



THE BISHOP'S

BULLETIN

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AN EFFECTIVE
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There is a great saying “As the shepherd goes so too the parishioners.” It has been on my heart and in my prayer to find ways to help our clergy be as healthy, happy and holy as possible so they can help each of you be healthy, happy and holy. After listening to insights from clergy, laity and members of the Clergy Personnel Committee, as well as discerning the gifts of priests and insights in prayer, I am changing our approach to priestly assignments for a variety of reasons:

- To promote healthy, happy and holy priestly life and ministry, I asked for input at our Clergy Days last October on what they would find helpful. I then surveyed our priests to see which ones would be open to living with other priests and share in a communal life of some sort, i.e. regular prayer, meals, fraternity. I took into consideration rectory living situations, distances between churches, individual priests that expressed openness to living in communal life, and other factors before asking the priests to consider this model. With the hope that it would be helpful to them personally, I asked priests to consider this model knowing it has proven fruitful in other dioceses.
- It is not uncommon that isolation and solitary assignments can be a tremendous challenge for some priests. I am supportive of facilitating living arrangements that help foster a shared priestly life, ministry, prayer, regular meals, fraternity, and occasional parish coverage for days on retreat, illness, etc. whenever feasible. I love the idea of priests helping priests be healthy, happy and holy, sharing ideas, as well as the challenges and joys of priesthood.
- I am also aware that some priests are called to a more contemplative way of life so living alone is ideal for a more contemplative lifestyle. I know from experience living alone can also be very spiritually fruitful for those called to this lifestyle.
- To provide more time for parochial vicars to learn how to be effective pastors before actually appointing them pastors. By allowing more time, they will be more equipped and not overwhelmed by their lack of knowledge and experience. This will better

prepare recently ordained priests for becoming an effective pastor while at the same time maintaining a healthy, happy and holy lifestyle.

- We, as a diocese, do not currently have enough priests available to serve in all the parishes that have traditionally had pastors living in the community. In fact, in the priest assignment changes announced, you will see that some parishes will no longer have a pastor that lives in the community (which formerly did). The number of eligible priest retirements in the upcoming years averages 2.7 per year. Compared to the 2.0 average for the number of ordinations our diocese has received each year over the past 10 years, we must be realistic about our ability to appoint priests in the ways we have been accustomed to.
- Aligning a priest’s gifts, natural and supernatural, produces amazing spiritual fruitfulness for the faithful and the priests.
- I want to try to do what we reasonably can to ensure priestly ministry in rural areas as well as in larger cities as best we can.

July 1, 2020, we implemented the model of one pastor for the two parishes in Mitchell with a parochial vicar. Beginning May 1, 2021, one priest will be appointed pastor of the three parishes in Dell Rapids, Garretson and Huntimer. A second priest will be appointed to serve as a parochial vicar.

Examples where similar changes will be implemented on July 1, 2021, include:

A single pastor will serve:

- the two parishes in Aberdeen (with three priests serving as parochial vicars)
- the two parishes in Mitchell (with one priest serving as a parochial vicar)
- the parishes in Mobridge, Eureka, Herreid and Selby (with one priest serving as a parochial vicar)
- the two parishes in Yankton (with two priests serving as parochial vicars)

A second goal in making priest assignment changes this year was to fully implement

 See more from the Bishop on next page

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE

April

- 1 7:00 Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper, Cathedral of Saint Joseph
- 2 3:00 Good Friday of the Lord's Passion and Veneration of the Holy Cross, Cathedral of Saint Joseph
- 3 8:30 Easter Vigil Mass, Cathedral of Saint Joseph
- 4 7:30 Easter Sunday Mass, Cathedral of Saint Joseph*
- 10 4:00 Stational Mass, Cathedral of Saint Joseph*
- 8:00 Gift of Hope Event, Cathedral of Saint Joseph
- 11 2:00 South Dakota Catholic Conference Legislative Reception
- 12 10:00 Real Presence Radio interview
- 13 11:00 Priest Council meeting, Catholic Pastoral Center
- 14 6:30 Confirmation, St. Joseph, Mobridge
- 17 5:30 Confirmation, Holy Cross, Ipswich; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Leola; St. Thomas the Apostle, Roscoe, at Holy Cross in Ipswich
- 18 10:30 Confirmation, St. Mary, Aberdeen, and Sacred Heart, Westport, at St. Mary in Aberdeen
- 2:30 Confirmation, Sacred Heart, Aberdeen; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Groton; St. Joseph, Turton, at Sacred Heart in Aberdeen
- 21 7:30 Mass at St. Peter, Jefferson
- 23 SD Knights of Columbus Convention, Sioux Falls
- 24 4:00 Stational Mass, Cathedral of Saint Joseph*
- 25 2:00 Regional Confirmation for St. Mary, Clear Lake; St. Francis de Sales, Estelline; St. Peter, Gary; St. John the Evangelist, Arlington; St. Mary, Bryant; St. Thomas Aquinas, De Smet; St. Peter, Colman; Our Lady of Good Counsel, Elkton; Sts. Simon and Jude, Flandreau, at St. Thomas More in Brookings
- 28 2:00 CCFESD Executive Committee meeting
- 7:00 Confirmation, St. Agnes, Vermillion
- 29 CCFESD Board meeting, Mt. Marty University, Yankton

May

- 1 10:00 Confirmation, St. Teresa of Avila, Beresford; Good Shepherd, Centerville; St. Patrick, Wakonda, at St. Teresa of Avila in Beresford

*Broadcast on Keloland TV or live stream via sfatholic.org

any changes in pastoral linkages that were announced in the 2014 Pastoral Plan. Therefore, the following linkages will begin July 1, 2021:

- St. Mary, Salem, and St. Patrick, Montrose
- St. George, Hartford, and St. Ann, Humboldt

The 2014 Pastoral Plan for our diocese also projected the merging of parishes in Clear Lake and Gary along with Castlewood and Estelline upon the retirement of the priests who were serving in those locations at that time. In an effort to fully-implement the Pastoral Plan, current Mass times and locations within the pastoral linkages that include these parishes will be reviewed by the local pastor with assistance from diocesan staff. As bishop, I will rely on this review process to inform me of the unique circumstances and needs within the pastoral linkages.

In the interim, due to our priestly limitations and the proximity of the parishes to retired priests who can assist in those parishes if needed, the following parishes will be linked by having the same pastor effective on July 1, 2021:

- Castlewood, Clear Lake, Estelline, Gary and Kranzburg
- Idylwilde/Mayfield, Lesterville/Sigel, Scotland and Tabor

To begin with, both linkages will be served by retired priests who have generously offered to provide sacramental coverage for Sunday Masses. However, these linkages are decreed with the likelihood that Mass times and locations will be undergoing further study and may need to be changed.

While I imagine it will be difficult for the parishes that will no longer have a priest living onsite as I implement this new model of shared life for priests when possible, I ask for your patience and understanding. We are limited in sufficient priestly vocations so I hope to provide what we reasonably can to serve as we are able. I also hope to intensify our efforts of praying and promoting the amazing vocations of consecrated lives of religious men and women, priests and deacons.

I have come to realize that without healthy, happy and holy priestly lifestyles and ministry it is very detrimental to fostering a healthy, happy and holy way of life for parishioners, consecrated women, men and deacons.

I humbly ask for your fervent prayers for: all affected by the changes of this year's priest assignments (see page 4 for details); for increased promotions of healthy, happy and holy lives for everyone in our diocese; for a great outpouring of grace of more holy vocations to serve all of you; for grace and insight for those who advise me on clergy assignments; and for me to serve you all as faithfully as I am able to do.

In the Love of God for all of you,

+ Donald E. DeGrood

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Officials of the Diocese of Sioux Falls

Effective July 1, 2021, the Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood has decreed the following appointments which relieve the following priests from assigned ministry and thus permit them to retire:

Reverend Jerome Kopel, from pastor of Sacred Heart, Gettysburg, and St. Pius X, Onida, to senior priest.

Reverend Kenneth Koster, from pastor of Holy Rosary, Kranzburg, and St. John, Castlewood, to senior priest.

Reverend Michael Schneider, from pastor of Holy Trinity, Huron, to retirement.

Reverend Andrew Swietochowski, from pastor of St. James, Chamberlain, and St. Margaret, Kimball, to senior priest.

Reverend James Zimmer, from chaplain at Sanford Hospital and Health System to senior priest.

Effective July 1, 2021, at the recommendation of the Pro Ecclesia Sancta community and the endorsement of their religious superior, the Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood has decreed the following appointments:

Reverend Yamato Icochea, PES to parochial vicar of Holy Family and Holy Spirit parishes, Mitchell.

Reverend Cesar Valencia, PES, to pastor of Holy Family and Holy Spirit parishes, Mitchell.

Effective July 1, 2021, the Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood has decreed the following appointments which have the effect of creating new pastoral linkages between parishes:

Reverend Thomas Anderson, in addition to his current role as pastor of St. Benedict, Yankton, to pastor of Sacred Heart, Yankton.

