

# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 23 No. 5 January 2009



Catholic Schools Week  
January 25-30, 2009

## Annual national celebration highlights important role of Catholic schools across the country

by Karla Cross, diocesan director of Catholic Schools

Catholic Schools Week is an annual national celebration of the important role that Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the country play in providing a values-embedded education for America's young people.

It is not a value-added education

but values are embedded throughout each and every school day and school subject area.

The 16 elementary and three high schools within the Diocese of New Ulm are proud of their educational network that emphasizes intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical, and social values in their students. Together we celebrate the high standards of excellence and the quality of the education available to all students in Catholic schools.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2009 is "Catholic Schools Celebrate Service." The Catholic schools within the diocese have planned activities throughout the

week of January 25-30 that express the Catholic Schools Week theme. The schools' events are part of the annual celebration of the nation's 7,500 Catholic schools and their contribution to their communities and the world. Although the students, staff, and families take one special week to recognize this value, the entire school year is spent living it!

### It all began in 1974

The Catholic Schools Week celebration became an annual event in 1974. The first national Catholic Schools Week slogan also emphasized service as one of the distinguishing qualities of Catholic Schools-the theme was "Different

Where It Counts: Message, Community, Service" (themes from the USCCB document *To Teach as Jesus Did*).

### Putting faith into action

It should not be a surprise that "service" continually reoccurs as a part of the CSW theme. One of the hallmarks of Catholic education is its emphasis on putting faith into action. Jesus asks us to serve others and advocate for justice in order to build the kingdom of God. Catholic schools have a long, proud tradition of serving the larger Church and community through service projects each year. This school year, the students and staffs within the schools of the Diocese of New Ulm

have pledged a total of approximately 40,000 service hours. Sharing their time and talents for others, with others, for the betterment of others is a commitment of each school each and every year. Helping others, especially the poor, is not optional in our faith, but is fundamental to it. The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching focus on solving long-term, systemic problems in society, like homelessness, poverty, and violence. This is a part of the education we provide youth and strive to live out in the Catholic schools.

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## MN Catholic bishops call for compassionate dialogue on comprehensive immigration reform

**Saint Paul, MN** - On the two year anniversary of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid of the Swift and Co. meat packing plant in Worthington, MN, the Minnesota Catholic bishops are asking Catholics throughout the state to renew their commitment to welcoming newcomers.

Anti-immigrant sentiment continues to divide communities throughout Minnesota and recent immigration raids have had a devastating impact on immigrant families and our rural communities. In the context of a new administration and new Congress, the

**STATEWIDE IMMIGRATION  
SUNDAY!  
January 4, 2009**

Minnesota Catholic bishops released a joint statement on December 12, 2008, calling for comprehensive immigration reform and strategies to reduce global poverty.

Representatives of both the Minnesota and

United States' Conferences of Catholic Bishops have discussed the long term fallout from the Swift raid and have announced the launch of the statewide "Immigration Sunday," set for January 4, 2009. This statewide celebration will serve as an opportunity for education and reflection in the Catholic community about biblical teachings on immigration and the reality faced by so many hard working immigrant families and the need to fix our broken immigration system.

(read the bishops' statement, pg. 8)

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**Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP,**

**vocation awareness**

## BE NOT AFRAID

### "Two important documents"



Bishop John M. LeVoir

Two important documents were released recently. One document is Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 World Day of Peace message. The Pope's message is entitled: *"Fighting Poverty To Build Peace."* The other document is entitled: *"Dignitas Personae"* (*"The Dignity of a Person"*). It was issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The text was personally approved by Pope Benedict XVI. Let me summarize these two important documents. Both can be found on the Vatican website ([www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)).

The Holy Father begins his World Day of Peace message by quoting Pope John Paul II. "Our world", he wrote, "shows increasing evidence of another grave threat to peace: many individuals and indeed whole peoples

are living today in conditions of extreme poverty. The gap between rich and poor has become more marked, even in the most economically developed nations. This is a problem which the conscience of humanity cannot ignore, since the conditions in which a great number of people are living are an insult to their innate dignity and as a result are a threat to the authentic and harmonious progress of the world community."

By being attentive to world events, we learn of the extreme poverty that exists in some parts of the world. Even in our own country there is a significant disparity of material wealth between the rich and the poor. A case in point is the plight of immigrants who seldom find a warm welcome in our country. They often live in fear and in the shadows of society.

The dignity of the human person is the basic principle that governs the relationship among peoples. Each person is an image of God. As such, each person has an infinite dignity and value. No one can put a price on the life of a human being. As an image of God, each person has certain rights with regard to the goods of the earth. Each person has a right to the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. Each person has

a right to work. These rights cannot be taken away from a person. However, poverty robs a person of these rights.

The Pope's message is primarily about material poverty. Nevertheless, he is aware that there are other forms of poverty as well. He mentions affective, moral and spiritual poverty. This type of poverty is seen in "people whose interior lives are disoriented and who experience various forms of malaise despite their economic prosperity."

Material poverty is often seen as a consequence of demographic change, says the Holy Father. This means that some see the population increase in some parts of the world as the cause of material poverty. However, Benedict points out that recent studies show that "population is proving to be an asset, not a factor that contributes to poverty."

Another cause of material poverty is disease, such as the pandemic diseases of malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS. Here the Holy Father calls for proper health care for people, which, of course, excludes any anti-life measures that some see (falsely) as a solution to health problems. Where there is a spread of AIDS, the Pope states that "educational campaigns are needed, aimed especially at the

young; to promote a sexual ethic that fully corresponds to the dignity of the person."

The Pope also speaks of child poverty. About half of those living in poverty are children. Benedict teaches that certain objectives should take priority with regard to children living in poverty, such as "caring for mothers, commitment to education, access to vaccines, medical care and drinking water, safeguarding the environment, and above all, commitment to defense of the family and the stability of relations within it."

The relationship between disarmament and development is also discussed by the Pope's message. He notes that excessive amounts of resources spent for military purposes diverts funds necessary for the authentic development of peoples. Therefore, he calls for dialogue to alleviate conflicts, especially military conflicts, which will free up more funds for development.

Finally, the Pope talks about the current food crisis. As he points out, "This crisis is characterized not so much by a shortage of food, as by difficulty in gaining access to it and by different forms of speculation: in

(continued on page 9)

