

THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 23 No. 7 March 2009



Catholic Schools Celebrate Service

The annual Catholic Schools Week was celebrated nationally January 25-31, 2009. This year's theme was "Celebrate Service" and in recognition of the theme, Catholic schools throughout the diocese put their faith into action! (Pictured left) The first grade class of St. Mary's, Bird Island, participated by cooking up a big pot of vegetable beef soup for delivery to home-bound parishioners. There were many jobs - washing vegetables, peeling potatoes and carrots, measuring spices and other ingredients. Everyone helped! Even though it was blustery outside, the soup and the children's smiles brought warmth into the homes.

(See Catholic Schools Celebrate Service **SPECIAL REPORT**, pages 5-8.)

Catholic Relief Services collection opportunity to express Christian compassion

by Most Rev. John G. Vlazny
USCCB Committee on National Collections, Chairman

In the story of the Last Judgment, Jesus reminds us to care for those in need. If we ignore those who are hungry, thirsty, ill, without clothes, in prison, or strangers, we turn away from Christ. When we act with compassion, generosity, and commitment to justice for the "least among us," we act as his true disciples.

The Catholic Relief Services Collection is an important opportunity to express Christian

compassion and generosity. The 2009 Collection is scheduled for March 21-22, in many dioceses across the country. The Collection theme, *Jesus in disguise*, reminds us of the presence of Christ in every one of our brothers and sisters in need. The Collection helps build the Church's international social ministry by funding the work of six agencies:

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., provides a full range of legal and support services to Catholic programs directly representing poor immigrants. It also advocates for comprehensive immigration reform. Its focus is on reunification of families and protection of those fleeing persecution or civil unrest.

Catholic Relief Services, the official international relief and development agency of the Catholic community in the United States, assists people in 98 countries on the basis of need - not race, creed, or nationality. Catholic Relief Services creates opportunities for Catholics in the United States to live their faith in solidarity with poor people overseas by providing financial support and addressing the root causes of poverty.

Migration and Refugee Services, of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, annually resettles one quarter of the refugees admitted to the United States, serves victims of human trafficking, and provides advocacy for and pastoral care to

many newcomers and persons on the move.

Justice, Peace, and Human Development (formerly Social Development and World Peace), of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, advocates for poor and vulnerable people and for international peace and justice. It works to build the capacity of the Church to respond to global concerns such as religious freedom, poverty, and hunger.

The Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church (SCDC), of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has as part of its mission the evangelization and

pastoral care of immigrants, migrants, refugees, and people on the move. The SCDC supports a network of national pastoral centers, pastoral consultants, and diocesan personnel who minister to various ethnic groups and migrant communities.

The Holy Father's Relief Fund assists victims of natural disasters and other emergencies around the world.

By giving to The Catholic Relief Services Collection, you are responding to *Jesus in disguise*.

(courtesy of www.usccb.org)

INSIDE

Page 3

'09 Diocesan Distinguished Service Award recipients

Page 4

Spanish counseling interpreter hired for Catholic Charities

Page 9

DCCW Spring Gathering schedule

Visit us online!
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Youth encouraged to register for spring Junior High Festival

The spring diocesan Junior High Festival is set for April 26, 2009, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Mary's School (the Fieldhouse) in Sleepy Eye and it is bubbling over with excitement and surprise! This year's keynote is Oddwalk Ministries, a musical duo of Shannon Cerneka and Orin Johnson (originally from St. Dionysius in Tyler). "Their very first gig together was at my first Junior High Festival in Hutchinson back in 2004," said Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP, Director of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm.

"We literally helped them get their

show on the road! Now that they've become nationally acclaimed (a kind of starving artist's version of 'rich and famous') we're going to welcome them back and see that they're better than ever! I'm sure that everyone who attends this Festival will 'Walk Away Different' just like the title of their newest album published by GIA."

Back by popular demand is Amanda Vernon who will be introducing a new song entitled "Keep it Fresh." Amanda's fun and spirited performance shows that the joy of the *Good News* is contagious! A

new time has been established for this Junior High Festival and others to follow. Sr. Margaret stated, "We're going to start at 11:00 a.m. and finish by 5 p.m. so it will be easier for folks to travel from all over the diocese. Mass will still be at the same time, but we'll offer lunch instead of supper."

Sr. Margaret added, "We're going to offer a break-out session for guys and girls which has worked out really well in the past. Julie Carleton, the co-hostess of LIFELINE and Discipleship Week at NET Ministries will give a talk to

the girls. Fr. Craig Timmerman, parochial vicar of St. Mary's in New Ulm and associate vocation director for the diocese, will talk to the boys."

All youth grades 6-8 and their parents and chaperones are encouraged to attend.

To register and/or arrange transportation, contact your parish youth minister, DRE, or pastoral leader. The cost, which covers lunch, snack, keynote, break-out, and dance, is \$17 if pre-registered by April 16 or \$20 after that date.

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BE NOT AFRAID

"Lent, Fasting, and Interior Conversion"



Bishop John M. LeVoir

We are now into the season of Lent. But, we might ask ourselves: "What is Lent?" The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines Lent as: "The liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert in fasting and prayer" (CCC, nos. 540, 1095, 1438).

Wednesday, February 25, was Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Many began Lent by attending Mass and receiving the imposition of ashes on their foreheads. Ashes are a sign that nothing is more important than God and that we have committed ourselves to an interior conversion of heart during Lent. We pledge to turn away (convert) from sin and be more faithful to God. The penances

that we do during Lent, such as fasting, should assist us in our conversion of heart and should be the fruit and bodily manifestation of a heart in the process of conversion.

"Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, 'sackcloth and ashes,' fasting and mortification, but at the conversion of the heart, interior conversion. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance" (CCC, no. 1430).

In our day, fasting is a particularly bold sign of an interior conversion of heart. This is so because fasting is so difficult for us to do in our culture, which promotes immediate satisfaction. Many feel that they should have what they want, when they want it, with no delay. This expectation is unrealistic and causes much dissatisfaction and even anger. Fasting helps to stabilize us, discipline our passions, and return us to reality (to God).

In his Lenten Letter for this year, Pope Benedict stresses fasting. He writes: "Denying material food, which nourishes our body, nurtures an interior disposition to listen to Christ and be fed by His saving word. Through fasting and praying, we allow Him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our

being: the hunger and thirst for God."

