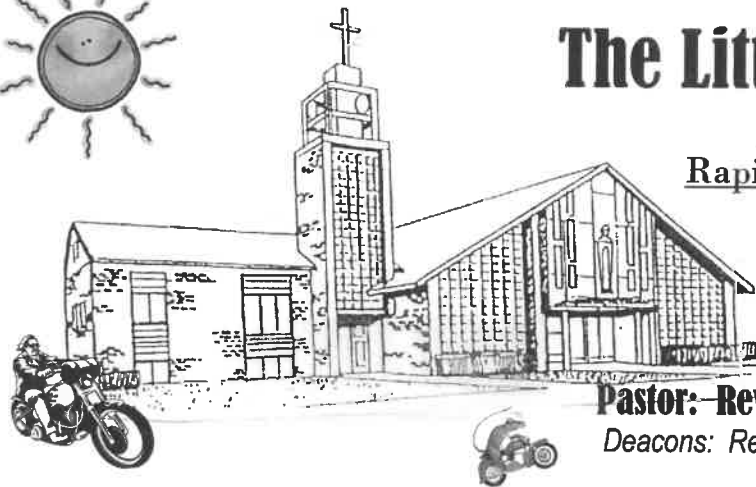




# Church of Saint Therese The Little Flower



532 Adams Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

(605) 342-1556  
sttherese@diorc.org  
sainttheresechurch.org

**Pastor: Rev. Kerry Prendiville**  
Deacons: Rev. Mr. Charles Rausch

*Our parish, dedicated as St. John the Evangelist on November 27, 1941, is presently known as Saint Therese the Little Flower. We have and will continue to proclaim and celebrate the gospel message by building community and serving in the name of Jesus Christ. We celebrate our gifts: a strong loyal parish community and our Catholic bond of faith dedicated to service and love of the Church.*

**Our Stewardship Mission is to love God first and commit ourselves to be the heart, hands and feet of Christ in our community.**

## OFFICE HOURS:

**Monday – Friday:**

**8:00 am – Noon & 1:00 – 3:00 pm**

*(We're PROBABLY there earlier/later or through lunch hour, so call daily for additional hours!)*

## YOUR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

**PASTOR ~ Father Kerry Prendiville,  
605-591-9991**

CHAIRPERSON ~ Rita Dupres	381-4988
VICE CHAIRPERSON ~ Patty Brunner	393-2577
Council Secretary ~ Fred Solano	381-7783
Buildings & Grounds ~ Jim Quintus	593-1207
Faith Formation ~ Holly Bossen	209-3268
Stewardship ~ Chris VanCleave	716-5526

## ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES

Altar Society ~ Doris Ann Werlinger	348-6311
Knights of Columbus ~ Jim Blackwell	923-2955

Your Parish Council meets on the LAST Monday of each month at 7 pm. You are WELCOME to attend or contact any member. If you have new business, contact a council member prior to meeting. Monthly meeting minutes e-filed on website: [sainttheresechurch.org](http://sainttheresechurch.org)

## WEEKEND Mass Schedule

**Saturday 5:30 pm**

**Sunday 9:00 am**

**5:30 pm**

## RECONCILIATION

**Saturday 4:00 – 5:00 pm**

**Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 am**

*Or by appointment!*

## Daily Mass Schedule:

**August 13 - 17**

**Monday 7:30 am**

**Tuesday 7:30 am**

**Holy Day Eve Mass: 7 pm**

## Wednesday

**Holy Day Mass: 7 am**

*9:30 am Mass at*

*Good Samaritan Center, New Underwood*

*5 pm Holy Day Mass at*

*St. John's, New Underwood*

**Holy Day Mass: 7 pm**

**Thursday 7:30 am**

**Friday 7:30 am**

## YOUR PARISH STAFF

PASTOR ~ Father Kerry Prendiville, 342-1556 ext. 11 DEACONS – Rev. Mr. Charles Rausch & Rev. Mr. John Steffen +  
OFFICE STAFF ~ Karen Thorp, ext. 15 ~ Connie Heeren, ext. 10  
ACCOUNTING ~ Diocese of Rapid City YOUTH FORMATION COORDINATOR– Bobby Myers, ext. 12  
FACILITIES/OPERATIONS ~ Larry Cole FACILITY JANITOR ~ Elaine Duncan

