

# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

*Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm*

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 37 No. 7 June 2023



*(Photo by Christy Baker)*

## Woman of the Year!

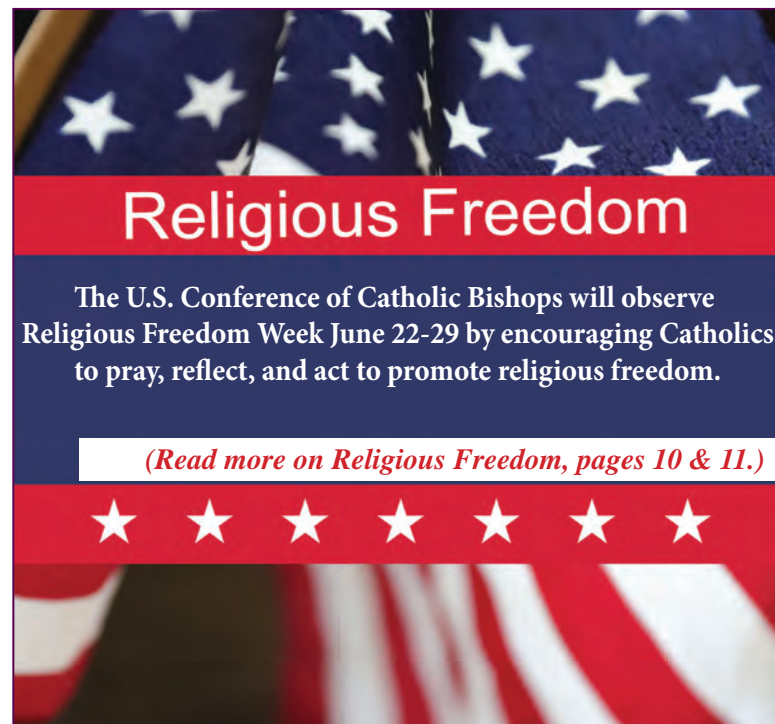
**NEW ULM** – Jan Noyes, a parishioner of the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Marshall, has been named the 2023 New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women “Woman of the Year.” The award was presented by Bishop Chad W. Zielinski at the annual New Ulm DCCW Convention held April 29 at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm.

*(For more on Noyes and convention highlights, see page 9.)*

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## Catholics invited to coast-to-coast 2024 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Eucharistic Congress is excited to invite Catholic communities across the country to be part of the historic movement to set hearts ablaze along four distinct routes that are part of a Eucharistic pilgrimage destined for the 10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, IN.

Rooted in daily celebration of the Mass and modeled after the Gospel account of Jesus' journey to Emmaus two millennia ago, the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage will kick off May 17-19, 2024, during the Feast of Pentecost. The routes, named for saintly significance corresponding to each geographical starting point, will pass through many major U.S. cities beginning in San Francisco, Calif. (Serra Route); Bemidji,

Minn. (Marian Route); New Haven, Conn. (Seton Route); and Brownsville, Texas (Juan Diego Route).

Modern Catholic Pilgrim, a non-profit organization established to deepen faith and build community across the U.S. through walked pilgrimage in the Catholic tradition, has partnered with the National Eucharistic Congress to organize and manage all routes.

"It is a stirring vision - Christ truly present in the Eucharist, traveling across our nation inviting crowds of hungry souls to come and be fed," said Modern Catholic Pilgrim President and Founder Will Peterson. "The pilgrimage is

modeled after the road to Emmaus and is an invitation for pilgrims to encounter the risen Christ on the

### Did You Know?

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage (Marian Route) will begin in Minnesota at the headwaters of the Mississippi? It will start with a Pentecost Mass at the Lake Itasca State Park.

journey and in the breaking of the bread before being missioned back into their local communities to spread the fire."

Spanning a combined distance of 6,500 miles through cities, along highways, mountain ranges, and rural towns, each pilgrimage route will be accompanied by a

consistent group of "perpetual pilgrims," a priest chaplain, and a support vehicle for legs of the journey in which safety, terrain, and/or climate may present obstacles. The support vehicle will also allow pilgrims to get to their destinations according to schedule for areas in which the distance is too great to travel on foot.

A general schedule for each pilgrimage route will be followed consisting of Mass and major solemn procession on Sundays, with Mass and smaller processions at parishes during the week.

Pilgrims will travel 10-15 miles each day while taking part in a minor Eucharistic procession.

Along the routes, parishes will host Mass, Adoration, 40 Hours devotions, praise and worship services, lectures on the Eucharist, pilgrim testimonies, meals, and fellowship. Biblical hospitality will be offered via host families, parishes, religious orders, schools, shrines, retreat centers, and everything in between.

To discern involvement in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, all Catholics are encouraged to visit <https://www.eucharisticpilgrimage.org/> to view a map of the routes and a schedule of cities each pilgrimage travels through, explore detailed FAQ, learn about the patron saint for each route, and sign up to receive updates about specific routes.

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## Bills opposed by bishops make headway in legislature

by Joe Ruff, [ruffj@archspm.org](mailto:ruffj@archspm.org)  
*The Catholic Spirit*

ST. PAUL – Despite strong opposition from the Catholic Church and others, Gov. Tim Walz signed into law April 27 a bill designed to make so-called "gender-affirming" health care readily accessible to minors traveling or brought illegally to Minnesota from other states.

The "transgender refuge" law allows Minnesota courts to disregard parental rights and court orders from other states and take "emergency jurisdiction" over minors to ensure their access to gender therapies that have been stopped by other countries such as Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Critics allege that the bill, HF146, violates multiple state and federal laws.

Walz also signed into law a related bill designed to ban so-called "conversion therapy" for minors and vulnerable adults that bars counseling which attempts to address unwanted same-sex attraction or gender discordance. The Church has argued that allowing "gender-affirming" health care and banning professional counselors from assisting minors and others struggling with their sexual identity can cause irreversible harm and undermine a person's ability to live an integrated sexuality ordered toward marriage and family.

Minnesota Catholic Conference Executive Director Jason Adkins said, "We live in an upside-down world where it is allegedly harmful for young people to access licensed mental health professionals to help them live in accord with their biological sex, but it is OK for those same minors to access puberty-blocking hormones and undergo surgical procedures in attempt to make their bodies align with their psychological state. The latter is the real 'conversion therapy' that should be banned."

He continued: "Protecting human dignity requires that we respect the objective reality that each person is an embodied soul created in the image and likeness

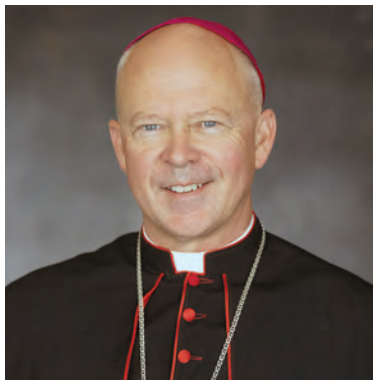
of God. We have a given human nature, not one that we create for ourselves and can manipulate at will. The consequences would be disastrous if we allowed our respect for each person to rest on their own subjective views of themselves, or the way in which we or others subjectively viewed them."

Along with the counseling ban and transgender refuge bill, Walz signed a law providing refuge for those seeking abortions from states in which it is banned, as well as for abortion providers who have lost their license or have been forbidden from performing abortions in other states. The bills

(Continued on page 2.)



*That they may have life*



by Bishop Chad W. Zielinski

**National Eucharistic Revival: Year of the Parish**

One of the most painful things I have done as a bishop was to temporarily suspend the public celebration of Mass due to COVID-19 concerns. I heard and saw the frustration and concern of the good people of God as they thirsted for the Eucharist in their lives. Many of my brother bishops shared the same sentiments.

In November 2020, with COVID cautionary procedures in place nationwide, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) held its annual Plenary Assembly via Zoom. Over 300 U.S. bishops shared their experiences and concerns about the pandemic.

Once COVID restrictions started to lift, parishes slowly returned to the public celebration of Mass. However, a growing number of Catholics were becoming

accustomed to the “online Mass” option, and parishes were finding that some of their members were not returning to in-person Mass.

The ongoing dialogue between the bishops developed into a much more extensive discussion of the Eucharist, which led to a further discussion concerning surveys/polls about Catholics’ belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It was then that the bishops’ conference realized that there was an apparent great need for a renewed catechesis on the Eucharist. The USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis took the reins for further discussion.

The following year, at the bishops’ 2021 June Plenary Assembly, the Evangelization and Catechesis Committee advised that the bishops launch a Eucharistic Revival process. At the Fall Plenary Assembly that same year, the bishops approved to move forward with a National Eucharistic Revival. It was to be launched on Corpus Christi Sunday of 2022. This entire process, I truly believe, has been guided by the Holy Spirit.

**Year of the Diocese (2022-2023)**  
The first year of the Eucharistic

Revival process was dedicated to the diocese, which was meant to gain general and popular interest among Catholics. At my installation as the new shepherd of the Diocese of New Ulm in September 2022, I proposed a passionate engagement with the Eucharistic Revival process with three simple points: Hear God, Hand Him Your Heart, and Have Hope.

