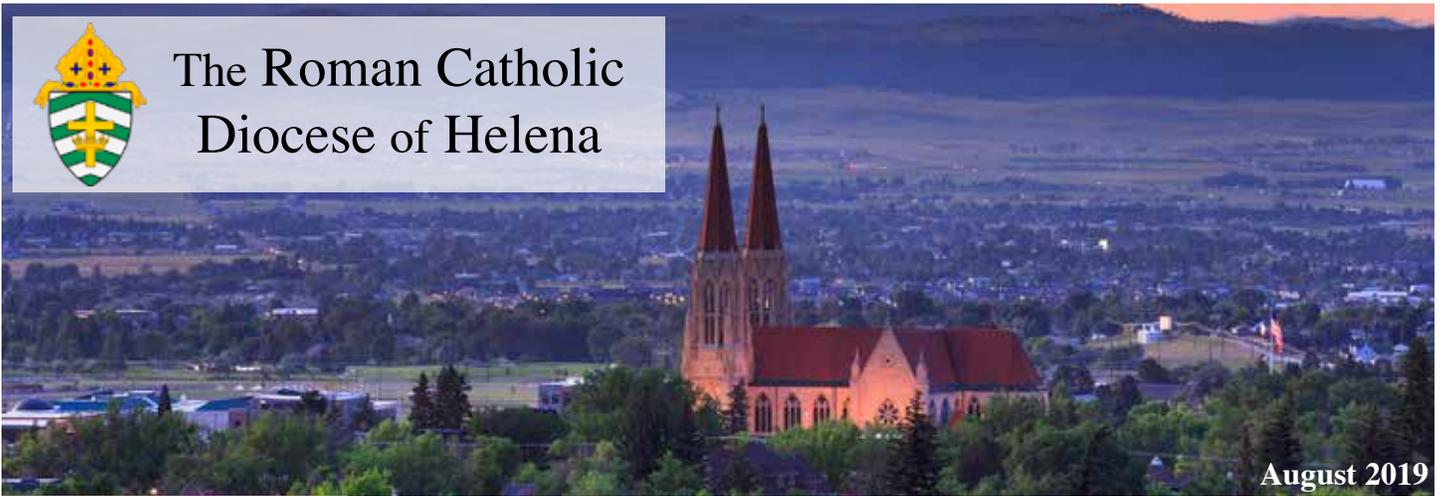




The Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena



August 2019

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As much as I truly enjoy the season of Christmas and the celebration of our Lord's Incarnation, it always strikes me as out of season and place when I see ads heralding "Christmas in July". Perhaps I am just being selfish in relishing warm days that have no threat of snow or ice. However, the advertisement does make me ponder one aspect of the Christmas Season that is mentioned in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Chapter 2, verses 13-15, commonly known as the "Flight into Egypt".

So much had just taken place in the lives of the Holy Family. They have traveled to Bethlehem to fulfill the demands of the census and, in doing so, had to settle for less than ideal lodging. They are visited soon after the birth of the Savior by three astronomers from the East who bring gifts that are emblematic of the purpose of His coming to be like us in all things but sin: the gold of his purifying and merciful love; the incense of prayers rising before God in praise and supplication; and the ointment of death, for Christ's victory over its power as the Lamb of God.

As these three visitors receive a message in a dream not to return to Herod but instead follow another route, so too does Saint

Joseph receive a message from an angel of the Lord to leave Bethlehem for the relative safety of a foreign land so as to escape religious persecution with its ultimate consequence of death for the newborn child.

When one reflects upon these events apart from the festival nature of the holiday season, they stand out plainly and without adornment as a timeless message to each generation and every pilgrim of Faith that our dwelling place on earth is but a tent, and that we journey with the expectation of dwelling in the unity of the Holy Spirit at the Table of God's Children in Heaven.

In Christ there is no east or west, no south or north but one great fellowship, one lasting communion of humanity throughout the world. If we immerse ourselves prayerfully in this Truth of Faith, then it helps us to see our place in time in the perspective of our journey into eternity, and it challenges us to see one another through eyes of faith as sisters and brothers in Christ, first and foremost and always.

