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U.S.A. Semiquincentennial 1776-2026

Over the course of the next year, Bishop Scott Bullock will be reflecting upon the 250th Anniversary of the founding of our nation and the role that the Catholic faith has played on its foundation and existence by considering seminal aspects of our nation's history from the perspective of our Catholic faith. To read about our Catholic roots see p. 2



January 2026

Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota

Volume 53 Number 9 www.rapidcitydiocese.org

In the Diocese of Rapid City

Fr. Timothy Castor pastor, of **St. Francis of Assisi Church** in Sturgis, said his parish will participate, "Absolutely! We're going to open a gift shop with t-shirts and mugs!" The parish youth group has been given the task of designing the art.

St. Francis Mission, on the Rosebud Reservation, is looking into ways to participate in the "Special Year of St. Francis." As of January 16 plans are still being formulated.



Pope Leo XIV declares Special Year of St. Francis

By ALMUDENA MARTINEZ-BORDIU
CATHOLIC NEWS AGENCY

Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed a "Special Year of St. Francis" to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the saint's death. During this time of grace, which will extend until January 2027, the faithful are granted the opportunity to obtain a plenary indulgence.

This Franciscan Jubilee Year, considered a gift for the entire Church and an occasion for authentic spiritual renewal, was inaugurated on Jan. 10 with a decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary of the Holy See.

Until Jan. 10 of next year, the faithful can obtain this grace under the usual conditions — sacramental confession, Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the pope — by making a pilgrimage to any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis anywhere in the world.

Furthermore, the elderly, the sick, and those who, for serious reasons, cannot leave their homes can obtain the plenary indulgence by spiritually joining in the jubilee celebrations and offering their prayers, pains, or sufferings to God.

In a world where "the virtual takes over the real, disagreements and social violence are part of everyday life, and peace becomes more insecure and distant every day, this Year of St. Francis spurs all of us, each according to our possibilities, to imitate the poor man of Assisi, to form ourselves as far as possible on the model of Christ," the decree states.

For the Order of Friars Minor, this time is also an opportunity for the faithful to become "models of holiness of life and constant witnesses of peace."

On the occasion of this anniversary,

Pope Leo XIV addressed a letter to the ministers general of the Franciscan Family Conference in which he emphasized that "in this era, marked by so many seemingly endless wars, by internal and social divisions that create distrust and fear, he continues to speak. Not because he offers technical solutions, but because his life points to the authentic source of peace."

In this regard, he highlighted that St. Francis reminds us that "peace with God, peace among people, and peace with creation are inseparable dimensions of a single call to universal reconciliation."

Catholic Roots Before 1776: Spanish and French Missions



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

"Father Vaillant began pacing restlessly up and down as he spoke, and the Bishop watched him, musing. It was just this in his friend that was dear to him. 'Where there is great love there are always miracles,' he said at length. ... The Miracles of the Church seem to me to rest not so much upon faces or voices or healing power coming suddenly near to us from afar off, but upon our perceptions

being made finer, so that for a moment our eyes can see and our ears can hear what is there about us always."

—Willa Cather,
Death Comes for the Archbishop,
Book I, Chapter 4.

Willa Cather's great novel, "Death Comes for the Archbishop," describes the efforts of early Catholic missionaries, in this case in the Southwestern part of our now United States. Here Cather articulates a deeply Catholic understanding of its mission of evangelization. The missionary's task is to see clearly — to recognize grace already at work in people and cultures — and to help others see it too. And yet contemporary perceptions of the early Catholic missionaries in the western hemisphere — operating in the two centuries before the Declaration of Independence — present a different perspective: one of the message of the Gospel "coming from afar off" to impose a

conversion. While undoubtedly there were imperfect realizations of the *bona fide* Catholic vision of missionary activities, where the dignity of each human person and the missionary instinct to propose the Gospel message is to be freely accepted, I would like to propose that the Gospel

message has indeed served as foundational to our nation. That the Declaration of Independence, long after the efforts of the first Catholic missionaries,

was able to declare the equality of persons "endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" was only possible in the context of the Christian message of Jesus' incarnation that endowed all humanity with an innate dignity. One does not have to look far across human history to see that few places and civilizations have insisted upon such dignity of the human person.

