The popular saint known as Padre Pio has gained “rock star” status since his death in 1968 and canonization in 2002, it’s perhaps fitting that he’s on an international tour.

The third stop on a 40-diocese spring tour coordinated by the Saint Pio Foundation was at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck on March 12. Thousands of the faithful, from across the diocese and beyond, showed up to venerate the six relics on display, attend Mass, and take part in Eucharistic adoration and the sacrament of reconciliation.

The relics, on loan to the foundation, included: his glove; crusts of wounds; cotton-gauze with Saint Pio’s blood stains; a lock of hair; his mantle; and a handkerchief soaked with his sweat hours before he died.

“I am always motivated when contacted by smaller dioceses,” said Luciano Lamonarca, who as founder and president of the Saint Pio Foundation in New York City organized the relics tour for the 50th anniversary of the saint’s death. “It’s a spiritual sign from Padre Pio to bring him to those who might never have a chance to visit him.”

The former rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Msgr. Tom Richter, had visited with his friend, Fr. Marcel Taillon, St. Thomas More Parish in Rhode Island. That parish had hosted the relics last fall. From this, Msgr. Richter contacted...
FROM THE BISHOP

Bishop David D. Kagan

We just celebrated the shortest but most spiritually intense liturgical season in our entire Church year, the great Paschal Triduum. As you know, the season of Lent ended when the Mass of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday and that of the Lord’s Supper began the evening of Holy Thursday.

The first day of the Paschal Triduum extended to the evening of Good Friday, the only day of the Church’s year when Mass may not be celebrated. We celebrate the Liturgy of the Passion of the Lord, the veneration of the Cross, and receive Holy Communion, done in a beautifully solemn yet simple manner.

The second day of the Triduum extended to the end of the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday evening, when we celebrate the waiting with such profound hope and humble gratitude the longed-for Resurrection of Jesus. We do so with the blessing of the new fire from which is lit the new Paschal Candle, one of the preeminent symbols of Christ Who is the eternal Light, the recounting of God’s fidelity to His promise to Adam and Eve to redeem them and all of their human offspring from their terrible sin which brought them suffering and death. We welcome to the Church, the Body of Christ through the sacraments of Initiation our newest Roman Catholics. And, we all are renewed and strengthened by the receiving of Our Lord, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Most Holy Eucharist.

The third day of the Triduum extended from the end of the Easter Vigil to the evening of Easter Sunday, as the Fathers of the Church have called it, the “Sunday of Sundays.” This is the day which every Sunday in our Church year commemorates. That is why every faithful Catholic attends and participates in Mass each Sunday, not only because the good God commands us to do so but because the desire to be so intimately united to Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist, the Mass, which is the re-presentation in unbloody form of His sacrifice for us on Calvary, is what gives each of our lives its firm foundation and its real meaning.

It is a great and continuous moment of grace to be able to be with the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper, at Calvary, at the Tomb and to be able to greet Him with the joy and peace that only He, crucified and risen, can give you. My sincere wishes that you all had a Blessed Easter and Easter Season! I promise to remember you and those whom you love and cherish at my Masses.

Enjoy the peace only the Risen Lord can give

BISHOP IN ACTION

Visit our website at www.bismarckdiocese.com
Get news, photos, videos and more from around the diocese.

Search “Bismarck Diocese” on YouTube for videos from the Church in western N.D.

Follow the Diocese on Twitter @BisDiocese and follow Bishop Kagan @VescooDDK

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BismarckDiocese
Get status updates, photos, videos, and links and share them with your friends.

BISHOP’S SCHEDULE

APRIL 2018

April 5 • Mass, St. Mary’s Academy, Bismarck, 8:45 am
• Mass for Legatus Chapter, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 6 p.m.
April 6 • Confirmation at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 7 p.m.
April 8 • Confirmation for Churches of St. Agnes in Kenmare and St. Joseph in Bowbells, at Kenmare, 10 a.m.
April 9 • Priest Benefit Association meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 2 p.m.
April 9-12 • Spring Clergy Conference, Radisson, Bismarck
April 14 • Institution of Lectors, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 9 a.m.
April 15 • Confirmation for Churches of St. Charles in Bowman, St. Mary in Marmarth and St. Mel in Rhamne, at Bowman, 10 a.m. MT
April 17 • Real Presence Radio Interview, 9 a.m.
• Celebration of New Life Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 6:30 p.m.
April 18 • Lumen Vitae event, University of Mary, 5:30 p.m.
April 20 • Confirmation for the Churches of St. Vincent de Paul in Mott, St. John the Baptist in New Leipzig and St. Henry in Regent, at Mott, 6 p.m. MT
April 22 • Confirmation for the Churches of St. Thomas the Apostle in Tioga, St. James in Powers Lake and St. Michael in Ray, at Tioga 11 a.m.
• Confirmation for the Churches of Queen of the Most Holy Rosary in Stanley and St. Ann in Berthold, at Stanley, 2 p.m.
April 23 • Confirmation for the Churches of St. Joseph and Christ the King in Mandan, at St. Joseph, 7 p.m.
April 28 • Knights of Columbus Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 5 p.m.
April 29 • Confirmation at the Church of St. Wenceslaus, Dickinson, 9:30 a.m. MT
• Confirmation at the Church of St. Patrick, Dickinson, 12 p.m. MT

Social Media
By Patti Armstrong

DCA-Wipf.jpg

Editor’s note: This is part of a series of feature stories about the lives and careers of our diocesan priests before they answered the call to their true vocation—proving that God calls from all walks of life.

Father Terry Wipf’s faith journey has taken him from Presbyterian to Catholic; and his vocational journey from music teacher to the priesthood.

Father Terry is currently parochial vicar at the Church of Corpus Christi in Bismarck where he has been for eight years. Although he was born into a Baptist family and grew up Presbyterian in Cavalier, North Dakota, he became a Catholic priest 18 years ago at the age of 42.

The attraction began with Jesus. “It’s because of the Eucharist especially,” he said. “As Christians, we are all about Jesus and the Eucharist is the maximum amount of Jesus.” The first 42 years of his life, were a journey of faith and sometimes challenges, that ended up bringing him to where he is today, “feeling privileged to be a priest.”

Born in 1958, Wipf was one of four children raised by parents who were originally Baptist and later became Presbyterian. His father went to a Baptist seminary, but became a Presbyterian minister after he decided he liked their theology better.

Journey to the Church

In 1981, Father Wipf earned a degree in music from North Dakota State University with a major in voice and minor in band. He taught in a couple of high schools, at Dakota Boys Ranch, and then at Cardinal Muench Seminary High School before it closed. It was while teaching band and helping out with choir at Cardinal Muench’s in 1986 that the Catholic faith began to enter his mind and heart, almost through osmosis.

“I got exposed to the Catholic faith there,” Wipf explained. “The Presbyterians were getting radical and were pro-choice—although my dad was not—but the more I learned about the Catholic faith, the more sense it made to me.” In addition, some of his favorite political writers and commentators were Catholics such as William F. Buckley and Pat Buchanan.

Although the logic and the history of the Catholic faith drew him in, it ultimately the Eucharist that Father Wipf could not resist. “I wanted the Eucharist,” he said. “Jesus said, “This is my body. Why wouldn’t you want to have that?”

Another attraction for Father Wipf was belonging to the Church that goes back to Jesus and is the same anywhere in the world—one, holy, Catholic and apostolic.

