

# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

*Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm*

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## New Catholic radio station launches in Montevideo

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**MONTEVIDEO** – A community in the Diocese of New Ulm has a new radio station in town, but it is not the typical top-forty-hits kind of station.

Real Presence Radio (RPR), which provides all Catholic programming, announced its “presence” in the Montevideo area when it went on the air April 19. Located at KBPG-FM 89.5, the station airs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Real Presence Radio Network originated in North Dakota and has spread across the region to Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Before coming to Montevideo, the last new RPR station was launched in the Dioceses of Duluth and Superior in 2016.

According to Steven Splonskowski, executive director of RPR Network, the programming is a mix of network radio shows from EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network), Ave Maria Radio, Catholic Answers, Word on Fire, and local shows broadcast from studios across the listening area.

So, why Montevideo?

“We go where we discern the Lord is leading us,” said Splonskowski.

After becoming aware of a signal for sale at the right price in Montevideo, Splonskowski and Edward Schmitz, vice president of RPR Network and chairman of the RPR Board of Directors, met with Bishop John M. LeVoir in February to discuss the possibility of a Catholic radio station in the Diocese of New



On April 19, Fr. Paul Timmerman, pastor of the Church of St. Joseph in Montevideo, blessed the radio tower and transmitter of Montevideo's new Catholic radio station, Real Presence Radio (KBPG-FM 89.5). Also pictured is Steve Splonskowski, the network's executive director.

*(Photo courtesy of RPR)*

Ulm. “Bishop LeVoir welcomed us to the diocese and encouraged us to pursue the opportunity,” Splonskowski said.

KBPG's signal is currently at 500 watts and covers about 30 miles in all directions. Splonskowski said the network hopes to raise

funds locally to do an upgrade to 3,000-4,000 watts in the near future, which will increase coverage to 40-50 miles. For those out of the broadcast range, there is a RPR app available for listening online.

According to Splonskowski, the start-up cost for KBPG was around \$20,000, and the monthly operations are expected to be around \$2,000 per month, or \$24,000 per year. An upgrade to increase coverage is expected to cost between \$50,000 and \$60,000.

“The entire network is completely listener supported,” Splonskowski said. “We hope to receive the support of our brothers and sisters in the New Ulm diocese to support and grow our Catholic radio coverage locally,” he said.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## INSIDE

Pages 2

May: the month of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary

Page 3

Official priest  
assignments

Page 6

NUDCCW Woman of  
the Year announced!

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## Glencoe school to close after 2016-2017 school year

by Katie Ballalatak  
*Prairie Catholic Correspondent*

**Glencoe** – St. Pius X Catholic School will officially close its doors this May after providing nearly 140 years of elementary education.

Bishop John M. LeVoir made the decision, accepting the recommendation presented to him by St. Pius X pastor, Fr. Anthony Stubeda, who studied the situation in depth with the help of the parish and education committee.

“For the last four or five years we have been struggling financially with the school,” said Fr. Stubeda, who has served the



Students of St. Pius X, Glencoe, share their singing talents during a visit with the residents of the Glencoe Regional Health Services Long Term Care Center.

*(Photo courtesy of St. Pius X School.)*

Church of St. Pius X since 2007. For that reason, the Parish Administrative Council and the

Home and School Committee (HANDS) had a joint meeting in December 2016. Information

was presented about population decline, financial issues, and future demographics. At that meeting, it was recommended that the parish close the school.

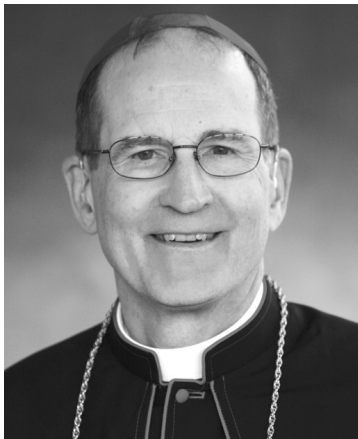
In early January, an open parish meeting was held where the same information was presented and the decision to recommend closing the school was made public.

“Even with all of our creative thinking of how to make it work, it did not eliminate the fact that the parish was putting in two-thirds of the cost of the school,” Fr. Stubeda said. “We are now in

*(Continued on page 2)*



## May: the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary



by Bishop John M. LeVoir

Traditionally, the month of May has been dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I remember learning this when I was a young boy in Catholic grade school. Since May was the month of Mary, we honored her in a special way throughout the month. For example, we prayed the Rosary and we had a crowning of Mary preceded by a procession with her statue. As we processed, we sang hymns. May was always the month of First Communion. Then there are the feasts of the Blessed Virgin during May; namely, May 13, Our Lady of Fatima, and May 31, The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This year the feast of Our Lady of Fatima marks the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's

apparitions to the three shepherd children in Portugal. The Blessed Mother appeared six times to the children. She told them that their prayers can help save souls, "Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell because there are none to sacrifice themselves and to pray for them."

The apparitions at Fatima also stressed the reception of Holy Communion and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life (CCC, no. 1324). The Fatima apparitions reminded the children that worthily receiving Jesus in Holy Communion gives them the grace of union with God and gives God great consolation.

Pope Francis is scheduled to make a pilgrimage to Fatima May 12-13 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the apparitions and to celebrate the canonization of Francisco and Jacinta Marto, two of the children to whom Mary appeared. I am leading a pilgrimage to Fatima to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima this September 11-21. If you would like to make this pilgrimage, please see the diocesan website for more information.

Since May is in the Easter season, the prayer *Regina Caeli* (Queen of Heaven) is substituted for the Angelis prayer at noon. As children, we sang the *Regina*

**"Jesus is alive today and he is searching for us in order to save us and unite us to himself, and to bring us to glory."**  
– Bishop LeVoir

*Caeli* in Latin, and that is how I remember it to this day. Maybe some of you remember it as well. "*Regina Caeli, laetare, alleluia. Quia, quem meruisti portare, alleluia. Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia. Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.*" ("Queen of Heaven rejoice, alleluia. For he whom you did merit to bear, alleluia. Has risen, as he said, alleluia. Pray for us to God, alleluia.")