As a result, the efforts of early Catholic missionaries provided a *de facto* foundation of the life of our nation, which has pursued, however imperfectly, "life, liberty

and the pursuit of happiness" of its citizens. In western South Dakota, we cannot but consider the specific encounter between the Gospel message borne by French and religious missionaries (notably our Jesuits) and the native people of our regions. While generous missionaries have sought to defend the dignity of native persons (as seen in the provision of schools, churches, and charitable efforts), at the same time, we want to accept in honesty that the larger activity of our nation has sought to suppress the cultural riches of our native sisters and brothers, too often under the auspices of a Christian nation.

However imperfectly, the foundation of our "national experiment" is closely associated with the Christian vision of the human person who has been endowed with a supreme dignity because s/he has been created and redeemed by God. Early Catholic missionaries assumed a large role in setting this foundation which, across its now 250 years, we have sought to live more fully. May God "shed His grace" on our nation, that we might live more fully the vision of the dignity of each person created and redeemed by God, first proposed by French and Spanish missionaries in the two centuries before the foundation of our nation.

Next month: The Declaration of Independence (1776)



UPCOMING:
THE MISSION



CINEMA with the *Shepherd*

JAN. 29 | 6:30PM | ST. JOSEPH HALL, OLPH

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'Be merciful as your heavenly Father is Merciful'

BY LAURIE HALLSTROM



Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City, is hosting a Divine Mercy Lenten Mission with Fr. Mark Baron, MIC, from the National Shrine of Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The mission will be held the evenings of Monday - Wednesday,

**FR. MARK
BARON, MIC**

March 23-25. Confessions and Adoration will be available and a Healing Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Scott Bullock on March 25.

Father Baron answered questions via email for the *West River Catholic*.

Why did you choose this particular order?

My community is the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. I chose the Marians because they were faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church and also because of my devotion to the Blessed Mother and Divine Mercy.

Your career began in engineering. Is it

a hurdle to move from engineering to the priesthood?

There are a lot of priests who have a background in science. Typically, that aids in the study of theology because theology is an analytic discipline and guys who have degrees in science are typically analytical so that is helpful in the transition from engineering to seminary formation and priestly life.

We are living in turbulent times, why do we have to give and receive mercy?

We have to first learn how to receive mercy in order to give mercy. The heart of this dynamic is where Jesus says, "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is Merciful." Since you can't give what you don't have, we thus have the need to learn how to have our hearts filled with God's mercy so that we can learn how to give that mercy to others.

How will retreatants learn to trust God more — isn't that relinquishing control?

Trust helps us to give up being a control freak. As creatures, we humans can't do it all ourselves. We need the help of others. Trust is about relying on others.

When we learn to trust in God by relying on his help, then, we become more free and peaceful because the weight of trying to control everything is lifted from us.

How have you seen divine mercy working in people's lives?

The goal of each Divine Mercy Mission is for the people to have an encounter experience with the Merciful Savior. The mission is organized so that people can have an opportunity for this to happen through the preached word and through his sacramental presence. When you have that encounter it changes the way you see God, yourself, others and the Church. In varying degrees, this is what happens to those who participate in the mission.

The parish lists retreat information on the website blessedsacramentchurch.org/divine-mercy-mission.



Jesus I trust in You!

