

# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

*Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm*

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 34 No. 3 December 2019



*(Photo by Christine Clancy)*

## ¡La Virgen de Guadalupe!

**MARSHALL** – On Sunday, Dec. 8 the Latino community from the Bread of Life Area Faith Community (Holy Redeemer in Marshall, St. Mary in Cottonwood, and the merged parish of St. Clotilde in Green Valley) gathered with their pastor, Fr. Mark Steffl for a special Mass in honor of the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12). As Mass began, over 200 faithful processed from the back of the church to the altar carrying a rose to be placed in front of a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Before the procession began, a group of dancers called matachines, adorned in bright red skirts, t-shirts bearing the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and hundreds of noise-making shells danced down the center aisle to the beat of a large drum. With a rose in hand, Manuel Cervantes kneels before the statue of Our Lady.

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## March for Life!

(Photo by Christine Clancy)

The 2020 Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL) March for Life will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 22 at noon on the state Capitol grounds in St. Paul. Several parish communities in the Diocese of New Ulm are making available bus transportation.

(For further information, turn to page 10.)

## Highlights from the United States Catholic bishops' fall meeting: politics, evangelization, racism, immigrants, and more

by Carol Zimmermann  
Catholic News Service

**BALTIMORE** – During their Nov. 11-13 meeting in Baltimore, the U.S. bishops elected new officers and discussed challenges in the Church and the nation. They spoke of their renewed efforts to help immigrants, youth and young adults, pregnant women, and the poor as well their steps to combat gun violence and racism.

Unlike recent previous meetings, their response to the clergy abuse crisis was mentioned but was not the primary focus.

### Elected officers

The bishops elected Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles to a three-year term as president of



Members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops pray together at the beginning of the morning session on the first day of their fall meeting in Baltimore, Maryland on Nov. 11, 2019.

(Photo by Christine Rousselle/Catholic News Agency)

the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit as conference vice president. Archbishop Gomez is the first Latino to be elected to this role.

### Strategic priorities

The bishops voted overwhelmingly on a revised set of strategic priorities to take them into the next decade. They approved adding new materials to complement "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," their long-standing guide to help Catholics form their consciences in public life, including voting. The addition included the statement that called abortion the preeminent social issue of our time.

### DACA and immigration

The second day of the bishops' meeting coincided with oral

arguments at the Supreme Court over the fate of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA and bishops at the Baltimore meeting spoke up in defense of DACA recipients on the floor and in interviews with Catholic News Service.

Bishops also heard a wide-ranging report on immigration Nov. 12, which included updates of policy, how programs to resettle refugees, including those run by the Catholic Church, have closed or reduced activity because the administration has moved to close the country's doors to those seeking refuge, and efforts on the border to help asylum cases.

After the report, Major-Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy

of Philadelphia said that no community more than Catholics in the U.S. know what it's like to be an immigrant in this country.

### Young people, the faith and vocational discernment.

The bishops' second day of meetings also included a presentation of the pope's document *Christus Vivit*, which was issued following the 2018 Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Conn., who had been a delegate at the synod, urged bishops to do more to support Catholic teens and young adults and to use the pope's apostolic exhortation as their guide.

During the conference, Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles told the bishops the

Church is losing young people in greater numbers and must face the challenges of how to get the religiously unaffiliated, or "nones," particularly young people, back.

He presented a three-minute video on the issue and spoke of his concerns and ideas for bringing young people back to Church which involved not dumbing down the faith and involving young people in the social justice aspects of the Church. Discussion about this from the floor lasted for more than an hour with bishops from across the country agreeing that the issue is of great concern and sharing other ideas to bring young people back which primarily involved catechism but also an increased devotion to Mary.

Bishop Barron, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, said that this topic needs to be a priority for the Church today.

### Marriage and Family Life

The bishops also heard that a new "pastoral framework for marriage and family life" should be ready for a vote by the U.S. bishops by next November at the latest, according to Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. He stressed that it is not a "plan," since it is intended to be applied within parishes and dioceses.

(Continued on page 8)

## INSIDE

Page 2

Bishop LeVoir provides update on bankruptcy

Page 3

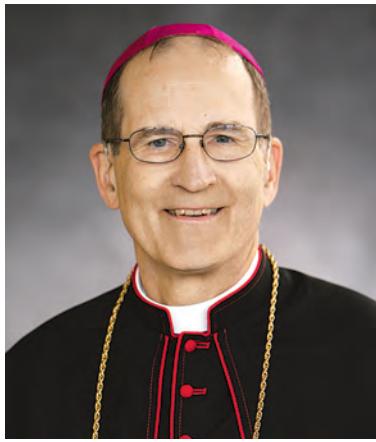
Bishop Sirba of Duluth dies unexpectedly

Page 6

Unplanned pregnancy services in diocese

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## Update on bankruptcy



by Bishop John M. LeVoir

In November, the Diocese of New Ulm took another step forward in fairly resolving sexual abuse claims by working with the creditors committee to file a joint plan of reorganization with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Later this month, a judge will determine if the disclosure statement describing the joint plan of reorganization provides adequate information. If he believes it does, then the plan and disclosure statement will be sent to the claimants, who will vote on whether to approve the plan.

Please pray that the process runs smoothly from this point forward

so that claimants may begin receiving compensation as quickly as possible.

While I know that no amount of financial compensation can truly make up for the pain suffered by victims and survivors of sexual abuse, I hope that the resolution of the claims against the diocese and parishes will bring some measure of hope, healing, and peace. I again apologize on behalf of the Church for their suffering. I am committed to finding a fair resolution for victims and survivors of sexual abuse while continuing our ministry for those the diocese serves throughout south and west central Minnesota. I am hopeful that we will reach such a fair resolution early in the new year.

### The ad limina visit

From January 10-18, 2020, the bishops of Region VIII (Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota) will make their ad limina visit. The ad limina visit is a pilgrimage to the Vatican. It involves a visit to the tombs of the two great apostles, Peter and Paul. It also includes a visit with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to express our unity with him

in teaching, governing, and sanctifying God's people. In addition, the bishops visit various dicasteries of the Roman Curia to exchange information.

In order to prepare for the ad limina visit, each bishop of a diocese had prepared a report on the state of their diocese for the Holy Father's review. The report was sent to the Holy Father in the summer of 2019. The report for the Diocese of New Ulm is about 200 pages in length.

The last ad limina visit was in 2012, when the Holy Father was Pope Benedict XVI. Please pray for the bishops as they make this important pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles. Look for more on the ad limina visit in an upcoming issue of *The Prairie Catholic* after the bishops return from the Vatican.

### Advent and Christmas

Once again, we arrive at the seasons of Advent and Christmas. With Advent, we begin a new Church year. The season of Advent is meant to assist us in preparing for the celebration of the birth of Our Lord at Christmas. But it is also meant to prepare us for the

second coming of Christ at the end of time. As the Creed tells us, at that time, Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead.

So, there are really two "comings" for which the Church is preparing during Advent: the celebration of the anniversary of Our Lord's "coming" 2,000 years ago and the second "coming" of Christ at the end of the world. Like all of the liturgical seasons, Advent is meant to draw us closer to God and God closer to us.

Union with God is the best preparation for the two "comings" of Our Lord. But in order to be drawn into union with God, we must dispose ourselves for such a union. We open ourselves to the purposes of Advent through prayer, especially the celebration of the Eucharist. Other prayers include the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession.

Daily prayer can involve the use of the Advent wreath and the accompanying prayers. The Advent wreath is a devotion that can involve the entire family. All the members of the family can join in prayer, asking God to come into their hearts and to help them to

prepare for the "comings" of Our Lord.

The Jesse tree is also a devotional tool to help in our preparations during Advent. There are various figures and symbols hung upon the Jesse tree to remind us of the preparations that were done by God the Father for the coming of his Son at the first Christmas. The Jesse tree gets its name from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD, and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD" (*Is 11:1-3*).

The season of Advent includes the four Sundays before Christmas. This time goes quickly, so let us immerse ourselves in this holy season through prayer, acts of charity, and fasting, so that we will be well prepared for the "comings" of Our Lord.

*Bishop LeVoir's monthly calendar can be found at [www.dnu.org/calendar/](http://www.dnu.org/calendar/).*

## THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

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## Archbishop Naumann: Know the pregnancy resources available in your community

**BALTIMORE, MD – (CNA)** Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan, announced Monday, Nov. 11 at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' fall meeting an initiative meant to help parishes assist pregnant women in need at the local level.

Everyone needs to know what pregnancy resources there are available in the community, Naumann said, adding that he hopes Catholics can move from "partisan divide into pastoral unity" on the topic of abortion and the Church's response.

Bishop Naumann, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, announced that from March 25, 2020 to March 25, 2021 the bishops will support

an initiative called "Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service."

