



The Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Helena

# NEWSLETTER

## -SPECIAL EDITION-

The Diocese of Helena Joyfully Welcomes  
Bishop Austin Anthony Vetter!

December 2019

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## Vetter's Fiat Places Him as 11th Bishop of the Diocese

Dan Bartleson  
Director, Communications Services

"This is indeed a joyous day for the local church here in the Diocese of Helena!" exclaimed Archbishop Alexander Sample in his homily during the Mass of ordination and installation of Bishop-Elect Austin Anthony Vetter. The greater Church was present as well with two cardinals, four archbishops, and over 15 bishops filling the sanctuary of the crowded Cathedral of St. Helena on Nov. 20th.

Before Sample's homily, the Apostolic Nuncio (papal ambassador) to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre exhorted the bishop-elect to, "Go with haste into the mountains." The same words, from St. Luke's Gospel, were spoken to Bishop Jean-Baptiste Brondel as he was commissioned as the first Bishop of Helena in 1884. The Nuncio then read Pope Francis' letter appointing Vetter as shepherd of the Church in Western Montana.

Archbishop Sample, as Metropolitan of the Ecclesial Province of Portland, ordained and installed Bishop-Elect Vetter with Bishop Kagan, Bishop



Bishop-Elect Vetter makes the oath of fidelity before Archbishop Sample (seated), Bishop Kagan (left of Abp. Sample), Bishop Checchio (right of Abp. Sample), and all gathered.

of Bismarck, N.D., and Bishop Checchio, Bishop of Metuchen, N.J., co-ordinating. Abp. Sample, asserted the significance of the rarely-witnessed Rite of Ordination of a Bishop by quoting Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church; "The Order of Bishops succeeds the College of Apostles in teaching authority and pastoral rule; indeed, in the order of bishops, the apostolic body continues to endure... The Episcopal College, gathered under the one head, the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, expresses the unity, diversity, and universality of the flock of Christ."

After Bishop-Elect Vetter made the oath of fidelity, each bishop, archbishop and cardinal prayerfully laid their

hands upon his head signifying their unity and conferring upon him the office of bishop in the line of Apostolic Succession. He received the ring, crozier, and miter of his office and then took the cathedra (the bishop's seat) as Bishop of the Diocese of Helena to sustained applause.

At the close of Mass, Bishop Vetter addressed those gathered proclaiming, "Jesus Christ is risen from the dead!" He thanked Almighty God, Pope Francis, his brother bishops and Msgr. Kevin O'Neil, Rector of the Cathedral, who has served as Diocesan Administrator for the past 19 months.

*Continued Inside:*

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He thanked his parents, Loretta and the late August Vetter, for fostering his faith. He thanked his 11 siblings, 46 nieces and nephews, and 51 great-nieces and nephews, saying, "I count it a blessing to be in a big family."



Abp. Sample lays hands on Bishop Vetter.

He pledged to walk in faith with the young people of the diocese and to the priests and deacons of the diocese, he said, "I look forward to helping to build upon the good and inspiring ministry already taking place here. Let us be strong witnesses of our hope in Jesus Christ." Speaking to the faithful, he said, "As the new shepherd of this beautiful diocese, I look forward to getting to know you better in the coming days as we strive to deepen our friendship with the living God through prayer and service to his Church." In closing

and keeping with his chosen episcopal motto, Bishop Vetter asked for the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, before exclaiming, "Fiat, Fiat, Fiat."

## Road to Episcopal Ordination

Bishop Vetter was born the youngest of 12 children in Linton, North Dakota, on Sept. 13th, 1967. He attended North Dakota State University and Cardinal Muench Seminary in Fargo, North Dakota. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy, he studied at the Pontifical North American College and the University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Italy. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Bismarck by Bishop John F. Kinney at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck, North Dakota, on Jun. 29th, 1993.



August and Loretta Vetter and Family. Bishop Vetter is pictured in the back row, first on the left (age 13).

His first assignment as a priest was as Parochial Vicar at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. He was a religion instructor at St. Mary's Central High School in Bismarck from 1994 to 1999. He then served as pastor of St. Martin's in Center, North Dakota; St. Patrick's in Dickinson, North Dakota; and St. Leo the Great in Minot, North Dakota.

From 2004 to 2007, he was an adjunct faculty member for the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, where he taught The Spirituality of the

Diocesan Priest.

Father Vetter has held various roles in the Diocese of Bismarck, including serving on the Presbyteral Council, Priest Personnel Board, Vicar for the Permanent Diaconate, Master of Ceremonies to the Bishop, and Director of Continuing Education of the Clergy.



Fr. Vetter baptizing his niece.

He served as Director of Spiritual Formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, Italy, from July 2012 through June 2018. He most recently served as Rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit and as a Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of Light of Christ Catholic Schools in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Just two months before his ordination and installation, then-



Seminarist Austin Vetter introducing his parents to Pope John Paul II in Rome in 1992.

Father Vetter dismissed calls from a Washington D.C. number as a telemarketer seeking money. When Bishop Kagan of Bismarck reached out, and kindly encouraged him to respond, he finally connected with the Apostolic Nuncio,

Archbishop Christophe Pierre. Abp. Pierre explained that he was calling to ask for much more than money before extending Pope Francis' request that Fr. Vetter become bishop of Helena. After a moment of silence, he replied, "In faith, yes."

Upon the Oct. 8th announcement of his appointment, Bishop Vetter held a press conference in Helena before returning to Bismarck to prepare for service to Christ and the Church as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Helena.

Watch the full video of the Mass of Ordination and Installation at [www.diocesehelena.org](http://www.diocesehelena.org).



Bishop Vetter bestows his first episcopal blessing upon the congregation.

## Description of the Coat of Arms of The Most Reverend Austin A. Vetter



In accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's heraldic tradition, the Coat of Arms of a Bishop is normally composed of:

- a shield with its charges (symbols) representing family, geographic, religious and historical meanings and/or referring to the name of the Bishop;
- a golden processional cross, with one traversal bar, to represent the rank of the Bishop, "impaled" (vertically) behind the shield;
- a green hat (galero) with 12 (six on each side) attached tassels, graded 1; 2; 3; from top to bottom;
- a banderole (banner) with the motto, printed generally in black, located beneath the shield.

Here was chosen a gothic shaped shield, frequently used in Roman Catholic Church heraldry and a processional bottony cross with five red stones to represent the Five Wounds of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### Motto

**"FIAT"**  
(Lk 1:38)

For his episcopal motto, Bishop Vetter has chosen just this one word, taken directly from the Angelus Prayer found in the Gospel of St. Luke, when Mary says her "Yes," thus beginning the mystery of the Incarnation. By this choice, Bishop Vetter wants to express that in his entire priestly life, and especially now, he is called to assume the fullness of the priesthood with the episcopate. He places his pastoral service in total trust and obedience to the will of God, as did the Blessed Mother.