It is impossible to imagine what went through the hearts and minds of the astronomers or of the Holy Family when these messages were given to them, but we do

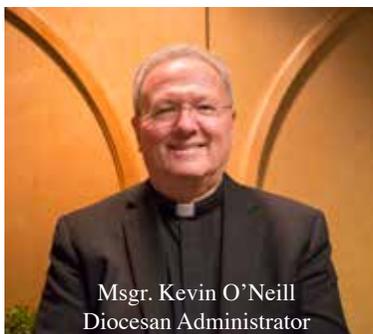
know that they were obedient unto God and did as they were asked. This faith-filled and trusting response is very humbling and challenging to my own earthly cares, concerns and priorities. It challenges us all to consider the struggles and hopes of others on their journey of Life and Faith. Whether the journey is within the state of one's own mind as one of self-perception, the hardships of one's household and family or in traveling many miles in a sojourn to a foreign land; in the suffering that is endured, all hope and pray for the understanding, resolution and freedom from persecution that is found in the promise of grace and blessing of God's help and protection.

That being said, perhaps Christmas in July is entirely appropriate if it engenders a realization of and appreciation for the true beauty of Christ within and among each of us as children of God whose eyes of Faith behold themselves and others as pilgrims on the path of righteousness and mercy. With trusting obedience to the will of the Father, we may more deeply desire that the promise of salvation in Christ is fulfilled for all and that no soul is lost on our journey into eternity or even the passage of this day.

Blessings Always,



Msgr. Kevin O'Neill
Diocesan Administrator



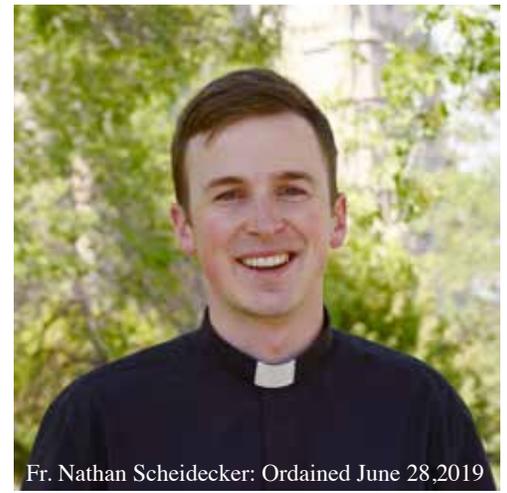
Fr. Nathan Scheidecker

Dan Bartleson
Director, Communication Services

In his first assignment as a priest, Fr. Nathan Scheidecker serves as the Parochial Vicar at the Cathedral of St. Helena. He began on July 1st as Fr. Christopher Lebsock took his new position at SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish in East Helena. Since his ordination on June 28th, Scheidecker is settling in to parish life and busily learning the ropes of priestly service. Though new to his assignment and the priesthood, "Father Ned" has spent his life, and grown in his faith, calling the Diocese of Helena his home.

He was raised in Butte and graduated from Butte Central Catholic High School. Active in both parish and diocesan youth and young adult ministry, he went on to graduate from Carroll College and studied for the priesthood at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, Col. Fr. Ned was ordained a transitional deacon by Bishop Thomas in 2018, Thomas' last ordination in the diocese prior to taking charge of the Diocese of Las Vegas. With no bishop in the diocese, Bishop Michael Warfel, Bishop of the Great Falls-Billings Diocese ordained Fr. Ned for Helena. He started his ministry by celebrating Mass the next morning.

Fr. Ned is bright, observant and a genuine "people person," well-suited to



the task of getting to know the faithful in one of our largest parishes. He celebrates roughly half of the weekend and weekday Masses and hears confessions every Saturday. Along with learning the ins-and-outs of the parish office, he has anointed the sick, celebrated a funeral Mass, and given spiritual counsel to the seeking.

As the school year approaches, Fr. Ned will be active at St. Andrew's Catholic School, have a role in parish youth ministry and looks forward to reconnecting at Carroll College. For now, he is learning to take joy in serving and to let go of his worry about whether or not he is doing things well enough; "I feel the Lord saying that He will be with me and make a way for me. If I give my best to His people, I know He's telling me that it's going to be really good."



Women's Retreat at Legendary Lodge

Living a Grace-filled Life ~ Gratitude brought 44 women (above photo) from 4 states, including 15 Diocese of Helena parishes, together at Legendary Lodge for inspiration from Sr. Noreen Walter, SCL. Thanks to our Pastors and Parishes for promoting the retreat.

Annual Catholic Appeal: Origin and Purpose

Dan Bartleson
Director, Communication Services

Born of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), *Gaudium et spes* (Joy and Hope), or the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* begins by stating: “The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.”

