

THE JOURNEY

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David Swenson

Spring
2023

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



MESSAGE FROM FR. ALAN

Members of the Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community who attended the Eucharistic Mission with Sisters Christine Marie and Damiana had a gentle and beautiful beginning of Lent. The focus was healing and prayer with the Eucharist. (See more about the Mission elsewhere in this issue.)

We continue the Lenten journey carrying the cross of Jesus in so many ways: with personal prayer, fasting and almsgiving; learning about and accompanying those who suffer in our world because of political unrest, violence and bloodshed (especially in Peru, Nicaragua, Ukraine); coming together for Stations of the Cross and Fish Fries and the Lenten and Holy Week liturgies. Father Lucho's presence, the recent mission trip to Guatemala, stories of the refugees among us, a visit from our bishop: all of these are enriching our Lent.

Once again for our ACC, this holy season will culminate with a combined, bilingual Easter Vigil celebration, this year with the baptism of one adult catechumen (Holy Saturday 7:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Victory). On Easter Sunday, we will have Masses at each of our parishes. We will joyfully celebrate Christ's glorious resurrection and victory over sin and death....and this will continue for fifty days.

May the remaining days of Lent bring you healing and consolation; plan ahead for a special encounter with Jesus during Holy Week, and know that the crucified and risen Lord is walking with us on our journey to Resurrection.

Pelican Valley Holy Week and Easter 2023 Schedule

EARLY PALM SUNDAY (Sat. April 1)

4:30 p.m. **Our Lady of Victory**

PALM SUNDAY (Sun. April 2)

8:30 a.m. **St. Elizabeth** and **Our Lady of Victory**

10:30 a.m. **St. Leonard** and **Our Lady of Victory**

12:00 Noon Spanish Mass **St. Leonard**

HOLY THURSDAY (April 6)

7:00 p.m. **Our Lady of Victory** and **St. Leonard**

GOOD FRIDAY (April 7)

12:00 Noon **St. Elizabeth**

3:00 p.m. **Our Lady of Victory**

6:30 p.m. **St. Leonard (Español)**

HOLY SATURDAY (April 8)

7:30 p.m. (COMBINED EASTER VIGIL) **Our Lady of Victory**

EASTER SUNDAY (April 9)

8:30 a.m. **St. Elizabeth** and **Our Lady of Victory**

10:30 a.m. **St. Leonard** and **Our Lady of Victory**

12:00 Noon Spanish Mass **St. Leonard**



Prayers for Christian Unity Week

By Deb Forstner

The week of January 22 this year was the nationally recognized week to pray for Christian Unity, with the theme of "Do Good; Seek Justice" (Isaiah 1:17). In Fergus Falls, the Ministerial Association, of which Fr. Alan is a member, planned to again have noon prayer services at various Christian Churches throughout the community, followed by lunch. This year, the schedule was as follows: Monday, Federated Church; Tuesday, Cornerstone Church; Wednesday, The Salvation Army; Thursday, Life Church; and Friday, at Our Lady of Victory. Many members of Our Lady of Victory attended all or most of these services throughout the week. On Friday, we were blessed to have Deacon Joe Hilber of St. Leonard as our presider, due to Fr. Alan's attendance at an out of town funeral of a friend. Paula Leitch pro-



OLV Parishioners at a Prayer Station at the Salvation Army.

vided the music, and Annette Anderson headed up a wonderful crew of helpers for the lunch. Gail Welle, Jennifer Dummer, and Mary Loreno all served as lectors. Deb Forstner



Fr. Michael Peterson of St. John's Abbey plays indigenous flute at Hope Lutheran on the Sunday of Prayers for Christian Unity Week.

wrote and presented the reflection. If anyone is interested in a copy of this reflection, contact Deb at da-forstner@gmail.com.

Bishop Patrick Neary Ordination Feb. 14, 2023

By John Schmidt, OLV Trustee



Amigos Fr. Lucho and Fr. Alan at Bishop Patrick's ordination.

My wife Meg and I were blessed and thankful to receive the two tickets OLV was given to attend the ordination of Patrick Neary as Bishop of the Diocese of St. Cloud.

The last bishop ordination in St. Cloud was in 1987 for Bishop Hanus because Bishops Kinney and Kettler were bishops before coming to St. Cloud.

Though the Ordination Mass was two and a half hours, it was an impressive ceremony filled with prayers, and full of meaningful symbolism. The new bishop's Coat of Arms designed by Bishop Neary is combined with the Coat of Arms of the



Fr. Alan thanking Bishop Kettler and wishing him a happy retirement.

St. Cloud Diocese. It was a reflection in symbols of our new bishop, his life, his heritage, and the elements of the Catholic faith important to him.

During the Mass, Archbishop Hebda questioned the bishop-elect on his willingness to serve. This was followed by Bishop-elect Neary prostrating himself as the faithful sang the Litany of the Saints invoking our ancestors in faith to pray for him. Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio (the pope's personal representative to the Catholic Church of the United States and ambassador to the United States government) read the decree from



Bishop Patrick shows letter from Pope Francis.