### Blazonry (heraldic description) of the Coat of Arms of Bishop Vetter

*"Arms impaled. Dexter: chevronny of eight Argent and Vert, a latin cross enfiling an open crown Or. Sinister: Azure, a chevronwise gemel between a garb Or in dexter chief, a crescent Argent in sinister chief and a wavy barrulet of the last in base"*

### Interpretation

In the right side of the shield (in heraldry, right and left are exchanged from the observer point of view since it is customary to consider the right and the left side from the perspective of the soldier who, in ancient times, held his own shield), we find represented the **Coat of Arms of the Diocese of Helena**: a field of alternating **silver** (*Argent*) and **green** (*Vert*) **chevrons**, a figure best described as an inverted "V", to heraldically portray the mountain peaks in the diocese.

On this field we find the **crown** of Saint Helen Empress, titular patroness of the See's Cathedral-Church, conjoined to the **Cross** which her son, the young Emperor Constantine, saw in the sky above the sun, with the inscription that said 'Conquer by This' attached to it, before the battle against his enemies.

In the left side of the shield upon a **blue** (*Azure*) field is Bishop Vetter's personal coat of arms which blends images representing his origins: the **crescent moon** for the Blessed Mother, the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States, the Diocese of Bismarck, and the Pontifical North American College (Bishop Vetter's alma mater where he also later served on faculty); the **sheaves of wheat** which combines the concept of the Eucharistic symbol and the principle product of the farm where Bishop Vetter grew up; a **"wavy barrulet,"** the water representing "the

spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14) and the Missouri River which begins in Montana and flows through Bismarck, North Dakota; and a **"gemel in chevronwise,"** one of them recalling the rafter holding the roof of the church which is set upon the foundation of the apostles with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone (having the meaning of protection) and the second representing the Rocky Mountains of Montana.

The color **blue** (*Azure*) symbolizes the separation from the worldly values and the ascent of the soul toward God, therefore the run of the Celestial Virtues which raise themselves from the things of the earth toward the sky. It also represents the Blessed Mother and the "Big Sky" of Montana. The **silver** (*Argent*) of the crescent symbolizes the transparency and the purity of the Virgin Mary. The **garb**, sheaves of wheat, is in **gold** (*Or*), the first among the noble metals, then the symbol of the first of the Virtues, the Faith which enables us to believe in the Eucharistic Host, fruit of wheat, real body of Christ.

*Renato Poletti, the Italian artist who helped develop the Coat of Arms, is the President of the Board of Trustees of the Pontifical Foundation for the Artistic and Cultural activities of the Holy See with Cardinal Ravasi. In return for his work, Mr. Poletti asks only for our prayers as payment for his contribution to Bishop Vetter's episcopacy.*

## Apostolic Letter of Appointment

# FRANCISCUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

dilecto filio **Augustino Vetter** e clero dioecesis Bismarckiensis ibique hactenus ecclesiae cathedralis curioni, Episcopo Helenensi nominato, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Exemplar caritatis accipere et secum habere fideles ab eo cuius ipse habitus magna disciplina est, mansuetudo vero eius potentia (Cfr. Ignatius Antiochenus, Ad Trallianos, III, 2), comperti, dominici gregis custodiae invigilare satagamus, ut spirituali incremento ipsi perfruantur animarumque salus per amplius promoveatur. In quo innisi apostolici laboris proposito, animum nostrum ad ecclesiam communiter Helenensem paternam mentem convertimus, quae, post translationem potissimi sacrorum Antistitis sui Venerabilis Fratris Georgii Leonis Thomae ad Sedem Campensem vacans, novum expectat Pastorem vitaeque dioecesanae moderatorem. De te ergo, dilecte fili, cogitavimus, qui, cumulatis meritis in officio tuis nunc usque exercitis, firma fide ac virtutibus et praeditus videris dotibus, quae aptum te efficiunt, ut episcopalia munia studiose expleas. Proinde, audito consilio Congregationis pro Episcopis, Apostolicae Nostrae auctoritatis plenitudine Episcopum **Helenensem** te constituimus, debitis datis iuribus congruisque impositis obligationibus. Ordinationem episcopalem ubi vis extra Urbem, servatis liturgicis normis, a catholico Episcopo suscipere poteris, praemissis fidei professione et iureiurando fidelitatis erga Nos Successoresque Nostros, secundum sacros canones. Hoc de Nostris decreto edoceras volumus clerum et populum huius ecclesialis communitatis, quam toto corde adhortamur, ut te habeat magistrum, custodem, patrem. Deum rogamus, dilecte fili, qui praestet te, haec officia susipientem, esse prudentem, modestum ac gregi quasi domui tuae bene praepositum (Cfr. 1 Tim 3, 2-4) ut, tua ductus moderatione et exemplo, solo Christi alimento utentur, quod est caritas. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die octavo mensis Octobris, anno Domini bis millesimo undevicesimo, Pontificatus Nostri septimo.

Franciscus

Franciscus PP. Pont. Apost.

(Translation)

### FRANCIS BISHOP SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

To Our beloved Son, Austin Vetter, from the clergy of the Diocese of Bismarck and, until now, Rector-Pastor there of the Cathedral Church, appointed Bishop of Helena, greetings and Apostolic blessing.

Well aware that the faithful receive from and keep the Bishop as a model of love, because his behavior is a great lesson, while his gentleness is a true power (Confer: Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Trallianos, 111, 2), We earnestly endeavor to watch over the Lord's Flock, so that its members may enjoy spiritual growth and the salvation of souls may be promoted more widely. Bolstered by this plan for apostolic ministry, We turn Our attention with fatherly affection to the ecclesial community of Helena, which, owing to the transfer of its former Ordinary, Our Venerable Brother George Leo Thomas, to the See of Las Vegas, is currently vacant and awaits a new Shepherd and director of diocesan life. Accordingly, We thought of you, beloved Son, who, up to now, have achieved so much in the fulfillment of your various responsibilities, and are endowed with a strong faith as well as the requisite virtues, which, in Our judgment, render you suitable for

carrying out zealously the episcopal responsibilities.

Therefore, upon consultation with the Congregation for Bishops, by the fullness of Our Apostolic authority, We appoint you Bishop of Helena, conferring upon you all the due rights and imposing the relative obligations, which are connected with this mandate.

