

THE JOURNEY

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David Swenson

Winter
2021/2022

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



Cardinal Luis Tagle, the spiritual director of Caritas International and the Share the Journey program, wrote a message for the start of Advent. These are excerpts of his words:

Advent is a very special time. A time of great love and celebration, remembering our neighbors and growing in togetherness. Advent is also a time of waiting. Of waiting for the future, like the refugees I spent last Advent with, and also of waiting for the coming of Jesus, who himself became a refugee. Jesus was born poor, like these refugees, but he never stops loving. I hope none of us ever stops loving.

In its four weeks, Advent is also time of great creativity, when God, the Creator, sent his son amongst us to foster unity and love. Advent is a time of Masses, of wreaths of beautiful hues. It is a season bursting with color and creativity, and with hope for the coming of Jesus.

Cardinal Tagle also wrote about a woman in Bangladesh, India, named Nasrin, who helps offer a safe, centralized, creative place for children to play and learn safety. Nasrin is identified by the Cardinal as "a modern day witness of the qualities of Jesus' mother, Mary. These are qualities of love, joy, patience, humility and kindness... Nasrin humbly walks with the Holy Families of today."

On behalf of Fr. Alan, Fr. Patrick, and all of the ACC parish staff members, we wish you and all of our families who are striving for holiness a very blessed Advent and very Merry Christmas!

El cardenal Luis Tagle, director espiritual de Caritas Internacional y del programa Share the Journey, escribió un mensaje para el inicio del Adviento. Estos son extractos de sus palabras:

El Adviento es una época muy especial. Un tiempo de gran amor y celebración, recordando al prójimo y creciendo en unión. El Adviento es también un tiempo de espera. De esperar el futuro, como los refugiados con los que pasé el último Adviento, y también de esperar la venida de Jesús, que se convirtió él mismo en refugiado. Jesús nació pobre, como estos refugiados, pero nunca deja de amar. Espero que ninguno de nosotros deje de amar.

En sus cuatro semanas, el Adviento es también un tiempo de gran creatividad, cuando Dios, el Creador, envió a su hijo entre nosotros para fomentar la unidad y el amor. El Adviento es tiempo de misas, de coronas de hermosos tonos. Es una temporada llena de color y creatividad, y con la esperanza de la venida de Jesús.

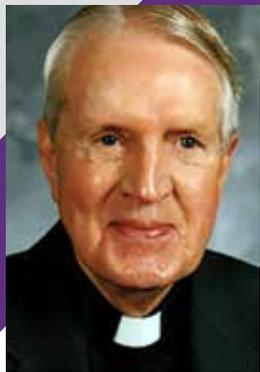
El cardenal Tagle también escribió sobre una mujer en Bangladesh, India, llamada Nasrin, que ayuda a ofrecer un lugar seguro, centralizado y creativo para que los niños jueguen y aprendan a estar seguros. Nasrin es identificado por el cardenal como "un testigo moderno de las cualidades de María, la madre de Jesús. Estas son cualidades de amor, alegría, paciencia, humildad y bondad ... Nasrin camina humildemente con las Santas Familias de hoy ".

En nombre del P. Alan, el P. Patrick, y a todos los miembros del personal de la parroquia de ACC, les deseamos a ustedes y a todas nuestras familias que luchan por la santidad un Adviento muy bendecido y muy Feliz Navidad.



OLV Assistant Priest Served Pelican Rapids

By Tom Hintgen



Fr. Alexander Ludwig, died April 26, 2018 in Alexandria, MN

In the early 1960s, the assistant priest at Our Lady of Victory Church in Fergus Falls, Fr. Alexander Ludwig, was also the main pastor at St. Leonard's Catholic Church in Pelican Rapids, as St. Leonard was considered a satellite parish of OLV in those days. Fr. Alexander Ludwig, in later years, ended his service as a priest at St. Mary's in Alexandria. He also served several years as a military chaplain.

Holy Week was a busy time for altar boys, with Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. There was an Easter Vigil at Saturday Mass starting about 7 p.m. in Pelican Rapids. After returning to Fergus Falls, altar boys served for the 11 p.m. Easter Vigil at OLV, followed by the Midnight Mass. Thus, they did double duty, so to speak.

When there was a weekday funeral, Fr. Ludwig recruited altar boys from classrooms at OLV School. The two, three or four boy servers did not mind getting out of class. An added bonus was a nice funeral lunch back at the church after the funeral Mass and burial near Pelican Rapids.

Fr. Ludwig was an avid pheasant hunter. On the way to and from Pelican Rapids, if he saw a pheasant close to the road during the hunting season, he would quickly grab his shotgun from the trunk of the car. Sometimes he was successful at harvesting a pheasant and sometimes not.

As mentioned in a previous Journey newsletter article, many older Catholics recall the days of the Latin Masses. This changed for

Catholic churches from 1962 to 1964, coinciding with the Second Vatican Council, when there was a switch from Latin to English in the United States.

