

THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 33 No. 1 September 2018



(photo by Tom Keaveny)

Final Mass held in Walnut Grove

On Sunday, June 10 choir members of the Church of St. Paul in Walnut Grove led the congregation in song during what would be the final weekend Mass at the church.

(For more on St. Paul's parish final Mass, see page 5.)

Catholic Charities: Over 10 years of providing help and creating hope

by Claudia Broman
Prairie Catholic correspondent

When Shelly and Carlos Mendiola's daughter, Elizabeth, was having some emotional struggles a few years ago, the couple came to a point where "nothing seemed to be working," Shelly said. The Dassel family received a referral for Elizabeth to go to a counselor, made an appointment, "but we just didn't have a connection," Shelly said. Then, someone suggested they try Catholic Charities.

"We found the help my daughter needed," Shelly said. A few years later, Elizabeth at 10 years old is now a happier kid and learned a few tools to handle her emotions, while her parents also learned a few techniques to help her along the way, Shelly said. The few months of visits showed Shelly that the counselor understood the

dynamics of a large family and had a Catholic perspective.

"They take into account the dignity of every person they come into contact with," Shelly said. "The counselor saw Elizabeth as a gift and as a creation of God. It gave us great comfort."

Success stories like this one demonstrate how the Diocese of New Ulm's Catholic Charities has something to offer to people in difficult situations: a person discovers his or her spouse is having an affair or is struggling with a pornography addiction; a family navigates grief and loss after a tragedy; a confessor tells someone to look into counseling; a flood threatens the livelihood of a community; a surprise pregnancy seems overwhelming to a young woman.

"We are immediately available



(Photo by Christine Clancy)

Celebrating over 10 years of vital ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm, Catholic Charities' counselors are available in four offices located throughout the diocese. Counselors are (left) Tami Behnke, MS, LPCC, serving the Marshall area; Paulette Kral (administration); Tom Keaveny, MSW, LICSW (director), serving the New Ulm area; Sandra Rickertsen, MS, LMFT, serving the Hutchinson area; and Lois Byrne, PBVM, MSW, LICSW, serving the Willmar area.

when a pastor needs to make a counseling referral or when an individual has a crisis," said Tom Keaveny, director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of New Ulm. "We bring a supportive, Catholic, Christian presence to the table."

Catholic Charities in the diocese was formed when Bishop John C. Nienstedt, the third bishop of New Ulm, directed its creation following the launch of the first Diocesan Ministries Appeal (DMA) in November 2006. Celebrating over 10 years of service, the DMA is the program's primary source of financial support.

It continues to be a direct program of the New Ulm diocese, as compared to being its own

(Continued on page 7)

INSIDE

Page 3

Diocesan regions reorganized; now called deaneries

Page 8

Ask a canon lawyer

Page 11

Prayer services for healing held

Visit us online!
www.dnu.org

United States' Catholic bishops' National Review Board calls for lay investigation of all misconduct claims

WASHINGTON (CNA/EWTN News) – The body charged with advising the U.S. bishops on sexual abuse prevention has called for an independent lay-led investigation into all allegations of sexual misconduct in the Church and for revisions of the Dallas Charter.

The National Review Board (NRB), which is constituted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), issued the call in a sternly worded statement Aug. 28, in which it condemned a "culture of silence" in the Church

hierarchy.

In a press release circulated by the U.S. bishops' conference, the board, which is entirely composed of lay experts from different fields, said that they have been raising concerns about episcopal complacency "for several years" and called for specific reforms.

"The revelations of horrific incidents of abuse in the

Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report, along with the abuse perpetrated by Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick point to a systemic problem within the Church that can no longer be ignored or tolerated by the episcopacy in the United States," the statement read.

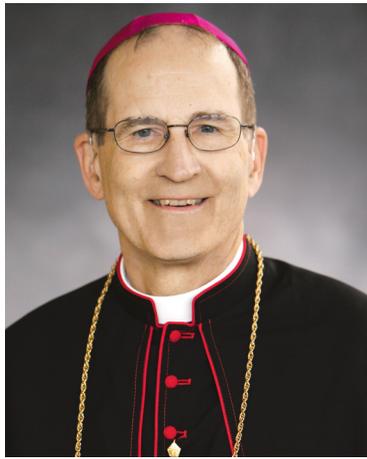
The board was constituted in June 2002 as part of the U.S. bishops' response to the wave of clerical sexual abuse scandals which were revealed in the Boston Globe.

The 13-member panel makes its recommendations to the USCCB's Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People. The board noted that, in the wake of the sexual abuse scandals of the early 2000s, new policies and procedures had been put in place – including the creation of the NRB itself. These, the board said, resulted in a "significant decrease" of incidents of abuse, but clearly underlying problems remain unaddressed.

(Continued on page 2)



The wounds caused by abuse



by Bishop John M. LeVoi

The recent revelations concerning Archbishop McCarrick and the clergy of Pennsylvania have once again opened the wounds caused by sexual abuse in our country. These wounds have been inflicted most devastatingly on those who were abused by clergy. I apologize to those who have been abused by clergy in any way. I ask for Jesus' healing for you.

Wounds have once again been opened in the Body of Christ, his Church. The Church is reeling from this recent wave of revelations. Trust has been diminished in the leadership of the Church. Many are wondering how sexual abuse could happen in the Catholic Church and how it

could be allowed to go on, despite the knowledge of the hierarchy.

There are wounds in the local Church. None of us is left untouched by these scandals. Everyone is hurt. "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (1 Cor 12:26).

From September 9–20, I am leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and will dedicate this pilgrimage to the healing of the wounds of sexual abuse. As a member of the Church hierarchy, I will do prayer, fasting, and penance in the Holy Land at all of the holy sites, especially at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (Monday, Sept. 17). It is this church that houses both the site of the crucifixion of Christ and the site of his resurrection.

The laity did not cause this scandal in the Church and they have every right to be angry and disheartened. However, I would ask that in solidarity they join with me in prayer, fasting, and penance from September 9–20 asking Our Lord for healing of the wounds caused by the sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy and the negligence of the hierarchy to stop such abuse.

Please note that the Diocese of

New Ulm, along with dioceses throughout the United States, has enacted policies to address sexual abuse in Church ministry and to help ensure safe environments for children and youth. I recognize this as my responsibility, not as a one-time obligation or as a set of requirements to meet, but as a commitment to answer the call to protect all God's children and firmly establish a safe environment throughout Church ministry.

Hope and Healing

In the summer of 2017, the diocese sent a delegation to the Convocation of Catholic Leaders in Orlando, Fl.

The delegates brought back to the diocese various ideas for evangelization initiatives. One of the initiatives was to offer a prayer service and adoration for hope and healing for those wounded and in need of physical, spiritual, or emotional healing.

Two such prayer services have already occurred in the diocese. On June 22, a Prayer Service for Hope and Healing was held at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Murdock followed by a Mass and prayer service for healing held on Sept. 7 at the Church of St. Peter in St. Peter.

Pope Francis has pointed out numerous times that we are all wounded in some way or ways. We all need the healing touch of Christ. He is the one who can heal us spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Chapter 11 Reorganization

The diocese is continuing to work together with the attorneys representing the victims of sexual abuse by clergy and the insurance companies for the diocese to resolve the claims and thereby allow the victims and survivors to receive compensation for the pain and suffering that they are experiencing.

Pastoral Planning

As I have said and written numerous times, the diocese has undergone a significant change from the time of its founding in 1957.

Technology has had a tremendous impact on farming and family life. Farms have gotten larger and families have gotten smaller. The population is declining. Our priests are assigned to multiple parishes instead of just one priest per parish.

It is clear to many that sooner than later our smaller parishes will no longer be able to sustain

themselves and our priests will be unable to minister to the current number of parishes. It is imperative that the diocese must plan now for the future and not be caught in a crisis.

Our smaller parish congregations are asked to pray and discuss their future in an honest way with their pastors. Some of the smaller parishes in the diocese have merged into larger ones. The smaller and larger parishes together as one can provide more comprehensive services, such as catechesis and Catholic education. A larger congregation offers the opportunity for a more robust liturgy.

Catechized in the parish and energized through the celebration of the Eucharist, parishioners are called by their baptism to go out to the peripheries to evangelize.

I ask that we all work together to "right-size" the parishes in the diocese to face the future with renewed energy. Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.

Bishop LeVoi's September-October calendar can be found at www.dnu.org/calendar/.

THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

The Prairie Catholic, the official newspaper for the Diocese of New Ulm since May 1972, is published every six weeks, Sept.-June.

Publisher: Most Reverend John M. LeVoi
Editor: Christine E. Clancy

Submission deadline is the 1st of each month prior to publication.

Publication office: Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; phone: 507-359-2966, Email: dnu@dnu.org Website: www.dnu.org

Postmaster: Send notice on Form 3579, "The Prairie Catholic," 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073-2071. Periodical postage paid at New Ulm and additional mailing offices. USPS 926-760.

NRB statement calls for genuine change in Church culture

(Continued from page 1)

"The National Review Board has for several years expressed its concern that bishops not become complacent in their response to sexual abuse by the clergy. The recent revelations make it clear that the problem is much deeper. We are saddened, angry, and hurt by what we have learned in the past few weeks."

The statement said that "the evil of crimes that have been perpetuated" reach the "highest levels of the hierarchy," and cannot be simply addressed with procedural and structural changes. The Board called for a "genuine change in the Church's culture," and singled out the bishops as particularly in need of change, noting that it was not just minors who were the victims of abuse.

"This evil has resulted from a loss of moral leadership and an abuse of power that led to a culture of silence that enabled these incidents to occur. Intimidation, fear, and

the misuse of authority created an environment that was taken advantage of by clerics, including bishops, causing harm to minors, seminarians, and those most vulnerable."

