

# THE DRAIRIE CATHOLIC

*Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm*

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 37 No. 5 March 2023



*(Photo by Christine Clancy)*

## United for Life!

**ST. PAUL** – On Tuesday, February 28, over 600 people from across Minnesota joined hundreds of others at the State Capitol in St. Paul to participate in the first-ever United for Life pro-life advocacy day, sponsored in part by the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the political voice of the Catholic bishops of the state. Bishop Chad W. Zielinski spearheaded the Diocese of New Ulm's effort to charter three buses to transport over 100 pro-life advocates from the diocese to the Capitol. The event kicked off with morning prayer and a rally in the rotunda that included pro-life guest speakers before participants fanned out to visit with lawmakers and learn more about the bills that affect life. Archbishop Bernard Hebda, Bishops Chad Zielinski and Daniel Felton (of Duluth), and Bishop Emeritus John LeVoir (of New Ulm) joined in advocating for life. Pictured is the Diocese of New Ulm group on the steps in front of the State Capitol.

*(Read more about United for Life on page 8.)*

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## Bishop makes visit to Guatemala

In January, Bishop Chad Zielinski traveled to San Lucas Toliman in Guatemala, a former mission parish of the Diocese of New Ulm. *(Read the bishop's reflections on his trip, page 5.)*

## Annual DCCW Convention will feature noted author, speaker Liz Kelly

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**NEW ULM** – Liz Kelly will be the keynote presenter at the 62nd annual Diocese of New Ulm Council of Catholic Women Convention on April 29 at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm.

The doors will open at 7:30 a.m., beginning with registration, a free-will offering breakfast, and a silent auction followed by praying the rosary at 8 a.m. and general assembly at 8:30 a.m. Kelly will speak from 9-10:00 a.m.

Kelly recently answered some questions for *The Prairie Catholic* to give her audience a taste of what they can expect from her upcoming presentation.

**Q. You are a native of the Diocese of New Ulm, graduating from Cathedral High School in New Ulm. Is there anything**

**you feel you took away from this small rural diocese that helped you achieve your current professions as a published author, columnist, national retreat master, and presenter?**

**A.** There are so many wonderful gifts I received while at Cathedral, but one moment stands out. I clearly remember writing an essay for religion class about why my faith was important to me, and Fr. Phil Schotzko asked if he could print it in the school newspaper. I remember him saying that he thought it would help other people. That was probably one of the first times I realized that my writing might be a charism, a real gift from God, and something God would use to help others.

**Q. What should people expect to get out of your presentation?**

**A.** I will introduce them to a new



Liz Kelly

Blessed, Benedetta Bianchi Porro, a young Italian woman who died in 1964. Her story is remarkable, and she is going to be an incredibly important saint for our

time: for doctors and those who work with the sick and those who suffer chronic progressive illness or care for someone who does, for single women, for professional women. She has tremendous graces for a large swath of people, and I can't wait to introduce the audience to her. In particular, we will examine how she practiced perseverance in her life.

Her life also has a very special connection to the Eucharist, and given that we are in a Eucharistic revival, her story is all the more moving and helpful.

**Q. Can you elaborate on your most recent book, "Love Like a Saint," which focuses on the unique gifts women saints bring to the Church?**

**A.** This was my COVID project. When COVID hit, all of my

speaking and retreats disappeared for more than a year, as it did with the work of so many others at that time. So I had this space open for writing and had long been interested in writing about virtue and holy women.

I chose women from every walk of life: married, divorced, single, religious, mothers, and professionals. I also chose women from every stage in the life of holiness, from an average lay woman to a servant of God, venerable, blessed, and saint. I wanted the whole range represented in the book and, where possible, to have a picture of the woman and some of her writing or words. I concentrated into the Church and society, rather than simply see them as objects of assistance; and to promote peace and dialogue.

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## Pope Francis marks a decade sharing the joy of the Gospel

by Cindy Wooden  
*Catholic News Service*

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** – For a decade, even when discussing the internal workings of the Vatican, Pope Francis has insisted the Church is not the church of Christ if it does not reach out, sharing the “joy of the Gospel” and placing the poor at the center of its attention.

Signals that his papacy would be different started the moment he stepped out on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica the evening of March 13, 2013: he was not wearing a red, ermine-trimmed cape, and he bowed as he asked the crowd to pray that God would bless him.

His decision not to live in the Apostolic Palace, his invitations to Vatican trash collectors and gardeners and other employees to join him for his daily morning Mass, his insistence on going to the Italian island of Lampedusa to celebrate Mass and pray for migrants who had drowned in the Mediterranean captivated the attention of the media.

One kind of summary of his first 10 years as pope can be found in numbers: He has made 40 trips abroad, visiting 60 countries; in eight consistories he created 95 cardinals under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave and paid tribute to 26 churchmen over the age of 80; and he has presided over the canonizations of 911 new

saints, including a group of more than 800 martyrs, but also Sts. John Paul II, John XXIII and Paul VI.

In his first major document, the apostolic exhortation “The Joy of the Gospel,” he laid out a program for his papacy, looking inside the Church and outside at the world to see what needed to be done to “encourage and guide the whole Church in a new phase of evangelization, one marked by enthusiasm and vitality.”

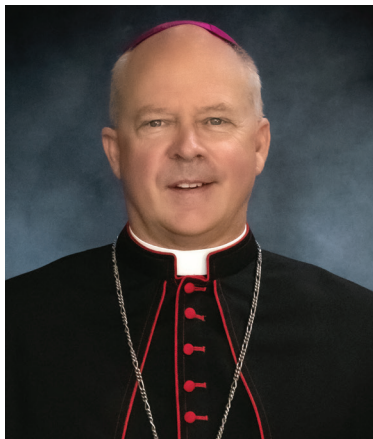
The document included a discussion of the need to reform church institutions to highlight their missionary role; to encourage pastoral workers to listen to and stand with the people they

were ministering to – his famous line about having “the smell of the sheep”; to deepen an understanding of the Church as “the entire people of God” and not as an institution or, worse, a club of the elect; to integrate the poor into the Church and society, rather than simply see them as objects of assistance; and to promote peace and dialogue.

For Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the agenda of Pope Francis is the original agenda of the Second Vatican Council.

*(Continued on page 3.)*

*That they may have life*



by Bishop Chad W. Zielinski

*Increase our fascination with God this Lent*

Every year we enter into Lent, we recall the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying. So, too, the entire Church is united more closely in one heart and mind during this time of prayer and penance.

In the Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Lent, *Matthew 4:1-11*, we hear, “At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.” We were always taught as kids to stay far away from the devil and to say “no” to evil and temptation. I always found this rather interesting that the Spirit led Jesus to face the devil.

As we hear in scripture, Jesus faces the three temptations from the devil. He confronts them with a relationship of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amidst temptation, Jesus is faithful to all the Father has called him to do. We hear in *John 6:37-39*, “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it [on] the last day.” Jesus confronts the devil and temptation on our behalf so that we can be saved. We are saved through a relationship with him that happens at our baptism. Our souls are forever imprinted with sacramental grace; we are sealed with the chrism oil to remind us that we are united to the Most Holy Trinity in a living and loving relationship.

During our Lenten journey, we are asked to focus more intensely on this relationship with Jesus and invited to draw closer to him by turning away from sin. We begin our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday and hear the words, “Repent and believe in the

Gospel,” as we are signed with ashes on our forehead. This is a choice on our part to turn more intimately toward Christ. Jesus guides and embraces us in this movement.

Last month, Feb. 14-15, the clergy of the Diocese of New Ulm gathered at the Church of St. Mary in Willmar for our bi-annual Clergy Days. The presenter was Fr. Vincent Lampert from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Fr. Lampert is a publicly known exorcist and has written a book, “Exorcism: The Battle Against Satan and His Demons,” to explain the ordinary and extraordinary activities of the devil, angels, and his ministry as an exorcist.

The thrust of Fr. Vince’s ministry is to help people encounter the healing power of God’s grace primarily through the sacraments of the Church. He explains that the two most powerful weapons against the devil are regular confession and regular Mass attendance. In confession, we are taking ownership of our sin and placing it in the merciful hands of Christ. The devil detests this because, as the great Accuser, he wants us to believe we cannot be forgiven. He wants us to persist in

our sinful behavior. In receiving the Holy Eucharist, we are consuming the perfection of love and grace, the Real Presence of Christ, so we can be consumed by Christ to become him in the world – to be Christ to a brother or sister in need. In this movement, we crowd out the devil with love.

