

THE JOURNEY

Photo Credit
David Swenson

Spring 2021

Pelican Valley Catholic Community Newsletter
Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard



“Come and Journey with Me”

is a song we have sung in church, written by David Haas. The lyrics are an invitation to a journey of faith and love with Jesus throughout our lives. This is the spirit of our new Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community quarterly newsletter entitled, “The Journey”. We want it to be a journal of our journey with the Lord and one another at St. Leonard, St. Elizabeth, and Our Lady of Victory. It will feature parish and ACC news, faith reflections and photos.

Many thanks to Deb Forstner, member of OLV and chaplain at Lake Region Hospital, who has served as editor of the OLV newsletter and has agreed to continue as editor for our ACC publication. Deb has recruited writers and photographers from our three parishes so that each community can be heard from! Thanks to those who have come forward, and in the future if you have something to submit or would like to join the staff, please contact Deb or your parish office.

Father Lucho Palomino has made his annual journey from Peru to be with us and travel to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester for his annual leukemia check-up. Fortunately, he will be able to help out as I recover from a March 17 prostate surgery. I will be journeying with all of you in my prayers through Lent and Holy Week to Easter, but may not be present at liturgies until a week or two after Easter. We are mindful of all who are dealing with illness of any kind; we accompany them with our prayers, asking for the healing hand of the Lord to be upon all who are sick.

Journey with the Lord throughout these days of Lent into Easter...we remember that all who join Jesus in bearing the cross are promised an eternal crown!

Happy Easter!

Fr. Alan



Brief History of Saint Leonard Church

Pelican Rapids, Minnesota

By Deacon Joseph Hilber

Prior to 1900, the Catholic community in and around the village of Pelican Rapids was part of the Parish of Saint Elizabeth just north of Fergus Falls. At its formation in the nineteenth century, St Elizabeth parish included most of Otter Tail and Wilkin counties west to the Red River. On those occasions when the priest would say Mass in Pelican Rapids, it was in city hall or private homes. Then in 1900, the local school board, having built a new larger school, sold the old building, which had been built in 1879, to the Catholics, and it was named Saint Leonard Church. It was consecrated for divine worship on May 31, 1901. This building served the community until a brick Church building was completed. This new church was consecrated for worship on August 25, 1954.

The Pelican Rapids Church continued as part of St. Elizabeth Parish until 1958. From 1959 to 1964 it was served by priests from Fergus Falls. In preparation for a resident pastor, additional property was purchased adjacent to the church, and a rectory was constructed. In 1964 Father John P. Miller became the first resident pastor.

The Catholic community continued to grow and by 1990, it also included members from Vietnam, Mexico and Bosnia. In response to continued growth in membership, the church building was expanded in 1993 onto a lot that had been donated to the church by Jack and Clarissa Hilber. They had recently bought the historic (original "Pelican Brick") house and vacant lot adjacent to the church. The donation of the vacant lot facilitated the expansion of the church building and parking.

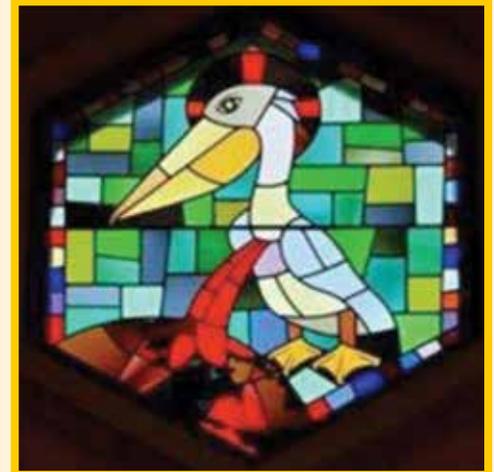
In the summer of 2020, the parish became part of the Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community, a new grouping of Catholic Parishes with



one pastor. The current leaders of this Area Community are Rev. Alan Wielinski, Pastor, and Rev. Patrick Hoeft, Associate Pastor. Serving more locally in Pelican Rapids are Deacons Pete Bellavance and Joseph Hilber. On Sundays, Masses in English and Spanish are celebrated. Members of the parish are dedicated to worship of God and sharing God's love with their neighbors. Music is an important part of Catholic spirituality,

and St. Leonard has both English and Spanish choirs that often combine for bilingual worship and community events.

THE MEANING OF THE PELICAN WINDOW: The symbolism of the mother pelican feeding her baby pelicans is rooted in an ancient legend which preceded Christianity. The legend was that in time of famine, the mother pelican wounded herself, striking her breast with the beak to feed her young with her blood to save them from starvation. This reminds Christians of Christ's blood shed for the life of the world.



