Catholic Schools building projects at different stages

Catholic schools in Dickinson and Bismarck have been making progress on building projects throughout the summer.

Construction continues on the new St. Mary’s Central High School in north Bismarck. The building progress has been fast and efficient through the spring and summer. All the foundation and more than half of the walls have gone up so far. The remaining walls and windows will be in place before the end of fall. This will allow work to move ahead on the interior of the school over the winter. The doors are set to open to students in the fall of 2019 as originally planned. The chapel for the new St. Mary’s Central High School has been bid out and currently the footings and foundation are being completed. The exterior structure of the chapel will be complete by the opening of the school in 2019, but the interior will need some extra time for completion due to the fine detail work involved.

The project initiative also includes renovations to the three Catholic elementary schools in Bismarck—St. Mary’s, Cathedral and Saint Anne. Significant work is currently being done at St. Mary’s, with projects to begin at the other locations soon.

In Dickinson, students have returned to school welcomed by a newly renovated gym space and auditorium. The Knights of Columbus Activities Center has a completely new gym floor and bleachers. The facility also received new paint, portable baskets, lighting and a sound system. The Trinity Auditorium now has new seating and carpeting. The fundraising phase of the project that encompassed these renovations also included funds for teacher and staff salary improvements and facility needs. Students can take pride in the new surroundings and realize how far the projects have come from the aftermath of the fire that occurred at Trinity Junior High and High School in March, 2014.

See more information on the school projects on pages 8 and 9.
Don’t let faith practices become too routine

FROM THE BISHOP

With the coming of the month of September, the schedules for all of us change to the extent that a more regular routine becomes the daily norm. In one sense, this is good since during the summer time many took vacations as a break from the usual routine and were able to rest and rejuvenate body and spirit. In another sense, returning to a regular routine is not so good when it concerns our lives of faith.

What I mean is that our daily life of faith and our reverent practice of our faith in prayer, good works of mercy and real sacrifices should never become routine, that is to say, we should never take our faith for granted. We all know or should know that true faith is God’s gift to us with which we are to live our lives so as to get to heaven. If we take it for granted, meaning if we just have it but do not nourish it, then we run the terrible risk of losing this precious gift.

We are several months removed from our last Lenten season, but do you remember what you committed yourself to do during that holy time? If you made the effort to get to daily Mass and/or faithfully pray every morning and night, if you made the concerted effort to practice the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy as you were able, and if you chose a specific act of penance to perform every day of Lent and kept to that, then consider doing all of this again now that your routine has changed and become more regular.

It is not that difficult to do; what is more difficult to do is to persevere in this every day. All of our parishes have ample times for Sunday Masses and regular confessions; many have periods of time every week for Exposition and Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. So many of our parishes have very good Catholic outreach efforts to the poor and needy and they are always welcoming of those who wish to volunteer some of their time to assist in these works of charity.

Besides being faithful to our Sunday Mass obligation and to regular confession each month, in September we celebrate the wonderful Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on Sept. 14. Make the sacrifice to attend and participate at Holy Mass on this day and thank Our Lord Jesus for His Sacrifice which saved us from our sins and which we could not have done for ourselves. There are several beautiful feasts which the Church celebrates during September and I encourage you to be at Mass for all of them, but if you cannot do that, at least set aside the time to be at Mass on Sept. 14. Meditate on the Crucifix. Ask yourself if you would freely do this for someone else. If you do this then you will understand a bit better why the Church celebrates this Feast and, better, you will understand how much Jesus loves you.

BISHOP’S SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 2018

Sept. 1  •  Fr. Jared Johnson’s Installation Mass, St. Mary, Bismarck, 4:30 p.m.
Sept. 3-6  •  Fall Clergy Conference, Medora
Sept. 8  •  Titan Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony/Banquet, Trinity High School, Dickinson, 5:30 p.m. MDT
Sept. 9  •  200th Anniversary of Assumption Parish, Pembina, 3 p.m.
Sept. 14  •  Cabinet Meeting, Chancery, 10 a.m.
Sept. 15  •  Home on the Range Board of Directors Meeting, Center for Pastoral Ministry, 12 p.m.
Sept. 16  •  Confirmation, St. Edwin, Washburn, 10:30 a.m.
Sept. 17  •  Dakota Hope Clinic Fall Fundraising Banquet, Minot, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 18  •  Real Presence Radio Interview, 9 a.m.
Sept. 21  •  Real Presence Radio Fall Live Drive, 9:00 a.m.
Sept. 22  •  THIRST Women’s Conference Vigil Mass, Bismarck Event Center, 4 p.m.
Sept. 23  •  Confirmation, Spirit of Life, Mandan, 11 a.m.
Sept. 24  •  Catholic Scouting Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 3 p.m.
Sept. 27  •  St. Vincent Continuing Care Annual Visit, 10 a.m.
Sept. 29  •  Fr. William Ruelle’s Installation Mass, St. Patrick, Dickinson, 4:30 MDT
Sept. 30  •  Confirmation, St. Joseph, Dickinson, 10:30 a.m. MDT
The root cause of the current scandal is, as St. John teaches us (1 Jn 2:16), the world, the flesh, the devil, and man’s natural inability to conquer them. But we need not fear, because Jesus Christ has conquered the world, and has given us the Church—perfect and penitent—to participate in his victory. If we are troubled by this mode of salvation, then let us pour out our hearts to the Lord in prayer.

In the end, we can agree with these general sentiments: clean up the mess, adjudicate whatever crimes have been committed, care for the victims and their families, and keep those who need to be held responsible accountable. But to those whose otherwise sturdy faith is shaken by scandal, remember this: except for her divine head and her immaculate mother, the Church is immanent in sinful men, from top to bottom. This is in itself scandalous, as scandalous as Christ’s cross (1 Cor 3:18).

Through sinful hands we are given Christ’s unsullied graces necessary to purify first ourselves and then our neighbors. Still, some demons can only be conquered by prayer and fasting (Mt 17:21). The drama that dominates the headlines today calls us not to revolution but to a deeper living of the Church’s divine and incorruptible mystery.

Fr. Aquinas Guilbeau, O.P., is senior editor of Aleteia.org and teaches at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

Fr. Dominic Bouck is a newly ordained priest of the Diocese of Bismarck serving at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck.

This article first appeared on Aleteia.org and is reprinted here with permission.
Sr. Kathleen Kuntz, OSB
Sacred Heart Monastery, Richardson

Sr. Kathleen Kuntz, OSB, born the ninth of Eva (Gerhardt) and Frank Kuntz’s 14 children near Fallon in 1929, entered the Sacred Heart Convent (now Monastery) in 1946. Her early life on the farm rather set her pace for life in a monastic community. She has served as a teacher and principal, monastic formation director, missionary (one of the founders of our mission in Bogotá, Colombia), subprior, serving in a variety of ways on the Fort Berthold Reservation, director of pastoral care at St. Vincent’s in Bismarck, hospitality at the monastery, spiritual director, etc.

