

THE MAGAZINE

OF THE CATHOLIC

DIOCESE OF

SAGINAW

Issue 5, 2021

faith *Saginaw*



WE REMEMBER THE SHEPHERD

PRAYER WARRIORS COMMIT TO PRAYING
EACH DAY FOR THEIR PARISH PRIEST

FATHER JOE:

How can I
be reverent
at Mass?

FEATURE:

Thumb-area
Catholics
celebrate
rural life

YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

Participate in
local novena and
pilgrimage



God will *not* be outdone in **generosity**

Have you ever done a kind deed for someone, neither expecting nor wanting anything in return, only to find yourself the recipient of an incredible act of kindness yourself?

It usually comes as a surprise, because it is not expected. And, the feeling of being loved and cared for is overwhelming ... in a good way!

I'm reminded of delivering baked goods recently to a friend who was having a tough day, only to come home and find my parents had prepared my family dinner!

Occasions such as these remind me of the incredible generosity of God.

How often in our spiritual lives does the Lord take our little effort and desire to grow closer to him and pour so much more of his Spirit into us.

As members of the Diocese of Saginaw, we have an opportunity every year to support the ministries of our Bishop and Diocese. We know that whatever we give, the Lord will bless and multiply it.

With God's grace and our gifts and prayers, anything is possible. Imagine more people, more families, more of our friends and neighbors engaged in parish life.

Let us continue to pray for renewal and revitalization in our diocese as we ask the Lord to guide our response to Christ's Mission Appeal. We know God will not be outdone in generosity!

Come Holy Spirit!



ERIN LOOBY CARLSON

is editor of FAITH Saginaw magazine and director of communications for the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.

faith Saginaw

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COVER STORY

Parishioners from Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, Bay City, began the ministry We Remember the Shepherd to pray intentionally for their pastor. Each member of the group dedicates at least one hour of prayer each week for Father Rick Filary.



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Annual appeal supports ministries throughout the Diocese of Saginaw, including the permanent diaconate and communications.



Christ's Mission
A P P E A L

Participating in the mission of Jesus Christ

Two years ago, when arriving as your bishop, I spoke of a “new springtime” in our diocese: “This moment in the history of this diocese for me brings with it a springtime of hopeful expectation.” I still believe this. Though we have been thwarted a bit by COVID, my desire for this has not waned. I also believe this is what the Lord wants for us as the people of God, as the Body of Christ. Any challenges always provide new opportunities for people of faith.



**THE MOST REV.
ROBERT D. GRUSS**
*is the seventh bishop
of the Diocese of
Saginaw*

At that time, I also reflected in my homily, “Foundationally, any vision for the Diocese is to help create an environment whereby it becomes natural for all of us, each in our own way, to share the love of Jesus Christ.” This is the privilege of discipleship – to share the love of Jesus Christ.

In fact, it is part of the mission statement of the Diocese of Saginaw. “Trusting in the Holy Spirit and nourished by the Eucharist, we, the faithful of the Diocese of Saginaw, are companions on the journey to share the love of Jesus Christ.”

We may not realize it, but Jesus’ last words before ascending to the Father sent his disciples on this same mission. “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”¹

“Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” is the heart of true discipleship

and is fundamentally our mission. Though challenging in these secular times, the mission of Jesus Christ speaks to who we are and why we exist. From this we are led to be stewards of the gifts we have received. Pope Francis speaks of these challenges. “One of the great challenges facing the Church in this generation is to foster in all the faithful a sense of personal responsibility for the Church’s mission, and to enable them to fulfill that responsibility as missionary disciples, as a leaven of the Gospel in our world.”²

I recently ran across this cute anecdote which, perhaps, speaks to the challenges expressed by the Holy Father. A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church “Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself,” she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. “Well,” said

“When we give to the Lord wholeheartedly, we imitate his generosity to us.”

the little girl, “I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I’d be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did.”

The Lord has called us to be faithful rather than cheerful. Sacrificial love challenges all of us in some way. While sacrificial love can be cheerful if we have the proper spiritual disposition, most often that is not our experience. But when we step out in faith and generosity, being a leaven of the Gospel, amazing things happen. “When we accept our lives as sheer gifts, the Spirit can use us as apt instruments for spreading the Gospel. Wherever the Spirit works, there is joy.”³

Living the mission of Jesus Christ means that we are a community of believers who embrace a mutually shared vision for the sake of building Christ’s kingdom. Each year we, the people of this Diocese, have an opportunity to be a part of something greater than ourselves in supporting Christ’s Mission Appeal. This is a concrete way in which we participate in the mission of Jesus Christ in the Diocese of Saginaw.

God’s bountiful love is all around us. We only have to open our eyes and hearts to notice constant reminders of his presence. When we give to the Lord wholeheartedly, we imitate his generosity to us. In the words of Sirach, “Give to the Most High as he has given to you, generously, according to your means. For the Lord is one who always repays, and he will give back to you sevenfold.”⁴ These words are the theme for this year’s Christ’s Mission Appeal. As Sirach used these words to teach his contemporaries, motivating them to their religious faith with integrity in the Jewish tradition, may they too inspire and motivate us to see how God has blessed each of us and our families.

This year’s appeal goal of \$3,693,000 represents nearly 50 percent of the total diocesan budget. The ministry provided to our parishes by our diocesan staff is significantly supported by your generosity. The remainder comes from outside sources and other

revenues. This is why your support is invaluable for us to carry forward the mission of Jesus Christ, allowing for this “new springtime” in our diocese. Remember, we are “companions on the journey to share the love of Jesus Christ.” In doing so, we bring Christ’s disciples into the very life of God.

Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., preacher to the papal household, reminds us: “Loving one another means looking together in the same direction, in the direction of Christ. If we will turn to Christ and go forward together toward him, we Christians will draw closer to each other until we become what he prayed for: to be ‘one with him and with the Father.’”⁵

Over the last few years, roughly 50 percent of families shared a gift in the annual appeal. Imagine what could happen if more Catholic families partnered with us in the mission of Jesus! Imagine if this number increased to 55, 60, 70 percent participation! I invite all families to participate. Some families may feel they are not able to give, but I believe that most families can find a way to participate in some way, “generously, according to your means.” All gifts, large or small, make a difference and touch the lives of the people we serve throughout the diocese.

Each year it is important to prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit for guidance regarding your response to the appeal. Please be generous in pledging both your financial support and your prayers for our great Diocese and the 2021 Christ’s Mission Appeal. Be not afraid! “For the Lord is one who always repays, and he will give back to you sevenfold.” May God bless you and your families!

1 Matt 28:18-20

2 Pope Francis, Sept. 26, 2015 homily

3 Pastoral Letter on Stewardship: A Disciples Response

4 Sir 35:9-10

5 cf. Jn 17:21

Dear Father Joe:

I hear people say we need to be more reverent at Mass.

How do I do this?

A.

Great question! For those just tuning in, this was a follow-up question to one I answered previously about the Mass. Let's get right to it!

First things first, you simply have to remember that the desire to be reverent at Mass is holy. That's your gift to God. He sees your hunger to do justice to and for him and treasures it. There will be a lot of people (usually the loud ones) who will tell you that you have to be a certain way or do things a certain way.

I invite you to relax and remember that God sees your heart. He sees how much you want to love him in the way he deserves. Let's start with the definition of reverence.

It's really cool.

We took it from the Latin for respect. The word "respect" is, in and of itself, really neat because it's two different words stuck together: *re* and *spectare*. *Re* means "again." *Spectare* means "to look at" (think of spectators or spectacles).

So, when we are asked to be respectful or reverent, we are being asked "to look again."

- **We look again at where we are: a sacred place, doing a sacred thing.**
- **We look again and see in the readings the sacred word of God spoken to us.**
- **We look again and see in the host the very presence of the Living God.**
- **We look again and see the diversity of people around the body of Christ.**

It's an amazing thing to do.

For you and I to be reverent is to commit ourselves to not letting the familiarity of Mass lead us into unintentional disrespect. We need to remember to look again at where we are and what we are doing.

Now, we'll quickly look at how to use our body and mind to help us be more reverent at Mass.

Let's start with the mind.

For me, I'm a spacey guy and I carry a lot in my head. Because of that, I can catch myself "drifting" at Mass. When I was younger, I used to panic and get mad at myself for that. I'd catch my mind in mid-drift and almost yell inside my head "STOP! FOCUS!"

My spiritual director at seminary taught me that mind drift is a normal reality and if I violently rebuke myself or if I get angry/frustrated, all I've succeeded in doing is pulling myself further away from the celebration.

Now, when I catch myself "in the drift," I acknowledge and say, "Come, Holy Spirit." I ask God to help me focus and get right back on track.

