Missionary Disciples to the People of Northern and Western Alaska

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Inside:
Regional Updates
1970s Delta Junction Volunteer
Bishop Pastoral Visit to Y-K Region
Faith Formation in a Time of Pandemic and Beyond
“Missionary Disciples” is a publication of the Catholic Diocese of Fairbanks that serves northern and western Alaska. Its purpose is to provide a regular opportunity for all ministries throughout the Diocese to share information so our tremendous diversity may enrich our common mission of service to the people of our Diocese.

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Cover photo: Bishop Chad Zielinski in St. Marys, Alaska, in front of the Church of the Nativity—his first pastoral stop during his Easter visit to three villages.

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Catholic Diocese of Fairbanks Diocese of Fairbanks
Tuesday, March 23:
Flight from Fairbanks to St. Marys
I just arrived in the village of St. Marys to provide the Mass and sacraments to parishioners at the Church of the Nativity, who have not seen a priest for more than a year. The parish’s regularly assigned priest, Rev. Aiden Yakubu, left to visit his family in Nigeria in late 2019 and has been repeatedly detained from returning to Alaska because of immigration issues and then pandemic travel restrictions.

As I was walking around the village today, I was thinking about what a difference a year makes. Last March, right as the pandemic hit the United States, villages went into lockdown, with state-mandated COVID-19 mitigation protocols. No

In St. Marys, Bishop Chad celebrates one of 39 total baptisms during his trip. On the left are: Clarence Johnson and Lillian Johnson—parents of Katelyn (the mother), who is holding baby Braxton, and her daughter Kyra is standing in front. To the right: Leo Aguchak (the father) holding Mila, and Leo's mother, Tammy Aguchak.

While communities in the lower 48 states have gradually relaxed restrictions as COVID-19 cases have waned, Alaska Native villages have been forced into prolonged lockdowns due to their remoteness and lack of medical resources. Villages have just a few hundred residents served by one small, basic clinic, and medical emergencies require a flight to Anchorage or Fairbanks. Even then, harsh weather often grounds planes, and minor situations can escalate quickly. After a prolonged absence from our diocese’s indigenous Catholics, Bishop Chad Zielinski was finally blessed to visit several parishes along the Yukon River this past spring. It was their first time celebrating the Mass and sacraments for more than a year for these faith communities.

DIOCESAN MAGAZINE | JUNE 2021 | 3
one was allowed in or out of these communities except for emergency services. Our priests and ministry staff were grounded in their home villages, and churches were closed as tribal councils enacted bans on public gatherings. Even if I had wanted to keep our churches open, I wouldn’t have been able to because each village’s response was dictated by the state and tribal council. They still are, which is why I had to get express permission from the councils to make these visits to the villages.

Right now, our diocese is suffering a severe priest shortage, especially in rural Alaska. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region is home to 24 of our churches and has just five priests to bring the Mass and sacraments to the people. Most priests serve three to four churches and normally would constantly be traveling between parishes. But with everything shut down for most of 2020, many villages did not see a priest at all last year. While we are doing our best to get clergy to our rural parishes, it’s still a challenge because of village quarantines and the skyrocketing costs of air travel. It’s truly devastating to me to think that our faithful Catholics have been without the Eucharist, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, and full funeral rites for so long.

But at least I’m here now, and I must take consolation in that. This evening, we celebrated a Memorial Mass for a deceased villager, which I know was a great comfort to their loved ones. Afterward, we had a potluck supper, and parishioners brought fish chowder, caribou stew, and other Native dishes that I enjoyed. It was a truly joyful occasion to be together with our indigenous Catholics again!

**Wednesday, March 24: St. Marys**

I spent this morning visiting the homebound, and they were so grateful to receive Holy Communion, Anointing, and Confession. All of us have been impacted by COVID-19 in various ways and I fully understand the caution and concern, especially for the most vulnerable. But as I saw the loneliness of the homebound, I can’t help but worry about the long-term psychological and spiritual impact the pandemic will have on many individuals.

In the afternoon, I celebrated a small, private Baptism for a child with medical issues whose parents are scheduled to fly to Anchorage for medical treatment. Then that evening, the parish celebrated a Memorial Mass for a villager who passed away during the lockdown. The family was clearly touched to hear the name of their loved one remembered in the prayer intentions.

**Thursday, March 25: St. Marys**

This morning, I found out that flights were delayed because of the snowstorm that has continued to pelt the village. That meant the family whose child was baptized yesterday could not get to Anchorage for treatment.

I visited more of the homebound today and was then present for nearly three hours in the church for Confessions. Parishioners then gathered at 7 PM to celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation. It was a beautiful celebration of the feast day, and even with social distancing, we still had nine children baptized! Words cannot describe the “holy glow” on the faces of their parents and elders as the children were immersed in the waters of Baptism and became adopted children of God.

**Friday, March 26: St. Marys**

Today, I visited more homebound parishioners, performed several house blessings, and then heard Confessions at the parish. We also celebrated an evening Mass with another five Baptisms. One of the children baptized was an infant there with his mother and his grandmother, Lillian. Many decades ago, the village of St. Marys was the site of a Catholic boarding school run by religious sisters. Lillian attended the mission school
and graduated from there. She is now the director of the Yup’ik program for the high school. The family shared that the white blanket in which the baby was wrapped and the dress was actually made by the mission school’s nuns, who had made it for Lillian’s own Baptism. In many parts of the world, the Catholic faith is centuries if not millennia old. In Alaska, however, Jesuit missionaries brought the Gospel to the territory as recently as the late 1800s. So, to have this blanket made by our missionary nuns 60+ years ago now wrapped around a third-generation Yup’ik Catholic child... that was a special moment for all of us.

Saturday, March 27: Snowmachine from St. Marys to Pilot Station

This morning, we celebrated a Healing Mass that included Anointing of the Sick. The village has many who are chronically or seriously ill, and with no priest, they have not been able to receive Anointing for more than a year, so many people were in attendance. They were all deeply grateful to receive the sacrament, and I was humbled to give them...
strength for the journey.

It had “warmed up” to 5 degrees by late morning, so I hopped on the parish snowmachine and headed to the nearby village of Pilot Station. Martin, a young man in his early 20s, escorted me during the one-hour trip, and he knew the trails like the back of his hand. The day was clear and sunny, but it was still a bumpy ride since the tundra winds had whipped the snow into drifts that look like “snow waves.” I am amazed that people pay thousands of dollars for a massaging recliner when a ride on a snowmachine over the Alaskan tundra does the same thing!