In Fergus Falls, at Our Lady of Victory parish, several boys at OLV School learned the duties of being an altar boy. This was during the noon hour, with instruction from fourth-grade teacher Sister Mary Christine.

There were several weeks of training. This included Latin responses, the correct times in which to genuflect, kneel, stand and sit, as well as learning how to properly light candles, handle incense and carry the cross.

A server had to time the ringing of the bell just right during the consecration, when the bread and

wine became the Body and Blood of Christ. An altar boy had to hold the Communion plate just right when members of the congregation came to the Communion rail to receive the Holy Communion wafers on their tongues from the priest.

When entering the sacristy before Mass, altar boys felt it was an honor to put on cassocks and surplices. Entering the sanctuary at the start of the Mass was always an exciting time.

In the days of the Latin Masses, the priest and altar boys faced the altar with their backs to the people. Priests have faced the congregation since the early 1960s. Altar girls joined the ranks of Mass servers starting in 1983.

Sixteen Confirmation Candidates from St. Leonard Confirmed at St Mary of the Presentation in Breckenridge, MN

By Deacon Pete Bellavance

This class has shown great perseverance over the past two years with all the continually changing requirements from the pandemic. Whether attending classes initially, then trying different formats on Zoom, we tried to keep classes interesting and interactive, and they continued to attend.

Many in the class attended a virtual conference with Steubenville University the summer of 2020. This past summer many attended the Steubenville Youth Conference in Rochester where they met many

other teens engaged in learning more about the Lord.

In November, they engaged in their Confirmation Retreat run by NET Ministries. There they engaged and continued to learn more about their Faith.

It clearly was a growing time for both candidates and teachers as we worked together to find our way through some challenging times. We are very proud of how they held together and continued their journey to Confirmation.



CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE

FRIDAY - DEC. 24

3:00 pm Our Lady of Victory

4:00 pm St. Elizabeth

5:30 pm Our Lady of Victory

7:00 pm St. Leonard

CHRISTMAS DAY

SATURDAY - DEC. 25

8:30 am St. Leonard

9:30 am Our Lady of Victory

10:00 am St. Elizabeth

Saints and Sweets

On Halloween late afternoon, the OLV Parking Lot became a festive place to celebrate "Saints and Sweets" for its second year. This event is sponsored by the OLV Stewardship Committee.



JACOB KEEGAN AND ASHLLEY RAMTHUN

Jacob Keegan and Ashlley Ramthun have been members of Our Lady of Victory before and are happy to be back. All three of their children were baptized here. They have been together for 8 years. Welcome back, Jacob and Ashlley!



KAREN STENSTROM

Karen Stenstrom's family has been involved at OLV for many years. She was confirmed and married here and both of her children were baptized at OLV. She lives with her husband Don and they have two children: Troy, who is married to Kerian and Amber, who is married to Ben Reed. They have 5 grandchildren. Welcome, Karen!

RON AND KATHY WOLTJER

Ron and Kathy Woltjer are new members of Our Lady of Victory Church. They have three children and two grandchildren. Welcome to OLV!

NEW MEMBERS

The 1% CHALLENGE

1% of your day is 14 minutes and 24 seconds. How you spend that time can change your life!

Spend More Time with Jesus.

Challenge yourself and others to spend 1% of each day praying with the word of God. Read, Reflect, Respond, & Rest. Fifteen minutes a day with the word of God changes lives!



ST. ELIZABETH HOLDS A RUMMAGE AND BAKE SALE

By Carrie Wedll

The Christian Women of St. Elizabeth's Rummage and Bake Sale was a success! We had a good turnout, and we raised about \$600 for our coffers. We had good help setting up and working the day of. Some of our workers were: Regina Bergantine, Joan Brusven, Linda Krause, Jan Dumas, Cathie Wilde, Jacque Brusven, and Bridget Wedll. A great crew! Thank you also to all who baked and donated. It was a fun morning of fellowship, but we decided we will be taking a few years off. It's a lot of work!

2021 Our Lady of Victory Fall Festival

By Scott Fritz

A special thanks to everyone involved in this year's Fall Festival. The parish is so very blessed to have great volunteers. Subcommittee leadership was amazing, and parish generosity was outstanding.

After not being able to have our traditional turkey dinner in 2020, we were excited that we could do so this year. Fellowship is such an important part of being in this parish. Thanks to Randy and Char Zens for an amazing meal!

The Fall Festival was very well attended. Meals served were somewhere in the neighborhood of 500. Thanks to a very generous donation, half of the turkey was given to us. We tried an outside drive-up for meal service this year. We estimated that approximately 200 meals were drive-up. It was very well received.

Raffle ticket sales were down a bit over previous years, but still were well supported by the parishioners. Thanks so much to Cindy Bartsch for her hard work. She solicited many cash prizes, including a \$10,000 grand prize. We miss Fr Bill Gamber and his flair for selling raffle tickets. He was so generous to this parish, whether it be to the school or to the church. I have no doubt he was looking down and smiling while the Festival was going on. May he rest in peace.

