

# THE JOURNEY

Photo Credit  
David Swenson

April  
2026

Pelican Valley Catholic Community Newsletter  
*Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard*



## Dear Pelican Valley Disciples,

This Easter here in our Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community we rejoice in another "bumper crop" of adult candidates and one catechumen being fully initiated in our Catholic Church. They are catechumen, Michelle Fyhrie, candidates Cooper Ernst, Eden Johnson, Debra Jacob-Byer and Abel Vazquez (all at Our Lady of Victory); candidate Nicole Johnson at St. Elizabeth, and candidates at St. Leonard, Alba Rosa Castellon and Angel Payan. The Holy Spirit is moving among us, drawing men and women more deeply into a life of faith. The Risen Christ shares with them and all of us His very special gifts of Easter peace and new life.

As a matter of fact, (and faith!), throughout Lent I read many accounts of record numbers of people who would be brought into the Church across our country this Easter, as well as in other countries. I checked to see if the numbers in our diocese reflected this "upsurge". I found out that in the St. Cloud Diocese we have a 25% increase in catechumens this year over last, and a 50% increase over the last three years. We have also noted an increase in weekly attendance at Sunday Mass this past year throughout our ACC.

There is speculation that the increasing amount of uncertainties in today's unpeaceful world is a factor influencing people to turn to God. That may be. Let us also give major credit, simply, to the power of the Risen Lord, who shatters all the death and doubt and despair of the world...with His glorious Easter Resurrection, and continues to draw us to Himself.

Happy Easter!

Father Alan



# Prayer and Hope

By Teresa Thompson

On Wednesday, March 11, Diane Aschnewitz and I went to the abortion center in Moorhead to pray. Wednesdays are the days abortions are performed, and as we stood there, I felt the weight of that reality deeply. We prayed quietly and faithfully, asking God for an end to abortion and trusting that one day this practice will no longer be permitted in our country.

About fifteen people gathered on both sides of the parking lot entrance. As vehicles came and went, Scripture was read aloud, and prayers rose up for the women and families involved. At

one point, a rescuer approached a vehicle and gently said, "We can help you," but was pushed away by an abortion worker. I noticed a young woman sitting in the passenger seat of one car who was crying, and my heart ached for her. Abortion workers used shovels to scrape the pavement, trying to drown out the sound of prayer, while escorts held rainbow-colored umbrellas to block the view as four women entered the clinic.

Standing there, I was reminded that legality does not determine morality. Even when something is permitted by law, it does not make it right.



I continue to pray—for an end to abortion, for healing and mercy for all who have been involved, and for a conversion of heart for those who participate in the taking of unborn life. I place my hope in God, trusting that prayer matters and that hearts can change.

## PRAYER MINISTRY

*"Because He bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!"*

Psalm 116: 2

There are prayer warriors among us! Do you need urgent prayer? Might you have a special intention? Maybe a friend or family member has needs but would prefer to stay anonymous? All these prayer requests and more can be brought to the PVACC Prayer Chain, and you will have heavenly hosts on your team immediately! Each of our 3 churches has a list of people who would love to pray for your needs. Why do they do this? They hope that whoever needs prayers will know that there's a group of people wanting to pray for them. They feel that it's great to be in contact with people and are blessed to be able to pass prayer requests on. They feel that it's a great way to help others and know that the more people praying, the better! And they hope that someday, if they are ever in need, there will be a group honored to pray for them. Each leader has a list of people they call, and the prayer request gets passed right down the line to the last person on the list. That person calls the leader back to assure her that the whole team has been notified. Prayer needs can be general or very specific. All requests are kept confidential. If you ever find the need for extra prayers in your life, please contact any of these advocates:

**JO WEATHERLY**  
**(218)-205-0390**

**ALICE NEULEIB**  
**(218)-205-9007**

**LOUISE WENTWORTH**  
**(218)-770-0473**

**JEAN PALER**  
**(218)-731-4166**

**JUNE CLARK**  
**(218)-205-6899**



# Baptisms



## COLTON DAVID PETERSEN

February 15, 2026

Lucas & Amy Petersen

*In addition to having their son Colton Baptized, the Petersen family are new ACC members. Welcome to Lucas, Amy and Colton!*



