

WEST RIVER *Catholic*

Informing Catholics in Western South Dakota since May 1973



The Roman Adventure, p. 4



Spiritual Perfectionism, p. 5

December 2025

Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota

Volume 53 Number 8 www.rapidcitydiocese.org

Merry Christmas to you and your loved ones!

My Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Rapid City: The extraordinary image of the Nativity by the Spanish/Greek artist known as “El Greco” clearly emphasizes Christ as the “light of the world” (Jn 8:12), bringing hope into darkness! With the dark background (chosen to emphasize the Light of Christ emanating from Christ and reflected vividly in the face of Mary — in her perfect holiness — and, to a lesser degree, in the face of St. Joseph), it’s easy to miss two more characters surrounding the Holy Family: the ox and the ass. At the bottom of the image, the ox (symbol of obedience — like the yoked farm animal) strains his neck, making every effort to direct his attention to Jesus and take in the “Word made Flesh,” while the ass on the left remains in relative darkness, due to his characteristic stubbornness.

Christ offers himself to us — but we must choose him back! The obedience of faith is a habit that we can practice, with effort, and get better at, especially when assisted and empowered by God’s grace, powerfully offered at each and every Mass. I encourage you and your families to come to the “Word made Flesh” at Christmas Mass and receive the strength that strengthens faith — Jesus Himself! When you do so, I am certain that you will know the rich blessings of the Christmas season! I look forward to celebrating Masses at Christmas, during which you can be assured that I will be praying for each and every soul in our diocese. Come, Lord Jesus ... and help us come to You, the Light of the World, with expectant faith!

**Sincerely in Christ,
Scott E. Bullock, JCL
Bishop of Rapid City**

*El Greco, La Natividad
(1603-1605)*

Let great theologians guide your prayers



Bishop Scott Bullock
Diocese of
Rapid City
Surgite Eamus
“Rise, let us be
on our way.”

“Pray without ceasing,” (1 Thes 5:17). One of the shortest verses in the New Testament is perhaps one of the most complex and challenging! Here, St. Paul commands us to live always and in all we do with a prayerful spirit and in a prayerful context. How?

Recently, our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV revealed a favorite teacher of prayer for him: Brother Lawrence, in his work “The Practice of the Presence of God.” Brother Lawrence was a 17th Century French Carmelite monk, whose masterwork of spirituality, though brief, has taught followers of Jesus to remain more constantly aware of the presence of God through a life of prayer. This rather brief work can change your life, as it did for our Holy Father.

To the recommendation of Pope Leo, I would like to suggest two other works that changed my life and taught me about communion with Christ that is prayer. The first very much addresses obstacles to prayer and then invites us into prayer; the second is the masterwork of instructing us to go deeper into prayer — written by one of our authoritative “doctors” of the Church.

The first book on prayer that changed my life (and still does!), by an unknown author, is “**The Cloud of Unknowing**.” Written in the last part of the 14th century in Middle English, the underlying message of this work suggests that the way to know God is to abandon consideration of God’s particular activities and attributes, and be courageous enough to surrender one’s mind and ego to the realm of “unknowing,” at which point one may begin to be granted a glimpse of the nature of God. While sounding quite lofty,



A Doctor of the Church, St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1587) wrote the “The Interior Castle.” The work was inspired by her vision of the soul as a diamond in the shape of a castle containing seven mansions, which she interpreted as the journey of faith through seven stages, ending with union with God.

the author suggests a practice that helps us come to a glimpse of the true nature of God — one that is beyond our ability to conceptualize but, at the same time, is one into which God himself can immerse us.

The author speaks of two “clouds” in prayer: a “cloud of forgetting” when we choose to surrender our expectations and images of God under a cloud where we forget these images that limit the ineffable God; and a “cloud of unknowing,” where we seek God under a veil where we “find” God

by not seeking him, but instead resting and awaiting God to find us! All I can say (words fail me in speaking about the depth of prayer) is that this book is a sure and certain path to the true God, not containable by our minds and expectations, but ready to be in communion with each of us in prayer.

The second life-changing work is by the great Doctor of the Church, St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1587), “**The Interior Castle**,” sometimes called “The Man-

sions.” This masterpiece of spiritual guidance in prayer contains the basis for what St. Teresa felt should be the ideal journey of faith, comparing the contemplative soul to a castle with seven successive interior courts, or chambers, analogous to the seven mansions. The work was inspired by her vision of the soul as a diamond in the shape of a castle containing seven mansions, which she interpreted as the journey of faith through seven stages, end-

ing with union with God. As a personal testimony, the first time I read this work I found it off-putting and strange; the second time I read it, it changed my life and my heart. In the work, St. Teresa evidences a great understanding of the human difficulties in prayer (“distractions”) as well as the possibility of being found by God through the primacy of God’s initiative in prayer rather than ours. Too often, we find prayer a great effort and one that can be exhausting. St. Teresa counsels us to find God by letting God find us. My summary fails to do justice to this masterwork.

