

# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

*Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm*

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 30 No. 5 January 2016

Day of Prayer & Fasting  
in Reparation  
for a Culture of Violence



In view of the recent Planned Parenthood videos and news of other attacks on human life, the Minnesota Catholic bishops have decided to hold a Day of Fasting and Reparation for a Culture of Violence. This day will afford the faithful an opportunity to emphasize a consistent ethic of life and to join together in standing against violence in all forms. Bishop John M. LeVoir has decided to hold this day on Jan. 22, 2016 in the Diocese of New Ulm to coincide with the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade.

To encourage participation in this event, The Prairie Catholic and other diocesan newspapers are publishing a special four-page feature about the day. These pages contain an introductory article on the topic, features showcasing what Minnesota Catholics are doing to promote life, ways of taking action, and petitions to be used at Masses or prayer services that day. See pages 7-10.

## Human slavery: a thing of the past?

**NEW ULM** – The International Labour Organization estimates that there are almost 21 million victims of human trafficking globally. Traffickers use a variety of manipulative tactics – including violence, threats, deception, and debt bondage – to force people into commercial sex or jobs they cannot leave.

In 2014, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center responded to over 24,000 phone calls, Web forms, and e-mails, identifying over 5,000 of them as potential cases of human trafficking.

Closer to home, Forum News Service published a series of in-depth investigative reports in early 2015 on the emerging crisis of human sex trafficking in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota, and its connection to Minnesota and South Dakota (see



Human traffickers use violence, threats, deception, debt bondage, and other manipulative tactics to force their victims into commercial sex or unskilled labor. Other tactics, such as isolation and monitoring, help to keep them quiet.

*(Photo by Webphoto99/Dreamstime)*

<http://www.traffickedreport.com>).

But could human trafficking be going on right here, in the Diocese of New Ulm? That's one question we posed to Christopher Ljungquist, a national anti-trafficking expert who serves as the national outreach and education coordinator for the Office of Migrant and Refugee Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Ljungquist is helping the USCCB spearhead the Amistad Movement, a national education campaign working to empower immigrants and local leaders to prevent human trafficking in their communities.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of New Ulm has invited Ljungquist to bring the Amistad Movement to the diocese through a series of presentations he will give on Feb. 16 and 17

at the Church of St. Mary in Willmar. This training will teach participants to identify human trafficking in different industries, establish partnerships with other organizations to combat trafficking, and become ethical employers and consumers.

"Prairie Catholic" editor-in-chief Dan Rossini interviewed Ljungquist by phone in late December to get some more insight into the modern-day scourge of human trafficking as a prelude to his training sessions in the diocese.

**How did you get involved with the USCCB's Office of Migrant and Refugee Services?**

So I started working for the USCCB Migrant and Refugee Services' Anti-Trafficking Office in March of this year. ... I know about human trafficking because

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Mother Teresa to be canonized a saint

by Elise Harris  
Catholic News Agency

**VATICAN CITY** – After months of anticipation, the miracle allowing for the canonization of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta has officially been approved by the Vatican, though as of now no specific date for the event has been given.

Rumors of the canonization have been building for months. However, the Vatican made it official in a Dec. 18 communique, which also recognized the heroic virtue of Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, giving him the title "Venerable."

Though Pope Francis met with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, previously to advance several causes of canonization, including an American, he met with the cardinal again in a private audience on the pope's birthday, Dec. 17.

In the course of the meeting the pope accepted the miracle attributed to Mother Teresa, which has been being studied, namely, the healing of a Brazilian man inexplicably cured of brain abscesses.

Although no plans are official, Cardinal Amato has previously suggested Sept. 4, 2016 – which is being observed as a jubilee day for workers and volunteers of mercy – as a possible



*(Photo by L'Osservatore Romano)*

**Blessed Mother Teresa is photographed at the Vatican in October 1994.**

canonization date, since it is close to Sept. 5, the nun's feast day and the anniversary of her death.

In September, Father Caetano Rizzi, the vicar for Canon Affairs in the Brazilian diocese of Santos and the Promoter of Justice for the miracle, told CNA that the pope was interested in canonizing Mother Teresa during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which runs from Dec. 8, 2015 to Nov. 20, 2016.

Mother Teresa was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu Aug. 26, 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia. The youngest of three children, she attended a youth group run by

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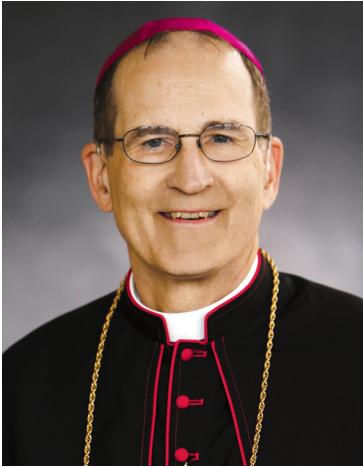
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# Be Not Afraid

## Pastoral planning moves forward



by Bishop John M. LeVoir

In union with priests, religious, pastoral leaders, and parishioners, the Diocese of New Ulm continues to implement the “Fourth Plan for Parishes.”

When the diocese was founded in 1957, there were 68,094 Catholics, 98 priests, 86 parishes, seven Catholic high schools, and 37 Catholic grade schools.

Today, the statistics are much different. The diocese has 57,495 Catholics as of June 30, 2014 (down about 10,600), 37 active diocesan priests (down 61), 75 parishes (down 11), three Catholic high schools (down four), and 15 Catholic grade schools (down 22).

It is significant to note that with just 11 less parishes since the inception of the diocese, the number of priests has declined by 61, which means more stress for

our priests. I observe the effects of stress on our priests now.

Projections show that the number of active priests in the diocese, age 70 and under, will decline even more in the next five years to 27. Also, due mainly to deaths, the diocese is losing about 850 parishioners per year.

In addition, there are only about 33 percent of Catholics who attend Mass on the weekends. The decrease in active parishioners usually means a decrease in financial support for parish facilities, and fewer people to plan and work at parish activities. As can be seen, it is not possible to continue operating as we have been.

What is happening now with regard to pastoral planning in the six regions of the diocese? Many are working together to move forward in the diocese and to plan for the future.

To assist in the planning process, Tom Keaveny, director of Pastoral Planning, and I have been involved in the pastoral planning for Region 1 and the Holy Cross Area Faith Community. We have met with priests, deacons, and pastoral leaders in Regions 2 and 4. In these regions, priests and pastoral leaders are moving forward and holding discussions with parishioners.

These discussions are also taking place in Region 5. Discussions involve the reduction of the number of Masses and merging of

parishes. Tom Keaveny and I have planning meetings scheduled this winter and spring with Regions 3 and 6.

The goal of the “Fourth Plan for Parishes” and pastoral planning is to look honestly and prayerfully at our situation in the Diocese of New Ulm. Things have changed a great deal since the diocese was formed in 1957.

More change is happening. But these changes do not have to be negative. With prayer and proper planning, there can be more vibrant parishes and area faith communities, even though there is real pain and sadness involved as we leave some of the past behind.

As I visit parishes, I have seen a new vibrancy already in area faith communities where Mass schedules have been pared down. Due to fewer Masses, the number of people at each Mass has increased. The sense of community is stronger. The worshipping communities are more robust. The Mass responses and singing are more vigorous. Priests are less stressed.

A significant part of the Fourth Plan is to encourage young men to consider the priesthood and to pray that more young men answer God’s call to the priesthood. Please continue to do these things.

The Diocese of New Ulm has nine men in the seminary at present, but most still have many years of formation ahead. Please pray for these young men as well.

Please continue pastoral planning efforts to reduce the number of parish Masses and to merge parish operations, and ultimately to merge parishes. Through pastoral planning, we are not losing our history. Rather we are changing our structures and the way that we celebrate our faith based on an honest and prayerful look at what is happening in our parishes and in our diocese. May Jesus Christ be our guiding light.

### Year of mercy

At the beginning of December, it was emotional for me to open the two Holy Doors of Mercy in our diocese. One door is at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. The other is at the Schoenstatt Shrine in Sleepy Eye.

During this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has asked us to do the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The works of mercy are Scripture-based and can be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

He has also asked us to celebrate the Sacrament of Confession in order to avail ourselves of God’s mercy, and to be reconciled to God and our brothers and sisters whom we have offended. Confession also brings peace to our hearts.

Finally, he has asked us to make pilgrimages to the Holy Doors. By making a pilgrimage to a Holy Door at either New Ulm or Sleepy Eye and entering through the door, one is able to gain a plenary indulgence by fulfilling the usual

conditions for the indulgence. Much more on the Year of Mercy can be found on the Diocese of New Ulm Web site (<http://www.dnu.org/>).

### March for life

The annual March for Life will take place at the Minnesota State Capitol on Friday, Jan. 22, 2016. It is an opportunity to bring our Catholic faith to the public square as Pope Francis has asked us to do.

Those at the march are public witnesses against abortion and *for* life. They influence our legislators to support pro-life legislation. They also remember all the unborn babies who have been aborted; the mothers who have been wounded physically, emotionally, and spiritually; and fathers who have been deeply affected by abortion. The gathering demonstrates what it means to be pro-life.

Before the March for Life, there is the annual Prayer Service for Life at the St. Paul Cathedral. I have been asked to lead the prayer service, which begins at 10:30 a.m. After the prayer service, I will be taking part in the March for Life at the Capitol.

Please join me for these important events, especially during this Year of Mercy. Mercy is the solution to a troubling pregnancy, not death.

*Bishop LeVoir’s January 2016 calendar can be found at [www.dnu.org/calendar/](http://www.dnu.org/calendar/).*

## THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

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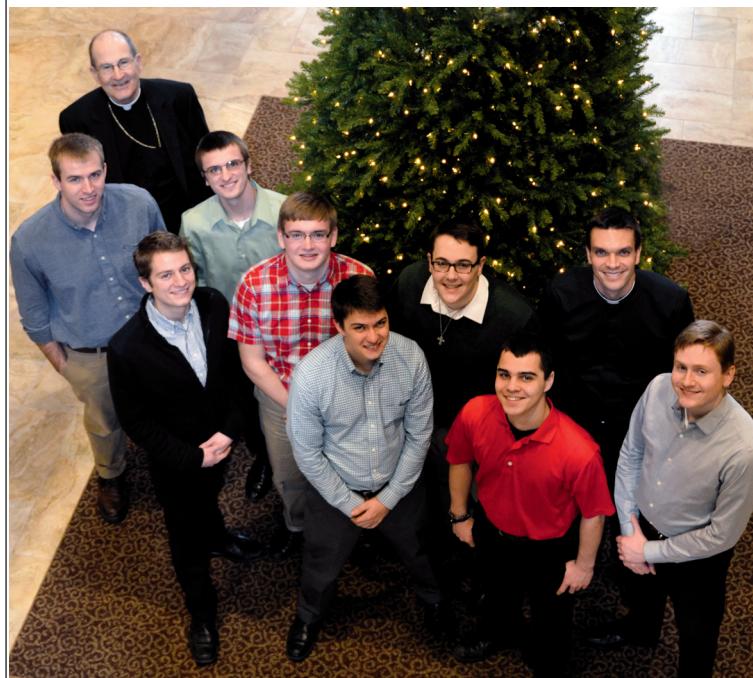
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## A Christmas gathering with the bishop



NEW ULM – Bishop John M. LeVoir hosted a Christmas gathering for seminarians of the diocese on Dec. 27 at his home. The following day, the group gathered with the bishop at the Pastoral Center for Eucharistic adoration, Mass, and lunch. Pictured are seminarians Raymond Eberhard (front row, left), John Hayes, Nathan Hansen, Tanner Thooft, and Evan Huebl. Back row: Bishop LeVoir (left); seminarians Shawn Polman, Joshua Bot, and Troy Timmerman; and Fr. Matthew Wiering, director of Vocations for the diocese.