It is the “etc” that most clearly describes her through her 70 plus years as a Benedictine. Her many gifts are obvious and she uses them generously in service of everyone she meets. She has a graced presence and a generous smile. In short, she gives of herself every minute of the day to God, her monastic community and guests.

Sr. Mary William
Stadick, OSB
Sacred Heart Monastery, Richardson

Sr. Mary William Stadick, OSB, embraced her religious vocation early in life, making her first profession of vows at 17 (now Canon Law requires one to be at least 18). She was born in Underwood, the youngest child of John and Martha (Manache) Stadick. She completed her high school at Mount Saint Benedict in Crookston, MN, before earning her teaching credential through Minot State Teacher’s College, Mount Marty in Yankton, SD, and graduating from the University of Mary in 1977.

Despite being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at age 25, she excelled as a teacher for 40 years at SS Peter and Paul’s, Fallon; St. Joseph’s, Red Lake Falls; MN; Nicholas, Garrison; St. Leo’s, Minot; and St. Mary’s, Malta, MT. Though she was a delightful, patient teacher, her energy waned so she shifted ministries. She was intuitively gifted in pastoral care, so she served at the Good Samaritan Home in Malta and later at St. Benedict’s Health Center in Dickinson. In 1993, she received the “People Who Make a Difference” award from the Bismarck Tribune. When she retired to the Monastery in 1995, she helped in any way she could, from monastic hospitality to health care in Sacred Heart Health Center and later to St. Vincent’s.

For over 25 years, he offered Mass at United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck throughout the school year, and during the summer months often helped out in parishes in Wisconsin.

Father Victor was also known for his passion for recycling. He brought the Earth Day celebration to the campus during the 1989-90 school year. By supplying a crew from the college, they cleaned the ditches along the highway. At that time, recycling had not been “invented” yet. He learned of recycling while he was in St. Louis for graduate school. A city councilman set up recycling outlets. Today, recycling containers are found throughout the University of Mary campus due largely to Fr. Victor. In the late 1990s, the campus organization ECOS—Environmental Coalition of Students—was formed to make the University of Mary a greener campus. In June of 2017 Father Victor entered the Richardson Health Care Center as a resident.

Sr. Laura Hecker, OSB
Sacred Heart Monastery, Richardson

Sr. Laura Hecker, OSB, celebrates her 50th jubilee of monastic profession at Vespers on July 13. She is the daughter of the late Mike L. and Veronica (Lantz) Hecker of Dunn County. Born the third of six children on a farm northwest of Dickinson, she attended her first eight grades in a country school before attending Model High in Dickinson. Prior to her entrance into the monastery, she earned her LPN degree and postgraduate certificate in obstetrics and pediatrics in Pierre, SD. Following her ordination, she worked as a nurse at St. Joseph Hospital in Dickinson prior to coming to the monastery.

After her initial monastic formation, she remained in the medical field as an Accredited Record Technician at the Richardton Hospital. In 1979, she began her study and work experience in pastoral care, serving first at St. Vincent’s. After earning an MA in pastoral studies at Aquinas Institute in St. Louis, MO, she returned to St. Joseph Hospital as a chaplain and later director of pastoral care. She has served as the subprior for the community since 2011.

Sr. Margaret Nelson, OSB
Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck

On June 9, Sr. Margaret celebrated her 50th anniversary of monastic profession with family, friends and her monastic community at Annunciation Monastery. At 10 months old, Sister Margaret was not expected to live. She had encephalitis which left her in a week-long coma. Miraculously, she survived left with the only damage being her tongue and lips are paralyzed, making it hard for her to talk and swallow. Being physically challenged at such a young age helped Sister Margaret develop a close relationship with God. Sister Margaret graduated in 1965 from Priory High, which was operated by the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. She attended Minot State University for one year. She became homesick for the sisters, the monastery, and the beauty surrounding the monastery. Sister Margaret became a postulant in 1966 and made her first vows on July 11, 1968.

Sister Margaret earned a bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Mary and a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Iowa. She served 21 years as a writer/editor in the Office of Public Affairs at the University of Mary. She has the distinction of serving as monastery secretary to three prioresses, Sisters Lurdy, Susan Barry, Susan Berger, and Nancy Miller, over a span of 20 years. A gifted writer, she also used her skills to write and edit monastery publications and reflections. She has the gift of pursuing the spirit of sisters when they pass away by writing poignant obituaries about their lives of faith and service. She continues to write and edit when called upon.
Abbott Daniel celebrates 50 years as a priest

June 7 marked 50 years of service as a priest for Right Reverend Daniel Leo Maloney, OSB, Abbot of Assumption Abbey. Ordained in 1968, his priesthood has led him into various roles of work and leadership, many of which were unanticipated.

Born on Nov. 24, 1941, to Leo and Eileen Maloney, Daniel first came into contact with the Abbey through Abbot Robert West. In those days, Assumption Abbey was responsible for St. Joseph’s Parish in Devils Lake, and Daniel’s hometown of Webster is about ten miles north of Devils Lake. Through Robert West’s encouragement, he attended the Abbey school and graduated at the top of his class in 1959. He entered the novitiate in 1961, and made temporary profession in July of 1962. After vows, he was sent to St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minn., and graduated with honors and a B.A. in philosophy in 1964. In 1968 he finished his theological studies at St. Meinrad Archabbey in Spencer County, Ind., and was sent to Fordham University to continue studies in Philosophy. He received a Master’s degree in 1970. The summer of 1969-70, he began studies in German at Georgetown University to pass a language exam. Fordham saw him again that fall, studying for a doctorate in philosophy, but he returned home to North Dakota in 1973 to teach at what was then called Mary College in Bismarck. In July of 1975 he was appointed prior of Assumption Abbey by Abbot Robert West, who, three years later, appointed him superior of a planned monastic foundation in Billings, Mont. Daniel spent time out in Billings, but the plan was scrapped for various reasons, and in 1979 he was sent as chaplain to Mercy Hospital in Devils Lake.

In August of 1980, Father Daniel was directed into an entirely new venture that of conducting retreats at the Abbey. Each year, twenty weekends were scheduled, and he maintained a part-time position at Mary College as professor of philosophy.

Meeting of the Federation of St. Benedict

The Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, hosted the general chapter meeting of the Federation of St. Benedict from July 24-29. The leadership team included (l – r): Sr. Nicole Kunze, Annunciation, Bismarck, vice president/councilor; Sr. Lisa Maurer, St. Scholastica, Duluth, Minn, councilor; Sr. Kerr O’Reilly, St. Benedict’s, St. Joseph, Minn., president; Sr. Jacqueline Leiter, St. Paul’s, St. Paul, Minn, councilor. Not pictured: Sr. Michaela Hedican, St. Benedict’s, St. Joseph, Minn., councilor. The Federation of St. Benedict is an international congregation of 10 Benedictine women’s monasteries. The theme of this year’s chapter meeting was, “Tending the Benedictine Charism.” Sister delegates are from: Annunciation (N.D.), St. Benedict’s (Minn.), St. Paul’s (Minn.), St. Scholastica (Minn.), St. Placid (Wash.), St. Mary (Ill.), St. Benedict’s (Japan), St. Benedict (Taiwan), St. Martin (Bahamas) and Santa Eucalastica (Puerto Rico).