Reverend Andrew Dickinson, in addition to his current role as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Aberdeen, to pastor of St. Mary, Aberdeen, and priest director of St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center, Aberdeen, and temporary parish administrator of Sacred Heart, Westport.

Reverend Michael Griffin, from pastor of St. Mary, Aberdeen, and administrator of Sacred Heart, Westport, to pastor of St. Joseph, Mobridge, St. Michael, Herreid, St. Anthony, Selby, and St. Joseph, Eureka.

Reverend Christopher Hughes, from pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle, Faulkton, and St. Liborius, Polo, to pastor of St. Mary, Clear Lake, St. Peter, Gary, St. Francis de Sales, Estelline, Holy Rosary, Kranzburg, and St. John, Castlewood.

Reverend Mark Lichter, in addition to his current role as pastor of St. Wenceslaus, Tabor, and St. John the Baptist, Lesterville/Sigel, to pastor of St. George, Scotland, and St. Boniface, Idylwilde/Mayfield.

Effective July 1, 2021, (unless indicated differently) the Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood has decreed the following appointments to pastorates and chaplaincies:

Reverend Thomas Clement, from pastor of St. Michael, Herreid, St. Anthony, Selby, and St. Joseph, Eureka, to pastor of St. Peter the Apostle, Platte, and St. Ann, Geddes.

Reverend Kristopher Cowles, from pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Sioux Falls, to priest director of the St. Thomas More Newman Center, Vermillion.

Reverend Thomas Fitzpatrick, from pastor of St. Nicholas, Tea, and St. Christina, Parker, to pastor of St. Katharine Drexel, Sioux Falls.

Reverend William Hamak, from pastor of St. Joseph, Mobridge, to pastor of St. Margaret, Kimball, and St. James, Chamberlain.

Reverend Thomas Hartman, from pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Groton, and St. Joseph, Turton, and sacramental minister of the St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center, Aberdeen, to pastor of St. Michael, Sioux Falls.

Reverend John Helmueller, from pastor of St. Mary, Clear Lake, St.

Peter, Gary, and St. Francis de Sales, Estelline, to pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Sioux Falls.

Reverend Steven Jones, from priest director, St. Thomas More Newman Center, to pastor of St. Mary, Salem, and St. Patrick, Montrose.

Reverend DeWayne Kayser, from pastor of St. Mary, Salem, to chaplain at Sanford USD Medical Center and Hospital, Sioux Falls.

Reverend Paul King, in addition to his current role as pastor of St. George, Hartford, to pastor of St. Ann, Humboldt.

Reverend Robert Krantz, from pastor of St. Patrick, Montrose, and St. Ann, Humboldt, to pastor of St. Mary of Mercy, Alexandria, St. Martin, Emery, and St. Stephen, Bridgewater.

Reverend Grant Lacey, from pastor St. Peter the Apostle, Platte, and St. Ann, Geddes, to university chaplain and director of campus ministry at Mount Marty University and Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton.

Reverend Ken Lulf, from pastor of Holy Family and Holy Spirit, Mitchell, St. Martin, Emery, St. Mary of Mercy, Alexandria, and St. Stephen, Bridgewater, to pastor of Sacred Heart, Eden, and St. Joseph, Grenville.

Reverend Tyler Mattson, from parochial vicar, Christ the King, Sioux Falls, chaplain at O’Gorman Junior High School, Sioux Falls, and associate vocations director for the diocese to pastor St. Nicholas, Tea, and St. Christina, Parker, and campus ministry coordinator in Sioux Falls.

Reverend Randy Phillips, from pastor of St. George, Scotland, and St. Boniface, Idylwilde/Mayfield, to pastor of St. Thomas, Faulkton, and St. Liborius, Polo.

Reverend Larry Regynski, from pastor of Sacred Heart, Yankton, to pastor of Holy Trinity, Huron.

Reverend Brian Simon, from parochial administrator of Sacred Heart, Eden, and St. Joseph, Grenville, to parochial administrator of Sacred Heart, Gettysburg, and St. Pius X, Onida.

Reverend Shane Stevens, effective May 1, 2021, while remaining pastor of St. Mary, Dell Rapids, from temporary administrator to pastor of St. Rose of Lima, Garretson, and St. Joseph the Workman, Huntimer.

Reverend Gregory Tschakert, from pastor of St. Katharine Drexel, Sioux Falls, to pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Groton, and St. Joseph, Turton.

Reverend Terry Weber, from pastor of St. Michael, Sioux Falls, to pastor of St. John, Plankinton, St. Peter, White Lake, and St. Mary, Stickney.


Reverend Andrew Young, effective May 1, 2021, after having completed his service to the United States Air Force, to vicar general and pastor of Risen Savior, Brandon. Fr. Young will share in the duties of vicar general with Fr. Cimpl (the current vicar general) for a time in order to facilitate a smooth transition.

Effective July 1, 2021, (unless indicated differently) the Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood has decreed the following priest appointments to parish and other assignments:

Reverend Mark Axtmann, from chaplain, Avera St. Luke’s Hospital and sacramental minister at St. Mary, Aberdeen, to parochial vicar, St. Joseph, Mobridge, St. Michael, Herreid, St. Anthony, Selby, and St. Joseph, Eureka.

Reverend Timothy Cone, from parochial vicar, Holy Family and Holy Spirit, Mitchell, to parochial vicar at Sacred Heart and St. Mary, Aberdeen.

Reverend Brian Eckrich, effective May 1, 2021, from parochial vicar of Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Sioux Falls, to parochial vicar, St. Mary, Dell Rapids, St. Rose of Lima, Garretson, and St. Joseph the Workman, Huntimer.

 *Officials continued on next page*

Statement from Bishop DeGrood regarding a change to the dispensation from attending Mass

As your spiritual father and bishop, through consultation and ongoing research on the status of COVID, it has become clear to me that it is the appropriate time to remove the revised dispensation that I previously granted to Catholics over the age of 65 and/or with underlying health conditions related to COVID from fulfilling their obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. This revision to the general dispensation to all Catholics was previously announced on August 10, 2020. Therefore, effective March 27, 2021, the Church's obligation of Catholics to attend Sunday Mass weekly and Holy Days of Obligation is being reinstated for all Catholics in the Diocese of Sioux Falls.

For Catholics who have serious reasons for not physically attending Mass, here is guidance the Church provides in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 2181: "The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor."



Due to the essential spiritual need we have for weekly physical participation in Sunday Mass, the tremendous gift and spiritual nourishment of physically receiving our Lord in Holy Communion is critically important for our spiritual growth. You can find a teaching on the Mass at sfatholic.org/the-mass-truth-goodness-and-beauty for ongoing education and for deepening our appreciation for the benefits promised through our full participation in Holy Mass.

Know of my prayers for your spiritual wellbeing so we all can be healthy, happy and holy in our journey to heaven through God's gift of Holy Mass.

In His Service,

Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood
Bishop of Sioux Falls

Officials, continued from previous page

Reverend Michael Kapperman, in addition to his current role as parochial vicar, Sacred Heart, Aberdeen, to parochial vicar, St. Mary, Aberdeen.

Reverend Anthony Klein, in addition to his current role as parochial vicar, Holy Spirit, Sioux Falls, to chaplain, O'Gorman Junior High School, Sioux Falls.

Reverend Robert Lacey, effective April 12, 2021, from pastor of St. John, Plankinton, St. Mary, Stickney, and St. Peter, White Lake, to parochial vicar at Sacred Heart and St. Benedict, Yankton.

Reverend Monsignor Charles Mangan, from parochial vicar of St. Martin, Emery, St. Mary of Mercy, Alexandria, and St. Stephen, Bridgewater, and chaplain to the Our Mother of Mercy and St. Joseph Monastery, Alexandria, at the invitation of its rector, to spiritual director and faculty member at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Reverend Jeffrey Norfolk, effective May 1, 2021, while remaining chaplain to the South Dakota State Penitentiary, from pastor of Risen Savior, Brandon, to parochial vicar of the Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Sioux Falls.

Reverend Robert Wullweber, effective April 12, 2021, from parochial vicar of St. Lambert, Sioux Falls, to parochial vicar of Sacred Heart and St. Benedict, Yankton.

Additional priest assignments, including those for candidates for priestly ordination, will be announced when they have been decreed.

Thank you for holding each of these priests in prayer as they undergo these transitions in their ministry.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Matthew K. Althoff
Chancellor

MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH GOD'S LOVE

Presentations of Bishop DeGrood's vision for the Diocese of Sioux Falls

Join in person or via livestream at 7 p.m.

April 6 - St. Anthony, Hoven
April 15 - Immaculate Conception, Watertown
April 20 - St. Benedict, Yankton
May 11 - Cathedral of St. Joseph, Sioux Falls

sfatholic.org/discipleship



Gazing on the face of *Christ*

The *freedom* and *love* of the cross

by *Renae Kranz*

Cover photo and photo this page by Ellen Keena

When you look at the face of Jesus on the cross, do you see only the face of the God who set us free? Or maybe you see the face of a man in excruciating pain, his head hanging low in agony.