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# Diocese of New Ulm inaugurates Jubilee Year of Mercy at Cathedral

by Dan Rossini  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**NEW ULM** – “Open your hearts to mercy and show mercy to our brothers and sisters.”

That was the message Bishop John M. LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm proclaimed in his homily at the opening Mass of the Year of Mercy Dec. 13 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm.

“Do you want to know how to act now, in the year 2015?” he enticed his listeners. “It’s mercy. Show mercy to those in need, whether in the family, in the workplace, school, social gatherings, no matter where we are.”

The bishop’s words were meant to make the Holy Year a lived reality, rather than a pleasant occasion to be noted and quickly forgotten.

“This is important for our day and age. It’s important for our diocese,” he said about the Year. “The reason that Pope Francis was elected was mercy. So we look at the face of mercy in Jesus Christ” and “open ourselves up to that mercy.”

The celebration, which also marked the Third Sunday of Advent, included a solemn procession, the official opening of a specially designated Holy Door of Mercy at the Cathedral, and refreshments and social time following Mass.

Congregants gathered first at the Cathedral High School gym. Following the opening prayer by Bishop LeVoir, they heard the Gospel reading of the parable of the Lost Sheep (Lk 15:1-7) and an excerpt from the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

In that text, Pope Francis explained why he proclaimed the Year of Mercy: “At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers

might grow stronger and more effective.”

Led by the Knights of Columbus, the bishop, altar servers, two deacons, 18 priests, the choir, and the congregation then processed outside the building, down 6th Street North and onto North State Street, and up the front Cathedral steps to the middle set of doors.

There Bishop LeVoir untied a purple sash from around the door handles, formally opening the Door of Mercy. “This is the Lord’s gate: Let us enter through it and obtain mercy and forgiveness,” he prayed. Holding the Book of the Gospels, the Bishop then entered the Cathedral, followed by his flock.

In his homily, Bishop LeVoir talked about the significance of the procession and the Holy Door.

“The idea behind a Holy Year is to make a special pilgrimage to symbolize our pilgrimage from this life into the next, to enter the Holy Door, to obtain the special graces, the special indulgence, and to solidify, to bond together the Body of Christ: Jesus and his members,” he said.

“The door leads into the Church, into the Body of Christ,” he explained. “Those who pass through it, pass through to a different way of life, a different way of being.”

Bishop LeVoir said it is very important in the Year of Mercy to have a correct understanding of mercy. “Mercy is really an expression of love,” he said. “In fact, sometimes it’s called merciful love.”

Then he quoted St. John Paul II’s landmark 1980 encyclical on mercy, “*Dives in Misericordia*” (“Rich in Mercy”). According to the saintly pontiff, mercy is “the bringing of good, true good, from evil: physical evil, moral evil, or both,” said the bishop.

The person who best exemplifies mercy, he said, is Jesus Christ, whom he called “mercy personified.” Jesus brought good from physical evil when he fed the hungry crowd and when he cured the sick. He brought good



Holding the Book of the Gospels, Bishop John M. LeVoir enters through the Holy Door of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity at the start of the opening Mass to celebrate the jubilee Year of Mercy Dec. 13 in New Ulm.  
*(Photo by Fritz Busch/New Ulm Journal)*

from moral evil when he forgave sins, reconciling people to God and their brothers and sisters.

“The greatest act of mercy is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,” the bishop said. “The death of Jesus is the death of God. ... There is no greater evil than deicide: the killing of God. But out of that great evil, what does Jesus bring? He brings the good of redemption, the good of salvation, the good of the Resurrection.”

Bishop LeVoir went on to remark that mercy “has been a constant theme of Pope Francis throughout his papacy. So this declaration of the Year of Mercy was no surprise. He’s talking about mercy all of the time.”

He said that he is looking upon the Year of Mercy as Pope Francis’ “signature event,” “an interpretive key for his whole papacy.”

“So this is very, very important,” Bishop LeVoir said. “Francis was chosen for a particular reason. And in my opinion the reason is mercy. Everyone needs mercy. Remember the Holy Father calling the Church a field hospital, for those who are physically and morally wounded.

“So what are we supposed to do in the Church? We’re supposed to bring goodness to those people. That’s mercy.”



The Knights of Columbus lead the procession of the faithful – including the bishop, altar servers, two deacons, 18 priests, the choir, and the congregation – down Sixth Street North toward the front steps of the Cathedral where the Holy Door would be opened.  
*(Photo by Dan Rossini)*



Just after opening the Holy Door, Bishop LeVoir prays before leading the faithful through the Holy Door and into the Cathedral. Catholics who enter a Holy Door at a Cathedral or designated shrine during the Year of Mercy are eligible to receive special indulgences.  
*(Photo by Chris Clancy)*



## No Tengas Miedo *La Planificación Pastoral Sigue Adelante*

por Obispo John M. LeVoir

La Diócesis de New Ulm en conjunto con los sacerdotes, religiosos, líderes pastorales y feligreses continúan implementando el “Cuarto Plan para Parroquias”.

Cuando la diócesis fue fundada en 1957, había 68,094 católicos, 98 sacerdotes, 86 parroquias, 7 escuelas católicas de secundaria y 37 escuelas católicas de primaria.

Hoy en día, las estadísticas son muy diferentes. La diócesis cuenta con 57,495 católicos (una diferencia de 10,600), 37 sacerdotes activos (una diferencia de 57), 75 parroquias (una diferencia de 11), tres escuelas secundarias (una diferencia de cuatro) y 15 escuelas de primaria (una diferencia de 22).

Es importante señalar que con una diferencia de 11 parroquias, el número de sacerdotes ha disminuido a 61. Esto significa más estrés para nuestros sacerdotes. Ahora me he dado cuenta de los efectos del estrés en nuestros sacerdotes.

Las proyecciones muestran que el número de sacerdotes activos en la diócesis disminuirá aún más en los próximos cinco años, a 27 sacerdotes solamente. La diócesis está perdiendo 850 feligreses por año, la razón principal es la muerte de feligreses.

Además, alrededor de solo un 33 por ciento de católicos asisten a la misa los fines de semana. Por lo general, cuantos menos feligreses activos significa una disminución en el apoyo financiero a las parroquias, y menos personas para planificar las actividades en las parroquias. Como pueden ver, no podemos continuar operando como lo hemos estado haciendo.

¿Qué está pasando en este momento con respecto a la planificación pastoral en las seis regiones de la diócesis? Muchos están trabajando en conjunto para hacer planes para el futuro.

Tom Keaveny, Director de Planificación Pastoral nos está ayudando en el proceso de planificación. Yo también he participado en la planificación pastoral en la Región 1. Nos

hemos reunido con sacerdotes, diáconos y líderes pastorales en la Región 2 y 4. En estas regiones, sacerdotes y líderes pastorales están en conversación con los feligreses.

En la Región 5 también se está llevando a cabo una conversación. Estas conversaciones implican la reducción de Misas y la fusión de parroquias. Tom Keaveny y yo tendremos reuniones este invierno y en la primavera con las Regiones 3 y 6.

Vienen más cambios. Pero estos cambios no tienen que ser negativos. Con mucha oración y la planificación adecuada, puede haber parroquias y Comunidades del Área de Fe más dinámicas, a pesar que es triste y doloroso ver el pasado atrás.

Cuando he visitado las parroquias, he notado una nueva vitalidad que ya se ve en las comunidades del Área de Fe, donde se ha disminuido el número de Misas. Por el hecho que hay menos misas, el número de personas en cada Misa ha incrementado. Se siente una comunidad más dinámica. Las comunidades de adoración son más sólidas y los sacerdotes tienen menos estrés.

A través de la planificación pastoral, no estamos perdiendo nuestra historia. Más bien estamos cambiando nuestras estructuras y la forma en cómo celebramos nuestra fe basado en oración y viendo lo que está sucediendo en nuestras parroquias y en nuestra diócesis. Que Jesucristo sea nuestra luz de guía.

**Año de la Misericordia**  
A principios de diciembre, fue muy emocionante abrir las dos puertas santas de la Misericordia en nuestra diócesis. La primera puerta se encuentra en la Catedral de la Santísima Trinidad en New Ulm y la otra es en el Santuario de Schoenstatt en Sleepy Eye.

Durante este Año de la Misericordia, el Papa Francisco nos ha pedido que hagamos las obras espirituales y corporales de la misericordia. Las obras de misericordia son basadas en las Escrituras y se pueden encontrar en el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica. Él también nos ha

pedido celebrar el Sacramento de la Confesión.

Por último, nos ha pedido hacer peregrinación en las puertas santas. Ustedes pueden hacer una peregrinación a una Puerta Santa, ya sea en New Ulm o Sleepy Eye y entrar por la puerta, uno gana la indulgencia plenaria al reunir las condiciones habituales de la indulgencia. Más sobre el Año de la Misericordia en la página de la Diócesis (<http://www.dnu.org/>).

### Marcha por la Vida

La Marcha Anual por la Vida se llevará a cabo en el capitolio de Minnesota el viernes, 22 de enero. Es una oportunidad para que nuestra fe católica llegue a la plaza pública como el Papa Francisco nos ha pedido que hagamos.

Aquellos en la audiencia pública serán testigos en contra del aborto y luchar por la vida. Influir a nuestros legisladores para apoyar la legislación pro-vida. También recordar a todos los no nacidos que han sido abortados; o las madres que han sido abusadas físicamente, emocionalmente y espiritualmente; y padres que han sido profundamente afectados por el aborto. La marcha demuestra lo que significa ser pro-vida. Antes de la Marcha por la Vida, habrá un Servicio de Oración por la Vida en la Catedral de St. Paul. Yo haré el servicio de oración, que comienza a las 10:30 a.m. y después de la oración, estaré participando en la Marcha.

### Official appointment

At the recommendation of the diocesan Priest Personnel Board, Bishop John M. LeVoir has made the following assignment:

*Effective October 7, 2015*

**Fr. Dennis Labat** appointed



parochial administrator of the Church of St. Catherine in Redwood Falls and the Church of St. John in Morton, while remaining pastor of the Church of St. Mary, Bird Island; the Church of St. John, Hector; the Church of St. Aloysius, Olivia; and the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Renville.

## Pope ups effort to make annulments more accessible

by Catholic News Agency

VATICAN CITY – On Dec.

11 Pope Francis clarified a few points in his streamlined marriage annulment process and restored power to the Vatican’s main marriage court in order to prevent unnecessary procedural delays.

One of the key clarifications the pope made was to reiterate that the new rules trump everything that came before them, including changes made during the pontificates of Pope Pius XI and John Paul II.

First announced in September, the new process went into effect Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and the launch of Francis’ Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

With the streamlined process, more of a role is placed on the local bishop, who now acts as the judge in the process, automatic appeals have been dropped, and the process has been declared free of charge.

The changes were initially published in two *motu proprio* – or letters – issued by the pope “on his own initiative.” The documents were entitled “*Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*” (“The Lord Jesus, A Meek Judge”), which deals with modifications in the Latin Rite’s Code of Canon Law, and “*Mitis et Misericors Iesus*” (“Jesus, Meek and Merciful”), which outlines changes for Eastern Churches who, although in full communion with Rome, have historically had a different process.