The Finance committee reported that the Fall Festival brought in over \$70,000 dollars, which is up about \$10,000 over last year.

There are so many people that make the Fall Festival a success. On behalf of co-chair Dave Schroeder and myself, thank you!



THE MINNESOTA TWINS

By Nancy Hilber

Twenty years ago on a fine autumn day in September, two priests were in New York, having an extra cup of coffee prior to an anticipated gourmet brunch at the World Trade Center. But suddenly the world changed forever, as first one of the Trade Center towers, then the second, were attacked and fell. Instead of a relaxing and enjoying time off in the Big Apple, they changed into clerical garb and collars and headed for the scene of chaos and devastation. With another priest, they spent the day at St. Vincent's Hospital, caring for shocked and injured firefighters and preventing them from returning to the melee.

The next day they, along with clergy of other denominations, joined together for the much more difficult job of counseling family members and giving them permission to let go and begin the long journey of grief.

The two priests are Fr. Jeff Ethen and Fr. Peter Kirchner. The priest they worked with turned out to be Cardinal Edward Egan. They were concelebrants at a special Mass at which he presided. He called them the "Minnesota Twins." Eventually they returned home, changed forever. They returned to New York on the first, fifth, tenth, and fifteenth anniversary of the horrific attack. Last September 10 was the twentieth anniversary and only Fr. Jeff has returned to New York to mark it, along with clergy and firemen who were there and will never forget. Fr. Peter has been in ill health and stays close to home, but his prayers regarding that day are no less fervent and no less powerful. Cardinal Egan passed away in 2015. Life goes on, but the "Minnesota Twins" will forever have a deeper understanding of the fragile hold we all have on life, which can turn on a dime.

THE END IN SIGHT IS ALSO THE BEGINNING

By Nancy Hilber



Mario Mancilla

In the summer edition of *The Journey*, one of the articles featured a very special couple in the Pelican Valley Catholic Community: Mario and Alejandra Mancilla. The article detailed their burgeoning faith life since moving to Pelican Rapids and becoming deeply involved in the Spanish speaking part of the St. Leonard community.

Mario spoke no English when they moved here from California. As his command of the language grew, so did the ministry responsibilities fulfilled by Mario and his wife. This resulted in becoming involved in a leadership program one weekend a month and, when that ended, participation in the Emmaus Institute Program, going again for a weekend a month, this time at St. John's

University in Collegeville, Minnesota. By this time, Mario was studying to be a deacon in the church. In addition to the language hurdle, adjustments have had to be made with work and family schedules, and fitting in their many duties at St. Leonard. Many times, the goal of becoming a deacon has seemed to be stubbornly out of reach, most notably during the pandemic. But on October 14 of this year, Mario and his fellow deacon candidates were instituted to the Ministries of Acolyte and Reader, which certifies them to serve in formal roles in the worship liturgy of the Church.

Mario was back at Larry's Supermarket the next day, hard at work as he always is. But the smile on his face was incandescent. Now, he said, "It's getting real." His ordination as a deacon is expected to take place in mid-2022.



Mario Mancilla standing next to Bishop Kettler at St. Mary's Cathedral

We Three Spies

By Rachel Cox

This year, OLV School is bringing back its live Christmas program. Mrs. Clark and the OLV students are excited to present *We Three Spies*. There will be two performances on Wednesday, December 15th, one during the school day at 1:30 pm and one at 6:30 pm.

The play *We Three Spies* is about a group of Christmas secret agents whose job is bringing the Christmas spirit to those who need it. The play is performed by the 6th grade class with all the other grades joining in to sing songs throughout the performance. The older kids who remember participating in previous Christmas programs are pleased to return to a familiar routine. The younger grades are happy to be along for the ride, learning new songs and choreography. The whole show will come together to create a 45-minute Christmas musical.

Directing plays and musicals is nothing new for Mrs. Clark. She has many years of experience producing shows. She wrote and directed last year's virtual concert, creating mini plays for each grade to record. She also directed the spring play, *Junie B. Jones the Musical, Jr.* Though she said this is the first time she's put together a show involving so many children all at once, Mrs. Clark is certain that *We Three Spies* will be a great experience for everyone.

OLV MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL FAITH FORMATION REPORT

Andrew Jennen, OLV's Faith Formation Coordinator for Grades 6-10, provided a report on how it has been going so far this school year. He notes that things have taken off pretty quickly! On October 6th, the program started out with a social night; just a little fun night to get to know one another. They went over this year's outline that night as well. The theme for this year for the Edge Curriculum (grades 6-8) is a Marvel theme, so the curriculum is using Marvel characters and relating them to the topics each night. For example, the first lesson night was introducing the cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. On the second lesson night, the Black Panther character from the Black Panther movie was highlighted, in order to help the youth relate to our first Virtue of Prudence. The kids are enjoying the Marvel comparison and learning more each week. For grades 9 and 10, the curriculum includes DVD's and Workbooks from Ascension Press called, Chosen: This is Your Catholic Faith. Andrew stated, "I would like to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to those that have not registered with us yet to come and join us on Wednesday nights (6:30-8 PM) for Faith Formation. It's an evening full of good times and prayer and learning and growing a closer relationship with Our Creator."

