



**CATHOLIC
HOME
MISSIONS**

Sharing the Faith in South Dakota



At the National Tekakwitha Conference held in Rapid City, July 2017, organizers wrap Bishop Gruss in a Lakota Star Quilt.

Wherever we go, even to the smallest parish in the most remote corner of this earth, there is the one Church. We are at home, we are in the family, we are among brothers and sisters. And this is a great gift of God!

—Pope Francis
General Audience
September 25, 2013

In western South Dakota, while driving from one end of the Diocese of Rapid City to the other, a motorist encounters rolling, rugged, open prairies punctuated by rivers, creeks, and a smattering of trees—not

to mention the rocky, imposing Black Hills. Towns are separated by miles of roads, both paved and gravel. The four-hour ride across the diocese provides the opportunity to see plenty of sheep, cattle, and fields of wheat, corn, sunflowers, soybeans, and hay. People work in tourism and agriculture throughout the diocese. In Rapid City, the largest city in the diocese, the major employers are a hospital, a military base, and a university.

The diocese spans 43,000 square miles in 22 counties and includes five Native American reservations. Catholics make up only 10% of the population. Mass is celebrated at 23 parishes and 53 missions in the cities, towns, and rural communities of the diocese.

Despite the challenges of great distance, relatively small numbers, pockets of poverty, and an increasingly diverse population, the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Rapid City is strong, steadfast, and responsive to the needs of its people. And grants from Catholic Home Missions support formation, communication, and ministry programs that reach every parish in the diocese.

Fr. Michel Mulloy, vicar general of the diocese, says, “The faith is very strong, and there is a generosity on the part of priests living in far-flung areas to serve multiple locations. Some cover 200 miles each weekend to celebrate Mass.”

Parishes may have as few as 200 parishioners, but he says, “People know instinctively what it means to be Church.”

...continued on page 2

Neighbors

ISSUE 1 2018

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSION AMERICA

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Throughout Lent we reflect on our own weakness and our need for Christ's merciful love. And when we celebrate the great joy of Easter, we join the heavenly hosts praising God with Alleluias!

For many of us, the Lent and Easter journey mirrors the seasons of our own lives. We all have times when we face challenges, or even cry to God, "Why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). But as people of faith, we know that our strength comes from the Lord. Christ has come to save us, and so we need never lose hope.

Our Home Mission dioceses face challenges that could easily lead them to feel forsaken. But your support gives them the light of hope that reminds them we are all one family in faith. In this newsletter you will find a map of all the dioceses that benefit from your support.

Dioceses like Rapid City are answering the call to live in hope and share the faith. It is with your support that these efforts can succeed. Your support for the Catholic Home Missions Appeal has helped the Diocese of Rapid City, and many dioceses like it, to strengthen the Church throughout our country.

We are a family of faith called to inspire and support one another. And so, as you read about the Diocese of Rapid City in this issue, I invite you to recall those who have helped you on your own faith journey. Just as you have helped others on their journey, others have helped you. I invite you to think about these people and say a prayer of gratitude for them.

And let us also pray together for our Home Mission communities across the country. May they continue to build peaceful and prayerful communities. Thank you for your continued compassion and support.

In the Heart of Christ,

Paul D. Etienne

Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL
Archbishop of Anchorage

...continued from page 1

MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

With your support, the modest diocesan headquarters in Rapid City focuses on the spiritual, temporal, and emotional needs of parishioners throughout western South Dakota. Ministry on Native American reservations is complicated by factors like unemployment and addiction.

"Ministry on the reservations and in the rural areas helps people cope with the struggles and difficulties of their lives," Fr. Michel says. "We don't need a lot of ministry on the reservations focused only on the sacraments. We need to knock on doors and rebuild the faith life with the consistency of our presence."

Ten years ago, the diocese developed Lakota Circles of Hope, a values-based curriculum written by Native elders and educators to help Native and non-Native students move away

from patterns of addiction. This program has reached more than 17,000 people and is now offered in 16 Catholic and public schools, including schools on five reservations.