Pray the Rosary Coast to Coast Oct. 7

On the weekend of the October 7, Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, the U.S.—through Rosary Coast to Coast—will join with our International brothers and sisters to pray for our respective nations.

People of the Bismarck Diocese are invited to join the effort to pray the rosary with the world on Sunday, Oct. 7 on the state capitol building steps in Bismarck. The gathering will begin at 3 p.m. (central time).

The time is now to call upon God, through the powerful intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, to heal our country and return it to holiness.

Americans across the country are invited to pray Rosary Coast to Coast wherever they can gather: in parish Churches; in front of state capitols; along the U.S. coasts and borders; as families.

Rosary Coast to Coast will take place at 3 p.m. Eastern, 2 p.m. Central, 2 p.m. Mountain, 1 p.m. Pacific. The reasoning behind these times will be to support all time zones in full participation.

The National Rosary Rally will take place, as well, in front of the US Capitol on this day. Information provided by http://rosarycoasttocoast.com.

Holy Father’s Prayer Intentions for September

Universal: Young People in Africa
That young people in Africa may have access to education and work in their own countries.
By Patti Armstrong  
DCA Writer

Technology has made life easier, but also more complicated in many ways, particularly in the field of bioethics. The announcement last month from the London-based Nuffield Council on Bioethics that changing the DNA of a human embryo could be "morally permissible" if it is in the best interest of the child, is the most recent example of how some applications of science and technology conflict with Catholic teaching.

"Just because we can do something does not mean that we should," according to Msgr. James Sheas, president of the University of Mary. "It's important to take a step back, and ask, 'what will this do for the future of human kind?'" That is the very reason, he explained, that the University offers a graduate degree in bioethics as a service to the Church—to help people navigate the complicated world of technology and religion. It is also the reason that on Aug. 10-11, leading experts in the field of bioethics gathered at the University of Mary for their annual two-day seminar, in partnership with the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC), to address the bioethical issues of our times. As always, it was open to the public.

"We live in a time where bioethical concerns are rapidly escalating, and lay people should have at least a rudimentary understanding of the issues," Msgr. Sheas said. "It's important to put forth these profound questions for the human race and to do it using the deep insights of the Catholic faith. The context of the wisdom and tried and true teaching of the Catholic Church about the nature and limitation of human power is our guide to the true and deep nature of healing."  

Best interest

"On first glance, genetic editing of human embryos to treat diseases seems like a laudable project," said one of the presenters, Fr. Tad Pacholczyk, who has a Ph.D. in neuroscience from Yale, is one of the world's experts in the bioethics field and is the director of education for the NCBC. "But the reality is far more complex. The most likely approach that scientists would take to genetically modify an embryo would require that the embryo(s) be created in glassware through in vitro fertilization, a step that violates their human dignity and 'objectifies' them. Humans are entitled to be brought into the world not in the cold, impersonal world of laboratory glassware, but exclusively in the loving bodily embrace of their parents.

He added, "The proposed genetic 'therapies' would not involve treating the embryo as a unique patient, within his or her mother's womb. It would rather involve treating the embryo as laboratory fodder, set up for experimental protocols that, in fact, would require numerous embryos to be simultaneously created (or thawed out), treated as 'products' and subjected to genetic 'treatments' to see if just a few of them might end up surviving and developing without the disease.

Unforeseen ramifications

Real answers and real help come by holding to truth as taught by the Church, which is not a formula that gives everyone what they want as their right. Fr. Pacholczyk explained, "Rights language bulldozes those preventing you get your rights, but is this true? Do you have a right to a baby? No, a baby is not a piece of property."

The ramifications of technology are not always apparent on the surface. For instance, as a result of in vitro fertilization (IVF) technology, there are now hundreds of thousands of embryos in storage. Judges have had to decide the fate of some through custody battles between separating couples. One California surrogate mother lost in court after she contracted with a stranger to carry his children in her womb, and when he changed his mind, he sought to compel her to abort the three unborn babies. The woman was forced by custody, but the judge ruled that the contract was binding. Thus, IVF effectively allows the creation, destruction and purchasing of children at whim.

Examples like these remind us of the wisdom of the Church's teachings and guidance, according to Fr. Pacholczyk. In one of his talks during the recent seminar, he referred to the article, "The Sperm-Donor Kids Are Not Really All Right" which reported how some children created through sperm donation are struggling with troubling issues in understanding their own origins.

One woman put it this way, "My existence owed almost nothing to the serendipitous nature of normal human reproduction where babies are the natural progression of mutually fulfilling adult relationships, but rather represented a verbal contract, a financial transaction and a cold, clinical harnessing of medical technology."

Ethical solutions

The Church does want to help infertile couples to have babies by encouraging the use of techniques that respect the dignity of the human person and assist, rather than replace, the natural act.

Father Pacholczyk pointed to the example of NaPro (Natural Procreative) Technology which seeks to identify and treat the underlying cause of the couple's infertility and has a one-and-a-half to three times higher success rate than IVF.

He also noted that the Church wants to see cures and treatments for serious diseases by encouraging the use of techniques that do not rely on the exploitation of human embryos. There have not been any clinical successes thus far using stem cells from embryos, while therapies using the ethically acceptable adult or umbilical cord stem cells have had extensive successes in the clinic.

Yet, Fr. Pacholczyk cautioned against focusing on "what works" because even if human embryonic stem cells one day lead to effective treatments, their use will still be immoral.

Facts over emotion

Immoral applications of technology are often defended based on emotions. "But emotions don't afford us a solid foundation for understanding moral issues," according to Fr. Pacholczyk. We rather need careful reflection and discernment.

He noted that the public often initially responds with repugnance toward some bioethical issues like cloning or gene manipulation, but as time goes on, they soften to the idea. "They start thinking, 'Well, as long as scientists and researchers tell us they have a good reason, maybe it's okay after all and we'll result in progress.' But real progress cannot occur apart from good ethics."

When the Church deems an action to be unethical, Fr. Pacholczyk noted, it is often because there is a grave injustice involved, or because the action treats a good as if it was an evil. Unethical actions often lead to bad effects, which he said can speak to us and hearken back to why it was wrong from the beginning.

Father Pacholczyk encourages Catholics to understand the Church's positions to be able to share a reasoned, non-emotional explanation with others and to be personally prepared to make intelligent, moral decisions in their own lives.

"Learn the issues and explain them in your own language," he said. "And realize that God calls us to grow where He has put us, and to ourselves plant seeds, so we don't need to feel like we have to convert everyone, but simply witness to them the depth of our own respect for what the Church teaches."
A Catholic Women’s Retreat, “Grace for the Journey,” will be a time to relax and refresh the soul on Saturday, Oct. 13, at St. Nicholas Church in Garrison. The day begins with Mass with Fr. Basil Atwell at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. It will feature speakers from the Bismarck diocese, Shelly Preszler, Monica Hannan, and Patti Armstrong, and include lunch, adoration, confession, the rosary, and Divine Mercy Chaplet.

