Father Stephen Folorunso, who grew up in West Africa, calls Lagos, the most populous city in Nigeria, home. He recently made a trip back home with a special assignment. This time, his trip home to Africa took him to the opposite side of the continent to the Bismarck Diocese’s African Mission near the city of Kisii. He journeyed there recently to evaluate the need for short-term missionary teams. Even though this pastor of parishes in the southwest N.D. towns of Hettinger, Reeder and Scranton, is native African, he had never been to Kenya. “I am from Africa, so I am aware of the needs of the people, but to see it in person is entirely different,” Fr. Stephen said. “I went to see what we could accomplish for the people there and return home with a plan.”

Many people cannot commit to a long-term stay in Africa, but devising a plan for short-term trips for two weeks for example might open up the opportunity for many people to answer the call to be missionaries. “I went to assess the area and what types of projects that short-term missionaries could accomplish,” he explained. “I came back with details for a plan and a different attitude and appreciation for what we have and how we can make a difference for others.” Possible jobs for short-term missionaries would be constructing and repairing of buildings, preparing work sites for houses and repairs to the school all associated with the orphans served by the Mission. Many of the orphans are too young and the guardian they live with, in some situations, is often too old to accomplish such projects that require manual labor. “As Christians, Jesus invites us to take care of the poor,” Fr. Stephen explained. “We are all called to be missionaries. When you know you have been blessed in your life, it is your duty to be a blessing to others.”

The need is great at the Diocese’s Mission in East Africa. Fr. Stephen took notes, photos and held meetings with locals as well as the Diocese’s long-term missionaries Brent and

Continued on Page 11

On special assignment to Africa
Fr. Folorunso makes trip to home country to assess needs at Diocese’s Mission

By Sonia Mullally, DCA editor
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Continued on Page 11
Let Lent be a time of holy preparation

FROM THE BISHOP

This year, the entire month of March finds us celebrating the season of Lent. But, during this month, we Catholics will celebrate two beautiful solemnities as well. The first is March 19, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary; the second is March 25, the Annunciation of the Lord.

While neither day is a holy day of obligation for us in the United States, I would urge you to come and participate at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on these two days during Lent. These two solemnities focus our attention and our prayers on the two persons whom God chose to be intimately involved in the life of His Beloved Son. Who better than Our Blessed Lady and her chaste spouse, Saint Joseph to show us how to love Jesus faithfully in all circumstances of life? Please do make this effort to participate at Mass on these solemnities.

By the time you receive this issue of the Dakota Catholic Action, the Lenten Season will be about two weeks old. One of the better pieces of advice I have been given was from one of the wonderful Sisters who taught me in Catholic grade school. She told all of us at that time (I was a sixth grader) that every Wednesday in Lent, we should make a short examination of conscience just about the prior week and what we did and did not do to keep the season of Lent. That would help us for the next week.

I have never forgotten this and I have done it every year during Lent. She was absolutely correct. What I commit myself to on Ash Wednesday I ought to keep myself to for the entire time of Lent. When I examine this each week, I usually find that I am doing what I should be doing, but I also find that I have been lazy at times about my prayers, penances and good works. One of the good results of this weekly examination is that I find myself going to confession a bit more frequently and that is always good. Try this and you just might come to like it.

Please do not forget that each Friday of Lent is a day of abstinence for all Catholics who have celebrated their 14th birthday. Try to make each Friday of Lent a day of true sorrow and penance for sins committed. Alas! From all meat and foods made from meat by-products is a good way to do this. Finally, if you are able, plan to join us Saturday, April 25 at the University of Mary in Bismarck for our Diocesan Convocation celebrating the Year of Consecrated Life. It is not only a great opportunity to thank the religious women and men of our Diocese for their loving service to Christ and the Church, but it is a good way to learn more of the real necessity for all of us to cultivate the evangelical counsels in our own vocations. All of the details and registration information can be found on our Diocesan website. You can also read more about the event on page three of this issue of the DCA.

May this Lent be a time of holy preparation for the Paschal Triduum, the days of our salvation, for all of us. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us! Saint Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, pray for us!

BISHOP IN ACTION

Bishop John Folda, Diocese of Fargo, and Bishop Kagan visited with legislators after the Legislative Mass and dinner on Jan. 29. Rep. Mike Nathe (right) of Bismarck and Rep. Mike Lefor from Dickinson were among the crowd of legislators and public officials who attended the event held at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck. The North Dakota Catholic Conference organized the event.

BISHOP’S SCHEDULE

March 1 • Confirmation at Sacred Heart Church, Glen Ullin, 10 a.m.
March 10 • Diocesan Building Dedication Mass, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 11 a.m.
March 13 • Home on the Range Dedication Mass, Center for Pastoral Ministry, Bismarck, 12 p.m.
March 15 • Confirmation for the Wells, Strasburg, 10 a.m.
March 17 • Real Presence Radio interview, Saturday, 9 a.m.
March 19 • Mass and Pastoral Visit to St. Marcellus Manor, Bismarck, 7 p.m.
March 22 • Confirmation for the Church of St. Charles, Garrison, and Immaculate Conception, Max, at Garrison, 11 a.m.
March 25 • Pastoral Visit to St. Gabriel’s, Bismarck, 9:30 a.m.
March 28 • Palm Sunday Vigil Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 5 p.m.
March 29 • Lenten Penance Service, Church of Assumption, Bismarck, 2 p.m.
March 30 • Chrism Mass, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Bismarck, 11 a.m.
• Lenten Penance Service, Church of Spirit of Life, Mandan, 7 p.m.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BismarckDiocese
Follow the Diocese on Twitter @BisDiocese or follow Bishop Kagan @VescooDK
Search “Bismarck Diocese” on YouTube for videos from the Church in western N.D.