On Dec. 7, the day before the new process went into effect, Pope Francis signed a “rescript,” that is, a written answer to a question in which the primary subject of the question is clarified.

The move is a step in bringing the procedures of the Vatican’s main court, called the Roman Rota, in line with the new marriage annulment process.

According to the rescript text, the entry into force of the new process, which aims “to bring justice and mercy on the truth

of the bond to those who have experienced the failure of their marriage,” requires, among other things, “the need to harmonize the renewed procedures for marriage annulment with the regulations of the Roman Rota, awaiting their reform.”

The new laws, it said, are “intended precisely to show the Church’s closeness to wounded families, desiring that the many who experience matrimonial failure are reached by Christ’s healing work through ecclesiastical structures.”

Pope Francis affirmed the Rota’s jurisdiction as the ordinary court of appeal of the Apostolic See, and assured that it remains the point of reference in “safeguarding the unity of the jurisprudence,” as was laid out by St. John Paul II in his 1988 apostolic constitution “*Pastor Bonus*.”

With these two points in mind, as well as the desire to contribute “to the continuing formation of pastoral workers in the Tribunals of the local Churches,” Pope Francis decreed that the new laws on annulment cases “repeal or waive any contrary law or regulation currently in force.” The rescript also states that Pope Pius XI’s *Motu Proprio* “*Qua Cura*” on regional tribunals in Italy is canceled.

In the text, the pope clarifies that cases that reach the Roman Rota will now be judged according an old Latin formula: “*An constet de matrimonii nullitate, in casu,*” roughly translating as “Is there proof of the nullity of marriage in the case of ....”

Basically, the formula allows the Rota to grant an annulment even if the grounds for doing so weren’t the ones originally specified.

For example, a person might seek an annulment on the basis that one of the parties didn’t believe in marriage indissolubility, that is, the fact that marriage is a lifelong commitment.

The court could rule that while that point couldn’t be proven, the

(Continued on page 15)



# Unbound Ministry offers spiritual healing, restored freedom

*New Healing Ministry office can help people recover from past wounds*

by Debra Skelley Blaschko  
Prairie Catholic Correspondent

**NORTH MANKATO** – What would our world look like if people became spiritually healthy, happy, and deeply rooted in the freedom willed for us by Jesus Christ?

That's a big question, and one that is being addressed in the Diocese of New Ulm through the new Office of Healing Ministries.

Deacon Michael McKeown has been appointed to head up the new office in addition to his duties as the new director of Development for the diocese.

He is excited to see months of preparation lead to the implementation of healing ministry in the diocese. He will spend part of his time leading a prayer team to offer hope to people seeking a closer relationship with God.

"Deacon McKeown has been trained in Unbound Ministry and has helped a good number of people in the diocese to experience spiritual healing and to recover their freedom in Jesus Christ," said Bishop John M. LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm. "I have asked him to continue that ministry as a Pastoral Center staff member. Please pray for Deacon Mike and this special ministry."

The ministry uses the Unbound model of healing and deliverance developed by Neal and Janet Lozano of Heart of the Father

Ministries. Unbound is a practical guide to deliverance through prayer. It consists of walking through five key stages to freedom: repentance and faith, forgiveness, renunciation, taking authority, and the Father's blessing.

According to Bishop LeVoir, the ministry's focus is empowering people to reclaim their true identity in Christ as sons and daughters of the Father through Unbound prayer.

One Catholic in the diocese revealed how healing came through Unbound ministry after a lifetime "with feelings of worthlessness."

"I knew I needed prayer," he said. "I was scared but the prayer team was very understanding. I was finally able to forgive those who had hurt me. I feel like a tremendous burden has been lifted and I feel such peace and joy. ... I am so thankful for this ministry and the compassion and love that the prayer team showed me."

#### Results evident

Fr. Robert Mraz is pastor of the parishes in the Our Lady of the Prairie Area Faith Community comprising Tracy, Milroy, and Walnut Grove. He is a leader of the diocesan prayer team and is impressed by the results of the Unbound Ministry.

"From what I have seen, people go through this and there are changes in people's lives: sometimes dramatic



**UNBOUND  
MINISTRY**

*In Christ there is freedom!*

This image is taken from the front cover of the book "Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance" by Neal Lozano. The work lays out the foundations of healing ministry and is the result of the author's years of experience helping people uncover the freedom they have been given in Christ. It has been translated into Spanish as "Libertad: Guía Práctica Para la Liberación Espiritual." Both are available from [www.heartofthefather.com](http://www.heartofthefather.com).

and sometimes it comes in incremental steps of improvement," he said.

He said many people find the relief they have been looking for ... and begin to recognize the lies that have separated them from God. A person might believe what someone once told them, such as "You are a disgrace to the family," or "You can't do anything right."

Unbound Ministry helps people recognize the lies and past experiences that have "made them the way they are," said Fr. Mraz. The hurts and burdens are areas where people are attacked by temptation. Prayer helps them recognize the lies and understand that God does not see them as the lies portray.

Another person who was prayed for through Unbound Ministry

said, "The greatest thing I got out of it was that it was as if I (had been) looking through a foggy window before ... and the fog was wiped away. I saw everything in a different light." She said that has given her freedom and great joy.

**Another avenue for healing**  
Deacon McKeown explained the Unbound prayer is not a replacement for medical help or counseling. Prayer is in addition to other avenues to healing.

Thomas Keaveny is director for Catholic Charities for the Diocese of New Ulm and a licensed clinical social worker. He said clergy have always referred people to psychologists or doctors, perhaps never thinking of referring them for prayer.

He said that in the beginning, he was cautious about the new ministry, but has since been convinced of the value of adding prayer to the resource list for people seeking counseling through Catholic Charities. He himself has gone to experience the Unbound prayer model and found it helpful in his own life, he said.

#### Diocesan participation

When asked how the ministry came to the diocese, Deacon McKeown said a number of years ago he shared with his spiritual director that people often asked for prayer and he was feeling called to pray for them in a more personal way. His director suggested he read the book "Unbound."

The book led Deacon McKeown to attend a training seminar, and then he connected with an Unbound Ministry team in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis to gain practical experience.

Sometime later Bishop LeVoir allowed him to start an Unbound Ministry prayer team in the diocese with Fr. Robert Mraz, and to train lay people. The ministry has now been introduced to diocesan clergy and people are starting to see that it is helpful, said the deacon.

Bishop LeVoir underscored the need that many people have for an effective healing ministry to restore their freedom in Christ.

"Over my years as priest and bishop, I have seen the many spiritual wounds that people have and from which they suffer, he said. "Some have deep wounds due to abuse, bullying, ridicule, broken families, and many other things. Others suffer from the effects of their sins and failures. Still others have feelings of worthlessness, depression, and malaise. They lack the freedom willed for us by Jesus Christ."

The Unbound ministry prayer team offers a compassionate, non-judgmental environment for healing and respects participants' confidentiality. To inquire about an appointment, call 507-233-5310 or 507-430-1690.

## There's still time to contribute to the DMA

by Deacon Michael McKeown

The theme of this year's annual Diocesan Ministries Appeal is "Blessed are the Merciful."

We have been truly blessed by the generosity of our parishes in this year's appeal. We are currently at 83 percent of our \$1 million goal in terms of pledges and 72 percent in terms of receipts.

The eight ministries supported by the DMA promote the very acts of mercy called for by Pope Francis during this Year of Mercy. These ministries assist those needing spiritual and/or

physical assistance, and nurture youth and adults in their faith.

If you haven't already made your contribution to this year's DMA, please prayerfully consider a gift or pledge to support these vital ministries. Twenty percent of each dollar donated will be returned to your parish. In addition, donors who give \$1,000 or more will become members of the Bishop's Guild.

You can view this year's DMA video, initiate online giving,

and track your parish's progress by visiting the diocesan Web site at [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org) and clicking the "Giving" link at the top right. For questions or assistance, contact the Office of Development at (507) 233-5310 or e-mail me at [mmckeown@dnu.org](mailto:mmckeown@dnu.org).



*Editor's note: Deacon Mike McKeown is director of the Office of Development for the Diocese of New Ulm.*



# ¡ Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe !

**MONTEVIDEO** – The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, is an important celebration in the Church, especially for the Hispanic community. The Church of St. Joseph in Montevideo marked this important feast day on Dec. 12 with Mass and related festivities followed by a potluck dinner. Celebrating the Mass was Bishop John M. LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm; concelebrating was Fr. Paul Timmerman, pastor of St. Joseph and the other parishes in the Holy Family Area Faith Community; and assisting was Deacon Bob Reitsma, who is also assigned to Holy Family.

As the congregation arrived for the 7 p.m. Mass, matachines practiced their routines to participate in the liturgy. With everyone gathered, Bishop LeVoir led the group in prayer. The Knights of Columbus then led a procession into the church. After the bishop and the faithful placed roses at the foot of the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mass began.

At the end of Mass, actors re-enacted Mary's apparitions to St. Juan Diego in 1531 on Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City. They were Maria Vargas as Our Lady of Guadalupe, Carlos Cortez as St. Juan Diego, Adan Lopez as the bishop, and Ricardo Martinez as Hermano Ignacio.



Photos by  
Krista Hartman



# Day of Prayer & Fasting in Reparation for a Culture of Violence



## Initiative's goal is to become people of peace, healing

By Joe Towalski

When a series of undercover videos was released this past summer showing Planned Parenthood officials discussing the harvesting and sale of tissue and organs from aborted children, many people were taken aback by the callousness with which the people in the videos spoke about human life.

"It really shocked the conscience," said Jason Adkins, executive director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC).

The videos prompted discussion among Minnesota's bishops about ways in which Catholics and others of good will could join together to stand against violence — the kind documented in the videos, but other types as well. Gun violence, domestic violence, abortion, ongoing efforts to legalize assisted-suicide, using violence as a means of conflict resolution — all of these are serious societal problems that diminish the "culture of life" the Church is called to build, Adkins said.

In response, the bishops are organizing a "Day of Fasting and Prayer in Reparation for a Culture of Violence and Disrespect for Human Life." It will be observed in each Minnesota diocese on a day in December or January chosen by each bishop.

Resources for the day are available from MCC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota. They include suggestions for prayer intentions, acts of reparation (see sidebar) and legislative advocacy.

"Everything from a Church perspective and from a Christian perspective starts in prayer," Adkins said. "There is no better thing we can do in the Church than to come together as a community and reflect individually — and collectively — about this culture of violence and the way we have contributed to creating it."

"That's why it's important to make acts of reparation, which are prayers in repentance for our own sins but also for the sins of others," he said.

The hope is that these prayers will inspire people to take positive, concrete actions in their own lives and in their communities in support of life from conception until natural death, Adkins said.

MCC is promoting advocacy on two specific public policy issues as part of the day's observance: 1) state legislation that would require licensing and inspection of abortion facilities; and 2) ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, an effort supported by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

But the actions people can take aren't limited to these two efforts, Adkins said.

In conjunction with the Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are good ways to share the love of Christ and promote non-violence.

"Building a culture of life is rooted in a consistent ethic of life," Adkins said. "This happens when we go out and serve others — from taking the time to care for an elderly person so that they don't feel like they're a burden, to working for the well-being of people with disabilities, to helping women in need, especially in difficult domestic situations."

It also happens, for example, when individuals and families reassess their entertainment choices and say no to violent movies, shows and video games. "There are so many ways we can build a culture of life," he said.