“The mercy of Jesus Christ changes everything!” Shelly said referring to her talk about Divine Mercy. Shelly and her husband, Todd, have six children and live in Mandan, N.D. She enjoys writing and speaking about the joys of following Christ.

Shelly received the “Jesus, I Trust in You” image from her mother over 20 years ago. “I have a very personal story of reconciliation attached to the image that forever changed my family’s life,” she said. “Christ put it on my heart to speak about his mercy and love.” She will share personal testimony and explain why the Divine Mercy message has been called the fastest growing grassroots movement in the Church today.

Patti Armstrong, married to Mark, will explain how learning her Catholic faith took her places she never dreamed, including going from secular to Catholic writing and becoming the mother to 10 children.

She has published 10 books and is a correspondent for a number of national Catholic newspapers and magazines.

“Perspective changes everything,” she said. “It is why some people with very little are happy while others with everything are miserable.” Patti will share grace-filed stories including Jesus’ definition for success, as he revealed to St. Faustina.

Monica Hannan, mother to three children and married to Cliff Naylor, is a three-time Emmy-Award-winning television anchor, talk show host, and news manager at NBC affiliate, KFYR-TV, in Bismarck. She will offer insights from her latest book, Gift of Death: A Message of Comfort and Hope. It was her father’s journey toward death that led Monica to write the book which includes interviews with pastors and uplifting stories of people’s final moments on earth.

During her research, Monica heard reports of communication from the other side, and deep inspirational moments as people prepared to enter the next world. “It’s all about surrender,” Monica explains. “Chances are the things you imagine are much worse than the things that actually occur. So why do we worry?” She will share stories of hope and talk about overcoming life’s greatest fears by giving in to grace and having faith in God’s plan.

To register, send $10 by October 5 or $15 afterwards or at the door to: St. Nicholas Church Women’s Retreat, PO Box 870, Garrison, ND 58548.

—Submitted information
A summer of renovation at Trinity High School

By Kelli R. Schneider
Special Contributor to the DCA

The beginning of a new school year brings Trinity Junior High and High School students a fresh look at two spaces — the Trinity Auditorium and the Knights of Columbus Activities Center. These are two of Trinity’s biggest classrooms and significant places for students living the mission of Trinity Catholic Schools of educating the whole student — mind, body and soul.

Late May through early August was a time of renovation at Trinity Junior High and High School. “Before the 2014 fire, efforts had begun on replacing the gymnasium wood floor and evaluating the auditorium needs. When the fire happened, though, all of that had to be put on hold so we could focus on the immediate educational needs of our students,” said Steve Glasser, President of Trinity Catholic Schools.

Glasser continued, “With the gym, it really became a safety issue with the floor and with the bleacher seating. The bleachers were no longer safe for fans to sit on and the floor had come to the end of its life. The auditorium had not received a facelift, other than lighting and sound enhancements, since the original construction in the early 60s and that’s well over 50 years of significant use. The carpeting and seating especially were in need of updating.”

With the $80 million Building Our Future, Embracing Our Past Capital Campaign complete at Trinity and full support of Bishop Kagan and the Diocese of Bismarck, the “here and now” became the perfect time to embark on the renovations.

What is encompassed in the renovation project? For the Knights of Columbus Activities Center, the renovation involved a complete removal of the gym floor and the bleachers. The facility received new paint, wood floor, Spaulding portable baskets, bleacher seating, LED lighting and a sound system. The boys’ and girls’ locker rooms also received a much-needed update, including new showers with radiant heat panels.

Gregg Grinsteinner, Athletic Director at Trinity High School said, “…this gives our kids a renewed sense of pride! We want our student-athletes to know that we believe in them and that we are invested in them.”

In the auditorium, the renovation included removal of the old and installation of new carpeting and seating. Janel Schiff, Drama Director and English and Speech teacher at Trinity High School, said, “So many patrons and community members visit our auditorium for performances and comment about the talent of our students and the beauty of our performances. Now, they will experience our auditorium and the performances hosted there while sitting in comfort.” Schiff continued, “It is a blessing to offer our students the opportunity to perform in an auditorium like Trinity’s; and it is a blessing to offer that space to our community and region.”

Father Kregg Hochhalter, Dean of Students at Trinity Junior High and High School, when asked how this renovation project will help the student population, said, “If we are a school about the mind, body, and soul — which we are — then what nourishes those facets of the human person must be adequate … and not just adequate, but magnificent. After the gym and auditorium renovations are complete, those places, paired with the St. John Paul II Chapel and our academic classrooms, will be magnificent places for our students today and future generations of Titans to pray, play and live out our mission.”

“These are really the last two pieces of our magnificent facility project, and are the best to be found between Bismarck and Billings; Minot and Rapid City,” said Msgr. Patrick Schumacher, Vice President of the Trinity Catholic Schools Board of Directors.

The fundraising for the renovations, in the form of investing alumni and patrons, as well as alumni parents and current parents, to purchase a seat for either the gym or auditorium or both is going well. The Vision for Our Future Campaign, as it is called, started in early summer and continues. This phase II campaign includes the renovation project, as well the establishment of funds for teacher and staff salary improvements and facility needs.

“We need to take care of our highly-qualified teachers and staff, and we need to take care of our structures. The Vision for Our Future Campaign encompasses all of that,” said Glasser.

Mind, body, and soul — the facets of the human person that are nourished in the classrooms, big and small, of Trinity Catholic Schools. These classrooms have educated students for over 50 years and proudly embrace educating students for generations to come.

Progress on St. Mary’s Central High School

The active construction zone on the new St. Mary’s Central High School will continue through this fall just off Washington Street in north Bismarck. Project organizers say that 90% of the funds necessary to complete the project have been secured. The remaining 10% will be raised over the coming months and with efforts to be complete early in 2019. For more information on the project or to learn more about donating, 701-354-1226 or visit keeptherpromise.net.

A red and gold votive candle stand, the St. Killians Candle Burning System claims a special place in the St. John Paul II Chapel.

Keeper of the flame

Candle burning system claims a special place in the St. John Paul II Chapel

By Kelli R. Schneider
Special Contributor to the DCA

The St. John Paul II Chapel at Trinity Junior High and High School received a beautiful gift from the Diocese of Bismarck—a St. Killians Candle Burning System.

While attending the annual Catholic Mutual Group national insurance meeting, Diocesan Parish Resources Manager, Tony Chap, was selected to receive a safe candle burning system donated by the St. Killians Company. Catholic Mutual Group insures over 500 dioceses across the country and promotes many safety programs. It was Catholic Mutual that was deeply involved in restoring Trinity Junior High and High School after the fire, issuing over $85 million in insurance claims. Because of the fire that occurred at Trinity Junior High and High School in March, 2014, Bishop Kagan thought it most appropriate to gift the candle burning system to the St. John Paul II Chapel. Trinity Junior High and High School rose from the ashes of a fire, due to the generous support of many benefactors and friends, as well as the Diocese of Bismarck and Catholic Mutual Group.

