or being negative or speaking ill of people or organizations. We know that all of this is destructive, and yet, we do it anyway.

Looking about the internet for information on gossip, I ran across a delightful article which stated, “In the South we have this knack for making gossip sound … almost nice. All you have to do is add ‘bless her heart’ to the end of the sentence. It goes like this: ‘Susie gained 50 pounds with that last pregnancy, bless her heart.’ Marcy’s husband ran off with his secretary, bless her heart.’

As I read, I thought to myself that we sometimes do the same thing in the church, except instead of saying “bless her heart,” we say, “we need to pray for …” How crucial it is to be attentive and honest about our true motive. Do we really desire to offer this situation up to prayer, or is prayer just a pretense, a “legitimate” excuse for talking about another person or his or her struggles?

As Lent is just around the corner, now might be a great time to equip ourselves with some tools to root out the vice of gossip in our lives and replace it with the virtue of Christian kindness. In my own experience, to root out a vice and develop a virtue requires a simple tool rather than a complicated one. Here are three simple questions attributed to Amy Carmichael, a missionary who served in India in the first part of the 20th century.

Before we speak, we should ask ourselves:

Is it true?
Is it kind?
Is it necessary?
It’s simple, but not necessarily easy. Still, I am inspired by Matthew Kelly to keep working to use this tool. In his latest book, “The Culture Solution,” he offers this advice: “How do you know if it is gossip or just a discussion? If there is a problem and there is nobody in the conversation who can address the problem, it’s gossip. If the person does not have a chance to defend his or her actions, it’s gossip.”

“Gossip erodes trust,” says Kelly. All healthy relationships are rooted in trust. All healthy church communities, in fact any healthy organization, is rooted in trust. Trust is foundational, and gossip undermines it terribly. As we strive to become more vibrant and more authentic witnesses for Christ, we will need to be intentional and persevering in promoting virtue, so that, as our Diocesan Stewardship document stresses, we can be “parishioners (who) embody steadfast kindness and compassion.”

https://finerfem.com/2014/05/24/gossip-is-it-true-kind-necessary/

Carmichael, Amy, “Edges of His Ways” (Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1955)

The adjective culture belittles the person, says Pope Francis

PANAMA CITY (CNS) — Just like the Pharisees, many today shun Jesus’ merciful love toward sinners and prefer to use labels that stigmatize a person’s past, present and future, Pope Francis said.

Speaking to young detainees at a penitential liturgy in Las Garzas de Pacora Juvenile Detention Center in Panama Jan. 25, the pope said society creates “an adjective culture” that prefers to immediately label people as good or bad rather than truly getting to know them.

“Gossips are not interested (in the person). They quickly seek to put a label to get them out of the way. The adjective culture belittles the person,” he said.

“When a society or community allows this,” he added, “and does nothing more than complain and backbite, it enters into a vicious circle of division, blame and condemnation.”

Pope Francis traveled by helicopter to the industrial town of Pacora, 20 miles east of Panama City. Thousands of people lined the streets holding banners, balloons and flags welcoming the pope, who waved and smiled as he greeted them from his popemobile.

The detainees — wearing white World Youth Day T-shirts — chanted “Esta es la juventud del papa” (“We are the pope’s youths.”) Many wore rosaries around their necks or held them in their hands.

In a message sent to journalists, the Vatican said the pope’s drive around the neighborhood of Pacora was “a sign of closeness to the people who live in this periphery.”

During the penitential liturgy, the pope heard the confessions of five inmates — four young men and a young woman — in a small tent set up outside of the prison, the Vatican said. One of the young men was missing a leg and using crutches. He could not sit down, so the pope stood up to hear his confession.

Pope Francis hears confession during a penitential liturgy with juvenile detainees in Las Garzas de Pacora Juvenile Detention Center in Pacora, Panama, Jan. 25. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
Pray together with the pope and our bishop

In the four Eucharistic Prayers that are used at Sunday Mass, we pray for unity and peace, for faith and charity in the church. Together with the pope and our bishop, we ask God the Father to grant us these graces. The four Eucharistic Prayers express our belief that we, the body of Christ, the Risen Lord present in the world today, are united with the Pope and our bishop.

I say “we” because, although the Eucharistic Prayer is vocalized by the priest, we all pray the Eucharistic Prayer through our attentive listening and in the sung acclamations. Together with the priest we are offering this prayer to God the Father through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the past few weeks I have reflected on this moment in the Eucharistic Prayer. Our church is under attack. Our Holy Father along with bishops throughout our country have been challenged on many levels. To be sure these are difficult times and there are many unanswered questions about serious matters in the church. All the more reason to renew our efforts to pray for this unity in the body of Christ, for the Holy Father, our bishop and bishops throughout the world.

The words of the Eucharistic Prayer are powerful. This is the high point of the celebration of the Mass. We are joining our sacrifice to Christ’s sacrifice. Christ died to bring unity to all people. His first words to his disciples in John’s Gospel when he appeared to them were, “Peace be with you.” Christ desires unity and peace in his church. When we join our sacrifice to Christ’s sacrifice, foremost in our minds and hearts should be His desire of unity. As we pray the Eucharistic Prayer, we believe that God the Father hears our prayer because it is the prayer of Christ himself. Jesus told us that God always hears his prayer.

The Eucharistic Prayer also calls us to action. During the disagreements that will inevitably manifest themselves we are called to exercise charity. In our conversations around the dinner table and the office, we must strive for clarity in the truth and understanding. Sharing our understanding must be united to our listening to others. This is how we arrive at the truth and how the unity for which we are praying will be manifested. I am always grateful when those moments of dialogue happen. This is how God continues to work within us and between us.

Unity will come to the church. May we pray earnestly for this and do our part to ensure the building up of church unity.

I would encourage you to reflect on this the next time you celebrate Mass and hear that part of the Eucharistic Prayer that says:

“Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity your pilgrim Church on earth, with your servant Francis our Pope and Robert our Bishop” 
(EP III) or “Be pleased to grant her (the church) peace, to guard, unite and govern her throughout the whole world together with your servant Francis our Pope and Robert our Bishop.” (EP I)
“Everything is interconnected and our failure to see that leaves us in peril.”