Pope Francis. Bishop-elect Neary showed the decree to the 14 bishops attending and to all the assembly. The ordination itself was performed by Archbishop Hebda. It started with all bishops laying their hands in prayer on the bishop-elect. An opened Book of Gospels was then placed over his head, illustrating the faithful preaching of the word of God as the preeminent obligation of the office of bishop. Sacred Chrism is used as a sign of the distinctive share in the priesthood of Christ. This was followed by the Book of Gospels given to the new bishop as a reminder of his responsibility to preach the Gospel, presentation of the ring as a symbol to the Bride of God and the church, investiture of

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We Know He'll Be a Good Bishop by Those Who Love Him

By Deb Forstner

At the Prayer Vigil for Bishop Neary on February 13 (the eve of his ordination), there were 45 people who had traveled from Portland, Oregon by plane to Minneapolis and ground transportation to St. Cloud, in order to be part of their pastor's momentous liturgical events. They were all members of Fr. Patrick Neary's Holy Redeemer Parish Community, many of whom were part of those who regularly attend daily Mass. One of them recalled how, though they were all sad they were losing their pastor, they were happy for him as well, and had expressed a desire to attend the ceremonies. Fr. Pat humbly reacted in surprise that they would really want to do that. When they assured him they were very sincere, Fr. Pat made sure there were tickets for them to attend, and special reserved seating was saved for them at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Sitting right in front of me the next day was a woman who traveled all the way from Ireland to be present at the prayer vigil and ordination of her friend, Bishop Neary. She explained that she had been a lay missionary for development in Uganda when Fr. Pat Neary was there. She commented that Fr. Pat had told her, when you meet good friends, you hang on to them. Gabrielle added that this is how she feels about him, and he about her.

I also was blessed to strike up a very interesting conversation with Tod Tamberg of Los Angeles, California. Tod first met Pat Neary when they were both in their first year at Notre Dame, in minor seminary. Being from California, Tod was going to be spending his first Thanksgiving away from home. Pat invited him to spend Thanksgiving at the Neary family home. Tod recalls meeting his friend's five beautiful sisters, and called Pat (the only boy and eldest) their prince! He recalls the delicious meal served early in the day, and continued "noshing" on more food throughout the holiday. While Tod did not become a priest and married his wife Louise, he worked as Communications Director for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and is now Executive Director of LA Archdiocesan Archives and Mission San Fernando. Throughout their lives, Tod has traveled to all of his friend Pat's assignments, and he expects that he will be back to visit in St. Cloud



Long-time friends of Patrick Neary, Louise and Tod Tamberg.



Julie Howe, Fran Smith, and Roberto Lara-Martinez. Three of 45 parishioners from Holy Redeemer in Portland, Oregon at 2/13/2023 prayer vigil.

(and maybe Otter Tail County, which he called the best name for a county ever) as well.

The ordination definitely had a Notre Dame flair, as Bishop Patrick is a member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, associated with Notre Dame. The Chaplain of the Notre Dame football team was in attendance, and it was reported that prior to the processional of Deacons, Priest, and Bishops, he said, "Make it Count!"...similar to a pep talk he would give to the Fighting Irish.

Another amazing Congregation of the Holy Cross (C.S.C., abbreviated words from Latin) connection was the surprise Fr. Lucho had in store in seeing his friend from the southern region of Peru, Bishop Jorge, C.S.C. Bishop Jorge and Bishop Patrick spent time in seminary together, and are also friends. Bishop Jorge did not realize Fr. Lucho would be at the ordination in St. Cloud, and vice versa! So, it was a joyous time for the two of them.

The world can become small because of friendships. It also becomes smaller through the beauty



Gabrielle Farren, who traveled to St. Cloud from Ireland.



Father Patrick prior to his ordination, visiting with his Oregon parishioners in their pews.



At Ordination Reception: Fr. Lucho and Bishop from Peru, Jorge Enrique Izaquirre Rafael, C.S.C.

of an open smile. At the first OLV School Mass after the ordination, Fr. Alan passed around to students the picture of newly ordained Bishop Neary for the children to see. I noticed many of them taking a long time looking at his picture, almost as if they were praying over him, but certainly I believe because of his open smile and friendly face. How fortunate we are to welcome this man of many friends to become one of ours.

Serving Others with Variety and Smiles

By Tom Hintgen - Information provided by Julie Dahl

The Our Lady of Victory Social Concerns Committee is seeking individuals willing to help people and put one's faith into action. The committee meets the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30 to 6 p.m. in the St. Joseph Room.

Programs include Meals by Wheels, Kris' Food Crusade for Kids, the Coat Drive, Angel Tree, Box of Joy, BINGO at the VA, and Fundraisers to assist the Health Resources Center.

"We serve others often directly, face to face and hand to hand," says Social Concerns Committee Chairperson Julie Dahl. "When we serve a person with a smile and receive a smile in return, it's a true gift."

Volunteers also appreciate a human connection, which is a hidden treasure in our digital world.

"We experience profoundly the joy from 'it's in giving that we receive.' Committee members hope that more parishioners will join us," Dahl says. "We need more smiles, a smile just like yours."

The following is a summary of each program, with participation from Social Concerns Committee members and other volunteers.

Meals by Wheels involves OLV participating with other churches in Fergus Falls. Volunteers deliver meals to homebound residents, and the Social Concerns Committee makes sure that it has enough drivers from our church along with other volunteers.

Last year OLV contributed, along with other local churches, in serving 17,000 meals to the homebound. Out of gratitude to the OLV volunteer drivers, the committee served them a homemade dinner last spring. Finding and supporting our volunteer drivers is ongoing.