(L-R) Fr. Patrick Hoeft, Bishop Donald Kettler, Mario Mancilla, Fr. Alan Wielinski, Deacon Joe Hilber

On January 22, 2021 at St. Mary's Cathedral Church in St. Cloud, a candidacy Mass was held for permanent deacon candidates. Mario Mancillo of St. Leonard Parish has been discerning his call for the diaconate and has completed initial formation. The Church officially recognized Mario as a candidate preparing for ordination. Congratulations to Mario, his family, and the church community in Pelican Rapids!

NEW MEMBERS



CHRISTOPHER & TARA KUTZER

Chris and Tara Kutzer have roots at OLV. Tara was baptized here and they were also married in this church. They have a son, Cayden, who was born in October of 2020 and a dog, Ranger. Their parents all live on Otter Tail Lake, and so they spend most of their free time there year-round, ice fishing and enjoying summer weather and boating. Welcome to OLV, Chris and Tara.



AMY ZEHOWSKI & RAYMOND DEMARS

Amy Zehowski and Raymond DeMars met about 5 years ago and got engaged around a year ago. They plan to marry October 2 at Amy's parents' church. They both love outdoor recreational activities, and home improvement renovations. They are also working on two Datsun cars from the 70's. Welcome to OLV!



MARCIA KOEFOD

Marcia Koefod is a resident of Ashby. She has 2 children and 3 stepchildren. Marcia is grandmother to eleven grandchildren! Welcome to OLV, Marcia!

A PLACE IN THE CHOIR

By David Hilber

Prior to March of 2020, the Saint Leonard 10:30 Sunday Mass Choir routinely consisted of 8 members – 3 men, 4 women, 2 guitars, 1 keyboard. Once a month and on certain Holy Days, that could increase to 13 or even 14 when we would combine with the 12:30 Sunday Mass Hispanic Choir for a bilingual service. As with so many other things in our world, that has changed significantly over the past year. For several months, we had no Mass at all. That was followed by a period where there was no choir, then music with just one person, and eventually routine use of a 3-person choir. Currently, not only is the choir smaller, but so is our workload. We do not sing the Gloria, the responsorial, the Holy Holy, the Profession of Faith, the Offertory, or the Lamb of God.

While these changes have had an impact on the comradery and socializing that were commonplace with the choir on Sundays before the pandemic, they have not dulled the spirit of providing meaningful, moving music to support the Mass. Because of the relatively small and confined choir space at Saint Leonard, we have settled on 3 as the optimal number of members that allows for social distancing while still providing nuanced song arrangements and presentation. The smaller number of voices also provides an ability to do some music that the congregation does not often hear, although on some occasion we may bring in a 4th for songs where an additional voice is needed. While this leaves some choir members in the pews listening rather than up and singing, it meets the needs of the times. And when someone cannot make it to Mass on a given Sunday, we have others standing by ready to pitch in.

All of us are waiting for a return to "normal" as soon as possible. But in the meantime, we are happy to be able to continue to provide good music for our masses – pun intended!



LOEGERING FAMILY

Andrea Loegering moved back to Fergus Falls with her 4 boys, James-10, Dominic-9, Joseph-5, and Daniel-3. Welcome to OLV, Andrea and boys!



**L to R:
Bev Terhune
(Director), Chris
Hovden and
Nancy Hilber**

MY JOURNEY TO THE PRIESTHOOD

By Father Patrick Hoeft

I've often been asked about the journey that led me to priesthood. What made me want to be a priest? When did I first start thinking about the priesthood? What was it like to feel that tug towards giving my life to God to serve His Church? Some priests say that they knew ever since they were a little kid that they wanted to be a priest when they grew up. But for me, priesthood was never on my radar until after I graduated from high school.

In the summer between high school graduation and my first year of college I felt a little restless and unsettled. I was signed up to attend a community college near my hometown, but I was only going there because I was undecided on a major, and I could get cheap general credits there. During high school and into that summer I had been starting to spend more time in prayer, especially with Scripture. As I prayed with Scripture, I was noticing something growing within me. It's hard to explain, but I had this growing sense that I was being called to live differently. I felt drawn to a life of giving everything away to follow God and to serve His people. I also felt the desire to preach the Gospel. Very slowly the idea of priesthood started presenting itself, and as it did, a few memories came to mind.

I was riding in the back seat of

the car of my home parish priest, Fr. Richard Leisen, on the way to Mass in a nearby town. I was around 10 or 11 years old at the time and was going to be one of the servers at this Mass. At one point he looked at me in the rearview mirror and said to me, "You know Patrick, I'm getting pretty old. I'm going to need someone to replace me some day." Clearly, he was hinting at the priesthood, but the thought just went in one ear and out the other.

