

# THE DRAIRIE CATHOLIC

*Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm*

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 37 No. 3 December 2022



*(Photo by Christine Clancy)*

## Bishop celebrates first Friday of Advent Mass with Catholic school leaders

**NEW ULM** – On the first Friday of Advent, Catholic school leaders of the Diocese of New Ulm gathered for a morning Mass celebrated by Bishop Chad Zielinski in the chapel at the pastoral center in New Ulm. In his homily, the bishop preached that every child is created in the image and likeness of God and encouraged the school leaders to “Look for the tiniest flame of hope in each child you educate and fan that flame.” Pictured with Bishop Zielinski are front row, left, Dr. Michelle Kramer, diocesan director of Catholic Schools, Ashley Honetschlager (Marshall), Lori Rangaard (Canby), Susan Mielke (Winsted), Lisa Dieter (Tracy), Betty Jodzio (Hutchinson), Jaci Garvey (Minnesota), and Peter Roufs (Sleepy Eye). Back row, left, Mary Franta (Wabasso), Erica DeVries (New Ulm), Karen Schulte (New Ulm), Bishop Zielinski, Kevin McCaffrey (Winsted), Sr. Julie Brandt (New Ulm), and Beth Steffl (Springfield).



# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

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(Photo by Dr. Michelle Kramer)

**WATKINS** – Dan and Tammy Winter’s annual tradition of making ice luminaries for families that have lost a loved one has grown significantly. Pictured, Dan Winter fills a balloon with water that once frozen, becomes a lantern to house the votive candle.

(Read more about the Winters’ ministry, page 11.)

## Diocese recruiting candidates for its next class of permanent deacons

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**NEW ULM** – Bishop Chad W. Zielinski has authorized the recruitment and formation of a new class of permanent deacons for the Diocese of New Ulm. Set to begin in early 2023, this class will be the third class of permanent deacons. The first class was ordained in 2012. There are currently 18 assigned permanent deacons serving in the Diocese of New Ulm.

Deacon Mark Kober is the diocesan director of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program. He oversees and implements the recruiting process. According to Deacon Kober, the five-year program will assist the deacon candidates in developing spirituality, academics, pastoral

skills, and human skills in preparation for ministry in the Church.

“The diocese has been abundantly blessed by this vital ministry and I am pleased that a new permanent deacon formation class will begin soon,” said Bishop Zielinski. “The role of a deacon invites men to use their talents and skills to reach out to the faithful of God in need of preparation for the sacraments, marriage and spiritual counseling, catechesis to all ages, pastoral visits to the homebound, care homes, the imprisoned and the homeless, and prayer and comfort to the dying,” he said.

The bishop continued, “Their formed gift to celebrate funerals, weddings, baptisms, and preach the Word of God is an important contribution to parish and



(Photo by Christine Clancy)

Assisting at Mass, Deacon John Hansen was part of the first class of permanent deacons to be ordained in the diocese in 2012. Deacon Hansen serves the Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community (Darwin, Litchfield, Manannah, and the merged parish of St. Gertrude, Forest City). Also pictured is Deacon Mark Kober, diocesan Director of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program.

diocesan leadership. All of these noted areas of ministry and more have been a most fruitful blessing

to the entire diocese. As I make pastoral visits to our parishes, I am excited to see the ministry of

the diaconate alive and well.”

The order of the diaconate is an ancient order of the Church re-instituted as a permanent office by Pope Paul VI at the suggestion of the Second Vatican Council. The word deacon comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, which means “servant.” The apostles chose deacons to help them respond to the pressing needs of the infant Church and maintain fidelity to its mission of service.

“The deacon is ordained not to be in charge in his ministries but to serve the Church in an extraordinary way,” said Deacon Kober. “It makes sense, then, that a significant portion of a deacon’s time is spent in charitable service.”

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## Prayer Vigil for Life good time to praise God for Dobbs decision

**WASHINGTON** – The National Prayer Vigil for Life is hosted each January by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Pro-Life Secretariat, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and The Catholic University of America’s Office of Campus Ministry.

The vigil has always coincided with the eve of the March for Life, which marks the date of the 1973 decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Roe v. Wade* that legalized and normalized the taking of innocent human life nationwide.



March for Life 2020 at the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul.

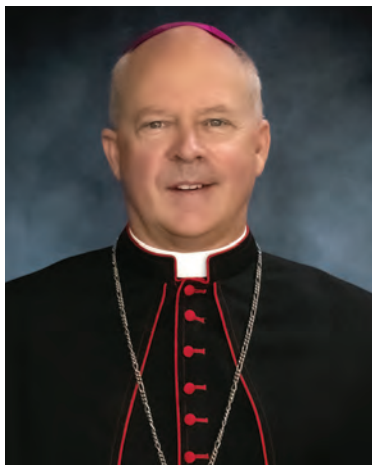
(Photo by Christine Clancy)

Catholics across the country are encouraged to observe a nationwide prayer vigil from Thursday, January 19 to Friday, January 20, 2023, to pray for an end to abortion and a greater respect for all human life. “The National Prayer Vigil is a time to praise God for the great gift of the recent Supreme Court Dobbs decision, overturning the tragic *Roe v. Wade* decision made almost a half-century ago. State and federal legislators are now free to embrace policies that protect preborn children and their mothers. Yet, there is still a great need for prayer and advocacy from

(Continued on page 5.)



## That they may have life



by Bishop Chad W. Zielinski

### Christ's birth brings hope and healing.

We all have our favorite scriptures or scenes from the Gospel. One of the most powerful for me comes at the end of John, when after the Resurrection, Jesus finds Peter fishing. I'm sure part of the connection comes from growing up around Lake Huron in Michigan and enjoying a lot of fishing. I also know how hard it is to fish to feed your family, having witnessed during the time I served as bishop of Fairbanks, Native Alaskans along the Yukon River haul in salmon for days to put away for winter.

I find it amazing that after Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples were confused about

their mission. Jesus had already appeared to them twice, but they still returned to their familiar livelihood of fishing but catching nothing. Yet, Jesus remains present amidst this confusion and fruitless work. He gives the disciples simple instructions – “toss the net over the other side of the boat” – that produces in abundance.

Peter no doubt wanted to keep Christ at a distance, ashamed of having denied him three times. But Jesus looks at him man-to-man, piercing his soul with a forgiving and hopeful gaze. He invites Peter to embrace his capacity for goodness with a simple question: “Do you love me?” Each question penetrates Peter's wounds and reveals his feelings of unworthiness. He could have again said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” But Peter is instead empowered by the Risen Christ to lead God's people, having just encountered his enormous capacity to love.

In this Gospel scene, Jesus demonstrates his unrelenting desire to be close to Peter and all of us. Every Christmas, we are reminded that God desires to be so close to us that he “became flesh and dwelt among us” (*John 1:14*). Christ draws near to us even now, especially in the sacraments and above all, in the Eucharist, where

we truly encounter him and are transformed.

The marvelous truth of the Eucharist is that in choosing to commune with us, Christ announces the goodness of God's sacred design etched into our very being. Christmas is an invitation to draw closer to Christ, embrace him, be transformed, and help others recognize their capacity to love because goodness lives within us. You see this especially at Christmas when even non-religious people desire to be generous and kind to others.

### God is always crying out his love if we have ears to hear

Once while at seminary, I headed to the city for a few Christmas gifts. I approached the bank ATM (not everyone had a credit card in those days) and was chagrined to see a long line of people. Ahead of me in line was a young man wearing blue jeans, a denim jacket, and chains hanging from his clothing. It was the “punk rock” era, so his hair was shaved on the sides, spiked on top, and he sported an array of colors. I mentally sized him up, negatively thinking that nothing about his appearance reflected the Christmas spirit.

Then a man in a car decided he would drive up and try to cut in front of all the other bank patrons.

You could see the irritation in people who had waited patiently for their turn.

Within a few seconds, the “punk rocker” spoke up loudly for all to hear: “I don't think Santa is going to bring him anything this year.”

I wanted to yell, “You go, punk rock guy! Tell him like it is!” Then I realized I had completely misjudged the man. Despite his appearance, he had demonstrated a keen sense of justice on behalf of us all.

This experience in the 1980s expressed that instinct within each person to move toward the good. God's desire to show us what is good breaks forth into our world in the Incarnation of his Son, Jesus Christ. Yes, there is quietness in the birth of Christ. But there also is a cry to the world that our Creator has given us the gift of gifts. As the angel, Gabriel proclaimed to the shepherds, “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (*Luke 2:10-11*).

As I reflect over the past year, I see the world crying out in its woundedness. God allows us to choose good or evil, and sadly, we too often choose sin and violate the human dignity of

others and ourselves. Despite the abuse, violence, and oppression so prevalent today, deep down, people still desire an encounter with true goodness. At the root of most personal and social problems is an unrequited desire for the One who is all good, Jesus Christ. We sense we are capable of greater love than our sins reflect.

