



The Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena

NEWSLETTER

October, 2017

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The Dreamers

In 1899, poet William Butler Yeats wrote a powerful and plaintive poem that helps to capture an urgent challenge that we are now facing as a nation. "But I, being poor," he wrote, "have only my dreams; I have spread my dreams under your feet. Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

September 5, 2017, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the end of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the signature immigration program of President Barack Obama. DACA allowed undocumented young adults, called Dreamers, to emerge from the shadows, seek temporary employment authorization and a reprieve from the ever-present fear of deportation.

With the stroke of a pen, some 787,580 young adults who came to the United States as the infants and children of undocumented immigrants were plunged into a maelstrom of fear and legal uncertainty. These people are contributors to our economy, veterans of our military, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our churches and communities.

The United States Conference of Bishops had hoped for a different path to address the legal vagaries associated with the DACA program.

In July, the Bishops' Conference urged Congress to continue administering the DACA program while working in an expeditious and bipartisan manner to find a compassionate and permanent legislative solution for DACA youth.

Upon learning that President Trump had rescinded DACA with termination of the program after six months, the usually restrained USCCB called his decision "reprehensible."

At least 20 State Attorneys General filed lawsuits challenging the President's decision.

On the bright side, President Trump is on record as having said, "We will resolve the DACA issue with heart and compassion – but through the lawful Democratic process – while at the same time ensuring that any immigration reform we adopt provides enduring benefits for the American citizens we were elected to serve."

We are also learning of encouraging developments taking place behind closed doors. Early reports

say that the President is open to resolving the DACA crisis without tethering a resolution to the deal-breaking building of a border wall.

If we take our President at face value, then we must shift our attention to members of Congress and ask them to seize the moment.

What can you do?

I strongly urge our people to ask Congress to work with the Administration in creating a permanent and compassionate legislative solution to the DACA crisis.

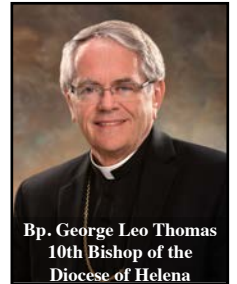
As people of faith, we say to the DACA youth – regardless of your immigration status – you are children of God and welcome in the Catholic Church. We support you, pray for you, and will walk with you as your advocate and friend in your time of need. You are not alone.

Finally, we prayerfully reflect on the challenge issued by Pope Francis during his 2015 address to the U.S. Congress: "Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us."

In a word, I appeal to our Catholic community to open your hearts to the young Dreamer now living in fear.

Congress holds the key to their future.

Please do not tread on their dreams. Until Congress acts, dreams are all they have.



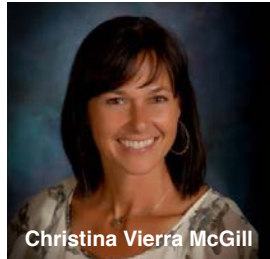
Bp. George Leo Thomas
10th Bishop of the
Diocese of Helena

Vierra-McGill New Principal St. Joseph's School

Dan Bartleson

Christina Vierra-McGill began July 1st as principal at St. Joseph Elementary and Middle School in Missoula. Her 29 years in education include 11 as an administrator, most recently as Principal at Assumption St. Bridget Elementary (K-8) in Seattle, Wash. Prior to that as teacher and then Principal at Madeleine Choir School (K-8) in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Christina, and husband David, already had hopes to move to Montana when she saw the position opening in June. Their ties to Big Sky Country include David's parents hailing from Havre and Chinook and



Christina Vierra McGill

their son, Elliott, playing Football at Carroll College before starting at Alexander Blewett III School of Law at the University of Montana. The opening at St. Joseph prompted David to inquire and find work locally even before Christina was hired as Principal. "We knew we wanted to move to Montana for the past 5 years and when I saw the job opening in the one Catholic School (in Missoula), I went for it," she said. "It wasn't really our time table, but we're definitely excited." Transitioning from Seattle to Missoula for her is a welcome change. "We have some acreage and some animals. We're embracing it. We love the outdoors and the pace is healthier for us, we call it a quality of life move."