Snake-bitten …

Everything is of one piece. Whenever we don’t take that seriously, we pay a price.

The renowned theologian, Hans Urs Von Balthasar gives an example of this. Beauty, he submits, is not some little “extra” that we can value or denigrate according to personal taste and temperament, like some luxury that we say we cannot afford. Like truth and goodness, it’s one of the properties of God and thus demands to be taken seriously as goodness and truth. If we neglect or denigrate beauty, he says, we will soon enough begin to neglect other areas of our lives. Here are his words:

“Our situation today shows that beauty demands for itself at least as much courage and decision as do truth and goodness, and she will not allow herself to be separated and banned from her two sisters without taking them along with herself in an act of mysterious vengeance. We can be sure that whoever sneers at her name, as if she were taken lightly as luxury that we say we cannot afford. Like truth and goodness, it’s one of the properties of God and thus demands to be taken seriously as goodness and truth. If we neglect or denigrate beauty, he says, we will soon enough begin to neglect other areas of our lives. Here are his words:

“All life is connected and we will eventually pay the price for our blindness and non-concern; reality bites back with a mysterious vengeance. (WRC Graphic)

of all the other animals. They were worried, they lamented, because they had seen the mistress of the house buy a mousetrap. They were now in danger. But the other animals scoffed at their anxiety. The cow said that she had nothing to worry about. A tiny little contraption couldn’t harm her. She could crush it with her foot. The pig reacted in a similar way. What did he have to worry about in the face of a tiny trap? The chicken also announced that it had no fear of this gadget. “It’s your concern. No worry for me!” it told the mice.

But all things are interconnected and that soon became evident. The mistress set the mousetrap and, on the very first night, heard it snap. Getting out of her bed to look what it had caught, she saw that it had trapped a snake by its tail. In trying to free the snake she was bitten and the poison soon had her feeling sick and running a fever. She went to the doctor who gave her medicines to combat the poison and advised her: “What you need now to get better is chicken broth.” (You can guess where the rest of this is going.) They slaughtered the chicken, but her fever lingered. Relatives and neighbors came to visit. More food was needed. They slaughtered the pig. Eventually the poison killed her. A huge funeral ensued. A lot of food was needed. They slaughtered the cow.

The moral of the story is clear. Everything is interconnected and our failure to see that leaves us in peril. Blindness to our interdependence, willful or not, is dangerous. We are inextricably tied to each other and to everything in the world. We can protest to the contrary, but reality will hold its ground. And so, we cannot truly value one thing while we disdain something else. We cannot really love one person while we hate someone else. And we cannot give ourselves an exemption in one moral area and hope to be morally healthy as a whole.

Everything is of one piece. There are no exceptions. When we ignore that truth we are eventually snake-bitten by it.

I emphasize this because today, virtually everywhere, a dangerous tribalism is setting in. Everywhere, not unlike the animals in that African tale, we see families, communities, churches, and whole countries focusing more or less exclusively on their own needs without concern for other families, communities, churches, and countries. Other people’s problems, we believe, are not our concern. From the narrowness in our churches, to identity politics, to whole nations setting their own needs first, we hear echoes of the cow, pig, and chicken saying: “Not my concern! I’ll take care of myself. You take care of yourself!” This will come back to snake-bite us.

We will eventually pay the price for our blindness and non-concern and we will pay that price politically, socially, and economically. But we will even pay a higher price personally. What that snake-bite will do is captured in Von Balthasar’s warning: “Whoever ignores or denigrates beauty will, he asserts, eventually be unable to pray or to love.” That’s true too in all cases when we ignore our interconnectedness with others. By ignoring the needs of others we eventually corrupt our own wholeness so that we are no longer able to treat ourselves with respect and empathy and, when that happens, we lose respect and empathy for life itself — and for God — because whenever reality isn’t respected it bites back with a mysterious vengeance.
Catholic Rural Life announces new support for rural pastors

BY ANNIE HUNTINGTON

Catholic Rural Life has received a $1 million grant to help establish its Thriving in Rural Ministry program. This grant is part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Thriving in Ministry, an initiative that supports religious organizations across the nation as they create programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy mentors and guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry.

Lilly Endowment is giving nearly $70 million in grants through the Thriving in Ministry initiative. Catholic Rural Life seeks to create a program that will serve pastors of rural communities by offering retreats for them to come together and learn from one another, to deepen relationships and to build fraternal communities that go beyond the retreats. CRL will use the five-year grant to create a network of pastors serving rural communities who can encourage, sharpen and help one another.

For more than 95 years CRL has been serving rural communities throughout the country through various programs. Currently, many pastors serving in rural communities are responsible for multiple parishes that are separated by long distances. This is a dynamic that is challenging for these priests.

“Many pastors have told us of their feelings of isolation and need for fellowship with peers and wise mentors. CRL’s new program will help pastors overcome some of the unique challenges in pastoral ministry they face, while also creating ongoing fraternity and fellowship,” says James Ennis, Executive Director of CRL. “We work with many priests who are doing outstanding work in rural ministry, and we want to be able to share those models of best practice with other pastors around the country.”

Catholic Rural Life is one of the 78 organizations from 29 states that are taking part in the initiative. All the organizations reflect diverse Christian traditions: mainline and evangelical Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox. Thriving in Ministry is part of Lilly Endowment’s grantmaking to strengthen pastoral leadership in Christian congregations in the United States. This has been a grantmaking priority at Lilly Endowment for nearly 25 years.

“Leading a congregation today is multifaceted and exceptionally demanding,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “When pastors have opportunities to build meaningful relationships with experienced colleagues, they are able to negotiate the challenges of ministry and their leadership thrives. These promising programs, including Catholic Rural Life’s Thriving in Rural Ministry program, will help pastors develop these kinds of relationships, especially when they are in the midst of significant professional transitions.”

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family — J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons Eli and J.K. Jr. — through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly & Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. The Endowment maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and its home state Indiana. Its grantmaking in religion focuses on supporting efforts to strengthen the leadership and vitality of Christian congregations throughout the country and to increase the public’s understanding of the role of religion in public life.