You may receive Episcopal Ordination from a Catholic Bishop anywhere outside the city of Rome, the liturgical norms being observed. However, prior to this, you must make the Profession of Faith and take the Oath of Fidelity toward Us and Our Successors, in compliance with the sacred canons. In addition, it is Our wish that you bring this Our Decree to the attention of the clergy and the people of this ecclesial community, whom We cordially exhort to regard you as their teacher, guardian and father.

Finally, beloved Son, We prayerfully beseech Almighty God, to accompany you, as you undertake these responsibilities, that you be self-controlled, gentle, managing well the flock as your own household (Confer I Timothy 3, 2-4), so that, led by your guidance and example, they may enjoy the one and only nourishment of Christ, which is love.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the eighth day of the month of October, in the year of the Lord two thousand nineteen, the seventh of Our Pontificate.

FRANCIS PP.



## A Letter from Bishop George Leo Thomas

*Bishop of Las Vegas, Tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Helena*

My Friends in Christ,

Nearly eighteen months ago, I departed the Diocese of Helena praying for the graces to face new challenges in a new land, but also praying for you. I knew you faced a potentially long season without a bishop. I trusted our Lord, knowing that in the fullness of time He would bless you with a holy shepherd. He has done that and more.

It filled me with indescribable joy to return to Helena in November and see Bishop Austin Anthony Vetter ordained and installed as your new bishop. Watching him take his place in the cathedra for the first time, I knew a chair that had sat empty for so long was now filled by a man after the Lord's own heart.

As a native of neighboring North Dakota and the son of a large family with deep roots in the land, Bishop Vetter is well suited for the Diocese of Helena. He will surely find his home among you. I know you will show Bishop Vetter the same warmth and hospitality that you always showed me. It will not be long before he feels right at home.

Bishop Vetter, my brother in the episcopacy: I pray the people of western Montana become as dear to you as they are to me. As you travel past the vast mountains, sprawling plains, urban settings, working farms and ranches, rural hamlets, and beloved Native American communities of the diocese, you will find that the Lord has blessed the people with a rich faith and deep sense of missionary discipleship.

The many treasures you will soon encounter include:

- Generations of Catholics, young and old, whose love for the Lord inspires them to serve the Church and community with selflessness and compassion;
- Carroll College, founded by the visionary Bishop John Patrick Carroll, and stands as a college community marked by academic rigor and deep dedication to Catholic mission and identity;
- Legendary Lodge, long prized by generations of youth as a memory maker and a Spirit filled camp which has helped to transform young souls into strong and dedicated Catholics;
- Guatemala Mission, founded by the late Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen, providing pastoral care, scarce medical services and education to our cherished Guatemalan sisters and brothers;

- Large numbers of youth, young adults, and exceptional lay leaders throughout the Diocese who have been formed by the Diocese and await your call to serve in whatever ways you envision;
- A cadre of caring and competent clergy, religious and laity, all dedicated to the vision of shared responsibility and missionary discipleship;
- A highly qualified Chancery staff who stand in the ready to extend your apostolic ministry to the people of your Diocese; and
- An iconic Cathedral which is a community treasure and symbol of the strength and vitality of the Diocese of Helena.

Looking back over my 14 years of service to the people of the Diocese of Helena, my heart is filled with warm memories and gratitude. Together we sojourned through both abundant harvest and tribulation. Now you will lead them and walk with them on the road ahead, together in faith, hope, and charity.

Bishop Vetter, I extend my assurances of prayers and friendship as you begin your new adventure in beautiful Montana.

May God bless, and Mary guide you all!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

**+George Leo Thomas**  
*Bishop of Las Vegas*





## A Letter from Bishop David D. Kagan

*Bishop of Bismarck*

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write to you at this time of great and joyful gratitude to Almighty God for the gift of your new Chief Shepherd, Bishop Austin Vetter. I know that over these many months of waiting you have been praying not

only for a new Bishop but for a Bishop with a holy and courageous faith. Dear friends, God has answered your prayers!

In the coming weeks, months and years you will come to know and love Bishop Vetter as we do in the Diocese of Bismarck. He has been a good and holy and zealous pastor of souls for more than 26 years. You will find him to be very willing to visit with you, listen to you and minister to you in any way he can. You will also find him to be an excellent teacher of our Catholic faith and one who certainly practices what he teaches.

As you get to know Bishop Vetter, the wonderfully mysterious and merciful will of God Who sent him to you and entrusted your souls to him will be evident. When Jesus chose His Apostles and then their successors, He did not choose

angels but good yet imperfect men who through His grace act in His Person for you so that you come to know and love and serve the Lord better each day on your way to heaven. If you do this with open and sincere hearts, you will help Bishop Vetter get to heaven with you.

Bishop Vetter is a man of many talents, but every bishop knows he must have the prayers of all his people to be the Apostle the Lord has chosen him to be for you. More than anything else, pray for your good Bishop and know that he is doing the very same for each of you every day.

I know I speak for every Catholic in the Diocese of Bismarck when I say that Bishop Vetter will be missed, but the Lord Jesus through His Vicar, Our Holy Father Francis, has blessed us and you by calling Bishop Vetter to the Apostolic ministry. Let us all praise and thank the Lord for His love and let us be resolved to pray for each other every day.

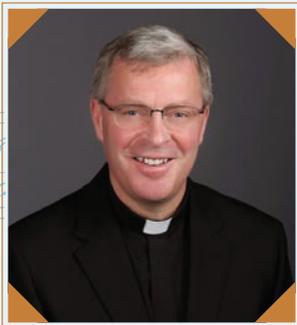
Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend David D. Kagan  
Bishop of Bismarck

### Congratulations

## MOST REVEREND AUSTIN A. VETTER

on your Episcopal Ordination & Installation  
as Bishop of the Diocese of Helena



With prayers and blessings from  
Archbishop Alexander K. Sample,  
Bishop Peter L. Smith and the faithful  
of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon.



# Congratulations

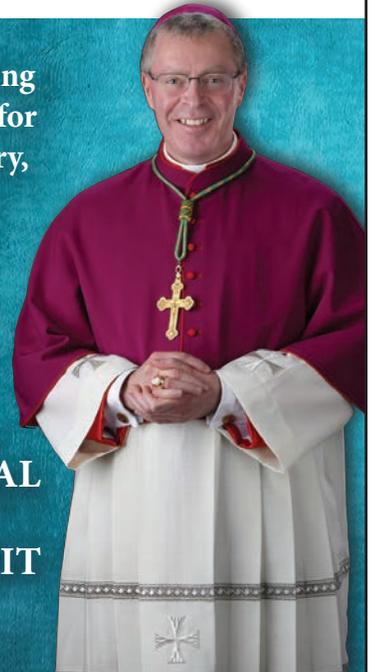
## BISHOP AUSTIN A. VETTER

With joyful thanksgiving  
and abundant prayers for  
your episcopal ministry,  
congratulations on  
your ordination  
and installation  
as the eleventh  
Bishop of Helena!