Fr. Vince boldly stated that we live in a world that is disinterested in faith, and that we either have a relationship with God or with something else. He pointed out the entry points where we can allow evil to intrude in our lives including palm reading, various forms of witchcraft, tarot cards, fortunetellers, use of Ouija boards to talk to spirits, and curiosity about ghosts. These things bombard us on television and the internet and lead to a fascination with evil. As people are deceived into this, it weakens one’s faith.

Exorcism is simply a healing ministry that focuses on a fascination with God, rather than on the devil. Fr. Vince’s advice is to fear God, not the devil, and to recognize the Church as a loving mother and source of help and hope.

Let’s make this our Lenten goal and increase our fascination with

God by repenting and turning toward him who calls our name from the moment of conception. Consider more “silence” so you can hear Christ speak to you more clearly. Slow down and turn away from temptation and distractions. Move to that quiet place to be with Christ, and open the doors to your heart, mind, and soul to encounter him. Hand him your heart, recognizing where it needs to be healed and forgiven. Most of all, have hope!

Jesus never tires of extending his mercy to draw us closer to him. The evil one, the great Accuser, will convince us there is no hope - which is why he is also called the great Deceiver. The words of *Habakkuk 2:3* remind us to wait with hope, “For the vision is a witness for the appointed time, a testimony to the end; it will not disappoint. If it delays, wait for it, it will surely come; it will not be late.”

Let us keep one another in prayer as we increase our fascination with God during this Lenten season.

**Bishop’s calendar**

- March 13-16** – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Administrative Committee Meetings, Washington, DC
- March 18** – Confirmation, St. John Paul II AFC, Holy Trinity, Winsted
- March 19** – Confirmation, Apostles Peter & Paul AFC, St. Peter, St. Peter
- March 21** – Diocesan Staff Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center
- March 22** – Minnesota Catholic Conference Board Meeting, St. Paul
- March 23** – Legislative Visits, St. Paul
- March 25** – Confirmation, Holy Family AFC, St. Joseph, Montevideo
- March 26** – Adoration for Hope &
- Healing, Ss. Peter & Paul, Ivanhoe
- March 28** – Priest Personnel Board Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center
- March 30** – Diocesan Chrism Mass, Holy Redeemer, Marshall
- March 31** – St. Paul Seminary Meeting, St. Paul
- April 2** – Palm Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm
- April 4** – Diocesan Staff Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center
- April 5** – Annual Catholic Charities Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center
- April 6** – Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper, Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm
- April 7** – Good Friday Service,
- Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm
- April 8** – Easter Vigil Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm
- April 9** – Easter Sunday Mass, Church of St. John the Baptist, Searles
- April 11** – Priests’ Council Meeting, St. Aloysius, Olivia
- April 11** – College of Consultors Meeting, St. Aloysius, Olivia
- April 16** – Confirmation, Light of the World AFC and Redwood Falls, St. Catherine, Redwood Falls
- April 16** – Divine Mercy Celebration, Holy Family, Silver Lake
- April 16-20** – Annual Diocesan Priests Retreat, Christ the King
- Retreat Center, Buffalo
- April 23** – Confirmation, St. Isidore the Farmer AFC, Sacred Heart, Murdock
- April 25** – Diocesan Staff Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center
- April 26** – Annual Diocesan Ministries Appeal Committee Meeting
- April 27** – 30th Anniversary – Catholic Community Foundation, Minneapolis
- April 28** – White Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm
- April 29** – Mass, New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention, St. Mary, New Ulm

*Editor’s note: Calendar represents the bishop’s schedule at the time “The Prairie Catholic” went to press.*

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## Sr. Marie Grossman was known for her passion for Catholic education



Sr. Marie Grossman

Sr. Marie Grossman, CSJ, died Feb. 25, 2023, at Carondelet Village in St. Paul. Christian Burial was held on March 3 at Resurrection Cemetery in Mendota Heights. A Celebration of Life Mass was held on March 4 at Our Lady of the Presentation Chapel, St. Paul.

Marie was born on June 27, 1923, and raised on a farm in Chokio, Minn., to John and Anne (Leuthard) Grossman. After graduation, she answered the call to serve her country during WWII by working as a riveter at Boeing Aircraft in Seattle, Wash. In 1943, she returned home and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in St. Paul, Minn.

In 1956, she earned a BA in History and Education from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, and in 1962, an MA in

Education and Instruction from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Catholic Education was her passion, and she excelled as an elementary school teacher for 28 years.

Sister Marie served at St. Mary's, the Cathedral, and Holy Spirit parish in St. Paul, the Basilica in Minneapolis, and St. Michael's in Grand Forks, ND. In 1976, she was appointed Assistant Province Director for the CSJ community, serving in province administration until 1982. For the next ten years, she served in the Diocese of New Ulm at the Church of St. Joseph in Lamberton as one of the first pastoral administrators in the diocese. In 1986, Bishop Raymond A. Lucker awarded her with the New Ulm Diocesan Distinguished Service Award for her generous, gentle leadership.

In 1995 she moved to Gaylord, Minn. with younger sister Agatha Grossman, CSJ, where together they created a youth center and worked with the growing Hispanic population as they learned English. For their ministry they received the Gaylord Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award and the Paul Harris Fellowship Award from the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International.

## Buckley elected general superior for Schoenstatt



Sr. M. Joanna Buckley

Redwood Falls, Minnesota native Sr. M. Joanna Buckley has been elected as general superior of the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary by their General Chapter being conducted in Schoenstatt, Germany. She will serve a 12-year term residing in Germany.

Sister Joanna served in Sleepy Eye, Minn., from 2001-2003 working with the girls' youth branch of the Schoenstatt Lay Movement. From 2003-2009, she served as the educator of her community, training the young sisters. In 2009, she was appointed as the provincial superior of the Northern United States province, which included sisters in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. When this province merged with that of the southern U.S. and Mexico in 2015, she was appointed provincial over the North American province. In 2019, she was called to Schoenstatt, Germany, to serve on the community's general council, where she was the assistant for the English-speaking areas of the institute.

## Pope Francis: Priority is concern for poor

(Continued from page 1.)

Unlike St. John Paul II and the late Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis did not attend any of the council sessions. He was ordained to the priesthood Dec. 13, 1969, and is the first pope to be ordained a priest after Vatican II.

"After Scripture and tradition, the council is the significant foundation, and I would say, characteristic orientation of this papacy," the cardinal told Catholic News Service. "He has taken the council not from a collection of decrees, but from the lived experience of the council as implemented, as lived, as tested, as developed, you might say, in the church of Latin America."

St. John XXIII launched the council with a pastoral focus on what it means to be the church in the modern world, he said. The papacies of St. John Paul and Pope Benedict, he said, "reverted to a more doctrinal understanding of the council" with "some very good results and with some massive, unfinished business."

While the work of Pope Francis' predecessors was important, he said, "I don't think it picked up the primary agenda (of the council), which was implementing a new understanding of church in the modern world, a new way of evangelizing because the world is so different from how it was, let's say, at the end of World War II."

Emilce Cuda, an Argentine theologian and secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, agreed that a key to understanding Pope Francis' pontificate is knowing how Vatican II was lived in Latin America with respect for popular piety and culture, and trust in the "sensus fidei," the notion that the baptized together have a "sense of faith" and an ability "to understand what God says to us, to his people, in every moment."

"There in the popular culture, in the peripheries, and in all the people of God, we can hear what God wants from us, or what God tells us to do in response to social problems and in the Church in each moment," she said. "We are in history and history is a movement, and the situation is not the same (as) in the 20th century or in the 21st century."

As for disagreements with or even controversies about the papacy of Pope Francis, Cardinal Czerny warned against confusing "loud with representative or loud with majority. Loud doesn't mean any of those things; it means loud."

But, he said, "the patience of Pope Francis" leads him and encourages others to recognize that the pope's critics "are not 100% off beam," or off track; there usually is a grain of truth in what they say or an important value they hold dear that is being overlooked.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, told CNS he believes the first 10 years of Pope Francis' pontificate have been preparation for "what's happening right now, and that's the synodal conversation."

The Second Vatican Council called Catholics to read the "signs of the times" and respond. And, the cardinal said, "this notion that we don't have automatically prepared prescriptions for every challenge that faces us leads us to a fundamental tenet of our belief," which is belief "in the Holy Spirit, the lord and giver of life."

The synod process, which began with listening to people around the globe and will move toward two assemblies mainly of bishops, is about listening to the Holy Spirit.

While the synod involves meetings, Cardinal Tobin said, "synodality is a way of being church. It's an ancient way of being church that is being recovered and lived in the circumstances in which we face ourselves today. And so, to my mind, that's sort of the capstone of what Pope Francis has been working for over the last decade."