Fasting manifests the power of conversion. Fasting or refraining "... from food and drink as an expression of interior penance, in imitation of the fast of Jesus for forty days in the desert. Fasting is an ascetical practice recommended in Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers; it is sometimes prescribed by a precept of the Church, especially during the liturgical season of Lent" (CCC, *Glossary*).

"Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace" (CCC, no. 1431).

The help of God's grace comes to us through prayer and the celebration of the sacraments. That is why it is so important for us to pray often during Lent. For example, praying the Stations of the Cross or the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. If possible, it is important to make time to attend some daily Masses. Mass is a wonderful place to meet Christ and to speak to Him, to listen to Him, and to bask in the radiance of His grace. The sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession, with

individual confession of sins and absolution by a priest, assists us greatly in the conversion process and brings into our hearts God's merciful grace.

Fasting and penance are not only personal acts; they also have a communal dimension. Returning to Pope Benedict's Lenten Letter, we find: "At the same time, fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live. In his *First Letter*, Saint John admonishes: 'If anyone has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, yet shuts up his bowels of compassion from him - how does the love of God abide in him?' (3,17)."

"Voluntary fasting enables us to grow in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, who bends low and goes to the help of his suffering brother (cf. Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, 15). By freely embracing an act of self-denial for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger."

I ask that our Blessed Mother Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary, be our guide and intercessor as we make our way through this Lenten season of penance, fasting, and prayer. Through the practices of Lent, I pray that we will experience the interior conversion that will make Easter a truly joyful celebration of the Resurrection of Christ.

Bishop's March Calendar

1 Minneota: 10:30 a.m. Church of St. Edward. Confirmation.

Ivanhoe: 2:00 p.m. Church of SS. Peter & Paul. Confirmation.

2 St. Peter: 2:00 p.m. Benedictine Living Community. Chapel Blessing.

3 New Ulm: 9:30 a.m. Diocesan Pastoral Center. Lenten Morning of Reflection.

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

6 St. Paul: St. John Vianney Seminary. Vocations Day for Diocesan Catholic High Schools.

7 Redwood Falls: 9:30 a.m. Church of St. Catherine. Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting.

8 Sleepy Eye: 10:00 a.m. Church of St. Mary. Confirmation.

New Ulm: 3:00 p.m. Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Rite of Election.

10 Hutchinson: 3:30 p.m. Church of St. Anastasia. Committee on Parishes Meeting.

Hutchinson: 7:00 p.m. Hutchinson Event Center. Bishop Lucker Lecture.

11 St. Paul: 8:30 a.m. Archdiocesan Chancery. Minnesota Catholic Conference Board Meeting.

13 New Ulm: 8:30 a.m. Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. School Mass.

14 Redwood Falls: 9:00 a.m. Church of St. Catherine. Together in Communion.

15 Cottonwood: 9:00 a.m. Church of St. Mary. Confirmation.

Milroy: 2:00 p.m. Church of St. Michael. Confirmation.

Marshall: 7:30 p.m. Southwest Minnesota State University. High School Youth Group.

16 Marshall: 8:30 a.m. Holy Redeemer School Chapel. School Mass.

Marshall: 12:00 p.m. Avera Hospital. Hospital Tour and Informational Meeting.

(continued on page 4)

Bishop's selection of Diocesan Distinguished Service Award recipients complete award to be presented to five March 10 at Bishop Lucker Lecture in Hutchinson

Annually, the bishop of the diocese selects up to five nominated recipients who he feels deserving of the Diocesan Distinguished Service Award (DDSA). Recipients are chosen on the basis of committed service and outstanding contribution to the diocesan mission and ministry over a period of years.

The award consists of an engraved medal and a framed citation signed by the bishop. In giving this award, the diocese seeks to honor people from every walk of life whose efforts help to build up the Body of Christ on the diocesan level in a significant way.

Bishop LeVoir will present the award to recipients following the Bishop Lucker Lecture on March 10.



AL AND BUNNY IVERSON are members of the Church of Our Lady of the Lakes in Spicer. Their distinguished service in the Diocese of New Ulm extends from their involvement in Spicer and Willmar to our mission parish in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala. Beginning in the 1970s and with their son, Bruce,

they visited and helped support the orphanage in San Lucas, even sponsoring a girl who now is married and works as a nurse at a clinic in San Lucas. In addition, they worked at a Catholic charity in Washington, DC, and they have been local hospice volunteers since 1993. They served the diocese by conducting interviews for the Diocesan Tribunal Office. Al worked for over 40 years as a chemical dependency counselor, helping many people to live healthier and happier lives. Bunny worked for both St. Mary's Parish in Willmar and the former parochial school there. Today they continue to serve their parish by training and scheduling Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.



MARK AND PAT SCHNEIDER reside in New Ulm and have generously served as a presenter couple for the diocesan Marriage Preparation Program. For the past nine years they have helped engaged couples prepare for marriage, focusing especially on interfaith marriage and parenting.

Pat is a member of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity and Mark is a member of Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church. Both are active members of their church communities. They have three daughters, two graduates and one senior of Cathedral High School.



CINDY BLICKEM is a member of the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm. She has worked tirelessly and energetically for the Diocese of New Ulm for over 30 years as administrative assistant for the diocesan offices of Religious Education, Adult Faith Formation, Catholic Schools, and Youth Ministry. She exemplifies excellence not only with daily office operations, but also through her organization and development of promotional materials for major events such as annual diocesan youth rallies, faith formation days, Catholic school events as well as national Catholic events such as World Youth Day and NCYC (National Catholic Youth Conference). Blickem is also active in her parish volunteering with family faith formation and other activities. She and her husband, Joe, have two children, one in high school and one in college.

Former priest of diocese to keynote Bishop Lucker Lecture

Hutchinson, MN - The annual Bishop Lucker Lecture will be held Tuesday, March 10, 2009, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Hutchinson Event Center, 1005 Highway 15 South, Hutchinson, MN. The lecture is free and open to the public. There is no cost for attending.

This year's evening presentation will be *Planting the Seeds of Stewardship* presented by the diocese's native priest from Hutchinson, MN, Bishop John J. McRaith.

Most Reverend John J. McRaith ended his more than 25-year tenure as Bishop of Owensboro, KY, January 5, 2009, at the age of 74 due to health concerns.

He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of New Ulm in 1960. In the 1970s he served as executive director of the NCRLC (National Catholic Rural Life Conference). During his leadership, Rev. McRaith and a team of priests conducted Rural Parish Service workshops across the country to help rural priests integrate family life with parish life and to raise awareness among church leadership about rural ministry needs. Rev.

