



Declaration Values p. 2



PMD — Everyone Welcome, p. 4

February 2026

Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota

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From St. Peter to Pope Leo XIV: Apostolic succession on full display

BY JOSIAH HANSON
DIOCESAN SEMINARIAN

As part of my seminary formation our class traveled to Rome for three weeks of classes and a pilgrimage this past January. One of the most striking things about the pilgrimage was how often pieces of the faith stopped feeling abstract and became concrete. Things we say and pray every Sunday suddenly had faces, places, and weight. That became especially real to me when we had the opportunity to see Pope Leo XIV. Being able to see him face-to-face during his Wednesday audience was a surreal experience. What stayed with me, though, was the awareness that I was standing before the successor of St. Peter — the man who holds the same office entrusted to the first pope nearly two thousand years ago. Apostolic succession is a phrase I've heard countless times, but in that moment it became something visible and human.

That same truth met me again at the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Along the interior of the basilica runs a series of mosaics depicting every Bishop of Rome, beginning with St. Peter and continuing all the way to Pope Leo. Walking beneath them was quietly powerful. One by one, face after face, generation after generation, the same responsibility of pastoring the universal Church passed forward through history. What struck me most was the simplicity of it. These were men from vastly different times, cultures, and circumstances, yet they are united by the same apostolic mission: to glorify God and labor for the salvation of souls.

Together, meeting Pope Leo and standing beneath those mosaics helped me grasp something essential: the Church endures not because she adapts herself to every age, but because she faithfully guards what was entrusted to her. As a seminarian for the



Diocesan seminarians (**Front row**) Josiah Hanson and Dillon Johnson (**Back row**) Dcn. Todd VanderMay, Blane Schriock, and Gabe Fanning. Deacon VanderMay, and seminarians Hanson and Schriock attend St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota and were on a pilgrimage to Rome. Seminarians Johnson and Fanning attend Pontifical North American College in Rome. (Courtesy photo)

diocese, I was struck by the fact that I am being drawn — humbly and undeservedly — into that same apostolic mission, en-

trusted with the sacred work of glorifying God and seeking the salvation of souls.

See page 8 for more seminarian stories.

Local Holy Hour scheduled: Peace is built on respect for all people

"I call on people of faith and all men and women of good will to ardently pray that we, as an international community, may develop the courage to pursue an authentic, transformative, and lasting peace," said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He asked policymakers to pursue diplomatic negotiations, citing the expiration of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) on February 5. New START is the last major nuclear arms control pact signed by the United States and Russia.

Archbishop Coakley continued, "I call upon policymakers to courageously pursue diplomatic negotiations to maintain New START's limits, opening pathways toward disarmament. International policy disagreements, as serious as they are, cannot be used as excuses for diplomatic stalemates; on the contrary, they should spur us on to more vehemently pursue effective engagement and dialogue. May the Prince of Peace enlighten our hearts and minds to pursue peace around



the world in a spirit of universal fraternity."

In response to a separate invitation by Archbishop Coakley, Bishop Scott Bullock will offer a Holy Hour for Peace at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City, on Thursday, February 26 at 6 p.m. It will also be live streamed at rapidcitydiocese.org/live and on our Facebook page. (Check with your parish to find out if a holy hour is scheduled for peace.)

January 25, in St. Peter's Square in Rome, Pope Leo XIV called for prayers for

peace. "Peace is built on respect for people!" he said. "In Ukraine, in the Middle East and in every region where, unfortunately, there is fighting going on for interests that are not those of the people. The continuation of hostilities, with increasingly serious consequences for civilians, widens the rift between peoples and pushes further back the opportunity for a just and lasting peace," he said, inviting everyone "to intensify their efforts to end this war."

Contributing to this article were Catholic News Service, the USCCB and WRC.

Human equality at the heart of the Declaration of Independence



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

We continue the series of reflections on the 250th Anniversary of our Nation and the role of our Catholic faith in our nation's history with a consideration of our foundational document, the Declaration of Independence (1776).

The Declaration of Independence is often read as a quintessential expression of Enlightenment political philosophy. Yet, when

viewed through the lens of the Roman Catholic intellectual tradition, the document also resonates deeply with principles long articulated in Catholic moral and political thought: the dignity of the human person, the natural law, the purpose of government as the guardian of the common good, and the moral legitimacy of resistance to tyranny. While the American founding was not a confessional Catholic project, the Declaration's moral architecture bears striking affinities with ideas that had matured over centuries within Catholic theology and philosophy.

Among the fifty-six signers of the Declaration, one was a practicing Catholic: Charles Carroll of Carrollton of Maryland. His cousin, John Carroll — though not a signer — would later become the first Bishop of Baltimore and a central figure in shaping Catholic life in the new nation. Charles Carroll was educated in the Jesuit tradition in Europe, where he encountered the rich heritage of Thomistic thought and Catholic social reflection on law and governance. His participation in the Continental Congress and support for independence suggest that Catholic intellectual formation did not stand at odds with the American cause; rather, it could harmonize with it.

