



Pastoral Ministry Days, p. 5



School Choice p. 8

January 2025

Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota

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2025 Jubilee: Opening the Year of Hope

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

One of the most renowned and, in many ways, challenging saints of the last century is the Italian Franciscan mystic and stigmatist, St. Pius of Pietrelcina (1887-1968), commonly known as “Padre Pio.” Ascribed to this saint is this seemingly simple expression of wisdom for the Christian: **“Pray, hope and don’t worry.”** However simple it might sound, appearances can be deceptive! For with a few words, Padre Pio encapsulated the essence of the Christian life and has, as we begin a Jubilee Year of Hope, set the perfect course that we can all adopt in the next year — and beyond!

For first he asks us **to pray**. While saints and sinners alike have proposed the “how” of prayer, what they all have in common is directing our hearts, minds and lives away from ourselves and toward our God, a God who desires communion with us. With the focus on our God, who is all sufficient, our insufficient selves can find deliverance from the self-focus that often leaves us hope-less. Hence, prayer is the key to **hope**, the second movement that St. Pius of Pietrelcina describes. Furthermore, when we are filled with hope, the result will be the vanquishing of worry. For authentic, divine hope forces out worry with a well-founded confidence that we are in communion — from now to eternity — with a God who has us squarely in His hands.

Pope Francis, in his Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee Year 2025 entitled *Spes Non Confundit* (“Hope Does Not Disappoint”), begins his reflection by quoting from what some might call the “Christian Charter of Hope,” the 5th chapter of St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans. Therein, St. Paul lays out his sublime analysis of the virtue of hope, saying, “Since we are justified



Bishop Scott Bullock opens the Year of Hope, Dec. 29, 2024, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City. Serving Mass with the bishop are Deacon Rich Olsen, Pontifical MC Max Daniel and Seminarian Josiah Hanson. (WRC photo by Jacques Daniel)

through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing in the glory of God ... Hope does not disappoint, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom 5:1-2.5). Notice that faith is the precursor to hope (“Since we are justified by faith...”), which produces the peace that comes from our hope in sharing the glory of God. St. Paul continues by reminding us that hope arises when God’s love is

poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the end, both saints travel the same path. St. Pius prescribes this movement: prayer→hope→freedom from worry. St. Paul’s path is essentially the same: faith→hope→peace in the Holy Spirit.

The preparation for hope: Prayer

The Catechism of the Catholic Church identifies prayer as the necessary preparation for our reception of the gift of hope (CCC 2657). Our Catholic faith identifies two general forms of the prayer that is the *sine qua non* for hope: public prayer and private prayer. Public prayer includes that for-

mal prayer of our Church that we would also call “liturgy.” From its Greek-language roots, this word is often translated literally, “the work of the people [of God].” While work can be at times a drudgery (cf. Gn 3:17-19), with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, it becomes a burden that is light (cf. Mt 11:28-30). Furthermore, it is a work with and for others. Not only is your completion of the work of liturgy through your attendance at weekly Mass (our most frequent work of liturgy) a path to your personal hope, but your faithful witness of your participation at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is a sign of hope to your sisters and brothers, including your bishop! As the new bishop of the Diocese of Rapid City, I have presided at Mass at many of our parishes. Some of the Masses were well-attended, while others were less so. While this is not an experience specific to western South Dakota, I have found across the course of my priesthood that we must not underestimate the encouragement we offer others when we attend Mass together with them. And — when you — and others — are missing from the community, it is a discouragement to others. I implore you: regularly come to the Eucharist — as a way to increase hope in yourself and, at the same time, be an encouragement to others!

In addition, we rely on our private (personal) prayer to build the foundation for hope through a daily turning from our insufficient selves to our all-sufficient God. I find a special source of hope comes when I begin the day in prayer, dedicating the day to the Lord and, at the same time, recalling that I need not be the “lord” of my day since there is Another who is Lord! In this, I am

Hope, Continued on p. 2

Hope, Continued from p. 1

daily restored in a hope that comes from my Savior! In this vein, allow me to make a special appeal for all to take recourse to the intercession of the saints and especially the Mother of our God! Once again, by inviting these friends of Christ into my prayer, I can easily transcend my meager individual resources and rely upon the merits and intercession of the great company of saints. As I reminded us at the Evening Prayer the evening before my ordination last September, **the surest way to Christ is through the Mother of God!** I invite you to embrace the prayer that has been a power for generations, the Rosary. Each time we call on “Holy Mary, Mother of God” she opens us to her certain and powerful intercession — and the sure and certain hope that comes from her maternal care.