## Bishop's January Calendar

**Dec 29-Jan 5 Jacksonville, Florida:** Region VIII Bishops' Retreat.

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

**7 New Ulm:** 10:30 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Vocations Team Meeting.

**9-10 Duluth:** Classes for Deacon Candidates.

**12 New Ulm:** 1:00 p.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Catholic Charities Meeting.

**13 Olivia:** 12:30 p.m. Church of St. Aloysius. Committee on Parishes Meeting.

**15 St. Paul:** 3:00 p.m. St. Paul Seminary. Board of Trustees Meeting.

**18 Willmar:** 4:00 p.m. United Methodist Church. Christian Unity Prayer Service.

**New Ulm:** 6:00 p.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. *Lectio Divina* Prayer Group Gathering.

**21 Glencoe:** 7:00 p.m. Church of St. Pius X. Pro-Life Presentation.

**24 Glencoe:** 5:30 p.m. Church of St. Pius X. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

**Glencoe:** 6:30 p.m. Church of St. Pius X. Knights of Columbus Dinner.

**26 Mankato:** 9:00 a.m. Loyola Catholic School/Fitzgerald Gym. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

**St. Peter:** 1:00 p.m. Church of St. Peter. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

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

**28 Wabasso:** 8:30 a.m. Church of St. Anne. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

**Springfield:** 1:00 p.m. Church of St. Raphael. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

**29 Winsted:** 8:15 a.m. Church of the Holy Trinity. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

**Hutchinson:** 1:00 p.m. Church of St. Anastasia. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

**30 Sleepy Eye:** 8:20 a.m. Church of St. Mary. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

**New Ulm:** 1:30 p.m. New Ulm Area Catholic Schools/Cathedral High School Gym. Mass for Catholic Schools Week.



## Postcard campaign opposing Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) set for January 24-25

At the U.S. Catholic bishops' general meeting last November, Cardinal Francis E. George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), issued a statement welcoming the historic nature of the election and committing the Church to work on issues of economic justice, immigration, education, health care, religious freedom and peace at home and abroad. At the heart of the statement was a message of deep concern about potential efforts to advance pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders that would create a "fundamental right" to abortion and overturn laws protecting parental involvement and conscience rights and those preventing partial-birth abortion and

taxpayer funding of abortion. The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) would undo virtually all of the

expand abortion. The goal of the campaign is to educate people in Catholic parishes about the dangers of FOCA and to encourage parishioners to communicate their concerns about FOCA to their U.S. senators and representatives. It is

"The goal of the campaign is to educate people in Catholic parishes about the dangers of FOCA and to encourage parishioners to communicate their concerns about FOCA to their U.S. senators and representatives."

reasonable, hard-won protection for children in the womb and their mothers. Elements of this legislation could also jeopardize health care reform, PEPFAR, and other important priorities.

a way to demonstrate commitment to the dignity of human life from conception to natural death.

The campaign will be promoted in the Diocese of New Ulm on the weekend of January 24-25, 2009.

### POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

The USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities has authorized a major postcard campaign to communicate opposition to any legislation, particularly FOCA, that would

More information about the campaign and FOCA is available at [www.nchla.org/issues.asp?ID=50](http://www.nchla.org/issues.asp?ID=50) and [www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/FOCA](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/FOCA).

## Rev. Myles P. McGowan dies at the age of 88



Father McGowan

Rev. Myles Patrick McGowan died Wednesday, November 26, 2008, at the age of 88.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Friday, December 5, 2008, at the Lumen Christi Catholic Community in St. Paul, MN, with burial at Resurrection Cemetery in St. Paul.

Father McGowan was born December 1, 1919, in Mohill, County Leitrim, Ireland and was ordained June 3, 1945 at St. Patrick's Seminary in Carlow, Ireland by Bishop Thomas Keogh for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul, MN. [Two of Father McGowan's uncles were priests of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul – Fathers John and Peter O'Neill. A great uncle, Msgr. Patrick O'Neill, had served the Archdiocese for sixty years.] Due to the war, Fr. McGowan did not arrive in Minnesota until May 8, 1946. He served as associate pastor of the

Church of St. Michael in St Paul, MN [assisting his uncle, Fr. John O'Neill], Holy Rosary in Graceville, and St. John in St. Paul. Father McGowan served as pastor of the Church of the Assumption in Assumption, and St. John in Morton. He continued his priestly ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm when it was established on November 18, 1957. Parishes he served as pastor in the Diocese of New Ulm include the Church of St. Eloi in Ghent, St. Philip in Litchfield, St. Gertrude in Forest City, St. Peter in St. Peter, St. Anne in Wabasso, and St. Mathias in Wanda.

In addition to parish ministry, Father McGowan served on the Diocesan Board of Education, the Diocesan College of Consultants, was State Chaplain of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, State Chaplain of the Minnesota State Board Ancient Order of Hibernians and a member of the 4th degree Knights of Columbus.

Father McGowan retired from active ministry on January 11, 1990, and resided at the Leo C. Byrne Residence in St. Paul, MN.

During his retirement years, he helped out in many parishes both in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and in the Diocese of New Ulm.

## Father Bissonette named administrator of Duluth diocese

Fr. James Bissonette of the Diocese of Duluth was named administrator December 4, 2008, which was left vacant by Bishop Dennis Schnurr who was named coadjutor archbishop of Cincinnati October 17, 2008.

Archbishop Schnurr, who served Duluth for seven years, was welcomed to the Ohio archdiocese during a December 7 Mass.

Father Bissonette, judicial vicar and

chancellor in Duluth, will oversee the diocese until Pope Benedict XVI names a new bishop.



Father Bissonette

He was ordained a priest August 17, 1988, for the Duluth diocese.

He has served at several parishes in the diocese, most recently as pastor of St. James in Duluth.



## Diocesan Ministries Appeal inspires generous response

have already reached their goal. A number of these parishes have significantly surpassed their goal enabling them to fund parish projects.

These pledges and cash gifts have come from 4,348 households. As a new dimension to this year's Appeal, initial letters to households that had never made a pledge to previous Appeals received a special card with their flier and gift envelope. The special card contained Bishop LeVoir's picture and the following quotation from him. "This year I'm going to be a first time giver to the Diocesan Ministries Appeal. Why? Because the DMA supports good and worthwhile projects around the diocese. Won't you join me as a first time giver?"

The following parish communities in the diocese have already achieved their goal in pledges: Appleton, Arlington, Beardsley, Benson, Bird Island, Canby, Clara City, Cottonwood, Darwin, Gaylord, Ghent, Gibbon, Glencoe, Graceville, Granite Falls, Green Isle, Green Valley, Hector, Henderson, Hutchinson, Ivanhoe, Kandiyohi, Lake Benton, Lake Leo, St. Peter, Seaforth, Silver Lake, Sleepy Eye, Spicer, Stewart, Tracy, Tyler, Wabasso, Walnut Grove, Wanda, Watkins, West Newton Twp., Wilno, Willmar, and Winthrop.

Good news! There have been over 500 first time givers to this year's Appeal.

by Wayne Pelzel, director Office of Development

In the face of recent economic challenges the 2008 Diocesan Ministries Appeal continues its growth. As of December 23, 2008, pledges to the annual Appeal have grown to \$985,800.

As of December 23, 2008, the Appeal has generated \$777,384 in cash. Using pledges to the Appeal as the guide, a long list of parishes





## No Tengas Miedo por Obispo John M. LeVoir

### *Dos Documentos importantes*

Recientemente dos documentos importantes fueron publicados. El primer documento es el mensaje de su Santidad Benedicto XVI para la celebración de la Jornada Mundial de la Paz. El título de su mensaje: "Combatir la Pobreza, Construir la Paz." El otro documento se titula: "Dignitas Personae" ("La dignidad de la Persona").

El Santo Padre inicia su mensaje a la Jornada Mundial de la Paz al citar el mensaje del Papa Juan Pablo II. "Nuestro Mundo," y dice, otra seria amenaza para la paz: muchas personas, es más, poblaciones enteras viven hoy en condiciones de extrema pobreza. La desigualdad entre ricos y pobres se ha hecho más evidente, incluso en las naciones más desarrolladas económicamente. Se trata de un problema que se plantea a la conciencia de la humanidad, puesto que las condiciones en que se encuentra un gran número de personas son tales que ofenden su dignidad innata y comprometen, por consiguiente, el auténtico y armónico progreso de la comunidad mundial."