It's hard to imagine the pain, emotions and thoughts our Lord had while he hung on the cross, dying for each one of us. We do know from the Gospels that he did several important things in his last moments. Some seem somewhat random or unimportant, but each word he says from the cross is carefully chosen to open the door to our salvation and establish the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Father James Morgan, rector of the Cathedral of Saint Joseph, says Jesus came at that time to that specific place to do what only he could do as the Son of God—save us from our personal sin and the original sin of Adam and Eve.

His actions before dying on the cross, done out of a deep love for all of us, set the stage for our redemption.

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

It seems like this question can be answered easily with “to save us from our sins,” but there's more to it than that. Father Morgan explains there are two sides to consider here: the particular meaning behind Jesus' death on the cross and the universal one.

Let's start with the particular meaning.

During the years of Jesus' public ministry, he progressively angered Jewish religious authorities with what was perceived as his defiance of the Mosaic Law. As his hour got closer, those Jewish religious authorities saw him as a serious threat to their power and as a blasphemer because some of the things he said and did were a claim that he was God. By Jewish law, the sin of blasphemy came with a sentence of death, and those authorities plotted to get rid of Jesus.

“There's this particular moment in history that because of what Christ did in and of himself, in the particular time period that he was in, the people that he was dealing with, the culture that he lived in, all of that had to play a role in why he had to die,” Father Morgan says.

Since Passover was approaching and they couldn't execute someone over Passover, those plotting against him had to work quickly. They involved the Roman authorities because the Jews were not allowed to hand down a death sentence. The Romans saw Jesus as a trouble maker who was threatening the thin thread of control they had on the region. Although they didn't really want to crucify him, they did want him out of their hair.

Jesus knew these things but never hesitated in teaching the truth

of his identity as the Son of God and revealing the Father. But this would be precisely why the authorities would put him to death.

The universal reason for Christ's death encompasses the forgiveness of sins and bringing the human family back into relationship with God. It was foretold in the Old Testament scriptures and planned from the beginning of creation by the Father. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) lays out God's plan beautifully:

"By giving up his own Son for our sins, God manifests that his plan for us is one of benevolent love, prior to any merit on our part: 'In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.' God 'shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.'" (CCC 604)

Father Morgan says this universal meaning that Christ had to come into the world, die for our sins and rectify the disobedience of Adam would restore the order originally intended by God the Father. After Jesus rose from the dead and then ascended to the Father, the early Christians began to understand what had happened and what it all meant.

Jesus had won our redemption and salvation with his free choice to die for us.

Freedom is essential to love

The original sin of Adam, through his disobedience, brought chaos into the world. Father Morgan says from that original sin, now we know how to hate, how to be prideful and selfish. Something radical had to take place to redeem us.

"Christ's sacrifice helps us to understand that surrender and death and allowing ourselves to be humbled, and in his case humiliated, actually brings us life," Father Morgan says. "So obedience to what makes us weak is what makes us strong. Saint Paul talks about that, 'In my weakness, I am strong.'"

Obedience had to be restored and could only be done by one who was perfect and therefore worthy of bringing order and obedience back to mankind. But it also had to be a free choice. As God, Jesus could have, at any time during his Passion, called down a legion of angels to rescue him and stop what was happening. He didn't. Out of love for us and for his Father, he humbled himself to the point of death.

Think about that for a moment. Jesus loves the Father and loves us so much that he suffered an excruciating torture and death so we could have eternal life with Him. And he knew how much he would suffer beforehand. His choice to freely accept his suffering was what made it a redemptive suffering for our sake.

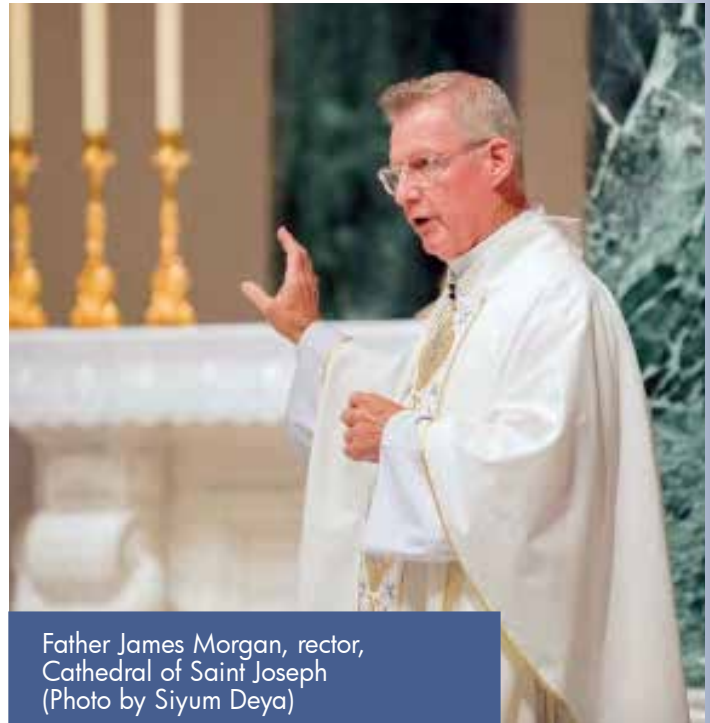
The Father gave his Son the freedom to obey or not. He gave him the freedom to love. That freedom is essential to the love of Jesus for us. And the Father gives that to us as well. We are free to love him and be obedient, or we are free to turn away and live in chaos.

Kym Osterberg, parishioner at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph, understands what Jesus did for her and for all of us.

"I was brought up in South Dakota for the most part. I'm not a celebrity. I'm a Catholic lay woman who's a wife, a mother, a

nurse, and my life has meaning," Kym says. "It's breathtaking, that He was willing to die for me."

She understands that she has a responsibility and a freedom to develop her relationship with Jesus and with the Church. She feels fortunate that unlike the Jews before Christ who offered sacrifices at the Temple, never really knowing if those sacrifices were enough to cover their sins, her sins, and all of our sins, are redeemed by the one sacrifice that saved us all.



Father James Morgan, rector,
Cathedral of Saint Joseph
(Photo by Siyum Deya)

"It's not just for that one moment in time; it's all through time," Kym says. "And every time we go to Mass, we participate in that sacrifice. It is fresh for us. The presentation is there for us. And so it is as real now as it was then."

The redemption Jesus won for us allows us the chance to work out our salvation. Father Morgan says He made it possible, but we have to do our part.

"Jesus Christ has opened the way for us, and Christ didn't answer all the questions. In fact, he answered very few questions," Father Morgan says. "He kind of left it up to us to figure it out on our own, but He gave us the blueprint and this is important. He showed us by action, more than word, what we needed to do. And that is to lay down our very lives out of love and out of fidelity, *out of fidelity*, for love of our God."

Jesus demanded this of his followers and now of us. As he suffered on the cross, he knew this demand would be difficult, so he needed to leave us help and he needed to do it before he died. It had to be part of his suffering. And Father Morgan says we have to acknowledge that Jesus was very aware of himself and what he was doing.

Remember the freedom he had from the Father to choose this path? That freedom and his divinity gave Jesus the ability to do the things necessary as he neared his death on the cross to establish his church and the new covenant in his blood.

"So, in the particular, this is all happening, and he probably

wants it to end as soon as it can,” Father Morgan says. “And yet he needs to hold on, those are my words. He would like this to end as soon as it can, but he knows that he’s also on the universal stage where what he does, what he says, will have a huge significance on people understanding the meaning of the significance of the sacrifice, of his death.”

We don’t have the space to explore all of these significant things Jesus said and did on the cross, but let’s take a look at a few of them.

I Thirst

By the time Jesus says these words, sometime Friday afternoon, he wouldn’t have had a drink since the Last Supper. With blood loss, beatings and physical exhaustion added in, his thirst was probably as piercing as the nails. But his thirst went deeper than that. Many saints and theologians suggest his thirst was a thirst for love and for souls.

St. Teresa of Calcutta famously used these words of Jesus to focus her mission. She felt deeply Jesus’ thirst for the souls of the poor and the forgotten. Father Joseph Langford, the co-founder of her priests’ community, was inspired by her many writings about the Lord’s thirst for souls and wrote his own reflection from the perspective of God:

“I thirst to love you and to be loved by you—that is how precious you are to Me. I THIRST FOR YOU. Come to Me, and I will fill your heart and heal your wounds. I will make you a new creation, and give you peace, even in all your trials I THIRST FOR YOU.”

In looking at some of the details of this moment, Father Morgan points out how the soldier uses a hyssop stick to put the sponge soaked in sour wine up to Jesus’ lips. When sacrifices were made at the Temple by the Jewish people, the priest used a hyssop stick dipped in the blood to bless and consecrate the altar during the sacrifice. Jesus also refuses to drink the wine, knowing he had told his apostles he would not drink again from the cup until he was in his Father’s kingdom.