With this vision and movement, a Diocese of New Ulm Eucharistic Revival Committee was established consisting of diocesan staff, clergy, and lay people. I am honored to serve on this committee with so many talented and faith-filled people who earnestly desire to be fearless witnesses of the Good News of the greatest gift the Church has in the Holy Eucharist – Christ Himself!

**Year of the Parish (2023-2024)**  
As we now move into the Year of the Parish Revival, which began on June 11, Feast of Corpus Christi, the National Eucharistic Revival Committee has developed a Leader’s Playbook: Year of Parish Revival as a guide for each diocese. “The purpose of the Year of the Parish Revival is to discern how we might heal, form, convert, unify, and send our

parishioners through a rekindled relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist” (Leader’s Playbook, page 6). The Leader’s Playbook has proposed four invitations for our spiritual focus: Reinvigorate Worship, Personal Encounter, Robust Formation, and Send as Missionaries. After entering into dialogue with several bishop groups at our USCCB and regional meetings, I am convinced that this first section is of “paramount importance.”

The first section, “Reinvigorating Worship,” with an emphasis on “*ars celebrandi*” (the art of worship), has many references to Pope Francis’ document *Desiderio Desiveravi* (I Earnestly Desire) from June 29, 2022. He has an entire section on the “*ars celebrandi*.” I encourage you to read this document as I truly believe it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Year of the Parish Revival will focus on celebrating the Mass: encountering Christ in the Liturgy of the Word, in the gathered community, in the person of the priest, and above all else, in the Holy Eucharist. You will find this substantially documented in Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1374; see also Pope Paul VI’s

*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no.7 and *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 39.

As the Diocese of New Ulm Eucharistic Revival Committee solicits help to fan the flame of faith alive in parishes in our diocese, I ask for your involvement and especially prayer that a mighty thirst for Our Lord in the Holy Eucharistic increase with great fervor, drawing people in greater numbers to the altar of worship.

I want to close my words by drawing your attention to a part of the closing prayer that Pope Francis used in his document on the Mass, “I Earnestly Desire.” It is a prayer taken from a letter St. Francis wrote to his brothers. This part of the prayer is being used on the Diocese of New Ulm’s Year of the Parish prayer card, available online on the diocesan website, [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org), and in parishes.

*“Let everyone be struck with fear, let the whole world tremble, and let the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest!”*

– Saint Francis of Assisi  
A Letter to the Entire Order II

**Minnesota legislature**

*(Continued from page 1.)*

were framed by Minnesota Democrats as an attempt to position Minnesota as a welcoming state for abortion and transgender procedures.

In another area opposed by the state’s Catholic bishops, the Democrat-controlled House and Senate passed legislation April 25 and April 28, respectively, to legalize recreational marijuana use for adults. The bills will have to be reconciled before the legislation can reach Walz’s desk. He has pledged to sign legislation to legalize recreational marijuana. Minnesota already allows medicinal use of marijuana.

“Legalizing a recreational marijuana business is a big setback for the state of Minnesota, which will have tremendously harmful consequences and negatively impact our quality of life,” said Adkins. “Legislators refused for nakedly political reasons to pump the brakes on this proposal and learn the lessons from other states. It was irresponsible lawmaking at its worst.”

**Great growth is happening to support the poor and vulnerable in Minnesota**  
*(Provided by Minnesota Catholic Conference.)*

- ♦ Many of our poorest families will now benefit from a nation-leading Child Tax Credit which is expected to reduce childhood poverty in Minnesota by 20 to 30 percent.
- ♦ Those who fall on hard times are now better protected from debt traps by a 36-percent interest rate cap on payday loans. Additionally, those in low-wage jobs now have access to earned sick and safe time, thus enabling them to receive one-hour of paid time off for every 30 hours worked to care for a sick family member or themselves.
- ♦ Finally, immigrant families this fall can apply for a driver’s license and they can also buy into Minnesota Care, allowing them access to health insurance instead of avoiding necessary medical care.

**Bishop’s calendar**

**June 16** - Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus: First Vows, Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm

**June 17** - Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus: Perpetual Vows, Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm

**June 18** - Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus: Chapter Elections, Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus Convent, New Ulm

**June 20** - Diocesan Staff Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center, New Ulm

**June 22** - Mass at the Church of St. Anthony, Watkins

**June 27** - Multicultural Diversity at the National Eucharistic Congress, Zoom

**June 27** - Eucharistic Revival Committee Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center, New Ulm

**June 28** - Hope and Healing Service, Church of the Holy Family, Silver Lake

*Editor’s note: Calendar represents Bishop Zielinski’s schedule at the time “The Prairie Catholic” went to press. The bishop’s full summer schedule can be found on the Diocese of New Ulm’s website, [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)/bishop.*

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It’s time for Parish Festivals!



[www.dnu.org/local-events/](http://www.dnu.org/local-events/)  
Be sure to check back often for new announcements.

# ChristLife – equipping Catholics for the New Evangelization

## *Parish program catching on fire in Diocese of New Ulm*

**How can we renew our parishes to become vibrant communities of faith? How can we live our Catholic faith and reach out to those who have fallen away from the Church?**

by Deacon Mike McKeown

For the past decade, the ChristLife Series, a transformational process of forming disciples, has been fostering community and providing participants with a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ.

Parishes within the Diocese of New Ulm that have introduced ChristLife in their faith community have witnessed people come to Christ, Catholics return to the sacraments, authentic community form among parishioners, and passive Catholics catch fire to follow Jesus and share him with others in their everyday life!

The ChristLife series began in 1995 as an apostolate of the

Archdiocese of Baltimore. It was founded in response to Pope John Paul II’s call for evangelization, and its goal was to equip Catholics to evangelize. It has since spread nationally and in many other countries. The program leads participants through three essential steps: Discovering Christ, Following Christ, and Sharing Christ.

Each step in the process involves a seven-week experience (21 weeks total) that invites every person, baptized or unbaptized, to encounter the love of God the Father, enter into or renew a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live as God’s children.

After experiencing a deep conversion while participating in the ChristLife series in 2012, Joe and Melissa Neumann of Holy Trinity in Winsted helped bring the program to their AFC as core team members, facilitators, table leaders, and musicians.

“This series was a key part of transforming my life,” Joe explained. “I have had a complete change of life because of the

personal relationship I found with Christ through ChristLife. I have been filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I never knew this was possible. I can’t stop sharing.”

Melissa echoed her husband’s enthusiasm and its impact on their life. “As a Catholic convert, this program ignited my Catholic faith,” she said. “I went from knowing about Jesus to knowing him personally. I experienced the love of the Father for the first time in my life, and Jesus became alive in the sacraments to me through this program.”

Melissa described how ChristLife prepared her to share her faith. “I went from minding my own business about faith to a burning desire to share the Good News to everyone and anyone, which prompted me to start Revive Women’s Ministry at Holy Trinity,” Melissa said.

“We’ve been facilitating the ChristLife program for eight years in our AFC,” Joe explained. “In those eight years, 231 people have experienced ChristLife at Holy Trinity. Two years ago, we also began hosting ChristLife at St. Pius X in Glencoe. It’s borne so

much fruit in our AFC.”

In addition to Revive Women’s Ministry, Melissa mentioned other ministries in their AFC which have sprung from participants in the ChristLife program, including Widows of Joy, Gift Pilgrimage, Women of Valor, and COR Men’s ministry. “We have watched our parish transform into a vibrant community,” Melissa said. “Much of our parish leadership cite ChristLife as a key part of their faith journey.”

In the spring of 2021, after reading a story in *The Prairie Catholic* about the success of the ChristLife program, a group of parishioners from the neighboring Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community (St. John, Darwin; St. Philip, Litchfield; Our Lady, Manannah, and the merged parish of St. Gertrude, Forest City) took part in the ChristLife program held at Holy Trinity.

Connie Gray of St. John’s in Darwin was part of the visiting group and was impressed by what she experienced. “I saw people growing in their relationship with God and sharing their faith with each other. There were great

discussions, and it was obvious that the Holy Spirit was moving and changing lives,” she said. “We knew this program was something we wanted to introduce in our AFC.”

In the two years that ChristLife has been hosted in the Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community, 114 people have participated in the program.

Another member of the ChristLife leadership team at St. John’s, Theresa Lahr, encouraged parishes looking for a parish program to reignite the faith of their parishioners to visit a ChristLife group. “I think the best way for a parish or AFC to discern whether the ChristLife program is something they want to experience is to first of all pray, asking the Holy Spirit to guide them! Then ask a current ChristLife group to offer some guidance and ask if they could sit in on a session.”

*Editor’s note: For information about starting the ChristLife series in your AFC this fall, contact Dcn. Mike McKeown, director of Adult Faith Formation for the Diocese of New Ulm, mmckeown@dnu.org, (507) 233-5310.*



“ChristLife taught me how to have a personal relationship and pray with God. It was the start of my faith journey that I continue to be on now.”

Todd Fleischacker  
Holy Trinity, Winsted



“ChristLife has made a big impact on my life. I definitely felt God and the Holy Spirit at work and began to realize how we have to reach out to each others more and build up our community and our Church.”