(Abandoned by the Tracks, photo by Fr. Tony Grossenburg. Used with permission)

In Your Prayers

In Your Prayers is designed to help us remember the birthdays, ordination and death anniversaries of the priests and deacons who serve us.


OFFICE OF BISHOP
February 19, 2019

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we present our annual diocesan financial reports, I want to thank all of you for your commitment and generosity to this great Diocese of Rapid City and the many ministries which provide support to our parishes in carrying on the mission of the church. We had a good year in 2018, mostly due to your ongoing faith and generosity.

At the outset, the financial outlook for 2019 is mixed. The turbulent stock market is not a promising starting point, but the positive response to the Living the Mission Campaign is very encouraging. We are also grateful for the ongoing generosity of the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation. Our other outside sources of operational grants are continuing to reduce their funding; therefore, we continue to rely more and more on your generosity to the Annual Diocesan Appeal. The cost associated with providing ministry on the reservations is still a challenge and the ongoing progress in accomplishing the goals of our Diocesan Priority Plan will not come without cost.

I am confident that the strong faith, sacrificial generosity and hard work so ingrained in the culture of western South Dakota, combined with the bountiful love of our God, will lead us through these challenges so that we can accomplish all that God has planned for us.

Please keep our benefactors in your daily prayers. Their support is invaluable for the work of the diocese. In addition to significant contributions from the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation, we continue to receive vital support from Catholic Extension, the USCCB Committee on Home Missions, the Black and Indian Mission Office and the Mission Cooperative program of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, as well as a number of grants provided by private foundations for various programs and ministries.

Any questions regarding this report can be addressed to Rick Soulek in our Finance Office. Again, with deep gratitude, I thank you for your kindness and generous support, allowing the Gospel mission to be carried out in western South Dakota.

Be assured of my continued prayers for you and your families. May God continue to abundantly bless you.

Sincerely in the peace and joy of Christ,

Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Rapid City

Thank you

To Ray Hillenbrand for three decades of generous service to the Diocesan Finance Council.

The annual audit for the Diocese of Rapid City was performed by the accounting firm Ketel Thorstensen, LLP. A copy of the audit is available for review at the Chancery Office. In accordance with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Resolution on Diocesan Financial Reporting, information regarding the review and approval of the audit report has been provided to the Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Your comments and questions are welcome.
Summary of the diocesan finances for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2018

The Diocese of Rapid City has been blessed with another fruitful year and we are deeply grateful for the support that has allowed us to provide the necessary ministries in our diocese.

This year's financials were highlighted by a successful Annual Diocesan Appeal, the creation of the Children's Memorial Garden at Terra Sancta, the payoff of the interest-bearing Terra Sancta debt and laying the groundwork for the Living the Mission Capital Campaign. Thank you for your ongoing support, allowing us to continue to build God's kingdom in western South Dakota.

The Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation continues to be the largest contributor to the support of our diocese. We are very grateful to the foundation and to foundation board members for their generosity. Please offer your prayers and financial support as they continue to provide support to entities across the diocese.

Since its opening in 2012, the Terra Sancta Retreat Center has been a wonderful asset for our diocese. In the past year, the retreat center hosted 717 events with over 15,000 guests and had only 10 days without a scheduled event. It continues to provide core support for our foundational ministries in a very cost-effective manner, providing over $100,000 in contributed services to attendees of diocesan events. The retreat center continues to live up to its name of “Holy Ground.”

Catholic Extension, Catholic Home Missions, the Black and Indian Mission Office and the Mission Cooperative have also provided valuable support to various ministries in our diocese. In addition to the amounts listed in our financial reports, some of the funding from these entities was also directed to parishes throughout the diocese. Please continue your prayerful and financial support for these generous organizations.

A copy of the full audit is available through the Finance Office of the diocese. Your comments and questions are welcome. Please direct questions or requests to Rick Soulek, PO Box 678, Rapid City SD 57709, or call 605-343-3541.

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**Fiscal Year 2018 Expenses**

- **Terra Sancta Retreat Center**: 17%
- **Discipleship Formation**: 25%
- **Development & Living the Mission**: 14%
- **Pastoral Programs**: 13%
- **WWBF Allocation**: 1%
- **Depreciation & Loan Interest**: 6%
- **Evangelization**: 6%
- **Administration**: 8%
- **Social and Family Programs**: 10%

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**DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Receivables</td>
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<td>Property &amp; Equipment</td>
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<td>Assets held by others</td>
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<td>Investment – SM Properties, LLC</td>
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<td>Investment – Cash Surrender Life Ins</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous Assets</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<td>20,348,253</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities</td>
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<td>405,025</td>
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<td>Amounts Held for Others</td>
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<td>759,947</td>
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<td>Debt on Terra Sancta Property</td>
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<td>1,622,827</td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td>Unrestricted Designated</td>
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<td>Unrestricted Undesignated</td>
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<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>20,348,253</td>
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**DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2018**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and Revenue</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Permanently Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Pr. Yr. 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Western S.D. Catholic Foundation Grant</td>
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<td>1,175,000</td>
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<td>Annual Appeal</td>
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<td>Diocesan Programs and Misc. Income</td>
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<td>726,803</td>
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<td>Gifts and Bequests</td>
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<td>162,001</td>
<td>3,016</td>
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<td>Outside Funders (Catholic Missions, Comm Home Mission, BIMO, Mission Coop)</td>
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<td>216,182</td>
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<td>286,633</td>
<td>269,878</td>
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<td>Terra Sancta Retreat Center Income</td>
<td>165,226</td>
<td>165,226</td>
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<td>198,558</td>
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<td>Terra Sancta Guild</td>
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<td>22,032</td>
<td>26,455</td>
<td>121,120</td>
<td>211,953</td>
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<td>Parish Assessments</td>
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<td>46,079</td>
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<td>We Walk By Faith Donations</td>
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<td>6,994</td>
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<td>Investment Income</td>
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<td>Net Assets Released From Restriction</td>
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<td><strong>Total Support and Revenue</strong></td>
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<td>70,865</td>
<td>72,620</td>
<td>4,920,118</td>
<td>4,918,582</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
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<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Pr. Yr. 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipleship Formation (Vocations, Faith Formation, Lay Ministry)</td>
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<td>1,157,551</td>
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<td>Social Concerns and Family Life</td>
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<td>Depreciation and Loan Interest</td>
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<td>344,906</td>
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<td>We Walk By Faith (Allocation to Rapid City Catholic School and Newman Center)</td>
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<td>42,284</td>
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<td>30,000</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4,616,422</td>
<td>4,072,119</td>
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| INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS           | 160,211      | 70,865                 | 72,620                | 303,696  | 846,463           |