### He is risen!

The Easter season begins on Easter Sunday and lasts fifty days, ending on Pentecost Sunday. Thus in 2017, it begins on April 16 and ends on June 4. The long Easter season gives us the opportunity to reflect upon the Resurrection of Our Lord. The Resurrection is such a monumental mystery that we cannot fathom its depths in just one short Easter weekend.

We need time to meditate and ruminate upon it, and still it amazes us.

About Jesus, Pope Francis said:

"He died, was buried, is risen, and has appeared. That is, Jesus is alive! This is the core of the Christian

message." In other words, the Resurrection is truly a historical event. It really happened!

There are some who say that only Jesus' memory "rose from the dead" or that the disciples fabricated the story of the Resurrection in order to enhance Jesus' reputation. However, the disciples go to great lengths in the Gospels to confirm that they are eye witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus. Many of the disciples gave their lives as martyrs based on the reality of the Resurrection. No one would give their life for a memory or a fabrication, but only for a true, historical event. Furthermore, billions have placed their faith in the reality of the Resurrection over the centuries.

Jesus was capable of rising from the dead because he is truly God and truly human. As God, he has

the power to rise from the dead and to make his body glorified. At the end of time, St. Paul tells us that Jesus will do for us what he did for himself. "He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself" (Phil 3:21).

Jesus is alive today and he is searching for us in order to save us and unite us to himself, and to bring us to glory. As Pope Francis said: "(Christianity) is not so much our search for God, but rather God's search for us. How beautiful to think that Christianity, essentially, is this!"

"Jesus," the pope said, "has taken us, has seized us, has conquered us in order not to leave us anymore."

During this long Easter season, let us let the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus penetrate our minds and hearts.

**Bishop LeVoir's May 2017 calendar can be found at [www.dnu.org/calendar/](http://www.dnu.org/calendar/).**

## A legacy of students with a strong Catholic understanding

(Continued from page 1)

the position where we are unable to continue to make that work."

"The only way for us to maintain the school would be to really do what we thought would hurt the education of the children, which we were not willing to do," Fr. Stubeda said. "We are very proud of our school, we are very happy with our school, and it is not closing because there were issues with the education."

Due to lower student enrollment and to help contain costs, classes at St. Pius X School have been combined the past three years. First and second, third and fourth, and fifth and sixth grades were taught together.

The 2016-2017 school year is the first since 1980 that does not have a kindergarten class. The last year of preschool was 2011-2012. There are currently thirty-nine students enrolled in grades 1-6, with three teachers and three teacher aids.

Karen Thalmann, who has been teaching first grade at the school for twenty years, has enjoyed a lifetime of memories. She, along with all nine of her siblings, attended school at St. Pius X, as did her parents and her own children.

On her first day teaching at the school, she recalls seeing things in her desk that were from her first grade teacher. Thalmann still has a few of the games that her teacher had made. "That's what's so hard about the school closing," she said. "It's been a part of my life since I was seven years old."

Thalmann is proud of how supportive the enrolled families have been, despite the impending closing date for the school. "Our parents have been phenomenal with supporting the school even with knowing that this was the last year," she said. "We had a fundraiser goal of \$10,000 with twenty-six families and we almost made our goal, which is amazing. The parents have supported us 100% throughout this year."

Emily Popelka, who attended St. Pius X from preschool through 6th grade, firmly believes her education was instrumental to her own academic and spiritual life. "I believe that my motivation to excel in school stems from attending St. Pius. We were held to high learning standards, and we were given the necessary resources available to help us succeed. I also think that my relationship with God would not be as strong if I had not had the foundation of my faith built in elementary school," she said.

Popelka is also grateful for the friends she made. "My classmates and I became close since most of us attended school together from preschool on," she said. "We grew up together, learned together, and supported one another. To this day, some of my St. Pius classmates are my closest friends and will continue to be in the future."

"It was very good at what it was for," said Fr. Stubeda. "Besides providing a good education

for kids, it also helped give the children a strong Catholic understanding of the world. It will be a loss to us."

The last day of school at St. Pius X will be Tuesday, May 23. There will be a Mass celebrated at 1 p.m., followed by the 6th grade graduation and a reception. The school building will continue to be used for religious education classes and parish events. No plans have been made to rent the space out to an outside organization.

A commemoration event to celebrate the happy memories and many years of St. Pius X is expected to take place sometime this summer.

"I feel confident that as we move forward, God will open some doors for us and we will see what our next great adventure will be," Fr. Stubeda said.

### THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

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# Diocesan priests celebrate 50th, 40th, and 30th anniversaries of ordination

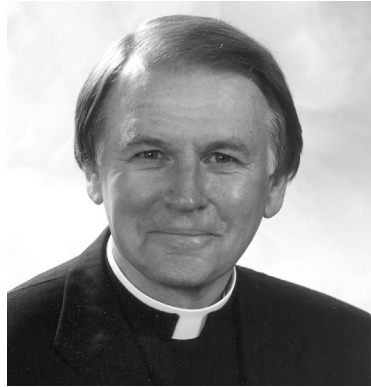
**NEW ULM** - Several priests of the Diocese of New Ulm will be celebrating significant anniversaries of their faithful ministry.

**Fr. John Berger** will celebrate his 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood on Sunday, June 11, with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated in the presence of Bishop John M. LeVoor at 1:00 p.m. at the Church of St. Brendan in Green Isle, followed by a picnic lunch on the parish grounds from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend.

Fr. Berger was ordained a priest for the Diocese of New Ulm on Feb. 19, 1967, at the Church of St. Brendan in Green Isle by Bishop Alphonse J. Schladweiler.