When we hear Christmas carols and reflect on manger scenes, do we hear Jesus's question – “Do you love me?” Our lives and purpose are important to him. I suspect most of us would like someone to ask that question directly to us so we can look within ourselves and confirm that deep capacity to love. Maybe our ability to love is wounded in some way, but Christ's birth brings hope and healing.

As disciples on the journey, may we take a moment this season to courageously ask one another Jesus's question – “Do you love me?” Let us also assist others to hear and answer this important question. In doing so, we acknowledge that Christ has given all people an incredible capacity to love, with him as our model.

Merry Christmas!

## Bishop's calendar

**Dec. 15** – Diocesan staff meeting – pastoral center, New Ulm

**Dec. 15-17** – USCCB Native American Affairs committee meeting, Washington, DC

**Dec. 18** – Advent Prayer Service – St. Philip's, Litchfield

**Dec. 20** – Diocesan Staff meeting – pastoral center, New Ulm

**Dec. 21** – Diocesan Worship Committee meeting – pastoral center, New Ulm

**Dec. 24 & 25** – Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses, New Ulm

**Dec. 27** – Dinner with seminarians – New Ulm

**Dec. 28** – Meet with seminarians individually - pastoral center, New Ulm

**Jan. 3** – Diocesan staff meeting – pastoral center, New Ulm

**Jan. 7-13** – Region 8 bishops retreat – Venice, FL.

**Jan. 17** – Diocesan staff meeting – pastoral center, New Ulm

**Jan. 18** – Committee on Parishes meeting – St. Aloysius, Olivia

**Jan. 24** – Deanery 3 priests gathering/dinner – New Ulm

**Jan. 26-30** – Visit to San Lucas Mission – Guatemala

**Jan. 31** – Diocesan staff meeting – pastoral center, New Ulm

*Editor's note: Calendar represents the bishop's schedule at the time "The Prairie Catholic" went to press.*

## Respect for Marriage Act passed; U.S bishops respond

**WASHINGTON** – On Nov. 29, 2022, the U.S. Senate passed the Respect for Marriage Act (H.R. 8404). The bill, which first passed the U.S. House of Representatives in July, will codify the nationwide redefinition of marriage to include same-sex couples in federal statute for the first time. The bill will also heighten the threats to religious liberty that have persisted after the Supreme Court's Obergefell decision of 2015. Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minn., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, issued the following statement in response:

“We are gravely disappointed that the misnamed Respect for Marriage Act passed the Senate and continue to call for its rejection.

“Pope Francis wrote in 2016 that ‘we can hardly stop advocating marriage simply to avoid countering contemporary sensibilities.... We would be depriving the world of values that we can and must offer.’ Indeed marriage, which is a lifelong and exclusive union, a complete and mutual gift of the husband and wife to each other for their good and for the procreation and education of children, is essential to the common good. . .

“This bill fails to include clear, comprehensive, and affirmative conscience protections for religious organizations and individuals who uphold the sanctity of traditional marriage that are needed.”

To read the complete statement visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

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*The Prairie Catholic*, the official newspaper for the Diocese of New Ulm since May 1972, is published every six weeks, Sept.–June.

**Publisher:** Bishop Chad W. Zielinski  
**Editor:** Christine E. Clancy

**Submission deadline is the 1st of each month prior to publication.**

**Publication office:** Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; phone: 507-359-2966, Email: [dnu@dnu.org](mailto:dnu@dnu.org) Website: [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)

**Postmaster:** Send notice on Form 3579, “The Prairie Catholic,” 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073-2071. Periodical postage paid at New Ulm and additional mailing offices. USPS 926-760.

## Sr. Betty Gits served as pastoral administrator in Sanborn for six years



Sister Betty Gits

**ST. PAUL** – Sister Betty Gits, a dynamic teacher, gregarious lover of people, gifted storyteller, avid Minnesota Twins fan, and woman of deep faith, died Oct. 7, 2022, at Carondelet Village in St. Paul at the age of 97.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Oct. 28, 2022, at Our Lady of the Presentation Chapel in St. Paul. Burial was

at Resurrection Cemetery in Mendota Heights.

A native of Minnesota, Elizabeth Ann Gits was born in Marshall on March 22, 1925, to Edmund and Theresa (Honsa) Gits. In 1943, Betty entered the community of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet where she was given the name Sister St. Gregory.

In 1958, she received a bachelor's degree in sociology and education from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. She served as an elementary teacher at many Twin Cities schools including St. Columba and St. Mary in St. Paul, St. Anne in LeSueur, Our Lady of Lourdes in Minneapolis, St. John the Baptist in Excelsior, and St. Peter in Richfield.

Following teaching, Sister Betty became the first lay pastoral administrator in Minnesota at the

Church of St. Joseph in Circle Pines.

In 1967, she began serving in the Diocese of New Ulm. For seven years, she worked as a parish worker at the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Marshall and the Church of St. Raphael in Springfield for four years. She also served as a chaplain at Weiner Memorial Medical Center in Marshall. In 1988 she was hired as a parish worker at the Church of St. Thomas in Sanborn before taking on the role of pastoral administrator there from 1989 up until her retirement in 1995.

Sister Betty was an outgoing lover of life who enjoyed sharing funny stories with family and friends. Following in her mother's footsteps and her love of music, Sister Betty spent many years singing with the Sweet Adelines.

## Former rural life director was a Dominican for 70 years



Sister Mary Catherine Nolan

**ADRIAN, Mich.** – Sister Mary Catherine Nolan, formerly known as Sister John David, died on Oct. 27, 2022, at the Dominican Life Center in Adrian, Mich. She was 89 years old and in the 70th year of her religious profession in the Adrian Dominican Congregation.

In the Diocese of New Ulm, she served on the staff of Bishop Raymond A. Lucker as diocesan director of Rural Life from 1980 to 1984.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 4, 2022, in St. Catherine Chapel in Adrian with burial in the congregation cemetery.

Sister Mary Catherine was born in Chicago to John and Leona (Caron) Nolan. She graduated from Aquinas Dominican High School in Chicago and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Siena Heights College (University) in Adrian; a Master of Science degree in Mathematics from the University

of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Ind.; a Master of Arts degree in Theology from the University of Detroit (University of Detroit Mercy) in Detroit; a Master of Divinity degree in Theology from Sts. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Mich.; and a Doctor of Sacred Theology degree from the University of Dayton in Ohio.

She spent 18 years ministering in elementary and secondary education in Detroit, Walled, and Lake Midland in Michigan, and Aquinas High School, Chicago, a congregation-sponsored institution. She also taught theology for two years at the Global Spirituality Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio, and for one year at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas.

Additionally, she served for two years in campus ministry at the University of Michigan, Dearborn; for a total of six years in formation work at Duns Scotus Formation Center, Southfield, Mich., and St. Ann Friary, Cincinnati; three years as Badin Hall rector at the University of Notre Dame; and three years in retreat ministry at the House of Hospitality, Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is the author of the book *Mary's Song*, published in 2001 by Ave Maria Press.

Sister Mary Catherine had been a resident of the Dominican Life Center in Adrian since 2012.

## Permanent diaconate

(Continued from page 1.)

### Candidacy qualifications

Although a college degree is not necessary to enter the program, a viable candidate must be able to master materials presented at the collegiate or graduate school level. Additional requirements include a candidate being a practicing Catholic layman who will be at least 35 years of age at the time of ordination and not older than 55 at the time of admission. A candidate must also have a high school diploma or equivalent, be a fully initiated Catholic in good standing with the Church with a familiarity with Catholic theology. They should be actively involved in ministry

at the parish or diocesan levels. If the candidate is married, they are required to be in a stable marriage of at least five years (at the time of application) and must have the support and agreement of their wife to pursue a diaconal vocation. If the candidate is unmarried (single or widower), they must live a lifestyle consistent with the call to the ordained ministry in the celibate state within the Catholic Church.

For a complete list of qualifications for becoming a permanent deacon visit [www.dnu.org/diaconate](http://www.dnu.org/diaconate).

**Opportunities to learn more**  
Informational meetings for

couples will be on Thursday, Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. at the Church of St. Joseph in Montevideo and Thursday, Dec. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Church of St. Catherine in Redwood Falls. All interested inquirers and their wives are welcome. However, a pastor's letter of recommendation will be required to start formation classes.

*Editor's note: Deacon Mark Kober serves as the diocesan director of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program, [mkober@dnu.org](mailto:mkober@dnu.org), (507) 227-4602. Fr. Matthew Wiering serves as the Bishop's Delegate for the Permanent Diaconate, [mwiering@dnu.org](mailto:mwiering@dnu.org), (507) 233-5301.*



Watch DMA video  
[www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)

## God loves a cheerful giver!

“As I make my way through various parts of this diocese, I hear numerous comments of gratitude for the abundant harvest this Fall. Thank you, brothers and sisters in Christ, for sharing a portion of your harvest in your generous contributions to the annual Diocesan Ministries Appeal. During this Advent season, as God draws us closer to his Son, the Light of the World, may we continue to reach out to those who struggle to meet basic needs. Your generosity is light and hope to those who feel they are in darkness. Thanks for being a ‘cheerful giver.’” — Bishop Chad Zielinski

*Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work, (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).*

# COR NIGHT

**FAITH | FOOD | FUN**

COR Night is an event for youth featuring games, music, food, and a great speaker!

