

THE JOURNEY

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

Photo Credit
David Swenson

August
2026



Care for Creation

On the Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time, July 12, I preached about "care for creation" at Our Lady of Victory Masses. The many references in the Scriptures to the earth and nature's cycle of growth that weekend provided an opportunity to introduce the newly published diocesan booklet, "Care for Creation". If you missed it, here's a recap; if you were there, here's the review!

Pope Francis is quoted, "How inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and...interior peace."

This notion is picked up by Bishop Patrick in the introduction, "When we nurture a healthy relationship with creation, we also nurture peace within ourselves. Time spent in nature, gratitude of God's gifts and a sense of belonging in the created world can be powerful support for emotional and spiritual healing." Thus Bishop Patrick ties together two of his diocesan priorities, mental health and care for our natural environment.

The booklet emphasizes that our concerns for the environment and created world are all rooted

firmly in Scripture and Catholic teaching. Caring for creation is a beautiful way to honor God the Creator. The message also moves into the impact of our practices on ourselves as well as the most vulnerable in our world.

Indeed, responsible use and care

of natural resources is an important response to the "Love your neighbor as yourself" commandment.

"Care for Creation" offers many timely reflections and prayer resources, and we will continue to make it available at our churches if you would like to preview all that it offers for use of individuals, families, communities, school and parishes. Help yourselves and perhaps return it to Church once you have read it to help save on our paper supply!

Continue to enjoy the summer! In the heat, take good care, and also remember how we long for the summer sun during the cold winter....May you and your families experience bountiful blessings (both of creation and in your spiritual lives) during the remainder of summer and as we prepare for fall.

Fr. Alan



ACC Consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

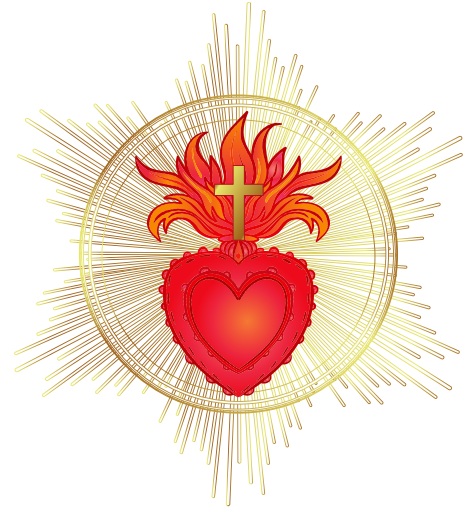
By Dolcar Montenegro

On June 10, the ACC gathered at St. Leonard Church for a bilingual Mass honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus, joining Catholics across the country in the consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart in celebration of the 250th anniversary of our nation's independence.

During the homily, the faithful reflected on the origins of this devotion through the apparitions of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, reminding us of Christ's infinite love and His invitation to grow closer to Him through the Eucharist, prayer, and devotion to the First Fridays. The symbolism of the

Sacred Heart was also explained, reminding us of Christ's boundless love, His sacrifice on the Cross, His mercy, and His call to conversion. The homily concluded by emphasizing that the renewal of our nation begins with the renewal of our families, making the Sacred Heart of Jesus the center of our homes and daily lives.

Throughout the month of June, our parish continued to honor the Sacred Heart by offering Holy Masses and Holy Hours in thanksgiving for this special consecration. The celebration concluded on June 28 with our Festival of Fellowship, beginning



with Holy Mass, followed by a delicious Mexican meal, games, and fellowship, bringing our parish family together in gratitude, faith, and joy as we celebrated the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Ministry Spotlight—Knights of Columbus

So, what's it like to be a member of the Knights of Columbus? It's men joining together to serve our parish and support the church and each other. It's meeting together the 2nd Tuesday of each month to share a social hour, a meal and then a meeting. It's sharing camaraderie while flipping pancakes in the OLV kitchen when hosting the pancake breakfast. It's also being part of an organization that helps send young people to Steubenville with a financial donation each summer, and provides Christmas goodie bags to OLV children after their Christmas Concert. The Mission Statement of the KC's speaks of "empowering Catholic men to live their faith and serve their family, parish, community, and country." This formula ties together everything they do.