Prior to his retirement from active ministry on July 12, 2012, Fr. Berger served the parishes of Holy Redeemer, Marshall; St. Anastasia, Hutchinson; St. Mary, Willmar; Sacred Heart, Franklin; St. Willibrord, Gibbon; St. Paul, Nicollet; St. Michael, Gaylord; St. Francis de Sales, Winthrop; St. Gregory the Great, Lafayette; and St. George, West Newton Township. Since 1998, Fr. Berger continues to serve as chaplain at the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center in St. Peter.

On the diocesan level, Fr. Berger began working in the Tribunal as defender of the bond in 1972. On Dec. 1, 1973, Bishop Schladweiler



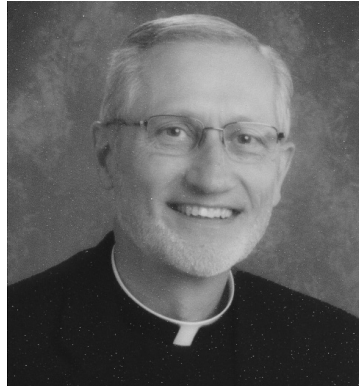
Fr. John Berger

appointed Fr. Berger judicial vicar, a position he held for forty-two years.

Fr. Berger served as vice chancellor of the diocese from 1979 to 2008, and from 2000 to 2001 he served as diocesan administrator (prior to Archbishop John C. Nienstedt being named the third bishop of the diocese).

In 1991, Fr. Berger received the Diocesan Distinguished Service Award for his leadership and ongoing commitment and service to the people of the diocese.

**Fr. Philip Schotzko** will celebrate his 40th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood on Wednesday, June 7, with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop John M. LeVoor at 5:30 p.m. at the Church of St. Raphael in Springfield. A reception with music will follow from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at the Springfield Area Community Center, 33 South



Fr. Philip Schotzko

Cass Avenue, Springfield. There will be a program at 8:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend.

Fr. Schotzko was ordained a priest for the Diocese of New Ulm on May 29, 1977, at the Church of St. Raphael in Springfield by Bishop Raymond A. Lucker.

Following ordination, Fr. Schotzko served the parishes of Holy Redeemer, Marshall; Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm; St. Michael, Gaylord; St. Francis de Sales, Winthrop; St. Mary, Bird Island; St. John, Hector; St. Peter, St. Peter; and St. Paul, Nicollet. He currently serves as pastor of the Church of St. Raphael in Springfield and the Church of St. Joseph in Lamberton, including the oversight of the Oratory of St. Thomas in Sanborn.

From 1984 to 1990, Fr. Schotzko served as associate pastor of the Mission of San Lucas Toliman in Guatemala. During his service



Msgr. Douglas Grams

there, he was involved in the design and construction of four churches for the villages in the San Lucas area. While in Guatemala, he authored the book, *Simple Faith: Stories from Guatemala*.

**Msgr. Douglas Grams** will celebrate his 30th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood on Tuesday, June 13, with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop John M. LeVoor at 7:30 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm, followed by a rolls-and-coffee reception. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Msgr. Grams was ordained on June 13, 1987, at the Church of the Holy Rosary in North Mankato by Bishop Raymond A. Lucker.

Following ordination, Msgr. Grams served the parishes of St. Mary, Sleepy Eye; Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm; St. John the Baptist, Searles; St. Mary, Tracy; and St. Paul, Walnut Grove.

In 1999, he was appointed pastor of the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm. In 2015, he was appointed rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm and pastor of St. Gregory the Great, Lafayette; St. John the Baptist, Searles; and St. George, West Newton Township; while remaining pastor of the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm. He was also appointed canonical administrator of New Ulm Area Catholic Schools.

Since 1999, he has served the diocese in various capacities including chancellor, vicar general, Bishops Delegate in Matters Pertaining to Sexual Misconduct, director of the Office of Priest Personnel, and diocesan administrator (prior to Bishop John M. LeVoor being named the fourth bishop of the diocese in 2008). He continues to serve as the vicar general and Bishop's Delegate in Matters Pertaining to Sexual Misconduct.

In 2005, Msgr. Grams was named a Prelate of Honor with the title "Monsignor" by Pope Benedict XVI.

In 2010, he received the Diocesan Distinguished Service Award for his leadership and ongoing commitment and service to the people of the diocese.

## Bishop announces new priest assignments

On the recommendation of the Priest Personnel Board, Bishop John M. LeVoor of the Diocese of New Ulm has made the following priest assignments:

**Effective June 28, 2017**

**Fr. Garrett Ahlers** appointed parochial vicar of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm and to assist with pastoral duties in the Holy Cross Area Faith Community and to teach at Cathedral High School, as well as serving as chaplain for the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus and being available to assist on the weekends in other parts of the diocese as needed by the priests of the diocese.



**Fr. David Breu** to retire from full-time active ministry; he is planning to assist part-time on the weekends and weekdays in the Spirit of Life Area Faith Community while living in the rectory in Graceville.



**Fr. Aaron Johanneck** appointed parochial administrator of the Church of St. Mary in Arlington, Church of St. Michael in Gaylord, and Church of St. Brendan in Green Isle; in addition to his current duties as director of the diocesan Office of Worship.



**Fr. Brian Oestreich** appointed pastor of the Church of the Holy Rosary in Graceville, in addition to his current duties as pastor of the Church of St. Michael in Madison, Church of St. John in Ortonville, and Church of St. Joseph in Rosen.



**Fr. Keith Salisbury** appointed parochial vicar (senior associate) of the Church of St. Leo in St. Leo and to assist with pastoral duties in the Good Teacher Area Faith Community, as well as being available to assist on the weekends in other parts of the diocese as needed by the priests of the diocese.



