



WEEKLY MEMO from BMW

Date: December 12, 2014
From: Bishop Michael W. Warfel
To: Clergy, Religious, Lay Ecclesial Ministers et al

As many will have heard by now, Fr. Dale Yurkovic died yesterday, December 11th after a struggle with cancer. Funeral arrangements are yet pending as I write this memo though plans are for the funeral Mass and burial to be at St. Mary Parish in Livingston. More information will be forthcoming as final arrangements are decided.

Fr. Denis Keane is now no longer pastor at St. Agnes in Red Lodge, having returned permanently to Ireland due to illness. Please continue to keep him in prayer.

This evening, December 12th, I'll be at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Billings in order to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This is always one of the highlights of the year for me. On the weekend, I have schedule pastoral visits for St. Michael Parish, Absarokee on Saturday evening, December 13th followed by a listening session and St. Mary Parish, Columbus and St. Agnes Parish, Red Lodge on Sunday morning, December 14th followed by a listening session.

Again, please remember to keep Deacon Carlos Malaver-Parada in your prayers in these last few days as he prepares for his priesthood ordination on Tuesday, December 16th.

Last month I participated in a symposium in which over 70 representatives from agricultural groups, agribusiness, environmental studies and academia, including theology, gathered on the campus of the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota titled *Food, Faith & the Environment: the Vocation of the Agricultural Leader*. Participants came for this three-day gathering to address some of the pressing challenges facing agriculture, such as conserving the natural resource base and preparing to feed an ever-larger world population. The symposium featured presentations from scholars, religious figures, and leaders of national farm groups including representative from Montana. The outcomes from this symposium, plus another one planned for next year in Milan, Italy, will serve as the basis for a comprehensive reflection on the vocation of agriculture. Catholic Rural Life is in partnership with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to inform the next generation of food and agriculture leaders how religious faith connects with their work. All the presentations from the symposium are on the following website: FaithFoodEnvironment.org.

As a repeat announcement, looking ahead to February, February 8th, the Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita, is the National Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Human Trafficking. Human trafficking is quite a serious problem in our world and is experienced especially in Eastern Montana. I ask that you touch upon this issue at your Sunday Masses on Sunday, February 8th and include petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful. There are several helpful websites dedicated to this: www.usccb.org/shepherd and www.usccb.org/stopslavery. In this light, the theme Pope Francis has designated for the 48th World Day of Peace is “Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters.” I encourage all to read through the Pope’s Letter.

I pray that this Season of Advent has provided at least some time and opportunity to reflect upon the coming of Christ.