

WEEKLY MEMO from BMW

Date: March 25, 2015
Solemnity of the Annunciation
From: Bishop Michael W. Warfel
To: Clergy, Religious, Lay Ecclesial Ministers et al

Upcoming Pastoral Visitations: I'll be at St. Anthony Parish, Culbertson from March 27th through 29th.

On Friday evening, March 27th at 7:30 PM (following their Friday fish fry) I will be giving a presentation at St. Anthony's on *Stewarding the Gift of Faith: the Lifestyle of a Disciple*. On Saturday, March 28th from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, I will be offering a day retreat on *The Sorrowful Mysteries*. Area parishioners are invited to attend these. On Palm Sunday, I will celebrate Mass at 11:30 AM followed by a parish Listening Session.

Obviously to all (I hope), next week is Holy Week. While there are many details and last minute preparations to address, it would be good if all of us can find at least some extra time to reflect on the great mystery of salvation we celebrate.

Cum Christo/Cursillo celebrates its 50th anniversary in Eastern Montana this year. The Celebration will be held June 19th through June 21st at Billings Central Catholic High School. It will be an occasion filled with music, prayer and fellowship. Saturday, June 20th, will feature Tom Peterson as keynote speaker. He is a "4th Dayer" having gone on his Cursillo some years ago. Presently, he is founder and President of *Catholics Come Home* as seen or heard regularly on EWTN. I will also offer a presentation as well as preside at the Sunday morning Mass. On Saturday, there will be a special time for adoration and confessions. There will be more information coming out on this as the weekend approaches. For now, I just wanted to alert you all to this very special event. I also direct your attention to the need of volunteers to help put it on. There is need of many more volunteers. For those who have attended a Cum Christo/Cursillo, you may contact your Vicariate representative.

For more information and registration forms please visit

<http://www.bigskycumchristo.org> or call:

Billings: Lucy Melugin 208-2340

Forsyth: Renee Steinberger 351-2150

Miles City: Diane Burke 704-564-4282

Glendive: Kathy Ackerman 939-2633

Sidney: Julie Brodhead 488-633

Great Falls: Carmen Thorsen 761-1805

Lewistown: Ron Hrubes 366-3709

Miles City: Donna Nation 697-0020

Hysham: Marion Icopini 690-8571

The Synod on the Family will be coming up in October as I believe all are aware. Pope Francis has asked that people begin praying for this Synod. Given the concern that so

many have expressed about some of the issues that will be addressed it is a great idea. Noted below is an article that came from the Holy See today.

The Pope asks for prayers for the Synod on the family

Vatican City, 25 March 2015 (VIS) – On the solemnity of the Annunciation, during this Wednesday's general audience held in a rain-soaked St. Peter's Square, the Pope announced to the faithful that today would be a special catechesis, a pause for prayer during his path of reflections on the family.

“On 25 March, the Church solemnly celebrates the Annunciation, the beginning of the mystery of the Incarnation. The Archangel Gabriel visits the humble girl from Nazareth and announces that she will conceive and give birth to the Son of God. By this announcement the Lord illuminates and strengthens Mary's faith, as He will also do for her spouse Giuseppe, so that Jesus may be born in a human family. This is beautiful: it shows us how deeply the mystery of the Incarnation, as God wished it to be, includes not only conception in the womb of the mother, but also the fact of being welcomed into a true family. Today I would like to contemplate with you the beauty of this bond, of this, God's condescension, and we can do so reciting together the Hail Mary, which in its first part includes the words the Angel addressed to the Virgin”.

After praying the Hail Mary with all those present, Francis commented that today in many countries is the Day for Life, and that twenty years ago on this date St. John Paul II signed his encyclical “*Evangelium Vitae*”, in which the family “occupies a central role, inasmuch as it is the womb of human life”.

“The word of my venerated predecessor reminds us that the human couple has been blessed by God since the beginning to form a community of love and life, to whom the mission of procreation has been entrusted. Christian couples, by celebrating the sacrament of Marriage, indicate they are willing to honour this blessing, with the grace of Christ, for all their life. The Church, for her part, solemnly commits to caring for the family that is thus born, as a gift from God for her own life, in good times and bad: the bond between the Church and the family is sacred and inviolable. The Church, as a mother, never abandons her family, even when it is debased, hurt and humiliated in many ways. Not even when it gives in to sin or drifts away from the Church; she will always do everything to seek to cure and heal it, to invite it to convert and be reconciled with the Lord”.

If this is her task, the Pontiff observed, then it appears clear how much prayer the Church needs in order to be able to carry out this mission. “A

prayer full of love for the family and for life. A prayer that knows how to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to suffer with those who suffer". The Holy Father explained that he and his collaborators had decided to propose a renewal of the prayer for the Synod of Bishops on the family, and asked all present to continue to recite it until October, when the Synod assembly dedicated to the family is due to take place.

"I would like this prayer, like the entire Synod path, to be inspired by the Good Shepherd's compassion for his flock, especially for those people and families who for various reasons are 'harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd'. In this way, supported and inspired by the grace of God, the Church will be able to be even more committed, and even more united, in her witness of the truth of God's love and His mercy for the world's families, without exception, both inside and outside the fold".

"I ask you, please, to ensure that your prayer is not lacking. All of us – the Pope, cardinals, bishops, priests, men and women religious – we must all pray for the Synod. We need this, not chatter! I encourage even those who feel distant to pray too, and those who are not used to doing so. This prayer for the Synod on the family is for the good of all of us. I know that this morning an image has been given to you, which you now hold in your hands. I invite you to keep it and carry it with you always, so that over the coming months you can recite the prayer often, with holy insistence, as Jesus asked us. Now, let us pray together:

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
in you we contemplate
the splendor of true love,
we turn to you with confidence.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
make our families, also,
places of communion and cenacles of prayer,
authentic schools of the Gospel,
and little domestic Churches.
Holy Family of Nazareth
may our families never more experience
violence, isolation, and division:
May anyone who was wounded or scandalized
rapidly experience consolation and healing.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
may the upcoming Synod of Bishops
re-awaken in all an awareness
of the sacred character and inviolability of the
family,
its beauty in the project of God.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
hear and answer our prayer. Amen".

Helping Christians in the Holy Land

Every year there is a collection requested for the Holy Land on Good Friday. Given the violence present in the Middle East and the ever lessening presence of Christianity in the Holy Land, it is good to consider. I note the following about it.

When you donate on Good Friday at your local parish you help to ensure that Christianity will remain in the Holy Land.

The Franciscans of the Custody of the Holy Land have the unique responsibility of caring for the Holy Places as well as caring for the Christians living in the Holy Land.

Last year's Good Friday Collection provided support for the Holy Land in these ways:

- Provided emergency funds to the people in Syria and Iraq
- Supported 29 parishes, four homes for orphans, three academic institutions
- Helped keep 16 schools open for over 10,000 pre-K through grade 12 students
- Funded university scholarships for 295 students
- Provided 398 homes benefiting Christian families
- Helped rehabilitate over 100 homes for Christians families
- Provided senior care facilities in Bethlehem and Nazareth
- Created more than 1,500 jobs in the Holy Land
- Preserved 74 sanctuaries and shrines from the life of Jesus and the prophets
- Supported over 100 men preparing to be priests or brothers

