

THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 31 No. 7 March 2017



(Photo by Dan Rossini)

A place like home

NEW ULM – Shelly Hogue, a board member and volunteer, hangs up children's clothes during a Feb. 9 move-in day at the Southern Minnesota Crisis Nursery in New Ulm. In family emergencies, the new community resource will provide a temporary, nurturing environment for children ages 0-12.

(For more on SMNCN, see page 11.)

Diocese of New Ulm files for financial reorganization

Chapter 11 filing will allow equitable payment of clergy sex abuse claims

NEW ULM – On March 3, 2017, the Diocese of New Ulm filed for financial reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection allows an organization to pay creditors, in this case claimants who were abused as minors by clergy, while maintaining operations essential to its existence.

“Reorganization is not about the diocese avoiding its responsibilities,” stated Bishop John M. LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm. “Rather, reorganization provides the diocese a process to fulfill its obligation to victims and survivors while continuing to carry out its mission.”

The diocese and some parishes within the geographic area the

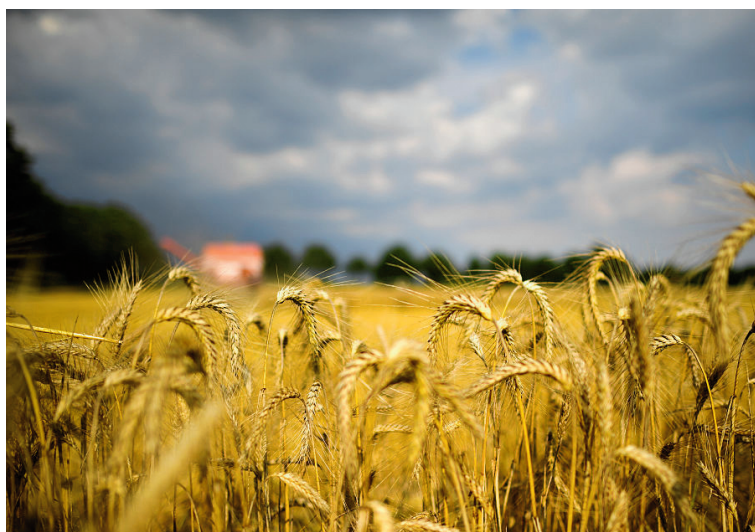
diocese serves are facing a total of 101 lawsuits resulting from claims filed under the Minnesota Child Victims Act. That Act lifted the civil statute of limitations for a period of three years, ending on May 25, 2016.

The lifting of the civil statute of limitations allowed victims and survivors to file claims of sexual abuse, regardless of when that abuse happened. Most of the abuse claims against the diocese stem from incidents reported to have occurred from the 1950s through the 1970s. No priests accused of abuse are currently in public ministry in the diocese.

“We must treat victims and survivors with the compassion and respect they deserve, provide fair compensation as part of the healing process, and give voice to this issue so that it never happens again,” said Bishop LeVoir. “I apologize on behalf of the Church to those harmed by sexual abuse and renew our commitment to help in the healing process and protect young people.”

The diocese and those representing victims and survivors will continue to work together, under the guidance of the court, to come to a just resolution of claims that will allow the ongoing work of the Church in the 15 counties within the diocese.

Parishes, Catholic schools, and other Catholic organizations in the geographical area served by the diocese are not part of the diocese's filing for reorganization



(Photo by Alexander Koerner/Getty Images)

“*With faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we know all things are possible. In him I put my faith for a brighter future – for victims and survivors of abuse, for local Catholics, and for our entire community.*”

- Bishop John M. LeVoir

because they are separate corporations under Minnesota law.

Diocesan assets

The diocese has filed preliminary financial information with the court.

“We have worked diligently to produce detailed financial records needed for review by attorneys for the victims and survivors, in order to move ahead with Chapter 11 proceedings,” said Tom Holzer, diocesan director of Operations and Finance.

Holzer also noted that the diocese is working with its insurers to resolve the covered claims.

Parish and Catholic school buildings and other Catholic organizations' property are not included in the diocesan assets because they do not belong to the diocesan corporation.

Creating safe environments

Diocesan leaders are committed to protecting children and youth and preventing sexual abuse in Church ministry. The filing for financial reorganization will not alter that commitment.

It is diocesan policy to report any claims of abuse against a priest or other person in Church ministry to law enforcement, regardless of when the abuse is reported to have occurred.

Since the 1990s, priests have been required to undergo a background check and participate in sexual abuse awareness and prevention training.

For more than a decade, all adults who work with or who have regular or unsupervised interaction with minors are required to participate in sexual abuse awareness training, undergo a background check, and sign a code of conduct. In 2016, nearly 4,000 adults in the Diocese of New Ulm received training and nearly 7,000 children and young people in parish faith formation and Catholic school programs received age-appropriate personal safety lessons.

“Fostering safe environments is a central part of our ministry,” said Karla Cross, Safe Environment coordinator for the Diocese of New Ulm. “Clergy, employees, and volunteers understand that training and screening make a difference in protecting young people. We need safe environments to carry out the good work of the Church.”

Promoting healing

Since the 1990s, the diocese has offered independent counseling and other support for those abused by priests in the diocese. The diocese has also held listening sessions and prayer services at parishes where abuse occurred. Bishop LeVoir and other diocesan leaders have met with sexual abuse victims and survivors to hear their experiences, acknowledge their

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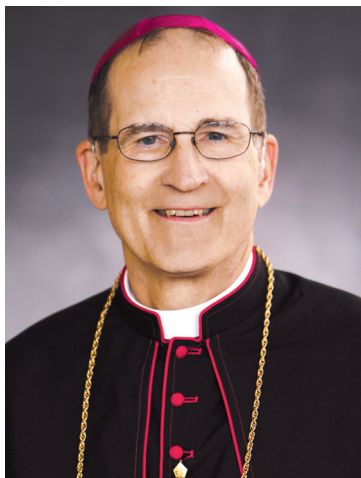
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My decision that the diocese file for financial reorganization



by Bishop John M. LeVoi

This year, we will mark 15 years since the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" in response to the reports of sexual abuse of minors by clergy.

Since I became bishop of New Ulm in 2008, I have listened to many victims and survivors share their stories. I have heard from them how the abuse they experienced violated a sacred trust, often damaging their relationship with God and with their loved ones. They have told me of their struggles on the long and difficult path toward healing.

On behalf of the Church, I once again extend my deepest apologies to these victims and survivors. It takes great courage to tell their stories. They deserve not only our compassion, but also fair compensation to help them in their healing. They should also have our daily prayers for healing.

While victims and survivors have endured years and even decades of pain, the impact of sexual abuse is now more publicly evident than ever in the Diocese of New Ulm. There are a total of 101 lawsuits against the diocese and some parishes within the area the diocese serves. These claims were made under the Minnesota Child Victims Act, which temporarily lifted the civil statute of limitations on historic cases of childhood sexual abuse.

Faced with the large number of lawsuits, on March 3, 2017, I directed that the diocesan corporation file for financial reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

The decision to file for financial reorganization has not been an easy one. But after months of prayer, examination of all options, consultation with

representative clergy and lay leadership, and the counsel of financial and legal advisors, I am confident it is the right decision.

Reorganizing our finances under the guidance of the court is the fairest way to compensate victims and survivors of childhood sexual abuse by clergy, while continuing the work of the Church in our parish communities.

By no means does reorganization suggest that the diocese is avoiding its responsibilities. Rather, reorganization is the fairest way for the diocese to meet its obligations to victims and survivors.

We must act to ensure that available assets are fairly utilized to resolve all the pending sexual abuse claims. If we instead resolved the cases on a piecemeal basis, available diocesan assets could be exhausted in the first few cases, leaving nothing for other claimants.

I understand there may be concerns about what

reorganization means for local Catholics, not just because of the diocesan reorganization filing, but also because of pending claims against some parishes.

Let me assure you that we will remain steadfast in carrying out

"We will remain steadfast in carrying out the mission of the Church. The pastoral needs of people in our local parish communities will continue to be met." - Bishop LeVoi

the mission of the Church. The pastoral needs of people in our local parish communities will continue to be met.

In addition, the diocese will remain resolute in efforts to create safe environments for our children and youth as well as continuing our commitment to helping victims and survivors heal. Much work has been done, but work remains. We will do more to reach out to victims and survivors and help them in healing.

We will continue to improve our sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs. To learn more about these efforts,

I encourage you to visit the diocesan website at www.dnu.org and click "PROTECT & HEAL" at the top of the page.

Guided by our faith in the Lord, I am confident that filing for financial reorganization is the right decision to fairly address all lawsuits by victims and survivors and to help keep us moving forward as a Church family.

During this difficult time, I am especially grateful for the prayers and support of parishioners and I hope that they will continue to help sustain the diocese and their parishes.

I encourage all of us, as one Body in Christ, to continue to pray for those sexually abused by clergy.

May the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bring us hope, healing, and peace.

Bishop LeVoi's March 2017 calendar can be found at www.dnu.org/calendar/.

Protection of children and young people is of highest priority for the Church



comprehensive set of procedures established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002, and last revised in 2011, for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

The "Charter" also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of abuse.