Pope Leo has recommended an instruction to teach us how to pray always: Brother Lawrence’s “**The Practice of the Presence of God.**” add two more: “The Cloud of Unknowing” and St. Teresa of Avila’s “The Interior Castle.” These works originate from three different centuries — the 14th, 16th and 17th, but each speaks to the perennial human desire to find the God in prayer that desires to find us. Such rich works from various ages comfort us with the richness of our Catholic tradition — given to us down the centuries from Holy-Spirit-inspired authors who still speak to us today. When St. Paul instructed us to “pray always,” the Church has given us instructors from the ages that still teach us today. *Surgite eamus* — Rise, let us be on our way ... our prayerful way ... with Jesus ... instructed by teachers from our beautiful Catholic tradition!

The Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation is Grateful for Your Generosity

This Christmas, consider a year-end gift to strengthen Catholic ministries in western SD.



605-721-6843
wsdcf.org

National Pastoral Musicians announce 2026 Meetings, CLEM Credit Hours

Rapid City National Pastoral Musicians' Winter Meeting will be Saturday, January 31, at St. Isaac Jogues Church, Rapid City. The meeting will offer three credit hours for Certified Lay Ecclesial Ministers. The featured speaker is Fr. John Hatcher, SJ, on Catholic Inculturation. Lakota, Hispanic, and Filipino music will be specifically covered in three shorter presentations by Toni Ramos, St. Isaac Jogues, Rapid City; Jaime Munoz, Blessed Sacrament, Rapid City; and one other speaker, To Be Announced. The Spring Meeting will be Saturday, April 25, at St. Patrick Church, Wall.

The Fall Meeting will feature nationally known composer and theologian Fr. Ricky Manalo, CSP, in a two-day concert-plus-meeting event, Friday-Saturday, September 25-26, at Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont.

Contact Chantry Nelson, marycsnelson@gmail.com for more information about the Rapid City Chapter of National Pastoral Musicians. See our website www.npmrc.org or Facebook page www.facebook.com/NPMRapidCityChapter.



Christmas Mass Times

Several parishes sent in their schedule for Christmas Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 24, and Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25, Masses. To view go to: rapidcitydiocese.org/christmas-mass-2025/.

WEST RIVER CATHOLIC

USPS 983-360

Official newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Rapid City, published monthly.

The West River Catholic is owned and published by the

Diocese of Rapid City, 225 Main St., Ste 100, Rapid City, SD 57701-3031

Phone: 605-343-3541



Publisher: Bishop Scott Bullock

Director of Communications: Jacques Daniel, jdaniel@diorc.org

Editor: Laurie Hallstrom, lhallstrom@diorc.org

Assistant Editor: Becky Berreth, bberreth@diorc.org

Advertising: Laurie Hallstrom, 605-343-3541

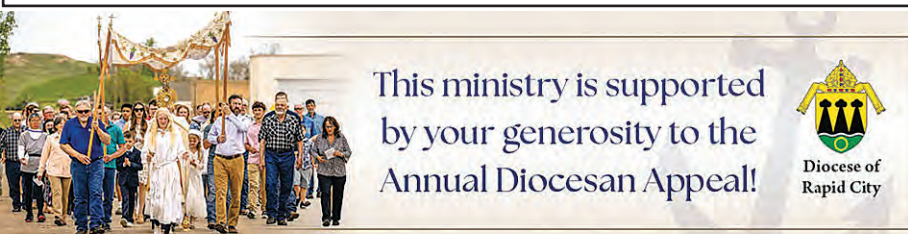
Circulation Contact: receptiondesk@diorc.org

Subscription: \$35, Foreign subscription: \$60 per year.

Postmaster: Address all correspondence, including change of address, to:

West River Catholic, 225 Main St. Ste 100, Rapid City, SD 57701-3031

Periodical postage paid at Rapid City, SD 57701



This ministry is supported
by your generosity to the
Annual Diocesan Appeal!



Bishop's Calendar

December 24, 2025 – January 19, 2026

Subject to change without notice

December 24-25, Wednesday-Thursday

Chancery Closed for Christmas

December 24, Wednesday

10 p.m. Christmas Mass at Night, Cathedral

December 25, Thursday

9:30 AM Mass, Black Hills Chapel, Ellsworth AFB

December 28, Sunday

5:30 p.m. Mass, Closing of the Jubilee Year of Hope, Cathedral

December 31, Wednesday

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass – Cathedral

December 31, 2025-January 1, 2026, Wednesday-Thursday

Chancery closed for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

January 10, Saturday

3 p.m. Confessions, Cathedral
5:30 p.m. Mass, Cathedral

January 17, Saturday

11:15 a.m. Heart to Heart Retreat
Mass, Terra Sancta

January 19, Monday

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Chancery Closed

**Is corporate medicine not for you?
Let our small town family practice care for
you and your family.**

**Let our
family treat
yours!**

**Dr. Brandy Tarap, M.D.
Jennifer Zettl, DNP, CNP***



**Southern Hills Family
Medicine PLLC**

1369 Montgomery St., Custer, SD 57730
605-673-3900 • SouthernHillsFamilyMedicine.com



*Jennifer Zettl, DNP, CNP, is a graduate of University of Mary family medicine NP program and is a natural women's health provider trained in FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management) and knowledgeable in NFP methods.
Walk-in/same-day appointments available