### CATHEDRAL of the HOLY SPIRIT

Bismarck, ND  
[www.cathedralparish.com](http://www.cathedralparish.com)



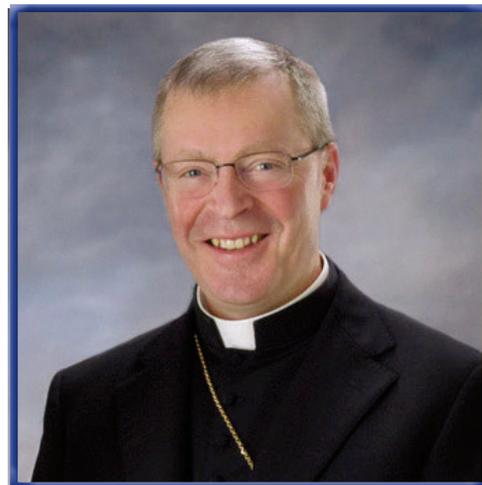


# *Congratulations*

## Bishop Austin Vetter

You will be greatly missed in our diocese but know we are joyful for you and the Diocese of Helena.

From Bishop David Kagan, priests, deacons and lay faithful of the Diocese of Bismarck.



Diocese  
of Bismarck

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## To Serve Those Most in Need

Theresa Ortega  
Director, Good Samaritan Ministries

“Mary” was homeless, cold and struggling when she came to the Good Samaritan Ministries Thrift Store (GSM) in distress. After living in the mountains for several months, she needed to be closer to town for help.

Good Sam’s Assistance Ministry helped initially by paying for two weeks at a camping spot in a safe location. In the meantime, staff began building a relationship of trust with her to work on applications for housing opportunities. To make matters more complicated, she was living with mental health challenges.

Her challenges prohibited her from holding a job and carrying out many ordinary tasks. After the funds ran out for the two weeks of camping, she stayed at a homeless shelter, which took a bit of convincing because of her fears and mental health challenges.

Although simple problems for you or me, Mary’s challenges were devastating for her to meet, and the consequences were dire if she did not get help. Also, finding housing – affordable housing – added a different element to connecting her with resources, job services and follow-along support.

It was difficult at times to explain to her that even though we were filling out housing applications, the system is prolonged, and she may or may not receive housing. Again, it was devastating to hear this news, but she valiantly worked with staff to complete all the necessary application steps.

Bam! Another setback, Mary was unable to stay at the shelter and needed to be out the next day. Where to go? What to do? It’s cold out, and on the streets again! It’s hard enough to figure out, without the added challenges, but Mary did come back to Good Samaritan to seek our help.

Dropping everything to prevent another night out in the cold and ensure Mary’s safety, GSM staff followed up on her previous housing applications. GSM received a Permanent Supportive Housing Voucher (PSHV) on Mary’s behalf. The voucher is specially designed for individuals who are chronically homeless and struggling with mental health challenges. This program helps pay rent and provides support, ensuring an individual’s dignity and respect.

Together, Mary and the GSM staff attended an orientation at Helena Housing Authority to understand precisely how the program worked and how to fill out all the required documentation. At last! Mary will have a home for Christmas.

Are most of us even able to imagine what it would be like to be homeless in the winter and during the Christmas Season?

So many “Marys” can’t meet their immediate needs for shelter, transportation, childcare, prescriptions, utilities, and much more. At Christmas, as we consider the Holy Family in desperate need for shelter and unable to find help, many Catholic ministries stand ready to partner with you and make a difference.

In the Greater Helena community, Good Samaritan Ministries is focused on our mission to serve those most in need. Please consider donating to one of the ministries below this Christmas Season.

[Online:](http://www.goodsamhelena.org/give-online.html) <http://www.goodsamhelena.org/give-online.html>  
*Good Samaritan Assistance Ministry assists families or Individuals in crisis when the unexpected happens. Good Samaritan understands unexpected obstacles come up in life, and sometimes all someone needs is a little boost to get through a hard time.*

[Hunthausen Fund A Loan/Grant Program](#) provides financial assistance to families in the Greater Helena Area, who are transitioning from a homeless or temporary housing situation into permanent housing. The program intends to provide funds for the first month’s rent plus security deposit.

[Hunthausen Endowment](#) provides a perpetual source of support to help house the working poor in Montana and help to move men, women, and children from shelters and transitional housing into more stable and permanent housing in the Greater Helena Area.

[Donald Murphy Endowment](#) provides a perpetual source of support for the benefit of the Good Samaritan’s Assistance Ministry to serve the poor and needy in Helena.





## Catholic Women's Conference Slated for April

By Connie Beckman

The Montana Catholic Women's Conference invites you to this year's "Spa Day for the Soul," Saturday, April 18th, 2020, at the Civic Center in Helena Montana. Mark your calendars and come for a day of refreshment and renewal.

As women, we are busy loving our families and giving the gift of ourselves where needed in our communities. Is God, our Father, calling you to come for a day and sit at the feet of Jesus to be filled with His love and peace? "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28)

This year's conference will feature four exceptional women speakers who will share insights on the dignity and vocation of women. During lunch, we will hear a testimony of faith encouraging women, young and young-at-heart, to embrace their mission as disciples of Christ, living out their vocation to love.

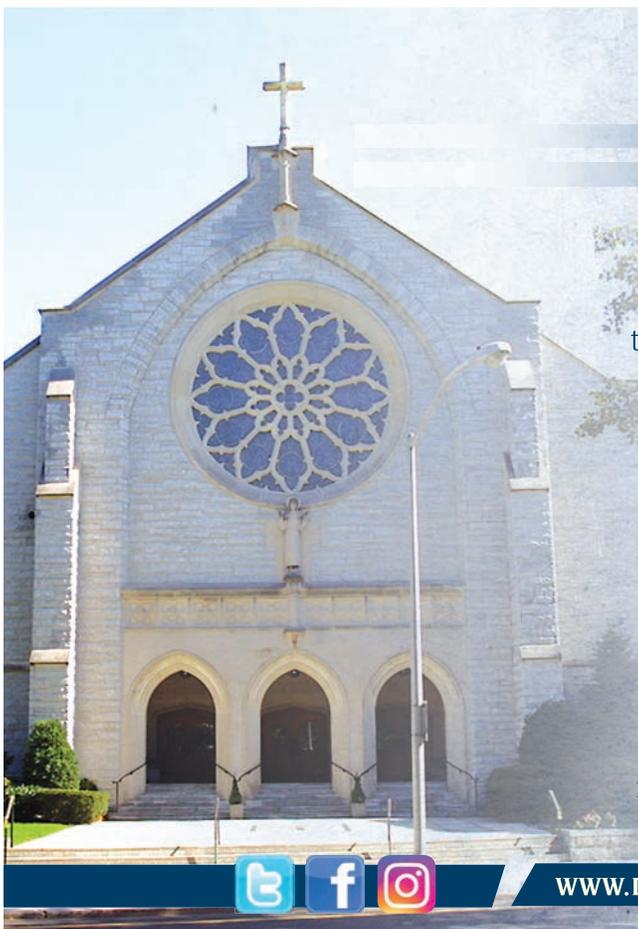
The conference will begin with the Rosary and celebration of the Holy Mass, offered for families on Friday evening at the Cathedral of St. Helena. All men, women, and children are invited!