Guided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's "Charter," for more than a decade the Diocese of New Ulm has expected and encouraged fulfillment of safe environment requirements for all priests and deacons, diocesan staff, parish and Catholic school employees, as well as parish and Catholic school volunteers who have regular or unsupervised interaction with minors. These safe environment requirements

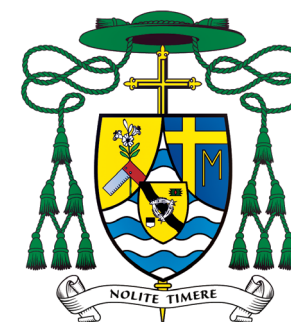
include submission to a criminal background check, adherence to a code of conduct, and participation in sexual abuse awareness and prevention training.

The Diocese of New Ulm is committed to providing comprehensive training and screening to prevent abuse, immediately reporting any allegations of abuse in Church

ministry to law enforcement, and removing from ministry any member of the clergy with credible accusations against him.

For more information about the safe environment initiatives of the Diocese of New Ulm, visit www.dnu.org/safeenvironment/ or contact Karla Cross, diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator, 507-5323; email kcross@dnu.org.

Please see Bishop LeVoi's video message, "Hope, Healing, and Peace" at ProtectandHeal-DNU.org.



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Questions about the diocese's financial reorganization answered

What is happening?

On March 3, the Diocese of New Ulm filed for financial reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code in United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Minnesota. This filing allows the diocese to reorganize its finances and establish a plan to pay its creditors, who are victims and survivors of sexual abuse as minors by clergy, while continuing its operations.

The bottom line: Reorganization provides the diocese with a neutral process to fairly and permanently resolve claims with victims and survivors while continuing to carry out the mission of the Church. Please see Bishop LeVoi's video announcement at HopeHealingandPeace-DNU.org.

Why is the diocese filing now?

The diocese and some parishes within the geographic area it serves are facing a total of 101 lawsuits resulting from claims filed under the Minnesota Child Victims Act. After prayerful and careful review, the diocese determined that filing for reorganization was the best way to fairly resolve those claims. The Diocese of New Ulm is the third diocese in Minnesota to file for reorganization following

the enactment of the Minnesota Child Victims Act, which temporarily lifted the civil statute of limitations on historical childhood sexual abuse claims for a three-year period which ended on May 25, 2016.

What does this filing mean for victims and survivors of sexual abuse as minors by clergy in the Diocese of New Ulm?

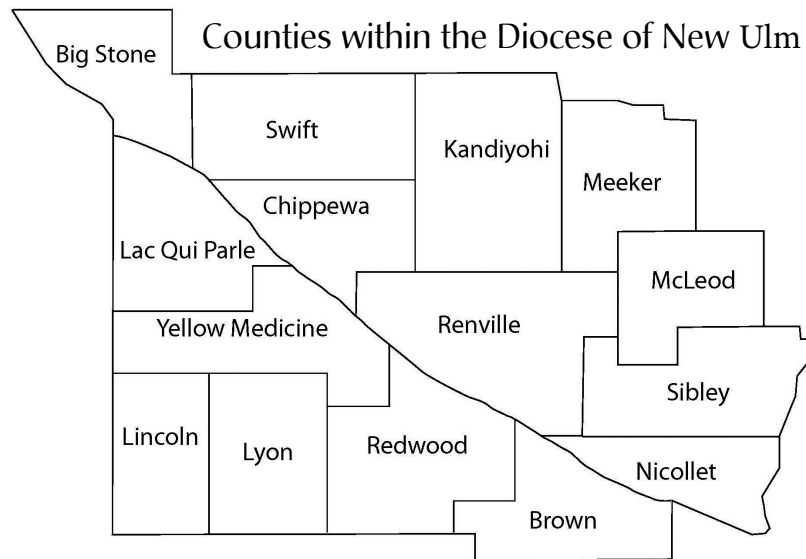
Reorganization under Chapter 11 means the court will supervise a process to fairly resolve claims with victims and survivors and provide equitable compensation.

What does this filing mean for my parish or Catholic school?

Parishes, Catholic schools, and other Catholic organizations located in the geographic area the diocese serves are not included in the diocesan filing. Parishes and other Catholic organizations are separately incorporated under Minnesota law.

With what assets will the diocese pay creditors?

The Diocese of New Ulm listed all of its assets in documents filed with the court. You can see a document listing diocesan assets at HopeHealingandPeace-DNU.org. Those assets include real estate and other property that belong to the diocesan corporation. The diocese is also



working with its insurers to resolve the claims.

What about my donations to the Diocesan Ministries Appeal, will that money go to settle claims?

As stated in the Diocesan Ministries Appeal (DMA) materials, donations to the DMA are restricted gifts to be used in support of the specifically designated ministries only. The Diocese has every expectation that donations will be used as designated.

How will this filing affect ministry in the diocese?

We do not expect that this filing will affect core diocesan ministry.

We expect that operations will continue without interruption as we work toward resolution.

Has the diocese issued a public apology to victims and survivors?

Yes. On behalf of the Diocese of New Ulm, Bishop LeVoi has apologized publicly to victims and survivors and continues to do so both publicly and privately. Please see Bishop LeVoi's video message, "Hope, Healing, and Peace" at ProtectandHeal-DNU.org.

If someone was sexually abused as a minor and has not yet come forward, what should he or she do?

If someone was sexually abused as a minor by anyone involved in Church ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm, they should immediately report such abuse to local law enforcement, regardless of when the abuse occurred. You can see contact information on the diocesan website for county law enforcement and social service agencies. This information is at dnu.org/report-abuse.

Victims and survivors of sexual abuse by clergy are also encouraged to contact the diocesan victim assistance coordinator at 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073, or by phone at 507-233-5313, for counseling or other assistance in healing.

In addition, there will be an opportunity for victims and survivors of childhood clergy sexual abuse to file a proof of claim with the bankruptcy court. Victims and survivors with questions about a proof of claim should consult with a qualified attorney.

What if I have additional questions?

Please call the diocesan Office of Communications at 507-233-5332.

Reorganization provides the diocese a process to fulfill its obligation to victims and survivors while continuing to carry out its mission

(Continued from page 1)

suffering, and apologize to them on behalf of the Church.

The diocese continues to encourage anyone who has suffered sexual abuse or exploitation by a priest or anyone else involved in Church ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm to immediately report such misconduct to local law enforcement, regardless of when the misconduct occurred.

Victims and survivors of sexual abuse by clergy are also encouraged to contact the diocesan victim assistance coordinator at 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073, or by phone at 507-233-5313, for counseling or other assistance in healing.

Church ministry continues
Diocesan ministry and other

current core diocesan functions will continue. This includes Catholic Charities counseling and emergency response; liturgical and other worship support for parishes, support for faith formation, youth ministry and Catholic school programs, Hispanic ministry, marriage preparation classes and other family life offerings, and the marriage tribunal.

It also includes clergy assignment and ongoing formation, seminary and diaconate formation, healing ministry, safe environment records keeping and support, and the work of the offices of Social Concerns, Development, and Communications, including publication of The Prairie Catholic.

Donations to the Diocesan Ministries Appeal (DMA) are

restricted gifts to be used in support of the specifically-designated ministries only, as indicated in DMA materials. Diocesan leaders expect that DMA donations will be used as designated.

The work of the parishes, Catholic schools, and other Catholic organizations within the 15 counties of the diocese is expected to continue without interruption.

"We know that local Catholics rely on the Church to provide opportunities to participate in Mass and other sacramental ministry, as well as to offer spiritual guidance and pastoral counsel," said Bishop LeVoi.

"People should be reassured that reorganization will not decrease access to such care at their parish," he said.

Parish planning to address ongoing demographic shifts and priest shortages will continue as the diocesan reorganization process moves forward. This parish planning is not expected to be affected directly by diocesan reorganization.

The road ahead

The diocese is in communication with those representing victims and survivors and will continue to be during the financial reorganization process to resolve the claims. It is not known how long this process will last, but in the interest of providing victims and survivors with the largest possible share of resources, it is the diocese's intent to promptly and efficiently complete the reorganization process.

"The Church must acknowledge this terrible time in our history, be accountable for its failings,

and resolve to do all in its power to prevent future abuse and to promote healing. As the local bishop, I pledge to do this in our diocese," said Bishop LeVoi.

"With faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we know all things are possible. In him I put my faith for a brighter future – for victims and survivors of abuse, for local Catholics, and for our entire community," he said.

Editor's note: Updated information regarding the reorganization process can be found at HopeHealingandPeace-DNU.org.



No Tengas Miedo

Mi Decisión por la cual la Diócesis se Declara en Bancarrota

por Obispo John M. LeVoir

Este año, marca los 15 años desde que la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos aprobó “El Estatuto para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes” en respuesta a las demandas de abuso sexual a menores por parte de sacerdotes.

Desde mi consagración episcopal en el 2008, he escuchado las historias de muchas víctimas y sobrevivientes. He escuchado como el abuso que pasaron ha traicionado la confianza depositada en la Iglesia, ha dañado su relación con Dios y con sus seres queridos. Me dijeron de sus dificultades en su camino largo y difícil hacia la sanación.