Al estar atentos a los acontecimientos del mundo, aprendemos de la pobreza extrema que existe en algunas partes del mundo. Incluso en nuestro propio país hay una diferencia significativa de la riqueza material entre los ricos y los pobres. Un ejemplo es la condición difícil de los inmigrantes que raramente encuentran una cálida bienvenida en nuestro país. A menudo ellos viven en miedo y en las sombras de la sociedad.

La dignidad de la persona es el principio básico que gobierna la relación entre las personas. Toda persona es una creación a imagen de Dios. Como tal, toda persona tiene una dignidad y un valor infinito. Nadie puede poner un precio a la vida de un ser humano. Como imagen de Dios, cada persona tiene ciertos derechos con respecto al bien común de la tierra. Toda persona tiene el derecho a las necesidades básicas de la vida: alimento, ropa y refugio. Toda persona tiene el derecho a trabajar. Esos derechos no se pueden privar a la persona. Sin embargo, la pobreza roba a la persona de esos derechos.

El Santo Padre ofrece asistencia a la Iglesia a terminar la pobreza indicando: "La marginación de los pobres del planeta sólo puede encontrar instrumentos válidos de emancipación en la globalización si todo hombre se siente personalmente herido por las injusticias que hay en el mundo y por las violaciones de los derechos humanos vinculadas a ellas. La Iglesia, que es «signo e instrumento de la íntima unión con Dios y de la unidad de todo el género humano, continuará ofreciendo su aportación para que se superen las injusticias e incomprendiones, y se llegue a construir un mundo más pacífico y solidario."

El otro documento que recientemente fue publicado "La Dignidad de la Persona." Este documento se ocupa de éticas médicas a inicios de la vida humana. Éstos son ediciones complejas y es esencial que la Iglesia enseñe sobre ellos. Las ediciones que enseñan este documento son: investigación de las células madres, las píldoras, terapia genética, adopción entre otros.

El principio sobre el cual este documento se basa es similar al principio empleado en el mensaje del Santo Padre para el "Día Mundial de la Paz," es decir, la dignidad y el valor inherente de cada persona humana, es creado a imagen de Dios.

## Citizenship - a *coveted* gift for those who journey to seek it

by Sr. Anna Marie Reha, SSND  
Director of Hispanic Ministry  
Diocese of New Ulm

Citizenship is one of the most coveted gifts that the U.S. government can bestow, and the most important immigration benefit that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services can grant. Most people become U.S. citizens in one of two ways: by birth, either within the territory of the United States or to U.S. citizen parents, or by Naturalization.

### WHAT IS NATURALIZATION?

Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is conferred upon a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The general requirements for administrative naturalization include:

- a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the United States as a lawful permanent resident ("green card" holder);
- an ability to read, write, and speak and understand simple words and phrases in English;
- a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of U.S. history and government;
- good moral character;
- attachment to and can support the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and,
- can swear allegiance to the United States.

Depending on where and when you choose to file your application, the period of time between sending in the completed application and the interview to become a U.S. Citizen can vary from five months to more than two years.

Each immigrant comes to the United States searching for a better life for him or herself as well as for their family.



Permanent U.S. resident, Maria Vasquez, pictured with her children who are U.S. citizens, hopes to one day soon become a U.S. citizens as well. *(photo by Sr. Anna Marie Reha, SSND)*

### A PERSONAL JOURNEY

María Vasquez, originally from Guanajuato, Mexico, and a "green card" holder, came to the United States for the first time 13 years ago with her parents to do agricultural work in the state of Georgia. They found it hard to adjust to the culture and missed home and so after two years they returned to Mexico. But after finding that they still could not make ends meet they returned to the U.S.

After marrying, María and her husband, who was working in construction, lived in several different places. But now María, who has lived in Gaylord, MN, for four years, considers this home.

She says, "Gaylord is a pleasant town, quiet and safe, and a good place to raise a family." She has four children; the oldest is in second grade.

Last year a friend received her citizenship and encouraged María to do the same. Upon considering it, she thought, "My children are U.S. citizens and there is no future for them in Mexico."

María only has a fifth grade education and knows that here her children will receive a good education and will have so many more opportunities than she had growing up.

Applying for citizenship required that she begin to take studying English seriously. With four young ones between the ages of eight and two there is not a lot of time for silence and studying. María said that her best study time was late at night after the children and her husband had gone to bed. She agonized as she learned the answers to such questions as, "How many branches are there in the government? And what does each do?"

María acknowledged that she needs to learn more English so that she can help her children with their school work and so that she can collaborate more in the broader community. But it is a challenge to bundle up three little ones in the cold of winter and take them with her to English classes where they demand attention and do not always let her study.

*(continued on page 8)*





# The Good News in Education

(continued from page 1)

Two different posters were produced and disseminated throughout the diocese about fourteen years ago that have the words, "Catholic Schools- Nurturing a Life of Service." We continue to nurture this life in the schools of the diocese but we are also learning we must celebrate this service. We want to share the "good news" of a Catholic school education with the many that are not experiencing the faith experience it provides for the students who attend.

Celebrating and being proud is not something that a humble people typically choose to do but this is "good news!" It cannot be kept as a secret to only those who have experienced it for themselves and now want to give their children the opportunity to experience this same faith-based education. We must share this "good news" with others- we must celebrate! We encourage others to discover for themselves the outstanding achievements of Catholic schools. We encourage those within the schools currently to share the "good news."

### Get involved!

Find out what the Catholic school in your community or a neighboring community is doing to celebrate! Find out what you can do to help the school to nurture a life of service of which it can celebrate!

The annual Catholic Schools Week celebration contributes in building community awareness of, and involvement in, Catholic schools throughout the diocese. Parents are encouraged to take full advantage of the benefits of local Catholic schools by enrolling their children in a Catholic school. CSW also is an occasion for schools to interest citizens in volunteering their time and talents to the local Catholic schools.

Come and help us Celebrate! Come and help us share the "Good News!" Come and be a part of the success of nurturing our youth to live "a life of service."

### March Prairie Catholic to cover Catholic Schools Week '09 events!

Watch for highlights relating to the events of Catholic Schools Week 2009 in the March issue of *The Prairie Catholic*.

*[Catholic Schools Week is a joint project of the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.]*



Good News from LITCHFIELD, MN  
St. Philip's School

This past Christmas, rather than exchanging presents with each other or with the school staff, the students

and staff of St. Philip Catholic School in Litchfield, MN, contributed toward class projects to share with those in need. Altogether the 82 students presented almost \$700 worth of Toys for Tots, Econofoods certificates for parish food baskets, and items from the parish giving tree. Class representatives presented these gifts to Fr. Joseph Steinbeisser, pastor of St. Philip parish at Mass on December 12 during their Advent retreat day.