Also, we can use our mind to help us be reverent by investing a little time before Mass to get ready: Look up the readings for next Sunday's Mass and read them every day that week to prepare. If you're feeling saucy, look up some commentaries about the readings and try to get the context of it all.

Reverence takes some discipline and patience. Crying kids and the motions of people are only distractions if we let them be. Pray for struggling parents. Pray for people who are around you. Let every invitation to be irritated be a chance to pray. Don't focus too much on what you wish was happening; focus on what is happening. Our God was born in a barn during a census; chaos doesn't bother him at all.

Let's look at how we can use our bodies to increase our reverence.

Part of the genius of Catholicism is its recognition that we humans are body/soul unities. In some ways, our bodies are the portals to our souls. As physical creatures who worship a God we cannot see, it's so helpful that our sacred Mass incorporates our bodies into it.



FATHER JOE KRUPP

is a former comedy writer who is now a Catholic priest.

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When we walk into Church, we should make a slow genuflection. Find the tabernacle, look toward it, and (if you can) put one knee on the ground, while the other is up. The quick-dip genuflections rarely get done the very thing they can help us accomplish: I am doing something unusual with my body because I am doing something unusual; I'm in a place unlike any other.

Allow this thoroughness with our gestures to carry all through Mass. Do no motion without thought. Do nothing quickly and thoughtlessly. Pray for the discipline to truly engage our minds.

We don't kneel often in everyday life. We kneel before Jesus, our savior, in the Blessed Sacrament. We kneel at the eucharistic prayers when we enter the Last Supper. We kneel because of our contrition. We stand to be attentive; we sit to listen and absorb.

I could go on and on, and any victims of my homilies will tell you that is always a possibility; but I think you get it. Our celebration is filled with opportunities to use our bodies as a tool to focus our minds and bring us back to the wonder of what we are doing.

A couple of "clean-up" points ...

Make sure that, in your head, you divide your experience at Mass into two categories – things you can control/are called to control and things you cannot control or are not called to control.

There are few things more challenging and liberating because I think many times, people's complaints about Mass are diversion tactics from the devil. He doesn't want us to be present at the Mass we are at; he wants us to be present at a Mass that doesn't exist.

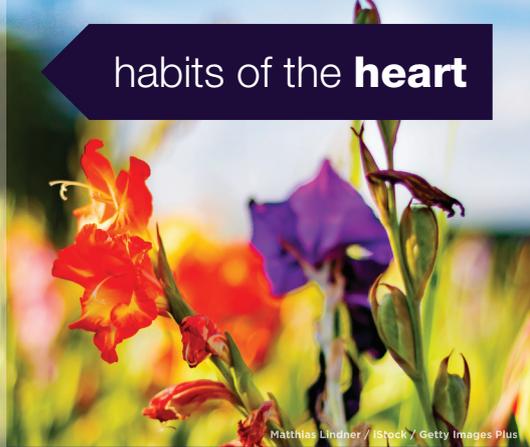
Since the first Mass was celebrated, men and women have prayed Mass with great love and great imperfections. Our call is not to fix other people to be more like us, but to enter into the eternal sacrifice of the Mass.

I hope you find this helpful.

Enjoy another day in God's presence. †

Gladiolas AND TURNING TOWARDS GOD

habits of the heart



Our chapel was recently adorned with beautiful gladiolas, late summer flowers pointing toward cooler weather. The flowers were just beginning to bud and, with each day, became more lovely. Bedazzled by their beauty, I could hardly take my eyes off the opening red, pink and white blossoms. Eventually, yes, the flowers began to wither, were cut back and then removed.

How much in the past year and half have we missed the gifts from God? Since March 2020, we have been coping – initial withdrawal from usual human contact; taking steps to preserve health; paying attention to the impact of isolation and illness throughout the world; praying for those whose emergency and healthcare services became burdensome and exhausting.

Yet, in the midst of tremendous suffering, we can become hardened toward our own loss and even toward others. This can lead to harsh acts toward others. We might, for example, be surprised by our own insensitive comments toward others. We witness violence and recklessness on a national level.

In his "Confessions," when beginning to recognize his own sinfulness, St. Augustine wrote, *For, up to that time, it seemed to me that it is not we who sin, but some other unknown nature within us which sins. It was a joy to my pride to be set apart from culpability, and when I had done some evil thing, not to confess that I had done it (so that Thou might heal my soul because it was sinning against Thee), but I loved rather to excuse myself and accuse some other unknown being which existed with me and was not I!*¹

St. Augustine adds, "My hateful iniquity (or wickedness) was such that I preferred that Thou, O omnipotent God, should be overcome in me and for my own destruction, rather than that I should be overcome by Thee for my salvation."

In other words, St. Augustine began to recognize his own sinfulness, yet he preferred to think of sin as outside his control. In this frame of thinking, sin was not his fault. He would not admit that he had done wrong. God was excluded as St. Augustine excused himself from wrongdoing. Naturally, St. Augustine could also excuse himself from concern for others, rationalizing that their injury due to his actions was simply not his fault.

Eventually, God broke through his hardness of heart, drawing St. Augustine in goodness and truth. Beauty also draws us, as all beauty begins in God. During times of suffering, it is especially important to turn to God, seeking His path of truth, goodness and beauty. May we all take the occasion to see the goodness surrounding us and place our trust in God.

¹St. Augustine, "Confessions," in *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, Vol 21, p. 118.



SISTER MARY JUDITH O'BRIEN, RSM

is a member of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma. She serves as chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.



ONE-SIZE-DOESN'T-FIT-ALL WITH PARENTING

WHEN THE DOCTOR HANDED US OUR FIRSTBORN, I didn't realize it, but along with 10 pounds of baby boy, I was also holding on to some ridiculous notions about parenting. By the time baby number three was racing through the farmhouse, it became abundantly clear that many of the notions I began motherhood with had to go, and the first among them was this: I will be fair and raise all my kids the same way. The day I let go of that notion and grabbed on to the truth that fair and equal aren't the same, mothering became more joyful, peaceful and enjoyable. Parenting isn't one-size-fits-all, so here are some ideas to help you embrace that truth.

► THE DREADED WORDS:

"That's not fair!" Accept the fact that you will hear them often. They are guaranteed to elicit a reaction, and that's exactly why kids use them. They can send a parent backpedaling in an instant.

► THE RESPONSE:

"I understand why you think that, but it's my job to keep you safe, healthy and help you become holy, and this is what needs to happen." If an earlier bedtime than siblings is the hot topic, assure them that when their brother was their age, he went to bed at 8 p.m. and when they turn 10, they can stay up until 9 p.m. as well. It's about facts, not negotiation.

► KNOW THEM:

It's our job to give our kids what they *need*, not what they *want*. Really knowing your children allows you to meet their needs. Getting to know them in times of peace rather than times of conflict will give you a great view of what makes them tick. I'm a big hugger, and I learned that one of my kids needed the hugs and affirmation like me while one just needed a wink and a nod, and the other one responded best to a simple smile and a short note in his lunch box or gym bag.

► **LISTEN:** Most of the time when things don't seem fair, kids just want to be heard. They want to let you know what they're feeling, and I found that these times of tension often led to the best discussions about the real emotions and situations going on in their life.

► THE GOLDEN TICKET: GOD CREATED EACH

of our children in his image. Psalm 139 reminds us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. I think it should also say "and differently" made. The gifts and struggles of our kids require a difference in resources, time and reaction. We are called to love them just as they are; our mission isn't to make them into the "perfect child," the mission is to help them discover who God made them to be. Some need clear structure and black-and-white boundaries. Some need wiggle room and negotiation. But they all need consistent love and an unwavering knowledge of your commitment to keep them safe, healthy and growing in holiness.

► **PEACETIME TALKS:** Ask your kids for input about fairness and equality. Ask them what they need in times of conflict, what motivates them, what helps them in times of stress and when and how you can offer support. Have conversations about what ensures and what endangers their safety, what actions lead to good health and, most importantly, the daily pursuit of holiness. The pearls of wisdom you'll gain from these talks will be a helpful treasure. †

SHERI WOHLFERT

is a Catholic school teacher, speaker, writer and founder of Joyful Words Ministries. Sheri blogs at www.joyfulwords.org.



kindling for the fire

The gift of the other



I recently read through a short essay by St. John Paul II entitled “Meditation on Givenness.” I had read through it before in an academic setting, but reading it anew in pastoral work has been fruitful in my priestly ministry. In it, the pope recounts a story of being a young priest and talking to his spiritual director about a particular person. The older priest imparted an impactful piece of wisdom to the future pope: “Perhaps God wills to give that person to you.”



**FATHER ANDY
LAFRAMBOISE**

is pastor of St. Agnes Parish, Freeland and director of priestly vocations. He holds a licentiate in Sacred Theology in Marriage and Family Studies from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family.