A few years later Fr. Leisen retired. I was just going into 10th grade, at that time. Through a series of events, the St. Cloud Visitor asked me to write a paragraph about a priest I admired. Fr. Leisen was the only priest I had known growing up, so I wrote about him. When it was published in the paper, Fr. Leisen wrote a thank you note to me which basically said, "Thanks for the paragraph you wrote about me. And by the way, I think you would make a good priest." This time those words didn't go in one ear and out the other. Instead, I briefly worried "what if God is calling me to be a priest. I don't think I want that." God was very patient with drawing me to the priesthood since I quickly forgot about it and the thought never returned until that summer after high school.



Fr. Patrick and Fr. Leisen

Putting these two memories together along with what I was noticing in prayer, I began to consider the possibility that God might actually be calling me to the priesthood. I wrote a letter to Fr. Leisen explaining my situation to him. He wrote back encouraging me to go to the seminary and discern the call. He reminded me that going to the seminary didn't mean committing to the priesthood right away, but rather it meant discerning whether or not this was God's calling for me. This brought a sense of relief and confirmed my decision to go to the seminary.

I visited the seminary during my first year of college and knew when I visited the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) Seminary in Winona, Minnesota that I wanted to attend seminary there. The following year I began the first of my three years there. My time at IHM was some of the most formative and important years of my life. I graduated from IHM with a degree in philosophy, and was feeling more confident that God was calling me to the priesthood, but I wasn't convinced 100% yet.

From IHM I moved on to the Saint Paul Seminary (SPS) in St. Paul. My time at SPS can be summarized in three words: prayer, study, brotherhood. The priestly formation program at SPS is phenomenal. I loved studying the immense riches of the faith, and I loved being surrounded by

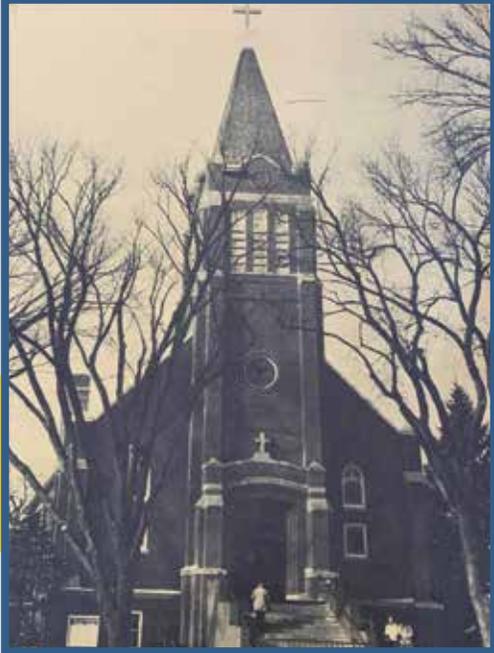


SPS Classmates and Fr Patrick (third from right)

Continued on Page 9

1961 OLV Church Fire Was Long Remembered

By Tom Hintgen



The old Our Lady of Victory Church suffered a major fire just before the start of Holy Week services in 1961. The church was repaired and again became operational in early 1962.

On a Tuesday evening, just two days prior to Holy Thursday in 1961, OLV seventh graders Kathy Scheidecker and Kathy King were walking together between Our Lady of Victory School and the old OLV Catholic Church at the northwest corner of Cavour and Vine.

"We saw flames at the lower window of the church at the driveway from Cavour," recalls Kathy Scheidecker Warn, today a resident of the Twin Cities. "This was while we were walking to the public library at the top of the hill, Cavour and Union."

The two girls rushed to the side door of the rectory. When Father Robert Smith answered, they told him the church was on fire.

After the seventh-grade girls showed him what they had seen, Father Smith, OLV pastor, rushed

back to the rectory to call the fire department.

"We continued to the public library and told the person at the counter that our church was on fire and we had reported it," Warn recalled. "By then we heard the fire trucks with their sirens wailing, arriving at the church."

Warn remembers walking back to her home, just two houses west of OLV school, to tell her parents, Roy and Marjorie Scheidecker. But by then they were already outside watching the commotion along with Warn's younger brothers and sisters.

During the fire the altar, on the west side of the church, fell into the basement. Some brave parishioners, including Vince O'Meara, Bud Kruchten and Glen Simons, carried out the heavy tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament.

Ironically, the altar had been previously preserved in 1919 when a tornado ripped through the central section of OLV Church, leaving the east and west sections pretty much intact.

In 1961 Father Smith was able to enter the sacristy and took sacred vessels to OLV School for safe keeping.

Cause of the fire was never determined. The boiler inspector had recently checked everything, and no repairs were needed. The OLV custodian, Gust Saurer, had checked on the boiler at 3:30 p.m. the very day of the fire.