Good News from TRACY, MN  
St. Mary's School

Students from St. Mary's School in Tracy collected ingredients to prepare 20 Thanksgiving meals! Each class collected 30 items that became part of the ingredients needed for a Thanksgiving meal. The 20 "meals" were delivered to the Food Shelf in Tracy. The food shelf was able to give away 20 frozen chickens at the same time to complete the menu. Pictured separately are grades K-2 (top photo) and grades 3-6 (bottom photo) with their bags before delivery.



## NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS

### *a Note from the Director of Vocations*

Fr. TODD PETERSEN

The Bishops of the United States have designated the week of January 11-17, 2009 as National Vocation Awareness Week. This special week in January begins with the *Feast of the Baptism of the*

*Lord*. There is no more appropriate feast to help us start becoming aware of our own vocations, and to help others to discern theirs.

We all have a vocation, a mission, that has been given by Christ to spread the Gospel message. National Vocation Awareness Week serves as a good reminder that all Christians are called to live out their baptismal commitment on a daily basis.

When John objects to Jesus' baptism, Jesus responds that it must be done to "fulfill all righteousness." His willingness to be baptized begins the fulfillment of God the Father's plan for salvation. Jesus embraces the waters of the Jordan as God-made-man, undoing the sin in the Garden of Eden as Eve and Adam took the forbidden fruit in an effort to become like gods. Jesus, as the sinless Son of God born of Mary, had no sin and no need of repentance. He identifies himself with those who recognize their sins, faults, and failings; those who know that no human being on his or her own can ever find redemption. In his baptism Jesus identifies himself with the human race as more than merely one who shares the human nature, but as one who is bringing true change. He accepts the baptism of John the Baptist and transforms it. In doing so, he inaugurates a new baptism, though not fully enacted until his death and resurrection.

Baptism begins a real transformation in us as we are given grace to respond to God's will. While we are given the grace to contend with the effects of original sin (death, sickness, concupiscence or disordered desire and darkened intellect), we are also given the ability to be transformed and to be in relationship with our creator. Baptism creates in us the ability to respond to the voice of God in a new way. We are given the opportunity not just to go back to the Garden, but to Heaven, into the very presence of the Holy Trinity.

Our life in God begins with baptism. Thus is the first sacrament of vocation. We all have a vocation, a particular role to play in God's plan of salvation. Some are called to sacraments of service, marriage and holy orders. Some are called to profess the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience and live as a priest, brother, sister, monk, or nun. But all are called!

This National Vocation Awareness Week we should call to mind the great gift of our baptism and pray that we would be able to cooperate with the grace that God gives us through it. For those who are parents with children still at home, take the time to talk to them about why you had them baptized, and also take time to pray with them and for them that they would be able to discern God's will for their lives.

### MEET THE DIOCESAN VOCATIONS TEAM



Fr. Todd Petersen  
VOCATIONS DIRECTOR



Bishop LeVoir  
TEAM LEADER



Fr. Craig Timmerman  
VOCATIONS ASSOC.  
DIRECTOR



Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP  
VOCATION AWARENESS

Visit: [www.dnu.org/admin/vocations.html](http://www.dnu.org/admin/vocations.html)

### *Nine from Diocese of New Ulm currently studying for the priesthood*



**GARRETT AHLERS**  
*College Freshman*  
St. John Vianney Seminary,  
St. Paul, MN  
Parents: Richard & Mary  
Ahlers  
Home parish: Holy  
Redeemer, Marshall



**PAUL BLASCHKO**  
*College Sophomore*  
St. John Vianney Seminary,  
St. Paul, MN  
Parents: Russell & Debra  
Blaschko  
Home parish: Holy Rosary,  
North Mankato



**BURTON HENDRICKSON**  
*College Sophomore*  
St. John Vianney Seminary,  
St. Paul, MN  
Parents: Burton &  
Rosemary Hendrickson  
Home parish: St. Peter,  
Canby



**AARON JOHANNECK**  
*Theology II*  
Pontifical North American  
College, Vatican City  
Europe  
Parents: Thomas &  
Constance Johanneck  
Home parish: St. Mary,  
Seaforth



**ANDREW ILLIKMAN**  
*College Freshman*  
St. John Vianney Seminary,  
St. Paul, MN  
Parents: John & Sharon  
Illikman  
Home parish: St. Mary,  
New Ulm



**JACOB NIEMAND**  
*College Freshman  
Theology II*  
Saint Meinrad  
St. Meinrad, IN  
Parents: Carleton &  
Patricia Niemand  
Home parish: St. Joseph,  
Montevideo



**ZACHARY PETERSON**  
*Theology III*  
Saint Meinrad  
St. Meinrad, IN  
Parents: Dean & Doreen  
Peterson  
Home parish: Holy  
Redeemer, Marshall



**SAMUEL WAGNER**  
*Pre-Theology I*  
St. Paul Seminary  
St. Paul, MN  
Parents: Michael & Audrey  
Wagner  
Home parish: St. Mary,  
Sleepy Eye



**MATTHEW WIERING**  
*Theology III*  
Pontifical North American  
College, Vatican City Europe  
Parents: Ronald & Rhonda  
Wiering  
Home parish: St. Dionysius,  
Tyler

*All are called by God to love him. All are called to serve him.  
Some are called to special lives of service, to give witness  
to God's love through being a priest, religious brother or sister.*

**Is He calling you?**

**BLOG WITH FATHER PETERSEN!**  
[frtodd.blogspot.com](http://frtodd.blogspot.com) [ourmib.blogspot.com](http://ourmib.blogspot.com)

## Trends in religious vocation on the rise according to recent survey

More men and women are responding to the vocation to become a sister, brother, or priest within a religious community.

The positive trends continue, according to the VocationMatch.com *Second Annual Survey on Trends in Religious Vocation* sponsored by Vision Vocation Guide and published by TrueQuest Communications of Chicago on behalf of the National Religious Vocation Conference.

According to the survey, Catholic religious communities reported on average a 30 percent increase this past year in the number of individuals in initial formation-the period before final vows. In

addition, 62 percent of participating communities reported an increase in vocation inquiries in the past year.

*"... it appears that many discerners are looking for more obvious outward expressions of their commitment to religious life."*

The majority of those who are considering religious life are under 30 and quite serious about choosing religious life-about one in five plan on entering a religious community in the next year, while another 64 percent are "seriously considering it."

Echoing the countercultural appeal of religious life to younger

Catholics, it appears that many discerners are looking for more obvious outward expressions of their commitment to religious life.

Vocation directors-both men and women-commented on an increased interest among inquirers in wearing a habit or traditional religious garb.

Personal contact with a religious priest, sister, or brother continues to be the most helpful source of vocation information.

### INTERESTED IN A RELIGIOUS VOCATION?

Visit [www.vocationmatch.com](http://www.vocationmatch.com) and have your profile matched against religious communities in its database.

## Children's books lay a foundation of faith and vocation

by Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP

I've learned that no one is ever too old or too young to listen to a story. Some of the most profound truths can be taught this way! Just like the family stories told and retold reinforce the sense of belonging to a particular family, so too, the stories of our ancestors in faith strengthen our connection to community and Church. Our Catholic identity is clearer, stronger, and most solid when we know "our stories". The entire history of the Church is a library of the lives of our "greats" and "not-so-greats".

The following are a number of children's books that communicate faith, values, and virtues. These can help lay the foundation for our children to discover their own vocation while rekindling the wonder of our own vocation.