Saturday, the women's conference will include the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Adoration, Confession and end with Mass at 5 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Helena. It will be a special time of fellowship with many women from throughout Montana and beyond.

At the moment of the Annunciation, the Blessed Virgin Mary was commissioned to bring Jesus into the world. As women, we are also called to bring the hope of Jesus into our families and our world. This conference will strengthen you to live out your vocation as a woman because You are Unique and Unrepeatable! You will be inspired to use your feminine gifts to transform the family and society.

"Thank you, every woman, for the simple fact of being a woman. Through the insight which is so much a part of your womanhood, you enrich the world's understanding and help to make human relations more honest and authentic." -- Saint John Paul II, Letter to Women 1995.

All you who thirst, come to the water of a "Spa Day for the Soul" to be equipped and renewed. Register early at: [www.showmyevent.com](http://www.showmyevent.com). For more information, visit: [www.helenacwc.com](http://www.helenacwc.com).



The Most Reverend James F. Checchio,  
together with the clergy, religious and lay faithful of the

*Diocese of Metuchen*

congratulates

**The Most Reverend Austin A. Vetter**  
on his ordination and installation as  
the eleventh Bishop of Helena

May our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless you  
as you begin your episcopal ministry and  
may He bless all those entrusted to your pastoral care.

[WWW.DIOMETUCHEN.ORG](http://WWW.DIOMETUCHEN.ORG) • [WWW.CATHOLICSPIRIT.COM](http://WWW.CATHOLICSPIRIT.COM)

Carroll College rejoices in the appointment of

## **Bishop Austin A. Vetter**

as the 11<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Helena and the Chancellor of the College.

**Carroll College**

[www.carroll.edu](http://www.carroll.edu)

[admission@carroll.edu](mailto:admission@carroll.edu)



### **Our 21st Century Identity Crisis**

Mathew Brower  
Director, the Montana Catholic Conference

During a recent presentation, I asked participants to take a moment to ask themselves, "Who am I?" The question is as ancient as the human race and one with which people have wrestled from time immemorial. Recall the Delphic maxim "Know thyself" inscribed on the Temple of Apollo. In a sense, "Who am I?" is the most fundamental question but one not easily answered.

Simply asking oneself the question can be unsettling. Maybe that's because deep down we know that our answer unavoidably impacts how we live. Our answer reflects back to us what we believe about our end, our responsibilities and ultimately the meaning of life.

Who am I? Where do I come from? What is my destiny? These questions are preceded by the essential metaphysical question "What is real?" and lead us to conclusions regarding ethics (What should I do?) and epistemology (How do I know anything?).

These questions are the big ones and while perhaps we aren't regularly asking ourselves these in a deliberate way, I think everyone at some level makes these inquiries. We have an innate hunger for truth and can't help but seek

answers. These are questions from which we cannot hide. They shadow us every step of our way and demand our thoughtful gaze.

But are we finding answers? If so, where? How do those answers impact our daily living?

The world's great religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. propose answers, sometimes bearing similarities amongst each other. But these aren't just questions of religious faith and the fact that many truths are accessible by reason provides opportunity and hope for dialogue not only among religious believers but between all persons. One doesn't need to be religious to believe that all humans have intrinsic worth or that love is the highest value in human life.

Perhaps our ever-widening divides on social and moral issues can be traced not so much to differences in religious precepts but, more fundamentally, to different views regarding the human person.

Before we talk about what we ought to do, we must discuss who we are. It's difficult, if not impossible, to agree on ethics without some agreement on metaphysics and anthropology, and while there is certainly room for dialogue and agreement between Christianity and those of other faiths or no faith at all, Christianity does have important things to say about our origin, nature and destiny.

*Continued On Page 6*

**Continued From Page 5**

C.S. Lewis once wrote, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.”

Lewis’ statement reflects a profound Christian belief—that each person is a masterpiece, a uniquely gifted and irreplaceable union of body and spiritual soul destined to exist forever. We believe reality, including human persons, encompasses both the material and the spiritual. We aren’t idealists, gnostic dualists or materialists.

Certainly, many deny that humans have a spiritual soul. The challenge for them is to explain how a purely material creature is capable of abstraction and self-reflection. And what we believe about such things matters deeply. Moral responsibility only makes sense if we can rise above the effects of chemical processes and nerve impulses.

Christians trace our origin to God in whose image and likeness we have been created. This origin communicates something about our nature, destiny and purpose. Saint John Paul II said that being made in God’s image and likeness means we “are called to exist ‘for’ others, to become a gift.” At a time when it’s very easy to weaponize faith, it’s good to be reminded that it is in living our life as a gift for others that we encounter and reveal to the world the true meaning of human dignity.

We live in an age when many do not truly know who they are. We can’t help but find ourselves asking questions like, “Am I defined by what I achieve or possess? Am I a ‘someone’ or a ‘something’? Am I loved or even lovable? To whom do I belong?” The litany of questions laying bare our deep identity crises seems infinite.

But whether one is religious or not, a fulfilling life is realized in meaningful self-sacrifice for the sake of others. One doesn’t need to be Christian or religious to accept that as true. However, for those of us who have chosen to follow Jesus Christ, we believe that it is in him that we find the full revelation of what it means to be a human person.

It is Jesus who shows each of us who we must become and in him we find our true identity. He answers the fundamental questions and calls us to fullness of life in him. He invites all to come and find rest as he reveals us to ourselves.

For more information about the Montana Catholic Conference, please feel free to contact me at (406) 442-5761 or [director@montanacc.org](mailto:director@montanacc.org).



**Welcome  
Bishop Austin A. Vetter  
as the 11<sup>th</sup> Bishop of  
the Diocese of Helena  
and to  
Big Sky Country**

Blessings, Bishop Michael Warfel and  
all from the Eastern side of the State.