We arrived at St. Charles Spinola Catholic Church, in Pilot Station, at 1 PM. The Mass was scheduled for the next day, so there was no evening liturgy. Some parishioners still arrived to greet me and extended their deep thanks that I’d made the trip. I spent several hours that afternoon hearing Confessions. The apartment I stayed at was well-heated. Villagers had told me in advance I would have to boil any water I consumed at Pilot Station, so I had hauled a few gallons of water with me from St. Marys.

Palm Sunday, March 28: Pilot Station
It had been 14 months since parishioners had celebrated Mass, so we had many gathered for the Palm Sunday Mass. I heard loads of comments that it was so good to be “back to church.”

I made an afternoon visit to the village’s Russian Orthodox priest, Rev. Stan Heckman, and his wife, Anna. As bishop, I have been fortunate to have a very good working relationship with the Russian Orthodox in our state. There are actually more Orthodox churches in Alaska than Catholic, a legacy of the three centuries during which Russia colonized and then claimed the territory. Father Stan and Anna have always been gracious and hospitable to me during my visits.

Monday, March 29: Pilot Station
In the afternoon, I met with parents for a Baptismal preparation class since there will be seven children baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass on April 3. Our village churches have truly suffered from a lack of clergy in the past year. Not only have most not had a priest, but even those few withdeacons and catechists were not able to perform ministry. Alaska Natives highly value elder wisdom, which is why they usually insist their leaders be older folks. Yes, that brings a richness of life experience to ministry, but it also means that most of our lay ministers were vulnerable to the virus and were under an even stricter quarantine than the rest of the village. Even when churches opened back up, older Catholics were understandably reluctant to return to ministry. For most of our rural churches, formal catechesis has all
but stopped, and the parish has not been able to offer religious education classes, sacramental prep, or adult faith formation. Hence, the impromptu baptism class gives people at least a basic understanding of the sacrament before receiving it.

I also visited homebound parishioners named Peter and Mary, who find it challenging to navigate the snow on foot. They were most appreciative of my visit, and I heard powerful stories of faith from them both. Peter related that he had seen a clear, vivid image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the sky over Pilot Station some years back.

Later on, we had a Memorial Mass for several individuals who died during the COVID-19 lockdown when no deacon or priest was available. While I know many in the lower 48 states have not been able to have funerals for loved ones because of the pandemic, I wondered how often that happens because there isn’t a priest available, like it does here. It makes me sad to think about all the Catholics who were buried during the COVID-19 restrictions without the benefit of a full Mass.

**Tuesday, March 30: Snowmachine Pilot Station to St. Marys**

I returned to St. Marys via snowmachine this morning, escorted by a villager named Fred who wanted to visit family in that the windchill making it feel much colder. Fortunately, I wore my beaver fur mukluks (boots) and beaver mittens, as well as a marten fur hat that was given to me by an Athabaskan family. All these Native furs kept me incredibly warm in the subzero temperatures.

**Wednesday, March 31: Snowmachine from St. Marys to Mountain Village**

This morning, another gracious young man named Morgan escorted me via snowmachine over to Mountain Village. Mountain Village is one of our larger villages, with almost 800 residents, nearly half of which are children. Like many places in Alaska, the climate swings from one extreme to the other during the seasons—from 40 below zero in January to the high 80s in July. But unlike many villages farther inland, Mountain Village is situated on solid ground and not surrounded by swampy tundra that makes boardwalks necessary.

When I arrived at the village, I was greeted by Charlotte and three children of the family who assist with running the local store. The group was removing the snowdrifts on the church steps. Oh, the days of untiring youth that seem to have passed by so quickly! Word traveled quickly that I had arrived, and I was still bundled in snowmachine gear when my cell phone rang with a request for a Baptism. Since an evening Memorial Mass was scheduled for 5:15 PM, we immediately decided to have an impromptu baptism class afterward.

After Mass, the parish’s deacon, Elmer...
Beans, reminded me that the last Mass in the church was celebrated 16 months earlier by me and their now-missing Nigerian priest, Rev. Aiden. The parishioners were so excited to have Mass again and had cleaned the church until it was gleaming. There was an outstanding showing for Mass! Everyone wore masks, and I heard Quyana Cukneq! (Thank you so much!) countless times. There was great joy among the people, and many had tears in their eyes because they could finally return to worship in their Father’s house again. Their tears and voices conveyed that the Mass was for them a healing balm for the dark, isolated days of COVID-19.

Holy Thursday, April 1: Mountain Village
I met with various parents this morning to discuss Baptism for Easter Sunday, and they were quite excited to have their children baptized finally. In the afternoon, I again visited some homebound parishioners. It was humbling to witness the strong resilience of these souls during the pandemic. Many shared that they have a robust, daily prayer life that sustains them in the most challenging times.

Good Friday, April 2: Snowmachine from Mountain Village to St. Marys
A midday departure back to St. Marys presented another bumpy ride down the snowmachine trail on the Yukon River.

I arrived safely at St. Marys to join the parish to pray the Stations of the Cross at 3 PM. During Lent each year, I find that the Lord focuses my attention on something different. This year, I was deeply taken by Station V when Simon of Cyrene helps carry the Cross with Jesus. This has jarred my conscience to look at others who carry heavy crosses and see what I might do to care for them as my brother and sister. I hear so many stories of people who carry heavy burdens such as medical issues, family challenges, lack of resources, financial constraints, and addiction.

We gathered at 7 PM for the Good Friday Service, for which there was a good showing. I enjoyed the reading of the Passion from John’s Gospel, and it brought to mind memories of being a child and my excitement to go to church to participate in the reading. The narrative just makes the Passion of Christ come alive, and through the eyes of a child, it seemed even more real because I was saying the words aloud.

Good Friday! The only day of the entire year when Mass is not celebrated. As one who is faithful to daily Mass, this always grabs my attention for the right reason. It helps focus on the fasting required and the power of the Mass. This always causes me to reflect on my great privilege as a priest—the ability to receive Holy Communion every day. It is a stark contrast to the spiritual privations of many in the Diocese of Fairbanks, who even pre-pandemic were only able to celebrate the Mass every few months. For our most remote parishes, they are now going on almost two years without the Mass and other sacraments.

Holy Saturday, April 3: Snowmachine from St. Marys to Pilot Station
I think my theme song for this Yukon venture should be “On the Road Again.” Willie Nelson’s song from 1980 was about life as a traveling musician, but I think it applies to villagers in remote Alaska, too. So, another midday departure with my reliable escort, Martin. Another snowstorm rolled through the area last night, so the trail was blanketed with loads of fresh, heavy, wet snow. It was a little slower going, but at least the trail was smoother, which will save time on the way back. After an hour of scooting across the white tundra and crisscrossing the river channels, we arrived back in Pilot Station. I unloaded my waterproof duffle bag at St. Charles Spinola Catholic
Church. After six years of traveling the Alaskan bush in summer and winter, I’ve learned that waterproof gear of every sort saves the day. All it took was one experience of unloading a duffle bag of wet, frozen clothes to set me straight!