Carol Schumacher  
St. John’s, Darwin



“The Christ Life program has opened my eyes to how much God loves me and the forgiveness and mercy Jesus gives me. Along the way, I have made new friends and have enjoyed learning about their journeys.”

Julie Fairchild  
Holy Trinity, Winsted



“As a non-Catholic and a non-member of any church, the course has taught me that I have much more faith and belief than I realized. I’ve enjoyed the tapes and group discussions. And as a newcomer, I definitely intend to join in future sessions.”

George Jepson  
Holy Trinity, Winsted

“I learned so much in this course. I have a much more deep and meaningful relationship with Jesus as a result of going through the ChristLife course.”

Betty Jepson  
Holy Trinity, Winsted



## Para que tengan vida



por Bishop Chad Zielinski

### Avivamiento Eucarístico Parroquial

Una de las tareas más dolorosas que he hecho como obispo fue el de suspender temporalmente la celebración de la Misa por motivos del COVID-19. Escuché y vi la frustración y la preocupación del pueblo de Dios mientras tenían sed de la Eucaristía en sus vidas. Un gran número de mis hermanos obispos compartieron los mismos sentimientos.

En noviembre del 2020 y con los procedimientos de precaución del COVID en todo el país, la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB) llevó acabo su Asamblea Plenaria anual

via Zoom. Más de 300 obispos compartieron sus experiencias y preocupaciones sobre la pandemia.

Una vez que se levantaron las restricciones del COVID, poco a poco las parroquias regresaron a celebrar la Misa. Sin embargo, un gran número de católicos se acostumbraba a la opción de ver “la Misa en línea,” y las parroquias se dieron cuenta que algunos miembros no regresarían a la misa en persona.

El diálogo sobre la Eucaristía entre los obispos se convirtió en un tema muy extenso, lo que condujo a un debate a las encuestas/sondeos sobre la creencia de los católicos en la Presencia Real de Cristo en la Eucaristía. Fue entonces cuando la conferencia episcopal se dio cuenta que había una gran necesidad aparente de trabajar en una catequesis renovada sobre la Eucaristía. El Comité de Evangelización y Catequesis de la USCCB tomó las riendas para futuras conversaciones.

En Junio del 2021 durante la Asamblea Plenaria los obispos, el Comité

de Evangelización y Catequesis hizo su recomendación para que los obispos inicien un proceso de Avivamiento Eucarístico. En la Asamblea Plenaria de otoño de ese mismo año, los obispos aprobaron la iniciativa sobre el Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional que comenzó el domingo de Corpus Christi del 2022. Creo sinceramente que este proceso ha sido guiado por el Espíritu Santo.

**El Año de la Diócesis (2022-2023)**  
El primer año del Avivamiento Eucarístico fue dedicado a la diócesis con el propósito de ganar el interés general y popular entre los católicos. En mi instalación como el pastor de la Diócesis de New Ulm en septiembre del 2022, propuse un proceso de Avivamiento Eucarístico con tres puntos simples: Escucha a Dios, Entrégale tu corazón y Tenga esperanza.

Con esta visión se estableció el Comité del Avivamiento Eucarístico Diocesano conformado por el personal diocesano, clérigos y laicos. Es de gran honor servir

en este comité con tantas personas talentosas y llenas de fe que desean fervientemente ser testigos de las Buenas Nuevas de los grandes dones que tiene la Iglesia en la Sagrada Eucaristía – el mismo Cristo.

**Año Parroquial (2023-2024)**  
A medida que avanzamos hacia el Año del Avivamiento Parroquial: 11 de junio, Fiesta del Corpus Christi, el Comité Nacional del Avivamiento Eucarístico ha desarrollado un libro de recursos para líderes: Año del Avivamiento Parroquial como un guía para cada diócesis. “El propósito del Año del Avivamiento Parroquial es discernir de que manera podemos sanar, formar, convertir, unificar y enviar a nuestros feligreses a través de una relación viva con Jesús en la Eucaristía” (Leader’s Playbook, página 6). El Libro propone cuatro invitaciones para nuestro enfoque espiritual: Revitalizar la Adoración, Un Encuentro Personal, la Formación Sólida y enviar como Misioneros. Después de entrar en un diálogo con varios grupos de obispos en nuestras reuniones regionales de la USCCB, estoy convencido que la primera parte es de “suma importancia.”

La primera parte, “Adoración revitalizante,” con énfasis en “ars celebrandi” (el arte de la adoración), tiene muchas referencias al documento del Papa Francisco Desiderio Desiveravi - 29 de junio del 2022. El tiene una parte completa sobre el “ars celebrandi.” Los animo a que lo lean, pienso que es inspirado por el Espíritu Santo.

El Año del Avivamiento Parroquial se enfocará en la celebración de la Misa: el encuentro con Cristo en la Liturgia de la Palabra, en la comunidad reunida, en la persona del sacerdote pero sobretodo en la Sagrada Eucaristía. El documento se encuentra en el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, no. 1374; ver también *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no.7, *Papa Pablo VI, Mysterium Fidei*, no. 39.

A medida que el Comité del Avivamiento Eucarístico de la Diócesis de New Ulm solicite ayuda para avivar la llama de la fe en las parroquias de nuestra diócesis, les pido su participación pero especialmente mucha oración para que haya una enorme sed por Nuestro Señor en la Sagrada Eucaristía crezca con gran fervor y atraiga a muchos feligreses al altar de adoración.

Quiero llamar su atención a una parte de la oración de clausura que usó el Papa Francisco en su documento sobre la Misa. Es una oración tomada de San Francisco que escribió a sus hermanos. Esta parte será usada en la tarjeta de oración del Año Parroquial de la Diócesis de New Ulm, disponible en línea [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org), y en las parroquias.

*“¡Tiemble el hombre todo entero, estremézcase el mundo todo y exulte el cielo cuando Cristo, el hijo de Dios vivo, se encuentra sobre el altar en manos del sacerdote!”*

San Francisco de Asís  
Carta a toda la Orden II, 26-29

## Meet this year’s *Totus Tuus* missionaries!



**NEW ULM** – The 2023 Diocese of New Ulm *Totus Tuus* missionaries received commissioning from Bishop Chad W. Zielinski on Thursday, May 25, in the chapel at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in New Ulm. Pictured front row (nearest the bishop), r-l: Zach Koralewski (St. Pius X, Glencoe), Luke Hasson (Mater Ecclesiae, Berlin, N.J.), John Mendiola (St. John, Dassel), and Brendan MacLeod (St. Patrick/St. Anthony, Grand Haven, Mich.). Second row: David Rabaey (St. Eloi, Ghent), Sarah Mendiola (St. John, Dassel), Julia Nilles (St. Dionysius, Tyler), and Ellie Kirby (St. Columbkille, Dubuque, IA). Third row: Noah U’Ren (St. Catherine, Redwood Falls), Hazel Chvatal (St. Philip, Litchfield), Anissa Kulzer (St. Philip, Litchfield), and Maryanne Larsen (St. Michael, Morgan). Standing: left, Kevin Losleben, diocesan Director of Youth Ministry, and diocesan priest Fr. Shawn Polman, *Totus Tuus* chaplain.

*Totus Tuus* (Latin for “totally yours”) is a diocesan program that sends out young adult missionaries in teams of four (two men, two women) to preach the gospel. Each team hosts a day program for elementary students consisting of skits, songs, and catechesis. In the evening, the team hosts a program for middle and high school students consisting of games, testimonies, talks, and group discussion. The program was introduced to the Diocese of New Ulm in 2017 with one team and has expanded to three teams.  
(Photo by Christine Clancy)

## Fr. Bruno to soon return to homeland of India



Fr. Bruno Santiago

Rev. Bruno Santiago, OSB, has served in the Diocese of New Ulm for six years but will return to his native India and the Asirvanam Benedictine Monastery in the Archdiocese of Bangalore after July 31, 2023.

Since 2018, Fr. Bruno has served as parochial administrator of the All Saints Area Faith Community

(Fairfax, Gibbon, and Winthrop and the now-closed Sacred Heart in Franklin). When he first arrived in the diocese in 2017, he was appointed parochial vicar of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm and assisted with the Holy Cross Area Faith Community (New Ulm, Searles, West Newton Township, and the now-closed St. Gregory the Great in Lafayette.)

In honor of Fr. Bruno, the parishes in the All Saints AFC will celebrate Fr. Bruno’s service on June 11, following 10 a.m. Mass at St. Andrew’s, Fairfax; June 17 following 5 p.m. Mass at St. Willibrord in Gibbon, and June 18 following 10 a.m. Mass at St. Francis de Sales, Winthrop. Everyone is welcome.



# Becoming Catholic: Finding Jesus through the celebration of the Mass

by Bethany Steffl, parishioner St. Raphael, Springfield

In the heat of the summer of 2006, sweaty and nervous, I sat in the principal's office for a job interview at St. Raphael Catholic School in Springfield. I answered the interview questions the best I could as my heart continued to race.