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

Dakota Catholic Action
Reporting on Catholic action in western ND since 1941
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Celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life

Special event on April 25 at the University of Mary

Gain a special understanding and appreciation for the men and women devoted to the consecrated life during a conference on April 25.

The public is invited to celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life at the McDowell Activity Center on the University of Mary campus south of Bismarck. The event, sponsored by the diocese, Annunciation Monastery, Sacred Heart Monastery and Assumption Abbey, is free and open to everyone. The schedule will feature two keynote speakers and six breakout sessions with three in the morning and three in the afternoon. Mass will be celebrated at the close of the day.

Keynote speakers

Sister Anna Laura Karp, O.P., a member of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation of Nashville, Tenn., will be the day’s first speaker at 9 a.m.

Sister Anna Laura grew up in Little Rock, Ark., and attended the University of Dallas majoring in English. She lived in Rome for a semester, and taught English as a second language to Mexican girls after graduation. Two years after graduation, she entered the convent. Over the past 18 years in the convent, she has primarily taught high school English and theology. Currently, Sister is among the founding faculty of Frassati Catholic High School in Spring, Texas, the newest Catholic high school in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, which is now in its second year. Sister Anna Laura chairs the English, theology, and ethics and culture departments.

The afternoon keynote speaker, Fr. Roger Landry who is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., will begin at 1 p.m. Fr. Landry, since his 1999 ordination, has served as a pastor, diocesan newspaper editor and high school chaplain. In March, he began working at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. He writes for many Catholic publications and preaches several retreats a year for diocesan prebyterates, permanent deacons, seminaries, religious institutes and lay people. He was an on-site commentator with Raymond Arroyo for EWTN’s coverage of the conclave that elected Pope Francis and is national chaplain of Catholic Voices USA.

Breakout sessions

The breakout sessions will be a three-person panel consisting of a religious sister, brother or priest, and layperson. Topics are: poverty and property; chastity and relationships; obedience and authority; prayer and work; stewardship and social justice; and vocation.

Register online

Registration is available online at bismarckdiocese.com/consecrated-life. The day begins at 9 a.m. and concludes with Mass at 3:30 p.m. Lunch will be served, and pre-registration is requested in order to provide an accurate count.

—Staff report

MARCH 2015

Catholic Action Bringing Christ into everyday life

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Why I love silence

Reflection on personal perspective of living the consecrated life

By Sister Margaret Nelson, OSB, Annunciation Monastery

Editor’s Note: In honor of the Year of Consecrated Life, this is the first in a series of personal perspectives from those living this holy life.

I love silence. Yes, silence – no speaking, no Internet, no radio, no TV, no smart phone, just me alone in the silence. Only in silence will I hear the Word of God. Only in stillness of body and mind will I be able to listen to the God within me.

I am a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck. As a community of monastic women, we value silence and solitude. In our busy, noisy, global-connected world, the opportunity for time and space for silence is one of the great blessings of consecrated life.

Although Annunciation Monastery sisters are busy serving others in our varied ministries, we also take time to sit in silence and pray, listening for God’s voice. Three times a day we gather to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. This is the prayer of the Church and is Scripture based consisting of hymns, psalms and readings. It is not a rushed or hurried prayer, but has a reflective rhythm to it with silent pauses between the psalms to let us ponder what we have heard.

We also are blessed to participate in the daily Eucharist. In the Eucharist we have times of silence in which we contemplate the Word and the mystery of our faith, sharing in the very life of Christ.

In addition, we have monthly days of Contemplation in which there is little or no speaking from the time we get up until after 5 p.m. evening prayer.

Meals are in silence. There is also adoration of the Blessed Sacrament that day. These days of quiet allow me to take a longer time for silence in order to deepen my relationship with God. Silence is not important for its own sake. It is vital because in the silence I can hear God speaking to me and loving me. This brings me peace and joy which I am able to pass on to others.

Each sister has a bedroom for privacy and solitude. The bedroom areas of our monastery are quiet especially at night. We respect each other’s time and space to listen to God. Some sisters rise early in the morning to pray and reflect. Others like me spend time with the Lord at different hours of the day. I have found that evening is the best time for me to sit in reflective silence with God. I am more alert and awake. Anything on my “to do” list is either finished or can wait until tomorrow making it easier to free myself from distracting thoughts.

Just like good friends and spouses take time to foster their relationships, I must take time to grow in my relationship with God. It is the most important part of my day. I turn off the radio, even if I am in the middle of an exciting sports game, disconnect from the Internet, and try to unclutter my mind. I am reminded of Psalm 46 which says, “Be still and know that I am God.” In silence I pray the Scriptures of the Eucharist for the next day and if a word touches my heart, I sit with it and let it sink in. Sometimes I hear nothing; other times I do hear God speaking to my heart. I try not to have my own agenda for my conversations with God, but wait in stillness to receive whatever God wants to tell me.

Often, I am surprised at the message.

Once when I was on a silent retreat, I woke up at 5 a.m. and a voice inside me said, “Get up, get up, I want to be with you.” I was surprised and honored to hear that invitation. However, since I am definitely not a morning person, I answered “Oh, God it is 5 o’clock in the morning; it is too early to get up.” But that inner voice persisted, “Get up, get up, I want to be with you.” I got up and spent one of the best times with God utterly aware that I was in the Divine Presence.

That is why I love silence. Only in the silence do I hear the voice of God. Only in silence and stillness does my relationship with the loving God grow and blossom. Try it; you too can hear God’s voice.

I encourage you to use silence as your base; wait in patience and be ready for surprises.

| 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 3 |

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I encourage you to use silence as your base; wait in patience and be ready for surprises.
Bishop Kagan enters the church of St. Anne's for the children’s Mass for Catholic Schools Week.