## Darwin native professes final vows as a Franciscan



**HANKINSON, ND** – Sr. Mary Ruth Huhn, Franciscan Sister of Dillingen, professed her final vows Nov. 13, 2016, at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel in Hankinson, N.Dak. Faithful from around the diocese and her hometown of Darwin, Minn., gathered for the celebration. This profession of vows comes at a special time for the Franciscan Sisters, as this year marks the 775th anniversary of the community, which began in Dillingen, Germany, just fifteen years after the death of St. Francis of Assisi. Sr. Mary Ruth (right) smiles as she is welcomed by her provincial, Sr. Ann Marie Friederichs.

(Photo by Kristina Lahr / New Earth, Diocese of Fargo)





# No Tengas Miedo

*Mayo: El Mes de la Santísima Virgen Maria*

por Obispo John M. LeVoir

Tradicionalmente, en el mes de Mayo se honra a la Santísima Virgen Maria. Me acuerdo haber aprendido esto cuando joven en la escuela católica. Como Mayo es el mes de la Virgen María la honramos de manera especial. Por ejemplo, orábamos el rosario e hicimos una coronación de María precedida por una procesión con su estatua. Mientras en la procesión cantábamos himnos. En Mayo era el mes de la celebración de la Primera Comunión. También en Mayo hay celebraciones de la Santísima Virgen, el 13 de Mayo es la celebración de Nuestra Señora de Fátima y el 31 de Mayo, la Visitación de la Santísima Virgen María.

Este año, la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Fátima marca el centenario de las apariciones de la Virgen a los tres pastores de Portugal. La Santa madre se le apareció seis veces a los niños. Ella les dijo que sus oraciones pueden ayudar a salvar almas: “Orad, rezad mucho y haced sacrificios por los pecadores; porque muchas almas van al infierno, porque no hay nadie que se pueda sacrificar y orar por ellos.”

Las apariciones en Fátima también enfatizaron la recepción de la Santa Comunión y la adoración del Santísimo Sacramento. La Eucaristía es la fuente y cumbre de la vida cristiana (CCC, no. 1324). Las apariciones de Fátima recordaron a los niños que recibir a Jesús dignamente en la Santa Comunión les da la gracia de unión con Dios y le da a Dios gran consuelo.

El Papa Francisco tiene previsto hacer una peregrinación a Fátima el 12 y 13 de Mayo para conmemorar el centenario de las apariciones y celebrar la canonización de Francisco y Jacinta Marto, dos de los niños a los que María se apareció. El 11 al 21 de Septiembre voy a liderar una peregrinación a Fátima para celebrar el centenario de las apariciones en Fátima. Ya que Mayo cae en la temporada de la Pascua, la oración Regina Caeli (Reina del Cielo) se sustituye por la oración Angelis al mediodía. Cuando niños, cantábamos el Regina Caeli en latín, y así es como lo recuerdo hasta el día de hoy. Quizás uno de ustedes lo recuerda también.

## ¡EL HA RESUCITADO!

La temporada de la Pascua comienza con el domingo de Pascua y dura cincuenta días, culmina con el Domingo de Pentecostés. Este año comenzó el 16 de Abril hasta el 4 de Junio. Esta larga temporada de Pascua nos da la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre la Resurrección de nuestro Señor. La Resurrección es un misterio monumental que es difícil de entenderlo con profundidad en un fin de semana de Pascua. Necesitamos tiempo para meditar y así asimilarlo, y así todavía nos asombra.

Sobre Jesús, el Papa Francisco dice: “El murió, fue sepultado, resucitó y apareció. Es decir, ¡Jesús está vivo! Este es el mensaje cristiano.” En otras palabras, la Resurrección es verdaderamente un acontecimiento histórico. ¡Realmente sucedió!

Hay quienes dicen que sólo el recuerdo de Jesús “resucitó de

entre los muertos” o que los discípulos inventaron la historia de la Resurrección, con el fin de aumentar la reputación de Jesús. Sin embargo, los discípulos van muy lejos en los Evangelios para confirmar que son testigos de la resurrección. Muchos de los discípulos dieron sus vidas como mártires basados en la realidad de la Resurrección. Nadie daría su vida por algo que se ha inventado, sino sólo por un verdadero acontecimiento histórico. A lo largo de los siglos, millones han puesto su fe en la realidad de la Resurrección.

Jesús fue capaz de resucitar de entre los muertos porque es verdaderamente el Dios y el ser humano. Como Dios, tiene el poder de resucitar de entre los muertos y hacer de su cuerpo glorificado. Al final de los tiempos, San Pablo nos dice que Jesús hará por nosotros lo que hizo por sí mismo. “Cambiará nuestro cuerpo miserable y lo hará semejante a su propio cuerpo, del que irradia su Gloria, usando esa fuerza con la que puede someter a sí todas las cosas.” (Fil 3:21).

Jesús está vivo y nos busca para salvarnos y unirnos a sí mismo y de esta manera llevarnos a la gloria. Como dijo el Papa Francisco: “(El Cristianismo) no es tanto nuestra búsqueda a Dios, más bien Dios en busca de nosotros. ¡Qué hermoso es pensar que el cristianismo, en esencia, es esto!” “Jesús,” dijo el Papa, “nos ha llevado, nos ha incautado, nos ha conquistado para no dejarnos más.”

Durante esta larga temporada de Pascua, dejemos que la realidad de la Resurrección de Jesús entre a nuestras mentes y corazones.

# Your forgotten child

by Deacon Mike McKeown

A few months ago, I was meeting with a retired widower who was looking for some direction with his planned-giving. He did not have a lot of money or assets but he was a faith-filled man who loved his parish and had a soft spot in his heart for the local Catholic elementary school. In our conversation, he talked to me about his life and family, his conversion to the Catholic Church in his early twenties, and why he saw the parish school as a beacon of hope for passing on the Catholic faith to the next generation.

In our conversation, he told me of some advice his parish priest shared with him many years ago. He told me that, “When it came to planned-giving, I should always view my parish as one of my children.”

This advice had stayed with him over the years but he had never really done anything about it. After reviewing his modest estate, he decided to leave his home, car, and some other assets to his children and make his church and parish school the beneficiary of his retirement accounts and some other investments. He then checked with his investment advisor and was able to ensure a very substantial gift at his passing.