This is important because He is intentionally fulfilling the law and the prophets and what God had set in motion from the beginning according to Father Morgan. All of these small things that point to him attest to his incarnation and to his unity with the Father.

Behold your mother

This is his last action on the particular level, at least partly. John has stayed at the cross with Mary and Jesus throughout the Passion. Jesus loves his mother and John and knows she will need someone to take care of her after he is gone. He needs to take care of this for her.

“Woman behold your son.” And then, “Behold your mother.” (John 19:26-27)

At this moment, Jesus gives his mother to the universal church. Father Morgan says He uses the word “woman” on purpose, calling us back to the wedding feast at Cana and even further to the first woman, Eve. Mary is the woman, the *new* Eve who is without sin.

“Christ, because he is God, the knowledge that he has, the ways he’s able to think, the way he’s able to see into Godly, supernatural, divine things,” Father Morgan says. “He’s able to gaze into both of those dimensions. He’s able to gaze into both the particular and the universal and have the right words at the right time.”

Kym has a deep appreciation for what Jesus did at this point as well.

“He left her to the Church as a mother, as that tender figure,” she says. “He left her to John, and helped, I think, be a mother figure to the Apostles afterwards because of their humanness and despair.”



He will not separate
from the Church
the new covenant

- Father James M.

Prayer Before a Crucifix

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus, while before your face I humbly kneel and, with burning soul, pray and beseech You to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity, true contrition for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment.

While I contemplate, with great love and tender pity, Your five most precious wounds, pondering over them within me and calling to mind the words which David, Your prophet, said of You, my Jesus:

“They have pierced My hands and My feet; they have numbered all My bones.”



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”

Father forgive them

When Jesus forgives those who condemned him and crucified him, Father Morgan says he is making his last great act of claiming he is the Son of God. Only God can forgive sins, and he does it while hanging on the cross, dying a horrendous death.

“It’s Christ’s last great act of charity, of love and a surrender at that moment when he says, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do,’” Father Morgan says. “They know not what they do. Not, father forgive them because they’ve done something wrong. No. ‘They know not what they do.’ He even gives them the benefit of the doubt! Jesus knows that at that point, forgiveness is love. Forgiveness is what leads to love.”

It is finished

Just before Jesus gives up his spirit to the Father, he says, “It is finished.” Kym knows at this moment Jesus has completed the new covenant.

“It’s the overcoming death is finished. It’s the sacrifice is finished, because he has completed it. He has made it whole and complete,” she says.

Father Morgan likes another translation of these well-known words. “It is consummated.” It is the moment Christ marries his Church.

“Jesus uses marriage at the beginning of creation, marriage is used as a symbol of God’s relationship with his chosen people, and related to a covenant, and now the new covenant. Now marriage is related to relationship with Jesus,” Father Morgan says. “So the Church is the bride. He has consummated this marriage to his bride. He will not separate himself from the Church because of the new covenant. That’s how we can be sure that Christ is still present to us now, in this age. No matter what happens.”

Tearing the veil

At the moment of Jesus’ death, the veil in the Temple is torn in two, from top to bottom. The veil separated the Holy of Holies from the people. Christ opens it from heaven to earth and in so doing, opens the door to all people.

“The Lord opens himself up so that all peoples can come to him and all peoples, out of good faith, can gaze upon him and live,” Father Morgan says.

“We have to remember it was Christ who opened it,” Kym says. “And because of him, we have access to his body, blood, soul, and divinity. We have access to that forgiveness that the Jews weren’t even sure they had, even when they did bring that blood sacrifice. He was the blood sacrifice for us. And why blood? Because blood is life and shedding blood is the giving of life from someone to another. It is that covenant, that giving of one to another. And he was willing to do that.”

Gaze on the face of Jesus

Father Morgan spends time in the Cathedral of Saint Joseph gazing on the face of Jesus on the cross, often alone in the morning or evening.

“To look up at it and to see the agony in the face, the pain that’s on the face. In certain instances, sometimes I see a great relief, a great peace in Christ’s face, too, that he has accomplished what he set out to accomplish, because he was truly human,” he says.

“And God will speak to you. Things will come to you. Graces come, spiritual insight comes. And then to ask yourself, well, what did he experience at that moment? Well, he’s true God. So again, he was very aware of what was happening and what he needed to do and what he needed to leave behind so that the Apostles understood. Generations down through the ages would understand the reason for the sacrifice on the cross, that God so loved the world.”

He gave his only Son for us, that we might live.

Does the Church allow me to think for myself?



I have relatives who are Catholic but don't go to Church anymore because they claim that they want to be able to think for themselves. How can I respond to them?



Unfortunately, this is a very common objection many people raise against the Catholic Church; you'll hear it from inactive Catholics, other Christians and

atheists. As is so often the case, however, the reality is very different from the perception.

One thing that must be noted up front is that the stated desire of this objection is sound: it's a good thing to want to think for yourself and not merely follow another person blindly. The reality, however, is it is actually far easier to think for yourself within the Catholic Church than outside it.

As much as we might like to believe we are all autonomous individuals who do what and only what we choose, the reality is we are all influenced to some degree by people and events around us. The question we must ask ourselves is this: in what environment are we most encouraged to think critically, to stop, step back, and reflect upon our lives and the choices and decisions we make?

As counterintuitive as it may seem to some, the Catholic Church is more demanding in this regard than is the prevailing culture around us. In fact, major aspects of our culture actually attempt to stifle our desire to think critically. Consider the advertising industry as an easy and obvious example: companies with products to sell hire advertising firms precisely to get us to act on impulse rather than to think critically about our purchases. This is just one example of how our culture discourages critical thought.

One might object, though, that this is no proof the Catholic Church is any better, and that's true. The initial objection holds that Catholics are simply supposed to do whatever our priest, bishop and pope tell us to do, without questioning or thinking.

Again, the reality is very different from the perception.

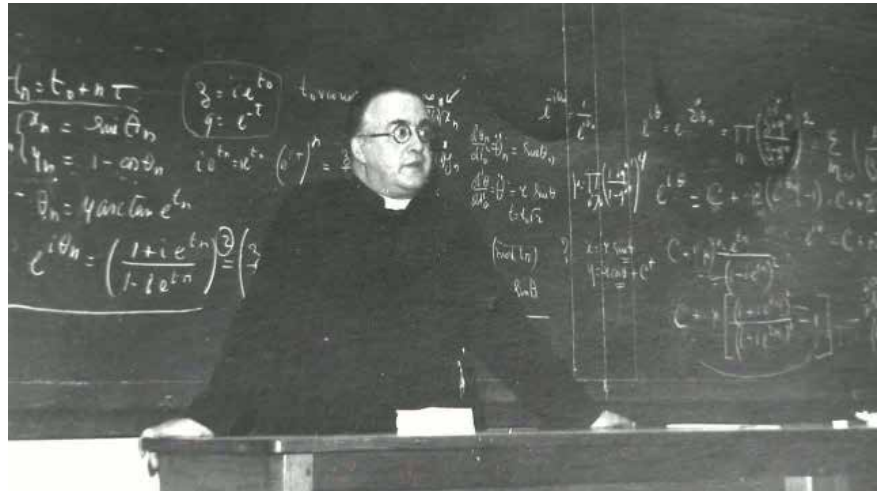
Does the Church hold that her teachings are the teachings of Jesus Christ? Yes.

Does the Church hold that Catholics are obligated to acknowledge and believe in her teachings? Yes, precisely because they are the teachings of Jesus Christ. Does this mean Catholics are called to be mindless robots? Absolutely not.

As it turns out, following Jesus Christ and His teachings as we find them in the Church actually requires we use our intellect, and in turn, following Him and His teachings will in fact free our minds rather than numb them.

Remember how Jesus answered the question about which of the commandments is the greatest: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, *and with all your mind.*" (Matthew 22:37; emphasis added) Or consider the words of St. Paul which he wrote to the Christians in Rome: "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of *your mind.*" (Romans 12:2; emphasis added)

The fact is, the Church—following Jesus Himself—encourages us to understand *why* we believe what we believe and do what we do. As I never tire of saying, "why?" is my favorite question: I love to intellectually explore the teachings of the Church, and I've found that I will *never, ever* exhaust that exploration. When my faith was awakened as a college student, I rejoiced to discover there is no question which the Church is afraid of or shrinks



The Catholic Church doesn't shrink from critical thinking. Just ask the Belgian priest Monsignor Georges Lemaitre who was a professor of physics and the first to propose the Big Bang theory.

from. To the contrary, she practically begs us to more deeply understand her teachings, because doing so allows us to *live* them more fully.

It's also worth taking note of the intellectual history of humanity: many of the greatest thinkers who have lived were devout Catholics. Did they have to check their brains at the church door? Of course not; in fact, many of them said being Catholic made them greater thinkers.

Finally, it's worth noting that oftentimes what underlies the objection raised in this question is a doubt or denial that what the Church teaches are actually the teachings of Jesus Christ. We'll answer that question in next month's column.