A villager named Abraham saw my yellow Skidoo snowmachine arrive and then called to invite me to his house for a late lunch of fresh caribou. As I walked into Abraham’s kitchen, my eyes caught sight of caribou heart, liver, and meat on a piece of cardboard on the kitchen table. He walked up with a large knife and started carving away, and said, “You are going to have a great lunch!” His children sat around watching, rather quiet. After the meat was prepared, Abraham asked me to bless the food and then insisted I be first in line. I took a few pieces of heart, liver, and meat from the pan. As I sat at the table, the children stared at me, no doubt wondering, “Is he really going to eat it?!” They didn’t know that I grew up on a farm in Michigan, where we ate every edible part of an animal we harvested. So, this was not my first rodeo with wild game! It was worth seeing their pleased faces as I praised Abraham for providing me with such a hearty, outstanding meal. I knew I was going to be up until the early hours of Easter morning because of the vigil, so the fresh caribou was good fuel for the long night.

Late afternoon, I headed back to the church to start preparing for the most beautiful liturgy of the year. Parishioners had decided they wanted the Mass to start when it was truly dark, 10 PM.

There literally was a blizzard raging outside, which would have easily blown out a wooden fire, so we had a small fire fueled by rubbing alcohol poured over rock salt instead. (Alaskans are incredibly resourceful!) St. Charles Spinola was quite full as we had nine children and one adult lined up for Baptism. With such a late start, the children’s responses to the sacrament were typical—some slept through their Baptism, while others grumpily protested that they wanted to be left alone. A few bolted upright from sleep with a full-throated scream when we started to pour water over their
foreheads! Most responded with a smile, though. After the rite is finished, I love belting out an “Alleluia,” and the community echoed this beautiful declaration of Christ’s rising.

The adult who was baptized was a 63-year-old man who, for some reason, had just plain missed Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation over the years. His peers urged him to get baptized since he has regularly attended Mass for all these years. As I baptized James, there was this thunderous clapping after the pouring of the water. The entire community was beaming with joy, and this very quiet and shy man had this holy glow about him. The Holy Spirit certainly pierces to the depths of our soul in Baptism to imprint that permanent seal, and you could practically see that indelible mark on James’s face.

After celebrating the sacraments of initiation and the Eucharist, I extended a final blessing and the Easter dismissal. Each family of the newly baptized wanted a photo, and there was an extensive line snaking down the main aisle as people requested an individual blessing from me. It was 1 am by then, yet people could not get enough graces! As the last person departed the church, I looked toward the sanctuary and had a profound sense of joy amidst my exhaustion. The Lord poured forth a special grace of a deep slumber before I had to rise again at 6 am for the Easter morning services.
Easter Sunday, April 4: Snowmachine from Pilot Station to Mountain Village

I woke early—grateful to the smell of freshly brewed coffee—knowing I needed to get an early start back to Mountain Village. My escort, Edwin, was coming in from Mountain village, and just at 6 am, he texted to see if I was up and about. He said skies looked clear, but there appeared to be a ground storm on the river. A ground storm is created by high winds that swirls about the dry, fallen snow and reduces visibility for travelers.

After coffee and praying the Liturgy of the Hours, I gathered my gear together and prepared for Edwin's arrival at 8:30 am. My next Mass was scheduled for 11 am in Mountain Village, so we had plenty of travel time. We made our way on a narrow, winding trail through the woods and then downhill for the first part of the trip. It was beautiful to see the sun starting to rise, casting its rays through the trees. A moose was trotting down the snowmachine trail and jumped off when he heard us motoring along.

We arrived in Mountain Village by 10:30 am, and parishioners began filtering into the church as it approached Mass time. Deacon Elmer had recruited and prepared ten young children for Baptism, and it was a beautiful scene to see them all lined up at the edge of the sanctuary. Easter joy radiated from the faces of many parents as they witnessed an ontological change in their child. Now and forever, their child would be claimed by Christ as a child of God, born into a new life of the Holy Trinity.

Deacon Elmer offered to escort me back to St. Marys for the 3 PM Easter Mass. The 64-year-old deacon is a quiet and humble man who is always so polite in his demeanor. He quietly said to me, “Bishop, I am not sure how used you are to driving a snowmachine, but we will be moving along.” I was not quite sure what he meant, but I soon discovered that “moving along” meant scooting along quite quickly.

After three hours on a snowmachine and a 90-minute Mass, I was definitely feeling tired. The worship space at the Church of the Nativity at St. Marys is small, so we scheduled the 15 Baptisms across two Masses to keep from overcrowding the church. At this Easter Mass, I baptized a young child, confirmed a young adult, and another young adult received her First Holy Communion. Even through the masks, “Alleluia!” rang out loudly and joyfully, as the people gratefully celebrated the Resurrection after the long isolation of COVID-19.

Monday, April 5: Home to Fairbanks

After all the festivities of the past few days, I was in bed early last night. I then rose early this morning to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to get my gear ready to go. Thanks be to God the weather was nice. After a short 40-minute flight to Bethel for a transfer, I boarded Alaska Airlines for another 50-minute flight to Anchorage. I texted Sr. Kathy to let her know I had safely arrived, and she responded that my departure was perfectly timed since it was now snowing quite heavily at St. Marys. I spent the next two days resting and visiting some friends, including Archbishop Roger Schwietz (Emeritus) and Archbishop Andrew Bellisario, the newly appointed Archbishop of Anchorage-Juneau.

As I reflected on my adventure across our remote villages, I realized what a joy and honor it was to have baptized 39 young people, confirmed two, and distributed the Eucharistic Lord in a First Holy Communion. I had heard countless hours of Confessions, blessed numerous houses, and met so many saintly souls on my homebound visits. As always, I returned to Fairbanks as the most blessed among men.
Staff Changes

Donation Office

After 16 years of service to the Diocese, Lin Craig retired on March 31st. Lin, who was hired in 2004, first served as a part-time receptionist before transferring to The Alaskan Shepherd where she was promoted from clerk to Office Manager. She was best known for her ability to connect with benefactors through countless phone calls and correspondence. Lin was the cheerful voice most people heard when they contacted the Donations and Processing department these past years.