NEW EVANGELIZATION OFFICE

By Mammias H. Mammias - NE Office

The New Evangelization Office was established in March 2015 as the parish's response to the Church's universal call to begin a process of re-evangelization. Pope St. John Paul II called for a world-wide effort of Catholics to proclaim the Gospel in a new wave of missionary activity. The Pope said that the mission of Christ the Redeemer is not complete and in fact is still very much needed. In order to carry out this mission a new band of missionaries is needed, and those missionaries are all men and women of faith. The missionaries are all the baptized faithful, and the mission territory is in their very own communities. Our vision for the NEO has been precisely what the Pope called for, which is to create programs and to form missionaries, among our own parishioners. The Great Commission of Christ is a command to the whole Church and required of every Christian. Each of us in our own particular and unique way is invited to bring everybody we meet to know Christ.

The first step in this process of the New Evangelization is for everybody to deepen their own knowledge of the Catholic Faith and their personal commitment to Christ and His Church. The NEO has as its first task to help the members of our parish to attain a more in-depth understanding of the Faith which is done through the Catechetical series. This series examines a different article of the Catholic Faith according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Secondly, the NEO sponsors a Come and See Program which allows individuals who are Catholics, not currently part of our community, but interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith, to come and ask questions in an open and accepting forum. These evenings take place in the homes of parishioners. This is done by sending an invitation to five couples monthly.

Thirdly, the NEO oversees the parish's RCIA Program. The Rite

of Christian Initiation of Adults, although re-established after the Second Vatican Council, is the Church's ancient formation and preparation of new members of the Church. Through the RCIA those interested in becoming Catholics, principally the non-baptized but also joined by other baptized persons who are not Catholic, spend a year learning about the faith while being mentored by other seasoned members of the Church. The RCIA program is run by a team of persons committed to assisting others to know Christ. It is a good example of the mission of the NEO because it involves different individuals who share their own journey of faith with those just taking the first steps in the journey toward Christ and His Church.

Fourth, the NEO also started a monthly get together with young couples who have gone through the process of RCIA. These monthly gatherings allow individuals who are still new to the Church to continue their journey together by ongoing formation and fraternity. These monthly gatherings have become an important part of the overall NEO Program. This monthly get-together allows the young couples to continue to support and encourage each other in living a life of discipleship. They are all reminded that they are not alone in the Christian life but have others to walk this way with them.

Fifth, the NEO takes up the important work of community building through various opportunities for fellowship. The relationship we share with Christ is a friendship, and our friendship with each other assists in building that communion. It is important to truly know our fellow Christians with whom we worship every Sunday. Another aspect of fellowship is through the NEO sponsored monthly suppers for individuals and couples which allows people to meet each other and also to interact with the pastor

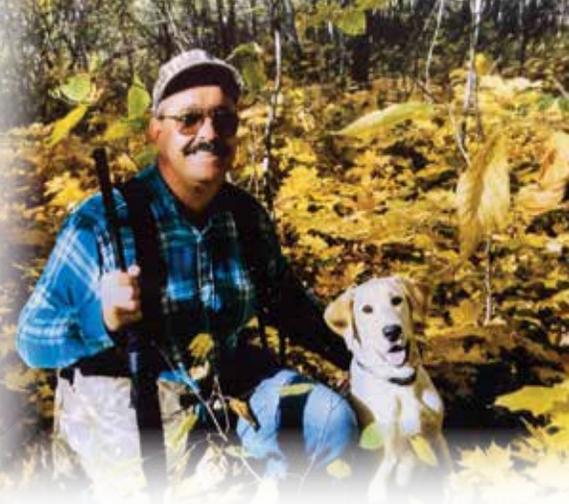
on a personal level. As Pope Francis has said so often, the shepherd must know the smell of his sheep. This important time that the pastor has with his parishioners allows him to truly get to know his people, their needs, and their concerns. Barriers and divisions between priests and people are broken and gapped as they see the humanity in each other. The supper with the pastor allows the people and the pastor to simply have time together to develop a relationship grounded in charity and mutual affection and not on ceremony and customs. We all recall the wonderful presence of Fr. Bill Gamber, who was instrumental in promoting this supper.

Sixth, at the very heart of the apostolate of the NEO, is a desire and effort to make all one in Christ. This was the great prayer of the Lord Jesus on the night before He gave His life, that His disciples would be one in mind and heart. The NEO Diversity Committee sponsors several events throughout the year which bring together local students from different countries and origins to come to know each other and grow in their faith. These students in turn help members of the parish to have a wider awareness of the true universality of the Church.

In conclusion, the NEO, like all aspects of the parish, has been impacted by the COVID restrictions, and the NEO committee is planning a new way of doing the wonderful ministries that we have started due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we approach the end of the year and the beginning of the new year, we are preparing to start up all the different programs of the NEO. I hope these programs will be welcomed and flourish in our sister parishes of Elizabeth and Pelican Rapids. It is our hope that the ministry of the NEO will flourish in these communities as it has in ours. We are very excited as a NEO committee to share the work we have been doing with them.