Somewhere in between talking about my qualifications and asking about the job expectations, I noticed a framed picture on the wall. In the picture was a photo of Jesus surrounded by little children and the words, "It is the mission of St. Raphael School to bring students to a closer relationship with Jesus while providing quality education."

As soon as I saw this, I thought, "I really want to work here." I wanted to help bring children closer to Jesus. It was exactly what I was trained for and exactly what I was meant to do. Little did I know, it would be the children who would bring me closer to Jesus.

## Raised Lutheran

Growing up, I had a strong religious upbringing. My parents sacrificed much to send my brother and me to a private Lutheran grade school and high school. We attended church weekly (more often during Lent and Advent), attended Sunday school, vacation bible school, and other church events. When it was

time to go to college, I attended Martin Luther College in New Ulm, the teacher training college for our church's synod, 600+ miles from my family in Benton Harbor, Mich. Even then, I knew that my lifelong calling was to minister the love of Jesus to children.

Along the way, I met my husband, Justin, on Match.com. I was drawn to him for many reasons, one being his commitment to faith and family. He grew up attending St. Mary's Catholic Church and School in Sleepy Eye, Minn.

Although he was Catholic and I was Lutheran, we both had very similar upbringings which included attending parochial schools throughout our childhood with a strong connection to the Church.

We began dating while I was attending college, and we continued dating long-distance while I took my first teaching job in Overland Park, Kan. While teaching in Kansas, Justin proposed to me, we were married, and I moved to Sleepy Eye, Minn. where I currently reside.

I applied for a teaching position at St. Raphael Catholic School, and very quickly, St. Raphael became my home. It was a place where I spent so much of my time, effort, and energy. I enjoyed the small class sizes and the family-like atmosphere. Each student I taught became near and dear to my heart. After teaching music and



In November of 2020, Bethany Steffl, a member of the Church of St. Raphael in Springfield and principal of the parish school, received Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time. *(Photo submitted)*

kindergarten the first year, I was asked to help lead the songs with the students during weekly school Masses. Masses were a bit new to me, but there was something very comforting in the ritual. I love singing with the students and helping them praise and worship God, who is present on the altar during Mass.

It was during the celebration of the Mass that God showed himself to me in the Eucharist, and reflected his love to me in the hearts of children, in the scriptures, and the sacred music. I began to be transformed.

Twelve years into teaching kindergarten, along with music and art classes, the school's principal position opened up. I felt at this time that God was calling me to use my gifts to serve in this capacity. After prayerful consideration, I applied, and I was hired. I went back to school to earn a Master's Degree from Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, while continuing to teach and serve principal.

During this time, Fr. Phil Schotzko, then St. Raphael parish pastor, took me under his

wing. I leaned on him for advice about student concerns, budget considerations, and staffing. I believe it was his essence and nature that also brought me to convert to Catholicism. I admired how he was such a gentle pastor to all he was around. His very presence and servant-like attitude helped draw me closer to Jesus. Although I already felt St. Raphael was my church home, I wanted to participate fully in Mass.

## Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist

In November 2020, during a children's Mass at school, I received Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time as a Catholic, in the presence of my husband Justin, daughter Lauren, and the St. Raphael staff and students.

It was an extraordinary time to celebrate my first Communion and the sacrament of Confirmation, as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fr. Schotzko and St. Raphael pastor Fr. Garrett Ahlers presided over the Mass. It was truly unique and special to get to partake fully in Communion with Jesus in the presence of my family and my school family.

Since I became Catholic, I am even more committed to bringing students closer to Jesus, as they continue to help bring me closer to him as well.

## Events and resources to help enkindle a loving relationship with the Lord in the Holy Eucharist

**Totus Tuus** - a week-long summer catechetical program in parishes for youth (June through July 2023). Teams of four dynamic young adult missionaries tour the diocese spreading their love for Jesus to all they meet. Visit [www.dnu.org/totus-tuus](http://www.dnu.org/totus-tuus).



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic Revival**  
**Avivamiento Eucarístico**  
DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

For middle and high school youth. It features games, a great speaker, a meal, and Eucharistic adoration with music and confessions. Visit [www.dnu.org/cor-night](http://www.dnu.org/cor-night).

### Resources:

The Diocese of New Ulm Eucharistic Revival web page has a section with a list of comprehensive resources all about the Eucharist. Resources available for individual, parish, or Catholic school use.

**Eucharistic Revival prayer cards** are available through your parish or download from the Diocese of New Ulm website, [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org).

For more information about the National Eucharistic Revival efforts in the Diocese of New Ulm, email [dnu@dnu.org](mailto:dnu@dnu.org); (507) 359-2966.

### Camp Beloved and Camp Greatness:

July 22 – Aug. 5, Schoenstatt-on-the-Lake, Sleepy Eye. Diocesan-sponsored girls and boys summer camps (respectively). Talks at this year's camps will focus especially on the Eucharist. Learn more at [www.dnu.org/camp-beloved](http://www.dnu.org/camp-beloved) and [www.dnu.org/camp-greatness](http://www.dnu.org/camp-greatness).

**COR Night:** Dec. 10, 2023 and Feb. 18, 2024.

**Liturgy Matters**

REFLECTIONS ON THE SACRED LITURGY BY BISHOP CHAD W. ZIELINSKI

[www.dnu.org/liturgy-matters](http://www.dnu.org/liturgy-matters)

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As a part of the Eucharistic Revival in the Diocese of New Ulm, Bishop Zielinski offers reflections on the liturgy based upon a book by Abbott Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, titled "What Happens At Mass." Weekly reflections will be posted over a 36-week span and available in both audio or text. Visit [www.dnu.org/liturgy-matters](http://www.dnu.org/liturgy-matters) and learn more about the Mysteries of the Sacred Liturgy.

*New reflections offered weekly.*



# A warm Guatemalan welcome – Part 3

*Bishop Zielinski reflects on pastoral visit to San Lucas Toliman*



*This is the final installment of Bishop Zielinski's reflection on his recent pastoral visit to Guatemala. Reflections I and II can be found in the last two editions of The Prairie Catholic, [www.dnu.org/communications](http://www.dnu.org/communications).*



Bishop Chad Zielinski's pastoral visit in January to Guatemala came at the invitation from the Friends of San Lucas, a Minnesota-based non-profit that partners with and advocates for the San Lucas Toliman Mission by supporting its locally-led programs. Pictured above are the beautiful shores of Lake Atitlan in San Lucas, with inactive volcanoes bordering the waters. *(Photos submitted)*

by Bishop Chad Zielinski

**Saturday, Jan. 28, 2023**

There was a strong wind that blew that night. The roosters had decided to wake everyone in the neighborhood at 3:30 a.m. So, I decided to get up and start my morning with the roosters.

### Visit to Café Juan Ana

My day began by taking a tour of Café Juan Ana, a program of the San Lucas Mission and the nonprofit Friends of San Lucas in Minnesota. The Mission's former pastor, Fr. Greg Schaffer, founded this coffee program in 1992.

Fr. Greg recognized that the area around Lake Atitlan was a rich environment for producing coffee. However, at the time, the native Mayan coffee growers were being paid very poorly for their crops. Café Juan Ana's direct trade model pays growers above-market rates for their coffee beans, resulting in a much better income for 100-plus families.

Annually, about 45,000 pounds of coffee are produced. The program's director, Edy Morales Alvarez, briefed that the coffee is exceptionally high quality for three primary reasons: 1. it is grown at a high altitude of about 4,500 feet; 2. the volcanic soil, and 3. the unique climate around Lake Atitlan. Also, the coffee plants are grown in the shade around large trees, an eco-friendly process allowing larger trees to grow. This creates a more solid foundation for the earth, thus resulting in fewer mudslides during the rainy season.

**Interesting fact:** *It takes 500 pounds of harvested coffee beans to make 65 pounds of roasted coffee.*

### Monseñor Gregorio Schaffer Hospital

During my time in San Lucas, I was welcomed to the Monseñor Gregorio Schaffer Hospital by a showering of firecrackers and large explosions called "bombas." The staff was most friendly. A two-story building, the hospital provides general healthcare and several specialized healthcare. I visited the dental, optometry, surgery, and OB unit where babies are delivered. However, most children in the San Lucas region are born at home and delivered by a midwife. As a general rule, hospital births happen primarily during complicated pregnancies.

The hospital partners with various medical teams from the United States who travel to San Lucas to provide specialized medical care. The average medical visit costs the person 10 Quetzals, about \$1.25. I was impressed with the number of people that were served. A lot of the medical equipment is outdated by U.S. standards but is functional. The hospital's efforts in advancing medical outreach is significantly raising the quality of life for those in the local community.

### The shores of Lake Atitlan

Following the hospital visit, Fr. Sam Perez (a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm whose homeland is San Lucas) and I ventured out for a 2.5-mile walk around part of Lake Atitlan, a large lake with water ranging from deep blue to

green. Visible from the shores were some beautiful inactive volcanoes.