En nombre de la Iglesia, una vez más quisiera extender mis más profundas disculpas a las víctimas y sobrevivientes. Se necesita un gran valor para contar sus historias. Ellos merecen no solo nuestra compasión, sino también una compensación justa para ayudarles en su sanación. Como parte de su sanación, ellos también necesitan de nuestras oraciones.

Aunque las víctimas y sobrevivientes han sufrido por años hasta incluso décadas de dolor, la repercusión del abuso sexual ahora es más evidente públicamente en la Diócesis de New Ulm. Hay un total de 101 demandas en contra de la diócesis y de algunas parroquias dentro de la diócesis. Estas demandas se hicieron bajo el Acta de Niños

Víctimas de Minnesota, que levanto temporalmente el estatuto de limitación civil en la historia de abuso sexual infantil.

Ante el gran número de demandas, el 3 de marzo del 2017, solicité que la corporación diocesana a una petición de reorganización financiera al capítulo 11 del código de bancarrota de los Estados Unidos. Esta decisión de solicitud a una reorganización financiera no ha sido fácil. Después de meses de oración, analizar todas las opciones, consultas con el clero representativo y el liderazgo laico y el consejo de asesores financieros y legales, estoy convencido que es la decisión correcta.

La reorganización bajo la dirección del tribunal es la manera más justa de compensar a las víctimas y sobrevivientes del abuso sexual de menores por parte de sacerdotes, mientras continúa el trabajo de la Iglesia en nuestras comunidades parroquiales.

De ninguna manera la reorganización sugiere que la diócesis vaya a eludir con sus responsabilidades. Al contrario, la reorganización es la manera más justa para que la diócesis cumpla con sus obligaciones con las víctimas y sobrevivientes. Debemos garantizar que los bienes estén disponibles y se utilice de manera justa para resolver todos los reclamos pendientes de abuso sexual. Si resolvemos los casos por partes, los primeros casos serían los más

favorecidos sin dejar para los demás demandantes.

Entiendo la preocupación que puede causar sobre lo que significa la reorganización para los católicos, también por las demandas pendientes contra algunas parroquias.

Permítanme asegurarles que permaneceremos firmes en cumplir la misión de la Iglesia. Las necesidades pastorales de los feligreses en nuestras comunidades parroquiales seguirán siendo atendidas.

Asimismo, la diócesis se mantendrá firme para crear un ambiente seguro para nuestros niños y jóvenes, como también nuestro compromiso de ayudar a las víctimas y sobrevivientes a sanarse. Ya se ha hecho bastante, pero aún queda trabajo por hacer. Continuaremos mejorando nuestros programas de sensibilización y prevención del abuso sexual. Para mayor información sobre estos esfuerzos, los invito a visitar el sitio web de la diócesis www.dnu.org bajo el título de “PROTECT & HEAL”/ PROTEGER & SANAR en la parte superior de la página.

En este momento tan difícil, estoy tan agradecido por todas las oraciones y el apoyo de los feligreses y espero que continúen ayudando y apoyando a la diócesis y a sus parroquias.

Me gustaría animarles a todos, como un solo Cuerpo en Cristo, continuar orando por las víctimas de abuso sexual por parte de sacerdotes.

Que la gracia de nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo nos traiga esperanza, sanidad y paz.

‘Lower the volume, talk less, listen more’

by Deacon Mike McKeown

After the elections were over last November, I think many of us breathed a sigh of relief, thinking we could finally get beyond all the political bickering. I guess we were wrong.

Unlike in the past, the post-election cooling off period never came. Instead, we are still bombarded with political rancor. Sometimes it seems as if people have forgotten how to have a respectful conversation. It’s not just that people see issues differently, it’s the angry and disrespectful way that those views are expressed.

In a recent address to a group of university students in Rome, Pope Francis spoke about the disrespect and divisiveness in politics. “But in a society where the standards of politics has fallen so much – I am talking about world society – we lose the sense of building society, of social co-existence, and social co-existence is built on dialogue.”

“Insulting has become normal,” he said. “We need to lower the volume a bit and we need to talk less and listen more.”

The sad thing is, this disrespectful, insulting attitude that we see every day on the political news has filtered into daily conversations between people in our communities and even in the Church.

While we have a responsibility to stand up for what we know to be true, we still have an obligation to treat people with respect. Sometimes people take a good stand on a moral issue, but do so in such a rude and disrespectful way that the other person is offended – and God is offended.

You may have witnessed the political tension in your own parish – maybe at a church dinner, a committee meeting, or at coffee and rolls. Things are going along peacefully until the conversation turns to politics.

As one person shares a strong political view,

you can see eyes widen, backs stiffen, and the conversation suddenly becomes more tense and forceful. At times like this, Pope Francis’ advice is helpful: “Lower the volume ... talk less ... listen more.”

In the fifth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus gives us some direction on how to deal with these volatile discussions: “But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well.”

But is that really practical? Is Jesus asking us to be doormats and let people walk all over us? Or is he offering us a path to rise above the sin of anger and disrespect?

If you think about those people who you really respect in a debate, it’s not the loud ones who are constantly interrupting and talking over top of everyone. And it’s not the sarcastic ones that always seem to have the perfect put-down at just the right time. We tend to respect those people who refuse to take part in the vindictiveness and who control their emotions even when they are insulted.

When we are in one of those situations where someone is talking over top of us, twisting our words or insulting us for our views, we are still called to be respectful. When we disagree with someone, even if they are being rude, it’s important to remember that we’re dealing with a person and not just their ideology.

Lent has already begun, but it’s not too late to add a Lenten resolution to be respectful in our political conversations. Real dialogue is not possible without listening. Pope Francis’ words can be a guide for all of us: “Lower the volume, talk less, listen more!”



Editor’s note: Deacon Mike McKeown is director of Development and Healing Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm.

Fatima, Spain & Lourdes
100 Year Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima

Bishop John M. LeVoir
Catholic Diocese of New Ulm, MN

September 11-21, 2017
www.dnu.org/pilgrimage/

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What do you do when therapy is not enough? When prayer is not enough?

Healing Ministry, Catholic Charities form powerful alliance to heal clients' wounds

by Debra Skelley Blaschko
Prairie Catholic Correspondent

NEW ULM – “For years, I have struggled with anger, anxiety, and control issues. Much of these problems stemmed from my childhood – I am the product of a broken home. Not only was there a long history of abuse of all kinds in my family, but also of depression, divorce, suicide, and pretty much any other symptom of deep hurt.”

Jessie Collins, a young mother of four children from Murdock, stood before parishioners in the Holy Family Area Faith Community at a mission focused on Healing Ministry Jan. 16 at St. Joseph’s Church in Montevideo. In poignant, personal, and at times emotional terms, she explained what led her to pursue deliverance prayer and talked about the effect it had on her life.

“One thing I have learned from this ministry is that all of this past family history as well as my own dark history had an effect on me,” she said. “I never knew that all my anger, anxiety, etc., had a source, and that just identifying it, which I had done plenty of times in therapy, isn’t enough. I was in need of some serious healing.

“So after confessing and struggling with the same sins for years and years, my priest suggested that I call Deacon Mike,” she continued. “And a year ago, December, I did my first Unbound Healing Prayer with Deacon Mike and the prayer team.”

Sometimes therapy is not enough. It’s a statement Deacon Mike McKeown, director of Development and Healing Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm, has heard before. Often it occurs when counseling has identified a problem, but only brings about limited healing.

“For example, someone talks about their woundedness in relationships and they have trouble forgiving,” said Deacon McKeown. “They’ve talked about it, they’ve analyzed it, they’ve looked at different ways to deal with it, but that core wound is still there: Forgiveness is not coming. That’s an indication that it’s a spiritual

wound as well and that the healing that can come through prayer will have a deeper effect.”

Catholic Charities referrals

Tom Keaveny, director for Catholic Charities for the diocese and a licensed clinical social worker, is grateful to have a diocesan prayer resource to offer clients with that need. “We can refer to Unbound ministry for spiritual closure,” he said. “It’s a wonderful gift.”

Keaveny said that he has several copies of Neal Lozano’s book, “Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance,” that he distributes to clients who could benefit from Healing Ministry. The book is a primer on how deliverance prayer can help people uncover the spiritual freedom they have been given as disciples of Christ.

Part of Lozano’s work is to hold conferences and train people to conduct deliverance prayer in their own dioceses. The ministries arising from these efforts often take the name “Unbound,” following Lozano’s model of prayer.

Whether clients decide to pursue Healing Ministry is completely up to them, said Keaveny. Catholic Charities counselors suggest it when they encounter issues of guilt and shame, as well as for anger and resentment.

Tami Dale, a licensed professional clinical counselor for Catholic Charities, believes counseling and Unbound prayer are resources that complement each other and can provide hope, well-being, and recovery. All of Catholic Charities’ counselors have encouraged clients to seek deliverance prayer.

Two-way street

Not only does Catholic Charities send clients to Healing Ministry, it also receives them. When prayer team members encounter people with signs of mental illness, such as depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or schizophrenia, they encourage them to call Catholic Charities to see a counselor.