The program will include resources for parish use, tools for creating an inventory of resources available to help women in the community, prayers for building a culture of life, reflections on encyclicals related to life, homily help, pulpit announcements, communications and outreach suggestions, and more.

Bishop Naumann said all the resources related to the initiative will be online in English and Spanish, along with a timeline for putting them out.

He noted that March 25, 2020 is the 25th anniversary of the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, in

which St. John Paul II expanded on the term "culture of life," which he first used in the encyclical *Centesimus annus* four years earlier.

In *Evangelium vitae*, Bishop Naumann noted, St. John Paul II asked the faithful to assess the efforts in assisting pregnant mothers in need, especially at the local level.

"Pregnant and parenting moms in need are in our parishes and neighborhoods," Bishop Naumann said, noting that there are 17,000 parishes in the United States and each parish is best equipped to help women at the local level.

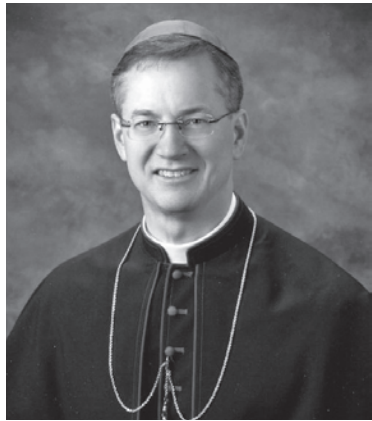
"We have done little to help women in difficult situations," when abortion seems like a quick

solution to their problems, he lamented.

Our parishes need to be, in the words of Pope Francis, "islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference."

► *For information regarding Pregnancy Resource Centers available in the Diocese of New Ulm, turn to page 6.*

## Duluth's Bishop Paul Sirba dies unexpectedly at 59



Bishop Paul D. Sirba, 59, of the Diocese of Duluth died on Sunday, Dec. 1 after suffering a heart attack before offering Mass. According to a statement from the diocese's vicar general, Fr. James Bissonette, Bishop Sirba was at St. Rose in Proctor, Minn., when he suffered cardiac arrest. He was rushed to Essentia Health St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth, where lifesaving measures were unsuccessful.

The Mass of Christian Burial was held Friday, Dec. 6 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary in Duluth with burial in the Calvary Cemetery in Duluth. The funeral was livestreamed.

Bishop Sirba was named the Diocese of Duluth's ninth bishop in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI.

Raised in Bloomington, Minn., he attended Nativity of Mary Grade School, the Academy of the Holy Angels, the College of St. Thomas, and the Saint Paul Seminary. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Saint Paul Seminary and a Master of Arts degree from the Notre Dame Apostolic Catechetical Institute in Arlington, Va.

On May 31, 1986, he was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Following ordination he served as associate pastor at the Church of St. Olaf, Minneapolis, from 1986 to 1990; at the Church of St. John the Baptist, Savage, from 1990 to 1991; as a member of the spiritual formation department at Saint John Vianney Seminary, St. Paul, from 1991 to 2000; as pastor of Maternity of the Blessed Virgin, St. Paul, from 2000 to 2006; and as spiritual director at the Saint Paul Seminary from 2006 to 2009.

He was appointed vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis by Archbishop John C. Nienstedt on July 1, 2009. Bishop Sirba was ordained a bishop on Dec. 14, 2009.

For the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Sirba has served as a Region VIII representative on the Priorities and Plans Committee and as a member of the Administrative Committee; he was a member of the Catholic Home Missions Committee.

### Administrator for Duluth diocese announced

On Thursday, Dec. 4 the Diocese of Duluth announced that Fr. James Bissonette, pastor of the Church of St. Raphael in Duluth and the Church of St. Rose in Proctor, was elected as diocesan administrator for the diocese.

Under Church law, a group of diocesan priests called the College of Consultors elects the diocesan administrator, who will care for the diocese while it awaits the appointment of its new bishop by Pope Francis.

This process takes place shortly after a diocese (also known as a "see") has become vacant, meaning it no longer has a bishop, often through an appointment of a bishop to some other post.

Among the consultors are the deans of each of the five regions, called deaneries, in the diocese, who were key advisors to the bishop.

The role of the diocesan administrator, who takes on some of the obligations and powers of a diocesan bishop, is to maintain the diocese in its ongoing work until a new bishop is installed.

"I am humbled that the priest-consultors have placed their confidence in me to serve as diocesan administrator," Fr. Bissonette said. "I ask prayers that I may fulfill my duties well. I also ask prayers for the faithful of this local Church, that we might faithfully live the Gospel as we await the Holy Father's appointment of the next shepherd for the flock in northeastern Minnesota."

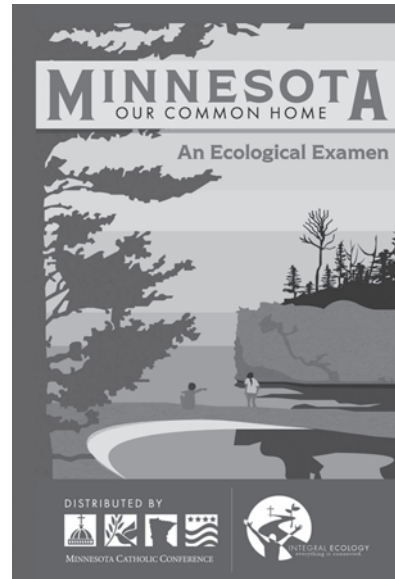
## Minnesota Catholic Conference offers study guides, ecological examen

**ST. PAUL** – The Minnesota Catholic Conference, (MCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops in Minnesota, is offering small group study guides and an ecological examen for the document it released this year on faith and the environment, "Minnesota, Our Common Home."

Synthesizing Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'*, "Care for Our Common Home," and applying its teaching to issues that especially concern Minnesotans with regard to the ecological crisis, MCC's work can be used by individuals, parishes, schools, ministries, and other groups.

The ecological examen is intended, not for daily use, but as a periodic review of one's life in light of the teachings of *Laudato si'* and the ecological conversion to which it calls us. It is recommended as a practice during Lent or Advent of each year, to help one overcome temptations and make important changes in one's attitudes and actions that will bring one's life into greater harmony with God's will.

The "study guide version, which contains the full text of "Minnesota, Our Common Home," is intended for use in small groups. It incorporates group discussion questions, a weekly challenge to incorporate the teaching into daily life, and spaces for taking notes.



"The central message of *Laudato si'* is integral ecology, which is a way of caring for both the natural and human ecologies and doing justice to both. Just as in an ecosystem, there is a natural order that leads to flourishing, so too there is a natural order to human life that promotes happiness and human development," said Minnesota Catholic Conference executive director Jason Adkins. "This document is intended to help the faithful apply this call to integral ecology in their own local context – right here in Minnesota."

"Pope Francis' decision to highlight ecological sin brings into greater focus the themes from the prior pontificate," Adkins said.

Sin is not simply something

done by individuals, but also has a social dimension for which peoples and nations must answer. That is why (Pope) Francis talks about the 'throwaway culture' in which creation, including human life, is treated as raw material to be used, manipulated, and discarded at will. In other words, questions about bioethics and environmental ethics are connected.

"The antidote to the throwaway culture is an ethic of integral ecology. The ecological examen is a way for Catholics to consider how they may be contributing to the throwaway culture and offers practical guidance to facilitate what Pope Francis calls for, which is ecological conversion – living in right relationship with the Creator and creation," Adkins said.

The study guide, which includes the original 41-page document, "Minnesota, Our Common Home," is available at an introductory price of \$5.99 (plus the cost of shipping outside of the Twin Cities metro area) through Dec. 31 or until supplies run out. The examens are \$2.50 each. The original document is \$3.35.

Descriptions of the documents and instructions for ordering them are available at [mncatholic.org/ourcommonhome](http://mncatholic.org/ourcommonhome).

## Three seminarians instituted as Acolytes

**ST. PAUL** – Three seminarians from the Diocese of New Ulm were installed as acolytes on Nov. 5, 2019, at St. Mary's Chapel at the Saint Paul Seminary in St. Paul by Bishop David J. Malloy of the Diocese of Rockford, Ill. Men who are in their second year of theological studies for the priesthood are installed as acolytes.

Learn more about the ten men from the Diocese of New Ulm who are currently studying for the priesthood by visiting [www.dnu.org/vocations](http://www.dnu.org/vocations).