Of St. Joseph School, she said, "We are blessed to be part of such a rich legacy, celebrating 144 years and pre-dating Montana's Statehood, it's unique in our country. I'm also just impressed with the dedication and eagerness of the faculty." McGill is looking forward to engaging an energetic faculty this year, including in-house professional development in conjunction with the University of Montana. "We'll continue to build skills to meet the needs of our diverse student body. We have students with varying socio-economic backgrounds, different cultural backgrounds and students with learning exceptionalities."

She explained that having strong programs in Art, Music, P.E. and Technology are unique to a small school, but academic performance doesn't suffer. "St. Joseph students consistently perform above state and national average on the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) test. I do feel the rigor begins at St. Joseph and continues at Sacred Heart. The priorities are right and the performance shows it's working."

As far as challenges, St. Joseph is looking for more students. "Like many Catholic Schools, it's no secret we need to build enrollment," she said, "but I'm optimistic. We've been around and will be proactive with visible and deliberate marketing." She cites the growth in Missoula's overall population as a positive as well as open house gatherings and tuition assistance. "This year, we're doing things differently."

Open House tours will be led by student and parent ambassadors who will highlight features of the school. Student ambassadors are identified by their teachers as confident and willing leaders while parent ambassadors include parents and some school board members who have children enrolled. Tours will take place while classes and activities proceed as usual. McGill hopes it will give people a look at the school in action. Attendees will then gather while she gives a general overview of the school mission, its curriculum and what makes the school unique. McGill hopes to make a strong connection through personalized follow up with each family that attends. Open houses are advertised on social media and yard signs throughout the valley and will take place Oct.

5th, Nov. 9th and Feb. 1st. from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Along with open house gatherings McGill cited the Companion Program that aids in tuition costs for families as a help for enrollment. She said, "Over 50% of families get some form of tuition assistance through the work of the (Loyola Sacred Heart) foundation. It's where our priorities should be. When I attended Catholic School, parishes helped my mom with tuition. It's nice to be part of a system with that same priority. By marketing the Companions Program we'll help squash the myth that it's too expensive."

Her oldest Malorie, a Gonzaga graduate, attends the University of Washington School of Law while youngest, Abbie, is at St. Mary's College of California. A product of, advocate for, and catalyst within Catholic Education, she contends, "Catholic school is the best investment we ever made."

Women Religious Celebrate Jubilarians

Dan Bartleson

Women Religious in the diocese gathered with Bishop Thomas in the Brondel Center at the Cathedral of St. Helena on Sept. 11. After a luncheon and Midday Prayer, the group took time to honor Jubilarians, or Sisters celebrating over 25 years of religious life and service. Celebrating 60 years are Sr. Mary Agnes Hogan, SCL, and Sr. Dorothy Jean (DD) Casey, SCL, while Sr. Gretchen Wagner, CSJ, celebrates 40.

Originally from Anaconda,

Sr. Mary Agnes Hogan, SCL, began teaching elementary school in 1959 in Chicago immediately after college. Work in education took her to Oklahoma and Kansas before she transitioned to Parish Ministry in 1969 and served in Nebraska and Missouri. After earning a certification in Clinical Pastoral Education, Sr. Hogan, then moved closer to home as Staff Chaplain at St. James Healthcare in Butte. After that, she headed up the Pastoral Care Program and Social Concerns ministries at St. Mary Catholic Community in Helena.



Sr. Mary Agnes Hogan, SCL

Following a sabbatical, she returned to St. James in Butte to direct the Spiritual Care Dept. as well as Mission Services until 2011. Prior to retiring in 2015, Sr. Hogan served as the Highland Hospice Chaplain. In retirement Sr. Hogan is active serving the homeless in Butte, saying, "Reaching out to the homeless is a new step for me, but it's place I needed to go."

Of her service, she said, "I am always grateful for the gift of my Baptism and God's call to ministry in the context of religious life. I'm very blessed to have been a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth for 60 years. 35 of those years have been spent doing ministry in the diocese that I love, the Diocese of Helena."