Kris' Food Crusade for Kids, named after the late Kris Dahl, was initiated to deliver groceries to children in need during the summer months. These children often get their best meals at school and extra food is delivered for the weekend to their lockers as part of the United Way's Backpack Program.

There's a gap during the summer

months and that's when Kris' Food fulfills a needed service. The Social Concerns Committee fundraises for the purchase of groceries. Kris' Food fulfills a need when school food and the Backpack Program are unavailable.

Social Concerns volunteers, through the Coat Drive, collect gently used coats and deliver them to the Salvation Army. "We filled up two huge boxes last year," Dahl said. "The first box we dropped off was greatly needed. The Salvation Army had just run out of coats and it was cold."

The Angel Tree is popular among OLV parishioners when Christmas gifts are collected for children in need. The gifts are delivered from our church to the Salvation Army. "Last year the Social Concerns Committee focused on gifts for teenagers because the Salvation Army told us that teens are very often forgotten," Dahl said.

Through the Box of Joy, we participate in the diocesan program for providing Christmas gifts to



Social Concerns Committee
Members: Jamie Braun, Julie Dahl
(chair), Tom Hintgen
Members not pictured: Steve
Steinbach and Kim Imdieke

children in third world countries.

In support of military veterans, BINGO at the VA was organized and volunteers played BINGO with residents prior to the onset of Covid 19. We hope to start this outreach to veterans again.

Lastly, to assist the Health Resources Center, free-will lollipop fundraisers are held to help our local pregnancy care center. Middle school and high school faith formation students also collected money, and we appreciated their involvement.

If you are interested in joining the Social Concerns Committee, or to seek more information, contact Julie Dahl at 804-714-9026. Her email is eightdahls@gmail.com

Delphine Silbernagel - Part of OLV, City's Rich History

By Tom Hintgen

Longtime Our Lady of Victory Church parishioner Delphine Silbernagel, 91, is not only well respected by fellow OLV churchgoers. She is also highly respected by residents throughout the community of Fergus Falls.

She takes pride in being a member of the Our Lady of Victory parish for 85 years.

Delphine, as a child, lived briefly on a family farm near Dent, southwest of Perham. She recalls rural life in Otter Tail County with her mother, father, and ten siblings. The family moved to Fergus Falls in 1936 after her father lost the farm during the Great Depression.

Of the 11 siblings, Delphine is the only one still living. "I was not the youngest," she says, "but number nine."

When people ask how she made

it this far in life, she says, "Know your faith and practice it. Work hard, stay as mobile as you can and have a good sense of humor."



Delphine, and her older brother, Robbie, moved to a house at 705 West Cavour in 1953. She was employed by Northwestern Bell Telephone near the northwest corner of Union and Lincoln in downtown Fergus Falls.

Two nephews (Tony and David) and a niece (Kathleen) lived with Delphine and Robbie, and attended Our Lady of Victory School, only two blocks to the east past Broadway.

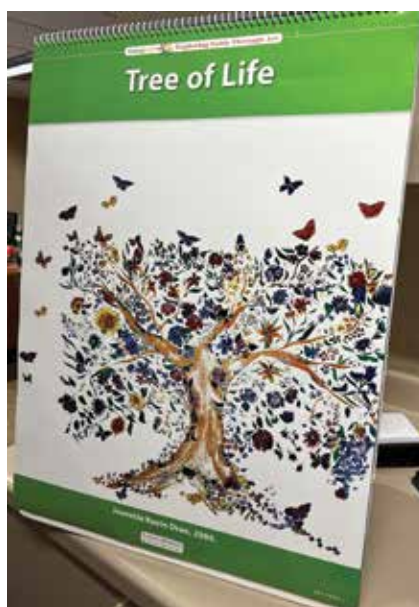
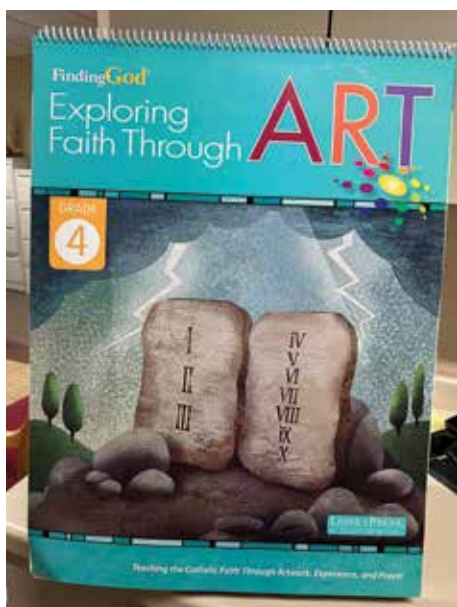
Delphine's nephew Tony is remembered as the greatest

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Finding God from Loyola Press: Elementary Faith Formation

By Deb Forstner

This year in Elementary Faith Formation at OLV, a new curriculum is being used from Loyola Press. It includes some interesting new approaches to instruction, including art easels, where spiritual art can be shown and taught about, and audio/video files to bring Scripture, the Saints, and other topics to life. I am very thankful to our catechists who have wholeheartedly delved into this new program! We are also grateful to Mary Widiger who donated three Microsoft Surface Devices in honor of her father, Bob Braun. These are needed for showing the curriculum's technology to students. We are also grateful that two more were donated by an anonymous donor.



Art Easels



Two of the donated Microsoft Surface Devices.