**A HAT FOR IVAN** by Max Lucado published by Crossway Books, 2004.

**BEST OF ALL** by Max Lucado published by Crossway Books, 2003.

**BROTHER JOSEPH: THE PAINTER OF ICONS** by Augustine DeNoble, OSB, published by Bethlehem Books and Ignatius Press, 2000.

**CAN YOU FIND JESUS: INTRODUCING YOUR CHILD TO THE GOSPEL** by Phillip D. Gallery published by St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996.

**CAN YOU FIND SAINTS: INTRODUCING YOUR CHILD TO HOLY MEN AND WOMEN** by Phillip D. Gallery published by St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2003.



**CAN YOU FIND THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS: INTRODUCING YOUR CHILD TO DISCIPLES** by Phillip D. Gallery published by St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000.

**IF ONLY I HAD A GREEN NOSE** by Max Lucado published by Crossway Books, 2002.

**JOSEPH'S HANDS** by Kety and Maria Sabatini published by Bezelel Books, 2007.

**SEVEN LONELY PLACES, SEVEN WARM PLACES: THE VICES AND VIRTUES FOR CHILDREN** by April Bolton, St. Anthony Message Press, 2003.

**THE CATERPILLAR THAT CAME TO CHURCH: A STORY OF THE EUCHARIST** by Irene Hooker, Susan Andrews Brindle, and Miriam Andrews Lademan published by Our Sunday Visitor (bi-lingual), 1993.

**THE TALE OF THREE TREES: A TRADITIONAL FOLKTALE** by Angela Elwell Hunt, Cook Communication, 2004

**THE WEIGHT OF A MASS: A TALE OF FAITH** by Josephine Nobisso published by Gingerbread House, 2002.

**WHAT CAN I GIVE GOD?** by Neal Lozano, published by Maple Corners Press, 2008

**WITH YOU ALL THE WAY** by Max Lucado published by Crossway Books, 1993.

**YOU ARE MINE** by Max Lucado published by Crossway Books, 2001.

## Young women of diocese answering God's call



**SARAH DECOCK**  
Archdiocesan House of Discernment - St. Paul  
Parents: Bernie & Julie DeCock  
Home parish: St. Eloi, Ghent



**SR. VICKY LARSON**  
Perpetual Professed Sister - Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Parents: Ronald & Mary Larson  
Home parish: St. Michael, Madison



**SR. LISA MAURER**  
Novice - St. Scholastica Monastery  
Parents: Eugene & Diane Maurer  
Home Parish: St. Mary, Sleepy Eye



**SR. JOHN MARY OF LAUDEM GLORIAE**  
Professed Sister Sisters of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Parents: Mike & Gina McKeown  
Home parish: St. Mary, Seaforth



**SR. MARIA MATER COMPASSIONIS**  
Novice The Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matarara  
Parents: Glen & Donna Schmitz  
Home parish: St. Raphael, Springfield



**SR. MARY SARAH MACHT, RSM**  
Perpetual Professed Sister - Religious Sisters of Mercy  
Parents: Richard & Nancy Macht  
Originally from: Our Lady of Victory, Lucan



**SR. ROXANNE SEIFERT**  
Professed Sister Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Parents: Myron & Jean Seifert  
Home parish: St. Anastasia, Hutchinson



**CLAIRE ROUFS**  
Helping to found a new community in the St. Paul/Mpls Archdiocese.  
Parents: Franklin & Theresa Roufs  
Home parish: Holy Trinity, Winsted



**SUSAN VERLY**  
Postulant Sisters of the Lamb France  
Parents: Pat & Barb Verly  
Home parish: Holy Redeemer, Marshall



**KATIE WALLYN**  
Candidate Sister Servants of the Home of the Mother Spain  
Parents: Christopher & Cathy Wallyn  
Home parish: St. Anastasia, Hutchinson

# Welcoming Our Immigrant Sisters and Brothers

## Minnesota Catholic Bishops' Statement on Immigration - December 12, 2008

Every day, throughout the world, tens of thousands of our sisters and brothers leave their homelands. Many flee in order to escape persecution, torture, famine, and oppression. Others set out in search of greater opportunities for themselves and their families. Today we call to mind the immigrants and refugees who have come to Minnesota.

Most of us have immigrant ancestors. We have heard their stories at our tables and family gatherings. Such stories are a vital part of Minnesota's history, and they reveal that we are all one family and responsible for one another. Today, we, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Minnesota, want to share our hope for:

- ▶ Newcomers journeying in search of greater opportunities for themselves and their families;
- ▶ Communities enriched by the many contributions of newcomers; and
- ▶ Advocates working for justice and reform.

In our pursuit of justice, we must work together to transform hearts, minds, and communities.

Minnesota has welcomed many immigrants and refugees. However, we are alarmed by the antiimmigrant sentiment that is dividing our communities. Daily, we hear statements that contradict principles of Catholic social teaching. We witness the exploitation and isolation of our migrant, immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers. Mothers and fathers are forced to leave their children, spouses are separated from one another, and families are uprooted from their homes. Our communities suffer, too. Children lose friends and classmates, cities lose neighbors and businesses, and our churches lose parishioners.

Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger and reminds us that whatever we do to one of our brothers and sisters we do to him. We are called to recognize Christ in every newcomer and to respect the



Prior to taking part in a Tuesday, Dec. 16 press conference with Winona bishop, the Most Rev. Bernard Harrington, and other Catholic leaders to discuss how anti-immigrant sentiment continues to divide communities throughout Minnesota and how recent immigration raids have had a devastating impact on immigrant families and rural communities, Sr. Anna Marie Reha, SSND, New Ulm Diocesan Director of Hispanic Ministry sits down for an interview with a local television station to discuss immigration reform. *(photo by Joan Weicherding)*

dignity of all human beings, regardless of their legal status. We must recognize that legal status is a human construct. People have a right to leave their countries of origin when persecution, famine, or war threaten their lives and their rights to work and worship. When people make the difficult decision to leave their homelands in search of a better life for themselves and their families, we are called to assist them.

Minnesotans have a long history of opening their arms to immigrants. We have welcomed many newcomers from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. Over 100 dialects are spoken in our communities. The Church's resettlement programs have helped Minnesota welcome one of the highest numbers of refugees in our country.

Though many immigrants have sought solace in Minnesota, their dignity and safety are often threatened. The harsh enforcement of federal immigration laws pushes many of our immigrant sisters and brothers into the shadows, and makes them more vulnerable to workplace intimidation and abuses. Fearing deportation and further exploitation, they are reluctant to report the injustices they endure.

Enforcing current law, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers have raided homes and businesses in various communities throughout Minnesota. As a result, many of our sisters and brothers were separated from their loved ones. Another serious problem facing our state is the human

trafficking of both children and adults, many of whom are immigrants. During the last three years, more than 1,000 labor and sex trafficking victims have been identified.