The good news was that the church was fully insured.

Pretty quickly it was decided that

Mass and all church services would be held in the school gym, including the Holy Week services.

The gym served as the church until repairs were completed, in early 1962.

Over the next several months Sunday Mass took place at the school gymnasium as did weddings, funerals and other services. The altar was positioned on the north side of the gym, and the choir used the school stage.

Catherine Hintgen of Fergus Falls married St. Cloud native Leo Siegmund in the gymnasium, referred to as OLV Church in the local newspaper, on Aug. 19, 1961. The officiant was OLV associate pastor Alexander Ludwig.

The temporary sacristy was near the OLV school principal's office, where the priests and altar boys put on their vestments before Mass.

At that time the OLV school principal was Sister Mary Peter who also taught eighth grade. Today she goes by the name Sister Adela Gross and at 90 lives at the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls complex. She remembers very well the OLV church fire from 60 years ago.

"I also remember how hard the gym floor was to kneel on," Warn said. "Someone started building padded kneelers that many people used."

"Wow! 60 years ago! Life is going way too fast."



OLV STUDENTS SHOW RESILIENCE



By Rachel Cox

OLV School celebrated Catholic Schools Week February 1-5. Throughout the week we celebrated our parish, students, families, vocations, and community. While each day brought a new celebration and fun activity, like all things this year, Catholic Schools Week looked different. Rather than traveling to Andes for skiing or to SkyZone, students stayed at school and participated in smaller classroom activities.

As we were working on planning these new, Covid-conscious activities, we began to wonder how our students are handling pandemic life. Often, children have greater flexibility and resilience than adults. Catholic Schools Week seemed to be the perfect time to check in with our students to see how they've managed almost a whole year of life with social distancing, masks, canceled or altered activities, and smaller get togethers. I visited several classes throughout the week asking our students to reflect on the last year and look for ways in which they found creative solutions to problems, learned flexibility in the face of change, gained resilience, and shared God's love with those around them.

It turns out the OLV students found creative ways to keep in touch with each other while distance learning last spring. In 6th grade Elizabeth K., Ryanna M., Ruby B., and Alexis T. wrote letters to each other and others they couldn't see regularly. Ali B., Bella H., and Noah

F. participated in Zoom birthday parties to make sure their friends felt special on their birthdays. Grace K. had socially distanced playdates in her driveway while Isabella S. had an outdoor sleepover including an outdoor movie.

Many kids found ways to be active outside or even picked up new hobbies. Adelyn M. in 5th grade suggests swimming or skating outdoors when we can't be inside. Maeve C. and Aubrey H. spent time kayaking and canoeing. When dance classes were cancelled, Angelina J. practiced from home. Lucas T. learned how to cross-country ski. Isaac J. learned how to paint, and Caleb C. worked on 3-D projects. Several kids said they tried cooking new recipes with their families.

Many kids found time to spend with their pets. Jeanelle F. and Akira B. took walks with their dogs. Emma S. spent time with baby goats while Reed E. tended to cows. Ashtynn N-B. got chickens and Coy B. got new

kittens.

Some kids even found that online learning wasn't all bad. Katie L. liked that she didn't have to get up so early for school, and Luke L. liked that he could have more time outside when he finished his work. There were some students who liked getting to do homework from comfy chairs and getting to eat whenever they wanted.

Overwhelmingly, all of our students said they got to spend more time with their families. Jacob J. got to spend more time with his baby brother. Aydan M. is grateful for the extra time he got to spend with his dad. Several sets of siblings wrote about the fun things they did together like building forts, biking, playing outside, or movie nights. Even cousins found time for playdates and dinner parties.

Like everyone else, our kids had some fears about the virus and getting sick. They talked about small steps they took to keep their families and their community safe and healthy. To keep his grandparents from getting sick, Gavin N. started giving air hugs. Gracie K. is thankful that she can go to school again, even if she has to wear a mask. She sees masks as a simple action to "show love to one another." Lauren M. summed it up beautifully. She said that tough times make us pay closer attention to those people and things that bring us happiness, which will eventually make us more thankful.

While no one is sure what the lasting effects from Covid-19 will be, I know as a parent that I will be happy if resilience, flexibility, creativity, kindness, and thankfulness remain.