The Roman adventure

BY DR. CAROLE BROWN
DIRECTOR OF SIOUX SPIRITUAL CENTER

Going to Rome for four months was, without a doubt, one of the highlights of my life. I've lived in Europe before, and have visited Rome before — but I was never able to stay long enough to really get to know the city. Having the time to really learn my way around was a true gift. Not only was it the Great Jubilee Year of Hope, but to be there during such a historic time, when one pope passed the baton to the next, was just extraordinary. **I was there at St. Peter's for Pope Francis's funeral, and I was there when the white smoke went up for our new pope.** When Pope Leo was introduced, I didn't understand what they said — and our phones were jammed, so I couldn't check the internet. I was halfway home before I learned that he was an American. I was so surprised, I almost fell into the Tiber River!

I am grateful to the Board of the Sioux Spiritual Directors for encouraging me to go to Rome to study missiology at the Gregorian University, and to the Diocese of Rapid City for sponsoring me. Thanks also to Norma Tibbitts for looking after the SSC for the bulk of my time away, and to the great staff of the SSC for holding things together.

Why on earth would someone working as an out-of-the-way retreat center director get sent to Rome for four months to study? It's a long story.

The primary mission of the Sioux Spiritual Center is to serve the special spiritual needs of Native American Catholics. The Jesuits, who built this place and ran it for 40 years, used to have a program called "Basic Directions," which was designed as a kind of "orientation program" for missionary and diocesan personnel who would be working in native ministry settings. When Bishop Peter Muhich asked me if I would work on a redesign of the program, I met with some leaders in native ministry to get some input, and we soon realized that among all of us, there was very little to no training in the field of missiology.

"Missiology" is the field of academic study that looks at the Church's approach to missionary work in cultures that are new to the Church. When St. Paul wrote



Carole Brown, director of Sioux Spiritual Center, Howes, went to Rome to study the Church's approach to working in new cultures. (Courtesy photo)

his letter to the Romans, the Catholic Church was brand new to the Roman world. In chapter 11 of his letter, he was explaining to these Christians, who had only recently converted from their former way of worshipping multiple gods, how, in their new identity as Christians, they were related to the Jewish people. Using the metaphor of grafting trees, he described it as follows:

"... you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in ... to share the rich root of the olive tree ... remember that it is not you that supports the root, but the root that supports you. You have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree. ..."

This is a metaphor for the process of "inculturation." Perhaps the idea of wild grapes is more familiar to us. Imagine grafting a wild grapevine into one of the vines in Napa Valley. **The wild grapes bring some new characteristics to the cultivated vine, but even more so does the cultivated vine pour its life into the wild grapes, making them sweet and rich.** You could say that "missiology" is about this process of grafting new families of peoples into the cultivated tree, rooted in Judaism and fulfilled in Catholicism.

You can also imagine how traumatic it must be for a wild olive branch or a wild grape branch to be cut off from the vine and grafted in. This was true of the Romans too. At first, the bigger culture of the Romans was not interested in what the Christians had to say. They made it illegal not to worship the Roman gods. They persecuted the Christians, and many of them laid down their lives as martyrs rather than renounce their faith in Jesus. But deep down, the Romans were impressed. And after a few hundred years, they were won over. **As pagan Rome gradually became Christian, the Christians did not bulldoze the pagan temples, but founded churches on them.** This is actually an apt metaphor for mission. The Church does not destroy cultures, but looks for the *semina verba* (seeds of the word) that are already present in the spiritual intuitions of the gentiles, from which bridges can be built. Now, Rome is arguably the most Catholic town in the world. Inculturation is a long and often painful process. And it is a process that the Church is extremely patient with.

Every Friday, one of our professors took us on an excursion through ancient Rome, to see it through the lenses of mission. The remnants of the former way of life of the ancient Romans are all over that city. Some of their temples are still standing, like the famous Pantheon — now a church, officially named the Basilica of St. Mary and the Martyrs. Many Churches, and even the Gregorian University, are founded on the

foundations of former pagan temples. Those former temples also present us with a good analogy of the work of inculturation. The various cultures of the world were able to intuit, on the basis of reason, certain "universal truths." For example, the belief that there is a spiritual world, beyond the natural world; belief in life after death; belief in the value of sacrifice; love of wisdom; questing for truth. These foundational beliefs are perfectly Catholic — and they can be built on, whenever a new culture is brought into the Church.

