

# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 26 No. 4 December 2011



Bishop John M. LeVoi was one of five speakers at the second annual bioethics conference held Oct. 29 in New Ulm. The bishop spoke on the "Theology of the Body and the Dignity of the Human Person."

(Read more on page 8)

## Project Rachael founder Vicki Thorn gives straight talk to kids

encourages high schoolers to be courageous, make counter-cultural choices

by Sam Patet  
*The Prairie Catholic*

Since abortion was made legal in 1973 by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, over 53 million babies have been aborted in the United States.

For Vicki Thorn, not only have 53 million innocent lives been lost, but millions of moms, dads, grandparents, and siblings have lost a child in a traumatic and unnatural fashion. It is to these people that Thorn has been offering a helping hand for almost 30 years.

Thorn is the founder and executive director of Project Rachel, the post-abortion healing organization of the Catholic Church.

Founded in 1984 in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Project Rachel's mission is to provide healing to those who are dealing with the aftermath of an abortion. It seeks to do this by providing individuals with professional counseling, spiritual direction, the sacrament of Reconciliation, days



Vicki Thorn

of reflection, and retreats.

It is now present in about 150 Catholic dioceses in the United States as well as in other countries, including Canada and New Zealand.

On Nov. 16, Thorn gave three presentations in the Diocese of New Ulm – one to mental health professionals and clergy, and two to high school students. This was the third year in a row that the Office of Catholic

Charities had invited Thorn to speak in the diocese.

**"Her experience changed my life forever"**

Thorn's motivation to start Project Rachel comes from an experience she had in high school. One of her friends had an abortion the summer before her junior year. Before this incident, her friend had been pregnant with a different child; however, she had given that child up for adoption.

Thorn says the abortion did not make her friend's situation better; on the contrary, it made it worse.

"After this happened, I listened to my friend for years talk about the pain of her abortion," she said.

"She finished every conversation we had by saying the same words: 'I can live with the adoption – I can't live with the abortion.'" "I was a senior in high school," she continued. "Her experience changed my life forever."

**A challenge to high school students**

In the morning, Thorn provided training to mental health professionals and clergy.

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## Casting the NET on diocesan youth

National Evangelization Team inspires teenagers to draw closer to Jesus

by Sam Patet  
*The Prairie Catholic*

Ever thought about travelling 20,000 miles by van, sleeping in a different room every night, and living out a suitcase for nine months?

Most of us wouldn't be up for this. For 120 young adults, however, this challenge is exactly what they want. They've volunteered to be part of NET Ministries.

**What is NET?**

NET is an acronym for National Evangelization Team. Established in 1981 in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, NET Ministries

recruits and trains approximately 120 young adults (ages 18 to 28) each year to put on Catholic retreats for junior high and high school students. These 120 young adults are split into teams of 8 to 13 people, and they are sent out for nine months to be evangelists.

"That's really what they do, they share the Good News," said Margaret McHugh, director of the Office of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm, who arranges NET retreats in the diocese annually. "The Gospel is Good News."

According to NET Ministries, 11 teams are spreading the Good News

throughout the country this year. Three of these teams are based in the Twin Cities, and the remaining eight are travelling across the country.

From Oct. 21 to Nov. 9, one of the travelling teams – NET Team #7 – was in the Diocese of New Ulm. The team's 11 members travelled 900 miles in a 15-passenger van, giving 13 retreats to approximately 550 students. In addition, the team was present at the Oct. 23 Senior High Youth Rally in Hutchinson, an event attended by over 400 students.

NET team members come from across the nation. On Team #7, for example, five members are from

Minnesota, and the other six claim Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Texas, California, and even Scotland as their homes.

Brandon Hall is one of the out-of-state members. Originally from Stephenville, Texas, Hall, 19, grew up attending NET retreats from sixth to 12th grade. After finishing his first year of college at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, he applied to be a missionary with NET. To his great delight, he was accepted.

"I got a tremendous sense of peace

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# BE NOT AFRAID

## Advent and Christmas



Bishop John M. LeVoir

We are now in the season of Advent, and we are looking back in time and preparing ourselves for the celebration of the first coming of Our Lord on the first Christmas. We are also looking forward to the end of time and Our Lord's second coming. Advent tells us that we must be ready for both events.

How do we prepare for both events? We prepare as Christians have done for hundreds of years before us. We pray in the liturgy and on our own. For example, to ready himself for any event, Archbishop Harry J. Flynn uses just a simple petition to invite the Lord to enter his heart. He prays: "Come, Lord Jesus." We, too, before the liturgy and before private prayer, can petition Our Lord to "come." What a beautiful way to ready ourselves for the liturgy and for private prayer during Advent.

Advent is a time to say "come" in the sacrament of Reconciliation or confession. Sin hinders and can even stop Our Lord's coming into our hearts. However, when we approach with repentance the priest in the sacrament of Reconciliation, the Lord does come. He comes for the forgiveness of sins. "I absolve you from your sins," are the words that we hear, and it is absolution from our sins that really takes place in the sacrament through the power of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. The sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the premiere ways of celebrating Advent.

Self-giving is another way to celebrate the season of Advent. Doing works of charity helps us to tame our selfishness and self-seeking. Acts of charity, done for the

sake of the Gospel, fill our hearts with love of God and love of neighbor. It is charitable hearts that Our Lord will be looking for when he comes at Christmas and when he comes at the end of time.

May you have a most blessed Advent, Christmas, and New Year.

### United States Conference of Catholic Bishops General Assembly

From Nov. 12 through Nov. 17, 2011, I attended the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) General Assembly in Baltimore, Md. In his opening speech, the president of the USCCB, Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, said that: "Love for Jesus and his Church must be the passion of our lives." This set the tone for the assembly.

There were several themes that wove their way through the talks and meetings that occurred throughout the week. One was religious freedom. It was made clear that there are some in government who would want to restrict the freedom of the Catholic Church to speak out on issues that affect our nation. Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., chairman of a new Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Liberty, said that the bishops see a pattern in culture and law to treat religion "as merely a private matter between an individual and one's own God. ... Some decisions and some administrative regulations treat religion not as a contributor to our nation's common morality but rather as a divisive and disruptive force better kept out of public life."

For example, recently the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) denied a one-year grant to the United States Catholic bishops' Migration and Refugee Services to aid foreign-born human trafficking victims because the bishops' agency would not include contraception and abortion in the "full range of reproductive services" that HHS deemed necessary for the grant.

Another example cited by Bishop Lori was the Department of Justice's shift from defending the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to opposing it in court "as an act of 'bias and prejudice' akin to racism, thereby implying that churches which teach that marriage is between a man and a woman are guilty of bigotry." The Catholic Church is one of those churches mentioned by Bishop Lori. The Catholic Church has been prominent in promoting and defending marriage as the union of one man and one woman, not only for the couple's sake, but also for the sake of children, who are better served when they are raised by a mother and a father.

A second theme in the meeting was the sexual abuse scandal in the Church. The Penn State disclosure of sexual abuse in its own facilities provoked much discussion on the topic of sexual abuse and a recommitment by the bishops to their promise to provide a safe environment for children, young people, and those who are vulnerable.

A third theme was the respect for life from conception to natural death. In that regard, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, who is the chairman of USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, emphasized the importance of Project Rachel, the Church's post-abortion counseling ministry. (See page 1 in this issue.)

A fourth theme was the emphasis on the New Evangelization and the Year of Faith recently announced by Pope Benedict XVI. Both are important for the Church in the near future as she strives to spread and defend the Catholic faith.

A fifth theme was the concern for the poor and suffering, not only in

our own country, but throughout the world. There were some very touching stories from bishops who had visited places of violence, natural disasters, and poverty. The bishops are also supportive of immigration reform.

There was discussion of the implementation of the new translation of the Roman Missal beginning on the first Sunday of Advent. The bishops were also able to meet and welcome Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the new Apostolic Nuncio to the United States. He was greeted by a standing ovation and was genuinely moved by his reception by the United States bishops.

In addition, the bishops approved the addition of an optional memorial for Blessed John Paul II to be celebrated on Oct. 22. The bishops voted as well to approve an optional memorial for Blessed Marianne Cope, a Franciscan sister who is known for her works of heroic charity. She spent the last 30 years caring for the poor and sick at the settlement for leprosy patients at Kalaupapa, Molokai.

There was a reaffirmation of the priorities of the USCCB, namely, the strengthening of marriage, faith formation focused on sacramental practice, recognition of cultural diversity, life and dignity of the human person, and priestly and religious vocations.

As in the past assemblies, I was impressed by the enormity of the tasks that face our bishops. Please continue to pray for them daily. Nothing will be accomplished without prayer.

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## "Christ Our Life" Campaign reaches the \$10 million mark

*goodwill of parishioners extends halfway across the world to mission parish in San Lucas*

**New Ulm** – Day by day, dollar by dollar, the "Christ Our Life" Campaign is making positive changes throughout the Diocese of New Ulm. From new roofs to renovated buildings, parishes are using the campaign to address much needed projects. But the impact of the campaign isn't isolated to the borders of our diocese. In fact, the goodwill is stretching halfway across the world.

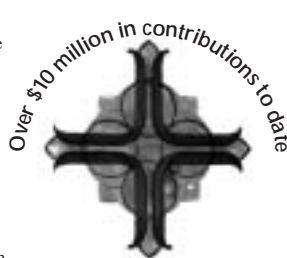
Five churches in the New Ulm diocese have decided to designate a portion of their campaign funds to the outreach mission in Guatemala. St. John, Morton; St. Patrick, Kandiyoji; St. Thomas More, Lake Lillian; Our Lady of the Lakes, Spicer; and St. Mary, Willmar, have committed to raise dollars for families they've never even met.

"It was important for us to tithe 10 percent of our parish income from the capital campaign because it enabled us to enter into and approach the campaign from an

attitude and spirit of abundance rather than scarcity," said Fr. Steve Verhelst, pastor at four of the involved parishes.

Since the early 1960s, dioceses in Minnesota have responded to the request of Bishop Angelico Melotto to support the Diocese of Solola in Guatemala. Fifty years later, only the Diocese of New Ulm still has priests actively serving there on a regular basis. They operate the San Lucas Toliman Mission. The mission offers programs that support and care for people living in poverty. And priests and parishes from the Diocese of New Ulm continue to offer their help, year after year.