## PARISH REPRESENTATIVES

Homebound Ministry: Jerry Kanta, Ron Miller, Kathy Grebner, Dewayne & Joanne Borszich,  
Joan Feller, Rick Edelen

Liturgy/Music: Sue Englin & Jeanne Schneider First Communion & Confirmation: Bobby Myers  
RCIA: Ralph & Rita Dupres, Deacon Chuck Rausch BAPTISM: Call the office: Deacon Chuck Rausch  
Altar Society President: Doris Ann Werlinger Knights of Columbus: Grand Knight, Tom Baumgartner

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 11 & 12, 2018

## Week of August 12<sup>th</sup>

Sunday, August 12

Don't forget...

**12:47 pm PARISH PICNIC** at  
College Park! Make plans to be  
there! Bring a side dish and/or dessert  
to share and come have fun &  
fellowship with your church family!  
Oh, and maybe a chair or blanket!

7 pm FAMILY ROSARY – All welcome!

Monday, August 13

7 pm Boy Scouts

7 pm Knights of Columbus meeting

Tuesday, August 14

Happy birthday Father Arnie Kari!

9:30 am Mass at Good Samaritan Center

7 pm Mass for the Feast of the Assumption

Wednesday, August 15

7 am Mass for the Feast of the Assumption

1:30 pm Mary's Circle

7 pm Mass for the Feast of the Assumption

Friday, August 17

8 to 9 am Holy Hour of Adoration followed

*by Benediction & Morning Prayer*

Followed by DONUTS & DISCIPLESHIP

8 pm High School LOCK-OUT! See Bobby

for more information! All high school

students are invited! Come have fun!!

Saturday, August 18

Fr. Kerry leaves for vacation through the

24th. Please pray for safe travels.

Lord, today we pray for all those  
who are suffering in any way, be it  
physically, mentally, spiritually, or  
financially. We ask You to hold  
them in the Palm of Your Hand,  
and give them Your Peace. Amen.

## Down the Road

Thursday, August 30

7 pm RCIA Information gathering

**Welcome to St. Therese!**

We are truly happy you joined us in  
the Celebration of the Mass!

## MASS INTENTIONS ~ August 13 - 19

*Intentions indicated by "+" are deceased; no notations are for living*

MONDAY	7:30 am	Mary Karp +
TUESDAY	7:30 am	Corrine Krebs +
<b>Feast of the Assumption</b>		
TUESDAY	7 pm	Matthew Scott +
WEDNESDAY	7 am	Delores DeRouchey +
	9:30 am	Mass New Underwood Good Samaritan
	7 pm	Amada Gallegos +
THURSDAY	7:30 am	Gary Gross +
FRIDAY	7:30 am	Judy Rapp +
<b>20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>		
SATURDAY	5:30 pm	Carrol Krause + & John Krause +
SUNDAY	9:00 am	DJ DeJager
SUNDAY	5:30 pm	Parishioners

### FAMILY ROSARY: EVERY SUNDAY AT 7PM

PLEASE COME! EVERYONE WELCOME!!