The goal of acts of reparation and, ultimately, the day of fasting and prayer is to help repair what is broken in our lives and in society.

"These actions help us to become people of peace and a people of healing," Adkins said. "That's what this is really about: How do we become people of peace instead of contributing to the culture of violence?"

*Joe Towalski is editor of The Visitor, newspaper of the Diocese of St. Cloud.*

## IDEAS FOR ACTS OF REPARATION

As a child of God, we each have an opportunity to help satisfy the justice of God by making reparation for our own sins and the sins of others.

1. Go to an abortion clinic and pray, or set aside an hour today to pray for those who are struggling with a decision of life or death for their unborn child.
2. Make an act of faith, hope or love. ([www.bit.ly/9DaysFaithHopeLove](http://www.bit.ly/9DaysFaithHopeLove))
3. Pray the Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
4. Spend an hour with the Blessed Sacrament in adoration.
5. Increase your knowledge about important life issues. Here are some resource examples:
  - Women's health and marriage prospects have suffered from more than 40 years of nationally legal abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. Learn more in "Life Matters: Roe Plus 40" ([www.bit.ly/RoePlus40](http://www.bit.ly/RoePlus40)).
  - Learn how some methods of conceiving a child pose serious concerns in "Life Matters: Reproductive Technologies" ([www.bit.ly/ReproductiveTechnologies2011](http://www.bit.ly/ReproductiveTechnologies2011)).
  - Read about some of the challenges, concerns and joys on a couple's journey of adopting a child in "An Adoption Love Story" ([www.bit.ly/AdoptionLoveStory](http://www.bit.ly/AdoptionLoveStory)).
6. Pray the rosary, or even just a decade, today for someone who has hurt or disappointed you, and ask for the grace to forgive that person.
7. Smile. Ask God today for the grace to be extra joyful and to share your love for Christ with those who most need that encouragement today.
8. Use Facebook or another form of social media to post something that builds up the culture of life.
9. Take time to write a handwritten note to someone who is lonely or needing encouragement.
10. We can sometimes forget how blessed we are to have many of our daily

comforts. Give up sleeping with your pillow tonight.

11. Today, ignore your sweet tooth. Make healthy eating choices.
12. Make a "quiet hour" today, turning off all electronic devices (cell phone, iPod, computer, television, radio, video game system) and retreat to your room. Spend some time in prayer or prayerful reading.
13. Clean a room in your house without being asked or without telling anyone. Pray for your family members while you clean, "and your Father who sees in secret will repay you" (Matthew 6:6).
14. Read about a Church teaching you do not understand in the catechism.
15. Make an honest assessment of your "giving finances" — Are you giving too little? Make a resolution to give a set weekly or monthly donation to your parish or favorite local charity.
16. Say three Hail Marys for your parish priest. Without our priests, we could not have the Mass or the sacrament of reconciliation.
17. Pray for your deceased relatives and for those who have no one to pray for them.
18. Spend quality time with a family member or friend. Offer to help them with something with which they need assistance.
19. Go to confession — today, if possible! — or during this week. Before you go, look up St. Faustina and learn a little about the message of Divine Mercy she shared during her life.
20. Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for those who are suffering the loss of a child through abortion, or through any act of violence, asking that they find healing and peace.

— Minnesota Catholic Conference



Deacon Wayne Wittman, left, of St. Paul, a Navy veteran, stands with Dave Logsdon, president of Veterans for Peace, Chapter 27, and Robin Monahan, a VFP member. Submitted photo

## Veterans group seeks to build culture of peace, heal wounds of war

By Frank Lee

Wayne Wittman enlisted in the Navy after high school and fought in the Korean War. But all the deacon in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis wants now is peace.

"I was part of the World War II culture and that meant that we were all very, very patriotic, and I was excited about service," Wittman said of his enlistment in 1948.

Wittman belongs to Veterans for Peace, which was founded by American veterans in 1985 in response to the nuclear arms race and U.S. military interventions in Central America.

The 86-year-old Catholic from St. Paul is not alone in seeking peace after the conflict. Greg Boertje-Obed of Duluth is a member of another Veterans for Peace chapter.

The Army veteran entered the medical service corps in 1981 and was assigned to a combat engineer battalion in Fort Pope, Louisiana; he served as a supervisor of field medics.

"Part of my job was to prepare to fight and win a nuclear war ... and that led to my crisis of conscience — studying the Bible, reading the writings of Dorothy Day — and that led to my declaring to my superiors that I wouldn't shoot anyone," Boertje-Obed said.

### Veterans for Peace

Wittman's ship participated in the amphibious invasion of the Korean city of Incheon in September 1950, resulting in the recapture of the South Korean capital of Seoul.

"I was an active opponent to the Vietnam War. And at that time, it was not very patriotic to be opposed to our government and what they were doing in Vietnam," Wittman said.

"I had enough exposure to military culture and military operations to look beyond what we were being told," he said of his opposition to the Vietnam War.

Veterans for Peace grew to more than 8,000 members in the buildup to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and consists of veterans, military family members and allies.

"I was critical of what we were doing as I have been pretty much since then in terms of military solutions to political problems," said Wittman, who was a political science major. "That seems to be our way of dealing with

issues, and it's very unproductive."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "all citizens and all governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war" (2266). It adds, "However, as long as the danger of war persists and there is no international authority with the necessary competence and power, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed."

### Catholic faith

According to Veterans for Peace, the international organization is dedicated to "building a culture of peace, exposing the true costs of war, and healing the wounds of war."

"As a Catholic, I honored and valued and was attracted to the faith because of [its] position on life, and because of that, I became a critic of killing," Wittman said. "The Catholic Church, and as Catholics, we put a great emphasis on the gift of life."

Veterans for Peace consists of 120 chapters, including those in Vietnam, the United Kingdom and Ireland. In the last three decades, it has led or participated in over 60 peace delegations to Latin America, Vietnam, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

"Jesus says to love your enemies," Boertje-Obed said. "Jesus says to Peter, 'Put down your sword. Those who live by the sword will die by the sword,' and that all spoke to me very strongly when I was in the military when I was reading those passages."

The 60-year-old volunteers at Hildegard House Catholic Worker with his wife, Michele Naar-Obed, a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams; CPT members are invited to regions experiencing lethal conflict to help with human rights and violence reduction.

"I spent a lot of time in Iraq," she said.

"I spent a lot of time with Muslims, and I learned that those social justice teachings, those Beatitudes are not owned by the Catholic Church but are very universal teachings ... about the sacredness of life."

Naar-Obed, a 59-year-old Catholic, was planning to speak at a Veterans for Peace event on Veterans Day even though she is not a veteran.

"I can't help but feel that God would cry looking at the way we treat each other in

## Building a Culture of Life

Minnesota's Catholic bishops have asked that Catholics and others come together to pray for an end to violence. Their efforts are part of building a "culture of life," which means looking with mercy and compassion at the faces of each human person from conception to natural death. There are numerous examples across the state that demonstrate ways that people are carrying out that witness. Here are just a few.

## Sagrada Familia center offers hope and healing to families

By Kristi Anderson

The Visitor

Odilon and Sara Jabana were certain they were headed for divorce when a family member urged them to try a marriage-healing program at Sagrada Familia, a family services center and ministry of St. Stephen Parish in South Minneapolis.

Very hesitantly and with little hope for reconciliation, the Jabanas decided to attend weekly meetings and pray with mentor couples at Sagrada Familia.

"The witness from these couples touched our hearts," Odilon said, "and after several meetings we accepted that we needed to open our hearts to God and let him do his work."

As the Jabanas were working through their marriage issues, Odilon was invited to attend a men's support group called "Hombres Fuertes," which translates to "Strong Men."

"At that point I knew that I needed all the help that I could get, so I joined the group for a year," he said. "The marriage healing program and the men's group gave me strength and hope but most importantly, it helped me to understand that we shouldn't struggle alone. God is right there, ready to come to our assistance if we just ask and allow him to heal us."

Sagrada Familia, which means Holy Family, offers two core services — family services and pregnancy services. The family side provides healing in marriages and encourages parents to be the primary educators of their children.

Viviana Sotro, the center's executive director, explained, "Many of the families we serve are Latino," she explained, "and many of them endured suffering in their home countries and came looking for a better future. But they are still carrying those wounds. Through the family center, we heal individuals so we can heal families. We also heal marriages. In order for the family to be healthy, we need to have healthy spouses."

Sotro, who moved to Minnesota from Argentina with her husband, Adrian, in 2002, recognized a need for services like these in the Latino communities in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis when she and Adrian began working in Hispanic ministry there.

However, when Father Joseph Williams, pastor of St. Stephen, asked her to get involved with opening a center, she said it was a call from God that she didn't

## Catholic Charities program helps women choose life

By Dan Rossini  
The Prairie Catholic

The toll-free number that Catholic Charities of the Diocese of New Ulm offers for help can be a life-saver for both women in crisis pregnancy situations and their unborn children.

That number connects prospective clients with an intake specialist, who asks some initial questions about their situation. That person then contacts one of several licensed social workers in Catholic Charities offices around the diocese on the caller's behalf.

Typically, the prospective client will receive a call back from a counselor on the same day, said Thomas Keaveny, MSW-LICSW, director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of New Ulm.

After their initial conversation, counselors will then meet in-person with the woman, usually within the next day or two. Keaveny said that counselors are even willing to travel from their offices so that a woman in crisis can receive face-to-face counseling.

"I would say that our response is exemplary and the highest priority," he said.

Even when a client calls after hours, a phone number on the voice recording of the toll-free number will allow callers in an emergency situation to speak to someone right away.

"We need to be immediately available because when a person is in that crisis, they are discerning a life-changing situation," said Keaveny. "They may choose to call Planned Parenthood, they may choose to call Catholic Charities, or they may be in denial and do nothing."

In most cases, the choice eventually comes down to abortion or parenting. According to a recent study in the American Journal of Public Health, half of pregnancies among American women are unintended,

"We need to be immediately available because when a person is in that crisis, they are discerning a life-changing situation. They may choose to call Planned Parenthood, they may choose to call Catholic Charities, or they may be in denial and do nothing."

Thomas Keaveny



and four in 10 of these will end with an abortion. A small fraction of women with unintended pregnancies decides in favor of adoption.

Keaveny emphasized that it's extremely important that counselors working with women facing crisis pregnancies be non-judgmental and respect their clients' need to be self-determinate.

"The less pressure that counselors convey to their clients, the more they trust" and the more they will listen, he said.

This can be delicate when it comes to the topic of abortion. Following Catholic teaching, Catholic Charities is committed to offering women alternatives

to abortion as supportively as possible. "Our message is that it's not our role to decide to take a life," said Keaveny.

He added that counselors can convey their experiences working with women who have felt the pain and guilt of an abortion to help those with crisis pregnancies.

Counselors try to persuade women that "your child is going to be your child for the rest of your life," whether they choose to abort or not, Keaveny said. That fact, conveyed in a context that promotes self-determination, seems to move clients away from abortion, he said.

needs," she said.

### Strong men

As the organization began developing those core services, another need surfaced.

"We needed to make an official effort to reach out to Latino men," Sotro said. "Women are more open to ask for help and so we were getting a lot of wives and women coming to our services and asking for healing and guidance. But we noticed that even though they were coming and making the effort, they were still sad because they would go back home and encounter the same situations."

In 2014, Sagrada Familia declared the "Year of the Fathers." They increased their efforts to reach out to the men of the community through the Hombres Fuertes program which Odilon is part of.