A red and gold votive candle stand, the St. Killians Candle Burning System claims a special place in the St. John Paul II Chapel, directly underneath a beautiful painting of the Divine Mercy. According to St. Killians Candle Burning System literature: With our patented glass system, the flame is protected at all times. The candle itself is isolated in a uniquely designed glass. After burning for approximately 90 minutes the flame is extinguished as it drops through the hole in the glass with the liquefied candle wax, this becomes solid as it drops to a water tray contained in the votive candle stand.

The new votive stand has been a beautiful addition to the St. John Paul II Chapel. It gives students, faculty, staff and friends a place to offer a devotion to the Divine Mercy and, as the candle burns, reminds all who visit the chapel of the power of the Holy Spirit working through ashes to restore life.

The Trinity gymnasium underwent a major transformation this summer including a new wood floor and bleachers.

The walls of the new St. Mary’s Central High School continue to go up. This view is from Belpreland Dr. looking west towards the front entrance of the school. Once walls and windows have been completed this fall, work will continue inside over the winter.
Bishops meet to officially mark change in diocesan boundaries

Bishop Kagan and Fargo Diocese’s Bishop Folda met on Aug. 19 at St. John in Lansford for a Mass of Thanksgiving and Unity to officially welcome the parish into the boundary of the Bismarck Diocese. In his homily, Bishop Kagan said the Mass was symbolic of the friendship, love and mutual admiration among Catholics of both North Dakota dioceses.

The Lansford Parish, which was previously part of the Fargo Diocese, was brought under the care of the Bismarck Diocese in the late 1940s when the bishops of both dioceses—Bishop Dworshak of Fargo and Bishop Ryan of Bismarck—came to a “gentleman’s agreement” that the Bismarck Diocese priests would cover the parish’s pastoral, spiritual and sacramental needs. Earlier this year, the Congregation for Bishops officially and canonically placed St. John of Lansford, by Bishop Folda, within the boundary and care of the Bismarck Diocese—altering the diocesan borders for the first time in over 100 years.

“The fraternal love of Catholics of North Dakota is symbolized in this wonderful parish,” Bishop Kagan said. “There’s a beauty to this demonstrating the friendship and respect between two bishops who were friends and priests of the Fargo Diocese before being named bishops.”

Lansford is located about 30 miles north of Minot, very near the borders of both dioceses. The current pastor of the cluster of parishes in Mohall and Sherwood, Fr. Adam Mass, serves St. John in Lansford.

“This historical day is a sign of our mutual love and respect for one another and abiding love and faith in our Almighty God,” Bishop Kagan added during his homily.

—Staff report

Fall festivals in the Bismarck Diocese

St. Hildegard
Location: Menoken
Date/time: Sept. 9, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Menu: Sausage, roast beef, pies, buns and all the trimmings
Cost: Adults $12, children ages 4-10 $5, free for ages 3 and under.
Includes: entertainment and raffle

St. Mary
Location: Hague
Date/time: Sept. 9, 5 p.m.
Menu: Swiss steak, hamburger-rice dressing, mashed potatoes, homemade pie, and all the trimmings
Includes: Bingo at 6:30 p.m. in the K of C Hall and raffle

St. Anthony
Location: Linton (K of C Hall)
Date/time: Sept. 16, 4 to 6:45 p.m.
Menu: Fried chicken, ham, hamburger rice, mashed potatoes, and variety of desserts, along with all the trimmings
Includes: Silent auction, bingo at the parish center starting at 5:15 p.m. and raffle drawing at KC Hall at 7:30 p.m.
Cost: Adults $12, children 6-12 years $6, and free for under six.

St. Bonaventure
Location: Underwood
Date/time: Sept. 30, 4:30 to 7 p.m.
Menu: Fried chicken, salad bar, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, dessert and beverage
Cost: Adults $10, children 6-12 years $5, and free for under six.

St. Martin
Location: Center (civic center)
Date/time: Sept. 30, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Menu: Ham, meatballs, mashed potatoes, corn and dessert
Cost: Free-will offering
Includes: Cake walk, craft and produce table, raffle

St. Martin
Location: Hazen
Date/time: Sept. 30, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Menu: Roast beef, potatoes, corn, coleslaw, pickles, pie and ice cream
Cost: Adults and seniors $10, ages 6-12 $7, age 5 and under free
Includes: Cake walk, craft and produce table, raffle

Sacred Heart
Location: Wilson (Memorial Hall)
Date/time: Oct. 7, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes, corn, salads, buns and pie
Cost: Adults $10, children 4-10 $5, children 3 and under free
Includes: Chinese auction, bingo starting at 1:30 p.m.

St. Anthony
Location: St. Anthony
Date/time: Oct. 7, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Menu: Fried chicken, roast beef, potatoes, kuchen and trimmings
Cost: Adults $10, children 3-12 $5, children under 3 free
Includes: Verein Hall activities from 12:30 to 4 p.m. of bingo, silent auction, paddle wheel and other games, ending with drawings for parish and Christian Mothers raffles.

Sts. Peter & Paul
Location: Strasburg
Date/time: Oct. 7, 4:30 p.m.
Menu: Fried chicken, country style sausage, rice dressing with all the trimmings, homemade pies and desserts
Cost: Adults (grade 7 and up) $12, children (grades K-6) $6; preschool $2
Includes: parish marketplace, bingo, raffle

St. Katherine
Location: Breda
Date/time: Oct. 7, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Menu: Chipped beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, hamburger rice, coleslaw, corn, relishes, homemade buns and pie
Cost: Adults $12, grades 1-8 $6, under six free
Includes: silent auction, raffle and bingo at the community hall beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Bishop Kagan celebrated Mass at St. John in Lansford with Fargo Diocese’s Bishop Folda, Deacon Dennis Dean (far left) and Pastor Adam Maus.
SEPTEMBER 2018

Diocese of Bismarck
Women’s Conference
Thirst 2018

Saturday, September 22
at the Bismarck Event Center
7:30 a.m. doors open • 8:30 a.m. Conference begins • 4 p.m. Vigil Mass

Shannon Deitz is the founder of Hopeful Hearts Ministry, an advocacy organization giving a voice to survivors of abuse. Having endured incest and date rape, Shannon addresses the realities and effects of abuse in our culture and the graces God provides for one’s healing journey. She lives in Kingswood, Texas with her husband and two sons.

Judy Hehr has triumphed over homelessness and drug addiction to become a seminary graduate, author, speaker, and radio host. The energetic, inspirational speaker motivates others to rekindle their faith and live out our calling to be Christ to all. Judy and her husband and four children reside in Wisconsin.

Register and get more information online at www.bismarckdiocese.com/thirst2018

Teens of high school age welcome with their mom or accompanying adult.

This event is FREE to attend!