"New Ulm helps those living in poverty receive an opportunity to live a life worthy of dignified human beings," said Msgr. Greg Schaffer, a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm and director of the San Lucas Mission Office. "Those receiving this blessing by the diocesan community of New Ulm



<http://dnucampaign.steiergroup.net>

are forever grateful for the care and concern of others."

The Church of Saint Mary in Willmar made the decision to tithe 10 percent of its campaign proceeds to share with the San Lucas Mission, as well as with local food pantries and other organizations that support people in need.

"So often we choose to live life through the lens of 'not enough': not enough time, not enough energy, not enough resources, not enough money," said Fr. Verhelst.

"An attitude of abundance enables us to live life through the lens of sharing what we do have so that there is enough for everyone."

Church of St. Mary parishioner Joe Eikmeier said supporting the San Lucas Mission has benefited the parish in many ways. Some parishioners have visited the mission to experience the work that the church has been funding, he said.

"It is also gratifying to see the concern that many of our parishioners have for the needs of not only those in the mission in Guatemala, but also in other parts of the world – such as Africa and Asia – where our parishioners have sent their support," Eikmeier said. "Since so many areas of the world are lacking in the resources with which we have been blessed, it becomes necessary that we as Catholics aid those in need, as we are able."

Msgr. Schaffer added that the

global ministry is a direct reflection of the work of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Bible. While on earth, Jesus commanded his disciples to transmit his teachings for generations to come.

"Our social teaching and doctrine as Catholics is profound and clear in teaching us how to live and serve God," Msgr. Schaffer said. "And those acts of kindness and sacrifice are continually applied in so many different situations the world over. As a diocese we work to make ourselves better, so as to improve our world, realizing and appreciating that our God is a God of compassion and mercy for everyone, always," he said.

For more information about the "Christ Our Life" Campaign, contact Wayne Pelzel at the diocesan Office of Development, 507-359-2966; [wpelzel@dnu.org](mailto:wpelzel@dnu.org).

## Archbishop Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis voted chairman-elect of the Committee on Doctrine

**Baltimore** – At the annual fall United States Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting held Nov. 14–16 in Baltimore, the bishops voted for the secretary-elect of the USCCB, the chairmen-elect of five committees, and the chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace.

The bishops elected were:

- Archbishop Peter Sartain of Seattle for secretary-elect/chairman of the Committee on Priorities and Plans.
- Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City for chairman-elect of the Committee on Communications.
- Bishop Daniel Flores of

Brownsville, Texas, for chairman-elect of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

– Archbishop John Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis for chairman-elect of the Committee on Doctrine.

– Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati for chairman-elect of the Committee on National Collections.

– Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston for chairman-elect of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

– Bishop Richard Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, for chairman of International Justice and Peace.

## Bishop's December Calendar

**2 New Ulm:** 9 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Diocesan Staff Advent Morning of Reflection.

**3 New Ulm:** 6:30 p.m. Martin Luther College. Christmas at Martin Luther College.

**6 New Ulm:** 9:30 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Diocesan Staff Meeting.

**7 St. Paul:** 11 a.m. Chancery. Minnesota Catholic Conference Board Meeting.

**8 Sleepy Eye:** 8:25 a.m. Church of St. Mary. School Mass.  
**New Ulm:** 10 a.m. Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. School Mass.

**10 Sleepy Eye:** 8 a.m. Schoenstatt on the Lake. Admissions and Scrutinies Committee Meeting – Permanent Diaconate.

**Renville:** 7 p.m. Church of the Holy Redeemer. Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration.

**11 Marshall:** 12 p.m. Church of the Holy Redeemer. Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration.

**Olivia:** 4 p.m. Church of St. Aloysius. Diocesan Advent Prayer Service.

**13 Olivia:** 1 p.m. Church of St. Aloysius. Priests' Council Meeting followed by College of Consultors Meeting.

**14 New Ulm:** 10 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Priests' Pension Plan Board Meeting.

**New Ulm:** 1 p.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Finance Council Meeting.

**16 New Ulm:** 6:30 p.m. Diocesan Staff Christmas Gathering.

**18 New Ulm:** 5 p.m. Lectio Divina Prayer Group Christmas Gathering.

**20 New Ulm:** 10:30 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Priest Personnel Board Meeting.

**24 New Ulm:** 4 p.m. Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Christmas Eve Mass.

**25 New Ulm:** 9:30 a.m. Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Christmas Mass.

**30 New Ulm:** 5 p.m. Seminarian Christmas Gathering.



## No Tengas Miedo *Adviento y Navidad*

por Obispo John M. LeVoir

Ahora estamos en la temporada de Adviento y por ende nos preparamos para la celebración de la primera venida de Nuestro Señor en la primera navidad. También nos enfocamos al final del mundo y la segunda venida de Nuestro Señor. El adviento nos dice que debemos estar listos para ambos acontecimientos.

¿Cómo nos preparamos para ambos acontecimientos? Nos preparamos como los cristianos se prepararon hace cientos de años antes de nosotros. Oramos en la liturgia y en privado. Por ejemplo, para prepararse para cualquier acontecimiento el Arzobispo Harry Flynn utiliza una simple petición para invitar al Señor a entrar a su corazón. El reza: “Ven, Señor Jesús.” Nosotros también, antes de la liturgia y antes de una oración privada, puede pedir a nuestro Señor “ven.” Que hermosa manera de prepararnos para la liturgia y la oración privado este adviento.

El adviento es un tiempo para decir “ven” en el sacramento de la Reconciliación o confesión. El pecado obstaculiza e incluso no puede dejar que nuestro Señor entre a nuestro corazón. Sin embargo, cuando nos acercamos al sacerdote con arrepentimiento en el sacramento de la Reconciliación, el Señor si viene. El viene por el perdón de los pecados. “Yo te absuelvo de todos tus pecados,” son las palabras que escuchamos y es la absolución de nuestros pecados que

da lugar en el sacramento a través del poder de la cruz y la resurrección de Cristo. El sacramento de la Reconciliación es una de las maneras primordiales de celebrar el Adviento.

Auto entrega es otra manera de celebrar el Adviento. Hacer obras de caridad nos ayuda a dominar nuestro egoísmo. Los actos de caridad, hechos por la causa del evangelio, llenan nuestro corazón con el amor de Dios y amor por nuestro prójimo. Cuando nuestro Señor venga al final del mundo él estará buscando corazones caritativos.

Que este Adviento, Navidad y Año Nuevo este lleno de bendiciones para usted y toda su familia.

### Asamblea General de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos

Del 12 al 17 de Noviembre asistí a la Asamblea General de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos (USCCB) en Baltimore, Maryland. En su discurso inaugural, el presidente del USCCB, Arzobispo Timothy Dolan de New York, dijo: “El amor por Jesús y su Iglesia debe ser la pasión de nuestras vidas.” Esto marcó el tono de la asamblea.

Uno de los temas que se habló fue sobre la libertad religiosa. Se dejó en claro que hay algunos en el gobierno que quisieran restringir la

libertad de la Iglesia Católica para hablar sobre temas que afectan a nuestra nación. Obispo William Lori de Bridgeport, Connecticut y presidente del nuevo comité para la Libertad Religiosa del USCCB dijo que los obispos ven un modelo en la cultura y la ley para tratar la religión como un contribuidor a la moralidad común de nuestra nación sino “constituyen una fuerza divisiva que busca sacarlo del espacio público.”

Un ejemplo citado por Obispo Lori fue el turno del Departamento de Justicia de defender la Defensa del Matrimonio (DOMA) para oponerse en la corte “como un acto de ‘parcialidad y prejuicio’ similar al racismo, lo que implica que las Iglesias enseñan que el matrimonio es entre un hombre y una mujer es culpable de la intolerancia.” La Iglesia Católica se ha destacado por defender el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer, no sólo por el amor de la pareja pero por el bien de los hijos también.

Hubo una reafirmación sobre las prioridades del USCCB, principalmente, el fortalecimiento de formación de la fe, el matrimonio, que enfoca la práctica sacramental, el reconocimiento de la diversidad cultural, la vida y la dignidad de todo ser humano y vocaciones sacerdotales como religiosas.

## Las Posadas and the Gospel practice of hospitality



The Latino/Hispanic religious tradition of Las Posadas consists of song and prayer, and usually ends with breaking the piñata.

by Sr. Anna Marie Reha, director  
Office of Hispanic Ministry

Las Posadas (Spanish for “the inns”) is a nine-day Latino/Hispanic religious tradition that is celebrated from Dec. 16 to Christmas Eve (Dec. 24). A yearly tradition based on a passage in the Gospel of Luke (2:1-9), it symbolizes the trials that Mary and Joseph endured before finding a place to stay where Jesus could be born. This celebration, or Advent procession, is filled with song and prayer and usually ends with the famous fun of breaking the piñata.

At the heart of Las Posadas is the joyous and profound message of the Incarnation – that God has crossed over every border to make a home with humanity. But for many migrants around the world, the Posada is not just a simple reenactment. They identify closely with the Advent procession.

Millions of migrants seek survival by attempting to cross political borders. They are refugees from conflict, natural disasters, and a harsh global economy. Thousands of them live among us. The Las Posadas story calls us to see, in the struggles of Mary and Joseph, the difficult journeys of our migrant brothers and sisters. The search for shelter is very real for many migrants, who knock on doors searching for refuge and protection. The Church offers compelling reasons for immigration reform.

**Editor’s note: “Posada,” an award winning documentary about unaccompanied migrant youth who seek to be reunited with family or find safety in the United States, is available through the diocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry, 507-359-2966; jmichels@dnv.org. Produced by Fr. Mark McGregor, SJ, the documentary is a response to the U.S. bishops’ Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform.**

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35).

The moral voice founded in the person of Jesus Christ and in encountering Christ in the migrant is unshakable. Las Posadas articulates this in an active communal experience. As part of the liturgical season, it speaks to the Church’s migrant heritage and celebrates it in light of faith.

Las Posadas retells the Christmas story as a communal experience and helps people to find themselves in that story while engaging them in questions of charity and justice. During Advent, Las Posadas offers a Catholic Christian response to pray, give hospitality, and celebrate the birth of Christ.

Contact your local Catholic parish to find out where Las Posadas will be held within the diocese, or visit [www.dnv.org](http://www.dnv.org) and click on the Hispanic Ministry link.

## New staff at Christ the King Retreat Center, Buffalo

**Buffalo, Minn.** – Fr. Bill Antone, OMI, provincial to the United States Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, recently appointed Fr. Ron LaFramboise, OMI, to the preaching staff at Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, Minn.