Be sure to check out the additional resources at sfcatholic.org/answer. If you have a question you need an answer to, email rkrantz@sfcatholic.org.



Chris Burgwald holds a doctorate in theology and is the director of Adult Discipleship and Evangelization for the Diocese of Sioux Falls.

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Bishop DeGroot blesses the oils at Chrism Mass



Bishop Donald DeGroot pours balsam into the Sacred Chrism while Fr. Martin Lawrence assists during Chrism Mass. The bishop blessed the Oils of Catechumens and of the Sick and consecrated the Sacred Chrism. (Photo by Ellen Keena)

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God asks us: Whom are you looking for?

By Father James Zimmer

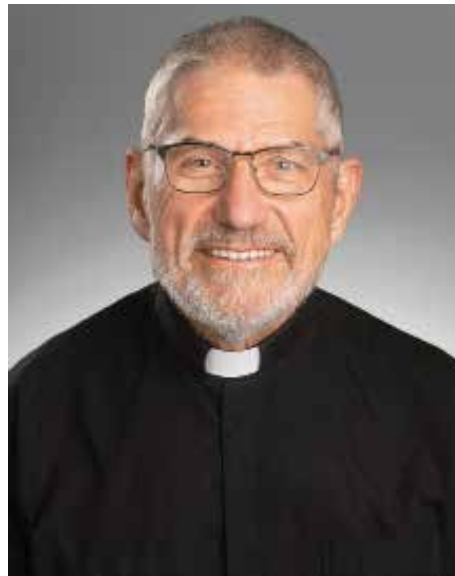
When you “come up empty,” pay attention. You may bump into someone so real, they could be divine—in fact, the Risen Christ.

On the day of resurrection, Mary Magdalene came up empty. Peter, John, Thomas—the guards, chief priests and elders, for that matter—came up empty. That emptiness ushered some into a new, unimaginably beautiful life. Others missed the chance and went on with the “same old, same old.”

This is what I mean by “coming up empty”: What you wanted didn’t happen. Better, what you *thought* you wanted didn’t happen. You wanted something good; it didn’t happen. You wanted something virtuous, holy; it didn’t happen. Maybe you wanted something unvirtuous, unholy, downright evil; it still didn’t happen. In fact, you can’t make it happen. Or, you got what you wanted and still weren’t satisfied. *That’s* coming up empty. *That’s* the moment to be attentive.

Mary Magdalene came to anoint Jesus’ dead body. Nobody there. Soldiers, posted to make sure Jesus’ body stayed put, had nothing to show. Mary ran to tell Peter, John and the other disciples. The guards hurried to the chief priests and elders: The tomb is empty!

“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom



Father James Zimmer

are you looking for?” The answer to that question was greater than Mary Magdalene thought. In comparison, what she thought she wanted was puny—a dead body to anoint. When Jesus said “Mary,” what she *really* wanted, happened! You could even say she happened. She became truer to herself, more alive, more beautiful.

Back to the guards: They wanted nothing more—they thought—than for Jesus’ body to stay lying in that limestone cave. Now he’s gone! Could anything be worse? They surely had heard of him (How could

anyone not?). His presence carried a strange magnetism.

Herod, Pontius Pilate, Pilate’s wife, the Pharisee Nicodemus—all felt the pull. (Read the Gospels; you’ll see what I mean.) When they found the tomb empty, if the guards and chief priests had paid attention to that “tug” in their deepest being—their *heart*—how their lives would have changed. They’d have been a hundred times richer. Instead, they pretended. They came up with their own explanation. They did not become truer, more alive, more beautiful. “Same old, same old.”

We “come up empty” more often than we’d like to admit. The hard realities of life can help us, then. I visit the sick and dying at Sanford Hospital. I spend time with those who care for them. That gives me the chance to face every day the all-important question: Whom are you looking for? Might this be the value of the COVID pandemic? Keeping us from what we think we want, exposing our emptiness, the futility of our competing ideologies, it confronts us: Who are you, really? Whom are you looking for?

Early on in the pandemic, I went to give the sacraments to a woman dying from COVID. I’d just phoned her family; they couldn’t be with her. Talk about an “empty tomb” feeling! I donned all the personal protective equipment, and looking like an astronaut headed for the moon, opened the door. I heard singing!

A young nurse, her hand on the patient’s hand, mouthed soothing tones—an echo of heaven itself. I could almost feel Christ, risen from the dead—in Heaven, yes, yet on earth, in human form—a young nurse, a not-so-young priest, a dying woman, a grieving family at home. It was as though the Father’s voice was heard: Whom are you looking for? The One for whom you look is here—alive!

Aching limestone walls echo

My heart’s one longing:

You who love me,

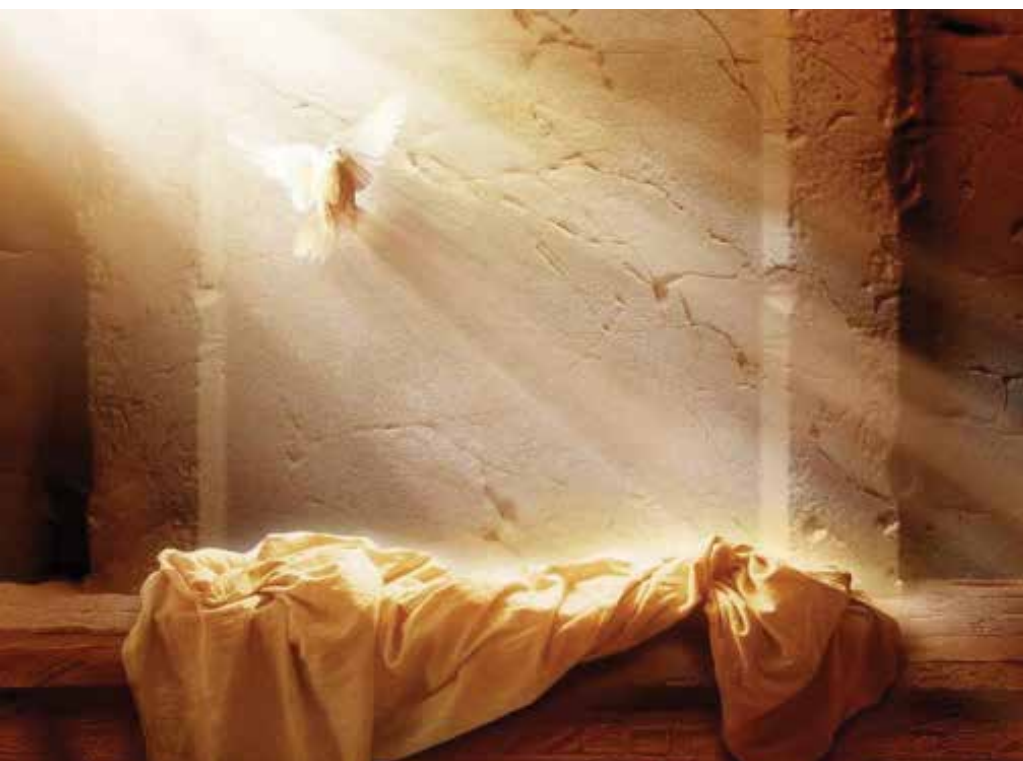
Whom I want to love—

Where have you hidden?

Buried deep, it seems,

In our rubble, if I look—

You are there ahead of me.



Vocations Q&A

with Sister Mary Thomas



Sister Mary Thomas with Collin Block

Sister Mary Thomas, a Presentation Sister of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has been a religious sister since September 2, 1978. She is currently the senior vice president of mission at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls.

Q. Tell us a bit about your family and where you grew up.

A. I am the youngest of eight children. I grew up on a farm north of Bowdle. I loved living on the farm and how we all worked together to get big projects accomplished. All my siblings lived in the area so we were able to gather frequently as an extended family.

Q. How did you get your call to the religious life?

A. A call matures and begins with noticing. Noticing what was stirring in my heart, when I felt more alive, what did not hold any attraction to me. As I listened and began to “act” upon what was churning in me, i.e. talk with a vocations director, someone who knew the life I seemed to be attracted to, then the swirling energy was able to find direction. She helped me focus my listening as I began to trust that I was being called and trust the one who was calling me. The attraction was love. God is love.

Q. What is your work as a religious?

A. I have had several ministries throughout my life. I would say the emphasis was more on a pastoral presence—youth minister, campus minister, vocations director and now senior vice president for mission at Avera McKennan. In common with all these ministries was accompanying people in their joys and sorrows, helping to guide them, so in that sense there was an educational component, deepening their spiritual awareness of God’s presence in their lives.

Q. Who has been most influential in your life?

A. I have been blessed with so many who have influenced me in a positive way. I would say in my teens, there were people who were willing to create space

for me, listen to my deeper questioning, honor the questions and help me stand in the truth that was being revealed. As I grew older I still needed that type of nurturing presence; however, more was needed. I was influenced by people who could stay in relationship, in dialogue as there were competing “goods.” How to show respect for each other in the midst of divergence and elevate the conversation.