"Something very beautiful happened," Sotro said. "When the men began to open their hearts and compare themselves to Christ, immediately they were reflecting on fatherhood and what being a true man means."

"It helps them to grow in virtue and to make the changes they needed to make in their own lives. I think they felt like someone was listening to them. Some have never talked about their experiences before. For many men, this was the first time they felt comfortable to talk about it," she said.

At least 54 men have gone through the program and many of them, Sotro said, are now stronger husbands and fathers as well as active members in the parish, including the Jabanas.

"These programs led me to an encounter with Christ and a profound desire to receive the sacraments," Odilon said. "After a year of faith formation and marriage preparation my wife was welcomed in the Catholic faith, we celebrated our sacramental wedding and two of my children were baptized."

Odilon says that God has done great things for him and his family.

"I know that if my family and I stay closer to him, all will be good," he said. "We are serving at St. Stephen's with joy and take every opportunity we have to share the many blessings we have received. We are joyfully expecting our fourth child — one more blessing from God. We are striving to live a joyful and faithful life [that] we can only do with God's help."



Dianne Towalski / The Visitor

Odilon and Sara Jabana attended Mass Nov. 8 at St. Stephen Parish in South Minneapolis with their daughters, Wendy, Francisca and Maria.

want to answer.

"I wasn't looking for a career change," she said, "but Father Joseph was persistent...Then I prayed and I recognized that, 'OK, God, I know you want to use me to answer my own questions about how to provide those services that are needed.'"

The center offers material assistance to pregnant women and families but Sotro said it goes much deeper than that.

"You can get diapers, you can get a crib, but what do you do with those spiritual wounds? If you give a pregnant mother only diapers and you don't help her to be a happy pregnant mother, to value the sanctity of life, she can't see the value of the child. We need to go beyond her material needs and provide for her spiritual



## Prayers for the victims of violence

*Preface: Lord Jesus, a culture of violence has engulfed our nation and has left many victims in its wake. We pray now for some of those who have been affected, and ask you to bless all victims of violence as we keep the souls and intentions of affected persons in our hearts and prayers.*

**For the unborn victims of abortion:** Let us pray for all the unborn victims of abortion; that these innocent children who die without baptism may be welcomed into the Father's house, where they may enjoy everlasting peace and reconciliation with those responsible for taking their life.

*Prayer in silence. Then the celebrant says:*

Almighty and ever-living God, who in Christ Jesus makes all things new, bring new and eternal life to those children whose lives were unjustly shortened because of fear, despair, malice or selfishness. Welcome the unborn victims of abortion into your kingdom where they may experience the fullness of life. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, our Mother, patroness and protector of the unborn.

R: Amen

**For the innocent victims of war:** Let us pray for the innocent who have died as a result of war; that they may be remembered in our hearts and in our consciences as a testimony to the fact that war is always a tragedy and should strenuously be avoided.

*Prayer in silence. Then the celebrant says:*

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the prince of peace. Plant within our hearts a determination to speak out against unjust wars, so that the suffering of the innocent may not increase and the fabric of peace between nations not be torn. May Our Lady, Queen of Peace, intercede on our behalf and obtain for us the graces we need to become people of peace.

R: Amen

**For the victims of gun violence:** Let us pray for those who have been murdered in senseless acts of gun violence; that they may come to know in the kingdom of heaven a place of light, peace and refreshment, where swords have been turned into ploughshares.

*Prayer in silence. Then the celebrant says:*

Almighty and Eternal God, you are the desire of the everlasting hills. We long for a day when we need not await in anxiety the next mass shooting, because peace reigns in the hearts of all people. Transform the hearts of the troubled, the mentally ill, the angry and the afflicted, that they may not be fooled by the Tempter to embrace the false allure of violent killings. Through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen

**For the victims of sex trafficking and pornography:** Let us pray for those who have been exploited in body and soul by the greed and lust of others; that they may experience healing to know again that they are created in the image and likeness of God, and that their lives are of inestimable worth.

*Prayer in silence. Then the celebrant says:*

Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Living God, how often it is that we believe a lie about ourselves and others because we fail to see your face in each person we encounter. Heal our brokenness, pain, shame and guilt, and restore us to new life in you.

R: Amen

**For the victims of domestic violence:** Let us pray for the victims of domestic violence, that they may not experience the gifts of home and family as places of danger and fear, but instead as places of love, solidarity and compassion. Restore in their soul the knowledge that they are lovable and loved infinitely by you.

*Prayer in silence. Then the celebrant says:*

Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, you made Adam and Eve to care for one another and to be stewards of

# PRAYER INTENTIONS

creation. But when we separate ourselves from your loving care for us, we are capable of violence against our brother, as Cain and Abel show. Protect the vulnerable in our midst, particularly women and children, and free them from the bondage of violence and fear.

R: Amen

**For the victims of child sex abuse:** Let us pray for the victims of sex abuse, and, in particular, children abused by clergy and teachers. That they may find authentic justice, but also hope, healing and renewed trust in schools and houses of worship.

*Prayer in silence. Then the celebrant says:*

God our Father, hear our cries as we agonize over the harm done to our brothers and sisters. Breathe wisdom into our prayers, soothe the restless hearts with hope, steady shaken spirits with faith. Show us the way to justice and wholeness, enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people's wounds and transform our brokenness. Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace, so that we may act with justice and find peace in you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

R: Amen.

## Prayers for mercy

*Lord Jesus Christ, your mercy is infinite and stretches wide, like your hands on the wood of Calvary, to embrace all of us. We know that to experience your mercy is to truly encounter your face, and when we experience your mercy, we are able to share that with others. Through your mercy, and the mercy we extend in your name, may those who fear that they are unforgivable and undeserving of your mercy, as well as those who do not believe they are in need of mercy at all, come to know your loving and healing embrace.*

**For mothers and fathers broken by the memory of a child lost to abortion:** That through the intercession of the Mother of God, the gentle and merciful love of God may heal their innermost being.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For those in the abortion industry:** That, like others before them, they come to see that, despite what they may believe are good intentions, they are perpetrating a grave injustice that ends the life of the unborn person and wounds the parents of the baby who is aborted. That they instead may become advocates in defense of life, and transform the hearts of many.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For organ traffickers, for those who buy and sell the remains of aborted children, and for those who engage in illegitimate biomedical research that destroys human life:** That they may come to know the dignity of the human person, in body and soul, and the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For those who produce and peddle pornography:** May all people reject pornography and discover the true meaning of love through an encounter and relationship with Christ.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For all of us:** When we have failed to build an authentic culture of care and culture of life by not acting in solidarity with others through participating in the social and political life of the community. May God instill in us the desire to offer authentic social friendship by making the sacrifices necessary to become a truly faithful citizen and to limit the proliferation of violence in society.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For the merchants of violence in all its forms:** That those who create and peddle violent entertainment and pornography; those who exploit others through prostitution; and those who are involved in the arms trade may see the way in which their pursuit of profit undermines the dignity of the human person and the well-being of their communities. That they may reject these trades and discover

the true meaning of love through an encounter and relationship with Christ.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For the perpetrators of violent crime:** That those who terrorize others and their communities by resorting to violence and crime, those who have committed violent crimes, and those who produce and traffic illegal drugs may seek forgiveness and mercy from their victims. May they offer restitution and make reparation in their communities, and may they work to reach others trapped in a life of crime.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For military personnel at every level:** That those who struggle or despair because of the way in which they discharged their duties, or because of the guilt they may hold for being complicit in acts of aggression, may experience God's healing hand and work to become people of peace and help others do the same.

We pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**For this nation:** That we recognize our sins and seek reparation for when our nation has used violence and unjust war to: resolve political disputes; impose our will on others; manipulate foreign policy; facilitate commerce; and attack human dignity, such as in the practice of torture. May we constantly strive to be a people of peace and a city on a hill — one that uses the power of reason to achieve a just and peaceful world, and one that holds leaders accountable when they resort to violence.

## Prayers for justice

*Almighty God, Creator of all things, if we want peace, we must work for justice. You ask each of us to seek justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly. As we extend your mercy to those who have sinned, we also work for justice, which is a right ordering of relationships among persons and between communities. May we never forget that the work of justice requires first that we are in right relationship with you — because there is no brotherhood of man without your Fatherhood.*

**For an end to the use of the death penalty in the United States:** That responsibility, restoration and rehabilitation, rooted in hope found in Christ Jesus, become an enduring feature of our criminal justice system.

We pray to the Lord.

R: The peace of Christ, in the reign of Christ.

**For an end to the use of war as a means of conflict resolution:** May we proclaim with Pope St. John Paul II, "War, never again!"

We pray to the Lord.

R: The peace of Christ, in the reign of Christ.

**For the abolition of nuclear weapons:** May weapons that are intended to target civilian populations and to unleash destruction that can wipe out whole nations be obliterated from our arsenals.

We pray to the Lord.

R: The peace of Christ, in the reign of Christ.

**For an end to racism in all its forms,** especially acts of police violence that undermine the trust between a community and its citizens.

We pray to the Lord.

R: The peace of Christ, in the reign of Christ.

**For an end to abortion and a halt to the expansion of physician-assisted suicide:** May our judges and elected officials create a legal regime in which life is protected in all stages of its development, from conception to natural death.

We pray to the Lord.

R: The peace of Christ, in the reign of Christ.

*Lord Jesus Christ, you are the prince of peace. When we forget you, and forbid you from reigning as king in our hearts and in our lives, a regime of violence and a throwaway culture persists and grows. May you become sovereign in our hearts, in our homes, in our churches and in our society, so that the peace of Christ may flourish in the reign of Christ. We ask all this in your name.*

Amen.

# U.S. bishops have new weapon in the human trafficking fight

(Continued from page 1)

in my previous job as a Latin American analyst for the Geopolitical Monitor, I tracked the activities of the Mexican drug cartels in Mexico and Central America. And so because drug interdiction efforts by the U.S. government have been increasingly successful, many of the Mexican drug cartels have diversified their operations to include human trafficking in the United States.

## What attracted you to this particular job at the USCCB?

Not only the fact that the U.S. bishops have been the leading NGO (non-governmental organization) advocate for anti-trafficking victims and survivors since the year 2000 and before then, but essentially, from a faith perspective, certainly human trafficking has become the signature issue of Pope Francis' pontificate. And so I thought that what I had learned in my previous job as a Latin American analyst I could essentially contribute to the Church's mission to eradicate modern-day slavery at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In a way, I would say it's a commitment of faith on my part.

I feel quite strongly in the efficacy of the Church's own efforts, and I do believe that the Church in the United States is the single most important, unified player in human trafficking. And why is that? It's because the Catholic Church is really the only national organization that is present in all the immigrant communities where human trafficking is a problem. The Catholic Church is trusted where law enforcement is not trusted. The Catholic Church is trusted where even the Salvation Army is not trusted. So I was attracted to the mission of the Church in the spiritual freedom dimension of fighting human trafficking.

**That explains a bit why the bishops decided to initiate the Amistad Movement, right? It was partially because of their own expertise, their ability to reach people in these immigrant communities.**

Oh yes, absolutely. And it's a very, very important strategic advantage. One very powerful example is in Houston, how

we, through the Missionaries of Charity – Mother Teresa's nuns – have been able to really identify victims in the very communities where human trafficking prevails most: the immigrant community. And the reason for this is because we are trusted, because we come from the Church and because Mother Teresa's nuns are doing the most grassroots work that you can imagine. We were able to take that victim identification training to the lowest common denominator, which leads to victim identification.