**FEB. 26 - ST. ALOYSIUS, OLIVIA - RSVP @ [DNU.ORG/COR-NIGHT](http://DNU.ORG/COR-NIGHT)**

**Come and hear local Catholic speaker Kristen Soley give her riveting testimony about how she found God through her battle with cancer!**





por Bishop Chad Zielinski

*El nacimiento de Cristo trae esperanza y sanidad.*

Todos tenemos alguna escritura o escena favorita en el Evangelio. En lo personal, uno de ellos y conmovedor es en el Evangelio de Juan, después de la Resurrección, Jesús encuentra a Pedro de pesca. Parte de la conexión proviene de haber vivido alrededor del Lago Huron en Michigan y haber disfrutado mucho de la pesca. También sé lo difícil que es pescar para alimentar a la familia, Durante mi estadia como Obispo de Fairbanks fuí testigo como los nativos de Alaska pescaban salmon a lo largo del río Yukon para así congelarlo y usarlo durante el invierno.

Me sorprende que después que Jesús resucitó de entre los muertos, los discípulos estaban confundidos sobre su misión. Jesús ya se les había aparecido en dos ocasiones, pero aún así regresaban al lugar de siempre para pescar pero sin pescar nada. Sin embargo, Jesús permanece presente en medio de esta confusion y trabajo en vano. Jesús les da instrucciones simples: “echen la red al otro lado de la barca,” ya que produce en abundancia.

Pedro sin duda quería mantener una distancia con Cristo, avergonzado de haberlo negado tres veces. Pero Jesús lo mira de hombre a hombre, atravesándole su alma con una mirada compasiva. Jesús invita a Pedro y le pregunta “¿me amas?” cada pregunta penetra las heridas de Pedro y revela su sentimiento de indignidad. Pedro le habría dicho: “apártate de mí, Señor, porque soy un pecador.” En cambio, Pedro es empoderado por el Cristo Resucitado para guiar al pueblo de Dios, al encontrar su capacidad de amar.

*Para que tengan vida*

En esta escena, Jesús demuestra su incesante deseo de estar cerca de Pedro y de todos nosotros. Cada navidad, nos recuerda que Dios desea estar cerca de nosotros “se hizo carne y habitó entre nosotros” (Juan 1:14). Ahora, también, Cristo se acerca a nosotros, especialmente en los sacramentos y sobre todo en la Eucaristía donde verdaderamente lo encontramos y somos transformados.

La verdadera maravilla de la Eucaristía es al escoger una comunión con nosotros, Cristo anuncia la bondad del diseño sagrado de Dios grabado en nuestro mismo ser. La navidad es una invitación para acercarnos más a Cristo, ser transformados y ayudar a otros a reconocer su capacidad de amar porque el bien vive en nosotros. Esto se ve especialmente en la Navidad, incluso con las personas no religiosas. Ellos tienen el deseo de ser generosos y ser amables con los demás.

**Dios siempre esta clamando su amor si tenemos oídos para oír**  
Cuando estaba en el seminario, fuí a la ciudad para comprar algunos regalos para la navidad. Me acerqué al cajero automático del banco ATM (en esa época, no todos tenían tarjeta de credito) y me disgusté al ver una fila larga. Delante de mí había un joven que vestía jeans, una chaqueta denim, y cadenas colgando de su ropa. Era la época del “punk rock,” y su cabello estaba rapado en ambos lados a modo de cresta en la parte superior y con una variedad de colores.

Lo evalué mentalmente pensando negativamente que nada en su apariencia reflejaba el espíritu navideño. Luego, un caballero en su carro decidió atravesarse delante de la fila e intentar pasar por delante de todos los demás clientes del banco. Se sentía la irritación entre las personas que habían esperado pacientemente su turno.

Segundo después, el “punk rockero” gritó para que todos lo escucharán: “No creo que Santa te vaya a traer nada este año.”

Yo quería gritar, “¡bien, punk rockero!” ¡díselo como es! Ahi, me dí cuenta que lo había juzgado mal. A pesar de su apariencia, el habia demostrado un sentido de justicia en nombre de todos nosotros.

Esta experiencia de la década de 1980 expresó ese instinto dentro de cada persona de avanzar hacia hacer el bien.

El deseo Dios de mostrarnos lo que es Bueno irrumpe en nuestro mundo en la Encarnación de su Hijo, Jesucristo. Si, hay quietud en el nacimiento de Cristo. Pero también hay un grito al mundo que nuestro Creador nos ha obsequiado el don de los dones. Como el ángel, Gabriel proclamó a los pastores: “Os traigo buenas nuevas de gran gozo para todo el pueblo: os ha nacido hoy en la ciudad de David un Salvador, que es el Mesías, el Señor” (Lucas 2:10-11).

Al reflexionar sobre el año pasado, veo al mundo clamando en su vulnerabilidad. Dios nos da la oportunidad de elegir entre el bien o el mal, lamentablemente, con demasiada frecuencia elegimos el pecado y violamos la dignidad humana de los demás y de nosotros mismos. A pesar del abuso, la violencia y la opresión que prevalecen hoy en día, en el fondo, la gente todavia desea un encuentro con una bondad real. A raiz de todos los problemas personales y sociales se encuentra un deseo no correspondido pero alguien Bueno que es Jesucristo.

Cuando escuchamos los villancicos y reflexionamos sobre las escenas del pesebre, escuchamos la pregunta de Jesús – ¿me amas?” Nuestras vidas y propositos son importantes para Dios. Sospecho que la mayoría de nosotros nos gustaría que alguien nos hiciera esa pregunta directamente para que podamos ver en nosotros mismos y confirmar esa capacidad de amar. Quizas nuestra capacidad de amar esté lastimado, pero el nacimiento de Cristo trae esperanza y sanidad.

Como discípulos en el camino, tomemos un momento en esta temporada para hacernos la pregunta de Jesus – “¿me amas?” Ayudemos también a otros a escuchar y responder esta pregunta super importante. Al hacerlo, reconocemos que Cristo nos ha dado una increíble capacidad de amar, con El como nuestro modelo.

¡Feliz Navidad!

**Support Catholic Schools**  
*Fundraising events scheduled*

Catholic schools provide a complete education given in and by the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, so that her children, like the Christ child, may *advance in wisdom and age and favor before God and man, (Lk 2:52)*. Following are Catholic school fundraisers to be held throughout the Diocese of New Ulm in 2023.



**St. Peter, Canby**

Prime Rib Dinner fundraiser will be held Saturday, Feb. 4 at 6 p.m. This is a formal event for adults. Bingo will be played in addition to the meal. This fundraiser largely supports the technology efforts of the St. Peter School. Visit <http://www.schoolofstpeter.com/>.

**School of St. Philip, Litchfield**

Parent’s Night Out will be held Saturday, Feb. 18 from 5-8 p.m. The evening will feature a jazz group called Jazz Authority and include dinner and dessert. The evening’s proceeds will support scholarships for students attending the School of St. Philip. Visit <https://www.schoolofstphilip.org/>.

**St. Edward, Minneota**

St. Edward’s School Flurry of Fun auction and gala will be held on Saturday, Feb. 4. This will be a musical night out with entertainment provided by River Rats Dueling Pianos. Visit <https://www.stedschools.com/>.

**New Ulm Area Catholic Schools (NUACS)**

The annual Snowfest will be held on Friday, Jan. 20. The event includes a big ticket raffle, meat raffle, bingo, and class project item raffles. Visit <https://www.nuacs.com/>.

**St. Anne, Wabasso**

March Madness Spring Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 25. The evening will include dinner, light entertainment, games, and live and silent auctions. The cost is \$75 a ticket. Visit <https://wabassostannesschool.com/>.

**Holy Trinity, Winsted**

Annual Spring Fling will be held April 22 beginning at 5 p.m. The theme this year is an oriental garden, and the evening includes dinner and both live and silent auctions. Visit <https://www.winstedholyltrinity.org/>.

**Anyone** who has suffered sexual abuse or exploitation by a cleric of the Diocese of New Ulm should immediately report such misconduct to local law enforcement. They are encouraged to contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator or the Bishop’s Delegate in Matters Pertaining to Sexual Misconduct, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073, phone: 507-233-5313, for counseling or assistance, if that is desired.

**PROMISE TO PROTECT**

**PLEDGE TO HEAL**

**T**oda persona que fue víctima de abuso o explotación sexual por parte de un clérigo de la Diócesis de New Ulm debe reportar dicha mala conducta a las autoridades policiales inmediatamente. Se les exhorta ponerse en contacto con el Coordinador de Asistencia para victimas o el Delegado del Obispo en cuestiones sobre el mal comportamiento sexual, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073, teléfono: 507-233-5313, hay consejería o asistencia disponible si así lo desea.