Fr. LaFramboise

Ordained a priest in 1967, Fr. LaFramboise volunteered for the Oblate Mission in Japan and was involved in the formation of Japanese Oblates as well as the superior of the Oblates in Japan. He served in Rome as the director of the Oblate Information Service and

as editor of the International Oblate Newsletter. His most recent assignment was in Buffalo, N.Y., in the formation of future Oblates.

For information on upcoming retreats at the Christ the King Retreat Center, call 763-682-1394; [christtheking@kingshouse.com](mailto:christtheking@kingshouse.com); [www.kingshouse.com](http://www.kingshouse.com).

## Fragile glass negatives remain a mystery for St. Raphael's in Springfield

by Mary Pauluk

It could have been a case for history detectives, but instead we are counting on your help with this historical mystery.

In December 2008 Steven Granger, archivist of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, delivered a puzzling and unique package to Fr. Dennis Labat, pastor of St. Raphael Church in Springfield. The package consisted of three metal boxes containing 288 glass negatives. The negatives ranged in size from 5 x 7 inches to 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches.

### What's a glass negative?

Before there were megabytes on your cell phone or digital cameras, and even before there was Kodak film or the Kodak Company, glass negatives were used in photography. The glass plate would be coated with a chemical and placed in a large box-like camera. Leaning down, the photographer would duck under a drape, focus on his subject, ignite a large flash, and expose the glass negative.

In 1992 Granger had discovered a dilapidated cardboard box with glass negatives at the archdiocesan archives. The negatives were stacked together and at risk of being destroyed, so he wrapped each one in archival paper to preserve them. After studying the negatives, he determined that many of them were images of St. Raphael Catholic Church and School in Springfield. However, he did not know who the photographer was or how the negatives ended up in the archives.

A group of St. Raphael parishioners and Sam Wagner, a seminarian for the Diocese of New Ulm, studied each of the 288 negatives for clues



as to the photographer's identity. Wagner lifted one negative to the light and said, "There are gravestones on this one." A close examination of the photo revealed the inscription "Gemeiner" on one of the gravestones. When Wagner and the other "detectives" cross-referenced this name with St. Raphael parish's centennial book, they discovered that a Fr. John Gemeiner had served as the parish's pastor from 1902 to 1910.

### New detectives on to something

The St. Raphael centennial book included only three to four sentences about the priest; however, after historical investigation, they determined that Fr. John Gemeiner (listed incorrectly as "Gemeiner" on both the gravestone and in the centennial book) had produced these beautiful, unique, and rare negatives. The gravestones Wagner had spotted were of Fr. Gemeiner's father, mother, and brother.

Fr. Gemeiner was born in Baernau, Bavaria, on Dec. 5, 1847. He and his family immigrated to



In 2008, rare and fragile glass negatives dating back to the early 1900s were discovered in the archives of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. The photographer is believed to be St. Raphael's, Springfield, pastor Fr. John Gemeiner.

Milwaukee in 1849. At the age of 22, John Gemeiner was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. His first 17 years of priesthood were spent teaching seminarians at St. Francis de Sales Seminary in Milwaukee and serving at four parishes.

Fr. Gemeiner's connection with Minnesota began in 1887 when he transferred to the Diocese (later the Archdiocese) of St. Paul at the request of Bishop John Ireland. His 25 years of service in the Diocese of St. Paul included teaching at the newly formed St. Paul Seminary and serving at a number of Catholic parishes, which included St. Raphael in Springfield.

During his lifetime, Fr. Gemeiner published many articles in national magazines on photography. Further research showed that he was one of the most famous Catholic priests and writers at the beginning of the 20th century. His legacy includes authoring at least a dozen books and many historical, scientific, and theological articles. He was also a part of the Catholic delegation that presented at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions held in conjunction with the World's Fair.

Fr. Gemeiner died in 1913 at the age of 66. He is buried at Assumption Catholic Church in Richfield.



Fr. John Gemeiner self-portrait.

### A remarkable collection

It was important to Fr. Labat and members of his parish that these valuable and fragile glass negatives be preserved and made available to those who had an interest in Fr. Gemeiner and his ministry. Furthermore, they hoped that by making the negatives available, people might help identify unknown persons and places in the photographs.

After an extensive application process, the 288 negatives were accepted into Minnesota Reflections, the online collection of the Minnesota Digital Library (MDL). According to their Web site, MDL seeks to preserve photos, journals, pieces of art, and other artifacts that are culturally

### See photos online

<http://reflections.mndigital.org>

1. Scroll down to "St. Raphael's Catholic Church" and click on it.
2. Click on "Browse St. Raphael," located in the navigation bar at the top of the page.

significant for the state of Minnesota by digitizing them, that is, by carefully scanning them into a computer. Not only does the MDL preserve these artifacts, but they also make them available to everyone by posting them in an online database.

The director of MDL told Fr. Labat, "When I am talking about the Minnesota Digital Library, I always bring up your collection because it is so remarkable and Fr. Gemeiner's work is so fascinating."

### Pictures online for viewing

The University of Minnesota scanned each negative, and the pictures are now accessible on the Minnesota Reflections Web site, <http://reflections.mndigital.org>. Everyone is encouraged to view the pictures on the Web site to see if they can help identify the people and places in the pictures. Fr. Gemeiner enjoyed taking portraits; perhaps a relative or friend of yours is pictured.

Contact Mary Pauluk at 507-723-4449 or e-mail [mktppauluk@newulmtel.net](mailto:mktppauluk@newulmtel.net) if you have questions or information to share.

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## The Permanent Deacon *Icon of Christ the Servant*

WORD † LITURGY † CHARITY

*Editor's note: As the Diocese of New Ulm approaches the ordination of its first group of permanent deacons, "The Prairie Catholic" will publish a four-part series on the vocation and ministry of permanent deacons. This is the first article in the series, which will focus on the role of the deacon. The group of men are scheduled to be ordained by Bishop John M. LeVoir on April 21, 2012, at the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye.*

by Dcn. Mark Kober, director  
Office of Permanent Diaconate

God has called men from the beginnings of the Church to serve the faithful through ordained ministry. These men are bishops, priests, and deacons, individuals called to preach the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, and care for the needs of the flock.

Most Catholics understand the ministries of a bishop and of a priest. They know less about the ministry of a deacon because the permanent diaconate did not exist in the Latin Church from the fourth century until after the Second Vatican Council. During these years, men who were ordained to the diaconate would soon after be ordained to the priesthood. Being a deacon was "transitional," that is, it was a temporary state of life that led to something else.

The Second Vatican Council recommended that the permanent diaconate be restored in the Church. Permanent deacons would not eventually be ordained priests; rather, as their name suggests, they would serve the Church simply as

a deacon. In 1967 Pope Paul VI made the Council's recommendation official through his apostolic letter *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*.

One year later, the bishops of the United States asked the pope to authorize the restoration of the permanent diaconate in their country. They cited two reasons when making this request: "to complete the hierarchy of sacred orders, and to enrich and strengthen the various diaconal ministries at work in the U.S. with the sacramental grace of the diaconate."

"To complete the hierarchy of sacred orders" refers to the fact that the diaconate is an integral part of the Church's three-fold ordained ministry (bishop, priest, and deacon). This was always the case, even though for centuries the diaconate was a transitional stage before a man was ordained a priest.

**What does the newly restored permanent diaconate look like?** Most likely, you will not be able to recognize a permanent deacon on the street. Ordained priests and bishops wear clerics and work in the Church full time; permanent deacons, on the other hand, do not necessarily have as strong a connection with the Church. Many times they wear street clothes and have a secular job.

**Ordained for a special service in the Church** While their work in the Church is different from that of priests and bishops, permanent deacons receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. They have been ordained by a bishop for a special service in the Church. As the bishops of the United States said in 1968, the diaconate and the priesthood are

complementary ministries. "The diaconate is not an abridged form of the priesthood, but a full order in its own right," and for the good of the Church as a whole, "the two ministries must be exercised in communion with one another."

Their ordination enables permanent deacons to participate in three areas of service in the Church: the ministry of the word, the celebration of the liturgy, and the exercising of charity.

Permanent deacons are able to proclaim the Gospel, preach at Mass and other liturgical celebrations, perform Baptisms, assist at the Eucharist, witness marriages, and preside at funerals.

Deacons are not only ordained to attend to the religious needs of people, but they are specially ordained to attend to the needs of people in everyday circumstances. In other words, they are called to exercise charity, to serve others as Christ himself did. This was very true in the early days of the Church when the first deacons were ordained by the apostles to care for widows and orphans.

Individual diaconal ministry will vary from deacon to deacon, but these basic precepts are always present. A deacon is called by the Holy Spirit and enabled through ordination to serve God's Kingdom in the community.

For additional information on the ministry of the permanent deacon, contact the diocesan Office of the Permanent Diaconate at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in New Ulm, 507-359-2966; mkober@dnu.org.

## Pope Benedict: Do not waste your God-given talents and mission

**Vatican City, CNA/EWTN News** – Pope Benedict XVI used his Sunday Angelus address Nov. 13 to remind people that God has given everybody both talents and a mission in life.

"God calls every person and offers talents to all, at the same time entrusting each one with a mission to carry out," said the pope from the window of his apostolic palace to the crowds gathered below in St. Peter's Square.

"It would be foolish to presume that these gifts are an entitlement, just as failing to use them would mean failing to achieve our purpose in life," he said.

The pope drew his observations from Sunday's Gospel passage from St. Matthew in which Jesus tells the parable of the master who goes on a long journey and gives talents to three servants. Upon his return, two have invested their talents and provide an enhanced return while the other does not and is condemned as "wicked and slothful."

Pope Benedict said the passage should remind everybody of the "transience of earthly existence," given that "our final destiny" and "meaning of life" is "death followed by Final Judgment."

The third servant lost sight of this, he said, and "behaved as if his master would not to return, as if there was not a day when he would ask him to account for his activities." To refuse to use our gifts or from embarking on our mission "would be a dereliction of the purpose of their (our talents') existence."

Given that the apostle St. Paul

reminds us that the Lord will call us to account "like a thief in the night," the pope advised that we should live "in an attitude of watchfulness," waiting for the second coming of Christ "in the constant memory of his first coming."

*"It would be foolish to presume that these gifts are an entitlement, just as failing to use them would mean failing to achieve our purpose in life."*

– Pope Benedict

The pope then quoted from his sixth-to-seventh century predecessor, Pope Gregory the Great, who said that the primary virtue that needs to be preserved and enhanced throughout life is love – both love of friends and enemies.