## LAINY ARLENE JAROSZEWSKI

March 7, 2026

Alexander & Shalyn Jaroszewski



## GRAHAM WEST HERZOG

February 21, 2026

Eric & Lauren Herzog

## JUDE MICHAEL OCHOA

February 28, 2026

Michael & Brandi Ochoa



## ELLISON, CARLEE & AMELIA BIEDERMAN

February 28, 2026

Andrea & Tommy Biederman

## New ACC Members

### NATHAN AND LISA BERRY

Nathan and Lisa Berry, with their three children, stay busy on their farm and with kid activities.

St. Leonard welcomes the Berry family!



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**APRIL 11**

### OLV Spring Gala

Tickets are available through the school office.

**APRIL 18**

### Made in the Image of God:

Seeing Ourselves and Others as the Body of Christ RETREAT

Location: Centre for Christ, Sauk Centre 8:30 – 12:30 pm

\$35 Registration link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/5j1rZUfWyz>

**MAY 1-31**

### Parish Wide Baby Shower for Health Resources

sponsored by Catholic Daughters

**MAY 2**

### Salad Luncheon and Silent Auction

by Catholic Daughters

**MAY 2**

### Honoring Marriage Day

at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Sartell. See Bulletin for more information.

**JUNE 12 - 9:00 am**

**JUNE 14 - 2:00 pm**

### 2026 Latino Vocation Camp

Young men entering grades 7 – 12

Join Father Doug and the seminarians for three days at a private residence on Lake Osakis, with activities including fishing, swimming, frisbee, baseball, confessions, Mass, Adoration, lots of bacon, and much more. Draw closer to Jesus by listening to the voice of His Mother echoing in your heart:

*"Do whatever He tells you."*

**Check-in: 9:00-9:30 am, June 12**

*NOTE: Families of participants are invited to Mass on June 14 at 11:00 am, followed by a potluck lunch.*

**COST: \$50 – Scholarship available**

Questions,

please contact Julie Jacobs at [Julie.Jacobs@gw.stcdio.org](mailto:Julie.Jacobs@gw.stcdio.org) or call (320) 251-5001.

**DEADLINE: JUNE 5.**

Register at [vocations@stcdio.org](mailto:vocations@stcdio.org)

**AUG. 23**

### St. Elizabeth- Pork Out

# THREE STEPS

## WHY ARE THERE THREE STEPS BEFORE THE SANCTUARY?

Have you ever walked into a Catholic church and noticed the three steps leading up to the sanctuary?

- They're not just decoration.
- They preach.
- They teach.

They reveal something heavenly, if only we have eyes to see.

Let me take you on a short journey into their meaning. You'll never see them the same way again.

## 1 THE TRINITY IS CARVED INTO THE FLOOR

Those three steps represent the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Every time a priest climbs them, he's ascending in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, the same God who is made present on the altar.

Step One: God the Father, source of all.

Step Two: God the Son, Word made flesh.

Step Three: God the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies.

The sanctuary is not just a stage.

It's a meeting place between Heaven and Earth.

And the three steps are the path into that divine mystery.

## 2 HOLINESS REQUIRES ASCENT

God told Moses:

*"Take off your sandals, for the place where you stand is holy ground."* (Ex 3:5)

In Scripture, we never descend into God's presence, we ascend.

The three steps remind us:

You don't casually stroll into sacred space.

You climb. You prepare. You rise.

They symbolize your soul leaving behind the ordinary and moving toward the sacred.

## 3 THEY SYMBOLIZE THE THREE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

Every priest, altar server, or lay minister who ascends those steps is also making a spiritual climb:

FAITH — I believe God is here.

HOPE — I trust in His mercy.

CHARITY — I come in love ready to give.

Even if no one says a word, those steps are preaching:

"Come up higher. Draw near to God."

## PRIESTS ASCEND, NOT FOR POSITION, BUT FOR SACRIFICE

In the old ordination rite, the new priest ascended the altar steps, not to elevate himself, but to lay himself down.