Join Bishop Zielinski for an

**ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE**

**Sunday, Dec. 18 at 1:30 p.m.**

**Church of St. Philip, Litchfield**

*Bring Baby Jesus figure from your Nativity scene for the bishop to bless. “Swaddling clothes” also will be collected for those in need.*



# Making a difference

## 'Grandma Lorraine' of Sleepy Eye spreads love through Partnering with the Poor

by Kevin Conway

With no connection to the Society of Mary, Sleepy Eye, Minn., seems to be among the last places one would expect to find a dedicated donor to the Marianist Mission's Partnering with the Poor program.

But St. Mary's, Sleepy Eye parishioner Lorraine Schroepfer is one of the Marianist's dedicated donors.

"Grandma Lorraine," as she's known to the children she sponsors, has been sponsoring children in India and Eastern Africa since 2014, when she received mail from the Marianist Mission promoting Partnering with the Poor.

"It's such a reasonable cost and a simple way to help children living in such dire circumstances without adequate housing and food," she said. "It makes me feel good that they can eat every day, have shelter, some clean clothes, and, hopefully, all the love they need."

Schroepfer regularly receives updates, photos, and heart-warming letters from her sponsored children – currently, Shekhar at Morning Star School in Singhpur, India, and Vanessa at Our Lady of Nazareth School in Nairobi, Kenya. In return, she shares photographs and sends small gifts, cards, and notes,

signed – of course – Grandma Lorraine.

"I tell them they are very precious children of God, and they are awesome," she said. "And I remind them that God wants them to do well in their studies, too. I'm just so proud of them and admire their stamina."

They'd admire her stamina as well. In 1973, after 11 years of marriage, Schroepfer's first husband, a flight surgeon officer in the United States Navy, died suddenly, leaving her a single mother with four children between the ages of six and ten. After his death, she moved the family from California, where her husband had been stationed, back to Minnesota to be near extended family.

And, oh my – she had plenty of family to be near. Number 11 of 13 children, Schroepfer had grown up in the German-Catholic community of New Ulm, where she attended the local Catholic elementary and high schools. When she returned to the area, she settled about 20 minutes away in Sleepy Eye, a rural community named in honor of a Dakota chief in south-central Minnesota. Two of her sisters lived there.

When she remarried in 1979, her new husband brought six children into their marriage. The blended "Brady Bunch" family now bustled with the energy of ten children. In time, 25 grandchildren



Lorraine Schroepfer, a member of the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye, sends cards and small gifts to children she sponsors through Partnering with the Poor. (Photo by Christine Clancy)

came along; she also has numerous great-grandchildren.

Grandma Lorraine's love for her family overflows into the lives of children in need. For decades, her small, regular donations – inspired by her mother's support of missions years ago – have helped poor children around the world, even before Partnering with the Poor came into her life.

It all started in 1975 when her son asked his single mom for a brother. How could she say no to that?

She fulfilled his wish by answering an advertisement in a Catholic magazine to sponsor a child in need. She's been adopting such children ever since, helping them build a brighter future. "I don't think we can fully understand what a difference it makes in a child's life," Schroepfer said. "They are all God's beautiful people. You know they are so grateful. And you know you are serving the Lord."

While she acknowledges the need is great, Grandma Lorraine

appreciates how Partnering with the Poor offers a personal approach to positive change.

"You find yourself saying, 'I can't help all of them, but I can help that one and make a difference to that one. And then maybe another one.' And then you never know how many you will sponsor!"

*Editor's note: Kevin Conway is a freelance writer from Bloomington, Ind. Article courtesy of Alive magazine, www.marianist.com/ALIVE.*

# Prayer, sacrifice needed to end abortion

(Continued from page 1.)

the faithful, as there will be intensified efforts to codify Roe in legislation and policies at the state and federal levels. Many prayers and sacrifices are needed to transform our culture so that all may cherish the gift of human life and offer life-giving support to vulnerable women, children, and families," said Kat Talalas, assistant director of pro-life communications at the USCCB.

The Vigil Opening Mass will take place at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 19. The Mass will be immediately followed by a Holy Hour for Life. This will start off a series of

nationwide holy hours throughout the night from dioceses across the country, which will be broadcast on the USCCB's website, www.usccb.org. The nationwide vigil concludes at 8 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 20 with a closing Mass at the Basilica.

Live-streaming information for overnight diocesan national holy hours will be provided on the USCCB's website in January.

The live television broadcasts on Jan. 19 from 5-8 p.m. and on Jan. 20 from 8-9 a.m. will be provided by the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) and will be available via live-stream

on the Basilica's website, www.nationalshrine.org/mass/. For more information about on-site attendance at the Basilica for the National Prayer Vigil for Life, please visit the information page on the Basilica's website, www.nationalshrine.org/faq/.

Thousands of Catholics are signing up for the national pro-life novena, 9 Days for Life, which will take place from Jan. 19-27, 2023.

For more details on the National Prayer Vigil for Life in Washington, D.C., visit <https://www.usccb.org/prolife/annual-pro-life-events>.

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# Identities as male and female are part of God's good design in Creation

by Sr. Candace Fier, ISSM

The Church teaches that our identities as male and female are part of God's good design in Creation, that our bodies and sexual identities are gifts from God, and that we should accept and care for our bodies as they were created. "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them," (*Genesis 1:27*).

However, the American Psychological Association (APA) defines the concept of "gender identity" as a person's "internal sense of being male, female, or something else, which may or may not correspond to an individual's sex assigned at birth or sex characteristics," (APA 2018). This inherent conflict leads a growing number of individuals, many children and adolescents, to separate themselves from their sex at birth by transitioning to the opposite sex or self-identifying in some other way.

On Oct. 8, 2022, the intersection of gender ideology and everyday life was addressed at the annual Diocese of New Ulm Ethics Conference held at Schoenstatt on the Lake in Sleepy Eye, Minn.

The day's discussion topic was based on how our Catholic faith informs and responds to gender ideology and the dignity of the human person. How do we, as Church and as individual Catholics, care for the spiritual and psychosocial well-being of each human being?

To explore these questions, we must first understand what is meant by "gender ideology."

Gender ideology is a system of beliefs where an individual adopts a "gender identity" based on feelings or their "sense of self" as male, female, both, neither, or something else – regardless of their actual male or female identity. Gender ideology denies that the differences between men and women have natural and biological foundations. Instead, it empowers the individual's "right" to transition to the desired identity, using social, medical, or surgical interventions to change from a male to a female, a female to a male, or to whatever identity they have chosen.

Bishop Chad Zielinski, bishop of

the Diocese of New Ulm, opened the conference by challenging the audience to consider how we love people and how we help them see that their soul is imprinted with the beautiful image of God, male or female. "God created them, and they radiate God's goodness, beauty, and truth," the bishop said.

**Gender ideology, contrary to the beliefs of the Catholic Church**  
Fr. Tom Knoblach, a priest of the Diocese of St. Cloud, was the opening presenter providing a foundation based on love and the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person.

"God is love," said Fr. Knoblach. "We are made in the image of God, and therefore we find our perfection, our true identity, in love."

Fr. Knoblach explained that the Church reveals the love of God that creates the human person, male and female, as a beloved son or daughter in his own image and likeness. "Together, body and soul constitute the fundamental identity of each human person," he said.

However, Fr. Knoblach points out, in contrast, "Individualism [in our culture] is something very prominent," he said.

"What happens then is that people create their own identity and in a highly sexualized culture, very often that expression of one's identity and uniqueness, is somehow expressed through sexuality."

**Courage International offers prayer, fellowship and mutual support**

In response to the need for support of those experiencing gender confusion, Fr. Knoblach introduced Courage International, the first of two Catholic ministries highlighted during the conference. For over 20 years, the apostolate has accompanied individuals experiencing gender or sexuality issues on their journey of living chaste lives according to Church teachings.

**EnCourage provides pastoral care to families and friends**

As director of the Office of Family Life for the Diocese of New Ulm, I spoke on behalf of EnCourage, an apostolate of Courage International. EnCourage provides pastoral care to families and friends of those who are



experiencing same-sex attraction or gender confusion. As moderator of the apostolate here in the diocese, I explore with EnCourage members the call to holiness that characterizes this pastoral care. Each of us is called to holiness, to a sharing in the very life of God, and to the task of bringing others to that same holiness. It is within the family that we fulfill this task.

The five goals of EnCourage describe how the personal life and example of family members and their loving and accepting relationship with their loved ones give witness to our true hope,

Jesus Christ, in and through his Church. More information about Courage and EnCourage can be found at [www.couragerc.org](http://www.couragerc.org).

**Legal and mental ramifications**

Other presenters throughout the day included Virginia Cronin, an attorney-at-law who discussed the current legal landscape and the protections religious organizations have in both the United States and Minnesota Constitutions. "This is an ever-changing landscape," Cronin said and expounded on how the Church needs to be vigilant in identifying and responding to gender-related

issues, such as the concern over parental rights, the rights of medical personnel to practice according to conscience versus promoting gender-affirming care, and equity in sports.