#### Our Daily Scriptures

Monday	Ez 1:2-5,24-28c	Ps 148:1-2,11-14	Mt 17:22-27
Tuesday	Ez 2:8-3:4	Ps 119:14,24,72,103,111,131	Mt 18:1-5,10,12-14
Wednesday	Rv 11:19;12:1-6,10	Ps 45:10-12,16	1 Cor 15:20-27 Lk 1:39-56
Thursday	Ez 12:1-12	Ps 78:56-59,61-62	Mt 18:21-19:1
Friday	Ez 16:1-15,60,63	(Ps) Is 12:2-6	Mt 19:3-12
Saturday	Ez 18:1-10,13b,30-32	Ps 51:12-15,18-19	Mt 19:13-15
Sunday	Prv 9:1-6	Ps 34:2-7	Eph 5:15-20 Jn 6:51-58

**Faithful Citizenship** When you look in the mirror every morning when you are getting ready to meet the day, what do you see? Do you see a masterpiece? Do you see the masterpiece that God has created? If not, ask the Lord to give you eyes to see it, eyes to see who you really are. "Each of us is a masterpiece of God's creation."... The two most important principles of Catholic social teaching are the sanctity of human life and the dignity of the human person. The foundational principle of all Catholic social teaching is the sanctity of human life. Catholics believe in an inherent dignity of the human person starting from conception and enduring through to natural death. We believe that human life must be valued infinitely above material possessions and anything else.

<https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/human-dignity-threatened-sacredness/>

### Liturgical Ministry Schedule – August 18 & 19

**SAT. 5:30 pm E.M.:** Kathy Houston, Marcia Zacher (S) Ivan & Darlene Davignon, Renee Coldwell, Jeff Cook, 1 NEEDED **Lectors:** Kevin & Kris Hittle **Ushers:** Mac Coldwell, Fred & Paula Welsch, Dan Shank **Gift Bearers:** NEEDED **Altar Servers:** Matthew Theis, Rebecca Theis

**SUN. 9 am E.M.:** Diane Dahl, Ginny DeJager (S) Dcn. Chuck Rausch, Dik Dahlquist, Kathy Grebner, Marcy Morrison, Nadine Zeller **Lectors:** Tom Baumgartner, Jean French **Ushers:** Tom & Melanie Parson, Randy Rapp, Al Thome **Gift Bearers:** Kent, Jean & Joshua French **Altar Servers:** Lucas Kanta, Spencer Morrison, Chloe Thome, Madyson Wolfe

**SUN. 5:30 pm E.M.:** Beth Paris (S) Jan Winegar, Chris Bossen **Lectors:** Deanna Johnson **Ushers:** Bob Ormesher, Greg Rausch, Will Winch **Gift Bearers:** Jerry & Elaine Kocher **Altar Servers:** Ben Schutz, Camden Walker

**The SEPT.-OCT.-NOV. Liturgical Schedule is in the works! If you know you will be gone during those months, please call GAYLE MARTIN at 718-4631.**

## LET US FILL OUR FATHER'S HOUSE

**"I have called you by name, and you are mine!"**

This week please pray about who God wants you to invite to join our parish, if a name comes to mind, invite them! Do you know someone who is not confirmed yet? Invite them! We are called to be intentional disciples, we are people of action not just words. **Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and Children** opens the doors of our church wide - to preach and teach the gospel, to prepare all of God's children to baptism and the rest of our amazing sacraments! This week, invite one or two or three to RCIA beginning in September to come into full communion with our Church by Easter 2019!!!!

**INFORMATIONAL MEETING IS AUGUST 30<sup>th</sup> AT 7 PM**

**Please note new date!**

For more info. or to sign up for RCIA, contact the office at 342-1556.

*The gifts of God that the angel brought to Elijah – food, water, rest, and encouragement – were given, not for his own good alone, but to strengthen him for service. How am I using my gifts to serve others?*

#### GENERAL & OTHER FUNDS: Contributions this week

Envelopes	\$ 6231.50
Plate Collection	\$ 927.20
Children's Collection	\$ 53.63
<b>Electronic Tithing</b>	<b>\$ 631.64</b>
Assumption	\$ 25.00
Priest Retirement Aid Association	\$ 166.00
Seminarian Fund	\$ 75.00
Building Improvement Fund	\$ 77.00
Votive Candle Income	\$ 102.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 8289.08</b>