Lin was a skilled seamstress and often offered her talents to help repair clergy apparel. She also sewed and embroidered banners; she tackled any project that came her way. Beyond his thanks for the buttons replaced and the pants hemmed, Bishop Chad Zielinski expressed his gratitude for Lin’s years of service to the Diocese of Fairbanks.

Office of Facilities and Construction

Hello! I’m Jake Baugh, the new Facilities and Construction Manager; I come to the Diocese from the Ground Based Midcourse Defense program at Fort Greely. As a lifelong Alaskan and newly baptized Catholic, I am excited to bring my experience in facilities management to the team.

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Jake is hitting the ground running with a new church being built in Koyukuk. In addition, work is being started for the new rectory in Chefornak this summer. The foundation for the Chefornak church will be put in this year, and the Church is planned to be completed next summer.

Summit Lake and Gulkana Glacier in 1972. From Jean McBee Coviello Slide Collection.
As the Chancellor for the Diocese of Fairbanks, I am often asked, “what is the role of a chancellor?” Canonically, the role of a chancellor in a diocese is to take care that the acts of the curia are gathered, arranged, and safeguarded in the archive. In plain English, my role is to ensure that all official paperwork signed by the bishop or any offices within the chancery are notarized if needed, stored, and secured for historical purposes. However, I wear many hats and serve the diocese in many different roles. One role that has grown and expanded under the leadership of Bishop Zielinski is the role of bringing in international priests to assist us with our critical priest shortage.

In his early years as Bishop for the Diocese of Fairbanks, Bishop Chad visited many of his brother bishops in Poland and Zimbabwe and wrote many letters asking for priests to come and serve in our missionary diocese. The fruits of Bishop Chad’s labor have come to fruition, and we currently have eight international priests serving in our diocese that have arrived since his ordination as bishop. Prior to their arrival in the Diocese of Fairbanks,

**The Diocese of Fairbanks Welcomes Rev. Simon Jingbe**

*by Leigh Scarboro, Chancellor*
I work directly with these international priests and an immigration lawyer in collecting supporting documentation to acquire their visas for immigration to the United States. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, this process would take roughly six to eight months; however, now, it is taking over two years.

**Rev. Simon Jingbe**

On 3 June 2021, Rev. Simon Jingbe, from Nigeria, Diocese of Pankshin, arrived in the early hours of the morning after traveling two days to get to Fairbanks. At 7:30 am at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rev. Jingbe con-celebrated his first Mass in the Diocese of Fairbanks with Rev. Yakubu Aiden and Rev. Alphonsus Afina; all three priests are from Nigeria. It is by God's grace that these priests from Nigeria were celebrating Mass on the Feast of Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs of Uganda.

Rev. Jingbe’s visa to travel here was approved in April of 2020. However, it was delayed for over a year due to the global pandemic. The immigration process can be frustrating and challenging to manage at times, but it is all worth it when you witness these priests celebrating Mass and bringing the sacraments to the faithful! We may be separated by our cultures and where we were born, but we are all united in our Catholic faith as brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Revs. Alphonsus and Aiden Return!**

*by Rev. Alphonsus Afina*

Frs. Yakubu Aiden and Alphonsus Afina are finally able to return iso ministry in Alaska, having been away for 17 months.

It all started with the excitement of going to Nigeria for our annual vacation to see family and friends toward the end of 2019. The vacation was good as we were having a good time rounding up the year (2019) in the midst of loved ones. Having completed our annual vacation in December, we discovered we could not return due to travel documents. Four months later, when the documents finally arrived, we could not return to Alaska due to the Covid-19 lockdown happening all over the world. Our one-month vacation turned to one year, and eventually many more months.

During the period of our stay in Nigeria, we were able to visit many parishes and places as we still had time out before returning to ministry. While it was fun and good to be at home that long, our constant worry was for the people we left behind in Alaska, especially in the places we shepherd in the Yukon and Bering Strait regions of the Diocese.
New Church in Koyukuk
This summer, a new church will be built for the people of Koyukuk. The plan is to have the Tribe of Koyukuk remove the existing building and put in a gravel pad. Then contractors will build the foundation. The Knights of Columbus from North Pole will travel to Koyukuk to install the shell of the building and, hopefully, the inside structure.

Around 1985 the old power plant building was converted into a church. Due to issues from its prior use, such as a lack of necessary insulation and oil embedded in the walls, it was decided the old church needed to be replaced. In addition to a larger worship area, the new church will have a residence section attached to the church. Presently the minister’s residence is a separate building next to the old church.

Visiting Franciscan
Brother John Neufer, OFM
A Franciscan brother is visiting this summer to assist the Franciscan ministers in the Interior of Alaska. He will be helping Bro. Bob Ruzicka in Nulato and will also spend time with Rev. Joe Hemmer in Kaltag and Ruby.

Memorial Day Burials
There were burial services for the ashes of four members of the tribe on Memorial day. Due to the pandemic, they were not able to be brought home until this time in Nulato. A special memorial service was held at Our Lady of the Snows Church, in Nulato, to remember the elders.

July Visit to the Interior
Planned for Bishop Chad
Bishop Chad Zielinski will be making a special trip to the Interior of Alaska around the first week of July. He will be using the original method ministers used to travel to villages by boat. He will travel on the river from Ruby to Kaltag, stopping at Galena, Nulato, and Koyukuk.

Update from Y-K Region
by Sr. Kathy Radich, OSF, Regional Coordinator

Parishes in the YK region are reviewing their mitigation plans as the situation with the pandemic continues to change. Rural parishes are dealing with the challenges, such as increasing the number of people who can safely attend services or what to do when holding service with the possibility of non-vaccinated youth being present in a group. These parishes are trying to provide for the religious needs of the villages while keeping everyone safe.

Planning for the Coming School Year
The region is looking forward to restarting group activities for the coming school year. Program directors Dominic Hunt, Lola Hunt, Pat Tam, and Rev. Mark Hoelsken, SJ, are starting to schedule events and activities. Please stay tuned for updates on upcoming events.

Returning Priests
Frs. Alphonsus and Aiden plan to return to the region soon. Both are in the Fairbanks area, awaiting approval to travel to villages. Rev. Aiden ministers from St. Marys, Mountain Village, and Pilot Station. Rev. Alphonsus ministers from Stebbins, St. Michael, and Unalakleet.

After both priests were stuck in Nigeria for over a year and a half, parishioners are looking forward to them returning.
It is a challenging year. Due to poor salmon returns, the fishing season on the Yukon will be closed in early June. Should runs improve, there could be future openings.