Perpetual Light

By Connie Graff



THOMAS BLONDEAU

Thomas Dale Blondeau was born to Charles(Buster) and Opal Blondeau on October 12, 1947. Tom grew up and lived much of his life in Elizabeth along with his siblings Colleen, Charlie, Jim, Debra, Rebecca and Steven. He attended the elementary school building on the west side of Highway 59, which had an enclosed outside fire escape, which had to have tempted shenanigans from many a student. The Blondeau kids helped out in the family business of running "Buster's," a popular beer joint right on main street in Elizabeth. Brothers took a turn at being the bouncer while sisters washed glasses or swept the floor. Buster's theory was to welcome all the pretty girls and the beer drinking guys would be sure to follow. Live bands provided music and many a bride and groom danced their first dance together as a married couple at Buster's. St. Elizabeth Catholic Church played a large role in the Blondeau family life, whether it was attending Mass, being an altar boy as Tom was, CCD classes or sharing a meal with the priest at the family table.

Tom graduated from FFHS in 1966, and obtained his art education degree from Moorhead State University. On July 24, 1971 Tom married Jean Mittelstadt and they settled in a house on the east side of Highway 59 before buying a home in the center of Elizabeth. Life was good for the young couple as they both pursued their careers. Jean was a Respiratory Therapist at LRHC and Tom was hired in the Fergus Falls School District in the art department replacing J.D. Dahlen when he retired. They were thrilled to welcome a son, Alexander Thomas, who completed their family.

Tom's early interest in art was likely influenced by his Dad, who had artistic talents himself. Tom's passion for the outdoors and the beauty he saw in the simplest of creation was reflected in his artwork, with his favorite mediums

of pottery and watercolors. His unique ability to connect with students needing the most attention and the student who didn't think they could draw, endeared him to many students over the years. On his own time, Tom brought Foreign Exchange students to a working farm to actually milk a cow and drive a tractor. Tom's message to his students was to pay attention and be observant of creation. He wanted kids to really "see" and appreciate the outdoors. This message is needed even more so today.

Tom's happy place was the woods, the duck slough or a no name lake catching sunnies. No doubt his Dad, his brothers and friends contributed to his enjoyment of these pursuits of providing "meat for the table". It's essential for a good bird hunter to have well trained dogs to point and retrieve and Tom was an expert in training his dogs. Whether you were fortunate to see Tom's dogs in action in the field or just observing them in his backyard, you were amazed at their obedience and devotion to their master.

After Tom, Jean and Alex moved to Fergus Falls, Friday afternoons after a long work week, brought friends to Tom's garage for liquid refreshments, the occasional cigar and a lot of smart talk. This group of guys came from various connections to Tom, fellow educators, neighbors, hunting and fishing companions. Tom inherited that gift of hospitality and shared it on Friday afternoons.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, with a lovely blue sky and lots of sunshine, when Tom and a friend went duck hunting. Tom had gotten his limit of ducks and returned with his dogs to his vehicle to wait for his friend who remained down at the duck slough trying to get his limit. When his friend returned to the vehicle, he found Tom sitting up in the driver's seat, head reclined, cell phone at his hand. His ducks were cleaned and the dogs put away in their kennels. Tom

looked to be peacefully resting but in fact he had left this world for the next. Tom was 58 years old and news of his death was shocking to many. His funeral at OLV was overflowing with many people wanting to pay their respects. Tom is buried at St. Otto's cemetery, not far from the home he, Jean and Alex shared. Tom and Jean got to share in the joy of seeing Alex marry beautiful Megan and a few years later, welcoming their grandson, Adrian, several months before Tom died. He would've relished being a Grandpa, especially to the granddaughter, Brynn, who arrived after his death. Tom's artistic gifts are so very present in both Adrian and Brynn.

The annual spring Fine Arts Festival showcasing Fergus Falls School student's artistic talents, was renamed the "Blondeau Fine Arts Festival" as a memorial to Tom's contribution to the arts in Fergus Falls Public Schools. Another honor was bestowed in 2011 when Tom was inducted into the Fergus Falls High School Hall of Fame. The words inscribed on the plaque that hangs in the Kennedy School hallway were written by his son, Alex, and they are the most fitting way I can think of to end this story.

"Tom Blondeau was among those rare human beings whose encounter with the ambiguity of life combined with a passionate vision of essential goodness resulted in his being a transformative presence in the lives of his students. It was this quality that lead so many to remark that Tom was "more than 'just' a teacher", for them, he became a father, a mentor, a friend. His desire to see the holistic fulfillment of his students gave life to his vocation, but also brought with it pain, for the impact of even the greatest teacher is limited. But Tom could never remove his heart from his work. His love for his students never died, and in countless cases, neither did theirs for him."