*Terra Sancta revenue excludes $198K of diocese based retreat revenue and $275K of Terra Sancta grants and gifts
New book by St. John Paul II shows early political, social philosophy

By Jonathan Luxmoore

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — A new two-volume manuscript on political and social philosophy, authored by St. John Paul II in the 1950s, will dispel views of him as “an intellectual cut off from social concerns” and clarify his lifelong stance on political and ideological issues, said the book’s editor.

The 120,000-word collection by then-Father Karol Wojtyla, released for the first time, is expected to require the updating of biographies and reinterpretation of aspects of St. John Paul’s teaching.

“Katolicka Etyka Spoleczna” (“The Catholic Social Ethic”) shows Father Wojtyla “had a deep knowledge of social problems in the 1940s and 1950s and was looking for a key to solve them; while he was convinced a world shaped by capitalism was a bad world, he also saw how communism had made simplistic promises of social change,” said Father Alfred Wierzbicki, one of the book’s editors.

“This may well affect wider interpretations of his teaching. At the very least, it reveals there are really very few differences between St John Paul II and Pope Francis on social questions,” he said.

Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, director of the John Paul II Institute at Poland’s Catholic University of Lublin, said the book would be “a new source for those researching his ideas, showing how they developed from Wojtyla the philosopher to Wojtyla the pope.”

“Though it won’t necessarily affect our understanding of papal teaching as a whole, it will undoubtedly deepen our understanding of this pope. Certain things will be clearer when we see how he presented his arguments.”

Lekka-Kowalik spoke amid preparations for the Jan. 28 launch of the book at the Polish bishops’ conference headquarters in Warsaw, after 15 years’ preparation by Lublin-based experts. She told Catholic News Service Jan. 17 the work’s publication had been timed for the Catholic University of Lublin’s current centenary, as well as for the run-up to St. John Paul’s 100th birthday May 18, 1920.

“The Catholic Social Ethic” originated in a course taught from June 1953 by Father Wojtyla at Krakow’s Jagiellonian University. He continued the course at seminaries when the university’s theology faculty was forcibly closed by Poland’s communist rulers in 1954.

It shows the future pontiff was deeply versed as a young priest in the works of Karl Marx and able to debate complex points in the German thinker’s monumental classic, “Das Kapital.” However, it also reveals a deep knowledge of wider political, economic and social ideas, especially those with a bearing on church doctrine from the time of Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical “Rerum Novarum.”

Pope Francis: Serve the sick with generosity

By Hannah Brockhaus

Catholic News Agency/EWTN News

To serve the poor and sick in a generous manner is a powerful form of evangelization, Pope Francis said in a message for the World Day of the Sick.

“The church — as a Mother to all her children, especially the infirm — reminds us that generous gestures, like that of the Good Samaritan, are the most credible means of evangelization,” the pope wrote.

His message for the World Day of the Sick was published in advance of the solemn celebration Feb. 1. The theme of this year’s message comes from Mt 10:8: “You received without payment; give without payment.”

“Gift,” Pope Francis said, is more than giving of physical property or objects as presents: “it involves the giving of oneself,” freely, and with the desire for relationship with others, “the basis of society.” Moreover, “gift” is a reflection of God’s love, which culminates in the incarnation of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,” he said.

The pope noted that one person who exemplified self-gift, especially in service of the sick, is St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who “helps us understand that our only criterion of action must be selfless love for every human being, without distinction of language, culture, ethnicity or religion.” Her example continues to be a guide of hope and joy for those in need of understanding and love — especially the suffering, he said.

Quoting from the homily he gave at her canonization Mass, Sept. 4, 2016, he said: “For Mother Teresa, mercy was the ‘salt’ which gave flavor to her work; it was the ‘light’ that shone in the darkness of the many who no longer had tears to shed for their poverty and suffering.

“Her mission to the urban and existential peripheries remains for us today an eloquent witness to God’s closeness to the poorest of the poor,” he said.
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10 E. Mall Dr., Suite B, Rapid City, SD, 57701
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Curia Corner
Preserving a Catholic community — from the Diocesan Archives

A great sense of humor. A guitar playing cowboy. Do you need a few more hints to who delivered this homily in the 1970s? When I discovered this gem among his writings, growing up as a cradle Catholic, not only did it warm my heart, but I remember how instrumental he was in our young adults Catholic formation. It is a great tribute and very humbling to share with you the following homily on the Feast of Cana …..

When I was a little boy growing up on our farm 8½ miles west of Timer Lake, along with my older brother and sister … this serial movie was playing in the local movie theater, “The Green Archer!” On a Wednesday night. During the week! It was the last, the final movie of this series. We HAD to see it.

The heroine had been captured by the bad guy and was imprisoned in this sort of dungeon. Now, it was up to the Green Archer (he was all dressed in green, ya know) to rescue her.

So, we really wanted to go. Dad was late coming in from the field and we knew he would be tired and hungry and thirsty. So, before he came into the house we went to mother.

‘Mom, please, please, when Dad comes in ask him to take us to “The Green Archer.’”

She reluctantly asked him. He looked pretty tired but he washed up and changed clothes and we drove to the movie. I don’t think he even had time to stop and eat.

“The children really want to see the last episode of “The Green Archer.’”

That’s all it took. ASK. That’s all it took.

They have no wine.
PS. The Green Archer saved the beautiful maiden! He stood at the top of a winding staircase and far below, in the dungeon, he saw the maiden lying on the floor, bound, hand and feet. Beside her a stick of dynamite with a burning and sizzling fuse attached.

