

BULLETIN – AUGUST 21

Thank you to all for the warm welcome you gave last weekend to Bishop Paul Lakra from the Diocese of Gumla, Jharkhand, India. Thank you also for the generous gifts you provided him to use in his mission diocese. His people are very poor financially, with an average parish Sunday collection totaling the equivalent of about \$5 in U.S. money. But they are rich in spirit and faith, with an ever-growing percentage of Catholic people and hundreds and thousands joining the Church each year. Bishop Lakra ordains an average of 20 new priests a year! Is it that they have faith and we have money? Well, not exactly; but pray that we learn from each other how to prosper both spiritually and materially to satisfy both our temporal and eternal needs. If you did not have an opportunity to make a special mission gift last weekend, you may use the envelopes still in church to do so this week or next. Just put the envelope along with your gift to the parish in the regular collection and we'll take care of getting it to India for you. And thanks to Bishop Lakra for allowing Father Dominic Tirkey from Gumla to serve with us in our diocese since 2008. Father Dominic is presently pastor at Edmore and Stanton in Montcalm County.

Reporting sexual abuse of minors. [The following notice is required to be published four times a year in both English and Spanish in compliance with the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.*] To inform the Diocese of Grand Rapids of the sexual abuse of a minor by a priest, deacon, or other Church personnel and/or to speak with the Victim Assistance Coordinator, please call **243-0491**. A caller will be requested to provide his or her name and telephone number. All calls regarding complaints of sexual abuse will be returned in a timely manner. The Diocese is committed to protect children, young people, and other vulnerable people in our schools, parishes, and ministries. As an alternative, a report may be made to the Family Independence Agency for the applicable county.

Denunciando abuso sexual de menores. Para informar a la Diócesis de Grand Rapids sobre el abuso sexual cometido contra un menor por parte de un sacerdote, diácono, o personal de la Iglesia o para contactar al coordinador de la asistencia para víctimas (Victim Assistance Coordinator), por favor llame al **243-0491**. A quien llame se le solicitará que provea su nombre y número telefónico. Todas las llamadas en referencia a una queja sobre abuso sexual serán atendidas con prontitud. La diócesis está comprometida a proteger a la niñez y a la juventud así como a otras personas vulnerables en nuestras escuelas, parroquias, y ministerios. Como una alternativa la denuncia puede ser hecha a la Department of Human Services del condado correspondiente.

The problem with surrendering to fads. There doesn't seem to be any condition or desire which goes contrary to "traditional values" which the government and the media do not adopt as a *cause célèbre* worthy of championing. "Transgenderism" has been one of the most recent psycho-physiological fads to get the attention of everyone from courts to state legislatures to school boards. Who can predict which bizarre manifestation of one's psychological innards will merit the next congratulatory phone call from the White House? At the 2017 Academy Awards, which movie superstar will

label as neanderthals all those who object to the fawning embrace of the most recent dysfunction to announce itself as a human right?

For all those in government, Hollywood, or the other media who insist that “science and history” are somehow on their side in these matters, the American College of Pediatricians in March of this year issued a statement which at least indicates that not all those with degrees go along with the latest fads in transgender restrooms, rights, and wardrobes. Take note of these points of interest which appear among the many other insights in the declaration made by these medical doctors:

Human sexuality is an objective biological binary trait: “XY” and “XX” are genetic markers of health, not genetic markers of a disorder.

People who identify as “feeling like the opposite sex” or “somewhere in between” do not comprise a third sex. They remain biological men or biological women.

A person’s belief that he or she is something they are not is, at best, a sign of confused thinking. These children suffer from gender dysphoria.

Puberty is not a disease and puberty-blocking hormones can be dangerous.

Conditioning children into believing that a lifetime of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex is normal and healthful is child abuse.

The American College of Pediatricians urges educators and legislators to reject all policies that condition children to accept as normal a life of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex. Facts -- not ideology -- determine reality.

Lest anyone think that these statements are presented here to somehow cast blame or shame on people who suffer from such disorders, the fact is that the Church is anxious to preserve and respect the God-given dignity of all human beings of every age and condition. Recognizing that being born, for instance, with two arms and two legs is the norm for human beings does not imply that those who suffer from *not* being born with all their healthy limbs are somehow less than human or worthy of scorn. But neither does reality lead us to necessarily “celebrate” the handicaps which we or others endure as part and parcel of the human condition. The desire that many such people have to be able to live their lives as normally as possible is very understandable. The strength of will and character that many of them display is truly admirable, in the face of odds that would leave most of us quivering in a corner.

So using words like dysfunction, dysphoria, and disorder does not equate to dismissal of real human beings with real needs and feelings. It’s an accurate way of saying that something’s not what it should be, and at the same time of encouraging both empathy and consideration for those who labor under burdens above and beyond the ordinary. And that should make them *extra*-ordinary, in anybody’s book!

Our July CSA payback came in the form of a check for **\$4,503**, telling us that you’ve been steadily paying on your pledges. Thank you! Thanks to your generous donations to the Appeal, we have not only achieved our target, but again gone far in excess of it. All of that overage comes back to us here at the parish to put to use in our various apostolates. This is a critical matter for us, since we have numerous low-income and single-person households who are not free to do as they might wish with their limited funds. You can see in the “Weekly Scoreboard” that in most weeks, our Sunday collection does not even equal this July payback. So, very honestly, we would not be

able to continue operating if it were not for your additional generosity to the Catholic Services Appeal. That gives us an important lesson: *together*, we can do more than any of us could do individually. And that applies to our work as the Church here in West Michigan. *Together*, our 82 parishes can accomplish things that no one parish could do on its own. And that's how the Church works in the name of Christ, all over the world. It's why he calls us to be a People, not just an unconnected scattering of solitary believers. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: “Credit cards are used to buy things you don't need with money you don't have to impress people you don't like” (David L. Ramsey III, 1960- , American financial author and radio host).