Fr. Matthew Wiering (left), director of the Office of Vocations for the Diocese of New Ulm, is pictured with seminarians Nathan Hansen of Dassel, Tanner Thooft of Lynd, and Joshua Bot of Minneota. (Submitted photo)



## No Tengas Miedo

### Información Actualizada sobre la Bancarrota

por Obispo John M. LeVoir

En Noviembre, la Diócesis dio un paso más hacia una resolución justa sobre los reclamos de abuso sexual. Se trabajó con el comité de acreedores para presentar un plan conjunto de reorganización ante la corte de bancarrota de los Estados Unidos. A finales de este mes, un juez determinará si el plan conjunto de reorganización proporciona suficiente información. Si es así, el plan se enviará a los demandantes y ellos votarán si aprueban el plan o no. Oren para que durante el proceso todo marche bien y sin problemas, de modo que los demandantes puedan empezar a recibir la compensación lo más rápido posible.

Si bien sé que ninguna compensación financiera podrá compensar el dolor que sufrieron las víctimas y sobrevivientes de abuso sexual. Espero que la resolución de los reclamos contra la Diócesis y las parroquias traiga un poco de esperanza, sanación y paz. En nombre de la Iglesia mil disculpas por todo el dolor causado. Me propongo firmemente hallar una solución justa para las víctimas y sobrevivientes a medida que trabajamos en nuestro ministerio aquí en la diócesis. Espero que a comienzos de año lleguemos a una resolución justa.

#### La Visita Ad Limina

Los obispos de la Región VIII (Minnesota, North Dakota y South Dakota) harán su visita ad limina del 10 al 18 de enero del

2020. La visita ad limina es una peregrinación al Vaticano. Implica una visita a las tumbas de los dos grandes apóstoles, Pedro y Pablo. También una visita con el Papa Francisco, para expresar nuestra unidad con él en la enseñanza, el gobierno y la santificación del pueblo de Dios.

Cada Obispo tiene que preparar un reporte sobre su diócesis para que el Papa Francisco lo revise. Nuestro reporte contiene 200 páginas y ya fue enviando este verano.

La última visita ad limina fue en el 2012 y el Santo Padre, en ese entonces fue el Papa Benedicto XVI. Por favor, les pido que oren por los obispos que harán esta peregrinación en un mes.

#### El Adviento y la Navidad

Una vez más ya estamos en la temporada de Adviento y la Navidad. El Adviento marca el inicio del Nuevo Año Litúrgico católico. Es una oportunidad para prepararnos para la celebración del nacimiento de Nuestro Señor en Navidad. También nos preparamos para la segunda venida de Jesucristo. Como dice en el Credo, y de nuevo vendrá con gloria para juzgar a vivos y muertos.

Entonces, realmente hay dos “venidas” para las cuales la Iglesia se está preparando durante el Adviento: La celebración del aniversario de la “venida” del Nuestro Señor hace 2,000 años y la segunda “venida” de Cristo al

final de los tiempos. Al igual que todas las estaciones litúrgicas, el Adviento significa acercarnos más a Dios y viceversa.

La unión con Dios es la mejor preparación para las dos “venidas” de nuestro Señor. Para que dicha unión ocurra, debemos estar disponibles. Abrámonos a la experiencia del Adviento a través de la oración, especialmente de la celebración de la Eucaristía. Otras oraciones incluyen el Sacramento de la Reconciliación o la confesión.

La oración diaria puede implicar el uso de la corona de Adviento y las oraciones que las acompañan. La corona de Adviento es una devoción que puede involucrar a toda la familia. Todos los miembros de la familia pueden unirse en oración, pidiéndole a Dios que llene sus corazones y los ayude a prepararse para la venida del Señor.

El árbol de Jesé también es una herramienta devocional que ayuda durante los preparativos del Adviento. En el árbol de Jesé hay varias figuras y símbolos colgados que nos recuerda los preparativos que hizo Dios el Padre para la venida de su Hijo en la primera Navidad. El árbol de Jesé recibe su nombre del Libro del profeta Isaías:

“y brotará un retoño del tronco de Isaí, y un vástago de sus raíces dará fruto. Y reposará sobre Él el espíritu del Señor, espíritu de sabiduría y de inteligencia, espíritu de consejo y de poder, espíritu de conocimiento y de temor del Señor” (Isaías 11:1-3).

La temporada de Adviento abarca los cuatro domingos antes de la Navidad. Esta temporada pasa muy rápido, por ende, reflexionemos en esta temporada Santa a través de la oración, actos de caridad y ayuno, y así estar bien preparados para la “venida” del Señor.

## Pope celebrates 50 years as a priest; prayers encouraged

ROME – On Friday, Dec. 13, 2019, Pope Francis celebrated 50 years of priesthood. The Holy Father also celebrates a birthday this month turning 83 on Dec. 17.

In a December 5 letter to bishops across the country, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, asked that they encourage parishioners to honor the jubilee during Advent with special prayers and Mass petitions.

The letter included a special prayer in both English and Spanish, but the archbishop also invited the faithful to use any other appropriate prayer for the pope if they desire.

#### PRAYER

*Father of mercy,*

*We come before you with gratitude for the 50 years of priesthood of Pope Francis, whom you have made Peter's successor.*

*Support him with the Spirit's gifts so that he can continue to preach the Gospel with priestly zeal and lead the Church with wisdom and strength and courage.*

*May his example of long and faithful service be an inspiration to your priests and to all your faithful.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

## Immigration Sunday is on the Feast of the Epiphany

### Annual celebration gives Catholics opportunity to welcome migrants and refugees in their communities.

ST. PAUL – The Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota, is providing free downloadable resources to individuals, parishes, and communities to help them plan celebrations for the annual Immigration Sunday Minnesota.

Since 2009, Immigration Sunday Minnesota has been observed in conjunction with the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord, which falls on Jan. 5, 2020.

This year's theme, “It is not just about migrants it is about all of us,” is a continuation of Pope Francis' message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

“When families are torn apart and people are forced to live in fear it is an attack on their human dignity and a wound to all of us – the body of Christ. As the lack of resolution lingers into yet another decade, the severity of these wounds continues to grow. We must begin to heal our corner of the vineyard from the wounds of division,” stated Jason Adkins, executive director of the

Minnesota Catholic Conference. For the third consecutive year, the President's administration has slashed the number of refugee admissions into the U.S., ordering a new record low of 18,000 refugees. “In a time when our nation is reeling from the side effects of increasingly divisive political rhetoric and an immigration system in desperate need of comprehensive reforms, Immigration Sunday comes as an important moment for Minnesota Catholics to show their commitment to welcoming migrants and refugees in our communities. By accompanying our immigrant neighbors in person and in prayer, we can help them integrate into our communities and show that we welcome Christ in them,” Adkins said.

Immigration Sunday Minnesota resources, produced by the USCCB's Migrant and Refugee Services and distributed by the Minnesota Catholic Conference, are available at [www.mncatholic.org/immigrationsunday](http://www.mncatholic.org/immigrationsunday).

Minnesota Catholics are also encouraged to participate in National Migration Week (NMW) 2020 to be held January 5–11. Resources for NMW can be accessed at <https://justiceformigrants.org/take-action/national-migration-week/>.

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# Poverty and richness through missionary work

## *Hutchinson native's vocation is serving the elderly with both mercy and compassion*

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

For six years in the Diocese of Solola in Guatemala, Katie Wallyn has been spreading the Gospel message “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did it to me” (*Matthew 25:40*).

A native of Hutchinson, Minn., and a graduate of Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, with a Bachelor's degree in science and nursing, Wallyn, 38, has been serving as a lay missionary in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala, since November of 2013. With her missionary efforts primarily devoted to working with the abandoned elderly, in 2015 she founded LEAST Ministry (Loving the Elderly And Satiating His Thirst). LEAST seeks to improve the lives of the elderly by seeking out those who have become marginalized and forgotten in their community due to lack of family or financial support.

Wallyn recently replied to an online Q&A interview conducted by “The Prairie Catholic,” answering questions about her journey of service and her missionary work.

### **Q. Was there anything in particular in your childhood that prepared you for missionary service?**

**A.** I was born in Evanston, Ill., and moved to Hutchinson, Minn., in 1990, where my father, Dr. Christopher Wallyn, began his

business in ophthalmology with Dr. Michael Merck. In the early 1990s when San Lucas Toliman was classified as a mission parish of the Diocese of New Ulm, the doctors were invited by the parish pastor and Diocese of New Ulm priest, Msgr. Greg Schaffer to visit San Lucas. Msgr. Schaffer, who died in 2012, was assigned to the mission parish of San Lucas in 1963 by the diocese's first bishop, Alphonse J. Schladweiler, in response to Pope John XXIII's call to provide more pastoral care to Latin America. I was privileged to join my father on his second trip to San Lucas in December 1993. I was only 12 years old and didn't have a clue of what was about to hit me.

At that time, Guatemala was at the end of a devastating 36-year civil war. Poverty, disease, and unrest were still rampant. Seeing humanity in such an unpolished reality and seeing their tremendously poor living conditions (most homes were made out of mud and tree branches, there were no telephones, no paved streets, no hospital, etc.), the beauty and joy of the Guatemalan people completely transformed my materialistic and egotistical way of seeing the world as a pre-teen and set my heart on more meaningful views and deeper goals in life. I encountered God in the simple life of the poor. Since that first trip, I wanted to be a missionary for life.