The gift of hope is poured into our hearts — a theological virtue

While indeed hope is a gift God pours into our hearts, at the same time our tradition speaks of hope — together with faith and love — as a theological virtue. A virtue is an acquired habit, acquired through practice that, over time, becomes ingrained, a second nature. As a theological virtue (as contrasted to a human virtue), this habit is “infused by God into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life.” (CCC 1813). As such, we ought to regularly both prayerfully ask for the virtue of hope and then, once received, practice it, so that it might take root in our souls. The resulting fruits of the theological virtue of hope are freedom from worry and, as Pope Francis highlights, patience.

Regarding the practice of the virtue of hope, Pope Francis, in his Bull *Spei Non Confundit* (SNC), describes what he calls “signs of hope” — actions that both hone the virtue in each individual believer and, at the same time, witness to the hope that we find in Christ alone. Pope Francis then invites us to increase this hope through actions that show any of the following: a desire for peace (SNC #8); a renewed reverence for life (SNC #9); and a concern for prisoners (SNC #10), the sick (SNC #11), the young (SNC #12), the migrant (SNC #13), the elderly (SNC #14), and the poor (SNC #15). As this Jubilee Year of Hope is meant for the increase of hope in an often hope-starved world, I charge the people of

our diocese to take on a commitment during this year to manifest one of these signs of hope as your concrete observance of this Jubilee Year of Hope.

One final distinction seems necessary as we, the people of the Diocese of Rapid City, join the Universal Church in an observance of a Jubilee Year of Hope. For us Christians, hope has an understanding distinct from its more common sense. Recently, I was in discussion with a young man who, regarding a complicated aspect of our faith, posed this question to me: “Do you know that to be true, or do you just hope it is true?” My reply: “yes!” In other words, for the Christian, our hope in Christ, and because it is in Christ, is sure and certain. On his authority, his promises for which we hope, though yet not fully realized, are sure and certain — and so we know that his promises, for which we hope, are also true! So, when we speak of “hope,” we speak of a truth that is sure and certain — because they are promises of Christ.

A peace the world cannot give

I began this letter by citing the example of one of our saints, St. Pius of Pietrelcina, who advised us along this path: Pray, hope, and don't worry. Another name for freedom from worry is peace. As evidence of this peace, founded in prayer and the fruit of the theological virtue of hope, let me conclude by posing another role model of hope, a native son of our Diocese, Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk (1865-1950). This brother in Christ knew profound suffering in his life. Along the course of his extraordinary life as a Lakota, he was present at the Battle of Little Big Horn, the Wounded Knee Massacre, and other indignities that were visited upon his people. And yet — he remained hopeful. How did he do it? Clearly, he had been given the divine virtue of hope. In writing to his sisters and brothers in 1917 on the Rosebud Reservation, he expressed his confident hope in God when he said, “While we're still living on earth, we should be thankful to God for putting us here on this earth. And God has promised us a place when we die, and I'm pretty sure he'll never forget us.” And in another letter to the same Rosebud community at Christmas, he concluded his message, “May you have hope.” For he discovered in faith what Christ Jesus himself has promised — a peace that only the Lord

can give: “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid*” (Jn 14:27).

Traditionally, a Jubilee Year is a year of deliverance for those who have been long enslaved by debt, sin or some other thing that oppresses us and keeps us from life. Pope Francis concludes his teaching on this Jubilee Year of Hope by directing us to the intercession of our Blessed Mother as a means of liberation. He writes, “In the travail of that sorrow [of the suffering and death of Jesus], offered in love, Mary became our Mother, the Mother of Hope. It

is not by chance that popular piety continues to invoke the Blessed Virgin as *Stella Maris* [Star of the Sea], a title that bespeaks the sure hope that, amid the tempests of this life, the Mother of God comes to our aid, sustains us and encourages us to persevere in hope and trust” (SNC #24). May the prayers of our Mother Mary, *Stella Maris*, deliver us from the tempests of life and lead us with confidence to the merciful heart of her Son and our Savior!

Given on December 29, 2024.

+*Most Rev. Scott E. Bullock*
Bishop of Rapid City

Jubilee Year Plenary Indulgence

What is a plenary indulgence? Our church teaches that God is all mercy. Yet, our sins have the potential to imperil our hope for a happy life in this world and our eternal life in the next. The ordinary means of being healed for eternal life is the Sacrament of Penance, when we confess our sins and receive absolution. Yet, the effects of our sin in this life remain, what our faith calls the “temporal effects” of our sin. The remedy for this harm in this world is prayer and penance. Drawing from the treasury of holiness in the Communion of Saints, the Church recommends a means of healing for the “temporal effects” of our sins, which it calls an “indulgence.” Because of the special nature of this Jubilee Year of Hope, our Holy Father has designated a “plenary indulgence” for this temporal healing, through which the faithful, by completion of recommended spiritual acts, obtain the mercy of healing of the temporal effects of all their sins. The same recommended actions can be applied to a deceased person, but not to another living person. (Each person can act for him or herself!) While plenary indulgences are often associated with a pilgrimage to a designated holy site in Rome, by my authority, I am permitted to designate a site in our diocese for such a pilgrimage.