Bishop's Calendar

January 22 - February 17, 2026

Subject to change without notice

January 22-23, Thursday-Friday

Western S.D. Catholic Foundation Board Retreat, Terra Sancta

January 24, Saturday

11:45 a.m. Mass with Refuel Conference Participants, Terra Sancta

January 25, Sunday

8 a.m. Confirmation Meeting &

9 a.m. Mass, St. Paul Church, Belle Fourche

January 26, Monday

9 a.m. National Catholic Schools Week Mass, Cathedral

January 29, Thursday

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

February 3, Tuesday

Noon Native Ministry Meeting, Sacred Heart, Philip

February 6, Friday

Visit Immaculate Conception Parish School of Religion, Rapid City

February 7, Saturday

Veritatis Splendor Institute, Terra Sancta

February 13, Friday

9 a.m. Moms' Group *Visio Divina* for Lent, Cathedral

February 14, Saturday

5 p.m. Married Sweethearts Mass, Dinner, Terra Sancta

February 16, Monday

Presidents' Day, Chancery Closed

February 17, Tuesday

4:30 p.m. Confirmation Meeting &

5:30 p.m. Mass, St. Joseph Church, Spearfish

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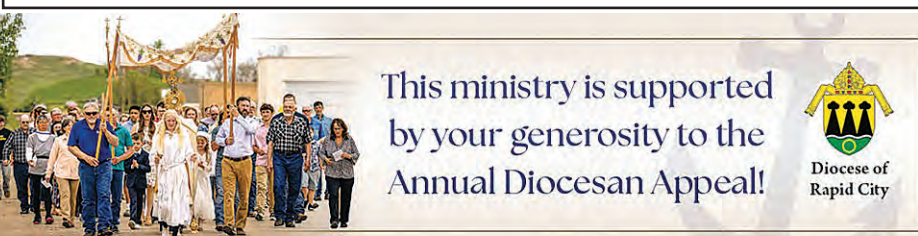
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'Adventures In Discipleship'

St. John's Parish, Ft. Pierre, hosted a Women's Advent Retreat on December 6, 2025, in Padre Hall. Dr. Carole Brown, director of the Sioux Spiritual Retreat Center, Howes, spoke to 68 women from six parishes. During the retreat she emphasized meditating on three advents: the original advent, when Mary's life and plans were disrupted by the message of the angel, leading to an amazing adventure; and our personal advent, in which the Lord comes and surprises us, disrupts our life and our plans and puts us on new adventures as

his disciples. The final event, she discussed is when Christ will come again, either at the moment of our death, or the second coming. The planning committee was assisted by Brown, Fr. Janusz Korban, volunteers, the youth, and a local restaurant that provided breakfast. *(Courtesy photos)*



Fanning installed as Lector in Rome

On January 11, Cardinal Fabio Baggio, C.S., Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, conferred the Ministry of Lector on Gabe Fanning, from the Diocese of Rapid City, and 31 other seminarians, in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at the Pontifical North American College, Vatican City State. Addressing the new lectors in his homily, Cardinal Baggio encouraged the seminarians to proclaim the Word of God with faithfulness and joy. Following the homily, Cardinal Baggio placed the Holy Scriptures in the hands of each candidate and said, "Take this book of holy Scripture and be faithful in handing on the word of God, so that it may grow strong in the hearts of his people." The seminarians, currently in their first year of theological formation for the priesthood, will have three additional years of theological, spiritual, and pastoral formation before being ordained to the priesthood in their home dioceses. *(Photo courtesy Pontifical North American College, Rome)*

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'Faith Seeking Understanding' theme for March Pastoral Ministry Days

By PEGGY SUE MUTCHLER
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

"Fides Quaerens Intellectum" is Latin for Faith Seeking Understanding. This year's Pastoral Ministry Days will feature Dr. Zena Hitz, who brings a rich background in the philosophical intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of pastoral work, in her keynote addresses. Participants can expect thought-provoking presentations that invite deeper reflection on how faith and reason intersect in ministry and how, as Catholic leaders, we can grow in our inner lives while serving others more effectively.

Hitz grew up in a reading family that often discussed the facts they read. Her parents enjoyed reading and reflecting. She and her brother became avid readers. Her brother became a scientist, and she became a philosopher.