Animated video teaching about St. Paul the Apostle.

GETTING THE FULL MINNESOTA EXPERIENCE

By Deb Forstner



On February 23, OLV parishioner Jeff Jennen and Fr. Lucho Palomino braved a winter storm for an ice fishing adventure. They went to Little Pine Lake to use the fish house belonging to Deacon Randy Altstadt (the Deacon of St. Henry's Parish in Perham). While Deacon Randy could not join them that day, his friend Mark Ceynowa met the two fishermen at the local café and led them to the lake. From there, Fr. Lucho and Jeff walked to the fish house. Jeff reports that the wind was so strong that they had to stop three times to turn away from the wind and catch their breath.

Despite being a native of Peru, with every snow whiteout, Fr. Lucho would snap a picture! He fully got into the process of chopping the ice to make their fishing hole. As he tells people who ask, they may not have caught many fish, but he caught experience! Using one of Fr. Lucho's favorite words: Uffda!

EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL MISSION

By Sr. Christine Marie Liebsch, Disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ from Prayer Town, TX

What a joy it has been for Sr. Damiana Tamaz and myself to spend these past few days in mission with the ACC parishes, with Fr. Alan and Fr. Lucho, and so many wonderful people! This mission focused on the Eucharistic Revival, in conjunction with the National Eucharistic Revival happening from 2022-2024. We talked through several themes from the document put out by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: The Mystery of Christ in the Eucharist.

Sunday evening we focused on the Eucharist as thanksgiving, sacrifice and communion. People wrote down things they were grateful for on pages with wheat and grapes. Transubstantiation, the term which explains our Catholic belief that the bread and wine completely change substance to become the Body and Blood of Christ, is meant to change our lives as well.

The Eucharist is truly the greatest gift we have. Each time we receive, our venial sins are forgiven, we are given strength to avoid sin in the future, we can receive spiritual and physical healing, we are brought into communion with Christ Jesus and one another, and we are empowered to love with the very love of Christ Himself.

Each time we attend Mass, we can join our sacrifice with the sacrifice on the altar, and Christ's merits allow our offerings to become very fruitful as a means of grace for the whole body of Christ. The Document Lumen Gentium from Vatican II tells us that Jesus desires to continue his witness and service through the laity, as they offer their works, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary and married family lives so that 'ever more abundant fruits may produced in them' (Lumen Gentium 34).

On Monday evening at St. Leonard's, we focused on the Eucharist as Real Presence. We spoke about how in many Eucharistic miracles throughout the centuries, the Eucharist appeared as actual heart tissue of the left ventricle of

a human heart; the place where the oxygenated blood gives life to the body. Jesus gives us His Heart so that we may be empowered to love all the members of His Body, especially the poor and the vulnerable. We are all challenged as Christians to counter the 'throw-away culture', which treats even people as disposable. St. John Chrysostom challenges us as he did the early Christians, "Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him homage in the temple clad in silk only then to neglect him outside were he suffers cold and nakedness. He who said, 'This is my body' is the same One who said: 'You saw me hungry and you gave me no food.'"

My favorite part of this mission was the opportunity for adoration each evening. We had some singing of hymns, and some time to approach Jesus to worship Him and to touch the tassel of a prayer shawl, just as the hemorrhaging woman in the Gospels reached out in faith and received the healing she sought. I also enjoyed praying during that time with those wishing additional prayer, with beautiful background music.

You can respond to Jesus' call to 'spend one hour with me,' by silently talking to him from your heart, and many other ways. I shared Bishop Dudley's holy hour: 20 minutes of Thank you, 20 minutes of Teach me, and 20 minutes of Take it.

On Tuesday at St. Elizabeth's, Sr. Damiana shared a bilingual teaching on Healing and Transformation through the Eucharist, along with the theme of Divine Mercy. The two rays represent two permanent modes of salutary grace for us: the power to cleanse and forgive, and

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Fr. Alan, at OLV along with Fr. Lucho, welcomes all, explains the purpose and focus of the Mission, and introduces the sisters.



Sr. Christine Marie and Sr. Damiana present at St Leonard



Gloria Villagomez in Eucharistic Adoration



Deacon Mario lighting the candles at St. Elizabeth

Eucharistic Revival Mission - Continued from Page 6.

the power to feed and transform us. Jesus wants to heal us and fill us with His life each time we receive Him in the Eucharist, or adore Him in the Blessed Sacrament. During the holy hour that evening, we asked the Lord for the healing that we need spiritually, emotionally and physically. It was especially moving when we all gathered to pray for Father Lucho's complete healing from leukemia.

During the week, we had the great privilege of visiting the homebound members of the ACC parishes. What joy and gratitude we experienced, in the smiles of those who have encountered so much suffering. These women inspired my faith and trust in the Lord as I see how they commune with the Lord and accept the crosses of suffering with so much hope and joy!

We pray that we will be able to return again. But until then, let us meet each other in the Eucharist, and live Eucharistic lives of self-giving love. Blessed be Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar!



Mission Music Team at OLV on Sunday Afternoon

EDITOR'S NOTE

As part of the 3-day ACC mission, wonderful meals were served!

The main courses were as follows:

OLV – Pulled Pork Sandwiches and Calico Beans

ST. LEONARD – Scalloped potatoes and ham, tuna noodle casserole

ST. ELIZABETH – Chicken Wild Rice Soup and Sandwiches

Thank you to all who prepared food and dining tables, served, and cleaned up.