**WEEKLY AMOUNT NEEDED: \$9984.00**

**"THANK YOU" FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:**

Solidarity Fund for Africa \$1376.87

#### COLLECTIONS FOR AUGUST:

**Aug. 12:** General Fund **Aug. 15:** Assumption

**Aug. 19:** General Fund **Aug. 26:** General Fund

**AUG.:** Priest Retirement Aid Assoc., Building Improvements, Seminarian Fund

## ~ PRAYER CHAIN ~

*This is not the list in the bulletin.*

If you would like prayers or would like to be a link in the prayer chain, please contact Karen Thorp at 342-1556, ext. 15 or [kthorp@dioc.org](mailto:kthorp@dioc.org)

**Please add Addie Emery to your prayers!**

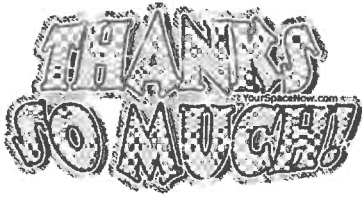
#### Bulletin Prayer List:

Marlene Albertson, Kathy Borkovec, Dewayne Borszich, Joyce Braun, Britney Weber Brouillette, Mike Cole, Irene Cox, Bonnie Elwood, Addie Emery, Pat Guertman, Tom Haney, Harold Hansen, Margaret Hansen, Kelly Heintz, Bill Hershley, Marietta Hollinger, Marlys Johnson, Rita Kutil, Alyssa Lichtenberger, Erin Maddox, Kevin Maher, Mary Maher, Brad Maskovich, Susan McFadden, Jack Myers, Aggie Mousef, Jeff Pansch, Helen Quasney, Jerry Quinn, Jim Quinn, John Radziwon, Ted Rapp, Russ Rearick, Elizabeth Richards, Bennie Saldanha, Karla Winland, Angie Zacher



We **NEED YOU** as a **TEACHER, Assistant Teacher OR Aides** for the **Religious Education Program (PreK-5<sup>th</sup>),**

**Confirmation for 7<sup>th</sup> grade (& 8-12) or Life Teen/Edge (Middle & High School).** Please contact Bobby in the youth office, we have a few openings!



**A huge "thank you" to the Jolene & Kelli for painting one of the parish offices. It looks fabulous! You are so appreciated!!**

**A LITTLE LAUGH ...**

Do you know why cows have hooves instead of feet?  
*Because they LACTOSE!!*

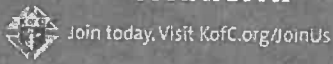
**The St. Therese Meals on Wheels Team is seeking drivers to serve one Friday every other month or as a substitute when needed!**

St. Therese Team delivers the route around the church area every Friday. We pick up the meals around 10:45 am and it usually takes an hour or a little more. If interested, please contact Connie at 342-1556. **THANK YOU!**

**Notes from the Knights....**

The 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of Tootsie Roll sales went really well! Will keep you updated on totals soon but if you see our Knights of Columbus out at local businesses handing out tootsie rolls, at least say hi & maybe donate, too, since all proceeds go to Camp Friendship, Special Olympics & the Suncatcher Riding Camp! Great causes!

**YOU ARE BORN A MAN.  
YOU BECOME A KNIGHT.**



**Still hunting for a few good men....  
Next Knights of Columbus Meeting**

**Monday, August 13th ~ 7 pm**

If you are interested in becoming a Knight, call Grand Knight Tom Baumgartner at 348-9528 or any KC!



**Mass Schedule for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>**  
7 pm

**Wednesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>**  
7 am & 7 pm  
5 pm in New Underwood

**Parish website:**

**[www.sainttheresechurch.org](http://www.sainttheresechurch.org)**

You'll find the weekly bulletin, the button for e-giving, the liturgical schedule, registration forms & so much more!

**Altar Society Funeral Chairpersons ~ AUGUST**  
Chairperson: Ginny Chandler Co-chair: Margaret Feist

**Love, INC. CLOTHE-A-KID program**

SHOPPERS are needed on August 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 10:30 am at Kohls. Volunteer forms need to be filled out prior to date and can be found online at [www.loveinonline.com](http://www.loveinonline.com)

Questions? Call Diane Dahl at 381-6389.