The three steps whisper to every soul:

"This place is not for performance. It's for offering."



SO,

Next time you're in church and you see those three steps before the altar, pause.

Let your heart hear what they say:

"Here begins the Holy of Holies."

"Here, Heaven bends to touch Earth."

"Here, you climb not with your feet, but with your soul."

Yes, even the floor of the Church teaches.

Even the steps carry sacred meaning.

Because in the Catholic faith...

Even the architecture tells the Gospel.

God bless you.

## Sharing Smiles



Who can resist a chocolate smile? These youngsters and many more are enjoying some OLV hospitality after 8:30 Mass. The joy of picking out the perfect donut makes a Sunday morning complete! Come and see for yourself and share your smile in the Fellowship Hall between the 8:30 and 10:30 Masses every Sunday!

# Behind the Scenes at the Fish Fry

By Mary McGovern

*"The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

Matthew 23:11-12

"There are so many who do so much more than I do". This is a quote from one of the men working behind the scenes at the OLV Lenten Fish Fries. The school kitchen is a merry scene of hubbub on Friday nights during Lent. Deep fryers are getting set up, oil is being heated, warm beer cans are opened for the batter, flour is being poured and laughs are abundant. But who cleans up the mess and prepares the kitchen for school lunches to be served again on Monday? There is a long-time band of brothers who takes on the job of cleaning the fryers, sanitizing

all of the counters and equipment, and bringing the kitchen back to it's normal capacity. This involves a lot of deep scrubbing!! One takes the fry baskets home to finish thoroughly cleaning them. Others collect cardboard pieces and tin foil to cover the walls, countertops and floors and then remove it afterwards. All refuse needs to disappear before the students arrive on Monday. After the final fish fry, the men haul the heavy fryers to the church basement to store for the following year. They do this without fanfare as these jobs are not glamorous, but the group takes them on as a chance to share camaraderie, and perhaps get to know some new people. It's also one great way to fulfill the desire for Lenten Penance!! (Anonymous quote) Thank you to all who serve in this behind-the-scenes ministry.



## SPRING GALA

The Pelican Valley Community is warmly invited to attend the upcoming Spring Gala benefiting Our Lady of Victory School. This special evening is one of the most anticipated events of the year, bringing together parishioners, families, alumni, and friends in joyful support of Catholic education.

The Gala will take place on Saturday, April 11, with festivities beginning at 4:00 pm. Guests are encouraged to dress in black and white as we gather for an elegant and meaningful evening. More than simply a social event, the Spring Gala is the school's largest annual fundraiser and plays a vital role in sustaining its mission. Proceeds from the evening help keep tuition affordable for families, enhance classroom resources, and support the faith-filled education our students receive each day.

Those who attend can look forward to a delicious meal, exciting silent and live auctions, raffles, games, and opportunities for fellowship with fellow parishioners and supporters. It is always a wonderful evening filled with community spirit, generosity, and celebration.

Parishioners are invited not only to attend, but also to support the Gala through donations, volunteering, or simply helping spread the word. Every contribution—big or small—makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our students.

Tickets are available through the school office. We hope you will join us for this joyful evening as we come together to celebrate and support our school.

Jake Raths - Principal  
Our Lady of Victory School

# Cruising the Internet

*One day, while cruising the internet, I stumbled upon something and found it interesting so thought I would share.... (note: I have not verified any of the news articles below.)*

The first Catholic church in Fergus Falls, a little frame structure, was built in the fall of 1881, the interior remaining unfinished, and, shortly after, a priest's residence was added.

OLV – Incorporated and  
Opened 1890  
St. Elizabeth – Incorporated 1872  
St. Leonard – Incorporated 1900

## **1906 - ST. OTTO'S NEW BUILDING** *[Source: Red Lake Courier (Red Lake Falls, MN) Jan. 25, 1906] mkk*

St. Otto's Catholic congregation of Fergus Falls has purchased two lots adjoining the present church property on Cavour Avenue and are planning to erect a handsome new edifice at a cost of \$15,000. The building will be of brick and will be one of the finest churches in that vicinity. As soon as it is completed the present church building will be remodeled for use as a parochial school.