The advice this man had received to view his parish as one of his children (or heirs) is not new, but like all good advice, it’s worth repeating; and it’s also worthy of our reflection. In what ways is my parish like one of my children?

Like any family member, our parish is there for so many of the truly important events in our life – Baptisms, wedding, funerals, First Communion, Confirmations, and others. Without our parish,

these events would cease to be the heartfelt and blessed memories that they are to us.

Like a child, our parish is dependent on us for support. Without our generosity, our churches would not be able to cover the basic necessities needed to survive. Our religious education and sacramental programs would come to a halt, and there would be no support staff to carry out important administrative duties and pastoral ministries.

It is most often the case that the love we give our children will come back to us many times over. That is also true of our parish. We do not always know the greatest blessings of our parish community until we are in need. The prayers, cards, and visits that we receive during hospital stays, the visits by our parish priest and pastoral staff and the sacramental care we receive, are all possible because of the love and care we have given to our parish.

## A child is part of our legacy

Children often grow to reflect the values instilled in them by their parents. The same can be said of our parishes. When we are generous stewards of our time, spiritual gifts, and financial resources, our parishes are in a much better position to reflect our core values even after we are gone.

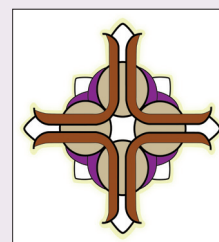
As you do your end-of-life planning, remember to include the often forgotten child – your parish. The diocesan Office of Development is able to assist you and your pastor with questions and resources related to charitable giving.

*Editor’s note: Deacon Mike McKeown is director of Development and Healing Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm.*



**FATIMA, SPAIN, AND LOURDES  
PILGRIMAGE**  
Sept. 11-21, 2017  
*Led by Bishop John M. LeVoir*

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# HE IS RISEN!

LISTEN WEEKLY TO BISHOP JOHN M. LEVOIR’S  
Easter season audio messages.

[www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)





# St. Gertrude in Forest City merges with St. Philip in Litchfield

## Meeker County's first parish among the oldest in the Diocese of New Ulm

by Tom Keaveny

**FOREST CITY** - On Sunday, March 26, parishioners of the Church of St. Gertrude in Forest City gathered for the last Sunday Mass celebrated in their 150-year-old church structure. Bishop John M. LeVoir and pastor, Fr. Joseph Steinbeisser, concelebrated Mass with over 165 parishioners and friends of the parish. The parish was merged with the Church of St. Philip in Litchfield.

Bishop LeVoir thanked the parish for their cooperative and faith-filled spirit as they begin this new chapter of their history as a merged parish.

### 160 years of parish history

This final Sunday liturgy followed some 160 years of history, beginning with a first Mass in Meeker County "sometime in 1857" at the log cabin home of John Whalen.

In 1867, lumber was transported from Gillman's Mill in St. Cloud to construct the parish's first and only church structure. Generous donors contributed \$3,000 for the church to be built under the leadership of the Benedictine pastor, Fr. Augustine Burns, and trustees, M.J. Flynn, John and Daniel Dougherty, and Patrick Casey. The first Mass in the new church structure was celebrated on Christmas Day in 1867.

Formal considerations regarding the merger of St. Gertrude's began in March 2016. Throughout the process, Bishop LeVoir held meetings with pastors, priests, and deacons from the Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community (Darwin, Forest City, Litchfield, and Manannah), as well as some 250 interested parishioners, to discuss pastoral planning issues. Following these meetings, Fr. Steinbeisser facilitated several meetings with

parish leadership groups from each of the parishes in the AFC in the summer and fall of 2016. The decision to merge St. Gertrude's with St. Philip's was finalized in November 2016.

Upon reflection, Fr. Steinbeisser said, "The greatest challenge of merging parishes together and eliminating the Sunday Mass is recognizing the great sense of loss that parishioners feel. Time spent listening and caring for everyone's feelings is so important in moving through the changes that merging parishes experience."

"Having three former pastors (Fr. Patrick Casey, Fr. Frederick Fink, and Fr. Paul Schumacher) each come a Sunday prior to the last Sunday Mass to celebrate Mass with the parishioners was a very healing step in this process," Fr. Steinbeisser said.

Parish records indicate that St. Gertrude's has been in the mix of serious and significant pastoral planning since long before the creation of the Diocese of New Ulm. During its history, St. Gertrude's is referred to as having what was noted as "daughter parishes" – namely, the Church of St. Columban in Green Leaf (1870) and the Church of Our Lady in Manannah (1876).

When Archbishop John Ireland came to St. Gertrude's in October 1876, he confirmed over 300 candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation from some 200 Meeker County families. Soon after Archbishop Ireland's 1876 visit, a large proportion of these families were "assigned" to either of the new parishes being formed in the railroad towns of Darwin (Church of St. John, 1878) and Litchfield (Church of St. Philip, 1882).

With the related growth in these



Retired diocesan priest and former sacramental minister and pastor ((2000–2009), Fr. Patrick Casey, returned to Forest City on Sunday, March 5, to celebrate Mass. Fr. Casey is the great-grandson of one of the trustees when the parish was founded, Patrick Casey. Also pictured are (left) acolytes Bruce Kiehn and Callie Fisher, and cantors (left) Pat Munson, Chuck Schoolmeesters, and Mary Knisley.

(Photo by Brenda Rick)

parishes, St. Gertrude's began a history of being a mission parish, sharing a pastor primarily with St. John's in Darwin, and in some instances with St. Philip's in Litchfield or Our Lady in Manannah, and even one year with the Church of St. Anthony in Watkins.