The KC's host very popular Sunday morning pancake breakfasts, which help fund their many projects. Every August, they organize a fun-filled family night at a local park with games for children, and time for families to enjoy a meal together. A night at the Fargo Red Hawks baseball game is another wonderful event, complete with ½ price admission tickets for

KC's and their families. This year's trip is planned for Friday, August 14. Insurance products are also offered, supporting financial security for members and their families. The KC's are a multigenerational and international organization. The Fergus Falls Council #3118 was chartered in 1948 and has approximately 169 members from our parish. The local Cub Scout group shares the same council number and is also supported through the KC pancake breakfasts. Gary Fults is begin-

ning his second year as Grand Knight, overseeing the meetings and planning for future projects. Harlan Jones begins his two-year term next June. The four principals of the Knights of Columbus—Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism—guide and inspire all that the Order does. What a vital ministry this organization is to our parish! If you are interested in joining the KC's please email Gary Fults for more information. [gmfuls@prtel.com](mailto:gmfults@prtel.com)



New ACC Members



MICHAEL & AMBER CANNON

We are both retired and moved to Fergus Falls from Hutchinson, MN, where we were members of St. Anastasia Catholic Church. We have three married children and eight grandchildren who live in Grand Forks, Moorhead and Andover. We have additional family members living in this area.

EMILY TOSO

I was a member previously at St. Mary's in Alexandria. I have 2 step-daughters and 1 new baby girl

Baptisms



LEWIS JOHN TRANDSATER

Logan Tandsater & Carly Wedll
June 21, 2026

BAPTISM PREPARATION – ST. L

We have not celebrated any baptisms in the past three months. Yesterday, however, seven families participated in our pre-baptismal preparation classes as they are preparing to have their children baptized over the next two months. We keep these families in our prayers as they prepare to welcome their children into the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism.

New ACC Council Members from OLV

Rachel Kosak is one of the new ACC members from Fergus Falls. In her term, Rachel is looking forward to sharing her strengths of building empathy, resilience and adaptability with her faith community.

Her favorite way to spend her time is having picnics with her family and eating ice cream.



My name is Ashley Arras, married to Eli, we moved to Fergus Falls 3 years ago and have 4 wonderfully wild young daughters! My husband works as an RN in town, and I am able stay at home with our girls while they are little. I am honored to be serving on our ACC/parish council, especially during this important transition!

AUGUST 11

PORK CHOP FEED for all KC members & family

AUGUST 18

OLV FALL FESTIVAL PLANNING MEETING at 7 pm

223 Raffle tickets have been turned in at the office as of July 20th. This is 62 more than sold at this time last year! Great job all.... Humm wonder who is going to sell the most this year...

AUGUST 23

ST. ELIZABETH PORK OUT * PORK OUT NEWS *****

- Raffle tickets are available in the church entrance. Please pick up your tickets and any additional tickets you are able to deliver.
- Pork Out worksheets have been placed in parish mailboxes located in the church entrance.
- Collection doors are marked, and donated items may be brought in at any time.
- Raffle prizes can be turned in anytime.
- The Country Store is looking for handmade, sellable items such as embroidered towels, washcloths, dish towels, and baby items.

Thank you for your support in making the Pork Out a success! We look forward to seeing you for Pork Out 2026 on August 23, 2026! Sept OLV parishioners will receive annual Stewardship Renewal Packet mid-month

SEPTEMBER 20
OLV FALL FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 24
REVIVE AT OLV

OCTOBER 21
ST. LEONARD
ROAST BEEF DINNER

OCTOBER 22
REVIVE AT OLV

ACC UPCOMING EVENTS

United States celebrated its 250th anniversary since the Declaration of Independence

On July 4, 2026, the United States celebrated its 250th anniversary with nationwide events, historic commemorations, and spectacular public festivities. Churches around the nation held special Masses to mark the occasion. On June 10th our ACC held a Sacred Heart Consecration Mass at St. Leonard's in Pelican Rapids. Deacon Dean is kind enough to allow his

Homily to be shared in this newsletter. On June 12th at the USCCB Spring General Assembly held at Our Lady of the Universe, Orlando FL, Archbishop William Lori gave the Homily during the Mass of Consecration of the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Both Deacon's Dean's and Archbishop Lori's Homilies are rich with spiritual food.

The Consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Tonight, we are doing our part to participate in the consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The US Bishop are doing this also this tomorrow. To help us understand what this means I would like to give you some history around the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the meaning of the image of His Sacred Heart, why it is fitting for us to dedicate the United States to His heart, and end with how we can continue to do are part even after tomorrow.

Jesus appeared to Saint Margrete Mary Alacoque between 1673 and 1676 in France. During these apparitions, He placed an atom of His Sacred Heart within hers. He wanted her to experience part of the anguish He felt in the Garden of Olives and at the same time His burning love for each one of us. He told her that His burning flame of love could no longer be contained, and He asked for a devotion to His Sacred Heart on the first Friday of the month. With this, He gave 12 promises which are wonderful and revolve around Jesus giving you and your family graces to grow closer to Him, no matter how hard one's heart is. Finally, He asked for a Feast in honor of His Sacred Heart. This is what we are celebrating with this Mass.