This was a formative experience for then-Father Karol Wojtyła. Undoubtedly, it was significant in his “theology of the body,” which relies so heavily on what has been called the “law of the gift.” In this meditation, the pope spoke of the idea of entrustment. When God gives us someone, he also entrusts us with that person. He tasks us with them. Pope St. John Paul II says, “To entrust means that God believes in you, trusts that you are capable of receiving the gift, that you are capable of embracing it with your heart, that you have the capacity to respond to it with a gift of yourself.”

We all have had the experience of unwrapping a gift and being filled with joy and wonder in that moment. Think of all the excitement from children as they look at what is under the Christmas tree. We know this experience of excitement and joy well. But we know something else, too. We know that over time the luster of the gift can be lost. The football stops being thrown, the video game stops being played, etc. This phenomenon happens to both children and adults. Why? I think it is because we stop seeing the gift as a gift, but just as our own possession. It is no longer a gift, but simply “mine.”

In the creation narrative in Genesis 2, God puts Adam into a deep sleep, forms Eve and brings her to Adam. Eve is a gift to Adam from God, as he is to her. Because of that gift, he exclaims in wonder: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”

If you are married, you and your spouse gave yourself to each other in the sacrament. But it is also true that God gave you to each other. Your spouse is a gift to you from God. Not just when you first met or were engaged, or when you were married or had your first child. Every day your spouse is a gift to you from God. Every day there is something new to unwrap, to discover, to rejoice in with your spouse. I think many marriages break down because this is forgotten. The other spouse is no longer seen as a gift. They lose their luster and the mind becomes occupied with other pressing concerns or new attractions. So much of conversion in the Christian life is about seeing properly.

Do you see your spouse as a gift? As a new gift each day from God? Do you recognize that God has entrusted you with this person? You have a unique task to help them become who God has called them to be, to live out the call to holiness, to help each other on the journey of life until the promised land of heaven.

I encourage you in your prayer to have a dialogue with God about your spouse. How is your spouse a gift to you? Express this gratitude to God in prayer. You may want to write a letter of thanksgiving to God. Take time on it. There is no rush. Listen for what the Holy Spirit tells you. You will find newfound gratitude and wonder at the gift that God has entrusted to you. †

“Flies don’t gather around plastic fruit.”

(and other spiritual wisdom from St. Ignatius of Loyola)

Have you ever made plans to do something that is pleasing to God, like going to a retreat, resolving to pray more, or setting aside five minutes each day to reflect on the daily Mass readings? Suddenly, thoughts start buzzing in your head: “I really don’t have time for that!” or “I don’t even know how to pray – why bother!” Some of our greatest saints have given wise advice about interior thoughts and movements such as these. One such saint is St. Ignatius of Loyola, whom the Church recognizes as a trustworthy “life coach” for two of the things that matter most: our life of prayer and our life with God.



DR. DAN OSBORN
Diocesan Theologian and Coordinator of Permanent Diaconate Formation & Ministry.

Recently, I was blessed to attend a four-day workshop led by Father Timothy Gallagher, who explored St. Ignatius’ 14 rules for the discernment of spirits. Not discernment about extraordinary manifestations of our spiritual enemy, such as we see in films like *The Exorcist*. Rather, St. Ignatius focuses on the spiritual ups and downs that commonly take place in our minds and hearts on a regular basis.

If the scenarios listed above sound like something you have gone through in your own life, then you will find Father Gallagher’s summary of the first two “rules” of St. Ignatius to be very enlightening. These are rules St. Ignatius included as part of a retreat he



Small vertical text: Saint Ignace de Loyola (1491-1556), fondateur de l'ordre des Jésuites painting by anonymous is licensed under CC0

created called “The Spiritual Exercises.” Dear reader, if you can find a way to make a retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises before your days on this earth end, it will be one of the best experiences of your life. I have had the gift of participating in the Spiritual Exercises 18 times, and it is always filled with graces.

It’s a truth of the spiritual life that we are either moving towards God or moving away from him. There is no “standing still.”

In his first two rules, St. Ignatius looks at both scenarios:

“The first rule: in persons who are going from mortal sin to mortal sin, the enemy is ordinarily accustomed to propose apparent pleasures to them, leading them to imagine sensual delights and pleasures in order to hold them more and make them grow in their vices and sins. In these persons the good spirit uses a contrary method, stinging and

biting their consciences through their rational power of moral judgment.”¹

The Catholic Church sometimes gets portrayed as a “religion of guilt” – which is unfair since Jesus came to free us from guilt, especially through the beautiful “sacrament of mercy,” reconciliation.

However, if a person is speedily cruising down the wide path that leads to eternal unhappiness, God will lovingly prick their consciences since he desires eternal joy in heaven for all his children.

St. Ignatius’ second rule is for those moving towards God: “in persons who are going on intensely purifying their sins and rising from good to better in the service of God our Lord, the method is contrary to that in the first rule. For then it is proper to the evil spirit to bite, sadden, and place obstacles, disquieting with false reasons, so that the person may not go forward. And it is proper to the good spirit to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and quiet, easing and taking away all obstacles, so that the person may go forward in doing good.”²

Ignatius’ insight in Rule 2 is behind the principle, “Flies don’t gather around plastic fruit.” It’s true in our spiritual lives and I have also seen it with evangelization. If some of us on the diocesan staff are planning a retreat or a faith formation event that will help bring a lot of people closer to Jesus, I now view it as a good sign if strange challenges start to arise. It could be that the presenter gets a flat tire on the way to Saginaw. Or the internet goes out during a PowerPoint. Or a disagreement starts between people who normally get along well. All these are probable signs that the spirit of the enemy is trying to prevent good spiritual fruit from coming into being by biting us like flies do, by saddening us, by placing obstacles or by whispering thoughts that take away our peace.

“It’s a truth of the spiritual life that we are either moving towards God or moving away from him. There is no ‘standing still.’”

When St. Ignatius refers to “the enemy,” he generally means the classic triad that we find in Catholic teaching. First, the attractions and cultural forces in *the world*, which counteract Gospel values and our life of virtue. Second, the gravitational pull away from God that we experience in *the flesh* as result of original sin – a tendency to disobey God’s laws that the Church calls “concupiscence.” And finally, there is the force opposing God’s work in our lives that is personal – *the devil* (Satan and the other fallen angels). One Old Testament name for this personal enemy is Beelzebub, which translates as “the lord of the flies.” (This is also the title of a modern novel and film that brilliantly explores the reality of original sin when a group of boys gets stranded on a desert island).

So the next time we set out to do something that will bring ourselves or others closer to God, we should pretty much expect some flies to start buzzing around us – “biting” us with suggestions of discouragement or thoughts that make us sad or anxious. These are normal “desolations” that occur when we are moving towards God. (There can also be other factors in play, like someone’s physical state or a mental health challenge such as depression; this is why speaking with a wise spiritual

person, and in some cases a professional, is important for discernment).

What can we do when we experience the everyday desolations that are bound to come as we strive to get closer to the Lord? In Rule 5, St. Ignatius tells us we should never change our prior decisions when in desolation, but to stay strong and stick with them. And in Rule 6, he encourages those in spiritual desolation to focus even more on prayer, meditation, self-examination, and suitable penances. A penance does not have to involve extreme things like wearing a hair shirt; it might just be skipping a dessert or refraining from watching a reality TV show that we know deep down is akin to the empty husks the prodigal son was munching on before he returned to feast at his father’s house.

And that is the striking image of the destiny of joy God promises his disciples, despite the flies that may buzz around us along the way. †

Do you believe God might be calling you to serve as a permanent deacon?

If so, please contact Dr. Dan Osborn in the Office of the Permanent Diaconate by the end of October since a key application deadline is approaching.

(989) 797-6662 or
diaconate@dioceseofsaginaw.org

Citations:

1 Father Timothy Gallagher, *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide to Everyday Living*, 7.

2 Gallagher, 7.

A MODERN SCRIBE



Bay City priest writes the Gospel of John in ancient Greek

A scripture scholar with a particular interest in biblical history, Father José María Cabrera wanted to have something that reading a book couldn't provide: the firsthand experience of copying the sacred texts, just as ancient scribes would have done.

STORY AND
PHOTOGRAPHY
BY DANIELLE
MCGREW
TENBUSCH

He had written short passages on papyrus, an early writing material made from the papyrus reed, but in April, Father José decided to take on a bigger project. He ordered a journal online that was made to look like aged paper bound in leather, and began copying his favorite book, the Gospel of John, in its original Greek.

"I started writing, and then I couldn't stop," he chuckled.