Father Wipf entered the Church in 1989. At that time, he felt called to be a priest. He was drawn to the thought of presiding at the liturgy. “But I thought it would be presumptuous to convert and say here I am,” he said. “I wanted to be sure it was not just the newness of being Catholic, so I decided to wait five years and see where I was at then.”

Treatment and healing

After Cardinal Muench high school closed in 1991, Father Wipf found another teaching job, but soon lost it. It was at that point when he had to confront the fact the he had a drinking problem. “It was either move under a bridge or go to treatment,” Father Wipf said. “I was hiding my empties in my trumpet case; it was bad. I did not realize that I had depression and was self-medicating, but in treatment it came out.”

Looking back, he said that when he was younger, he always knew something was wrong. “I wasn’t very social and had a hard time getting things done,” he said. “It would go up and down, but since then, I had to deal with my depression and I am better.”

After treatment, Father Wipf took a job in Minot working with developmentally disabled adults at the Minot Vocation Adjustment Workshop as a residential trainer. “It was a place where I learned to love people for who they were,” he said. “It was a very good experience for me and helped prepare me for the priesthood. It was about giving and not getting, although I did get back in many ways.”

When his self-imposed five-year wait was up, Father Wipf still felt called to the priesthood. He was accepted and attended Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio and was ordained on May 25, 2000. His family was supportive to be a priest, and I ask Him to help me to be a good priest for the people.

said, “We call that fake it till you make it.”

Father Wipf said that his love of the priesthood has brought him much happiness. “I always thought the liturgy would be the most enjoyable part—and it is great—but the people of God are just incredible. People keep me going. It’s been a very rewarding part of my priesthood.”

Working for Jesus as a priest has been a privilege, according to him. “I love Him more every day,” he said. “After Communion, I always thank God for letting me be a priest, and I ask Him to help me to be a good priest for the people.

Holy Father’s Prayer Intentions for April

April 16-May 2, 2018

St. Benedict’s Health Center
851 4th Avenue E, Dickinson, ND 58601
701-456-7317 | www.st-benedicts.org

April 17-May 4, 2018

Benedictine Living Center of Garrison
609 4th Avenue NE, Garrison, ND 58540
701-463-2226 | www.blcgarrison.com

May 5-17, 2018

St. Gabriel’s Community
4580 Coleman St., Bismarck, ND 58503
701-797-5115 | www.stgabrielscommunity.org

Call for special viewing times and events.

To learn more about the Saint John’s Bible, visit www.bhshealth.org/saintohns_bible.

A gift of Sacred Art

That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.

My Life Before the Priesthood

Father Terry Wipf reflects on his life before the priesthood

The Heritage Edition of Saint John’s Bible is brought to your community with support from Benedictine Health System and the North Dakota Health System Foundation.
Serra Club promotes vocations
Three Bismarck-Mandan charter members still active today

By Amanda Evinger
DCA Writer

Often, some of the most beautiful works of God begin by planting little seeds of faith with humility and hope. Such is the case of the Serra Club, which is a flourishing ministry of prayer that works to promote vocations to the religious life and the priesthood in our diocese and beyond.

The Serra USA was founded in 1935. This group of Catholic lay leaders is named in honor of St. Junipero Serra, an 18th century Franciscan friar and missionary who founded missions across California.

Soon after he came to our diocese in 1964, Jerry Spaedy recognized the need for actively promoting religious vocations in our sparsely populated diocese. Coming from the Diocese of St. Paul, he had an intimate knowledge of the Serra Club, which had numerous groups in the Twin Cities area. Knowing how dedicated Serrans are to fostering vocations, he decided the Serra Club charter was needed in Bismarck.

The Bismarck-Mandan chapter is blessed to have three of their original members still active today—Deacon Ray Grabar, Jerry Spaedy and Bob Rausch.

“In the beginning, only a few of us would meet together to pray,” said Deacon Ray Grabar. “At one point, we had trouble getting enough members to have an official charter, so we did some recruiting. We were sitting at about 16 to 18 members, and today we have about 90. In fact, at one time we were the largest or the second largest charter in the United States. Women are now admitted, and I really appreciate their participation.”

On Jan. 5, 1964, the Bismarck-Mandan Serra Club achieved their goal and received the charter which was bestowed by District Governor Harvey Seipp. As his personal gift to the Serra Club, Harvey presented the official Serra Club charter, which continues to be used at their meetings.

Currently, there are Serra Club groups in Bismarck and Minot, plus other active vocations groups in other cities. Its members try to stay true to the original intention of the club, which is to work prayerfully to promote vocations and give a means of fellowship to its members.

In addition to prayer, Serra Club members do fundraising to help seminarians, such as putting up on annual breakfasts or collecting pocket change at their meetings.

“When Deacon Ray first joined the Serra Club in the early 60’s, he was just a “Sunday only” Catholic, but it didn’t take long for that to change.

“My spiritual life mainly consisted of just going to Mass on Sunday, especially on great daily Masses during Lent,” he shared. “But, being a member of the Serra Club members to be more active with my faith. It brought me to pray daily for vocations, which then inspired me to pray for other intentions, such as for my family, and all of their struggles in life.”

Ultimately, it kindled a desire to open his heart to God’s call upon his own life in a radical way.

“My wife Loretta and I have eight children, and I thought that being a member of the Serra Club would be a great way to pray for their vocations,” he said. “But it ended up backfiring on me, and now I am the one with a vocation as a deacon!”

Looking back, Serra Club members are grateful that they were courageous and persistent in founding the charter. The Diocese of Bismarck knew the world needed is now reaping the “harvest” of their efforts.

“Having the Serra Club has really increased the prayers for vocations in our diocese,” said Jerry Spaedy, who has been a member since 1964 and was recently joined by his wife, Sharon. “Some of the years, we have persevered in prayer, even when there wasn’t anyone being ordained, or only one or two men. Now, we have 27 seminarians. I would like to think that our prayers have made a difference. It truly is God’s work.”

And, because this ministry has proven to be such a grace, Jerry and Sharon would love to see it branch out all the more.

“We are blessed and privileged to even have a Serra Club in our diocese,” Jerry said. “When our son David tried to get one started in another diocese, he didn’t have enough support to do so. We club members are constantly trying to get our organization’s name out to local parishes, so that it can grow further.”

Jerry and Sharon have also found that belonging to the Serra Club has enriched their journey as Catholics.

“It is a very prayerful group,” he added. “We not only pray for vocations, but we increase our own personal prayer life as well. Both Sharon and I feel that doing a ministry together has helped us grow in our faith together as a married couple.”

Other members have found themselves blessed in return for their generosity in giving their time and talent to the Serra Club. In 1997, Bob Rausch wrote the following about his enriching experiences as a member: “One of the highlights of my life as a Serran was representing our club at the Chicago International Convention where Bishop Sheen was a major speaker. I could hardly believe I was seated within about ten feet of the podium from which he spoke. Another, of equal importance, was a trip to Serra International Convention held in San Francisco. Serra has been a great gift in my life! I get inspiration from my fellow Serrans when I witness their dedication to leading a good Christian life. I’m so grateful for their companionship on our faith journey together.

Those who would like to join the Serra Club can contact any member and sign up. In Minot, contact Chapter President Mike Ruede at 701-839-4456 and President Chuck Huber at 701-391-9575 in Bismarck.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations is observed on “Good Shepherd Sunday” – April 22, 2018. The purpose of this day is to publicly fulfill the Lord’s instruction to, “Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest” (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). It affirms the primacy of faith and grace in all that concerns vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life. This year marks the 55th anniversary of this celebration.