Dr. Pamela Jacobson rounded out the discussion by explaining the criteria for the mental health condition called gender dysphoria, a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because of a perceived mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. She emphasized the need to create relationships. "We are asked to love each person we encounter, as Christ would. Then we can accompany others and speak the truth of our faith in love."

As Catholics, gender ideology touches our lives in ever-changing ways. The discussion that began at the 2022 Diocesan Ethics Conference needs to continue among us as we seek to respond in love to each person as the son or daughter God created us to be.

Visit [www.dnu.org/familylife](http://www.dnu.org/familylife) for more resources and support.

*Editor's note: Sr. Candace Fier is the director of the Office of Family Life for the Diocese of New Ulm, [cfier@dnu.org](mailto:cfier@dnu.org), (507) 233-5328.*

## United States Catholic bishops develop new outreach for passing on the faith

**WASHINGTON** – Catholic church leaders are taking a new approach to passing on the faith, saying they recognize a pressing need to do this in a way that adapts to the modern world. This new outreach, called the Institute on the Catechism, is not a place but instead a new springboard for faith formation developed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee on the Catechism.

It will involve catechetical publishers working directly with the USCCB subcommittee on new ways to pass on the faith using digital tools and aiming to reach a more diverse Church. It will also provide resources to dioceses and yearly, in-person training conferences and retreats for diocesan catechetical leaders.

As Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Conn., chairman of the bishops' Subcommittee on

the Catechism, sees it: Catholic parishes need to re-create a "Catholic culture that recognizes we're in the 21st century. We can't go back to 1950; it's gone."

Re-creating what he describes as a "radically different model" for teaching the faith is something he has been working on with this subcommittee for the past several years. The bishop announced the proposal to create the institute at the bishops' spring meeting last June. It launched Nov. 10-12, 2022, just ahead of the bishops' annual fall meeting in Baltimore.

This new approach, starting on the 30th anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, draws inspiration from Pope Francis' 2021 document *Antiquum Ministerium* (Ancient Ministry) that described catechesis as an official church ministry. It also builds on the Vatican's Directory for Catechesis, issued in 2020,

that gives guidelines for catechists and pastors particularly in the role of evangelization.

The most frequently used description for the Institute on the Catechism is evangelizing catechesis.

In explaining this to *Catholic News Service* Oct. 19, Bishop Caggiano said this new method will emphasize truth, beauty and goodness and it "recognizes that the passing on of the faith is no longer in a Catholic culture but in a secular and hostile culture toward Christian faith."

He said the institute's mandate is to "create multiple opportunities where a young person can encounter Christ in an ongoing way" and have the "leadership of the church and their parents accompany them."

*(Continued on page 7.)*



# 9 key things the U.S. bishops did at their fall meeting in Baltimore

by Zelda Caldwell  
Catholic News Agency

**BALTIMORE** – The U.S. Catholic bishops headed back to their dioceses after gathering in Baltimore Nov. 14–17, 2022, for their annual fall meeting.

Following is a summary of key actions taken at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) fall plenary assembly:

## 1. They elected Archbishop Timothy Broglio as president.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, was elected president of the USCCB for a three-year term, succeeding Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles. Broglio, 70, brings to the job diplomatic experience, having served the Vatican in Ivory Coast, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and in Rome from 1990 to 2001. As archbishop for the Military Services, USA, since 2008, he defended the religious freedom of service men and women when he called for a religious exemption for the COVID vaccine mandate and raised concerns about religious freedom issues involved in allowing homosexuals to serve in the military.

## 2. Baltimore’s Archbishop William Lori was elected vice president.

The newly elected vice president, Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, is a strong advocate for the unborn. In his role with the bishops’ pro-life committee, Lori has spoken out repeatedly in favor of assistance for pregnant women and against the Biden administration’s proposals to expand the availability of abortion. He has been a vocal proponent of the bishops’ 2020 initiative Walking with Moms in Need to help struggling pregnant women, mothers, and babies.

At 71, he will not be eligible to be president when Broglio’s term expires three years from now, as the bylaws of the conference say the president needs to be no older than 75 by the end of his term.

## 3. In a moving farewell address, Archbishop José Gomez called for bishops to be missionaries in a secular culture that is searching for meaning.

In a stirring speech, the outgoing president of the USCCB, Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, told the assembled bishops that a secularized society has lost its way but is experiencing



The U.S. bishops met in Baltimore for their annual fall general assembly on Nov. 14–17, 2022. (Photo by Katie Yoder/CNA)

a “spiritual awakening” and a desire for meaning. He called on all Catholics to evangelize and bishops in particular to share their personal encounters with Jesus in the Eucharist as part of the upcoming eucharistic revival. “The Church exists to evangelize,” Gómez said. “There is no other reason for the Church. To be a Christian is to be a missionary disciple.”

## 4. The bishops decided to begin rewriting their Catholic voting guide after the 2024 election.

The bishops voted to postpone embarking on a full revision of

“Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” a sort of voting guide for Catholics, until after the 2024 election. The “teaching document” asserts abortion should be “the preeminent” political issue for Catholics. In deciding to leave the document as it is, while adding a new introduction and supplemental inserts, the bishops effectively decided to reaffirm its opposition to pro-abortion policies in the political realm. The additional materials, however, could introduce new language, Archbishop Paul Coakley, head of the bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, said.

## 5. The bishops showed their support for Ukraine.

Cardinal Robert McElroy of San Diego, who was named to the College of Cardinals by Pope Francis in May, urged the USCCB to stand by Ukraine. Referring to the possibility that a Republican majority in the House of Representatives might back out of the nation’s commitment to the war effort in Ukraine, McElroy called on the bishops to act with haste to ensure continued U.S. military aid. In his speech Gudziak thanked the bishops and U.S. Catholics for their continued monetary support for humanitarian aid.

## 6. The bishops elected a steadfast defender of life to the pro-life committee.

The election of Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va, a staunch defender of life, as head of the USCCB’s pro-life committee is another signal that the bishops’ resolve in the defense

of the unborn has not weakened despite the failure of pro-life measures in the midterm elections.

## 7. The bishops cut the budget for the three-day Eucharistic Congress.

Plans for the Eucharistic Revival and Eucharistic Congress were unveiled along with an announcement that the cost of the three-day event would be reduced from \$28 million to \$14 million with the help of donors and sponsors. Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., who is leading the Eucharistic Revival initiative – an effort to revive an understanding and a love for Jesus in the Eucharist among Catholics – said 80,000 people are expected to make a pilgrimage to Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, where the congress will take place starting July 17, 2024.

## 8. The bishops approved a prayer book for laypeople ministering to the sick.

The bishops voted to move forward with the creation of a new prayer book for laypeople who work among the sick. Fr. Andrew Menke, executive director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat of Divine Worship, told CNA that he hopes the potential new prayer book will be helpful for laypeople who want to minister to the sick. “A pastor can put this book into the hands of the folks who help him in visiting the nursing homes, hospitals, and places where there isn’t a priest-chaplain every day, but there might be a layperson there,” Menke said.

## 9. The bishops voted to advance the causes for sainthood for three American women.

The U.S. bishops decided to advance on the local level the causes of beatification and canonization for Servants of God Cora Louise Evans, a mother and Catholic convert considered to be a mystic; Michelle Duppong, a young campus missionary who struggled with cancer; and Mother Margaret Mary Healy-Murphy, a religious sister who ministered to the poor and to the African American community.

# Engaging young people with the Church

(Continued from page 6.)

In other words, it’s not just religious education through textbook learning or even service projects but a more concentrated effort to engage young people with the Church and provide role models for them, with diocesan and parish resources to facilitate this. One of the hopes is that these youth will in turn reinvigorate the Church.

In a previous interview with CNS about this project, catechetical consultants said the institute has the potential to change the fundamental relationship between publishers and bishops into something that’s less reactive to a finished product and more collaborative.

Mike Raffio, vice president director of sales for Pflaum Publishing Group and the

president of the Association of Catholic Publishers, said leading people to a meaningful encounter with Christ through catechesis and an understanding of their role in the mission of the Church is something many catechetical materials attempt. “But we must admit our own limitations,” he added.

“Any person’s faith development is a lifelong journey. That journey, even for young people, includes so many more variables than catechetical texts can be expected to provide,” he said.

Similarly, Sabrina Magnuson, a catechetical consultant for Loyola Press, said the institute’s aim of forming leaders who will in turn inspire and form parents, teachers and catechists in their home diocese is a daunting prospect. “At the end of the day, the textbook is a resource, a tool,” she

said. “Encounter is so much more than that.”

About 17 bishops attended the institute’s launch, committing to using this new model in their dioceses. Bishop Caggiano hopes more dioceses will join next year.

In the meantime, he said, participating dioceses will get the support they need to get this work started. It will also be a learning experience for all participating dioceses and a time to come to a deeper understanding of what parishes really need to make this work.