Q. What is your favorite part of being a religious sister?

A. The uniqueness is in what we, as a congregation, along with many like-minded people, strive to create together. The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience really do give structure and meaning to our life in common. Our personal and communal prayer keeps us/me grounded as I engage what is before me and who I am privileged to walk with at any given moment.

Q. Why did you choose the Presentation Sisters?

A. When I started I did not know there were lots and lots of other groups to potentially join. I attended Presentation College and felt there was a “fit” for me with the sisters I knew at the college. There is a certain spirit to any community and the Presentation spirit brought me to greater life. Later I was part of an inter-community novitiate in Omaha. There I interacted with young women from three other congregations. While I valued each one, I felt confirmed in my original choice to be a Presentation Sister.

Q. What’s the most challenging part of religious life?

A. I think that for me there were challenges that may have been linked to my own developmental stages. So early on, choosing a “single” life as my high school classmates were getting married and having children would have been a hurdle. Later there was a question of whether my ministry has made a difference. With motherhood, we can see children grow

and hopefully blossom. Those types of markers are not part of this way of life. I see all of those times and any coming up as invitations to listen more fully to the call once again. It might mean letting go of status symbols I may have picked up along the way. It helps so much to witness how sisters older than me have navigated similar waters so beautifully. They inspire me.

Q. What is the biggest blessing?

A. The blessings never cease if I have eyes to see—being able to deepen my relationship with God, having my community sisters as companions on the faith journey, engaging the people of God. God’s people are truly amazing.

Q. Who is your go-to saint? Why?

A. I lean on Mary, the mother of Jesus, because she is my namesake. St. Therese and her Little Way fits me well. Venerable Nano Nagle because she founded the Presentation Sisters.

Q. What is something most people don’t know about you?

A. I like to get up earlier than most people because the day is fresh and full of promise as we are on the cusp of a new day. There is a stillness to the early morning. I imagine the veil between God and me/us is thinner at that hour.

Q. How can people in the diocese best help you be a great sister?

A. Prayer really does make a difference. I welcome the prayerful support.



Living your faith doesn't have to mean having no friends

By Makenzee Gooley

If I'm serious about my faith, will I fit in? This is one of the biggest questions young people seem to be facing today. It's a common fear that many have as they go through high school, and even college. Students and young people are afraid they will lose friends. They want to have connections as they get older and be part of a bigger picture. They want to feel loved and accepted by the world around them.

Chris Uhler, campus minister at Roncalli High School in Aberdeen, says this question of being serious about faith and what will happen is a lived reality of some of his students.

"That fear is quite real," Chris said. "I've seen it quite a bit in my three years here now. I've seen kids come to live their faith, get scared and then run away. I've also seen some kids go on living their faith." He says the students are afraid of what people will think.

Youth and young adults aren't necessarily afraid of losing friends as much as they are afraid of how the world around them will view their choice to live their faith, and in turn how the world will view them as a person. The fears they have are most

often about how people will treat them, gossip about them, and overall just look down on them for choosing to pursue the Catholic faith. They don't want to be judged for making a choice that is more than simply going through the motions.



Chris Uhler with his wife, Mariah, and son, Blaise

Anna Fischer, a freshman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, says this fear of losing friends is common because "to live your life and to follow Christ, your life will change because of that. A lot of times

that means your friendships will change."

Anna said especially when things first start to change, people fear the unknown. They worry about whether or not God will provide what they need, such as friendships.

"One of the big reasons I think this is such a big deal is that friendships are so important, throughout high school and college especially. Your friendships are kind of what keeps you going. They are the people you lean on. Not having people during those times can be very difficult," Anna says.

With that being a fear of young people, youth probably wonder how they can live out their faith while dealing with the possibility of losing the friends they have gained thus far.

Find others like you

One thing to remember is friendships evolve and change over time. They may grow stronger and people may grow closer; some may grow apart. They are not the same forever. However, the love of God is eternal. This everlasting love is something that will never change.

Chris encourages people to plug in. He says if there are activities such as a Wednesday night faith formation or youth group, students should attend these events. Try to befriend the teachers as well as other students there. This is a way to physically get yourself involved. Another way to get involved is to go to things like a praise and worship night or a retreat. These are ways to get closer to God in a more intimate manner. Opportunities like this allow for students to find community.

Chris also recommends students try looking at good Catholic content.

“Be it Catholic podcasts or Catholic YouTube videos or find good Catholic book recommendations. There’s so much out there,” he says. “For example, you can Google Father Mike Schmitz and there’s tons of stuff that can help you and encourage you along your journey.”

For college students, Anna recommends people check out what your campus has to offer for Mass. Newman Centers are an option for many on state college campuses. Students can also look at the local area around the campus and see what



Anna Fischer

other parishes have to offer if on-campus doesn’t have a Newman Center. Get involved in daily Mass and young adult groups that are offered.

“I think the most influential thing for me is having gotten involved at the Newman Center,” Anna says. “Just getting involved here has introduced me to a lot of great people who are becoming close friends. It’s been the highlight of my freshman year.”

You are not alone

Turning to Jesus and his love may seem

daunting to many at first. Society puts a lot of pressure on people to do certain things and act certain ways. Today it’s hard to see how one can fit in while pursuing a life in the Catholic faith. People fear they will be alone, and it’s hard to picture a life without friends. However, Chris says that while this is not going to be an easy thing, have the courage to step out.

“Christ had almost all his friends abandon him at one point. The only ones there when He died were his mother and John,” Chris says. “He knows what it’s like to feel alone, but we need to acknowledge this when it’s on our hearts. We should tell Christ that we feel this and we know you’ve been through it, please help me through this.”

God assures us we are not alone. You can find others interested in a life of faith, and one of the main places is at the Church itself. Getting involved at whatever church is available, be it the parish in town for the entire community or the campus Newman Center, is a key part of helping grow the relationship with the Lord that so many seek.

It may be hard at first, especially because people may not think it’s “cool” or “hip” to pursue the faith. However, there are people who do share this desire to follow Christ, and they may feel the same way at one point or another about this. It’s hard to imagine being alone, but if youth surround themselves with people who want to help on this journey, they actually won’t be alone at all.

The other key is simply to communicate with the Lord. He will not leave you, and one of the best reminders of that is prayer. People can pray anytime and anyplace and He will listen. The answer may not come right away, and it may not be exactly what was asked for; however, He will always listen and guide his children.

Live against the grain

The world may perceive following Christ as a thing that is “not the norm” or something that is “un-cool.” The way the world perceives us may seem important. It is important to be a person who is respected and known for being a good human being. On the other hand, society may deem



some things important that aren’t really important in the long run.

“Don’t get me wrong. I like my iPhone. I like my car. I like my Wi-Fi. I like living in the 21st century, not gonna lie,” Chris says. “But it’s just this vacuum that if kids take a few steps down the social media hole, they take a few steps down a politics hole, or they even go off to college... and in class some of the things they hear... they get sucked into this. And they see people of faith living lives contrary to that.”

The vacuum of society can be draining. One of the keys is of course to jump in yourself and find people who are willing to live out their love for God alongside you.

The other part to this puzzle is that those of us who are already living our faith in a radical way need to be role models. We must show younger people how to live a life that is one where we follow Christ and accept his love. This means attending Mass, partaking in the sacraments of confession and the Eucharist, and daily prayer.

The decision to follow Christ fully is a beautiful one, but it can also be full of unknowns. There may be people who turn away, including some of our closest friends. But God’s love is eternal. It will never falter. He will never leave you. He wants a relationship with his children and He loves them unconditionally. God will always provide for you.

We are reminded in Isaiah 49:15-16, “Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of my hands I have engraved you; your walls are ever before me.”



Overcoming fear is key to being an effective missionary disciple

By Laurie Stiegelmeier

Bishop DeGrood's vision for the diocese, *Lifelong Catholic Missionary Discipleship Through God's Love*, is meant for everyone to play a part in. But it's hard to imagine what missionary discipleship looks like and how it's carried out. Even more, this is a scary concept for many of us.

How do we overcome our fear of sharing God's love with others?

Even the Apostles hid in fear until the Holy Spirit filled them at Pentecost. We need to remember that same Holy Spirit is still alive in the Church and in us, especially through baptism and confirmation. We can also look to the witness of the saints who walked before us and learn from those who daily walk with us.

Their example can guide us on our own path of discipleship.

Overcome fear with knowledge

Julie Ernster, St. George Parish, Hartford, and Renee Hejna, St. Wenceslaus Parish, Tabor, found help dealing with that fear through Equip, a three-year diocesan program of reading the Bible and Catechism of the Catholic Church led by Dr. Chris Burgwald.

Julie found her way to Equip as she searched for reasons her three sons abandoned the faith they were raised in. She realized she needed a better understanding of the Catholic faith to help them.