Born and raised in East Helena

and one of 11 children, **Sr. Dorothy Jean Casey, SCL**, entered religious life after high school and attended St. Mary College in Leavenworth, Kans. Like many Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, she began as a teacher, teaching first grade for many years. She earned her Master's in Spirituality from Seattle University, and began working at the parish level in Pastoral Ministry and Religious Education/Formation. She had a special passion for the Right of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). After taking time to care for her parents in their final days, Sr. Casey returned to service as Mission Director for St. Vincent Healthcare in Billings, Holy Rosary Healthcare in Miles City and St. James Healthcare in Butte. With her residence in Billings, Sr.



Sr. Dorothy Jean Casey, SCL

Hogan spent time between the three locations and retired for health reasons in 2008. She lives in Helena with her biological sister, Sr. Donna Lynn Casey, SCL.

Sr. Gretchen Wagner, CSJ, entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1977. "It all began at a pool table," Sr. Wagner joked, "he asked me if I would marry him and I said no, I'm going in the convent." Originally from Green Bay, Wis., Sr. Wagner holds Master's Degrees in Secondary Education Administration from St. Mary's University in Winona, Min. and in Pastoral Studies from the Aquinas Institute in St. Louis, Mo. Like the other Jubilarians, she began as a teacher, teaching Music and Religion. She also worked as a high school, and then grade school principal in Missouri. Sr. Wagner transitioned to assisted living and nursing care with 14 years at Nazareth Living Center.



Sr. Gretchen Wagner, CSJ

Following her time there she began looking for a new assignment and settled on St. Margaret Parish in Cut Bank. Her work as pastoral assistant at St. Margaret continues with responsibility to St. William Parish in Shelby, St. Francis in Valier and St. Thomas Aquinas Mission in Sunburst. Her duties run the gamut from RCIA and Religious Formation to Bible Studies and sharing groups. Sr. Wagner travels an average 26,000 miles each year between locations and enjoys each community. "What I love about them is that each parish is so different, I love the rural areas." She takes opportunities to enjoy fishing and photography when she can, and is enjoying her work, "I just love the diocese, and we have the best Bishop. The people are lucky to have him."

The Sisters also took time to say a grateful farewell to the following Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth who are returning to the Mother House in Kansas: Sr. Marie Michael Mollis, Sr. Joy Duff, Sr. Paula Marie Tweet, Sr. Patricia Canty and Sr. Edna Hunthausen.

Coming to Carroll College

At the invitation of Fr. Stephan C. Rowan, Carroll College Interim President

Fr. Kevin Grove, Asst. Prof of Systematic Theology at Notre Dame

Will present: **"Seeing With the Eyes of Christ"**

Trinity Hall

Thurs. Oct 19th, 7-9 p.m.

Born and raised in Hobson, Mont. Kevin Grove was ordained a Holy Cross priest at Notre Dame in 2010. He served in two Michiana parishes before becoming a post-doctoral researcher at L'Institut Catholique in Paris, France, and then a research fellow at the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study. In addition to his faculty work, Grove serves pastorally as a resident of Dunne Hall at Notre Dame.

Carroll College Vision and Call Fellowship Presents

Q Union Conference

Live Stream Video Presentations by David Brooks, of The New York Times, **Kara Powell, PhD**, of the Fuller Youth Institute, and **Propaganda**, of Humble Beast Records

Live Presentations by Carroll College Vision and Call Fellowship Students with dialogue to follow.

Flex Theatre

Thurs. Oct 26th 7-9 p.m.

Funded by the Murdock Trust, the Theology Dept. advises Vision and Call interns as they serve in our ministries and parishes. The first annual Q Union Conference seeks to "...draw the community together to consider issues of faith and culture from the Catholic standpoint." – Eric Hall, PH.D., Associate Professor of Theology & Philosophy.

New Approach to Cemeteries Service, Structure

Dan Bartleson

In May of 2016, the Diocese of Helena and the Diocese of Great Falls-Billing jointly received a grant from Catholic Extension to implement the Mission Acceleration Program (MAP) for Catholic Cemeteries in both dioceses. The MAP approach engages the expertise of Catholic Funeral and Cemetery Services (CFCS) to strengthen the ministry, management and services provided by our Catholic Cemeteries.