"I've called synodality his long game," the cardinal said. "He's convinced that the changed circumstances of our world and our world going forward demand a new appreciation for the role of the Holy Spirit and a way to access that gift that is given to all of us by virtue of our baptism."

Pope Francis has been laying the foundation for the new synod process since the beginning of his pontificate, said Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago. "There's an organic whole to all of this."

"I just wonder if, from the very

### A special prayer initiative for the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' pontificate

To highlight the pope's 10 year anniversary in a "viral" manner, the Vatican's Digital Synod has launched a special online map featuring virtual lighted candles representing the prayers of the faithful worldwide for him.

Anyone who wishes to join the initiative will find an invitation on the website to pray one or more Hail Marys. "In the end the Holy Father will be sent the map with the little candles which represent the Hail Marys that are prayed for him, thanking God for His Mercy."

beginning, he had in his mind that this would be the trajectory of his pontificate, and the synod on synodality I think is, in some way, the opportunity for him to pull everything together," he said. "There are people who want him to go faster, but he wants things to be held together and the church to be held together."

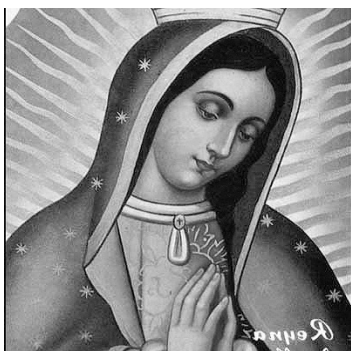
Asked what he thought was the most significant aspect of Pope Francis' pontificate, the cardinal cited his predecessor, the late Cardinal Francis E. George, who participated in the 2013 conclave, and said the best description of Pope Francis was "He's free."

"He's free in the sense of wanting to listen to different voices in the life of the church," Cardinal Cupich said. "He's free in being imaginative, but also he has the kind of freedom that really allows him to be joyful in this ministry."

"John Paul II told us what we should do. Benedict told us why we should do it. And Francis is saying, 'Do it,'" the cardinal said. Pope Francis is leading by example in how he cares for the poor, sees God at work in people's real lives and reaches out to people often overlooked by the Church.

"I think history will look back on this pontificate as historic, as pivotal in the life of the Church," Cardinal Cupich said.

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por Bishop Chad Zielinski

*Esta Cuaresma, Aumente su fascinación por Dios*

Durante la Cuaresma, recordamos los 40 días cuando Jesús pasó en el desierto ayunando y orando. Así también, durante este tiempo de oración y penitencia toda la Iglesia está más unida en un solo corazón y mente.

En la lectura del Evangelio del primer domingo de Cuaresma, *Mateo 4:1-11*, escuchamos: “En ese momento Jesús fue llevado por el Espíritu al desierto para ser tentado por el diablo.” Desde niños nos han enseñado a mantenernos lo más lejos posible del diablo y a decir “no” al mal y a la tentación. Siempre me causó interesante que el Espíritu llevó a Jesús a enfrentar al diablo.

En la escritura, Jesús enfrenta las tres tentaciones del diablo. Los enfrenta con la relación del Padre, Hijo y del Espíritu Santo. En medio de la tentación, Jesús es fiel a todo lo que su Padre lo ha llamado hacer. *Juan 6:37-39* dice: “Todo lo que el Padre me da, vendrá a mí, y al que a mí viene jamás lo echaré fuera. Porque yo he descendido del cielo no para hacer la voluntad mía sino la voluntad del que me envió. Y esta es la voluntad del que me envió, que yo no pierda nada de todo lo que me ha dado, sino que lo resucite en el día final.” En nuestro nombre, Jesús confronta al diablo y a la tentación para que

*Para que tengan vida*

podamos estar a salvo. Somos salvados a través de la relación que tenemos con él que tiene lugar en nuestro bautismo. Con la gracia sacramental nuestras almas son impresas para siempre; somos sellados con el óleo crismal que nos recuerda el estar unidos a la Santísima Trinidad en una relación amorosa.

Durante nuestro camino Cuaresmal, somos llamados a concentrarnos intensamente en esta relación con Jesús y nos invita a que nos acerquemos a él y alejarnos del pecado. Empezamos nuestro camino cuaresmal el Miércoles de Ceniza y escuchar las palabras, “arrepentirse y cree en el Evangelio,” cuando el sacerdote impone las cenizas en nuestra frente. Esta es una decisión de nuestra parte para estar más íntimamente con Cristo.

El 14 y 15 de febrero, el clero de la Diócesis de New Ulm se reunió en la Iglesia de Santa María en Willmar. El conferencista fue el P. Vince Lampert de la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis. El Padre Lampert es un exorcista muy conocido y ha escrito un libro, “El Exorcismo: La Batalla contra Satanás y sus Demonios,” explica las actividades ordinarias y extraordinarias del diablo, los ángeles y su ministerio como exorcista. El ministerio del P. Vince es ayudar a las personas a encontrar el poder sanador de Dios principalmente a través de los sacramentos de la Iglesia. Él explica que las dos armas más poderosas contra el diablo son la confesión frecuente y la asistencia regular a la Misa. En la confesión, nos hacemos cargo de nuestro pecado y lo ponemos en las manos misericordiosas de Cristo. El diablo detesta esto porque, como el gran acusador, quiere que creamos que no podemos ser perdonados. Él

quiere que sigamos cometiendo pecados. Cuando recibimos la Sagrada Eucaristía, consumimos la perfección del amor y la gracia, la presencia real de Cristo, para que puedan ser consumidos por Cristo para convertirnos en él en el mundo, para ser Cristo para un hermano en necesidad.

P. Vince manifestó valientemente que vivimos en un mundo desinteresado en la fe o tenemos una relación con Dios o con otra cosa. Señaló los puntos de entrada donde permitimos que el mal se inmiscuya en nuestras vidas que incluye como leer la palma de su mano, variedad de brujería, las cartas del tarot, adivinadora, tablero Ouija para hablar con los espíritus y la curiosidad por los fantasmas. Estas cosas bombardean en la televisión e internet y nos llevan a una fascinación por el mal. Cuando la gente es engañada así, su fe se debilita.

El exorcismo es un ministerio de sanidad que se enfoca en una fascinación con Dios, en lugar del diablo. P. Vince aconseja de temer a Dios, no al diablo y reconocer a la Iglesia como la madre amorosa y fuente de ayuda y esperanza. Hagamos de este nuestro objetivo de Cuaresma y aumentemos nuestra fascinación por Dios arrepintiéndonos y volviéndonos hacia él, que llama nuestro nombre desde el momento de la concepción.

Considere más “silencio” para que pueda escuchar a Cristo. Tome las cosas con más calma y aléjese de la tentación y de las distracciones. Vaya a un lugar tranquilo para estar con Cristo y abra las puertas de su corazón, mente y alma para el encuentro. Entrégale tu corazón, reconocer donde necesitan ser sanados y perdonados. ¡Sobre todo, tengán esperanza!

Jesús nunca se cansa de extender su misericordia para acercarnos más a él. El maligno, el gran acusador, nos convencerá que no hay esperanza, por ello también se le llama el gran mentiroso.

Habacuc 2:3 recordanos esperar con esperanza, “Aunque la visión tardará aún por tiempo, mas al fin hablará, y no mentará: aunque se tardara, espéralo, que sin duda vendrá; no tardará.”

Durante esta temporada de Cuaresma, mantengámonos en oración los unos a otros mientras aumenta esta fascinación por Dios.

*Liz Kelly Q & A*

*(Continued from page 1.)*

on just one or two virtues per woman - to discuss every virtue they practiced would have meant 12 books, not one. But in concentrating on just one virtue, we end up getting a more intimate look at their lives. The women in these pages are remarkable and have become like new friends and intercessors.

**Q. Your presentation will discuss the importance of Christian perseverance and growing in virtue. In traveling and speaking across the country, what are some common challenges women express in their desire to grow in virtue?**

**A.** I often see two primary blocks to growth in the spiritual life (though there are certainly others): fatigue and fear. I see many women just pushed to their limits, working really hard to balance an extraordinary number of tensions - the demands of family life, professional life, health, children and grandchildren, spouses, and caring for the poor and the marginalized. It takes a toll. And often, the thing they push to the very end of the to-do list is their own prayer life. So they come into my office completely depleted. Restocking the pond is some of the most important work we do in spiritual direction.