“The majority of people who come for prayer are not in need of counseling,” said Deacon McKeown. “But because of our relationship with Catholic



Healing Ministry and Catholic Charities offer different but complementary ways to free people from their deep spiritual and psychological wounds. In the Diocese of New Ulm, each ministry understands the other and offers referrals in cases where clients can benefit from both. (Photo by CHOATphotographer/Shutterstock)

Charities, we are able to refer those who are looking for a counselor to someone who respects their spirituality.”

Deacon McKeown said he especially appreciates Catholic Charities because of their knowledge of and respect for the Catholic faith.

People sometimes avoid seeing a counselor because “they’re afraid of not having somebody who will understand their spirituality or respect their Catholic faith,” he said. However, “we’ve got counselors here that not only respect it, they are familiar with deliverance prayer, and they’ll respect what you just went through.”

Making friends out of enemies

Fr. Robert Mraz, pastor of the parishes in Our Lady of the Prairie Area Faith Community comprising Tracy, Milroy, and Walnut Grove, is spiritual director for Healing Ministry and a prayer team leader. There are three prayer teams at different parishes, he said.

Sometimes we walk around carrying a grudge, he said, explaining one big need for deliverance prayer. “It’s like reaching into a fire, picking up a hot coal, and hoping the other person, your enemy, gets burned.... But holding a grudge hurts you. You need to move on, forgive the other person, and ask God to bless them. Jesus told us to take your enemies and make

friends out of them” (see Mt 5:43-45).

“People who are feeling miserable in life, and come (for prayer) with hurts and negativity, find when they bring things to the light they can start seeing the blessings,” Fr. Mraz said.

Beloved children of God

Fr. Paul Timmerman, pastor of the Holy Family AFC including parishes in Montevideo, Granite Falls, Clara City, and Dawson, is one of six diocesan priests trained to help with deliverance prayer. He said things like unresolved anger, bitterness, resentment, and division can sabotage our relationships and prevent us from seeing God as our loving Father.

“The enemy subtly pulls us away from our identity as beloved sons and daughters of God and robs us of fully receiving God’s love. That is our true identity – given to us in Baptism, the core of our being, that so many don’t recognize,” he said.

Fr. Timmerman explained that the wounds treated in deliverance prayer are not something to be ashamed of. “It is (in my wounds) where I’m vulnerable and there I can experience God the Father’s love for me,” he said. “The beautiful part: The wound becomes an instrument for us to cry out to Jesus – I can’t do this on my own!”

Deliverance prayer also destroys the lies associated with those

wounds. “Unbound Ministry teaches about the lies we believe about ourselves because of different wounds from our lifetime,” Fr. Timmerman said. “Unbound prayer includes a renouncing of lies.”

Free at last

The healing of wounds and the renouncing of lies was exactly what Collins experienced from her first Unbound prayer session.

“It was extremely difficult to recall all the hurt, not only from my own life, when I was a little girl, but also the pain from incidents in my other family members’ lives,” she testified. “Then I forgave. I forgave so many. Through that forgiveness I was able to let go of them and truly give them, and all my worrying about them, to Jesus.”

“We moved on to the lies that the devil tells me and that I believe,” she continued. “I was able to renounce all the lies from ‘I’m not a good wife or mother,’ to ‘I don’t deserve love.’”

At the end, she felt truly happy for the first time in her life. “I was free!” she exclaimed. “Free from all that weight of sin that led to such deep hurt and free from all the deep hurt that led to sin. I smiled the entire two-and-a-half-hour drive back home!”

Editor’s note: To schedule an appointment for prayer or a presentation on Healing Ministry for your parish or group, contact Deacon McKeown at 507-430-1690. Dan Rossini contributed to this report.



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Law professor Helen Alvaré to present Bishop Lucker Lecture March 23

Talk to address role of government, law in promoting unconstrained sexual expression

NEW ULM – What is the government doing in the arena of human sexuality? How does it come to tell us philosophically, theologically, and practically what sex means? How did the federal government get into this business? Why?

These are some of the questions that Helen Alvaré plans to answer in her upcoming Bishop Lucker Lecture. The Diocese of New Ulm’s annual event will begin at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 23 at the Church of St. Catherine in Redwood Falls. A reception will follow the event.

No one disputes the fact that the government is promoting a certain view of sexuality, she says. From Supreme Court decisions legalizing artificial contraception, abortion, and same-sex marriage, to the President draping the White House in the rainbow flag and talking about the necessity of transgender surgery, the evidence is plain.

The question is why.

Furthermore, “why are they causing so much misery for women and children, especially the poor?” she asks rhetorically.

“We’ve got far more unintended, non-marital pregnancy, and the feminization of poverty. How come they still get to do this? It’s a complete failure.”

The title of Alvaré’s talk is “The Rise of Sexual Expressionism in the Law.” She will provide an expanded treatment of the topic in a forthcoming book, “Putting Children’s Interests First: U.S. Family Law and Policy,” due out from Cambridge University Press this fall.

Alvaré is currently a professor of law at George Mason University School of Law in Arlington, Va., where she teaches family law, law and religion, and property law. She has also taught law at the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America and the John Paul II Institute of Marriage and Family, both in Washington, D.C.

To whet people’s appetite for her talk, Alvaré agreed to do an interview for *The Prairie Catholic*.

“We are most free when we are most ‘human in the image of God.’ Sex serves freedom then, when it is what it really *is* as God created it – when its actions and meanings are not artificially severed.” – Helen Alvaré



How did you become interested in this topic?

I have been struck by two things for a long time. First, the oddity that federal actors (the Supreme Court, President, etc.) would, in law, instruct Americans about the meaning of sex, which is *not* a legal question. It’s pre-legal. It’s human and divine.

Second, that when they *did* instruct, they taught that sex is important for its affective, communicative meanings between the couple, and for its “identify-formation” properties, unrelated to the fact that it is the place children are conceived, and unrelated to the fact that it therefore, *per se*, tends toward being associated with ideas like union, family, kin, and future.

What were the events in society that led to the valorization of adult consensual sex in the law? What role did the general acceptance of artificial contraception play?

There is interplay among social, cultural, technical, and legal factors. Sex is naturally valorized because of its power to communicate love and to bond a couple, *and* because it is the only spot where God himself chose to “locate” conception. That’s powerful stuff.

What the government, culture, and technology did was to tease these elements out from one another artificially. Even before the pill, the rise of the separation of sex from children occurred in the early 20th century when writers predicted that birth control would improve marital sex and overall happiness because it would focus sex on the happiness of the couple alone.

Everything from the rise of individualism to the American cult of happiness to the rise of youth culture to the sexualization of consumption (via advertising) contributed to the further

separation of sex from all of its meanings.

Contraception technology was the most recent and powerful blow to integral sexuality. Catholic teaching aside, many non-Catholic commentators have pointed out that when you remove even the *idea* of children from sex, and set it off as about nothing more than physical pleasure and maybe couple bonding, you do things to sex which redound to the disadvantage of men, women, and children.

Sex is asked to bear more importance than it can bear. Infidelity and non-marital sex increase rapidly; non-marital children are born more frequently; women’s and men’s happiness declines as there is no open-ended commitment “necessary” any longer, etc.

What do you mean that sex is asked to bear more importance than it can bear?

There’s two sides. On the one side, we say that when you drag out of sex the fact that it creates new life, it becomes, in the words of this one philosopher, “unbearably light.” So that’s one side of it, that you’ve just taken away the fact that it is the source of the creation of all human life. You’ve removed something really significant

The other side is when you take that out of it, what is left is this communication between men and women, which is in the movies and ads and discussions of modern romance. Now this is supposed to be all there is.

This is all the weight it has, and it is supposed to be sublime. It is not just supposed to be for pleasure, but it is supposed to communicate precisely what you want it to communicate, no more and no less. It is now supposed to fill all the space that all the

meanings of sex used to have, of unity, kin, family, future, plus intimacy, plus the bond, plus the kids.

When you talk about sexual expression, you do not describe it in terms of freedom like many people would. Why?

Freedom means becoming who God intends us to be. We are most free when we are most “human in the image of God.” Sex serves freedom then, when it is what it really *is* as God created it – when its actions and meanings are not artificially severed.

I say this as a person who did not accept the Church’s teachings axiomatically on this subject when I was younger. I believed the Church to be sexist and physicalist on this point. I grew, not only through my reading of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, but also by reading the great philosophers and sociologists of the 20th century, who understood what happens to sex when it is made “unbearably light” by the divorcing of sex from its factual realities.

Why did you think the Church’s teaching was sexist? Physicalist? How was your thinking transformed?

I thought it was sexist because I thought they really weren’t considering the burdens on women of being pregnant, giving birth, and taking care of children. They simply didn’t care. They just thought, “Sorry, you’re just going to have to face more children than you want, and more child care, and we’re just not highly concerned about it. We are older men, making the rules, and we don’t really understand where you’re coming from. Nor do we wish to.” That was really my perspective in my teens and early twenties.

Physicalist, in the sense that ... I had the position very much of the dissenters of “*Humanae Vitae*,” which was, “Isn’t the real question whether you generously welcome children, not in every act, but really?” ...