Initially a ministry of the Diocese of Oakland, CFCS approached services by separating ministry for families from the operational duties. A Family Service advisor provides outreach guidance to families, while the Sexton, or manager of operations, coordinates arrangements and cemetery operations. The model's success and sound fiscal approach led to a growing consultation service offered to other dioceses.

Implementing the new model in Montana included hiring a Director of Montana Catholic Cemeteries,

Dan Hash, who oversees the cemeteries in both dioceses. A Montana native, Hash started in June of 2016 after a career spanning 31 years in the military. He sees his work managing cemeteries and training personnel as a ministry to families, "In dealing with loss in my own life, it's important to me that families know we're there to take care of them." One of his early goals was to establish the needed Family Service Advisors. Hash reported, "A full complement" of advisors was established in December of 2016.

In the new model, families will spend time with a Family Service Advisor to express their needs and desires for a loved one's resting place. "A Family Service Advisor's ministry starts with taking the time to listen, they need to be great listeners," said Hash. Advisors also help manage the process, often coordinating with mortuaries, funeral homes and local clergy. They help families understand the options available for their loved one at a cemetery and convey decisions to the Sexton.

The Sexton coordinates the physical aspects of arrangements and ensures that all is in place when a loved one is laid to rest. Sextons also care for and maintain the cemetery grounds, buildings,

memorials and property. According to Hash, the management can be complex, "They do a lot. From repairs on sprinklers to hiring contractors to coordinating florists and ordering memorials. They have a lot of moving pieces depending on the situation."

According to Hash the work of "Sustainable, beneficial and efficient services," includes a number of options depending on the cemetery and its particular offerings. In the Helena Diocese, three new columbaria have been added at Resurrection Cemetery (Helena), Holy Cross (Butte) and St. Mary (Missoula).

While the work of making cemeteries financially self-sustaining is an important goal, Hash's commitment to families is clear, "We want them to know that their (loved one's) resting place is taken care of in preparation for the Resurrection."

If you would like additional information on the pre-planning process, please contact your local cemetery office or Dan Hash, Director of Montana Catholic Cemeteries at (406) 603-0365.

DPC Members, Megan Stout & Mandy Bell

Dan Bartleson

Bishop Thomas convened a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) in April of 2016 to begin developing a new 5-year diocesan pastoral plan. The council is charged with synthesizing input from parishes and helping to develop plan recommendations.

Parishes held initial listening sessions earlier this year, discussing items for inclusion in the plan. Results went to the DPC, were consolidated, and will return to parishes for discussion and final recommendation. Following that, the pastoral plan will be articulated and presented to Bishop Thomas in 2018.

This September, I spoke with DPC members Megan Stout of St. John Vianney Parish in Belgrade and Mandy Bell of St. Joseph Parish in Libby. Stout is a wife and mother and volunteers at Divine Mercy Academy in Bozeman, where her son attends. She has served in both music and youth ministry at her parish. Bell is a wife and mother, business owner and youth ministry consultant. She also co-coordinates the after-school program at Libby Public Schools.

Q: What did you think about being approached by your priest?

Megan Stout: I felt honored and that it would be a neat way to serve. I talked it over with my husband, and he thought I really should because it's

the direction of the diocese for the next five years. I thought it would be especially interesting to hear what people from other areas are experiencing and get their perspective.

Mandy Bell: Representing a small parish, getting time with the bishop and communicating with the diocese struck me as a really good thing. I viewed it as a great opportunity. I'm blessed in that I have the flexibility, with two part-time jobs and a very supportive husband.

Q: What was your experience of the DPC formation period?

MS: The commitment was intensive with four or five meetings over six months. It was really helpful though, and helped create a relationship among us at the beginning. It was good to learn about the prior pastoral plan and about the offices and functions of the diocese and how bankruptcy effected the diocese in comparison to before. Sr. Rita is great too, when she explains things it makes it exciting.

MB: Sr. Rita took great pains to make sure the council had a real picture of what was happening. It was really good getting to meet and have in-depth presentations on what's happening in the diocesan offices and a better understanding of how a diocese works. Bishop's candor regarding the last few years and future hopes was great. I really appreciated it. I thought it was ingenious and really pleasant to have a partner to get to know and introduce. We could really delve into another person's perspective.