She found herself in a crisis and wanted to know where ethics, morality, and our sense of right and wrong came from. She chose Saint John College. Attending school there met her need at the time to read, converse, and think.

Hitz currently serves as a professor in the Great Books program at Saint John College in Annapolis, Maryland. However, she said that there the term "professor" is not used; instead, the word "tutor" is used. The term tutor has a slightly different meaning from the word professor: a tutor communicates that their teaching is not the transmission of expertise, but the leading of fellow travelers on a path to

their own learning. As Hitz explains on her online forum, "The pinnacle of intellectual life, so far as I am concerned, is to sit around a table talking about the deep questions, inspired by excellent books. We are drawn to that table by a desire to understand and to learn, with and from one another. We read, speak, and listen, not to draw a boundary between ourselves and others, but to uncover bonds of human unity."

She sees her experience at St. John College as aligning with the way she understands learning. The staff of the Office of Faith Formation is grateful that Hitz is bringing that vision to Pastoral Ministry Days, March 15-17, at the Terra Sancta Retreat Center.

Her biography shows she has pursued an extensive academic formation, studying at Saint John's College, Cambridge University, and the University of Chicago, and earning her Ph.D. in ancient philosophy from Princeton University. In addition to these accomplishments, readers might be interested in her online community dubbed the Catherine Project. The Catherine Project is an open online community for readers to read and discuss books. Hitz founded this in 2020, and since then, the project has offered over 700 courses, serving nearly 4500 readers in more than fifty countries.

She is the author of several acclaimed works that explore the life of the mind, faith, and human flourishing. Her book,

"Lost in Thought: The Hidden Pleasures of an Intellectual Life," reflects on the intrinsic value of learning and intellectual curiosity, echoing themes that resonate widely across secular and religious circles. The book discussions have highlighted how thoughtful engagement with learning can deepen one's life and faith.

Her most recent work, "A Philosopher Looks at the Religious Life," examines faith, sacrifice, asceticism, and happiness through a philosophical lens, offering readers a rich bridge between intellectual reflection and spiritual practice. These themes will be central to her presentations at Pastoral Ministry Days, where she will challenge participants to consider how their own formation — intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral — equips them for

ministry in today's world.

Pastoral Ministry Days is a cornerstone event for the Diocese of Rapid City's formation efforts, drawing ministers from across western South Dakota to learn, pray, and grow together. Hitz's presence promises to enrich this year's gathering with profound insight into the harmony between faith and reason, and the deep joy that comes from seeking truth in the service of Christ and his Church. Please visit the Diocese of Rapid City's website under Faith Formation to register for Pastoral Ministry Days. The cost is \$115; however, an early bird discount of \$10 is available if you register before February 8. Find online registration at dioceseofrapidcity.org/pmd26/.



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FEATURING:
DR. ZENA HITZ



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.

February

Ordinations: 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.

WSDCF grants slated for distribution

For fiscal year 2025-26, the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation has approved the allocation of \$1,358,873.70 in awards and grants to parishes, schools, and ministries across the Diocese of Rapid City. This year's approved allocation represents an additional \$218,000 over the previous year, which is a 16% increase in support for Catholic ministries serving this diocese.

In 2025, the grant nominating committee met on October 23, to make the recommendations. Then the WSDCF board members met and voted on November 19. Awardees were notified December 19, 2025. The parishes and organizations will receive their checks in July this year.