At the heart of the Declaration is the claim that “all men are created equal” and are “endowed by their Creator with certain



unalienable Rights,” among them “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” This assertion echoes a fundamental tenet of Catholic anthropology: every human being is created in the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*), possessing an intrinsic dignity that no earthly power may violate. Long before the eighteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas had argued that human law must be rooted in the natural law, itself a participation in the eternal law of God. Rights, in this tradition, are not grants from the state but moral claims

Aquinas taught that human beings, by reason, can discern fundamental moral truths about justice and the proper ordering of society.

grounded in the nature God has given to the human person. The Declaration's appeal to “the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God” closely parallels the Thomistic understanding of natural law. Aquinas taught that human beings, by reason, can discern fundamental moral truths about justice and the proper ordering of society. This conviction undergirds the Declaration's confidence that its claims are not merely political preferences but moral realities accessible to all rational persons. The authors do not argue from sectarian revelation but from truths they believe to be universally knowable — a method entirely consistent with Catholic natural law reasoning.

Equally significant is the Declaration's teaching about the purpose of government. Governments, it says, are instituted “to secure these rights,” deriving “their just powers from the consent of the governed.” In Catholic political thought, political authority is legitimate insofar as it serves the common good—the conditions that allow individuals and communities to flourish according to their nature. Rulers are stewards, not masters. When government ceases to serve the common good and instead becomes destructive of it, it forfeits its moral legitimacy. Here the Declaration aligns with a long Catholic reflection on the morality of resisting unjust rule.

Medieval theologians, including Aquinas and later Francisco Suárez and Robert Bellarmine, wrestled with the question of tyrannical authority. They concluded that when rulers violate the natural law and gravely harm the common good, resistance can be morally justified. The Declaration's assertion that “it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish” a destructive government mirrors this tradition. The American colonists did not claim a whimsical right to rebellion but a grave duty to oppose sustained injustice.

The document's careful tone further reflects a Catholic sensibility about political change. The signers acknowledge that “prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes.”

This echoes the Catholic virtue of prudence and the Church's general caution toward revolution. Only after “a long train of abuses and usurpations” do they justify separation. Such language resonates with the Church's insistence that resistance must be a last resort, proportionate to the injustice suffered.

While the Declaration does not explicitly mention the “common good,” its vision presupposes it. The grievances listed against King George III are not merely personal complaints but indictments of actions that harmed the colonies' ability to live in justice, order, and freedom. The implicit goal is not radical individualism but a political order in which communities can flourish. This harmonizes with the Catholic understanding that freedom is ordered toward the good, not license to act without moral constraint.

The presence of Charles Carroll among the signers symbolizes this harmony. As a Catholic in a predominantly Protestant colonial society, Carroll embodied the conviction that fidelity to the Church did not preclude commitment to republican government. His later support for religious liberty in Maryland anticipated the American experiment in a way that would allow Catholics to practice their faith freely without establishing a confessional state. This, too, aligns with Catholic teaching that the state should respect the freedom of the Church and the conscience of individuals.

In the end, the Declaration of Independence can be read not only as an Enlightenment manifesto but also as a political expression compatible with the Catholic moral tradition. Its grounding of rights in the Creator, its appeal to natural law, its understanding of government as servant of the people, and its sober justification of resistance to tyranny all find echoes in centuries of Catholic thought. For Catholics, the document can be appreciated as a remarkable instance in which enduring principles of moral theology proposed by our Catholic faith found new expression in the birth of one nation, under *God*.

Next month: Religious Liberty in the U.S. Constitution (1787-1791)

RUN TO WIN

INSPIRING A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE IN OUR PARISHES

"Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? RUN SO AS TO WIN."
- 1 Cor. 9:24

March 28, FAITH, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.



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"A NEW **HEART** I WILL GIVE YOU;
A NEW **SPIRIT** I WILL PUT WITHIN YOU
THAT YOU MAY COME TO **LIFE**."

-EE 36:26, 37:14

A Vita Christi RETREAT
DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY
APRIL 24-26, 2026
TERRA SANCTA RETREAT CENTER

Register Here



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by your generosity to the
Annual Diocesan Appeal!



Bishop's Calendar

February 17 - March 17, 2026
Subject to change without notice

February 17, Tuesday

4:30 p.m. Pre-Confirmation Meeting &
5:30 p.m. Mass, St. Joseph Church,
Spearfish

February 18, Ash Wednesday

7 a.m. Mass, Cathedral

February 19, Thursday

6:30 p.m. Bishop's Film Series, Cathedral

February 22, Sunday

3 p.m. Mass, Rite of Election, Cathedral

February 23, Monday

Visit Jr. Clergy Days, Sioux Spiritual Center,
Howes

February 25, Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Keynote for St. Thomas More
High School Business Etiquette Event,
Terra Sancta

6 p.m. Young Adult *Visio Divina*/Reflection
Night, Terra Sancta

February 26, Thursday

5:30 p.m. Mass, Cathedral

6 p.m. Holy Hour for Peace, Cathedral

February 28-March 1, Saturday-Sunday

Director: Carlo Acutis Student Center
Retreat, Terra Sancta

March 3, Tuesday

Visit Black Hills State University Fellowship
of Catholic University Students Team,
Spearfish