Q: What was the first parish listening session like at your home parish?

MS: Our parish had about 12 people including a number of young people. There was a lot of enthusiasm. Seeds were planted for parish life as well as diocesan goals and plans. Our group asked about communicating in new ways with parishioners and Father Gilbaugh said, "Sure we can do that." It was unexpected and a pleasant surprise as part of the process.

MB: In preparation for planning, we had just revitalized our parish council and we had over 50 people and met for almost three hours. We had great table discussions, mostly on parish priorities, ours and other parishes. We prioritized 30 to 40 original ideas that were sent to the parish council.

Q: And the DPC meeting to process parish information, what was that like?

MS: We split up by deanery and identified common threads. We also identified unique perspectives or insights that would apply to similar faith communities. Common themes came up frequently that were shared by rural communities as well as more urban parishes. The diocese has a lot of good and holy desires in common and it was neat to see that throughout our faith communities.

MB: Although I had to miss the meeting, I've been very pleased and thankful that Sr. Rita and Bishop Thomas have put so much into forming this council so they can go back and help our parishes. What I hope is that we can take the final document and make our own goals and objectives as a parish.



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Extending the Table: 125 Years of Invitation and Service

Cody Tredik

On Saturday, September 16, St. Francis Xavier Jesuit Parish celebrated its' 125th anniversary in Missoula at their "Extend the Table" event. Nearly 2,000 people gathered on a closed down Pine Street for Mass with Bishop Thomas, followed by various festivities including live music, food from local vendors, and historical exhibits to browse through.

The sunny evening kicked off with Mass outside in front of the church. Chairs were set up on the street, with the altar resting at the top of the granite steps. Bishop Thomas began his homily with a brief history of the building and community.



View of the Mass at St. Francis Xavier Church from Pine Street

Originally constructed in 1892, St. Francis Xavier parish opened with a mission from the American Bishops to provide pastoral care to the Native American community. At the time of its' completion, reporters noted that it was "the newest, largest, and costliest church in the territory of Montana". 125 years later, the parish remains a place of pastoral care and encounter with Christ.

Bishop made special note of four "invisible pillars" on which the foundation of St. Francis Xavier church was laid: the faith and invitation of the Native American people, the courage and tireless work of the Sisters of Providence, the early band of Jesuits who came to Montana, and a "dedicated and tenacious laity" who gave their all to ensure that future generations could worship in a great house of prayer.

He went on to celebrate the many unique ways in which St. Francis has distinguished itself as a parish that has strived to "embody the vision of the [Second Vatican] Council" through dedication to sacraments, ministry, and service. Finally, Bishop Thomas concluded with a great challenge, to address the "unfinished business that lies before us a parish, a deanery, and a diocese." This included continued work to minister to our Native American brothers and sisters, to reach out to victims of abuse, to utilize the great teaching ability of the Jesuit order to guide a confused generation on issues of morality, and to constantly continue all efforts to extend the table.

Following the celebration of Mass and some final congratulations, attendees made their way down to the numerous food vendors lining both sides of the street. Rows of long tables had been extended straight down the middle of the street, stretching from the edge of the outdoor sacred space to a large stage at the end of the block. While gathered at table, attendees could enjoy music from local groups such as Full Grown Band.

"The greatest strength of the Missoula Catholic Community is precisely that, the community," said



Fellowship, food and live music following Mass

Fr. Joseph Carver, pastor of St. Francis Xavier. "It is important to have an event that celebrates more than just St. Francis Xavier's 125th anniversary, but truly celebrates the greater Catholic community: the schools, the hospitals, the parishes, all of the works from the cemeteries to the spirituality programs, all that reaches out to say that this is who we are, and what brings us together is Christ."

To honor the greater community Fr. Carver spoke of, several rooms of historic displays were available in the old Loyola High School building for guests to walk through. Everything from the church's 125-year history was on display, from early paintings and the clothing of the early missionaries through the evolution of the parish building and construction of the hospitals and Missoula Catholic Schools.