The area needs prayers for a better salmon run so families can feed themselves for the winter. Frs. Alphonsus and Aiden will be rejoining the group of ministers in the region who are present with the people and pray with them through challenges such as this.

Update from Interior Region
Bro. Bob Ruzicka, OFM, Regional Coordinator

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Faith Formation in a Time of Pandemic and Beyond
by Pat Tam, Director of Y-K Region Adult Faith Formation

In the midst of a raging pandemic, when our minds are focused mainly on survival and safety, how do we go about doing faith formation? As Adult Faith Formation (AFF) program director, this was the challenge I faced in the last fifteen months while “sheltering in place” in the Yukon Delta. Program activities such as parish and regional workshops, meetings, and retreats were no longer possible. For bush villages, faith and prayer were fed instead by the “domestic church” of family life and by the creative use of technology like the VHF radio, conference calls, texting, online apps like Zoom, and social media such as Facebook. For example, Rev. Mark Hoelsken, SJ, faithfully produced a videotaped Sunday Mass every week from Bethel, which was then posted onto a Facebook link. Other villages used the VHF to pray the rosary or to proclaim the Sunday readings in a Liturgy of the Word. Many families said they prayed together more often during that time of village lock-downs. And during Holy Week of 2020, families were encouraged to celebrate the Triduum in simple prayerful ways like washing each family member’s feet or doing a veneration of the cross at home.

One way AFF tried to help nurture faith was to produce resources. Director of AFF (Patrick Tam) worked with the new directors of Native Ministry Training Program (NMTP) Lala and Dominic Hunt to produce a booklet presenting the “Mysteries of the Holy Rosary” for families and small groups. The booklet provides the scriptural passage for each Mystery along with...
some brief background. A choice of several "Discussion Questions" are provided that invite a family or group to share thoughts and feelings in a kind of “talking circle” process. The hope was that families would use the rosary for faith-sharing by connecting the Mysteries of the prayer beads with the “mysteries” of God’s presence in our lives.

AFF also created hand-out resources for Advent and Lent for parishes to distribute by either printing paper copies or sharing by email. These resources focused on the gospel readings of the season and invited reflection, prayer, or even some simple action.

Before the pandemic, AFF and NMTP presented a regional workshop in Bethel each fall on the Gospel for the coming year. Lay ministers of the Word, as well as deacons and deacon candidates, gained a deeper understanding of scripture in the workshops. When gatherings became impossible due to Covid, we decided to make a DVD resource on the Gospel of Mark. Deacon Charles Rohrbacher of the Archdiocese of Anchorage Juneau was invited to present the workshop. Each week he would review his script with the program directors (along with Sr. Kathy Radich) by conference call for suggestions and comments. Deacon Charles wanted to make sure that the presentations would be culturally relevant in the Yukon-Kuskokwim setting. At this point, the project is still in the production stage. The technical aspects of the project are in the hands of the Archdiocesan Director of Communications Dominique Johnson in Juneau and Rev. Mark Hoelsken, SJ, in Bethel.

In the last few weeks, restrictions have slowly lifted. In Emmonak, on May 10, 2021, we gathered for our first church funeral in 15 months. After a long illness, Laurie Waska, wife of Deacon Raymond Waska Sr., died in her home surrounded by her family. Rev. Mark Hoelsken, SJ, came to Emmonak to celebrate the funeral Mass in a full church. And on May 16th, I made my first trip to a parish for an AFF activity. St. Joseph’s Parish in Kotlik invited me to lead a retreat for their young adults preparing for Confirmation on Pentecost. Like the first green blades of spring, the signs of new life remind us that winter and death do not have the last word.
A DIY Magisterium Sabotages Evangelization!

This article was authored by Marcel LeJeune, President and Founder of Catholic Missionary Disciples. It was originally published at the following link and is used with permission. http://www.catholicmissionarydisciples.com/blog

Jesus says, “you are my friends if you do what I command” (John 15:14). This implies that those who don’t do what Jesus commands are not friends of his; that is, they lack intimacy with our Lord. This is very important. Disobedience to God leads to a break in our relationship with Jesus. I don’t know many Catholic leaders or disciples who argue with this, but many argue how obedience to God is lived out. As Catholics, we do NOT advocate blind obedience to human authority. Still, Catholics aren’t a magisterium unto themselves, and therein lies a big part of our current issue. After God, who am I supposed to be obedient to, and what does obedience entail? Furthermore, what are the implications of the answers to these questions in my relationship with God and how I evangelize others?

Obedience is not a dirty word

Obedience means to “listen to” or “accept guidance.” Jesus and the Catholic Church have always taught that one person is not an authority unto themselves but is granted authority from God. Even Jesus appeals to the Father, his works, and the Spirit when he talks about the authority he wields. To submit to God is not to go blindly into faith. Instead, it is to say that we are not God, do not know everything, and to humble ourselves before the all-knowing and all-powerful one that can save us.

This is good for us, just as being obedient to proper human authorities is good for us.

If there is a defining point of Catholicism, it is the authority the Church teaches with, in the Magisterium, the Pope and Bishops. We owe them our loyalty and devotion because God has instilled in them the power to protect the Church from teaching error. Not you. Not me. Not your favorite Catholic commentator or YouTube personality or speaker or pundit.

Jesus gave true spiritual authority to the Pope and the Bishops, even when we don’t like what they have to say.

What we are responsible for is our obedience to this God-given authority. This does not mean that if our Bishop told us to do something contrary to our conscience or God’s laws, we must do it. But, it does mean that who we listen to, who we submit our faith to, who we allow to lead us, who we see as authoritative will be answered for at some point. We are responsible for these decisions, not those who are in authority over us—only our own. Yes, we might have issues with some decisions of our leaders, but how we react to those decisions is what we are responsible for. Richard John Neuhaus put it this way:

“I may not understand an authoritative teaching of the Magisterium; I may have difficulties with a teaching, but, as Newman understood, a thousand difficulties do not add up to a doubt, never mind a rejection. I may think a teaching is inadequately expressed, and pray and work for its more adequate expression in the future. But, given a decision between what I think the Church should teach and what the Church, in fact, does teach, I decide for the Church. I decided freely and rationally because God has promised the apostolic leadership of the Church guidance and charisms that He has not promised me; because I think the Magisterium just may understand some things that I don’t; because I know for sure that, in the larger picture of history, the witness of the Catholic Church is
immeasurably more important than anything I might think or say. In short, I obey.”

Thus a proper understanding of how we are to obey our Catholic leaders is a testing of our virtue. Obedience is not a dirty word but a beautiful one. One that is closely tied to the other virtues of humility, faith, love, and prudence.