I guess what changed me was the actual experience of marriage combined with the fact that this issue bothered me since I was a kid. ...

You know, the best way to understand something is to think about its opposite by distinction, not description, right? And the opposite is, what if sex is divorced from the fact of its being the place of new life? What will happen? What does it do to the relationship between men and women? What does it do to people’s thinking about children? ...

I became persuaded in my own marriage that the openness to children, the rejection of contraception, actually laid the groundwork for a happier, more integrated, more natural, more holistic appreciation of the union that I have promised my husband and the welcome that I wanted to extend to my children.

Why are women and children hurt by a society that values unconstrained sexual expression?

Women are more oriented toward wishing sex to be associated with commitment, and toward accepting children. They will be more disappointed and even depressed when sex is not so associated. And they will be in 86 percent of all single parent households and 100 percent of abortion clients. They are also the bodies harmed by various forms of contraception. But don’t be fooled. Men need stable, long-term, healthy relationships with women and their children too. They are emotionally scarred – but not in the same visible ways.

You have said that most prominent federal and state government policies are all about “self-empowerment” and birth control, not about stable marital and parenting communities. How has this negatively affected poor women?

Life is relational even more than it is individual. We are vulnerable for a great deal of our lives. We want to love and give love. When the government frames the human person as an individual first and foremost, it forgets this.

Well off women and men, with the same preferences as the poor for marriage and marital parenthood, will fare better than the poor. The well-off have more

(Continued on page 7)



2017 Diocesan Distinguished Service Award recipients announced

awards to be presented at annual Bishop Lucker Lecture on March 23 in Redwood Falls

NEW ULM – What do the former diocesan mission of San Lucas Tolimán in Guatemala, the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, and the diocesan Hispanic community have in common?

All three groups have benefited greatly from the outstanding contributions of the winners of this year's Diocesan Distinguished Service Award. Bishop John M. LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm selected this year's recipients in January, and they were notified by letter shortly thereafter.

Four deserving Catholics will receive the honor this year. The award is given to individuals in recognition of outstanding service in some leadership capacity to the diocese.

The awards presentation will take place immediately following the Bishop Lucker Lecture on March 23 at 7 p.m. at St. Catherine's Church in Redwood Falls.

This year's recipients are:

Jan Noyes served as president of the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women from May 2014 through April 2016. As president, Noyes was responsible for presiding at all DCCW officer meetings, attending all regional CCW meetings, and promoting the CCW wherever she went.

She continues to serve the DCCW as its immediate past president – a position she will hold until 2018. The post primarily involves providing counsel to the current president and DCCW board. Noyes also continues to serve as chair of the



Jan Noyes

leadership council and as DCCW representative to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Before assuming the top spot for the DCCW, Noyes was treasurer of the Region III CCW from 2011 to 2014. She became president-elect in May 2013. That same month she also became a member of the CCW Province Board, and has served as secretary of that organization since October 2015.

Noyes and her husband Ken attend Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Marshall. They have been married for 37 years and have five grown children and six grandchildren. Ken Noyes is a deacon candidate for the Diocese of New Ulm.

Arch Mrkvicka has been executive director of the Friends of San Lucas since January 2013. His involvement with the mission of San Lucas Tolimán began when he chaperoned mission trips for teens and adults starting in 2002.

In April 2011, Mrkvicka retired from corporate America after 37 years with the Travelers Insurance Company. About the same time, Msgr. Greg Schaffer,



Arch Mrkvicka

the longtime head of the mission, moved to the Twin Cities to begin skin cancer treatments. He and Msgr. Schaffer deepened their friendship and traveled a lot together to the mission over the next year.

Soon after Msgr. Schaffer died in May 2012, Bishop LeVoir established a small committee to ensure the future of the mission. Mrkvicka was a member of that group, and eventually assumed day-to-day leadership of the newly formed Friends of San Lucas (FOSL) non-profit organization.

As executive director, Mrkvicka resolved a labor dispute among mission employees, appointed directors of each major mission program, and helped to set up advisory councils and committees for each program to facilitate the work of FOSL with the mission leadership in Guatemala. He has also been in charge of stateside fundraising for the mission.

Mrkvicka and his wife Suzie have been married for 42 years and have three grown children.

Pamela Osborne has been a member of the diocesan Hispanic



Pamela Osborne

Ministry Coordinating Committee for over 10 years. She received the appointment based on her work as director of Religious Education and Hispanic ministry volunteer for the All Saints Area Faith Community, which includes parishes in Gibbon, Fairfax, Franklin, and Winthrop.

As HMCC member, Osborne further became a member of the subcommittee for planning the consultation to write the Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry, which was promulgated in January 2015. She also served on the committee to help write the plan in 2014.

Over the years, Osborne has been very active in her parish, the Church of St. Francis de Sales in Winthrop. She has served as lector, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, cantor, choir director, volunteer helper at the Friday Mass at the Good Samaritan Nursing Home, planner with the Winthrop Ministerial Association, RCIA instructor, and funeral planner.

Osborne has been married to her husband, Deacon Roger Osborne, for 26 years. The couple has nine children and 12 grandchildren.



Kris Anderson

Kris Anderson has served the Diocese of New Ulm in several ways. She has been the treasurer for the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, 2015-2016, and from 2012 to 2014 served as NUDCCW spirituality coordinator.

Since 2012, she has been a member of the Diocesan Finance Council. In 2014, she and her husband Duane served as co-chairs of the Diocesan Ministries Appeal. Twice she has also been a chaperone for youth groups attending the National Catholic Youth Conference.

The Andersons have attended the Church of St. Michael in Morgan for the last 13 years. Throughout that time, Kris has hosted Bible studies, taught religious education, and served as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. She was also CCW president for the parish from 2012 to 2014.

The Andersons have seven children ranging in age from eight to 25.

Alvaré: Promiscuous society especially hurts poor women

(Continued from page 6)

opportunities for marriage partners and have prospects for better jobs and education. They will less likely exercise their need to be “a gift to someone” by having a non-marital birth; but for poorer women and men, without the trade-off or opportunity cost of a good education or job, will more likely fall into that pattern of life.

Why will well-off women less readily exercise their need

to be a gift to someone than poor women by having a non-marital birth? Is it because of their need to have someone to depend on them, to love them unconditionally?

Every person, anthropologically, is a gifted giver. We have gifts, and we are called as part of being human to give them. We're not happy if we cannot be in relationship and give the gifts that we've been given.

Poor women, like advantaged women, have this – every woman,

every man. The constraint that every woman has is that you're only fertile for so long. ... The preferences that poor women and well-off women have is most of them want to have kids. Most of them wind up with children in their lives, between 80 and 90 percent of women.

But there are different constraints and opportunity costs for the poor woman, and this is what I mean. In her community, she is very unlikely to have as many opportunities for marriage. There

are drastically more men who are incarcerated; there are drastically more men with past criminal records; there are drastically more men who cannot get a job, which people have come to believe is a prerequisite for marriage.

The other thing a poor woman is facing is what we call lower opportunity costs. If a middle class or wealthy woman, an educated woman, has a child, the opportunity she is giving up is to finish college and to have a good job.

If the poor woman has a child, she is not trading off a good job or a good education. Her opportunity for achieving those is quite low. ... They are facing a situation where having a child is a narrative of success in their community: “I can be a mother” – “I can be a good mother” – “I can face the odds.”



St. Anthony parish in Watkins dedicates new parish center

by Katie Ballalatak
Prairie Catholic Correspondent

WATKINS – Four years of planning and building came to fruition last month as the Church of St. Anthony officially opened its new parish center.

The completion of the new 9,700-square-foot facility was especially satisfying for parishioners, who had endured more than their share of tragedy in the last year. Last July, an EF-2 tornado ripped through Watkins, causing extensive damage to many homes and injuring one parishioner. Then in August, the Ertl family – also parishioners at the church – lost their little girl Alayna after a tragic abduction.

The Feb. 5 dedication of the building included a Mass celebrated by Bishop John M. LeVoi of the Diocese of New Ulm and concelebrated by parochial administrator Fr. Aaron Nett, as well as a celebratory lunch for parishioners in the new facility.

The new center takes the place of St. Anthony’s old Catholic school building, which was located right next to the church on Central Ave.

“The school was used for faith formation on Wednesday

evenings,” said Jessie Teicher, parish director of religious education and secretary. “But the school was unsafe and we knew it would take a lot to get it up to code. It also wasn’t handicap accessible, which we wanted to change.”

An official building committee of 14 people formed in January 2013 and demolition and removal of the school began in November 2014. Groundbreaking occurred on July 19, 2015, and the first faith formation classes took place in the new center on Sept. 21, 2016.

Today, the center is still waiting for kitchen appliances such as commercial ovens, oven hoods, and commercial refrigerators. “The only thing we can’t do yet is cook in there,” said Erin Donnay, a parishioner at St. Anthony’s. These last additions will come in the next month or so.

