

"Ut Omnes Unum Sint."



"In the Gospel of John, at the Last Supper, Jesus prays "that all may be one"-in Latin, "Ut Omnes Unum Sint." Upon being named a bishop, those were the words that I chose as my episcopal motto. It is my prayer for the Diocese of New Ulm that all may be united in faith and in the living out of that faith in Jesus and his Body, the Church."

- Bishop John C. Nienstedt

Diocese of New Ulm Quinquennial Report 1998-2003 A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

summarized by
Bishop John C. Nienstedt
Third bishop of New Ulm

Every five years, each diocese in the world is required to prepare a "quinquennial report" to Rome detailing the state of the Diocese. "Quinquennial" is Latin for *five years*. The last such report was compiled by the New Ulm Diocese in 1998. Due to the Holy Father's busy schedule during the Jubilee Year of 2000, this Quinquennial Report is a survey of events, accomplishments, and challenges the Diocese has seen over the previous six-year period instead of the usual five. It details everything from the names and titles of all Diocesan employees to Diocesan goals for the future. In addition, the report states statistical data on advisory councils, the tribunal, publications, the clergy and educational institutions, just to name a few. The following *Executive Summary* in part, "sums up" what has been reported to Pope John Paul II by Bishop Nienstedt as Shepherd of the Diocese of New Ulm.

Without a doubt, the most positive aspect of the Diocese of New Ulm is her faithful Catholic people. As the most rural Diocese in America, these people are close to the earth and, therefore, close to God. I believe that accounts for their deep hunger for holiness. I have experienced great cooperation in the administration of the Diocese since my installation on August 6, 2001. The majority of priests and pastoral administrators have been most cooperative in conforming to the Church's discipline. There has been strong leadership on the part of the Priests' Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, and Committee on Parishes, particularly in developing a *Diocesan Plan for*

Parishes and diocesan priorities. People have responded well to the need for vocations promotion and to the implementation of the new *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*.

After compiling this report, I am convinced more than ever that the pastoral activity undertaken in the past six years will lead to greater unity and growth in faith as we enter the future.

▼ OVERVIEW

During this quinquennium, the Diocese was under the care of its second Bishop, the Most Reverend Raymond A. Lucker (1976-2000); a Diocesan Administrator,

Reverend John G. Berger (2000-2001); and its third Bishop, the Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt (2001-present). The Diocese consists of fifteen counties wherein 25% of the population is Catholic. The Catholic population has remained constant for over forty years at about 70,000 Catholics. There are eighty parishes and two missions. State population projections indicate that the area's population will increase by 10% in the future with the majority of the increase coming in the central to northeastern parts of the Diocese.

▼ LITURGICAL & SACRAMENTAL LIFE

The Sunday liturgy is widely

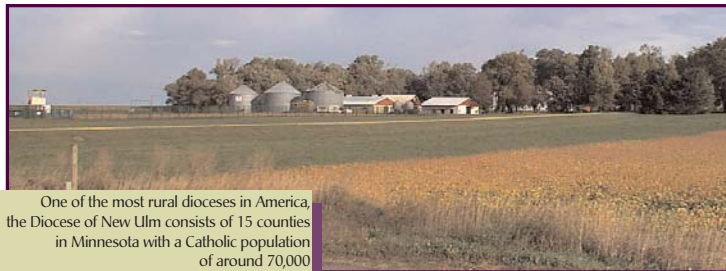
viewed to be at the center of faith and parish activity. Its practice, however, is being challenged. During the past six years, Sunday Mass attendance has declined from 48% to 44% of the total number of registered parishioners. Christmas and Easter attendance also declined from 78% to 76%.

An evangelization initiative that is being considered will address ways to reverse these trends. The introduction of the *new General*

Instruction on the Roman Missal has provided an opportunity for renewed liturgical formation of the faithful. Articles by me and other authors have been included in the diocesan newspaper. Pastors also devoted time during their homilies and in their parish bulletins to instruct the faithful about changes and their role in the celebration of the Eucharist. Communal Penance services (Form 2) are the most popular form for reception of the sacrament, even though the individual form is regularly scheduled in all parishes.

General Absolution was previously practiced throughout the Diocese but that practice has been eliminated. The Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults and of Children are fully implemented in the Diocese.

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One of the most rural dioceses in America, the Diocese of New Ulm consists of 15 counties in Minnesota with a Catholic population of around 70,000



The annual Chrism Mass gathers the faithful of the diocese with the bishop to celebrate, to worship, and to consecrate the holy oils used in all our parishes throughout the year.



A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

▼ CATHOLIC EDUCATION

During my installation homily, I announced that priestly and religious vocations are the number one priority for the Diocese. Since then, various programs have been designed and developed for vocation awareness to the priesthood and religious life.

As the Diocese looks to the future of Catholic schools, the realities of a declining school-age population and an unstable agricultural economy will mean that the concept of "area schools" will need to be addressed. In order to preserve their futures, some changes will need to be made in the structure of administration, teaching staff, programs, and subsidy.