Therefore, I decree, in communion with the directives of our Holy Father Pope Francis, that, besides the holy sites in Rome, the faithful of our Diocese of Rapid City may obtain a Jubilee Year Plenary Indulgence for themselves or a deceased person through a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Rapid City during the Jubilee Year, beginning December 29, 2024 and ending December 28, 2025. Pope Francis further specifies, that upon the occasion of the pilgrimage to the holy site, those seeking the Jubilee plenary indulgence ought to receive sacramental absolution through confession, and “for a suitable period of time, engage in Eucharistic adoration and meditation, concluding with the Our Father, the Profession of Faith in any legitimate form, and ... [offer prayers] to Mary, the Mother of God, so that in this Holy Year everyone ‘will come to know the closeness of Mary, the most affectionate of mothers, who never abandons her children’.”

The Jubilee Year of Hope is now upon us. Rise ... let us be on our way ... our pilgrim way to mercy and hope. *Surgite eamus!*

+*Most Rev. Scott E. Bullock, Bishop of Rapid City*

A Safe Environment for Children and Young People

The Catholic Diocese of Rapid City is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and young people. To report allegations of sexual abuse by church personnel, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Irene Lee. To ensure confidentiality in our outreach to victims, she can be contacted privately at 1-605-209-3418 (cell). Alleged victims are advised of their right to report alleged abuse to civil authorities.

In accordance with diocesan policy, all allegations of sexual misconduct involving children, young people, and vulnerable adults by priests, deacons, lay employees, or volunteers serving the Diocese of Rapid City will be investigated.

The diocesan sexual misconduct policy and the code of conduct are posted on the diocesan website at www.rapidcitydiocese.org.



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Bishop Calendar

January 22 — February 18, 2025

Subject to Change without notice

January 22, Wednesday

4 p.m. RCCSS Executive Committee

Meeting, Chancery

January 23, Thursday

10 a.m. College of Consultors Meeting,

Chancery

5:30 p.m. Mass, Prayer Vigil for Life,

Cathedral, view at rapidcitydiocese.org/live

January 25, Saturday

11:30 a.m. Mass with Refuel

Catechetical/Youth Ministry Conference,

Terra Sancta

3 p.m. Confessions, Cathedral

5:30 p.m. Mass, Cathedral

January 26, Sunday

8 a.m. Confirmation Meeting

9 a.m. Mass with Confirmation, St. Paul,

Belle Fourche

January 27, Monday

9 a.m. RCCSS National Catholic Schools

Week Mass, Cathedral

5 p.m. Men in Black Basketball Event,

St. Thomas More High School

January 28, Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Catholic Social Services Board

Meeting, Catholic Social Services

January 30, Thursday

8:30 a.m. Mass with Middle School,

Mahpiya Luta (Red Cloud Indian School),

Pine Ridge

9:30 a.m. Tour *Mahpiya Luta* (Red Cloud)

Campus, Pine Ridge

12:30 p.m. Tour Our Lady of Lourdes School,
Porcupine

January 31, Friday

5:30 p.m. Andrew Dinner, St. John Ft. Pierre

February 1, Saturday

5 p.m. Mass, Pastoral Visit, St. Francis of

Assisi, Sturgis

February 2, Sunday

10:30 a.m. Mass, Pastoral Visit, St. Joseph,

Spearfish

5 p.m. Serve Meal, Cornerstone Rescue

Mission, Rapid City

February 4, Tuesday

8:30 a.m. Staff Mass, Chancery

11:30 a.m. Western Catholic Foundation

Board Meeting, Chancery

February 9, Sunday

10 a.m. Confirmation Meeting,

11 a.m. Confirmation Mass, St. John,

New Underwood

February 15, Saturday

5 p.m. Mass, Pastoral Visit, St. Anthony

Church, Buffalo

February 16, Sunday

8 a.m. Mass, St. Isidore, Ralph

10 a.m. Confirmation Meeting, 11 a.m.

Confirmation Mass, Blessed Sacrament,
Bison

February 17, Monday

Chancery Closed for Presidents' Day

February 18, Tuesday

8:15 a.m. Diocesan Investment Committee

Meeting, Chancery

BEGIN AGAIN

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Grant checks totaling a little over \$1.14 million dollars will be issued in July 2025 to the following parishes and organizations: All Saints Parish, Eagle Butte ● Black Hills State University Newman Ctr., Spearfish ● Casa Maria Retirement Center, Piedmont ● Catholic Social Services, Rapid City ● Church Response, Rapid City ● Cornerstone Rescue Mission, Rapid City ● Diocesan Office of Faith Formation ● Diocesan Office of Vocations ● Diocese of Rapid City ● National Pastoral Musicians, Rapid City ● Presho Cemetery and Church Landscaping ● Rapid City Catholic School System ● Rapid City Newman Center ● Real Presence Radio, Rapid City ● Sioux Spiritual Center, Howes ● St. Anthony Church, Buffalo ● St. Anthony Parish, Fairfax ● St. Francis Fund, Diocese of Rapid City ● St. Francis Mission, St. Francis ● St. Joseph Church, Spearfish ● St. Michael's Church, Hermosa ● St. Vincent de Paul Society OLPH, Rapid City and ● Standing Rock Reservation Ministry, McLaughlin.