2025-26 Award and Grant Recipients include:

All Saints Parish - Eagle Butte; Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church - Rapid City; Casa Maria Retirement Home - Piedmont; Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help - Rapid City; Catholic Social Services - Rapid City; Christ the King Church & Presho Holy Angel Cemetery - Presho; Church Response - Rapid City; Cornerstone Rescue Mission - Rapid City; Diocese of Rapid City; Faith Formation - DIORC; Gassen Fund - Gregory; Healing the Culture - Rapid City; Office of Vocations - DIORC; Priest Retirement and Aid Association - DIORC; Rapid City Catholic School System; Real Presence Radio; Sioux Spiritual Center - Howes; Standing Rock Reservation Ministry - DIORC; St. Anthony Parish - Buffalo; St. Carlo Acutis Student Center/SDSMT; St. Francis Fund - DIORC; St. Francis Mission - Sapa Un Jesuit Academy; St. Joseph's School - St. Joseph Parish - Spearfish; St. Therese the Little Flower Parish; St. Vincent de Paul - Spearfish/Belle Fourche; St. Vincent de Paul Society - OLPH; St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store.



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2026 Catholic Heritage Society Mass Intention Schedule

Catholic University of America, WA - January 20th
Blessed Sacrament, Bison - February 14th
Sacred Heart, Burke - March 21st
St. John the Baptist, Custer - April 19th
St. Ambrose, Deadwood - May 10th
St. Bernard, McLaughlin - June 7th
Cathedral OLPH, Rapid City - July 12th
Holy Cross, Timber Lake - August 16th
St. Joseph, Spearfish - September 13th
St. Patrick, Wall - October 11th
Christ the King, Presho - November 22nd
St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis - December 13th

Monthly Masses are offered for living and deceased planned giving donors. Consider joining the Catholic Heritage Society with a deferred gift to the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation. Call 605-721-6843 or visit www.wsdcf.org to learn more..

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1



2

Seasonal Celebrations

1. The Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass was held Dec. 12, 2025, at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. Children dress as St. Juan Diego or as Mexican peasants to present roses to OLG. Dianna Munoz with her sons Leonel and Adriel. (WRC photo by Becky Berreth)

2. Simbang Gabi, a Filipino Advent tradition with nine Masses to prepare for the coming of the Christ Child was held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City. On Dec. 19 the children reenact the Annunciation. A host of heavenly angels arrives to witness the event. (WRC photo by Laurie Hallstrom)

3. A Spanish/English Posada was also held at Blessed Sacrament Church on Dec. 14, 2025. The word translates to "asking the inn keeper for shelter." Elizabeth Pauley and Noah Rangel portrayed Mary and Joseph. (Courtesy photo)

4. On the Feast of Epiphany, Jan. 4, Fr. Mark Horn met three wisemen, Ronaldo Munoz, Giovanni Munoz and Sebastian Munoz. (Courtesy photo)

See more photos from the events on the diocesan website dioceseofrapidcity.org.



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4



Fr. Max Vetch accompanied students from Black Hills State University, Spearfish, to the SEEK26 Conference held in Columbus, Ohio, January 1-5. (Courtesy photo)

St. Pier Giorgio Frassati inspired the SEEK26 theme 'To the Heights'

BY FR. MAX VETCH

"Why are you here?" Long before ordination or priestly formation, these words once greeted Fr. Chase Hilgenbrinck as a young adult making a confession. With a bit of confusion, he listed his sins not knowing what else to say, which were significant. After being given absolution, he was told to not return to that church until he was willing to take God seriously. For most, this might be a reason to give up.

He wondered what priest would say something like that? But for the now Father Chase and for the near 25,000 attendees of SEEK26 including students from Black Hills State University and S.D. Mines and Technology, they found the reason to take God seriously.

Father Chase, from the Diocese of Peoria, Ill., was a keynote speaker at the annual FOCUS SEEK 2026 conference held Janu-

ary 1-5 in Columbus, Ohio. The theme was "To the Heights," inspired by the recently canonized St. Pier Giorgio Frassati, encouraging young Catholics to pursue holiness and Christ through service, echoing Frassati's love for climbing and evangelizing to "go love the world."

Through masterclass level talks, times of prayer, Mass, confession, visiting with priests and religious men and women from across the country, an atmosphere was born. One where being Catholic made sense, where belief in God was the norm and a constant delight. Belief in God and love of the Catholic Church was the basis of conversation and connection.