The Challenges
The Catechism says that obedience to rightful authorities is our duty:

“The duty of obedience requires all to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and good-will." (CCC 1900)

We will all have some challenges in being obedient. For some, it will be a moral issue. Some particular doctrines they struggle with. For some, it will be a particular person in authority over them. Regardless, we have to take these issues to prayer...not the internet. When we start to proclaim such struggles to the broader community of non-believers, we can sabotage our evangelization.

For instance, I will argue for the merits of coffee, queso, and bourbon. But I dislike beets, cheap yard equipment, and fire ants. It is natural to have an opinion and bias for some things and against others. Still, as Christian disciples, we are called to something better than just living with our bias, especially when there are eternal consequences. We are called to submit our bias and our problems to our Lord and allow him to sift through it to see where we are right and where we are wrong. Even further, Catholic leaders are held to a higher standard (rightfully so) and should also help those struggling with their bias.

The question we need to answer is - when does a bias turn unhealthy for a Catholic disciple? Here are some signs of unhealthy disobedience or bias:

1 - Every opinion is an opportunity to find an enemy or an ally. Rather than allowing a differing opinion (even polarizing ones) to challenge you or seeing them as an opportunity to understand where others are coming from, you feel the need to take a stand and react. This can become unhealthy because when every opinion needs a reaction, every person behind the opinion can be an enemy. This is magnified in our age of social media hot takes. I fear many don’t realize they may be putting their souls in danger more often than they realize.

2 - Every Catholic leader, group, etc., is labeled and placed into a good or bad category. This could be political (right or left) or with a label (progressive, traditional, conservative, liberal, etc.). No matter how you assign them, they are grouped with others, and you think you know where they are coming from. Once you assign them a label/category, you can either listen intently to them (if they agree with you - aka confirmation bias) or dismiss them (because they disagree with you). This is toxic. You have allowed yourself to let a toxic Catholic echo chamber determine your narrow way of seeing others.

3 - You are not in the heart of the Church but on an extreme side or the other. The poles are always the coldest place for a reason. But, to be in the heart of the Church means your own heart can remain warm and loving to others. This doesn’t mean you don’t take a stand on things that need to be stood up for. Instead, it means that you are resting in the heart of Catholicism. A Catholicism which isn’t defined by you or I, but by God.

4 - You have a DIY magisterium that includes a select few Bishops, clergy, and lay leaders that fit your views. Maybe they speak about problems you want spoken about. Maybe they challenge things you believe need to be challenged. Still, you have narrowed those who have authority over you to a select few. This may even mean that those with real spiritual authority in your life (real = authority that God has given others, not that you have assigned yourself) are ignored. Your pastor. Your Bishop. Your Pope. Never mind those men... you have selected your own Magisterium, a DIY one. This is a dangerous place to be. Maybe your favorite Catholic leaders/commentators seem angry, dismissive of others, or are monetizing Catholic angst. They may make themselves out to be the arbiter of the “real truth” about your favorite issues rather than the Magisterium of the Church. Finally, they have incentivized all of these things and sometimes
monetized them. Division, angst, disagreement, and name-calling are their fruits, not unity, peace, empathy, and charity. Red flags and warning lights should be going off in your head/heart if this is the case.

With all this in mind, we can quickly see how a DIY magisterium can sabotage our evangelization. Our opinions become the gospel. Our winning an argument trumps winning a soul. Our proclamation of truth is due to pride, not love. Oh Lord, forgive us!

What to do?
So, what can we do to regain our spiritual, emotional, and communal health? Here are a few suggestions.

• Realize that listening and understanding others does not necessitate agreement or acceptance.
• Do your best to treat others as you would want to be treated or even better as God would have you treat them.
• If you struggle to be obedient to a Church teaching, a legitimate authority, etc., make sure you pray about these issues. Be prudent about how you spread such struggles.
• Look for the good in others. God made them with good in them, regardless of their opinions and lifestyle. Their very being is good. Try to see this.
• Love those that don’t deserve it. Mercy is always in need.
• Be obedient to those who have true spiritual authority over you.
• Try to avoid hot takes and reactions on social media.
• Remember that there is a human being behind every opinion. Your soul and their soul are more important than you winning an argument.
• Forgive others and ask for forgiveness when you need to. Reconciliation takes courage.
• Allow room for others to be imperfect, then love them anyway.
• There are times to be silent and times to speak up. But, when we do speak up, how you state a truth may be as important as stating it.
• Understand when your inner peace is out of whack and why. Talk to Jesus about it in prayer. Guard your peace because you are the custodian of it, and nobody can take it away unless you allow them to.

“What embitters the world is not excess of criticism, but an absence of self-criticism.” -GK Chesterton.

Summer Seminarian Assignments

by Rev. Robert Fath, Vicar General and Director of Vocation

Now that the academic year has come to an end, we have summer assignments lined up for our seminarians. Deacon Dominik will be spending the summer with Rev. Gregg Wood in the villages of Scammon Bay and Chevak. Deacon Piotr will be assisting Rev. Alphonsus Afina in the villages of Unalakleet, Stebbins, and St. Michael. Josh Miller begins the summer spirituality program at the Institute for Priestly Formation on the campus of Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. Josh will return to the diocese in mid-August to begin his pastoral year assignment. Michael Koehler, a first-year college student for the diocese, studying at Bishop White College Seminary in Spokane, Washington, decided to step away from priestly discernment at the end of the academic year. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors. As always, continue to pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send workers into His vineyard!
Catholic Schools of Fairbanks

Summer Camps

www.catholic-schools.org/summercamp

5th - 8th grades

STEM Camps w/ Mr. Storm

3D Design & Printing (June 14-18, 9 a.m. to noon)
Improv Camp (June 14-18, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
Robotics & Programming (June 21-25, 9 a.m. to noon)
Strategy Games & Logic Adventures (June 21-25, 1 to 4 p.m.)
$150 per camp

K-6th grades

Fun with Four-Legged Friends (June 28-July 2 & July 6-9)

Campers will learn how to care for our four-legged friends (dogs). Along with her well-trained dogs, Mrs. Atkins will teach basic obedience commands and dog training games. Campers can take these skills home to work with their own dogs. $150 half day / $250 full day ($225 CSF students)

Ocean Week (July 12-16)

Mrs. Noe, originally from Florida, will share her first-hand ocean knowledge through a variety of activities. In the afternoons, campers will partake in as much outdoor water play as possible. $150 half day / $250 full day ($225 CSF students)

Space Camp (June 14-18 & July 19-23)

Join Ms. Ward on two weeks of adventures in space without ever leaving Earth. The first week, campers will explore Mars and the second week, they'll journey to the moon.
$150 half day / $250 full day ($225 CSF students)

Register online: catholic-schools.org/summercamp
phone: (907)313-3291
615 Monroe St. | Fairbanks, AK 99701
Jean McBee Coviello: A Diocesan Volunteer’s Adventure, 1971-1973

Edited by David Schienle, Coordinator

In January 2020, Jean Coviello mailed a letter containing several slides to Patty Walter, Editor of the Alaskan Shepherd. Jean shared her experience as a diocesan volunteer from the early 1970s at Delta Junction and Tok. Over the next year, she sent her collection of 792 slides, including detailed descriptions, to the Diocesan Archive. Her donation has added to the recorded history of the Diocese. The following is an interview with Jean Coviello.