**CONGRATULATIONS 2018 ST. THERESE MEN'S SOFTBALL TEAM!**



**CHAMPIONS! 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the "B" Division!! Also, the 2018 Sportsmanship Award Winners! 😊**

**Did YOU get your cards yet??!!! The 'We Care' & Scrip gift cards spend just like cash at many stores & benefit the church at no extra cost to you! If you're going to spend the money anyway, why not help a good cause while you're at it? ON HAND from MANY BUSINESSES plus we can order a variety of amounts from a bunch of other local places! Come see us after mass or in the office.**

***The Church is like a bank – the more you put into it, the more interest you have in it.*** What Ministry would you like to make a deposit (of time, talent) ?? – Church library? Funeral Meals, Adoration, Meals on Wheels, Homebound, Religious Education, etc.

**Call the office at 342-1556 TODAY!! ☺**

## MARY'S CIRCLE MEETING

**Wednesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm**

**at St. Therese Parish Hall**

Bring ideas for the Fall Festival!

**Questions? Call Darlys at 348-4269.**

*EVERYONE  
WELCOME!!*

St. Therese youth invite you to

## DONUTS & DISCIPLESHIP

Friday mornings thru August 17<sup>th</sup>

Mass at 7:30 am followed by Adoration & Morning Prayer from 8 – 9 am then a light breakfast in the Parish Hall ~ **EVERYONE WELCOME!!!**



## SEEKING ITEMS FOR THE Roads Outpatient Treatment

**Center:** Pens/Pencils, Crossword puzzles, word puzzles, word search, Sudoku, and regular puzzles. Place in the box in the Parish Center by the offices.

## MOMMY'S CLOSET

 Items needed soon:

**SUMMER CLOTHING** to sz. 6, **SOCKS & UNDERWEAR** to sz 6,

**DIAPERS** especially sz 5 & **BABY WIPES**

We greatly appreciate all your contributions.

Please place all items in the cradles at either entrance.

**NEWBORN BABY ITEMS 0-12 months new and/or very gently used Outfits, rattles, onesies, receiving blankets, etc. & MATERNITY CLOTHING in all sizes are collected & donated to BIRTHRIGHT.** Also, if you are interested in volunteering with Birthright, call Cathy at 347-6190.

## CANNED FRUIT, CANNED MEAT, PUDDING PACKS & BODY SOAP

ARE NEEDED AT CHURCH RESPONSE

Please place your items in box at either entrance! THANK YOU !!



### Keep those FAMILY FARE receipts

**coming!** We're 1/3 of the way there!! Need a total of \$150,000 in receipts to receive a \$1,000 check. So, keep eating. Keep saving. And

together we'll keep EARNING!! We will still collect the Box Tops for Education but will no longer take the Campbell's Soup labels. They are no longer offering this program.

## ANOTHER LITTLE LAUGH...

A man was working out at the gym one day when he spotted a very beautiful woman walking in. He asked the trainer next to him, "What machine should I use to impress that lady over there?" The trainer replied, "I would recommend the ATM in the lobby."

**Garage + Bake  
Sale Fundraiser  
For the St. John's  
Building Fund is  
September 8<sup>th</sup> in  
New Underwood.**



**Mark your calendars!** Donations for the garage sale can be brought to St. John's church garage.

## If you haven't tried e-giving yet, you should!!! It's easy & SECURE!

If you're still not sure, but want to try it, just stop into the office or call Linda at the Chancery at 343-3541.

**Online** – Make a donation on our website:

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

**Text to Donate** – Make a donation

to our Number: 605-250-1952

Simply text an amount (no dollar sign needed) to the number above and follow the prompts to complete your donation!