Students from the Light of Christ Catholic Schools, Easton Hinnenkamp, Abby Seamands, Casey Fischer, and Will Koch bring forth the gift during the children’s Mass for Catholic Schools Week, held this year at St. Anne’s parish.

Bishop Kagan delivers his homily at the children’s Mass for Catholic Schools Week, held this year at St. Anne’s parish. (l to r) Fr. Sattler, Fr. Nelson, Msgr. Lindemann, and Deacon Jerry Volk, look on in the background.

Students, (l to r) Austin Link, Dawson Mills, Elizabeth Bichler, Cael Hilzendeger and Carson Rohrich, helped out as Mass servers for the children’s Mass for Catholic Schools Week, held this year at St. Anne’s parish.

Dickinson Trinity High School students hosted the “Know Your Faith” competition held during Catholic Schools Week. The event featured the four Catholic high schools in North Dakota.

St. Mary’s Central High School Senior Noah Krebs takes part in the pie-eating contest at the “Know Your Faith” competition held at Dickinson Trinity High School during Catholic Schools Week. Krebs won the contest.

Minot’s Bishop Ryan High School students, dressed in a hunting theme, cheered on their school during the “Know Your Faith” competition held during Catholic Schools Week. The event featured the four Catholic high schools in North Dakota.

Fargo Shanley Deacons celebrate victory at the “Know Your Faith” Contest held at Dickinson Trinity High School. The Deacons were repeat champions.

Fr. Josh Waltz, Bismarck Diocese vocations director, tries his best at the donut-on-a-string eating contest during the “Know Your Faith” competition held at Dickinson Trinity High School during Catholic Schools Week.

Fr. Justin Waltz, Delegate of the Bishop for Catholic Education, fired up the crowd when he announced that next year’s “Know Your Faith” competition during Catholic Schools Week will be held at Bishop Ryan High School in Minot.

Photos by Deacon Joe Krupinsky and Sonia Mullally
Rome, Italy — If he’s not the envy of the entire world, millions of people would at the very least love to have the same experience that Andrew Meyer had with Pope Francis.

The University of Mary student from Wahpeton, traveled to the school’s Rome campus in early January with his classmates to study for a four-month semester — knowing his life will be forever changed. But he didn’t know just how life-changing it would be.

On Jan. 21, just three weeks into his stay, he and two dozen of his classmates were at a papal audience in the Paul VI Auditorium. Typically held in St. Peter’s Square, this would be one of the few audiences for Pope Francis in the auditorium. But Meyer knew this would potentially one of the few audiences for Pope Francis at the audience, but it was hard to contain my excitement of having the zucchetto in my hands.”

Zucchetto exchanges vary with each pope. Meyer believes Pope Francis does it only on rare occasions. “When he does take a zucchetto, he often will wear it for a few seconds before returning it. I know complete switches are not too common.”

Dr. Don Briel, the Blessed John Henry Newman Chair of Liberal Arts at the University of Mary agrees. “The history of trading zucchetos is a modern phenomenon that became popular with Pope John Paul II when he began engaging and interacting more with crowds. Since it is still a very uncommon occurrence, anyone fortunate enough to trade or receive a zucchetto from the Holy Father should feel very fortunate and blessed.”

Meyer added, “I think the inside is calfskin, because it smelled like leather. I haven’t gotten up the guts to try it on, and I don’t know if I will. I did try on the one I bought for him and it didn’t feel like much, but he doesn’t have as much hair as me.”

Meyer planned the exchange once he got accepted to study at University of Mary’s Rome campus back in December 2013. He’s currently in Rome with 24 Mary students who are from various cities around the Upper Midwest: Alexis Bakke, Bismarck; Annie Brickweg, Burnsville, Minn.; Kacie Dietz, Bozeman, Mont.; Morgan Dowling, Littleton, Colo.; Ashley Drum, Faith, S.D.; Peter Foley, West St. Paul, Minn.; Katrina Gallic, Westminster, Colo.; Jean Gehrz, St. Paul, Minn.; Amanda Hillestrom, Mandan; Laura Huber, Strasburg; Kateri Krebs, Jamestown; Catherine Mahrer, Mandan; Grace Maires, Buffalo Lake, Minn.; Kyle Martin, Aberdeen, S.D.; Sarah Maslow, Burnsville, Minn.; Elizabeth Miller, New Ulm, Minn.; Amanda Mohr, Aberdeen, S.D.; Lake Nasers, Minot; Benjamin Porter, Bismarck; Clare Schoch, Chippewa Falls, Wis.; Ryan Shields, Whitehall, Mich.; Courtney Sibila, Bismarck; Kellen Tibor, Bismarck; Morgan Timmerman, Robbinsdale, Minn.

Even though Meyer may be the envy of all Catholics, Christians, college students and his classmates, Meyer doesn’t see it that way, at least right now. “Since we are with each other all the time, we almost act as a family, so I view this as something we succeeded at together — not just me,” said Meyer, who can’t believe he’s witnessed so much in such a short period of time at Mary’s very popular Rome campus. “The feeling of awe witnessing these events or stepping foot into St. Peter’s Square for the first time are moments that are priceless. Rome has been above and beyond what I had hoped for.”

So, what plans does Meyer have for his new, extraordinary and cherished souvenir from Pope Francis? “I am really not sure myself,” said Meyer. “It’s safe to say that the zucchetto will end up in one of three places: at the University of Mary campus; my home parish of St. John’s, or I will just hold onto it myself. Assuming I would hold onto it I still have plans to give people a chance to see it. Realizing that I have something worn by the pope himself is mind-blowing, and something I will always hold dear.”