"If one lacks this virtue, he loses all good that he possessed, he is deprived of the talent he received, and is thrown out, in darkness," warned Pope Gregory.

Pope Benedict said that "only by practicing charity, can we also take part in the joy of our Lord," adding that "the Virgin Mary is both an active and joyful teacher supervising our path to union with God."

Summing up his thoughts in his address to English-speaking pilgrims after the Angelus, the pope said that the words of Sunday's (Nov. 13) Gospel call us to "an ever deeper conversion of mind and heart, and a more effective solidarity in the service of all our brothers and sisters."

"Upon you and your families I invoke the Lord's blessings of wisdom, joy and peace!" he said.

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## PILOT WAVE

Parish	Parish City	Raised	% of Goal
Church of St. Francis	Benson	5183,953	99%
Church of St. Malachy	Clonarf	519,950	35%
Church of St. Bridget	De Graf	511,617	23%
Church of St. Andrew	Fairfax	598,435	70%
Church of the Sacred Heart	Franklin	542,001	104%
Church of St. Willibrod	Gabbas	599,826	141%
Church of Our Lady of Victory	Lucas	568,598	105%
Church of St. Joseph	Montevideo	5132,608	85%
Church of the Sacred Heart	Montlock	5177,387	195%
Cathedral of the Holy Trinity	New Ulm	51,099,527	137%
Church of St. Mary	Scottdale	5112,692	169%
Church of St. Mary	Sleepy Eye	5086,362	125%
Church of St. Mary	Tracy	5129,666	54%
Church of St. Ann	Wabasso	592,793	71%
Church of St. Paul	Wahgan Grove	536,800	117%
Church of St. Martin	Wanda	589,822	105%
Church of St. Francis de Sales	Worship	555,367	130%

## WAVE 1

Parish	Parish City	Raised	% of Goal
Church of St. John	Appleton	51,600	16%
Church of St. Mary	Beardsley	531,025	50%
Church of St. Mary	Bird Island	5215,517	79%
Church of St. Peter	Canby	5214,971	100%
Church of St. Clara	Clara City	574,102	98%
Church of St. James	Dawson	512,281	20%
Church of St. Elia	Glenn	5117,210	95%
Church of the Holy Rosary	Graceville	523,210	17%
Church of St. Andrew	Grass Falls	5143,575	108%
Church of St. John	Hector	535,822	60%
Church of St. Peter and Paul	Ivanhoe	527,312	35%
Church of St. Patrick	Kandiyohi	590,561	60%
Church of St. Genevieve	Lake Bemont	522,220	45%
Church of St. Thomas More	Lake Elkton	521,659	55%
Church of St. Michael	Madison	533,553	54%
Church of St. Michael	Millers	593,756	105%
Church of St. Edward	Minnesota	5283,894	105%
Church of St. James	Norson	53,980	24%
Church of St. Alvin	Olivia	5196,285	111%
Church of St. John	Orrville	549,603	28%
Church of the Holy Redeemer	Rehrille	5190,95	20%
Church of St. Joseph	Rosen	516,513	25%
Church of St. Leo	St. Leo	530,958	68%
Church of Our Lady of the Lakes	Spirit	5209,412	58%
Church of St. Dionysius	Tilly	542,160	68%
Church of St. Mary	Wilmar	5414,212	51%
Church of St. John Cantius	Wilso	586,023	104%

## WAVE 2

Parish	Parish City	Raised	% of Goal
Church of St. Mary	Arlington	557,700	33%
Church of St. Paul	Carthage	529,700	50%
Church of St. Mary	Comstock	51,620	2%
Church of St. John	Dagwin	569,885	40%
Church of St. John	Faxon Township	545,262	86%
Church of St. Germaine	Forest City	55,925	10%
Church of St. Michael	Gaylord	560,700	83%
Church of St. Pius X	Glencoe	550,065	15%
Church of St. Brendan	Greenbale	537,165	64%
Church of St. Cloud	Green Valley	5380	1%
Church of St. Joseph	Henderson	549,040	94%
Church of St. Anastasia	Hutchinson	5482,263	61%
Church of St. Gregory the Great	Lafayette	528,072	50%
Church of St. Joseph	Lamberton	526,620	38%
Church of the Japanese Martyrs	Leavenworth	535,150	70%
Church of St. Philip	Litchfield	5187,722	41%
Church of Our Lady	Maranath	575,560	66%
Church of St. Michael	Morgan	575,144	56%
Church of St. John	Morton	529,258	47%
Church of St. Mary	New Ulm	5688,305	87%
Church of St. Paul	Nicollet	515,958	19%
Church of the Holy Rosary	North Mankato	5352,747	49%
Church of St. Catherine	Redwood Falls	5178,007	60%
Church of St. John the Baptist	Scates	564,166	65%
Church of the Holy Family	Silver Lake	531,945	9%
Church of St. Raphael	Springfield	5225,610	82%
Church of St. Peter	St. Peter	5311,003	55%
Church of St. Boniface	Stewart	546,200	95%
Church of St. Anthony	Wadena	597,300	99%
Church of St. George	West Newton	560,065	66%
Church of the Holy Trinity	Winsted	558,625	11%

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## Second annual bioethics conference addresses in vitro fertilization and emergency contraception

by Sam Patet  
*The Prairie Catholic*

October is Respect Life Month. For 31 days, the Church calls all Catholics to reflect on the gift of human life and the need to protect it at all stages, from conception to natural death.

Just as Respect Life Month was winding down for 2011, the Diocese of New Ulm squeezed in a final event that celebrated and defended human life. This event was the diocese's second annual bioethics conference.

Sponsored by the diocesan Office of Family Life Education, the conference was held on Oct. 29 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. Approximately 15 doctors, nurses, teachers, and other individuals attended.

Sr. Candace Fier, director of the Office of Family Life Education and organizer of the event, said the conference was intended primarily for health care professionals and institutions. She said the diocese wanted to provide these persons with the Catholic Church's

teachings on current health care issues, and to support these persons in their work, especially as more and more health care regulations go against the Church's teachings. The conference focused on the gift of human life and the Church's response to medical procedures that undermine human life, including in vitro fertilization (IVF) and emergency contraception.

"The Church cannot be the last person on the table on these issues," Sr. Candace said. "We need to let people know that the Church has very thoughtfully, very thoroughly, and very professionally entered into the development of responses to the kinds of crises we have in health care today."

The conference included five speakers, each bringing a wealth of clinical and pastoral experience to the table:

– Bishop John M. LeVoir is the bishop of the Diocese of New Ulm and co-author of the book "Covenant of Love: Pope John Paul II on Sexuality, Marriage, and the Family in the Modern World." In his talk, "Theology of the Body and the



New Ulm family physician Dr. Francille Knowles speaks about in vitro fertilization and alternative methods of conception that are supported by the Church during the second annual bioethics conference held Oct. 29 in New Ulm. (photo by Sam Patet)

Dignity of the Human Person: A Foundation for Bioethics," he spoke about Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body and how it informs the Church's views on abortion, in vitro fertilization, sterilization, and artificial birth control. He said the Theology of the Body "really is the foundation for a medical ethics that speaks to people today."

– Dr. Francille Knowles has been a family physician in New Ulm for 16 years. Knowles' talk was entitled "Hey Doc, We Can't Get Pregnant, Where Do We Start?" She focused on in vitro fertilization, a procedure that is commonly prescribed to help women become pregnant, and yet goes against the Church's moral teaching. She then spoke about an alternative method to help women become pregnant, a method the Church supports: Natural Procreative Technology (NaPro Technology). NaPro Technology has a woman make daily observations of her menstrual cycle, she said, and a doctor uses this information to diagnose and treat her infertility.

– Sr. Candace is a registered nurse, a certified Creighton Model practitioner and educator, and a graduate of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C. During her talk, "Bioethical Decision Making in the Face of Infertility," she explained in greater detail why the Church is opposed to in vitro fertilization, using a number of Church documents.

– Dr. James Joyce has been a family physician for 25 years and is the current medical director of Divine

Providence Fertility Care Center in Sleepy Eye. His talk was entitled "Emergency Contraception - Why Not?" Not only did he explain what emergency contraception is and why the Church is opposed to it, but he also gave tools one can use when counseling women who are considering using it.

– Dr. April Lind is a medical doctor practicing in Maple Grove and a 2011 graduate of the National Catholic Bioethics Center's certification program in health care ethics. In her talk, "Bioethics in the Context of Catholic Health Care," she spoke about the duty all Catholics have to form good consciences that can respond to bioethical questions. Catholics must seek the Truth and practice the virtues in order to develop a well-informed conscience, she said.

Jenny Baker, a volunteer at a life care center in Apple Valley who also serves on its board of directors, said she was impressed with Bishop LeVoir's presentation. "I was really impressed at how well the bishop could explain that complicated topic of the Theology of the Body," she said, "and how he was able to convey its deep meaning, and yet in terms that were so beautiful and easy to understand."

An urgent care nurse from Minnesota found Dr. Joyce's talk to be beneficial. She frequently encounters women who want to use emergency contraception. Joyce's tips for counseling these women, she said, will be very helpful in the future. "The direction that Dr. Joyce gave will certainly be one that I will use," she said. "To say 'Why do you think that pill will really change your situation right now?' ... You do have some time to think, to just stop and think."

For more information about the conference, the speakers, or the topics, contact Sr. Candace at [cfer@dnu.org](mailto:cfer@dnu.org); 507-359-2966.

### Looking for a Christmas gift idea?

#### 50th anniversary history book makes great keepsake

A beautiful hard-cover photographic book covering 50 years of history of the Diocese of New Ulm is available for Christmas delivery.

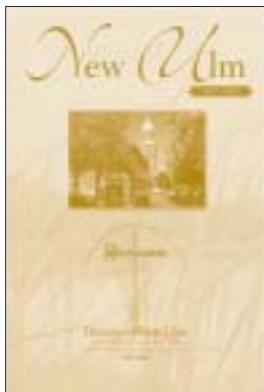
"Diocese of New Ulm, 1957-2007: A Loving People in a Holy Place" provides an in-depth look at the history of the diocese from its earliest roots to the present day. It also includes all parishes, each of which have a special section of history, as well as several colored pictures.

This beautiful book, published in 2007 by a French company, Editions du Signe, consists of approximately 160 pages and is printed in color on high-quality paper. It includes

hundreds of photos covering the history of the diocese.