So, what is all the symbolism in His Sacred Heart Image? Well, one of the first things we see is a Heart, and a heart reminds of love. It reminds us of

Jesus' love for us, but it also reminds us that God took on human nature to become united with us because of His love for us. He wanted to remind us that He created us in His image. We are united to God through His son's heart. God went so far as to have His Son's side opened up when it was pieced by the centurion lance while He hung upon the cross. Hence, the wound in the side of the heart is to remind God opened a direct path to His heart. He didn't stop even a millimeter short; He went all the way to His heart because His heart is love and mercy.

We also see a glow emanating from all side of His Sacred Heart. Again, this is to remind us that His heart is a furnace that is burning so hot that it can't be contained within the walls of the furnace, His heart. It's not just few rays coming out, but a glow because there are so many rays of love. It's so hot, it is emanating light, just like the sun burns so hot it gives off light.

- On top we see even more prominent flames and a cross. These represent a volcano exploding, which is what Jesus gave us when He died on the cross. His love for us exploded in a way that only God's love for us could when He died on the cross for us.

Finally, there is the crown of thorns around His heart with some of the thorns piercing His heart. This is to remind us that our sins are piercing His

heart, and His heart is wounded with every sin we commit.

So why did Jesus give His Sacred Heart to Saint Margrete Mary? France was a country very devoted to Jesus. We don't know exactly how many saints have come from France, but one source indicated around 175. However, in the 1600, France started to fall away from God, from a sacramental life, from the Eucharist, and this was wounding Jesus' heart so much. He also knew that a devotion to His Sacred Heart would bring it back, which it did. The devotion to His Sacred Heart started to spread, and families were practicing this devotion together and consecrated themselves to His Sacred Heart. When they did this, they started to feel His love in the Eucharist. This is why He asked people to go to the Mass on the first Friday of the month, to receive the Eucharist not just on Sunday's, but on Fridays too. This is the day that He felt so much pain in His passion, but also when He opened a direct line to His heart.

To show their devotions, families started to put pictures of the Sacred Heart in their homes and to go to Mass. Some families today go so far as to go through a formal enthronement ceremony. In doing this they are linking their home to the tabernacle of their parish, inviting Our Lord to be their constant and most intimate Companion. His Sacred Heart becomes a way of life making Christ the king of their hearts, and desire to be with Him always. When they do these things, families start to grow together as a family by loving each other enough to talk about their day together. They feel each other's pain. Through the sharing of this pain, they learned compassion and to love. They love each other as Jesus loves them. They have mercy on each other as Jesus has mercy on us. They feel Jesus' love within their family.

Continued on Pg 7.

Homily from the Mass of the Consecration of the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus USCCB Spring General Assembly Our Lady of the Universe, Orlando, Florida Archbishop William Lori

Archbishop Lori has served in several key roles within the Catholic Church, including auxiliary bishop of Washington, bishop of Bridgeport, and since 2012, as the Archbishop of Baltimore. He also serves as Supreme Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus and Vice-President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.



Why We Consecrate

- My brother bishops, dear priests & deacons, women & men in consecrated life, and faithful lay men and women, dear friends in Christ all: What a remarkable moment of grace we are privileged to share. On the threshold of our nation's 250th anniversary, we gather, not first to celebrate ourselves, but to consecrate. To entrust. To place the Church in the United States, and indeed the whole nation, into the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.
- Why do we do this? Because consecration is an act of faith. It is an acknowledgment that history is not simply the story of what human beings accomplish; it is the story of God's faithful love at work in the world. We give thanks for the blessings of these past 250 years, but we do so with humility, recognizing in faith that every nation stands in need of God's mercy, wisdom, and guidance. We consecrate our nation, not because it is perfect, but because it is beloved by God. We entrust to the Heart of Christ our achievements and failures, our hopes and anxiety, our present challenges and our future aspirations. We ask him to heal what is wounded, strengthen what is good, and guide us towards a future marked by justice, peace, freedom, and respect for the dignity of every human person.
- Consecration is also an act of hope. It is a declaration that the future does not belong merely to political movements, economic forces, or human plans. The future belongs to God. And so, we place into His Heart, not only ourselves but generations yet unborn, and all those who will inherit the Church and the nation we leave behind.