### **Q. Was there anyone that was**

### **most helpful in your missionary decision?**

**A.** There were various people whom God strategically placed in my path so that I could come to know Jesus. I was “obligated” to go on a TEC (Together Encountering Christ) retreat by my Confirmation sponsor following high school graduation in 1999. I made Riverbend TEC #157 and had a true encounter with God the Father my last day of the retreat. It was grace that I didn't even ask for nor deserved, but it changed the course of my life and lit a fire in my soul to want to know more of and follow fiercely the love of God. My four years at Franciscan University in Steubenville were also fundamental for my formation as a young adult.

### **Q. Talk a bit about LEAST Ministry. What is it?**

**A.** “LEAST” stands for Loving the Elderly and Satiating His Thirst, which seeks to improve the lives of the elderly by seeking out those who have become marginalized and forgotten in their community due to lack of family or financial support. Once found, these elderly will be supported in order to understand and respond to their basic human needs for affection, food, water, shelter, medical care, belonging, and dignified death. Addressing these needs with mercy and compassion is part of affirming their inherent value and worth as a child of God.

For the past four years, LEAST has provided one meal a week to 120 elderly. That's almost 25,000 meals! The ministry has been able to host around three mission teams per year and has provided new housing or other construction projects to the elderly in need. We also provide medical care and follow up care with chronic illnesses such as glaucoma, hypertension, diabetes, and other wounds/acute care if needed.

On Sept. 24, 2017, through a miraculous donation, we were able to purchase Casa Feliz from the San Lucas Mission / Friends of San Lucas. [Friends of San Lucas is a nonprofit organization that supports development in



For the past six years, Diocese of New Ulm native Katie Wallyn has been working with and caring for the abandoned elderly in San Lucas Toliman in Guatemala. A nurse by vocation, Wallyn is provides medical care and follow up care to the elderly in need.

(Photo submitted)

San Lucas Toliman and the surrounding communities in Guatemala.]

Spearheaded by Msgr. Schaffer, Casa Feliz was built initially to be a home for over 200 orphans during the time of the war. Since around the year 2000, Casa Feliz had only been used for office space up until the death of Msgr. Schaffer in 2012 and completely shut down in 2014. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and now through the miraculous donation to repurchase Casa Feliz, the two buildings are being transformed into the first nursing home facility to provide assisted living to 70 elderly and hospice care to 10 patients in the Diocese of Solola!

### **Q. What part of missionary work do you enjoy most?**

**A.** Even though it is very challenging to live and advance a ministry in a developing country, I recognize the path that the Lord paved in my life to lead me to this point so that I can be a witness to the fact that he is alive and that we are never alone. Being a missionary is not so much about finding the way to get the “mission accomplished,” rather, it is learning how to be docile and

silent so that your heart can listen and be more conformed to Christ.

### **Q. Advice you would give to people headed for missionary service?**

**A.** In the words of the late Msgr. Greg Schaffer who lived almost 50 years as a missionary priest here in San Lucas Toliman, he said you need “patience.”

I would also complement this with the word “wisdom.” Following Christ doesn't always look pretty, and God writes straight with crooked lines. But, every failure or dead-end may only be a seed sown in the ground that needs to die in order to bring new life. If we don't get discouraged by how our plans didn't work out or grow weary on the broken paths that we don't quite understand, and if we surrender in joyful trust and hold on through patience, we will see within time the wisdom and beauty of God's plan. A plan that was well thought out to help us grow in holiness, to make way for true charity towards the “least” – those in dire need, and to allow the light of His Kingdom shine in this world.

## Mission Immersion Trips offer educational experience

**GUATEMALA** – Friends of San Lucas (FSL) is a non-profit organization that supports development of the San Lucas Mission in San Lucas Toliman and the surrounding communities in Guatemala.

In 2018, FSL began designing Mission Immersion Trips to give participants the opportunity to take a closer look at the workings of the Mission. Participants spend time learning about Guatemalan

culture and programs. They meet with Mission program directors as they share hopes and dreams for their programs. Typically lasting 5–6 days, these trips are designed for people who have made previous trips to the Mission as well as newcomers.

For further information and a listing of upcoming Mission Immersion Trips visit <https://sanlucasmision.org/mission-immersion/>

# Unplanned pregnancy? Choices are available in and outside diocese

by Katie Braulick  
Prairie Catholic correspondent

Facing an unplanned pregnancy can be a terrifying and lonely experience. The staff and volunteers at the crisis pregnancy centers that serve the Diocese of New Ulm want women and men to know they are here to walk with them through this experience.

Through the doors of these centers are the resources, skills, training, medical advice, and loving compassion that anyone facing an unplanned pregnancy needs to help them make life-affirming decisions. Beyond offering a pregnancy test, the advocates and volunteers at these centers journey with their clients through the milestones of decisions and healing, prenatal care, birth, parenting struggles as well as relationship and job skills, empowering them with support and education.

Crisis pregnancy services in the Diocese of New Ulm have been built on the foundation provided by the four Birthright Centers that serve the diocese, located in Hutchinson, Marshall, Mankato, and Moorhead. All of these centers have been open for over 40 years! Serving clients with pregnancy tests, physical resources, emotional support, and helpful referrals to community resources is their mission as well as speaking engagements and health fairs. Through Birthright's strong support system, they aim to help each client realize hope for their future. Judy Hagen, director of the Hutchinson Birthright, stresses how befriending a woman in this situation and meeting her physical needs empowers her to choose life.

The efforts of these Birthright Centers have paved the way for centers that provide not only pregnancy testing but other medical services such as sexually transmitted infection testing and ultrasounds. Likewise pregnancy resources have expanded to include a host of educational programs as well as baby stores with such things as clothing, baby supplies, cribs, and car seats,

**Community Education**  
Recently I visited Options for Women – Mankato with a group of 28 students from St. Mary's High School in Sleepy Eye. Our visit included a REAL Essentials activity that challenged the students to think about decisions in the light of peer pressure and how the right sequence of life milestones can lead to more successful relationships, careers, and overall happiness.

Lori Letourneau, Options executive director, said that the REAL Essentials relationship education program has recently been expanding at her center. "In order to change our society and promote a culture that honors and values life, we feel that education and awareness needs to begin before individuals engage in risk-taking behaviors," Letourneau said.

All of the pregnancy centers that serve the diocese do outreach education to high school and/or community groups in addition to education programs.

**Parent Education**  
Since 2016, Choices Pregnancy Center of Redwood Falls has added life coaching to their offered services. According to executive director Carrie Meyers, "Often,



clients are living incongruous lives; the values she holds may not be consistent with the actions she is taking. Life coaching empowers our clients to make healthy life choices for themselves in the future."

Denise Wittman is the executive director at Hope Pregnancy Center in Willmar. She said "So often, people come with layers of underlying trauma; everything from past childhood abuse to homelessness. [They are] feeling overwhelmed by their circumstances . . . our staff is passionate about making this a safe place for people to come and we journey with them throughout pregnancy and beyond."

Wittman explained how the Earn While You Learn Education program (EWYL) is a great way for the center to support and build relationships with both women and men by helping them to gain tools and skills for parenting and life.

Many of the centers that serve the diocese offer the EWYL program. While enrolled in this program clients go through a curriculum either in a classroom setting or individually with a mentor or through online classes. Clients earn diapers and baby wipes for each class they finish and baby bucks to buy items they need at the center's baby store. Willmar's center has taken EWYL one step farther to create the Parenting Partnership Program which makes this education available to parents in the local jail.

First Choice Pregnancy Services

in New Ulm has offered a nationally affiliated program called Daddy Boot Camp for the last six years. This highly successful program connects "rookie dads" with "veteran dads" for an intense three-hour, man-to-man workshop offered four times each year. The veteran dads bring their babies, and along with course content, they are able to give the rookie dads hands-on experiences.

Nick Dauer is the leader of this program offered in both New Ulm and Sleepy Eye. He says, "As men we tend to father how we were fathered. A lot of times we need to break the cycle of neglect or abuse. Many of these young men have grown up without fathers themselves and they need to learn to commit to their own children."

Daddy Boot Camp gives fathers a good foundation to start and confidence to be better fathers to their young children.

Through education and support, these vital safe havens that serve the Diocese of New Ulm continue to equip parents and young people with the knowledge and skills to make good, life-affirming choices and empower them to create healthy relationships. This, in turn, leads to better lives for them and their children, stronger families, and a healthier society that honors and values life.

For a list of pregnancy centers that serve the Diocese of New Ulm, their contact information, and a listing of available services, visit [dnu.org/familylife](http://dnu.org/familylife).