What led you to come to Alaska?
I first met Father Anderson Bakewell, a Jesuit, in 1963. At that time, I was in nursing school in Baltimore, and a good friend from school introduced me to him. Rev. Bakewell was then serving at Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown, DC. He went from Washington, DC, to Our Lady of Sorrows in Delta Junction, AK.

After graduation and registered nursing licensure, I worked in Baltimore for several years, then moved to Denver with another nurse friend. After a year there, my roommate became engaged and had wedding plans, so I knew we would be parting ways. My parents were still living in western Maryland, but I didn’t want to go back there. I had communicated a bit with Father Bakewell over the years, and he suggested, “why not come up here and work with me?” And so I decided to do just that!

What did you do as a volunteer?
In essence, my job was to do whatever needed to be done! I was provided a comfortable apartment and Father’s older car to drive. My duties included serving at Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown, DC. He went from Washington, DC, to Our Lady of Sorrows in Delta Junction, AK.

Top left image: Jean in 1972. Top right image: Jean and her husband Al volunteering at a fair hosted by their parish. Background Image: Cathedral Bluffs outside of Tok on the ALCAN Highway, in 1972.

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as sacristan, paying the bills, keeping parish records updated, balancing the bank statements, making deposits, grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, chauffeuring visitors, outreach to parish families, and occasionally helping with CCD classes.

What was the trip to Alaska like?
When I decided to join Father Bakewell, I planned to drive all the way from my parent’s home in Maryland. My car was a newish VW Fastback. Little did I know that Volkswagens were not a wise choice in the cold temperatures of Alaska. After the first winter, I drove it to Anchorage to sell it.

I stopped in Denver for a day or two with my sister, then proceeded northwest to Seattle. It had been arranged that my car would be “winterized” there before continuing on. From there, I boarded a ferry, the Taku, to travel the Inside Passage, disembarking at Haines. I had to deal with seasickness for a day before realizing that medication was available in the gift shop.

At Haines, I was met by Jean and John Koehler, acquaintances of Father Bakewell. John was stationed at the pump station there in Haines. I stayed with them for a day, then continued north. They became lifelong friends.

My next stop was Burwash Landing on Kluane Lake in the Yukon. There I met Father Henk Huijbers, OMI. Father Bakewell also arranged this stop, and there I learned I was to have a traveling companion for the rest of my trip.

Father Henk came to Burwash in 1974 from Holland and pastored Our Lady of the Rosary Mission church. I also met a wonderful couple, Josey and Frank Sias, who lived very near Kluane Lake. They have quite a legacy there. Sadly I lost contact with them but never forgot their kindness towards me. I used the spelling of Josey’s name for my first child.

In Burwash Landing, I met my traveling companion for the rest of my trip: Randy Davenport. Randy was an elderly farmer, originally from Iowa, who had established residency in the Delta area and returned from a visit to his sister in Iowa. He was very sweet, about 70 years old.

What was your experience in Alaska?
Alaska was an entirely new environment. Denver gets cold, and Maryland also, but rarely does the temperature fall below zero. From the beginning, Father Bakewell stressed safety issues. Dress for the weather, make sure your gas tank is always full, etc. Father always carried extra gear in his car in the event of an emergency, and he wanted me to do the same. Once, on a weekend trip to Tok, I slid off the highway into three and a half feet of snow. I couldn’t believe how the snow was pushed up all around the engine. I had to be towed into Tok, and the car spent the night in a warm garage to thaw out. Thankfully that never happened again.

Father Bakewell was an intellectual, and a frequent meal guest with us was Gesina “Niki” Threlkeld. They often spoke of things I had no knowledge of, both on religious matters and many other subjects. To say I was out of my depth was an understatement! Niki was a botanical illustrator, working on the wildflowers of Alaska. She lived to be 100 years old and ended her days in New Mexico, not too many years ago.

Sr. Patricia Herrin, OSU, Sr. Sally Ann Nash, OSU, and Jeanie McBee, at Worthington Glacier while heading to Valdez.
Early on, I became acquainted with the Fett family, who operated Mountain View Farms at Mile 1417 of the Alaska Highway, just a few miles outside of Delta. The Fetts were homesteaders from Wisconsin who came north to start a new life. Together with their numerous children, they built a chicken house for 10,000 laying hens and a barn for raising hogs. Their son Tom engaged me to practice my nursing, giving iron shots to the piglets!

Occasionally I would help with the egg sorting and packing. This was Mrs. Fett’s bailiwick, along with five or so women from the community. Her job was “candling” the eggs: determining the condition of the air cell, yolk, and white by passing each egg over a light. The rest of the crew rinsed, sorted, and packed the eggs for transport to the stores. It was a well-oiled machine.

The parishes back then were small, and though there was faithful attendance, I don’t remember the church ever really full. First Communion might be the exception. Mass brought people out for the social interaction as well as Sunday worship. Usually, I did not go to Tok with Father Bakewell for the weekend Masses, as there was no place for me to stay. Holy Rosary’s church was a small log structure, with a chapel, a social room, and a bedroom and bath for the priest. When I became acquainted with parishioners, I was eventually offered a place to stay. Both parishes were very welcoming to me, and everyone had a story, whether they were native
to Alaska or came from the “lower 48.”

Fort Greely was just a few miles from Delta, and they also had a resident chaplain and weekend Masses. The community’s Catholics usually went to one or the other; they didn’t go back and forth. As a rule, military families tended to worship on the base, with very few exceptions.

Father Bakewell loved to hunt. He had several bearskin rugs on the floor in the rectory. The kids loved them. I always tripped over the heads! Though hunting was new to me, he wanted me to try it, so I did. Over those few years, I went ptarmigan hunting, moose, caribou, and sheep hunting.

There were many visitors to Our Lady of Sorrows. I was privileged to meet Bishop Gleeson, Bishop Whelen, SJ, Paul Zahl from National Geographic, and the Benziger sisters, Marieli and Rita from Altadena, California. Their father, August Benziger, was a portrait painter of Popes and presidents.