If you’re wondering if there’s more to life than just “getting by” and are ready to focus on what really matters, then discover the Catholic teaching known as the Theology of the Body.

In An Introduction to the Theology of the Body: Discovering the Master Plan For Your Life, an adult faith formation program, renowned author and theologian Christopher West unfolds God’s extraordinary plan for all of humanity.

This DVD series will be held on Saturday, April 21 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Mary’s Parish, Bismarck. The cost is only $10 plus $5 if you would like to order the workbook. Order for workbooks will be placed on April 2. For more information and to register, contact Diane Huck at 701-223-5562 or dianeh@stmarysparishfamily.net.

Some people have heard the “whats” of Catholic teaching, but very few have ever heard the “whys.” The course presenter will demonstrate that the Church’s teaching on human sexuality makes sense, and, in fact, is the very “logic” of Christianity—because it corresponds perfectly with the deepest stirrings and desires of the human heart.

This study is for everyone searching for their ultimate purpose in life.

Erasing the master plan for your life
Introduction to the Theology of the Body study offered April 21

Discovering the master plan for your life
Introduction to the Theology of the Body study offered April 21

Theology of the Body
An introductory DVD series
Saturday, April 21
3 p.m.
St. Mary’s Parish, Bismarck

About the presenter

The speaker on the DVD series is world-renowned author Christopher West offering the tools needed to lay a firm foundation for those who desire to learn and incorporate the Theology of the Body into their daily lives. He serves as a research fellow and faculty member of the Theology of the Body Institute near Philadelphia.

—Submitted information
Showering God’s love on the most vulnerable

Children’s Advocacy Center provides support

By Amanda Evinger

For the past 17 years, Paula Condol has been giving her heart to a higher purpose, and the joy it has brought her is like nothing else.

“I have been with the Dakota Children’s Advocacy Center (DCAC) for the past 17 years and its mission has become a part of my heart,” said Paula, who now serves as the organization’s executive director. “I strongly believe in giving kids not only great childhoods, but also giving them the skills so they can grow up to be healthy, productive adults. We have such a wonderful opportunity at the DCAC because we are given the honor to intervene with people during one of the most difficult moments of their lives. We all have such a strong passion for the work we do.

The mission of the DCAC is to provide a safe, family friendly environment that promotes hope, health, and healing to traumatized children and their families. They serve children and their families that have been affected by abuse. They also provide education to prevent abuse from occurring and to improve intervention if or when it occurs.

Time and time again, DCAC employees prove to have a tremendous impact on those whom they serve. With willing hearts, they lift the children they work with up from their sorrows, and show them that they are not alone.

“We help people in many different ways,” Paula said. “For some, it is helping them feel safe when safety isn’t something that they’ve known, for others it is providing a listening ear when they feel like their whole world is falling apart. At times, we help them by empowering them to take a stand and to take back control. Sometimes it’s as simple as giving them a cozy blanket to hold as they fall asleep in a new place, or helping them find their smile again as they learn to deal with what has happened to them.”

The DCAC opened in the spring of 1997 and became a full member of the National Children’s Alliance in 1998. For 20 years, they operated under an umbrella organization. In 2008, they became an independent non-profit. In 2008, they partnered with the Diocese of Bismarck to help develop and present Safe Environment Training sessions to kids and volunteers across the western half of North Dakota. Over the past 10 years, they have provided these training sessions to over 10,000 people.

They have partnered with many faith-based organizations over the past 20 years helping to make child safety a high priority. The Diocese of Bismarck has embraced education for both children and its volunteers to educate them and prevent abuse of any kind. Each year, out of the 2,500 people that DCAC trains, over 75% of them are associated with Catholic churches throughout the Diocese of Bismarck.

“Even though the DCAC is a secular organization, I myself am a Catholic, and every day I hope that I do my job with God’s love and a servant’s heart,” Paula said. “We have helped thousands of individuals over the years. Many of their stories have been ingrained in my soul and will always stay with me. That’s why we do what we do—to start people on a new, better path in life, and give them resiliency so they can face the bumps they will meet head on, with strength and courage.”

Looking back, Paula can’t help but be impressed by the ground that the DCAC has covered over the years.

“Since its opening, the DCAC has experienced tremendous growth,” Paula shared. “We have gone from seeing 60 kids a year to over 500. We have served all of the counties in North Dakota, including the state’s Native American reservations, as well as northern South Dakota and Eastern Montana.”

Shannon Hilfer, who has worked with the DCAC as a forensic interviewer for nearly 12 years, is grateful to be a source of consolation to her clients and their families.

“After a child has made a report, they come to DCAC to be interviewed so they don’t have to talk to social services or law enforcement representatives,” she explained. “They tell their story to me, in one place, at one time. It is important that they can tell their story to someone who is trained in talking to them so that the information is accurate and reliable.”

Over time, Shannon sees the children and families she works with grow stronger, more assertive, and confident in dealing with their personal situations the best that they can.

“I tell our families that unfortunately I can’t ensure that bad things won’t happen again, because that is the way life is, and I have no control over that,” Shannon said. “But what I can do is give them skills so that when bad things do happen, they can take a deep breath and know that they have built a strong support system and a resiliency within themselves.”

Shannon also sees glimpse of the joy and freedom her clients can have with the help of people who care.

“That is why I keep doing what I do, because I get the unique experience of being with people in their darkest hours and walking with them to a place where I am no longer needed because they are strong and vibrant and whole,” Shannon said. “They’ve gotten their smile back, and that’s what keeps me going.”

The fruits of this careful, gentle approach are evident in many ways.

“It is very important that when kids have these difficult things happen to them, we don’t re-traumatize them with our professional response,” Shannon said. “With the DCAC’s help in interviewing them, we see better outcomes for the kids, both health-wise and prosecution-wise. People need to understand that children can’t protect themselves, and that they rely on adults to protect them. They are totally vulnerable.”

The DCAC is always in need of donations, and at times, of volunteers. The DCAC events would not be able to happen without the generosity of volunteers. Special events volunteers join event-planning committees and are needed the day of events to help with set up, registration and clean up. Volunteers also needed to assist with the Giving Tree Project during the holidays, which provides necessary gifts for children seen at the DCAC. The monthly sponsorship program, providing snacks and other items for the children served at the DCAC, also relies on the contributions of volunteers.

Those who would like to join the mission of the DCAC may contact info@dakotacac.org or call 701-323-5626. Prospective volunteers can set up a time to come in for a short visit so that a staff member can explain the various programs offered and help determine the best volunteer role for them.

Volunteers need to complete an application and background check, sign a pledge of confidentiality, and attend a volunteer orientation. The Dakota Children’s Advocacy Center is located at 1303 East Central Ave. in Bismarck. More information is available at www.dakotacac.org.

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APRIL 2018

Dakota Children’s ADVOCACY CENTER

By Amanda Evinger

DCA Writer

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the Saint Pio Foundation to request the relics come to the Bismarck Diocese. Once that was set into motion, the details were arranged with Bishop Kagan and Lamonarca.

In Italy, Lamonarca explained that most every Catholic home has a photo of Padre Pio hanging on their wall. But, his personal devotion to the saint came years later after he had come to the United States in 2008 to pursue a career as an opera singer.

After his wife, Valentina, suffered a miscarriage in the fifth month of pregnancy, the couple went through some dark times. On the first anniversary of the loss, they visited the tomb of Padre Pio to ask for his intercession. “Like everyone does, we asked for some sort of sign from him,” Lamonarca said.