Though not all knew why they agreed to come to SEEK on New Year's Day, they know now that it was because God wanted to make something known, that he pur-

posefully willed our existence, and wants to fill us with life to the full. He didn't make a mistake in your arrival or stay in this world. He has made you for the heights, and the horizon attainable on our own is not enough. That is why we are here, and such a pursuit is worth taking seriously.

Three Spearfish college students who attended the conference made these observations:

"My time at SEEK 2026 was absolutely transformative. Experiencing the Eucharist during adoration among thousands of peers was the most incredible moment of my entire life." -**Laurie Vifquain**

"I have been going to SEEK for multiple years now and I have found that each year it comes down to the same two words, rela-

tionship and change. As you spend a week taking part in the sacraments, attending as many breakout sessions as possible, and exploring a new town, there is a change in your heart. As your heart is changed, so is your relationship not only with God but also with your peers. It becomes so joyful! There is this indescribable feeling of excitement and gratitude that you don't want anyone else to miss out on! SEEK is an event that reminds you of the beauty of Catholicism." -**Kendra Palmlund**

"My time at SEEK was great. Being around thousands of other college students pursuing their faith is inspiring. SEEK is a great way to dedicate the beginning of the year to God. I can't wait to go back next year!" -**Justin Hausmann**

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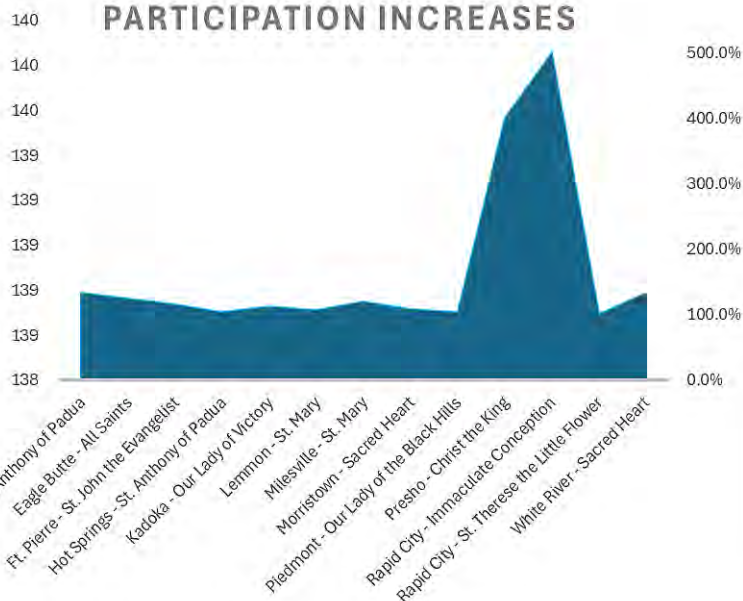


College students from St. Carlo Acutis Catholic Student Center, Rapid City, attended the SEEK26 conference, held January 1-5, in Denver, Colo. According to the center's chaplain, Fr. Mark McCormick, "SEEK26 aimed to motivate attendees to live out their faith actively." (Courtesy photo)

Thirteen parishes see increased participation in Annual Diocesan Appeal

“With deep gratitude, I’m pleased to share that several parishes in our diocese have increased their participation in the 2026 Annual Diocesan Appeal. As of January 9, thirteen parishes have grown their participation by more than 100% compared to last year’s appeal at this time. It is my hope that more parishes will follow this example so our diocese may continue to offer the many programs and events which benefit the people of the Diocese of Rapid City,” said Dcn. Tim Minihan, director of the Diocesan Development Office.

ANNUAL DIOCESAN APPEAL PARTICIPATION INCREASES



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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.AnthonyofPaduaCatholi-ux4yo



Televised Mass

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

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2026 READING LIST

- **Bread Grows in Winter** by Ida Friederike Gorres
- **A Year with the Church Fathers** by Mike Aquilina
- **Chaste Heart Gems** by Donald H Calloway, MIC
- **The Song of the Lamb** by Robert Cardinal Sarah
- **33 Days to the Holy Family**
by Donald H Calloway, MIC and Scott L Smith Jr.