## Pregnancy Crisis Center Services

**Birthright - Hutchinson**  
(320) 587-5433  
[birthrighthutchinson.com](http://birthrighthutchinson.com)  
Pregnancy tests, help and support, confidential medical referrals

**Birthright - Mankato**  
(507) 387-7818  
[birthrightmankato.org](http://birthrightmankato.org)  
Pregnancy testing, emotional support, diapers and essentials, community referrals

**Birthright - Marshall**  
(507) 532-3660  
[birthright.org/marshall](http://birthright.org/marshall)  
Pregnancy and parenting information and support, local referrals, free pregnancy and maternity resources

**Birthright - Moorhead**  
(218) 477-1977  
[birthrightfm.org](http://birthrightfm.org)  
Pregnancy testing, emotional support, physical resources, community referrals

**Choices Pregnancy Center - Redwood Falls**  
(507) 637-2534  
[choicespregnancycenter.com](http://choicespregnancycenter.com)  
Pregnancy testing, EWYL, REAL Essentials Education, life coaching

**First Choice Pregnancy Center - New Ulm**  
(507) 359-9800  
[consideryouroptions.org](http://consideryouroptions.org)  
Pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, EWYL, Daddy Boot Camp, REAL Essential Education, STI testing

**Hope Pregnancy Center - Willmar**  
(320) 235-7619  
[findhopepc.com](http://findhopepc.com)  
Pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, STI testing, Parenting Partnership Program, EWYL, REAL Essentials Education

**Options for Women - Mankato**  
[optionmankato.org](http://optionmankato.org)  
(507) 625-2229  
Pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, EWYL, REAL Essentials Education, Fatherhood program



**Catholic Charities**

offices located in NEW ULM, MARSHALL, HUTCHINSON, WILLMAR  
offering pregnancy and adoption counseling, Project Rachel,  
and Respect Life Resources

**Pregnancy support services include assistance with:** an unplanned pregnancy, finding resources, preparing for the birth of a child, and relationship counseling. **Adoption:** Information on and assistance in discerning an adoption plan and its options as well as resources for people interested in adopting. **Abortion:** The Church's message is one of healing and hope. Counseling and spiritual support are provided for those affected by abortion.

**Call (866) 670-5163 | [pkral@dnu.org](mailto:pkral@dnu.org)**

# Diocesan Youth Council – a ray of hope in the Catholic Church

by Kevin Losleben

A recent Pew Research Center survey revealed that 69% of Catholics do not believe in the Church's teaching on the Eucharist. A quick survey of our friends, neighbors, and co-workers will reveal to us that many Catholics do not attend Sunday Mass or practice the faith at all.

But in the midst of such darkness, a small group of youth in the Diocese of New Ulm are a ray of hope. The Diocesan Youth Council (DYC) is comprised of youth in grades 10-12 from all around the diocese who have decided to make a commitment of prayer and dedicated service to the Church. This year, there are 15 youth who have made this commitment, some of whom are entering their third year on the DYC.

Members of the DYC commit to 15-minutes of mental prayer each day and regular Confession (at least once per month). This can be challenging at times, especially with how busy high school students often are. But it is endlessly rewarding.

“Because it was a requirement of being on DYC, I began praying everyday,” said Clare Schmitz, who joined the DYC in 2016 and graduated in 2018. “Learning how to pray and putting it into practice has affected every area of my life.”

DYC members are instructed in the method of mental prayer laid out by St. Teresa of Avila, the “Doctor of Prayer.” For their first year, DYC members read a book titled *Conversation with Christ* by Fr. Peter Thomas Rohrbach and discuss it in small groups with adult leaders.

“I think the biggest way [the DYC] helped me prepare for life after high school was the foundation it gave me in prayer,” said Schmitz. “Having that foundation helped me to learn to surrender everything to God and discern where he wanted me to go with my life after I graduated.” Schmitz served as a Totus Tuus missionary last summer and is now helping as a young adult leader on the DYC while taking classes online through the University of Steubenville.

In addition to developing a life of prayer, the DYC members serve the diocese by hosting Cor Jesu,



Fifteen youth from the Diocese of New Ulm make up this year's Diocesan Youth Council. They are: front row, left, Anna Timmerman, Holy Redeemer, Marshall; Cassie Louwagie, St. Clotilde, Green Valley; Regina Surprenant, St. Mary, Sleepy Eye; and Bella Sieling, St. Mary, Cottonwood. Middle row, Clare Schmitz, St. Mary, Sleepy Eye; Sophia Portner, St. Mary, Sleepy Eye; Coryn Peppel, St. Aloysius, Olivia; Clare Fischer, Cathedral, New Ulm; Maryanne Larsen, St. Michael, Morgan; Amanda Stafford, SMSU Newman Club; Mary Kate Losleben, St. Mary, Sleepy Eye. Back row, Fr. Matthew Wiering, chaplain; Marc Collins, Sacred Heart, Murdock; David Rabaey, St. Eloi, Ghent; Sean Connolly, St. Mary, Sleepy Eye; Noah U'Ren, St. Catherine, Redwood Falls; Abi Ries, St. Joseph, Montevideo; and Derrick Van Overbeke, Holy Redeemer, Marshall. *Not pictured* Emily Schommer, St. Mary, New Ulm and Cecilia Rabaey, St. Edward, Minneota. (Photo submitted)

an evening of adoration with music and Confession available.

“The thing that I enjoyed most about DYC was assisting at the Cor Jesu holy hours with the other members of the DYC,” said Luke Miller, a DYC alumnus and sophomore at St. John Vianney Seminary.

The DYC is responsible for inviting their friends to attend Cor Jesu with them, setting up the many candles used to create a prayerful environment in the church, handing out programs, and also for singing in the choir. These responsibilities are carried out by the three different teams within the DYC: evangelization, hospitality, and choir.

Regina Surprenant is a junior at St. Mary's School in Sleepy Eye and is on the evangelization team. At the DYC training retreat, which was held in New Ulm on October 26-27 this year, the evangelization team went to Wal-Mart to hand out Miraculous Medals.

“Being on the [evangelization] team has really forced me outside

of my comfort zone and helped me to grow in my relationship with Christ,” Surprenant said.

The hospitality team plans the two “parties” that the DYC hosts for all the youth of the diocese: the It's-Still-Christmas Party on January 12 and the Paschal Party on May 3 at St. Aloysius in Olivia. They are the “behind the scenes” operation that sets the tone for the rest of the group and are lead by Mary Kate Losleben, a stay-at-home mom and skilled cook, and Amanda Stafford, a student at Southwest Minnesota State University and former Totus Tuus missionary.

The choir provides the music for Cor Jesu and is lead by Sean Connolly, the music director at St. Mary's in Sleepy Eye.

“I am extremely excited to be involved in the Cor Jesu choir,” said Cecilia Rabaey, a senior at Marshall High School. “Sean does a phenomenal job helping us to praise God through music, and I am truly blessed to be able to learn from him how to praise God more beautifully.”

One of the greatest benefits of the DYC, however, is the opportunity for devout Catholic youth to spend time with peers who share the same zeal for the faith as they do.

At each monthly meeting, the DYC pray a holy hour together, discuss their spiritual reading assignments, play games, and spend time with their teams learning how to cultivate their skills in evangelization, hospitality, and sacred music. Fr. Matthew Wiering, director of Vocations for the Diocese of New Ulm, generously serves as chaplain.

“What I enjoyed most about the DYC was the community,” said Schmitz. “Having a group of teens my age that cared about their faith and wanted to grow in it from all over the diocese was so uplifting and inspiring.”

Holiness is true friendship with Christ, and the youth of the DYC are pursuing that friendship and finding the company of others

doing the same thing in the midst of an increasingly secular society.

“The DYC played a significant role in my discernment of God's will for my life,” said Miller, reflecting on how the DYC prepared him for life after graduation. “The DYC helped me to develop a friendship with Christ, and through this relationship, I discerned that God was calling me to the seminary.”

The DYC will be hosting their next *Cor Jesu* holy hour on Sunday, Jan 12, 2020, at 6:15 p.m. at the Church of St. Aloysius, Olivia. They will host their “It's Still Christmas Party” afterwards.



Kevin Losleben is the director of the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm, [klosleben@dnu.org](mailto:klosleben@dnu.org).



# Ask a Canon Lawyer

**This month's question:  
"Heresy, schism, apostasy – what's the difference,  
and how does one get excommunicated?"**



by Fr. Mark Steffl, STL, JCL

There are few things that are more misunderstood in Church history (and even now) than the concept of excommunication and the terms heresy, schism, and apostasy. These terms have a very theological meaning to them, but like many things, they have found their way into our common parlance.

The theological basis to these canon law terms is found in the words and actions of the Lord, who during in his public teaching had to correct and rebuke some of his public adversaries.