Not everything from every culture fits, of course. Think of St Francis Xavier, when he first encountered a culture that practiced cannibalism, for example, or the human sacrifice of the Mayans. Those are the kinds of things that the process of inculturation seeks to purify. But every culture also brings new gifts into the Church. These are the things the Church treasures. This principle is aptly captured in the document from Vatican II, *Nostra Aetate* (Dialogue with Non-Christian Religions):

Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions.

And so, this four month sojourn in Rome has provided me with a much better orientation to the work at hand than what I had when I got here.

BEYOND SUNDAY

BUILDING UP YOUR DOMESTIC CHURCH TO CREATE A LEGACY THAT CHANGES THE WORLD

CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE 2026

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026 | TERRA SANCTA RETREAT CENTER | 8AM - 5PM

*EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT IF REGISTERED BY JAN 30

GUEST SPEAKER
ADAM MINIHAN
THECATHOLICMANSHOW.COM



Refuel will explore the burden of self imposed spiritual perfectionism

By PEGGY SUE MUTCHLER
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

“Perfectionism — and specifically, spiritual perfectionism — is a subtle but surprisingly widespread problem today, particularly among highly committed Catholics,” explains Colleen Carroll Campbell. “The unspoken belief that we have to earn God’s love, white-knuckle our way to heaven, or outperform everyone around us to achieve holiness can be lethal to intimacy with the Lord and to our efforts to share his love with others.” Campbell will be the keynote speaker

for the 2026 Refuel Retreat, January 23-25 at the Terra Sancta Retreat Center. She will share the heart of her story — from dorm rooms to the papal palace. Bringing the power of the saints to others through her own story, she will chronicle her life struggles, where she found no answers in the secular world but discovered how these saints kept stepping forward to walk with her. After a fifteen-year quest to understand the meaning of her life and identity in light of her Christian faith, she found real freedom, a freedom in life with the saints as her guide. A lifelong overachiever, she discovered her



REFUEL SPEAKER COLLEEN CAMPBELL

attachment to perfectionism when she became a mother of twins. It was then that she recognized how subtly perfectionism had crept into her heart and how it threatened her happiness, her spiritual life, and her family.

She said her experience mirrors a widespread reality. As Colleen notes, “Many saints struggled with the toxic cycle of pride, sin, shame, blame, and discouragement that spiritual perfectionism fuels. Learning from their struggles can help us chart our own course to freedom.”

At Refuel, she will explore not only spiritual perfectionism but also the broader challenge of evangelizing today. “I’ll be exploring what the saints can teach us about how to evangelize effectively in a hostile culture and how to resist the twin temptations of distraction and dilution of the faith,” she notes. “Here again, we find the stories of the saints — from the famous mystics and Doctors of the Church

to the most obscure desert hermits — have so much to teach us. Their wisdom is truly timeless.”

The annual Refuel Retreat, held each January at Terra Sancta, was created to rejuvenate those who minister in the Church — religious educators, catechists, youth and adult ministers, liturgists, music ministers, marriage and family ministers, and parish staff. The conference offers inspiration, spiritual renewal, and fellowship during a time when the long days of the season can take hold with a cold grasp — Refuel gives a person a chance to get away from the dark days of winter and motivate the inner soul of those who cheerfully serve the diocese and who generously give their hearts to Christ. It invites those who give so much of themselves to step away, rest, and rediscover the joy of ministry.

Colleen captures the heart of the event well. “Evangelizing and educating others in the faith is a high calling. It’s also an exhausting one ... That’s why I love the title of this annual retreat, “Refuel.” That’s exactly what I hope this experience will be: a chance for us to come together and let Jesus and his saints rekindle our passion for taking the Good News to the ends of the earth, one soul at a time.”

Discover how the saints can transform your life, just as they did for Colleen Carroll Campbell at Refuel. Register and learn more about our speaker rapidcitydiocese.org/refuel/. The retreat is open to all who are interested.

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.

January

Birthdays: Jan. 8, Dcn. William Dustman; Jan. 10, Fr. Francis Nsubga; Jan. 21, Fr. Tyler Dennis; Jan. 23, Fr. Ron Seminara, SJ.

Ordinations: Jan. 6, 1977, Fr. Peter Wilke; Jan. 27, 2021, Fr. M. Ari Saputra, SCJ.