While we recognize our nation's right to maintain secure borders, we oppose policies and practices that separate families and fuel suspicion, fear, intimidation, hatred, and violence. Echoing our brother bishops across the country, we renew our call for comprehensive immigration reform and strategies to reduce global poverty. Just and equitable immigration policy, based on the principles of Catholic social teaching, would:

- ▶ recognize the inherent dignity of every human being;
- ▶ seek to reunite, stabilize and strengthen families;
- ▶ ease the path to citizenship for our undocumented sisters and brothers who are living in the United States;
- ▶ provide access to basic necessities;
- ▶ embody due process protections; and

▶ reflect an awareness of the social, political and economic causes of migration.

We invite all of our sisters and brothers to join us in promoting compassionate and just immigration reform of our broken immigration system. By embracing newcomers and sharing our abundance, we pray that justice will prevail.

*Archbishop John C. Nienstedt*  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul/Minneapolis

*Bishop Michael J. Hoeppner*  
Diocese of Crookston

*Reverend James B. Bissonette,*  
Diocesan Administrator -  
Diocese of Duluth

*Bishop John M. LeVior*  
Diocese of New Ulm

*Bishop John F. Kinney*  
Diocese of Saint Cloud

*Bishop Bernard J. Harrington*  
Diocese of Winona

## U.S. citizenship

*(continued from page 4)*

Sr. Ann Carol Kaufenberg teaches ESL (English as a Second Language) in Gaylord and shares about the struggle of learning a new language as well as the joys, "English is not an easy language to learn but what fun when a student can finally distinguish the difference between 'they're, they're, and their'." Experts explain that typically the immigrant generation makes progress but remains dominant in their native tongue, the second generation is bilingual, and the third generation speaks English only. Sr. Ann Carol has companioned several people on their journey to citizenship and testifies that it is a liberating and joyous moment when someone is sworn in as a citizen of the United States.

After the elation of passing her English and government test Maria



Sr. Ann Carol Kaufenberg, SSND, teaches English as a second language in Gaylord, MN. She has companioned several people on their journey to citizenship and testifies that it is a liberating and joyous moment when someone is sworn in as a U.S. citizen.

*(photo by Sr. Anna Marie Reha, SSND)*

is anxiously awaiting the day when she will receive the news that all her paper work has been

completely accepted and the date has been set for her swearing-in ceremony.



## from the desk of the DCCW President

A New Year brings with it the chance to begin anew; a time for resolutions and a time to bring about change in what we plan to do and will not do. The year 2009 rings in with political change and, for many,



Jeane Appel  
DCCW President

economical change. What can the Council of Catholic Women do to be "wise, courageous, and loving leaders of the Church" as we pray in the Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel?

This month, we will observe a number of important events.

**NATIONAL VOCATIONS WEEK**

The week of January 11-17 is National Vocations Week. Fr. Joseph Hirsch, director of the Office of Vocations for the Diocese of LaCrosse, WI, recently stated that "the vocation crisis in the world today stems from the crisis within

families." The four foundations necessary in the family are:

☞ Prayer - This teaches a family how to speak about Christ in the home. "What does Christ mean to you?" How do I witness to Jesus Christ in my personal life?

☞ Catechesis - This ensures that a family grows in faith by a deeper knowledge of God and his Church. Keep challenging and inviting your children to know their faith.

☞ Virtue - Do we emphasize the virtues of faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude in our lives and within our families?

☞ Commitment to God - Do I express the fact that all I possess and have accomplished comes from God? Do I offer everything I do in appreciation for all of God's gifts?

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

All Council of Catholic Women are encouraged to pray for Christian Unity and be involved in ecumenical activities during the week of January 18-25.

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK**

The week of January 25-30 is dedicated to the Catholic Schools. Show your support for this vital form of Catholic education.

**REGION BOARD MEETINGS**

Many of the Region CCW Board meetings will be held in January. I encourage all involved to fully participate, try new ideas and work together as we strive to build God's Kingdom on earth. Through DCCW and the workings of the various Commissions, we will continue to "support, empower and educate all members in spirituality, leadership and service; reaching out with Gospel values to meet the needs of Church and society."

The 2009 year brings with it many challenges. Let us always remember the following Psalm: "Know that the Lord does wonders for his faithful one; the Lord will hear me when I call upon him. Offer just sacrifices, and trust in the Lord." Psalm 4:4,6

*Jeane Appel is a member of St. Genevieve parish, Lake Benton.*

## Roe v. Wade to mark 36 years this month

*CCW advocates for life*

by Judy Haag,  
NUDCCW Reverence Life  
Committee

We live in a world in which a gracious God enables us to see astounding wonders and to experience truly amazing events. What could be more remarkable than the birth of a child...the miracle of life?

January 22 is the 36th commemoration of the infamous Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Our bishops tell us "In all the dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 shall be observed as a day of penance for violations of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the right to life." (*USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, liturgy guide*) Will you observe the day in your parish, individually, or as a family?

In the last Congress, a Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) was introduced that would do away with state laws on abortion, including laws mandating parental involvement, or banning partial birth abortion. FOCA would also compel taxpayer funding of abortions, and, of greatest concern to our bishops, could force faith-based hospitals and healthcare facilities to perform abortions. FOCA could have an equally destructive effect on the freedom of conscience of doctors, nurses and health care workers whose personal convictions do not permit them to cooperate in the private killing of unborn children. It could threaten Catholic health care institutions and Catholic Charities. FOCA is that radical!

Because all life is sacred-it comes from God, belongs to God, and returns to God - the Council of Catholic Women (CCW)



advocates for all the issues that affect life, placing the greatest efforts and emphases on abortion. That's our Christian responsibility.

Please join the Council of Catholic Women in prayer for our political leaders that they open their hearts and minds to the sacredness of life from the moment of conception to natural death. Study our Catholic faith in order to develop well-formed consciences, enlightened by the teachings of Christ, so that we can be guided by our moral convictions to protect the fundamental right to life especially for unborn children. Be of service to each other by participating in society to promote the well-being of all individuals. Advocate for the voiceless, the vulnerable, the poor and the disenfranchised in all areas of our culture.

**Learn More!**

For more information about the right to life and the dignity of the human person, visit these internet sites.

[www.fightfoca.com](http://www.fightfoca.com)

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

[www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion)

[www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)

**Be not afraid**

(continued from page 2)

other words, by a structural lack of political and economic institutions capable of addressing needs and emergencies." The more affluent countries produce the manufactured goods that bring in high revenues, while the poorer countries produce agricultural goods which bring in lower revenue. This situation can be rectified by cooperation (solidarity) among governments and peoples.

The Holy Father offers the Church's assistance to end human poverty by stating: "Effective means to redress the marginalization of the world's poor through globalization will only be found if people everywhere feel personally outraged by the injustices in the world and by the concomitant violations of human rights. The Church, which is the "sign and instrument of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race" will continue to offer her contribution so that injustices and

m misunderstandings may be resolved, leading to a world of greater peace and solidarity."

The other document issued recently was "*The Dignity of a Person*". This document deals with issues of medical ethics at the beginning of human life. These are complex issues, yet it is essential for the Church to teach about them. The issues taught about in this document are: stem-cell research, the morning-after pill, gene therapy, embryo manipulation and "adoption," freezing of human eggs, and human-animal hybrid cloning.

The principle upon which this document rests is the same as the principle employed in the message of the Holy Father for the "World Day of Peace," namely, the inherent dignity and value of each human person, who is created in the image of God.