McRaith insisted that food, land, and related natural resources were to be understood and treated as gifts from a loving Creator for the common good. Major policy statements were adopted during his direction addressing land use, taxes, energy, and water. The Heartland Project, which resulted in the 1980 release of the pastoral letter *Strangers and Guests: Toward Community in the Heartland* signed by bishops of 44 dioceses in 12 states, was initiated by NCRLC during his tenure. Rev. McRaith resigned from NCRLC in 1978 to return to the Diocese of New Ulm as vicar and chancellor.

Bishop McRaith is acknowledged for his leadership in adapting to serve a growing number of Latino immigrants in the Owensboro diocese. Bishop McRaith praises priests and lay people for learning Spanish and accepting the newcomers.

The Diocese of Owensboro has also



Pictured above (l-r) in 1982 is Bishop Raymond A. Lucker and Bishop-elect John J. McRaith following the announcement by Pope John Paul II of the appointment of 47 year-old Fr. John J. McRaith as Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky.



Bishop John McRaith

become known for a church attendance rate that is considered among the highest in the country, with nearly 60 percent of registered members regularly attending Mass, according to McRaith.

Bishop McRaith plans to remain in Owensboro to assist the diocese as he is able.

For further information on the Bishop Lucker Lecture, please contact the Diocese of New Ulm at (507) 359-2966; email: pforst@dnou.org



Spanish speaking interpreter part of Catholic Charities staff



Edelgard Fernandez Mejia

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of New Ulm is excited to welcome Edelgard "Edel" Fernandez Mejia as a Spanish speaking counseling interpreter to assist Spanish speaking clients requesting counseling services in the diocese. Edel will work primarily in the Willmar office with counselor, Sr. Lois Byrne, PBVM, LICSW. Financial assistance with transportation is available if needed.

Edel lives in Willmar with his wife, Kathryn, and their daughters, Estela and Amaya. They are members of the Church of St. Mary in Willmar and have lived in Willmar since 2000. Edel has a BA in Communications and Public Relations from the Universidad Santa Fe, Guanajuato, Gto, Mexico. He is the Director of Multicultural Affairs and Men's Head Soccer Coach at Ridgewater College (Willmar and Hutchinson). He also is a registered Spanish interpreter for the MN Court Systems and a certified referee for the United States Soccer Federation and the Minnesota High School League.

Bilingual (English and Spanish) information about Catholic Charities counseling services and

scheduling arrangements can be made by calling 1-866-670-5163.

Caridades Católicas le da la bienvenida a Edel Fernandez

Caridades Católicas tienen la gran dicha de dar la bienvenida a Edelgard "Edel" Fernandez Mejia como el intérprete hispano para asistir a los clientes de habla hispana que necesitan servicios de consejería en la Diócesis de New Ulm. Edel trabajará en la oficina en Willmar con nuestra consejera Hermana Lois Byrne, PBVM, LICSW. A los clientes de las diferentes ciudades que desean asistir a nuestra oficina en Willmar se hará un reembolso para su medio de transporte (gasto de gasolina).

Edel vive en Willmar con su esposa, Kathryn y sus hijas Estela y Amaya. Ellos son miembros de la Iglesia Santa María y llevan viviendo en Willmar desde el 2000. Edel tiene su título en Comunicaciones y Relaciones Públicas de la Universidad de Santa Fe, Guanajuato, Gto, Mexico. Actualmente Edel es el Director de Asuntos Multiculturales y entrenador de fútbol en Ridgewater College (Willmar y Hutchinson). El también es un intérprete registrado de Court Systems de Minnesota y árbitro certificado de la Asociación Americana de Fútbol y de la Liga de High School de Minnesota.

Para información bilingüe sobre Servicios de consejería y hacer una cita llame a la oficina de Caridades Católicas al 1-866-670-5163.



No Tengas Miedo

por Obispo John M. LeVoi

Cuaresma, Ayunar y la Conversión Interna

Estamos en el tiempo de Cuaresma. Pero, nos deberíamos preguntar a nosotros mismos: "¿Qué es la Cuaresma?" El catecismo de la Iglesia Católica define la Cuaresma como: "La Cuaresma es el tiempo litúrgico de cuarenta días - comienza con el Miércoles de ceniza y termina con la celebración del Triduo Pascual (Jueves Santo, Viernes Santo y la Pascua). La Cuaresma es el tiempo penitencial elemental en el año litúrgico de la Iglesia, ya que refleja los cuarenta días que Jesús permaneció en el desierto orando y ayunando" (CCC, nos. 540, 1095, 1438).

El 25 de febrero fue Miércoles de Ceniza y el comienzo de la Cuaresma. Muchos iniciaron la Cuaresma asistiendo a la Santa Misa y otros recibiendo la imposición de cenizas en sus frentes. Las cenizas son una muestra que ante todo Dios es lo más importante y que nos hemos comprometido a una conversión interna del corazón durante la Cuaresma. Prometemos no cometer más pecados (cambiar) y ser más fieles a Dios. La penitencia que hacemos durante la Cuaresma, tales como ayunar, nos ayuda en nuestra

conversión del corazón y debe ser el fruto y la manifestación corporal del corazón en el proceso de la conversión.

Hoy en día, ayunar es una muestra particularmente prominente de una conversión interna del corazón. En nuestra cultura lo es ya que la acción de ayunar no es nada fácil de hacer, la cual fomenta una satisfacción inmediata. Muchos sienten que deberían obtener lo que quieren, cuando quieran, sin ningún retraso. Esta expectativa es poco realista y causa mucho descontento e incluso coraje. Ayunar ayuda a estabilizarnos, disciplina nuestras pasiones y nos hace volver a la realidad (a Dios).

Este año en su mensaje para la Cuaresma, su Santidad Benedicto XVI enfatiza el ayunar diciendo: "Privarse del alimento material que nutre el cuerpo facilita una disposición interior a escuchar a Cristo y a nutrirse de su palabra de salvación. Con el ayuno y la oración Le permitimos que venga a saciar el hambre más profunda que experimentamos en lo íntimo de nuestro corazón: el hambre y la sed de Dios."