**Diocese of Great Falls-Billings**



**Bishop Thomas A. Daly**  
and the Catholic Faithful of the  
Diocese of Spokane offer  
congratulations to  
**Bishop Austin A. Vetter**  
on the occasion of his  
ordination and installation as  
the 11th Bishop of  
the Diocese of Helena.

We offer prayers and  
congratulations as he begins  
his episcopal ministry.

We especially entrust  
Bishop Vetter to  
the intercession of  
Our Lady of Lourdes  
and St. Helena.

## Junior High Youth Inspired to Be Courageous in Faith

Kelly Armstrong, Carroll College Student Intern



Young people from across the State of Montana gathered at Great Falls Central High School for the annual Junior High Rally. Hosted jointly by the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings and the Diocese of Helena, over 200 young people and their chaperones were inspired by speakers and activities focused around the theme “Be Courageous for You are Worthy.”

“I like all of the speakers, they are very inspiring in showing how God gets us through hard times,” said Lily Jones, from Holy Spirit Parish in Great Falls. “I think I’ll pray more before school and at lunch. God is really supportive and helpful

throughout life, and he will always have your back, no matter what.”

The keynote for the day, Doug Tooke, challenged young people to pursue lives of holiness. A national speaker and a resident of the Diocese of Helena, Tooke spoke about embracing faith at a young age. “God can work with you no matter what spiritual state you are in,” said Lyla Ackerman from Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Helena.

Tooke also spoke about the great example that saints are for courageous acts, including St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Patrick, St. Joan of Arc, and several others. He connected that to everyone’s ability to be a saint.

“Everyone can be a saint, but some people try to do it alone, and you can’t do it alone,” said Michael Hecock from Christ the King in Missoula. “You always need help.”

Several high school youth on the Catholic Youth Coalition Board gave testimonies of faith. Sam Fulbright, a Senior from Lewistown, and Lily Tooke, a Sophomore from Helena, spoke of everyone’s ability to be courageous in their life.

“Sam reminded me that it’s easy to be courageous in small things,” said Isaac Ramirez, from the Cathedral of St. Helena.

After being entertained by, and trying to stump, Frs. Kirby Longo and Joe Paddock with a “Priest Q & A” session, the day concluded with the celebration of Mass, followed by Eucharistic Adoration.



On behalf of the people of the Archdiocese of Seattle, we extend our greetings and prayer-filled good wishes to

*The Most Reverend  
Austin A. Vetter*

on his ordination and installation as

*Bishop of Helena*

May your service to the people of the Diocese of Helena be a great blessing and bring you immeasurable joy!

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul D. Etienne".

The Most Reverend  
Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL  
Archbishop of Seattle

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eusebio Elizondo".

The Most Reverend  
Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S., DD, JCL  
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel H. Mueggenborg".

The Most Reverend  
Daniel H. Mueggenborg, DD, STL  
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle

# CONGRATULATIONS

Bishop-Elect  
**Austin A. Vetter**

On your ordination and installation  
as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese  
of Helena



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congratulations to our  
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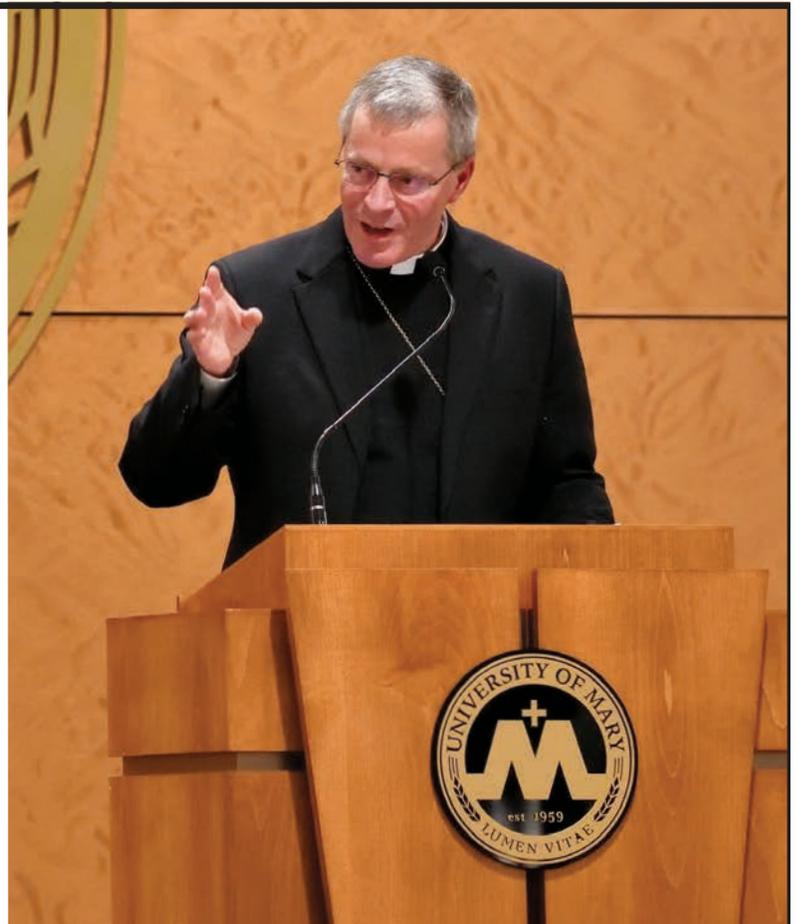
*The Most Reverend*  
**Austin Vetter**

upon his appointment  
as Bishop of Helena

*We wish you great joy and  
God's blessings in this new calling.*

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university at [ComeToMary.com](http://ComeToMary.com).*





## Two Families Finalize Adoptions Through Catholic Social Services of Montana

Cody Tredik  
Staff, Communications Services

On Tuesday, November 26, two families finalized adoptions during a celebration of adoption at the Montana State Capitol building. Russ and Carolyn Gates welcomed Alexander into their family (*pictured left*) while Toby and Lynnsey Tade welcomed Micah, joining his sibling Lander (*pictured right*).

Also in attendance at the celebration was Montana Governor Steve Bullock, District Court Judge Mike Menahan, Mayor Wilmot Collins, and representatives from various offices of the Montana Government, Catholic Social Services of

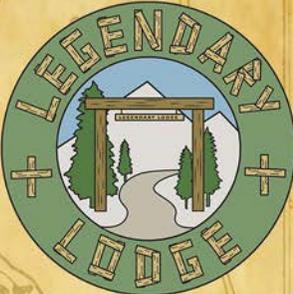


Montana, and the Department of Public Health and Human Services. The St. Andrew's Catholic School choir was also present, and performed several arrangements, including the singing of the National Anthem.