Necrology: Jan. 2, 1973, James Weithman; Jan. 4, 1955, Edward Henault; Jan. 7, 1979, Dominic Padula; Jan. 12, 1961, Michael Conley; Jan. 13, 1999, Bishop Lawrence Welsh; Jan. 14, 1964, John Connolly; Jan. 15, 2014, Raymond Deisch; Jan. 16, 1946, Raymond O’Hora; Jan. 16, 1978, Othmar Buerkler, OSB; Jan. 17, 2004, Collins Jordan; Jan. 21, 1957, John Novak; Jan. 23, 1951, John O’Reilly; Jan. 25, 1990, James Donahoe; Jan. 26, 1955, Edward McGonigal; Jan. 26, 1962, Gerhard Stakemeir; Jan. 26, 1960, Walter Pascal; Jan. 27, 2022, Dcn. Gerald Bush; Jan. 30, 1998, William McKenney, SJ; Jan. 20, 2019, Dcn. Marlon Leneau; Jan. 31, 1959, Charles Virnig; Jan. 31, 2005, Dale Kutil.

Fides

QUAERENS

Intellectum

Faith seeking understanding in the life of the pastoral leader

PASTORAL MINISTRY DAYS
MARCH 15-17, 2026
TERRA SANCTA
RETREAT CENTER 8415

register here!

FEATURING:
DR. ZENA
HITZ

DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY

REFUEL 2026

FEATURING:

THE Wisdom OF THE Saints

Register here!

JAN. 23-24, 2026
TERRA SANCTA RETREAT CENTER
COST: \$100
(Early Bird Discount of \$10 before Jan. 5)

COLLEEN CARROLL CAMPBELL



“

I just wanted to thank you for a really great experience at the retreat center. The grounds are beautiful, and while the accommodations were simple, they were just what I needed. The retreat center was very well-maintained, and I am glad I got to stay in such a beautiful environment. God bless you!

~Private Retreatant

...of God, they had returned to their Master to report all they had seen. It is clear that their journeys had left them exhilarated but at the same time tired and in need of restoration. The Lord recognizes this and says, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." Surely their lives of serving God were good things, but then they needed refreshment. In that deserted place, he fed them with the lavish multiplication of the loaves and fish—so much more than they could have expected or imagined!

Since 2012, Terra Sancta Retreat Center has been such a place of rest and refreshment of countless people from near and far, who have come and received lavish spiritual nourishment. At the same time, Terra Sancta has become the center of the formation for deacons and lay ecclesial ministers to serve our diocese, the site for spiritual enrichment for our people, and the place of countless opportunities for groups to gather, all to "come away...and rest a while" in the Lord.

As a new bishop, I am committed to solidifying and extending the mission of Terra Sancta Retreat Center for years to come! In this vein, I have recently constituted a task force that will gather over the next months to assess the current situation of the Center and to strategize prayerfully about how we can strengthen the reach and availability of this treasure of our diocese. Please join us in prayer as we endeavor, with discernment and discovery, May the Holy Spirit...



“

Thank you for making our family reunion such a success! We received many compliments on the accommodations, food, and friendly staff. We appreciate you all! Have a wonderful summer!

~Family Reunion
June 2025



Lucy Hamer
Event Coordinator
Senior
Sturgis Brown High School

“

Working at Terra Sancta Retreat Center for the past three years has been a transformative experience. The incredible facility helps guests grow closer in their relationship with Christ and helps me stay grounded in my faith. It is very easy to get caught up in the chaos of life, but working at a retreat center reveals the bigger goal of glorifying God. Wherever you are in the building, you can feel the Holy Spirit echoing throughout. As I work, there are always reminders that help me grow closer to God and spread his works. Seeing the guests show gratitude...



“

Thank you so much for the lovely facility, the quiet, the reverence. Of exceptional note is the food, which is outstanding, and completely unexpected!! I am so grateful for the all around lovely and grace-filled weekend. Thank you so much, keep it up!

~Miles Christi Retreatant
February 2025

bearing spiritual FRUIT

The impact of Terra Sancta goes beyond the number of people served and the activities experienced. The Holy Spirit animates the retreat center's life and touches those who use the facility and its grounds. The real fruit of Terra Sancta Retreat Center is in the fruit of the Spirit, so evident in guest comments and staff reflections.



Terra Sancta
Retreat Center
Come away and rest in God.

Copies of the most recent Impact Report are available at the retreat center or on-line at

terrasancta.org/impact

Terra Sancta Retreat Center
2101 City Springs Rd, Ste 300
Rapid City, SD 57702
stay@terrasancta.org

Continue to respond generously



On December 9, we celebrated the Feast Day of St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin. This year I was struck by how St. Juan Diego's story teaches us about the struggle and the hesitation we all sometimes feel in responding in faith to an invitation to give witness to not only Jesus and his Church, but our Mother Mary too. If you remember the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Feast Day

December 12) and how she appeared to Juan Diego, not once, not twice, not three times but four times on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City in 1531, it's a powerful story of receiving and responding to an invitation made in faith and in trust.