You helped make this a beautiful time of fellowship for our ACC!

From Rhonda Petersen

On behalf of the ACC Evangelization and Discipleship Committee, a thank you to all volunteers: callers for invites; Gerry Leonard who hosted the sisters at her home; fabulous musicians; child care providers; hospitality and registration; decorators; Frs. Alan and Lucho who heard Confessions each night of the mission; parish staff; and all who attended



Sisters share in song with ACC Youth

Baptisms



ARIEL DIANE KOLSTAD
Jennifer & Steve Kolstad
12/7/2022

AYVEN KYLER HAHN
Roger & Stacie Hahn
1/15/2023

SCOUT MARIE FITZGERALD
Brian & Jannessa Fitzgerald
1/29/2023

SULLIVAN MIKE FITZGERALD
Brian & Jannessa Fitzgerald
1/29/2023

OWEN TAYLOR WELLNITZ
Jonathan & Stacey Wellnitz
2/5/2023

Welcome New Members to St. Leonard
WALMARO & KENIA LOPEZ

Bishop Patrick Neary Ordination Continued from Page 2.

the miter signifying resolve to pursue holiness, and presentation of the crozier (shepherd's hook) signifying the duty of guiding and governing the Church entrusted to him.

It concluded with the new bishop, upon leaving the cathedral and from the front steps, blessing the city and

the diocese, extending it to all those who could not attend. The evening before, at vespers, on arriving at the cathedral, he knocked on the door of the cathedral, and was admitted by the Rector of the Cathedral.

There was a reception at the Park Event Center in Waite Park filled with

great food. It was a grand time to visit with most priests that have served OLV, meet people we have never met, and of course meet the new Bishop, welcoming him and congratulating him on being the Shepherd to the people of the St. Cloud Diocese.

Perpetual Light

By Connie Graff



Chris and Joel Kotschevar



Joel and his kids, doing good.

Have you ever heard about a person who you wish you would've gotten to know before they left this earth? I'm feeling this way about Joel Kotschevar, the subject of this edition of the "Perpetual Light" column. Joel died suddenly from a heart attack at age 50 while hanging out with friends in his beloved Game Room in the fall of 2018. While I knew Joel by sight, I did not know him personally. After reading the amazing memories contributed by his family and friends, I believe I missed out by not getting to know a fine human being. However, my hope is if you're reading this, you too will be inspired by the ways Joel influenced many people's lives and continues to do so today. The ripple effect of one person's life can persist even after death and Joel still has something to say that we need to hear.

Joel Alan Kotschevar was born on March 3, 1968 in Cavalier, ND the 3rd of 4 children. His sister, Karen, describes her little brother as the fun sibling and the energy and motivation of the family, both as a crazy kid and as an adult. He was the bond that gathered people, kept them connected and built the value of family and closeness. He valued his friends enough to stay connected to them for life. Another sister, Julie, summarizes Joel as "having more personality than anyone I've ever known". He graduated from Enderlin High School in 1986. In the summer before his senior year, he was an exchange student in Japan, which is where he discovered a love for Japanese cuisine. He went on to graduate from NDSCS in Wahpeton. On June 22, 1992, he married Chris and they went on to become parents

to Claire, Kate and Brock. The young family settled in Fergus Falls in 2002, immersing themselves in the community and joining OLV Church.

One of Joel's passions was sports and he became a "MVC" (Most Valuable Cheerleader) for everything Otter related! He volunteered as a coach, announcer, and led cheers from the stands. Many lifelong friendships were made between the Kotschevars and other Otter families. His friend Todd met Joel through coaching and remembers how intense Joel often was at game time, but what many people didn't see is how he made games and practices enjoyable for the kids. Todd misses many things about Joel, but has so many fond memories and appreciates that he was able to be a part of Joel's life, and appreciates even more that Joel was a part of his life. Joel and Chris's daughter Claire describes her dad's coaching style as follows: He was a tough critic, but done in a way that wanted you to be better, not want to quit trying. Being a coach was a natural talent for my dad." A red oak tree planted by the activities entrance at Kennedy School reminds Dacia, another family friend, of Joel every time she enters the door for an Otter sporting event. "His passion for Otter athletics, the kids involved, the lessons participation brings and most importantly the friendships, will always bring cherished memories of Joel", recounts Dacia.

According to Dacia, Joel knew all the best places to go trick or treating on Halloween. He somehow knew where the full size candy bars were given out and the best neighbor-

hoods to get the best Halloween treats. And no doubt his energy and sense of humor contributed to the evening as Joel was being Joel; bringing kids together to create special memories. Joel was in charge of facilities at M State, which allowed him to be around college sports as part of his job, which he loved. Lest you think Joel wasn't a well-rounded guy, his wife Chris says she misses Joel's fabulous cooking, a skill he learned from his mom. Even though he was a dumper, not a recipe follower, he could make a delicious meal out of a few leftovers in the fridge and often incorporated his love for Japanese cuisine into his cooking. He did like to try new recipes, but also made well-loved dishes as well that Chris now cooks.