March 4, Wednesday

6 p.m. Young Adult *Visio Divina*/Reflection
Night, Terra Sancta

March 7, Saturday

9:15 a.m. Present Course for *Veritatis
Splendor* Institute, Terra Sancta
11:45 a.m. Mass, Terra Sancta

March 8, Sunday

6 p.m. Mass with College Students, Black
Hills State University Newman Center,
Spearfish

March 11, Wednesday

6 p.m. Young Adult *Visio Divina*/Reflection
Night, Terra Sancta

March 16-17, Monday-Tuesday

Pastoral Ministry Days, Terra Sancta

UPCOMING MOVIE: STAGECOACH

CINEMA with the *Shepherd*

FEB. 19 | 6:30PM | ST. JOSEPH HALL, OLPH

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ChestertonAlcuin.com



Seeing the world in wonder and curiosity

BY EMILY PRIOLO

Picture in your mind, our beautiful Black Hills — full of forests and streams and wildlife — and now imagine that the only people who are allowed to go hiking in our national forest are those who are professionals sponsored by Patagonia Outdoor Gear. No average man or woman is allowed to walk and explore the Black Hills and soak in its beauty. Only those outdoorsmen who are so skilled that Patagonia pays them to be professional hikers are permitted.

Of course, that would be outrageous. Hiking — like woodworking, or cooking, or singing — are natural human activities that people enjoy, whether trained, sponsored, or not. These activities are good in and of themselves. They express something of God's life and creativity within us! In fact, the word, "amateur" comes from the Latin word *amator*, which means, "one who loves." And to the person who is doing something, "for the love of the game," it doesn't matter whether or not he is a professional.

The example of the hiker comes from this year's Pastoral Ministry Day's presenter, Dr. Zena Hitz, from her book, "Lost in Thought: The Hidden Pleasures of the Intellectual Life." It is an inspiring book about the joy and fulfillment that comes from fostering our intellectual life, the life of the mind.

Unfortunately, the idea of the "intellectual life" is one that we can easily believe belongs only to the professionals — famous writers, university professors, and podcast guests. But to Dr. Hitz, the intellectual life — a life of curiosity, wonder, and thought — is for all people, and perhaps especially for those of faith.



In her PMD presentation on March 15-17, entitled, "Faith Seeking Understanding in the life of the pastoral minister," Hitz will be with us to discuss how the intellectual life feeds the life of faith and helps it to grow and flourish. For Dr. Hitz, the intellectual life of a Catholic is not simply about knowing a bunch of facts; it is about seeing

the world, including the spiritual realm, with curiosity and wonder. It's one thing to know what the word "transubstantiation" means, but it's another thing to ponder the mystery of how it could be that Jesus allows himself to enter such a humble form every Mass — what sort of a God is this? Do I believe this is true? If it is true, what kind of example does my God give me? If eating normal food changes me, how does receiving the Eucharist change me?

And Dr. Hitz tells us that these questions are not just for the theologians who teach seminarians in Rome. These questions are for the amateur, for all of us. Whether a

volunteer in children's ministry, a cantor, an OCIA catechist, or a Knight of Columbus, we serve out of a love for Christ and his Church, and that love is the root of intellectual life.

As St. John writes, "Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." To love God with our heart, we must know him with our mind. And the more we come to know him, the more we love him. Join us for this year's Pastoral Ministry Days to grow our hearts and minds together for the glory of God in our diocese!

To register for Pastoral Ministry Days go to rapidcitydiocese.org/pmd26/.

Fides **QUAERENS** *Intellectum*
Faith seeking understanding in the life of the pastoral leader

PASTORAL MINISTRY DAYS
 MARCH 15-17, 2026
 TERRA SANCTA
 RETREAT CENTER 8115

FEATURING:
DR. ZENA HITZ

IDENTITY & MISSION
CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE 2026
 SAT., MARCH 21, 2026 | TERRA SANCTA | 8AM - 5PM

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**Dr. Brandy Tarap, M.D.
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*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



Rachel's Vineyard Post-abortion Healing

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat date is April 24--26, Healing Abortion Trauma through Compassion and God's Merciful Love. The spring Rachel's Vineyard Retreat has room for you. Come receive healing from your abortion and restoration for your emotional and spiritual life! Contact Carol at 605-374-5639 or ckling@sdplains.com for help, information, and encouragement.

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Diocese of Rapid City

Financial Statement for July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025

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Jeff Berzina
Pat Burchill
Bruce Byrum
Don Stukel

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. A complete set of audited financial statements are on the diocese website: www.rapidcitydiocese.org/finance/.



DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY

February 17, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Rapid City,

With the coming of a new calendar year, it is time once again to present the annual financial report for our diocese.

This is also a good opportunity for me to acknowledge Rick Soulek for his service as Diocesan CFO during 2017-2025. I am grateful for his many contributions to the administration of our diocese, and I wish him and Lynn all the best as they enjoy their retirement.

Having completed my first full year as your bishop in September, I have seen firsthand the good work that is accomplished in our local Church, which you will see reflected in the report.

Prominent among these are our vocations efforts. Our diocese had the highest number of seminarians per capita of any diocese in North America. This blessing and challenge is reflected in the large budget for our vocations office.