Papyrus, paper and an iPad

In addition to serving as the pastor of All Saints Parish in Bay City, Father José also maintains a Bible museum, complete

with reproductions of ancient manuscripts through modern Bibles. The handwritten copy of the Gospel of John will be added to show what an early copy of the manuscript would look like, with a few notable additions, such as spaces between words, verse numbers, and the use of both uppercase and lowercase letters.

"My hope is that, first of all, (museum visitors) can hold it," he said. "Hopefully it gives them a deeper appreciation of their Bibles at home. ... They will realize that to get to that particular point they had to go through a very long process of transcribing and copying and

translating and printing."

In many ways, the process of transcribing the Gospel is similar to copying any text by hand. In a blend of ancient and modern, Father José displays the Koine Greek text from the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition, on his iPad and writes using an ordinary pen. The program also displays the English translation under the Greek. While he has studied ancient Greek, Father José also uses dictionaries and other resources to read the texts.

When he makes a mistake, such as mixing up similar-looking letters, he scratches out the error — as the ancient scribes would have done — with a hobby knife and uses colored pencils to blend the white spot into the surrounding paper.

Over the four months of writing the Gospel, Father José periodically recorded the process and shared the videos on his YouTube page.

“I just wanted to have the memory of the experience,” he said. “Having the book complete is cool but the most important part of this is the experience of taking the time to write. It’s like a pilgrimage; it’s a whole process.”

A prayerful process

Father José describes the project as “very prayerful.” Sometimes, the movement of the Holy Spirit was especially apparent—like when he awoke at 4:30 a.m. during a thunderstorm and felt a “rush to write.”

“I’m hearing the rain come down and the thunder as I’m writing the moment of Jesus’ actual death: ‘It is finished,’” he recalled. “I couldn’t believe it.”

The slow process of writing also helped him make connections at the repetition of certain words in different passages or small nuances in the Greek text. Most of all, it provided insight into Jesus.

“The most important thing for me was the love with which John was describing Jesus. I can only imagine John shedding so many tears as he was describing Jesus, because he wanted to make sure the stories of Jesus would not go unheard of or they would disappear,” he said. “He was so in love with Jesus he wanted to make sure people in the future would read these stories.”

The process also helped Father José consider the ancient scribes.

“When we look at the ancient papyri, we only see the papyrus and the ink on it and, of course, the content of what is written. But what you don’t see is the person behind the manuscript. You don’t see the feelings of the scribe—whatever persecution he may have been running from, perhaps copying a manuscript from another manuscript on a rush, overnight and quickly before the owner of the ‘original’ had to go because he would leave on the caravan the next day, the weather of the day when the manuscript was written,” Father José said. “You don’t see a lot of things, but you do see that what



they wrote was important to them and thus the urgency of writing it so that the content may not be lost. That is what I have learned when writing the Gospel of John.”

In a way, he said, the project also honors those who dedicated their lives to reproducing the biblical texts. The experience has been so fascinating, Father José is also writing the Letters of John and the Book of Revelation, so all the Johannine literature will be in one codex, or book.

When he finished writing the Gospel on Aug. 16, Father José leaned back in his chair and grinned. The book’s title, KATA

“The most important thing for me was the love with which John was describing Jesus. I can only imagine John shedding so many tears as he was describing Jesus, because he wanted to make sure the stories of Jesus would not go unheard of or they would disappear.”

ΙΩΑΝΝΕΗΝ (the Gospel according to John) was the last line, marking the end of the manuscript.

“There is nothing extraordinary about this. It’s just writing on paper. And yet, it’s extraordinary because it’s about the life of Jesus.” †

How do we know our New Testament is accurate?

About 5,800 New Testament manuscripts, all in Greek, have been discovered dating from the second to sixth century. Most are fragments of pages or single sheets. Of those, about 98 percent of the text matches, meaning we have confidence the Scriptures have been preserved in their integrity.

Scholars compare all the manuscripts and put them together into a single normative text. Most modern Bibles have been translated from the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, also known as the Nestle-Aland edition, first published in 1904. As more manuscripts are discovered, it is updated to reflect the small changes that may be made. Father José used the 27th edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

“The biblical text often has been preserved in its integrity. The accuracy is enormous. It is amazing,” he said. “No other text in the history of the world has been quoted as faithfully as the New Testament.”

Father José’s videos can be found on YouTube by searching “Fr. Jose Maria.” The Gospel of John playlist is at <https://bit.ly/38yd7C8>.

FAITH *and* FINANCES

In a recent address to the World Bank Group, Pope Francis stated, “The pandemic ... has reminded us that ‘no one is saved alone.’” (*Vatican News*, Apr. 8, 2021) As schools and parishes reopen, post-pandemic financial challenges are still facing many families. Lost income and job reduction due to lockdown restrictions, combined with increased childcare and other unforeseen expenses, have caused unprecedented hardships for many families. Yet despite the short-term challenges, there are also signs of hope – including resources for families who need help getting their finances back on track.

BY HEIDI HESS
SAXTON

With 22.2 million jobs lost since 2019, only about half of which have been recovered (*Reuters, WRAPUP 5- U.S. economy loses jobs*, Jan. 8, 2021), credit card debt might have significantly increased in the past year. Surprisingly, this is not the case: While the debt load has shifted nationwide, there has been an increase in “good debt” (mortgage and student loan debt is linked to long-term consumer benefits) – and a corresponding decrease in “bad debt” such as credit card debt. (*Experian, Average U.S. Consumer Debt*, Apr. 6, 2021) By greatly reducing – or eliminating – credit card debt and finance charges, families are finding money to put toward other financial goals – such as emergency funds, or college or retirement funds. This kind of *intentional spending* is helping families to finance a brighter future.

WHAT IS “INTENTIONAL SPENDING”?

In their book *A Catholic Guide to Spending Less and Living More*, the husband and wife team of Rob and Sam Fatzinger tell how they managed to raise 14 kids on one modest income – debt-free – with a remarkable combination of intentional spending, disciplined saving and avoidance of credit card debt.

Intentional (or “mindful”) spending, says Rob, “is spending money *consciously* after assessing your needs *prudently* and considering your options *diligently*.” (p. 45) He identifies four key steps to this process:

STEP 1: Figure out your highest priorities and goals. This will vary from one person or family to the next: a down-payment on a house, school tuition or even a dream vacation.

STEP 2: Create a budget. List all income sources and expenses, including recurring expenses as well as one-time or unexpected expenses from the past year. Use this information to create a budget that will reflect both your priorities and needs.

STEP 3: Work your way out of debt. Do whatever is necessary to pay off credit cards and other personal debt – even if it means getting a second job, packing a lunch and brewing your own coffee! If you have a tendency to overuse credit, switch to debit cards or a cash-envelope system instead.

STEP 4: Save and have fun. Don’t be a Scrooge! Make the most of the free local offerings in your community. Have fun finding the best deals! When possible, give each person a little “mad money” each month to spend the way they want – the key is not total deprivation, but spending intentionally.

AS CATHOLICS, WE CAN LET OUR FAITH INFORM OUR FINANCIAL PRIORITIES IN THREE IMPORTANT WAYS.

Practice gratitude

Caitlyn Kano, executive director of Compass Catholic Ministries, says: “The cycle of debt can feel isolating, but you are not alone! To start reversing course, take a minute and thank God for something, anything. Gratitude shifts our mindset from scarcity to abundance. Gratitude boosts physical and mental health, improves decision-making, and increases our sense of contentment. With gratitude, you can start to interrupt the debt cycle.”

Be generous

Pope Francis’ observation that “no one is saved alone” is being demonstrated in a powerful way in post-pandemic America: MarketWatch recently reported an increase in charitable giving to faith-based organizations. While the first months of 2020 saw a reduction in donations across the board, in the second half of 2020, donations surpassed the previous year’s totals. “Human service organizations – which includes groups like the Salvation Army and YMCA – and faith-based groups saw the biggest increase in donations in 2020.” (*Charitable giving rose in 2020*, Feb. 22, 2021)

When times are hard, local donations of time and money, including repurposing and family-to-family sharing, are helping many Catholic families stay afloat. “We couldn’t survive if it weren’t for our generous parish community,” says Sam Fatzinger. “We help each other – and nobody is afraid to put a need out there, because we all know that sooner or later, we will have a chance to pay it forward.”