Submitted by University of Mary
Blessings of the March for Life in Washington

By Nick Emmel

As I recall all of the gifts God has shared with the St. Mary’s Saints for Life (SFL) group this past year, I am grateful. In 2014, we brought 93 pilgrims on the first Bismarck Diocesan March for Life High School Pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. This past January, we were honored to be invited by Shanley High School to help carry the lead banner for more than 600,000 people at the March for Life 2015.

With the help of Fr. Jadyn Nelson; chaplain at Bishop Ryan High School; Fr. Thomas Grafsgaard, chaplain at Dickinson Trinity High School; Amanda Ellerkamp, religious studies instructor at Dickinson Trinity and countless others, the three Catholic high schools in the Bismarck Diocese combined for a total of 167 pilgrims attending the March for Life. This level of participation makes Bismarck Diocese history with one of the largest high school pilgrimages to date.

It would be impossible to describe the scope of the March for Life 2015 in the space provided. To highlight our experience, I thought it would be helpful to provide three vignettes from the march this year.

The first vignette comes from BI. John Henry Newman’s coat of arms and reminds us that God’s love cannot be contained. Our faith, hope and love cannot be kept to ourselves; rather it must be given away and shared with others.

The second vignette comes from Sarah Zander, St. Mary’s Central High School (SMCHS) junior, as she described the march in this way: “Newman’s coat of arms opens on this pilgrimage around and these students are saying, “I drive a lot of students...”

The third vignette describes not the march but the “Life is Very Good Rally” held the night before the March for Life. This rally took place on the campus of George Mason University. Students got to hear from Catholic speaker Chris Stefanick, the music of Matt Maher, and participate in adoration and confession.

By Anne Storick, SMCHS Senior

As a young teen growing up amidst the problem of abortion in the world, I have always wanted to do my part in putting an end to it. The first thing I was taught in eliminating abortion was to pray. And rightly so, prayer is always the first step in defeating evil in the world.

However, in addition to prayer, action is needed. So, when the opportunity arose for me to participate in the March for Life, I took advantage of it immediately. What better way to take action than to join a half million others in peaceful protest of Roe vs. Wade?

Even more amazing was the fact that this year, Fargo Shanley High School was granted the great privilege of carrying the lead banner for the entire 2015 March for Life.

Shanley students proudly allowed the students from the Bismarck Diocese to join them in this honor. Altogether, there were more than 700 North Dakota pilgrims. This includes all the Catholic high schools of North Dakota and students from the University of Mary unified and leading the way for an end to abortion.

The experience was incredible! Just the fact that there were so many people who shared our same goal, to abolish abortion in America, was amazing. United for the same cause, it didn’t matter your age, gender, race, or even religion; we were all working together. It was also amazing that we were actually a part of a movement that will one day overturn Roe vs. Wade because we are the pro-life generation. We were standing up for what we believe in and showing America that we do not want abortion any longer, life is precious and should be respected.

As we marched along Constitution Avenue, spectators stepped out on the balconies of particular buildings and watched the procession. Some simply stared at us, while others smiled and even waved. When we reached the Capitol building, we encountered 50 or so protesters of the March. Since we were at the front of the March, we experienced first-hand that to every good action there is always opposition.

The March for Life was an astounding, eye-opening experience for me. It is a constant reminder that we can work together to overturn Roe vs. Wade, and we are not alone in fighting abortion. Let’s continue to march on, fighting to protect life!
MARCH 2015

Dioecesan Roundup

Philadelphia, PA

September 22-28, 2015

Dioecesan of Bismarck

Pilgrimage to Participate in the World Meeting of Families, Papal Visit & Mass

World Meeting of Families Package Includes

- Round-trip Airfare from BISMARCK, ND Airport (including airport taxes & fuel surcharges, subject to change)
- Hotel for 6 nights at the Fairmont Hotel, Detroit (or similar)
- Breakfast daily at the hotel
- 2 Dinners at Restaurants in Philadelphia area
- Luxury Motor Coach Transportation
- Assistance of a Canterbury Pilgrimages & Tours Representative while in Philadelphia
- Sight-seeing in Historic Philadelphia as well as visits to the various Shrines

Not included in the cost are the following:

- WMF Conference Registration Fee
- Anything not listed above

Per person cost: $1795 (double occupancy)

For more details and registration go to bismarckdiocese.com

“Love is our mission; the family fully alive”

Event Information:

- World Meeting of Families Package
- Diablo Events
- Canary Events
- Daily Events
- Family Life Events
- Faith Events
- Food & Drink Events
- Health & Wellness Events
- History Events
- Kids Events
- Music Events
- Nature Events
- Sports Events
- Travel Events
- Wellness Events

Additional Information:

- WMF Conference Registration Fee
- Anything not listed above

For further information, call: 800-663-0017

Canterbury Pilgrimages & Tours, Inc.

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166 South River Rd. Suite 110, Bedford, NH 03110

Dakota Catholic Action | 7
By Brent Naslund

Over the past two issues of the Diocese’s special features of the Kenya Connection, we have introduced you to the African Mission and several team members working in Kenya. In this issue, I want to round out your knowledge of the Mission by telling you more about the program we support.

I will offer some background information on the mission, show how a child qualifies for support, and describe the type of support we provide. Also, because the annual appeal is March 7-8, I will briefly list the costs associated with the Mission’s orphan support program.

$16 Cost of one solar-powered study lamp

Background Information

Often when we think of orphans, we imagine large orphanages with several children living under one roof. In the rural areas of western Kenya where we operate, few very few such orphanages. Most of the orphans we support live with guardians. Often these guardians are elderly grandparents, barely able to care for themselves, while others live with aunts or uncles who are already struggling to provide for their own children.

Currently, the Bismarck Diocese’s African Mission has 366 enrolled orphans. Ages range from nursery school to high school. We also provide tuition support for orphans attending post-secondary (technical school and university) classes.