"When I was applying for Equip, Chris said I was applying to be a missionary disciple, and I asked him if he knew I was married because I thought it meant going to Haiti or another foreign country!" Julie laughs about that now that she understands it means bringing the Good News of God to the people you are with, to your families, parishes and communities.

Julie had to overcome fear of both rejection and a lack of her own knowledge and ability to express the fullness of our faith. Equip helped her with both. She was amazed at how much she didn't know. In addition, practice and learning to trust God have been key in conquering fear.

"Just getting out and doing it makes it easier, and a lot of it is a gift of grace where I say, 'Okay God, I'll do it.' If he's asking me to do something, who am I to say no?" Julie says.

However, she adds there are still times when she is afraid to share her faith.

"A specific example is just getting the email that this interview was requested," Julie says. "The big thing for me is saying yes and stepping out of my comfort zone, knowing that God is doing it, not me."

The "yes" leads to growth

Leading small groups of women and starting a Traveling Blessed Virgin to help families in the parish grow in their devotion to Mary grew out of Julie's

yes. She also started the Seven Sisters Apostolate on the suggestion of a spiritual director. This involves seven women who each take a day to pray one hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament for their parish priest.



Julie Ernster

"I also believe it is important to be able to converse with anyone God places in my path, wherever I am," Julie says. "This means I've had to learn to listen to the Holy Spirit to discern if I should say something or just listen, or even walk away."

Jesus said He knows his sheep and his sheep know him. This becomes more understandable when Julie explains how she discerns the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

“The key is learning to listen to God’s voice through building my own prayer life and conversation with him so I can recognize his voice,” she says.

Julie recognizes the way the Holy Spirit works through her, even as she’s speaking. “I’ll be explaining something, and I don’t know where the words come from because...my brain...I’m glad it’s not me!” she laughs.

Renee expressed the same idea. “When I say something eloquent, I think ‘did that come out of my mouth?’ I know it’s a God thing.”

The Seven Sisters Apostolate showed Julie an image of her role: she sees herself as Aaron and Hur holding up Moses’ arms so the battle could continue favorably for the Israelites.

“I’m the person who holds others up so they can do the work,” she says.

Julie explains evangelization is not so much about words as about being Jesus to others—holding a door, being kind to someone who looks down, praying for people we see along the road.

“I look for Jesus all the time and I need to be Jesus for others. It doesn’t have to be a Bible verse that I pull out and give to them. It’s being with people in whatever they are going through,” Julie says.

But she stresses that God gives everyone gifts to use in their mission to evangelize that will look far different than what God has called her to do.

Each gift is different

While being a great blessing, Equip was also a source of fear and struggle for Renee. Raised Lutheran, she says her faith was always strong and Jesus was her best friend. When she converted to the Catholic faith prior to marriage, she didn’t find huge differences but those she found kept her a little distant. Through Equip, God took down the barriers and removed the myths of Catholicism—even though she resisted applying for the course.

“Father Jones insisted that I take this course, and one day he showed up on my doorstep with the application,” Renee says. “My fear was that it would try to change my faith, that I wouldn’t be able to do what was asked of me. I realized that

God isn’t going to ask me to do anything I can’t do. All I’m going to do is grow closer to God, and that’s the best thing we can do.

“Our real goal is to get closer to him and when we lose sight of that goal, we let the evil one insert fear into our lives. It’s an every day battle. The more you win the battle, the easier it is because you see the right thing to do and the fruits of growing closer to God.”

That was one of the blessings, but the struggle was intense and began with the loss of her mother-in-law who Renee describes as a wonderful, strong woman who had a strong hold on their lives. At the same time, in Equip, Renee was being encouraged to go deeper, spend more time in prayer and adoration and find a spiritual mentee. She felt she had to take care of all the details her mother-in-law had covered and that she would have to quit Equip.

“I thought I had to be busy with all that stuff. I literally felt like if I continued on in Equip, I was going to lose my husband and the whole life I had built,” Renee says. “I felt I needed to choose between my family and God. The devil created that; he didn’t want me to go deeper in my faith. It was the most eerie feeling for at least a month.”

A niece helped her realize that her growth would help her family grow, too, not take them away from her. “If I can squeeze in a daily Mass or adoration, I am equipping myself to be better for my family, to be there for them,” she says.

A sermon by Fr. Mark Lichter on discipleship helped Renee hear God’s calming but stirring voice. “I had been praying hard and I think God kept stirring and stirring my heart because he knew I didn’t really want to quit. I talked to Fr. Mark and he took every obstacle to Equip away,” Renee says.

“I used to be so anxious, just go, go, go,” Renee says. “Equip has given me that silence to not be anxious. I always had a strong faith, but I was so anxious inside.

The more you know about God, the more you know peace and tranquility. Once you really feel the value of discipleship you look back on your life and say, ‘thank you God, what a gift the struggle was.’”

Prayer calms fear

Prayer and meditation are Renee’s number one ways of overcoming fear; she stresses how important it is to learn to talk to Jesus as your best friend. She also recommends spiritual direction because talking it out can help you put your fear in true perspective; even talking to spiritual friends is helpful.

Julie echoes that prayer brings peace. “I don’t worry about anything. The Holy



Renee Hejna with her family: (left to right) Rachel, Jordan, Renee, Mark, Hannah and Jeremy

Spirit is in charge,” she says.

Teaching religion classes almost non-stop since she was 16 convinced Renee that young people especially need us to overcome fear of evangelizing.

“The struggles they are facing today are unbelievable to me. I want them to have a deep-down faith so they have God to hold onto in all they will face,” Renee says. “I want them to have Jesus as their best friend like I do. Life is so much easier with God.”

Julie explains the importance of overcoming our fears this way: “Just look at the state of the world—I don’t want to be the cause of that, I want to be the solution. We need God and if we’re not sharing God, who’s going to?” she asked, adding “The rewards are much greater than the fear, so step out in faith and be amazed.”



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April 22, 2020





ABERDEEN – Ken and Pat Zens will celebrate their 60th anniversary on April 8. They have 6 children, 12 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren and are members of Sacred Heart Parish.



ALEXANDRIA – David and Carolyn Schmit will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 24. They have 5 children (1 deceased), 12 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren and are members of St. Mary of Mercy Parish.



FAULKTON – Monty and Jackie Geiger will celebrate their 40th anniversary on April 25. They have 2 children and are members of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.



HUNTIMER – Chuck and Rosy Iddings will celebrate their 60th anniversary on April 22. They have 3 children, 6 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren and are members of St. Joseph the Workman Parish.



KIMBALL – Chuck and Joyce Nedved will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 24. They have 4 children, 10 grandchildren and are members of St. Margaret Parish.



LESTERVILLE – Bob and Janice DeJong will celebrate their 60th anniversary on April 8. They have 4 children (1 deceased), 7 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild and are members of St. John the Baptist Parish.



SIOUX FALLS – Michael and Brenda Vernarsky will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 24. They have 3 children, 8 grandchildren and are members of Cathedral of Saint Joseph Parish.



SIOUX FALLS – Jim and Evelyn Graff will celebrate their 60th anniversary on April 13. They have 5 children, 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren and are members of St. Lambert Parish.



TABOR – Gary and Marilyn Sestak will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 17. They have 3 children (1 deceased), 1 grandchild and are members of St. Wenceslaus Parish.



WAGNER – Donald and Doris Hosek will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 3. They have 3 children, 10 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild and are members of St. John the Baptist Parish.



YANKTON – Bill and Monica Dwyer will celebrate their 40th anniversary on April 25. They are members of St. Benedict Parish.



YANKTON – Jim and Mary Ann Plavec will celebrate their 50th anniversary on April 23. They have 3 children, 6 grandchildren and are members of St. Benedict Parish.

ANNIVERSARY SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We accept anniversary submissions for the following anniversary years: **25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, and 70.** We include them in the issue of the month of the anniversary, and late submissions will only be accepted from the prior month.

Send a color photo, your anniversary information and a self-addressed, stamped envelope by **April 16** for inclusion in the May 2021 edition to:

The Bishop's Bulletin
523 North Duluth Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
or e-mail to:
rkranz@sfcatholic.org.

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Bishop celebrates many confirmations



Bishop DeGrood has been traveling around the diocese confirming young Catholics for the past couple months. Above he seals a confirmand with the Holy Spirit at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph. (Photo by Jeannie Johnson)

NOW HIRING

St. Thomas More in Brookings seeks applicants for three positions available for the 2021-2022 fiscal year:

- Director of Evangelization & Discipleship
- Coordinator of Evangelization & Discipleship
- Administrative Assistant

If you are interested, you may find more information on our website:
stmbrookings.org

or you may contact Fr. Terry Anderson, pastor:
St. Thomas More Parish
1700 8th Street South, Brookings, SD 57006,
605-692-4361, frterenceanderson@sfcatholic.org

MISSION ID MEN'S CONFERENCE

register at
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Saturday, April 17, 2021
9-5pm
Aberdeen, SD

PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD

SCHEDULE:
9 registration
10 keynote
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*-Glen Gauer
founder of Mission Blueprint*

**Safe environment commitment
of the Diocese of Sioux Falls...**

...in order to be effective in fulfilling her mission to evangelize and to remain true to Christ's calling for us all, the Church's ministries and institutions must be safe places for both children and adults. The Diocese, therefore, pledges to preserve safe environments in all of its facilities and catechetical programs. Those clergy, religious, diocesan, parish and school employees, and volunteers who collectively carry out the Church's ministries, remain committed to fulfilling this solemn pledge to protect those children entrusted to her for formation in the Catholic faith.