This principle is clearly stated in the conclusion to this 32 page document. "In virtue of the Church's doctrinal and pastoral mission, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has felt obliged to reiterate both the dignity and the fundamental and inalienable rights of every human being, including those in the initial stages of their existence, and to state explicitly the need for protection and respect which this dignity requires of everyone. The fulfillment of this duty implies courageous opposition to all those practices which result in grave and unjust discrimination against unborn human beings, who have the dignity of a person, created like others in the image of God. Behind every 'no' in the difficult task of discerning between good and evil, there shines a great 'yes' to the recognition of the dignity and inalienable value of every single and unique human being called into existence."

## WHAT CATHOLICS BELIEVE

### *the Sacrament of the Eucharist*



**Editor's Note:** *The Prairie Catholic, with the assistance of the diocesan Office of Worship and the Office of Religious Education, continues the series, What Catholics Believe. This 7 part series will explain the sacramental system in the Catholic Church and explore the specific purpose and characteristic of each of the Seven Sacraments.*

by Ann Przybilla, director  
Office of Worship

As the Christmas season winds down, we will soon be putting away those things that spark sentimentality in us and express the true meaning of Christmas. We also begin to use the gifts that have been given to us. We may feel we have not deserved these gifts or that we can do without some of them. Or we may have been given a particular gift that is very useful to us, leaving us wondering how we could have ever gotten along without it. Other gifts have hidden potential, like the newest electronic gadgets, until we are taught how to use them. This goes to show that the effectiveness of any gift is only as good as our learning and knowing how to make use of it.

The command to eat and drink in memory of Him is an awesome gift. Jesus left this gift to his disciples, not to be ignored or cast aside, but to be treasured and celebrated. Consider the many saints who have found strength and healing from this

gift. Participating in the Eucharist on a regular basis leads the entire people of God toward holiness and community, as this sacrament is both the sign and cause of unity.

For most of us, at a very young age we learned how to reverently receive our Lord, how to celebrate Mass, and the meaning of the offerings of bread and wine.

Celebrating our First Communion was just the beginning. Then we matured, realizing that there is much more to Eucharist than putting on a white garment and learning our prayers. Adults who are committed to the Church, a Eucharistic Church, are called to "put on" the attitudes that reflect the unity of Christ (see *Colossians 3:12*).

A gift is not a gift unless it is given willingly and accepted by another. We choose to accept the gift of the Eucharist by: participating in Mass, spending time in adoration, actively doing God's will in our daily activities, seeking to know more about Him and learning his will,

educating ourselves about the Eucharist through reading devotional books, scripture or taking part in formational classes. When we do these things, it becomes easier for us to live in Christian virtue.

The Catechism lists numerous titles for this sacrament, such as sacrifice, thanksgiving, communion, and memorial. Because it is the one sacrament that has "inexhaustible richness" there can not be one way to describe it. There is also not one single way that the sacrament affects us. It unites us, strengthens us to live in charity, detaches us from sinful habits, helps us to recognize Christ in the poor, and grants us a pledge of eternal life. We "become the gift that we receive" by openly partaking and making use of this precious gift that has been given freely from our Lord.

Taken, in part, from *The Sacrament of Baptism*, # 44150 Part 1 of 4 © 2008 Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 415 Michigan Avenue, N.E., Suite 70, Washington DC 20017 Author: Rev. Lawrence Mick. Used with permission.

## USCCB approves Blessing for Child in Womb

**Baltimore** - The U.S. bishops approved the *Order for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb* for use in the dioceses of the United States with a 223-1 vote November 11, 2008, at their General Assembly in Baltimore. The bishops also approved a Spanish version of the blessing with a 224-0 vote.

*The Blessing of a Child in the Womb* was prepared by the

USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities after receiving requests from dioceses for such a blessing and not finding an existing blessing for a newly conceived child. In March, 2008, a blessing was prepared and submitted to the Committee on Divine Worship. The proposed blessing is distinct from the *Blessing of Parents before Childbirth* found in the *Book of Blessings*.

*The Blessing of a Child in the Womb Within Mass and Outside Mass*, in English and in Spanish, upon approval by the Congregation on Divine Worship and the Sacraments in Rome for use in the dioceses of the United States of America, will be included in future editions of the *Book of Blessings (de Benedictionibus)* when the text is revised.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins January 18

by Fr. Paul Timmerman  
Diocesan Director of Ecumenism??

Some Catholics ask, "Why do we even try to be ecumenical?" Jesus gives us the answer to this question in that the night before he died, he prayed to the Heavenly Father, "May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (*John 17:21*).

In other words, Jesus desires all Christians to be united. Each year we set aside a week to pray so that the unity of all Christians may one day become a reality. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins January 18th and ends with the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul on January 25th. Different denominations take turns hosting this prayer service on the diocesan level. This year the Methodists will be hosting this prayer service in Willmar, at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 18, 2009, at the Willmar United Methodist Church, 1818 SW 9th St, Willmar, MN. Several Christian denominations will be represented and there will be time for fellowship and refreshments

**What:**  
Prayer Service for  
Christian Unity

**When:**  
4:00 p.m.  
Sunday January 18, 2009

**Where:**  
Willmar United Methodist  
Church in Willmar, MN

**Who:**  
Bishop John LeVoir along  
with many Catholics and  
Christians

**Why:**  
To join ourselves with Jesus'  
prayer for Christian unity

afterwards in the church social hall. Each year has a theme and this year the theme is, "That they may become one in your hand," which comes from *Ezekiel 37:15-19, 22-24a*. I encourage you to join Bishop LeVoir and other denominations' representatives in praying for Christian unity at this prayer service. If you are unable to attend, I encourage you to still participate in the prayer service for Christian unity in your local area. Let us all pray for Christian unity so that we may be cooperators in Jesus' prayer for Christian unity.

## Bishop takes part in Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration

**Sleepy Eye, MN** - Bishop LeVoir continues to experience many "firsts" in the Diocese of New Ulm. On December 12, 2008, he experienced his first bilingual Mass and first celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe held at the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye.

(photo by Sr. Anna Marie Reha, SSND)



## Upcoming Events

**GOOD SHEPHERD SERRA Club** meets January 8, at Divine Providence Chapel and Marian Conference room, Sleepy Eye, beginning with rosary and Mass at 7:00 p.m., followed by program and lunch. Speaker: Sr. Mary Charles Mayer, RSM. Everyone welcome!

**A MAN IN LANCIANO** - a one man play, will be held at the Marshall High School, Marshall, MN, on January 21 at 7 p.m. Tickets are on sale for \$5. Call (507) 532-3602 to reserve a ticket.

**ROE V. WADE** - January 22, 2009 marks the 36th anniversary.

**FRASSAITI VISIT** - Young men and women (high school Jr./Sr.) are invited to a college faith visit at the College of St. Thomas on February 5-8, 2009. This visit is sponsored by the New Ulm

Diocesan Office of Vocations. This is a great opportunity to think about your future and your faith. Call (507) 359-2966 to register.

**WORLD WIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKENDS** will be held February 13-15, 2009, at Shalom Hill Retreat Center near Windom and March 13-15, 2009 in Marshall. Worldwide Marriage Encounter is designed to give married couples the opportunity to examine their lives together openly and honestly in a face-to-face, heart-to-heart encounter. Contact Jeff and Rondi Kodet at (507) 644-3523 or jrek@redred.com; Web site www.wmmeSection8.org.