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Contact the diocesan Office of Communications, 507-359-2966; [spatet@dnu.org](mailto:spatet@dnu.org) to order your copy. Each book is \$26.50. Note: If pick up is not possible and mailing is necessary, please include \$4 for one book; \$4.50 for two books; and \$5.50 for three books. For more than three copies, call for a postage quote. Hurry and order your copy for early Christmas delivery!



## National Evangelization Team helps kids encounter Christ

(continued from page 1)

about it, more than anything I've felt before," he said.

NET Ministries has been present in the Diocese of New Ulm since 1982. Since that time, they have given 365 retreats to 21,679 students.

Why does the diocese keep asking them to come back? Simple: They help students encounter Jesus Christ. "They offer retreats of various kinds," McHugh said, "but it's done in such an attractive, and youth-friendly, and joyful way that their enthusiasm is very contagious."

NET members have a number of ways to put on effective retreats. First, they take the time to get to know the students. As students enter the room where the retreat is being held, NET members are at the doorway to greet them with a smile. Other team members are scattered throughout the room and begin conversations with the students, talking about family, music, school, and sports.

Second, NET members like to have fun. At retreats they gave in Clara City and Canby, members of Team #7 performed funny skits (complete with over-the-top costumes), played group games with the students, and even taught everyone a Star Wars-themed meal prayer.

Finally, and probably most importantly, NET team members are in love with Jesus Christ and are willing to talk about how he has impacted their lives. As the team members give presentations, lead the students in small-group sessions, give personal testimonies, and perform short skits (or dramas) on accepting Jesus Christ into one's life, one can tell that these young people are not just reading from a script. They have been touched by Jesus.

Betty Strommer is faith formation director and youth minister at the Church of St. Clara in Clara City. She and Christina Wangen, faith formation director and youth

minister at the Church of St. Andrew in Granite Falls, had the NET Team give a retreat to youth from their area faith community on Oct. 21. They both were impressed by how the team presented the Gospel to their high school students in a joyful and real way.

"I like the idea that they are young kids," Strommer said. "They seem to have so much fire and energy for the faith," she said, and they "share with these kids that it (the faith) is real to them, that God is real."

Wangen said the NET Team members are able to reach out to young people in a way that older generations are not able to do. They "have lived the life experience, and are living now the life that God has brought them to ... they've gone through tough times," she said. "I feel like it's not just us (older adults) preaching to them and telling them that these are the good things you should be doing."

Hall talked about his life experiences while in Clara City. He shared with the students his growth from being concerned with the things of the world to finding fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

"Before I realized that I was truly a child of God and what that meant, I was kinda one of those people that you saw in the media," he said. "I had the cool truck, I had all the right girlfriends, Homecoming court, everybody loved me, all that good stuff."

"But," he continued, "it never worked. And like I did, we can convince ourselves that all those things we see in the world outside ourselves are fun and good for us. But the reality is that they are sinful ... They hurt others and, most importantly, they hurt our relationship with God, and our relationship with God is what we were meant to be in, it's why we were created."

Hall's words resonated with the students in Clara City, including Alison Miller, a tenth-grader from the Church of the Sacred Heart in



Team #7 photo courtesy of NET Ministries



NET Ministries Team #7 was in the diocese in October and November conducting retreats for youth at the Church of St. Peter in Canby (left) and the Church of St. Clara in Clara City (below).

(photos by Sam Patet)

Murdock. The retreat "really hit home," she said. Team #7 "talked about the different things that could impact your life ... and made you think, 'Is this what God really wants you to do?'"

When asked about his time in the Diocese of New Ulm, Hall said that God was with his team every step of the way, from their first day in Clara City to their last day in Kandiyohi. He was struck by how positively students in the diocese responded to the retreats. "It can be hard when you go through a retreat," Hall said, "and the youth on the retreat ... don't show anything, they just walk out." In the Diocese of New Ulm, he continued, "it's been that at almost every retreat there have been signs where you can visibly see that somebody has been moved."

While Team #7 was in the diocese for less than three weeks, the impact



they made was significant. They are an important part of the diocese's religious education programs, McHugh said, and they bring joy and hope to the parishes they serve.

Hall agreed with McHugh. "Don't give up hope ... Christ is moving" in young people's hearts, he said. "Give them opportunities to be involved, 'cause I think the youth are grasping and reaching for things

to hold onto. It's up to us whether they grab hold of the things of this world or if they grab hold of things of our faith."

Editor's Note: More about NET is available on their Web site: [www.netusa.org](http://www.netusa.org). NET Team #7 is also keeping an online blog as they travel across the country. Go to NET's Web site and click on "NET Blog."

## Why a marriage protection amendment? Why now?

by Jason Adkins

In November 2012 Minnesotans will have the chance to preserve in law the institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman from activist judges and rogue legislators who seek to undermine this bedrock social institution. A constitutional amendment on the general election ballot next year asks Minnesota voters: "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide that only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota?"

The answer is emphatically "yes."

### Threat to marriage

Some people are confused as to why a marriage protection amendment is needed. After all, the marriage between one man and one woman is current state law.

Unfortunately, there is an organized, nationwide campaign to redefine marriage or to eliminate it from law altogether, and Minnesota is not immune. Courts in places such as Iowa and Massachusetts have struck down traditional marriage laws as irrational relics of a society that allegedly used to be governed by religious dogma.

Here in Minnesota, multiple same-sex couples have sued for a marriage license because, they argue,

excluding them is state-sponsored religious discrimination that is both irrational and violates their own deeply held beliefs. Their arguments were heard by the Minnesota Court of Appeals in October.

Legislatures, too, are the scene of attempts to remake marriage. Just recently in New York, the Legislature and Gov. Andrew Cuomo transformed New York marriage law from an institution focused on the well-being of children into a system of love licenses for adults, severing the inherent connection in marriage between children and their biological parents.

"We're about to redefine what the American family is, and that's a good thing," one New York state senator told the "Wall Street Journal" as the bill was being considered. Such comments are not unique or uncommon and are consistent with a broader cultural movement that is seeking to not only redefine the family, but to transform all of society.

For example, activist Michelangelo Signorile, a man who self-identifies as gay, stated in "Out!" magazine that people like him should "fight for same-sex marriage and its benefits, and then, once granted, redefine the institution of marriage entirely. The most subversive action



Saints Joachim and Anne, illustrated in this art, are the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the fruit of their marriage. By a singular grace of God in view of the merits of Jesus, she was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. Thus it is in the context of married life and conjugal love that Mary is prepared to receive the Divine Logos, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the Logos, the "Reason" at the heart of all reason and truth, including the truth of marriage. The marriage between Joachim and Anne is a significant witness to why marriage is "unique for a reason."

(courtesy of USCCB)

lesbians and gay men can undertake is to transform the notion of 'family' entirely."

In Minnesota, numerous pieces of legislation have been introduced over the last few years to redefine marriage along the lines of what happened in New York (see H.F. 1710), or eliminate it altogether (H.F. 1746) in favor of a system of "civil unions," which might be more accurately called marriage "leases" – a legal union without the expectation of permanence or fidelity. Such a system would reinforce the emerging cultural norm

that marriage is fundamentally about the happiness of adults, and that when the happiness or "love" ends, so does the marriage. One sees this trend in the ever-present slogan, "love + commitment = marriage." But kids are the ones who lose when marriage is just like any other contract.

### A public concern

Love and commitment are necessary for marriage, but not sufficient. Society has an interest in supporting and sustaining a legal institution that is fundamentally about begetting children, attaches those children to their parents, and carries with it social norms of permanence and fidelity – which research clearly indicates are indispensable to a child's well-being.

In fact, a recent study from the Social Trends Institute confirms what we know from Catholic social teaching: The long-term success and economic prosperity of societies depends upon the health of intact families. So, the next time you are asked how redefining marriage hurts you, you can say that marriage is not just about the private relationship of two people, but a public institution that affects all of us, our children and the future of our community.

The Minnesota Marriage Protection Amendment ensures that judges and politicians do not have the final say about marriage in Minnesota.

### Faithful citizenship

With just under one year until the November 2012 election, we must begin the hard work of sharing with Minnesotans what marriage is, why it is important, and the consequences that will undoubtedly occur if it is redefined.

In many cases, this will be a challenging conversation. Unfortunately, there are many, especially in the media, who seek to perpetrate stereotypes that the Church's defense of marriage is a bigoted effort to harm people and deny them basic human rights. It is not.

All of God's children are created in his image and likeness, and we should love them all. But loving someone has never meant affirming all of their choices or desires. Jesus clearly demonstrates this in the Gospels time and again. Loving someone means we perform a work of mercy and share the truth with them, no matter how uncomfortable or difficult that may be.

This is not a conversation we have chosen to have, but we cannot sit on the sidelines. Article I, section 1 of the Minnesota Constitution states: "Government is instituted for the security, benefit and protection of the people, in whom all political power is inherent, together with the right to alter, modify or reform government whenever required by the public good."

Like the Church's other work in the public arena defending human life and promoting social justice, the "public good" now requires we stand up for marriage and preserve it in our constitution – the very thing this important document was designed to do.

With your help and prayers, we will pass the marriage protection amendment as part of our work as faithful citizens, to reclaim a culture of marriage in Minnesota.

*Jason Adkins is executive director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public voice of the bishops of Minnesota.*

## Bishops launch new "Marriage: Unique for a Reason" Web site

**Washington** – Catholics seeking reliable information on what the Catholic Church teaches about marriage can now visit [www.marriageuniqueforareason.org](http://www.marriageuniqueforareason.org), a Web site featuring resources such as an extensive FAQ section on the meaning of marriage, a compilation of Catholic teaching on marriage, a blog, and the videos "Made for Each Other" and "Made for Life."

The site was launched by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage. Portions of the site will be translated into Spanish. "The launch

of the new Web site demonstrates the continued efforts of the bishops to educate the faithful on the unique meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman and on marriage's foundational place for the flourishing of any society," said Bishop Salvatore Cordileone of Oakland, Calif., chairman of the Subcommittee. "The Web site ... will serve as a reliable place where inquiring Catholics and others can find authentic teaching about marriage."

"Marriage: Unique for a Reason" is the latest phase in the USCCB's ongoing catechetical and

educational work on marriage. The initiative began in June 2010 with the release of "Made for Each Other" and continued in June 2011 with the release of "Made for Life." Future video resources include a Spanish-language video, and videos about marriage and the common good and marriage and religious liberty, due out next year. The Web site joins the bishops' initiatives For Your Marriage ([foryourmarriage.org](http://foryourmarriage.org)) and Por Tu Matrimonio ([www.portumatrimonio.org](http://www.portumatrimonio.org)) in providing Web resources for the strengthening, promotion, and protection of marriage.