**Give+ App** Search "GivePlus Church" in your phone App store, download- find St. Therese Church by 57701.

## Are you a single, separated or divorced Catholic?

**CONNECTED CATHOLICS OF SD** A group that provides a social and spiritual group of single, widowed, separated, and divorced Catholic men and women ages 35 & up a network of activities that offer companionship for singles.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Tuesday, August 21 – Dine Out – Sickies Trivia Night – 5:30 pm**

**Thursday, September 6 – Dine Out – Applebee's – 5:30 pm**

**Saturday, September 29 – Volksmarch – Flume Trail, Hill City – 8 am**

If you need additional information or would like to be put on our email list please contact Brenda at 718-0954 or Larry at 355-9087.

## ONE MORE LITTLE LAUGH...

"I once sang for the king of Spain," announced an elderly woman during choir practice. "You're kidding!" said the woman sitting next to her. "Well, that's what he told me. He said if I were a singer, then he was the king of Spain!"

**Spiritual Hospice Ministry:** to request prayers for the dying, call (605) 209-0667 or visit SpiritualHospice.com

## Fair Volunteers

Rapid City Right to Life is looking for volunteers to help work at the Right to Life booth at the Central States Fair, Rapid City, August 17-25. Hours are noon to 8 p.m. each day. If interested call Don Rausch at 718-5215.

## Open Air Mass with Bishop Gruss

The Children's Memorial Garden at the Terra Sancta Campus is in the final stages of completion. Please join us for Celebration of Sunday Eucharist and official dedication of the Memorial Garden by Bishop Robert Gruss. Sunday, August 26 at 9 a.m. in the Mount of Beatitudes Amphitheater on the Terra Sancta Campus, 2101 City Springs Rd, Rapid City, SD. The amphitheater is located on the hillside west of the retreat center. It has wooden benches for seating; if you'd like a more comfortable seat, you're welcome to bring a lawn chair with you. A light reception will follow at the retreat center. For more information on the Children's Memorial Garden visit: <http://tsCMG.org>.



**FALLING  
WITHOUT A  
PARACHUTE?**

"THOUGH HE MAY  
STUMBLE, HE WILL  
NOT FALL, FOR THE  
LORD UPHOLDS HIM  
WITH HIS HAND."  
- Psalm 138:16

**SUMMIT 2018**

SATURDAY SEPT. 22, 2018  
TERRA SANCTA RETREAT CENTER

If life is weighing you down, please join us on Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10 am – 8:00 pm for this year's Summit, sponsored by the Office of Stewardship. Healing prayer, inspirational talks and time to relax are all waiting for you there. Cost is only \$25/person or \$50/family and a Youth Track will be provided. For more information or to register, please visit: [www.The2018Summit.com](http://www.The2018Summit.com). *Come. Be Inspired. Be Renewed.*

## Sioux Spiritual Center Open House

The Sioux Spiritual Center will be having an open house on Sunday, August 19, beginning with Mass at 11:30 a.m. Please bring a picnic lunch! SSC will provide drinks. For more information visit [www.siouxspiritualcenter.org](http://www.siouxspiritualcenter.org).

**Call to Holiness Retreat**, 4-day retreat led by Dr. Clare Ten Eyck, will be held at the Sioux Spiritual Center, September 14-17. Focus on personal healing. Cost \$200. 12 spaces only. For more information, visit <https://siouxspiritualcenter.org/retreats>

*Jesus is the bread of life. Our world still hungers. Who will feed the multitude? Consider a life of ministry, or encourage others to do so. (John 6:41-51)* **PLEASE PRAY FOR VOCATIONS!**

## You Are Invited to Celebrate 50 Years of the

**Permanent Diaconate** Bishop Robert D. Gruss invites the people of the Diocese of Rapid City to celebrate 50 years of the U.S. Permanent Diaconate, Friday, September 7, at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. Mass is at 6 pm with a reception to follow. Deacon Greg Sass is putting together a slide show of the event. If you have any photos of deacons over the years please contact him at 605-343-3541 or [gsass@diorc.org](mailto:gsass@diorc.org).