“It has to be the work of the Holy Spirit,” he added, and he also said it will need financial support that he hopes to get from those who want to be partners in this effort.



# FOSL executive director stepping down; new leadership begins in February

Bill Peterson is the outgoing executive director of Friends of San Lucas (FOSL), a nonprofit organization that supports development in San Lucas Toliman and the surrounding communities in Guatemala. Formerly a mission parish of the Diocese of New Ulm, San Lucas Toliman was served for nearly 50 years by the late Msgr. Greg Schaffer, a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm who died in 2012. Msgr. Schaffer led numerous efforts to improve the health, education, living conditions, employment prospects, and spiritual welfare of the Guatemalan people.



by Bill Peterson

As the outgoing executive director of the Friends of San Lucas, serving since 2017, I have found that each time I have traveled to the mission parish of

San Lucas, I have tried to take a few minutes to visit the room Msgr. Greg Schaffer once studied in when he served as pastor. The space now serves equal parts study/chapel/museum. Back in the day, the mission program directors met in that room, everyone avoiding what had been “Fr. Greg’s chair.” The symbolism of sitting in it, perhaps, was just too weighty.

The room now contains several of Msgr. Schaffer’s vestments and belongings, photos of him and his family, plaques, diplomas, awards, and numerous gifts he received over the years. What caught my attention during my most recent visit were two slabs of concrete, each about one foot by two feet and each containing an impression of a shoe.

One may ask, why shoes?

On Oct. 18, 1972, Fr. Schaffer, Ronal Motta, and Elias Jacinto set off from the steps of the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul and began what would be a historic walk to



The San Lucas mission provides healthcare through a hospital and a Health Promoter Program. (Photo submitted)

San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala, in hopes of raising money for the mission parish. The trio arrived in San Lucas, 3,000+ miles and three months later, on Msgr. Schaffer’s birthday, Jan. 29, 1973. The walk raised \$75,000.

This year celebrates the 50th anniversary of that historic walk. Earlier in the year, the concrete slabs were displayed during a 50th-anniversary commemorative

Mass and celebration in San Lucas. Although the shoes used to make the impressions were likely not the ones that Msgr. Schaffer made the walk in, it is the symbolism that matters – meaning they are big shoes to fill when comparing all Msgr. Schaffer had done for the San Lucas mission.

Since the death of Msgr. Schaffer, the mission has evolved significantly. Friends of San

Lucas continue to develop and help “fill Msgr. Schaffer’s shoes.” As I near my final days as executive director, we welcome the incoming director Elaine Tymchak, who assumes her duties on Feb. 1, 2023.

My service throughout these past five years has left me in awe as I witnessed all the support for the mission and its impact on the lives of more than 25,000 indigenous people each year.

In the last ten years, \$15 million has helped support San Lucas Toliman. Hundreds of homes have been built, thousands of fuel-efficient stoves have been constructed, lives have been saved, and lives have been changed.

However, the benefits the San Lucas mission receives through the Friends of San Lucas would not be possible if it were not

(Continued on page 11.)

## Three comings of Christ prepare us for Advent

by Bishop Robert E. Barron

Many years ago, in the context of a high school religion class, a very wise Benedictine nun gave me a template for understanding Advent that I’ve never forgotten. It is simply that Advent calls to mind three “comings” of Christ: the first in history, the second now, and the third at the end of time.

Let us first look back. Fulton Sheen said that Jesus is the only religious founder whose coming was clearly predicted. And indeed, we can find throughout the Old Testament indications and anticipations of the arrival of the Messiah. How often the New Testament authors use the language of fulfillment and insist that the events around Jesus occurred *kata tas graphas* (according to the Scriptures). They appreciated Jesus, this particular figure from two thousand years ago, as the one who brought to full expression all of the institutions of Israel. His rising from the dead demonstrated that he is the New Temple, the New Covenant, the definitive prophet, the Law or Torah in person.

Furthermore, they understood that Jesus had brought all of history, in a very real sense, to

its climax. The turning point of the human story is not, therefore, the emergence of modernity, not the revolutions of the eighteenth century, but rather the dying and rising of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. If we turn Jesus into a mythic or legendary figure or we construe him simply as an inspiring religious teacher, we miss this crucially important truth.

Every single New Testament author witnesses to the fact that something happened in connection with Jesus, indeed something so dramatic that all of time should be understood as falling either before him or after him. And so, during Advent, we look back with deep interest and spiritual attention to that first coming.

Christ came in time, long ago, but we must attend to the second dimension of Advent – namely, his coming to us in the here and now. We might think of that famous painting of Jesus knocking at the door. This is the Christ who presents himself every day, seeking entry into our hearts and minds. In his first coming, he appeared in the context of Israel. In this present-day *Adventus*, he appears through the sacraments of the Church, through good preaching, through the witness of the saints, through the Eucharist

especially, and through the poor who cry out to be cared for. We recall his words, “Whatever you do to the least of my people, you do to me.”

Now just as many rejected him when he came into history long ago, so, sadly enough, many reject him today. Can we see that the most important decision we will ever make – more important than decisions regarding job, family, livelihood, etc. – is whether we allow Christ to become the Lord of our lives?

During the season of Advent, we are meant to stop and pay close attention. How is Jesus coming to us, and how, precisely, are we dealing with his arrival?

And finally, Advent calls to mind Christ’s definitive coming at the end of time. One of the peculiar marks of Christianity is the belief that time is going somewhere. It is not just “one damn thing after another,” as the cynical adage famously has it, nor simply an endless cycle nor the “eternal return of the same.” Rather, time has a direction, moving toward its consummation when God will be all in all. The Church identifies this final culmination as the “second coming” of Jesus, and the Gospels speak of it often.

Here is just one example from the Gospel of Luke: “Jesus said to his disciples: ‘There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth, nations will be in dismay. . . People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world. . . And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.’”

What this remarkable language conveys is the conviction that, at the close of the age, the old order will give way and God will renew the great structuring patterns of reality. At this second coming of Christ, all of the seeds that had been planted throughout nature and history will bear fruit, all of the latent potentialities of the cosmos will be actualized, and God’s justice will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The Church’s belief – and it governs the whole of its life – is that we are living in the in-between times; that is to say, in between the culmination of history in the cross and Resurrection and the definitive fulfillment of history in the second coming of Jesus. In a sense, the war against sin and death has been won, and yet mop-up operations continue. The Church lives in that middle zone where the final stage of the battle

is still being fought. Pay attention, especially during the Advent season, to our daily Gospels at Mass. I think you’ll be surprised how often they reference the second Advent of Jesus at the end of time.

I might offer just two well-known examples: “We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again,” and “As we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.” This is how the Church speaks during the in-between times. Though we are beset on all sides by failure, pain, sin, sickness, and the fear of death, we live in joyful hope, for we know that history is going somewhere, that God has won the decisive battle and will win the war.

Therefore, this Advent, look back, look around, and look forward. With each glance, you will see the Christ who comes.

*Editor’s note: Word on Fire founder Bishop Robert Barron is bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester and an acclaimed author, speaker, and theologian.*



# 2022 NCCW convention: Find the lost sheep of the faith

by Susan Klemond  
Catholic News Service

**MINNEAPOLIS** – Christ the Good Shepherd delights in finding those who are lost, but he may also call the faithful to be shepherds to help others find their way, said Liz Kelly Stanchina, addressing nearly 500 people at the opening session of the National Council of Catholic Women’s (NCCW) convention in Minneapolis on Nov. 3, 2022.

“I think we all think of the Good Shepherd passage as Jesus coming to save us. Of course, he does, but I do wonder how often he asks us to go in search of the lost in his place,” Kelly Stanchina said, referring to the day’s Gospel from Luke chapter 15, at a convention whose theme was “Wide Open Hearts: Abiding in Faith, Hope and Love.”

Offering stories of two women as virtuous examples of responding to God’s call, both as shepherd and lost sheep, Kelly Stanchina, a retreat leader, speaker, author, and columnist, encouraged those gathered to pray for the grace to make the virtues of faith, hope, and love visible in their lives.

Attendees, including some priests, gathered at the Nov. 2-5 event for prayer, liturgies, presentations, decision making, and socializing.

At the opening Mass, Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis encouraged the congregation to use their gifts to help priests and bishops find the lost sheep – including Catholics who haven’t returned to their parishes since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s really only when we’re able to demonstrate a deep charity that we can ever have the hope of attracting people back to our Church, and you my sisters, do that in spades,” Archbishop Hebda said in his homily, thanking the women for their commitment to faith and service. “We’re so



Liz Kelly Stanchina addresses the National Council of Catholic Women’s convention Nov. 3, 2022, in Minneapolis. Listening is Beth Mahoney, NCCW president-elect.

(Photo by Robert Cunningham / PhotoResource MN)



Representing the Diocese of New Ulm at the convention are left, Sharon Illikman of St. Mary, New Ulm, Marianne Schotzko of St. Paul, Comfrey, and Carolyn Keller of St. Mary, New Ulm.

grateful for the ways in which you demonstrate charitable concern for our sisters and brothers.”