It was probably my first Christmas in Alaska that Rev. W. Thomas Laughlin, OSB, came up from St. Louis to help with the holiday liturgies. Father Thomas was a Benedictine from St. Louis (originally Liverpool) who saw a “help wanted” notice on a bulletin board somewhere in St. Louis, probably placed there by one of Father Bakewell’s friends or family members. He decided to look into it, and the rest is history. In retrospect, I think Father Bakewell posted that note himself when visiting St. Louis.

As Father Thomas had little experience driving in
snow, I was assigned to be his chauffeur for a while. Despite his British formality, he was truly a man of the people, and he became another lifelong friend. Father Thomas helped again during the summer and went on to serve in Bethel for a later summer.

After two years and Sr. Sally returning to St. Louis, I was forced to make a more definite plan for my future. Father Bakewell knew my father was ill and spiraling rapidly downward into dementia, and he encouraged me to go home. I delayed my departure for a while, working a part-time job at the nearby FAA station. Leaving was bittersweet; I had many friends and had no idea whether I would ever see them again.

I had purchased a Plymouth Duster from neighbors in Delta and started packing up in the fall of 1973. Driving the ALCAN Highway could be a challenge, and I realize that my Guardian Angel was with me on both trips, coming and going. My first goal was to get to Sumas, Washington, where my friends, Jean and John Koehler (formerly of Tok) had retired. There was one hair-raising experience when driving through a canyon after dark fog descended. I couldn’t see how deep the canyon was, probably, a good thing! And, somewhat belatedly, I realized my headlights were dirty. My confidence was restored after I cleaned them. The Duster lasted quite a few years, and even after being buried in snow for several weeks one western Maryland winter, it started on the first try.

**What did you do after leaving Alaska?**

After Alaska, I came home to my family and found a job in a nearby hospital. My father had deteriorated considerably and nearly required 24-hour care. He could walk and still feed himself, but that was the extent of his self-care. My mother was a trooper, but she was near the breaking point. My father had been a beloved mailman in the small town where we lived: Westernport. He knew everyone, and his customers all loved him. One of my favorite stories about him was during World War II; he would go into the post office on weekends. He knew the families who had a son or brother serving overseas, and if there was a letter for them, he would deliver it. Our mother was quite used to going from Sunday Mass to the post office “just to check.”

Dad had a stroke and died on Good Friday, 1974. My mother lived on for many years. She was a wife for 35 years and a widow for 44. She died in 2018 at the age of 104. She was quite a woman!

I met my future husband later that year in 1974. Al was a roommate to one of my first cousins, and despite all my aunt’s best efforts, we had never met. When my cousin married a Canadian girl, we all flew to Manitoba for the wedding. That was our first meeting; Al was in the wedding party. We enjoyed each other’s company and thus began our courtship. We were engaged by early summer and married August of 1975.

We lived in the DC area for a short time but knew we did not want to raise a family there. So we looked west and uprooted to the western extreme of Maryland, Garrett County, and the historic town of Mt. Lake Park. There we raised our four children in an old house that was built in 1883. In 2018, we left our Maryland home and moved to North Carolina to be nearer to children. It was a bittersweet parting, but as retirees with less income, we knew we wouldn’t be able to maintain the house. Old homes are always in need of something!

Our children are all successful adults, and we are grateful. Our oldest, Josey, is a pre-school teacher. Teaching her kids during the Pandemic was a challenge. Second child, Christian, is a biomedical engineer living in the UK. His field is ultrasound and its use in the treatment of cancer. Eliza is next, and she lives in New York City and works at the National Academy of Design as Deputy Director. Our youngest, Francesca, is a gifted artist and works at the local Catholic school. We have been blessed with five grandchildren.

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Some give by going to the missions. Some go by giving to the missions. Without both there are no missions.

The Diocese has been blessed by the many volunteers and donors that have supported the mission. Not only have friends of the Diocese supported the mission financially, but they also have donated their time and talents. We want to express our gratitude for the generosity of our donors. Many of our past volunteers have stayed connected with the Diocese.
MADE IN GOD’S IMAGE

We are all made in God’s image and likeness. That means we possess a profound dignity that makes us sacred, from the child in the womb to the elderly. This sacredness is why the Church teaches us that every life must be protected from conception to natural death. It is also why we insist abuse of any kind is wrong, because it violates that sacred image.

If you believe a child has suffered from abuse or neglect, you must report it. Child abuse and neglect can have devastating and long lasting effects on a child. Children who get help as soon as possible have a much better chance to have a safe home, a strong family, and a better chance at a happy life. Some parents need help and skills to provide for their children in a healthy way. Parents can learn how to meet the developmental needs of their children through intervention. Please take the safety of our children seriously.
**4 Types of Abuse:**

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:**

Physical Abuse is any non-accidental physical injury to a child. It might come from extreme punishment or discipline. The following are examples of physical abuse:

- shaking
- slapping
- burning
- biting
- hitting
- punching
- scratching
- inappropriate restraint
- mis-use of medications

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:**

Emotional abuse is the pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that hurts a child’s emotional, psychological or social development. Family problems that may lead to emotional abuse are:

- domestic violence
- substance abuse
- chronic mental illness
- lack of parenting skills

Showing few signs of affection, guidance, or not meeting emotional needs by belittling, shaming or humiliating are all forms of emotional abuse.

**NEGLECT:**

Child neglect is failure to provide for a child’s basic needs. All children have the right to:

- adequate food
- an education
- medical care
- freedom from violence
- a loving caregiver

**SEXUAL ABUSE:**

A child or youth cannot consent to any form of sexual activity. Child sexual abuse is a form of abuse that includes sexual activity with or in front of a minor and does not necessarily include physical contact. Some forms of sexual abuse are:

- sex of any kind with a minor
- fondling or touching a child’s private parts
- exposing oneself to a minor
- sharing or owning pornographic images of children

**WHY DON’T CHILDREN TELL?**

- They fear no one will believe them.
- The abuser may have threatened them, their families or their pets.
- The abuser may have tricked them, then blamed them.
- They don’t want to upset their families.
- They may have loving feelings toward the abuser.

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Safe Environment Office
1316 Peger Rd
Fairbanks, AK 99709
amenard@cbna.org
907-374-9553

*Heavenly Father,
We pray that you would pour
your Holy Spirit into our hearts,
That as we minister to your
people, we might recognize and
love them for who they are: Your
beloved sons and daughters,
created in Your image and
conformed to your Son, Our Lord
and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*