## Would you say that's the biggest advantage of the USCCB's initiative over other programs?

We are partnered with many of these programs. ... We're certainly not disparaging any of the work that they do; it's magnificent work. However, I would say that the strategic advantage that the Catholic Church has is that it involves the immigrant community, so it's able to actually leverage that trust that the immigrants have in her to provide the training that leads to victim identification.

Also, because of that trust that the immigrant community has toward the Catholic Church, our training goes beyond the intermediary level. Lots of organizations do very good anti-trafficking awareness-raising, but they do it at the intermediary level. They do it as concerns the Good Samaritans, for example. They do it to teachers, social workers, police officers. They do it to that intermediary level, which then goes out to find it. We do that intermediary level as well, but we go directly to the people who are most at-risk, and speaking their language, and getting to them on their own terms. We train them to identify human trafficking in their families, in their social networks, with their relatives, etc. So that's the key differential.

**It's hard for some people – maybe people in our small towns – to believe that trafficking might be a problem in the Diocese of New Ulm. How do you respond to that?**

I would respond by saying that it's scary how wherever there is large-scale agricultural or animal processing plants, there's bound to be human trafficking. That's

just the sorry situation that we have. It does not mean that human trafficking exists throughout those industries – that's not what I'm saying. But it is certainly much more prevalent than we are led to believe.

It's not usually through the negligence of the corporations themselves. Many times they do not even know because they're not the recruiting agency. Many times the business owners themselves are aghast at how human trafficking has infiltrated their own businesses. So we're essentially there to educate them as well, and it's by no means a blame game. Because most of the business owners don't realize – and it's not their fault – that human trafficking has somehow gotten into the recruitment chain.

Many times workers will be recruited by third parties, who could be traffickers. ... The recruitment phase can happen overseas. The dynamics of it are not that complicated. The employee owes a large amount of debt to the recruitment company, which then controls and exploits him without the employer necessarily being a party to the exploitation. So that's why the USCCB emphasizes a partnership. We're not there to blame anyone.

**Say you are an employer or a farmer in the Diocese of New Ulm. What are the signs you might look for that trafficking might be going on?**

If, for example, the activity of an employee is monitored around the clock; if, for example, they live in the same place that they work; or if their living conditions are akin to abject squalor, then there are questions of a possible exploitation. I would not say that those are absolute indicators of human trafficking. It's more or less an investigator approach to identifying certain red flags that could lead to the discovery of a human trafficking situation.

**The Diocese of New Ulm has a significant Hispanic population. Many of them have been in the country for a while or are even second-generation. Is this group more or less at risk to be exploited than other immigrant groups?**

Here's a point that is oftentimes

**Are you interested in preventing human trafficking in your community?**



**BECOME A COMMUNITY EDUCATOR TODAY!**

**Amistad Movement Training Sessions**  
**Tuesday, Feb. 16 at 6:30 p.m. (Spanish) and**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 1:30 p.m. (English)**  
**Church of St. Mary, 713 12th Street NW, in Willmar**

Sessions are for pastoral leaders, parish leaders, community leaders, law enforcement, health care professionals, social workers, and anyone else interested in combating human trafficking.

To register, contact Catholic Charities at 507-359-2966 or [pkral@dnu.org](mailto:pkral@dnu.org). Two hours of social work CEUs are available for \$10. This training is sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Diocese of New Ulm.

misunderstood. Many, many of the trafficking victims that become exploited here in the United States did not enter the United States as a trafficking victim. So they have fallen to exploitation once they are here. And certainly the second and third generation immigrants can fall into that danger.

However, most of the trafficking victims who are foreign-born and were recruited overseas by a trafficking organization, they will be exploited once they are here by that same organization or by agents anywhere along the supply chain. So among U.S.-born trafficking victims, most of them fall into the sex-trafficking category. But among foreign-born trafficking victims, most of them are labor-trafficking victims.

**Does an immigrant's legal status affect their susceptibility to human trafficking?**

Absolutely. So if they're here illegally, they are by definition on the margins of the law. So they can be more easily preyed upon by the traffickers.

**What is your primary goal in coming to the Diocese of New Ulm?**

The goal of the national Amistad Movement of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is essentially to help the local diocese to build up its own anti-trafficking infrastructure. That is an action-oriented goal in that it transcends the mere awareness of human trafficking. ... I'm there to give you a step one, step two, and step three of local parish awareness-raising on knowing what to

do when any particular human trafficking case or any victim is encountered.

**Who do you want especially to hear your message?**

Off the bat I would tell you that perhaps the most important people we could access are parish-level activists, because this is a Church-organized program. To the extent that this training is able to reach the local immigrant community, to be able to fortify it against human traffickers, then that would make it a success. ...

Because we build partnerships across the country and in the local community to be able to deal with trafficking and to get that information to vulnerable people, we do indeed also emphasize the training of intermediaries in the Church network. So absolutely, everyone from social workers to teachers to police officers to lawyers who might want to contribute some part-time *pro bono* work if a human trafficking victim is found.

**Is there anything else that you want to add?**

The USCCB was recently awarded a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services to provide direct services to trafficking victims once they are found. So if the Amistad Movement in New Ulm finds a trafficking victim, we would be able to provide services through the local Catholic Charities. Through your Catholic Charities, we would be able to reimburse for services that your Catholic Charities would provide them.

## Patriotism, American exceptionalism, and the common good



### FAITH IN THE PUBLIC ARENA

by Jason Adkins

Today, “patriotism,” a proper love of country or home, is often castigated as narrow-minded, bigoted, or reactionary by the cosmopolitan elites who police our public discourse.

Unfortunately, the talking heads have lots of ammunition for such claims when politicians use campaign themes such as “Make America Great Again,” while at the same time clamor for the exclusion of whole groups of people from our country.

Patriotism, however, is a noble sentiment that compels us to work for the common good. It is perfectly consistent with the universal values and call to solidarity our Catholic faith requires. Like any virtue, it is a mean between the extremes of jingoistic nationalism and a sterile, abstract universalism that loves “humanity” but tends to dislike actual human persons.

Proper patriotism is rooted in the right idea about what makes (and has made) a country great and beloved; in this way, it is also a corrective force when one’s community fails to live up to that patrimony.

One preserves, protects, and perpetuates a patrimony only that one loves. As St. Paul’s first archbishop, John Ireland, declared: “The value of patriotism to a people is above gold and precious stones, above commerce and industry, above citadels and warships.

Patriotism is the vital spark of national honor; it is the fount of the nation’s prosperity, the shield of the nation’s safety. Take patriotism away, the nation’s soul has fled, bloom and beauty have vanished from the nation’s countenance.”

**Patriotism: right and wrong**  
People naturally have pride in

their home. Americans are no different, and have always embraced the idea that this is a great and exceptional nation, guided by the hand of Providence.

But today, we continue to talk of greatness – and of the United States being the “greatest” nation now and of all time – untethered to any real, shared idea of what that means, and

**“True American patriotism is instead rooted in our country’s noblest ideals, and in the institutions and culture that promote those ideals.”** – Jason Adkins

certainly without reference to the God in whom we no longer seem to trust.

For example, is greatness about having the preeminent military? Is it winning the most medals at the Olympics, or having the largest economy?

True American patriotism is instead rooted in our country’s noblest ideals, and in the institutions and culture that promote those ideals. Unlike other nations that identify by ethnicity and a shared history, the United States is a nation founded on an idea – namely, the proposition that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.”

Our nation is great when, as President Lincoln exhorted us, we prove this proposition true. Our history shows us that when we defend the rights of all persons, and extend the blessings of liberty to others outside the circle of exclusion, we truly live up to our expectations and responsibilities as an exceptional nation.

But when we, out of the (not illegitimate) fear of losing our country to forces out of our control, fall into narrow, ethnic, linguistic, or racial categories about what it means to be an American, we undermine our greatness.

#### Proper patriotism promotes solidarity

Sometimes, because of our failings as a nation, patriotism is attacked. In its place are calls to be “global citizens” and proclamations of “God bless everyone, no exceptions.”

But our responsibility of global solidarity does not mean transcending the particular responsibilities we owe to our family and the local community to which we have primary responsibility. Indeed, proper concern and

care for those closest to us is actually the seedbed of national and global solidarity.

As the prophet G.K. Chesterton noted: “A man who loves humanity and ignores patriotism is ignoring humanity... The fundamental spiritual advantage of patriotism and such sentiments is this: that by means of it all things are loved adequately, because all things are loved individually.”

As Catholics, we must model and cultivate a proper patriotism – a love for our communities and our nation rooted in its noblest patrimony of extending the blessings of liberty. Likewise, we must remind our fellow citizens that, at a global level, our nation’s greatness will be found in humility and service, that is, becoming small – not in power and the imposition of our culture.

Changing our world first means changing ourselves. In other words, our Catholic faith calls us to “think globally, and act locally.”



*Editor’s note: Jason Adkins is executive director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference.*

## Rural women: invaluable and irreplaceable

by Bishop Paul D. Etienne  
*Catholic in the Countryside*

One of the greatest privileges of being a bishop in a rural diocese has been my ability to witness the incredible sacrifices people make to ensure their family, their farm, and their community thrive.

Wyoming is a great and beautiful state, but there are many factors here – from harsh weather to the remoteness of rural areas – that present challenges to living in the countryside.

Hollywood suggests that “rugged individualism,” captured by someone who is strong, silent, and set apart, is the necessary characteristic for “making it” in the countryside. But I’ve found that the opposite is true.

“Making it” in rural America takes a group effort, a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of another. The Second Vatican Council teaches us that, because we’re relational beings, one can fully discover his or her true self only in a sincere *giving* of him- or herself. I see this self-giving throughout my diocese, and in a special way in our women.

Take, for instance, Roxie Harris, a rancher from Wheatland, Wyo., with whom I recently spoke. While her husband works a full-time job away from the ranch to provide a needed income and insurance, Roxie keeps the ranch going.

She told me that it’s hard work, but she does it because ranching offers a good lifestyle that they want to preserve. The natural cycle of life keeps Roxie and her husband close to God, and has provided a strong work ethic and solid values for their daughter.

Roxie is just one example of the many women in rural America who give tirelessly of themselves for the building up of society and their families. These women care for creation as well as the human family, and their gift of self has passed on the faith to many through the ages.

I think of the women who are wives, mothers, and sisters; religious and lay women who share so much love for the building up of the Church. They have cared for the home, raised children, taught the faith, supported their parishes, worked the farms and ranches, and

shown the way for so many of us to grow in virtue and holiness.

The impact of such hard-working and loving women is perhaps felt most within the family. Pope Francis spoke of the origins and reality of such love during an impassioned address to the participants at the recent World Meeting of Families when he said that families united in love create “a society of goodness, of truth and of beauty.”

St. Pope John Paul II taught in his 1988 Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women that “Christ’s attitude to women confirms and clarifies, in the Holy Spirit, the truth about the equality of man and woman. One must speak of an essential ‘equality,’ since both of them – the woman as much as the man – are created in the image and likeness of God. Both of them are equally capable of receiving the outpouring of divine truth and love in the Holy Spirit. Both receive his salvific and sanctifying ‘visits’” (“Mulieris Dignitatem,” no. 16).

While men and women are equal in dignity, we also know that they are distinct, and that human life is incomplete if it’s lacking one or the other. St. John Paul articulated a “feminine genius,” referring to the unique and distinctive characteristics that women possess as women.