About 15 priests and several bishops concelebrated with the archbishop. Later in the convention, Bishop Joseph Williams of St. Paul and Minneapolis and William Wack of Pensacola-Tallahassee, FL, NCCW’s episcopal liaison, also presided at Masses.

The NCCW’s charitable concern and commitment to service was clear in other presentations from several national and international organizations the council partners

with to serve the poor and vulnerable, including Catholic Relief Services and Cross Catholic Outreach.

Founded in 1920, the National Council of Catholic Women is a nonprofit organization that seeks to respond to Church and societal needs. With thousands of members nationwide, the council works to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service.

The 489 convention goers, many of them 50 or older, hailed from a majority of states and dioceses in the U.S., and included more than 100 representatives from Minnesota. The Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women hosted the conference. This year’s event was the fifth NCCW annual or biennial convention held in the Twin Cities since the organization was founded.

Former Diocese of New Ulm Council of Catholic Women president Barb Mathiowetz of St. Aloysius in Olivia said while



Twenty-four women from the Diocese of New Ulm along with their DCCW Spiritual Advisor Monsignor Eugene Lozinski attended the national convention. Pictured left, Karla Antony of Holy Redeemer, Marshall, DCCW president Jackie Finstad of Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm, Lori Timmerman of Holy Redeemer, Marshall, and their newly met acquaintance from Oklahoma.



Former New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women president Barb Mathiowetz (2020–2022) stops to explore one of the booths on display at the national convention. (Photos submitted)

attending the convention she was reminded that she can find peace with women who share her faith. It also centered her on Jesus’ presence in the sacraments. “He is inviting me every day to come to be with him,” Mathiowetz said.

Chris Heiderscheidt of St. Mary’s in Sleepy Eye who serves as St. Paul and Minneapolis Province Director said she thought the 2022 national convention surpassed them all as almost 500 women, filled with the Catholic faith, venerated the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the patron of the first year of the U.S. Catholic bishops’ three-year Eucharistic Revival. “There are no words to describe the sacredness present in that space at the Marriott City Center in downtown Minneapolis, and especially at this time as we look forward to the Eucharistic Revival,” said Heiderscheidt.

The convention’s theme was inspired by Pope Francis’ teaching on hope in his 2020 encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti* and on St. Paul’s writing on love in 1

Corinthians 13. Talks throughout the weekend focused on one of the theological virtues that inspired the convention theme. Kelly Stanchina’s presentation emphasized love, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Xavier Mariette Ezeokoli described her ministry of service at Sharing and Caring Hands in Minneapolis in a talk focused on hope for the homeless.

As part of a panel discussion titled “Discover your Fiat,” Minnesota women Therese Coons, Kristin Molitor, and Susan Stabile shared their faith stories. On the final day of the convention Yen Fasano, associate director of the archdiocese’s Drexel Mission Schools Initiative, tied the virtues together and sent the participants out on mission.

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## Accepting applications NOW for 2023–24 NUDCCW Scholarship Fund

Scholarships help with expenses to attend workshops - leadership training, bookkeeping programs, education, and more.

Learn more at [www.nudccw.org](http://www.nudccw.org) or contact Sandra Jerzak, scholarship coordinator, (507) 828-9082 email: [ks.jerzak@gmail.com](mailto:ks.jerzak@gmail.com)





by Fr. Mark Steffl, STL, JCL

**T**he Code of Canon Law has only a short nine canons on the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, and beyond that, we need to look to the law in the liturgical texts to explain specifics of the Apostolic Pardon and other prayers that can be offered for someone who is dying. Taken together, these prayers and rituals are sometimes called the “last rites.”

The instructive canon 998 of the Code of Canon Law says: The anointing of the sick, by which the Church commends to the suffering and glorified Lord the faithful who are dangerously ill so that he may support and save them, is conferred by anointing them with oil and pronouncing the words prescribed in the liturgical books.

The subsequent canons specify:

- the oil to be used in the sacrament (c. 999),

# Ask a Canon Lawyer

## This month's question:

### How do “last rites” differ from receiving anointing of the sick? And, what is the “Apostolic Pardon”?

- how the priest is to administer the sacrament (c. 1000),
- that priests and family members are to ensure the sick receive this sacrament (c. 1001),
- that in certain situations, it may be permitted to have a communal celebration of this sacrament (c. 1002),
- that it is a priest who administers this sacrament (c. 1003),
- that the sacrament can be given to any member of the faithful who has reached the use of reason and has a serious illness or is of old age (c. 1004),
- that if there is a doubt as to whether the person has died, the sacrament should be administered (c. 1005),
- that the sacrament is to be given to someone who cannot ask for it him/herself, presuming he/she would have asked for it if he/she could (c. 1006), and
- that it cannot be given to someone who persists in grave sin (c. 1007).

The anointing of the sick, as a

sacrament, with the graces that it offers the recipient, is not meant to only be given to someone who is actively dying or on the verge of imminent death, but this had become the “practice” in many places, well into the 20th Century. Pope Paul VI, in the revisions to the sacrament of the anointing of the sick after the Second Vatican Council, wanted to pastorally encourage more frequent reception of this sacrament for those who were seriously ill or infirmed.

“Last rites” is a term used to describe a set of prayers that includes the anointing of the sick, but also a collection of prayers specifically for the dying individual, called the “commendation of the dying,” along with the possibility of receiving the sacrament of reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist (if the individual is able), and a prayer called the Apostolic Pardon. This set of prayers is said for those who are near death.

The Apostolic Pardon is a beautiful prayer of forgiveness

for someone dying. Properly speaking, it is a plenary indulgence given to the dying person. The prayer calls on the “treasury of mercy” that the Lord gave to the Church.

The prayer says: Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, May almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May He open to you the gates of paradise, and welcome you to everlasting joy.

As a priest, I encourage people to ask for the anointing of the sick when they need it, and also to try to remind family members to request a priest to administer this sacrament if the person cannot ask for it themselves.

As a sacrament, I have seen that it offers great encouragement to those facing the difficulty of serious illnesses and diagnoses such as cancer or terminal illnesses.

While, as a sacrament, the anointing of the sick is only for those who receive it, it is excellent when other family

members can be present as well, and the prayers can also be a consolation for them as they experience the reality of sickness and death through a loved one. (Of course, in cases of emergency or sudden or unexpected death, this is not always possible, but then it is in the hands of the Lord Jesus, who is mercy!)

**Next Issue:** What is the process for someone who has fallen away from the practice of the Catholic faith to return to the sacraments?

Do you have a question regarding canon law that you would like to see answered here? E-mail *The Prairie Catholic* at [cclancy@dnu.org](mailto:cclancy@dnu.org). In the subject area indicate “Ask a canon lawyer.”



Fr. Mark Steffl serves as judicial vicar of the Office of the Tribunal for the Diocese of New Ulm and is a canon lawyer; [msteffl@dnu.org](mailto:msteffl@dnu.org), (507) 233-5316.

## Opportunities for a positive vision of the good



MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

### FAITH IN THE PUBLIC ARENA

**T**he 2023 legislative session will be filled with challenges and opportunities. Governor Walz and DFL legislative majority leaders promised to use their historic “trifecta” to, at the outset, make our state’s abortion regime even more permissive and legalize recreational marijuana. These policy challenges present a tremendous opportunity for Minnesota Catholics to, as Pope Francis has said, “meddle in politics” by proposing a positive vision: the ability to choose what we ought, not the license to choose what we want.

Abortion is already legal up till birth in Minnesota, and our state supreme court has declared abortion access part of the right to privacy in our constitution. Almost half of abortions are paid for by taxpayers. The court’s decisions already put Minnesota on par with North Korea and China. Yet, abortion proponents want to take abortion access even further by enshrining this radical regime in our statutes.

We must work against a policy of abortion on demand. But in saying “no” to abortion, we must help people say “yes” to life. We propose creating a supportive climate for mothers and families by promoting policies such as nutritional support for expectant mothers, adequate healthcare coverage during and after pregnancy for both the mother and child, a child tax credit, childcare assistance, housing support, and more.

Similarly, when it comes to legalizing recreational marijuana, we owe Minnesotans a positive vision of the good. Rather than enabling people to dull their brain function with marijuana, we should address the root causes that lead so many to recreational drug use in the first place. As Catholics, we believe there is a better path to justice than normalizing and commercializing a drug that has been linked to the degradation of communities, the environment, and the common good.

Legalizing what some will treat as a recreational activity will likely impose much harm on the rest of us, especially in the realm of public safety, where it is associated with an increase in crime and traffic accidents. Marijuana endangers those already struggling with substance abuse and serves as a gateway drug for youth. Among states where recreational marijuana

is legal, drug use among teenagers increases. We owe it to Minnesotans to provide safe roadways, workplaces, and healthy internal and external environments to raise children.