HOLY WEEK

April 1	Holy Thursday	7:00 p.m.	Our Lady of Victory
		7:00 p.m.	St. Leonard
April 2	Good Friday	12:00 p.m.	St. Elizabeth
		3:00 p.m.	Our Lady of Victory
		5:30 p.m.	St. Leonard – English
		7:30 p.m.	St. Leonard – Spanish
April 3	Holy Saturday	7:00 p.m.	St. Elizabeth
		7:30 p.m.	Our Lady of Victory
April 4	Easter	8:30 a.m.	St. Elizabeth
		8:30 a.m.	Our Lady of Victory
		10:30 a.m.	St. Leonard
		10:30 a.m.	Our Lady of Victory
		12:00 p.m.	St. Leonard – Spanish

The Ultrasound Initiative

"...the greatest humanitarian achievement in the history of the Knights of Columbus." (Supreme Knight Carl Anderson)

By Craig Hebert

The protection of life is a sustained prayer intention of the Church, and in particular, of the Knights of Columbus. Knights remain firmly committed to defending the right to life of every human being – from the moment of conception to natural death (Knights of Columbus, 2021). Putting action into this commitment, the Knights provide many programs that support faith, family, community, and life.

One of these programs is the Ultrasound Initiative. This initiative provides ultrasound machines to pregnancy centers. Discounted prices for ultrasound machines are offered through pricing agreements arranged by the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council. The list of machines is provided to sponsoring local councils after the pregnancy center is approved for funding by the local diocese and the Supreme Council. After the local council raises 50% of the cost, the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council will provide the other 50% to complete funding for purchase of an ultrasound machine (Knights of Columbus, 2021). Working through this program, Our Lady of Fatima Council 3118, serving Our Lady of Victory parish, recently purchased an ultrasound machine for Health Resources Center in Fergus Falls.

It was on a dark and cold evening in January that five Knights, three priests, and a small group of parishioners gathered with the director, the ultrasound nurse, and the sonographer of Health Resources Center in Fergus Falls to bless and celebrate the purchase of the new ultrasound machine. The warm and inviting environment and friendly staff, however, quickly chased away the chill. After a tour of the center and description of the services they provide, it was clear that

the new ultrasound machine is a key component in their mission to "affirm the value of all human life through care and education." Father Jeremy Ploof completed the visit and the reason for the gathering by conferring the blessing of the new ultrasound machine.

Health Resources Center Executive Director Erin Tysver graciously answered questions regarding the center and the new ultrasound machine:

Q: How long has the center been in existence?

It was founded in 1983 and formerly called Agape.

Q: Who uses the ultrasound machine?

Mary Ellen Tungseth, a Registered Nurse trained in Limited Obstetrical Ultrasound; and Kathy Hanson, a Registered Medical Sonographer.

Q: What is the ultrasound machine used for?

It is used in the first trimester of pregnancy to predict the due date and confirm the health of the baby.

Q: This is the second donation by the Knights of Columbus, correct?

Yes, the Knights donated the ultrasound machine in 2009 that this one is replacing.

Q: What effect does actually seeing the baby have on the mother and father?

Abortion-minded mothers leave choosing life for their baby.

GRAND KNIGHT JAMIE BRAUN PROVIDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Q: How much did the ultrasound machine cost?

\$27,000. Local paid half; the Supreme Council paid half.

Q: Where did the funds come from?

Fundraising over the years. This money came from the hard work of many of our Knights. The credit goes to them.

The Knights of Columbus were founded on the principles of charity, unity, and fraternity. The Knights from Our Lady of Fatima Council 3118 have a long history of living out these principles. Well done, good and faithful servants!

PRESENT AT THE BLESSING WERE:

Father Jeremy Ploof (pastor of parishes in Elbow Lake, Herman, and Tintah)

*Father Alan Wielinski
Father Patrick Hoeft*

*Grand Knight Jamie Braun
Past Grand Knight Don Cole
and Donna Cole
John Schmidt
John, Jennifer, and Naomi
Dummer*



Mary Ellen Tungseth speaking about donated machine.



Fr Patrick, Fr Jeremy, Erin Tysver and Mary Ellen Tungseth



Fr Alan Wielinski, Jamie Braun, Fr Patrick Hoeft, Fr Jeremy Ploof, Kathy Hanson, Erin Tysver and Mary Ellen Tungseth at Health Resources Center



John Schmidt, Donna Cole, Don Cole, John Dummer, Naomi Dummer and Jennifer Dummer at Health Resources Center

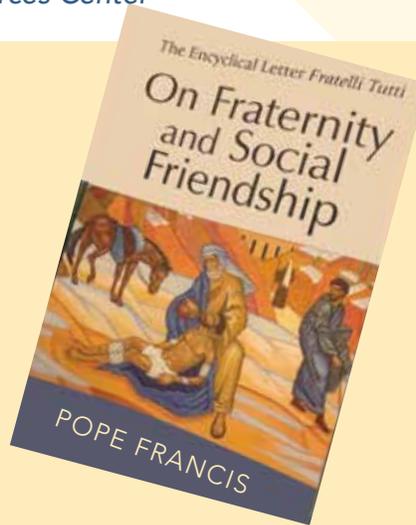
“Fratelli Tutti” ... What does that mean?