Remaining in the Love of Christ

- In a culture that prizes independence and self-reliance, we gather publicly to acknowledge that our deepest identity and our truest hope come, not from ourselves but from the Lord. That is why today's Gospel is so fitting. Jesus says: *"As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love."* The Sacred Heart is the visible sign of that love. It is not an abstract devotion. It is the revelation of God's love made flesh—a heart that has known joy and sorrow, friendship and betrayal, suffering and sacrifice.
- In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us something else that is extraordinary. He says, *"I have called you friends."* The Sacred Heart reveals a Savior who desires not merely our obedience, but our friendship; not simply our service, but our communion with Him. To consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart is ultimately to accept Christ's invitation to remain in His love and to allow that love to shape every aspect of our lives, public and private.

Consecration Requires Humility

- In my recent pastoral, *In Charity & Truth: Towards a Renewed Political Culture*, I reflected on the certainty that love and truth are never opposed. They meet perfectly in the Heart of Christ. Jesus tells us: *"This is my commandment: love one another as I love you."* To love as Christ loves is the true measure of Christian discipleship and the true measure of our humanity. Yet if we are honest, we must acknowledge that neither our nation nor the Church has always clearly reflected that love—indeed, it is sometimes obscured almost beyond recognition. To be sure, there have been moments of extraordinary witness and holiness. But there have also been moments of failure, division, and sin. Consecration requires the humility to acknowledge both. We cannot come to the Heart of Christ while pretending we have no need of His mercy. To consecrate ourselves and our nation is to place our wounds, our shortcomings, and our sins before the One whose love is greater than all of them.

Consecration Sends Us Forth

- Jesus also says in today's Gospel: *"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain."* Those words describe the Church's mission throughout our nation's history. Catholics have contributed immeasurably to the life of this country through faith, sacrifice, education, charity, and service. We give God heartfelt thanks for that legacy and commend to the love of his heart those who gone before us in faith.
- Yet consecration is not merely about remembering the past. It is about accepting responsibility for the future. To consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart means remaining in Christ's love and carrying that love into the world. It means building communities – ecclesial and civil – where truth is proclaimed clearly and charity is practiced generously. It means resisting the temptation to define ourselves by division, ideology, or resentment. The Sacred Heart does not divide; it reconciles. It does not harden hearts; it transforms them. It does not simply invite us to receive love; it sends us forth to share it.
- My brother bishops, this Gospel speaks to us in a particular way. *"I chose you."* Those words should fill us with humility and gratitude. Our ministry is not something we have earned; it is a gift entrusted to us for the service of God's people & the wider community. And to all the faithful: this consecration is not something the bishops do for you. It is something we do together. The renewal of the Church and our nation will not come through declarations alone. It will come through disciples who remain in Christ's love and bear the good fruit of holiness in families, parishes, communities and in their daily lives.
- As we approach this great anniversary of our nation, we may be tempted towards nostalgia for the past or anxiety about the future. Today we choose something better: trust. Today we place the Church in the United States, and this nation we love, into the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Not because we have everything figured out, but because we know the One whose love endures forever. In his Heart, we find gratitude for the past, strength for the present, and hope for the future.

ACC Youth Ministry

By Emily Stawarski

In life we don't often receive opportunities to see the fruits of our labor. We plant the seeds, water them and nurture them while they are in our care, but send them off into the world to grow on their own. However, Youth Ministry is an area where we have the honor to sometimes see those fruits in bloom, sooner rather than later.

Andrew and I have had the honor of working with the youth in various capacities for the majority of our adult lives. When I first moved to Fergus Falls in 2013, my first place of connection was the church and volunteering with Faith Formation. For Andrew, it became second nature throughout his high school years, helping his mom teach the middle school FF program at St. Olaf in Elbow Lake.

Over these last 13ish years, we have been blessed to work side by side for about 7 years within youth ministry. Youth ministry has proven to be somewhat of a refiner for us; offering opportunities to become stronger in our own faith lives, both independently as well as together. It has also been transformative in how

we see the Church today and who the Church will be in the future.

Andrew and I will often talk after Wednesday night Faith Formation class about the challenges we encountered but also the beautiful snippets of God's work in the students. We are often so impressed by the depth of faith and reverence these youth have for the Lord. While each student is at a different place in their relationship with God, we have the honor to witness the seeds growing. Knowledge is being shared, joy, fellowship, and love are blooming in how the youth witness the faith to each other. God's hand is at work.

In April, we had the honor of ending our school year with a talk about mental health with guest speakers Mary and Amanda. Through that visit, we were granted insight into the struggles our youth are facing, both internally and out in their everyday lives. However, we also witnessed the youth coming together to talk about their struggles and work through them with the lens of our faith. What. A. Gift.