Aware that some who have ministered in the name of the Church have caused harm, the Diocese of Sioux Falls also pledges to assist any who may have been harmed. As a diocese, we desire to help individuals heal from injury that has been caused to them. If you or someone you know has been abused, regardless of who caused the harm, please contact us. We promise to cooperate with civil authorities in any investigation. We promise to do our best to help facilitate a process for healing. Whether the need is for counseling, an opportunity to tell your story or something else, as a diocese, we are ready to assist.

Our chancellor or victim assistance coordinator can be reached toll free at 1-800-700-7867 or 605-334-9861. We will do our best to help.



Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls
523 N. Duluth Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
webpage@sfcatholic.org



During the Coronavirus—Shorter Hours

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and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
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new birth to a living hope through
the resurrection of Jesus Christ
from the dead.

1 PETER 1:3

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Events planned for those in need of healing

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention month, the Diocese of Sioux Falls will hold two events at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph.

A rosary for healing and protection will be livestreamed on April 13 at 10 a.m. and led by Deacon John Devlin. This rosary is being offered for all those who need healing and protection. Pray with us live from your location or at your convenience on YouTube at SFDiocese.

On April 24 at 4 p.m., Bishop Donald DeGroot will celebrate Mass to pray for healing for all those impacted by abuse. If you cannot attend this Mass, it is televised on Keloland Sunday at 10 a.m. and livestreamed on YouTube at SFDiocese. Please join the bishop for this time of healing and prayer.

Every year in South Dakota, the Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment estimates 4,000 children in our state experience sexual abuse. These events can be powerful opportunities for us to pray for those affected.



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UPCOMING RETREATS

SILENT RETREATS

Men's Silent Retreats
April 15-18
August 19-22
September 23-26
October 21-24
November 18-21

Women's Silent Retreats
May 13-16
June 17-20
August 12-15
September 16-19
October 7-10
November 4-7

DAY OF RECOLLECTION
Broom Tree Days of Recollection begin at 10 a.m. and consist of conferences, time for Adoration, Mass, and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The day ends in mid-afternoon. Because lunch is also served, we ask that you please register. A prayerful donation is requested.
April 13, 2021
"The Reality of the Resurrection"
- directed by Dr. Chris Burgwald
May 11, 2021
"Letting God Love You"
- directed by Fr. Shaun Haggerty
August 17, 2021
- directed by Teresa Henrickson

SPECIAL RETREATS
October 15-17, 2021
UNDONE: A Healing Retreat
- directed Fr. Scott Traynor

123 Saint Raphael Circle, Irene, SD 57037
605-263-1040 | broomtree@sfatholic.org

REGISTER FOR RETREATS ONLINE broom-tree.org
A Place for Spiritual Renewal

Recitation of the rosary planned

Friday, April 2 - The rosary is recited for the faithful departed on the first Friday of the month at 10 a.m. in St. Michael Cemetery in Sioux Falls.

Knights 5K coming fast

April 24 - The Knights 5K, "Run the River," begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. at O'Gorman High School McEneaney Field with the race beginning at 9 a.m. The race is open to all ages and skill levels. Register by April 7 to guarantee a race shirt. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information or to register, visit ogknights.org/about/events/knights-5k.

Sacred Relics of the Saints on display

May 2 - St. Agnes Parish, Vermillion, presents a teaching and exposition of the Sacred Relics of the Saints: Treasures of the Church Sunday beginning at 3 p.m. in the school gym. Father Carlos Martins of the Companions of the Cross will display an extraordinary Vatican collection of over 150 relics, some as old as 2,000 years. Among the treasures will be relics of St. James, St. Joseph, St. Maria Goretti, St. Therese of Lisieux (the "little flower"), St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Faustina Kowalska. There will also be a portion of the Veil of Our Lady and one of the largest remaining pieces of the True Cross in the world. Those in attendance will be able to examine and venerate each relic.

Mass for those who have lost an infant

May 22 - St. Michael Parish, Sioux Falls, invites those who have experienced the loss of a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant loss (whether recently or years ago) to celebrate Mass at 9:30 a.m. at St. Michael Parish. You are not alone in your loss. Father Weber will give a special blessing of parents and all who mourn. Observing prudent guidelines, we will gather for refreshments and conversation after Mass.

School of Healing in Yankton

July 30-31 - The Yahweh Shalom Prayer Group is hosting the School of Healing from Encounter Ministries at St. Benedict Parish, Yankton, beginning July 30 at 6:30 p.m. and ending July 31 at 10 p.m. Presenters will include Fr. Brian Gross and Fr. Patrick Gonyeau. For more information, visit www.encounterministries.us/events/soh-yankton.

Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit available

Would you like the Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit to come to your parish? This display is from the Vatican and provides concrete evidence of the miracle of the Real Presence. To learn more, contact Earl Markley at 605-214-1620 or earl.markley@hotmail.com.

Help display the Immaculate Heart of Mary image

St. Christina Court of the Catholic Daughters in Tea is spreading the image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary around the diocese via billboards. If you'd like to support this effort to bring Mary to others, contact Earl Markley at 605-214-1620.

Pray at Planned Parenthood with the Jericho Wall group

Tuesday's - In Joshua 1:14 fighting-age men are called to go to Jericho's wall to fight for the women and children. Today we are called to step out for our faith. Men are meeting on Tuesday nights at 7 p.m. at our wall of Planned Parenthood to pray the rosary for our women and children. We are asking for men to join us. If you have questions, call Paul at 605-201-5428. Women are welcome.

Mission S.O.S. open for prayers for life

Tuesday's/Thursday's - Mission S.O.S. (Saving Others Spiritually) is for anyone interested in praying for the life of the unborn child and their mother. We are open for prayer on Tuesday's and Thursday's from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at an apartment/chapel with a balcony overlooking Planned Parenthood. To set up a time to come and pray, or for more information, contact Sara at 605-421-8378 or Darlene at 605-254-0951.

Help for parents who have lost a newborn or pre-born child

If you've lost a child due to miscarriage, still birth or shortly after birth, The Angel Lee Cronen Memorial Fund is available to assist you in dealing with your loss by helping you secure a proper burial for your child. Most parents don't know what to do when faced with this situation and are often unable to pay for the services involved. This fund exists to help during this difficult time. For more information, contact Deacon Bill Radio at 605-336-7390 or denwilliamradio@sfcatholic.org.

Traditional Latin Mass available

The Traditional Latin Mass, or the Extraordinary Form of the Mass, is offered every Sunday at 2 p.m. at St. Dominic Parish in Canton. The Latin Mass is also offered on most holy days of obligation and principal feasts of the Church Year at 7:30 p.m. St. Dominic Church is located at 800 E. Walnut Street. For more information, please call 605-764-5640 or email Father Lawrence at frmartinlawrence@sfcatholic.org.

Parish Dinners/Socials

April 18: St. Benedict Parish, Yankton. Bazaar and raffle. Chicken meals, take-out only. Pre-order and pay by April 9 at yanktonbenedict.org.

Catholic Family Services

Catholic Family Services Counseling Service/During this pandemic, in addition to our current in-person counseling we are offering a HIPAA compliant tele-health format. It is user friendly and as long as you have internet availability, can be accessed by phone or computer.

Rachel's Vineyard One Day Retreat/ April 30-May 2. Strictly Confidential. A safe, loving, non-judgmental environment. Open to men, women, mothers, fathers, grandparents who have been affected by abortion. Non-denominational. Sponsored by Catholic Family Services. For more information, call 605-988-3775 or 1-800-700-7867 or email cfs@sfcatholic.org.

Sacred Heart Monastery

April 2/ Online Lectio Divina, Fridays, April 2, 9, 16 and 30, 10-10:45 a.m. Meet online for Lectio Divina, a time for praying with the Gospel of the following Sunday. To register any time, contact group leader, S. Penny Bingham OSB at pbingham@yanktonbenedictines.org/605-668-6023. Include your email address.

Supervision for Spiritual Directors/ Supervision groups for active spiritual directors are being formed now. Please contact S. Jeanne Ranek at jeanne.ranek@yanktonbenedictines.org for more information.

Spiritual Direction/ Due to social distancing restrictions, we are currently offering spiritual direction online. Share your experience of God with an experienced companion-guide and intensify your spiritual journey. Scheduling is flexible, typically meeting once a month. Contact benedictinepeacectr@yanktonbenedictines.org or 605-668-6292 for more information.

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