Mail the registration form below to:
Thirst 2017 Women’s Conference
Diocese of Bismarck
PO Box 1137
Bismarck, ND 58502-1137

Name:

Email Address:

Age:

☑ High School Student
☐ College Student
☐ 19-30
☐ 31-40
☐ 41-50
☐ 51-60
☐ 61 and over

City/State:

Parish/Church:

7:45 a.m. Check-In
Adoration and Confessions begin
Free continental breakfast available until 9:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:00 a.m. Praise Music by “One Det”
9:20 a.m. Welcome & Opening Prayer
9:30 a.m. Keynote 1: Shannon Deitz
10:15 a.m. Break
10:30 a.m. Breakout Session 1: Judy Hehr, Dr. James Link
Women’s Panel
11:15 a.m. Free Time/Lunch Break
(Taco bar buffet available with purchased ticket)
1:15 p.m. Praise Music by “One Det”
1:30 p.m. Testimony: Karie Kinzler
2:00 p.m. Keynote 2: Shannon Deitz
2:45 p.m. Break
3:00 p.m. Breakout Session II: Dr. James Link, Shannon Deitz, Judy Hehr
3:40 p.m. Break
3:55 p.m. Eucharistic Benediction
Reposition
4:00 p.m. Sunday Vigil Mass with Most Rev. David Kagan

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for more information and to listen live.
Bishop Kagan, alongside Deacon Dan Brooke and Fr. Jason Signalness, blessed the farmstead.

Bishop Kagan presented a gift of appreciation to the host family, Wyatt and Becky Goettle, during Mass.

Dominic Goettle, Rachel Goettle and Chris Goettle provided vocal music during the Mass.

Wyatt and Becky Goettle and their children served as the host family for this year’s Town and Country Celebration.

Bishop Kagan blessed the land and machinery.

Father Jason Signalness concelebrated Mass during the Town and Country Celebration.

Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky
The news did not slow down during the summer. Here is a round-up.

**Family planning funds**

In the last column, I wrote about regulations proposed by the Trump Administration that would change how grantees use federal family planning funds. Those changes would allow North Dakota to enforce its law against using funds for abortion referrals. Thanks to your calls and emails, Governor Doug Burgum submitted comments to the administration in support of those rules. We do not know at this time when the new rules will be finalized.

**Immigration**

On July 4, Bishop David Kagan and Bishop John Folda issued a joint statement on immigration. The statement mentions important principles for an immigration policy based on church doctrine and Sacred Scripture. While there is room within Catholic teaching for differences of opinion on some aspects of immigration policy, there are basic principles that always apply and cannot be violated. They are:

- People have a right to migrate to seek safety, basic needs, work and opportunities essential to their life and dignity and that of their families;
- Justice requires that countries receive immigrants, provided it is without actual detriment to the welfare of their citizens;
- Nations should provide immediate protection to refugees and asylum seekers who flee wars and persecution;
- Sovereign nations have the right to secure their borders, but this must be accomplished only for legitimate reasons for the sake of the common good and never in a manner that violates the basic rights and dignity of immigrants or the primacy of the family;
- Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the country that receives them, to obey its laws, and to assist in carrying civic burdens; and
- The rights and dignity of all immigrants and their families must always be respected.

These principles flow from society’s obligation to put families first. Regarding the practice of family separation, the bishops stated: “The family is so vitally important, not only to a child’s life, but also to society as a whole, that children should be removed from their family caregiver only when, through due process, it is established that removal is necessary to protect the child from harm. Merely crossing the border without authorization does not meet this threshold.”

The statement is at: ndcatholic.org/immigrationstmt/

**Death penalty clarification**

On Aug. 2, Pope Francis issued a change to the Catechism stating that the death penalty is always inadmissible in light of a developing understanding of the dignity and life of the human person. Some Catholics in the United States who support the death penalty think that Pope Francis is mistaken and that capital punishment is acceptable here. They are mistaken on two fronts. First, the change is now part of Church doctrine, not a mere opinion of a pope. Second, the death penalty was already unacceptable in our country.

In 1995, St. John Paul II stated that it was morally wrong to use the death penalty “except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society.” He added that in today’s society, “such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent.” The United States is one of the wealthiest and strongest nations in the world. No other country, then as now, is more capable of defending society without use of the death penalty. In short, the death penalty was morally unacceptable in the United States before and after Aug. 2.

**Your faith and your vote**

An election is approaching. The North Dakota Catholic Conference has a resource to help you, the Catholic voter, fulfill your Christian obligations as an educated voter with an informed conscience. Christians should set aside ideologies like “conservative” or “progressive,” party identification, and self-interest, to vote for human life and dignity and the common good. The resources, at yourfaithyourvote.org, are updated periodically during the campaign season.

Catholic parishes in the state are not allowed to have any voter education material that mentions a candidate or political party in any way. If there are questions about what parishes and priests are allowed and not allowed to do, see the Your Faith, Your Vote website or contact the North Dakota Catholic Conference office.

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Imagine yourself back in time 95 years ago when radio was the next big thing and cars were just becoming commonplace. Aircare was brand new, but commercial aviation would not arise for another 20 years. It was 95 years before the first computers were introduced, and 75 years before cell phones became popular. North Dakota was even more rural and had about twice as many farms than it does today. Little cities like Bismarck and Fargo, and how they would have looked 95 years ago.

Back in 1923, Msgr. Vincent Ryan and others wanted to do something to help the vulnerable. They started a small group called the Catholic Welfare Bureau and focused on unmarried mothers, dependent inoders, and the poor and suffering. After about three years they incorporated in 1926, formed a board of directors, and hired their first official employee. Later, Fr. Anthony Peschel led the development of the Catholic Charities North Dakota operation.

Thus, the Catholic Charities North Dakota is celebrating their anniversary this weekend. To celebrate, we have chosen the theme “Forever Grateful.” We are grateful for wonderful staff and hundreds of directors, for the many clients we have been privileged to help throughout the years and we are especially grateful for you—all the people who have partnered with us in the dioceses, parishes and communities that have been part of this ministry to those in need over these past 95 years. You are the supporter of our mission and our services to others possible.

Catholic Charities North Dakota Sunday is a celebration of each part of this agency bringing awareness and support to the services we offer. Hosted the last weekend in September in Catholic churches across North Dakota, we share materials and a video about our services which help increase interest and support for our agency’s programs such as adoption, pregnancy and parenting support and counseling services.

During the 95th Anniversary of our Catholic Charities North Dakota organization, originally known as the Catholic Welfare Bureau and then Catholic Family Service, we reflect on how small group of clergy and volunteers has grown into a nonprofit with over 90 employees. This sounds like a lot, but is just enough to cover the state with guardianship workers and caseworkers. Members of this small group are treat like the most important people in the state with guardianship workers and caseworkers.

Our pregnancy, parenting and adoption services and our other work also put on many miles as they strive to offer counseling services at different locations within North Dakota. They travel to visit pregnant clients wherever they are across our state. Our pregnancy and parenting support is available free to anyone who has questions or is facing challenges in their pregnancy.

Thus, the Catholic Charities North Dakota Sunday event is both a celebration and an opportunity for others near and far to share in our work at Catholic Charities North Dakota. This anniversary is a reason to reflect on how our service may be an answer in our mission serving those in need, but there is no obligation to make a gift. Thankfully, many of you give what you can and donations of $10, $20 and $100 or more add up. Together with a few larger donations this allows us to continue helping those in need.