The Stained-Glass Pelican

By David J. Hilber

I became a full-time member of St. Leonard Catholic Church in Pelican Rapids in the late spring of 2013. Prior to that I had attended Mass there during many of the summer vacations I spent visiting family in the area over the previous 40+ years. But it wasn't until I was asked to take some photos for the 2013 St. Leonard's Parish Directory that I noticed a unique architectural aspect of our church. That would be the stained-glass window that sits above the front entrance to the church. It features a pelican.

At first, I thought this was just a clever idea by the builders of the church – a stained-glass pelican for the church in Pelican Rapids. But aren't the stained-glass windows in our churches supposed to depict biblical and religious themes? I asked a few knowledgeable people and was informed, much to my surprise, that the pelican has a long history of symbolism in Christianity.

The pelican was first seen in Christian symbolism around the 2nd century. The symbolism is based on the myth that a mother pelican,

during times of famine, will pierce her breast with her beak and feed her blood to her babies to ensure their survival. Symbolically, this is strikingly like Jesus sacrificing himself to spiritually save his people. It is reminiscent of the Eucharist where we are fed with Christ's body and blood.

In most Christian visual depictions of the pelican, you will see a mother pelican feeding her young – again depicting Jesus spiritually feeding us. St. Leonard's stained-glass pelican is somewhat unique in that it does not depict the mother feeding her young, but rather pouring her blood on to the earth – just as Jesus poured out his blood for us.

Do pelican mothers really pierce their breasts to feed their young? No, but it looked to early men like they did. Pelicans will macerate the fish they catch and then hold it in their very large bill. They then press the bill against their chest to help force the macerated fish out of the bill and into the mouths of their young. Because some pelicans have red tipped bills, this was sometimes viewed as the pelican feeding blood to its young.



So the next time you are at St. Leonard's, stop on your way out and take a look at the holiest pelican in Pelican Rapids!



SPECIAL MONUMENT AT ST. ELIZABETH CEMETERY

By Susan Ward

When I walked through the gates of our cemetery at St. Elizabeth's, the first thing I noticed was a large monument. Hundreds of names were engraved on the granite and a lantern was at the base of the monument. The message and image were powerful. A small infant is held by a loving hand and God is reaching out **HIS** hand to the child.

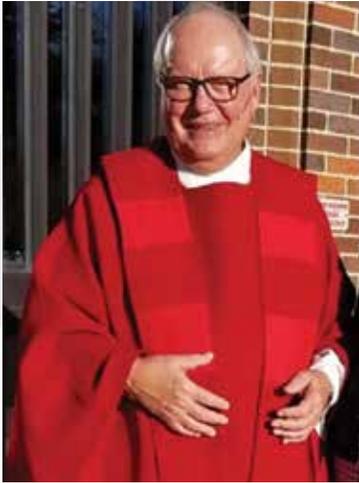
The engraving brings tears. **"I KNOW YOU LOVE ME MOM AND DAD. I FORGIVE YOU"**

When I got home and told my husband Pat, he shared a conversation he had with Father Dick McGuire. Father told Pat that he had counselled so many young women who had abortions and were really hurting. The women suffered mostly because there was no recognition of the baby's existence. And so Father Dick came up with the idea of having a tombstone placed in the cemetery and engraving the names of the babies on it.

Father also had the quote placed on the tombstone. Father knew that recognizing the baby by naming them and engraving on the tombstone was a step forward in helping the parents heal.

THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY: What Does that Mean?

By Deb Forstner



Fr. Bob Kieffer wore red vestments at OLV (as did Fr. Alan at Sts. Elizabeth and Leonard) the weekend of October 16th and 17th to invoke the Holy Spirit to be present throughout the Synod Process.

Officially beginning in October 2021, Pope Francis has called for a unique kind of Synod. The word "synod" is Greek and means assembly, typically referring to a council of bishops. However, this Synod will be a two-year process, which is something historic and new. Its theme is, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." Based upon this theme, Pope Francis refers to inverting the pyramid from the traditional hierarchical flow of communication (Pope, to Cardinals, to Bishops, at the top three layers of the triangle) to these men being servant leaders who listen to what all members of the church have to say. In other words, Pope Francis is inviting the entire church to be part of this conversation. An example of a question we are invited to grapple with is, "What is God calling of the Church for this place and this moment?" The Synod Process promotes that everyone can take part in answering that question, not just the ordained or those in leadership.

In our Area Catholic Community, the Synod was introduced and prayed about at Masses on the weekend of October 16-17. Fr.

Bob Kiefer celebrated Mass at OLV, and Fr. Alan at St. Elizabeth and St. Leonard, in red vestments in honor of the Holy Spirit, and to help give focus that through our prayers, we will be open to the Spirit throughout the Synod Process. As Fr. Alan said in his homily, "Pope Francis is convinced of the value of listening. He wants all to have a say in voicing concerns, but also to listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit... as he also promises to do. The Church resides in us. Pope Francis wants us to take our religion seriously."

That communication process began on the St. Cloud Diocese level at Diocesan Ministry Day at St. John's University on Saturday October 23rd. Every diocese in the world is to have a Synod Coordinator, and in the St.