Since 2006, the Mission has supported over 780 orphans in achieving their educational goals. Most importantly, we have strong indicators that our program does indeed make a difference to Kenya’s youth. According to the Global Education Fund (www.globaleducationfund.org), 85% of our graduates from high schools in the Bismarck Diocese’s high school graduation rate is at least 50%, many times the Kenya national average. These are tremendous results; especially considering the operating costs to manage the program are just under $2,500 per orphan, per year (or less than 60¢ a day per child).

One of the most intriguing aspects of the program is that it serves the local community as a Catholic outreach program. Currently 22% of our orphans are Roman Catholic, 33% are Seventh Day Adventist, and the remaining 45% are made up of various other denominations. Of all the Christian denominations centered in our area, only the Bismarck Diocese’s Mission offers educational support to vulnerable children. We are making a difference in this part of Kenya and the community sees that it is the Catholic Church making that difference.

Enrollment qualifications

Enrollment qualifications are simple. All orphans in our area, who are willing to be of the Church’s mission, offer educational support to vulnerable children. We are making a difference in this part of Kenya and the community sees that it is the Catholic Church making that difference.

$100 Technical/Trade School tuition for one year

Benefits offered

Because the Mission is primarily an educational support program, all of the benefits we offer are designed to support a child’s education, either directly or indirectly. The program is also deliberately designed to give orphaned children a fighting chance at earning an education. Program benefits, therefore, are not comprehensive. Children in our program still struggle, but the program does give a child a chance at earning his or her own education. If they are determined to do so, their simply need to reside within the geographical area defined by the Church as the local parish. Incidentally, our parish is a very large rural area. It has one main church, three priests, and over 60,000 Catholic parishioners.

Finally, a child must be enrolled in and attending school. Our program is an educational program, first and foremost. We require our orphan to pursue their spoilt education. Mission functions in their school uniforms and they are required to provide their report cards at the end of each term in order to prove their school attendance and academic progress.

Support

Your generosity to the Mission not only helps to sustain the educational support activities outlined above, but it also supported other needs as well. Each year we have been able to build houses for orphans with the greatest need. In fact, this year we have already selected two more families to receive homes. In the past, we have also dug wells and built out-house latrines. In the future, we also hope to be able to provide quality families with a cow so that they can have their own milk supply and a small way to help support their education.

In conclusion, I hope this article was able to showcase the Mission program and also convey the importance the Mission plays in the lives of the orphans we support and, by extension, the community at large. In the next issue I will highlight success stories from orphan’s who have taken advantage of our program.

$1750 Cost of university tuition and fees for one year

The Mission also provides annual educational support in the form of goats and chickens to students with good grades.

If you are interested in learning more about the Mission, please visit the Mission’s website at www.BismarckDiocese.org/mission and look for the “African Mission” menu option.

For information on how to give or for more details about the program, contact Brent Naslund:

Dakota Catholic Action
1009 E. 50th Street
Bismarck, ND 58501

Brent@BismarckDiocese.org

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The Kenya Connection is a newsletter about the activity of the Diocese of Bismarck’s mission in Kenya. The logo symbolizes the call of Christ to reach out and assist those in need.

Bismarck Diocese Missionary Brent Naslund is pictured with a group of orphans served by the Mission.

Bismarck Diocese Missionary Jessica Naslund is pictured with a couple of the orphans served by the Mission.

Chairman and CEO Matthew Naslund is pictured with a group of orphans served by the Mission.

The Kenya Connection is a newsletter about the activity of the Diocese of Bismarck’s mission in Kenya. The logo symbolizes the call of Christ to reach out and assist those in need.
Lunchtimes here seem to be getting later and later for our family, however that seems to fit the customs of the people whom we deal with the most. It would not be uncommon to finish lunch at 2 p.m. for us now. Of course, with each meal a process of boiling and washing takes place. I aim for a clean kitchen by 3 p.m. as soon it will be time to prepare an evening meal and you guessed it...boil more water!

Trips to the nearby grocery store, home visits and other mission work continues later in the day. Sometimes we might join the girls from St. Theresa’s for a prayer or the Rosary at the parish. Perhaps I might sneak a few minutes in on my sewing machine during this time as well. I have been taking in a few odd jobs like fixing uniform seams for the girls at school as well as making new curtains for the mission house and the new guesthouse that we, in conjunction with the Sisters, are fixing up. Of course as with any house, there is always a floor to mop or room to clean as well.

By 5 p.m., the primary school students are starting to come home from their nearby schools. Cameron and Chloe have good friends who live right here on the compound that they eagerly await for each day. Their playtime might consist of helping them pump water for food, laundry and bathing, walking to a nearby home to grind maize or play a local game of song and dance. The local children have long school days usually followed by a lengthy walk home. There is not much time to play during the week for them.

I have started a few extra activities from the mission house that take place in the evenings that I am excited about and am trying to build. Right now, I have a small library book checkout system for the nearby children. They really enjoy it, as this is not something available to them normally. I make a big deal about a book returned in good condition so they can check out more. I pray as well to see them march back each week with a big smile. I also have a little craft club that meets a few evenings a week to do everything from origami cranes to sewing. They call it their “creativity club.” They don’t know it, but it is a time we work on their English language skills as well. I suppose you could say they work on my Swahili skills at this time too.

By 6 p.m., clothing on the line needs to be taken down and put away. Buckets of water need to be carried in to fill the water purifier and start the evening meal. More water is brought in to boil for evening cleaning and bathing and still more to make sure the bathroom is ready for morning. If all goes well, we will be eating supper by 6:30 p.m. and ready for the Rosary by 7 p.m. Cameron and Chloe are avid readers so the offer to have free reading time before bed is never passed up. They seem to be pushing their bedtime back with each passing night, but usually lights out by 9 p.m. This gives Brent and me time to finish up loose ends and wonder where the day went.