La ayuda de la gracia de Dios hacia nosotros se hace a través de la oración y la celebración de los sacramentos. Por ende, durante esta temporada es de suma importancia orar a menudo. Por ejemplo, orar el Vía Crucis o los Misterios Dolorosos del Rosario. Si es posible, trate de asistir a una Misa entre semana. La Santa Misa es un lugar maravilloso para reunimos a Cristo, hablar con él, escucharlo y gozar en el resplandor de su gracia. El sacramento de la reconciliación o de la confesión, con la confesión individual de los pecados y la absolución por el sacerdote, nos ayuda bastante en el proceso de conversión ya que llena nuestros corazones con la gracia misericordiosa de Dios.

Le pido a nuestra Santísima Madre María, Nuestra Señora del Rosario, para que sea nuestra guía y mediador mientras nos abrimos paso hacia este tiempo de Cuaresma de penitencia, el ayuno y la oración. Ruego para que a través de las prácticas de Cuaresma experimentemos la conversión interna y haga que esta Pascua sea una celebración verdaderamente jubilosa de la Resurrección de Cristo.

Bishop's March Calendar (continued from page 2)

17 New Ulm: 1:00 p.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Finance Council Meeting.	Prayer and Welcome.	25 Darwin: 6:00 p.m. Church of St. John. Operation Miryam Dinner.
New Ulm: 3:30 p.m. Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Deanery.	21 New Ulm: 11:30 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Tribunal Training – Mass.	27 Sleepy Eye: 7:30 p.m. St. Mary's School Auditorium. School Musical.
New Ulm: 7:00 p.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Property Committee Meeting.	Hector: 7:00 p.m. Church of St. John. Confirmation.	28 Wabasso: 7:00 p.m. Church of St. Anne. Confirmation.
18 Litchfield: 12:30 p.m. Church of St. Philip. School Mass.	22 Bird Island: 10:30 a.m. Church of St. Mary. Confirmation.	29 Redwood Falls: 9:30 a.m. Church of St. Catherine. Confirmation.
Watkins: 4:30 p.m. Church of St. Anthony. Rectory Blessing.	New Ulm: 6:00 p.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. <i>Lectio Divina</i> Prayer Group Gathering.	Benson: 3:00 p.m. Church of St. Francis. Confirmation.
19 Minneapolis: 5:30 p.m. Basilica of St. Mary. Confirmation.	23 New Ulm: 8:30 a.m. New Ulm Area Catholic Schools. Teacher Inservice – Presentation.	31 Tracy: 9:00 a.m. Church of St. Mary. School Mass.
20 New Ulm: 9:00 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Budget Review Committee Meeting.	Litchfield: 7:00 p.m. Church of St. Philip. Catholic Identity Presentation.	Lamberton: 12:00 p.m. Church of St. Joseph. Pastoral Administrator Meeting.
New Ulm: 6:00 p.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Tribunal Training – Opening	24 New Ulm: 10:30 a.m. Catholic Pastoral Center. Priest Personnel Board Meeting.	

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 or appointment scheduling 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.

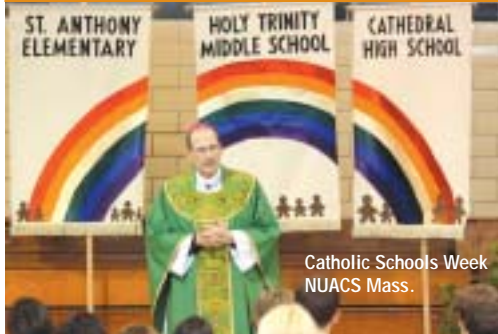
Catholic Schools



During Catholic Schools Week Bishop LeVoir celebrated Mass and visited with St. Anastasia, Hutchinson students.



St. Pius X, Glencoe students, (above) and Holy Redeemer, Marshall students (below) are pictured with Bishop LeVoir during the Children's Holy Field Trip last October at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm.



Catholic Schools Week NUACS Mass.



Dear Friends in Christ,

The week of January 25-31, 2009, was "Catholic Schools Week" in the Diocese of New Ulm. It was a week to celebrate our Catholic schools. We thank God for the gift of Catholic schools, and we recommit ourselves to praying for them and supporting them financially. Catholic schools in this country can be traced to the efforts of two of our canonized saints: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821) and St. John Neumann (1811-1860).

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was a widow with children, who converted to Catholicism. To support her family and insure the proper education of her children, she opened a school in Boston. At the invitation of the Archbishop of Baltimore, St. Elizabeth established a Catholic girl's school in Baltimore, Maryland, which initiated the parochial school system in America. To run the system she founded the Sisters of Charity in 1809, the first American religious community for women.

St. John Neumann was the Bishop of Philadelphia from 1852 to 1860. He is credited with establishing the first unified system of Catholic schools under a diocesan board. He opened almost one hundred schools and the number of parochial school students in his diocese grew from 500 to 9,000.

The goal of Catholic education is to educate the whole human person, both body and soul. So, the students in Catholic schools are educated in the basics of the liberal arts, as well as the Catholic religion. The teaching and living of the Catholic faith permeates the activity of a Catholic school each day, every day, five days a week.

An essential element of the schools' religious education is the liturgy. The children in Catholic schools attend Mass and they celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation. There are other prayer opportunities throughout the year, such as Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic adoration, Benediction, the Rosary, and prayer services.

The Catholic identity of a Catholic school is apparent. Crucifixes, statues, holy pictures, and the artwork of the school children are clearly visible in the school. An essential part of the school day is prayer. The lay teachers, the religious sisters, the pastors, as well as the administration and staff are totally dedicated to the Catholic education of the young people.

The theme for *Catholic Schools Week* this year is **Catholic Schools Celebrate Service**. The theme manifests the practical aspects of the faith that is learned in the classroom. Catholic school students are taught to reach out to their brothers and sisters who are poor and are in need. Through various "hands on" projects they put their faith into action.

Recently, Pope Benedict spoke to those involved in Catholic education in the Catholic schools. He urged school officials, teachers, parents, and students "...to continue the commitment to holistic education [education of the whole child], which works to unite quality instruction and the Christian understanding of the person and of society."

This is clearly the goal of the Catholic schools of our diocese.

During *Catholic Schools Week*, I visited nine of our Catholic schools. The pastors of the schools joined me in celebrating Mass for the students and their families. I visited classrooms, greeted the students and shook their hands, and ate lunch with them. I spoke with pastors, administrators, staff, and faculty, as well as volunteers. I was impressed with what I experienced. We have very fine Catholic schools in our diocese. In our Catholic schools, the Catholic faith is taught, celebrated, and put into action. As a diocese, let us continue to pray for our Catholic schools and to support them financially. Our children are worth the effort.