The Living the Mission campaign that was initiated by Bishop Robert Gruss and continued by Bishop Peter Muhich has now been completed. The many significant fruits of this effort are evident throughout the diocese. As pledges have been completed, the diocese has shared funds for a number of case elements from the original campaign, including \$691,453.56 to parishes for local projects, \$1,665,381.71 for the Rapid City Catholic School System, \$572,235.92 to fully fund Priest Retirement, and \$566,033.00 to establish an endowment for Native American Ministry.

The 2025 Annual Appeal, "A Future Full of Hope," exceeded the previous year's appeal by \$177,963.62 as of January 7, 2026. Responses to the 2026 Appeal, "Messengers of Hope," are

coming in a bit slower than they did the previous year, but we are hopeful that participation will increase as God continues to inspire your generosity and faithfulness to the hope of the Gospel.

The impressive list of ministries for our Church that are supported by the Annual Diocesan Appeal includes:

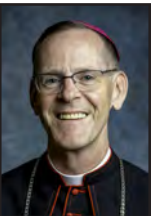
- Communicating the saving Gospel of Jesus through various means — online technology, support of the South Dakota Catholic Conference, which advocates the gospel in the public square, and through our publications;
- Supporting those men seeking ordination to the priesthood by providing for their seminary education;
- Providing for the spiritual formation of parish leaders through *Veritatis Splendor* Institute, future leaders through *Totus Tuus* summer camps, and other opportunities for growth in faith;
- Providing support to our parish communities, including those on our five Native American reservations.

Each time we join together as a diocesan family to support an individual through one of these ministries, we are literally serving the Lord as "Messengers of Hope." Thanks for your response to the Annual Diocesan Appeal, the impact of which has sown seeds of hope throughout the people of western South Dakota!

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Scott E. Bullock

Most Rev. Scott Bullock
Bishop of Rapid City



225 Main St., Ste. 100 • Rapid City, South Dakota • 57701-2835 • (605) 343-3541

Summary of the diocesan finances for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025

Fiscal Year 2025 saw the transition from Rick Soulek to me, Tim Adams, as CFO. I am honored by the confidence shown in me by the bishop, clergy, staff, and faithful of the Diocese of Rapid City. The diocese is one that punches above its weight, providing the faithful more opportunities to practice our faith and live authentically Catholic lives than many dioceses that are several times our size. Our diocese is rich, but not wealthy, and we are thankful for our many benefactors, both spiritual and financial.

The 2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal exceeded both its financial and participation goals with contributions increasing by 11.4% over 2024 and 78 new donors. Please note that Parish Assessments totaled only \$44,142 in Fiscal Year 2025. Unlike the vast majority of dioceses, Rapid City does not impose a tax on its parishes but is dependent on you, the faithful, deliberately giving to the support of the diocese. Thank you for your ongoing generosity, allowing us to continue serving the parishes of western South Dakota.

The accompanying financial statements show a reduction in total assets of more than \$2 million, primarily due to paying out the Living the Mission case elements and parish refunds, and an operating loss of \$836,520 with \$571,322 directly attributed to Living the Mission payout. This still leaves an operating deficit of \$265,198 for the Fiscal Year. The Living the Mission campaign which has provided many benefits to parishes and the diocese will officially close on June 30, 2026. Again, thank you for your generous support.

The financial statements show nearly \$19 million in total net assets (assets minus liabilities) which gives the impression that the diocese is flush, but that is not the case. We, like many of the faithful, are "Land

Rich, Cash Poor" with most of the assets being real estate. Furthermore, most of the money in the investments category is restricted in its use (seminarian education, foreign missions, etc.); often with the requirement that only earnings and not principal may be spent. The operating funds are very limited, and chancery staff are very frugal with your donations.

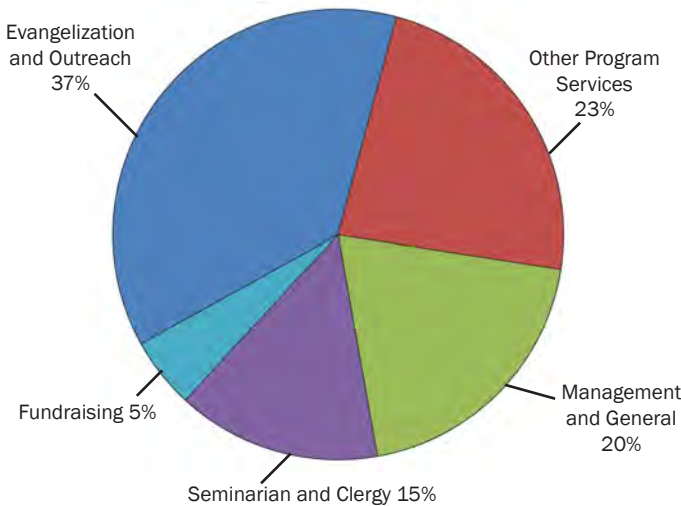
The Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation continues to be the largest contributor to the diocese, providing \$477,000 to the diocese in Fiscal Year 2025. They have pledged to increase their support for the diocese to \$530,741 for Fiscal Year 2026. We are very grateful to all those who work with the foundation as well as all those who have contributed to its growth. Please keep the work of the foundation in your prayers and consider offering your support through financial gifts, endowments, and estate plans.