## All are invited for a COMMUNITY FOOT CARE CLINIC each month at St. Therese

Interim Healthcare will be providing a community foot care clinic. **\$10 per person: feet soak, toenails cut and lotion applied.** August 17 at 9 am til done with those present. Please call 348-5885 to sign up or ask questions.

## Driving through the Hills or simply need a weekend

**away?** Stay, pray, and play with us at Terra Sancta Retreat Center in Rapid City, SD. Terra Sancta offers state of the art meeting rooms, hotel-style lodging, high-speed wireless internet, full-service catering, outdoor features, chapels and quiet spaces for reflection and prayer, with close proximity to the best attractions in the Black Hills. Rates for Family Style Rooms (2 queen beds and a private bath) are only \$89 per night and our Monastic Style Rooms (two bunked twin beds and a common bath nearby) are \$44 per night. For more information, visit [www.terrasancta.org/lodging](http://www.terrasancta.org/lodging) or give us a call at (605) 716-0925.

**Don Barnett**, former Mayor of the Rapid City, will receive the prestigious **Msr. William O'Connell FOUNDER'S AWARD** at Catholic Social Service's Annual Meeting Brunch on Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 2 pm in the LaCroix Ballroom at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City. Jim Kinyon, CSS Executive Director, will provide a brief Annual Report. The reserved seating tickets are \$20 per person and includes the breakfast brunch. Contact Catholic Social Services at 605-348-6086, by mail at 529 Kansas City Street, Rapid City, SD 57701 or via email at [css@cssrapidcity.com](mailto:css@cssrapidcity.com) You may also order online and save \$5 per ticket at [www.catholicsocialservicesrapidcity.com](http://www.catholicsocialservicesrapidcity.com)

## SUBSTITUTE TEACHER ORIENTATION: August 13th, 2018

– Terra Sancta – 8:30am. For new and returning subs. New subs please submit a support staff application and letters of reference prior to orientation. Contact Molly Rausch: [mrausch@rccss.org](mailto:mrausch@rccss.org), 605-348-1477

## Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont - Mass Time Change

Beginning September 1, Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont, will be changing the Sunday Mass times. Mass times will be **Saturday at 5 p.m., Sunday at 8 a.m., and Sunday at 11 a.m.** No longer Mass at 9 am or 6 pm on Sundays.

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

**Letter to the Bishops  
regarding the new revision of number 2267  
of the Catechism of the Catholic Church  
on the death penalty**

1. The Holy Father Pope Francis, in his Discourse on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei depositum*, by which John Paul II promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, asked that the teaching on the death penalty be reformulated so as to better reflect the development of the doctrine on this point that has taken place in recent times.<sup>[1]</sup> This development centers principally on the clearer awareness of the Church for the respect due to every human life. Along this line, John Paul II affirmed: “Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this.”<sup>[2]</sup>

2. It is in the same light that one should understand the attitude towards the death penalty that is expressed ever more widely in the teaching of pastors and in the sensibility of the people of God. If, in fact, the political and social situation of the past made the death penalty an acceptable means for the protection of the common good, today the increasing understanding that the dignity of a person is not lost even after committing the most serious crimes, the deepened understanding of the significance of penal sanctions applied by the State, and the development of more efficacious detention systems that guarantee the due protection of citizens have given rise to a new awareness that recognizes the inadmissibility of the death penalty and, therefore, calling for its abolition.

3. In this development, the teaching of the Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitæ* of John Paul II is of great importance. The Holy Father enumerated among the signs of hope for a new culture of life “a growing public opposition to the death penalty, even when such a penalty is seen as a kind of ‘legitimate defense’ on the part of society. Modern society in fact has the means of effectively suppressing crime by rendering criminals harmless without definitively denying them the chance to reform.”<sup>[3]</sup> The teaching of *Evangelium vitæ* was then included in the *editio typica* of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In it, the death penalty is not presented as a proportionate penalty for the gravity of the crime, but it can be justified if it is “the only practicable way to defend the lives of human beings effectively against the aggressor,” even if in reality “cases of absolute necessity for suppression of the offender today are very rare, if not practically non-existent” (n. 2267).