Just as important or more so, Catholic Charities North Dakota is a wonderful opportunity to reach more of those people in need. This can happen directly when someone learns about us and the Lord touches their heart to pray for us, the counseling they need or to consider opening their homes and lives to adoption. You can look into it by telling others who may be interested to learn more about us and by joining us in our own parishes on September 29.

Prosowski 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 and changing lives. Chad can be reached at info@catholicharitiesnd.org or 701-231-4657.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Fertility seminar Sept. 12**
Want to know more about your body and natural fertility? A public presentation entitled “Signs of the Female Cycle Explained” will be offered on Wednesday, Sept. 12 at 7 p.m. at Boniface Hall at CHI St. Alexius Health in Bismarck. The public is invited to attend to learn about the signs of fertility and what they mean for women’s health and family planning. For more information, contact Christie Collins at ccollins@bismarckdiocese.com or 864-354-5046.

**Hannah’s Hope support group to meet Sept. 13**
Hannah’s Hope ministry, a diocesan spiritual support group for couples facing the struggles of infertility, will meet Thursday, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. at Mother of Peace in Bismarck. For more information, contact Carmel Collet at collet@catholicharitiesnd.org or 701-204-7209.

**Marriage retreat Sept. 14-16**
The diocese is sponsoring a retreat for couples who are growing closer to one another. The retreat weekend is Sept. 14-16 at the Assumption Abbey in Richmond. Enjoy silence, worship and a sharing of your Ruelle with others through the Mass and Eucharist. If you are interested, please contact Tara Brooke at tbrooke@bismarckdiocese.com or 701-204-7209 with questions.

**Vocation live-in weekend Sept. 15-16**
The Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, invite you to spend the weekend in contemplation about religious life to an “Ever Wonder?” vocation live-in experience Saturday, Sept. 15 beginning at 1 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 16 beginning at 9 a.m. This unique opportunity allows women to participate in the Benedictine, monastic life of the sisters. There is no cost to participate. Meals and a private room are included. For more information or to pre-register, email Sr. Hannah Yanovsky at hayanovsky@gmail.com or Sr. Gerard at genwaldy@umary.edu or call or text 701-425-9455. If you are unable to attend the Sept. weekend, another will be held the weekend of Nov. 3-4.

**Dakota Hope fundraiser Sept. 17**
Dakota Hope Clinic, a life-affirming pregnancy help center located in Mandan, is holding its 5th Annual Dakota Hope Fundraising Banquet on Monday, Sept. 17 at the State Fair Center. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. The keynote speaker is abortion survivor Melissa Ohden. For information on attending the banquet, call 701-852-4672 or reserve your seat online at www.dakotahope.org.

**Women’s THIRST Sept. 22**
Ladies, you’re invited to spend a day like no other at the THIRST 2018 Women’s Conference sponsored by the Diocese of Bismarck Saturday, Sept. 22 at the Bismarck Event Center. Don’t miss this day of inspirational presentations, confessions, Eucharistic adoration, music, a Vigil Mass with Bishop Kagan. Registration is free. For more information and registration, go to bismarckdiocese.com/thirst18.

**Novena for St. Therese begins Sept. 22**
The Discalced Carmelite Nuns invite you to join them in praying a novena for St. Therese, the Little Flower, beginning Sept. 22 and ending on her feast day, Oct. 1. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for the benefit of the novena and all the intentions of the novena on Sept. 22 and on Oct. 1. The Sisters of the Carmel of the Holy Face of Jesus welcome you to contact them by mail or phone if you would like them to pray for you or your child or family remembered in the program, “Your child or family is carried to His arms directly from the womb or from the world of suffering into the arms of God.” Holy Face of Jesus welcome you to contact them at info@catholicharitiesnd.org or 701-325-6671 with questions.

**SERRA breakfast Sept. 23**
The Bismarck-Mandan Serra Club pancake breakfast will be Saturday, Oct. 13 at the Trinity Junior High School. Girls (age junior high and up) and their fathers are invited for dinner and guest speaker, Sarah Swafford. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. followed by Father/daughter event titled “Pure Freedom: A Night Full of Purpose” on Friday, Sept. 28 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the ballroom of Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The public is invited to come and enjoy this event.

**Father/daughter event Sept. 28**
The diocese is sponsoring a Father/daughter event titled “Pure Freedom: A Night Full of Purpose” on Friday, Sept. 28 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the ballroom of Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The public is invited to come and enjoy this event.

**Trinity fall gala Oct. 13**
The Trinity Catholic Schools 18th annual fall gala will be Saturday, Oct. 13 at the Trinity Junior High and High School. Mass will begin at 4:30 p.m. with the social to start at 5 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. A live and silent auction will follow. Tickets ($70) and sponsorships are available online and at all Trinity Catholic Schools. Call 701-483-6085 or visit www.trinitycatholicschools.com for more information.

**Mass for God’s Children Nov. 6**
The diocese is sponsoring a Mass for God’s Children at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 6 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, for all the children that God has called to His arms. Please consider attending to give a hands-on way to show your care of his or her parents before adulthood. All are welcome to attend, please join us in praying for these children and their families. If you would like your child or family remembered in the program, and/or your family would like to process a flower to the Mary statue to ask for her prayers for your child and family, register at bismarckdiocese.com/godschildren or contact Christie at 864-354-3046 or ccollins@bismarckdiocese.com. For more information, visit www.diocesebismarck.org/godschildren or call 701-231-4657.
Promethean medical temptations

Superheroes attract us. From Greek gods to Superman and Spiderman, our fascination with the awesome deeds of superheroes beckons us to become Masters of our own destiny. Yet even as we enjoy the fantasy of acquiring Promethean powers to combat our enemies and conquer evil, we have legitimate misgivings about mere mortals taking on god-like powers in real life. We are concerned about those who play with fire just like Prometheus did, at the risk of harm and great destruction.

Today, as modern medicine tries to rebuild death and control our humanity in ever more sophisticated ways, new temptations arise that challenge us to choose between life and death, between living in reality and living in a fantasy world where we elevate ourselves as “Masters of our own destiny.”

We encounter these Promethean temptations today in the expanding fields of reproductive medicine and infertility. We may be drawn to the idea of “manufacturing” children through in vitro fertilization and related forms of assisted reproductive technologies. By producing and manipulating our children in laboratory glassware, however, we cross a critical line and sever our obedience to the Giver of life. We assume the role of Masters over, rather than recipients of, our own offspring. We allow our children to be mistreated as so many embryonic tokens — with some being frozen in liquid nitrogen and others being discarded as biomedical waste. We take on the seemingly divine role of creating another human being and reigning supreme over his or her destiny.

We are tempted toward this same type of Promethean mastery at the other end of life. While we recognize that we cannot avoid death, we may be troubled and vexed by the possibility of a protracted and painful dying process. We may decide that the best answer is to “take charge” of the situation and move into the driver’s seat, resolutely calling the final shots ourselves. By ending life “on our own terms” through physician-assisted suicide, we hope to steer around the sufferings and agonies of the dying process. Yet suicide clearly goes against the grain of the kind of creatures we are, creatures intended for life, not death.