This postconciliar text, along with the Council’s emphasis on empowering the laity in Christian service, gave rise to many ministries that extend beyond even the richest expressions of Catholic parish life. These ministries and services educate, evangelize, serve and advocate for the poor while engaging the culture by articulating the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

After attending the Second Vatican Council, Archbishop Raymond Hunt-hausen (Bishop of Helena 1962-1975) brought the call to broader engagement back from Rome and the faithful of the diocese donated to the first annual Diocesan Development Fund. Among other

ministries, the fund helped establish the current mission in Guatemala.

As the impact of ministries continued to grow, the support through an annual appeal expanded as well. By 1973, the annual effort was called the Diocesan Offertory Program and included support for the mission in Guatemala, Carroll College, Cursillo/Journey, religious education efforts, Catholic Charities, Catholic campus ministry, Legendary Lodge, and the Montana Catholic Conference.

Initially, there were no specific funding goals – only a statement of pastoral priorities with attached funding needs. Over time, the approach evolved to track fundraising around parish-specific goals, based on each parish’s income, to fund diocesan ministries and services.

In 2009, Bishop George Leo Thomas (Bishop of Helena 2004-2018) renamed the effort the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA). To avoid substantial fluctuations, Thomas based parish goals on a parish’s three-year income average. Rebates to parishes that donated over their goal – based on participation rates – were first offered in 2016. The first two years saw \$63,275 returned to parishes to be used for local initiatives, charities or investments.

The bishop, in broad consultation, sets the pastoral priorities of his diocese and determines the amount of support allocated to related services and ministries. In our diocese, funding allocations are at www.diocesehelena.org and currently include funding for 31 ministries, programs and services, as well as the cost of administering the annual effort.

Glenda Seipp, Director of Stewardship Services for the Diocese of Helena spearheads ACA efforts. She reports that donors to the ACA include 35% of registered households contributing an average gift of \$350. Both household participation and average gift amount are on the high end among comparable dioceses in the U.S. and she described donor loyalty as “unsurpassed” with over 99% of pledge donors fulfilling their pledge. Glenda expects to see growth in the number of participating households as “people continue to form relationships with their pastor, bishop and ministries that are close to their hearts.”

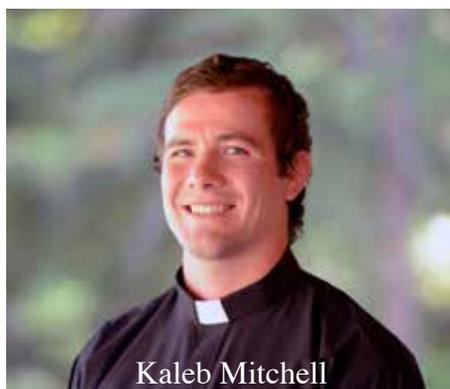
The 2019 Annual Catholic Appeal, *The Calling to Fullness of Life in Christ*, will start in October and include the 57 parishes and 38 missions that constitute our diocese. Funding of \$2M is needed to meet the needs of our people in Montana and at our mission in Guatemala.

Kaleb Mitchell to Enter Seminary This Month

Dan Bartleson
Director, Communications

This August marks the start of Kaleb Mitchell’s formation for priesthood in the Diocese of Helena. He will begin at St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver with what is called a spirituality year. His time will be taken up by prayer, discernment and service before starting formal priestly studies.

Kaleb grew up in Kalispell where he attended Risen Christ Parish. He was active in youth ministry and served on the Diocesan Catholic Youth Coalition Board as a teen. After graduating from Glacier High, he started college at Colorado School of Mines, but soon transferred to Benedic-



Kaleb Mitchell

tine College in Atchison, Kans., where he graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 2018.

After a powerful experience of grace and healing in the confessional, his faith in Christ started to take on a deeper meaning. His classmates at Benedictine also played a big role. Kaleb said, “My wrestling team and friends in class were the

same people I went to bible study and Mass with. Most of my friendships were rooted in Christ, first and foremost.”

In summer during college he served as a counselor at Legendary Lodge. The experience helped him better consider priesthood. He said, “Being with priests and seminarians, praying, sharing meals, playing games and talking around the fire helped me see it wasn’t something that was so removed from normal life.”

Kaleb shared his feelings about this new chapter in his life: “I believe the Lord wants me to be at seminary next year and there’s a lot of peace in that. I have some nerves and anxiety too, but I want to be holy and grow in relationship with Christ. It’s nice to take a step forward.” Kaleb asks that we pray for his vocation and for his family back home in Kalispell.