On their visit to Italy they met a monsignor who had been a friend of Padre Pio. He showed them a handkerchief soaked with the blood of the saint. Lamonarca said that when that handkerchief was pulled out of its storage bag, “it was as if the room was filled with 1,000 roses.”

A flowery odor is associated with certain saints like Padre Pio. The blood that flowed from his stigmata was reported to have smelled like roses.

“The smell was so strong; my wife and I started to cry,” he said. “The monsignor said that we would have many challenges and sacrifices, but we would be parents and that Padre Pio had a big vision for me.”

In 2013, Lamonarca began making connections with people working to promote Padre Pio’s legacy. Then in 2014, he started the foundation. And, on Sept. 3, 2015, he and his wife had their son, Sebastian.

“My mission, all my efforts and direction with the foundation are to thank God for the blessing of a healthy, beautiful child,” he added.

He said that he continues to pray to Padre Pio for himself and others that this is what the saint would want for his legacy. From Bismarck, Lamonarca boarded a plane for San Bernadino, Calif. to display the relics continuing the 40-diocese tour.

About Padre Pio

St. Pio was born on May 25, 1887 in Pietrelcina, Italy, and baptized Francesco Forgione. He first expressed his desire for priesthood at age 10. To pay for the preparatory education, his father, Grazio Forgione, emigrated to the United States in 1899, where he worked for several years.

The future saint entered the Capuchin order at age 15, taking the name Pio. He was ordained a priest in 1910 at the age of 23. During his lifetime, Padre Pio was known as a mystic with miraculous powers of healing and knowledge, who bore the stigmata. Stigmata is the term the Catholic Church uses to speak about the wounds an individual receives that correspond to the crucifixion wounds of Jesus Christ. They can appear on the forehead, hands, wrists, and feet.

His stigmata emerged during World War I, after Pope Benedict XV asked Christians to pray for an end to the conflict. Padre Pio had a vision in which Christ pierced his side. A few weeks later, on Sept. 20, 1918, Jesus again appeared to him, and he received the full stigmata. It remained with him until his death on Sept. 23, 1968. Pope John Paul II canonized him in 2002.

Those devoted to St. Pio regard these wounds as signs of holiness and miraculous fact that they never became infected, though they did bleed. So much so, that St. Pio is said to have changed his fingerless gloves twice a day.

As Catholics, we pray for the intercession of the saints to help us become good and holy people in our mission to live eternal with Our Lord. We venerate their relics as recognition of a true and intentional disciple of God and to hopefully imitate that type of discipleship.

Continued from page 1

The six relics of St. Pio were on display at the front of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.

Many faithful followers touched sacramentals, such as rosaries, scapulars and prayer cards to the relics of St. Pio.

Bishop Kagan celebrated Mass with several diocesan priests.

A large crowd attended the Mass to commemorate the presence of the relics.

A large number of students from the Catholic schools came to venerate the relics.

Many faithful followers touched sacramentals, such as rosaries, scapulars and prayer cards to the relics of St. Pio.

A large crowd attended the Mass to commemorate the presence of the relics.
North Dakota night at D.C. seminary

By Ryan Martire
Diocesan Seminarian

We, Bismarck seminarians, are very proud of our great diocese and state. Recently, we were blessed to host something called “North Dakota Night” at our seminary, Saint John Paul II, in Washington, D.C. It was a wonderful night, and all the guys from the six other dioceses on the East Coast really loved the night.

Thank you for your commitment to Christ and His mission within our diocese! My fellow seminarians here are: Grant Dvorak, Isaiah Fischer, Jake Magnuson and John Windsor.

Showcasing our home state

“God of freedom, all victorious, Give us souls serene and strong, Strength to make the future glorious, Keep the echo of our song: North Dakota, North Dakota, In our hearts forever long.” These are the words of the North Dakota State Hymn which exuberate within the hearts of seminarians from the Bismarck Diocese.

During our time in the District, we have been blessed to be surrounded by the great priests, seminarians, and lay people of the bustling and bustling Archdiocese of Washington. But, at times, we grow homesick. We come to miss the wide prairies, the serene silence, and the hearty souls of our motherland.

To compensate for our homesickness, we have Bismarck night once a week so that we can talk about North Dakota stuff. You know… farming, hunting, ice-fishing, buffalo, and the like. But, this still did not fully satisfy our North Dakota homesickness. So, North Dakota night was born.

Knoephla, kuchen, lefse, deer jerky… all of these German-Prussian and Norwegian words are foreign to the native seminarians of D.C., so we decided to give them a little taste of the earthy culture of North Dakota.

“Ope,” “you betcha,” “oh for cool,” and “bag” (pronounced bag) were terms plastered over the walls of St. Joseph’s common room at the first-ever North Dakota night at D.C. seminary. Our good mothers and vocation director, Fr. Josh Waltz, sent us the finest cuisine that North Dakota has to offer for the event. From caramel rolls, to knoephla soup, to the deer that our vocation director shot this fall, the seminarians of St. John Paul II seminary did not leave unsatisfied.

To accompany the cultural depths of North Dakota, our talented seminarians provided entertainment for the night. Diocese of Baltimore’s Francis Lyons gave a long list of jokes about North Dakota such as, “If your snow-blower has more miles than your car… then you might be from North Dakota.” JPHH, the band at the seminary, played a rendition of the John Denver song “Take Me Home, Country Roads”, replacing the words “West Virginia” with the beloved words “North Dakota,” to the dismay of West Virginia Seminarian Daniel Callahan.

In short, it was a truly blessed night, and we, North Dakota seminarians, were so tremendously grateful. Now living in D.C., we are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to be here for formation, and the least we could do was share a little bit of our home state with our fellow brothers in Christ Jesus. North Dakota night was a blast and we will forever remember it as a tribute to all our loved ones in D.C.

at St. John Paul II seminary. Our Lady of the Prairies – Pray for us!

Martire is studying Second Pre-Theology at St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C. His home parish is the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck.

How Can You Protect Your Child?

Sexual abuse can happen to children of any race, socioeconomic group, religion or culture. There is no feet-proof way to protect children from sexual abuse, but there are steps you can take to reduce this risk. Below you’ll find some precautions you can take to help protect the children in your life.

Be involved in the child’s life.

• Being actively involved in your child’s life can make warning signs of child sexual abuse more obvious and help your child feel more comfortable coming to you if something isn’t right.
• Show interest in their day-to-day lives. Ask them what they did during the day and who they did it with.
• Get to know the people in your child’s life. Know who your child is spending time with, including other children and adults. Talk about these people openly and ask questions so that your child can feel comfortable doing the same.
• Talk about the media. Incidents of sexual violence are frequently covered by the news and portrayed in television shows. Ask your child questions about this coverage to start a conversation. Questions like, “Have you ever heard of this happening before?” or “What would you do if you were in this situation?” can signal to your child that there are important issues that they can talk about with you.

For more information on keeping kids safe, call (701) 323-5426.
School Sisters of Notre Dame 100-year milestone in the diocese

By Sister Ann Schuch, SSND

The School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) are celebrating 100 years in the Diocese of Bismarck.

SSND arrived in New Hradec, a small town with only one building, the church. Bishop Dahms, in the early 1840s, greeted the sisters who opened the school after New Year's Day in the church basement with approximately 23 students, including two teachers. There were no books, desks, or beds because of a blighted that halted delivery.