We feel so blessed to be active members of this community, yet with that have been saddened by the constant cry for basic living needs. We continue to do the best we can with the funds we are given to help support the families of our area. The Bismarck Diocese’s Mission support is greatly appreciated and spoken of with such love and affection here that at times it brings tears to my eyes. I am proud to be on the team. Good people of the Bismarck Diocese’s Mission, you are doing great things! Please continue to pray for our mission and know that your contributions are making a big difference.

Jessica, along with her husband, Brent and children, Cameron and Chloe, are full time missionaries at the Bismarck Diocese’s African Mission in Kenya. The Naslund arrived in Kenya in September and plan to serve there for three years.
Building homes and changing lives for orphan families

By Leon Heick

Having adequate shelter is something many of us take for granted in America. But for orphans under the care of the Bismarck Diocese’s African Mission, it’s a great privilege, even a luxury in most cases.

Building homes is just one of the many critical things that the diocese’s Mission does for the lives of the AIDS orphans. In most cases the orphans are living with a grandparent, aunt, uncle or older sibling. The Mission team visits the homes of the orphans and assesses their housing situation.

Most orphan families could use a better house, but with limited funds the Mission gives priority to those families that have the greatest needs. During the six months I was in Kenya, the Mission provided the funds to build six houses.

Once the team decides which families are to receive a new home, Rogers Osero, the Mission director, meets with the families and explains how the mission will fund the construction. In most cases, the house will be built on the same property near the house in which they currently live. Our Mission team currently does not actually build the house, but provides the funds so the labor force in the area will have a job and therefore will have money to support their families.

The homes built are called mud houses. The materials are mud, logs and metal sheets. The family hires a carpenter in the vicinity and this carpenter will layout the house, hire workers and build the house. Rogers and the Mission team oversee the construction and provide funding during the different phases of the construction.

After the carpenter is hired, he purchases trees locally, has them cut down and delivered to the building site. The logs are then split and cut to about nine feet long. The house size is about 20 ft. by 20 ft. and typically has two bedrooms and a living room. There will be no running water, plumbing or electricity. There will be no kitchen. They cook with wood and because of the smoke be no cooking outside the living quarters.

The house is constructed with holes dug two feet deep, two feet apart and the logs then placed in the holes to frame out the walls. More logs are used to frame out the holes to frame out the walls. The doors and windows are nailed about two feet apart and the logs then placed in the holes to frame out the walls. More logs are used to frame out the roof. Metal sheets, purchased by the Mission from the town of Kisii and delivered to the site, are used for the roof. Branches are nailed about two feet apart horizontally up the sides of the walls. Mud is packed in between the branches and mud is packed to finish the walls. The doors and windows are made out of wood.

The final step is to seal the walls with a mixture of cow manure and mud by smearing this combination to cover the logs and branches. Smearing the walls needs to be done yearly to prevent the walls from eroding due to all the rain.

Heick was among a group of individuals to serve for six months last winter at the Bismarck Diocese African Mission in Kenya.

Continued from Page 1

On special assignment to Africa

Jessica Naslund, in order to get a sense of the specific projects that short-term missionary teams could get done while there.

The Naslunds are serving in the Gekano Parish in the Diocese of Kisii, which is home to 65,000 Catholics with only three priests. The Bismarck Diocese estimates a Catholic population at just fewer than 62,000, to get a perspective of the need for more helping hands by way of missionary teams.

The Bismarck Diocese’s African Mission began approximately 25 years ago under the direction of Bishop John Kinney. The intent was for the diocese to send a continuous stream of long-term missionaries to live and work with the local people. Jim and Henrietta Nistler, the first couple from N.D. to travel to the Mission, served there for 10 years. Since then, however, there have been few people to serve on a long-term basis until the Naslunds began their three-year commitment last fall. Many short-term missionaries have served in many different ways.

“It’s one thing to give money, but another great gift is to give of your time,” Fr. Stephen expressed. “I understand that people are weary to leave their comfort zone to serve as a missionary. But so many I’ve talked to who have done it, realize how blessed it makes them feel and how rewarding it is.”
Seeking holiness in the ordinary

You were made to be a saint. Do you believe that? Do you think you can do it? I want to remind you that there’s no doubt in God’s mind that you CAN do it! He made you for it. The only way you can get to heaven is if you are a saint.

But, isn’t it true that at times we look back and see how little you and I are? I mean, who can it be? The stories of the saints, we can get a bit discouraged thinking we have to be just like them and do the things they did in order to be among the favored ones of God? Take St. Joseph of Cupertino, for example. He levitated. I don’t know about you, but I can’t mark that one off my bucket list yet! St. Rose of Lima survived on only a couple hours of sleep a night. St. Francis of Assisi gave up all the wealth he had to the point of taking off the very clothes he was wearing. My point is that sometimes we can get caught up in thinking that holiness is limiting everything the saints did, and we forget that God is calling each of us to follow Him and carry out the mission He gives us in a unique way. We shouldn’t and can’t judge our holiness by comparing ourselves to others, whether they’re the saints in heaven or our neighbors here on earth.

God is giving each of us the grace we need to be holy in the everyday, ordinary tasks of our lives. Not all of us are called to move to China to be missionaries. Some are given this call. But, all Christians are called to be missionaries where we are and to share God’s love with the people He puts in our path each day. This is something we all have the capability of doing with God’s grace.

When I was beginning college, I was struck by the story of a young man from Italy named Pier Giorgio Frassati who died in 1925 and was raised by the Church to the rank of “Blessed” in 1990. Blessed Pier Giorgio lived a very ordinary life to which most of us can relate. He loved the outdoors, sports, hiking, swimming, riding bike, being with friends, playing practical jokes, laughing, photography, studying engineering, etc. Sound like someone you’d like to have as a friend?