By Deb Forstner

You may have heard on the news or seen in print media that Pope Francis' 2020 letter to the faithful is called *Fratelli Tutti*. Besides being kind of fun to say, in Italian that phrase means “Brothers and Sisters All.” St. Francis of Assisi would say “Fratelli Tutti” when he addressed his followers. In that same spirit, Pope Francis gave his encyclical on fraternal friendship that name.

The opening chapter of *Fratelli Tutti* reflects on problems or distortions of our current times, calling them “Dark Clouds over a Closed World.” Out of the shadows of these dark clouds, the Encyclical gives a shining example from Scripture: the story of the Good Samaritan. Pope Francis notes that like the Good Samaritan, we are all called to be neighbors to others and to recognize Jesus in the face of everyone.

Pope Francis promotes a vision of a more open world, and that learning how to live with an attitude of acceptance begins in the family. With hearts open to the world, the right to live with dignity is not to be denied to anyone. Pope Francis writes that unnecessary migration can be avoided by creating



opportunities to live with dignity within people's home countries.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis devotes a chapter to “A Better Kind of Politics.” He offers the viewpoint that better politics can be one of the most valuable forms of charity, if it is placed at the service of the common good of people. Francis identifies that political life needs to work on solutions for everything that attacks fundamental human rights, including abortion; terrorism and organized crime; sexual exploitation; illegal use of weapons and drugs; and hunger.

Pope Francis challenges us to grow in dialogue and friendship, and to choose words carefully, making them comforting and encouraging. Kindness can help bring about consensus, while hostility tears down any possibility of building a bridge. Peace is something we must constantly strive for. While wars provide a constant threat, the Pope notes that with nuclear and biological



Grand Imam and the Pope

weapons, so many innocent civilians would be killed that we no longer can think in terms of a “just war.”

Pope Francis teaches that with forgiveness, remembrance and justice are also important. However, he rejects further evil and revenge, and expresses a clear teaching against the death penalty.

Dialogue and peace are also encouraged by the Pope among all world religions. *The Document of Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* was signed jointly on February 4, 2019 by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar (considered by many Muslims to be the highest authority in Sunni Islamic thought). That document declared that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism.

Pope Francis credits St. Francis of Assisi as inspiring this encyclical on universal sisterhood and brotherhood. He encourages us to similarly be inspired to dream of living life as “Fratelli Tutti”...“Brothers and Sisters All.”

THE GIFT OF GIVING: St. Elizabeth

By Susan Ward



Susan Ward & Bridget Wedll

During this difficult time, we all face additional challenges. After Mass one Sunday during a conversation with Marla Kunz, it became apparent to me that some face far more difficult challenges than many of us do.

Marla works at the Veterans Home. In an effort to keep all the veterans healthy, they are confined to their rooms. This protects them from the pandemic, but it can also create loneliness. To brighten their days and to thank them for their service to our country, we decided to deliver poinsettias to each of them. In addition, my husband and I searched the local stores and purchased some puzzles and every sudoku, word find, crossword puzzle book, and other game magazines we could find, and Marla provided gingerbread kits. The staff notified us that "these gifts were more important this year due to the covid restrictions, and the activities were appreciated by our veterans. The veterans were touched by the kindness shown by our Catholic community."

We were able to broaden our reach to also deliver poinsettias to those who are currently shut-ins and those who have recently lost a loved one. Father Alan, Father



Linda Krause & Marla Kunz

Patrick, and Deacon Pete helped in identifying those who would enjoy these small gifts of caring. Bridget Wedll and Linda Krause were happy to make the poinsettia deliveries to people in the Elizabeth and Fergus Falls areas, and Deacon Pete delivered to those in the Rothsay, Breckenridge, Pelican Rapids, and Detroit Lakes areas.

The funding was provided by our parishioners who demonstrated amazing generosity to support these "gifts of giving." I had given a brief announcement of our plan after Mass along with an invitation to put a few dollars in the basket in the entryway to help fund this. The generosity filled our hearts as the basket was filled – not with ones and fives but with \$20 dollar bills and \$50 checks. Because of the generosity, we were also able to deliver cash gift cards to many in need. We felt blessed by the messages of appreciation and joy from those who received a gift.

We have personally experienced this verse from Proverbs:

"Whoever brings blessing will be enriched."