The school’s location made payment for tuition and boarding fees with meat, garden produce and even corn.

The original building, with multiple alterations and additions, served all purposes for many years. A classroom, turned into a classroom, later served as a dormitory.

St. Mary, New Hradec, 1923-2014

The school was founded by Father Paroutage who envisioned a parochial boarding school that would provide Catholic education to the children in New Hradec and the surrounding area.

The school flourished and a commercial class functioned as kindergarten through grade 8.

When enrollment reached 263 in 1957, the Sisters german-began on a four-classroom addition to the school and lay teachers were hired to assist the sisters. The school functioned as a consolidated school arrangement in 1961.

When the Sisters left in 1961, the elementary schools according to grade levels.

St. Wenceslaus was under a lay principal and teachers from 1984 until 1999, and the Sisters were not needed to staff the parish office, complex. SSND returned to the school from 1993 until 1997.

The SSND community in the region was part of the Vincentian Family. In 1986, the SSND community began to serve at St. Charles Borromeo and the Bishop of the region was a Vincentian.

The Sisters arrived in Bismarck to staff the school for 707 students.

Sisters answered the call to teach at many schools.

The SSND were welcomed to Dickinson by the pastor, parishioners and Benedictine sisters.

SSN sisters arrived in Bismarck in 1953 where they began teaching in the high school. Once the parish felt it could afford to do so, the grade school reverted to its parish status.

In 1917, with an enrollment of 80 students.

In 1913, with 28 Catholic families in the parish and their lay staffs. Sister Gladys Dahms to operate one classroom as a parochial school.

By 1973, with changing times and decline in enrollment, there was sufficient space in St. Anne Church for all the elementary students.

In 1968, the school district asked Msgr. Dahms to operate one classroom as a parochial school.

ST. GERTRUDE HIGH SCHOOL, RALEGH: 1959-1987

In 1965, five Catholic families of German-Russian descent settled in the area. A Catholic presence has existed on the land for hundreds of years. In 1881, the South Dakota Benedictines from Indiana, arrived in 1878 to teach.


Parents wanted a Catholic high school but they knew their small community could not support both.

When the Franciscan Sisters left, the pastor turned to Mother St. Bernardi in Mankato, and, in August 1959, three SSND sisters arrived from St. Joseph, Mn., arrived in 1959 to serve these children of German immigrants.

The first SSND came to St. Joseph Parish in 1953.

St. Joseph Parish went to public schools. The pastor, parishioners and Benedictine Sisters.

In 1957, St. Anne parishioners had built two schools about two miles apart.

St. Anne, Bismarck: 1957-1985

The story of SSND coming to St. Joseph Parish began in 1953, four years before the Bishop of Bismarck confirmed that the Episcopal Diocese of Bismarck.

The sisters who had established schools in the region were inducted into the Trinity Titan Athletics Hall of Fame.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur have a long and storied relationship with Dickinson Catholic schools.

Tekla Dakota was a state and the Diocese of Bismarck.

SSND sisters arrived in Bismarck in 1953.

In 1961, the Sisters arrived as part of Trinity's 57-year history helped lay the foundation for its viability as a high school.

Sisters and parents sacrificed, struggled and persevered in their efforts to provide Catholic education for the children.

The SSND are members of an international congregation of more than 2,500 women religious in 30 countries.

Our congregation, founded on Oct. 24, 1873, by Blessed Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger in Bavaria, is in its 187th year as a congregation. Today our headquarters are in Rome.

In 1847, the SSND came to the United States.

In 1881, the South Dakota Benedictines from Missouri, arrived in 1878 to teach.

In 1917, with 28 Catholic families in the parish and their lay staffs.

By 1973, with changing times and decline in enrollment, there was sufficient space in St. Anne Church for all the elementary students.

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Continued from page 9
Dickinson State University; Mandan: Christ the King Parish, St. Joseph Parish; Mandaree: St. Anthony Mission School, Mandaree Public School; Max: Immaculate Conception Parish; Menoken: St. Hildegard Parish; Minot: Bishop Ryan High School, Our Lady of Grace Parish and School, St. Therese/Little Flower; Wilton: Sacred Heart Parish.
In our early history, sisters also taught two-week vacation bible schools for parish children in rural towns without a Catholic school.
SSND IN THE DIOCESE TODAY
Sister Annette Dobitz, born on a farm in the New England area, attended grade and high school at St. Mary. During the 1973-74 school year, she began her teaching career as a student teacher at St. Anne in Bismarck. Her first years of teaching were at five schools in Minnesota. Sister Annette is in her 13th year as 7th-8th grade math teacher at Trinity in Dickinson. She also teaches sixth grade CCD classes at St. Patrick Parish. For several summers, she assisted at the Christian Life Camp at St. Anthony’s Mission near Mandaree.
Sister Rosemarie Dvorak grew up on the family farm in the Scheffeld area. She has been a SSND for 58 years. From 1966 until 1974 she taught at St. Anne, Bismarck, eight of her 24 years either as an elementary teacher or principal in Catholic schools in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. Sister Ivo is in her 334th year in pastoral ministry with Corpus Christi Parish, Bismarck.
Sister Gladys Reisenauer (formerly known as Sister Louis Anna) lived on a farm near New England. She attended St. Mary Grade and High Schools as a boarder. As an elementary teacher for 45 years, she ministered in Minnesota schools, at SS. Peter and Paul, New Hradec; St. Mary, New England; Mandaree Public Schools; St. Bernard, Fort Yates; Little Flower, Minot, and St. Joseph, Dickinson. She served as chaplain at St. Alexius Hospital, Bismarck, for two years and then returned to Rochester as chaplain for both Mayo hospitals. Since 2015, she has been an on-call chaplain at CHI St. Alexius Health Center, Dickinson. In July, Sr. Gladys will be an SSND for 60 years.
Sister Ivo Schoch grew up on the family farm in the Scheffeld area. She has been a SSND for 58 years. From 1966 until 1974 she taught at St. Anne, Bismarck, eight of her 24 years either as an elementary teacher or principal in Catholic schools in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. Sister Ivo is in her 334th year in pastoral ministry with Corpus Christi Parish, Bismarck. She continues the ministry in which she has assisted some 800 families in planning funeral services and, for many, she has done the vigil/wake service. She also works with LOTUS (Looking Onward to Understanding and Serenity) grief-support groups.
Sister Karen Warren was born in Bismarck. As a first grader, she was in the first class at St. Anne School. After graduating from Good Counsel Academy in Mandako, she entered the SSND and became a teacher. She taught grade school at St. Mary, New England, and in Iowa and Minnesota. In 2011, Sister Karen returned to Bismarck to care for her mom living with beginning stages of Alzheimer’s disease. Sister Karen is also a wood turner.
CALLED TO GOD’S WORK
Sixty-six young women became School Sisters of Notre Dame from the following places in the diocese: Scheffeld (16), New England (12), New Hradec (10), Hague (7), Napoleon (7), Strasburg (5), Dickinson (3), Linton (2), Belfield (1), Bismarck (1), Gaylord (1), Grassy Butte (1), and Hirschville (1).
The SSND have always been educators in all that we are and do. In our document, You Are Sent, we are encouraged: “Urged by the love of Christ, we choose to express our mission through our ministry directed toward education. For us, education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God’s image and assisting them to direct their gifts toward building the Earth.” Like our foundress, Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, “we educate with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons.” As we celebrate this century of mission in the Bismarck Diocese, we express our gratitude to God and the people of North Dakota who have been part of our endeavors during these past hundred years.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
This year, I celebrate 60 years as an SSND. When I left my home in Scheffeld, in 1956, I could not have imagined what God had in mind for me. Little did I dream that my first assignment as teacher would take me (then known as Sister Mary Ronald) to St. Mary, New England, just 12 miles from my home. I also had the opportunity, as teacher and administrator, to work with the Blackfeet in Montana; St. Paul, Minnesota; Kisii, Kenya, East Africa; and Dickinson.
I served on our provincial council in Mankato, Minn., and as secretary at our Generale in Rome. From Italy, I moved to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, doing pastoral outreach to the elderly and sick in Fort Yates, Cannon Ball and Porcupine. Currently, I am a pastoral minister in Billings, Mont., giving healing support to Native Americans hospitalized and in rehab centers.
Visit www.ssnd.org, to learn more about the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