Pier Giorgio grew up in a family where the faith was not openly practiced and his family relationships were strained to the point where his parents were considering a divorce, which was unheard of at that time. In spite of this, Pier Giorgio, even as a young child, embraced his Catholic faith and desired to be as close to Jesus as possible. His heart was enflamed with a love for others, especially the poor and sick, so he spent much of his free time visiting and serving them. He contracted polio from the poor he worked with and died during finals week of his last semester of college at the age of 24. When he was beatified, St. John Paul II gave him the title “Man of the Beatitudes.”

Why do I share his story? Well, reading about Pier Giorgio’s life made holiness seem so practical, so attainable. He was an ordinary young person who loved Jesus and allowed this love to pour forth into his relationships with others. He embodied what Jesus taught in the eight beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-10). He’s a hero to me; and I want to be like him.

When I found out that I had cancer, I knew I wanted to pray through Pier Giorgio’s intercession. I want him to go before the throne of God on my behalf to ask for a miracle. I want to be the miracle that helps him get canonized a saint so that the whole world can see through Pier Giorgio’s story that we all can be saints—that we all have what it takes.

But, just not exactly “yes” to the Father’s will for us today. He knows what is best for us. Let’s trust Him.
Lent: create an outward sign of commitment to God

If you believe the horror stories about shrinking oil prices, North Dakotans are in a bind. The money for the needed dollars to supplement highway transportation, rural water development, urban street improvement and social services needs for the future is decreasing—at least for the short term.

The typhoon speed alterations in the past five years were not sustainable if North Dakota was to maintain a quality of place. A course correction was needed and the drop in oil prices may be the tipping point for a new lease (or look) at how to manage change, how to positively combat issues like drug, sex and human trafficking.

Our state—and mostly within the borders of the Bismarck Diocese—had one of the largest increases in the number of millionaires per capita. Mineral ownership on any sizeable tract of land where a producing oil well was drilled meant a revenue stream never before realized. Demand for consumable goods exceeded supply and prices for almost every commodity (especially land) increased nearly exponentially.

There are many new issues to face. One issue deals with the protection of the resources needed to feed the world: the air, water and land. As an agricultural producer, I get to witness these three resources interacting in an almost magical way.

A big concern, however, is the fact that only two percent of the United States’ population is engaged in food production. There needs to be a firm commitment among food producers and the public to make sure land ownership and management remains with the farmers and ranchers: the stewards of the land, the front line environmentalists of the future.

I am proud to be an agricultural producer. In fact, I have the best seat in the universe, getting dirt under my fingernails, watching the wonders of the seasons and all that goes with that daily transformation. This responsibility is huge.

At the same time, a bigger responsibility is to them to protect, assist and love my sisters and brothers. This means clearing myself of the grudges, trash and prejudices that limit my ability to love unconditionally as God loves me. The Lenten journey is underway. With increased fervor, I need to seek forgiveness and commit to God’s will. Jesus made the march to Calvary because God thought I was worth saving. In the same vein, I need to foster an inner spirit that creates an outward sign of commitment to God’s infinite mercy and love.

This is God’s way of calling me, allowing me to consciously choose the path that leads to eternal happiness. It is not easy; there are many temptations. I need to resist evil and choose to cling to God. I hope I am up to the task. Care to join me?

Fr. Deichert promoted

Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Deichert has been promoted to the rank of colonel in the United States Air Force. Deichert has been a priest of the Diocese of Bismarck for more than 30 years. He was ordained on June 29, 1984 by Bishop John Kinney and served in several parish assignments for the next 10 years. He was released for full-time military service as an Air Force Chaplain on January 1, 1994. He has continued full-time military service to the present, currently stationed at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia.

Area retreats focus on enriching the Lenten season

“The Signs of the Times” is the topic for this year’s Lenten women’s retreat at St. Joseph in Mandan on Saturday, March 21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fr. Thomas Grafsgaard, associate at St. Wenceslaus and chaplain at Trinity High in Dickinson, will address the issues of our times through a Catholic lens. Early bird registration, due March 5, is $25. For more information, contact Theresa Waltz at 222-2752 or Patti Armstrong at 471-9053.

A men’s Lenten retreat will be held at the Church of St. Anne in Bismarck on Saturday, March 28 beginning with Mass at 8 a.m. Featured speakers are Msgr. Richter, Fr. Sattler and Dr. James Link. Registration fee is $25 and pre-registration is required. Contact Mike Bichler at mbichler6@gmail.com or 471-0985.

March Events

March 11, 4-8 p.m. Safe Environments at Ascension Church Bismarck

Keep a watchful eye: Help prevent child sex abuse

March 11, 4-8 p.m. Safe Environments at Ascension Church Bismarck

Warning signs to watch for include:

- Refusing to let a child set any of his/her own limits or ignoring the child’s limits by insisting on hugging, tickling, or wrestling, or using teasing/belittling language regarding the limit
- Frequently interrupts the child in the bathroom by walking in on him/her
- Has secret interactions with the child or spends excessive time with the child via texting, calling, or social media
- Insistent on or manages to spend uninterrupted alone time with the child
- “Is too good to be true,” which may be evident by free, frequent babysitting, taking the child on frequent outings, or buying gifts for no apparent reason
- Frequently makes dirty or suggestive jokes while the child is present
- Frequently points out sexual images in the presence of the child

For more information on events and how to help prevent child sex abuse, go to stopitnow.org.
Q: Why do we pray to the saints?

Many people wonder why we pray to the saints. Perhaps it’s easier to understand if I say that we pray through or with them, when we ask them to pray for us.