Trust in God’s providence

Did you know almost 2,400 verses in the Bible pertain to money and possessions? (churchleaders.com, *2,350 Bible Verses on Money*, 2017) Throughout the Gospels, and especially in the sixth chapter of Matthew, Jesus taught important principles of good stewardship: Be generous in secret (6:2-4), prioritize heavenly over earthly treasure (6:19-20), and trust in God rather than money (6:24). “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” Jesus reminds us. “And all these things will be given you besides.” (6:33)

When we see everything as being “on loan” from God, it can be easier to trust him in tough times. I was in high school when this lesson was impressed upon me in a powerful way. Growing up, my

parents frequently struggled to keep us fed and clothed because of chronic medical expenses. The year we decided to throw caution to the wind and welcome a Finnish exchange student, another stack of medical bills hit Dad’s desk just as we were expecting her parents to visit us at Eastertime. “We’re going to trust God,” my father told us as we got ready for church one Sunday morning. And when we got home that afternoon, we found eight large boxes of groceries on our front porch – along with a triple-layer chocolate cake for dinner that night. God didn’t make the bills magically disappear – Dad worked most of his life to pay them off. But we had enough to feed our guests ... and that kind gesture from an anonymous friend forever bolstered my faith in the abundant love of the God who never leaves us alone. †

Heidi Hess Saxton is a “sandwich generation” wife, mother and caregiver as well as senior acquisitions editor for Ave Maria Press. Her website “Life on the Road Less Traveled” offers a free downloadable called “The 40 Day Marriage Adventure,” based on the Prayer of Abandonment by Charles de Foucauld. If your marriage needs a “faith lift,” go to heidisaxton.com.

A Catholic Guide to Spending Less and Living More is available online at Ave Maria Press.

For more information about Compass Catholic Ministries, go to compasscatholic.org.

WE REMEMBER

PRAYER WARRIORS COMMIT TO PRAYING EACH DAY FOR



Members of We Remember the Shepherd dedicate at least one hour of prayer per week specifically for Father Rick Filary, pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish. They each pray on a different day, so he is covered in prayer every day.

THE SHEPHERD

THEIR PARISH PRIEST

BY DENYSE SHANNON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF SCHRIER

Editor's note: To ensure members of We Remember the Shepherd remain unknown by the priest, FAITH Saginaw has omitted all names with the exception of the group's founder, who is featured on the cover.

A small army of prayer warriors has made it their mission to pray for their parish priest each day. Their hope is to see this ministry begin in parishes throughout the diocese.



Father Rick Filary speaks with a parishioner at Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, Bay City.

cover story

“How strong and blessed our diocese would be if each parish would do this for their priest,” said a member of the prayer group.

INSET: Pat Phillips prays for Father Rick Filary, pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, as part of the We Remember the Shepherd apostolate.

Every day for the last three years, about 10 parishioners from Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, Bay City, have committed to praying one hour, one day a week for their pastor, Father Rick Filary. In that way, Father Rick’s parish ministry, his needs and his intentions are covered in daily prayer.

“I was surprised when (Pat Phillips) the organizer first came to me and asked me if that'd be okay,” said Father Rick. “We know that people care for their priests, but it's very personal in that way that they wanted to pray for me.”

When asked to help “name” the group which had been praying for him, Father Rick came up with a few options for their consideration. One of those names, We Remember the Shepherd, is the one the group embraced.

We Remember the Shepherd is modeled after the Seven Sisters Apostolate, which asks Catholics to pray for their clergy in a special way. The Seven Sisters Apostolate was founded in St. Paul, Minnesota, when Janette Howe began a Holy Hour of prayer for her priest. She sensed the call within

her heart to invite six other women to join her, and each member would pray one Holy Hour per week for their pastor and to ask for him to have a deeper devotion to the Blessed Mother.

Pat Phillips, a parishioner at Our Lady of Czestochowa, describes feeling a similar call when she began the prayer ministry at her parish three years ago.

“The Holy Spirit kind of led me to it,” she said.

Pat and her husband, Rich, had recently moved back to Bay City after living in northern Michigan for 45 years. It was there that Pat had heard

of the Seven Sisters Apostolate and she prayed about bringing it to her new parish in the Diocese of Saginaw. She said the Holy Spirit nudged her to reach out to both women and men who were attending daily Mass with her, and invite them to join her in praying for their pastor, Father Rick.



“I didn’t want to leave out the men who were also interested in being part of this prayer ministry,” Pat said.

Grateful for the new ministry, Father Rick shared his favorite prayers with the group, as well as special intentions and significant dates, such as his birthday, baptism and ordination anniversaries. Though many people offer to enroll him in Masses on those specific dates, he said, it is quite meaningful to have people within his parish spending time in prayer specifically for him each day.

“I am certainly aware that I wouldn't be able to do what I do without people praying for me, because of my humanness, my weakness, my shortcomings,” Father Rick said. “The role of God in my life and his action is certainly a response to the prayers of people, and I am very grateful that there are people that pray for me.”

Like Seven Sisters Apostolate, the members of the group each commit to pray one hour a day, each week for up to a year. They are to pray in a deeply

Anyone interested in joining or starting a similar prayer ministry for the priests of our diocese may contact Pat at (231) 330-0326 or (231) 347-3607.

personal way for their pastor, without him knowing specifically who is praying for him or when. Unlike the original apostolate, We Remember the Shepherd includes both men and women and is not constrained by a specific number of participants.

While prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in an adoration chapel is recommended, members can also pray before the tabernacle in church or a designated place at home. They're all invited to pray for Father Rick at the Adoration Chapel at St. James, but Pat said some people aren't able to get there. One of the group's members has a quiet place in her home where she prays for her hour.

"I just talk to God," she said.

While spending an hour in prayer may sound intimidating at first, the prayer warriors have some advice: "If people find it difficult to go to the chapel to spend an hour, just start with five minutes," one said. "An hour flies by because you're just sitting in the peace and quiet and being in God's presence."

During the hour of prayer, prayer warriors are asked to pray specifically for the priest and his needs.

"If you have other people to pray for or other needs, just come a little early, or stay later," Pat said.

One of the other members isn't able to spend a whole hour all at once, so he prays for smaller increments of time. Throughout the day he spends more than an hour in prayer for his priest and for all those he comes into contact with.

"You think you're doing it for Father, but really it's for you," one prayer warrior said.

Though the prayer intention is for Father Rick and his intentions, the result is a greater reliance on God and an understanding of God's presence.

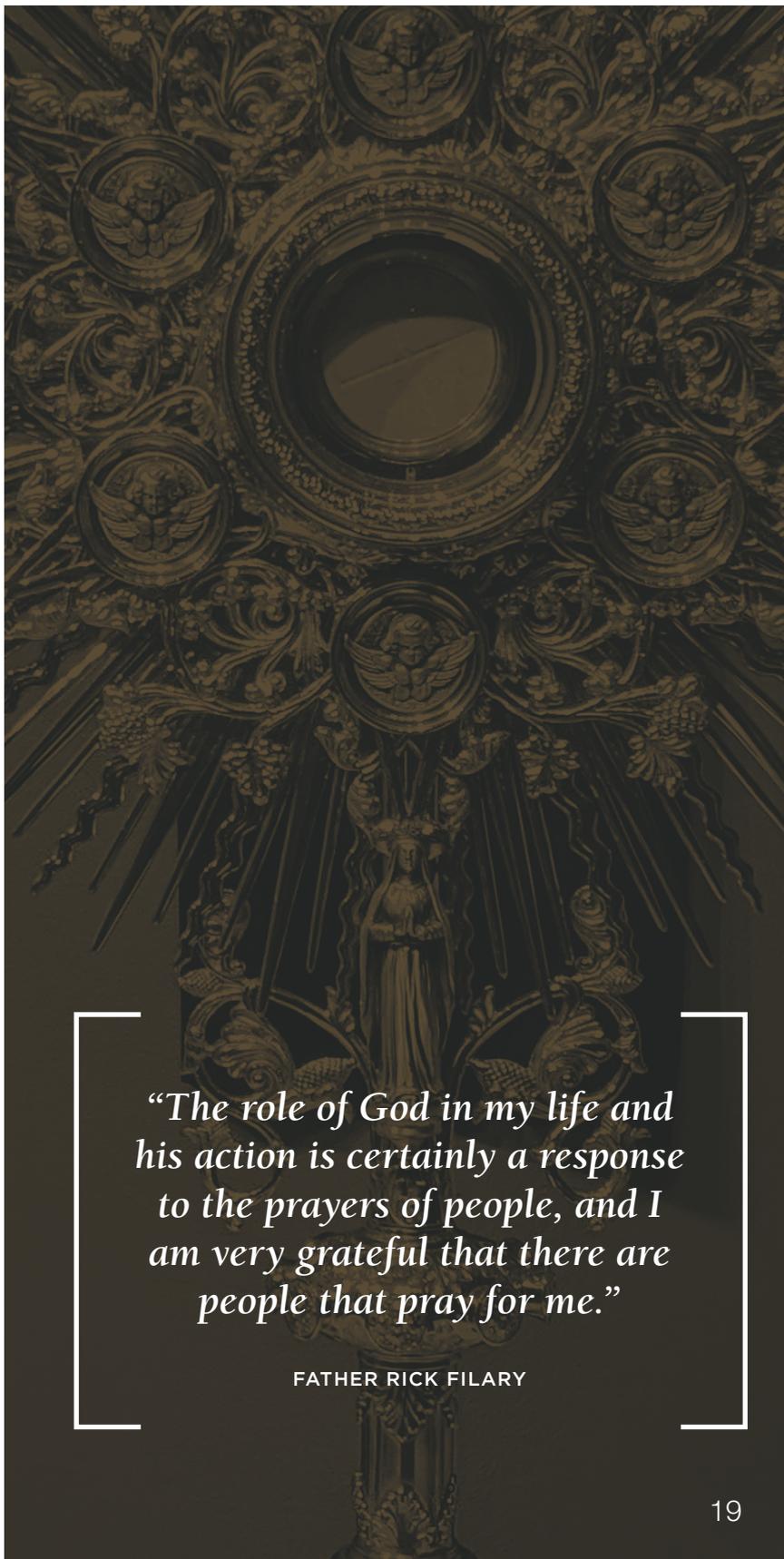
"It makes you more aware of God's creation and God everywhere."