**VIRTUS (SAFE ENVIRONMENT) SESSIONS** - January 12, 2009, in Redwood Falls and February 12, 2009, in Arlington. Time: 6:30 p.m. Contact your local Catholic parish for further information.

### Televised Catholic Mass schedule for the New Ulm diocese

KEYC-TV, Ch. 12, Mankato, MN - Sunday, 7:30 a.m.

### Catholic Radio Catholic Radio Weekly

5:30 p.m. on KLOP-FM 92.1 Madison/Dawson

### Radio Rosary

KMHL 1400 AM - Marshall  
Sunday's at 7:00 a.m. and Monday-Saturday at 6:10 p.m.

## Families gather for annual advent prayer service despite inclement weather

*"May this figure of Jesus and the ones who use it be blessed. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."*

**St. Peter, MN** - Families of the Diocese of New Ulm joined Bishop John LeVoir on Sunday, December 14, 2008, for the annual Advent Prayer Service.

The service was scheduled in two locations in the diocese: the Church of St. Peter, St. Peter (afternoon service) and the Church of St. Peter, Canby (evening service). Due to inclement weather, the Advent Prayer Service scheduled in Canby was cancelled.

However, despite of the windy and bitterly cold weather, approximately 65 people gathered for the 2 p.m. service in St. Peter.

Faithful of all ages brought figurines of the Baby Jesus from their family Nativity Crèche, to be blessed by the bishop during the prayer service. Bishop LeVoir also offered a special blessing to all expectant mothers and families.



This special service was also an opportunity for people to assist the less fortunate by donating new infant clothing, blankets, or layette items to be given to the San Lucas Mission, Birthright, or Human Services.

A reception for all was held in the parish hall following the service.



(photos by Christine Clancy)

## Pro-life advocate/author part of *Celebrate Life* series

**Silver Lake, MN** - Bobby Schindler, Director of the Teri Schindler-Schiavo Foundation, spoke at Holy Family Church, Silver Lake, MN, last November. Schindler's sister Teri, who suffered from a brain injury, was the subject of a court ordered controversy several years back to have hydration and nutrition withheld. She later died.

Since his sisters death, Schindler along with his family and countless other prolife advocates, have worked tirelessly to support those who are in danger of death or being classified as unworthy of life.

Schindler's recent book, *A Life That Matters*, addresses the issues surrounding Teri's death and raises consciousness of the call to defend life. For more information please visit [www.Terisfight.org](http://www.Terisfight.org)

Schindler's talk was part of the third Celebrate Life series of presentations at the Church of the



Bishop LeVoir was present during Bobby Schindler's talk and visited with him following the presentation.

Holy Family on the importance of respecting and defending human life. The Celebrate Life gatherings are organized by parish pastor, Fr. Brian Oestreich, and are held every two years on the Sunday before the major political elections.

## Catholic Charities Counseling Services offered in

**Hutchinson, Marshall, New Ulm, and Willmar**

*Providing services for: Individual and Family Counseling; Adoption; Marriage Preparation Counseling, Parish and Community Response; Pregnancy Counseling; Grief Services; and Immigration and Legalization Services.*

For inquiries and to schedule an appointment, please contact the New Ulm office located at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN, 56073; phone: (507) 359-2617 or toll-free 1(866) 670-5163.

### Counseling Position Available

Spanish Speaking Counselor needed to serve growing Hispanic caseload in the Diocese of New Ulm. Counseling experience and licensure preferred. Limited English speaking ability also necessary 10 hours per week and/or combined with Hispanic Ministry to Full time. Hours and location flexible. Call Thomas P. Keaveny, MSW-LICSW at 1-866-670-5163.

# THE DRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 23 No. 5 January 2009

## Hail Mary! Patroness of the Diocese of New Ulm

After the diocese was formed in 1957, one of Bishop Alphonse J. Schladweiler's first official acts as bishop was to dedicate the diocese to Mary, the Mother of God. This was confirmed in December, 1992, when Bishop Schladweiler's successor, Bishop Raymond A. Lucker, officially decreed that the patronal feast of the diocese is the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God celebrated each year on January 1.



The statue of the Blessed Mother, pictured above, was carved in circa 1921 from a block of Indiana limestone and originally sat in a niche atop the old St. Mary's church and school building in New Ulm. When the building was demolished in 2004, the statue was removed from its original location. On November 21, 2008, the feast of the Presentation of Mary, the statue was installed in the new bell tower of St. Mary's Church.

(photo courtesy of New Ulm Journal)

## catholic trends

**A final regulation protecting health care providers' conscience rights** was issued December 18, 2008, by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The U.S. Catholic bishops' spokesperson on abortion, Deirdre A. McQuade, welcomed the published regulation as a way to protect medical personnel from being coerced to violate their consciences in federally funded programs. The regulation clarifies and implements existing federal

statutes enacted by Congress in 1973, 1996 and 2004. (For the text of these laws see [www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion/crmay08.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion/crmay08.pdf).)

**World Day of Peace is January 1.** The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) urges Catholics to follow the call of Pope Benedict XVI in his 2009 World Day of Peace Message, "Fighting Poverty to Build Peace." To promote action and awareness, the bishops have made available the text of the pope's message and other resources on the USCCB Web site at: [www.usccb.org/globalpoverty/](http://www.usccb.org/globalpoverty/).

In the papal message released December 10, Pope Benedict said that poverty is often a contributing factor in armed conflicts, which in turn fuel greater poverty. He decried the growing gap between rich and poor, even in the most developed nations. "This is a problem which the conscience of humanity cannot ignore, since the conditions in which a great number of people are living are an insult to their innate dignity and as a result are a threat to the authentic and harmonious progress of the world community," he said.

Pope Benedict addressed spiritual and moral poverty as well, noting that "in advanced wealthy societies, there is evidence of marginalization, as well as affective, moral and spiritual poverty, seen in people whose interior lives are disoriented and who experience various forms of malaise despite their economic prosperity." Addressing other areas of poverty, the pope warned against viewing population as a problem and efforts to reduce birth-rates in poor countries. "The extermination of millions of unborn children, in the name of the fight against poverty, actually constitutes the destruction of the poorest of all human beings," he said. He also cited the importance of disarmament and moral responses to

pandemic diseases and noted that children are the most vulnerable victims of poverty worldwide.

The pope said that globalization should benefit everyone, even the poorest countries, and said financial policies that have lacked "any long-term consideration of the common good" have hurt everyone. He also

called for ethical approaches in market and policy.

Building upon the pope's message on poverty, a full re-launch of USCCB's campaign against global poverty and its Web site is planned for February 23, at the USCCB annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering.



### Discerning a vocation to the priesthood

A total of 83 young men participated in the three Operation Andrew Dinners recently offered by the diocesan Office of Vocations. Burton (Butch) Hendrickson, a seminarian of the diocese, was present at each dinner to speak to participants about discernment. Operation Andrew Dinners are for young men of junior high and high school age who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood. (See special vocations report, pages 6-7.)

(photo by Fr. Todd Petersen)