In Christ,

The Most Reverend John M. LeVoir
Bishop of New Ulm

(turn to pages 6 - 8 to see how Catholic schools in your area are putting their faith into action by serving others.)

Catholic Schools Celebrate



CANBY - January service project at St. Peter's School was based on the Corporal Work of Mercy "Shelter the Homeless." Students tied 10 fleece blankets that will be delivered to Teen Links homeless shelter in the Twin Cities.



Glencoe - As part of the Catholic Schools Week Celebrations, St. Pius X School made Valentines for the St. Pius X Council of Catholic Women *Mission of Love Project* as well as "Appreciation Cards" for the school volunteers.



New Ulm Area Catholic Schools - During the offertory procession at the NUACS Catholic School's Week Mass, students in St. Anthony Elementary presented \$2,020.10 in dimes. The money was raised for the San Lucas Mission in Guatemala. St. Anthony Elementary students were encouraged to earn dimes by doing extra duties at home.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

Dear God,
 Jesus tells us to give to you what is yours. What do you want from me, God? What can I give to you? As a young person still growing and developing, I don't have much to offer financially. I can make a small financial contribution to the Church, to poor people...but is it enough, Lord? What more can I give? I can offer my time and talents to serve my faith community. I can sing, play an instrument, draw posters, greet visitors, clean, decorate, organize, cook, bake, and telephone. I can help teach children, lector, or usher...but is it enough Lord? What more can I give? I can reach out to serve and share your love at home, in my neighborhood, my school, my community...but is it enough, Lord? What more can I give? I want to serve you better, Lord. Speak to me, and I will listen. Amen.

(based on Mark 12:13-17)
 by Hannah Meyer, Grade 8
 Holy Redeemer, Marshall.



St. Peter - Fifth and sixth grade students of John Ireland School participate in the year-long Adopt-A-Grandparent program with the Benedictine Health Care facility in St. Peter. Students "adopt" a senior resident in the health care facility and visit their adopted grandparent once a month.

ate Service

a *Prairie Catholic* Special Report
(pages 6 & 7)



Morgan - St. Michael's School PreK-2nd grade students visited residents at Gil Mor Manor, a local nursing home. The students made crosses with the residents and ate cookies!

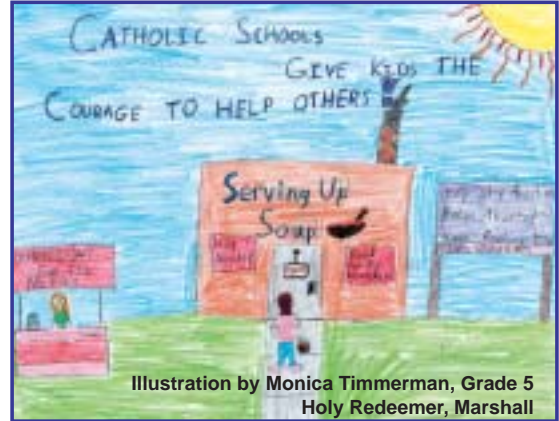


Illustration by Monica Timmerman, Grade 5
Holy Redeemer, Marshall



Minneota - The 8th grade students at St. Edward's School display the pop tabs the entire school collects for the Ronald McDonald House.



Sleepy Eye - St. Mary's School 5th grade students collected and delivered donations to the Sleepy Eye food shelf.



Wabasso - St. Anne's School Student Council organized a "birthday bag" drive, collecting items to help needy children celebrate birthdays. Birthday bag items included items such as cake mix, candles, frosting. The bags were then given to area food shelves.



Winsted - Third grade students at Holy Trinity Elementary School read a story entitled, *The Patchwork Quilt*. The

story is about how using scraps cut from the family's old clothing, a young girl learns the secret ingredient in her grandmother's special quilt of memories. After reading the story, each student brought in a square of material that represented what was important in their life. Students and staff worked together to sew a quilt of great stories which will be given to a needy family so that they will keep warm and perhaps create their own stories.

(more *Catholic Schools Week* coverage - page 8)

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS (continued from page 7)

Celebrating Service!



Litchfield - The 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders from St. Philip School spent a morning at ProWorks bringing extra happiness to special individuals. ProWorks provides adult day training and habilitation services to persons with developmental disabilities and related conditions. The clients there appreciate having the children's visit, and the students learn understanding and compassion as they are of service in their community.



Silver Lake - During Catholic Schools Week, Holy Family School students prayed a decade of the Rosary for those who need food, clean water, and warmth in the winter. As a service, students brought in food and bottled water for the McLeod County foodshelf, and warm winter wear for Sharing and Caring Hands, Minneapolis.



Tracy - Students of St. Mary's School made bookmarks for the parish members of St. Mary's as one of their Service Projects for Catholic Schools Week.

(photo by Marshall Independent)

Springfield - St. Raphael School students participated in Brown County Families First Collaborative *Blankets for Babies*. The effort encourages families with infants to place them on their tummy for play time to aid in proper growth and development.



They've Earned Our Support

- ✓ Since the 1800s, Catholic Schools in the diocese have been passing on the faith to our young people.
- ✓ Our 19 elementary and high schools are providing top quality, faith based education to 2,491 students this year.
- ✓ Using the State's average public per pupil cost of \$7,691, the diocesan Catholic schools saved taxpayers \$19,158,281 this year alone.



In 1891, Immaculate Conception Parish in St. Peter, built one of the first schools in the diocese. The construction was ready for the opening of the school year on September 7, 1891. At that time the school was directed by the Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester MN.

You can help support our Catholic Schools

****Use the enclosed envelope to support****
 THE ARCHBISHOP JOHN C. NIENSTEDT
 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

"The need for Catholic Schools may be greater today than it has ever been in our history." - Archbishop John C. Nienstedt



Jeane Appel
DCCW President

from the desk of the DCCW President

there is no time to include one more activity. There are many ways we can direct our attention to God that do not require extra time.

The Council of Catholic Women (Mary Ann Kramer initiated the idea) encourage you to display a five-point star in your home considering the five points as a reminder to pray five times a day. If children are included in this, it is amazing how they will remind us to pray.

The Commissions of CCW offer suggestions to make Lent more meaningful:

Family Concerns Commission promotes monitoring the TV programs your family watches. Contact the broadcasting network and sponsors of programs that contain violence, sex, and inappropriate language. You might even turn off the TV for a night and spend quality time with family members, write a note to a neglected person, or phone someone who is alone.