## **1915 - THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN FERGUS FALLS, MIINN** *[Source: The Irish Standard, Anniversary Edition, (Minneapolis, MN) Sept. 1, 1915] tr. by mkk*

Before the end of the 70s, Catholics of West-Central Minnesota were rarely blest with the visit of a priest. To missionaries from the Dakotas and from the Chippewa missions of northern Minnesota, the pioneers of Fergus Falls and vicinity owed the few welcome opportunities to hear Mass and receive the sacraments, in those early days - the humble home of some lately arrived settler serving temporarily as the House of God. The first Catholic church in Fergus Falls, a little frame structure, was built in the fall of 1881, the interior remaining unfinished, and, shortly after, a priest's residence was added. Handicapped in every

conceivable manner, it was only by persevering effort and great sacrifice on the part of priest and people that so much could be accomplished.

Rev. Joseph Moder, the first pastor, was transferred to Barnesville in 1882 and the parish of Fergus Falls was temporarily attended by the Benedictine Fathers of St. John's Abbey. In 1883 Rt. Rev. Rupert Seidenbusch, D. D., then Vicar Apostolic of Northern Minnesota, appointed Rev. Joseph Boever pastor of Fergus Falls and the surrounding missions. Father Boever as well as his immediate successors labored assiduously to pay the little debt, which in those days weighed heavily upon the small congregation. The interior of the church was finished by Father Schels. With the help of Rev. William Lange (1889-1893), the congregation finally had the satisfaction of wiping out the parish debt. The Revs. Joseph Stephan, G. Goebel, Charles Pfeiffer, Anthony Arzt, Emil Steinach, Hubert Gundermann and Francis Welp successively had charge of the parish between 1893-1906, leaving marked traces of their labors for the good of their parishioners. Rev. William Scheiner (1906-'08) was the first pastor who could give his undivided care to the Catholics of Fergus Falls, the adjoining missions having been placed in charge of another priest in 1906. His successor was Rev. George Rauch who arrived in 1908.

As the number of families had slowly increased, the need of a new church was felt, and, after some hesitation, the work was decided upon, pastor and people working together in complete harmony. The construction of the church, a substantial brick building, 58 by- 116 ft., in modified Gothic, was begun

in June, 1913. The cornerstone was laid September 7, 1913, by Rt. Rev. James Trobec, D.D. On Easter Sunday of the following year the first services were held, after the beautiful new windows had been set in place, and the installment of new pews, altars, stations and altar railing had been completed the week before. Rt. Rev. Bishop Trobec officiated at the dedication services, which took place on June 2, 1914.

The old place of worship had been known as the Church of the Holy Family but after its dedication, Sept. 10, 1890, by Rt. Rev. Otto Zardetti, D.D., it was named "Church of St. Otto." Since the erection of the new church, the parish has grown and prospered under the protection of "Our Lady of Victory," its present patron. A new parsonage was completed in November, 1914 and the parish already owns a teachers' home as well as the site for a school. If sisters can be secured, it is confidently hoped that by September, 1916, Our Lady of Victory parish will enjoy the blessing of a parochial school. Catholics who, in seeking a new home, hitherto passed by Fergus Falls, because it could not offer their children the education they desired, will find this deficiency supplied and can, in the future, look for no more desirable place to locate.

## **1915 - CHURCH ROBBED AT FERGUS FALLS**

*Source: The Bemidji Daily Pioneer (MN) September 30, 1915; transcribed by Mary Kay Krogman*

Fergus Falls, Minn., Sept. 30.-The Church of Our Lady of Victoria in this city was entered by thieves and a beautiful chalice, valued at between \$50 and \$60 was stolen. The chalice, or sacred cup used in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, was kept in a sort of cupboard in the sacristy. Two other older chalices alongside it were not taken, and one or two other chalices of lesser value were also left.

# REFLECTIONS OF AN OLD MAN

## ***Feed the Hungry...***

Please believe me when I say that I had more than the concept of an idea for this issue of *The Journey* but decided to save it for another time after reading Tom Hintgen's column in the January 17 edition of the *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*.