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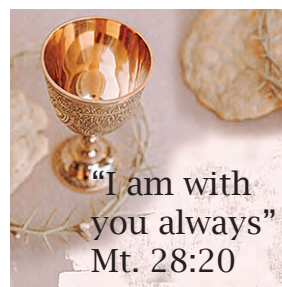
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Whatsoever you do...

Timber Lake, Trail City, Isabel, White Horse, Firesteel, Promise & Lemmon

Sixty Edge and Life Teen youth from Isabel, Firesteel, Timber Lake, Trail City, Whitehorse, and Promise, packed 52 Boxes of Joy as a service project in November. The teens worked in small groups and used donated items to assemble boxes. This year, the youth prayed the Rosary before packing boxes adding the rosary they prayed with in each one. Holy Rosary parish serves as a drop off point for the program receiving an additional 13 boxes donated by the confirmation students in Lemmon. Boxes of Joy is a program of Cross Catholic Outreach. Each box contains Christmas gifts for children in developing countries.



Rapid City, Blessed Sacrament



The youth ministry wrapped supplies to support the homeless in their community. More than 100 students from grades 6-12 participated in the "St. Nicholas Bags" initiative, creating more than 250 vinyl string bags packed with essential items. The youth, included messages of encouragement in each bag. Church Response helped to distribute the bags. Supplies were funded by the youth, their families, and parishioners.

Courtesy photos

Piedmont

Volunteers from Our Lady of the Black Hills and the community, headed by the Piedmont Valley Sewing Club and the Piedmont Valley Food Pantry, collect food and gifts for those in need. The gifts are sorted and wrapped. Boxes full of Christmas dinners are assembled, and then the Black Hawk and Piedmont Volunteer Fire Departments deliver gifts and Christmas dinners to more than 70 families in Piedmont, Black Hawk, and Summerset. Over 750 gifts are given out each year thanks to the generosity of parishioners and the area churches.



Rapid City, St. Therese

Confirmation students from St. Therese the Little Flower, Rapid City, made 250 Thanksgiving food bags in November and 250 Christmas food bags the Saturday before Christmas to



help Church Response feed the poor and homeless. They also completed an Advent project making 16 birthday cake gift sets for those who cannot afford birthday celebrations for their children or a family member. The St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Isaac Jogues Parish, and Church Response helped distribute meal bags and cake sets.



Proud to support the Rapid City Catholic School System

The Hillard Williams Group

243 Founders Park Drive, Suite 101 | Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 343-7720 | www.hillardwilliams.com



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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.



Married Sweethearts

HOLY HOUR | MASS | DINNER | DANCE

FEB. 14, 2026 | TERRA SANCTA
BEGINNING AT 4PM

Love is...

RAPIDCITYDIOCESE.ORG/FAMILY



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

We form hearts and minds in the Truth!
The Rapid City Catholic School System



2026-2027 Registration Preschool - Grade 12

Returning Family & New Sibling
Registration

January 23-February 6, 2026

New Family Registration

Begins February 10, 2026

For a tour & more information

Contact Marcia Werner

605-343-8484 X203

admissions@rccss.org

Visit: www.rccss.org

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS
PROFICIENCY LEVEL (AT LEVEL)



READING

SES 92% & STM 94%

OR ADVANCED



MATH

SES 89% & STM 88%

Come Check Us Out! **OPEN HOUSES**

Kindergarten Round-Up

January 14

9:00-10:30 AM

St. Elizabeth Seton Open House

January 15

Preschool - Grade 5

Come visit between 4-6:00 PM

St. Thomas More Open House

February 3

Grade 6 - Grade 12

Visit between 4-6:00 PM

with free admission to the STM
HS basketball game

STM MS Student Shadow Day

February 11

Call 605-348-1477 to RSVP



United in Faith and Community *All are welcome!*

National Catholic Schools Week

Come Celebrate with Us January 25 - 31, 2026

Monday, January 26

- All- System Mass with Bishop Scott Bullock 9:00 am The Cathedral
- Men in Black Basketball Game at St Thomas More High School
Dinner 5-6:30 PM, SES Game 5:30, MS Game 6:15, and Priests vs. STM 7:00