J.O.P. 2019, Celebrating Solidarity and Dignity

Dan Bartleson
Director, Communications

On July 9th, 27 teens and chaperones arrived in Browning, Mont. for the 10th annual Justice Outreach Project (J.O.P.). Kevin Molm is the manager of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Helena and coordinates the project. Developed to explore the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching, J.O.P. provides youth with formative experiences that emphasize solidarity and the dignity of the human person. "Our purpose is to strengthen relationship between the Blackfeet people and the Diocese of Helena. The experience helps us better appreciate our faith as we get to see the syncretism of Black-

the youth engage in conversations with local Blackfeet over a shared meal of hamburgers and hot dogs. "When we take time to sit with,

or serve someone who looks, lives and sometimes believes differently than we do," says Molm, "we go away having grown, and it can break down barriers of race and ethnicity."

Each day began with Mass and concluded with a teaching, discussion, or cultural experience lead by youth

ministers, Little Flower Parish members, or Blackfeet elders. During the day, community service was the catalyst to help young people truly engage their faith. The work of reclaiming gravesites in Browning and Heart Butte, according to Molm, was profound for the group, "It's ironic how we end up having such profound conversations about life and the dignity of the human person when we're pulling weeds in the middle of a cemetery."

Highlights of the week included a conversation with Chief Earl Old Person who invited the group to his teepee. He shared his background, 90 years of life experience and the wisdom



Group after learning about Blackfeet family names and history

of his strong faith. Another powerful experience was the celebration of Mass with Fr. Joe Paddock at Running Eagle Falls in Glacier National Park. The youth reflected on the connection between God's great love and our faith's deep respect for creation in the midst of this beautiful setting.

Reclaiming a grave; St. Ann's Cemetery in Heart Butte



feet tradition and Catholicism," said Molm.

The community feed, a free meal offered to any who want to join, stands out as a vivid moment of solidarity as



Mass at Running Eagle Falls in Glacier Natl. Park

Several young adult alumni returned this year to take part. They helped chaperone, served alongside teens and reconnected with friends in the Blackfeet community. Regardless of their age, Molm is confident that the group had much to reflect on and, "Will return home with a new perspective, inspired to live out their faith more vigorously and compassionately."



Youth learn the cultural tradition of teepee construction



The J.O.P. Group stopped for a photo in front of Running Eagle Falls



A Jr. High small group (discussion group)

and their families as well as the world around them. While learning about their faith, they took part in canoeing, hiking, archery, indoor games, campfires, swimming and much more. Many of the activities fostered teamwork and group achievement with a focus on the Christian community.



Fun at the High School Celebration Dance

Igniting Faith at Legendary Lodge

Communications Staff

At over 50 years strong, Catholic camping is alive and well at Legendary Lodge. This year, 588 young people attended camps for either 5th-6th grade, junior high or high school age groups, including a high school leadership camp. Four of the six camps had over 100 campers and the other two saw numbers in the mid-70s. These figures are encouraging because so many of our youth spent a week attending daily Mass, discussing their faith and encountering Christ amid a joyful camp experience.

Surrounding campers with strong Catholic role models is a significant focus. This summer's counselor team had four returning members and an incoming group of faith-filled young adults hailing from Carroll College, Montana State University, the University of Montana and the University of Mary. Each day at camp is organized to the minute, packing in as much activity and content that a short week can provide. "We have great counselors and a management team that handles every detail," said Dan Bartleson, Director of Legendary. "Our Caretaker, Ron (Burnett), has fixed every problem imaginable for 11 years now. George Lund cares for a lot of different dietary needs and prepares great meals. Cody and Anna Tredik manage all the camps and operations, and the counselor team extremely well.

Fr. Marc (Lenneman) provides a lot of leadership for all of us, advising on the practical and the spiritual, and anchoring everything in an amazing way."



Youth guide counselor, Shea Bills, during an activity



Seminarians, Tyler Frohlich and Kaleb Mitchell serve as extraordinary ministers during Mass

At the end of the season staff say that they will go home feeling a lot like campers at the end of a week: tired, grateful and with much to reflect upon having encountered Christ at Legendary Lodge.

With "Ignite" as the theme, camps explored the ways we can both strengthen and share our Catholic faith. Counselor-led presentations and discussions helped and encouraged campers to recognize God moving in their hearts



Jr. High youth getting set to race



High-flying fun on the water trampoline



The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Helena

NEWSLETTER

August 2019

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.*

Men in priestly formation for the Diocese of Helena



Dillon Armstrong



Matthew Christiaens



Tyler Frohlich



Kaleb Mitchell



Kyle Tannehill