Lent - What a wonderful time of the year God has given us! It is a time to meditate, fast, pray, confess our sins, sacrifice and travel with Jesus on the road to Calvary. These may not sound like pleasant things to do, but how can we experience the joy of the Risen Savior on Easter unless we participate in the journey?

We, as Catholic Christians, are all on our journey through life - training, practicing, and desiring to attain our final reward - to see God face to face in heaven. This Lent gives each of us an opportunity to improve. In our busy lives, we often think

The Community Concerns Commission asks we be aware of the needs and donate to our local food shelf. Participate in your local bloodmobile and community projects.

Mission of Love is a valentine project that continues until the end of March and provides aid to our San Lucas Toliman Mission in Guatemala, through the **International Concerns Commission**. Another suggestion is to clean out closets and donate items to a mission.

Legislation Commission and Reverence Life Committee encourages you to contact President Obama and your senators and representatives concerning FOCA and other important life issues.

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

Minnesota food shelf visits on the rise

by Bev Wambeke

Every year during Lent we are to pray, fast, abstain, and give alms, which the dictionary's definition is: money, food, etc. given to those in need.

Each March, Food Share runs the largest food drive in the state (known as the March Campaign,) and restocks 260 food shelves across Minnesota. It recruits thousands of congregations, businesses, civic groups, and schools to run local cash and food drives to aid in the effort. In 2008, the March Campaign raised 9.1 million combined dollars and pounds of food, working with the food shelves.

During the March Campaign, all of the money raised across the state goes to purchase food for Minnesota food shelves. We help restock more than 260 food shelves each year by directing the largest annual food and cash drive in the state. The effort provides about half of the food

distributed at food shelves each year. Minnesota Food Share has an incentive food fund (paid for by corporate and individual donors) which means the more a food shelf raises, the more money they receive from the fund.

2008 had more than 2 million food shelf visits statewide, 50 million pounds of food was distributed to Minnesota families through the food shelves. Fifty percent of adult visitors are employed; fifty-six percent of adult food shelf visitors are families with children; twenty percent are seniors.

The food shelves are expecting to have more visits this year because of the declining economy, and job layoffs. Let's all pitch in and do our part!

Bev Wambeke is a member of St. Clotilde, Green Valley and is the DCCW Community Concerns Commission Coordinator.

Mark your calendars for the DCCW Regional Spring Gatherings!

REGION 1

Delores Portz, President
Thursday, March 19, 2009
St. John the Baptist, Searles
Registration: 5:30 p.m.
Mass: 6:00 p.m.
"St. Paul...Our Model for Commitment to Christ"
Guest Speaker: Rev. Bernie Steiner

REGION 2

Audrey Prokosch, President
Thursday, March 12, 2009
Japanese Martyrs, Leavenworth
Registration: 5:30 p.m.
Mass: 8:00 p.m.
"Our Gift...Volunteerism"
Guest Speaker: Sarah Lendt

REGION 3

Betty Thoof, President
Monday, March 30, 2009
Holy Redeemer, Marshall
Registration: 5:15 p.m.
Mass: 7:15 p.m.
"Spreading the Word through Mission and Music"
Guest Speakers: Rev. Jeremy Kucera/The "Singing Nuns" from Elkton, SD

REGION 4

Monica Roggenbuck, President
Tuesday, March 31, 2009
St. Michael, Madison
Registration: 5:30 p.m.
Mass: 6:00 p.m.
"Cutting through the Spin on Stem Cells and Cloning"
Video: Rev. Tad Pacholczyk Ph.D.


REGION 5

Pat Raunhorst, President
Monday, March 23, 2009
Holy Redeemer, Renville
Registration: 5:30 p.m.
Mass: 6:00 p.m.
"Promoting a Culture of Life"
Guest Speaker: Mary Ann Kuharski

REGION 6

Cindy Entinger, President
Tuesday, March 17, 2009
St. Boniface, Stewart
Registration: 5:30 p.m.
Mass: 6:00 p.m.
"We Follow You with our Whole Heart"
Guest Speaker: Sr. Lucille Hass on the "Year of St. Paul"

50th Annual Convention
New Ulm Diocesan
Council of Catholic Women
Saturday, April 25, 2009
7:30 AM - 3:00 PM



"Blessed are they who hear and keep the word of God"

"Be Steadfast in Faith"
1 Peter 5:9

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Edward Sri
PRAYING THE ROSARY LIKE NEVER BEFORE:
Mary, the Rosary and the New Mysteries
"Sister Anselm" "Friendship" "Catholic Q & A"
Church of St. Raphael
Springfield, Minnesota

WHAT CATHOLICS BELIEVE

the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick



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 Pryzbilla, director
Office of Worship

For Donnie and Jean Schmidt of St. Michael's Parish in Milroy, there is no question that the Anointing of the Sick has been a tremendously powerful sacrament in their lives. In 1983, a week after their second son was born, severe hemorrhaging overtook Jean. Her husband, Donnie, prepared for a twenty minute procedure but waited alone for two hours until a blood-soaked surgeon came from the operating room to tell him that they had already used all the blood available from the surrounding hospitals. Jean describes that day as she remembers it; "Feeling a tap on my shoulder awakened me to a room full of family and tears. I saw in the distance my mother praying, and my sister, Jan, crying and someone comforting her. I turned my head to find in the fog my parish priest leaning over me. To my recollection the first thing I heard him say was 'Do you have any sins you want to confess?' I remember just shaking my head and he then began placing the cross on my forehead with oil. Where the doctors didn't see hope, the sacrament brought peace."

The sacrament of Anointing was begun by Jesus himself, a sign of God's power over sickness by bringing healing of body and renewal of spirit. The use of oil as a soothing ointment (Mark 6:13 and James 5:14-15) and the laying on of hands are still part of the sacrament today. Any baptized individual who is seriously ill from sickness or old age or in danger of death can take part in the sacrament. It is a sacrament that can be repeated if a person's condition

worsens. Done in the context of a communal celebration, whether it is at the bedside with one's family or in a liturgical celebration at the parish, the sacrament strengthens the individual to overcome the difficulties of the illness and unites the individual with the sufferings of Christ.