But let’s start with a more basic question, “What is prayer?” I think this is where people get hung up. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2558) puts prayer in the context of faith: This mystery (of faith), then, requires that the faithful believe in it (Creed), that they celebrate it (Liturgy), and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.

Sometimes, when we think of a personal relationship, we want to limit it to only spending time with that person. We’ve all seen how unhealthy they are. This doesn’t happen at grandpa’s house at Christmas, of all times! Grandpa loves to see all those people doing there! Well, they were related to grandpa and so were related to me. One was grandma, others were aunts and uncles, and lots of others were cousins. They are a part of my relationship with grandpa.

So, why do we pray to the saints?

If prayer is our relationship with God, then saints are our relatives. Sometimes they have special areas of understanding that we don’t, and they are close to God in heaven so they can help by praying when we cannot. When we speak with the saints, we ask them to speak on our behalf. We never confuse the saints and God, though.

—Fr. Streifel, pastor of the Church of St. Joseph in Dickinson.

Who have been responsible for the personal safety of the pope since 1506?

A. Italian Police  B. Swiss Guard  C. Vatican Officials  D. French Army

Who was the first non-Italian pope since 1523?

A. Paul VI  B. John Paul I  C. John Paul II  D. Benedict XVI

What are the colors of the Papal flag?

A. Red and yellow  B. White and Orange  C. White and yellow  D. Red and Orange

Who were all those people doing there?

What were all those people doing there? Of all, people! Grandpa loves to see all those people doing there! Well, they were related to grandpa and so were related to me. One was grandma, others were aunts and uncles, and lots of others were cousins. They are a part of my relationship with grandpa.

What were all those people doing there?

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Like any surgical technique, bariatric surgery has risks associated with it. Mortality from the surgery itself is less than one percent, whereas any surgical leakage into the abdomen or malfunction from the device from the stomach pouch can require further surgeries. Nearly 20 percent of patients undergoing the procedure experience some degree of malfunction, and other complications like gallstones and osteoporosis can also be seen. A new device, sometimes described as a “pacemaker for the stomach,” was recently approved by regulators at the Food and Drug Administration. This rechargeable and implantable device blocks electrical nerve signals between the stomach and the brain to help diminish feeling of hunger. The cost for the single small incision for its surgical implantation, is expected to run between $30,000 and $40,000, making it competitive with various forms of bariatric surgery. Because the stomach pacemaker does not modify the stomach or the intestines as organs, but instead reduces appetite by blocking electrical signals in the abdominal vagus nerve, some of the surgery-related complications associated with modifying or stapling the stomach are eliminated. Other surgical complications related to the insertion of the device into the abdomen are being observed, however, as well as adverse events associated with its use, like pain, nausea and vomiting.

Bariatric surgery, should it be noted, is not the only successfully novel in terms of the underlying goal of losing weight and some patients ultimately end up either through enlargement of the stomach pouch or a revision to compulsive eating patterns or both. Results have been similarly mixed for those who were seeking a stomach pacemaker: some lose and keep off significant amounts of weight; others show only negligible improvements when they are unable to adhere to the needed life-long changes in eating habits.

Among the ethical questions that need to be considered with regard to surgically-based approaches are: Should an expensive and potentially risky surgery be routinely used for an anomaly that might be addressed by modifications in diet and eating habits? What criteria should be met before such surgery is seriously considered? It is also of ethical importance that physicians and decision makers are not unduly influenced by device manufacturers to utilize their various surgical banding apparatuses or their pacemaker devices.

In 1991, the National Institutes of Health developed a consensus statement on “Gastrointestinal Surgery for Severe Obesity” that offers guidance for clinical decision making. The statement notes that while a Zerios weight problem, patients seeking therapy for the first time should generally be encouraged to try non-surgical treatment approaches including dietary counseling, exercise, behavior modification and support.”

The broad guidelines are intended to spark discussion on the part of patients and their surgeons as to whether such support has an individual really received prior to looking into whether a new stomach pacemaker insertion? Some patients may have tried dieting for years to lose weight, while others may have made only cursory, poorly-supported efforts. The need for support is also likely to continue following bariatric surgery or after the implantation of a stomach pacemaker.

In sum, there are notable differences between such surgical interventions and traditional weight loss techniques involving dietary changes and diet. With the surgical techniques, due diligence will be required both prior to and following the operation, particularly in light of the ongoing discussions about the cost-effectiveness of the procedures and outcomes of intervention surgery for the overweight patient.

Guest Column

Shelly Preszler resides in Mandan with her husband, Pastor and “name-caller” Betty and a houseful of hungry people willing to sample her wares. In her spare time she enjoys writing and speaking about the blessings and pitfalls of parenthood. She is happily married to her hobby, Todd, and can be seen cycling the town with their six kids.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The Diocese of Bismarck is firmly committed to the health and protection of our children, young people and vulnerable adults. With the hope of healing and demonstrating the love of Jesus in the Catholic Church, we encourage anyone who has suffered from this abuse to please come forward and let us know. To report allegations of sexual abuse, please contact: Dale Eberle, Chancellor, Diocese of Bismarck, PO Box 1575, Bismarck, ND 58502-1575. Phone: 701.223.1347 or 1.877.405.7435. The complaint form and more information can be obtained on the diocesan web site at http://www.bismarckdiocese.com.

CODE OF PASTORAL CONDUCT

The Catholic Church has always put the safety of our children before the interests of our diocesan or parish, and volunteers are held accountable for their behavior. To help the highest level of accessibility, there must be a clear and unambiguous definition of appropriate behavior. To this end, this Code of Pastoral Conduct is defined for the Diocese of Bismarck and it provides a foundation for implementing effective and enforceable standards for all personnel. View the Code of Pastoral Conduct at http://www.bismarckdiocese.com.
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