4. John Paul II also intervened on other occasions against the death penalty, appealing both to respect for the dignity of the person as well as to the means that today’s society possesses to defend itself from criminals. Thus, in the *Christmas Message* of 1998, he wished “the world the consensus concerning the need for urgent and adequate measures ... to end the death penalty.”<sup>[4]</sup> The following month in the United States, he repeated, “A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform. I renew the appeal I made most recently at Christmas for a consensus to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary.”<sup>[5]</sup>

5. The motivation to be committed to the abolition of the death penalty was continued with the subsequent Pontiffs. Benedict XVI recalled “the attention of society’s leaders to the need to make every effort to eliminate the death penalty.”<sup>[6]</sup> He later wished a group of the faithful that “your deliberations will encourage the political and legislative initiatives being promoted in a growing number of countries to eliminate the death penalty and to continue the substantive progress made in conforming penal law both to the human dignity of prisoners and the effective maintenance of public order.”<sup>[7]</sup>

6. In this same prospective, Pope Francis has reaffirmed that “today capital punishment is unacceptable, however serious the condemned’s crime may have been.”<sup>[8]</sup> The death penalty, regardless of the means of execution, “entails cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment.”<sup>[9]</sup> Furthermore, it is to be rejected “due to the defective selectivity of the criminal justice system and in the face of the possibility of judicial error.”<sup>[10]</sup> It is in this light that Pope Francis has asked for a revision of the formulation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the death penalty in a manner that affirms that “no matter how serious the crime that has been committed, the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and the dignity of the person.”<sup>[11]</sup>

7. The new revision of number 2267 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, approved by Pope Francis, situates itself in continuity with the preceding Magisterium while bringing forth a coherent development of Catholic doctrine.<sup>[12]</sup> The new text, following the footsteps of the teaching of John Paul II in *Evangelium vitæ*, affirms that ending the life of a criminal as punishment for a crime is inadmissible because it attacks the dignity of the person, a dignity that is not lost even after having committed the most serious crimes. This conclusion is reached taking into account the new understanding of penal sanctions applied by the modern State, which should be oriented above all to the rehabilitation and social reintegration of the criminal. Finally, given that modern society possesses more efficient detention systems, the death penalty becomes unnecessary as protection for the life of innocent people. Certainly, it remains the duty of public authorities to defend the life of citizens, as has always been taught by the Magisterium and is confirmed by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in numbers 2265 and 2266.

8. All of this shows that the new formulation of number 2267 of the *Catechism* expresses an authentic development of doctrine that is not in contradiction with the prior teachings of the Magisterium. These teachings, in fact, can be explained in the light of the primary responsibility of the public authority to protect the common good in a social context in which the penal sanctions were understood differently, and had developed in an environment in which it was more difficult to guarantee that the criminal could not repeat his crime.

9. The new revision affirms that the understanding of the inadmissibility of the death penalty grew “in the light of the Gospel.”<sup>[13]</sup> The Gospel, in fact, helps to understand better the order of creation that the Son of God assumed, purified, and brought to fulfillment. It also invites us to the mercy and patience of the Lord that gives to each person the time to convert oneself.

10. The new formulation of number 2267 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* desires to give energy to a movement towards a decisive commitment to favor a mentality that recognizes the dignity of every human life and, in respectful dialogue with civil authorities, to encourage the creation of conditions that allow for the elimination of the death penalty where it is still in effect.

*The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, in the Audience granted to the undersigned Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 28 June 2018, has approved the present Letter, adopted in the Ordinary Session of this Congregation on 13 June 2018, and ordered its publication.*

*Rome, from the Office of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1 August 2018,  
Memorial of Saint Alphonsus Liguori.*

Luis F. Card. Ladaria, S.I.  
Prefect

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