There was a time when the sacrament was experienced only as a death-bed ritual. Around the time of the Middle Ages, as the demands of canonical or public penance became increasingly stringent, reconciliation was avoided until death and anointing became linked only to the deathbed confession. The "last rites" of reconciliation, anointing (*Extreme Unction*) and communion (*Vaticum*) gave sacred meaning to the death experience and still do today.

While not every anointing brings the healing of the physical body, many who have experienced the sacrament report that there is a profound peace within even when the physical ailment persists.

Jean underwent chemo and radiation treatment for breast cancer in 1998. Her doctor commented that there were three women at the same time undergoing treatments for breast cancer. Even though Jean's case was the most severe she was the only one who survived. "I remember telling the doctor about the power of prayer and the grace that comes through it. But, I also know the power of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and God's goodness and mercy. I have been blessed and know it. My relationship with God deepened through the whole experience."

In 2007, the Schmidt's had yet another crisis when their son David was involved in a car accident that nearly took his life. As the helicopter flew their son to Sioux Falls, the Schmidt's contacted their pastor, Fr. Bob Mraz. "Knowing the power of the sacrament we asked if he could line up a priest to meet David when he arrived in Sioux Falls and have him receive the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick."

"Because of the challenges our family has faced we have come to depend on the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. We have felt God's power and healing through it. We would encourage anyone facing a serious surgery or illness to receive this sacrament as it's grace can never be explained. But the peace which envelopes you is truly God working to heal you in the best possible way, spiritually and physically."

Charismatic Renewal evening planned

Springfield - Fr. John Mark Nolte of the Intercessors of the Lamb based in Omaha, NE, will be the keynote for the 2009 Charismatic Renewal evening to be held April 18, 2008.

pastor of the Church of St. Raphael's in Springfield. Following the Mass a dinner will be served and Fr. John Nolte will speak. Cost is \$20. Pre-register by contacting Lucy Moldan at (507) 752-7081.

Fr. Nolte is the spiritual director of the men's formation at the Intercessors of the Lamb. He also gives private and preached retreats and parish missions. The Intercessors of the Lamb are active Charismatics who are also dedicated to the contemplative formation of all Christians.

The evening will begin with the 5:30 p.m. Saturday evening Mass presided by Fr. Dennis Labat,

Charismatic Renewal "Life in the Spirit" seminar, March 27-28, 2009, at the Schoenstatt Retreat Center, Sleepy Eye, MN. Contact Jan Crowe, Diocesan Charismatic Renewal Liaison, (320) 275-2424.

Pastoral musicians convention set for July

The 2009 National Association of Pastoral Musicians Convention will be held July 6-10, 2009 in Chicago, IL. These conventions are amazing experiences for all those involved in music ministry!

Clergy/musician duo rates and companion rates are also available. Participants are responsible to book hotel rooms. Hotel rates are \$139/night for single, double, triple or quad (+13% tax).

The Diocese of New Ulm is offering reduced rate bus transportation to the convention with pick-ups in Marshall and Hutchinson. The cost of the convention is \$255 by March 2, \$275 by March 3-June 5 or \$335 after June 5.

Please contact the Office of Worship (507) 359-2966; aprzybilla@dnu.org for more information or to sign up for the bus. Further information on the convention can also be obtained from www.npm.org.



You, God, are dynamic. You are within me. You are here. You are now. You are. You are the ground of my being I let go. I sink and merge into you. You overwhelm me. You flood my being. You take me over completely.

The Diocese of New Ulm announces its 2009

"Living Virtue"
a Lenten Retreat Experience for Parishes

This is an adaptable retreat that serves as an additional spiritual opportunity for parishes. It features Rev. Robert Barron on his DVD, Seven Deadly Sins, Seven Lively Virtues, and some pamphlets on virtues from the *Growing Faith Project* by Twenty-Third Publications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
contact your parish pastoral leader or Diocese of New Ulm, (507) 359-2966; email: aprzybilla@dnu.org

Good News for San Lucas mission parish!



In January, as a result of *Project Joy*, NUACS senior Emily Eckstein presented Msgr. Greg Schaffer, pastor of the New Ulm diocesan mission parish of San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala with a check for \$1,000.

(photo by Kathy Huebert)

Last summer, an anonymous donor gave New Ulm Cathedral High School \$46,000 but with a stipulation. Each member of the senior class was to be given \$1,000 and in turn select a charity or charities for the money to be given to. This endeavor, tagged *Project Joy*, was meant to teach each young person involved the "joy of giving."

Seniors in his or her religion class investigated charities at the local, state, national, and international level. Selected charities had to have a philosophy that was "within the mission" of the Catholic school. The final component of the Project was that students would write a narrative describing what the experience meant to them on a personal level, and what they learned from it. Among the high school seniors, forty different charities were selected. Emily Eckstein, daughter of Joseph and Mary Eckstein of New Ulm, selected the New Ulm Diocesan Mission Parish of San Lucas Toliman in Guatemala as her \$1,000 recipient.



The last of donated computers, an x-ray machine and other needed items are put on the shipping container bound for San Lucas on January 17, 2009. Some of the computers will be used at the major and minor seminary in the Diocese of Solola, the diocese wherein San Lucas is located. Helping to load the truck are (front-standing) Herb Biebl and Greg Hillesheim; Don Wendinger on the bobcat, and (back-standing) Steven Biebl and Ken Huebert.

Upcoming Events

GOOD SHEPHERD SERRA CLUB

March 5, 2009, 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. Come early for Eucharistic Adoration. Guest speaker: Fr. Craig Timmerman of St. Mary's, New Ulm will share his vocation story. His topic will be *The Last Things in Life - Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell, and our Vocation in Life*. Everyone welcome.

THE RITE OF ELECTION AND CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

Sunday, March 8, 2009, at 3:00 p.m., Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm. All the faithful of the diocese are welcome to attend. A reception will follow the service.

Employment opportunities

Full-time position (combined): Director of Religious Education (grades 7-11) and Youth Ministry for St. Mary's Parish, New Ulm.

Formation in theology preferred (B.A. or M.A. in theology, youth ministry, Catholic studies, or related field); previous experience in youth ministry or religious education helpful. Ideal candidate is active, practicing Catholic with good communication and organizational skills, and sound formation in Catholic theology who interacts well with youth and adults. Salaried position with full benefit package. Send cover letter, resume and three references to: Msgr. Douglas L. Grams, Church of St. Mary, 417 S. Minnesota St. New Ulm, MN 56073; email: dgrams60@yahoo.com Subject: DRE/YM position

Holy Redeemer Parish, Marshall seeks energetic person to lead Youth Ministry and Confirmation programs. Contact Fr. Paul Wolf, pwolf@holy-redeemer.com or Mary Nordstrom, mnordstrom@holy-redeemer.com; (507) 532-5711.