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Heritage Society Masses

Holy Mass is offered each month of the year for deceased and living Foundation "planned giving" donors. You can become a member of the Catholic Heritage Society by making a deferred gift to the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation. Contact Jim at jkinyon@wsdcf.org or 605-721-6843.

Parish	City	Month	Date	Time	Pastor
Saint Therese	Rapid City	Jan	Fri 24	7:30 a.m.	Rev. Prendiville
ICC	Winner	Feb	Wed 5	9:30 a.m.	Rev. Pekron
Newman Center	Spearfish	Mar	Tue 4	8:30 a.m.	Rev. Achbach



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Pastoral Ministry Days 'Restored: Making All Things New'

FROM THE OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

Every day we witness the growing struggle of individuals battling mental health issues like depression, anxiety, trauma, and addiction. It's a reality that touches every corner of our lives — whether at home, in the workplace, within our schools, or in our communities.

Did you know that 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. lives with a mental illness, and 1 in 8 is currently prescribed an antidepressant? Moreover, a staggering 50% of Americans have faced an untreated mental illness at some point in their lives. These figures don't just impact people outside of a life of faith but also affect the individuals we serve in our parishes and can even affect those serving in some leadership role. You may recall hearing that Bishop James Conley from the Lincoln Diocese took a leave of absence for a year to address his mental health. These realities highlight the urgency of our conversation about mental health and the importance of clergy, lay leaders, teachers, and parents being aware of the growing resources available to us from a Catholic perspective.

Hosted by the Office of Faith Forma-



DR. GREG BOTTARO

tion, the annual Pastoral Ministry Days conference will be held at Terra Sancta Retreat Center, March 9-11. The conference is open to all but targeted to those involved in parish ministry. The topic for this year's conference is, "Restored: Making All Things New," and will feature presentations from Dr. Greg Bottaro, a Catholic psychologist and the founder and Executive Director of the CatholicPsych Institute. The two-day conference will provide tools for church

ministers seeking renewal in their own mental and spiritual well-being, equipping them to serve others more effectively from a place of wholeness, strength, and grace.

Dr. Greg's institute aims to "provide services and resources based on the integration of faithful Catholic anthropology with sound psychological science to help people become who God created them to be." The approach taken by the institute combines faith and psychology, emphasizing personalized mentorship to transform an individual's daily challenges.

Bottaro's personal story has shaped his approach to psychology. The psychologist grew up in a nominally Catholic family. The divorce of his parents during his teenage years deeply affected him. He went off to college feeling "completely unbalanced." At Boston College, Bottaro studied St. John Paul II's "Love and Responsibility" under renowned philosopher, Dr. Peter Kreeft. The

book transformed his understanding of love, marriage and human happiness and compelled him to want to give his life away in service to others. Subsequently, Dr. Bottaro entered religious life as a Franciscan friar with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in New York, where he began his studies in psychology. His vocational discernment eventually led him away from religious life to pursue marriage and his doctorate in psychology. He met and married his wife Barbra and is now the father of seven.

PMD 2025 promises to offer a rejuvenating experience for ministers that will hopefully reach beyond simply those participating: to their families, parishes, and anyone else they serve. We hope you'll consider joining us for this unique opportunity. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/pmd25/>.

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From MCMXXIV to MMXXV ... A Year of History and Hope!

By KATHY CORDES
DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST

We begin 2025 as pilgrims of the Year of Hope, which means another collection of materials for the archives. Photos, texts, and news coverage will all end up in the archives to document how we celebrated this Jubilee Year. As Pope Francis recently said in his general audience, "If the Church is a boat, the Holy Spirit is the sail that propels it and lets it advance on the sea of history, today as in the past!" (General Audience, 12/11/24)

An article titled "Vatican opens archives on Pope Pius XII," published in 2020, spoke at length about just one of their many anthologies and how the archival collections can take decades to process.

Historical details such as date, timeline, and location can vary. People or descriptions of photos can also take a great amount of time to identify. Once I can identify these details and context, it takes a considerable amount of time to organize them and keep their providence intact. Then the items are added to an inventory system in a multi-step process. This inventory helps make connections between them — how it was originally used, original ownership, and time periods to help with future research.

Another reason it can take so long to archive artifacts is that records can change daily. Updating records can require research to find details omitted in parish files. Labels created more than two decades ago are discolored and difficult or

even impossible to read. I suspect they turned rust colored during our battle with humidity, particularly during hot summer days.