Another passion of Joel's was fishing and he loved hosting fish fries. If there were leftovers he sent his kids to make deliveries to the neighbors. As you can see, Joel was a very social guy, loved visiting with people, with a definition of a great day being hosting happy hour in his Game Room. The infamous Kostechevar Game Room was located in a separate garage on the back of their property and was decorated with, you guessed it, bar and sports memorabilia. One of Joel's favorite hobbies was refurbishing old football helmets and he had over 65 helmets displayed in the Game Room. Todd adds that "It was fun to go to the Game Room to be where family friends would gather to have a great time talking smart and just have a relaxing good time. The one thing that stands out to me is how so many

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Perpetual Light - Continued from Pg 8.

kids enjoyed the Game Room as much as the adults. Kids would frequently come and hang out and Joel took a genuine interest in everyone, no matter what activities they were in or were not involved in."

Another of the things Chris misses most about her beloved husband of 26 years is his sense of humor. He was a very funny guy, although sometimes slightly inappropriate. He liked to tell jokes and was always the life of the party. They shared the same sense of humor and laughed at the same things. Their daughter Claire describes her dad "as the light in every room, he was so funny, at times poking fun at people but always making them feel important." Claire strives to be like her Dad in making people laugh and going out of her way to make people feel special. "It is a quality of his that I try to replicate as often as I can," she said. As a teacher, she uses many of his sayings in her classroom, not always intentionally, but catches herself telling her students to "give me your eyes" when needing their attention or "I'm telling you this to set you up for success, not failure". Joel truly loved his family and was a devoted dad. He had a no-nonsense way of parenting and had high expectations of all 3 kids; but according to Claire the expectations were never out of reach. Joel balanced that parenting style with great pride in each of his children and would brag about them to anyone who would listen because he viewed them as his greatest achievement. Joel's sister Karen shared: "The connection and bond between Chris and the kids warms my heart and gives me peace that they will be ok, even without Joel. I admire and love the family Joel and Chris built together and how their family was the most important part and foundation for their lives".

Along with a deep love for his family, Joel loved God. Chris shared that he wasn't outwardly vocal about that love, but his faith was important to him and he manifested it in his own way, by singing loudly in church, helping with OLV Fish Frys, and his genuine love of people. He was the BINGO caller at the Fall Festival just weeks before he died; an activity he loved and no doubt would still be

doing today.

Chris doesn't have a specific answer as to how her family has coped with Joel's death. She and the kids lived day to day and slowly the days became less hard. Their family and friends were extremely supportive, despite the fact they were grieving too. Then one day they were able to talk about him without crying. They now mention him often in conversation and are able to do so with a smile and love in their hearts. Her advice to others who are grieving a loved one is to lean on your support system, have faith and lean on God in your toughest times, accept help from others and know that just a "thank you" is enough. Find comfort wherever you can, even in the smallest of things: a baby's smile, in music, in the warmth of the sun. Use your experiences to provide comfort to others going through the same things. Always remember to never take anything or ANYONE for granted.

Claire's suggestion is to not avoid grief. "I honor Dad in many ways, from listening to his favorite playlist to cooking his signature meals. Even though it makes me emotional, it also helps me devote time to remembering him and the things that made him happy. I feel I get my signs from him through music. Every once in awhile, I'll be somewhere and one of his favorite songs will come on. It seems random, but I feel it's a sign he's still with me. I used to have a hard time truly believing that they were signs from him; that he is still with me and not just me wanting to believe that they were, but that mentality changed at my wedding. Right after we lit a candle in memory of him and started saying the Lord's Prayer, the sun came out from behind the clouds and we could feel it shining down on us. It had been completely overcast/rainy all day and I know this was him letting us know he was with us and watching over us. Lean into those times, cherish them, and even in the hardest moments, know that it gets easier. Not easier to live without them, but easier to manage the grief that comes from living without them." Joel's sister Karen stated, "It saddens me beyond words to think of all of the moments in his family's lives that he

is missing, but someday we will be together again. And I will soak up every glorious moment of the bear hugs from my little brother. Busy lives disguise and distract us from longing for his presence. I miss him everyday, but my appreciation for the gift of his presence in my life is greater than any sorrow I can have. I think of people in heaven that Joel is encountering and helping get through the next part of their lives, especially young people, and I know God wanted him there. I am confident and thankful that God is still using his vibrant and guiding spirit today for others. That may not be what heaven is like, but it is comforting to me. He was a very musical person and I'm sure he is front and center of loud, powerful and beautiful worship of our Lord!"

Joel's other sister, Julie, shares her story that holds lessons for all of us: "I think my fondest memory and biggest regret are all wrapped into one. We had a sibling get-together the year before Joel died, just the 4 of us siblings; no spouses, no kids, no one else. It gave us time to reminisce and learn about each other. Not just who we were as fathers and mothers and spouses, but who we were as people. We talked about what we remembered about childhood, and what we wanted for our futures. Our true selves shone through, we saw each other's personalities like never before and how similar, yet different, we were. My advice is not necessarily to those who are grieving, but to those that have your family. Enjoy them. Do not take them for granted. Do not assume they will be here tomorrow. Take advantage of your time with them today. Pick up when they call. Have the lunch. Get together."

There are many takeaways from this short story about Joel's life. And I trust that Joel is on the sidelines cheering us on to live our lives fully and to love intentionally "real big" like he did.

SPECIAL NOTE FROM CONNIE GRAFF

This will be my last "Perpetual Light" column, I'd like to thank readers who have read some amazing stories. My deep appreciation to the families who shared memories of their loved ones and inspired many.