The Blessed Virgin Mary asked Juan

Diego for a special favor, a request, to visit the local bishop and ask him to build a shrine, in her honor, on Tepeyac Hill. On December 9, Juan Diego, desiring to be faithful to Our Lady's request of him, did as she asked him to do. However, Bishop Juan de Zumarraga was not receptive to Juan's message. In fact, he dismissed him, asking for proof for his claim.

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego and made her request a second time. This time Juan was cautious to respond to the message of Our Lady. He was disheartened because he felt like a failure. Despite his feelings of inadequacy, though, he obeyed the Virgin Mother Mary and went back to the bishop only to be turned down once again. On his way home Juan Diego shared with Our Lady the bishop's request that he only return if he has a sign to prove his claim. She invited Juan Diego to go back to Bishop de Zumarraga for a third time the next day. Our Lady assured Juan Diego that she indeed would provide a sign for the disbelieving bishop.

On December 11, realizing that his uncle is gravely sick, he decided to avoid Our Lady's presence altogether and instead took another route around Tepeyac Hill in search of a priest to give his uncle the last rites. On December 12, Our Lady intercepted Juan Diego for a fourth time. She assured him that his uncle would recover and asked him to go back to his original mission once again, to request the building of the shrine. She also provided him the sign he needed — Castilian roses in full bloom on the top of the frozen and barren hillside, which he gathered into his tilma.

Returning a third time to the bishop, Juan Diego opened his tilma to show the flowers to the bishop and the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared on Juan Diego's tilma. Bishop de Zumarraga immediately understood the truth of Juan Diego's message from the Blessed Mother and granted permission to have the shrine built on Tepeyac Hill to honor Mary the Mother of God.

This is an amazing and life-giving story in so many ways, but this year in particular I was struck by the persistence of Our Lady's invitations and the faithful obe-

dience of Juan Diego despite his discouragement. I know sometimes I just get tired of asking and inviting others into mission or into a deeper faith, but Juan Diego reminds me to keep asking because, in the end, it will bear great fruit in the lives of others and the Church.

I have an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe across from my bed. It is the last thing I see before I retire for the night and the first thing I see when I wake up. As I look upon her I pray these words spoken to Juan Diego by the Virgin Mary: "Hear and let it penetrate into your heart: Let nothing discourage you, nothing depress you. Let nothing alter your heart or countenance. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety, or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else that you need?"

And like St. Juan Diego, I am encouraged to continue to respond generously to her invitations.

OSHEIM & SCHMIDT FUNERAL HOME

Serving Your Family for Generations

Family-owned and Operated



Robb
Schmidt



Ozzie
Osheim



Terry
Gilbertson,
CSFP

2700 Jackson Blvd.

Rapid City, SD

605-343-0077



Jes
Scott



Dwight
Edstrom



Robert
Broderick



J. Buck
Dyck

*"Funeral Directors
with over 235 years
of combined
experience"*

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH Mahipya Na Maka Okogna



Sioux Spiritual Center

Group Retreats

- Personal Retreats
- Ignatian Retreats
- Native Recovery Retreats
- Healing Retreats
- Spiritual Direction Available

visit our website

www.sioxspiritualcenter.org
605-985-5906



SIoux SPIRITUAL CENTER
CATHOLIC RETREAT LODGE

Sincere Thanks

to all the volunteers and staff who have made the Diocesan TV Mass a success for the past five years including: Celebrants, Deacons, Musicians, Readers, Camera Crew, Production, and mostly for KNBN for giving us the opportunity to reach out.

— Becky Berreth, Production Coordinator

On December 28, the Feast of the Holy Family, we will conclude our production and offering of the TV Mass from the Diocese of Rapid City.

Some have expressed regret that this effort, that started with the unfortunate limitations imposed by the recent pandemic, will cease. I am happy that you have found this effort meaningful and appreciated. For a final time, I again acknowledge the many who have contributed long effort, and we are grateful, particularly, to the generosity of KNBN, who underwrote this service for the last five years. I have heard that many have enjoyed hearing from their bishop — both my predecessor, Bishop Peter Muhich, and myself. I indeed intend to keep reaching out through various print and online media, to continue our mission to share the evangelia, the Good News of Jesus, Lord, God, Savior, and the Bread of Life. I look forward to “speaking to you” through various means. Stay tuned for there is more to come!

— Bishop Scott Bullock

Merry Christmas
from the **MUSTARD SEED**
Catholic Store

**Thank you for your support this year!
May God bless you all in the new year.**



Visit us at 225 Main Street, Rapid City, SD or call 605-348-5228

ONLINE/TELEVISED MASS

Homebound, hospitalized, and nursing home residents
You can still enjoy the word of our Lord ...