MY JOURNEY TO THE PRIESTHOOD
Continued from Page 4

dozens of other men who loved the Church and were intent on growing in holiness. Prayer was always the foundation of our day, followed by classes and study, followed by spending time hanging out as brothers. During my time at SPS I grew more and more confident this was God's plan for my life, and grew comfortable with the thought of being a priest one day. After my third year there, I was ordained a transitional deacon. I spent one summer as a deacon in a few parishes, and then returned for my final year of priestly formation. I was ordained on June 6th last year, and Fr. Leisen vested me for the first time as a priest. Later he sent me a note saying, "Now I'm ready for the Lord to call me home. I've found someone to replace me."

Looking back on my seven years of discernment and preparation for the priesthood I see very clearly God's hand at work. Every step of the way was filled with challenges and graces in abundance. God never gives us more than we can handle, yet God stretches us well beyond our comfort zones. As the saints remind us over and over again, no one grows in holiness or attains the glory of Heaven without the cross. I experienced great trials as the Lord formed and molded me in the seminary, yet I see how every challenge and painful experience has helped form me into a better priest.

The first year of priesthood has been a fantastic experience. The learning curve has felt steep at times, but I was reassured at one point by a brother priest "Don't worry, you'll have it down by the time you've been ordained for 10 years!" The journey continues, and I'm grateful for your prayers and support as I continue my first year as a priest. Know that I pray for all of you daily as well.

God's blessings,
Fr. Patrick

Perpetual Light

By Connie Graff



Nora
McAuliffe
Charest

NORA MCAULIFFE CHAREST

Few people who visit St. Otto's Cemetery who notice the name "Charest" would realize the connection to the Hintgen family. Nora McAuliffe Charest, pictured here, was Tom Hintgen's maternal grandmother. Tom graciously supplied the information for this portion of his family history.

Nora McAuliffe, of Irish descent, was raised on a farm south of Mapleton, North Dakota, which is southwest of Fargo. Her parents, John and Mary McAuliffe, immigrated to this country from Ireland. They later operated a feed store in Fargo and are buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in North Fargo. Nora married Arthur Roche Charest, who was of French Canadian descent. Arthur was among the wave of people who came from Quebec, Canada in the 1870s to settle, farm, and raise their families near Wild Rice, south of Fargo. Nora and Arthur raised their six children in Moorhead where Arthur was a bookkeeper. They later moved to Fergus Falls and operated a music store.

Three of Nora's children are buried close to her in the southeast side of St. Otto's. They are a son Raphael (Ray) and daughters Marie Charest LaPlante and Blanche Charest Mjelde. Marie was the godmother to Father Bill Gamber who is also buried at St. Otto's. Blanche was the mother of Sonny Mjelde, who operated Neighborhood Grocery, just east

of Lake Region Hospital. A fourth child, Claire Charest Hintgen, Tom's mother, is buried on the north side of St. Otto's. A fifth child, Arthur Jr. Charest, is buried near Long Beach, California, and a sixth child, Marcelle Charest Koenig, has a final resting place in Fairfax, Virginia. Sadly, Arthur and Nora later separated. Arthur moved back to Quebec where he is buried.

As we continue to hear the stories of those departed souls buried at St. Otto's Cemetery, pray that God's Perpetual Light shines on them and all of our loved ones, wherever they are buried. If you are interested in sharing the story of your loved one buried at St. Otto's Cemetery, email Connie at connie.graff1206@gmail.com.

MURRAY AND PAT SWANSON

For those of you who remember the Fergus Falls main street store "Swanson's Surplus", you'll also remember a sincere greeting upon entering the Lincoln Avenue business. The partnership of Murray and Pat Swanson succeeded in business, family and faith due to their dedication, hard work, and sense of humor. Their son, Ken, of Fergus Falls shared information and memories of his parents who are buried at St. Otto's Cemetery.

Cecelia, better known as "Pat", was born in Frazee to German Catholic parents. The oldest of 12



children, she not only helped care for her younger siblings but also delivered milk, earning 25 cents a day that supplemented the family's income. Mervin, better known as "Murray" was the youngest of 5 boys who grew up in Detroit Lakes. All 5 brothers served overseas in WWII, with Murray achieving the rank of Master Sergeant. After the war, Pat and Murray met through their jobs and after dating for 1 1/2 years were married. They purchased a Furniture and Surplus store in Glasgow, Montana where a daughter, Kathy and a son, Ken were born. (Ken was named after Murray's best friend who did not survive WWII.) When Murray's parents started experiencing health problems, the family relocated back to Minnesota to be closer to family and purchased "Wagner's Surplus" on main street of Fergus Falls in 1958. (It was after the move to Fergus Falls, that Murray converted to the Catholic faith under the instruction of Father Smith.) When a larger space became available, Swanson's Surplus" moved next door into the building now home to "The Bric". The store sold surplus items and soon expanded to sporting goods and work clothing.