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CREDITS
* Information on the School Sisters of Notre Dame: Courtesy of the School Sisters of Notre Dame North American Archives
* Information on the Benedictine Sisters: Courtesy of Annunciation Monastery Archives, Bismarck, ND
* Information on the SSND in North Dakota: Source of the Centennial Celebration 1902-2002
* St. Joseph’s Parish Centennial History Committee 2005 – St. Joseph’s Parish, Dickinson, ND

For schedule, more information or to register, visit www.fargodiocease.org/redeemed
The Heritage Edition of the Saint John’s Bible will be available for public display at St. Gabriel’s Community in Bismarck, St. Benedict’s Health Center in Dickinson and Benedictine Living Center of Garrison in April and May.

This special opportunity was brought to life through a partnership between Benedictine Health System (parent organization of the senior care centers) and the College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, Minn., to honor the 125th anniversary of their sponsor, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery.

The Saint John’s Bible is the first handwritten and illuminated Bible commissioned by a Benedictine monastery since the advent of the printing press more than 500 years ago. Noted for its vibrant, colorful “illuminations” and elegant calligraphy, the one-of-a-kind Heritage Edition is a full-size fine art edition of the original manuscript created under the direction of Donald Jackson, the artistic director of the original manuscript.

The making of the Heritage Edition revived a tradition that dates back centuries, and involved the finest printing experts and binders in the world to ensure faithful representation of the original Saint John’s Bible. Utilizing ancient techniques and materials, its construction parallels that of its medieval predecessors—written on calfskin vellum and using turkey, goose and swan quills, natural handmade inks, hand-ground pigments and gold leaf gild—while incorporating modern themes, images and technology of the 21st century.

Each letter was rendered by hand, and each page was scrupulously compared to its original counterpart to ensure fidelity to the original. Only 299 sets of the Heritage Edition were created.

In the tradition of great medieval Bibles, the Saint John’s Bible is monumental, measuring two feet tall and three feet wide. The Heritage Edition was printed on 100 percent cotton paper using lightfast ultraviolet inks. Gold and silver treatments replicate the original gold, silver, and platinum used in the original illuminations. Because many of the illuminations required finishing treatments by hand, no two Heritage Edition sets are identical. Once the pages were complete, each volume was hand-bound using Italian calfskin, Welsh oak boards, and headbands hand-sewn in Pakistan.

The goal of the Saint John’s Bible is to ignite the spiritual imagination of people all over the world of all faiths, by commissioning a work of art that illuminates the word of God for a new millennium, in a way that is relevant to the 21st century. It is a prophetic witness to the word of God in our day and beyond, an opportunity for learning and scholarship and a dignified expression of the Benedictine vision: “That in all things God may be glorified,” which aligns nicely with the work of their sponsor, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery.

More information on The Saint John’s Bible and the Heritage Edition can be found at www.saintjohnsbible.org.

—Submitted information

Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Immaculate Conception, #322, Bismarck, North Dakota, celebrated its 100th Anniversary December 10, 2017. The court was instituted October 9, 1917. The Most Reverend David D. Kagan, Bishop of Bismarck, celebrated Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit with Court Chaplain Fr. Gregory Luger concelebrating. Among those attending was Past National Regent Claudia Bosch, Dickinson; Second Vice National Regent Vickie Feist; North Dakota state officers; local court officers and members. A luncheon and program followed Mass.
In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. — Matthew 18:3

“Let’s take some time off,” the old guy has to be careful not to nod off before the two-year old (I suspect with the help of his mother) who coined the family phrase “take some time off.” So, off to a quiet room we went but, like most of these situations, I especially appreciated the innocence of little children, their gift of love, trust and forgiveness that is so evident in their lives.

For more information, contact Christie Collins via GoToMeeting online video conferencing. Are available either on location in Bismarck or the first Thursday of every month. Meetings are available either on location in Bismarck or go to Meeting online video conferencing. For more information, contact Christie Collins at 864-354-5046. Find out more about Jesus about becoming like a child, I especially appreciated the sharing of ideas, credit, work, or commitment to God. I am called to be God’s child and to be innocent, loving, caring, meek and loving. This means I must “take some time off” from God. Care to join me?

A Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend is a private weekend away from the distractions of daily life for couples in good marriages. Give your marriage this gift. The next available weekends in this area are April 20-22 in Fargo and Nov. 9-11 in Medora. Early registration is highly recommended. For more information, visit ndwwme.org or contact Rob and Angie at 701-347-1998.

Hannah’s Hope support group to meet April 5 Hannah’s Hope ministry, a diocesan spiritual support group for couples facing the struggles of infertility, will hold the first meeting Thursday, April 5 at 7 p.m., with plans to meet the first Thursday of every month. Meetings are available either on location in Bismarck or go to Meeting online video conferencing. For more information, contact Christie Collins at collins@bismarckdiocese.com or 864-354-5046. Find out more about Hannah’s Hope ministry at www.bismarckdiocese.com/hope.

Living Chaplet of Divine Mercy April 8 The CCD students at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary in Stanley will present the Living Chaplet of Divine Mercy on Sunday, April 8 at 3 p.m. The public is invited to attend. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Concerts at two churches Catholic artist, Michael James Mette, will be performing music and testimony with his daughters, Gabby (13), Trinity (12), and Charity (10), at Our Lady of Grace in Minot on Monday, April 16 and St. Ann’s Parish in Hebron on Wednesday, April 18. Both performances are at 7 p.m. All are invited. Check with the parish offices for more information, 701-839-6834 in Minot or 701-878-4658 in Hebron.

Celebration of New Life Mass April 17 Come celebrate with expecting and new parents at the Celebration of New Life Mass with Bishop Molla on Tuesday, April 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck. All are invited and families are encouraged; parents will receive a blessing. Questions can be directed to Christie Collins at Christie Collins at 864-354-5046. Find out more and register online here: www.bismarckdiocese.com/birth.

Keynote address at Vocations Jamboree April 18 St. Gianna’s daughter, Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla, will share her mother’s memory, example, testimony and spirituality with the public at the University of Mary’s annual Vocations Jamboree. Her keynote address, Wednesday, April 18, 7:30 p.m., in the new Founders Hall inside the Lumen Vitae University Center, is free and open to the public. Those interested in attending are encouraged to register at www.umary.edu/vocjam or contact Ed Konieczka at (701) 355-8102 or erkiniekz@ umary.edu.