Of course, the other great obstacle to growth in the spiritual life is fear. Will I be okay? What will others think? If people only really knew me, they would know I'm not lovable - that kind of thinking. Everyone suffers from some anxiety now and then, but a general fear of being unlovable sits at the bottom of much of that. Uprooting that lie takes a lot of work, too. But I see women doing just that all the time and going on to flourish in their faith life in beautiful ways.

**Q. Being a disciple and growing in virtue takes much trust. Why do you think it is so hard for some women (and men) to trust God and surrender to God's will for them?**

**A.** Determining God's will for us takes some effort. We need to know the voice of God in our lives. We need to be still enough to listen and to hear him. Furthermore, we need to know when it's the Father speaking to

our hearts and when it's our ego, the world, or the evil one. To learn the voice of the Father is a long and exacting work, not something we can pick up at a drive-thru and consume like fast food. Learning the voice of God in our lives is much more like preparing a master feast. It takes time, planning, creativity, commitment, choosing the very best ingredients and preparing them with care, pairing dishes that complement one another, choosing the right wine, and so on. You don't toss a feast together quickly, and you don't learn the voice of the Lord quickly, either. There's a lot of “fast-food faith” out there, and it's just as damaging to our spiritual life as it would be to our health to live on French fries and chocolate milkshakes.

**Q. How do you encourage women who want a closer relationship with Jesus but are afraid they may not be “good enough” to experience intimacy with him?**

**A.** That's an incredibly common feeling, not being good enough. So the first thing to note is that if you don't feel good enough, you are far from alone in that feeling. It is one of the devil's favorite lies to impose upon God's favored creation. So, you need to reject it from your heart and allow the Lord to heal that. The way that happens is unique to every soul.

But the other thing I would stress is that the Father is so gentle and tenderhearted toward his creation. He will never force himself on us, flatten or run over us. He approaches so gently and takes his time. He knows the very best way to approach us.

And I like to remind people of this lovely quote from Pope Benedict about how every single one of us is the result of a thought of God. He writes, “We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.” The hard part is to believe it.

*Editor's note: For questions concerning the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention on April 29, contact Carolyn Keller, NUDCCW Vice President, cgkeller@newulmtel.net.*

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

[www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)

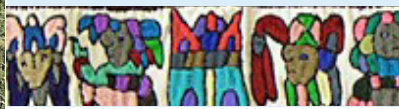
Advertise your parish or Catholic school event on the Diocese of New Ulm website! Email [pforst@dnu.org](mailto:pforst@dnu.org).

# A warm Guatemalan welcome!

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



*This is Part I of Bishop Zielinski's reflection on his pastoral visit to Guatemala. Additional reflections will be published in upcoming editions of The Prairie Catholic.*



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. San Lucas sits on the southeastern shore of Lago de Atitlan with a population of approximately 17,000 people, 90-95 percent Highland Maya.

by Bishop Chad Zielinski

**Thursday, Jan 27, 2023**

I arrived in Guatemala City, Guatemala, at about 1:15 p.m. with an uneventful flight. The flight attendants were very polite and excited for me as it was my first visit to Guatemala. On the flight, I met a religious brother who belonged to the Heralds of the Good News. We communicated rather well between my broken Spanish and his wanting to practice his English. He was most accommodating when explaining how to accomplish the customs, fill out the immigration form, and guided me through the lines to claim my luggage.

Fr. Sam Perez, a native son of the San Lucas Toliman community and a Diocese of New Ulm priest, was already in Guatemala visiting his family and graciously made the three-hour trip to the airport to greet me when I arrived. It was a relief to know that he was present to guide me through the crowded airport. Fr. Sam was street savvy and navigated our way to the van that would take us to the San Lucas Toliman Mission.

Four women from Kansas City accompanied us, and I later learned that Kansas City had a long time and significant presence in supporting the work of the Mission. The women were so polite and kind, and they shared that they were not Catholic but loved coming to the Mission. I was happy to see that Christ's

work of carrying for his Mystical Body united us in heart and mind amidst faith group differences.

The journey from the airport to the Mission was quite the adventure. Within short order, I was introduced to our driver, Adrian, who has worked at the Mission for more than 30 years. My Air Force days allowed me to experience driving and road travel in many foreign countries, including Mexico. Guatemala seems much like Mexico, with the traffic laws driven by "ordered chaos." All appears to be confusion, a traffic jam, and a mess, but it all moves along in an orderly and mostly safe manner. As Adrian masterfully "threaded the needle" of the busy streets, dodging potholes, and broken-down vehicles blocking traffic, we moved quickly to the outskirts of Guatemala City. He seemed relieved as we missed the heavy traffic that typically started at about 3 p.m.

As we made our way down the winding streets through small villages, we passed numerous sugar cane plantations and the second-largest sugar processing plant in the country. There were many plantations of pineapples, bananas, and rubber trees. Several local stands sold fresh produce: bananas, coconuts, sugar cane, and pineapples. We stopped at one stand to purchase fresh coconut water. The young woman selling the water shaved half of the coconut, punctured a hole through the shell, and inserted a straw

that led to a sweet coconut flavor. Quite refreshing with 80-degree temps outside.

Arriving in San Lucas Toliman, we dropped off my luggage at the hotel, which was open-air style with lush grounds. The staff greeted me with hospitality, graciousness, and kindness.

Fr. Sam and I celebrated Mass for the Feast of Saints Timothy and Titus before we made our way to a community gathering in honor of the 50th anniversary of the late Msgr. Greg Schaffer's historic 3,087-mile walk (Oct. 18 to Jan. 29, 1973) from the steps of the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul to San Lucas to raise both money and awareness to support education, housing, and healthcare at the Mission. Padre Greg, as the locals called him, was a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm and pastor for 48 years of what was once was our diocese's Mission Parish of San Lucas Toliman. About 80 people from the United States traveled to participate in the celebration.

During a special evening dinner, individuals and groups were recognized for their contributions to the San Lucas community over the decades. Some were presented with a brilliantly colored tapestry made on a loom by the local women who utilize the Women's Center founded by Fr. Greg over 20 years ago. The fabric design was similar to the flora and fauna of the Guatemalan region. The women presenters



Fr. Sam Perez, left, a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm and a native of Guatemala, concelebrated Mass with Bishop Zielinski upon his arrival at the San Lucas Mission. (Photos submitted)



During a special evening dinner and presentation, area leaders of San Lucas recognized individuals and groups who have supported the Mission over the decades.



Children of San Lucas broke out in song during the 50th anniversary celebration of Fr. Greg Schaffer's historic 3,087-mile walk from Minnesota to the Mission to raise awareness and donations for the Mission's life-changing work.

also wore brilliant colors with unique patterns reflecting their local village. I was deeply moved by how many times each woman repeated "*Muchisimas gracias*" (thank you very much), each ending her presentation with "*Dios te bendiga*" (may God bless you) for your support and kindness. Although it was evident that the people of the San Lucas region live a simple life – a lot less material wealth than those of us in the USA – they were always quick to extend profound thanks

for everything they received. I later visited with a few Friends of San Lucas board members, a Minnesota-based non-profit that partners with and advocates for the San Lucas Mission by supporting its locally-led programs. What wonderful people, mostly from Minnesota, who have long been committed to the Mission work here. I look forward to getting to know them and hopefully making more trips to the Mission.

# Lenten Penance and the Synodal Journey

## Pope Francis' message for Lent 2023: 'We need to listen to Jesus'

by Hannah Brockhaus  
Catholic News Agency

**VATICAN CITY** – In his message for Lent 2023, Pope Francis encouraged Catholics to listen to what Jesus wants to tell them through the Scriptures and others.

Using the story of Jesus' Transfiguration as a launching point, Francis addressed the journey of Lent and the Catholic Church's ongoing Synod on Synodality in the message released Feb. 17.

The pope recalled "the command that God the Father addresses to the disciples on Mount Tabor as they contemplate Jesus transfigured. The voice from the cloud says: 'Listen to him.'"

"The first proposal, then, is very clear: We need to listen to Jesus," he said. "Lent is a time of grace to the extent that we listen to him as he speaks to us."

"During this liturgical season," he continued, "the Lord takes us with him to a place apart. While our ordinary commitments compel us to remain in our usual places and our often repetitive and sometimes boring routines, during Lent, we are invited to ascend 'a high mountain' in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline – asceticism – as God's holy people."

Pope Francis said one of the ways Jesus speaks to us is through the Word of God, which we can hear at Mass. But if one cannot attend Mass during the week, it is a good idea to still read the daily readings of the liturgy, the pope encouraged.

"In addition to the Scriptures, the Lord speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and the stories of those who are in need," he added.

Francis' second suggestion for Lent was to confront the difficulties of ordinary life, remembering that Lent is a period that leads to Easter.