Continued from Page 10.

Murray and Pat were the epitome of small town friendliness, welcoming everyone to their store, from the doctor to the farmer. Ken recalls a bustling downtown Fergus Falls, especially on Thursday nights when stores remained open until 9:00pm, when people would make their way to Main Street. At Swanson's Surplus, Thursday evenings "were not about making a sale but a time for folks to visit and socialize" over a cup of coffee or apple cider. 1986 brought retirement for Murray and Pat, handing over the store to their daughter and son in law, Kathy and Keith Jacobson. Their daughter and son in-law continue in the Fergus

Falls business known as "Locators and Supplies Inc."

Pat thoroughly enjoyed her role as Grandma to 4 granddaughters, who loved coming to their grandparents home to play. Murray was an avid deer hunter who enjoyed the traditions associated with the hunt. They both enjoyed a good conversation, which explains their success in the retail world. Due to Murray's Parkinson's disease and poor eyesight/ blindness and Pat's Lewy Body Dementia, the couple moved to assisted living. In the fall of 2007 they both died just 3 weeks apart. Although Pat hadn't spoken in several months, after Murray took his last breath, she turned to Ken

and said "He's gone isn't he? Will you pray the rosary with me"? While grieving your parents deaths so close together, there was comfort that after 57 years of marriage, Pat and Murray were together again.

Their cemetery plot and headstone at St Otto's reflect this couple's values. Pictured on pg. 10 is the bench inviting anyone to "sit and talk awhile". The front of the bench also depicts important aspects of the Swanson's life, the outdoors involving deer hunting depicted by a beautiful 12point buck and a doe and their faith, portrayed by praying hands and rosary beads. Blessed be the memory of Murray and Pat Swanson.

Reflections of an Old Man

QUESTIONS REVISITED

By Lee Krogh

Several years ago I wrote a *Reflection* titled "Questions I'd Like to Ask God". In it, I asked a number of rather pointed questions about the number of great disparities (health, opportunity, appearance, athletic ability, intelligence, financial status, creative genius) that exist among the greatest of God's creations at the time of their birth. It didn't seem fair to me.

Not long ago, as I sat contemplating the rather mundane (although perfectly comfortable) existence thrust upon me by my physical disability and the pandemic, that idea returned to me. But this time it had a different twist! With my 88th birthday just around the corner, the issue was no longer what answers God would give me to my questions. It became, rather, what would be my answer to questions God might want to ask me. Questions like:

Have I even come close to deserving the many gifts that have been showered upon me?

Have I shown respect for the dignity of every person I've come in contact with regardless of their appearance, social status or economic circumstances?

Have I done enough to try to control a temper that too often gets out of hand?

Have I made the best use of my talents, however humble or worthwhile they may be?

Have I contributed enough of my economic assets to the betterment of my brothers and sisters who have far less?

Have I prayed often enough? Hard enough? Sincerely enough?

Does my faith even come close to measuring up to that of the many saints and holy people who have come before me and continue to inspire others?

It should come as no surprise that shortly after compiling that list I had the common sense to realize that God would never have to ask those questions. Why? *Because God already knows the answers!*

That being true, I'll continue to pray that God is as forgiving as the Bible promises.

Lee Krogh, an OLV parishoner, began his sojourn in Fergus Falls in 1961 as an English instructor and theatre director at what was then Fergus Falls Community College. He retired in 1998 as director of corporate communications at Otter Tail Power Company.

**PELICAN VALLEY AREA
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard

**C/O 207 North Vine Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537**



WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday 4:30 p.m. Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 8:30 a.m. St. Elizabeth
Sunday 8:30 a.m. Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 10:30 am St. Leonard
Sunday 10:30 am Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 12:30 p.m. *St. Leonard Spanish Mass
* Noon Spanish Mass starting on
Easter at St. Leonard

*Our Lady of Victory School
(K-6th grade)
Learning Ladder Preschool
(3-5 year olds, full and
half day)
218/736-6661
www.ffolvschool.org*

***Congratulations to our
Newly Baptized and their Families!
From your Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community***

CAYDEN JAMES KUTZER

Son of Christopher and Tara Kutzer
Baptized 1-8-21

MAGDALENE RAE OTT

Daughter of Austin and Rachel Ott
Baptized 2-6-21

TUCKER DANIEL OTT

Son of Austin and Rachel Ott
Baptized 2-6-21

HAZEL ROSE MORTIMORE

Daughter of Alexis and Matti Mortimore
Baptized 3-6-21

CASE RUSSELL STEER

Son of Joshua and Miranda Steer
Baptized 3-7-21