Catholic Social Services of Montana (CSSM) is a licensed adoption agency based in Helena. They work with expectant parents in numerous capacities as well as couples praying to expand their families. They also provide counseling, intermediary services, and programs designed to heal the wounds caused by abortion. It is their goal to advocate for and respect life by serving the needs of babies, children, individuals, and couples by building and strengthening families in Montana.

For more information, visit [www.cssmt.org](http://www.cssmt.org).

**“Serving the young disciples of Our Lord, Jesus Christ”**



**For over 50 years Catholic Camping in the Diocese of Helena has provided a place for young people to encounter Christ. Make plans now to send a child to camp, and don't forget; registration opens January 1st.**

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

The ministry of Catholic Camping is made possible in part by generous donors to:



## †Legendary Lodge 2020 Camp Season†

CAMPS	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
LEADERSHIP CAMP	21 - 26		
JUNIOR HIGH CAMP #1		5 - 10	
JUNIOR HIGH CAMP #2		12 - 17	
HIGH SCHOOL CAMP		19 - 24	
5th/6th GRADE BOYS CAMP		26 - 31	
5th/6th GRADE GIRLS CAMP			2 - 7

## Resurrection Parish Installs Solar Panels

Will Wright, Resurrection University Parish Parishioner



Photo by J. Michael Connell

During the first week of November 2019, Resurrection University Catholic Parish in Bozeman installed a 50 kW solar array on top of its church roof. The project was initiated by Resurrection's Creation Care Team, a faith-based environmental justice ministry, in response to Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home. The Creation Care Team pursued the project both for long-term utility savings through renewable energy and as a means of living out our Catholic faith as better environmental stewards. For those parishes interested in walking together toward climate justice with solar projects, please email Creation Care leader Will Wright at [wilmmwright1@gmail.com](mailto:wilmmwright1@gmail.com) or visit the Catholic Energies website at [www.catholicenergies.org](http://www.catholicenergies.org).

## BISHOP AUSTIN VETTER

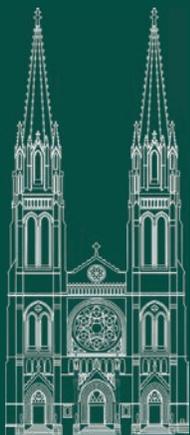
The faithful from the great state of Idaho offer our congratulations on this wonderful occasion of your installation. And we share in the joy of the people you will serve in the Diocese of Helena and the great state of Montana. How blessed they are to have you as their shepherd. With our promise of prayers, I remain your Brother in Christ,



Bishop Peter F. Christensen  
Diocese of Boise



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*Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila,  
Bishop Jorge Rodriguez  
and all the faithful of Northern Colorado  
congratulate Bishop Austin A. Vetter,  
on his appointment as the 11th  
Bishop of the Diocese of  
Helena.*

*Our prayers  
and well-wishes  
are with you.*

## NCYC's 20,000 Youth Include Diocese of Helena

Kelly Armstrong, Carroll College Student Intern

A delegation of over 80 high school youth and their chaperones from parishes across the Diocese of Helena recently participated in the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis on Nov. 21-24. With over 20,000 people, NCYC is the single largest gathering of Catholic young people in the U.S.

NCYC started with a special welcome this year: a video of Pope Francis greeting and praying for all of those in attendance. Unable to attend in person, the Holy Father sent his ambassador, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Christophe Pierre, to speak in person to NCYC.

Throughout the three days, attendees enjoyed talks and performances from the best of Catholic speakers like Sr. Miriam James Hiedland, Sr. Bethany Madonna, Mark Hart, and Jason Evert, as well as Christian musicians, For King and Country.

On Friday morning Imaculee Ilibagiza, a survivor of the Rwanda genocide, gave a keynote that spoke of her encounter with Jesus during her experience hiding from persecution. Her testimony to the power of prayer, especially the rosary, touched the hearts of every person in the stadium.

During the rest of the day, attendees spent time in a variety of spiritual and fun activities. Participants chose from dozens of breakout sessions. Confession and Eucharistic Adoration was available throughout the event. Young people interacted with Bishops, priests, and religious in the exhibition hall that was filled with booths from Catholic groups, speakers, artists, merchandise, and colleges – including Carroll College.

Friday night provided a beautiful witness to the vibrancy of the

young Church when the entire Lucas Oil Stadium went silent as Jesus entered the building. During adoration that night, young people pursued His mercy as the lines for Reconciliation went out the door.

Saturday morning held another powerful keynote from Sister Bethany Madonna of the Sisters of Life. She spoke of the beauty of life, how it needs to be celebrated and upheld in dignity. Following the keynote was another round of breakout sessions, including more great talks. Saturday night was truly the pinnacle of the conference as deacons, priests, bishops, and archbishops joined together to celebrate the closing Mass.

More than a rock concert with Jesus, NCYC was a three-day experience of the gift of youth in our Church. In addition to hearing from the best of Catholic speakers and their priests and Bishops, the young people gave witness to one another, encouraging all of us to live out our faith with conviction, prayers, blessings and joy every day of our life.



## Prayers and Blessings

**Bishop Austin A. Vetter**

Eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Helena

We wish you well and offer  
our prayers for the  
fruitfulness of your ministry.

Father Michel Mulloy,  
Diocesan Administrator,  
the Clergy, Religious  
and people of the  
Diocese of Rapid City  
South Dakota



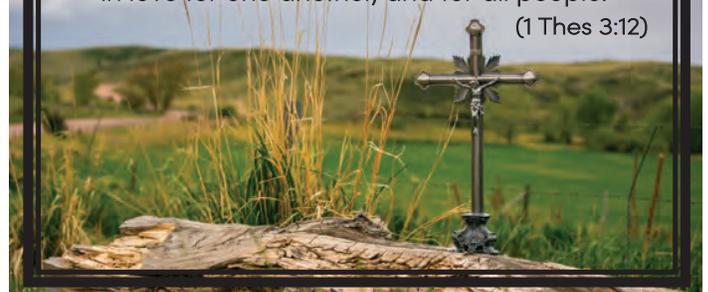
**Bishop Steven Biegler**

and the clergy, religious and faithful  
of the Diocese of Cheyenne  
offer prayers and best wishes to

*Bishop Austin A. Vetter*  
and the Diocese of Helena!

"May the Lord cause you to increase and abound  
in love for one another, and for all people."

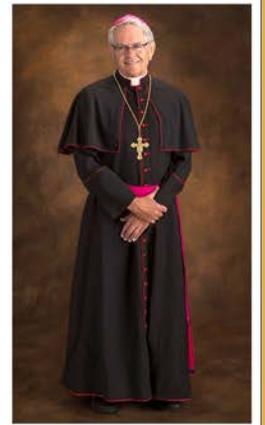
(1 Thes 3:12)



# Congratulations and Prayerful Best Wishes

from Bishop George Leo Thomas, Ph.D.

and the people of the Diocese of Las Vegas



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Congratulations to  
**Bishop-Elect  
Austin A. Vetter** on  
his appointment as  
the 11th Bishop of the  
Diocese of Helena.