"Do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events

and dramatic experiences, out of fear of facing reality and its daily struggles, its hardships, and contradictions," the pope said.

"The light that Jesus shows the disciples is an anticipation of Easter glory, and that must be the goal of our own journey, as we follow 'him alone,'" he said. "Lent leads to Easter: the 'retreat' is not an end in itself, but a means of preparing us to experience the Lord's passion and cross with faith, hope, and love, and thus to arrive at the resurrection."

Pope Francis compared the journey of Lent and the Church's ongoing Synod on Synodality to a "strenuous mountain trek."

While we hike up the mountain, we must keep our eyes on the path before us, but at the top, we are rewarded by the beautiful panorama that confronts us.

"So too, the synodal process may often seem arduous," he said, "and at times, we may become discouraged. Yet what awaits us at the end is undoubtedly something wondrous and amazing, which will help us to understand better God's will and our mission in the service of his kingdom."

The Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development announced Feb. 17 that it would hold a communication campaign based on Pope Francis' Lenten message. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, the dicastery began presenting every week, via its website, a new "step" on the journey of Lent.

The campaign, "With him on the mountain: Lenten penance and the synodal journey," will include reflection questions based on Scripture passages and the pope's message.

"The Lenten journey of penance and the journey of the synod alike have as their goal a transfiguration, both personal and ecclesial," Pope Francis said. "A transformation that, in both cases, has its model in the Transfiguration of Jesus and is achieved by the grace of his paschal mystery."

The pope also spoke about



The Holy Father's Message for Lent 2023, released Feb. 17, is entitled "Lenten Penance and the Synodal Journey."

(Photo by Vatican Media)

the newness of Christ and his fulfillment of the ancient covenant.

"In a similar way, the synodal journey is rooted in the Church's tradition and at the same time open to newness," he said. "Tradition is a source of inspiration for seeking new paths and for avoiding the opposed temptations of immobility and improvised experimentation."

Francis said a Lenten penance "is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith

and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross."

"To deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach ourselves from mediocrity and vanity," he encouraged. "We need to set out on the journey, an uphill path that, like a mountain trek, requires effort, sacrifice, and concentration."

### Communication campaign based on popes' Lenten message

Pope Francis reminds us that our Lenten path is a synodal journey. At the end of a pathway that "requires effort, sacrifice and concentration," we will arrive to the summit, where "the panorama that opens up at the end amazes us and rewards us by its grandeur."

The Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development will release every week the contents of this message, in order to offer the Churches around the world an aid to live their Transfiguration in a practical way.

Following the symbolic inspiration of the Lenten discipline as a mountain trek given by the Holy Father, it is proposed to make a path of Lenten reflection that will, step-by-step, accompany us to the summit of the mountain and "help us to understand better God's will and our mission in the service of his kingdom."

**Visit the Dicastery weekly for new content to download, [www.humandevlopment.va/en.html](http://www.humandevlopment.va/en.html)**  
**Follow the #Lent2023 campaign on Twitter and Instagram**

Please join Bishop Zielinski and our priests for the

# Chrism Mass

30  
MARCH  
2023  
7PM

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ANNUAL CONSECRATION OF HOLY OILS  
& RENEWAL OF PRIESTLY PROMISES

# Becoming Catholic: Finding answers through the teachings of the Church



Visit [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org) for a listing of area events.

## Eucharistic Revival

by Luke Pekrul, Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm

Answering why one became Catholic can sometimes feel like telling someone my favorite restaurant. That is to say, entering a church is often seen as a subjective choice, which is open to change, rather than a process of being chosen. But in the experience of my wife Steph and I, entering the Church has felt more like being led to blessings that we didn't even know to look for.

In my case, the Lord led me into the Church through questions. I left the Church I'd grown up in seeking answers to basic questions about life. And the Church had great answers. But I was just looking for answers. I wasn't necessarily looking for the Church.

Inspired by the Church's vision of love and service, I lived out my faith by serving the poor. But then there were more questions about what people really need and what a just society should look like. Again, the Church's social teaching had the answers. But, again, the answers were what I wanted, not the Church.

Then came 2018. My family and I were living in Nicaragua doing humanitarian work. A popular uprising and subsequent

government crackdown turned the whole country on its head. Years of work and progress were lost overnight. We, and everyone we knew, wondered how to understand all of this. But then, it was more than a merely intellectual question; it was a question of the heart. God provided me with more than an intellectual answer; he provided the Church.

The Catholic bishops of Nicaragua stood up and spoke with wisdom and courage. They mediated between the opposing sides, called for justice and mercy, and demonstrated the balance that the country had lost. The Church embodied the answer. I stopped being concerned with my remaining questions. I trusted that God would use his Church to guide me as he had been all along. Circumstances forced us to return to the US in the spring of 2018. I entered RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation) that fall and was Confirmed in 2019.

Steph's journey into the Church was blessedly shorter but also similar. After I joined, she was interested to learn more about the peace she saw that I'd found after so many years of questioning. She and our boys attended Mass with me. But taking her faith seriously, she did not join the Church just



Luke Pekrul and his wife, Steph are pictured with their children, (left to right) August, Esmae, Solomon, Liam, and Manuel. The Pekarls are members of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm.

because I did. It was when she picked up a copy of "What do Catholics Believe?" that many of the questions that had kept her from seriously considering the Church finally started to find answers.

Wanting to ask real Catholics her questions rather than read from a book, Steph entered RCIA in the fall of 2019. Here she also found answers and, in addition, a whole world of saints, symbols, sacraments, and deep truths beyond what she had even been searching for.

As Confirmation approached, she became nervous. There were beautiful truths of the Church calling to her, but the more she

learned, the more questions she had. One RCIA night, with many tears, she fearfully asked Father and the Sisters leading RCIA if she could be confirmed when she still had so many questions. Again, God answered her, not with the perfect argument to immediately dispel all her questions, but with the Church herself – a person who provided the perfect balm by saying, "You don't have to have it all buttoned up. None of us have it all buttoned up. If God is calling you to his Church, then answer that call." Steph and our boys were confirmed a few months later.

Our journey into the Church has continued to be like that. We're thankful for the answers we have been given, but we're even

more thankful for the Church - the Brothers, Sisters, friends, and Fathers, whom God uses to provide the answers.

God's blessing didn't stop with a beautiful human community, as great as that is. He wanted to give us more graces, the sacraments, the Eucharist – his very self and the "source and summit" of this beautiful community. These are the things God was leading us to.

As we go further up and further in, each good thing somehow, unexpectedly, leads us to something even better.

## RCIA: Continuing a journey of faith

**NEW ULM** – Each year as Lent begins, the Church celebrates the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion as part of the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Its focus is on two groups of people: *catechumens*, or unbaptized people seeking the three sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist; and *candidates*, those who are baptized but wish to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church, including those who were baptized Catholic but previously uncatechized who wish to complete their Christian initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.



Bishop Chad Zielinski greets newly elect Desislava (Olivia) Parmer from Sacred Heart parish in Murdock during the annual Rite of Election on Feb. 26 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. Parmer and 23 other candidates and 14 catechumens will be initiated into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil on April 8.

(Photo by Christine Clancy)

**REFLECTIONS ON THE SACRED LITURGY BY BISHOP CHAD W. ZIELINSKI**

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

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.*



# Hundreds gather for 'United for Life' rally at Minnesota State Capitol

by Joe Ruff, *The Catholic Spirit* with contributions from *The Prairie Catholic*

**ST. PAUL** – Chants of “United” followed by “for Life” echoed in the State Capitol Feb. 28 in St. Paul as pro-life advocates gathered by the hundreds in the rotunda and then fanned out to visit with lawmakers considering pro-abortion measures such as allowing infants to die after attempted abortions.

“My first words to you this morning are, ‘Peace be with you,’” said Archbishop Bernard Hebda of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, joined by three other Catholic bishops in the state, as he addressed those gathered and asked them to remind legislators to welcome life and protect it in law.

“It is impossible to live in a peaceful society without peace in the womb,” the archbishop said. “We want peace with justice. We are here advocating for prenatal justice.”

Bishops Daniel Felton of Duluth, Chad Zielinski of New Ulm and Bishop Emeritus John LeVoor, also of New Ulm, joined the archbishop. Religious sisters and brothers, lay women and men in the Catholic Church, people from other denominations and all walks of life filled both floors of the rotunda.

People held signs including, “I am human,” “Let her live,” and “Pregnancy centers support women and their families.” Many held State Capitol maps and lobbying materials as they prepared to meet with lawmakers in their offices.