In addition to highlighting its history, the community played an integral role in putting on the event. "We were very blessed to have people from every Missoula parish involved in putting on the event," Fr. Carver



Fr. Carver (L), and Bishop Thomas accept the offering of gifts at Mass

said. "We also had close to 40 Missoula Catholic School students who helped to set up before and tear down afterward, and were happy to have a Carroll College student as one of our Lector's."

After several hours of fellowship, music, and dancing, the celebration came to a close.

Montana Catholic Schools' Teacher Days

October 19th & 20th principals and teachers from all 24 Montana Catholic schools will gather in Butte for professional development. Thanks to a generous grant from the Butte Convention & Visitors Bureau, educators will spend the night in Butte and attend sessions at Butte Central High School. Montana Catholic Schools' Superintendent, Dr. Tim Uhl said, "The Catholic Teacher Days are designed to assist our teachers in building collaborative networks. We are providing high-level content that will help our teachers develop their professional practices."

Thursday's program will include, a catechetical workshop for religion teachers on God's Mercy by the Sophia Institute and a general session with speaker Roy Petitfils on working with adolescents and the anxiety epidemic among teens.

On Friday, attendees will gather for an All-School Mass at St. Patrick Parish, celebrated by Fr. Patrick Beretta and con-celebrated by all Montana priests

"A Very Positive Adventure"

Jeanne Saarinen

Director, Foundation for the Diocese of Helena

That's how one participant described the Little Rock Scripture Study (LRSS) through Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Helena.

Fr. Dan Shea, pastor of the thriving young (1976) parish of over 545 families, envisioned a robust adult formation program. His vision became a reality in 2013 through the LRSS.

Classes run year round and are very popular. Over 50 classes have been offered at OLV. The next studies will focus on The Women of the New Testament, Book of Genesis, and the Infancy



Left to right, Judy Harris, Tim Harris and Kathy Ward at the Bible Study

Narratives of the Gospels. Classes are facilitated by both lay leaders and clergy. "I listen more closely to the readings at Mass" and "It has brought the bible alive" were just a few of the many positive responses to the study.

Fr. Shea and Deacon Steve Barry believe the LRSS helps build a stronger and more vibrant parish community, and the Foundation was pleased to help get the program off and running through our annual grants program.

Two more parishes have since started the LRSS with the help from a Foundation grant - St. Ann (Butte) and St. Richard (Columbia Falls).

To learn more about the Little Rock Scripture Study, visit www.littlerockscripture.org. For information on the Foundation's grants program, visit www.fdo.org.

Correction: The last issue stated that Josephine McDermott taught in Butte. McDermott did not teach in Butte.

connected to Catholic schools. After a breakfast hosted by the Knights of Columbus, breakout sessions will be offered by teachers themselves as well as guest speakers from Notre Dame on the integration of science and religion as well as presentation by the Association of Catholic Indian Schools network. After lunch, teachers will gather in their grade-level groups for collaboration to improve instruction and facilitate networking. "We are designing subject, and grade-level, cohorts so our teachers, who often work in isolation, will have colleagues across the state," said Uhl.

The following educators will be honored for 25 or more years of service in Catholic Schools: Butte Central Catholic Elementary: Peggy Kambich, Barb Peoples, Carmie Dunbar, Carol Tash and Shannon Sullivan. De La Salle Blackfeet School: Br. Dale Mooney FSC, Sr. Pat Johannsen, SCL, and Michael O'Brien. Missoula Catholic Schools: Mary Dougherty, Patrice Schwenk, Kathy Newman, Scott Anderson, Dave Klein, Matt Stergios, Mike Trudnowski, Brad Verworn and Dan Weber. St. Matthew's: Sr. Judy Lund, OP, and Lisa Brann.

Nurturing Vocations Through ACA Support

Dan Bartleson

With the October launch of the 2017-2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, donors have the opportunity to support the services and ministries that benefit our parishes, missions, the people of our diocese and the needy at the Guatemala Mission. Donations are allocated under the following categories:

- Nurturing Vocations
- Enriching Faith Communities
- Building the Culture of Life and Family
- Loving Our Neighbors
- Forming Our Faith
- Assisting Our Parishes and Missions
- Honoring the Past and Serving the Future

Beginning with this issue, the Diocesan Newsletter will highlight the services and ministries associated with ACA allocations.