Cloud Diocese, those people are David Fremo, who also serves as Director of Catholic Education Ministries and Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and Brenda Kresky, Director of Pastoral Planning. At Ministry Day, David presented to all about the Synod, and attendees broke into small groups to discuss what issues and groups might need to be given focus through a process of consultations throughout the diocese. It is the job of the coordinators to submit a 10-page summary to the Vatican regarding what they heard within their diocese.

For more information and updates on the Synod process in our Diocese, go to stcdio.org, and search Synod 2021-2023.

At the Spanish Mass at St. Leonard on October 31st, in anticipation of the Feast of All Saints the next day, both adults and children dressed to represent favorite saints. Such beautiful representatives!

En la Misa en español en St. Leonard el 31 de octubre, en anticipación de la Fiesta de Todos los Santos del día siguiente, tanto los adultos como los niños se vistieron para representar a los santos favoritos. ¡Qué bellos representantes!



Adults: Graciela Franco as St. Lucia; Mario Mancilla as St. Juan Diego
Children: Jadiel Villagomez as St. Christopher; Ayden Villagomez as St. Michael the Archangel



Kailany Romero and Diana Diaz as Our Lady of the Rosary; Juana Franco as St. Elizabeth of Hungary



Bottom Right - Children: Jaelynn Villagomez as Our Lady of Peace; Juliet Franco as Jesus Divine Child; Socorro Martine as St. Teresa of Calcutta; **Adults:** Cecilia Chavez as St. Cecilia; Susana Franco as St. Faustina Kowalska; Miguel Ledesma as Jesus.

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS FOCUS ON ST. JOSEPH

By Missy Hermes

In honor of the Year of St. Joseph, the Catholic Daughters (CDA) of Court St. Cabrini #1466 took a mini pilgrimage on Oct. 9th. Despite the blustery, rainy weather, nine hearty women carpoled to visit the oldest officially recognized Catholic parish in Otter Tail County. It was a wonderful outing full of fellowship.

Although St. Joe's Catholic Church is no longer standing due to a devastating fire in 1965, the memories of the parish and school are rooted firmly in the hearts of local residents. Located in Perham Township, the church held its first services in parishioners' homes beginning in 1867. A log church that opened in 1871 was replaced by a beautiful wooden church in 1882.

Other historic buildings related to the parish include the priest's house and two-story school made from local yellow brick. These buildings, as well as outbuildings with a connection to the parish, were lovingly restored and cared for by John and Cheryl Rutten. The St. Joe School - District 32, now called "Schoolhouse on 49," can be reserved for religious or craft retreats, family reunions and other gatherings. It sleeps 8 people.

After visiting the school, CDA members drove a short distance to the St. Joseph's Cemetery to pray and to reflect on our faithful ancestors who struggled and sacrificed to come to the United States. As the raindrops fell, members prayed the St. Joseph prayer honoring this father who struggled to protect and provide for his Holy Family.

From there, we traveled into Perham for lunch at the 1894 restaurant. The eatery is another example of a historic building that has been restored and repurposed. It too is made from distinctive local yellow bricks. The former Lutheran church has a fantastic menu and friendly staff. Decor throughout recalls the religious history of the building that is now feeding stomachs instead of souls.

CDA members that couldn't get out in the rain that Saturday had their own opportunity for a "mini pilgrimage." At the October meeting we "traveled" from the Fellowship Hall to the statue of St. Joseph in the Gathering Area where we prayed the Litany of St. Joseph. As this Holy Year of St. Joseph draws to a close, we can be thankful for this pilgrimage and other ways we can find to remember this important saint.



BAPTISMS

ANDERS JAMES NELSON
6/13/21
Parents: Adam & Oriana Nelson

BRIGGS DAVID SOLAND
8/29/21
Parents: Ethan & Miranda Soland

VIRGINIA HERNANDEZ
9/12/21
Parents: Brian Villagomez & Cindi Hernandez

ANNA ZAVALA
9/18/21
Parents: Dario Zavala Diaz & Luz Maria Ramos Vega

LUCIA SAAVEDRA
10/2/21
Parents: Ramon & Veronica Saavedra

Catholic Daughters Field National Contest Winner

By Missy Hermes

Every year the Catholic Daughters sponsor an Education Contest for the youth of our parishes in grades 4-12. Students create art, photographs, music, essays and poetry that fit with the theme. Student entries that place 1st locally then compete with students around the state. First Place winners in Minnesota compete against students from all over the country. Students receive monetary awards.

The themes for the 2021 contest were: "Let All You Do Be Done With Love" and "Show Love to One Another." A local student named Maeve Cox earned 3rd Place in the national CDA contest in the Art category. Congratulations to Maeve! What a wonderful accomplishment. She is currently a student at OLV School. Shirley Seyfried is the Education Contest Coordinator for the local Catholic Daughters.