If you feel called to continue this column or have an idea for another column, please contact Journey editor Deb Forstner, at email dforstner@gmail.com, or 320-292-1016.



SIX SCOOPS

Dishing up everything you need to know about OLV School from a 6th grader's perspective Today's Treat: Catholic Schools Week

KICKOFF MASS: Sunday, January 29th, kicked off Catholic Schools Week with a Mass where OLV kids and alumni participated. They were able to volunteer for the choir or as readers/servers. Father Alan led the Mass and talked about the Beatitudes in the Homily. Mr. Rath also spoke at the end of Mass about his Catholic Schools Week experience. After Mass there were coffee, rolls, coffee grounds, and raffle tickets for sale. All in all, it was a fun weekend Mass for us to kick off the best week of school!

Served by Coy Bjerklie

DRESS-UP DAYS: When you walk into school and you are confronted by historical figures, movie characters, and book characters, you know it is Catholic Schools Week. Our first dress-up day was Class Color Day. Each class wore a different color so they could be distinguished by grade at SkyZone. On Tuesday and Wednesday, we all went bowling. On Tuesday, we had book or Movie Character Day, and on Wednesday we had Pajama and Crazy Hair day. On Thursday, we were not going to have a dress-up day, because we were going to go to Andes Tower Hills, but it was too cold, so we had Hawaiian or Tie Dye Day. On Friday, we had Jersey and Hat day, because it could be put on after our Mass. My favorite day was Pajama and Crazy Hair Day because it is always fun to see other people's hair and pajamas. Catholic Schools Week is one of the best weeks of school all year. The dress-up days make Catholic schools week better because it adds fun and creativity into the week.

Served by Isaac Jenc

SKY ZONE: On February 6, everyone K-6 loaded the buses for Sky Zone. Our school rented it out. When everyone got there, put on their socks, and took their class pictures, then we had about one hour to jump. There were lots of different activities including an air court, where we played dodgeball, a trampoline wall jump, a trust fall onto a huge air mat, and three regular trampoline areas. My favorite part was when the entire school cheered on the



Sky Zone

little kids when they were scared to fall. I also liked playing dodgeball. After lunch, we loaded the buses, and went back to school. Sky Zone was tons of fun.

Served by Ashtynn Koep

BOWLING: On Tuesday of Catholic Schools Week, 3rd-6th grade and Preschool went to Northern Aire Bowling Lanes. First we did a normal game, then we played a game called Character Factory. It was a funny game where however many pins you hit down determined what your character looked like. The dress up day was Book or Movie Character day so we all dressed in a fun way at the bowling alley. 6th grade boys asked for the bumpers so we could have a higher score but for some reason they did not let us. I wonder why. CSW was fun and bowling was my favorite.

Served by Drae Parker

BAKE SALE: Imagine, you are walking into the 6th grade classroom, and you see all kinds of sweet, salty, and delicious snacks. This is the bake sale. The bake sale is set up by 5th and 6th grade students who go to the store and buy snacks to bring to school. 6th grade sets up all of the items in their classroom, and all of the classes cycle through, grabbing 4 items to start with. (Every item is 1 quarter). 6th goes first. When that is done, there is a last call. The money made went to the 5th and 6th grade trip to St. Paul MN., and riding a coach bus there. We made \$163, and the best sellers were Cosmic Brownies, Zebra Cakes, Koolaid Jammers, cookies, cupcakes, and Pringles. There



Living Rosary

were lots of other treats too. That day, it was Hawaiian Dress Up day, and we got to see all of the cool outfits. Lastly, for some fun, we put on Pixar Shorts and Schoolhouse Rock in the background. The bake sale was very successful, fun, and delicious!

Served by Grace Klimek

LIVING ROSARY: On Thursday, Vince Thoma led K-6 students in a short Living Rosary program. Three students from each grade K-5 and all 6th graders stood in the church to create the shape of the rosary. 6th graders represented the Cross, Apostle's Creed, and each of the five mysteries, while the other students stood for a Hail Mary. Every time we prayed we lit a candle. Mr. Thoma said to always carry a rosary with you.

Served by Aydan Moen

ANDES TOWER HILLS: The day began with Mrs. Parker announcing our buddies for the trip, Isaac and me, Grace and Ashtynn, and Coy, Drae and Aydan. Grades K-3 were tubing while 4-6 were skiing. There were three skill levels on the hills, green being easy hills, blue medium, and black hard. Popular green hills include Big Ben and Hawaiian Cruise, popular blues were Frikadiley, Serendipity, and Paradise, and for black hills Worm Gear and Little America. Coy, Drae, and Aydan went down all three types of hills, and Isaac and I went down just blues and greens. Some memorable moments were when all of us boys went down the hills in bright colored skirts. Then, Isaac was not allowed to wear his skirt because an employee thought he got stuck on the chair lift, and when Aydan came down Frikadiley and drifted right back into the line for the ski lift. Overall, our trip to Andes Tower Hills was easily one of the best times we had this year.

Served by Owen Leopold

ODILIA RIESTENBERG: AN AMAZING WOMAN OF GREAT WORTH

By Susan Ward

Odilia Guck was born in 1935, the fifth child of nine children. She and her siblings walked one mile to country school everyday. Odilia recalls walking on the East side ditch so the neighbor's Holstein bull wouldn't follow them along the way.