Search weekends Search for Christian Maturity is a weekend retreat experience sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Bismarck. The weekends are for anyone of high school or college age (at least 15 years old). Search weekends are held at the Badlands Ministries Card just south of Medora. The next weekend is April 20-22. More information can be found at www.bismarckdiocese.com/search1.

Father-daughter ball April 28 The third annual father-daughter ball sponsored by the diocese will be held Saturday, April 28 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Municipal Country Club in Bismarck. The event is for daughters age 4-18 and their fathers. Supper will be served with a dance to follow. Tickets are $50 per couple and $10 for each additional daughter. Register online at bismarckdiocese.com/ball.

Quilt show and sale May 5 The Church of Corpus Christ Quilters show and sale is Saturday May 5, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the parish center in Bismarck. There will be more than 100 quilts for sale. Refreshments will be served and there’s no admission fee.

Caritas Award Luncheon May 8 The Spring Caritas Award Luncheon is Tuesday, May 8 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. hosted by Catholic Charities North Dakota at Spirit of Life Church in Mandan. This year’s honorees are Sr. Mary Margaret, Sr. Arnel Grace, and Sr. Josephine because of their outstanding service in their role in expanding the Mother Teresa Outreach program at Spirit of Life Church in Mandan. The sisters have ministered to others byubit, where in the soup kitchen, distributing food in the food pantry, teaching faith formation in the parish, and countless other ways. There is no cost to attend, but attendees are asked to RSVP no later than April 30 to dinner@ catholiccharitiesnds.org or Catholic Charities North Dakota at 701-235-4457.

“Ag Attitudes” JAMES ODERMANN

The innocence of children is a lesson for all

The innocence of children is a lesson for all...
Our values statement provides that “Catholic Charities serves all people, regardless of faith. These values inspire the work that we do for and with those most in need: Our mission is sustained by hope, guided by charity, and rooted in Christian faith and the principles of Catholic social teaching.”

Previously, I have discussed some of the resources available on the Catholic social teachings. These include the many papal encyclicals addressing different topics on charity and justice, the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, and of course Sacred Scripture and the Catechism. These are all very insightful sources, but over the past couple of years I have been searching for a more accessible guide to the social teachings.

This past fall, a mentor shared a newer resource with me called the “DOCAT—What to do?” The DOCAT (DO comes from the verb to do and CAT stands for Catholic Teaching) was structured in a question and answer format. It is well written, clear, and to the point. The first thing it says, that is to answer that question of, “What should we do?” Some of you may already be familiar with the YOUCAT, a catechism for youth that was released at the Catholic Book Store in 2016, and most recently the same team published a YOUCAT Bible as well. The DOCAT was created in response to the vision of Pope Francis and others as a guide for young people on how to live out their faith in the world. In fact, the DOCAT includes a foreword from the Pope himself, inviting all of us to learn the social doctrine of the Church and participate in social action. He adds, “If a Christian in these days looks away from the need of the物资 poor, then in reality he is not a Christian!”

Addressed especially to our young people, the DOCAT contains a richness and depth to it that can benefit individuals of all ages and backgrounds. The social teachings are a gift from the Church, and all people of goodwill should find many different ideas for consideration in how we can respond with love and care to problems we face in the world today.

In contrast, the DOCAT Study Guide is also helpful to have with individual lessons or group discussions. Copies of both are available at Catholic bookstores, online, at a discount through the Fargo Diocese, or online.

Interestingly the DOCAT is structured in a question and answer format similar to the way Saint Thomas Aquinas addressed common questions or objections with his responses in the Summa Theologica and other treatises. This method also hearkens back to the ancient philosophers and is still commonly known today as the “Socratic Method” after the Greek philosopher Socrates who was reported to have asked questions of his students or followers to teach them.

The DOCAT begins by explaining where the social teachings come from and their purpose. Over time, the Catholic social teachings have been developed through the Popes and Bishops (Q24-25). The purpose of the Social Teachings is: (1) “To set forth the requirements of just social action in the light of the Gospel,” and (2) “In the name of justice to denounce social, economic, or political actions and structures wherever they contradict the Gospel message.” (Q25). Helpful summaries of the key themes or principles of the social teachings can be readily found from the USCCB and other sources.

In describing the DOCAT, Pope Francis says, “it is like a user’s manual that helps us to change ourselves with the Gospel first, and then our closest surroundings, and finally the whole world.” Through twelve chapters, the DOCAT answers tough questions about living in our world with others, on the individual level, locally and nationally, and on the international field. It explains concepts such as solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good, and discusses the importance of family in society. Another great feature of the DOCAT are the digressions on different current topics. These include the intersections of new media, bioethics, poverty, global goods and research.

Although the DOCAT is small, there is much to digest. It can be picked up and reflected upon as much as you would want to or be able to read through it all at one time. In my own experience, I could easily spend an hour on each of the 12 chapters, and may have taken much longer if I had the time. With substantial indexes of subjects and names of people quoted, the DOCAT can serve as a useful reference tool, as well.

Much of the beauty of this book is how well-researched it is with many helpful quotes, stories, and examples to drive home its points.

For a companion DOCAT Study Guide, I think the DOCAT hits a homerun!

**Prososki is the Director of Development and Community Relations for Catholic Charities North Dakota (CCND). For more than 90 years, CCND and its supporters have been putting their faith in action helping people in changing lives. Chad can be reached at info@catholicharitiesnd.org or 701-235-4457.**
The wrong-headedness of “wrongful birth” lawsuits

At its core, the idea of a “wrongful birth” claim is unreasonable and ethically incoherent. Parents who bring lawsuits against obstetricians and hospitals claim that medical professionals should have detected a particular disease or defect in their unborn baby prior to prenatal testing and informed them about it. Had they been given this information, their argument continues, they would have chosen to abort their baby, rather than spending years of their lives caring for a less-than-perfect, possibly infirm child. Wrongful birth lawsuits enable the parents to seek legal redress, often in the form of multi-million dollar settlements. In 1995, for example, a jury in Washington state awarded a $50 million payout to a couple who claimed they would have aborted their five-year-old son Oliver if they had known he had an “unbalanced chromosomal translocation.” Because of the mismatched chromosomes he received from his parents, he has an IQ of less than 70 and is unable to walk. Rachelle Harz, a malpractice lawyer who spearheaded one of these lawsuits in New Jersey in 1999, expressed some of the tortuous thinking that goes into these cases during an interview for 60 Minutes. She noted that although the physician in this case, “didn’t cause the child’s retardation, what he caused was not giving the proper information to the parents to allow them the choice to abort the child.” She concluded that the doctor “caused the birth of this very, very neurologically impaired child.”

The fundamental flaw in her argument, of course, is the claim that the doctor “caused the birth” of the baby, when, in fact, the birth was caused by an activity that took place nine months prior between the husband and wife. That action of the mom and dad, not an action by the doctor, resulted in the birth.

What the doctor actually “caused” by not discovering and sharing specific medical information with the parents was the preservation of the child’s life. These lawsuits rely on fundamentally flawed logic: that it is wrong and illegal for a doctor not to know or to withhold medical information such that a life that would have been ended is saved; second, that a doctor is somehow obligated to facilitate or cooperate in harmful or lethal actions that parents intend to carry out against their own offspring. If the doctor, however, has long professed allegiance to the creed of “do no harm,” so that doctors can serve uniquely as healers, not killers. For obstetricians in particular, the unborn child they track and follow during pregnancy count as that doctor’s patients in the same way that the mothers do.