Our youth are not the "future" of the church. They are the church TODAY just as much as anyone else. Let us continue to nurture our youth by supporting them, encouraging them, and empowering them to be an integral part of our Church community. These young people are READY to be the hands and feet of Christ; sometimes they just need a bit more encouragement...watering the seeds, encouraging them to bloom.

Our ACC Youth Ministry team will once again host summer gatherings and mini-retreats in the coming months. We encourage all youth to join us for fun, fellowship, and faith. Keep an eye out for the schedule, coming soon!

Vacation Bible School

It's a great blessing to be a child that attends Our Lady of Victory church! Beginning on August 11, all children pre-school--5th Grade are invited to attend a special adventure Vacation Bible School. The theme this year is: **Galaxy--Launching Kids on a Mission of God's Love**. This meaningful experience will be located at OLV church August 11-13 from 6:00--8:15PM. Come and be a part of a 3-day mission that will fill children's hearts with God's presence. To register, please call Danielle Jensen at 218-517-0772.

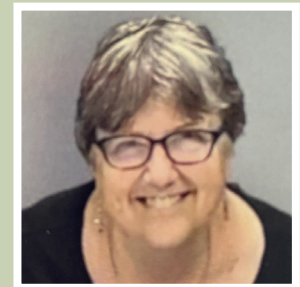
Danielle is the new Elementary Faith Formation Director at OLV. She has been a part of OLV School as Librarian, one of the Kid's Club leaders and helps with fund raising and recess. She is also a volunteer group leader with the Middle School Faith Formation Program. In addition, Danielle and her daughter, Hazel, work with

the audio-visual recording of Mass. If you're looking for an excellent cup of coffee, she and her husband, Isaac, own Minnesota Mudwater Coffee Roasting in Foxhome. They have a mobile trailer that can be found at Farmer's Market every Saturday. The trailer will be at the OLV Fall Festival in September, with 25% of the profit going back to the church as a fund-raiser for our parish. What a perfect place to enjoy a delicious cup of coffee!



Welcome to our new Elementary Faith Formation Director, Danielle Jensen, and her assistant, Andrew Dembouski. Thank you for sharing your faith with our OLV children!

ACC PASTORAL ASSISTANT



Beginning in August, we welcome Deb Forstner (formerly in OLV Elementary Faith Formation) as a part-time Pastoral Assistant.

In her new role, Deb will help us from time to time with funeral preparation, Word and Communion services and some sacramental preparation for families with special circumstances.

These are ministries Deb already has experience with and we welcome her now as Pastoral Assistant!



Steubenville Here We Come!

On Friday July 24th, thirty-six ACC students and six chaperones left the OLV parking lot for St. Paul on a spiritual Steubenville retreat. The morning began with prayer and a blessing and a quite orderly loading of students and snacks.

Upon their departure, Fr. Lucho noticed the brand of the bus 'Prevost', Pope Leo's last name – our students are in good hands!



The Consecration of the United States Continued from Pg4.

Father Crawley-Boevey explains it this way,

- "When Jesus crosses the threshold of your home He will say to you, *"Peace be to this house and to all who dwell therein."* Because you have carried out His divine request to be invited to your home, He keeps His promise to bless your family and all its undertakings, to sanctify your joys and sorrows, to console you in all your trials, to keep your family united and to give it true peace."

Yes, we are consecrating our nation to the Sacred Heart. But what is our nation? Our nation is made up of families. So this consecration is a two-way street, the bishops are consecrating your families to the Sacred Heart, and if we live within our families with the Heart of Jesus, His love will radiate out of the household into the community and through our nation.

As Saint John Paul II stated,
"As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live in."

By Deacon Dean



Mark your calendars for
SEPTEMBER 20TH
for OLV's Annual
Fall Festival!



**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

REFLECTIONS OF AN OLD MAN HELP!

Either it's been busy two months or I'm slowing down a lot in my dotage.

Whatever the case, I'm asking you to write the *important* part of this "Reflection."

If you will be so kind as to fill in the blanks in the sentences below we will not only help me, you'll become a co-author!

Thanks in advance for your assistance!

Love the _____, your _____, with your whole _____, your whole _____ and your _____ and your _____.

Do unto _____ as you would have them do unto _____.

_____ the hungry, _____ to the thirsty, _____ the naked, the sick and imprisoned, _____ the stranger.

And so, these three abide; _____, _____, and _____. But the greatest of these is _____.

What does it profit a _____ to gain the whole _____ and suffer the loss of his _____?

Thought starter: *How do your thoughts, words, actions and values conform to those basic tenets of Christianity listed above?*

Soaring: The answer to that question (as you well know) always was, and ever shall be, directly between each of us and our God.

Lee Krogh