“Most of the building committee had experience with construction, which is primarily why they were chosen,” said Donnay, whose husband, Kevin, was a part of the committee. “The committee really clicked. The men and women had good discussion and they didn’t get upset if things didn’t go their way. They always rose to the challenge and worked together to get things done. They



The new parish center at the Church of St. Anthony in Watkins is located just to the north of the church on Central Ave. It boasts a large main dining hall, offices, a kitchen, an elevator for handicap accessibility, and five classrooms for faith formation. *(Photo courtesy of the Church of St. Anthony)*

all used their talents to complete this beautiful center for all of us to use.”

The project was undertaken by businesses owned by parishioners, including Kue Contractors, Ron’s Excavating Service, Kramer Electric of Watkins, and Faber Building & Supplies. All of the owners of these companies served on the building committee.

The estimated cost of the center was \$1.9 million, including contingencies, with the final cost coming in at a more modest \$1.5 million. “The majority of the cost was covered by generous parishioners and investments from estates of parishioners,” said Teicher.

The parish also hosted fundraisers to help pay for the new building, including a capital campaign that kicked off on April 1, 2014 and a Lumberjack Challenge Fundraiser, which helped remove three trees from the building site, that took place on May 31, 2015.

The new center is connected to the church and it consists of offices, a main gathering area (which is also used as a dining hall), a kitchen, an elevator for handicap accessibility, and five classrooms used for faith formation classes on Wednesday nights.

“It’s a great building for our faith formation kids to gather in,” said Fr. Nett, a priest of the Diocese of St. Cloud who is pastor at Assumption Catholic Church in neighboring Eden Valley in



The main hall of St. Anthony’s new parish center, seen here during the dedication reception, is 4,720 square feet and can seat 250 people. By opening up rooms on the side, it can accommodate up to 300. *(Photo by Laurie Schultz/Eden Valley Watkins Voice)*

addition to serving St. Anthony in the Diocese of New Ulm. “It makes it much easier to teach the kids when we have separate spaces for the classes. It’s always important to have workable facilities for the students.”

“It will also provide for any gatherings we might have after Mass since it can hold so many people,” Fr. Nett added. “We’ve already had fellowship and faith gatherings in this parish center and it provides a lot of space for a variety of different events.”

“Parishioners have already rented it out for parties, and showers, and such,” said Teicher. “The first big festivity that will take place will probably be our church festival in the fall.”

“There are so many opportunities for fellowship” in the new center, agreed Donnay. “In Advent, for example, we had faith and fellowship evenings on Sunday nights where every member of

the family was welcome to come and, depending on their age, go to a different section of the parish center. There were activities for every age going on for everyone at the same time. Nothing like that could be offered before this parish center was built because we didn’t have the space.”

Fr. Nett wrote a letter to all the parishioners in the dedication booklet where he thanked them for their generosity and hard work as they begin a new chapter as a parish community.

“Isn’t it fitting then, that we ask God to bless this new center as one journey ends and another begins, for He is the beginning and end of all things good,” he wrote. “We pray that the St. Anthony’s Parish Center may always be found to be a place of welcome for the stranger, good Catholic teaching for the believer, friendship for the lonely, food for the hungry, and fellowship for all.”

Learning about and reflecting on ‘The Joy of Love’



WILLMAR – Dr. Deborah Savage speaks with a discussion group during the Diocese of New Ulm’s Pastoral Leader Days Feb. 8 at the Church of St. Mary in Willmar. The two-day event featured three presentations by Savage, who spoke on the pastoral implications of Pope Francis’ recent apostolic exhortation, “The Joy of Love” (*Amoris Laetitia*). Savage teaches philosophy and theology at The St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. *(Photo by Dan Rossini)*



Attend the DCCW convention April 29!

by Ronda Mathiowetz
DCCW President

The 58th annual New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention will be Saturday, April 29 at St. Mary's in Sleepy Eye. This is an opportunity to be spiritually enriched, connect with other women, and grow in your faith!

The keynote speaker, Cari Donaldson, will share her story of conversion and acceptance of God's will in her life. Initially, she and her husband did not want

to embrace organized religion or to have children. A profound conversion led to her current family life. If you would like to know more, read her book, "Pope Awesome," an inspiring work in which she shares snapshots of her life.

In the afternoon, Sr. Anne Walch and Sr. Briana McCarthy from the Franciscan Sisters in Rochester will present important information on human trafficking.

The day will also include Mass celebrated by Bishop John M.

LeVoir, confession, Rosary, the Woman of the Year Award, a silent auction, and various exhibits and displays.

Register with your Parish President by April 10 to get the discounted rate of \$30. Or, check with your parish CCW, as many pay for members' registrations for the convention. Scholarships are also available through the NUDCCW Scholarship Program.

The Rosary and the renewal of politics

by Jason Adkins

Exactly 100 years ago, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children outside of Fatima, Portugal, sharing with them some extraordinary messages and prophecies. But Our Lady of Fatima's most urgent plea was for repentance – on behalf of ourselves, sinners, and entire nations – as well as for people to pray the Rosary. In the end, she promised, her Immaculate Heart would triumph.

As Pope Benedict noted in his homily at Fatima in May 2010, "We would be mistaken to think that Fatima's prophetic mission is complete."

Although great calamities seem to have been averted during the 20th century due to her intercession – nuclear annihilation, Communist hegemony, and the assassination of Pope John Paul II – the world continues to be beset by deep conflicts between man and God, creation, other peoples, and within himself, all of which portend our destruction just as much as the threats of the last century.

None of us alone can thwart these trends or renew society. And no politician or political program will do so either. The first and most urgent thing that is needed to restore all things in Christ and bring peace to the social order is a Church full of faithful citizens – faithful citizens who repent for their own sins, make reparation for offenses to God, and pray the Rosary fervently for renewal.

Mary's option for the poor

In her various apparitions during the past 500 years, Mary seems to choose to visit the most humble of

persons, whether children like St. Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes and Blessed Jacinta and Francisco Marto at Fatima, or the socially downcast, such as St. Juan Diego and his uncle, Juan Bernardino, indigenous converts to the faith, whose people had lost much after the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

Indeed, the Rosary, the presence of which has figured strongly in the apparitions at Lourdes and Fatima, is an object of popular piety and devotion particularly among the poor and those of simple, yet profound, faith – faith as trusting as that of children.

By contrast, the Blessed Virgin has not appeared in recent times to clergy, social and political elites, or theologians. And justly so, perhaps, as oftentimes Marian piety and devotion to the Rosary have been an object of derision from many enlightened proponents of a more "modern" faith.

Yet modernity continues to run frenetically after various fads, revolutions, products, and politicians that provide fleeting hope for change, but then inevitably end in disappointment.

The world, and sometimes the Church, forgets the basic message of our Savior – "Repent!" Our Blessed Mother comes to us as our protector and intercessor, reminding us of the need to repent, and gives us a wonderful gift, the Rosary, with which to bind ourselves to her and to meditate as she did on the great mysteries of her Son.

The lesson of Fatima is that there is no salvation and no renewal, ecclesial or social, that is not rooted in deeper friendship with

Jesus Christ. Mary's message of repentance and the exhortation to pray the Rosary brings us closer to him.

Rosaries in the rotunda

Try as we might to renew public life as faithful citizens, we will have trouble without the gift of the Rosary. All of the policy arguments, all of the meetings, and all of the latest advocacy tools will not change the public discourse without the intercession of Mary to prepare the way, so that the seed can fall on fertile ground in hearts softened by God's mercy.

That is why, when the bishops of Minnesota host Catholics at the Capitol on March 9, an important component of the day will be the praying of Rosaries in the Capitol rotunda.

As attendees make their legislative visits, and suggest policies that promote life and human dignity, other participants will pray that our legislators' hearts and minds are opened to the truth; that they serve the common good and not special interests; and that they protect the life and dignity of every person, from conception to natural death. And we will pray for our whole state, that amid all of its prosperity, it will always seek first to protect the poor and vulnerable – those little ones closest to Mary's heart.

We come confidently and joyfully to St. Paul on March 9, knowing that whatever the outcome of our legislative activity, her Immaculate Heart will triumph.

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

What does it mean to "Do this in memory of me"?

by Fr. Aaron Johanneck

At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine, declared them to be his Body and Blood, shared them with his disciples, and instructed them to "do this in memory of me."

When we think of a memorial, we normally think of remembering an event or a person in terms of "calling them to mind." Memorial plaques, statues, or services call to mind significant events in history and those who were involved in them.

Pictures or other mementos of loved ones who have died or who live far away from us help us call them to mind. In this way, these activities are participated in or items are viewed "in memory" of the events or persons they commemorate.

The Holy Mass is a memorial. However, it is not a memorial in the same way as the examples just described. The Mass does more than call to mind the Paschal Mystery – the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ.

If the Mass were only a memorial in the common use of the term, some sort of dramatic reenactment of these saving events in the life of Christ would probably be more appropriate. Instead, the Church has passed down a ritualized liturgical celebration that has been organically developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the centuries.

To understand what the Church means when she refers to the Holy Mass as a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, we have to understand the scriptural understanding of this word. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this as follows:

"In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a

certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them" (no. 1363; italics in the original).

In the New Testament, and in the time of the Church, the memorial takes on a new and deeper meaning. The Catechism explains, "When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ's

Passover, and it is made present: the sacrifice of Christ offered once for all on the Cross remains ever present" (no. 1364).