The temptation that flashes before us when we consider suicide is the fantasy of becoming “Master” over our destiny by arrogating to ourselves direct power over life and death. We begin to accept the falsehood that we are uniquely in charge of our own destiny, and can remake or destroy ourselves as if we were gods. It is but a short step, then, for us to take further powers unto ourselves, lording it over the fate and destiny of others through activities such as euthanasia, direct abortion, and human embryonic stem cell research.

Although we are creatures intended for life, we may not be entirely clear about how we came to possess that life. We sense how we have been cast headlong into existence without asking for it, and we know, with certainty, that we did not create ourselves or have any role in bringing ourselves into being. The fact that we were created entirely apart from our own will means that our existence has been intentionally chosen by Another. The goodness and beauty of our life has been independently conferred on us by One who has radically willed our personal existence. Because that existence is good and beautiful, it ought always to be treated as such, and never directly violated.

The goodness and beauty of the human life we have received is also connected to the gift of our masculinity or femininity. Yet here we also face the temptation of Promethean mastery as we imagine we can become the opposite sex, or that we needn’t be either male or female, but can be any of dozens of different “gender identities.” We engage in the fantasy that our embodied nature is fluid and malleable, and that we can vanquish our birth sex, remaking ourselves through the gender bending powers of medicine and science. But the damage that this fantasy can wreak in a short space of time through hormones, surgeries, the irreversible decisions and mutilated bodies — is not trivial.

The lives of many thousands of individuals, convinced they have become Masters of their own identities, have already been irretrievably altered or ruined, often with the assistance of other medical or political Masters.

The ever-expanding powers of biomedicine call us to careful ethical reflection and discernment, so we do not fall prey to the temptation of seeing ourselves as Masters, rather than collaborators with God, our inalienable Source of life and being.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. He also serves as a professor of bioethics at the University of Mary in Bismarck. See www.ncbcenter.org

FR. TAD PACHOLCZYK

Are you a disciple of Jesus?

A couple years ago I “graduated” to a tractor with a cab (and air conditioning). It is nothing fancy, but it does mitigate the heat on 100+ degree days. I was taught to concentrate on little things like feeding the poor. I see little real commitment. Jesus talks about feeding my soul.

When somebody asked me the other day if I was a democrat, independent or republican (listed here in alphabetical order), I smiled and quickly answered, “I am a Catholic.” Silence ensued. Discussion over.

That brought me to the stark realization that belief in God and Christian values may be secondary to a political party affiliation. I grew up and live in the Catholic Diocese of Bismarck, where blisters, sweat, fatigue and sore muscles are the result of accomplishments—from physical and/or mental labor.

My tractor radio blared rhetoric from talk shows.hosts extolling numerous economic theories and virtues about family values, protecting children, sex trafficking, activities like euthanasia, direct abortion, and human embryonic stem cell research. We may decide that the best answer is to “take charge” of the situation and move into the driver’s seat, resolutely calling the final shots ourselves. By ending life “on our own terms” through physician-assisted suicide, we hope to steer around the sufferings and agonies of the dying process. Yet suicide clearly goes against the grain of the kind of creatures we are, creatures intended for life, not death.

The temptation that flashes before us when we consider suicide is the fantasy of becoming “Master” over our destiny by arrogating to ourselves direct power over life and death. We begin to accept the falsehood that we are uniquely in charge of our own destiny, and can remake or destroy ourselves as if we were gods. It is but a short step, then, for us to take further powers unto ourselves, lording it over the fate and destiny of others through activities such as euthanasia, direct abortion, and human embryonic stem cell research. Although we are creatures intended for life, we may not be entirely clear about how we came to possess that life. We sense how we have been cast headlong into existence without asking for it, and we know, with certainty, that we did not create ourselves or have any role in bringing ourselves into being. The fact that we were created entirely apart from our own will means that our existence has been intentionally chosen by Another. The goodness and beauty of our life has been independently conferred on us by One who has radically willed our personal existence. Because that existence is good and beautiful, it ought always to be treated as such, and never directly violated.

The goodness and beauty of the human life we have received is also connected to the gift of our masculinity or femininity. Yet here we also face the temptation of Promethean mastery as we imagine we can become the opposite sex, or that we needn’t be either male or female, but can be any of dozens of different “gender identities.” We engage in the fantasy that our embodied nature is fluid and malleable, and that we can vanquish our birth sex, remaking ourselves through the gender bending powers of medicine and science. But the damage that this fantasy can wreak in a short space of time through hormones, surgeries, the irreversible decisions and mutilated bodies — is not trivial.

The lives of many thousands of individuals, convinced they have become Masters of their own identities, have already been irretrievably altered or ruined, often with the assistance of other medical or political Masters. The ever-expanding powers of biomedicine call us to careful ethical reflection and discernment, so we do not fall prey to the temptation of seeing ourselves as Masters, rather than collaborators with God, our inalienable Source of life and being.

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FR. TAD PACHOLCZYK

Are you a disciple of Jesus?

A couple years ago I “graduated” to a tractor with a cab (and air conditioning). It is nothing fancy, but it does mitigate the heat on 100+ degree days.

Another feature is a radio, which is regularly played when somebody other than I am in the tractor cab. I guess old habits die hard. I was taught to concentrate on what I was doing, growing up in an era of “mono” tacking.

But, occasionally I flip on the radio’s power switch. Currently, the discussions are not about what will be done to make a better world or how to solve issues facing our state (and country) but rather smearing the opposition. Remember, this is an election year. I wonder how many votes would Jesus get?

When somebody asked me the other day if I was a democrat, independent or republican (listed here in alphabetical order), I smiled and quickly answered, “I am a Christian, a Catholic.” Silence ensued. Discussion over.

That brought me to the stark realization that belief in God and Christian values may be secondary to a political party affiliation. I grew up and live in the Catholic Diocese of Bismarck, where blisters, sweat, fatigue and sore muscles are the result of accomplishments—from physical and/or mental labor.

My tractor radio blared rhetoric from talk show hosts extolling numerous economic theories and virtues about family values, protecting children, sex trafficking, feeding the poor. I see little real “listening” taking place. Where is the “roll up your sleeves” attitude for solutions?

In fact, the discussions are about ideological control. Little effort is made to really listen, to discern a concept that may have merit.

So, I asked myself, “How would Jesus respond?” Jesus is not about dominance. Jesus is about free will, helping me see my world through the lens of helping me help others. Jesus shows there is great joy in seeing others succeed.

The recent five Sunday gospels from St. John detailed Jesus’ commitment. Jesus talks about the bread from heaven that leads to eternal life, a precursor to the establishment of the Eucharist, the table where I can eat and drink to feed my soul.

Recall when Jesus asked Simon Peter if he and the disciples wanted to leave. “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God,” Simon Peter responded.

I strive and pray I can be counted as a disciple of Jesus. Care to join me?

Odermann lives with his wife, Leona, on a farm in Dakota County. They are members of the Church of St. Patrick in Dickinson and assist with eucharistic celebrations there as well as at the Churches of St. Bernard (Belfield) and St. Mary (Medora).
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