The Diocese of Rapid City is simultaneously one of America's smallest dioceses by number of Catholics (less than 21,000 Catholics — only Fairbanks, Alaska has fewer) and largest by area, at more than 43,000 square miles. Included in the vast territory are some of the poorest areas in the nation. Geography, poverty, and small population mean we are not self-supporting, but a Mission Diocese. This status makes us eligible for funding from various granting agencies. Catholic Extension, Catholic Home Missions, the Black and Indian Mission Office, the Raskob Foundation and others provide 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 went directly to parishes throughout the diocese. Please continue your prayerful and financial support for these generous organizations.

The diocesan financial picture shown here does not include the support that parishioners offer to their local parishes. We are grateful for all that parishioners do for their local parishes.

A copy of the full audit is available on the Diocese of Rapid City website or through the Finance Office of the Diocese. Your comments and questions are welcome. Please direct questions or requests to Tim Adams, 225 Main St, Suite 100, Rapid City, SD 57701, tmadams@dioc.org, or 605-343-3541.

Fiscal Year 2025 Expenses



DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	584,028	645,982
Investments	5,623,777	6,855,551
Receivables	946,965	1,460,107
Property & Equipment	14,405,858	14,662,943
Investment – SM Properties, LLC	511,614	511,907
Investment – Cash Surrender Life Ins	85,718	79,978
Total Assets	22,157,960	24,216,468
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	419,925	410,671
Amounts Held for Others	656,610	2,989,548
Debt on Pastoral Center	2,152,389	1,050,693
Total Liabilities	3,228,924	4,450,912
NET ASSETS		
With Donor Restrictions		
Restricted in Perpetuity	1,935,956	1,929,000
Purpose/Time Restrictions	2,896,080	2,841,945
Without Donor Restrictions		
Designated	2,277,314	5,442,478
Undesignated	11,819,686	9,552,133
Total Net Assets	18,929,036	19,765,556
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	22,157,960	24,216,468

DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total Fiscal Year 2025	Total Fiscal Year 2024
Support and Revenue				
Annual Diocesan Appeal	1,758,674		1,758,674	1,479,329
Investment Income	220,206	486,407	706,613	798,136
Outside Funders (Catholic Extension, Comm Home Missions/BIMO, Mission Coop)		196,183	196,183	139,114
Diocesan Programs and Misc. Income	661,193	135,071	796,264	741,514
Western SD Catholic Foundation Grant		477,000	477,000	528,615
Terra Sancta Retreat Center Income	301,815		301,815	287,247
Gifts and Bequests	369,708	295,973	665,681	894,530
Living the Mission Appeal	0		0	0
Parish Assessments	44,142		44,142	43,709
Net Assets Released From Restrictions	1,529,543	-1,529,543	0	0
Total Support and Revenue	4,885,281	61,091	4,946,372	4,912,194
Expenses				
Evangelization and Outreach			2,150,078	2,087,293
Other Program Services			1,349,706	954,982
Management and General			1,141,638	1,038,989
Seminarian and Clergy			849,266	760,536
Fundraising			292,204	398,195
Total Expenses			5,782,892	5,239,995
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS			-836,520	-327,801



Seminarian Blane Schriock snapped a photo of his classmates kneeling in adoration.

Original icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help links Rapid City and Rome

DEACON TODD VANDERMAY

This January I got the opportunity to go to Rome through the seminary. It was a very eventful trip, and there was a lot that was seen and done. Our housing was fortunate, being situated close to the Vatican. We were about a six minute walk from Saint Peter's Square, and I made an intention to go there as often as I could, which was most days. Besides seeing many churches and visiting many saints' graves, two things that particularly stood out was getting to see the icon of Perpetual Help and being with my brothers. Our Lady of Perpetual Help is the patroness of our diocese, and the original icon is housed in Rome. I was able to go there three times during my stay in Rome. The second time I went there was with the theologian seminarians of the diocese. Five seminarians for the diocese were together that day; we went to Mass in the morning, attended the Angelus with the pope, went to a couple churches, including Saint Alphonsus Ligori, which is the church that has the orig-

inal icon of Perpetual Help. That was a very moving and cool encounter to be with brother seminarians at the original icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. While there, we prayed together for Bishop Scott Bullock, for the priests of the diocese, for us seminarians and an increase of vocations, and for the people of the diocese of whom we will serve and minister to.

Divine Mercy Lenten Retreat

March 23-25, Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City will host a Lenten Mission,

"Healing Power of Divine Mercy," in the evenings. Fr. Mark Baron, MIC, from the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass., will be the featured speaker. For information go to blessedsacramentchurch.org/divine-mercy-mission.



We have received the Light of Christ

BY SEMINARIAN BLANE SCHRIOCK

I recently received a wonderful gift: a trip to the "Eternal City" of Rome. Praying at the tombs of saints and walking the same streets where countless gave witness to Christ made the faith come alive for me in a beautiful new way.