Here we connect again with the theme of last month's article: the Holy Mass as a sacrifice because it is the re-presentation and the memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. The Catechism refers to the Eucharist as the "sacrificial memorial" of Christ and explains that the Mass is a sacrifice because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover (cf. CCC, no. 1365).

It is the memorial of this not simply because it calls it to mind, but because the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist makes this event truly present.

Jesus says, "This *is* my Body and my Blood: Do this in remembrance of me," affirming the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He could also say to us, "This *is* my sacrifice ... this *is* the making present of my offering to the Father for love of you: Do this in memory of me. Allow yourself to be united to my offering as you enter into the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Make your own offering in union with mine, so that I may take it for you to the Father."

Editor's note: Father Aaron Johanneck is director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of New Ulm.



Childhood sex abuse survivor shares her experience and perspective

The following is an e-mail interview with a survivor of childhood sexual abuse in the Diocese of New Ulm. She agreed to speak with us on condition of anonymity. Her abuser is now deceased. It is important to share her experience and her perspective, which is at times critical of past diocesan action or inaction.

I was abused by our parish pastor in the 1960s over a period of months in the Diocese of New Ulm. I was around the age of 11 and my younger sister was 8. My sister and I did tell our mother, but back in those days my parents held the parish pastor in high respect and no report was made to law enforcement.

When I was an adult, I spoke to our then-parish-priest, whom I considered a friend. He offered an apology and counseling if I wanted. I did not contact the New Ulm diocese but I have been contacted by them on a few occasions in order to be interviewed by independent auditors from The Gavin Group evaluating the diocese's victim and survivor outreach services.

What has helped you on your journey to healing?

When I look at the journey of healing, I have been graced with a strong faith in God passed down by my mother. I see that we all can choose to forgive and move on in life or harbor anger, regret, the "why me's?"

I choose to take my life experiences, good and bad, and make the best of me with those experiences. I believe that God carries me through the hard times and I need to rest in his arms. When I pray the Our Father and say to "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," I must forgive the sick priest that did this abuse to me.

His abuse changed the dynamics of how I view Church leadership, but it has not taken my faith in the Catholic Church from me, which I practice today. My parents' generation was afraid or in awe of the parish priest. I see our priests and nuns as human beings; some are wonderful and called to their vocation and bring

healing and support.

Have you shared your experiences with others?

I have not shared my story of abuse with people outside my family and a very small circle of friends, a few who are priests and nuns. When the abuse scandal first broke, I shared that I had been abused in a small group of close friends and their response was silence.

Their silence hurt. I'm sure they didn't know what to say, but to say nothing to someone who has experienced this is painful. It felt like they didn't believe it or by not saying anything it would go away.

When interviewed by The Gavin Group, I spoke then of how it would be so nice if we could have met with other abused people who were willing to share their name with the diocese. As victims and survivors, we could help others like me who don't want to sue, but want to make our faith stronger and help others build their faith.

What has been your experience in talking with Church leaders about what happened to you?

Over the years I have shared my abuse with four other priests, who I considered friends, and two nuns. Three of the priests along with the nuns were very supportive, open to visiting with me if I felt the need, and offered counseling.

One priest ignored my words of the abuse, which somewhat surprised me because of our friendship, but I see him from the old school of thought that if we don't talk about it, it will go away. The nuns were amazing, opening up the conversation to me more than once, allowing me to feel like I had a place to share my experience.

Do you feel you have been heard and believed by Church leaders?

I have felt heard and believed by my parish priest and those priests that are my close friends that I have shared this abuse with. The same cannot be said of Church leaders at the time my abuse first became known. While the

sexual abuse was sick, it was the apathetic response of former Church leaders that left my wound open.

I attended a meeting in the parish where my abuse took place. The Gavin Group at the diocesan office in New Ulm had just interviewed me and then there was a posting in the parish bulletin regarding a meeting in my home parish. I chose to attend and bring my aging mother.

The former bishop, aware of just seeing me in New Ulm, came into the room and walked past me like I was invisible. His actions, intentional or not, re-opened the wound during a deeply vulnerable time.

The meeting itself had mothers of victims crying. I felt so much pain in the room. My observation is the former bishop did nothing to heal the hurt in that room. For me just a simple acknowledgment would have gone a long way towards helping in my healing.

What would you like to say to fellow local Catholics to help them understand what happened to you and others?

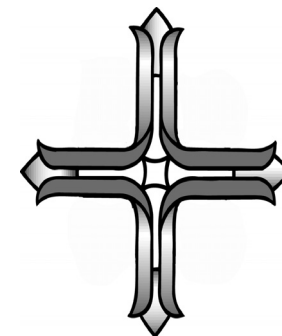
I do believe people are tired about hearing about the sexual abuse. I would hope instead of turning their ears away, they would lift the abused and the abuser up in prayer for healing. My abuser was a sick man who played games with little girls, taking away innocence; he was later moved to another area in his old age where I'm sure he had more victims.

The bishops did wrong by just moving these sick men around. I can't change what happened to me or others; we did nothing wrong and have nothing to be ashamed of. I believe I have been given the gift of forgiveness and through this gift, I choose to love and move on in my faith journey.

There is no resurrection without the Cross

by Fr. Todd Petersen

Lent is a season to reflect and ponder the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The liturgical destination of our Lenten journey is the Sacred Triduum, when we celebrate the giving of the Eucharist, the Cross, and the Resurrection.



It is tempting to ignore Good Friday, to view it as something simply gotten through or around. Easter Sunday is easy to celebrate with joy. Holy Thursday is also happy, with the gift of love that Christ leaves in the Eucharist as well as the model of charity in the washing of feet.

However, it is Good Friday that ties these days and themes together and gives them their power to change our lives. Good Friday is difficult because we do not like the Cross or always understand what it truly means. We try to avoid it because it symbolizes suffering, sacrifice, and pain. Ultimately, Lent is about remembering that there can be no resurrection without the Cross.

It is the Cross that marks our lives on this earth. We are marked with the Cross at our Baptism; and this is renewed with each Sign of the Cross. Jesus instructs us to take up our cross daily.

This is not an optional activity for a few followers, nor a one-time deal, nor something to be done when convenient or on a limited schedule. Every disciple has a cross, and it is part and parcel of following Jesus.

The cross is not light, in discussion or in fact. Crucifixion was cruel, slow, and methodical. People could be dying on the cross in excruciating (literally "from the cross") pain for days. As one of our Eucharistic Prefaces (Preface III of Ordinary Time) states, the Father "fashioned the remedy out of mortality itself."

When Jesus embraces and dies on the cross, he takes upon himself the entire burden of the world's sins. By his innocence and obedience, he puts sin and death to death. The Church Fathers and countless saints spoke of the

Cross and Resurrection in terms of the re-creation story.

Adam and Eve, by disobeyingly taking the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, caused sin to enter the world. In the Crucifixion, Jesus stretches out his hands not to take but to give. He is revealed as the New Adam, and the Blessed Mother Mary as the New Eve who stands beside her Son. This makes the Cross the Tree of Life.

How Jesus dies is not just incidental, a matter of convenience, simply because crucifixion was the current tool of capital punishment chosen by the Roman government. It was God the Father's plan, his ultimate choice, from before all time. He intended that the wood of the Cross be the means of our salvation.

Jesus willingly gave his life, so that we could see how ugly our sins are to the Father by looking at Jesus on the Cross. In the Cross, he fulfills the promise of the Eucharist, the most blessed fruit of Tree of Life, which brings us eternal life in the Resurrection.

But we must ponder our sins and allow them to be put to death. We cannot go around the cross – we must go through it.

Instead of avoiding the Cross this Lent, we are to take up our cross and follow Christ. He will put our sins to death. We need to submit ourselves in obedience to him, and receive often and well of the fruit of Tree of Life: Jesus, the Eucharist.

Editor's note: Fr. Todd Petersen serves as pastor in the Apostles Peter and Paul Area Faith Community which consists of St. Paul, Nicolle and St. Peter, St. Peter.



With God's help, new crisis nursery is set to open in New Ulm

by Amber Collins

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a future full of hope. – Jer 29:11

I received the gift of a rose petal that once laid upon the casket of St. Mother Teresa years ago. I have always admired Mother Teresa, and have always had a desire to serve the poor, the orphans, and the afflicted as she did: doing small things with great love!

I hear stories of children struggling, hurting, and suffering and it breaks my heart. Recently, our New Ulm community has been learning more about the needs of hurting, suffering families right here in town and in the surrounding areas.

Many of us want to do something, but don't know how. Well, God is showing us the way.

The idea to start the Southern Minnesota Crisis Nursery (SMNCN) was surely not my own. God has been preparing my heart for this mission for many years. I volunteered with the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery while living in the Twin Cities.

During that time God showed me how giving a stressed parent a break – even for just a short



Amber Collins (left), Michelle Schwartz, and Melanie Mohror sort clothes, toys, and other items during the Southern Minnesota Crisis Nursery's move-in day Feb. 9 at their house on 5th Street North in New Ulm. All three are board members of the non-profit organization.