The Lord himself desires that we, as his followers and members of his Church, be always "of one heart and mind" (*Acts of the Apostles 4:32*). Jesus prayed for the unity of the Church in his "Priestly Prayer" offered at the Last Supper (*John 17:20-21*): "I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father are

in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."

Knowing the importance of unity in relation to what we believe, the Church struggled to maintain this unity from the earliest days of its history. Lack of unity has led, at times, to great turmoil in the Church, and unfortunately sometimes even to political conflicts. The Nicene Creed that we say at Mass each week is an example of how we profess together what we believe, and was the result of a number of theological disagreements in the early centuries of the Church.

To protect this unity, the Church has had at times to publicly correct errors and misunderstandings regarding theological and doctrinal matters – what we believe – in a definitive way. The Church sees this as acting both for the good of the individual(s) involved, and for the good of the Church, to avoid the confusion and scandal on the part of others such errors could bring about.

A section of the Code of Canon Law, Book VI, goes into great detail that any imposed sanctions

(punishments) by the Church must be guided by principles that protect the rights of individuals to self-defense, that an action that warrants correction by the Church was done deliberately knowing it was wrong (not out of ignorance or error), and that ecclesiastical penalties are only imposed or declared as a last resort when all other efforts to resolve an action against the unity of the Church have been exhausted.

The distinct terms, heresy, schism, and apostasy are the names of three different sins against the unity of the Church. Excommunication is a penalty given for serious offenses against them, with the hope of reform of the person.

Heresy, apostasy, and schism are all defined in canon 751 of the Code of Canon Law. "Heresy is the obstinate denial or doubt, after baptism, of a truth which must be believed by divine and Catholic faith. Apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith. Schism is the withdrawal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or from communion with the members of the Church subject to him."

The concept of "excommunication" is not defined in the Code of Canon Law itself, but the term expresses a loss of communion (or unity) with the Church because of a grave and public offense such as heresy, apostasy, or schism. Excommunication means that an individual is not able to receive the sacraments, and if the individual is a deacon, priest, or bishop, that cleric may not administer the sacraments nor exercise any public role in the Church.

The Church sees excommunication as an effect or result of an individual's actions, something that they do by and to himself or herself. The formal declaration of this excommunication by the Church is regarded as a "medicinal penalty," done always and only with the hope that the individual will repent and correct the error, and return to "communion" with the Church. It is never a declaration that the individual is "bad" or unredeemable or lost to eternal life.

At many times in history, the unity of the Church has been in great danger, often far more so than we see today. As the terms like

"heresy" and "schism" are often thrown about in news stores and social media posts, it is important and helpful to remember that these do not describe mean or vindictive actions by the Church, but are all part of the Church's unending efforts to heal division, to clear up confusion, and to bring all together in the faith.

**NEXT COLUMN:** "What is laicization? How can a priest stop being a priest?"

**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 for the Diocese of New Ulm and is a canon lawyer.

## Bishops examine challenges faced by Church, society

(Continued from page 1)

During the conference the bishops raised pressing issues that included the priesthood shortage, gun violence, and the need to provide support services for pregnant women. Archbishop Christophe Pierre, papal nuncio to the United States, mentioned some of these challenges in his opening remarks, along with the need to welcome migrants and fight racism. He also urged the bishops not just to focus on the challenges before them but to consider how they could further develop collegiality and collaboration with one another.

In his final address as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston told his fellow bishops that it has been "an honor to serve you, even in the difficult times."

"Let's begin anew," he said, at the close of his address, veering

away from prepared remarks, and quoting St. Augustine.

The cardinal did not elaborate on specifics of the abuse crisis in the Church, particularly highlighted this past year, but spoke of the bishops' continued work of transparency related to dealing with the crisis. He said the abuse measures adopted by U.S. bishops at their meeting last June are "only a beginning. More needs to be done."

At the start of the meeting, Bishop Earl A. Boyea of Lansing, Mich., asked for an update on the Vatican's report on the McCarrick situation, which many of the bishops, by voice vote, also said they wanted to hear.

In a brief presentation, Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley told the bishops the Vatican has not yet published a report about its investigation of now-defrocked former U.S. Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, but a report could

be ready by Christmas, or in the new year. He said he and other bishops at the Vatican for their recent *ad limina* visit said they were "anxious to receive the Holy See's explanation of this tragic situation, how he could become an archbishop and cardinal, who knew what and when." He also stressed that the "long wait has resulted in great frustration on the part of bishops and our people and indeed a very harsh and even cynical interpretation of the seeming silence."

In a presentation on gun violence, Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., said Catholic clergy and lay leaders can play a role in bringing together people along the rural-urban divide to build understanding of the need for sensible policies that can end the scourge of gun violence. The bishop, who is chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, outlined the USCCB's long-held stance of

the need for "common sense" legislation that governs the availability of guns. But he also said it was time for people to come together so that there is greater understanding of how gun violence affects urban communities in particular.

In a new approach for the bishops' pro-life efforts, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., invited his fellow bishops to devote a year of service to pregnant women starting next March. He said Catholic parishes can be one of the first places a woman facing an unexpected or challenging pregnancy can turn to for assistance rather than think of seeking an abortion and they could offer a variety of support services to women who may be thinking about whether to carry their child to term.

The bishops also voted for a new sixth edition of the USCCB's existing Program of Priestly Formation for U.S. dioceses;

before it can be implemented, it must first receive a "recognitio" or approval from the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy. They approved a text translation to be used in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults and OK'd close to 300 new hymn texts for the Liturgy of the Hours.

The three-day meeting wrapped up Nov. 13 with a presentation by Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, La., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, who spoke about the ongoing work of the committee, highlighting the listening sessions that have taken place around the country.

The bishops also heard presentations about Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Relief Services, and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network or CLINIC.

Visit [www.USCCB.org](http://www.USCCB.org) for more on the 2019 Fall General Assembly.

## Preparing our hearts for the presence of the Lord



by Betty Thooft  
DCCW president

The countdown is on! The Spirit of Christmas will soon be here.

When we are out shopping, driving ourselves a little bit frazzled from all of the crowds, let us slow down. Slow down and take notice of those around us. Perhaps you will find that compassionate listening and kind understanding might be the gift of grace someone needs during this time of year.

During this holy season of Advent, we are getting ready for Jesus' coming into the world and into our lives. We are reminded to get ready and prepare for the way of the Lord. As we are doing this preparedness, are we contemplating our own lives and the journey it is taken? Is our life's

journey taking us closer to God or further away? Are we educating our children and grandchildren in the Catholic faith?

Our faith calls us to act and be prepared by listening attentively to the Word of God. Some ways we can do this are:

- Go to confession (Sacrament of Reconciliation)
- Attend daily Mass and Sunday Mass
- Read the Bible
- Volunteer at local food shelves or nursing homes
- Visit your neighbors, shut-ins, or invite them to your home; especially invite those who have no family close by or no place to go during the Advent and Christmas season
- Talk about the Catholic faith to others, evangelize.

No matter what the Lord is asking you to do, remember it is not so much about what he is asking you to do, but how it will change your heart when you do what he has asked.

As we prepare for the Lord's coming at Christmas, let us prepare our hearts for the presence of the Lord in us and among us.

## Scholarship opportunities available now!

The New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (NUDCCW) scholarship program is a unique program that is available to all registered Catholics in the Diocese of New Ulm who are involved in serving their parish or the diocese.

Scholarship grants may be used for workshops, institutes, conferences, seminars, classes, courses or convention registration that aid individuals in parish and/or Catholic school ministry, CCW functions such as national, province, or New Ulm Convention registration.

Scholarships may also be used for enrichment for parish CCW groups such as speaker cost, or

purchase of CD/DVD/books that would encourage and help members grow in their faith.

Applications can be obtained by contacting your parish scholarship coordinator or parish CCW president or by visiting [www.nudccw.org](http://www.nudccw.org).

Applications must be submitted by March 1, 2020, to be considered.

For further information contact Jeanne Bednarek, NUDCCW scholarship coordinator at 507-694-1467, email: [jbednarekforccw@gmail.com](mailto:jbednarekforccw@gmail.com)

## Calling upon saints with life stories that inspire us as we prepare for Christmas

by Fr. Ed Dougherty M.M.

Advent is a time to prepare for Christmas, recalling the hope surrounding Christ's first coming and looking forward to his second coming, when all things will be fulfilled in him. During this time, we should feel like we are on a journey away from the bondage of worldliness and towards the fulfillment of our deepest and purest desires.

One of the most important ways to bring this journey to life within our hearts is to pray for guidance, protection, and intercession along the way; and there are certain saints who are particularly appropriate to call upon, with life stories to inspire us as we prepare ourselves for Christmas.