A central critique of the Church hierarchy was a "culture of silence" which, the NRB said, led to abuse running "virtually unchecked." The need to hold bishops accountable required, according to the statement, an "independent review into the actions of a bishop" following any allegation and this could only be ensured by entrusting it to laity.

"The NRB, composed exclusively of lay members, would be the logical group to be involved in this task," the statement observed.

The board recommended the creation of an anonymous whistleblower policy, mirroring some corporate and public sector structures, which would provide a clear, lay-led mechanism for reporting an allegation to the competent bishop, Vatican

authorities, and civil law enforcement.

Existing policies should also be revised, the board said, including the Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. While calling the document "helpful," the NRB said it was a "living document" that needed continual revision in the light of experience – most notably its "deliberate ambiguity and its lack of inclusion of bishops."

Currently, there is no clear USCCB mechanism or policy for handling abuse beyond a document called the Episcopal Commitment, which the bishops have agreed to abide by – though this document has no binding force.

The board's recommendations called this document "ineffective" and said there need to be "concrete steps" for fraternal correction when a bishop is accused of either abuse or failure to respond to an accusation. At the same time, it said, there needs to be clear formation of new bishops on their

responsibility as "moral leaders" in responding to accusations, saying that such leadership is currently lacking.

"We recognize that the overwhelming majority of our current bishops have, and continue to, take the sexual abuse of minors seriously and who act accordingly by adhering to the Charter, some even going beyond these basic requirements. However, every time one bishop fails to act, the entire episcopate is tainted."

The statement ended by saying the National Review Board would consider making further recommendations in the coming weeks, and would continue to work with the USCCB.

Editor's note: The information provided in this article regarding the Holy Father's response to the clergy scandal was the most up-to-date at the time The Prairie Catholic went to press.

Diocese reorganized from six “regions” to three “deaneries”

by Fr. Mark Steffl

NEW ULM – The Diocese of New Ulm includes 15 of Minnesota’s 87 counties. When the diocese was formed in 1957, its 86 parishes were served by 98 priests, who were in one of five deaneries that were originally a part of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. As the new diocese formed its administrative structure, a regional model evolved in order for priests, parish staff, and laity to meet and convene in regional settings involving less travel and increased local parish collaboration.

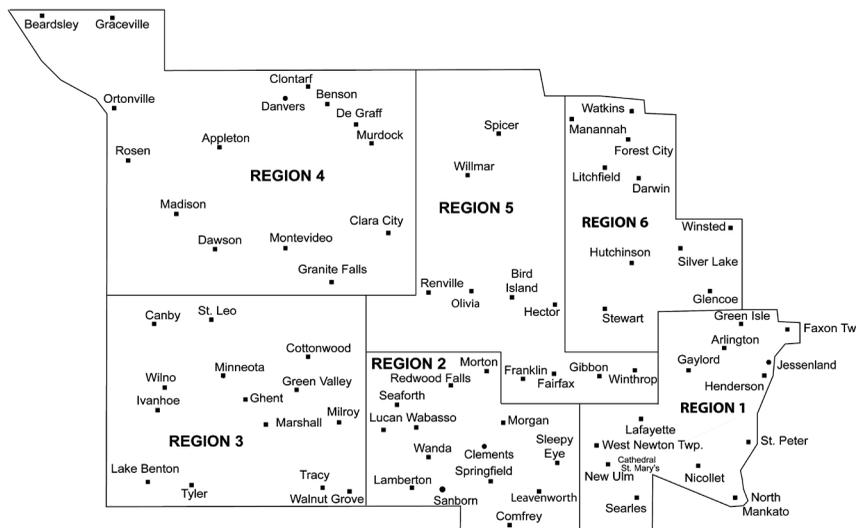
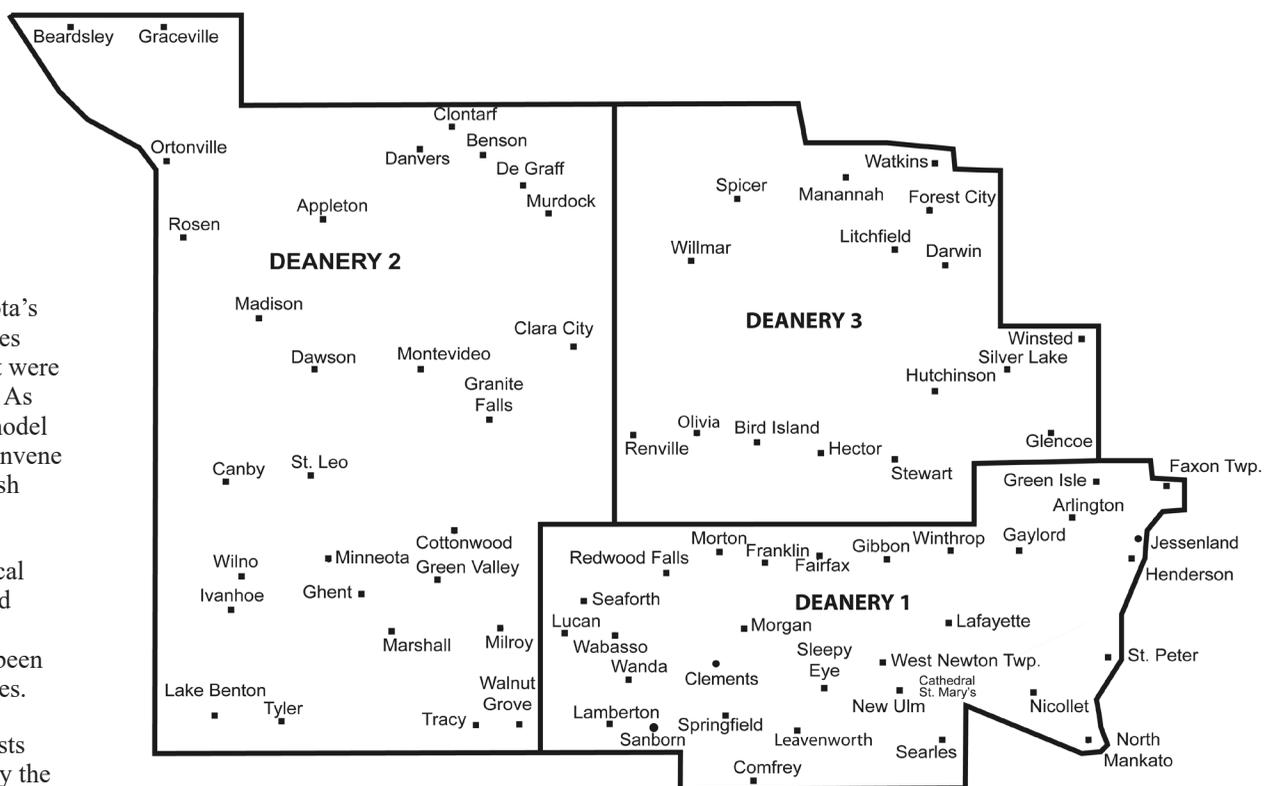
For the past 30 years, the diocese has consisted of six geographical regions, that most recently included 68 parishes primarily aligned in 21 area faith communities. These regions have allowed for collaboration on many initiatives that might otherwise not have been possible, most notably the formation of the area faith communities.

As populations have shifted, and there are currently only 35 priests serving the diocese’s 68 remaining parishes; it was determined by the Diocese of New Ulm Priests’ Council and recommended to Bishop John M. LeVoir, that a reorganization and “downsizing” of these six regions might better address the existing needs of the parishes, the priests, and the parish staff serving the diocese.

On May 15, 2018, Bishop LeVoir issued a decree that officially reorganized the six regions of the diocese to what are now three “deaneries.” (See map.) The change from “region” to “deanery” was simply made to bring the terminology that is used in the diocese to be consistent with the standard language of the Catholic Church, and that which most dioceses and archdioceses use to describe regional configurations.

The Diocese of New Ulm was the only diocese in Minnesota that did not call such divisions deaneries, so it seemed timely to make the terminology change at the same time the transition from six regions to three deaneries is being implemented.

Fr. Mark Steffl is the Judicial Vicar for the Diocese of New Ulm.



For the past 30 years, the Diocese of New Ulm consisted of six geographical regions, each determined by groupings of parishes that were geographically close to one another.

First profession of vows



Two sisters with the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus – Sr. Therese Marie, a native Mandan, ND and Sr. Mary Angela, a native of Napoleon, ND – made their first profession of vows on Aug. 22 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. During the ritual Mass of religious profession, the women vowed to live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Several hundred people attended the event, including Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Pictured following the ceremony are (l-r): Bishop LeVoir, Sr. Therese Marie, Handmaid’s Superior General Mother Mary Clare, Sr. Mary Angela, and Bishop Cozzens. (Photo by Jeanine McMahon)

Humanae Vitae topic of ethics conference

SLEEPY EYE – On July 25, 2018, the Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, that unfolds the Catholic teaching on married love and the transmission of human life. As controversial as it was, it was also prophetic.

Fifty years ago, Pope Paul VI accurately foresaw the effects of contraception on the Church and society: lowered moral standards in society would result in an increase in marital infidelity; loss of respect for women reducing them to a mere instrument for the satisfaction of another’s desires; governments claiming the right to impose contraceptive methods/technologies on everyone; and that human beings would claim unlimited dominion over their own bodies.

On Saturday, Oct. 13 the Diocese of New Ulm will host an ethics conference entitled, Reaping the Fruits of *Humanae Vitae*, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Schoenstatt on the Lake, 27762 County Road 27 in Sleepy Eye. Participants will explore how *Humanae Vitae*’s message applies for us today.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. followed by opening Mass at 9 a.m. celebrated by Bishop John M. LeVoir. Cost is \$20 individual/\$35 couple (includes lunch). Register by Oct. 3. Visit www.dnu.org/ethicsconference/ or contact Cindy Blickem, 507-233-5325, cblickem@dnu.org.