One moment especially stands out: seeing St. Peter's Basilica lit up against the night sky. Standing there in the rain, looking up at that enormous church glowing in the darkness, something clicked in my heart: the simple but powerful reminder that Jesus truly is the Light in the darkness.

Through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we have received Light. It was carried outward by apostles like Peter and Paul, who gave their lives for him in Rome.

Over the past two thousand years, that same Light has continued to spread.

And now, by God's grace, the Light has reached our hearts in western South Dakota.

We are not distant spectators of Jesus' work — we are part of it! The Church is not just something we study or admire; she is something we belong to! Each of us has received Christ's Light through baptism, and each of us is invited to share it with others.

My time in Rome left me deeply grateful and excited to continue serving Christ and his people. And while Rome had incredible food, beautiful churches, and more history than imaginable, the greatest gift I brought home was a renewed love for Christ the Light — and that fits easily in a suitcase!



Seeing the historical portraits of the popes brought to life Apostolic Succession for Seminarian Josiah Hanson. (Courtesy photo)

Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection for Men and Women

Laudato Si: Becoming the Living Praises of God

Learning from St. Francis of Assisi presented by Sr. Jacque Schroeder, OSF

Saturday, Feb. 28, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Check in begins at 8:30 a.m.

Our Lady of the Black Hills, 12365 Sturgis Rd. Piedmont.

Mass with Fr. Andrzej Wyrstek

Brunch and catered lunch included. To register call Diane at 605-721-3065 or text 605-484-2824, or call Cindy 605-381-7240. Registration deadline Feb. 21.

No charge, free will offering accepted.

Hosted by the Living Stones Secular Franciscans

Co-sponsored by Knights of Columbus and Catholic Daughters

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.

March

Ordinations: Mar. 11, 1995, Dcn. Bill Dustman; Mar. 28, 1977, Fr. Arnold Kari; Mar. 30, 2019, Dcn. Don More; Mar. 31, 2016, Dcn. Lloyd Frein and Dcn. Craig Pearson. **Birthdays:** Mar. 12, Fr. Robert Kinyon; Mar. 13, Dcn. Ben Black Bear, Jr.; Mar. 15, Msgr. Michael Woster; Mar. 17, Fr. Grant Gerlach; Mar. 20, Dcn. Walt Wilson; Mar. 21, Dcn. Patrick Coy; Mar. 22, Fr. Edmund Yainao; Mar. 24, Dcn. Charles Rausch; Mar. 26, Dcn. Luis Usera; Mar. 27, Fr. Richard Novotny and Fr. Zane Pekron. **Necrology:** Mar. 5, 2013; Reuben Valades; Mar. 6, 1966, John DeRaff; Mar. 7 1991, James Sheehan; Mar. 8, 1965, George Heup; Mar. 11, 1948, Bishop John Lawler; Mar. 11, 1964, Arthur O'Brien; Mar. 11, 1965, Benedict Dettman, TOR; Mar. 14, 1975, Wenzel Sobolewski; Mar. 14, 2003, Glendon Welshons, SJ; Mar. 16, 1994, Arthur Doyle; Mar. 16, 2014, Paul Dahms; Mar. 17, 1955, Francis Parisian; Mar. 21, 1977, James Tunnissen, SJ; Mar. 22, 1909, Emil Perrig, SJ; Mar. 25, 1972, Alban Reid; Mar. 27, 1964, Philip O'Connell; Mar. 27, 1966, Thomas Downey, SP; Mar. 30, 1968, Florian Kruswicki.

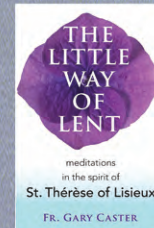
Rite of Election

February 22, 2026
3 p.m.

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



Lenten Season



The Little Way of Lent by Fr. Gary Caster
The Way of the Cross with the Saints by Tan Books
With Jesus in Jerusalem by Etienne Metenier
Kids Lent Activity Book by Our Sunday Visitor

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A Safe Environment for Children and Young People

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

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Perfectionism and spiritual sluggishness can afflict every Christian

By LAURIE HALLSTROM

Researchers have blamed perfectionism for everything from soaring rates of youth eating disorders, campus suicides, spikes in pharmaceutical addictions, credit card debt, and elective plastic surgery according to Colleen Carroll Campbell, speaker at the Refuel 2026 Conference. It has given us “tiger moms, helicopter dads, and work martyrs who won’t take their vacation days,” she said, adding, “The mania for self-improvement is at a fever pitch and millions jump from trend to trend in a frantic quest for enlightenment.”

Campbell is a nationally published author, broadcast journalist, and former presidential speech writer. She brought to life the Refuel theme “The Wisdom of the Saints.” More than 100 educators came from across the Diocese of Rapid City to get a midyear recharge for spreading God’s message. Campbell shared examples of multiple saints who overcame perfectionism and acedia (spiritual fatigue) to live God’s plan for them.

Spiritual perfection is that same demand for flawlessness but transposed onto our relationship with Christ. It manifests in discouragement over stubborn faults, crippling guilt over past mistakes and small sins, compulsive comparing of our lives with the lives of others, and even a tendency to over-commitment that goads us to wear out doing good works,” said Campbell.