Holy Family Area Catholic Community seeks pastoral associate to collaborate with pastor in providing leadership and care for an area parish. Primary ministry is administration,

UPCOMING VIRTUS (SAFE ENVIRONMENT) SESSIONS -

March 12 in Minnetota at 6:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. in Willmar. To register, contact your local Catholic parish. For upcoming VIRTUS sessions visit www.dnu.org

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

You deserve a Marriage Encounter Weekend, March 13-15, 2009. Jeff and Rondi Kodet, (507) 644-3523, or jkrek@redred.com.

QUEST FOR GOD TODAY-A

LENTEN RETREAT for single women ages 20-40, March 14, 9 a.m. to March 15, 1 p.m., at Sisters of St. Francis, Assisi Heights, Rochester, MN. Cost: \$35 includes food and housing. Contact Sr. Ann Redig (507) 282-7441 or

ann.redig@myclearwave.net
Register by March 6.

RIVERBEND TEC (TOGETHER ENCOUNTERING CHRIST)

weekend March 28-30, 2009, in New Ulm. For more information contact Riverbend TEC, 112 W. Van Dusen St., Springfield, MN 56087; (507) 723-4141; www.riverbendtec.org.

ANNUAL CHRISM MASS -

April 2, 2009, at Our Lady of the Lakes, Spicer, 7:00 p.m.

This Lenten Season, be sure to visit the Diocese of New Ulm Media Resource Center's **Web site (www.dnu.org)**. Check out all the new Lenten resources available for use in your parish, school, or home.

stewardship, and coordination of day-to-day parish operations, developing lay ministries, and providing some pastoral care. Send resume or contact Fr. Jim Devorak, St. Joseph Parish, 512 Black Oak Ave, Montevideo, MN, 56265; phone: (320) 269-8623; fjim@saintsjac.org.

The Holy Family Area Catholic Community has a full-time opening for Director of Faith Formation

Learn more about your faith it's only a "click" away!

The Diocese of New Ulm is now partnered with the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF). This is a great opportunity for adult lay people from all walks of life to learn more about their Catholic faith, and do it all from their home computer!

The next VLCFF cycle will feature on-line seminars lasting three weeks. Upcoming online courses are: Designing a Parish Catechetical Plan; On Bended Knee; and Our Hearts Were Burning.

working primarily at St. Joseph Parish in Montevideo and St. Andrew Parish in Granite Falls, MN. This also includes sacramental preparation for Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. Send resume or for more information contact Fr. Jim Devorak, St. Joseph Parish, 512 Black Oak Ave, Montevideo, MN. 56265. Phone (320) 269-8623; fjim@saintsjac.org.

Registration begins on March 3 and closes April 15, 2009. Each seminar runs from April 19-May 9. The cost for Catholic adults within the Diocese of New Ulm is discounted to \$30 to take a three week seminar.

For additional information contact Bryan Reising at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; phone: (507) 359-2966; email: breising@dnu.org. Information can also be obtained by visiting <http://vlc.udayton.edu/>.

THE DRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 23 No. 7 March 2009



Bishop John LeVoir will celebrate the Rite of Election with eleven catechumens and the Call to Continuing Conversion with twenty-eight candidates on Sunday, March 8, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm. This celebration is one of many rituals that take place as part of the R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) as a step toward the initiation rites of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation that will be celebrated at the Easter Vigil in the parishes around the diocese. The Rite of Election is for those seeking Baptism. The Call to Continuing Conversion is for those already baptized in the Christian faith but seek full membership in the Church. All the faithful of the diocese are welcome to attend. A reception will follow the service.

"This community gladly recommends you to the bishop, who, in the name of Christ, will call you to the Easter sacraments."

- Celebration of the Rite of Sending

catholic trends

The President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has called remarks denying the Holocaust by Bishop Richard Williamson of the Priestly Society of St. Pius X, "deeply offensive and utterly false." The assessment came in a February 3 statement by Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, USCCB President. The Holocaust denial by Bishop Williamson was widely publicized after Pope Benedict XVI lifted the excommunication

upon the bishops of the St. Pius X Society. Cardinal George's statement can be found on the Web at www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2009/09-031.shtml.

Writing as chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Cardinal Justin Rigali sent a letter on February 5 to all members of Congress, urging them to maintain pro-life provisions in the appropriations bills they must soon approve to

keep government programs funded past March 5. "I urge you not to use this legislation to weaken or rescind longstanding provisions that protect U.S. taxpayers from being forced to fund and promote the destruction of innocent human life," Cardinal Rigali said.

"In making this plea," he said, "I am joined by millions of Catholics and others who have sent postcards to their elected representatives with this message: 'Please oppose FOCA [the 'Freedom of Choice Act'] or any similar measure, and retain laws against federal funding and promotion of abortion.' While an extreme proposal like FOCA would overturn hundreds of pro-life laws at once, we are equally concerned that such laws may be overturned one at a time during Congress's appropriations process." The entire text of the letter is available at: www.usccb.org/prolife/rigali_2-5-09.pdf.

Fasting from food and detaching oneself from

material goods during Lent help believers open their hearts to God and open their hands to the poor, Pope Benedict XVI said. The Lenten fast helps Christians "mortify our egoism and open our hearts to love of God and neighbor," the pope said in his message for Lent 2009.

Pope Benedict XVI's March 17-23 trip to Cameroon and Angola will be his first visit to Africa

and his 11th trip outside Italy since the beginning of his pontificate in April 2005. Previous trips have been: Germany, August 2005; Poland, May 2006; Spain, July 2006; Germany, September 2006; Turkey, November-December, 2006; Brazil, May 2007; Austria, September 2007; United States, April 2008; Australia, July 2008; and France, September 2008.

Happy Birthday Bishop LeVoir!

Sr. Mary Joseph Mead surprises Bishop LeVoir with a birthday cake on February 7. Bishop LeVoir was a dinner guest of the



Benedictine Sisters at Holy Trinity Convent in Graceville, MN. (Pictured left) Community with the Bishop - Sr. Mary Joseph Mead, Sr. Pia Rottinghaus, Sr. Paula Lieck and Sr. Hilda Choi.