Two young Lakota people bring up the gifts at the Mass to open the cause for canonization for Nicholas Black Elk, servant of God.

ENCOUNTERING CHRIST ACROSS THE PRAIRIE

Your donations to Catholic Home Missions have helped the diocese develop creative ways to provide faith formation opportunities for people to encounter Christ. The diocese's Veritatis Splendor



Children participate in the Lakota Circles of Hope program and learn more about traditional Lakota values.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Diocese of Rapid City includes the geographic center of the United States, twenty miles north of the town of Belle Fourche.
- Within the diocese are three Catholic elementary schools, two Catholic high schools, and two Newman Centers.
- The Diocese of Rapid City is served by 29 active diocesan priests, 2 retired priests, 15 religious order priests, 26 deacons, 5 women religious, and the prayerful support of a community of 18 retired Benedictine sisters. In addition, 8 seminarians are studying for the priesthood.
- Jesuit missionary Fr. Pierre-Jean De Smet offered the first Mass in western South Dakota in 1839. Jesuit missionaries lived among the Lakota in the 1870s, and Fr. John Lonergan, the first resident priest, arrived in Deadwood to minister to prospectors during the Gold Rush in 1877.

A FAMILY OF FAITH

Bishop Robert D. Gruss of Rapid City shares, “The support of Catholic Home Missions is vital to our diocese to assist us in carrying out our mission to form intentional disciples through our faith formation programs, to share the message of Christ through our diocesan newspaper, and to support the great ministry in our family life office.”

The Diocese of Rapid City faces many challenges that at times can seem insurmountable. But we know that through Christ, we always have hope. Your support has filled the Diocese of Rapid City with hope that strengthens the faithful there to overcome their challenges and share the faith.

You have helped people across the diocese hear the message that no matter how remote or how small each faith community is, no matter how scattered the community members are, we are a family of faith. And with each other, we are home. ☺



Children experience adoration through the Faith on the Road program.

Institute trains catechists in liturgy, evangelization, spirituality, and mission. Eighty-eight students were nominated by their pastors and parish leadership to participate. Through this program, these new leaders have grown closer to Jesus and developed new confidence to share the faith.

Further, the diocesan Faith on the Road program brings teams of six people to share dinner, discussion, and prayer with entire parishes. Small groups form by age for the discussions, and Eucharistic adoration is an important part of the evening. Programs like these bring people closer to Christ and help the diocese answer the needs of the people.



Principal Coleen Lecy instructs the St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary School students carrying the gifts for the all-school Mass during National Catholic Schools Week.



The Veritatis Splendor Institute class of 2016 celebrates graduation with Bishop Gruss with Mass at Holy Cross Chapel at Terra Sancta Retreat Center.



Strengthening the Church at Home

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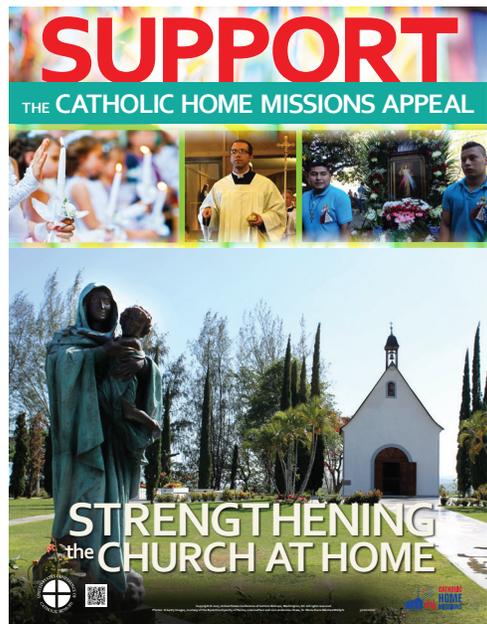
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www.usccb.org/home-missions

READ ABOUT HOW the Diocese of Rapid City is building families of faith across the prairie.



Your generosity to the Catholic Home Missions Appeal supports essential ministries in poor dioceses across the United States and its territories.

THANK YOU for being part of our efforts to strengthen the Church at home.

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