### Visit to Fr. Sam's Village and Mass at St. Michael the Archangel Parish

Fr. Sam and I took a 20-minute ride to the village of San Gabriel, where he grew up. We made a quick stop at his family home so he could introduce me to his parents before we walked across the street to St. Michael the Archangel to celebrate a 4:30 p.m. Mass. What a lovely community. They have Mass about once a month due to a lack of priests in the area. Fr. Sam offers a regular Mass when he is home on vacation. I had the opportunity to greet the people following Mass. They were most grateful for my visit and for celebrating Mass with them. Most came to me to ask for a family blessing and take a photo.

Before darkness set in, we drove back to San Lucas Toliman. The road over the hill was in terrible condition with loads of large potholes. Fr. Sam told me that as a young teenager, he would walk on a trail through the woods up a very steep mountain to get to school. It was a 45-minute walk each way. I am amazed at the agility of the native people, young and old, carrying heavy loads of wood, sugar cane, and coffee beans. All were delicately balanced on the shoulders, back, or sometimes even on one's head.

Another night of early to bed at 8:15 p.m.!

*(Continued on page 7.)*



While in Guatemala, Bishop Zielinski learned about the Café Juan Ana program that was founded in 1992 by Fr. Greg Schaffer in response to challenges faced by coffee growers in San Lucas Toliman. Café Juan Ana's direct trade model pays growers above-market rates for their highest quality, 100% arabica coffee. The program helps support the health, education, and livelihood of Guatemalan growers and their families.

To purchase from Café Juan Ana visit <https://juanacoffee.org/>.



Healthcare at the Mission is provided by the Monseñor Gregorio Schaffer Hospital which was named after the Mission's former pastor for 48 years, the late Fr. Greg Schaffer, a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm. Services include consultations, ultrasound, x-ray, maternity & delivery room, ER, dentistry, podiatry, pharmacy and an ambulance.



Mass for the Christian faithful in the village of San Gabriel where Fr. Sam Perez grew up is usually limited to once a month due to the lack of priests in the area.







(Continued from page 6.)

Sunday, Jan. 29, 2023

Rising at 4:30 a.m. with the roosters playing reveille seems to be the norm to begin my day in San Lucas. I followed it with another stupendous cup of hotly brewed coffee and prayed the liturgy of the hours to greet the new day.

That morning, Fr. Sam and I traveled 30 minutes to Santiago Atitlan, where Blessed Stanley Rother served and was martyred on July 28, 1981, at age 46. A priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, he is the first martyr from the United States and the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified. On the way, Fr. Sam pointed out an area of the road that wound up a perilous mountain. It was there where thousands of indigenous people were killed in the 1980s during a civil war between the militarist government forces and the guerrillas. The causes of the conflict and some of the current corruption and oppression of the indigenous peoples are multi-layered and highly complex. Fr. Sam mentioned that Fr. Greg had some near misses of being hurt or killed during the conflict but was able to keep his head low to accomplish his work.

While in Santiago Atitlán, we made a stop at Santiago Apostol (St. James the Apostle) Church. We peeked into the church to find that Mass was being celebrated. The array of beautiful colors grabbed my attention. Similar to my visit to churches in Mexico, all the saints' statues in the church were dressed in clothes. Fr. Sam told me that each village is recognized by its own color or collage/pattern of colors, and this would be a good opportunity for me to see the variety as the faithful departed the church. The women especially wore beautiful dresses with a full array of rainbow colors.

Once inside the church I noticed a memorial to Blessed Stanley Rother in the back. In front of the main altar was a vial of his blood. The experience was profoundly moving as I realized at that moment that a missionary priest from the United States fell in love with this culture and sacrificed

his life to address the injustice that caused so much suffering and oppression.

I visited the room where Fr. Rother was murdered. It had been turned into a memorial chapel. Some of his personal clothing and belongings were preserved behind glass for visitors to view and a small box with a glass top permitted a person to view a hole/indentation in the floor; the bullet impression of the last shot fired that killed Fr. Stanley. My visit to that room was moving beyond explanation. I looked at the photos of his body in state and saw a true hero who died for Christ and the love of the native people - deeply moving without words!

Following the church and memorial chapel visit, we wandered through the village as it was a huge market day, filled with various fruits, vegetables, and clothing that almost seemed like an artist intentionally placed each item in its proper place to create this well-balanced painting of colors and items.

I was taken by a few pieces of hand-sewn cloths that could be used as small tablecloths or table runners. I had more fun watching and listening to Fr. Sam engage in a bartering process with the women about the price. The funny thing was that both sides seemed to think they had won in the end! We returned to San Lucas Toliman with local artesian crafts to take back to the United States.

**Ten-mile walk**

The weekend celebration in honor of Fr. Greg carried into Sunday. As a symbol of sorts of Fr. Greg's historic walk back in the early 1970s from the steps of the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul to San Lucas, groups representing 16 different villages, a number of the Mission's staff along with visitors from the United States who came for the celebration, had already lined up at 5 a.m. that morning for a 10-mile walk up a winding mountain road, to the St. Lucas Church in San Lucas. Fr. Sam and I joined the procession for about the last half mile.

I celebrated Mass with the pilgrims following the walk. The sanctuary, especially around



Hundreds gathered in San Lucas on Sunday, Jan. 29 to take part in a ten-mile walk in honor of Fr. Greg Schaffer and his years of ministry to the San Lucas Toliman Mission.



During his pastoral visit to San Lucas in January, Bishop Zielinski (pictured left), toured the memorial chapel of Blessed Stanley Rother who was murdered for his faith in 1981 in Guatemala. He was beatified in 2017 in Oklahoma City and is the first U.S.-born priest and martyr to be beatified by the Catholic Church. Also pictured is Fr. Victor Ramirez, pastor of Santiago Apostol and Fr. Sam Perez of the Diocese of New Ulm.

the altar, was adorned with beautiful fresh-cut flowers that grow abundantly in the region. The same children's choir from the Friday afternoon Mass was present. I was taken by the beauty of their singing.

Fr. Phil Schotzko, a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm who served in San Lucas for eight years, working beside Fr. Greg, gave the homily. Coincidentally, the Gospel that day was the beatitudes from *Matthew 5*. Fr. Phil did a magnificent job reflecting on the beatitudes as he saw them lived out in the lives of the local communities and the work of Fr. Greg. A most beautiful Mass that will be forever etched in my heart and soul.

**A return family visit**

Fr. Sam had driven his family's Toyota Corolla over the mountain, and on our way back, we stopped

for another visit with his family. Many of his siblings, nieces, and nephews had gathered to celebrate his nephew, Jeremias' 5th birthday. Fr. Sam's sister, Miriam, the mother of Jeremias, organized games for the 20-plus children. Some of the games were familiar to me. One of them was tying a balloon to one's leg and trying to pop the balloon of an opponent until the one with the remaining balloon was honored as the winner, or, an all-time American favorite, musical chairs.

But, the big event of the birthday gathering was the breaking of the piñata. The excitement level of the children ramped up as the piñata was hung on a rope. Each was allowed three swings at the piñata with a long stick. As one can imagine, the older kids put some punch behind the swing, and the piñata burst open with candy flying in every direction.

The children scattered and screamed feverishly, gathering up the treats. I joined the adults on the sidelines, watching the joy of the children fill the room. The day's celebration was complete with a birthday cake and a song in English and Spanish.

Fr. Sam's family has operated a coffee plantation for years, and I was able to enjoy a cup of finely brewed coffee with a most unique flavor. I was gifted with a few bags for my return flight to Minnesota.

To end my day, Fr. Sam and I gathered for dinner back at the hotel with couples from New Ulm and other areas of Minnesota whom all serve on the Friends of San Lucas board. It was great to hear about some of the Mission's history and Fr. Sam's unique perspective on growing up in the local area.

**Monday, Jan. 30, 2023**

I departed San Lucas Toliman at 8:00 a.m. for a three-hour trip to the airport in Guatemala City. What an incredible experience in such a short amount of time. Overwhelmingly and graciously welcomed by all, I returned to Minnesota, a very blessed man with the sacred footprints of many of God's good people in the San Lucas Toliman area etched in my heart.







by Fr. Mark Steffl, STL, JCL

**T**he Code of Canon Law gives a general instruction that preparation must be given to those who desire to receive the sacraments:

Can. 843 §2. Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by a competent authority.

The “pastors of souls” mentioned are most specifically diocesan bishops who are responsible for teaching and overseeing all that is done in their respective dioceses. Secondarily included would be the parish priests who share in this responsibility as co-workers

## Ask a Canon Lawyer

**This month’s question:**

**What preparation is required to be able to receive the Sacraments? It seems there are often different requirements for each parish in our area.**

with the diocesan bishop, and those who work with the diocesan bishop’s staff and the parish priest’s staff who assist with catechesis programs.

Since catechesis to prepare for the reception of the sacraments is vastly different in cultures and locations worldwide, the Code of Canon Law does not get too specific regarding how it is to be accomplished, but instead mentions that there should be “norms issued by a competent authority.” This competent authority can be the conference of bishops of a country jointly giving guidance, as well as a diocesan bishop who can issue guidelines or define requirements for receiving specific sacraments in his diocese. However it is directed, it is important that there should be some catechetical preparation given for each sacrament that is received, so that the individual will understand better the sacrament that they are receiving.