### Moving forward and keeping the faith and parish life alive.

St. Gertrude's efforts as a newly merged parish in the diocese might be described as exemplary. A majority of the parishioners have registered at the Church of St. Philip, remaining a part of the Shepherd of Souls AFC. Although there will no longer be Sunday Mass celebrated at St. Gertrude's, the Wednesday weekday Mass followed by bible study will continue. Saturday morning coffee talks for working Catholics remain well attended, drawing parishioners from all four of the parishes in the Shepherd of Souls AFC and beyond. Plans are in place for continued participation in annual ecumenical events with the other Forest City churches.

Going forward, it is evident that little has changed with the wholesome spiritual lives of the dedicated parishioners at the Church of St. Gertrude in Forest City. Their experiences and efforts come from a 160-year legacy of keeping the faith alive on the Minnesota prairie.

*Tom Keaveny is director for the Office of Pastoral Planning for the Diocese of New Ulm.*



Bishop John M. LeVoir (left) and pastor, Fr. Joseph Steinbeisser, distribute Holy Communion during the last Sunday Mass celebrated in the 150-year-old place of worship.

(Photo by Christine Clancy)



Former pastor (1985–1988), Fr. Paul Schumacher, celebrated the last First Holy Communion Mass on Sunday, March 12, at St. Gertrude's. This year there were only two communicants, Luci Ficker (left) and McKenna Kielty.

(Photo by Brenda Rick)



## IT'S PARISH FESTIVAL TIME!

Visit [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)  
for a listing of parish festivals  
throughout the diocese.

Or, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Office of  
Communications, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073



## New Age convert to Catholicism shares her story with NUDCCW convention goers

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**SLEEPY EYE** - Approximately 241 people were registered to attend the 58th annual New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention held Saturday, April 29, at the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye. The theme this year was “Proclaim the Word of God.”

The keynote speaker was Cari Donaldson, a wife and homeschooling mother of six residing in Connecticut. Donaldson shared her story of conversion from a two-income quasi-New Age newlywed couple who resolved never to have children or to embrace any form of organized religion, to becoming a large Catholic family.

With intermittent twists of humor, Donaldson told her remarkable tale of being raised Presbyterian in the suburbs of Michigan, to her conversion to Catholicism and the peace she has found as a Catholic.

Although she attended church every Sunday with her family, most apparent about her childhood religious upbringing was how compartmentalized it was. “We didn’t pray together as a family, we didn’t read the Bible together as a family. Church was something that we went to for one hour on a

Sunday, and then we came back and that was it,” Donaldson said.

“I had all of these questions in this vacuum that was growing and growing,” she said. “I had longed for a relationship with God. I knew there was a God. I wanted to know how I could be closer to him, and I couldn’t find any answers in the religious upbringing of my youth.”

### Game changer was the Eucharist

It was when Donaldson started reading the Bible with an eye for instruction, as well as a newfound relationship with Mary, that her love for the Eucharist awakened.

For Donaldson, growing up Presbyterian, communion was a muddled concept for her. It was more of a remembrance ceremony. “We had Wonder bread and we had grape juice, and we passed it along, and you had this to remember Jesus,” she said. “It was more like an analogous of something you loved.”

As Donaldson continued to read and do research on the writings of the early Church, she learned that as far back as the early Christians, Catholics understood that the Eucharist was something more than remembering.

“... Catholics actually believe that it is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus himself under

the guise of that host and that wine – I was floored!” Donaldson exclaimed.

Donaldson reminded the audience of the many profound, lifelong blessings God gives us through not only our faith, but also through our daily small troubles and unexpected joys. “As women of faith, we know that God is a personal God, as close to us as our own breath,” she said.

“He is writing a love story with each of you as the beloved. Every single one of us is in the midst of an epic love story with God,” she continued. “This is a love story written by the master storyteller. The very source of love and beauty and goodness. The story that God is writing for you withstands space and time, and is designed to bring you home to him.”

It was during the Easter Vigil in 2006 that Donaldson and her husband, Ken, received Holy Communion for the first time. As she described it – she came home.

*Editor’s note: To listen to an audio version of Cari Donaldson’s presentation at the New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention on April 29 visit [www.dnu.org/news](http://www.dnu.org/news).*

## Go deep!

### Active participation in the sacred liturgy

by Fr. Aaron Johanneck

In these articles, we have spent the last several months exploring the nature of the sacred liturgy, attempting to answer the question, “What is it?” We have discussed the liturgy as an exercise of the priestly office of Christ, as a participation and foretaste in the heavenly worship of the angels and saints, as the source and summit of our lives, and as the memorial and re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

Hopefully, having a better understanding of what the liturgy is, we can now turn to another important question: what does it mean to participate in the sacred liturgy? Or we could phrase the question, “How do I enter in?”

The question of participation in the liturgy was an important one taken up by the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. In the document, the Fathers of the Council state, “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Peter 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism” (SC 14).

The Fathers go on to say, “In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit” (SC 14).

While the term “active participation” is closely associated with *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and Vatican II, this term did not originate at the Council. It was first used by St. Pius X in a document he published in 1903.

The true, active participation of the faithful in the sacred liturgy is something that the Church has been working to promote for over a century.

What exactly does this “active participation” mean? How do the faithful enter into that beautiful and mysterious reality upon which we have reflected these past months?

We often think of participation in terms of “doing something” at Mass. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* does mention this

when it talks about servers, lectors, commentators, and members of the choir and their “genuine liturgical function” (cf. SC 29). However, this certainly cannot be the only way in which the faithful participate. If it were the case that in order to participate everyone had to be “doing” whatever it is that these roles require, then at any given Mass probably 98% to nearly 100% of those present would not be participating!

In addition to carrying out ministries, the Council Fathers also write about the participation of the faithful by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs. They also mention actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes (SC 30). Certainly, all of these are ways in which everyone present can take part.

However, it would be a mistake to say that the active participation of the faithful at holy Mass only refers to these external elements. These must foster and manifest a deeper way of entering in. In future articles we will explore and attempt to explain what this deeper, interior participation might involve. Until next month!