May the Lord bless  
Bishop-Elect Vetter in his ministry.

*Most Rev. Card. Cyprian*

Heartfelt Congratulations

*Most Reverend  
Austin Anthony Vetter*

on your Episcopal Ordination and Installation  
as the eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Helena.



May God bless you and your ministry to the  
people of God in the Diocese of Helena.

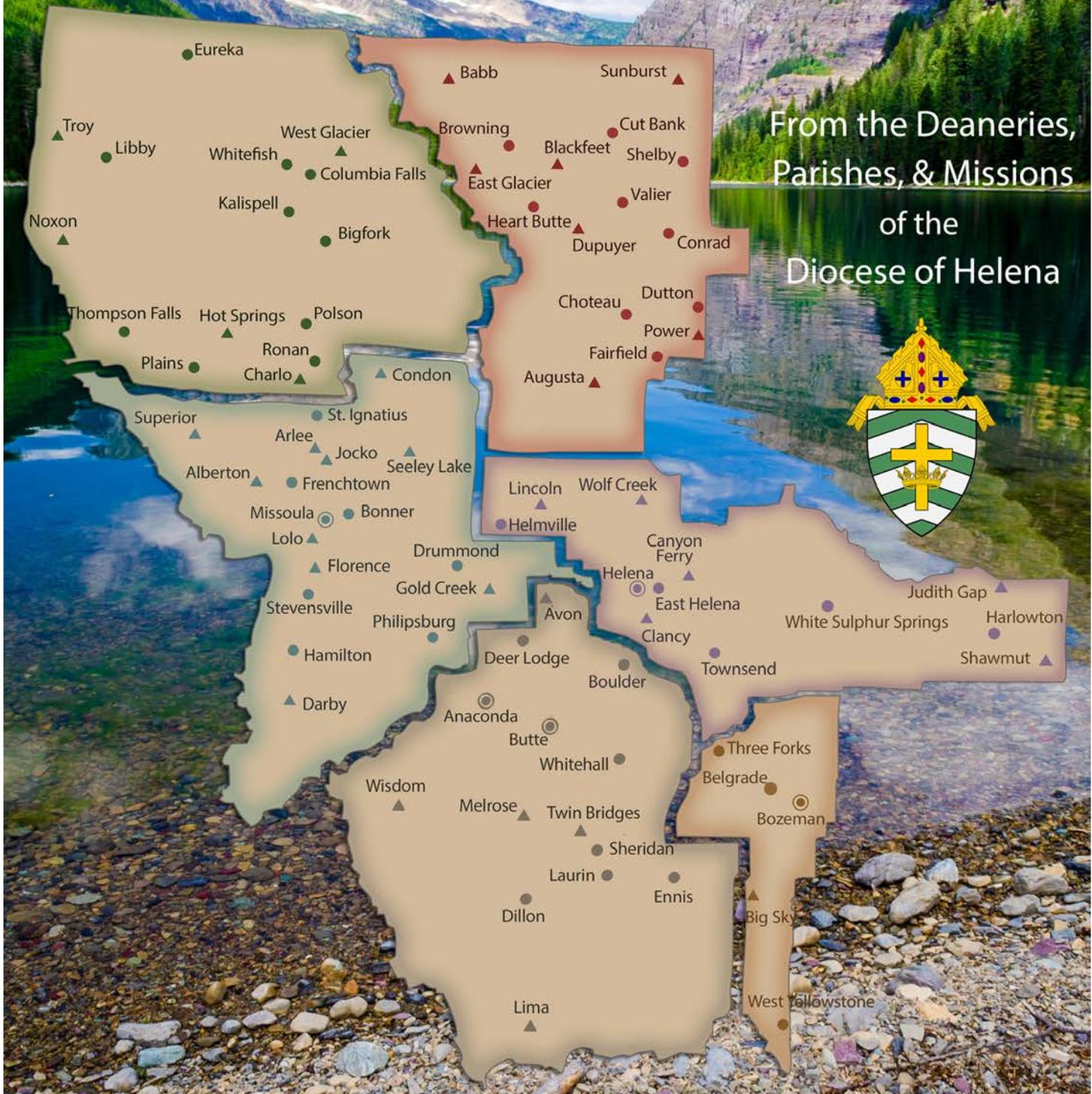
Bishop Kevin W. Vann, Auxiliary Bishops  
Timothy E. Freyer, Thanh Thai Nguyen, Bishop  
Emeritus, Tod D. Brown, the clergy, religious and  
faithful of the Diocese of Orange.



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF ORANGE

# Welcome Bishop Vetter!

From the Deaneries,  
Parishes, & Missions  
of the  
Diocese of Helena



● - PARISH      ▲ - MISSION      ◎ - MULTI-PARISH

# Bishop Austin A. Vetter



**Congratulations  
and every best wish  
for your years as  
Bishop of Helena.**



*Bishop Liam Cary*  
the priests, religious, and laity  
of the Diocese of Baker



# Congratulations

Bishop Austin A. Vetter on your  
Ordination and Installation as the  
11th Bishop of the Diocese of Helena

Those who follow the way of integrity,  
they alone can enter my service.

*Ps. 101:6*



From the tri-parish of:

St. Vincent de Paul - Mott, N.D.

St. John the Baptist - New Leipzig, N.D.

St. Henry's - Regent, N.D.

*Fr. Stephen Folorunso & Parishioners*



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*welcome*

**Bishop Vetter**

*May your flock flourish through the unwavering depth  
and steadfastness of your spiritual leadership.*

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**BISHOP**

# Austin A. Vetter

*Congratulations and prayerful best wishes  
on your installation.*

*May the Diocese of Helena grow in faith  
and love with your spiritual guidance.*



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The Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Helena

The Diocese of Helena Joyfully Welcomes  
Bishop Austin Anthony Vetter!

# NEWSLETTER

## -SPECIAL EDITION-

December 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 dedi-  
cated and generous leaders from our  
families and friends who will serve your  
people as Sisters, Priests, Brothers, Dea-  
cons, 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**  
Seattle, WA  
Philosophy I



**Matthew Christiaens**  
Valier, MT  
Theology II



**Tyler Frohlich**  
Billings, MT  
Pastoral Year



**Kaleb Mitchell**  
Kalispell, MT  
Spirituality Year



**Kyle Tannehill**  
Kalispell, MT  
Theology I