37 cents of each dollar support **Nurturing Vocations** and provide for the medical care, education, ongoing formation and retirement of our priests. It also includes permanent diaconate formation, seminarian education and vocation awareness promotion.



Msgr. Joseph Harrington, Senior Status

Our priests celebrate the sacraments and many serve in a variety of other capacities in their communities. They

The Diocese of Helena is blessed to have 49 active and 28 senior status priests. Priests, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, participate in the priesthood of Christ and in addition to administration and managing the ministries of our parishes, our

are campus ministers, teachers, chaplains for hospitals or prisons, diocesan administrators or advisors to the diocese or bishop. Many of our senior status priests remain very active in providing Mass, serving as confessors or engaging in ministry to the sick, poor or those in need.

Our priests are also available to people when they have special needs. They provide spiritual leadership in our communities. Along with parishioners, they address issues that touch all members of the community, particularly those who are abandoned and forgotten.

Our diocese has 25 active and 16 senior status Permanent Deacons. Bishop Thomas ordains Permanent Deacons for their ministry of service. Deacons



Deacons with Bishop Thomas at the Deacon's Retreat in February

proclaim the Gospel at Mass, preach homilies, and teach in the name of the Church. They may baptize, witness marriages, and conduct wake and funeral services. Deacons are also leaders who identify the needs of others, then, according to the U.S. Catholic Bishop's website, "marshal the Church's resources to meet those needs." Meeting the needs of others can take many forms for deacons. They often lead various ministries to Catholics as well as participate in or lead community efforts to help the poor or needy or to address issues in a way that reflects their ordination to service.

Deacons may be married men or single and often continue to pursue their careers or expand their ministry as they move toward retirement. In our diocese, deacons often provide critical sacramental and administrative support, especially as many of our priests



Bishop Thomas with seminarians at Beatification of Fr. Stanley Rother

have responsibility for more than one parish.

Currently, our diocese has 7 seminarians; five at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver Col., one at Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary, in Weston, Mass., and one at Mt. Angel Seminary, Mt. Angel, Ore. In addition to their studies, their formation can include service to the poor and marginalized, volunteer work in hospitals and community outreach, as well as ministry to youth and the elderly. Seminarians often spend their summers assigned to parishes in our diocese to serve the community and learn under the tutelage of our priests.

One cent of every dollar donated goes to **Honoring the Past and Serving the Future**. Honoring the Past includes Catholic cemetery perpetual care, and historical preservation of St. Ignatius Mission, St. Mary's Mission in Stevensville and St. Helena Cathedral. Serving the future provides for expenses incurred by the Delegate for Religious. (Information on the new approach to Catholic Cemetery services and management can be found on page 3.)



L-R: Fr. Kirby Longo, Rosie Stimatz-Richards, Kristina Larson, Fr. Tom Haffey, Bishop Thomas, Denise Kagie, Den. Bernie McCarthy, Jo Ann Lewis, Den. John Uggetti

St. Ann Parish Marks 100th Year

Dan Bartleson

On July 13th St. Ann Parish in Butte celebrated 100 years as a parish community. Over 400 people gathered for Mass with Bishop Thomas and the banquet that followed on the grounds and in the parish peace garden.

Bishop John Patrick Carroll dedicated St. Ann in 1917 and invited the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) to start a parish school. With copper mining at its peak, and the Butte population at 93,000, the school opened with three sisters and 143 elementary students. By 1961, attendance reached 656. In his homily, Bishop Thomas remarked, "The BVM sisters formed children by their goodness, infused them with knowledge, and inspired them by their faithfulness and care."

1917 also brought WWI conscription and loss of life in the war. Frenzied demand for copper brought mining accidents, labor disputes and riots. Spanish Influenza

epidemic also left families grieving further losses and working to find a way forward. These trials helped forge a resilient community that Bishop Thomas described as tough and tenacious, but also, "deeply reliant on the Providence of God." He added, "Like Butte America, St. Ann is the classic comeback kid."