Whenever a couple sets out with the intention of aborting an imperfect child and requests that prenatal testing be performed for this purpose, the practice of testing itself becomes immoral. In the same way, any physician or health care professional who arranges for such tests, if they have prudential certainty that a couple intends to abort a child, would be guilty of cooperating in evil when that abortion takes place.

To consider a parallel example, if a physician believed that a child arriving to the hospital emergency room had been physically abused or severely beaten by his parents, he would be duty-bound, not to mention legally obligated, to report that abuse to authorities. He would not be permitted to turn a blind eye, or otherwise cooperate in its facilitation so that child by his or her parents.

Similarly, obstetricians who work with pregnant couples should not be expected to turn a blind eye and provide diagnostic information to parents that will encourage them fatally to assault their unborn child.

None of us is perfect. None of us is born into this world completely free of defects, whether physical or psychological. Those limitations, however, never entitle others to place our lives in the crosshairs and pull the trigger—especially our own parents! In sum, these wrongful birth cases promote catastrophic misunderstandings about parental duties and the physician’s obligations towards mothers and their children in prenatal care settings.

Recognizing that some parents will face considerable expense, labor, and difficulty in raising a child who requires special care and attention due to disabilities, it is unreasonable to promote a pro-life and supportive response on behalf of these families, rather than encouraging the corrosive practice of wrongful birth lawsuits. That supportive response should include the expectation of everyone chipping in, and helping out, whether through insurance, taxes or crowdfunding, or through other forms of civic, societal or ecclesial outreach.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The Diocese of Bismarck is firmly committed to the health and protection of our children, young people and vulnerable adults. With the hope of healing the pain and suffering from sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, we encourage anyone who has suffered from such trauma come forward and know to report allegations of sexual abuse, please contact: Dale Ebeler, Chancellor, Diocese of Bismarck, PO Box 1575, Bismarck, ND 58502-1575. Phone: 701.223.1347 or 1.877.405.7435. The complaint form and policies can be found on the diocesan web site at http://www.bismarckdiocese.com.

CODE OF PASTORAL CONDUCT

The Catholic Church must be exemplary: Clergy, staff, whether diocesan or parish, and volunteers are held accountable for their behavior. To enable the highest level of accountability, there must be a clear and unambiguous definition of appropriate behavior. To this end, the Code of Pastoral Conduct is enforced for the Diocese of Bismarck and it provides a foundation for implementing effective and enforceable standards for all personnel. View the Code of Pastoral Conduct at http://www.bismarckdiocese.com.

During the Liturgy of the Word we listen to Scripture. Scripture is our story. It is not someone else’s story. It is the story of God’s family. His children. We hear of God’s love for us throughout salvation history—who our family. At Mass, we come together as God’s family, and are linked to each other in our local faith community, across the world and through the centuries by our common belief.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist we receive the Eucharist, Christ, who chose to join His divinity to our humanity. Christ chose to share in our human experience, a shared intimate of love. It is precisely at Mass that we recognize and acknowledge how God has loved His children throughout salvation history and how He continues to love us.

Often, I hear from parishioners, “Father, I get nothing out of Mass” My response to that statement is, “Well, what do you bring to Mass?” They look at me with the most quizzical look and state, “I come to receive.”

But, how can we receive if we are not prepared to give? There needs to be an enveloping of our very self if we are to receive God’s love, His grace. How can I receive what I am unprepared, unwilling or simply do not know how to give? It is precisely at Mass that we learn how to love, and be loved. Within the family of God, His Church, we learn how to love, and to love.

By “choosing” to attend Mass even though we may be distracted, or occupied, or think we’re just too busy, we are making a statement of belief. We are choosing to reciprocate God’s gratuitous love. Even an imperfect attempt of reciprocating God’s love in attendance at Mass will lead to an awareness of the intimate union between God and us, His children.

And, a deepening of the intimacy between a child and his/her father. The Mass is an act of worship, an encounter with our God, the risen Lord.
Parents, I know you’ve all heard your pas- tor or someone else tell you that “parents are the primary educators of the faith.” This can be a very scary thing to hear and can often make us as parents feel like failures when we back up and think about what we have, or haven’t, done to pass on our Catholic faith to our children.

In the hustle and bustle of life, sometimes we can’t even find time to look for matching socks out of the piles of laundry on the living room floor (okay, maybe that’s just me), so this idea of being the primary educators of the faith is a responsibility that can seem overwhelming and impossible.

I understand, firsthand, how impossible this might seem when we have full-time jobs, are catering kids to and from activities every night of the week and traveling for sports on the weekends. It can be very difficult to “log in” the faith in a way that is meaningful and valuable for our children. But, as parents, we can’t disregard current statistics about our children and their faith. In earlier articles, I’ve shared that the average age at which teens are currently choosing to leave the Catholic Church is 13. And the “nones”—those claiming no religious affiliation, is the fastest growing subset of young adults in the country (curr- rently 1 in 4).

I don’t know about you, but these statistics keep me up at night. As a parent myself, I question whether I’m sending the right mes- sage to my kids and if I truly am passing on my faith. But research shows that the domes- tic church (the family) has the biggest impact on whether a child will stay Catholic and continue practicing the faith as an adult.

If you aren’t currently bringing the faith into your home daily, getting started can seem very daunting and uncomfortable. And, if you feel like you have to go deeper, that, too, can be difficult. But, I want you to know that it’s not too late. It’s never too late!

Sometimes change is difficult, especially when change is the easiest way for him to say, “I love you.” When Dan played video games instead of spending time with me, I heard, “I don’t love you.” This kept going and even though we thought we were being very loving, we were acting out of our own love languages, leaving one another unintentionally feeling “unloved.”

About three years into our marriage, Dan and I began working with a team of couples who assist in pre-marriage preparation within the diocese. A portion of the seminar had been changed since we had attended as engaged couple and the love language profile had been added. That weekend, Dan and I took the profile for the first time and, even though we were not surprised by what our love languages were, we were surprised at how terrible we were at speaking our beloved’s love language.

As the season shifts from winter to spring, there is hope, there is new life, there is beauty. While watching TV or sharing the events of the day, it can be very easy to let other things take priority, but nothing is more important than receiving Jesus. And, doing so as a family provides an opportunity to connect with each other while connecting with God. If you are traveling out of town over the weekend for sports or a vaca- tion, find a church nearby to attend (check out www.thecatholicdirectory.com).

Ask your pastor or parish director of reli- gious education for information and tools to help you share the faith at home. They will have numerous family-friendly ideas and resources to share with you.

Learning to speak the other’s love language is quality time as well and intentionally speaks the love language of their spouse.

As respect life and natural family planning. In prayer, reading a book or watching videos to learn more about the faith (Check out Fr. Mike Schmitz on YouTube for a lot of great, short videos). This can be done verbally, but also through action. You can start small by praying to- gether before meals or at night before bed. While watching TV or sharing the events of the day, it can be very easy to let other things take priority, but nothing is more important than receiving Jesus. And, doing so as a family provides an opportunity to connect with each other while connecting with God. If you are traveling out of town over the weekend for sports or a vaca- tion, find a church nearby to attend (check out www.thecatholicdirectory.com).

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Come celebrate with expecting and new parents at the Celebration of New Life Mass with Bishop Kagan on Tuesday, April 17, at 6:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit! All are invited and families are encouraged; parents will receive a blessing. New life is such a gift!

Questions? Contact Christie Collins at (864) 354-5046 or ccollins@bismarckdiocese.com

Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m.
Cathedral of the Holy Spirit