Diocese of Rapid City – Parish Live stream Schedule

- **Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help**, Rapid City, Sunday 10:30 a.m.
www.youtube.com/@cathedralolphRC
- **St. Joseph, Gregory**, Sunday after 11:30am
www.facebook.com/GregorySt.JosephsCatholicChurch
- **Our Lady of the Black Hills**, Piedmont, Saturday: 5 p.m.
www.facebook.com/olbh.org
- **St. Anthony of Padua**, Hot Springs, Sunday 10:30am
www.youtube.com/@St.AnthoniofPaduaCatholi-ux4yo



Televised Mass

- **Diocese of Sioux Falls**, KELOLAND TV (CBS), Sunday: 9 a.m.
- **EWTN** – check local listings for time and channel

To find more online options visit our website
www.rapidcitydiocese.org/televised-mass/



TELEVISED CHRISTMAS MASS



with Bishop Scott Bullock

December 25

6:30 a.m. (NBC)

7:30 a.m. (KNBN.2)

CHRISTMAS MASS

with Bishop Scott Bullock

Live stream from the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City

December 24 ~ 10 p.m.

www.rapidcitydiocese.org/live
facebook.com/DioceseofRapidCity

The weekly televised Masses on KNBN/NBC will conclude on December 28.



SATURDAY – 4:30 P.M. NBC 21.1/KNBN.21.2

SUNDAY – 7 A.M. NBC 21.1/SUNDAY – 10:30 A.M. KNBN.2 21.2

ONLINE newscenter1.tv/catholic-mass

FACEBOOK KNBNNewscenter1 or DioceseofRapidCity



Deacon Candidates Installed as Lectors

On Saturday, November 1, Bishop Scott Bullock presided at Mass which included the Institution as Lector for the current diaconate candidates in formation. The Rite of Institution as Lector is one of the steps toward potential ordination as a permanent deacon. The three main areas of service the Church defines for the diaconate are ministers of word, liturgy, and charity. The institution as lector corresponds to being a minister of the word. As a permanent lector, these men have a vocation to proclaim scripture as a public witness, foster ongoing evangelization and faith formation within the Church. Most lectors in our parishes have a temporary role, delegated by their pastor, which demonstrates the shared responsibility of all the baptized to assist in liturgical celebrations without implying a lifelong commitment. (L-R) Todd Curtis, Piedmont; Steve Van Mullem, Ft. Pierre; Frank Birkholt, Hot Springs; Bishop Bullock; John Talcott, Spearfish; Eugene Iron Shell, Rosebud; Deacon Greg Sass, Director of Diaconate Formation. (WRC photo by Becky Berreth)



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 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.

**Your faith guides your life,
why not your insurance
and retirement planning?**

With Knights of Columbus, you can protect your family
and plan for your retirement – while preserving your
Catholic principles and values.

Thank you for your business and continued support.
Contact your agent to learn more.



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



Phil Carlson
Assistant General Agent
605-695-4793
philip.carlson@kofc.org



Mark DiSanto
Field Agent
605-391-5694
mark.disanto@kofc.org



Tommy Donovan
Field Agent
605-591-9531
thomas.donovan@kofc.org



Matt Weller
Field Agent
605-450-6066
mathew.weller@kofc.org



Zach Akin
Field Agent
605-450-8527
zachary.akin@kofc.org



Thomas Bechen
Field Agent
605-770-9798
thomas.bechen@kofc.org



AJ Waldner
Field Agent
605-350-2594
arnold.waldner@kofc.org

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



Knights of Columbus ("KofC") offers life insurance, annuities, long-term care insurance and disability income insurance products. For costs, terms, conditions and complete details regarding these products, please contact your agent directly or call KofC at 1-800-380-9995. Products may vary by state. Insurance solutions are available to eligible KofC members in the U.S. and Canada. Knights of Columbus is located at: 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510.

December live stream schedule:

with Bishop Scott Bullock

CHRISTMAS MASS AT NIGHT
December 24, 10.m.

**CLOSING MASS
FOR THE YEAR OF HOPE**
December 28, 5:30 p.m.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY
Vigil
December 31, 5:30 p.m.



www.rapidcitydiocese.org/live
facebook.com/DioceseofRapidCity



After Cana DATE NIGHTS

6:30-8PM | FOOD PROVIDED
CATHEDRAL ST. JOSEPH HALL
BABYSITTING AVAILABLE

JAN 10
FEB 7

A new marriage enrichment series sponsored by the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

Join other married couples for a date night full of food, fellowship, and conversation.

Exploring the beauty of the Sacrament of marriage and providing opportunities for prayer, discussion, and growth.



Learn more at: rapidcitydiocese.org/family

Bless You

The staff of the *West River Catholic* sincerely thank the donors who gave a combined total of \$15,902.57 to the diocesan newspaper in 2025.



SURSUM CORDA

"Lift Up Your Heart"

MONDAYS AT 7PM-8PM



Join the St. Carlo Community for:

Adoration Prayer Groups

Confession Praise & Worship

Open to all!