Renee Carlson, general counsel of the public-interest law firm True North Legal and Minnesota Family Council, emceed the rally and led the United for Life cheer. “Good morning, pro-life Minnesota,” Carlson greeted the crowd. “Welcome to the first ever United for Life day at the State Capitol.”

Only a month earlier, Jan. 27, pro-life and pro-abortion advocates gathered in great number in front of the Senate chambers as that body prepared to debate the PRO Act, which passed the House on Jan. 19 and the Senate on Jan. 28,

and Gov. Tim Walz signed into law on Jan. 31. The act places into state law a right to abortion in Minnesota for any reason and without limit on viability.

“We certainly made our presence and our mission known today,” said Deacon Tim Dolan, director of Social Concerns for the Diocese of New Ulm. “It was refreshing to see the enthusiasm so many people had to come forward in public and make their belief known about how important life is from that moment of conception to our last natural breath. I think the point that all life is so very precious was heard by many of our lawmakers today.”

Archbishop Hebda warned in his “Only Jesus” column in the Feb. 9 edition of *The Catholic Spirit* that the PRO Act marked “just the tip of the legislative iceberg this term.” He urged people to come to the Feb. 28 rally as members of the House and Senate debate HF91 and SF70, companion bills that among other things would remove protections for babies born alive after an abortion.

The bills also would eliminate parental notification for minors seeking an abortion and the Woman’s Right to Know pre-abortion informed consent law. The proposals would eliminate state abortion data collection, the 24-hour waiting period before an abortion and limits on state funding for abortion. Still another bill, HF289, would require pregnancy resource centers receiving funds under a state Positive Alternative Grant program to refer for abortions, undermining their mission of offering alternatives to abortion.

The Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC), the public policy voice of the state’s Catholic bishops, helped organize United for Life. The conference urged “no” votes but also wanted lawmakers to consider legislation that would help mothers choose life for their children, such as expanding the state sales tax exemption for certain baby products. MCC officials also are asking for increased funding for pregnancy resource centers under the current law, even as some argue to cut that funding.

The conference is encouraging a permanent child tax credit and



Pro-life Minnesotans, organizations and church bodies from across the state gathered February 28 in the rotunda of the State Capitol as the United for Life advocacy day kicked-off. (Photo by Christy Baker)

housing support to promote family economic stability.

Helping MCC organize the rally were the Minnesota Family Council, Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, Pro-Life Action Ministries, and the University of St. Thomas Prolife Center.

“This is an unprecedented effort – Minnesota’s largest pro-life advocacy organizations and hundreds of Minnesotans are coming together to show that, despite the current legislative climate, our voice will not be silenced,” said Maggee Hangge, public policy associate at MCC.

Days before the rally, MCC and other organizers helped people schedule meetings with lawmakers. After the rally, many pro-life advocates paid their visits.

“The meetings scheduled for the diocese included a meeting with representatives from District 15, Chris Swedzinski and Paul Torkelson who updated us on the legislative challenges we face in light of the pro-abortion extremism present in our Capitol,” said Sr. Candace Fier, director of Family Life for the Diocese of New Ulm. “Both men thanked us for our presence and reiterated their commitment to promote pro-life and pro-family legislation. They urged us to respond to the attack on human life and the family with prayer.”



Renee Carlson, general counsel of True North Legal, leads the cheers at the United for Life rally. (Photo by Christine Clancy)



During the United for Life event in St. Paul, pro-life advocates from the Diocese of New Ulm had the opportunity to visit with their lawmakers. Pictured front, l-r, is Minnesota State Representatives Paul Torkelson (District 15B) and Chris Swedzinski (District 15A) addressing current issues during one of the group sessions.

(Photo by Carol Hacker)

## Rosary and First Saturday devotions manifest a profound love of God and his Son



by Jackie Finstad  
NUDCCW president

At the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) Convention this past November in Minneapolis, resolutions were adopted to encourage and promote praying the rosary daily and the First Saturday devotions. Prayers and devotions are a manifestation of our profound love of God and his Son, through which we affirm

and reaffirm our commitment to Jesus Christ.

In his simple yet profound 2002 apostolic letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, St. John Paul II writes, “The Church has always attributed particular efficacy to this prayer, entrusting to the rosary, to its choral recitation, and its constant practice, the most difficult problems. At times when Christianity itself seemed under threat, its deliverance was attributed to the power of this prayer, and Our Lady of the Rosary was acclaimed as the one whose intercession brought salvation.”

This is a message that calls us to action, in the humblest of ways, in countering the numerous attacks on families, churches, Christians, pro-life centers, and human dignity, among others.

The rosary is also central to the First Saturday devotions. On the First Saturday during five consecutive months, the devotion consists of: going to Confession, receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion, saying five decades of the rosary, and meditating for 15 minutes on the mysteries of the rosary.

All this is offered in reparation for the sins of blasphemy and ingratitude committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Let us heed the call to take up the rosary and prioritize the First Saturday devotions this year. May we draw closer to Mary and allow God to work through us. Pray that she encourages us to better know God and trust in his will for our lives.

## Finding God’s grace through the sacraments

*The best way to invite Christ into the rhythm of our lives is to immerse ourselves in the sacraments because that is where God’s grace is most readily available in this world.*

by Fr. Ed Dougherty, M.M.  
*The Christophers News Note*

Thirteenth-century Italian mystic Saint Angela of Foligno wrote, “Christ appeared not as a philosopher of many words or as one who disputed noisily. . . . but in the utmost simplicity did he talk with men, showing them the way of truth in his life, his virtues, and his miracles.” These words point to a profound reality about how Christ invites us into a relationship that is simple and seamless in how it blends into the rhythm of our lives, yet is also miraculous and transformative.

If we want to know what it must have been like to encounter Christ and to experience that gentle, merciful aspect of his character, if we’re going to respond to Christ’s invitation to understand God’s wisdom through the simplicity of a loving relationship with him, we can partake in the sacraments of our faith. The best way to invite Christ into the rhythm of our lives is to immerse ourselves in the sacraments because that is where God’s grace is most readily available in this world.

In a piece she wrote for *Loyola Press*, entitled “A Little Reminder on Why the Sacraments Are a Really Big Deal,” award-winning writer Elizabeth (Liz) Kelly says, “They have the power to bring heaven to earth, rip the veil between all things seen and unseen, and allow humanity and eternity to commingle in mysterious, yet palpable ways. Through the sacraments, heaven comes, not just to visit but to live with us and in us. In the sacraments, we are graced.”

Detailing the unifying yet varying purposes of the sacraments, Bishop Robert Barron writes: “All the sacraments have a deifying purpose: Baptism

introduces the Divine Life into us. Confession restores it when it’s lost through sin. Confirmation strengthens it. Matrimony and Holy Orders give it vocational direction. Anointing of the Sick prepares us for the transition to our heavenly homeland. And the Eucharist is meant to Christify us.”

Looking at the nature of the sacraments in this way, we can see how they are the gift Christ has given to the Church to accompany us on our journey through life. For those of us who regularly partake in the sacraments, let’s renew our zeal and sense of awe over this grace-filled aspect of our lives. And let’s also be sure to give witness through the love we have in our hearts so that others can discover or rediscover this tremendous wellspring of God’s grace. We should focus specifically on giving witness to the transcendent nature of the sacraments for the young people in our lives. As Elizabeth Kelly writes: “It is particularly important for us to teach children that sacraments are so much more than a ceremony to prepare for; they are God’s way of reaching down to us and offering us a lifelong gift – a gift of grace that gives us a glimpse of heaven and a taste of eternity.”

So, let’s recognize Christ alive today within the sacraments, and let’s meet him there as often as possible and cultivate that profound relationship that blends into the rhythm of our lives and opens our hearts to the path of holiness.

*Editor’s note: Fr. Ed Dougherty serves on the Christophers’ board of directors. For a free copy of the Christopher News Note write: The Christophers, 5 Hanover Square, New York, NY 10004 or e-mail: mail@christophers.org*

## April NUDCCW Convention based on theme *I AM the Bread of Life*

by Carolyn Keller  
NUDCCW vice president

In keeping with its role to be wise, courageous, and loving leaders in the Church, the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (NUDCCW) has chosen “I AM the Bread of Life” as the theme for its 62nd annual convention on April 29 to be hosted this year by the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm.

The theme aligns 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 will be elaborated upon through our keynote and afternoon speakers and the viewing of the Vatican International Exhibition Eucharistic Miracles of the World on loan from Spirit Catholic Radio.