He fit an arrow to his bow, took aim, and the arrow zipped down the winding staircase and cut off the fuse just a couple of inches from the stick of dynamite. She was saved! And we children saw it because our mother said to our father:

“The children really want to see the last episode of “The Green Archer.””

That’s all it took.

They have no wine. That’s all it took.

Rev. Gerald Scherer, a great discovery in our archives. An important document that will live on due to the preservation efforts of our diocesan archives.
Support HB 1055 – The South Dakota Catholic Conference supports the passage of House Bill 1055, also known as Simon’s Law. HB 1055 originates with a Kansas infant, Simon Crosier, who was born with Trisomy 13, a congenital chromosomal condition. Simon’s doctor instituted a Do-Not-Resuscitate order without the knowledge or consent of Simon’s parents. Simon died in the hospital. HB 1055 would require a physician to obtain parental consent prior to the institution of such an order for a child in South Dakota. Under sound bioethics, parents must be informed of relevant medical information and are responsible for medical decisions concerning an infant. HB 1055 advanced through the House Health and Human Services committee on Jan. 31 by unanimous vote.

Support SB 71 – The South Dakota Catholic Conference supports the passage of Senate Bill 71, which would eliminate the death penalty as a possible criminal sentence for the seriously mentally ill. SB 71 failed Senate.

Support SB 72 – The South Dakota Catholic Conference supports the passage of Senate Bill 72, which would codify a standardized form abortion facilities must use in communicating relevant information to a mother prior to an abortion. Currently, abortion facilities use consent forms that undermine the spirit of the law. State law requires that mothers be informed that an abortion terminates the life of a whole, separate, unique human being, and that they have a pre-existing, legally-recognized relationship with their baby. SB 72 would strengthen the form in which mothers receive this information. SB 72 passed the Senate 26-5 on Jan. 30 and passed by House Health and Human Services committee.

Support SB 85 – The South Dakota Catholic Conference supports the passage of Senate Bill 85, which would direct the state Department of Health to release its annual abortion report on July 1. The law currently provides for abortion data to be published November 15. The earlier date would make the information available to citizens before summer fairs, thus promoting a wider distribution of up-to-date statistics on abortion in the state. SB 85 passed Senate, had first reading in House.

Support HB 1225 – The South Dakota Catholic Conference supports the passage of House Bill 1225. Like Senate Bill 49, which was voted down in the Senate Education committee on Jan. 24, HB 1225 would void the South Dakota High School Activities Association “transgender procedure” of 2015, which permits youth to compete on athletic teams other than the one in accord with the child’s sex. HB 1225 would align state law with Natural Law, upholding and respecting the nature of God’s creation. Men and women are created by God with equal dignity. Men and women also have fixed differences, not conditioned on one’s inner experience, that must be respected. Our civil laws must reflect this truth. In the name of a more “just society,” the complementarity of men and women has been called into question as a God-given reality. However, justice is inseparable from fundamental truths. All persons, and especially the young, ought to be guided to accept their humanity, whether male or female, as made in the image and likeness of God. The bishops of South Dakota make clear, as they have in the past, that they and their diocesan and parish staffs wish to be pastorally present to anyone who might be experiencing gender dysphoria. They recognize the call to do so while also being present to all other youth in their formative years who participate in sports and other activities. HB 1225 scheduled for hearing in House Health and Human Services Committee.

Support HB 1193. A bill to criminalize threatening a pregnant mother with murder, assault, or kidnapping in order to force an abortion. HB 1193 would codify greater protections for mothers and would increase legal protections for children in the womb. HB 1193, amended, passed House Judiciary Committee.

For more information contact Executive Director Christopher Motz, South Dakota Catholic Conference cmotz@sdcatholicconference.org or see http://www.sd catholicconference.org.

(Status as of press time is in blue.)

Want to share an article with a friend?
After the West River Catholic is mailed out to parishioners in the Diocese of Rapid City it is posted online at rapidcitydiocese.org — just click the front page icon.
A few things to know about Lent

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Ash Wednesday is March 6 this year. Here are some things to know about Ash Wednesday and the kickoff to Lent:

In the Table of Liturgical Days, which ranks the different liturgical celebrations and seasons, Ash Wednesday ties for second in ranking — along with Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, and a few others. But Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, though it is a day of prayer, abstinence, fasting and repentance.

Top ranked in the table are the Paschal Triduum — the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil — along with Easter Sunday. Good Friday isn’t a holy day of obligation either, but Catholics are encouraged to attend church for a liturgy commemorating Christ’s crucifixion and death.

Ash Wednesday begins the liturgical season of Lent. There are hymns that speak to the length of the season — one of them is “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days” — but the span between March 6 and Easter Sunday, which is April 21, is 46 days. So what gives?

“It might be more accurate to say that there is the ‘40-day fast within Lent,’” said Father Randy Stice, associate director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Divine Worship.

“Historically, Lent has varied from a week to three weeks to the present configuration of 46 days,” Father Stice said in an email to Catholic News Service. “The 40-day fast, however, has been more stable. The Sundays of Lent are certainly part of the time of Lent, but they are not prescribed days of fast and abstinence.” There are six Sundays in Lent, including Passion Sunday.

The ashes used for Ash Wednesday are made from the burned and blessed palms of the previous year’s Palm Sunday.

“The palms are burned in a metal vessel and then broken down into a powder. I believe ashes can also be purchased from Catholic supply companies,” Father Stice said.

“As far as I know, palms from the previous year are always dry enough,” he added. “Parishes normally ask parishioners to bring their palms shortly before Ash Wednesday, so there is no need to store them. People usually like to keep the blessed palm as long as possible.”

Almost half of adult Catholics, 45 percent, typically receive ashes at Ash Wednesday services, according to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University.

You might not have noticed, but the use of the word “Alleluia” is verboten during Lent. What is known as the “Alleluia verse” preceding the Gospel becomes known during Lent as “the verse before the Gospel,” with a variety of possible phrases to be used — none of which include an alleluia.

“The alleluia was known for its melodic richness and in the early church it was considered to ornament the liturgy in a special way,” Father Stice said, adding it was banned from Lenten Masses in the fifth or sixth century.