To illustrate how this is applied in a concrete manner in dioceses and parishes, I will look at two of the sacraments where it affects most of the Christian faithful at one time or another in their lives – the sacraments of confirmation and marriage.

For confirmation, it is common practice that a diocese will have a set of requirements for all who are preparing to receive that sacrament, while allowing a parish to have the flexibility of classes and different choices of catechetical materials.

In the Diocese of New Ulm, for example, all students preparing for confirmation must participate in some retreat experience, as well as a preparation component for the parents of the student who is asking to be confirmed. Also, the students are required to participate in Sunday and holy day Mass obligations and a year-long preparation catechesis program that includes a review of beliefs

of the faith, prayer, morality, the specific Rite of Confirmation, and the Gifts and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. The average age for this sacrament is prescribed to be between 10th and 12th grade in the Diocese of New Ulm (with the norm being 11th grade, but knowing that some parishes/area faith communities only have a confirmation program every other year).

For the sacrament of marriage in the Diocese of New Ulm, all parishes are to require the participation of a couple in a “pre-Cana” marriage workshop that is offered by the diocese on multiple occasions each year, as well as a pre-marriage inventory that will guide a discussion with the couple about issues that will apply to them about marriage.

With sacraments such as the Eucharist and confirmation, there are certain exceptions on a case-by-case basis that the parish priest can make for those who have physical or cognitive disabilities that would otherwise prevent them from receiving these sacraments, often in consultation with the diocesan bishop.

Ultimately, and to connect to

the reference that was made in the original question, there may indeed be differences between parishes/area faith communities in preparation for particular sacraments. After observing the requirements of universal Church law and diocesan requirements, it is up to the parish priest to devise sacramental preparation programs that fit the needs of his parishes, knowing the moral obligation that he has, in the eyes of God, to offer the best program that he can.

**Next Issue:** Can Catholics have pre-nuptial agreements and still get married?

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; [msteffl@dnu.org](mailto:msteffl@dnu.org), (507) 233-5316.*

## A Church of the many: Pope addresses some synod questions, fears

**VATICAN CITY** – While the release of the working document for the Synod of Bishops on synodality is expected sometime in early June, in May, Pope Francis told a group of Italian bishops and coordinators of the synod process in their dioceses that he knows some people have questions or even fears about the upcoming Synod of Bishops and the whole idea of fostering a “synodal church.”

Some confusion is natural at first, he said, but the Holy Spirit likes to stir things up to get people moving and then create a new harmony.

“Every baptized person is called to actively participate in the life and in the mission of the Church, starting from the specifics of one’s own vocation, in relationship with others and with the charisms given by the Spirit for the good of all,” the pope said. “We need Christian communities in which space is enlarged, where everyone can feel at home, where pastoral structures and means foster not the creation

of small groups, but the joy of being and feeling co-responsible.” Evangelization is at stake, he said. “A Church weighed down by structures, bureaucracy and formalism will struggle to walk in history at the pace of the Spirit, meeting the men and women of our time.”

“The great enemy of this process,” he said, “is fear.”

Pope Francis said that as he entered the Vatican audience hall for the May 25 meeting, someone - using an Argentinian phrase that is not very polite, nor is its translation in Italian, he said - told him that the whole synod process is creating a mess.

“Think about the apostles on the morning of Pentecost,” the pope said. “If the synod is “a blank,” he said to laughter, “Pentecost morning was even worse. It was worse. Total disorder. And who provoked that mess? The Holy Spirit. He’s good at creating disorder to move people. But

the same Spirit also provoked harmony.”

“Don’t be afraid when there is disorder provoked by the Spirit,” Pope Francis said. One need fear “only when it is provoked by our selfishness or the spirit of evil.”

The pope urged everyone, but especially the fearful, to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who opens people to listen to others, who makes dialogue fruitful, enlightens discernment and guides choices and decisions. Pope Francis told the bishops and representatives that he would try to respond to their questions about “the priorities for the Church in relation to society, about how to overcome resistance and concerns, on the involvement of priests and lay people, and on the experiences of marginalization.”

Church unity and shared responsibility are essential, he said. An “always lurking” temptation is to rely on “a few ‘qualified actors’ who carry out

pastoral activity” while the rest of the faithful stand by and watch.

“Sometimes one gets the impression that religious communities, chanceries and parishes are still too self-referential,” Pope Francis said.

“There seems to creep in, somewhat covertly, a kind of ‘defensive neoclericalism’ – clericalism is a perversion,” he said. It is “generated by a fearful attitude, by complaints that the world does not understand us anymore, that young people are lost and by a need to reiterate and make one’s influence felt.”

The pope said, a “synodal church,” one where all are welcome, where all share the mission and contribute their prayer, time, and talents will have an impact on those the Catholic Church still believes have been chosen by God and given special gifts to lead and to discern.

“We must ask the Holy Spirit

to make us understand and experience how to be ordained ministers and how to exercise ministry in this time and in this church: never without the Other with a capital ‘O,’ but also never without others with whom we share the journey.”

“This applies to the bishops, whose ministry cannot do without that of priests and deacons” and to priests and deacons who must work with each other and the faithful, the pope said.

“But this is also true for the entire community of the baptized, in which each one walks with other brothers and sisters in the school of the one Gospel and in the light of the Spirit,” Pope Francis said.

Part of the goal of synodality, he said, is to “let God’s heart shine through – a heart open to all and for all.”

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# St. Mary's, New Ulm hosts 62nd annual DCCW Convention

*Jan Noyes of Marshall presented this year's Woman of the Year award*

by Barb Mathiowetz  
Woman of the Year Committee  
Co-Chairperson

The 62nd annual Diocesan Council of Catholic Women convention was held on April 29, 2023, at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm. The convention theme was "I AM the Bread of Life" which aligned well with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops National Eucharistic Revival, a movement to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The theme was elaborated on through the convention speakers and exhibits. The keynote for the day was New Ulm native and award winning author Liz Kelly. Berny Berger, a member of St. Willibord in Gibbon and the parish CCW president, presented on Blessed Carlo Acutis, an Italian teenager who used technology to spread devotion to the Eucharist before his death at age fifteen from leukemia in 2006. He offered his sufferings for the Church and for the Holy Father. Pope Francis has called him a role model for young people. He was beatified in 2020 and is one of the intercessors for the national Eucharistic Revival. Bishop Chad Zielinski, bishop of New Ulm celebrated Mass with the convention participants.

## Woman of the Year

I had the privilege of announcing the 31st New Ulm Diocese Council of Catholic Women "Woman of the Year" award recipient presented at the annual New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention held on Saturday, April 29, 2023, at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm. Candidates for this prestigious award are judged on their involvement in family, Church, community, and Council of Catholic Women activities.

This year, the Woman of the Year award was presented to Jan Noyes of the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Marshall. (See cover photo in this issue of *The Prairie Catholic*.) Jan and her husband Deacon Ken have been married for 44 years. A mother of five daughters, all of them attended Catholic school where Noyes was highly involved with parent-led school events. The couples' children are all grown and they have been blessed with seven grandchildren.



A native of New Ulm, convention keynote Liz Kelly addresses nearly 250 women during the 62nd annual New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention held at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm.  
(Photos by Christy Baker)

## Noyes valued by her parish

At Holy Redeemer, Noyes has served as the diocesan CCW president, the parish vice-president, treasurer, and Reverence Life Committee chairperson. She is responsible for organizing the first Divine Mercy Sunday parish program and was instrumental in starting perpetual adoration. She continues to be an adorer, division lead, and substitute adorer.

Together, Jan and Deacon Ken organized both the parish RCIA program and the Marriage Preparation Program, in which Jan mentors engaged couples. Noyes is a sister in the Seven Sisters Apostolate, praying weekly for her parish priest, attending daily Mass, and often lecturing.

As an educator, Noyes teaches Confirmation classes and leads Bible studies and a Discipleship Quad. She organizes the church library, ensuring the material provided is Catholic-based, and also organizes the Adoration Library materials. Jan also played an important role in supporting her husband throughout his years of formation (2013-2018) as he became a deacon of the Diocese of New Ulm.

## Community involvement

Noyes is a member of the Beta Sigma Phi Sorority, where she has held several leadership roles, including historian. She volunteers at the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life booth during the county fair and helps with Heart to Heart, which provides Christmas toys for needy families. Noyes is involved with various charities, including Feed My Starving Children.

## Service to NUDCCW

Noyes' service to the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and beyond is extensive. From 2014-2016 she served as NUDCCW president. Following her term she continued to serve as immediate past president until 2018. Noyes also served as chair of the leadership council and as DCCW representative to the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Other CCW positions include treasurer of the Region 3 CCW from 2011 to 2014, and secretary of the CCW Province Board. Currently, Noyes helps organize the New Ulm Diocese Council of Catholic Women associates, collecting dues and helping to plan the annual gathering.

Jan Noyes is a faith-filled woman and disciple of Christ, an example of what a Christ-like woman can be. Her legacy of faith will live on in all the people whose lives are touched by her devotion to our Lord.