We are hoping to expand participation in the education



Contest winner Maeve Cox and Catholic Daughter Shirley Siegfried

contest to the other parishes in the Pelican Valley Catholic Community. Education materials are available in English and Spanish. The themes for 2022 are: "With God All Things Are Possible" Mt. 19:26 or "Where is God in my life when I am struggling?"

BUNCO Night

The Catholic Daughters invited members of our ACC to a BUNCO Sunday night, for the purposes of fellowship

and raising funds for the sponsorship of a child's education through the Children of St. Peter. Attendees reported having fun with this easy to learn game. Look for future BUNCO nights sponsored by the Catholic Daughters.



OUR LADY OF VICTORY FAITH FORMATION CATECHIST TRAINING

As part of preparing for a new year of Faith Formation classes, volunteer catechists gathered in September to begin team building and preparations. One of the questions asked in each session (one for Kindergarten through 5th grade, and another 6th through 10th grade leaders) was to explore the reasons why they said yes to this volunteer commitment. Here are some of the answers:



First time Catechist, Dani Ross, listens as Catechist of many years, Ken Cavanaugh, shares some of his wisdom.

- I love kids!
- After prayer, the Holy Spirit intervened.
- I want to help children get excited about their Catholic faith.
- I want to plant seeds for the children's future.
- My goal is to help children develop a friendship with Jesus and to realize how much God loves them.
- We grow and learn from the kids.
- I have enjoyed doing it in the past.
- I want children to remain in the Faith.
- I am drawn to volunteer for Church.
- Youth can be impressionable and growing up years can be tough.
- I want to pay back for blessings received.

Please keep all of our Faith Formation catechists, support volunteers, substitute teachers, music leaders,

students and parents in your prayers! If you feel a call to perhaps become involved with Faith Formation programming at OLV in the future, contact Deb Forstner, Faith Formation Facilitator at 736-2429, ext.47.



GRADES 6-10 TEAM

Back Row: Jeff Jennen, Pat Tuel, Andrew Jennen (Coordinator), Steve Steinbach; Front Row: Rachel Tuel, Deb Forstner (Training Facilitator), Nikki Hanson, Emily Stawarski (not pictured: David Schroeder)

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 pm Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 8:30 am St. Elizabeth
Sunday 8:30 am Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 10:30 am St. Leonard
Sunday 10:30 am Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 12:00 pm St. Leonard Spanish Mass

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

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

FRIDAY - DEC. 24

3:00 pm Our Lady of Victory
4:00 pm St. Elizabeth
5:30 pm Our Lady of Victory
7:00 pm St. Leonard

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

SATURDAY - DEC. 25

8:30 am St. Leonard
9:30 am Our Lady of Victory
10:00 am St. Elizabeth

Reflections of an Old Man

A PROBLEM WITHOUT A SOLUTION?

By Lee Krogh

One of my fondest childhood memories is of riding with my brother in the back seat of our old square Ford on the trip from Winona to Spring Grove to visit my dad's parents. In addition to the excitement of the trip was the knowledge that a delicious roast beef dinner awaited us, as did dimes for the afternoon movie and the reassuring sound of voices speaking Norwegian floating up from the living room to the upstairs bedroom where we slept.

Almost as memorable were our visits to my mother's parents in Fountain City, Wisconsin, just across the Mississippi from Winona. There, I would sit on the front porch overlooking the Burlington Northern railroad tracks and the Mississippi River. Inevitably, my mom's father, Max Glomski (need I mention his origins) would bring out his Hohner harmonica and, after playing a few tunes, hand it to me to try my luck. "Try" was the right word!

Yes, you read right. I had a Norwegian father and a Polish mother. Both, I might add, one-hundred percent Americans who had left everything to seek a better life.

Today, like my grandparents (and, perhaps, yours) hundreds of thousands of my brothers and sisters are giving up everything—and, in many cases, risking their lives—to come to "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

And that's what everything I've written so far leads up to. I watch those heartbreaking scenes of tiny, confused children being encouraged by exhausted mothers while slightly older children are being carried on the backs of their fathers and older children are helping their younger siblings wade through murky rivers and streams, struggle against rough terrain and endure steaming heat. And I wonder whether those children will ever have the kind of memories I have. Even more important, though, is that I have no idea what to do about it. The few dollars I send to aid organizations and charities won't solve the problem.

On one hand, the Bible tells me I must welcome the stranger, feed the hungry and love my neighbors as I do myself. That's my religion, and there's no escaping its truth!

On the other hand, simple common sense tells me that my country doesn't have the resources to provide for all those who want to cross its borders. That's especially true when we have millions of men, women and children in our own country who are homeless, hungry, poorly educated and unable to receive adequate health care.

Is it a problem without a solution? I don't know. What I do know is that if I were still a young man with children living in an environment of poverty, drugs, joblessness and gang violence, where health care and education were all but non-existent and basic needs could not be met, I could not call myself a man if I didn't do all in my power to take them to a place that would provide those things, including the kinds of memories I mentioned at the beginning.

And I wouldn't even consider the "legality" of my decision!

Is that the solution? Of course not. But that's what I'd do.

Please feel free to disagree.