In the Diocese of Rapid City, one of the most time-consuming archival projects involves certifying relics. I have to match and authenticate the relic with the correct certificate issued to indicate its authenticity. This has been a decade-long project for me, but I have almost finished it!

I hope to share some of these collections in 2025. Change is history in the making! Keep an eye on the Diocese of Rapid City's Facebook and Instagram accounts to follow our collections during this Year of Hope.



This St. John Vianney relic is stored in the archives. Fr Mark McCormick uses this reliquary to pray for an increase in vocations. (Archive photo)



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To kick off the new year the Newman Centers from Black Hills State University and South Dakota School of Mines and Technology sent forty-five plus students and FOCUS missionaries to the annual SEEK Conference, which was held in two locations this year: Salt Lake City and Washington DC. We went to SEEK in Salt Lake City.

In the two locations SEEK 2025 drew more than 21,000 participants, young adults, families, hundreds of religious and priests, with 46 bishops in attendance. At SEEK there are so many opportunities for our college students to deepen and learn more about their Catholic faith.

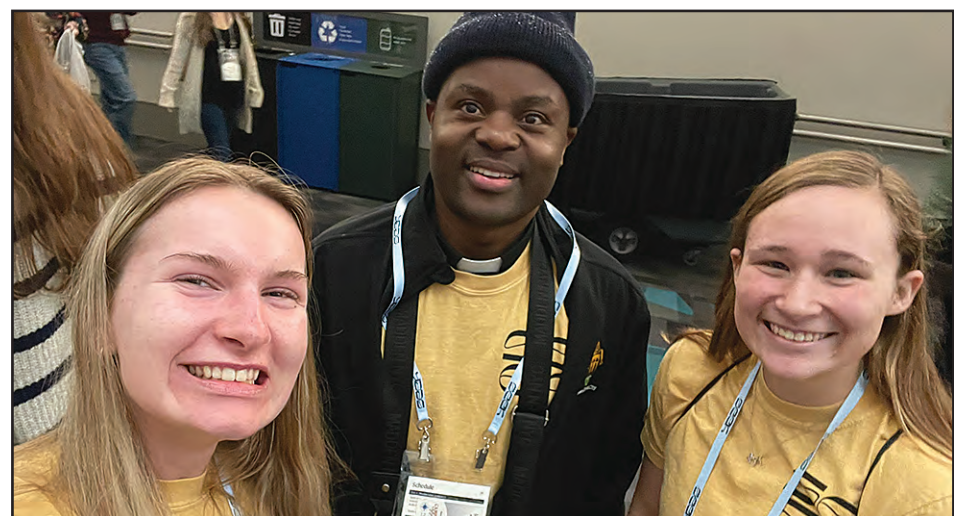
I visited with one young adult at SEEK, who was not raised religious at all. SEEK was his first experience of the Catholic faith. Can you imagine his first Mass was with over 17,000 worshippers in Salt Lake City, praising the Lord in the



Sydney Birkel, BHSU Newman Center, Spearfish, tries her hand at a giant game of Jenga. (Courtesy photos)

Word and in the Eucharist, in song and in communion, united as one in Christ? One of his comments was that he did not realize that the Catholic faith was so alive.

SEEK is not only for college students but also for parish leaders. The "Making Missionary Disciple Track" at SEEK is designed to equip parish leaders with the tools and knowledge to actively share their faith and make new disciples of Jesus Christ within their communities. It was amazing and powerful to see so many par-



Ava Elliott, Fr. Francis Nsubuga, and Scarlett Walsh from BHSU Newman Center, Spearfish, crowd in for a selfie.

ishes' teams from around the country, gathered around tables, sharing the Gospel with each other.

We began every morning with the celebration of the Eucharist, followed by Collegiate Men and Women talks. In the afternoon there were two impact sessions that one could attend. The evenings were taken up with keynote addresses by well known Catholic speakers such as Arthur Brook; Sr. Mary Grace, SV; Fr. Mike Schmitz; Msgr. James Shea; Sr. Marion James Heidland, SOLT; Jason Everett; Sr. Josephine Garrett, CSFN; and Dr. Edward Sri. These talks can even be viewed at www.seekreplay.com.

On Saturday morning Bishop Austin Vetter, from the Diocese of Helena, Montana, preached on John 1:35-42. In that passage the Gospel writer remembers that they were called by Jesus at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Bishop Vetter asked us to pray about our 4 o'clock moment, in which Jesus first enamored us. Like Andrew, who introduces and brings his brother Simon

to Jesus, "We have found the Messiah."