Ash Wednesday also is a day of abstinence and fasting; Good Friday is another. Abstinence means refraining from eating meat; fish is OK. Fasting means reducing one’s intake of food, like eating two small meals that together would not equal one full meal.

Lent begins Ash Wednesday, March 6

Group Reconciliation Services March 6-21

Faith, St. Joseph, Monday, March 18 – 6:30 p.m.
Gregory, St. Joseph, Thursday, March 14 – 6:30 p.m.
Hot Springs, St. Anthony of Padua, Thursday, March 14 – 6:30 p.m.
Rapid City, Blessed Sacrament, Mercy Night, Monday, March 18, — 4-7 p.m.
Rapid City, Cathedral, Mercy Night, Tuesday, March 12, — 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Spearfish, St. Joseph, Tuesday, March 12 – 7:30 p.m.
Winner, Immaculate Conception, Monday, March 18 – 6:30 p.m.

Group Reconciliation Services after March 21 will be in the March issue.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of both fasting and abstinence. On these two days only one full meatless meal is allowed. Two other meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken. Eating between meals is not permitted on these two days, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices, are allowed. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. Those who are over 18 years of age and under 60 years of age are bound to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. All Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence. Everyone 14 years of age or older are bound to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent.
Obituary
Deacon Marlon Leneaugh, Sr., 61
Diocesan Director of Native Ministries

Deacon Marlon Leneaugh, Sr., Wambli Hupahu, age 61, passed away peacefully on Jan. 30, at his home in Rapid City with his wife and son by his side.

He was born July 4, 1957, in Rosebud, to Frances Audiss. As an infant, Marlon was adopted and raised by Jess and Margaret Leneaugh. Marlon was an enrolled member of the Sicangu Lakota nation and was born and raised in Mission.

He received his GED and later graduated magna cum laude from the University of South Dakota with a Bachelor of Science in Education. He married Rhonda (Bordeaux) Leneaugh on June 24, 1977, in Pierre, and they later had their marriage blessed in the Catholic Church on Dec. 22, 1980.

The majority of Marlon's career was focused on service that benefited the Native American community. He began his career as a missionary at Sinte Gleska University and most recently was employed by the Catholic Diocese of Rapid City, as the Director of Native Ministries.

Marlon's most accomplished life's work was his calling to become a deacon. He celebrated his 25th anniversary on Dec. 5, 2018. Marlon was known for being a faith-driven, kind, and generous servant of the Lord with the ability to connect his Native American culture with the Catholic faith. Marlon had an uncanny ability to reach people in a deep and positive way.

Marlon will be remembered for his un-boundless love of family, his unwavering faith, and his belief in that it is never too late for people to change.

He is survived by his wife, Rhonda; children, Blaise Reagle (Corey), Travis “Sonny” Reagle, Jace Goodstar, Jessi Leneaugh, and Marlon “Buddy” Leneaugh, Jr., mother, Frances (Thin Elk) Audiss, brothers, Robert Munk, Timothy Audiss, Sr., Jeffery Audiss, sisters, Rev. Cheryl (Tito) Arguello, Robin Nuku, Christina (Larry) Shorb, Bridget (Wade) Shorb, Paulette Audiss, and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and grandchildren.

He was proceeded in death by his parents, Jess and Margaret Leneaugh, Irving Audiss, Sr., brother, Irving Audiss, Jr., uncles, aunts, and cousins.

In Rapid City, a wake service was held Feb. 5 at the Mother Butler Center.

Mass of Christian Burial was held Wednesday, Feb. 6 at St. Isaac Jogues, Bishop Robert D. Gruss, presiding, Fr. Ed Witt, SJ, homilist.

Cremation took place following the Mass. Deacon Marlon's ashes will be taken to Mission.

DON. MARLON LENEAUGH, SR.

George Weigel 2019 Palm Sunday Brunch
Keynote Speaker on April 14

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George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, is a Catholic theologian and one of America’s leading public intellectuals. He holds EPPC’s William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies.


George Weigel is the author of more than twenty other books, including “The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics Without God” (2005).

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The Catholic Parish of St. Ignatius, White River, had its beginnings in 1892 when Fr. Florentine Digmann, SJ, first mentions in his diary about going to the White River area because 30 Lakota from the Two Kettles band requested baptism. In 1897, the government gave forty acres of land on the White River for the purpose of erecting a church. In 1898, Mother Katharine Drexel made a substantial donation for St. Ignatius Chapel. This was the beginning of the White River community. In 1910, a church was built on tribal land, which was part of the Rosebud Reservation at the time. In 1921, the parish church building was moved from the hill to the west, down to the river bottom. Grothe Hall was then built next to the church. In 1961, the church and hall were moved to the present site just west of Highway 83. Jesuit priests from St. Francis Mission on Rosebud Reservation currently serve both St. Ignatius Parish and Sacred Heart Parish in White River.

At the turn of the new millennium, however, St. Ignatius Parish had only 12 registered families. Reduced availability of Jesuit priests for ministry in the Diocese of Rapid City as well as diminishing numbers of active parishioners prompted the pastors and parishioners of St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart Parishes in White River to join together in forming a cooperative plan for ministry to Catholics in this small reservation community. While St. Ignatius Church remained open for special celebrations and funerals for a time, there have not been regular Sunday Masses at St. Ignatius Church for over 20 years. More recently the building has been used by trespassers as an illicit gathering place, raising concerns about security and liability.

At the same time, a local charitable organization, Tree of Life, has come forward with a proposal to use the building as a soup kitchen and thrift center, which would include a space for prayer. This more fitting use of the property would also relieve St. Francis Mission of the costs for maintaining the building and property which were no longer being used for church activities.

Therefore, having ascertained the existence of the above-mentioned grave reasons foreseen by can. 1222 §2:

Having consulted the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Rapid City, which met on December 14, 2018, and at which date it determined that St. Ignatius Parish should be canonically closed, and the church property disposed of according to the laws of the Church;

And having ascertained that in no way will the good of souls be harmed by this action; I, the undersigned, Bishop of Rapid City, in virtue of my pastoral office and in conformity with canon 1222 §2 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, hereby relegate St. Ignatius Church; canonically closed, and the church property disposed of according to the laws of the Church.