Health care professionals and all interested people of the diocese are invited to attend.

Conference speakers

Bishop John M. LeVoir
Bishop of New Ulm

Dr. Mary Hill
Executive Vice President for Mission for Avera Health

Dr. Francille Knowles
Family Medicine Physician at New Ulm Medical Center

Dr. Deborah Savage
Clinical Faculty: Philosophy and Pastoral Ministry at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity, University of St. Thomas

Dan and Joy Wambeke
Both hold a master’s degree in theology and live on a hobby farm with their four children

Prof. Teresa Collett
University of St. Thomas School of Law



por Obispo John M. LeVoi

Con las últimas revelaciones sobre el Arzobispo McCarrick y los sacerdotes de Pensilvania se han abierto las heridas causadas por el abuso sexual en nuestro país. Dichas heridas son más devastadoras por los que fueron abusados por el clero. Pido disculpas por aquellos que de alguna forma fueron abusados por parte del clero. Le imploro a Dios para que los cure.

Una vez más las heridas se han abierto, en el Cuerpo de Cristo, su Iglesia. La Iglesia se está recuperando de esta reciente ola de revelaciones. La confianza ha disminuido en el liderazgo de la Iglesia. Muchos se preguntan, cómo puede pasar el abuso sexual en la Iglesia Católica y cómo se sigue permitiendo a pesar del conocimiento de la jerarquía.

Hay dolor en la Iglesia local. Ninguno de nosotros queda al margen de estos escándalos. Todos estamos lastimados. "Si una parte del cuerpo sufre, todas las demás sufren también" (1 Cor. 12:26).

Del 9 al 20 de Septiembre, estaré dirigiendo una peregrinación a la Tierra Santa. Esta peregrinación la dedico por la sanación causadas por el abuso sexual. Como miembro de la jerarquía de la Iglesia, haré oración, ayuno y penitencia en la Tierra Santa y en todos los lugares santos, especialmente en el santo sepulcro en Jerusalén (Lunes, 17 de Septiembre). En esta Iglesia alberga los sitios de la crucifixión de Cristo y de su resurrección.

Los laicos no causaron este escándalo en la Iglesia y por ende tienen todo el derecho para estar enojados y desanimados. Sin embargo, les pido que se unan a mí en solidaridad, en oración, ayuno y penitencia del 9 al 20 de Septiembre y pedirle a nuestro Señor que cure las heridas causadas por el abuso sexual y la negligencia de la jerarquía y así evitar dichos abusos.

Debo indicar que la Diócesis de New Ulm y todas las diócesis en los Estados Unidos, se han promulgado políticas para abordar el abuso sexual en el

No Tengas Miedo

Las Heridas Causadas por el Abuso Sexual

ministerio de la Iglesia y para ayudar a garantizar un ambiente seguro para los niños y jóvenes. Esta es mi responsabilidad, no como una obligación o como una serie de requisitos que cumplir, sino el compromiso de responder al llamado de proteger a todos los hijos de Dios y establecer firmemente un entorno seguro en todo el ministerio de la Iglesia.

Esperanza y Sanación

Durante el verano del 2017, la diócesis envió a una delegación a la Convocación de Líderes Católicos en Orlando, FL. Los delegados trajeron una variedad de ideas e iniciativas para promover la evangelización. Una de las iniciativas fue de ofrecer un servicio de oración y adoración por la sanación de los lastimados y los que necesiten sanación física, espiritual y emocional. Hasta ahora ya se han llevado a cabo dos eventos en la diócesis. El 22 de Junio en la Iglesia Sagrado Corazón, Murdock, y el 7 de Septiembre en St. Peter, St. Peter donde hubo un servicio de oración por la esperanza, la sanación y una misa.

En numerosas ocasiones el Papa Francisco ha manifestado que todos estamos lastimados de alguna u otra forma. Todos, necesitamos el toque sanador de Cristo. Él es quien nos puede sanar espiritualmente, emocionalmente y físicamente.

La Reorganización

La diócesis continúa trabajando con los abogados que representan a las víctimas de abuso sexual por el clero y con las compañías de seguro para que la diócesis resuelva los reclamos para

permitir que las víctimas y sobrevivientes reciban una compensación justa.

La Planificación Pastoral

Como ya les comenté en numerosas ocasiones, la diócesis ha experimentado un cambio significativo desde su fundación en 1957. La tecnología ha tenido un gran impacto en la agricultura y en la vida familiar. Hoy en día, las fincas son más grandes y el número de miembros en la familia ha disminuido. La población sigue disminuyendo. Los sacerdotes trabajan en varias parroquias en lugar que trabajen en una parroquia solamente. Para muchos, es obvio, que las parroquias más pequeñas ya no podrán mantenerse y nuestros sacerdotes no podrán ministrar al número actual de parroquias. Es imprescindible que la diócesis tiene que planificar para su futuro y no verse en una crisis más adelante.

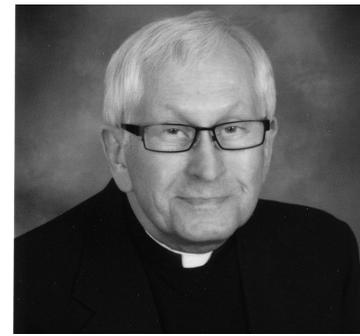
Se ruega que nuestras congregaciones parroquiales más pequeñas oren y conversen sinceramente con su sacerdote sobre el futuro de sus parroquias. Algunas parroquias más pequeñas en la diócesis se han fusionado en otras más grandes. Juntos, pueden proporcionar más servicios, como la catequesis y la educación religiosa. Una congregación más grande tiene la oportunidad de ofrecer una liturgia más sólida. Haber celebrado la catequesis en la parroquia y estar animados a través de la celebración de la Eucaristía, los feligreses son llamados por su bautismo para evangelizar.

2019 Diocesan Distinguished Service Award nominations now being sought

This award is presented to members of the Diocese of New Ulm in recognition of outstanding service in some leadership capacity to the diocese. Up to five awards will be presented by Bishop John M. LeVoi at the 2019 Bishop Lucker Lecture on March 11. Nomination forms, as well as a list of past recipients, are posted on the diocesan Web site, www.dnu.org, or contact Penny Forst at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; 507-359-2966; pforst@dnu.org.

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS NOV. 30, 2018.

Fr. Paul Schumacher retires from active ministry



Fr. Paul Schumacher

Following 56 years of priestly ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm, Fr. Paul Schumacher retired on June 26 from full-time active ministry.

Since 2012, Fr. Schumacher has served as parochial vicar at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Winsted. He will remain living in the rectory at the Holy Trinity parish, while providing limited pastoral assistance as needed.

Fr. Schumacher was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of New Ulm on Feb. 18, 1962, at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm by Bishop Alphonse J. Schladweiler. His first solemn Mass was celebrated on Feb. 19, 1962, at the Church of the Japanese Martyrs in Leavenworth.

Following ordination he served the parish communities of: New Ulm (both Cathedral of the Holy Trinity and the Church of St. Mary), Regal, Marshall, Hutchinson, Stewart, Lafayette, Bird Island, Bechyn, Darwin, Forest City, Gaylord, Winthrop, Ivanhoe, Wilno, Wanda, Lambertson, Sanborn, Silver Lake, Arlington, Henderson, Jessenland, Green Isle, Faxon Township,

Kandiyohi, Lake Lillian, Canby, St. Leo, Redwood Falls, Morton, Appleton, Dawson, Madison, Litchfield, and Winsted.

Throughout his ministry, Fr. Schumacher also served as director of the Newman Club at Marshall State College in Marshall, Chaplain at Southwest College in Marshall, Chairman of the Commission for Ecumenism, director of the diocesan offices of Religious Education and Youth Ministry, director of Seminarian Internship, and chaplain of the Prairie Correctional Facility in Appleton.

For 30 years, Fr. Schumacher served as the coordinator of HIV/AIDS ministry. From 1993-2002 he served as a member of the diocesan Review Board for Sexual Misconduct and from 2008-2018 he served on the advisory committee for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of New Ulm.

In 1987, he was awarded the Diocesan Distinguished Service award in recognition of 25 years of priestly ministry. The certificate he was presented read: "You have contributed to the diocese in so many ways. You have given significant pastoral direction in the areas of religious education, youth ministry, and campus ministry. You have displayed courage and clarity in facing controversial issues: you have encouraged ministry to the lonely and depressed, to the imprisoned, to those who suffer from AIDS. You have inspired people of all ages with your enthusiasm, hospitality, and personal warmth."

Diocese of New Ulm

Discipleship Day 2018
Basic Evangelization
Training open to anyone interested
 in Evangelization
Sat, Sept 29 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
St. Aloysius Jubilee Center, Olivia

with **Denise Hirl & Deb McManimon**
 from **St. Paul Evangelization Institute**

Contact Cindy Blickem to register, cblickem@dnu.org, 507-233-5325
 \$20 per person includes lunch / for more details www.dnu.org

Final weekend Mass celebrated at St. Paul's, Walnut Grove

Declining membership, shortage of priests cited as reasons to merge parish with St. Mary's, Tracy

by Seth Schmidt
Tracy Headlight-Herald
with additional information
provided by *The Prairie Catholic*

WALNUT GROVE – “This is not a happy event,” acknowledged Bishop John M. LeVoir as he began his homily during Sunday Mass at the Church of St. Paul in Walnut Grove on June 10, 2018.

The Mass was announced as “the final weekend Mass at St. Paul’s.” The parish has formerly merged with the Church of St. Mary in Tracy.