I asked those from S.D. Mines what their 4 o'clock moment was when Jesus aroused their own hearts to follow him. I was struck with these two responses in particular:

Laney Crook, who is a freshman at S.D. Mines from Houston, Texas — "It was an amazing and eye-opening experience. I did not realize how much God was missing in my life until SEEK. At adoration I sat on the ground, and I finally felt seen fully and loved fully. I felt at home. I was challenged by the amount of changes I need to make in order to become a better daughter of God."

Anthony Flores, who is the new Director of Development at S.D. Mines — "When I finished "Mere Christianity" by C.S. Lewis, it was the first time I said, "I'm a Christian!" And began my friendship with Jesus ... that has turned into a love story."

What is your 4 o'clock moment in which Jesus enamored you?

2025 Reading list:

Stand Firm, Be Strong
by Fr. Wade Menezes, CPM

Sister, Soldier, Surgeon
by Sister Deirdre Burne, M.D.

Martyrs of the Eucharist:
by Reverend J. Francis Sofie, OP

The Book of Prayer and Meditation
by Venerable Louis Granada OP

Devotions for Confessions
by Fr. Hubert McEvoy, SJ

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Education freedom on agenda for 2025 legislative session



Michael G. Pauley
Executive Director
S.D. Catholic Conference
sdccatholicconference.org

Parents who want more choices for educating their children have much at stake in the 2025 legislative session. Lawmakers are considering House Bill 1020, a measure that would usher in an “education savings account” or ESA program for South Dakota families.

Here’s how an ESA works: the state deposits a portion of taxpayer dollars allocated for education (about \$3,000 per student is proposed) into a parent-controlled education savings account, which could be used for specific educational expenses authorized by law, such as non-public school tuition, purchasing curricula for home

education, or fees for online classes.

This mechanism empowers parents to select an educational path that works best for the unique needs of their child. It also introduces a new model for how we pay for education in South Dakota: Money follows the child. First and foremost, we should fund students not systems. This empowers the customers — students and their families — to choose an educational pathway that works best for them, rather than settling for whatever a government-run monopoly decides to offer.

HB 1020 is strongly supported by the governor and by Secretary of Education Dr. Joe Graves. In a recent column for the Dakota Scout, Dr. Graves explained: “For a myriad of reasons, some parents view the default option, public school, as less than appealing. They want a different opportunity for their

child, and they should have options.”

The South Dakota Catholic Conference also supports passage of HB 1020, because its objective of giving parents more educational freedom aligns with Catholic social teaching. The Second Vatican Council taught that parents have the “primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children...” Because of this, the Fathers of the Council believed it was imperative that “public subsidies are paid out in such a way that parents are truly free to choose according to their conscience the schools they want for their children”

(*Gravissimum Educationis*, 20).

For too many South Dakota families, educational freedom is significantly limited by their income level, their zip code, or both. The proposed ESA program in HB 1020 moves us closer to the day when all families will have the freedom to

choose the learning option that best enables their children to succeed in life.

The benefits of adopting an ESA program are compelling. Extensive studies conducted in other states show that educational choice programs improve the academic performance of all students — including those in public schools. The reason for this is simple: competition promotes excellence. To quote again from Secretary of Education Dr. Joe Graves, “In every field of human endeavor, performance improves with greater levels of competition. In this way, ESAs will benefit public schools as well. Let’s unleash that powerful force for improvement on all schools.”

Your help is needed to advance this important policy. Please contact your legislators and urge them to support and cosponsor HB 1020. You can find their contact information at www.sdlegislature.gov. You can also learn more about HB 1020 by visiting www.sdccatholicconference.org.



We invite you to join us for

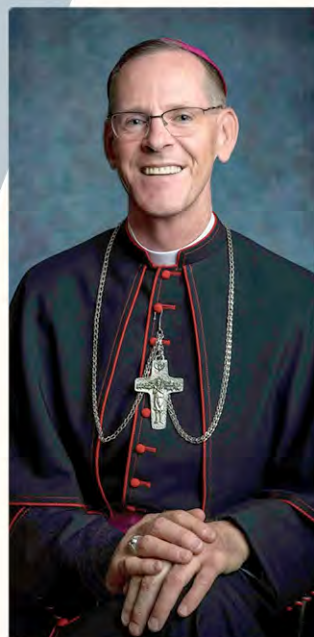
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A Vita Christi RETREAT

Filipino Simbang Gabi Celebrated

December 20 was the sixth night of the Filipino novena Masses celebrated at



the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City. The Advent tradition is a spiritual preparation for the coming of Our Savior. On this night the children re-enacted the Annunciation (**left**) with the Angel Gabriel portrayed by Eli Dairo. (**Top Right**) The host of heavenly angels.

(**Below right**) The *parol* (star) bearers are led by Kaitlyn Leabres and Russell Halvorson.