Given at Rapid City, South Dakota, on this 30th day of January 2019.

Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Rapid City

Margaret S. Simonson
Chancellor
Hill City parish hosts pastoral musicians

On January 26, the Rapid City Chapter of National Pastoral Musicians gathered in Hill City where St. Rose of Lima Parish hosted the chapter’s Winter meeting.

After a welcome from Julie Gray and an opening prayer led by St. John the Baptist Parish musicians, Dr. Cindy Howell informed the attendees about “Leadership in Music Ministry.”

Next was Tammy Schnittgrund’s segment on “Psalms for Lent and the Triduum.” Along with useful Psalm ideas, she led the group in singing some of the Lent and Triduum psalm selections.

In the afternoon, the members heard from Jeanine Gerlach regarding her experiences and lessons learned in music ministry. This presentation is called “Sage on Stage,” and its point is to feature a seasoned, respected music minister.

A panel discussion on “Goal Setting and How It Helps Us Get Things Done” was the topic of the last portion of the day’s program. The panelists for this discussion were Dr. Cindy Howell, Greg Josten and Jackie Schnittgrund with Bonnie Josten moderating the discussion. Attendees were given a question and answer opportunity and augmenting handouts on the topic.

The day ended with a four directions Lakota chant by St. Isaac Jogues Parish music minister George Ceremuga. He then led the group in a short meditation before NPM members parted company.

The NPM Rapid City Chapter’s Spring Meeting will be on Saturday, April 6, at St. Michael Church, Hermosa. The topics for this program are: “How to Get the Most Out of Your Electronic Keyboard,” “Seasonal Planning,” and “Funeral Music and Worship Aids/Tips for Leading a Successful Funeral Choir.”

All Rapid City Diocese music ministers and clergy are welcome to attend quarterly NPM meetings at which education, prayer and fellowship are the focal points. For more information about the Rapid City Chapter of National Pastoral Musicians, go to the website www.npmrc.org or Facebook page www.facebook.com/NPMRapidCityChapter.
St. Joseph School in Lincoln, Nebraska is seeking a LAY PRINCIPAL for the 2019-2020 school year.

Candidate will be working closely with a School Sister of Christ the King Vice Principal.

Send cover letter, resume, and references to Sister Mary Cecilia via email:
Sr.Mary-Cecilia@cdolinc.net. Contact Sister Mary Cecilia with requests for additional information.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Ben and Jenny Black Bear attended the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering 2019. The Catholic Social Ministry Gathering is organized by the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development in collaboration with seven other United States Conference of Catholic Bishops departments and 15 national Catholic organizations.

This central gathering of Catholic social ministry leaders in the U.S. annually brings together hundreds of participants whose faith inspires them to respond to pressing current domestic and global challenges relating to poverty, war, injustice and the promotion of human life and dignity according to the USCCB. The theme for this year's conference was “Let Justice Flow, A Call to Restore and Reconcile.”

The Black Bears attended the breakout sessions, “Celebrating Diversity in our Faith Communities,” Panel Discussion with questions and answers on “Racism in the Church and Society; Answering the Call to Restore and Reconcile,” and many other sessions.

“It was a great opportunity for both Ben and me to attend. This was our second year there. We were proud to see Fr. Henry Sands, on one of the panels discussing racism in the church. He was able to bring awareness to the attendees about Native American people,” said Jenny. “We were asked to be the state captains for South Dakota. We went to the U.S. Capitol on February 5. There were hundreds of Catholic Leaders from throughout our country that were at the Capitol from the CSMG. Our Catholic faith called for us all to work for justice, promote healing and restoration, defend human life and dignity, and for the common good of society.

“Both Ben and I, and a group of five from Mount Marty College, Yankton, were able to talk to Senator John Thune and Senator Rounds staff member Mark Johnston about the importance of investing in the Social Safety Net, preserving funding to nutrition programs, affordable housing, and the environment. Ben was able to advocate for funding for our Tribal Veterans program and health care.”

While in Washington, they also toured the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.
Rapid City Catholic School Systems second grader Noah Cordes presents the bread to Bishop Robert Gruss, assisted by freshman Marian Duffy, at the All Systems Mass on Jan. 28. During his homily, Bishop Gruss reminded the students that, “Service is at the very heart of the Gospel. It’s at the heart of discipleship. When students take part in this important aspect ... they demonstrate the values that they gain through their Catholic education. They learn how to make the world a better place.” (WRC photo) (Above right) Middle school students (grades 6-8) at Our Lady Of Lourdes, Porcupine, took part in an essay contest during National Catholic Schools Week, reflecting on what it means to be a Red Cloud student. The second day of the essay contest, the theme was school. One eighth grader wrote, “being taught at a school that celebrates Lakota tradition helps us lead because it shows us how the teachings of our ancestors still play a big role in today's world because those traditions make up our culture, and they make us unique to other cultures that other people follow.” (Courtesy photo)

NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

MEN IN BLACK BASKETBALL

Bishop Robert Gruss prepares to take a free throw during the 10th annual Men in Black Basketball game at St. Thomas More High School. The game is a joint fundraiser for the Office of Vocations and the Mission Team at the school. The night also featured elementary students vs. faculty, a middle school vs. faculty basketball game, autograph session with the priests, and a dinner. (WRC photo)

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Marchers urged to stand strong, fight for life with ‘compassion, hope’

A group of students from across the diocese gathered for a group photo before the March for Life, January 18, in Washington, D.C. “The March for Life was such a powerful experience,” said St. Thomas More High School senior Spencer Lund. “I was able to witness the unity of so many people who were willing to get off the sidelines and stand up for what they believed in — the sanctity of human life. I gained courage and encouragement to continue the fight against abortion, and I am prouder than ever to be a part of the Pro-Life Generation.”