The church building, including the rectory and social hall, which was dedicated in 1960, has been listed for sale. The decision to sell the church property was finalized Aug. 16 at a parish meeting with St. Mary’s pastor Fr. Mark Steffl. Fr. Steffl is also assigning the use of the sacred church items to other parishes in the diocese.

A weekday Mass will continue to be celebrated in Walnut Grove on Thursday mornings at the Country View Senior Living Community.

Most of St. Paul’s members are choosing to join the Church of St. Mary’s in Tracy. However, several families have chosen to enroll at parishes closer to where they live, including St. Michael in Milroy, St. Joseph in Lambertton, and St. Anthony in Westbrook.

Declining membership and the shortage of priests have been cited as reasons to merge St. Paul’s parish.

Embracing the future with optimism

In his homily, Bishop LeVoir said that 50 years ago no one foresaw the changes that have led to the merger of St. Paul’s with St. Mary’s.

“Farms are getting larger, and families are smaller,” Bishop LeVoir observed, “resulting in a smaller rural population.” Fewer men choosing priestly vocations, he said, has caused a shortage of priests available to serve in rural parishes.

The bishop paid tribute to the “rich heritage” of St. Paul’s and the emotional attachments that

many feel toward their church where hosts of important life events have taken place for so many.

However, the bishop urged the parishioners to not be discouraged and to embrace the future with optimism and faith. God is really present, wherever the Mass and Eucharist are present, the bishop said.

He cited the New Testament lesson of 2 Corinthians 4:13-15 as an example of early Christians who persevered during challenging times. *“Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.”*

Music at the Mass was upbeat beginning with the processional hymn: “The heavens are telling the glory of God, and all creation is shouting for joy. Come, dance in the forest, come play in the field, and sing, sing to the glory of the Lord.”

A joyful recessional hymn declared, “We are companions on the journey, breaking bread and sharing life, and in the love we bear is the hope we share, for we believe in the love of our God.”

The parish, whose patron saint is the Apostle Paul, traces its roots to 1876, when traveling missionary Fr. Alexander Berghold celebrated Mass in Walnut Grove.

For many years, Walnut Grove area Catholics traveled to Tracy to attend Mass. From 1904-1907, Fr. John Byrne celebrated Mass on the second floor of a downtown Walnut Grove building (now Bubai Foods), before a new church was dedicated on the corner of Third and Main on June 29, 1907.

Area faith community formed

In 2005, St. Paul’s joined with the Church of St. Mary in Tracy and the Church of St. Michael in Milroy to form the Our Lady of

the Prairie Area Faith Community. St. Paul’s has had a rich history of collaboration and the willingness to share priests and pastoral ministry staff dating back to its official founding in 1907.

Historical fact:

In 1981 Bishop Raymond A. Lucker appointed Sr. Eunice Drazba to serve the Church of St. Paul in Walnut Grove as the parish pastoral administrator. Bishop Lucker was one of the first bishops in the United States to appoint someone to such a position.

Sister Eunice’s ministry as a pastoral administrator made national news as she was featured in a *New York Times* article regarding changing rural ministries “near the shores of Plum Creek in rural Walnut Grove.”

Editor’s note: For an update regarding the implementation of the Fourth Plan for Parishes, visit www.dnu.org/fourthplan/ for a printable handout, “Continuing to Plan for Our Future.”



Robert Boerboom, a lifelong member St. Paul’ parish in Walnut Grove, receives the Blood of Christ from Deacon Bruce Bot during the parish’s final weekend Mass on Sunday, June 10.

(Photos by Tom Keaveny)



Rodney Maquire, age 91 and Quantyn Boerboom, age 2 and the son of Jon and Angela Boerboom, represent the oldest and youngest members of the Church of St. Paul in Walnut Grove.



Bishop John M. LeVoir and St. Paul’s longtime retiring pastor Fr. Bob Mraz pose for a photo with members of the Bishop Grace and Holy Redeemer Fourth Degree assemblies of the Knights of Columbus following Mass in Walnut Grove. St. Paul parishioners expressed special appreciation for the pastoral leadership of Fr. Mraz over the past ten years. Several shared that: “We need to be grateful for these extra ten years of parish life that Fr. Mraz has given us, at the same time he was preparing us for this time when the demographics dictate that our parish is no longer viable.”

Accepting God's will as shepherd

Bishop LeVoir reflects on his 10 years of episcopal leadership

by Sam Patet
Prairie Catholic correspondent

This September marks 10 years since Bishop John M. LeVoir was ordained and installed as the fourth bishop of the Diocese of New Ulm.

Since then, he has led the diocese through a number of changes that have affected Catholics of all ages from Graceville to North Mankato and Lake Benton to Watkins.

In commemoration of his 10-year anniversary, *The Prairie Catholic* interviewed Bishop LeVoir about his time in the diocese. His responses have been edited for length and clarity.

Q. Can you believe you've been a bishop for 10 years? How does it feel?

A. (Laughs.) No, I can't – I just can't. Time goes so quickly. In some ways, it seems like I've been here forever, and in other ways, it seems real short. But it's been very good and I know that this is what God has called me to, so I'm just trying to do the best I can to do his will.

Q. What's been the most joyful part of being a bishop?

A. I think just celebrating the sacraments with the people, especially Confirmation. To go out to the parishes and celebrate the sacraments with the young people, try to encourage them with my homily, and just to be with them for that special time in their life. I think that really has been the most joyful thing that I've experienced.

Q. And the most challenging part?

A. A lot of conflict comes to the bishop's office. That's the most challenging thing: trying to bring about peace where there is conflict. So I work on conflict resolution with individuals and situations that I encounter. I always try to get people to pray and to talk with one another; I think that's so important. It's what Pope Francis has really been asking us to do: to encounter one another and talk with one another in a prayerful way.

Q. Speaking of the pope, you've ministered as a priest and now as a bishop under Pope St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis. How have they influenced you and your ministry?

A. Pope John Paul II is my mentor. I spent a great deal of time reading his works and writing about them and speaking about them. He's really been a teacher for me, especially with regard to marriage and family life.

Pope Benedict XVI, of course, is a great theologian. The beautiful ways that he conveyed truths of the faith consistently struck me. He just had a way of putting things very precisely, but yet very beautifully.

And, I guess, you could sum up what I've learned from Pope Francis in three words: encounter, accompany, and evangelization. I think those three things are what summarize his papacy. He really has inspired me in my role as a bishop: to encounter people and to accompany them and to evangelize.

Q. If you could go back in time and have a conversation with yourself when you first were made bishop, what would you say?

A. I think I would encourage myself to be patient and to listen and to learn. I think those are the things that are so important in being a bishop, besides your prayer and spiritual life. Just be patient and listen and learn, and to try to do God's will as best you can in any situation.

Q. You've overseen many changes in the diocese. Share a couple events that stand out to you.

A. Chapter 11 reorganization with bankruptcy [as a result of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy] has been a huge change that has taken place. But why I point to that is because it enabled me to meet with a number of the victims of sexual abuse and to apologize to them on behalf of the diocese and the Church. That's a big



Ten years ago, on Sept. 15, 2008, an estimated 2,300 people filled the New Ulm Civic Center to witness the ordination and installation of Bishop John M. LeVoir as the fourth bishop of the Diocese of New Ulm. In the over 60 years of diocesan history, this was the first time a bishop had been ordained in the diocese.

(Photo by Bill Moeller)

change, and we're still working our way through that.

The other change would be pastoral planning. As you know, the farms [in southwest Minnesota] are getting larger and the families are getting smaller and the population is aging. The number of priests is decreasing, and things have changed radically over the period since the diocese was founded in 1957. It's almost a different place once you look at the statistics and what has happened.

So we've been trying to merge parishes, and I don't look at this as a negative thing. I think it's just recognizing reality and bringing people together so that we can be energized by the sacraments and by one another – to be evangelizers and to do what Pope Francis calls us to do. Yes, there is much sorrow and sadness when one sees his parish is being merged, but if we look at it from the point of view of energizing people with the grace of our Lord to evangelize, then it's a positive thing.

Q. Looking ahead, is there

Leaders a couple years ago, and the fruit of that has been to evangelize, but especially through individual contact and through healing services.

We had a healing service this summer, and we're going to have another one coming up in September. (The service was held on Sept. 7.) We're doing this to evangelize and to invite people back, because only one-third of our people come to Mass on Sunday. So there are two-thirds of the people who need us to talk with them and try to bring about healing and evangelization.

And then, finally, to bring about greater unity among the priests of the diocese. Every presbyterate is in need of unity in Christ. So we're praying for each other. We have a special prayer that I distributed to all the priests, and we're praying for each other, trying to support one another, and help one another.

Q. Anything else you'd like to share?

A. Being a bishop for the people here in southwest Minnesota is a great privilege. I feel that this is the call that God has given me. I think about what my mom said when I was made a bishop. She just couldn't believe it. "We never did anything," she told me. "We're not prominent people or anything like that." I said to her, "God just chooses ordinary people to do his work, so we're just part of those ordinary people."

So, I guess, being a bishop, a pastor, for the people in this part of Minnesota, that's a great privilege. That would be the highlight of my last 10 years.

anything you'd like to see accomplished in the diocese?

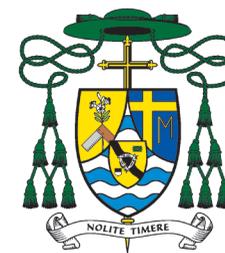
A. I probably have about two-and-a-half years left as bishop of the diocese. I'll be 75 in 2021, which is the age when a bishop typically submits his resignation to the pope. And so I've been pretty clear with four priorities for the diocese.

One, of course, is to work through chapter 11 reorganization. A second, as I mentioned earlier, is pastoral planning.

The third is evangelization, and part of that is healing. I and about 12 others from the diocese went to the Convocation for Catholic

Come celebrate!