The principal celebrant was Fr. Jason Marco from the Diocese of Cheyenne. Fr. Ed Witt, pastor at St. Isaac Jogues Parish, Rapid City, was the concelebrant. Members of the Filipino community were joined by volunteers for the choir hymns. Following Mass a traditional Filipino dinner was served in St. Joseph Hall. See more photos on the diocesan website at rapidcitydiocese.org/simbang-gabi-2024/.

(WRC photos by Laurie Hallstrom)



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Thank you!

Staff and students at the diocesan Newman Centers would like to thank Bishop Scott Bullock, the priests of the diocese, and all those who participated in the first diocesan Newman Partnership Appeal this year. Young adults were blessed by your prayers and support.

Your generosity impacts the lives of college students throughout our diocese while they are attending college or technical schools

in Spearfish and Rapid City. Catholic Newman Centers are places where the sacraments are celebrated, the Catholic faith is lived, and the call to holiness is accepted, as students encounter Jesus and authentic Christian friendships are developed and shared.

Surveys have shown that the college years are the time when young adults are most likely to abandon faith. Newman Centers exist to ensure that is not the case but rather that our students grow in faith, hope and love, and learn to enter into service of the mission of the church.

Thank you for your prayers and support. God bless you.



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Visit our website

WWW.RAPIDCITYDIOCESE.ORG/TELEVISED-MASS

for a list of online Masses and resources for at home prayer and study

Check with your parish for in-person Mass times

SATURDAY – 4 P.M.

NBC 21.1

ConnectCenter1 21.2

SUNDAY – 7 A.M.

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SUNDAY – 10:30 A.M.

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**Come Celebrate with Us
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MONDAY, JANUARY 27

**ALL-SYSTEM MASS WITH BISHOP SCOTT BULLOCK
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9:00 AM AT THE CATHEDRAL ~ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**MEN IN BLACK BASKETBALL GAME NIGHT
ST. THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL**

DINNER 5-6:30 PM

SES GAME 5:30, MS GAME 6:15, PRIESTS VS. STM HS 7:00



Appearing more than ever in the image of God

St. Elizabeth Seton school's students from kindergarten through the 5th grade are surrounded by beauty. The grounds of Terra Sancta appear to be in the midst of the Black Hills forest while only being a short drive out of the heart of Rapid City. The halls are lined with large images of classic artwork that students can see as they move from classroom to classroom throughout the day. The school's art and music programs are inspired by staff who have a heart for drawing the students into all that is true, beautiful, and good. St. John Paul II noted, "Through his artistic creativity, man appears more than ever in the image of God." All of this was on display at this year's annual Christmas music concerts.

The kindergarten - 5th grade students at St. Elizabeth Seton school created nativity drawings, which were featured in the annual Christmas concerts and art show on December 11, 2024. The exhibit was on view in the vestibule of Holy Cross Chapel at Terra Sancta. Dr. Julie Tipton, the superintendent of Rapid City Catholic School System, asked the students to illustrate the

nativity, and their drawings were entered into a contest for the front and back covers of this year's RCCSS Christmas card. Dr. Tipton announced the winners, Freya Gaul a 4th grader for the front cover and Lorelei Christensen a 5th grader for the back cover at the school's Immaculate Conception Mass. The almost 300 art students who each created wonderful nativity drawings were inspired by both sacred and contemporary art, which their art teacher Meryl Gaeta displayed in the classroom.

Meryl created the art curriculum two years ago, inspired by St. John Paul II's Letter to Artists. In it he said, "Artists of the world, may your many different paths lead to that ocean of beauty where wonder becomes awe, exhilaration, unspeakable joy." They are encouraged by Meryl to use their imagination and creativity as she encourages them to see that all this is truly a gift from God.

Dee Dee Johnson, the music teacher at Seton Schools, has been working with music students for 32 years, guiding more than 1,000 students across every grade level



RAPID CITY — St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary art teacher Meryl Gaeta points to a nativity display outside the Holy Cross Chapel during the Christmas concert and art show. More photos from the event can be seen on the diocesan website.

(WRC photo by Jacques Daniel)

from preschool to college. At Seton, music classes are offered to all students. Throughout the year, students are moved through a variety of experiences, including learning about rhythm, playing instruments like drums, triangles, and shakers, learning to read rhythmic notation, playing mallet instruments, learning about melody, harmony, and reading pitches.

As Seton School strives to fulfill its mis-

sion of helping students "develop personal and academic excellence in the Catholic Tradition," the artistic formation in music and art take their place in helping to form the whole student "more than ever in the image of God." The students are currently illustrating this year's school theme, "Faith Can Move Mountains," inspired by Mt 17:20, and will be featured in the Spring Art Show in May.



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22-RC-03048 (12/22)

In Your Prayers February

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

Anniversaries: Feb. 1, 2013, Dcn. Gregory Sass and Dcn. James Scherr; Feb. 2, 2024, Fr. Robert Kinyon; Feb. 7, 1981, Dcn. Walt Wilson.