In an article for Catholic Exchange, journalist Stephen Beale lists his "Top Ten Saints for Advent" and explains how aspects of their stories relate to this period of expectation. For instance, St. Francis of Assisi installed the first nativity scene, using real live animals and a life-sized manger. He wanted to ignite devotion to the faith, and his actions remind us that this is indeed a time for us to create beautiful commemorations to the miracle of Christ's birth.

Another saint devoted to reminding others of the importance of Christ was John the Baptist, only his was a prophetic call sounded even



© Virginia Broderick

before Christ began his ministry. John's story reminds us that we all have a unique purpose in life. His purpose was so clear to him from the very beginning that he actually leapt in his mother Elizabeth's womb upon being in the presence of the unborn Christ in Mary's womb.

Other saints that Beale highlights for their significance during Advent are St. John of the Cross for his meditation on the Dark Night of the Soul, a time when we wait in anxious expectation to be calmed by the peace of Christ; St. Martin of Tours, whose feast day was once a Mardi-Gras-like kick-off to start Advent; St. Nicholas, whose legend has grown around Christmas but who was also known as a strong defender of the faith; St. Lucy, who endured a torture that left her blind and is now remembered in connection to the Christmas imagery of Jesus as the light of the world; St. Therese of Lisieux, who was devoted to the Child Jesus; and St. Teresa of Avila, who was devoted to St. Joseph.

And that brings us to the two most important saints to remember during Advent: Mary and Joseph. Beale calls Mary "the ultimate Christian believer," who experienced the intense joy of being close to Christ and who also weathered the turmoil that surrounded his life. Reflecting on St. Joseph, Beale references an Advent sermon given by St. Bernard of Clairvaux on the special relationship between Joseph and Jesus. Bernard highlighted that God trusted Joseph to "carry in his arms, to lead by the hand, to nourish, and to watch over the Infant Savior."

No two people could have experienced the anticipation of Christ's birth more profoundly than Mary and Joseph. Imagine the responsibility they knew they were preparing themselves for – and then realize that God is calling you to that same responsibility.

Advent is a time to prepare ourselves to welcome the Child Jesus in all his vulnerability into our lives and to see Christ in all those entrusted to us in their most vulnerable moments. When we do that, we have walked in the footsteps of the saints in preparing ourselves for Christ, and it is a journey that will not disappoint.

*Editor's note: The Christophers are a Christian inspirational group that was founded in 1945 by Fr. James Keller. Fr. Dougherty is a member of the Board of Directors.*

## 'Young Church' comes alive at NCYC

**INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.** – For three days in November (21–23), more than 20,000 youth from across the United States came together to share their faith at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held at the Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. NCYC is a biennial celebration of the young Church sponsored by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. This event gathers together Catholic High School youth (grades 9-12) and their adult leaders from across the nation. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Diocese of New Ulm organizes and brings groups from the diocese to every NCYC.

This year over 80 youth represented the Diocese of New Ulm from the parish communities of Canby, St. Leo, Spicer, Willmar, Murdock, Franklin, Fairfax, Gibbon, and Winthrop.



Eleventh grade youth Danna Espadas, (left), Bailey Stahl, and Chloe Schafer are pictured at this year's NCYC in Indianapolis. The students are from the Catholic Area Faith Community of Jesus Our Living Water (Spicer and Willmar).  
(Photo submitted)

# January retreat to offer reprieve from the often stressful life of farming

by Katie Roiger  
Prairie Catholic correspondent

Deacon Tim Dolan has always had a heart for farms and the families that work them.

Dolan, a Minnesota native, first started in the Peace Corps, working with agricultural extension. This led him to a 12-year stint as a high school vocational agricultural teacher and Future Farmers of America (FFA) advisor. He also served on the University of Minnesota's agricultural extension, specializing in farm financial management for over 20 years. Besides this, he has a hands-on practice of agricultural technique as he still farms corn and beans on his land between Winthrop and Gaylord.

Dolan currently serves at the director of the Office of Social Concerns for the Diocese of New Ulm. When he took on the position in 2013, he knew he wanted to include the farming community in his ministry initiatives. This concern for his agricultural peers was only deepened by the recent years of difficult farming economy.

While certain factors, like weather, are perpetual challenges farmers face, other stressors seem to have

been worsened by current foreign policy. Recent tariffs on exports by the United States, combined with pig shortages in China, led the Chinese government to freeze the import of U.S.-grown crops – a move that hugely impacted farmers' revenue stream.

"The tariffs have been an issue," said Dolan. "When they put the tariffs in place, soybean prices went down almost two dollars in one week." He went on to share that many local farmers are feeling the pinch in other areas of their business. Lowered prices, as well as the past months' heavy rainfall and late planting season, have created significant difficulties for keeping farms running profitably.

"They [the farmers] have to be able to meet all of their expenses," Dolan said. "A lot of people have cash rent, and over time that's been kind of high. In the last few years, it's been hard to pay some of those rent prices."

### Harvesting Hope Retreat

Although unable to change the tariffs, as Director of Social Concerns Dolan wanted to benefit the local farming community positively.

In 2018, he had a brainwave that he shared with a fellow brother



deacon, Paul Treinen, regarding a way to minister to farming families. This led the two to form the first-ever Harvesting Hope retreat for married farming couples in February of 2019.

Dolan feels that this kind of uniquely-focused retreat is essential to the wellbeing of farming families. The stress of dealing with everyday concerns can lead to a potentially damaging buildup of tension within a relationship.

"I've seen them [stressors] destroy a marriage," Dolan said. "For a husband not to feel like he's able to support his family with work that he's done his whole life, that can get to be a real issue. For the wife, a lot of times, the husband

will close off and not talk, and communication becomes an issue."

Harvesting Hope is a non-denominational Farmer and Spouse Retreat. It is designed with positive, healthy communication at its heart. The 2019 two-day retreat featured a variety of panelists, from a talk centered around finding humor and joy in everyday work, to a mental health practitioner with several years' experience in farmer mental health support, to a farming wife who is able to give a feminine perspective on the ups and downs of an agriculturally-centered life. The 2020 retreat cast of presenters is purposefully similar.

"I'm just excited to see them all,"

said Dolan. "There gets to be a really good discussion on a lot of these issues."

In order to meet its other goals of relaxing and connecting, the retreat is structured to have plenty of time for couples to enjoy each others' company and get to know their farming fellows.

"There's a fair amount of time that's just time to sit and visit," said Dolan. "That's a good thing."

The next Harvesting Hope Retreat will be held Jan. 10–11, 2020, at Abbey of the Hills in Marvin, S.D. For more information, or to register, visit [abbeyofthehills.org/harvesting-hope](http://abbeyofthehills.org/harvesting-hope) or call (605) 398-9200. Non-farming individuals have the option to sponsor a farm couple and send them on a rejuvenating weekend.

"I hope [couples come] that just need an opportunity to get away from things for the weekend and talk and meet other people who are experiencing the challenges of agricultural life," said Dolan. "I just hope that everybody that comes will find hope to keep going in the future and that they would find a way to continue to do what they want to do and find a way to make sure they're doing God's will."

# Thousands to gather at State Capitol in January for annual March for Life

by Sr. Candace Fier

Every January, buses filled with youth and adults from the Diocese of New Ulm travel to the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul for the March for Life, a pro-life rally protesting abortion. The March is held annually nationwide on or around the anniversary of the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion in the case *Roe v. Wade*.

For the past number of years, student groups from the three Catholic high schools in the diocese have attended the March for Life. They give a strong pro-life witness on behalf of the Diocese of New Ulm.

Organized by the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL), the 2020 March for Life at the Minnesota State Capitol

will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 22. A Prayer Service for Life will take place at the Cathedral of St. Paul from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., followed by the MCCL March to the Capitol. The rally at the Capitol will begin at noon and a brief program will follow at 12:30 p.m. on the steps of the Capitol.

### Partial indulgence granted

Bishop John LeVoir has granted a partial indulgence for all Catholics from the Diocese of New Ulm who attend the 2020 March for Life in St. Paul. In addition to attending the March, the usual conditions apply:

- In the state of grace.
- Performing the action with the proper interior disposition of desire to receive the indulgence.

Note: The indulgence is

also available to those who are aged, sick, or homebound, having fulfilled the same conditions and who unite themselves to the prayers that are offered that day for Respect for Life

The diocesan faithful are encouraged to join Bishop LeVoir at the March and pray for the protection of the lives of the unborn and their mothers. Together we can make a difference!



Sr. Candace Fier, ISSM, is the director of the Office of Family Life for the Diocese of New Ulm, [cfier@dnu.org](mailto:cfier@dnu.org).

## Bus transportation opportunities

### Marshall Area/Hyw. 19 route

A bus will load at 6:30 a.m. in front of Holy Redeemer Church in Marshall. Additional stops can be arranged in Redwood Falls and other points along the way. Contact Lori Timmerman at (507) 476-0070.