On Sunday, Sept. 23, 2018, as a diocese we will celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Bishop LeVoir's ordination and installation with an evening prayer at 4:30 p.m. followed by a reception at the Church of St. Aloysius in Olivia. Everyone is invited to attend.



Priesthood Sunday acknowledges gifts and generosity of God's ministers

by Christine Clancy, editor
The Prairie Catholic

NEW ULM – In the United States, we like to celebrate. We celebrate Mother's Day, Boss's Day, Groundhog Day, Earth Day – it seems endless.

Hence, it was only fitting when in 2003 the USA Council of Serra International and other Catholic organizations organized the first Priesthood Sunday.

An annual event, this special day provides a way for Catholic communities to express appreciation for the devoted priests who serve them so faithfully. This year's Priesthood Sunday falls on Oct. 28.

In the wake of the clergy sex abuse scandal, there has been concern that the image of all priests has been tainted by the actions of some. Priesthood Sunday sends a message that these sins do not reflect the innocent majority of good priests who serve our parishes. As an instrument of Christ's ministry on earth, they are loved and respected by many in our parish communities.



(Photo by Msgr. Douglas Grams)

OLIVIA – On Aug. 27, Bishop John M. LeVoir and priests of the Diocese of New Ulm gathered at the Church of St. Aloysius in Olivia for the annual get-together in appreciation for retired priests of the diocese. Fr. Germain Rademacher (left), is one of the first of two seminarians to be ordained a priest in the newly formed New Ulm diocese. He has been retired from active ministry since 2003. Fr. Jerry Meidl (middle), currently serves the Holy Cross Area Faith Community (Lafayette, New Ulm; Searles, West Newton Township), and Fr. Dennis Labat serves the Bread of Life Area Faith Community (Marshall, Cottonwood, Green Valley).

Perhaps your parish has something planned that not only honors the sacrifice of your priest, but also will raise awareness of vocations to the priesthood for the young men in your parish.

With the declining number of priests in the United States, such a celebration is increasingly relevant. Of the over 17,000 Catholic parishes in this country, very few currently have more than

one priest. Many priests serve two or more parishes by themselves.

In the Diocese of New Ulm there are currently 32 assigned priests serving 68 parishes and 20 Area Faith Communities. Without these dedicated pastoral leaders, we would have no recourse to sacraments such as reconciliation, anointing and, most importantly, the Holy Eucharist.

However, these men are more than just a shepherd in our parishes. For many of us, they are also friends, comforters, advisers, and counselors. They laugh with us at weddings, cry with us at funerals, comfort us in life's dark times, and give us the spiritual strength to see and pray for God's wisdom through it all.

Some are great homilists, others are great spiritual directors. Some are outgoing, others are reserved. Nevertheless, they all share a deep love for Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church and its faithful. And for that, we should all be immeasurably grateful.

For everything a priest does over the course of a year,

Show your appreciation

The Prairie Catholic invites our readers to consider submitting a letter of appreciation and gratitude for your parish priest.

A special section on the diocesan Web site is in development where your letter will publicly state your appreciation and gratitude. Visit soon www.dnu.org (Office of Communications).

Send your letters of appreciation and gratitude to *The Prairie Catholic*, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073 or e-mail cclancy@dnu.org.

Priesthood Sunday is a chance for parishioners to give back, whether through a simple "thank you," a gesture of appreciation, or a word of encouragement.

Catholic Charities of diocese evolves to meet area needs

(Continued from page 1)

non-profit like many other affiliates of the national organization. The program provides counseling services in four areas throughout the diocese – Hutchinson, Willmar, Marshall, and at the Catholic Pastoral Center in New Ulm.

"We are one of the five smallest Catholic Charities affiliates in the nation," Keaveny said, but the small structure of the organization has its benefits in terms of being responsive. "We are immediately available, in conjunction with Bishop John M. LeVoir, when a crisis or need arises."

Sr. Lois Byrne is a licensed clinical social worker and counselor for the Willmar office of Catholic Charities. She has worked for the program since its creation.

"People come back; people make progress," Sr. Lois said of her interactions with people who have used Catholic Charities services

over the years. "We hope that their lives are more meaningful and more pleasant; their relationships more meaningful and more pleasant."

And though much is being done to help clients on the part of the counselors, the clients also make their own impact, Sr. Lois explained.

"It is an awe striking experience to hear someone else's experience. It is spiritual growth," Sr. Lois said. "You can't meet with someone where people are sharing honest experiences without being humbled in a very positive way."

Through Catholic Charities, the diocese provides assistance to people of all faiths and backgrounds, with almost all of the program's clients living within diocesan boundaries, Keaveny said.

"The Diocesan Ministries Appeal has always, since it began, identified Catholic Charities as one of its prime beneficiaries,"

Keaveny said. "We could not see people regardless of their ability to pay without the support of the DMA."

"One of our significant accomplishments is that we've stayed true to our ministries," Keaveny said of how Catholic Charities has evolved since its beginning in 2007. Counseling remains its primary service; while the organization has also addressed diocesan needs by helping parishes, schools, and communities prepare for and respond to disasters.

In February 2008, following a school bus accident that resulted in four student fatalities in Cottonwood, Catholic Charities worked with students and families to help them grieve and cope. Two years ago, when a tornado hit Watkins and Litchfield, Catholic Charities used a grant to financially support residents who were impacted by the storm. In another incident, the program assisted residents when baseball-sized hail fell on businesses,

farms, and homes in Winthrop.

"It's been a great help, especially for folks who needed to rebuild," said Fr. Brian Mandel, referring to the grant money people received in the aftermath of the 2016 tornado in Litchfield and Watkins. Fr. Mandel is an advisor to Catholic Charities and the associate pastor for the Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community (Darwin, Litchfield, Manannah, and Forest City).

As an advisor, he helps the program set annual goals such as providing assistance to communities and encouraging parishes to make plans for when disaster hits. In his pastoral role, Fr. Mandel has found Catholic Charities to be of great benefit in making counseling referrals and collaborating with spiritual direction. "People have gotten great help from Catholic Charities," he said. "I am always happy to refer people to them."

Catholic Charities Counseling

Serving over 12,500 people over past 10 years!

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 toll-free 866-670-5163, e-mail pkral@dnu.org



by Fr. Mark Steffl, STL, JCL

Ask a Canon Lawyer

This month's question: What exactly is canon law?

As a canon lawyer, at times I get questions like: What exactly is canon law? What does a canon lawyer do? How does one become one? I have heard that they mostly spend their time arguing marriage cases: is that true?

To “get the ball rolling” it is first important to define what canon law is. There are many people in the Church who know how things are supposed to work, but often times do not know why or where these things come from, or just see them as rules that have to be followed. The answer, more often than not, is found in Church law, known as canon law.

Every society needs laws – and so does the Church. Simply put, canon law is how the Church organizes and governs herself. Normally, canon law isn't in the

spotlight; however, it effects every Catholic whether they know it or not.

The word “canon” (with one “n” – not to be confused with a cannon that fires iron balls across a battlefield), basically means rule. It is a law that governs some aspect of life in the Church, and canon law is the body of these laws or policies.

Canon law deals with all the issues that any legal system does. For example, rights, property issues, procedures, administration, personnel, crimes and trials are all handled through canon law.

Canon law also deals with some matters that civil law cannot, such as laws regarding sacraments, sacred places, and magisterial teachings.

Canon law was formed from the pastoral experience of the Catholic Church over its vast 2000-year history. In the business world

today it might be called “best practices.”

The Lord Jesus gave a missionary mandate or “task” to the Church: proclaiming the Kingdom, announcing the Good News, celebrating the sacraments, and striving to be here on earth “the People of God” who are working together on attaining eternal life and bringing others with them to the Lord. Canon law is the Church putting her beliefs into standard practice found throughout the world, so that that same missionary mandate can be carried out with consistency and confidence in every place, in every time

Every organization needs guidelines so that it can effectively function. The Catholic Church, with over one billion members worldwide, is no different.

We as a Church body benefit from standards that govern the day-to-day life of the Church.

From the way the pope governs the universal Catholic Church or a bishop governs his diocese, down to how the sacraments are celebrated and administered, are all examples of specific things that are governed by canon law.

Like civil law, Church law aims not only to make people aware of their obligations and duties, but also and importantly, to protect their rights, and to administer justice with equity when rights and obligations conflict with each other. As a historical note, the legal system of the Catholic Church, as an on-going institution, has provided a basis and influence for the development of civil law systems around the world.

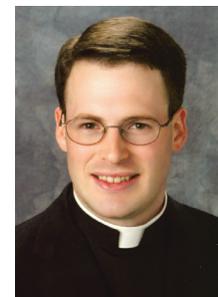
Our membership in the Church begins with our baptism, and confers on us a status within the Church: a special identity that we have for the rest of our lives. Our membership means something, and so it is protected by these guidelines.

Ultimately, the

importance and value of canon law is to help the Church ensure that “the salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law in the Church, is to be kept before one's eyes” (canon 1752).

NEXT COLUMN: Why do weddings have to take place in a church?

Do you have a question regarding canon law that you would like to see answered here? E-mail [The Prairie Catholic](mailto:ThePrairieCatholic@cclancy@dnu.org) at cclancy@dnu.org. In the subject area indicate “Ask a canon lawyer.”



Editor's note: Fr. Mark Steffl serves as the Diocese of New Ulm's canon lawyer and is the judicial vicar of the diocesan Office of the Tribunal.

Over 700 U.S. Catholic institutions affirm the Paris Climate Agreement

Catholic bishop decries the “Immorality of inaction” and the U.S. reversal on the Paris Climate Agreement on the third anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On behalf of the Diocese of New Ulm, Bishop John M. LeVoir has joined the over 700 United States Catholic institutions - including dioceses, communities of men and women religious, health care systems, universities, as well as parishes and schools – by signing on to the Catholic Climate Declaration that affirms the Paris Agreement and supports actions to meet its goals.