Birthdays: Feb. 3, Dcn. Fred Tully; Feb. 4, Dcn. Thomas Freece; Feb. 24, Fr. Joshua Lee; Feb. 27, Dcn. Gregory Sass.

Necrology: Feb. 2, 2022, Dcn. James Garnett; Feb. 3, 1996, Dcn. Victor Bull Bear; Feb. 4, 1978, Leo Feuerbach; Feb. 6, 1978, Charles Quinn; Feb. 10, 1893, Richard Maher, CSC; Feb. 11, 1972, Philip Clark, TOR; Feb. 11, 1978, Aloysius Grady; Feb. 13, 1905, John Toohey, CSC; Feb. 13, 1994, Leo O'Doherty; Feb. 14, 1903, Aloysius Bosch, SJ; Feb. 16, 1933, Henry Kelly; Feb. 16, 1980, William Diskin; Feb. 17, 2003, Dcn. Chester Murray; Feb. 17, 2024, Bishop Peter Muhich; Feb. 19, 1890, Charles Metzger, OP; Feb. 19, 1983, William Boat; Feb. 21, 1880, Bernard Mackin; Feb. 21, 1986, Dcn. Stephen Red Elk; Feb. 27, 1929, John Lynch.

Holy attention: reclaiming quiet in the new year

BY CHRISTINA CAPECCHI
TWENTY SOMETHING

If you're trying to write a book about quiet and you're a mom of four, you might need a few extensions on your deadline.

Such was the reality for writer Sarah Clarkson, 40, daughter of the acclaimed Christian author Sally Clarkson.

It all started — as did so many creative pursuits — during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sarah began “deep, convicted work” about quiet: why it’s threatened, why it’s needed, how to cultivate it. She sensed its ramifications were profound, and ultimately, a spiritual matter. She believed the topic warranted a book.

“Then I promptly entered three of the least quiet years of my life,” Sarah said. Two babies, three moves, numerous health issues and family deaths.

She kept trying to resume her book, hoping another extension would ignite that “deadline fire,” but she was simply too overwhelmed.

Finally, Sarah reached an impasse. Her family had just moved to Oxford, England, where her husband would be shepherd of two little Anglican churches. They were settling into an old brick vicarage. She knew her options: isolate herself for six weeks to complete the book (and neglect her family) or ask for one more extension.

They were vacationing in Devon, a historic county in England’s Southwest Peninsula. Sarah retreated to the coast. Gazing at the water, praying furiously, her heart cried out with the gulls overhead. She ended up in a café, writing an impassioned letter to her publisher from Baker Books requesting another year.

Rebekah said yes — “a decision,” Sarah later wrote, “that brought the gift of quiet to my own life in a healing way.” In total, her deadline was pushed back 18 months, which allowed a very different (and better) book to be written.

“Reclaiming Quiet: Cultivating a Life of Holy Attention” is now in bookstores and book clubs, homes and hands across the globe. And now Sarah gets to hear from readers who are also thirsting for more quiet in a noisy world.

“I’m delighted by the enthusiasm and have a growing sense of the communal nature of this quest, the urgency of it for all of



Christian writer Sarah Clarkson has a new book on the value of quiet time. (Courtesy photo)

us, the way we can help each other to grit and courage by articulating our own work in this realm,” Sarah said. Specifically, the book acknowledges the “clutches” of technology. She reflects on her first smartphone, which “slipped into spaces that used to be sacred” and stole moments of solitude.

The quiet, Sarah realized, was vital for creativity and imagination, for clarity and attention, for rest and for faith.

“That quiet,” she writes. “It was a living, benevolent thing, and in its presence, I felt myself waken, felt my skin and senses sharpen, felt something like grief stir in the deep places of my heart, a yearning that had not awakened in me for many days. I hungered for quiet, not just the cessation of noise but that deep inward hush in which the kindness of God is the light burning at the back of our eyes so that we look upon the world in the brightness of his companionship.”

As we set new habits for 2025, seek quiet. “If there is a season that summons us to attend, it’s winter in her bare-souled grace,” Sarah said. “I am learning to embrace the slowness, the impulse to draw inward, to rest, to shelter. And snow, ah! Anytime we have even a drop, I’m outside with the children to soak it in.”

In silence, Sarah writes, we can listen to Jesus. “Faith rests not primarily on gritted will or savvy choice but on response, on a honed and holy capacity to hear.”

What is he asking of you?

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

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January 2025

West River Catholic

WRC 12



2024 was a news-filled year in the Diocese of Rapid City. The Annual Voluntary Subscription Drive helps us keep everyone updated on events and inspiring stories of faith from around the diocese.

Since May 1973, the *West River Catholic* has been sent to every registered household in the Diocese of Rapid City, and we will continue to do so. However, to assist with production costs, a voluntary subscription drive is held each year. The suggested donation is \$35, but all gifts are welcome.

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