## Sisters' Council of diocese learns about poverty in Minnesota

by Sr. Anna Marie Reha, SSND

The New Ulm diocesan Sisters' Council, which represents nine distinct religious congregations ministering in the diocese, met on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2011. They invited Brian Rusche, executive director of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC), to address the topic of poverty in Minnesota.

JRLC is a statewide, interfaith public-policy group sponsored by the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Islamic Center of Minnesota, and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Rusche shared with the group that the "Minnesota data from the recent American Community Survey confirm what overflowing homeless shelters and weary food-shelf volunteers around the state have been telling us: Our economy is failing an alarming number of Minnesota families and their children."

The latest data shows that the overall poverty rate in Minnesota has risen from 9.6 percent in 2008

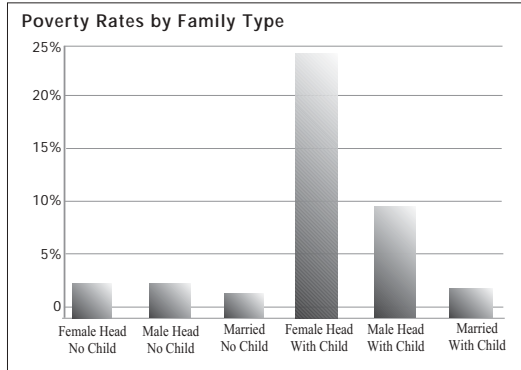
to 11.6 percent in 2010. In addition, the poverty rate is much higher in minority communities, in female-headed households, and among children.

The child poverty rate rose from 11.4 percent in 2008 to 15.2 percent in 2010. More alarming still, child poverty has increased 56 percent since 2000. Out of the 192,000 children residing in Minnesota, one in seven now lives in poverty.

When the statistics are broken down by race, the picture of inequality gets clearer. Today, 17.8 percent of Asians are living in poverty, as are 24.4 percent of Latinos and 37.2 percent of blacks. In the last year, poverty among American Indians jumped from 30.7 percent to 39.5 percent.

The new poverty statistics show a startling scenario. Many adults and heads of families work in the 17 percent of Minnesota jobs that pay a wage too meager to lift a family of four above the poverty line (about \$22,000 per year).

Rusche pointed out the distressing fact that the majority of those living in poverty are employed. The problem is that they do not make



	Minnesota 2007	Minnesota 2010	U.S. 2010
Overall	9.5%	11.6%	15.3%
White (non-Hispanic)	7.1%	8.4%	10.6%
Black/African American	33.5%	37.2%	27.1%
Asian	15.3%	17.8%	12.5%
American Indian	30.7%	39.5%	28.4%
Latino	22.2%	24.4%	24.8%

\*The increase in poverty between 2007 and 2010 is statistically significant.

(statistics courtesy of jrlc.org)

enough money to live on, especially if they have additional expenses like health care costs and non-working family members to support.

Minnesota's state government has shown a commitment to ending

poverty through the work of the Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020 (LCEP). Rusche said that JRLC supports initiatives that restore work as a way out of poverty, increase minimum wage, extend

child care assistance to more families, and provide education and job training.

Our faith tradition calls us to serve the poor and vulnerable. We cannot simply abandon those in poverty when times become tough. "Since there will never cease to be someone in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land'" (Dt 15:11). We are to be advocates for the poor, the disenfranchised, the abandoned, the marginalized.

Rusche ended his talk saying, "It's time to declare a new beginning – a renewed commitment in Minnesota to end poverty for the sake of stable communities, a productive and educated workforce, less income inequality, healthier children, less crime, less incarceration, less human loss, and less expenses."

The JRLC issue paper on the topic of ending poverty in Minnesota, "No Poor Among You ...," can be found at [www.jrlc.org](http://www.jrlc.org).

Sr. Anna Marie Reha, SSND, serves as chair of the diocesan Sisters' Council.

## Project Rachel

(continued from page 1)

Her four-hour presentation covered many topics, including common reactions individuals can have after an abortion and suggestions for helping these individuals heal.

In the afternoon and evening, she gave presentations to high school students in Sleepy Eye and in Redwood Falls. Over 600 students attended.

Her main point for the high school students: Be courageous. Being courageous means making decisions about one's sexual activity that are counter-cultural. "We live in a world that says, 'Hey, if it feels good, do it; no

problem,'" she said. If one applies this attitude to one's sexual activity, she continued, the consequences can be dire. Teenage parenthood, sexually transmitted diseases, broken hearts – these are only a few of the things that could happen.

Msgr. Eugene Lozinski, pastor of the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye and chancellor of the diocese, attended Thorn's evening presentation. He applauded her challenge to the students to live their lives differently. "I thought she said what needs to be said, and it needs to be said clearly and repeatedly," he said. "Her advice to look at facts and not to buy into what the culture is saying without question is very good."

Thorn also told the students that they will become connected to a person with whom they are sexually active. If the relationship breaks up, there is a good chance they will feel depressed. "We as women can't turn off the chemistry that causes us to bond to this person," she said, "and you guys cannot be involved in intimacy without being chemically changed. The concept of hook-up relationships is a lie ... even if we say, 'Oh, I'm doing this and there's no connection (with the other person).'"

Fr. Zachary Peterson, associate pastor at the Church of St. Anastasia in Hutchinson and the Church of St. Boniface in Stewart, attended Thorn's morning and

afternoon presentations. He said that Thorn's argument that sexual intimacy binds a man and woman together will help him in his work with high school- and college-aged students.

"Whether we want to or not," he said, "a chemical process happens in both the female and the male brain during sexual intimacy that connects those two individuals in a deeper manner. The myth that we can 'hook up' without any consequences is one of the biggest lies our culture feeds us."

### A heart filled with hope

While Thorn is facing an uphill battle on many fronts, her heart nevertheless is filled with hope for the future.

"This generation," she said, "these kids sitting here and the college kids, they're going to change this, because they see the fallout, they're willing to work hard to overturn this, but it's not so much about overturning the law as it is about changing hearts ... If I change one or two lives in here, that's all worth it."

Editor's Note: The Diocese of New Ulm has a Project Rachel chapter. Contact the Office of Catholic Charities at 866-670-5163 for confidential information. For more information about Project Rachel, visit their Web site: [www.hopeafterabortion.com](http://www.hopeafterabortion.com).

## October busy at Schoenstatt on the Lake Retreat Center



On Oct. 13, Sr. M. Alice Kunz of the Schoenstatt Retreat Center in Sleepy Eye hosted an event for Vickie Daub's fifth grade class from St. Anne's School in Wabasso. The class had been on a pilgrimage to see the Cathedral in New Ulm and stopped to spend time at the Schoenstatt Shrine and Center.



(photo by Alicia Hernandez)

On Oct. 23, 250 people from Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin gathered at the Schoenstatt Retreat Center in Sleepy Eye to celebrate several events: the 35th anniversary of the Jubilee Family Shrine, the closing of the Year of the Father, and the opening of the Year of the Shrine. Sr. M. Petra of Waukesha, Wis., was the guest speaker for the day. She provided an overview of the Schoenstatt Catholic lay movement and an in-depth view of its founder, Fr. Joseph Kentenich. Sr. M. Petra served as Fr. Kentenich's secretary for three years in Milwaukee. The day also included lunch, the sacrament of Reconciliation, Mass, and benediction. A small Holy Family statue was blessed and will now travel to every Schoenstatt family in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Pictured is the Schoenstatt Youth Choir, which provided music during the Mass and the activities throughout the day.

### WANTED:

Women who desire a deeper, more profound understanding of their God-given dignity and vocation as a woman.

### ENDOW groups being formed now!

Contact Sr. Candace Fier at the diocesan Pastoral Center in New Ulm, 507-359-2966; cfier@dnu.org.

<http://endowonline.org>

## Three from diocese receive Spirit of TEC award for service to Catholic young people

This October three members of the Diocese of New Ulm received the Spirit of TEC award, an honor that is given to individuals who have shown exemplary commitment to Catholic young people.



Deb Dack

Dave Grams

Mary Pauluk

The three individuals who received this award are Deb Dack of the Church of St. Joseph, Montevideo; Dave Grams of the Church of the Holy Rosary, North Mankato; and Mary Pauluk of the Church of St. Raphael, Springfield.

The recipients represent 15 dioceses throughout the United States. Since 1990 approximately 750 people have been honored with this distinction.

level, and their witness of Paschal Mystery spirituality in their daily lives.

TEC (Together Encountering Christ) is a Catholic movement of spirituality for older adolescents and young people. It uses three-day retreats to invite people to draw closer to Jesus Christ.

Nominees are selected by their local TEC communities on the basis of their committed service to the youth and young adults of the Church, their contributions to the TEC ministry on a local or regional

For further information about Riverbend TEC or upcoming retreats in the Diocese of New Ulm, contact Fr. Dennis Labat, spiritual director, 507-723-4141; riverbendtec@newulmtnet.net; www.riverbendtec.org.

## Connecting with faith and daily life in living the Beatitudes

**Washington** – “What does it mean to pass beyond fear and live our faith every day?” A new book by the associate general secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) explores this question by drawing on the account of the Beatitudes from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

grace. The image is rooted in the Gospels and the opening words of the second Eucharistic prayer at Mass.

“Fr. Bransfield proposes the mysterious woman at the well as our guide to the Christian virtues we find presented in the Beatitudes, virtues for which we should strive: poverty in spirit, gentleness, solidarity with those who suffer loss, justice, mercy, purity of heart,

In the Beatitudes, Jesus describes how we can live as his followers and enjoy God's blessings in this life and in the next.

“Grace, God's love for us, is a strong and persistent fountain that flows into our souls and shows forth

*“Grace, God's love for us, is a strong and persistent fountain that flows into our souls and shows forth in our actions.”*

In “Living the Beatitudes: A Journey to Life in Christ,” published by Pauline Books and Media, Fr. J. Brian Bransfield examines how the Beatitudes are a daily reality and that the path to holiness is not reserved for a select few, but open to all.

in our actions,” said Fr. Bransfield in the book's introduction. The book highlights that, no matter how much people search, Jesus is also searching for them in and through the Church. This search, Fr. Bransfield writes, is carried out in the work of the Holy Spirit who, through his gifts, builds the virtues in people's hearts that prompt them to live the Beatitudes.

peace, and the ability to suffer persecution for what is right.”