Catholic Schools Week is celebrated every January in the diocese in recognition and support for Catholic schools nationwide.



Currently,

the Diocese has five major seminarians and two college seminarians. There is no formation program for the Permanent Diaconate within the Diocese but a study is in progress to initiate one.

There are three Catholic High Schools, enrolling four hundred, ninety-four students, and seventeen elementary schools, enrolling 2,687 students, in the Diocese. During the past six years, schools at St. Andrew in Fairfax and Our Lady of Victory in Lucan were closed. Both schools' enrollments were fewer than twenty students.



The Most Reverend John Clayton Nienstedt, S.T.D., Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit, MI, was installed as the third Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of New Ulm, MN, August 6, 2001, at the Church of St. Mary, Sleepy Eye, MN.

formation into their elementary and high school program formats and referring to them as "whole community catechesis" or "intergenerational catechesis" programs. Youth Ministry takes on many forms in the diocese. Each year, a Junior High Festival is held which has averaged over seven hundred participants. A High School Youth Rally is also conducted, averaging over five hundred, thirty-five participants annually. The diocese assembles one of the largest bi-annual contingents to the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) with an average of five hundred, ninety representatives. In 2002, thirty-two people and I attended World Youth Day in Toronto, Canada. There are leadership camps available on the diocesan and regional level for youth and adults working with youth to receive training.

▼ LIFE & MINISTRY OF CLERGY & RELIGIOUS

There are a total of 75 Diocesan priests. Forty-nine priests are involved in ministry, five of whom work outside of the Diocese. Only forty-four have full-time pastoral assignments. Their median age is fifty-four. There are twenty-five retired priests with a median age of eighty.

During the past quinquennium, four men were ordained to the priesthood, twelve priests retired, and twenty priests died. There are four permanent deacons serving in the Diocese and their median age is fifty-five.



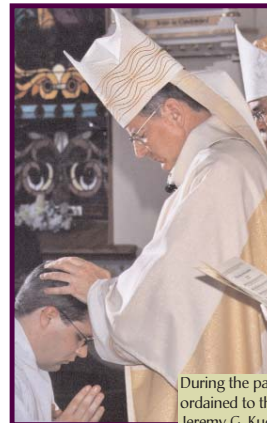
Quinquennial Report 1998-2003

"that all may be one"

▼ LAITY

The Diocese has a very positive and strong foundation of lay participation and lay leadership. Lay Catholics are actively involved in consultative bodies on the diocesan, area, and parish levels.

Their insight, energy, and commitment are extremely helpful to the mission of the Church. The largest public lay associations in the Diocese are the Council of Catholic



During the past five years, four men were ordained to the priesthood. The most recent, Jeremy G. Kucera (I) of Silver Lake, was ordained by Bishop Nienstedt in June, 2004 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm.

▼ MISSIONS

There are three diocesan priests who have served or are still serving in the foreign missions. Two are at the diocesan mission parish in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala and one serves at the San Alfonso Mission in El Paso, Texas and the Diocese of Ciudad, Juarez, Mexico.

Women (CCW) and the Knights of Columbus (KC). Thousands of members of the Diocese are involved in the activities of these groups.



In September, 2002, a mudslide swept through the small community of El Porvenir, San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala. Forty of the seventy houses were simply swept away.



A cross for RENEW 2000 and the 3rd millennium was introduced in 1999. The late Bishop Raymond A. Lucker, (3rd from left) second bishop of the Diocese, and other area Christian denomination leaders gathered for a special "At the Foot of the Cross" dedication.

▼ECUMENISM & OTHER RELIGIONS

The largest religious denomination within the boundaries of the Diocese is the Lutheran Church. Most are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). During this quinquennium, the Diocese organized an annual prayer service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, inviting all heads of denominations and churches within its boundaries.

▼PASTORAL CARE OF THE FAMILY

In 2003, there were 363 canonical marriages in the Diocese - 200 involved Catholic couples and 163 involved a Catholic and an ecumenical or interfaith partner.

The diocesan Marriage Preparation Program was revised to a one-day format, resulting in a 40% increase in participation. During the reporting period, the Diocese had an average of ninety-one canonical annulments per year. The major factors in the granting of these annulments were chemical dependency, emotional, and psychological instability and immaturity, marital infidelity, the erosion of a sense of commitment, and society's "divorce mentality." Pro-life activity is evident throughout the Diocese and the number of abortions has slightly declined. Although there is still need for vigorous efforts to protect human life, it is evident that most people in the Diocese view abortion as an evil.

▼EVANGELIZATION OF CULTURE

There is a growing Spanish-speaking population in the Diocese. Many of these people are migrants or immigrants from Texas or Mexico. There are also immigrants from Central and South America, Southeast Asia and central Africa. Over the past six years, a number of parishes in the Diocese have worked to provide a welcoming and receptive oasis for these migrants and immigrants. At present, a Task Force is studying ways to expand and improve this ministry. The Diocese has also committed to conducting an on-site Spanish Immersion Course to increase the number of Spanish-speaking ministers.