The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance, starting in the year 2020. On June 1, 2017, President Donald Trump announced that the United

States would withdraw from the Agreement, which had been signed by every nation. With the withdrawal, the U.S. is the only country not party to the agreement.

The declaration responds to President Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Agreement, is in solidarity with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) position, and is consistent with the calls for climate action from Pope Francis and his predecessors, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Saint John Paul II.

The declaration was organized by Catholic Climate Covenant (CCC), a Washington, DC-based organization that partners with seventeen national Catholic institutions including the USCCB. Leaders from several institutions spoke in moral terms of the need, in the words of Pope Francis, to “care for our common home.”

Leaders pointed to the human

suffering and threats to human life caused by human activity. Bishop Richard Pates of Des Moines, and the bishop liaison to CCC, said, “The immorality of inaction on



climate change has been clear for a long time. With ever-increasing temperatures fueling super hurricanes as well as extending and deepening droughts, we are seeing the tragedies of inaction up close and personal.” Bishop Pates recalled the people on the Gulf Coast of Texas and in Puerto Rico who continue to recover from last year's devastating hurricanes. Dan Misleh, Catholic Climate Covenant executive director, referred to Pope Francis' second

encyclical *Laudato Si'*, on Care for Our Common Home, saying that it was a high-water mark for the Church's decades-long engagement in the climate issue. “This declaration builds on a flurry of action this past year and helps to consolidate and expand on the numerous activities already happening in the U.S. Catholic community,” said Misleh.

Even while the signatories to the Catholic Climate Declaration noted that progress on climate change has been imperiled by President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, Sr. Sharlet Wagner, CSC, the president-elect of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), said, “Climate change is not a political issue but a moral issue. God's creation is in peril by our own actions. . . .”

Global Climate Action Summit
At the time this issue of *The Prairie Catholic* went to press, the Global Climate Action Summit 2018 (Sept. 12-14) in San

Francisco was wrapping up.

The summit gathered individuals from around the world who represent both emerging and established voices on climate change action, activism, and ambition. Of the 22 chosen to attend the summit, six live in North America, three in Central or South America, two in Europe, four in Africa, three in Asia, and four in Australia or Oceania.

The goal of the summit was to recognized growing momentum by demonstrating how the tide has turned on the fight against climate change, showcasing climate action taking place around the world, and inspiring deeper commitments from everyone in support of the Paris Agreement.

To read about the post-summit, stay updated, or take action, visit <https://globalclimateactionsummit.org/>.

Fall gatherings to address diocesan structure change of regions to deaneries



by Betty Thooff
DCCW president

On April 23, 2016, the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women passed a resolution to be supportive and receptive of the changes being made with our parish structures, especially in areas related to the Diocesan Plan

for Parishes. It is the Council of Catholic Women's goal to always be supportive and be instruments of unity with our pastoral leaders and parishioners.

Regions changed to deaneries

With the new diocesan structure change from regions to deaneries (see page 3 in this issue of *The Prairie Catholic*), the Council of Catholic Women (CCW) has combined six CCW region boards to three CCW deanery boards.

They are: CCW region 1 and 2 is now deanery 1, CCW region 3 and 4 is now deanery 2, and CCW region 5 and 6 is now deanery 3.

Upcoming fall gatherings

There will be two DCCW fall gathering opportunities this year.

Come and learn about the new structure change.

Deanery 1 - Tuesday, Sept. 25 at 5:30 p.m. at the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye

Deanery 2 - Monday, Sept. 24 at 5 p.m. at the Church of St. Edward in Minnetonka

I encourage all women to attend one of these deanery fall gatherings.

Editor's note: Learn more about the Diocese of New Ulm Council of Catholic Women by visiting www.nudccw.org.

Connected to the saints through the veneration of relics

by Fr. Aaron Johanneck

Whenever I give a tour of a church and explain the different items that are typically found in Catholic churches, one of the elements that most fascinates many are the relics that are placed in the altar and are sometimes also on display in another part of the church. "That's really a piece of him/her?" is a question I often hear.



them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy and to celebrate

the birthday of his martyrdom." The practice of praying and celebrating the holy Mass over the tombs of martyrs is very likely the origin of the practice of placing martyrs' relics (it is now permitted to use the relics of saints who are not martyrs as well) in altars.

The Catholic practice of venerating relics often seems strange to non-Catholics. It can seem strange to Catholics as well, especially in the United States where relics are typically much smaller and are less prominent than they are in many churches in Europe, for example. The relics with which we are likely acquainted are very small and difficult to identify. They are typically a small piece of bone, a strand of hair, or, in the case of some more recently canonized saints like St. John Paul II and St. Teresa of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), a drop of blood. In Europe, however, it is not uncommon to find whole bodies laid to rest beneath one of the altars of a church, or other large and more recognizable relics on obvious display in reliquaries. In Padua, Italy, you can view the tongue of St. Anthony – for example – who is not only very good at helping us find lost items but was also a very gifted preacher. One of my favorite relics is the right forearm and hand of St. Francis Xavier in the Church of the Gesù in Rome. It is with this arm that he is said to have baptized perhaps 700,000 people in India and other parts of Asia!

Relics are categorized according to three classes. A first-class relic is some part of the saint's body. A second-class relic is a piece of the saint's clothing or another item that was used by the saint. A third-class relic is an object that has been touched to another relic. Regardless of the class, relics help us to feel connected to the saints in a real, tangible way. They also help us to understand that the stories of the saints are not legends (although some elements of their stories might be), but are the stories of real men and women throughout the ages who devoted their lives entirely to God.

Saint Padre Pio relic tour coming to New Ulm

On Sunday, Oct. 28, the Diocese of New Ulm will host both first- and second-class relics of St. Pio of Pietrelcina – better known as Padre Pio – at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (Visit www.dnu.org for further information.)

Be sure to make a pilgrimage to New Ulm that day to venerate the relics of this great saint. See if you can find out anything about relics that might be in your own church as well. Experience how venerating these relics helps you feel more tangibly connected to the saints throughout the ages.



Fr. Aaron Johanneck is director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of New Ulm.

October Domestic Violence Awareness Month

by Lori Rixe
DCCW service chairperson

The National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) has long been an advocate for victims of domestic abuse, advocating on Capitol Hill for policies that protect children and families, developing educational materials, and working in coalition with faith leaders to brainstorm solutions and address mutual concerns.

October is designated as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. According to the most current data available from the National Coalition Against

Domestic Violence (www.ncadv.org/), ten million people a year are physically abused by an intimate partner and nearly one in every four women in the United States report violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in their life.

NCCW encourages us to get the word out regarding domestic violence during the month of October. The faithful are asked to acknowledge this month by wearing purple, praying, and getting the word out that help is available. For more information and resources check out NCCW's Web site www.nccw.org

Local service project

In 2017, the Southern Minnesota Crisis Nursery (SMCN) located in New Ulm, opened the doors to the Ivy House to serve families in a stressful situation. As a domestic violence resource, they provide a safe and loving environment while supporting families.

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women chose the Southern Minnesota Crisis Nursery to be their local service project for 2018. SMCN offers a free and confidential childcare program for children ages 0-12 that is available 24 hours for up to a maximum of 72 hours at a time. The crisis nursery can help during family emergencies, medical appointments, domestic violence, families in need of temporary childcare, or for parents that need a break. Families can call their hotline (507) 766-6925 or visit www.smnrcrisisnursery.org for more information.

International service project

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women understands that international families need our help as well. The San Lucas Toliman mission in Guatemala has been chosen as the DCCW international service project. The mission has been addressing the needs for housing, healthcare, nutrition, education, and land – all attending to the integral human development of the community. Visit <https://www.sanlucasmision.org/>.

CCW Recognition Sunday

NEW ULM – Bishop John M. LeVoir signs a proclamation declaring Sunday, Oct. 14, 2018, Council of Catholic Women (CCW) Recognition Sunday in the Diocese of New Ulm. Looking on (seated) is Betty Thooff, NUDCCW president, Msgr. Eugene Lozinski, NUDCCW spiritual advisor and Marianne Schotzko, NUDCCW spirituality chairperson. CCW Recognition Sunday is a time for parishes to recognize women who have worked tirelessly through the CCW using their time, talent, and treasure.



(Photo by Christine Clancy)

Pope calls for “prayer and fasting” for evil of clerical sex abuse

by Hannah Brockhaus

VATICAN CITY (CNA/EWTN News) – Pope Francis has called for every member of the Catholic Church to pray and fast in penance for the evil of clerical sex abuse, and to be involved in needed change within the Church.

“The only way that we have to respond to this evil that has darkened so many lives is to experience it as a task regarding all of us as the People of God,” Francis wrote Aug. 20.

In a letter to the entire Church following widespread revelations of clerical sex abuse in the Church in the United States, the pope invited “the entire holy faithful to a penitential exercise of prayer and fasting, following the Lord’s command.”

“This can awaken our conscience and arouse our solidarity and commitment to a culture of care that says ‘never again’ to every form of abuse,” he said. “Every one of the baptized should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need.”