## Judy Haag named 2017 Woman of the Year!

by Christine Clancy  
*The Prairie Catholic*

**SLEEPY EYE** – Judy Haag, a member of the Church of Our Lady in Manannah, was named the 2017 NUDCCW Woman of the Year. The award was presented by Bishop John M. LeVoi at the 58th annual New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention held April 29 at the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye.

Haag has been an active member of the CCW for over forty years, serving as diocesan Reverence Life chair, a position she continues to hold in her parish and region, as well as past parish vice president and Circle chair. She is a faithful participant in the two annual parish CCW fundraisers and a dedicated member of the funeral guild.

Haag is involved in her parish serving as a lector, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, faith formation teacher, and with youth programs. She has led the Confirmation program for over twenty years.



Judy Haag is photographed with Bishop John M. LeVoi upon receiving the Woman of the Year Award at the annual New Ulm Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention in April. Haag was recognized not only for her service in the NUDCCW, but for her faithful service to her parish. (Photo by Christine Clancy)

Since its inception, Haag has served as co-chair for the local 40 Days for Life campaign at the St. Cloud Planned Parenthood Clinic.

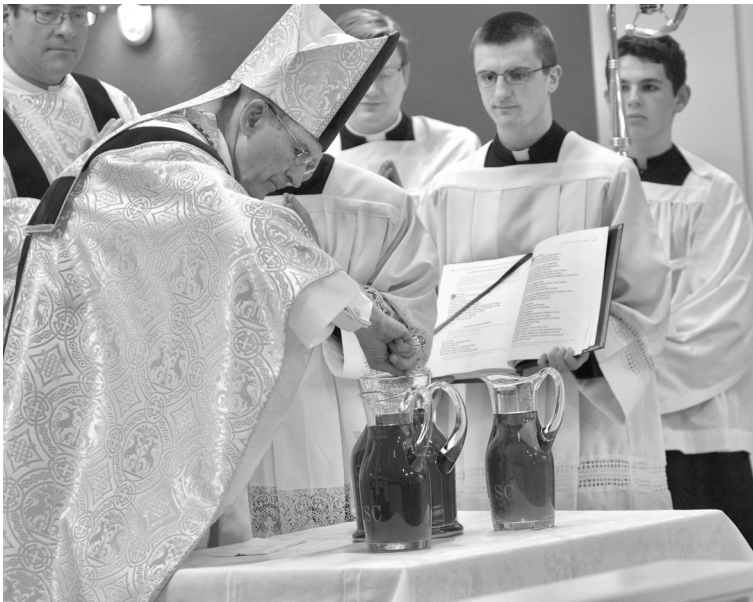
Haag and her husband, Robert, reside in Eden Valley.



*Editor’s note: Fr. Aaron Johanneck is director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of New Ulm.*



## Sacred oils blessed



**MURDOCK** – Bishop John M. LeVair presided at the annual Chrism Mass Thursday, April 6, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Murdock. The solemn and sacred liturgy, which included the blessing and distribution of sacramental oils to be used in parishes throughout the diocese in the coming year, also manifests the unity of the diocese's sixty priests (active and retired) with their bishop in the Renewal of Commitment to Priestly Service, making the celebration serve as a symbol of the universal and collaborative nature of the Roman Catholic Church. A photo slideshow of the event has been posted on the diocesan website, [www.dnu.org/bishop/](http://www.dnu.org/bishop/). (Photo by Fr. Eugene Brown)

## A missionary among us



**FRANKLIN** – Elizabeth Senkyr, daughter of Rob and Cecelia Senkyr (members of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Franklin), is serving with a group of young adult missionaries in Wisconsin through an organization called SPIRITUS. It is a missionary disciple formation program intended to inspire Catholic youth and form lifelong missionary disciples to be leaders for the Church. Senkyr is one of fifteen missionaries, between the ages of 20 and 29, from all over the country who are serving in the nine-month program. Senkyr will spend 500 hours in prayer, 132 hours in formation classes, receive 65 hours of ministry skills training, and participate in 450 hours of direct ministry. Since its inception in 2009, ten alumni members of SPIRITUS have gone on to pursue religious life or priesthood and seventy-five percent of SPIRITUS alumni are currently working in ministry. Pictured is Senkyr (center) during her missionary work with youth. To find out more about SPIRITUS ministry, visit <https://www.spiritusministries.org/>. (Photo courtesy of SPIRITUS ministry)

## RPR assists Church in drawing people to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ

(Continued from page 1)

The Montevideo station is also in need of local business partners who can help underwrite programming and get airtime for their business.

### What type of programming can listeners expect?

Real Presence Radio programming is authentically Catholic talk radio. It includes a mix of catechetical, evangelization, and devotional material. The network covers current hot topics as well as the timeless questions, all from a Catholic perspective.

EWTN is the station's main feed, but they also air four hours of local programming during the week, which includes local breaks each hour, including weather. Encores of local programming air on Saturdays.

### Bonus for parishes, dioceses

Each station has its own computer, geared to the local area,

**RPR**  
NETWORK

Your Family of Faith and Hope

Event notices should be  
emailed to [Brandon@yourcatholicradiostation.com](mailto:Brandon@yourcatholicradiostation.com).

so only local announcements will be aired. Catholic groups can get free 30-second announcements just by asking, but the group has to be somehow connected to a Catholic parish or be approved by the diocese.

"Bishops and priests across our listening area have informed us that our presence has increased the faith and activity of local parishioners," Splonskowski said.

Splonskowski explained that the primary mission of RPR is to

assist the Roman Catholic Church in drawing all people to the knowledge and love of Jesus and his Church through the medium of Catholic radio.

According to Splonskowski, the network's goals are to strengthen marriage, increase sacramental practice, promote vocations, promote the dignity of the human person, and support the goals of the local diocese.

"We get stories every week from people whose lives have been changed and who have been led to a deeper relationship with Christ by listening to RPR," Splonskowski said. "I could write paragraphs about this. We share these stories on air, and we will be sharing local stories regularly."