The danger, she said, is that many people mistake it for a virtue — living the unspoken belief we can earn God’s love. She added, left untreated it fills a toxic circle of pride, sin, shame, blame and despair, that infects every aspect of our lives. “It distances us from the one true thing that can save us, God’s grace,” according to Campbell.

She continued, “Scripture and tradition tell us that God’s justice and mercy always go together, so the cure for perfectionism must respect both, trust in God’s grace and cooperate with that grace. We must reject spiritual perfection without lapsing into spiritual laziness.”

“...many people mistake (perfectionism) for a virtue — living the unspoken belief we can earn God’s love.”



Colleen Carroll Campbell was the featured Speaker for the Refuel 2026 Conference held January 23-24 in Rapid City. She discussed the toll perfectionism had taken in her life. (WRC graphic)

A self-professed perfectionist, her epiphany came during a moment of personal crisis. Feeling like a failure as a mother, she was towing a bloodied toddler across a hospital parking lot toward the Emergency Room, while having severe labor contractions. All the while, Campbell was berating herself for an accident thinking God would blame her for the toddler being hurt. In her mind she heard a new thought, “someone should give that woman a break,” and a strange calm enveloped her. She realized she had to forgive herself, perfectionism was robbing her of cherishing her life as a wife and mother.

“The voice of the inner critic was stealing my joy and happy moments and compounding my sorrow with shame — was it right?” she asked. Her questions led her to plunge into studying the saints, a “motley crew, wildly diverse in gifts, quirks, and a passionate devotion to

doing the will of God.” Campbell explained Gospel perfection is diametrically opposed to the world’s definition. Human perfection is centered on self, conversely, Christian perfection is about surrendering to God’s vision with the goal of eternal life with Jesus.

“Sometimes what God most wants us to be is not flawless but humble,” she said. “Mistakes are not disasters, but opportunities to learn.”

Another stumbling block she discussed is burnout. It manifests in paying attention to mindless diversions and putting off important items. The forerunners of monasticism, the ancient mystics who fled to the deserts to focus more on God called it “acedia” a Greek word that means “without care.” The desert fathers and mothers called it the midday demon because it usually happened between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Time seemed to stand still and young monks would start daydreaming their sacrifices were too great, life was too monotonous, and going back home seemed like a better choice. This condition, spiritual sluggish-

ness, can afflict every Christian.

Their remedies included paying attention to where you are spending time; asking if activities will draw you closer to Jesus; avoiding vice and loose talk; not being curious about things that would distance you from the Holy Spirit; and to embrace routine in prayer and work. Campbell distinguished it from depression which calls for treatment beyond spiritual remedies.

Campbell reminded retreatants why they spread God’s message. Jesus’ last commandment before the Ascension was to go and make disciples of all nations. “Lay believers are on the front line of this work. They have the duty to spread the divine message,” she said. “Our culture likes to relegate religion to the private sphere, treating religious practice as a shameful habit we should not indulge in public. Faith treated strictly as a private affair soon atrophies either by curdling into self-righteousness or getting compartmentalized out of existence.”

She explained there are unchurched people everywhere who need to hear the word of God. “A conversation you have may be the only connection they ever have to the Church or Christ. Even in our Catholic parishes and our schools there are souls flying under the radar drifting in and out, people locked in prisons of loneliness, confusion or doubt. (They are) waiting for one of us to notice them to reach out, to make the love of Christ palpable in their lives. Christ is counting on us to help him save souls.”

If Christians are compelled to preach the good news, is anyone interested in listening? She answered yes, dioceses across the United States, England, France and Spain are reporting record numbers of converts and re-churched people. Campbell said splashy media campaigns, movies, and podcasts help bring awareness and might start conversations, but genuine conversion must happen in the context of real life relationships.

The conference also offered opportunities for adoration, reconciliation, Mass, and socialization. Refuel was hosted by the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation, under the direction of Sr. Sara Kowal, SCTJM. It was held at the Terra Santa Retreat Center, Rapid City.



Ft. Pierre keeping Christ Child until next Christmas

The “*levantada del Niño Dios*” is a Mexican tradition, celebrated mainly on February 2 (*Día de la Candelaria*), which marks the end of the Christmas season. It consists of removing the figure of the Child Jesus from the crib, dressing him in new clothes, and often lulling him with songs, and praying, symbolizing the presentation of Jesus in the temple and the purification of the Virgin Mary. This celebration is a moment of family unity that formalizes the farewell of the Child Jesus from the manger, keeping him until the next Christmas. The “Godparents” of the Baby Jesus are those who found a miniature statue of the Baby Jesus in the *Rosca* — a special cake prepared for the feast for Three Kings on January 6. They are (left to right) Nicholas Moore, Martha Vallejo, Efen and Mireya Velasquez. Godparents are asked to bring next year’s *Rosca* and tamales. (Inset) 6 p.m. Hispanic Choir. (Courtesy photos)



Presentation celebration in Hill City

Parishioners of St. Rose of Lima Church, Hill City, participated in a Tamale Cooking Class on February 7. The group made 175 tamales for a parish-wide feed on February 8 to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation, February 2.