The pope’s letter acknowledged the recent publication of a report

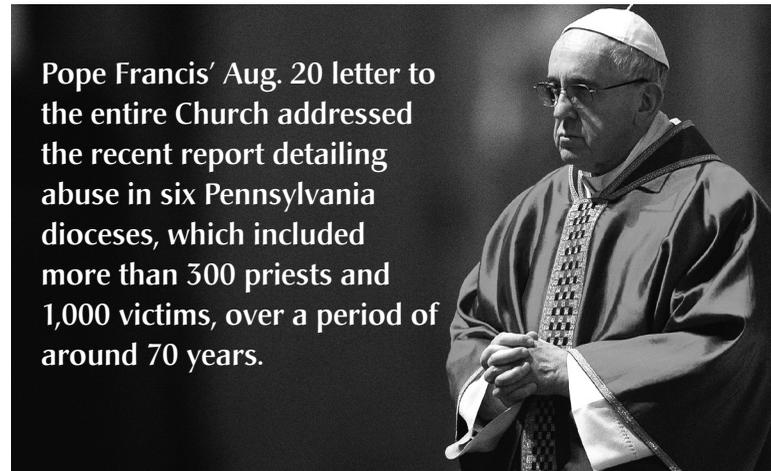
detailing abuse in six Pennsylvania dioceses, which included more than 300 priests and 1,000 victims, over a period of around 70 years.

Recognizing the deep pain and suffering endured by many minors who have experienced sexual abuse, or the abuse of power or conscience, at the hands of clerics, he said no effort to seek pardon or to repair the harm will ever be enough.

“Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated,” he stated.

He said the words of St. Paul, that “‘If one member suffers, all suffer together with it’... forcefully echo” in his heart.

The pope also emphasized that he thinks a conversion of the Church is “impossible” if it does not include the “active participation” of all the members, and he criticized the silencing or ignoring of some Catholics through the creation of elitist groups or projects. In particular, all forms of clericalism should be rejected,



Pope Francis’ Aug. 20 letter to the entire Church addressed the recent report detailing abuse in six Pennsylvania dioceses, which included more than 300 priests and 1,000 victims, over a period of around 70 years.

(Photo by L’Osservatore Romano)

he said, because clericalism undervalues baptismal grace and can lead to abuses by Church authority. Clericalism causes “an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today.”

Voicing strong support for all the victims of clerical sex abuse and for their families, he said though most of the cases recently come to light, “belong to the past,” as time goes on the pain of the victims has come to be more known. He said the gravity and extent to which clerical sexual abuse of minors and other abuse has happened

takes “coming to grips... in a comprehensive and communal way,” and while conversion requires acknowledgment of the truth, it is “not enough.”

“This change calls for a personal and communal conversion that makes us see things as the Lord does... to be where the Lord wants us to be, to experience a conversion of heart in his presence. To do so, prayer and penance will help,” he stated.

The penitential aspect of fasting will help Catholics to come before the Lord “as sinners imploring forgiveness and the grace of shame and conversion,” so that actions

“attuned to the Gospel” can follow, he explained.

He prayed that fasting and prayer will open people’s ears to the pain of children, young people, and the disabled, that it will make Catholics “hunger and thirst for justice,” and impel the Church “to walk in the truth, supporting all the judicial measures that may be necessary.”

“It is essential that we, as a Church, be able to acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable,” he continued.

“Let us beg forgiveness for our own sins and the sins of others,” he said. “An awareness of sin helps us to acknowledge the errors, the crimes and the wounds caused in the past and allows us, in the present, to be more open and committed along a journey of renewed conversion.”

Editor’s note: The information in this article regarding the pope’s response to the clergy scandal was the most up-to-date at the time The Prairie Catholic went to press.

Countering infidelity with greater fidelity and holiness



times of great crisis, the Lord in his faithfulness raises up a new generation of saints for his name’s sake.

Truly, we have all the means of holiness available to us. As St. Paul reminds us, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:39).

The infidelity of today

In 1873, upon the opening of a new seminary in Birmingham, England, Blessed John Henry Newman delivered an eerily prescient address entitled “The Infidelity of the Future,” cautioning that even one instance of clerical infidelity would have tremendously harmful effects on the witness of the Church.

An increasingly widespread dissemination of the news would make the examples of clerical infidelity known to the masses. And modern, secular persons, he says, nurtured in a mode of thought in which faith is understood to be both inherently irrational and corrupting of the work of reason, would be looking, quite naturally, for more reasons to disbelieve,

or to push religion further into the private sphere. Coupled with an immense store of malicious curiosity directed at Catholics, Newman asserts that “[i]f there ever was a time when one priest will be a spectacle to men and angels it is in the age now open upon us.”

This reality is inescapably more evident today in the age of social media and fake news, filled as it is with curiosity, pride, and gossip. That’s not to say that the news or those reporting it are bad. They are not. In general, we should be grateful to the media, bloggers, and law enforcement when they put a spotlight on corruption and crime from which bishops have failed to protect the faithful.

But Newman’s caution speaks to the reality that the Church makes bold truth claims and has the audacity to proclaim Christ crucified and risen. Unfaithful clergy undermine the credibility of the proposition – the good news – and in fact make the often-spurious claims of the Church’s opponents more reasonable to the masses,

particularly in the public arena.

As Pope Benedict XVI noted on his voyage to Fatima, “. . . the greatest persecution of the Church comes not from her enemies but arises from sin within the Church.”

No excuses

As Christians today, the abuse, scandals, and sins of others can make trying to live out the countercultural good news seem like an impossible calling, precisely for the reasons Newman identified. We can look like fools in the eyes of the world.

Unfortunately, some will find the failures of clergy to be their excuse not to sacrifice this life for the sake of the kingdom. They ask themselves: If bishops won’t engage the spiritual combat, master themselves, and wage constant war against sin in the clergy and among their flock, then why should the people in the pew take up their own cross?

On his Fatima voyage, Pope Benedict offered this response: “The Church . . . has a deep need

to relearn penance, to accept purification, to learn forgiveness on the one hand, but also the need for justice. Forgiveness does not replace justice. In a word, we need to relearn precisely this essential: conversion, prayer, penance and the theological virtues. This is our response, we are realists in expecting that evil always attacks, attacks from within and without, yet that the forces of good are also ever present and that, in the end, the Lord is more powerful than evil, and Our Lady is for us the visible, motherly guarantee of God’s goodness, which is always the last word in history.”

The times are challenging, but we know that when sin abounds, grace abounds even more. We must counter infidelity with greater fidelity, and be credible witnesses of the Gospel, especially when others fail.

Editors note: Jason Adkins is executive director for the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota.

Confronted with this grim reality, we can despair at the potential for a generation of lost souls, and lament the continued, unchecked disintegration of a social order that needs the Church more than ever.

Or, we can remember that the best argument for the good news and claims of the Church is not her clergy, but her saints. In

New principals hired at three Catholic schools in diocese



Peter Roufs



Bethany Steffl



Josh Langseth

NEW ULM – The Diocese of New Ulm welcomes new principals at three of the 17 Catholic schools (14 elementary, three high schools) in the diocese.

Peter Roufs is the new principal at St. Mary's Junior-Senior High School in Sleepy Eye. He taught for 18 years at St. Mary's School in Sleepy Eye, was principal for five years at Cathedral High School in New Ulm, and was a teacher/administrator at Lafayette Charter School in Lafayette for five years. He holds a bachelor of arts degree, a masters degree, and a specialist degree in K-12 administration.

Bethany Steffl is the new principal at St. Raphael School

in Springfield. She taught for two years at Mount Olive Lutheran School in Overland Park, KS, and for 12 years at St. Raphael Catholic School in Springfield. She holds a bachelor of science in elementary education and is currently working towards a masters in education.

Josh Langseth is the new principal at Holy Redeemer School in Marshall. He taught for seven years at Prairie Elementary School in Worthington. He holds a bachelor of science in elementary education, a master of arts in special education, and a education administration license (K-12).

Bishop leads prayer service for healing

by Deacon Mike McKeown

"I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle."

These words, spoken by Pope Francis during a homily in 2015, have resonated in the heart of Bishop John M. LeVoir, Bishop of New Ulm. "So many people are wounded today and in need of healing – physically, spiritually, and emotionally," the bishop said in a recent interview. "Pope Francis has been constant in calling for the need for healing," he said.

It is this renewed emphasis on the role of healing in evangelization that led to the Diocese of New Ulm's Prayer Service for Hope and Healing held June 22 at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Murdock. The evening service included adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Confession, and opportunities for individuals to receive prayer for physical, spiritual, and emotional healing.

Healing and evangelization
Ten days prior to the healing service, two Catholic regional missionaries from the Twin Cities provided a brief training to Sacred Heart parishioners on how to evangelize and invite people in the community to attend the service. These missionaries were part of St. Paul Evangelization Institute, an organization dedicated to forming leaders in Catholic evangelization.

Following the evangelization training, Sacred Heart pastor Fr. Jeremy Kucera and teams of parishioners went door-to-door throughout the Murdock area inviting people in the community, including non-Catholics, to join in the prayer service for healing. Stuart and Samantha Johnson were among the parishioners who attended the training and were part of the door-to-door evangelization effort. Admittedly, Samantha was initially uncomfortable with the idea of evangelization. "It's a small town where everybody knows everyone," she said.

However, after receiving the training, she had a completely different opinion. "The training was really good!" Samantha said. "I felt well prepared and almost



FOR HEALING

excited about going out. It's not as scary or difficult as I had imagined," she said.

Sacred Heart parishioner Judy Hoffer along with her husband Phil also took part in the evangelization training and door-to-door effort. "At first I thought it would be an awkward experience. I thought maybe some would be negative towards us," Judy said. Judy and Phil approached each house together, which they said made the experience easier. "We had positive responses from every single person we talked with," Judy said.

"People were receptive to the information and appreciated the invitation. It was a very rewarding experience," she said.

Prayer for hope and healing
Approximately 150 people attended the June 22 evening Prayer Service for Hope and Healing. Those attending came from not only the Murdock area, but also from other towns within the Diocese of New Ulm and neighboring dioceses.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament began the evening's service followed by a homily by Bishop LeVoir. In his homily, the bishop reminded those in attendance of the wounds that we bear, whether they be physical, spiritual, or emotional. "How do we address these wounds? Who can help us and heal us?" he said. "It is Our Lord, who is the great physician and healer. He touches us in prayer, in the Eucharist, in the Sacrament of Confession, and in our brothers and sisters," the bishop continued.