Daily Mass at the St. Joseph Church near Perham, across from the school, Tuesday catechism, and Friday's Bible history were only a small part of her week. Odilia's piano lessons resulted in her playing for the Christmas program for which she was paid \$1.00 for the job. At the time she was only a fourth grader, but she soon learned to play the organ and accompanied the choir at St. Joseph's church.

When arriving home on Mondays, she had washing and ironing to do for hours. With six brothers there were lots of shirts and pants to iron. She didn't mind because she could

listen to the radio.

Childhood activities included riding bike, skiing, skating, and playing ball when the cousins came over. The most fun was after dark when they would roll old tires up and down the driveway. They got electricity in the early 40's. The only refrigerator was the cream cooler outside.

Her first indoor bathroom was put in about 1948 when her family put an addition on the house. As kids, they took baths in the wash tub outside in the summer and near the wood stove in the winter.

Odilia attended Perham High School for four years. She was active in band and choir and Girls Athletic Association. After graduating, Odilia started working at the Perham Creamery. She saved enough money to buy their first television. She also bought her parents a washer, a



Jack and Odilia Riestenberg

dryer, and a freezer. Her first car was purchased in 1957; after one month the block cracked. Soon after, Odilia started dating Jack Riestenberg, and in 1959 Jack and Odilia were married.

Our parish in St. Elizabeth and everyone who knew Odilia was blessed.

Delphine Silbernagel - Part of OLV, City's Rich History Continued from Page 4.

basketball player at Our Lady of Victory School. He led the OLV seventh and eighth grade traveling basketball team to a record of 11-1 in 1960-61.

Delphine was especially proud of her four brothers who served in the military, three of them during World War II and one during the Korean War. Among them was brother Robbie, a World War II D-Day survivor, who died in 2009.

This past summer, Delphine moved to an apartment on the east side of Fergus Falls.

To say that she has been an active member of Our Lady of Victory Church for many decades is an understatement.

Delphine attended daily Mass for 25 years at 6:30 a.m. and fondly recalls nephew David as an altar boy when Masses were in Latin. She took her two nephews and niece to Mass at 8 a.m., prior to the start of the OLV school day, and then headed to work at Northwestern Bell Telephone.

"We went to Sunday Mass together, Stations of the Cross Wednesdays during Lent, all of the Holy Week services, Saturday evening when there was Rosary and Benediction and went regularly to confession," she said. "In those days

nobody went to Communion unless a few days earlier you had gone to confession."

Delphine, was treasurer for St. Anne's Society, belonged to St. Claire's Mission Circle, was volunteer bookkeeper when the parish was served by Fr. Joseph Fridgen, sang in the choir, worked at church dinners and served during the annual fall festival.

She made personal visits to nursing homes and the Veterans Home in Fergus Falls, prior to the onset of Covid 19 in early 2020.

Going above and beyond the call of duty, she joined Sister Mary Peter (now retiree Sister Adela Gross) in painting all the closets in the old OLV convent. Her father and Ben Snyder painted all the walls in the house that formerly stood where the sanctuary of the current church now stands.

Delphine was sacristan for a few years, taking care of candles and the votive stand. She led the Rosary for eight years on Wednesday mornings and several years prior to the Saturday Mass. Delphine gave ongoing financial support to a little boy in Guatemala through the Godchild program.

Members of the parish who are more familiar with Delphine's life story were amazed to learn that Delphine was only 21 when three kids, her two nephews and niece, were added to her family home in Fergus Falls.

These days, while visiting with people over coffee at the Viking Café, Delphine recalls her mother working as a cook seven days a week at Skogmo Café for 30 years, then at the Western Café for 10 years, "bringing leftovers home for us."

As for all of her volunteerism at OLV, Delphine says this was proudly done "for the greater honor and glory of God."



**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 9:30 am Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 10:30 am St. Leonard
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*

REFLECTIONS OF AN OLD MAN

I reflected a lot a few months ago when —after more than 50 years—I enjoyed a get-together with one of the best friends of my early adulthood.

Although we never became the well-known writers we had aspired to be, we both kept trying and, before the reunion, shared some of our work with one another. Here, with the permission of my once-again-good friend, Dick Butler, is one of his poems. Consider it my gift to you for this special season. I hope it will be as meaningful to you as it is to me!

GOOD FRIDAY THOUGHTS

I wonder

**After Jesus died on the cross and all
How did they get him down?**

**How did they ease that big T back down
After the effort it took to set it up to begin With?**

**Who helped them to dig out the base of the Cross?
And how many did it take to steady it and**

**Then slowly let it slip—
Clumsily, Tenderly—
To Earth again?**

**And did His mother cry out
When it jerked in His hands
And maybe tore a little
At her son's hands and feet
As they struggled?**

**Or did she suck in her grief somehow,
And help?**

**And when the cross was back on the earth
And Jesus' body began to slide a little
As the cross tilted on the uneven ground,
Did anyone try to stop it?**

**And what about the nails in His hands and Feet,
Driven in with so much hate?
How were they pried loose, anyway?**

**Was there another carpenter there, Perhaps,
With a claw hammer?
I wince when I write this,
But I just wonder.**

**And did Jesus's mother
Drop to the ground weeping
And draw her broken son into her arms,
And hug Him close
As she did when He was a baby
Years ago in that little stable
With all the animals looking on
And all the angels all around
Singing softly?**

I wonder.

Richard Butler

Happy Easter!
Lee Krogh