Part of the feminine genius is the ability of women to receive these sanctifying ‘visits’ that St. John Paul talks about; their openness to others, and their great capacity to share compassion, love, care, and concern, be that for the gifts of creation or especially their love for God and their neighbor.

So thank you, rural women, for sharing your many gifts and for the invaluable and irreplaceable contribution you make to the Church, your families, and your communities.

*Editor’s note: Bishop Etienne of the Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyo., is the president of Catholic Rural Life, a national organization dedicated to applying the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church to rural America. CRL devoted its most recent magazine issue to rural women; you can view it at [www.catholicrurallife.org](http://www.catholicrurallife.org).*



## CCW offers beautiful prayer resources

by Jan Noyes  
DCCW President

“At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven, and on earth and under the earth” (Phil 2:10).

Are you aware that the month of January is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus? A good practice to start during this month is the memorization of the Jesus Prayer: “O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Pray it during those moments of the day when you have a break at work, are feeling lonely, traveling in the car, or waiting in line.

Each month of the year has its own dedication. The NUDCCW offers a calendar that lists the dedication of the month at the bottom of each page. A suggestion would be to take note of the dedication at the beginning of the month and reflect on it throughout the month. Calendars are given to each attendee at the April Convention, with extras to be found at any NUDCCW event.

Another resource for prayer is the recently published “Collection of Prayers for the National Council of Catholic Women.” One prayer that is included is the January Prayer Service for Christian Unity Week – Respect Life. Christian

Unity Week is Jan. 17-23, 2016 and the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade is Jan. 22, 2016.

Lenten Journey of Love is a prayer in the “Collection” that can be used in the upcoming months. This prayer includes a special prayer for each week of Lent. The whole prayer can be said at once, or can be divided out for the appropriate week. Also included in the “Collection” is a Prayer Service for Lent, which focuses on healing.

“Collection of Prayers for the National Council of Catholic Women” is available at [nccw.org](http://nccw.org).

## Get involved in one of many initiatives that promote life

by Margaret Schueller  
DCCW Reverence Life  
Coordinator

There’s no better way for the people of the Diocese of New Ulm to carry out the works of mercy in this Year of Mercy designated by Pope Francis than to initiate or promote one of the life-affirming projects supported by the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

### March for Life

The anniversary of Roe v. Wade on Jan. 22, 2016, is an opportunity for everyone to support life by going to the Minnesota state capitol in St. Paul or the national Capitol in Washington, D.C. to pray for its reversal. If you are unable to do this, hold a parish holy hour of adoration or say the Rosary. We need prayer for this.

### 40 Days For Life

40 Days For Life will begin on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10, and run for 40 days. This is a time to pray daily to stop abortion around the world. Prayer vigils in front of Planned Parenthood facilities are held worldwide. Visit the Web site [www.40daysforlife.com](http://www.40daysforlife.com) and follow the movement daily as a family.

### Spiritual Adoption program

The New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has initiated the Spiritual Adoption program, where we pray daily for a baby headed for abortion. Many parish CCWs have also initiated this program.

For more information e-mail [maschueller38@charter.net](mailto:maschueller38@charter.net).

### USCCB Respect Life program

“Every Life Is Worth Living” is the theme for the 2015-2016 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Respect Life program. Materials from the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities have been sent out to parishes and may also be obtained from their Web site: [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). They call attention to several human life issues and are especially helpful for priests, parish groups, schools, and other organizations.

### DCCW special fundraising

This year the CCW’s special fundraising service project is to support Grace Place School, a place where those caught up in human trafficking are able to be healed and reoriented to society. This can also be a project for entire parishes to support.

By your participation in or support for one of the many activities and initiatives that call attention to the intrinsic dignity of human life, you will extend mercy to those most vulnerable among us during this jubilee Year of Mercy!

## Pray, march for life in St. Paul

Jan. 22 marks the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion in 1973. In commemoration of the anniversary, the faithful of the diocese are encouraged to attend the annual March for Life and rally at the Minnesota state capitol on Friday, Jan. 22. Sponsored by Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL), the rally will begin at noon, with a program including pro-life speakers at 12:30 p.m.

Prior to the March, Bishop John M. LeVoir will preside at the prayer service for life at 10:30 a.m. at the Cathedral of St. Paul. There will be reserved seating for the youth of the diocese. Contact Janelle Boyum at 507-233-5318, [jboyum@dnu.org](mailto:jboyum@dnu.org) to reserve a spot.

### Bus boarding for March

A bus will board at 6:45 a.m. and leave Marshall at 7 a.m. from the northeast corner of the Market St. Mall parking lot. Additional stops can be arranged in Redwood Falls and other points along the way.

For more information or to reserve a spot, contact John Rabaey at 507-532-7532 or [johnrabaey@starpoint.net](mailto:johnrabaey@starpoint.net).

## Overcoming difficulties in prayer

### GOD ALONE SUFFICES

by Connie Rossini

If you commit yourself to practicing mental prayer daily, talking with God from your heart, you will soon encounter difficulties. How can you navigate through them to grow closer to God?

Everyone encounters difficulties in prayer. Sometimes we mistakenly believe that saints have easy, beautiful prayer times routinely. When we study their lives, we quickly realize how wrong that notion is. Many saints struggled in prayer for years. Yet they persevered. At last they found the close relationship with God they sought. We too should persevere through our difficulties if we want to succeed.

The first problem beginners in prayer may experience is difficulty filling the minutes. You may find yourself constantly glancing at the clock to see if you are through. It’s hard to pray for 15 minutes when you are used to only rattling off a sentence or two. Using a meditation format like the one I suggested last month should help. Some people set an alarm when they pray, so they can avoid checking the time. Try not to quit sooner than the time you have scheduled. Strive for consistency.

A second major problem is distractions. Instead of praying, you find yourself planning your day, reviewing a conversation, or pondering a problem you are facing. Distractions will plague you your whole life, but they should gradually become easier to deal with. Try to pray first thing in the morning, if you can. If that’s not possible, do some quiet activity before prayer, like a little reading or a crossword puzzle, to calm your mind. Using digital media just before prayer almost always causes distractions.

You can start by picturing yourself laying distractions at Jesus’ feet. If a certain person comes to mind, briefly pray for him or her, then turn your thoughts back to God. If you

keep thinking about your favorite TV show, maybe it’s time to watch it less often. In other words, your distractions can show areas you need to focus on or let go of.

The third major difficulty people encounter is dryness. God seems distant at times. You wonder if you are praying into a void. Does anyone hear you? Or are you just wasting your time? Recall that prayer involves two people – you and the Lord. Try not to evaluate your prayer based solely on your feelings. God’s work is more important than your own. He often works silently, secretly, guiding your prayer without your realizing it. Even when your agenda falls apart, God’s will may be accomplished.

You may go through long periods of dryness in prayer – even darkness. The important thing is to persevere. God weans us from the comforting feelings we can get in prayer to help us grow up spiritually. He teaches us to trust his plan, rather than our own. He helps us to love him, rather than the sensible benefits we receive in prayer. Everyone experiences these challenges. They do not necessarily mean you are doing something wrong. If you have continual difficulty praying, I encourage you to consult a knowledgeable priest for advice.

As we begin a new year, resolve to do your part in prayer and let God do his. Pray daily, in a consistent time and place. Do not shorten your prayer time when praying is hard. Try to remain at peace, no matter how it seems to go. Seek the Lord’s will, rather than your own. Distractions and dryness cannot harm you unless you give in or give up. They may even bring you closer to your goal, which is intimacy with Christ.

*Editor’s note: A parishioner of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm, Connie Rossini recently published “Trusting God with St. Therese” and “A Spiritual Growth Plan for Your Choleric Child.”*



# More Catholic chaplains needed in the military

by Sam Patet  
Prairie Catholic Correspondent

*Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles that The Prairie Catholic is publishing on the Catholic Church and the military.*

**ROSEVILLE, Minn.** – There's no doubt about it: The Diocese of New Ulm is experiencing a priest shortage.

But even worse off is the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

To cite one troubling statistic: As of November 2015, there were only 217 U.S. priest military chaplains serving in all branches of the military. That's 8 percent of all military chaplains.

How many Catholics were they serving? One million, or approximately one-quarter of all active duty military personnel and their immediate families.

### Not enough chaplains

Matthew Erickson, a command sergeant major in the Minnesota Army National Guard who serves in the 682nd Engineer Battalion based in Willmar, has been deployed overseas three times and knows firsthand how few priests there are serving in uniform.

"The National Guard, in fact, has only 34 Catholic chaplains to serve over 50,000 Catholic soldiers," he said. That's for the entire country.



Command Sergeant Major  
Matthew Erickson

Fr. Leland Mead is a retired priest of the Diocese of New Ulm who served as a chaplain in the United States Air Force for 21 years, earning the rank of lieutenant colonel.

"If anybody needs Christ, it's people facing death and all kinds of stuff like this," he said. "The Church has got to be faithful to them and take care of them."

A native of St. Peter, Fr. Mead became a chaplain three years after being ordained to the priesthood in 1968. The bases at which he served all had the things you'd find in a U.S. Catholic parish: Sunday Masses, RCIA and faith formation classes, baptisms, and weddings. A big difference, Fr. Mead said, was that his parishioners in the military were younger than those he'd find in a parish.

With such a young population facing death daily, you'd hope there'd be a robust cadre of priests to accompany them. Unfortunately, there isn't.



Lieutenant Colonel  
Fr. Leland Mead

### Shortage of chaplains likely to increase

On Nov. 16, 2015, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio gave a presentation on this topic to the U.S. bishops at their general assembly meeting in Baltimore. As head of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, he knows all too well how desperate the situation is.

"I recognize that every archdiocese, diocese, and eparchy is understaffed and struggling to meet the legitimate needs of people entrusted to your pastoral care," he said to the bishops. "It is not easy to ask you to sacrifice a young, physically fit priest to care for that portion of your flock that is out of sight and under my care as long as they are on active duty. But the dire situation leaves me few other options."

By 2016, he told the bishops, the Army, Navy, and Air Force will all face a reduction in the number of priest chaplains due to retirements or separations for medical reasons. Navy chaplains serve military personnel in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

"I may soon be unable to provide Catholic priests to the military," he said.

### Chaplains provide counseling, sacraments

Chaplains "provide a confidential source of counseling for a variety of needs, including ethical dilemmas, family and relationship advice, grief counseling, psychological and emotional support, and overall spiritual and moral support," Erickson said.

But they're essential not just because they can offer



Archbishop  
Timothy P. Broglio

counseling, something any Christian chaplain can do.

Catholic priest chaplains are able to administer the sacraments. Soldiers entering battlefields need the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and the Anointing of the Sick at their disposal.

"They are also the only ones that can answer questions related to our faith that we can trust to have a high degree of accuracy," Erickson said.

### Solution: Promote vocations

With such a shortage on the horizon, is there anything that can be done?

There is. The solution lies in promoting vocations. "As we all know too well, contact, good role models, and familiarity with sacerdotal ministry are essential elements in promoting vocations," Archbishop Broglio said.

Fr. Mead's life is a perfect example of Archbishop Broglio's remedy in action. While he didn't indicate what inspired him to become a chaplain, he did say that simply being a priest was the most rewarding part of his work.

"You became a priest for a reason, and you just fulfill that in

a different setting," he said.

In many ways, serving soldiers and their families was more exciting for him than serving in a parish would have been. For example, when he served at a base in South Dakota, Sunday Masses were packed. And during his 18 months in the Philippines, he had around 45 people wanting to become Catholic. That's compared to the dozen or fewer he would have gotten at a parish in Minnesota.