Msgr. Eugene Lozinski, the New Ulm DCCW spiritual advisor, offers Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament during the Council's 2023 convention.



New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women leadership that were in attendance at this year's convention in New Ulm are: back row, l-r, Tracy Meyer, Spirituality; Sandy Jerzak, Scholarship; Lorri Koenig, Historian; Barb Mathiowetz, Immediate Past President; Jan Bot, Deanery 2 President; Carol Shukle, Province Director Elect; Dorothy Vandendriessche, Legislation; Carolyn Keller, Vice President; Debbie Keller, Province Secretary; Sharon Illikman, Deanery 1 President; and Chris Heiderscheidt, Province Director. Front row, Donna Sanders, Resource & Guidance; Jackie Finstad, President; Arlene Woelfel, Secretary; Lori Timmerman, Reverence Life; and Arlyce Anderson, Deanery 1 representative.



Berny Berger, a member of St. Willibord in Gibbon and the parish Council of Catholic Women president, presented on Blessed Carlo Acutis. Beatified in 2020, Acutis is one of the intercessors for the National Eucharistic Revival.



Display booths with various educational resources and services were available to convention goers during the day.



# Embracing the Divine Gift of Freedom

Religious Freedom Week will be celebrated nationwide beginning June 22, the feast of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher, ending with the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. During this week, Bishop Chad W. Zielinski, bishop of New Ulm, and all the U.S. Catholic bishops invite Catholics to pray, reflect, and act to promote religious freedom. Following are three commentaries from Diocese of New Ulm Catholic professionals on religious freedom from the perspective of Church, Education, and Healthcare.



RELIGIOUS  
FREEDOM  
WEEK

## CHURCH:



by Msgr. Eugene Lozinski  
Diocesan Chancellor

In a recent article in the *Catholic World Report*, George Weigel writes about a provocative proposal by Richard Rex, a Cambridge historian who says Catholicism today is embroiled in the third great crisis of its two-thousand-year history.

The first crisis he terms a “Theological crisis.” This crisis was concerned with the definition of who God is. It derived from a priest in Egypt who proposed that Jesus was merely a man and not the God-man. The controversy enveloped the whole Catholic world and endangered the existence of Christianity. Responding to this challenge, the bishops of the early Church met in council at Nicaea (325 AD) and Chalcedon (351 AD) and resolved the issue by establishing the doctrine of the Trinity and defining who Jesus is. They gave us the Nicene Creed, which we profess at Mass to this day.

The second crisis asked the central question, “What is the Church?” During the reformation in the sixteenth century, the Church was split over this

question. The bishops met at Trent and defined what the Church was. This definition was further clarified and ultimately defined at the Second Vatican Council, where they described the Church as a communion of disciples in mission.

Today, we are embroiled in the third great crisis of the Church, which Rex calls an “Anthropological Crisis,” that is, the question of who man is. According to Weigel, Rex rightly asserted that what the Church is contending with now is encompassed in “an entire alphabet of beliefs and practices: abortion, bisexuality, contraception, divorce, euthanasia, family, gender, homosexuality, infertility treatment. . . ,” and so forth. This is truly a cultural war that began outside the Church, but which is now also being fought within the Church itself.

The Church teaches, as is beautifully expressed in the opening chapters of the Bible, that the human being is willed by God and is composed of body and soul. Created out of dust, God breathed life into this new creation. God made them in His image, male and female, and commanded them to be fertile and multiply. Each human being finds dignity, meaning, and destiny in being faithful to the biblical description of who he or she is. This is biblical anthropology.

Fundamentally, our choice is whether we are going to accept the biblical view of the human person or the contrary view put forward by the world today. The current prevailing view of

the world is best summarized by Justice Anthony Kennedy, who tragically wrote in the 1992 decision *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*: “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe and the mystery of human life.” In other words, to be a free human being is to have a right to define who a human being is.

According to that view, it is not God who reveals who a human being is; instead, each individual makes this fundamental determination as they see fit. This proposition runs parallel to the consequences of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit, which has now come to fruition in our current culture.

The Church’s response to this admittedly sensitive issue is a great pastoral challenge. In faithfulness to Christ, we must uphold the truth of God’s revelation in the Bible, which reveals to us our identity.

Professing the truth in this controversial area goes to the central mission Christ has given to the Church and provides the only antidote to the destructive consequences of a relativist anthropology being wrought on our country and in our Church. However, as we profess the truth, we must show God’s true compassion and mercy to every human person made in the image of God, always remembering the command of Christ that we are to love each other as He has Loved us.

it in an afternoon cartoon.

The “Person and Identity Project” assists the Catholic Church in promoting the Catholic vision of the human person and responding to the challenges of gender ideology. They especially voice concerns about the subversive way public schools infuse gender ideology. Both administrative mandates like the “gender unicorn” and teachers bringing their

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## HEALTHCARE:



by Dr. Francille Knowles, MD  
Area Physician

My class in medical school was one of the first to adopt an oath for graduation that was different from the Hippocratic Oath that had been used for many years: to be more inclusive for the slowly changing demographics in the medical field. Fast forward 30 years and the recitation of an “updated version” of the oath that incoming medical students at the University of Minnesota were given to recite verbatim at their white coat ceremony included: “to combat white supremacy, promote a culture of anti-racism, and honor all indigenous ways of healing.”

While these are not “bad” concepts, what is the purpose of stating them as a group? Who will decide if and when the oath is being violated? What are the consequences of violation? What if some of the precepts are not in agreement with a student or faculty’s belief system? Our religious freedoms within medicine and those that we care for are being challenged from many angles. We should be aware of how this affects medicine today and how it will look in the future.

One of the documents from the Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae* provides guidance on questions that will always arise in our understanding of freedom, truth, and the relationship between church and state. The document explains that the state is not an “all-powerful institution” that can force individuals to act against their consciences. The state should not be allowed to coerce a person to do something against what is the truth in their religion. A society that embraces religious freedom is one that should allow persons to seek religious truth and live it out in both their public and private life. Religious freedoms in healthcare

are being challenged daily. The laws on abortion and who must provide medications that cause abortions are being proposed and debated in the Minnesota legislature. Medical school applicants are being asked politically biased questions, and some are turned away because of pro-life or pro-Christian values.

Today, euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide is illegal in Minnesota. There is a big push to legalize it in our state, as Oregon, Colorado, and several other states have done. Along with abortion, this change in medicine implies that some lives do not have value. After several years, when populations understand euthanasia to be “normal,” there can be coercion of patients and medical staff to accept it as a good and ethical option. Providers can be tempted to view it as an easier and more compassionate choice instead of working with patients and families to find palliative care to treat pain or suffering while maintaining the dignity of each person.

Women’s medicine has changed dramatically since the 1960s when birth control was first introduced. Prescribing birth control for a young woman with cramps, heavy bleeding, or irregular menstrual cycles is more the “norm” these days rather than figuring out what is wrong. Many in our society feel that all pharmacists and doctors should be mandated to prescribe or dispense birth control, even if it goes against their beliefs. It is a proven fact that the artificial hormones in birth control contribute to the infertility many women are facing, blood clots, strokes, and depression. Women deserve better than that!

*Primum non-nocere* is Latin for “first, do no harm.” As a physician, I learned this on my first day of medical school, and it remains one of the principal precepts of healthcare. I believe that Christ would encourage us to hold on to this principle and I will continue to encourage young people to support the laws put in place years ago that uphold the dignity of every person throughout life. The oaths that have been taken for decades do not need to be changed for our modern times, but their interpretations need our constant prayer.

## EDUCATION:



by Dr. Michelle Kramer, director  
Diocesan Catholic Schools

Peruse the local bookstore and check out the latest titles, “My Moms Love Me” or “Welcome to St. Hell,” recommended for pre-K/kindergarten and high school students, respectively, and you will quickly see the concerns of the Church in the formation of young people. But books are just a sliver of the full scope of the issues. A friend of mine told me she overheard children play-acting, one referring to another as “non-binary.” When questioned, she discovered the child had seen



# Nigerian priest in New Ulm carries concern in heart over homeland

by Elli Gifferson  
Prairie Catholic correspondent

In a 2020 Ash Wednesday letter, the two top leaders of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, located in West Africa, reflected on some of the nation's difficulties.

"The level of insecurity in Nigeria today is such that whether at home or on the road, most Nigerians, in all parts of the country, live in fear. The repeated barbaric executions of Christians by the Boko Haram insurgents and the incessant cases of kidnapping for ransom linked to the same group and other terrorists have traumatized many citizens," they said in the letter titled "Prayer and Penance for Peace and Security in Our Country."

Fr. Cornelius Ezeiloaku was ordained a priest in 2003 for the Archdiocese of Onitsha. He has been serving in the Diocese of New Ulm since 2014. Born in the city of Onitsha in the Eastern part of Nigeria, he eventually moved with his parents to Keffi in Plateau State, Nigeria, enabling him to experience the rural and urban aspects of his country as a boy. In describing the diverse Nigerian traditions and culture, he reflected

on how the uniquely close-knit customs and practices globally set Nigeria apart. Demographically, Nigeria "[consists] of a mixture of states with various tribes that each have their unique characteristic from others. Our culture is expressed in its arts and crafts and folklore," Fr. Cornelius explained.