“The idea for the event was the fruit of a conversation between me and some of our Mexican ladies, and my Parish Leadership Team, discussing both how to better unite our parish and bridge the two language groups, as well as which Mexican faith traditions from December-February,” explained Father Mark Horn.

The celebration began on the Feast of Epiphany when the three kings brought gifts and Wreath Cake for parishioners. The wreath cake, similar to a King Cake, is circular with a tiny baby Jesus baked into them. Tradition dictates that whoever finds the baby brings tamales on the Feast of the Presentation. (Photo by Bobbi Jo Dondelinger)

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH Mahipya Na Maka Okogna



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Lent Reconciliation & Mercy Nights

Belle Fourche, St. Paul, Mercy Nights, starting
February 25, Wednesdays during
Lent — 6-7 p.m.

Bison, Blessed Sacrament, Tuesday,
March 17 — 7 p.m.

Buffalo, St. Anthony, Tuesday,
March 17 — 5 p.m.

Colome, St. Isidore, Tuesday,
March 3 — 5 - 6 p.m. CT

Custer, St. John, Thursday,
March 12 — 6 - 8 p.m.

Deadwood, St. Ambrose, Friday,
March 20 — 5 p.m.

Eagle Butte, All Saints, Thursday,
March 26 — 5:30 p.m.

Faith, St. Joseph, Tuesday,
March 31 — 5 - 7 p.m.

Fort Pierre, St. John, Tuesday,
March 24 — 6:30 p.m. CT

Gregory, St. Joseph, Thursday,
March 19 — 6:30 p.m. CT

Hot Springs, St. Anthony, Mercy Night,
Thursday, March 5 — 6 - 8 p.m.

Lemmon, St. Mary, Tuesday,
March 24 — 5 - 7 p.m.

McLaughlin, St. Bernard, Sunday,
March 22 — 7 p.m. MT

Newell, St. Mary, Thursday,
March 5 — 6 p.m.

Piedmont, Our Lady of the Black Hills,
Tuesday, March 10 — 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Prescho, Christ the King, Thursday,
March 5 — 6:30 p.m. CT

Rapid City, Blessed Sacrament, Mercy Night,
Tuesday, March 24 — 4 - 6 p.m.

Rapid City, Cathedral, Mercy Night,
Saturday, February 21 — 7 - 8 p.m.

Rapid City, Cathedral, Mercy Night,
Saturday, March 21 — 7 - 8 p.m.

Rapid City, St. Therese, Mercy Night,
Thursday, March 26 — 5 - 7 p.m.

Spearfish, St. Joseph, Mercy Nights starting Feb-
ruary 25, Wednesdays in Lent — 4 - 7 p.m.

Sturgis, St. Francis, Sunday, March 15 — 3 p.m.

Timber Lake, Holy Cross, Monday,
March 23 — 5 - 7 p.m.

White River, Sacred Heart, Thursday,
March 26 — 5 p.m. CT

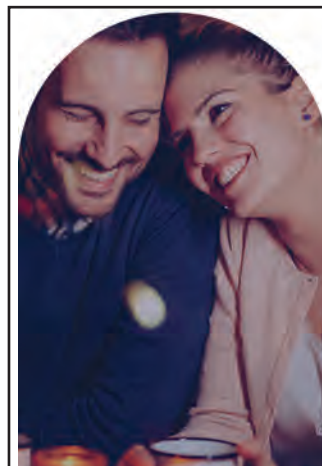
Winner, Immaculate Conception,
Thursday, March 12 — 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. CT

MAILING LABEL

WRC February 2026

West River Catholic

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After Cana DATE NIGHTS

6:30-8PM | FOOD PROVIDED
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APR 11
MAY 16

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SOULS & HEARTS

Internal Family Systems Workshop

Making Sense of Our Internal Experiences



Dr. Peter Malinoski

Join Dr. Peter Malinoski and Bridget Adams
for this experiential IFS workshop.

Dr. Peter is a clinical psychologist dedicated to
helping people understand their interior
life and overcome the obstacles that hinder
deeper relationships with God and others.

His insights have been shared in outlets
such as *The Pillar*, *The Lila Rose Show* and
The Chris Stefanick Show.



Saturday, March 28

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

St. Carlo Acutis Newman Center

\$40/person (\$20 for priests, religious, missionaries)

<https://members.soulsandhearts.com/rapidcityIFS>

"What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it
not your passions that are at war in your members?" James 4:1



PALM SUNDAY BRUNCH

MARCH 29th 12 PM - 2 PM

RAMKOTA HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Doors open at 11:30am | Mimosa bar available

Brunch begins at 12:15pm | Keynote to follow



Dr. Peter Malinoski, Co-Founder and President
of Souls & Hearts, will be the keynote speaker.
Dr. Peter is a clinical psychologist whose work
focuses on identifying and removing the
interior obstacles that prevent us from having
a deeper relationship with God and others.

His work has been explored in conversations
on *The Pillar*, *The Lila Rose Show*, and *The
Chris Stefanick Show*.



Sponsorship and tickets available at

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Sponsorship includes reception at Bishop Bullock's home with Dr. Malinoski