Tuesday, January 27

- Fidelis Blue Mixer at St. Joseph's Hall, The Cathedral 5:30-7:00 PM

We are your #1 source for Catholic News in the Diocese of Rapid City

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.

For your convenience a pre-addressed envelope is included in the January 2025 print edition of the *West River Catholic*. To contribute, use the

inserted envelope or the QR code for easy donating. Another way to make your donation is online, please go to: rapidcitydiocese.org/wrc and it will take you to the donation page. To receive email updates and stories posted weekly, send your

name and email address to lhallstrom@dioc.org or sign up on the diocesan website. The Annual Voluntary Subscription Drive helps us keep everyone updated on events and inspiring stories of faith from around the diocese.

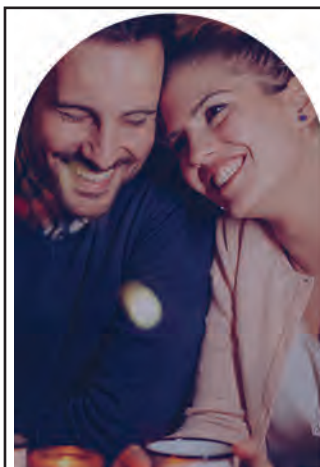


MAILING LABEL

WRC January 2026

West River Catholic

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After Cana DATE NIGHTS

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

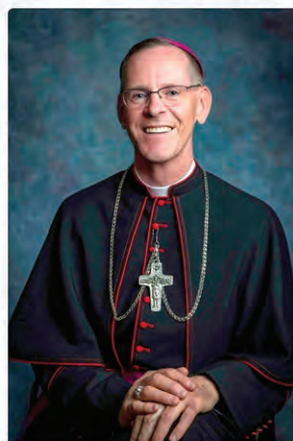
FEB 7
MAR 14

Join other married couples for a date night as we explore the beauty of the Sacrament of marriage and provide opportunities for prayer, discussion, and growth. Our Spring series is all about growing in intimacy with your beloved.

Learn more at: rapidcitydiocese.org/family



ASH WEDNESDAY COLLECTION



Jesus himself specified the spiritual practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (Matthew, Chapter 6) that have become the benchmark of our Lenten observances. As you consider which acts of prayer and fasting you intend to offer during this Lent, I invite you to complete your Lenten observances through a gift to the Ash Wednesday Collection for Catholic Social Services.

May this act of almsgiving enhance your Lenten journey and, even more, provide for the life-enhancing services offered in our name through Catholic Social Services.

Bishop Scott E. Bullock

Retirement PARTY

IN HONOR OF

Lorinda Collings

February 10, 2026

4:30 - 6:30 PM

529 Kansas City Street, Rapid City, SD 57701



For More Information: 605.348.6086
Cards and well wishes may be sent to the address above.

A Legacy of Stewardship and Service

After more than 32 years of dedicated service, Lorinda Collings, Finance & HR Director at Catholic Social Services of Rapid City, will retire in February 2026.

Since joining CSS in October 1993, Lorinda has been a steady and faithful steward of the organization's financial and human resources, helping guide its mission to serve families and individuals across western South Dakota.

To celebrate Lorinda's remarkable career, Catholic Social Services invites friends, colleagues, and community members to a come-and-go reception.



Calendar/Envelope distribution to occur the weekend of **Sunday, February 15, 2026.**

Collection will take place on **Ash Wednesday, February 18th, 2026.**

Donate online using the QR code - www.cssrapidcity.com/aw