Those wishing to financially support Real Presence Radio Network can do so through the network's website, [www.yourcatholicradiostation.com](http://www.yourcatholicradiostation.com), or by calling 877-795-0122.

## Upcoming events

**Memorial Day Mass (Monday, May 29)** celebrated by Bishop John M. LeVair at 8:00 a.m. at the New Ulm Catholic Cemetery. If inclement weather, the Mass will be held at the Cathedral of Holy Trinity in New Ulm. Everyone is invited to attend.

**Cor Jesu** will be held on Friday, June 2, from 7:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. Cor Jesu (pronounced "core yay-zoo") is an evening of Eucharistic adoration, contemporary praise music, and fellowship. All ages are welcome. Visit [www.dnu.org/cor-jesu](http://www.dnu.org/cor-jesu) for more information or call (507) 233-5327.

**Diocese of New Ulm Camp Beloved** will be held July 26-30 at Schoenstatt on the Lake in Sleepy Eye. Join young women from throughout the diocese for a week of fellowship, Holy Mass, Eucharistic adoration, and a whole lot of fun. The camp is for girls entering 6-12 grade and costs \$140. Scholarships available. Visit [www.dnu.org/camp-beloved](http://www.dnu.org/camp-beloved) to register, or call (507) 233-5327.

**Diocese of New Ulm Camp Greatness** is a diocesan summer

camp for boys at Schoenstatt on the Lake in Sleepy Eye that will be held from July 27-30 (for those entering grades 6-8) and July 30-August 4 (for those entering grades 9-12). Join young men from throughout the diocese for a week of fraternity, Holy Mass,

sports, and Eucharistic adoration. Cost for the camp is \$104 (for the middle school tract) and \$175 (for the high school tract). Scholarships available. Visit [www.dnu.org/camp-greatness](http://www.dnu.org/camp-greatness) to register, or call (507) 233-5327.

**United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Minnesota In re: Diocese of New Ulm, Case No. 17-30601**

**Claims Notice for Victims of Sexual Abuse and Others With Claims Against the Diocese of New Ulm**



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
**NEW ULM**

If you were sexually abused by any person connected with the Diocese, a Catholic parish or Catholic school within the geographic area of the Diocese, or have any claim against the Diocese, you must file a claim by July 10, 2017.

For more diocesan information: visit [www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)  
For U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Minnesota information: visit [www.mnb.uscourts.gov](http://www.mnb.uscourts.gov)



# THE PRAIRIE CATHOLIC

*Pastoral news from across the Diocese of New Ulm*

Minnesota's Most Rural Diocese    Diocese of New Ulm    Vol. 31    No. 9 May 2017



(Photo by Brenda Rick)

## Generations of faith

**FOREST CITY** – On Sunday, March 26, Bishop John M. LeVoir celebrated the last Sunday Mass with parishioners and friends of the Church of St. Gertrude in Forest City. Pictured with Bishop LeVoir are the oldest and the youngest parishioners who were present. They are (l-r): Millie Turck and Tattie Ficker, and Tyler Randt (back).

(Read more on page 5)

## catholic trends

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The U.S. Catholic bishops have approved a one-time special collection to take place in parishes across the nation on Mother's Day weekend (May 13-14). It will help support the completion of a beautiful mosaic that will adorn the "Crowning Jewel" of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

The Basilica is the largest Roman Catholic church in

the United States and North America and is one of the ten largest churches in the world. Fulfilling its mission, it is a place of worship, pilgrimage, evangelization, and reconciliation.

Designated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as a national sanctuary of prayer and pilgrimage, the Basilica is the nation's preeminent Marian shrine, dedicated to the patroness of the United States – the Blessed Virgin Mary under

her title of the Immaculate Conception.

For more information visit [www.trinitydome.org](http://www.trinitydome.org) or call (202) 526-8300.

**VATICAN CITY, (EWTN News/CNA) – President Donald Trump will meet Pope Francis during a visit to the Vatican later this month.**

"His Holiness Pope Francis will receive the Hon. Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, on Wednesday, May 24, at 8:30 a.m. in the Apostolic Palace," the Vatican announced Thursday, May 4.

"President Trump will then meet with His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States."

The president's trip will also include visits to Israel and Saudi Arabia, according to officials. President Trump will also attend a NATO meeting in Brussels on May 25 and a G7 summit in Sicily on May 26.

The president and the pope have sometimes been put at odds.

During a Feb. 18, 2016, in-flight press conference, Reuters reporter Philip Pullella asked the pope to respond to Donald Trump's immigration stand. Pope Francis answered: "A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian. This is not in the Gospel."

The pontiff added he would "give the benefit of the doubt" to the political candidate.

One week prior, Trump had bashed Pope Francis as a "pawn" for the Mexican government and "a very political person" who does not understand the problems of the United States.

Holy See spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi on Feb. 19 told Vatican Radio that the pope's comment "was never intended to be, in any way, a personal attack or an indication of how to vote" and had repeated a long-standing theme of his papacy, bridge building.

The U.S. bishops have had a mixed response to the early days of the Trump administration, criticizing his refugee and

immigration plan, while praising his pro-life measures.

**VATICAN CITY, (CNA/EWTN News) – During his trip to Portugal for the centenary of the Fatima Marian apparitions this month, Pope Francis will canonize** visionaries Francisco and Jacinta Marto, making them the youngest non-martyrs to ever be declared saints.

The children will be canonized during Pope Francis' May 13 Mass in Fatima. The decision for the date was made during a April 20 consistory of cardinals. Francisco Marto, 11, and Jacinta Marto, 10, are the youngest non-martyrs to be canonized in the history of the Church. The brother and sister, who tended to their families' sheep with their cousin Lucia Santo in the fields of Fatima, Portugal, witnessed the apparitions of Mary, now commonly known as Our Lady of Fatima.

Pope John Paul II beatified Francisco and Jacinta May 13, 2000, on the 83rd anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady at Fatima, teaching us that even young children can become saints.