(Photo by Dan Rossini)

while – can improve their situation tremendously. I learned that most abuse or neglect happens when a parent is in extreme stress, and to prevent that we need to give families resources to help them through their trying times, especially when they are raising children.

Two years ago a group of professionals who work with families gathered to see if there was a need for a crisis nursery in our community. The resounding answer from every one of them was yes! They see these hurting

families on a daily basis, and they know we need a resource to help them.

So we pulled together a tremendous board of 12 people and we have been working for over a year on establishing SMNCN. SMNCN is a 24-hour home that provides a temporary, safe, and loving environment for children, while supporting and strengthening families experiencing a stressful situation.

We are a short-term resource, as a child ages 0-12 can stay with us

for as short as one hour or as long as 72 hours at a time, up to a total of 30 days within a calendar year. Our services are completely free and confidential.

We will have an excellent Family Services team that will work with parents to guide them to resources they need and offer support in their stressful situation. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of New Ulm will be there to help those in need of counseling services.

Families can use the nursery for a wide variety of reasons, including overwhelming parental stress, risk of abuse or neglect, a parental or sibling medical emergency, disruption in shelter due to unpaid utilities or rent, an important medical appointment or job interview for the parent, or an emergency option when daycare is lost at the last minute.

We don't define what a crisis is to a family, as it can look different to everyone. SMNCN will just be that safe, loving place to care for children and support families!

God's plan for this crisis nursery is continually unfolding. As soon as we had found a house that

SMNCN Open House

The Southern Minnesota Crisis Nursery will hold an open house on Sunday, March 12 at 717 5th St. N, New Ulm, across from the convent of the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus (former Cathedral Middle School).

Everyone is welcome to see the home, prior to its opening in April.

Support opportunities

Volunteer: There is a great need for child-care volunteers. You must be 21 and complete the required trainings. If you are interested, contact Amber Collins at smncrisisnursery@gmail.com.

Financial: To donate, visit www.smncrisisnursery.org or mail a check to P.O. Box 53, New Ulm, MN 56073.

was the perfect fit, we needed to figure out how to buy it. Within 24 hours, through prayer, God provided two amazing families that came through with the needed \$18,000 down payment.

The first family had \$10,000 that they had been saving for God to show them how to use, and this was it! The second was the Friese family, whose 8-month-old baby girl, Ivy, had recently passed on to Heaven. They had exactly \$8,000 left in Ivy's memorial fund, and they were waiting for God to show them how to use it. Again, this was it!

This story alone reminds us that God has big plans for our crisis nursery. We pray that as we are the hands and feet of Christ for every family that comes to it, they in turn will find true hope in Christ.

Editor's note: Amber Collins is chair of the board of directors for SMNCN and a parishioner at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm.

Upcoming events

Sewing with the Sisters, an event to sew habits for the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus, will be Saturday, March 11 at the Handmaid's convent, 515 North State St., New Ulm. It will be hosted by the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity Council of Catholic Women. Everyone is welcome to attend. Contact Jackie Finstad, 507-217-6550; e-mail jackief@newulmtel.net. For more information about the Handmaids, visit www.handmaidsoftheheartofjesus.com/.

The annual valentine project, Mission of Love, sponsored by the Friends of San Lucas (FOSL), has begun and runs through March 31, 2017. Make or purchase a valentine, sign it (no address please), and send it with a \$2 donation to Friends of San Lucas, 4679 Cambridge Drive,

Eagan, MN 55122. Donations will be used to purchase corn, rice, beans, and school supplies for the school and families in need at the San Lucas Tolimán Mission in Guatemala. For further information about FOSL, visit www.sanlucasmision.org.

Options For Women – Mankato, a pregnancy center located in Mankato, is hosting a benefit concert and fundraiser on Sunday, April 30 at 3 p.m. at Hosanna Lutheran Church, 105 Hosanna Drive, Mankato. There will be a musical performance by the group Sister. A tax-deductible free-will offering will be collected. For more information, contact Darlene Schorn, 507-345-8667.

Riverbend TEC (Together Encountering Christ) will host a retreat April 1-3 in New

Ulm. TEC is a three-day retreat experience that focuses on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. For more information, call 320-523-1271, or e-mail riverbendtec@gmail.com.

A World Wide Marriage Encounter Weekend (WWME) will be held April 21-23 in Hutchinson. Worldwide Marriage Encounter is a pro-marriage organization that promotes weekend experiences for couples who want to make their good marriages even better. For more information about WWME opportunities in the Diocese of New Ulm, call 507-227-8229. For information about these weekends and others held outside the diocese, visit <http://www.wwme.org/find-a-weekend>.

Catholic Charities Counseling Services

offered in DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

HUTCHINSON, MARSHALL, NEW ULM, AND WILLMAR



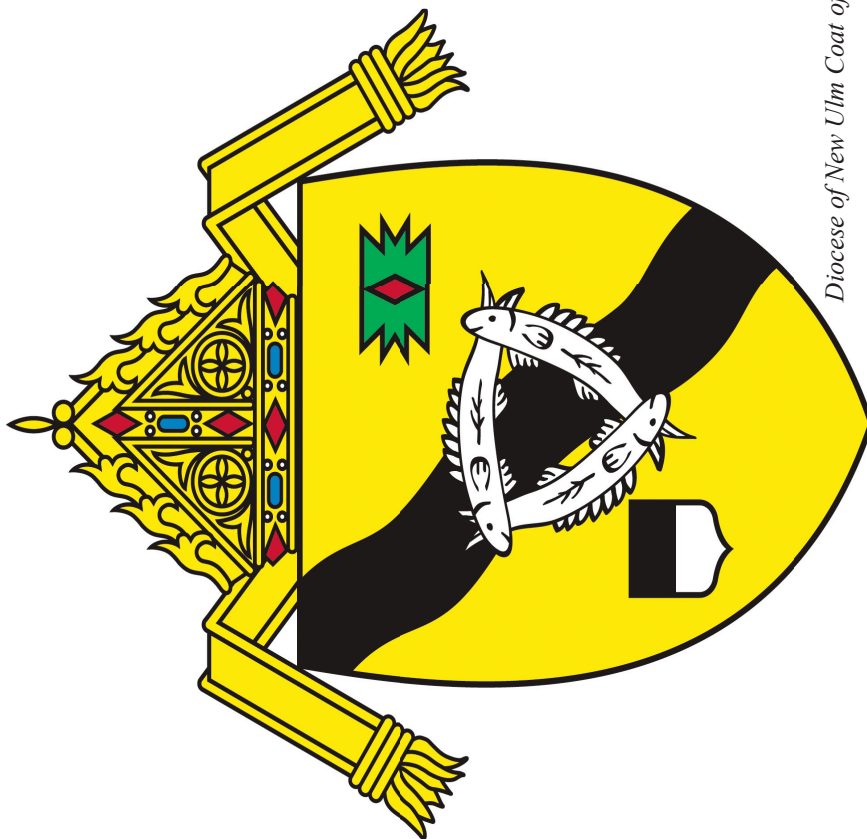
For more information or to schedule a counseling session, visit www.dnu.org/catholiccharities/ or call toll-free 866-670-5163.



THE DRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 51 No. 7 March 2017



Diocese of New Ulm Coat of Arms

Diocesan Financial Reorganization: a step toward hope, healing, and peace

On March 3, 2017, the Diocese of New Ulm filed for financial reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. This filing allows the diocese to reorganize its finances and establish a plan to pay its creditors, who are victims and survivors of sexual abuse as minors by clergy, while continuing its operations.

(Read more about the financial reorganization on pages 1-3.)

catholic trends

VATICAN CITY (CNA/ EWTN News) – In his message for Lent 2017, Pope Francis reminded the faithful that they should heed the Scriptures and treat each human person they encounter as a gift.

“Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor,” he said. “May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God’s word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need.”

Scripture is also a gift, the pope said in his message, which was released last October to help Catholics across the globe prepare for the 2017 Lenten season.

In his message, Pope Francis reflected on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In that story, a poor man named Lazarus lives on the doorstep of a wealthy man who ignores him. When they die, Lazarus rests in paradise, while the rich man suffers. Although Lazarus is “practically invisible to the rich man,” Pope Francis said, we should see him as a concrete person, whom God views as a priceless treasure.

“Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift,” the pontiff said. “A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value.”

In this way, the parable invites us to see each person as a blessing, he said, and Lent is a particularly fitting time to open our door to all those in need and the face of Christ in them.

“Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect, and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable.”

Another important lesson from the parable is how sin can blind us, Pope Francis said. He pointed to the rich man’s ostentatious displays of wealth, saying, “In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity, and pride.”

“Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol,” the pope warned. “Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and

the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.”

“For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego,” the Holy Father warned.

“The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God’s word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.”

As we start the journey of Lent, with its emphasis on fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, we have a chance at a new beginning in our own lives, the pope noted.

“This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God with all their hearts, to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord,” he said, adding that Christ waits for us patiently, ready to forgive us when we fall short.

“Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor,” he concluded. “Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.”

To read the pope’s message in its entirety visit <https://zenit.org/articles/popes-message-for-lent-2017/>.



**Bishop LeVoir's
Lenten Messages**

Visit weekly during Lent: www.dnu.org/bishop/