Growing up in a hardworking, devoted Catholic family of four boys and two girls, Fr. Cornelius confidently attests, "All I am today, the credit [goes] to my parents because they were pillars to those heights of success. [They] have a high level of parental warmth and discipline that made their children more confident, dependable, and socially responsible. Whatever paths they laid for us, we continued on that trend," he said.

"Our parents first taught us what life is and how to live a beautiful and moral life." He details learning traditional Catholic prayers at home, attending weekday and weekend Masses together as a family, and praying the Rosary along with morning and evening prayers in front of their family altar.

Similarly, Fr. Cornelius recalls



Pictured dressed in his native clerics, Nigerian priest Fr. Cornelius Ezeiloaku has served the Diocese of New Ulm since 2014. For the past 18 years, religious freedom in Nigeria has been challenged as hundreds of thousands of Christians have been killed for their faith. (Photo by Christine Clancy)

his family's involvement in various church activities and organizations. He and all three of his brothers attended the seminary.

In reflecting on his faithful upbringing, Fr. Cornelius affirms that "The absence of religious upbringing manifests itself in a person's character. My parents were very faith-filled and determined to pass it on to their children."

## Nigeria and religious freedom

Fr. Cornelius is well aware of his country's ongoing history of religious tension and violent extremism that seeks to threaten religious freedom in his homeland.

In a May 2022 report, the International Christian Concern, [www.persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org), described Nigeria as "the world's scariest country in which to be a Christian."

Fr. Cornelius said that because Northern Nigeria is predominantly Muslim and Southern and Eastern Nigeria is predominantly Christian, several factors have heightened religious tensions.

"The first is the competition for autonomy and space between the two main religions of Christianity and Islam," he said. "Secondly, there is a culture of insensitivity to the feelings of the minority. In addition to violence, Christians are also subject to various forms of discrimination, such as political, economic, educational, judicial, and land/building restrictions."

Concerning the educational barriers, Fr. Cornelius specifically said, "Christianity also provided a platform for establishing Western education in Nigeria. This failed in several areas in [the] North, where education is seen as [being] at variance [with] their beliefs and is equated with Christianity," he said.

"Religious tensions have continued to escalate with the violent attacks of the Boko Haram and Islamic extremists. Ever since the dawn of the 21st century, the murders and kidnappings of Christians in Nigeria have persistently increased."

## Serving from a distance

In the Diocese of New Ulm, Fr. Cornelius serves the Light of the World Area Faith Community (Wabasso and Lucan), and St. Catherine's in Redwood Falls. However, from a distance, he continues to serve the Church in Nigeria as well. In 2019 he established "Care 4 Nigeria," a non-profit charitable organization along with brothers Dennis and Joel Schwarz of New Ulm and Paul Platz of Lafayette to help assist the people of his Nigerian homeland. Ultimately, with the help of numerous parish volunteers and generous donors, the organization has so far successfully sent three 40-foot metal shipping containers 6,500 miles overseas to Nigeria, each filled with over 30,000 pounds of supplies and other much-needed equipment.

Specifically, Care 4 Nigeria has provided the Nigerian archdiocese with essential medical equipment from area hospitals within the Diocese of New Ulm, commercial table saws and power tools, more than 100 wheelchairs, pianos, and organs for the archdiocesan music department, church pews, and over 150 bicycles to create small businesses to generate income for impoverished families.

"My faith journey [has] been that of gratitude," said Fr. Cornelius. "It is a life of ongoing dependence on God, praising God for joy, abundant love, and steadfast support during sorrow, despair, and fear. Each day is an opportunity to grow in my relationship with my God and to follow where he wishes and desires."

*Editor's Note: To learn more about Care 4 Nigeria, contact Fr. Cornelius, [fadamebeogo@gmail.com](mailto:fadamebeogo@gmail.com).*

## Religious Freedom: Education

(Continued from page 10.)

ideologies into the classroom at the grassroots level are of concern. Perhaps it is no shock that according to a Gallup poll in March 2022, the LGBTQ+ population has more than doubled since 2012.

I am admittedly startled a little more each day as I witness and read about these developments. I have a new respect for and desire to preserve religious liberty. As a Church, we carry a profound responsibility to support families in their desire to raise children in the truth of the Catholic faith amidst the noise of a "woke" world.

The Second Vatican Council approved *Dignitatis Humane*, the Declaration on Religious Liberty, in 1965, a document that addressed the relationship between Church and State. It is a question that persists today and calls educators in our Catholic schools to question the rights and responsibilities we have as faith-based institutions in the Diocese of New Ulm.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) states, "Religious freedom requires that a society both refrain from preventing people from living out their religion and help to create the conditions for religious expression to flourish."

Religious freedom ensures that religious institutions can live out their values and function according to their declared faith. As mission-oriented institutions, we have both the benefit and the responsibility of making sure all decisions are mission-oriented and in congruence with the teachings of the Church. We are tasked with providing a space where individuals, families, and communities are able and encouraged to live out their religious convictions.

The USCCB further notes, "Religious freedom is the cornerstone of a society that promotes human dignity. It is a fundamental human right, for it follows on the duty of all people to seek the truth about God." It is a Catholic school's right to

not only instruct in matters of faith and morals but our supreme responsibility. A policy on sexual identity is currently being developed here in the Diocese of New Ulm for Catholic schools and parish ministry. This work aims to guide those in ministry and deepen the understanding of the Church's call to respect the dignity of each human person as a beloved son or daughter created by God.

As the policy's promulgation in the diocese is anticipated this fall, we will welcome Mary Hasson, JD, the Kate O'Beirne Senior Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. Hasson will provide formation for teachers, catechists, youth ministers, parents, and parishioners. We look forward to hearing her discuss the current landscape as the concern over religious freedom and gender ideology sweep across local and national boundaries.

*Editor's note: To learn more about Mary Hasson's work and the Catholic perspective on sexual identity, visit [personandidentity.com](http://personandidentity.com).*





## catholic trends

**WASHINGTON – The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will gather for the 2023 Spring Plenary Assembly in Orlando, June 14-16. The general sessions will be on June 15 and 16 and will be livestreamed on the USCCB website.**

The bishops will receive updates on the Eucharistic Revival and on the ongoing preparations for the National Eucharistic Congress in 2024, as well as the participation in World Youth Day with Pope Francis in Lisbon this August.

Although subject to change, the

meeting agenda includes:

- A consultation of the bishops on causes of beatification and canonization for five diocesan priests of the Diocese of Shreveport who are locally referred to as the “Shreveport Martyrs.”
- A plan for the ongoing formation of priests, which provides some guidance for priests to continue their personal and priestly formation following ordination to the priesthood.
- The priorities that will shape the USCCB’s Strategic Plan for 2025-2028.
- Four action items pertaining to the International Commission on

English in the Liturgy (ICEL), the commission established for the benefit of bishops’ conferences in countries where English is used in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy according to the Roman Rite. One of the action items pertains to the revision of the statutes that govern ICEL’s work; the remaining three address the approval of translations: the Liturgy of the Hours and Liturgical Texts for Saint Faustina Kowalska; the Ordinary of the Liturgy of the Hours; and the Proper Texts of the United States of America for the Liturgy of the Hours.

- The development of a process for a new pastoral statement addressing persons with disabilities in the life of the Church.
- The National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry
- A revision of part three of the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) for Catholic Health Care Services.

Public sessions of the assembly will be held on the mornings of June 15 and 16, and livestreamed at: [www.usccb.org/meetings](http://www.usccb.org/meetings).

**VATICAN CITY – In May, Pope Francis announced in a letter that “hope” will**

be the central theme for the upcoming 2025 Jubilee Year, voicing his desire for the year to foster a greater sense of global brotherhood and solidarity with the poor, as well as care for the environment.


A new website was launched in May and an app to help people register and to guide them along their pilgrimage in Rome will be released in September. Registrants will receive a free digital “pilgrim’s card,” which will be needed to participate in jubilee events. The jubilee website and new app will give news and information on the Holy Door of

St. Peter’s and the other basilicas as well as offer the possibility of organizing one’s own pilgrimage within the city. People can choose from three proposed pilgrimages: The traditional pilgrimage of St. Philip Neri with the seven churches; the pilgrimage on the churches dedicated to the women doctors of the Church and patrons of Europe; and the ‘Iter Europaeum,’ that is, the 28 churches in 27 different European countries, plus the church that represents the European Union.”


For more information visit [www.iubilaeum2025.va/it.html](http://www.iubilaeum2025.va/it.html).

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 Come and lay your burden at the feet of Jesus  
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 Let the Holy Spirit heal and renew you*



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**Holy Family, Silver Lake, MN**  
*Eucharistic Adoration with opportunities for healing prayer, Confession, spiritual counsel*



**NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival**  
 DIOCESE OF NEW ULM