### New Ulm – Cathedral of the Holy Trinity

The pilgrimage begins at 7 a.m. with Mass at the Cathedral. A coach bus will load at 7:40 a.m. and return at 3 p.m. To reserve a spot call (507) 354-4158. Questions can be directed to trip coordinator Kate Slood, [slood@newulmtel.net](mailto:slood@newulmtel.net).

### Our Living Water & Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community

A bus will be leaving from the following locations:

6:30 a.m.	Depart Church of Our Lady of the Lakes, Spicer
6:53 a.m.	Arrive South Side of Kandi Mall, Willmar
7:03 a.m.	Depart South Side of Kandi Mall, Willmar
7:43 a.m.	Arrive Church of St Philip, Litchfield
7:53 a.m.	Depart Church of St Philip, Litchfield
8:05 a.m.	Arrive Church of St John, Darwin
8:15 a.m.	Depart Church of St John, Darwin
8:28 a.m.	Arrive St. John's Educational Center
8:38 a.m.	Depart St. John's Educational Center
10:08 a.m.	Arrive Cathedral of Saint Paul, St Paul
1:15 p.m.	Depart Minnesota State Capitol

To reserve a spot contact the parishes involved. Free will offering.

## New Children's Memorial dedicated in Lafayette



Church leaders and memorial donors gathered at St. Gregory the Great parish cemetery in Lafayette on Nov. 10, 2019, for the dedication and blessing of the new Children's Memorial. Pictured from left, Arlene Phillips, CCW president and memorial committee chair; Mary Lou Schmidt, memorial committee member; Lori Dick, CCW treasurer; Gregory Bieraugel, Catholic Order of Foresters financial secretary; Cheri LeBrun, Holy Cross AFC representative and pastoral administrative council secretary; Ben Stadick, cemetery board member; Michelle Oswald, memorial committee member; and Fr. Cornelius Ezeiloaku, Holy Cross Area Faith Community parochial vicar. *(Photo submitted)*

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**LAFAYETTE** – A Children's Memorial dedicated to all aborted and stillborn babies as well as children who have died before reaching adulthood now stands erect in the Church of St. Gregory the Great cemetery in Lafayette. The memorial will serve as a permanent sacred place for bereaved families to seek healing and peace following their loss.

The memorial is the brainchild of the St. Gregory parish Council of Catholic Women (CCW). In the fall of 2018, a committee was formed consisting of CCW members Carol Hoffmann, Michelle Oswald, Mary Lou Schmidt, and Arlene Phillips as chairperson. Following approval from the parish administration council, the cemetery board, and Holy Cross Area Faith Community pastor Msgr. Douglas Grams, committee members began researching and planning.

"The goal was to make it [the memorial] intimate but strong enough to withstand the northwest winds," said Phillips.

Phillips said that the research involved visits by the committee to other memorial sites. Nagel's

Landscaping in Owatonna was where the committee settled on purchasing two statues – one depicting an angel and the other a baby laying in a pair of hands. St. Gregory parishioners Carl and Michelle Oswald of Lafayette volunteered to transport the statues back to Lafayette where they also took charge of painting them. According to Phillips, the angel alone took six hours to paint!

Referring to her as the "flower whisperer," Phillips said that Michelle Oswald also donated and planted daylilies and autumn sedum that currently surround the memorial.

In addition to the statues, a black stone monument was purchased from Borth Memorials in Sleepy Eye. Phillips said that the engraving on the stone: *Our Children in God's Care – Ours for a while, with Jesus Forever* was selected by parish CCW members. The landscaping of the project was done by Joe Mages of Evolve Landscaping of Winthrop, Minn.

"We are very thankful for all who helped make this project happen and to the Holy Spirit for guiding us," said Phillips.

## Richter of New Ulm recognized by Knights

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**NEW ULM** – In September, the Knights of Columbus Council #1076 of New Ulm presented Denise Richter of New Ulm the Knights of Columbus Family of the Month award. This award is given to those who have served as an inspiration to their parish, community, and Council.

According to Grand Knight Gary Neubauer, Richter is the first non-Knights of Columbus member to receive this award from Council #1076.

Richter has been a member of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm for 62 years. Her service to the parish includes multiple responsibilities: parish lector, Eucharistic minister, Rosary leader, and Holy Communion to Catholics at an area retirement home. She also managed the parish festival raffle for eight years.

Richter also serves as the Holy Cross Area Faith Community Perpetual Adoration (six-hour grid) leader, a responsibility she has held since its inception in 2011. She also is an adorer three times a week.

Richter also cleans the Cathedral parish sanctuary, sacristies, altar,



Grand Knight Gary Neubauer (New Ulm Council #1076) presented Denise Richter of New Ulm the Knights of Columbus Family of the Month award. *(Photo submitted)*

and all needs associated with their care and is responsible for the housekeeping of the Cathedral parish offices and the rectory.

For the past 19 years, Richter has maintained the general landscaping at the Way of the Cross in New Ulm which includes planting, weeding, and watering the flowers. She also takes care of the spring preparation and fall clean-up of the garden and planters. Since 2003, Richter has served as a member of the Diocese of New Ulm Way of the Cross Committee.

"Denise is so deserving of this

honor," said Knights of Columbus member Joe Eckstein on his recent blog. "She is always there and willing to help. She is a blessing to the Catholic community and a true living example of doing God's work."

*Editor's note: There are 38 Knights of Columbus Councils in the Diocese of New Ulm. Membership is open to males 18 years of age or older who are practicing Catholics. To join visit [www.KofC/Joinus](http://www.KofC/Joinus) and complete the online form. A Knight in your area will contact you.*

## Two professed as members of Secular Franciscan Order

**MARSHALL** – The family of Secular Franciscans in the Diocese of New Ulm has grown by two. On Sunday, Aug. 18, 2019, the Little Portion Secular Franciscan Order in Marshall celebrated the permanent commitment by Carrie Stiernagel of Marshall (pictured middle), and Nancy Rebstock of Sanborn. Fr. Todd Petersen, senior associate of Bread of Life Area Faith Community (Marshall, Cottonwood, and the merged parish of Green Valley), was the celebrant of the profession which was held at the Campus Religious Center of Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall.



*(Photo submitted)*

The Secular Franciscan Order is a canonically established Order within the Catholic Church. Secular Franciscans strive to live out the Gospel in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi through their word, example, and attitudes in everyday life. Little Portion will host a Come and See in March. For more information contact Sandy, (507) 763-3184 or Annette (507) 747-2181.



**WASHINGTON (CNA)**  
**- On November 18, the Administration published two notices in the Federal Register to implement asylum cooperative agreements with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.** The rules would allow the U.S. government to send asylum seekers to the three Central American countries without the opportunity to access asylum in the United States, and require the respective Central American governments to adjudicate asylum claims and attempt to provide protection.

Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and Chairman of the Committee on Migration for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Sean Callahan, President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), issued the following statement in response:

“Vulnerable individuals seeking protection and safety in the United States should be welcomed and given the chance to access the protection that our laws provide. If implemented, we fear that the asylum cooperation

agreements would leave many helpless people, including families and children, unable to attain safety and freedom from violence and persecution. The governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras do not have the resources nor the capacity to safely accept, process, and integrate asylees. There are numerous concerns with the implementation of these agreements which have also been voiced . . . by the Catholic Church of Guatemala. Furthermore, these agreements do not address the root causes of forced migration and could further endanger the lives of people fleeing a region that continues to have some of the highest homicide rates in the world.

These rules, combined with the implementation of the Migration Protection Protocol and the continued hold of humanitarian and development assistance to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, undermines U.S. moral leadership in protecting vulnerable populations and risks further destabilizing the region. To preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, we cannot turn our back on families and individuals in desperate need of help. In

light of the Gospel, let us always remember we are invited to embrace the foreigner and to take care of this human person. Let us move ourselves from a culture of indifference to a Christian culture of solidarity. We can and must do more.”

**WASHINGTON (CNA) – The U.S. Supreme Court Dec. 9 declined to take up a challenge** to a Kentucky ultrasound law that requires a physician or qualified technician to perform an ultrasound on a woman seeking an abortion and show the screen images to her.

The petition to the court did not get the required four justices

to sign on to hear an appeal of an April 4 ruling by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturning a lower court decision that the law violated doctors’ freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment. The Kentucky Ultrasound Informed Consent Act law can take effect immediately.

March for Life applauded the U.S. Supreme Court decision. “Women facing an unexpected pregnancy deserve to have as much medically and technically accurate information as possible when they are making what could be the most important decision of their life,” said Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life.



**Listen WEEKLY to Bishop John LeVoi’s  
ADVENT and CHRISTMAS MESSAGES  
[www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)**