In 1950, the second St. Ann Church and School was built by a volunteer labor force under the guidance of Msgr. John O'Conner. Now serving as the gathering hall, the larger church space was badly needed and the school grew from four classrooms to six with a new music room, library and Quonset-style gymnasium.

Today's Church is the vision of Fr. J. Bruce Plummer who, Bishop Thomas noted, had a, "familial connection to ordinary people," and "affection for the ordinary blessings of Montana life." Fr. Plummer's love for Montana and its people is visible in the unique stained-glass that depicts agriculture, construction and homemaking as well as the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the Butte mining industry.

Bishop Thomas acknowledged Fr. Haffey's 20 years as pastor calling him, "One of the finest priests I have ever known." He also recognized Sr. Mary Jo McDonald's business acumen and "deep sense of social justice," during her 34 years at St. Ann. The celebration paid special tribute to the many vocations to priesthood and religious life fostered there, including Fr. Joseph Finnegan, Fr. Ray Fleming, Fr. Ed Hislop, Msgr. Kevin O'Neill, Bishop George Leo Thomas, Sr. Marian Berry, SCL, Sr. Janet Rolando, BVM, Sr. Joan Nuckols, BVM, Sr. Mary Lex Smith, SCL, Sr. Sharon Smith, SCL, Sr. Susan Yerkich, SCL, Br. Patrick McCormack, CFC and Brother Francis Popish, CFC.

Fr. Haffey, with Deacons Bernie McCarthy and John



Centennial banquet following Mass at St. Ann Parish

Uggetti, convened a planning committee a year prior to the celebration. Fr. Haffey said, "We started with getting a date that would fit for Bishop and began plans for decorations, food and the liturgy. Our planners met six or seven times. Our deacons really made it all work." Special arrangements included new banners, flower stands and preparing the peace garden. "They really ran with the décor, especially Colleen O'Leary, Betsy Palmer and Joanie Cassidy, and everyone worked to make it come together."

While no longer operating a school, The long tradition of ministry, service and outreach continues with a full parish staff and abundant volunteers. St. Ann has programs for Religious Education, Youth Ministry and R.C.I.A. Weekly, St. Ann hosts 17 support group meetings, multiple prayer groups, a Little Rock Bible Study group and devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. St. Ann also hosts conferences and retreats with Immaculee Ilibagiza, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide and presenting a healing retreat October 6th.



“From Conflict to Communion”

Lutheran - Catholic

**COMMON COMMEMORATION
OF THE REFORMATION**

ECUMENICAL VESPERS

SAINT HELENA CATHEDRAL, HELENA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 7:00 p.m.

The Catholic and Lutheran Communities of Montana gather with our Bishops to embrace a very special moment between Lutherans and Catholics throughout the world. Occasioned by the joint document of the two churches, “*From Conflict to Communion*,” we gather in prayer, memory, thanksgiving and confession. With our common faith in Christ, we look ahead to common witness and a continued journey forward for the sake of our shared mission to the world.

From Conflict to Communion marks the first time that Lutherans and Catholics tell together the history of the Reformation. They express regret over the pain that they inflicted on each other, but also give thanks to the theological insights that both parties contributed and the fruits of the reformation that they have both received. At the same time, the document emphasizes the common responsibility to bear witness to the Christian faith and work for justice, peace and the environment and fight poverty.

Ecumenical Vespers Presiders:

Bishop Jessica Crist

Bishop of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Mark Ramseth

Retired Bishop of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Michael Warfel

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

Bishop George Leo Thomas

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Helena



**The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Helena**

NEWSLETTER

October, 2017

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Father, you call each one of us by name and ask us to follow you.

Bless your church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our families and friends who will serve your people as Sisters, Priests, Brothers, Deacons, and Lay Ministers.

Inspire us as we grow to know you, and open our hearts to hear your call.

*We ask this in Jesus name
Amen.*

Please Continue to Pray for Our Seminarians



From Left: Matthew Christiaens, Tyler Frohlich, Nathan Scheidecker, Bishop Thomas, Shannon Augare, Kyle Tannehill, Codi Krueger, Fr. Marc Lenneman.