Following the homily, people had the opportunity to receive prayer for healing from one of the three prayer teams that was composed of both clergy and lay members of the Diocese of New Ulm's

Healing and Deliverance Ministry. There were also opportunities for confession.

"The service, music, quiet, candles, lights low, was impressive," shared one Sacred Heart parishioner about the prayerful atmosphere. "It really was touching and set the mood to contemplate and pray. It was a beautiful experience," she said.

Fr. Aaron Johanneck, pastor of St. Michael, Mary and Brendan Area Faith Community and a prayer team member that evening commented, "Many who received prayer that evening found grace to forgive, release of anxiety, and the peace of inner healing," he said. "Some also experienced physical healing."

Rick DeGrote of Clara City described the physical healing he experienced as a result of the prayer. "I had chronic pain in my back and knees for many years due to my involvement in sports when I was younger. When the prayer team prayed for me, I felt a warmth go through my body. The pain was greatly diminished," he said.

DeGrote left the prayer service grateful for what he considered to be a partial healing. "It wasn't until the next morning when I was lying in bed that I realized all my pain was gone," he said. DeGrote is thankful to be pain free after many years of suffering.

Bishop LeVoir is encouraged by the positive response from the prayer service held in Murdock and has indicated that there will be additional diocesan healing liturgies scheduled in the future. "It was a powerful experience of Our Lord healing his sons and daughters. There were many tears that evening - tears of sorrow, repentance, and joy that come when Jesus Christ encounters us with his healing touch."

Editor's note: Prior to The Prairie Catholic going to press, a Mass for Hope and Healing was held on Sept. 7 at the Church of St. Peter in St. Peter. For upcoming healing liturgies, contact Deacon Mike McKeown, director of the Office of Healing and Deliverance Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm, 507-233-5310, mmkeown@dnu.org.

Cor Jesu

Join us for a powerful night of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, an inspirational sermon, opportunities for Confession, and reflective music!

September 29 | Cathedral, New Ulm
November 17 | St. Mary's, Arlington

For a 2018-2019 Cor Jesu schedule visit the Diocese of New Ulm Web site www.dnu.org/youth/ or contact Kevin Losleben, director, 507-233-5327, e-mail klosleben@dnu.org.

SAINT PIO
COMES TO THE
DIOCESE OF NEW ULM



CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY TRINITY

605 N STATE ST.
NEW ULM, MN 56073

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2018
(FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 6:30 P.M.)

For information about the public veneration, please call (507) 233-5320, email sranna@dnu.org, or go to www.dnu.org/st-padre-pio-relics-tour

Come and venerate the official relics of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, on the occasion of the 50th commemoration anniversary of his passing.

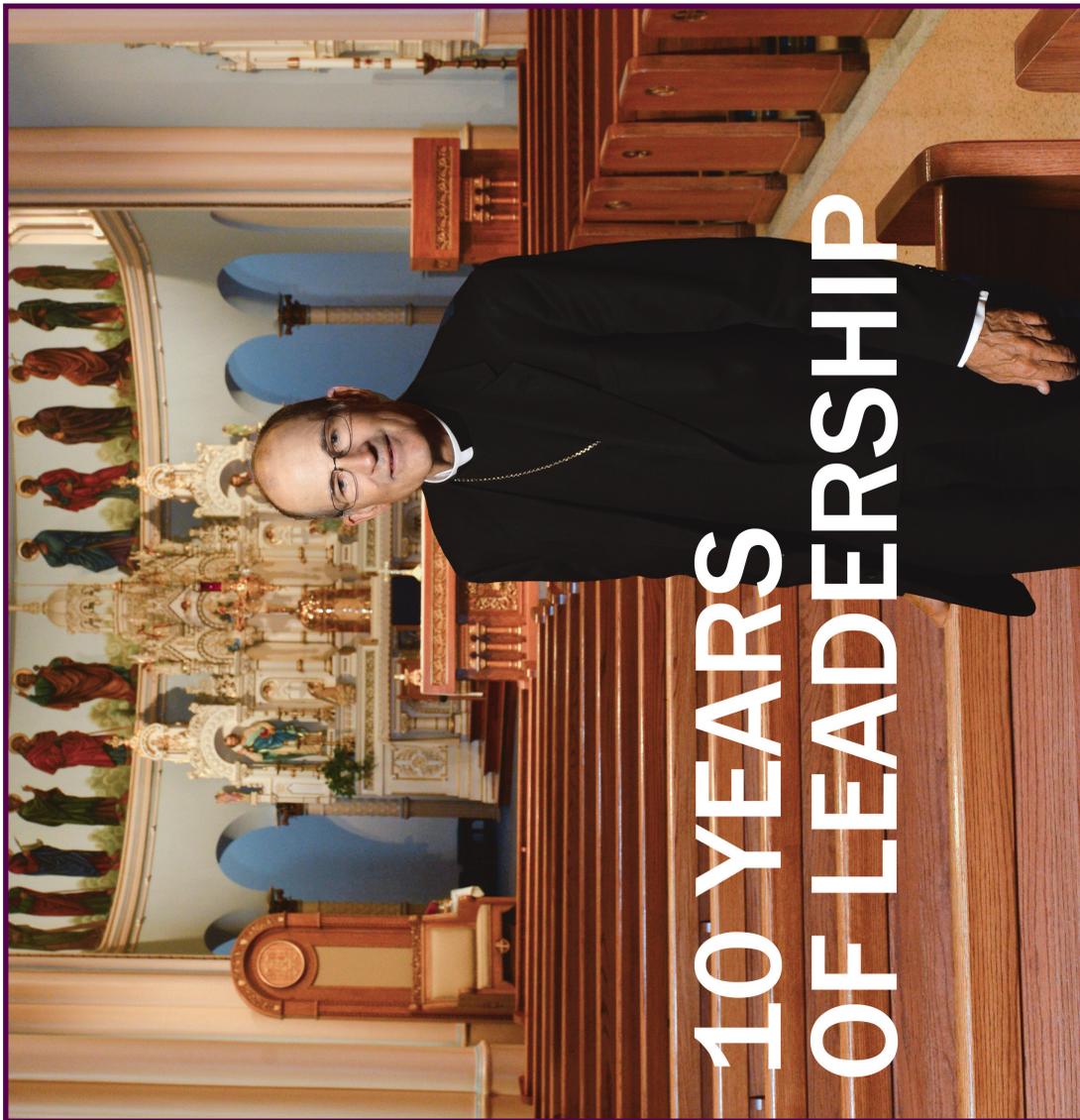
A mass in honor of Saint Padre Pio will be celebrated at 10:00 A.M. by The Most Reverend John M. LeVoir, Bishop of New Ulm



THE DRAIRIE CATHOLIC

Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese Diocese of New Ulm Vol. 53 No. 1 September 2018



10 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

(Photo by Rick Apitz)

This month, our shepherd Bishop John M. LeVoir celebrates a decade of leadership in the Diocese of New Ulm. Pictured, Bishop LeVoir stands inside the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm, the mother church of the diocese. Bishop LeVoir is the fourth bishop to lead the diocese since it was formed in 1957.

(Bishop LeVoir reflects on his past 10 years in the diocese. See page 6.)

catholic trends

MINNEAPOLIS (Catholic Spirit) – Pro-life advocates’ case against the University of Minnesota Medical School regarding its illegal use of aborted fetal tissue for research was dismissed by the Minnesota Court of Appeals Aug. 20.

The Thomas More Society, a Chicago-based law firm, filed the petition in 2016, representing University of Minnesota graduate student Bridget Busacker and St. Paul-based nonprofit Pro-Life Action Ministries. They cited

a Minnesota law that prohibits the use of fetal remains, whether from abortion or natural death, for medical research. They went to appellate court after the lawsuit had been dismissed in trial court.

The appellate court also dismissed it, using the basis of 2017 legislation on fetal tissue research. The court ruled that the new law allows for fetal research, which “prevails over the other” statute, according to the court’s decision. A court can use new

legislation for an existing case. “I think it’s a bad ruling by the court. They set a precedence ... that leaves us in a position where there’s very little options [to contest it],” said Brian Gibson, executive director of PLAM.

“That doesn’t mean we’re finished trying to deal with the U of M doing this very gruesome stuff,” he added. “They are still doing experimentation on the human remains of children that have been killed by abortion and without consent from those aborting these children.”

PLAM is a nonprofit that works to defend life through outreach and public witness.

University of Minnesota chief public relations officer Chuck Tombarge said in a statement that the school appreciated the “court’s guidance at this important intersection of medical research and law.”

“The University of Minnesota is committed to conducting research critical to the health and wellbeing of Minnesotans in an ethical, respectful and lawful manner,” he said.

Pro-Life Action Ministries took

interest in the issue in 2015 following the Center for Medical Progress’ discovery that the University of Minnesota had been obtaining fetal tissue from Advanced Bioscience Resources in Alameda, California. The Center for Medical Progress, a pro-life organization based in California, had been using undercover video to investigate Planned Parenthood’s participation in selling fetal remains at the time.

ST. CLOUD – An opening rally marking the start of the fall 40 Days for Life Campaign, an internationally coordinated pro-life effort to end abortion, will be held on Thursday, Sept. 27, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at St. Augustine Catholic Church, 442 SE 2nd Street, St. Cloud. Contact Judy Haag, 320-453-7592, e-mail judy4life@meltel.net or visit www.40daysforlife.com/stcloud.

October is Respect Life Month

“Every Life: Cherished, Chosen, Sent”



The 2018-2019 respect life program materials are available on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Web site. Whether you are simply taking a personal interest or you are serving in a parish or school capacity, there is something for you!

Visit www.usccb.org/respectlife