The book uses the anonymous Samaritan woman at the well from the Gospel of St. John as someone whose experiences of being lost, misdirected, and searching – are reflected in many people's daily lives.

“The most important journey of all is the one we make to God who is the source of life,” wrote USCCB secretary, Bishop George Murry, SJ, of Youngstown, Ohio, in the book's foreword.

Fr. Bransfield is a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He received his doctorate in moral theology from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. He previously served as professor of moral theology at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia. He is also the author of the best-selling book, “The Human Person: According to John Paul II.”

(courtesy of [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org))

## New Ulm diocese well represented at national CCW convention in Chicago



Representing the Diocese of New Ulm at the NCCW Convention in Chicago were: front row, l-r: Sr. Elizabeth Gruenes, Shirley Nowak (newly installed province director), Lori Dahlberg, Audrey Prokosch (DCCW president), Chris Helderscheidt (DCCW vice-president), Donna Sanders, JoAnne Griebel, and Carol Brown. Back row: Kathy Urban, Mary Ann Kramer, Renee Kodet, Luanne Kucera, Ronda Mathiowetz, Dawn Brewers, Roselin Jonas, Maureen Reiner, Sherry Johnson, and Msgr. Eugene Lozinski (DCCW diocesan moderator). Not pictured: Sharon Van Moer and Lorraine Weverka.

**Chicago** – Catholic women interested in spiritual enrichment, leadership development, and service to the Church and society gathered Nov. 9-12 in Chicago for the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) annual convention. Eighteen members of the Diocese of New Ulm attended.

The NCCW is an organization that began in 1920. It works to support, empower, and educate all Catholic

women in spirituality, leadership, and service by responding with Gospel values to the current needs of the Church and society in the modern world.

The theme of this year's convention was "Campaign for Human Dignity: Love in Action," which encompassed several issues: protecting marriage and families by working to end pornography, especially through the Internet and

cell phone use; ending the trafficking of human persons; promoting pro-life efforts; and sharing the Church's teaching on Blessed Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. Other issues were comprehensive, compassionate immigration reform and a Catholic response to climate change and its disproportionate effect on the poor. For more information visit [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org).

## Woman of the Year nominations sought



The New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women will again be presenting the Woman of the Year Award at their annual convention to be held at the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Marshall on Saturday, April 28, 2012. Contact your parish CCW president for additional information or for a nomination form. Each nominee will be judged on how she has carried on the mission of Christ in her family, Church, community, and especially in her involvement with the Council of Catholic Women. The deadline to send your nomination is Jan. 30, 2012.

### Past recipients

Marilyn DeGrote	1992	Angela Coudron	2002
Mary Vieyra	1993	Rose Jonas	2003
Dorothy Rourk	1994	Paula Spranger	2004
Arliss Stenger	1995	Elizabeth Mohr	2005
Betty Merritt	1996	Doris Weise	2006
Betty Heymans	1997	Kathy Wichmann	2007
Elaine McRaith	1998	Sherry Johnson	2008
Doris Foley	1999	Nancy Hanna	2009
Martha Polfliet	2000	Cloe Klinkner	2010
Donna Helget	2001	Dolores Brunner	2011

## Christ comes to fulfill our hopes

In C.S. Lewis's "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe," the White Witch has made it always winter and never Christmas. Think of it: every morning cold, every afternoon dark, and no holy days to look forward to. What a bleak prospect!

Sometimes my spiritual life seems to be under the same spell. Day after day, I see no progress in prayer or virtue. I am tempted to give up.

Why keep trying, only to fail? But there is no winning

the spiritual battle without fighting. As long as I persevere, there is hope of conquering in the end. I need to refocus my eyes on Christ and take them off of myself. This is not easy, but it is what Advent – and our entire life as Catholics – is about.

St. Paul frequently exhorts his readers not to be discouraged. In Philippians 1:6 he writes, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." He also states that Christ is the fulfillment of all God's promises (2 Cor 1:20). If we hope in Jesus to be sanctified, we will not be disappointed (see Rom 5:1-5).

St. Therese of Lisieux loved to quote the words of her spiritual father, St. John of the Cross: "We obtain from God as much as we hope from Him" (Dark Night of the Soul II, XXI, 8). John of the Cross was the master guide through the darkness that is common among people growing in prayer and virtue.

Therese spent most of her religious life in this dark night. But, like Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who likewise spent years in spiritual darkness, she exuded a constant peace and joy. These women hoped against hope that one day the darkness would be lifted and they would see Our Lord. They are now gazing on his face in heaven. They believed in Christmas, and they beheld the coming of Christ.

We too need to trust that Christ will be faithful to his word, no matter how little progress we see in our spiritual

lives. After all, our sanctification depends on him, not ourselves. If we could have become holy through our own efforts, Christ's birth would not have been necessary.



### God Alone Suffices

by Connie Rossini

We read in Romans, "Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently" (Rom 8:24-25). We must be like the child who asks his parents for a special gift and fully expects to receive it,

even when there is no package of the right size and shape under the Christmas tree. He believes, because he has a promise from someone trustworthy. His hope is not based on what he can see.

Jesus was born in the dark and the cold. This reveals the paradox that darkness or our own cold-heartedness may be just what we need in order to see God. Our powerlessness to overcome our sins can be transformed into the strength to rely completely on him. Hope and humility may flourish where lesser virtues refuse to sprout.

So, despite the lack of measurable growth, I go back to prayer each day. I continue to battle against sin in my life. I take as my motto the words of St. Faustina Kowalska, "Jesus, I trust in you."

I try to accept the cold, the dark, or whatever other trial there may be, and pray that with the Church I may "wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ." For, even if it is always winter, no creature under heaven can prevent the coming of Christmas.

*Connie Rossini is a parishioner of the Church of St. George, West Newton Township, and a member of the Council of Catholic Women. She is a permanently professed member of the Third Order of Discalced Carmelites.*

## Christmas traditions – Christian origins

by Ann Przybilla, director  
diocesan Office of Worship

As we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth, life can easily become consumed with many traditions, such as trimming the tree, baking sweet treats, and giving gifts. These tasks can quickly turn into an endless "to-do" list with little remembrance of their origins and meanings. Understanding the true Christian meaning behind these activities may help us to enjoy them and to better prepare our hearts for welcoming Christ, the true reason for the season.



**Christmas** – The celebration of Jesus' birth was observed as early as the fourth century. It was known as the feast of the Natale (birthday) of the Christ the Sun. The Church wished to add this commemoration to the annual observance of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. It helped to bring a Christian meaning to pagan celebrations of the time that resisted religious significance. In the year 1038 the term "Christ's Mass" was first used, giving rise to our word for the celebration, "Christmas."

**Christmas Carols** – The first Christmas carols were poems set to Latin hymns or chants. The text to "Of the Father's Love Begotten" was written in the fourth century and it is still sung in some churches to this day. The practice of Christmas caroling seems to have evolved from a few combined customs: the pagan custom of wassailing, joined with the Franciscan religious practice of lauda, and dancing in a circle at the time of the winter solstice. Lauda were joyous and happy religious folk songs whereas wassailing involved singing door to door while driving away evil spirits and drinking to the health of those visited.

**The Christmas Tree** – This German custom is believed to be part legend and part history. St. Boniface is credited with cutting down an oak tree that was about to be used for a human sacrifice to an idol god in celebration of the winter solstice. As a Christian symbol, the

evergreen tree, pointing upward toward heaven with its green branches, signifies eternal life.

**Nativity Scene** – As early as the sixth century there is evidence of the use of an outdoor manger scene at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome. The practice became widespread with the help of St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century. "I desire to represent the birth of that Child in Bethlehem in such a way that with our bodily eyes we may see what he suffered for lack of the necessities of a newborn babe and how he lay in a manger between the ox and ass" (Nesta Robeck, "The Christmas Crib," Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1956, p. 45). The tradition of animals being a part of the Nativity scene comes from two Old Testament passages: Isaiah 1:3 and Habakkuk 3:2. Today it is a custom to have a nativity scene in the home and also at the church.

**Las Posadas (Spanish for "the inns")** – This is an Advent preparation for Christmas. Based on a passage the Gospel of Luke (2:1-9), it symbolizes the trials that Mary and Joseph endured before finding a place where Jesus could be born. Each night a family in a neighborhood will schedule a Posada to be held at their home, starting on Dec. 16 and finishing on Dec. 24 (Noche Buena or Christmas Eve).

**Our Lady of Guadalupe** – In the year 1521, Our Lady appeared to an Indian convert named Juan Diego. She left a marvelous portrait of

herself on his mantle. The image is of a woman with Indian features and dark skin, full of symbols of the Indian culture and religious significance. The stars represent constellations that are visible in the winter sky in Mexico. The nine flowers represent abundance and new life. Mary is also depicted with a pregnancy sash around her waist, indicating her role as the virgin bearer of Christ.

**Lit Candles (in the window)** – This is an Irish custom. When the king of England forbade the Irish from practicing their faith, Christians began to celebrate it in secret. The Irish would place lit candles in the windows and leave the doors unlocked to indicate to priests that this was a Christian home where they were welcome to offer Mass.

**Advent Calendar** – This custom began in Germany around 1851 as a Protestant activity to mark the days of waiting for Christmas. It has become popular among Roman Catholic families over the years. In some Scandinavian countries, large buildings are used as a type of Advent calendar with a different window being lighted every night up to the celebration of Christmas. Calendars can include chocolates or other surprises behind each door or window that is opened every day leading up to Christmas.

## Putting "Christ" in the center of your Christmas

by Jake Frost

Scripture says "the preparation of a festive banquet is no light matter for one who thus seeks to give enjoyment to others" (2 Mc 2:27). Parents working to make a special Christmas know how true this is.

When I was a kid, Christmas was my favorite time of year. So many little things added up to a season of wonder. One day we would come home from school to find Christmas garlands lining the banisters with green ivy and red bows, the Christmas village in the bay window, and the Christmas throw-rug my mom hand-knit in front of the fireplace. We knew Christmas was on the way.

I remember Dad reading stories out loud – "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," "The Gift of the Magi," the Nativity story from the Bible – while we kids lay on the Christmas rug, with a crackling fire and the smell of the Christmas tree filling the house.