For those of you who may not know him, Tom is a lifetime resident of Fergus Falls, a fellow OLV parish member, a long-time friend, a hobby historian (Fergus Falls area and sports figures), for many years a colleague during my "second career" in the corporate communications department at Otter Tail Power Company and, in my humble opinion, a darned good guy!

His column tells of the sadness he and many of his close friends and family members felt when learning of the destruction of many tons of USAID food and medicine meant to ease the suffering of millions of our fellow human beings in war-torn, gang-ruled, poverty-stricken areas of the world. He has graciously granted me permission to use the basic idea behind his article—and many quotes—in this "Reflection."

Clergy worldwide, he writes, "regarded the intentional destruction and waste of food that could have saved lives as an appalling and unjust act, contrary to core values of compassion and charity across many faiths."

He quotes Patrick Neary, Bishop of the Saint Cloud Diocese, as saying, "My years in Africa and in parish ministry have shown me the face of Christ in the poor and vulnerable. I carry those encounters with me in my role as chairperson of Catholic Relief Services."

Tom concludes his heartfelt article by saying, "Many members of churches in our area, and religious leaders, shake their heads when hearing about people who are unmoved when seeing starving people on public service ads for charities." Many of us take to heart the scripture, 'Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do unto Me.'

One needn't be a priest, genius, philosopher, psychiatrist, writer or historian to understand Tom's concern, and to appreciate his willingness to remind us of this tragedy, which I had nearly forgotten because of the recent spate of other newsworthy events. I can't resist adding another Biblical quote, one that applies not only to food, but to the treatment of all our fellow travelers on this tiny (but beautiful) planet.

*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of heart let each of you regard another as more important than himself or herself. Corinthians, 2:3.*

Lee Krogh (with lotsa help from a friend)

**PELICAN VALLEY AREA  
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

**Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard**

**C/O 207 North Vine Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537**



**WEEKEND MASSES**

**Saturday 4:30 pm Our Lady of Victory**  
**Sunday 8:30 am St. Elizabeth**  
**Sunday 8:30 am Our Lady of Victory**  
**Sunday 10:30 am Our Lady of Victory**  
**Sunday 10:30 am St. Leonard**  
**Sunday 12:00 pm St. Leonard Spanish Mass**

*Our Lady of Victory School  
(K-6th grade)  
Learning Ladder Preschool  
(3-5 year olds, full  
and half day)  
218/736-6661  
[www.ffolvschool.org](http://www.ffolvschool.org)*

# Holy Week Schedule

**Palm Sunday - March 28-29, 2026**  
*(regular schedule)*

4:30 pm Saturday Mass - OLV  
8:30 am Mass - St. Elizabeth  
10:30 am Mass - OLV  
10:30 am Mass - St. Leonard  
12:00 pm Spanish Mass - St. Leonard

**Monday, March 30, 2026**

9:00 am OLV Word & Communion

**Tuesday, March 31, 2026**

12:05 pm Mass - OLV  
OLV confessions 3-6 pm

**Wednesday, April 1, 2026**

10:30 am Mass - Veterans Home

**Holy Thursday - April 2, 2026**

7:00 pm Mass - OLV  
7:00 pm Mass - St. Leonard

**Good Friday - April 3, 2026**

12:00 pm Good Friday Service -  
St. Elizabeth  
3:00 pm Good Friday Service - OLV  
7:00 pm Good Friday Service -  
St. Leonard

**Holy Saturday - April 4, 2026**

11:00 am Blessing of the  
Easter Food - OLV  
7:30 pm Easter Vigil Mass -  
OLV followed by  
Resurrection Reception  
7:30 pm Easter Vigil Spanish Mass -  
St. Leonard  
\* No confessions

**Easter Sunday of the  
Resurrection of the Lord -  
April 5, 2026**

8:30 am Mass - St. Elizabeth  
8:30 am Mass - OLV  
10:30 am Mass - OLV  
10:30 am Mass - St. Leonard  
\*No Noon Mass