St. Carlo Acutis
CATHOLIC STUDENT CENTER



Rosario Munoz from St. Rose of Lima Church, Hill City, making candles with the Sodalitas young women's group. (Courtesy photos)

Young Adult Ministry launches quarterly women's night

BY AVERY PORCH

DIOCESAN YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR

On November 20, at the Urban Glow Candle Co. in downtown Rapid City, 18 young women gathered to pour candles, cultivate community, and listen to Emily Priolo, Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, OCIA Director, give a talk on liturgical living. The women came from Rapid City, Spearfish, Sturgis, and Hill City, to the event.

Each participant made a custom candle, choosing from a variety of vessels and seasonal scents. As the candles cooled, Priolo gave an overview of the Catholic Church's liturgical calendar, discussed the importance of order and structure, and offered practical ways that they can celebrate the Church's many feasts. She emphasized the impor-

tance of celebrating with friends and family, pointing out that the word "liturgical," originating from the Greek word *leitourgia*, means "work of the people."

Attendees left the event ready to celebrate the Advent season. "The women's night was such a fun evening," said Bailee Robbins from Cathedral Parish. "I got to enjoy community with other young women, good food, candle making, and a great talk! What more could I ask for?"

Sodalitas Women's Nights will be offered quarterly, offering young women across the diocese the opportunity to come together for community and formation. The next Women's Night is scheduled for mid-February. All women ages 20-30 are invited to attend. Sign-up information will be posted on rapidcitydiocese.org/yya/sodalitas.

(Editor's note: Sodalitas is the Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Rapid City. Latin for "fellowship," Sodalitas exists to foster authentic community and accompany young adults as they deepen their faith. This ministry serves Catholic men and women ages 20-30, offering weekly studies, formation nights, and a quarterly speaker series. For more information contact Diocesan Young Adult Coordinator Avery Porch at 605-343-3541 or aporch@diorc.org.



Sodalitas groups mix social events with learning about their faith.



Whispering pines: listening for the Holy Spirit

BY CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

The sun was setting by the time we'd reached consensus on our Christmas tree. We'd decided on a cedar that hadn't been anyone's first choice — safely neutral, conflict averted.

Now we were dragging it home in the dark — tired, cold and hungry. Suddenly we heard a shimmering sound in the top of the swaying pines. It was different from the start-and-stop rustle of wind in oak leaves. The pines were singing, steady and smooth, their densely packed needles turned to reeds.

We paused our homeward trek, standing still and letting the sound wash over us.

Later, eager to confirm what we'd heard, I took to Google. Was it true? Were pines distinctly suited to make music?

Yes, I learned — and the Transcendentalists were enchanted by it. Ralph Waldo Emerson captured it well in his 1836 essay "Nature": "The pine blows its own sweet music when the wind sweeps through it." Later his protégé Henry David Thoreau described it in his journal, writing: "There is no finer music than the wind in the pine tops. It is the earth's own breath, sweet and powerful, sighing through the forest."

I read on.

Anne of Green Gables — one of my favorite literary heroines — finds comfort in

singing pines. In book three of L.M. Montgomery's beloved series, "Anne of the Island," Anne returns to Green Gables, homesick and weary, and soaks up the "passionate wind-songs in the pines."

My next discovery delighted my inner etymology nerd. There's actually a word for the sound of wind rustling through trees: psithurism. It's an archaic word with a Greek root, *psithuros*, meaning whispering.

Isn't that a lovely concept? Whispering wind.

At only a whisper, we may easily miss its lyrical song.

We embrace the spirit of Advent when we pause from our march to enjoy the view. When our instinct is to hurry up and look down, it is good to slow down and look up. We release our screens and our agendas and gaze into the heavens — available, attuned.

In an era of mindless scrolling and swiping, paying attention is a spiritual exercise. It allows us to see the sacred in our midst — the dignity of every person, the glory of God's creation, pine needle by pine needle. When we pay attention, we process the world as we are intended to, with all our senses and grateful hearts. We remember we aren't machines and life isn't a hamster wheel.

Only then are we able to sense the movement of the Holy Spirit, which Scripture likens to wind. (The Greek word for

spirit is *pneuma*, meaning wind or breath.)

We can't see the Holy Spirit, but we can feel it and hear it. And like pines swaying in wind, we can see it moving those around us. The Gospel writer John tried to capture this mystery, writing: "The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8).

Twice this month I've interviewed Catholic leaders who spoke to the power of the

Holy Spirit. It was a striking part of their ministry, opening doors at just the right time, providing the clue, the key, the cash.

"It's been amazingly consistent," one woman told me. "You know it when you experience it, and I believe it."

Amid our many December to-dos, may we listen for the Holy Spirit, whispering like wind. May we know it and believe.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Grey Cloud Island, Minn.

MAILING LABEL

December 2025

West River Catholic

WRC 12

You are not alone.

CATHOLIC
SOCIAL
SERVICES

Counseling and Life Coaching services
Call 605-348-6086 or Visit cssrapidcity.com