Each of us kids had our own special ornaments for the tree. Every St. Nicholas day, tucked away amidst the chocolates filling the biggest pair of shoes we could find to leave out, would be a new Christmas ornament. Mom and Dad labeled them with the year. Now it's amazing to see numbers like "1970" on the ornaments and realize how far back these traditions go.

The Creche was a family treasure. The stable was handmade by one grandfather, the Nativity figures by the other. The manger started Advent empty. There was a basket of straw next to the stable and when we did something good, we were allowed to put some straw in the manger. We had to try our hardest to make a comfortable bed for Jesus in time for Christmas morning.

While we kids vied for rights to put straw in the manger, mom baked like she was provisioning an army: cookies, fudge, caramel corn ... bin

after bin of deliciousness. Then there was the Advent wreath, lighting the candles every night during the Rosary, the Advent calendar ... midnight Mass ... so many memories, so many traditions.

Now that I am a parent, I realize those memories and traditions didn't just happen on their own. Someone had to make them happen. That meant a lot of work. At Christmas, we kids were sponges soaking up Christmas cheer, while mom and dad were sponges getting squeezed to make it. Creating joy takes effort.

I want to make memories like that for my kids, to leave them traditions they can pass on to their children one day. I just didn't know it would be so hard! But when the demands of the season seem overwhelming, it's good to remember what Jesus told us: "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life" (Mt 20:28). "If I ... have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet ... as I have done for you, you should also do" (Jn 13:14-15).

Parenting is a vocation of service, even unto quite literally washing the feet of another. That's another memory we can leave our kids – and I don't mean the memory of washing their little baby feet. I mean the memory of parents working, with good cheer, to make a special holiday. An example of giving, serving, striving for another's joy. The sort of example that helps put Christ in the center of Christmas, not just through words (which are important too), but also through deeds. They may not appreciate the lesson now, but when it comes time for them to squeeze Christmas cheer out of their own souls, hopefully they will have soaked up enough to fill the next generation.

*Jake Frost is an attorney turned stay-at-home dad and freelance writer.*

## Sleepy Eye Knights Section 2A champions!

*recent trip to Metrodome a dream come true*



Under head coach Brent Kucera, the Sleepy Eye St. Mary's Knights ended their regular season as Section 2A champions. They were also winners in the state quarterfinals. (photo by Sam Patet)

by Sam Patet  
*The Prairie Catholic*

For Kyle Krzmarzick, a senior at St. Mary's High School in Sleepy Eye, playing football in the Metrodome was a dream come true.

"I've always dreamed of playing in the Metrodome," he said. "Growing up as a little kid watching Vikings games, you're like, 'I wish I could do that someday.'"

Krzmarzick's dream was realized when St. Mary's football team went head-to-head against Mahanomen High School in the Class A state tournament semifinals. The semifinal game was held at the Metrodome on Nov. 18.

St. Mary's lost to Mahanomen 32-12; nevertheless, Bruce Woitas, athletic director at St. Mary's, said he is proud at how the football team

did this year. "Our football team has been playing very well in the playoffs," Woitas said. "We've been blessed as a school and community just for the success that they've had this year."

Under the direction of second-year head coach Brent Kucera, St. Mary's Knights went from a 3-6 record in 2010 to a 9-4 record in 2011.

Kucera's first year with the team "was a rough year, but very competitive," Woitas said. "This year things just seemed to gel. I think the kids have believed in his system, what he's trying to do, and we have the athletes that are able to execute."

The Knights' march to the Metrodome gained momentum on Nov. 4 when they defeated the New Ulm Cathedral Greyhounds 44-18,

making them the 2011 Section 2A state champions. One week later, the Knights' defeated Adrian High School 34-15 in the state quarterfinals.

While the Knights didn't advance to the championship game, playing football was a worthwhile experience for each and every player.

Jordan Anderson, an 11th grader and the Knights' quarterback, said playing football since the sixth grade has taught him what it means to be a leader. "It's really made me have to accept a lot of responsibilities, which I looked forward to," he said.

Krzmarzick agreed. "For me, football has changed my life in a lot of ways," he said. "It really taught me how to be a leader, and how to work hard for something, and that hard work pays off in the end; that's a big part of life."

An important part of St. Mary's football program is the Catholic faith. The players attended 7:15 a.m. Mass three times during the season, and Kucera led them in prayers before games, including the "Memorare," the St. Mary's school prayer, and the Hail Mary. Making sure prayer is a part of their warm-ups is "all about being together and hoping God guides us to victory," Krzmarzick said.

## Upcoming Events

### SPRINGFIELD LIVE NATIVITY PAGEANT

— Dec. 9 and 10 at 7 p.m. The Nativity pageant is held outdoors on the Springfield football field. Free to the public.

### TOGETHER IN MINISTRY MONTHLY SESSION

Dec. 10 from 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Church of St. Anastasia in Hutchinson. The topic is RCIA, and will be led by Ann Przybilla, diocesan director of Worship and Ministry Formation. This session will focus on aspects involving the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), the preparation and rituals involved with those seeking initiation into the Catholic Church, the Rite of Acceptance/Welcoming, the Rite of Sending/Election, Scrutinies, and other rituals to give parish coordinators and parish teams the tools they need to assist candidates and catechumens in the process. Cost is \$10. To register, contact the diocesan Office of Lay Ministry, 507-359-2966; aprzybilla@dnu.org.

**ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE** will be held Dec. 11 at 4 p.m. at the Church of St. Aloysius, Olivia. Everyone is invited. Bring baby Jesus figure from your home manger scene for Bishop John M. LeVoi to bless during the service. There will also be a blessing on families and expectant mothers as they prepare for Jesus' birth. In keeping with the Advent season, a "swaddling clothes" collection (blankets, sleepers,

layette items) will be taken for babies in need and given to the San Lucas Mission and area Birthright Centers. Cash donations will be taken for First Choice Pregnancy Services in New Ulm. For further information, call the Diocesan Pastoral Center in New Ulm, 507-359-2966.

### GOOD SHEPHERD SERRA CLUB

meets Jan. 5 at Divine Providence Chapel and Marian Conference room, Sleepy Eye, beginning with Rosary and Mass at 7 p.m. A program and lunch follows. Come early for Eucharistic Adoration. January meeting will feature several youth who attended the 2011 World Youth Day in Spain. Everyone is welcome. Call 507-747-2181, for further information.

### VIRTUAL LEARNING

**COMMUNITY FOR FAITH FORMATION (VLCFF) Cycle 1** – Jan. 8 – Feb. 11. VLCFF is an Internet-based e-learning initiative for adult faith and catechist formation, anytime and anywhere. Registration closes Jan. 4. Sponsored by the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives of the University of Dayton and the Diocese of New Ulm. Contact Bryan Reising, 507-359-2966; breising@dnu.org or visit <http://vlc.udayton.edu>. Scholarships are available for those involved in catechetical ministry.



## Were you married in 1946 or before?

"The Prairie Catholic" would like to honor couples who are members of a parish in the Diocese of New Ulm and will be celebrating a 65th, 70th (or beyond) wedding anniversary in 2012. There is no charge for this listing. Complete the form below and return it, along with a current photograph to "The Prairie Catholic," 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, Minn. 56073 by Dec. 31, 2011. Your announcement will be featured in the February 2012 edition.

Groom's name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bride's MAIDEN name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parish married in \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date married \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of years married as of 2012 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parish to which you presently belong \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone number you can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE

2012

### DIOCESAN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

*This award is presented to members of the diocese in recognition of outstanding service in some leadership capacity to the Diocese of New Ulm over a period of years. Up to five awards will be presented by Bishop John M. LeVoi immediately following the annual Bishop Lucker Lecture March 18, 2012, in Redwood Falls.*

Forms for nominations, as well as a listing of past recipients, are posted on the diocesan Web site, [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org), or contact Penny Forst at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; 507-359-2966; e-mail: [pforst@dnu.org](mailto:pforst@dnu.org).

**DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS JANUARY 2, 2012.**

# THE DRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 26 No. 4 December 2011



"For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, upon David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever."

Isaiah 9:5-6  
(From Christmas Mass at Midnight, Year C)

MARY AND CHRIST CHILD STAINED GLASS WINDOW  
CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL, GAYLORD

## catholic trends

**Washington – The 24th national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR)** will be taken up in most U.S. parishes Dec. 10-11, 2011. Sponsored by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, the annual appeal asks Catholics to Share in the Care of more than 34,000 women and men religious past age 70 who benefit from the collection.

"We are continually humbled by the generosity shown this appeal," said NRRO executive

director Sr. Janice Bader, a member of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Mo. "Since the fund was launched in 1988, Catholics have donated \$643 million to assist religious communities in caring for their elder members."

The real challenge for many religious communities is a lack of retirement savings. Most senior religious worked for years for small stipends. There were no retirement plans. As religious continue to age, fewer members are able to serve in compensated

ministry, leading to a sharp decrease in income. By 2019, the National Religious Retirement Office data projects that retired religious will outnumber wage-earning religious by nearly four to one. For more information, visit [www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org).

**Washington – In advance of the 2012 elections,** the U.S. bishops reaffirmed their 2007 document, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," in this coming election cycle and beyond, as the "continuing teaching of our Bishops' Conference and our guidance for Catholics in the exercise of their rights and duties as participants in our democracy."

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), joined the chairs of nine USCCB committees in offering an Introductory Note to the document.

"We urge our Catholic pastors

and people to continue to use this important statement to help them form their consciences, to contribute to civil and respectful public dialogue, and to shape their choices in the coming election in the light of Catholic teaching," the bishops wrote.

The Introductory Note does not modify or interpret the document itself, but rather emphasizes the importance of religious freedom. It raises six "current and fundamental problems: abortion and threats to the lives and dignity of the vulnerable, sick, or unwanted; threats to Catholic ministries, including health care, education, and social services, to violate their consciences or stop serving those in need;

intensifying efforts to redefine marriage; unemployment, poverty, and debt; immigration; and wars, terror, and violence, particularly in the Middle East.

The document with the new Introductory Note is available online: [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/Forming-Consciences-for-Faithful-Citizenship-2011.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/Forming-Consciences-for-Faithful-Citizenship-2011.pdf).

In addition, a new USCCB Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship Web site has been launched. Visit [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/).

Tune in for  
*Advent/Christmas Radio Messages*  
from Bishop John M. LeVoir  
**Broadcast on**



KNUJ Radio (860 AM)  
daily at  
approximately 7:30 a.m.

KDUZ Radio (1260 AM)  
daily at  
approximately 8:05 a.m.