Though most of the prayer warriors are retired, all make a point to fit an extra hour of prayer once a week into their schedules.

"The time you give to God is never wasted," Pat said, adding that for those who are homebound or unable to give physically in time and talent to the church, "this gives people a purpose."

We Remember the Shepherd members hope that one day each parish in the diocese will have a group similar to theirs.

"We have to be the hands and feet of the Lord," said one member, to which another added, "(Our priests) bring you Jesus every day. What better gift to give them than to pray for them in return?" †



"The role of God in my life and his action is certainly a response to the prayers of people, and I am very grateful that there are people that pray for me."

FATHER RICK FILARY



Christ's Mission Appeal

strengthens our Catholic community

BY GERI RUDOLF AND DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF SCHRIER AND DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH

The Diocese of Saginaw exists to support and nourish the faithful of mid-Michigan. Though times may change, our mission has not: to share the love of Jesus Christ.

From proclaiming the Good News far and wide through communications ministry to being the hands and feet of Christ to the poor and burdened; from supporting our future priests through seminarian education funds to training lay ministers who enrich parish life, the Diocese of Saginaw is visible in many ways.

In some cases, the Diocese also supports parishes in less visible ways. One example is the diocesan finance department's guidance to parishes in securing Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness early in the pandemic, which helped local churches avoid laying off staff.

Your generous prayerful and financial support allows the mission to continue.

Christ's Mission Appeal is the primary way that nearly 90,000 Catholics throughout the Diocese of Saginaw can support the wider Church in the region. The appeal makes up a little less than

half of the total diocesan budget, supporting ministries like community outreach, vocations awareness, education, youth programming, faith formation and Respect Life initiatives.

The financial goal of the appeal will remain unchanged – as it has for the past 14 years – to raise \$3,693,000. The larger goal is also unchanged: to help bring Christ to all people in mid-Michigan.

If every Catholic pledged according to their means, we would achieve the goal of continuing to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ.

More information, along with individual pledge cards, should have arrived in the mail. To donate to Christ's Mission Appeal, you can give online at saginaw.org/appeal, through the mail by sending a pledge card to the Diocese of Saginaw, or by dropping the pledge card off at your parish office or in the collection basket at Mass.

Spreading the Good News

through livestreaming and broadcast

We are made for community, and whether you're on a trip out of town or staying home, you're never far from connecting with your home, the Diocese of Saginaw.

We livestream Sunday Mass, daily Mass and special liturgies from the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption via our website, saginaw.org, social media and closed circuit television at Ascension St. Mary's hospital for all who are unable to attend in person. Online viewership of our Masses surged to as high as 15,000 viewers per Mass during the lockdown in the spring of 2020.

Appeal funds also permit the live broadcasts of some Masses, such as Easter. In addition, Bishop Gruss filmed a special Stations of the Cross during the COVID-19 pandemic, which aired on local and global television.

Christ's Mission Appeal helps to fund the livestream technology and the ability to broadcast live, bringing the sacred liturgy and other events to all who cannot attend.



Forming permanent deacons

to serve Christ's people



The formation and training of permanent deacons is partially funded by Christ's Mission Appeal. This summer, four men (including Deacon Andrew Waligorski from Holy Family Parish, Marlette/Peck/Sandusky, left) were ordained as permanent deacons.

The Diocese of Saginaw is currently blessed with 26 men who serve their parishes and the diocese in a variety of ways, such as acting as parish leaders and working in chancery ministries.

During formation, permanent deacon candidates go through a five-year program of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral training. Christ's Mission Appeal helps alleviate some of the costs associated with formation, including faculty stipends, use of the Center for Ministry and textbooks.

The Appeal also helps fund ongoing training for ordained permanent deacons as they continue their service in word, charity and liturgy.

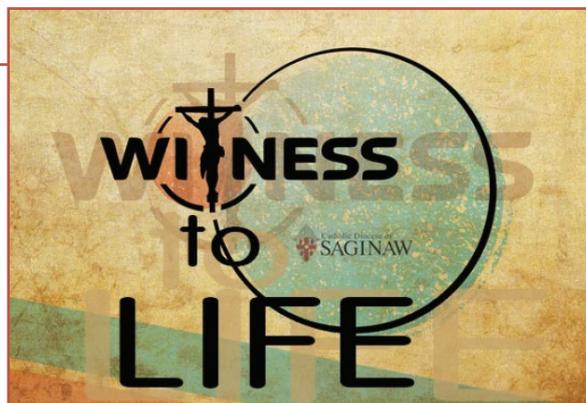


Special liturgies

The Office of Liturgy, which is funded by Christ's Mission Appeal, coordinates special liturgies, such as the Chrism Mass, in which holy oils are prepared and distributed to each parish in the Diocese. The Office of Liturgy plans the Masses, oversees music, creates worship aids and manages all of the details of these liturgies. The Appeal also funds Bishop Gruss' First Friday Masses and luncheons, which will resume soon.

Witness programs

During this past year, the Diocese of Saginaw changed the way some events were developed and delivered to the faithful. Funded by Appeal dollars, a virtual Right to Life event called Witness to Life featured nine days of podcasts. These audio recordings focused on topics like abortion, euthanasia and immigration presentations by regional religious and lay leaders. The virtual experience also included recorded Rosary prayers by Diocesan seminarians and religious. Each Rosary included specific prayer intentions, such as praying for an end to abortion or praying for an end to racism.



Catholic education

The Appeal helps to support the enrichment for teachers and administrators in the Diocese's 12 Catholic schools, as well as provides partial funding for "Welcome Scholarships" for students in kindergarten through 11th grade. Due to comprehensive plans and protocols developed in consultation with regional medical professionals and public health officials, the Diocese of Saginaw's Catholic schools were fully open for more than 90 percent of the time allowed by state regulations during the pandemic thus far.

Lay ministry program

Nearly 400 commissioned lay ministers currently serve almost every parish in the Diocese of Saginaw. The four-year formation program is partially funded by Christ's Mission Appeal, as is the continuing education and spiritual development for current lay ministers.



Office of Multicultural Services

Thanks to funding from Christ's Mission Appeal, the Office of Multicultural Services ministers to a variety of populations with liturgies and ministries. These include Masses for Spanish-speaking worshippers, celebrations for migrant families and collections of food, clothes and personal items. The percentage of Hispanic Catholics in the Diocese of Saginaw is continually growing.



Rite of Election

Hundreds of people are baptized, confirmed and receive their First Communion every year in all of the Diocese parishes. The Appeal helps to provide training and enrichment for those in parishes who prepare children and adults for the Sacraments.



Rural life outreach

A significant portion of Catholics in the Diocese of Saginaw live and work in agricultural communities. Special programs and liturgies for the faithful in these areas are continuing to grow, thanks to funding from Christ's Mission Appeal.



Vocations

Funding from Christ's Mission Appeal helps to support vocations awareness and recruitment, as well as the education and formation of seminarians in the Diocese of Saginaw. The six men currently enrolled in seminary for the Diocese come from a wide variety of backgrounds and faith experiences.

Thumb-area faithful gather to celebrate *rural life*



On a wide-open farmstead surrounded by beet fields and windmills, Catholics from across the Thumb gathered to celebrate faith and rural life with Mass and fellowship.

STORY AND
PHOTOGRAPHY
BY DANIELLE
MCGREW
TENBUSCH

Charlie Briolat, a parishioner of Good Shepherd Parish, Uby/Sheridan Corners/Frieburg/Argyle, welcomed Bishop Robert Gruss to his farm for the event.

“I thought it came together pretty well!” Charlie said.