Catholics cannot only oppose the killing of the innocent and

the legalizing of vice. We must also propose a better alternative – a positive vision of the good. You can do so by asking your legislators to enact policies that create a welcoming environment for all.

#### ACTION ALERT

Join the Minnesota Catholic Conference for Capitol Thursdays! From January to May, RSVP to join us any second or fourth Thursday at 10 a.m. We will equip you to successfully advocate for policies that bring about a positive vision of the good before you then meet with your legislators.

Be sure to pray for our legislators. Join us for Adoration each first Friday of the month (January to May) any time from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Capitol in St. Paul in the Governor’s Dining Room. In April, Adoration will take place on the 14th due to Good Friday.

There is free parking at our office, 525 Park Street in St. Paul for Adoration or Capitol Thursdays. Head to [MNCatholic.org/events](http://MNCatholic.org/events) for details and to RSVP.



# In the Darkness of winter shines many lights

## Watkins couple donate ice luminaries to area families in honor of loved ones who have passed

by Kathryn Ballalatak  
Prairie Catholic correspondent

**WATKINS, Minn.** – Around the beginning of December, the darkest time of the year, a couple from the Church of St. Anthony in Watkins take it upon themselves to bring a flicker of light to the community in the form of ice luminaries.

Skillfully crafted by Dan and Tammy Winter, the duo makes hundreds of magical, glowing ice globes each year and then delivers them to local families who are experiencing their first Christmas without their loved one who has passed on.

### Genesis of the tradition

Tammy was first introduced to ice luminaries as a child when her mother found an article in the *Pioneer Press* newspaper, detailing how to make ice luminaries with just a few simple items.

“I grew up on a dairy farm in central Minnesota, and there were eight of us girls, no boys,” says Tammy. “We didn’t spend a lot of money, but she figured she could take a votive candle, water, and a balloon.”

Tammy loved the tradition of making luminaries so much, enough to share with her children. “And then [when my mom passed away], I always had an ice candle for her,” says Tammy.

But it was after Dan’s father and mother passed away in 2008 and 2009 respectively, that the couple started to share their traditional creations with others.

“We started to see how tough it is at Christmas when you’ve lost a loved one,” says Tammy. “All of those ‘firsts’ are hard, but Christmas seems to be especially tough.”

When the couple first began making the luminaries for others, the list of recipients was small, only family members and friends. Today, it’s grown, with the Winters keeping track of families who have lost a loved one throughout the year.

“To me, it goes far beyond Christmas,” says Tammy. “I will write that name [down], and then at least once a week, I’m praying for those souls and those families who are left behind.”

### The production process

To make the ice luminaries isn’t too scientific. Tammy and Dan fill 10-12” balloons with water, place them in ice cream pails, and freeze them outside until the ice is 1 ½ to 2 inches thick. Once the ice is ready, the balloon is popped, and a core drill is used to make a hole at the top, big enough to fit a candle.

Freezing temperatures are helpful for this process, “So when it’s cold out, it’s go time,” Dan explained. Tammy was quick to give her



Watkins area residents Tammy and Dan Winter’s ice luminaries bring comfort to families who have lost a loved one during the year. (Photo by Dr. Michelle Kramer)

husband all the credit for how many they were able to make each year.

“With my mom, we were using an ice pick and a paring knife to round it out,” she said. “You get Dan involved, and he’s made this into a production. We made 300 last year, and 75 or so at a time, just because he’s so clever.”

According to Dan, the biggest challenge is freezer space. Last year, they were able to store ice luminaries at his welding shop and a couple of other establishments in town. “This year, we’re going to try to rent a walk-in freezer from the fire department,” Dan said.

Because they make so many, the Winters spend most weekends and many weeknights delivering ice luminaries. A small card

explaining the tradition is included with each.

“It’s a lot of work,” said Dan, “but you wouldn’t believe how it comes together when you hand them out. That’s when it’s all worth it.”

For the Winters, the most wonderful part of this tradition is seeing how it comforts the families.

“People really appreciate it,” said Tammy. “They realize they’re not the only ones who are missing people. When they hear they’ve been prayed for all year, it touches something in them.”

During deliveries, the Winters are often invited inside to visit with the families about their loved ones. “You can tell they needed

someone to tell these stories to,” Tammy said.

Occasionally, the Winters will add ice luminaries to the front of their own house in honor of families located in warmer states, where ice luminaries aren’t possible — just to make sure the souls of their loved ones are honored as well.

In addition, each year, the couple makes extra ice luminaries to line the church’s cemetery driveway. Many parishioners make it an annual tradition to head straight to the cemetery after Christmas Eve Mass to see the lights.

The Winters have never accepted payments for their ministry. But this year, they will be a part of a fundraiser for the parish youth group’s mission trip to Puerto Rico. The Winters pledged to create 100 extra ice luminaries and donate votive candles for the youth group to sell after Mass.

“That way, families who have lost people three or five years ago or even 100 years ago can have the opportunity to light a luminary,” said Tammy.

With so many wonderful stories, Tammy wishes her mother could see how her little ice candle tradition has grown and the difference this small act has made for so many. Although, “I’m sure she can!” said Tammy.

Every year the Winters light an ice luminary in honor of Tammy’s mother. According to Dan, hers always burns the longest.

## Friends of San Lucas

(Continued from page 8.)

for the Christian faithful of the Diocese of New Ulm, whose generosity has ensured that the mission is secure and stable and will continue to serve the people of San Lucas for years to come.

The Diocese of New Ulm has much to be proud of. You have made something remarkable happen.

*Editor’s note: As the Friends of San Lucas recognizes the 50th anniversary of that historic walk and its major accomplishments, they will share glimpses into the walk’s history and the mission’s work through the FOSL website, sanlucasmision.org.*

**Elaine Tymchak** is the incoming



executive director of the Friends of San Lucas, replacing Bill Peterson. Tymchak is a Brazilian native who has

almost 20 years of philanthropic and community development experience, including a Masters in international development, a Bachelors in sociocultural studies and biblical studies, and is the author of multiple comprehensive courses on empowerment and grassroots social change. She is the founder of a nonprofit that serves under-resourced leaders worldwide.

### Have you been married 65 years or more?

*The Prairie Catholic* will be honoring couples who are members of a parish in the Diocese of New Ulm and will be celebrating a 65th or beyond wedding anniversary in the year 2023. Complete this form and return it, along with a current photograph (NO NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, PLEASE), **no later than Jan. 3, 2023**, to *The Prairie Catholic*, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073, or e-mail [cclancy@dnu.org](mailto:cclancy@dnu.org). Announcements will be featured in the January/February 2023 edition.

Groom’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Bride’s MAIDEN Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish and City Where You Were Married: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Married: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years Married As of Dec. 31, 2023: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Parish: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number or E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_





**WASHINGTON, D.C. (CNA) – President Biden’s controversial transgender mandate has been blocked** after the administration failed to meet the November deadline to appeal a court ruling that struck down the mandate earlier this year.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the mandate Aug. 26, ruling that religious groups could not be required to perform procedures that violate their beliefs. The deadline for the Biden administration to appeal the decision passed Nov. 25.

“The final demise of this unconscionable mandate is a major victory for conscience rights and compassionate medical care in America,” Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel for Becket Law, said.

“Thousands of doctors will be able to do their jobs without the government requiring them to perform harmful, irreversible procedures against their conscience and medical expertise,” Goodrich added.

Becket, a religious liberty nonprofit

legal firm, served as counsel to thousands of Catholic and other religious medical professionals in a federal lawsuit – *Franciscan Alliance v. Becerra* – challenging the mandate in a continuation of a long legal battle stemming from a similar rule enacted by the Obama administration in 2016.

Religious medical groups including Franciscan Alliance, Christian Medical and Dental Society, and Specialty Physicians of Illinois fought to stop the requirement from taking effect. Goodrich applauded the decision adding that “the Admin has declined to appeal to #SCOTUS -meaning this win is final.”

If finalized, Biden’s rule would have empowered the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to force hospitals and doctors to perform gender-transition surgeries, in addition to expanding the Obama-era version of the rule to include abortion.

The rule revised Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act to add “sexual orientation and gender identity” and “reproductive health care services” including “pregnancy termination” to

existing “protections against discrimination on the basis of sex.” It also reversed Trump-era conscience protections that sought to allow medical professionals to opt out of performing procedures against their beliefs.

The proposal met with strong opposition from religious doctors, medical organizations, and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, which condemned the move in a statement July 27.

“[The] proposed regulations

threaten our ability to carry out our healing ministries and others to practice medicine,” the bishops wrote. “They mandate health care workers to perform life-altering surgeries to remove perfectly healthy body parts. Assurances that HHS will honor religious freedom laws offer little comfort when HHS is actively fighting court rulings that declared HHS violated religious freedom laws the last time they tried to impose such a mandate. This is a violation of religious freedom and bad medicine.”



*A Blessed Advent  
and Christmas Season  
to all our  
Prairie Catholic  
readers.*

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