### Morning presenter

The keynote speaker will be Liz Kelly, a native of New Ulm and a graduate of Cathedral High



School. Kelly is a retreat leader and the award-winning author of 12 books. Her most recent book, “Love Like A Saint: Cultivating Virtue with Holy Women” (March 2021), has been called “penetrating and graceful,” “a source of encouragement and hope,” and “a beautiful deep dive into the lives of inspirational, holy women.” Currently residing in Minnesota with her husband Vincent, Kelly co-hosts the Logos podcast “Deep Down Things.”

### Afternoon presenter

Berny Berger, the Council of Catholic Women president of St.

Willibrord in Gibbon will speak in the afternoon. Her presentation will cover the story of Blessed Carlo Acutis, an Italian Catholic teenager from Milan, Italy, who died in 2006 at the age of 15 of leukemia. He was beatified Oct. 10, 2020, in Assisi. Acutis was a gamer and computer programmer who loved soccer and the Eucharist. On display will be “Eucharistic Miracles of the World,” a Vatican International Exhibition designed and created by Acutis, who made the art for the panels before his death. His goal during his short life was to help bring others closer to Jesus through awareness of the mystery of the Eucharist. Check out <https://carloacutis-en.org>. You can also see all the panels in his exhibit at [www.miracolieucaaristici.org/en/Liste/list.html](http://www.miracolieucaaristici.org/en/Liste/list.html). For the complete NUDCCW Conference agenda, visit [www.nudccw.org](http://www.nudccw.org).

### Registration

Check with your parish for registration details or visit the NUDCCW website. In addition, family members who would like to attend one or both of the presentations may register for one of the presentations for \$10.



by Fr. Mark Steffl, STL, JCL

# Ask a Canon Lawyer

**This month's question:**  
*What are the steps to entering religious life as a religious sister or brother?*

The biggest section in the Code of Canon Law is that which deals with "Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life," totaling 173 canons. Beyond that, there are many documents outside of the Code of Canon Law which also govern those who are in religious communities, whether they are contemplative (devoting themselves exclusively to praying for the Church) or those who are apostolic (contributing to the work of the Church in catechesis, teaching, evangelization, parish work, nursing, and so many other ways).

There are hundreds (if not thousands) of different religious "institutes" in the Church. These

are all commonly referred to as "religious orders" but there are many precise distinctions in terminology that distinguish congregations, religious orders, societies of apostolic life, and secular institutes. And each of these groups have a unique charism (i.e., what they contribute to the Church) as well as many things that are particular to their own way of living their vocation as religious sisters, brothers, or priests.

Normally someone who thinks that he or she might have a call to "religious life" begins by informally exploring different institutes that "fit" the specific call that that individual is discerning. This will involve visits to get to know the institute and for the institute to know better the individual and to evaluate his or her ability to live the life of the

institute and the apostolate that they are engaged in doing for the greater good of the Church. Each institute has its own expectation as to how this process takes place and how long it should last. Some institutes refer to this as "aspirancy" or "postulancy" and each one may have different expectations in order to "test" a vocation before allowing a candidate to enter formally into the institute.

But the Code of Canon Law governs things that are binding on all religious institutes, and especially concerning the admission of candidates into the religious institute. This formal step is specifically called "novitiate" and the law defines certain prescribed characteristics and qualities, such as how old a candidate needs to be, and that he or she must not be married

or already a member of another institute.

*Canon 646* of the Code of Canon Law says: The novitiate, through which life in an institute is begun, is arranged so that the novices better understand their divine vocation, and indeed one which is proper to the institute, experience the manner of living of the institute, and form their mind and heart in its spirit, and so that their intention and suitability are tested.

As a "novice," an individual begins to live the life of a member of the institute in a formal way in order to properly "test" the person to see if he or she can live the vocation (similar to a period of "engagement," to use terminology relating to marriage). The novitiate must last at least 12 consecutive months and not longer than 24 months, according to what the institute deems suitable. This time is called "formation" because the candidate is being "formed" into the individual who has what will be needed to live the life of a religious priest, brother or sister that they will be taking on perpetually. It involves spiritual, mental, and educational elements. The novitiate takes place in a designated place, with others who are discerning the same vocation, and having a member of the religious institute who has been appointed to oversee this.

During the time of novitiate, a candidate can choose to leave at any time, or can be dismissed by the institute if there is a reason. After the novitiate, the religious institute and the candidate him/herself both decide whether to request admission to the religious institute. In most institutes, there is a time when a candidate will make what is called "temporary profession" which usually means promising to live the vows of the religious institute for between three and six years before making "perpetual" vows for the rest of one's life, permanently binding one's self to the religious institute in vows (sacred and solemn promises to God) of poverty, chastity, and obedience, along with any other promises that might be a part of the specific religious institute.

Canon 663 points out the duties and obligations of one who has made temporary or perpetual vows:

§1. The first and foremost duty

of all religious is to be the contemplation of divine things and assiduous union with God in prayer.

§2. Members are to make every effort to participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice (of the Mass) daily, to receive the most Sacred Body of Christ, and to adore the Lord himself present in the Sacrament.

§3. They are to devote themselves to the reading of Sacred Scripture and mental prayer, to celebrate worthily the Liturgy of the Hours according to the precepts of proper law, and to perform other exercises of piety.

§4. With special veneration, they are to honor the Virgin Mother of God, the example and protector of all consecrated life, also through the rosary.

§5. They are to observe faithfully an annual period of sacred retreat.

In addition, Canon 664 says that religious are to strive after conversion of the soul toward God, to examine their conscience, even daily, and to approach the sacrament of penance frequently. Canon 665 speaks about members of a religious institute living in a religious house together in common life, unless permission is given for reasons of health, education or apostolate. And Canon 666 reminds members of religious institutes to be prudent in the use of "modern means of communication" such as media and social communications, especially anything that can interfere with their complete consecration to God.

Finally, there are certain rights and obligations that are specified in Canon Law relating to governance of religious institutes, and that, when a member is perpetually professed, he or she is to have a voice in the governance and election of superiors of the institute, wear a religious habit (canon 669), and be supported and cared for by the institute (canon 670).

**Next issue: What does Church Law say about reverence toward the Holy Eucharist?**

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

## INSIDE THE CAPITOL

### *New Minnesota Child Tax Credit gains momentum*

by Minnesota Catholic Conference

"Public authorities have the duty to sustain the family . . . the family does not exist for society or the State, but society and the State exist for the family."  
*(Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 214)*

This is a bold calling, and as faithful citizens, we must advocate for policies that prioritize the family. Without strong families, we cannot expect to have a strong society. One policy that will put families first is a nation-leading Minnesota child tax credit (CTC). Economic relief in the form of direct cash support to families, such as a refundable CTC, not only helps sustain families but does so in a manner consistent with the Church's teaching on subsidiarity. This form of tax relief allows families to choose how best to structure their budgets.

A Minnesota CTC could also help address our state's long-term workforce and population concerns. While many studies show that financial difficulties encourage divorce and family

fragmentation, the lack of economic security also discourages family formation. A nation-leading fiscal commitment to families could be a catalyst for new families to be formed or for existing families to stay together.

The Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC) is working with various partners to pass a CTC. Our work began last year when MCC and Children's Defense Fund and Legal Aide convened a meeting between the Republican and Democrat Tax Committee Chairs to present a CTC as the solution to the gordian knot between GOP-favored tax cuts and DFL-favored "Walz checks."

This year, the Minnesota Budget Project joined our efforts, and we began promoting this relatively novel concept to the Governor's office. Those efforts proved successful when the Walz Administration included a CTC proposal in their budget recommendation. Simultaneous outreach to build a groundswell of public buy-in has resulted in over 30 advocacy organizations adding their names to a letter of support.

We crossed another significant milestone when a bill to create a new Minnesota CTC (H.F. 1369) received its first hearing in the House Taxes Committee on February 9th. Four parents from MCC's Catholic Advocacy Network participated in the hearing by sharing their stories of how the proposal would provide them with much-needed economic relief.

While only 12 states currently offer a CTC, there are several ways in which the policy can be crafted, with per-child benefit amounts and income eligibility thresholds being the most significant variables. It was important to offer a positive, personal display of support for H.F. 1369 because it would be nation-leading in terms of per-child benefit structure, flexibility, and inclusivity.

A CTC would send a signal to Minnesota families that our state supports their vital contribution to society. This family's first proposal has built great momentum, but we need the voices like yours to help get it over the legislative finish line.

# Veteran's retreat offers a source of healing from experience of war

Katie Ballalatak  
Prairie Catholic correspondent

**ROSEN, Minn.** – For Roger Karels, the plan was to spend his life farming the family land near Rosen. Like many others, however, his plans were disrupted when he was drafted into the Army in the summer of 1967. He had just two months' notice.