“Father Stephen (Blaxton) gets the credit for pulling it all off,” he added, explaining that Father Stephen, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Marlette/Sandusky/Peck, organized the event, ordered the tents and other prep work. The Knights of Columbus provided a cookout meal.

From the time he first arrived in the Diocese of Saginaw, Bishop Robert Gruss wanted to celebrate Mass at a local farm, he said, adding that he hopes to offer similar Masses in the future.

“Rural life, whether it be in a town or in the country, can put us in touch with the Kingdom message, leading us to a

place of trust, a place of patience, a place of faith, all in relation to the Lord,” Bishop Gruss said in his homily.

He also likened regenerative agricultural practices used to improve soil health and crop yields to the importance of cultivating a rich spiritual life.

“A daily life of prayer, making the Lord Jesus the focus of our lives, living in communion with the Lord are regenerative practices for the soul which allow us to yield greater fruit for the Kingdom,” he said.

Following Mass, Sister Esther Mary Nickel, RSM, gave a presentation about the organization Catholic Rural Life. Sister Esther is on the board of directors for Catholic Rural Life, and Bishop Gruss is the vice president of the national organization.

“What our mission is, is to promote Catholic rural life in rural communities,” she said.

Holy Family Parish is currently becoming established as a Catholic Rural Life chapter to foster and support Catholic culture in the region. Catholic Rural Life is a national, Catholic nonprofit organization dedicated to the vitality of the American countryside, according to their website.

Learn more about Catholic Rural Life at catholicrurallife.org.



1: John Pullis and his son Benedict kneel during the eucharistic prayer at Mass.

2: Jeff Sakon, accompanied by his two daughters, receives Holy Communion from Father Christopher Coman.



3: Mike Leen of Sandusky proclaims a scripture reading at Mass.

4: Charlie Briolat laughs with grandson Grayson, 3, as he sits on tractor weights. Seth Briolat, right, and Griffin Briolat, 5, watch. Charlie, a member of Good Shepherd Parish in Ubly, hosted the Catholic Rural Life Celebration Mass on his farm.



5: Bishop Robert Gruss, center, had wanted to celebrate Mass at a farm since he arrived to the Diocese of Saginaw. He said he hopes to celebrate similar Masses in the future.

6: Sister Esther Mary Nickels, RSM, shares information about the organization Catholic Rural Life.



7: Faithful from the Thumb attended the Catholic Rural Life Celebration Mass at Charlie Briolat's farm.

MAIN: A unique outdoor Mass celebrated the faith of rural Catholics as they gathered in Ubly on July 24.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN OF SCOTLAND



MICHELLE DIFRANCO
*is a designer and the
busy mom of three
children.*



A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, MY FAMILY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE UNITED KINGDOM.

The entire trip was amazing, but the most memorable city we visited was Edinburgh, Scotland. The architecture was beautiful, and the city made for some unexpected surprises.

When we arrived in Edinburgh, I knew we would be visiting a castle on a hill inside the city. As we were making our way up the main street lined with shops and restaurants, it was nearing lunchtime. Our time there was limited, so we grabbed a quick snack at a cafe. I ordered a piece of Scottish shortbread and English tea to go, and we continued up the street toward our destination. When we arrived outside the castle, I dove right into the freshly made shortbread and was immediately taken aback by how delicious it was! I had eaten shortbread back in the States many times, but it was always off a shelf and not warm. Another reminder to try local cuisine in its place of origin!

I continued to enjoy the snack and listened attentively to our assigned guide. For centuries, the castle was home to kings and queens, and I was surprised to learn that one was even made a saint! Margaret was an English princess born in Hungary around the year 1045. At the age of 10, her father was called back to England as a possible successor to the throne, but he tragically died upon arrival. In 1066 Margaret's widowed mother and family fled from William the Conqueror and headed toward Northumbria, England, but a storm

threw their ship off-course and they landed farther north in Scotland, where she ended up marrying the king there, becoming Queen of Scots.

As Queen, she lived a life of holiness and piety as she devoted all of her time to serving Christ and the poor. She was instrumental in building several churches, including the Abbey of Dunfermline, which housed a relic of the true cross. She encouraged the people of Scotland to devote their lives to grow in holiness and prayer. Queen Margaret lived a life of extraordinary virtue both in her personal life as a wife and mother and as a public servant to her adopted country of Scotland. Saint Margaret died Nov. 16, 1093, and her feast day is celebrated on that date.

Eight years have passed since our trip to Scotland, but that delicious shortbread remained in my memory. I wanted to find a similar recipe, so I could enjoy it right out of the oven, as I had eaten it. And then it hit me ... a good friend of ours, Maureen, was born in Scotland and she cherishes her Scottish roots. This is her recipe.

In the course of my research for this article, I learned that shortbread may have been made as early as the 12th century, but its reinvention and re-

SCOTTISH SHORT BREAD

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound room temp butter (4 sticks)

4 ½ cups flour

1 cup caster/superfine sugar (not powdered)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar. Mix in flour. (alternatively, you can combine everything in a food processor and pulse until it's thoroughly combined). Roll dough to ¼ inch thick on a cookie sheet. Pre-cut into desired square size and poke holes in each piece with a fork. This recipe can also be pressed into decorative shortbread molds (as pictured). Bake for 20-35 minutes or until light golden brown. Enjoy!

RECIPE NOTE: If you cannot find store-bought caster/superfine sugar, you can make your own. Just pulse granulated sugar in a blender until fine (not powdered).

finement was attributed to Mary, Queen of Scots, another Catholic Queen who reigned in the mid-16th century and also resided in Edinburgh Castle, centuries after Queen Margaret. She had her own on-site chefs who would prepare 'Petticoat Tails,' a traditional variation of shortbread enjoyed by the queen. Little did I know, as I stood outside of Edinburgh Castle eight years ago enjoying my shortbread, that I was standing in the same historic structure where it was made famous! †

local events

Marriage Preparation Workshop

Date: Saturday, Oct. 30
Time: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Location: Virtual
Cost: \$50/couple
To register: Call (989) 797-6660 or register online at saginaw.org/events
Registration deadline: Oct. 28

The Diocesan Marriage Preparation Workshop helps engaged couples understand what it means to get married in the Catholic Church. The topics covered include marriage as a sacrament, marital intimacy, natural family planning, communication, conflict resolution and family of origin.

Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Date: Saturday, Dec. 4 to Sunday, Dec. 12
For more information: Contact Deacon Librado Gayton at 989.797.6604 or lgayton@dioceseofsaginaw.org
Please check saginaw.org for additional details and schedules as they become available.

In honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Americas, the faithful have the opportunity to celebrate a novena (nine-day prayer) of Rosaries and Masses leading up to her feast day on Dec. 12. Las Mañanitas, or serenades to Our Lady of Guadalupe, traditionally take place on Dec. 11, the eve of her feast day.

St. Joseph Parish, Saginaw: All novena Masses start at 6:30 p.m. each evening with a Rosary at 5:30 p.m. Bishop Robert Gruss is scheduled to preside on Dec. 4.

St. Francis of Assisi, Saginaw: Novena Masses on the weekends are at the normally scheduled times. Weekday Novena celebrations are held in the evening with a Rosary at 5:45 p.m. and Mass at 6:30 p.m.

All Saints Parish, Bay City: Novena Masses on the weekends are at the normally scheduled times. Weekday novena celebrations are held in the evening with a Rosary at 6 p.m. and Mass at 6:30 p.m.

NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH | OCT. 24 - NOV. 1

In honor of the Year of St. Joseph, all are invited to pray the Novena to St. Joseph and visit various designated pilgrimage sites at churches dedicated to St. Joseph. The novena, or nine-day prayer, also includes opportunities to celebrate Mass and receive the sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). There will also be a special prayer with St. Joseph's intercession for the commemoration of All Souls' Day, Nov. 2.

PILGRIMAGE SITES HOSTING MASS AND NOVENA EVENTS:

SUNDAY, OCT. 24 | 10:30 A.M.
(LIVE-STREAMED)
Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption
615 Hoyt Avenue, Saginaw

MONDAY, OCT. 25 | 6 P.M.
St. Joseph Church/St. Gabriel Parish
84 W. Midland Road, Auburn

TUESDAY, OCT. 26 | 6 P.M.
**Mount St. Joseph Church/
Nativity of the Lord Parish, St. Louis**
605 S. Franklin Street, St. Louis

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 27 | 6 P.M.
**St. Joseph Church/Resurrection of
the Lord Parish**
7842 Newbery Street, Alger
-AND-
St. Joseph Church/St. Hubert Parish
3455 Rapson Road, Rapson

THURSDAY, OCT. 28 | 6 P.M.
St. Joseph Church/St. Christopher Parish
375 W. Ohmer Road, Mayville

FRIDAY, OCT. 29 | 6 P.M.
St. Joseph the Worker Church/Parish
2168 N. Winn Road, Mt. Pleasant (Beal City)

SATURDAY, OCT. 30 | NOON
St. Joseph Church/Parish
910 N. 6th Street, Saginaw

SUNDAY, OCT. 31 | 10:30 A.M.
Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption
615 Hoyt Street, Saginaw

MONDAY, NOV. 1 | 8 A.M.
(LIVE-STREAMED)
Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption
615 Hoyt Street, Saginaw

Visit saginaw.org/novena for more information.