And he enjoyed getting to serve as a mentor and father for hundreds of young people. For many of the soldiers, it was their first time away from home, Fr. Mead said. Without the immediate support of their parents, grandparents, and other relatives, they could go haywire, he said.

Still, life as a chaplain had its difficulties. When families were informed that a loved one had died, he was the one who had to counsel them until they left the base.

"That was probably the hardest thing," Fr. Mead said. "When somebody dies (in the military), they're younger," and they die "through an accident that's very, very tragic."

Not all men thinking about the priesthood will want to serve as Fr. Mead did. But some may. And that's good news for soldiers like Erickson.

"They (chaplains) remind us that while we may see or experience terrible things, there is purpose in our service, good in the world, and a higher power and purpose in our lives," he said.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

JAN. 18-25, 2016



Once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21). The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a special time when Christians come together to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all over the world exchange preachers or arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The theme for the week of prayer in 2016 is "Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord." The theme is inspired by two verses from the First Letter of St Peter (1 Pt 2:9).

Everyone is invited to join Bishop John M. LeVoir for the annual diocesan Christian Unity Prayer Service on Sunday, Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, Redwood Falls.

## Catholic Charities Counseling Services

offered in

Hutchinson, Marshall, New Ulm, and Willmar

Providing: Individual, Marriage, and Family Counseling; Pregnancy Counseling, Adoption, Project Rachel, and Respect Life Resources; Parish and Community Response; Transition and Grief Services. Referred Services include: Immigration, Financial Counseling, and Guardianship Resources.

Call 507-359-2617, or toll-free 866-670-5163.

## Upcoming events

**The Diocese of New Ulm will celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life** with a Mass and reception on Saturday, Jan. 16 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Church of St. Philip, Litchfield. Everyone is invited to join Bishop John M. LeVoir and religious communities with a presence in the diocese to recognize the gift of consecrated persons throughout the world and their contributions to the Church.

**A “Cor Iesu” Holy Hour for youth and young adults with praise music and the Sacrament of Reconciliation** will be Saturday, Jan. 16, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. Cor Iesu originally began at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul and has since been introduced into dozens of universities and youth programs. During this Year of Mercy, the diocesan Offices of Worship and Youth and Young Adult Ministry are bringing it to the Diocese of New Ulm.

The holy hour will begin with a brief sermon on God’s merciful love, followed by Eucharistic Adoration with praise music,

during which confessions will be heard. The evening will end with food and fellowship. For more information contact the diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, [klosleben@dnu.org](mailto:klosleben@dnu.org).

**The Diocese of New Ulm will mark the International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, Jan. 18-25, with an ecumenical prayer service on Sunday, Jan. 24, at 2 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, Redwood Falls. For details, contact the diocesan Office of Worship, 507-233-5320; [mshaffer@dnu.org](mailto:mshaffer@dnu.org).

**National Catholic Schools Week** runs Jan. 31 through Feb. 6. The Diocese of New Ulm’s 15 Catholic grade schools and three Catholic high schools will celebrate the occasion with special Masses and other activities. Call your local Catholic school for opportunities to participate.

**The Good Shepherd SERRA club meets** the first Thursday of every month at Divine Providence Community Home in Sleepy Eye, starting with Rosary and Mass in the chapel at 6:30 p.m.

On Feb. 4 Sr. Ellen Hoemberg of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary will share her story of growing up in Nazi Germany. Everyone is welcome. Please consider joining SERRA; their vocation is praying for vocations. Contact Annette Rohlik at 507-747-2181 for more information.

**The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion** will be Sunday, Feb. 14, at 3 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm. Occurring on the first Sunday of Lent, this celebration publicly recognizes the readiness of catechumens to receive the sacraments of initiation and the readiness of candidates to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter vigil.

**Riverbend TEC (Together Encountering Christ) will host a retreat** March 5-7, 2016, in New Ulm at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. TEC is a three-day retreat experience that focuses on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. For more information, call 507-829-2412 or visit [www.riverbendtec.org](http://www.riverbendtec.org).

## Year of Mercy inaugurated at Schoenstatt on the Lake

**SLEEPY EYE** – David Barriga, 6, talks with Bishop John M. LeVoir at Schoenstatt on the Lake in Sleepy Eye on Dec. 19. Bishop LeVoir was at the Schoenstatt Shrine to celebrate a second Mass in the diocese opening the Year of Mercy. Before the Mass, the bishop and the faithful processed to the Schoenstatt chapel to ceremoniously open its Door of Mercy. This Door of Mercy is similar to the Door of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, which Bishop LeVoir opened Dec. 13, in that pilgrims entering through it are able to gain a plenary indulgence associated with the Year of Mercy. David lives in Frost, Minn., south of Mankato. His mother has been part of the Schoenstatt movement since 1990. *(Photo by Chris Clancy)*



## Mother Teresa

*(Continued from page 1)*

a Jesuit priest called Sodality, which eventually opened her to the call of service as a missionary nun.

She joined the Sisters of Loretto at age 17 and was sent to Calcutta, where she taught at a high school. After contracting tuberculosis, she was sent to rest in Darjeeling, and it was on the way that she felt what she called “an order” from God to leave the convent and live among the poor.

The Vatican granted her permission to leave the Sisters of Loretto and to live her new call under the guidance of the Archbishop of Calcutta. After she left her convent, Mother Teresa began working in the slums, teaching poor children, and treating the sick in their homes. A year later, some of her former students joined her, and together they took in men, women, and children who were dying in the gutters along the streets.

In 1950, the Missionaries of Charity were born as a congregation of the Diocese of Calcutta. In 1952, the government granted them a house from which to continue their mission of serving Calcutta’s poor and forgotten.

The congregation quickly grew from a single house for the dying and unwanted to nearly 500 houses around the world. Mother Teresa set up homes for prostitutes, battered women, orphanages for poor children, and houses for those suffering from AIDS.

She was a fierce defender of the unborn, and is known to have said, “If you hear of some woman who does not want to keep her child and wants to have an abortion, try to persuade her to bring him to me. I will love that child, seeing in him the sign of God’s love.”

She died Sept. 5, 1997, and was beatified just six years later by St. John Paul II on Oct. 19, 2003.

## Pope’s clarification further eases restrictions on marriage annulments

*(Continued from page 4)*

marriage was obviously null for another reason, such as coercion, and declare it so.

This formula was previously used by the Rota, allowing them to grant an annulment on those grounds, however during his pontificate John Paul II required the court to judge the case only on the grounds originally specified, meaning that the person or couple seeking an annulment had to start the process over if their original claim was unable to be proven.

Pope Francis’ move, then, can be seen as a continued effort to reach out to the Church’s “most fragile sons and daughters, marked by wounded and lost love,” as he said in the rescript text in reference to the most recent Synod of Bishops on the Family, which placed special emphasis on reaching out to divorced and remarried Catholics.

Of particular importance in the process is the principle of “generic doubt,” under which a marriage

can be declared null when the case of nullity is obvious, even without any specific grounds declared. In the rescript, Pope Francis also clarified that “there shall be no appeal” against the decisions made by the Rota in matters of the nullity of sentences or decrees.

Under the new procedures, a first judgment is always made by the diocesan tribunal. However, if one or both of the spouses seeking an annulment disagree with the ruling, they may appeal to the Rota for a second judgment.

In the rescript, Francis established that if a cause of nullity arrives to the third degree of judgment, it cannot be proposed again “after one of the parties has contracted a new canonical marriage, unless the decision can be demonstrated to be manifestly unjust.”

It was also declared that the dean of the Rota, then, “has the authority to dispense with the norms of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota in procedural matters for a serious cause.”

Another aspect of the rescript, expressing the explicit wish of Eastern Church leaders, is that their local tribunals will now have jurisdiction over the “iurium,” or “human rights” aspects of marriage annulment cases that come before the Rota for an appeal.

This is particularly relevant for churches in the Middle East, where numerous countries have no civil law on marriage cases, and often depend on religious courts.

In his final point in the rescript, Pope Francis says that the Rota must offer to all “the principal of evangelic gratuity,” meaning that those seeking the annulment won’t have to pay the lawyer for the cause, but that the costs will presumably be absorbed by the Rota itself.

However, the pope did say that wealthier parties have a “moral obligation” to make “a just contribution towards the causes of the poor.”



# THE DRA RIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 30 No. 5 January 2016



(Photo by Krista Hartman)

## i Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe !

**MONTEVIDEO** – Maria Vargas and Carlos Cortez re-enact an appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe to St. Juan Diego in 1531 at Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City. The theatrical presentation came at the end of Mass celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Dec. 12 at the Church of St. Joseph in Montevideo. The evening's festivities also included matachines dances, a procession, and a potluck supper.

(See a photo spread of the event on page 6.)

## catholic trends

**VATICAN CITY (CNA) – In his annual Christmas “Urbi et Orbi” blessing, Pope Francis prayed for all those affected by violence, conflict, and poverty throughout the world, asking that they rejoice in salvation offered by the birth of Christ.**

“Only God’s mercy can free humanity from the many forms of evil, at times monstrous evil, which selfishness spawns in our midst. The grace of God can convert hearts and offer mankind a way out of humanly insoluble situations,” the pope said on Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

God alone is able to save us, he

said, adding that “where God is born, hope is born. Where God is born, peace is born. And where peace is born, there is no longer room for hatred and for war.” Pope Francis spoke to those gathered in St. Peter’s Square to hear his Christmas message and receive the special blessing which goes out “to the city and the world.”

In his message, he lamented that ongoing conflicts continue to strain peaceful living in the Holy Land, and prayed for peace there as well as in war-torn countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, sub-Saharan Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo,

Burundi, South Sudan, Colombia, and Ukraine.

Francis also turned his thoughts to all those affected by “brutal acts of terrorism” throughout the world, particularly the “massacres” which have recently taken place in Egyptian airspace, in Beirut, Paris, Bamako, and Tunis.

He then offered prayers for refugees forced to flee their homes due to violence, as well as for victims of human trafficking, for the unemployed, and for all who suffer due to poverty.

**WASHINGTON (CNA/ EWTN News) – The numbers of people without a religious affiliation are increasing in some countries. But some demographers project that the global population will be more religious, not less, for one simple reason: religious believers tend to have more babies.**

The growth in the religiously affiliated population is “largely about having relatively high fertility rates,” Conrad Hackett, a demographer at the Pew Research Center, told CNA Dec. 15.

“There is such rapid growth expected in parts of the world that currently really have little to no unaffiliated presence, Africa in particular. India is another place where a lot of population growth is expected,” he said.

The religiously unaffiliated population is growing in some countries such as the U.S., where they have been nicknamed the “nones.” However, the largest populations of the unaffiliated are in Japan and other countries with aging populations that are not replacing themselves.

“Therefore the global story is that the unaffiliated are expected to decrease as a share of the world’s overall population,” Hackett said. Hackett is one of the authors of the study, “The future size of religiously affiliated and

unaffiliated populations,” published April 2 in the journal “Demographic Research.” Researchers’ projections took into account factors such as a population’s religious composition, differences in fertility rates, age structure, and patterns in changing to and from religious belief.

The researchers projected that in the year 2050 the religiously unaffiliated will make up 13.2 percent of the world population, a decline from 16.4 percent in 2010.

Religiously unaffiliated have both low fertility and an old age structure. While this population segment is projected to grow in North America and Europe, it will decline in the populous Asia-Pacific region.



*Christmas Messages*

from Bishop John M. LeVoi

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