Karels headed to basic training, where he excelled in his training. For one who had never had much experience with guns, it was a source of pride to him to be among the top-ranked in his class. Then, in early 1968, Karels left for Vietnam.

His first memories upon landing was the smell, a mix of aviation fuel, diesel fuel, and gunpowder, along with the excessive heat and humidity. From there, the experiences grew horrifying. Karels recalls that they often did not know who the enemy was and that conditions were often incredibly difficult. He tells a story of meeting a man from close to home, just 70 miles from his family farm. Before there was time for much conversation, the man was killed, the victim of a grenade. Karels didn't even know the man's name, only the town he was from and the date he was killed.

Another night, Karels was sent out on watch only to find the gun he was assigned to carry had a defect and wouldn't have fired. He was out all night without a working weapon. "Why wasn't that checked?" Karels wonders.

Karels drove an armored personnel carrier (APC). He was wounded by shrapnel during the Tet Offensive (a coordinated series of North Vietnamese attacks) and was airlifted off the battlefield during the night. He spent weeks recovering before returning to action. Only later did he learn that the soldier who took over driving his APC was killed just two days after Karels was injured.

It wasn't all bad. Karels speaks with fondness of the local children. The soldiers did humanitarian work, standing guard while medics administered shots and medicine to the children.

Karels arrived home to Minnesota in 1969 during a record-setting blizzard. He recalled landing at the California airport and watching flight after flight get canceled. "No one would help us," Karels recalls, even though they wore their Class A uniforms. As they searched for a flight out, an airport worker stood quietly off to the side. Finally, the man approached them, saying, "I'm a Vietnam vet too, but no one knows. Where do you want to go?" With the man's help, they made it to the Sioux Falls airport.

## Returning to civilian life

Back on the farm, Karels began to piece together civilian life. He joined the American Legion, where he's now been a member for 52 years. He has also attended reunions of the Blackhorse 11th Armored Calvary Regiment, the unit he served with in Vietnam. But the transition was far from easy. People will ask when he served in



Following Mass at St John's in Ortonville on March 7, Roger and Mary Karels of Rosen presented a handmade Quilt of Valor to Bishop Chad Zielinski of the Diocese of New Ulm during a special "gathering of camaraderie" hosted by the parish. Bishop Zielinski is a military veteran serving as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force from 2002 to 2017, retiring as a Major. During his military ministry, the bishop served three tours of duty in war zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan. Roger Karels' sister, Sharon Dimberg, makes the quilts that are presented to veterans. (Photo by Krista Hartman)

Vietnam. In Karels' mind, it is "last night, and the night before, and every night."

The reunions have helped Karels, along with meeting the families of some of the men with whom he served. By almost chance, Karels learned the name of the man he'd met in Vietnam who lived near his own home. He found the name of Bill on a list of those killed in action on that day. Karels gathered his courage and called the man's mother and brother. It took some time, but at a commemoration service on March 29 – Vietnam War Veterans Day, Karels began a close friendship with Bill's family. "It works as part of your healing," says Karels. "And going to these reunions, it's comforting to be together."

## Quilt of Valor

At one mini-reunion and both veterans' retreats, Karels' sister Sharon Dimberg presented each veteran with a handmade quilt through the Quilts of Valor program. A proclamation is read when the quilts are presented, thanking each veteran for their service. It is an emotional ceremony and provides another source of healing for the veterans.

Roger and his wife, Mary, are members of the Church of St. Joseph in Rosen. Their parish pastor Fr. Brian Oestreich, knows the importance of supporting our military, veterans, and their families. "I'm very proud of Roger and Mary and the ministry they offer other military families," said Fr. Oestreich. "We are one nation under God, and some of our veterans gave their all to give us the religious freedom that we celebrate today," he said.

In 2019, the Karels began involvement in a new veterans retreat ministry. The

first retreat was held in February 2020 at the Abbey of the Hills in South Dakota. Attendees listened to speakers who shared their experiences and received a copy of the book "Tears of a Warrior: A Family's Story of Combat and Living with PTSD" by Janet J. Seahorn and E. Anthony Seahorn.

The Karels are on the planning team for future retreats, and they have plenty of ideas on how to make the retreats even more of a service to veterans. They hope to have more time to share and listen. An ideal schedule would include speakers, followed by time for small groups, perhaps with spouses splitting off separately to discuss and share their thoughts. They also hope to find a good keynote speaker, such as the "Tears of a Warrior" authors.

For the Karels and others, the community and the ability to share these experiences is a key part of the healing process. He says: "Being in the military is one thing. There were a lot of military people in Vietnam. But to be out in combat, to be shot at, you can't explain that. That's why those guys are so special. They were there beside me."

Whether at reunions or retreats or by building friendships with veterans and their families, talking and sharing are a source of healing after the pain of war. "Others are feeling this way too," Karels says. "That makes it easier to talk about." Mary Karels adds: "We can help each other find healing and peace; that's what we hope to accomplish with this Veteran's Retreat Ministry.

Those interested in learning about future retreats can visit [www.abbeyofthehills.org](http://www.abbeyofthehills.org) or call 605-398-9200.

## Works of Mercy

### Free food distribution event held in Graceville



During a March 7 visit to the Spirit of Life Area Faith Community (Ortonville, Rosen, Graceville, and Madison), Bishop Chad Zielinski, center, assisted with a free food distribution held in Graceville for those in need. The event was sponsored in-part by Social Justice, an organization of the Spirit of Life AFC. Pictured with the bishop are volunteer youth from the Church of St. John in Graceville. (Photo submitted)



## catholic trends

**WINONA – Bishop Robert Barron has announced plans** for a large Diocesan Eucharistic Congress in the Diocese of Winona-Rochester this summer. Entitled “This is My Body,” it will be held on Saturday, June 10 in Mankato at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center.

The day will include talks on the importance of the Eucharist from well-known speakers including Bishop Barron, Dr. Timothy O’Malley, Barbara Heil, Dr. Hosffman Ospino, Sr. Alicia Torres, and Sr. Emy Ychikawa. There will be opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and Confession, Mass celebrating the

Feast of Corpus Christi (Latin for Body of Christ), and a Eucharistic Procession. Music will be provided by Luke Spehar and a track for Spanish speakers will be available.

The event is expected to bring 5,000 people to Mankato and will take place during the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ National Eucharistic Revival. Registration is open now for members of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester; April 1 for the general public. Visit [www.eucharist.dowr.org](http://www.eucharist.dowr.org).

**VATICAN CITY – It is not enough to ask people who**

have suffered abuse for their forgiveness, Pope Francis said. They also must be offered “concrete actions to repair the horrors they have suffered and to prevent it from happening again” as well as the truth, transparency, safe spaces, psychological support and protection, the pope said in a video message released by the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network March 2. “The Church must serve as a model to help solve the issue and bring it to light in society and in families,” he said.

At the start of each month, the network posts a short video of the pope offering his specific prayer intention. For the month of March, the pope dedicated his prayer intention for the victims of abuse. Child Abuse Prevention Month is observed in April in the United States.

In his video message, the pope said, “In response to cases of abuse, especially to those committed by members of the Church, it’s not enough to ask for forgiveness.”

“Asking for forgiveness is necessary, but it is not enough. Asking for forgiveness is good for the victims, but they are the ones

who have to be ‘at the center’ of everything,” he said.

“Their pain and their psychological wounds can begin to heal if they find answers – if there are concrete actions to repair the horrors they have suffered and to prevent them from happening again,” Francis said.

“The Church cannot try to hide the tragedy of abuse of any kind. Nor when the abuse takes place in families, in clubs, or in other types of institutions,” he said. In

fact, the Church must be a model to help shine light on and remedy the problem.

“The Church must offer safe spaces for victims to be heard, supported psychologically and protected,” he said. “Let us pray for those who have suffered because of the wrongs done to them by members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering,” he said.

**ADORATION AND PRAYER FOR HOPE AND HEALING**  
*PRESIDED OVER BY BISHOP CELESTINE W. ZIEBLINSKI*  
*“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

*Are you struggling or hurting?  
 Come and lay your burden at the feet of Jesus  
 Share your trials with your brothers and sisters  
 Receive prayer for your physical, spiritual, and emotional needs  
 Let the Holy Spirit heal and renew you*



**Sunday, March 26, 2023**  
**3:00 pm**  
**Ss. Peter & Paul, Ivanhoe, MN**  
*Eucharistic Adoration with opportunities  
 for healing prayer, Confession, spiritual counsel*