In a report from Catholic News Service, Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life, welcomed the crowd and thanked them for coming once again to march to end abortion, what she called “the greatest human rights abuse of our time.” She asked the crowd if they will keep marching to fight abortion, to march for the “poorest of the poor” and those who cannot march for themselves until we no longer need to march and abortion is unthinkable. She received a resounding “yes” to each question. (Photo courtesy Sarah Huebner)

RCCSS teacher to receive ‘Lead. Learn. Proclaim.’ Award

Carrie Wilson from St. Thomas More Middle School, Rapid City, will receive the 2019 Lead. Learn. Proclaim. Award from the National Catholic Educational Association for dedication and commitment to excellence in Catholic education.

Wilson was chosen from more than 150,000 teachers and administrators, as well as diocesan leaders and organizations dedicated to the nation’s Catholic schools. She will be recognized during the annual NCEA 2019 Convention & Expo in April. The annual award honors those whose ministry is Catholic school education and who have demonstrated a strong Catholic educational philosophy as well as exceptional efforts, dedication and achievements.

“Carrie desires that all students succeed academically in her class, never forgetting that they are unique individuals made in the image and likeness of God,” is just one comment from Ms. Wilson’s nomination packet.

NCEA’s Convention & Expo is the largest private-education association gathering in the world. The annual convention draws thousands of members and participants from Catholic school communities, including elementary and secondary school teachers and principals, religious education programs as well as diocesan offices, church pastors, superintendents and school board members.

Confirmation Preparation

Have a student preparing for confirmation? Want to learn more about the sacrament? Watch for this Q&A featuring questions for confirmands from Bishop Robert Gruss.

Which person of the Holy Trinity became man?

The second person, God the Son, became man without giving up his divine nature. His name was Jesus.

CCC 464: The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. During the first centuries, the Church had to defend and clarify this truth of faith against the heresies that falsified it.
Donation drive at SEEK2019 gets attendees ‘more invested in mission’

By Natalie Hoeffe

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — The unseasonably warm weather in Indianapolis Jan. 3-7 was good news for the 17,000 participants of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students’ SEEK2019 conference in Indianapolis.

It was also good news for the city’s homeless.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, nearly 1,700 people are sleeping in temporary shelters, transitional housing or on the streets on any given night in Indianapolis.

Those people had more good fortune than just mild temperatures during the FOCUS conference. They benefited from a donation drive.

SEEK attendees filled 30 50-gallon bags with winter hats, gloves, scarves and socks, as well as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant and other hygiene items—all to help the homeless and others in need in the city.

The items were donated to two ministries for distribution. One was the Garden Door Ministry of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, located next to the Indiana Convention Center where the conference was held. The other was Archdiocese of Indianapolis’ Catholic Charities, where Theresa Chamblee serves as director of social concerns.

“The SEEK participants blew me away with their overwhelming generosity of donations,” she said. “I just knew those attending the SEEK conference would be generous, but their generosity exceeded my expectations.”

Kathleen Tierney agreed. She is coordinator of the Garden Door Ministry, which feeds and clothes the homeless who live near the downtown parish.

“I’m overwhelmed by the (charity of the) SEEK participants,” she told The Criterion, Indianapolis’ archdiocesan newspaper. “But at the same time, it’s not surprising, because the people who are involved in the FOCUS movement, their faith is lived in service. We’re very grateful and very humbled by their generosity.”

This year marked the first time a service project was incorporated into the biannual SEEK conference. The drive was sponsored by FOCUS Greek, a branch of FOCUS particularly involving college students who are members of a fraternity or sorority.

FOCUS, started in 1998, seeks to form intentional disciples by sending missionaries to colleges and universities. There are currently FOCUS missionaries serving on more than 150 campuses around the world.

Reports from local
Newman Club Members

Levi Kessler, BHSU, junior majoring in Corporate Communications — SEEK really made me realize that it’s not as hard as we think it is to live out our faith on a college campus. SEEK made me open my eyes and showed me what to truly strive for.

If you ever get the chance to go to adoration with 17,000 people do it. I really had a change of heart there in that large room filled to the brim with people. As I was gazing upon the holy sacrament it felt like it was just Christ and me.

I am in Sigma Tau Gamma Fraternity and I got to meet a lot of my brothers from all over the nation who are also Catholic. Even more fun, we still are communicating.

Anna Pirouetek, BHSU freshman majoring in English Education — One of the things that I learned from the conference is that I am not alone in my faith. There are thousands of other college kids across the nation, and even the world, who are also alive within their faith.

At SEEK conferences there are amazing speakers, and to be surrounded by so many people on fire with their faith is awesome.

Helen Squyer, SDSM&T, junior majoring in Civil Engineering — I come from a parish that doesn’t have a strong program for the older kids — nothing where a group of students is going out and doing something with our faith.

One big takeaway that I got was that you don’t have to go away and join a religious order to live a life of faith. It helped me to find easy ways to move forward in my faith that don’t have to be life transforming. Finding your faith isn’t always a big transformation, it’s taking baby steps.

MOVIE REVIEW

Isn’t It Romantic (Warner Bros.)

(CNS) In this clever send-up of romantic comedies, an architect (Rebel Wilson) who’s a cynical critic of the genre gets a blow to the head and wakes up in a transformed version of her world, one filled with all the cliches of the films she disdains. One of her potential clients (Liam Hemsworth), a dashing billionaire who had previously ignored her now courts her assiduously, but she still feels drawn to her co-worker and best friend (Adam Devine), a down-to-earth guy who has long been her secret admirer. Though the laughs are plentiful, and the essential message about the need to appreciate yourself before you can be open to receiving love is valid enough, other material makes director Todd Strauss-Schulson’s upbeat satire strictly grown-up fare. Mature subject matter and humor, including numerous references to homosexuality and nonmarital sex, brief medical gore, a same-sex kiss, an irreverent joke, a few uses of profanity and a mild oath, at least one instance of rough language, occasional crude and crass talk, 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.

MOVIE CLASSIFICATIONS — 2018 OSCAR NOMINEES, BEST PICTURE

Black Panther ..................A-III
BlacKkKlansman .................A-III
Bohemian Rhapsody ............O
The Favourite ..................O
Green Book .....................A-III
A Star is born ...................A-III
Roma ..............................L
Vice ..............................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