FIVE SISTERS PROFESS PERPETUAL VOWS AS RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF MERCY OF ALMA

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH

In a joyful ritual Mass, five women took a major step as Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan.

Sister Maria Juan Anderson, Sister Andrea Marie Lee, Sister Maria Crucis Garcia, Sister Miriam Fidelis Reed and Sister Brigid Mary Meeks each professed their perpetual vows while kneeling before Mother Mary McGreevy, superior general, at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption in Saginaw on Aug. 16.

The perpetual profession comes at the end of nearly a decade of formation and discernment with the Religious Sisters of Mercy.

“Perpetual profession closes the chapter of my life that focused on discernment and begins the full incorporation into the community, which is a greater responsibility. There is a growing sense of peace and joy that comes from knowing I am where he wants me to be. It is such a gift—a gift of God’s merciful love!” said Sister Maria Crucis.

“Profession of perpetual vows is an utterly astounding work of the grace of God,” said Sister Miriam Fidelis. “The years we have in temporary vows have been for me a time of real growth in love of God and in living out the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience as vows and our fourth vow of service to the poor, sick and ignorant. I am in awe of the Lord’s mercy and unbounded love and know he will bring this good work to completion in his time and in ways I cannot begin to imagine.”

After each sister had professed vows, Bishop James Conley of Lincoln, Nebraska prayed a solemn prayer of consecration over the sisters. Mother Mary McGreevy then placed a ring signifying religious profession on the finger of each sister, reminding them that they are betrothed to the eternal King, Jesus.

Bishop Conley, who celebrated the Mass with His



Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali and Bishop Richard Stika of Knoxville, Tennessee, reminded the sisters in his homily that their presence reminds others “there is another world each of us was created for.” More than 30 priests concelebrated the Mass, coming from all parts of the country and the Diocese of Saginaw to support the sisters in their perpetual profession.

“You are fundamentally oriented towards that invisible world,” he said. “People can see the goodness.”

Bishop Conley added that he had the honor of celebrating liturgies in which 13 women religious professed vows this summer—a sign that religious life is alive and well, he said.

“The joy and generosity of you young women is a real sign of hope. I am overwhelmed by the faith and the courage and the beauty of these young women,” he said.

“As a perpetually professed religious, I look forward to continuing to deepen my union with God and my commitment to our common vowed life with my sisters in the Church. As a response to the ‘universal call to holiness’ from Vatican Council II, I will continue to strive to grow in faith, hope and charity and to serve God’s people by God’s unceasing mercy,” said Sister Andrea Marie. †

GROUP: Sister Miriam Fidelis Reed, Sister Brigid Mary Meeks, Bishop Richard Stika, Bishop of Knoxville, Tennessee, Bishop James D. Conley, Bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska, Sister Maria Crucis Garcia, Sister Maria Juan Anderson and Sister Andrea Marie Lee pose for a photo following the Ritual Mass with the Profession of Perpetual Vows.

Sister Andrea Marie Lee smiles as she completes her profession of perpetual vows with the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma. Mother Mary McGreevy, superior general, accepted each of the sisters’ vows.

Making a fresh start with FAMILY GATHERINGS

Many families experience divisions at one time or another – disagreements about holidays, inheritance, perceived parental favoritism and more can lead to periods where someone in the family is not speaking to someone else. Especially as we approach the holidays, how can we move beyond those divides and press the reset button?

1 Pray to Our Lady, Undoer of Knots, the patroness of difficult marriages, family conflicts, addictions, anxieties and personal challenges.

2 If you're planning a holiday dinner where everyone will be together for the first time in a while, be transparent about expectations and hopes as a family. Have a conversation beforehand to determine if there are sensitive topics that should be "off the table" during the gathering.

3 Perhaps go out to eat rather than gather in someone's home. Neutral ground can help with neutral conversations.

4 Or really switch it up and do an activity together – possibly not on a holiday, but a nearby date. Instead of the potential awkwardness of sitting around a table, go hiking, plan a picnic, or enjoy a museum or sporting event together. You will still be able to catch up, but the mood around conversations will be lighter.

Remember that, while you didn't choose your family, God chose them for you. Even if we don't like everyone in the family at every moment, we are called to love them – and love is about action, not feeling. When you're feeling frustrated with family, silently say this prayer for help: *Jesus, make our hearts like yours so we may love like you do. Amen. †*



CYNTHIA KAAAN has an M.Ed, experience in marketing in higher education, freelance writing and loves using the written word to expand God's kingdom.

IvanMikheyev / iStock / Getty Images Plus

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'More than just giving'

Archbishop Robert Carlson, who spearheaded the formation of the Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan, reflects on stewardship and CCFMM's growth as it celebrates 15 years

Archbishop Robert Carlson, previously the bishop of Saginaw, with Bob Looby, the first chair of the board for the CCFMM.

For the Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan's 15th anniversary celebration, the CCFMM spoke with Archbishop Robert Carlson about the organization and its impact. Here, he shares his perspective on stewardship and the foundation's growth in the past 15 years.

For Archbishop Robert Carlson, former bishop of Saginaw and the archbishop emeritus of St. Louis, stewardship flows from a place of prayer, faith and gratitude.

"Stewardship is being responsible with the gifts that we're given-- intelligence, hard work, financial reward," he said. "It's how we give our thanks to almighty God. ... It's something that a person has to pray about."

Archbishop Carlson initiated formation of the Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan (CCFMM) after he was installed as bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw in February 2005. He saw firsthand how the foundation in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis benefitted the faithful. He brought his belief in the importance of charitable foundations with him to Saginaw. The CCFMM was officially established in February 2006.

In the 15 years since then, the CCFMM has grown to include more than \$38 million in assets and more than 250 endowed funds to support the parishes, charitable works and individuals throughout the Diocese.

"Hats off to the people of the Diocese of Saginaw and their great generosity. Hats off to the leadership of the foundation over the years and a special

thanks to those people who work so hard to make sure funds are invested wisely and correctly. It's a tremendous service to the people of the diocese and helps the Church to fulfill its mission of sharing the love of Jesus Christ," he said.

Along the way, Archbishop Carlson has taught that giving of any gift should begin with prayer. Once, he recalled, an individual wanted to donate \$5,000 to the foundation. Archbishop Carlson requested he pray about it first. The individual did donate the money, he said— but he also learned more about the foundation and became a partner and generous donor.

"I think he is a happier person, because he's doing it out of a spiritual motive," the archbishop said. "If you're going to write a check, first of all pray about it. And then, if you will bring God into the relationship, there will be joy in what (you) do."

For most people, Archbishop Carlson said, charity does not come naturally.

"Charity comes when we ask God to open our hearts to the power of his love. The love of Jesus Christ should be placed in our heart, and the more love we have, the more we begin to model our lives like Christ," he said.

Through prayer, reflection and reading, we can develop a clearer understanding of stewardship.



"I think stewardship is different than just giving. In just giving, you can have all kinds of motives. In stewardship, you really bring whatever your intentions are to God and say, 'How should I respond?' That's significantly different," he said. "I think there are people who say, 'Oh, this is just a clever way to raise money.' It's not clever; it's spiritual, and it's when we open our hearts to almighty God."

Archbishop Carlson recalled preaching on the Letter of St. James, in which the apostle urges his listeners to "be doers of the word and not hearers only."

"That's how I see stewardship," he said. "It's not enough just to see that people are in need. You also have to bring it to prayer, and then go out and live it."

The stewardship of the faithful— both financially and in the time and talent given to get the CCFMM up and running— has empowered the CCFMM to continue administering grants for decades to come.

"Everyone has done an outstanding job. I'm very excited for the foundation in the Diocese of Saginaw. Congratulations on the first 15 years and a job well done!" Archbishop Carlson said.



For more information, call the CCFMM's executive director Kristin Smith at 989.599.0079 or kristin.smith@ccfmm.org

Mission: We encourage faithful giving that is responsibly managed and reflective of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Vision: Joyous giving in Christ forever meeting the needs of God's people.

The CCFMM is here to help guide you with your planned and legacy giving.

The Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan is a registered 501(c)(3), and all gifts are tax-deductible.

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