Every year in December, the Hispanic community of the diocese celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Posadas which defines the Hispanic experience of Advent.

▼COMMUNICATIONS

The principal means of church related communication is through the Diocesan newspaper, *The Prairie Catholic*. Every registered Catholic household in the Diocese receives the paper which is published in ten issues per year.

The Diocese is also involved in sponsoring Catholic radio programming in English and Spanish and in taping religious programming for use on cable television outlets. A committee at the Diocesan offices is exploring ways that television, radio, and cable television use can be enhanced for adult catechetical purposes.

▼SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY

The Catholic Church Extension Society continues to characterize the Diocese of New Ulm as Minnesota's most rural diocese.

About 90% of the land in southwestern Minnesota is devoted to agricultural production. While the number of farms and farmers is decreasing, the size of farms is increasing. The net effect for rural

communities - those located far away from urban centers - is their populations are declining and aging at the same time.

▼FINANCIAL STATE

The financial condition of the Diocese is sound, despite the effects of the economic impact of the terrorist attacks and the stock market decline.

The operating budget for the diocesan ministries continues to be challenging. Unlike most dioceses in the United States, New Ulm has never had an annual appeal. One is being considered for the near future and the revenues should allow for the introduction and development of necessary ministries.



Bishop Nienstedt, along with 32 pilgrims from the diocese, traveled to Toronto, Canada to participate in World Youth Day 2002.



THE CHALLENGES

I believe the Diocese of New Ulm has a bright future. But the key to that future lies in the commitment of her members to unity - unity with her head, Jesus Christ, and unity with all who make up his

Body, the Church Universal. The Diocese does not stand on her own, nor is she constituted to do "her own thing." The Diocese is called by her Master to bring the Gospel to the world and thereby to bring the world to him. She does that through her commitment to communal and personal growth in holiness.

That growth in holiness involves the daily pattern of personal prayer, the celebration of the sacraments according to Church norms and expectations, the transmission of the truths of the faith to adults and children alike, the exercise of good stewardship over the resources entrusted to our care, the formation of a deep sense of community with a Catholic identity, a preferential option for the poor, the sick, the stranger and the marginalized, and a dedicated concern to protect and promote the common good of the society in which we live.

That growth to holiness is threatened when any member of the Diocese acts in ways that are not in union with what Jesus and his Church teach and practice. Where disunity arises our very mission is compromised.

The great privilege that is mine as Bishop of this Diocese for the past three years is to call the clergy, religious, and laity to that unity for which Jesus prayed. I am grateful that so many have cooperated with that call. They have given me great hope for the years to come.

In 1957, Bishop Alphonse Schladweiler, the first Bishop of the Diocese, dedicated this local Church to the Patroness of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I renew that allegiance to the one who was not only the first among her Son's disciples, but the very model of discipleship. May she continue to be our guide and example as we in this

Diocese journey in faith through the New Millennium of God's grace and favor.



John C. Nienstedt
Bishop John C. Nienstedt
Diocese of New Ulm



(Pictured from left to right):

- Bishop Raymond A. Lucker, 2nd bishop of New Ulm, (1976-2000) died of cancer on Sept. 19, 2001 at age 74. A final blessing is given by Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of St. Paul/Minneapolis.
- The Diocesan Festival was held August 19, 2001, at the Redwood Falls Community Center, Redwood Falls. Nearly 1,400 people of all ages came together to celebrate the beginning of a new millennium in the diocese.
- In December of 2002, Bishop Nienstedt presented to the Tribal Council of the Lower Dakota people, his newly designed Personal Coat of Arms (pictured) and also the newly designed Diocesan Coat of Arms as a "token of friendship to the native people of Minnesota."
- The first annual Bishop Lucker Lecture was held March 20, 2003 in Redwood Falls. Bishop Robert F. Morneau, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay, WI, spoke on *Salt, Leaven and Light: A Vatican II Spirituality*.

Statistical Information Diocese of New Ulm (1998-2003)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Active Priests	54	55	49	50	47	44
Sisters	86	80	85	85	85	68
Parishes	81	81	80	80	80	80
Missions	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total County Population	278,780	280,807	281,065	286,617	287,090	285,061
Catholic Population	69,840	71,908	70,835	70,039	70,406	69,503
Lay Ministers	<i>diocesan statistics not available for these years</i>					103
Seminarians	7	9	8	9	9	8
High Schools enrollment	513	507	515	510	500	494
Elementary enrollment	3,022	2,969	2,773	2,739	2,689	2,687
Religious Education high school	3,820	3,770	3,726	3,799	3,796	3,764
Religious Education elementary	7,922	7,761	7,322	6,921	6,656	6,490
Infant Baptisms	1,092	999	1,038	1,039	967	1,008
Converts (RCIA)	68	71	43	43	78	46
Canonically Celebrated Marriages	249	232	220	236	214	200
Mixed Marriages	253	220	195	195	175	163
Deaths/Funerals	757	764	766	734	738	767