



The Compass **IN THE** Bulletin

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Priest encourages teens to use digital devices to make world a better place

BY ANN DEL PONTE | SPECIAL TO THE COMPASS

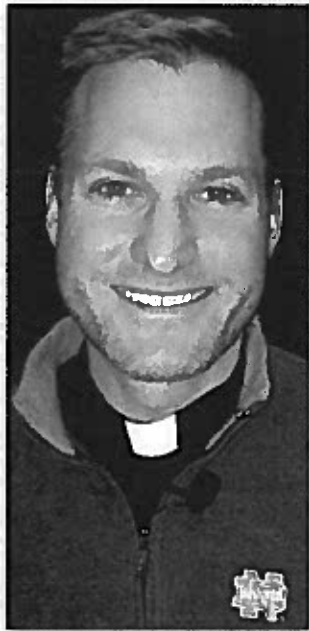
APPLETON — The students filling Xavier High School's auditorium seemed wary when the priest told them to take out their cell phones and wave them in the air. But Holy Cross Fr. Nathan Wills wasn't there to confiscate phones.

As part of his "digital evangelization," Fr. Wills, a professor at the University of Notre Dame, is encouraging young people to use their digital devices to make the world a better place.

Fr. Wills, 39, spoke to the student body Wednesday morning, Feb. 8, and addressed parents that evening with the same basic message: we can turn the internet from a "worldwide dumpster fire" into a place of encouragement.

"Figure it out for the rest of us," he told the students. "Create a world that's salt and light."

Cell phones, the Internet and social media need to be handled with care, Fr. Wills



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Holy Cross Fr. Nathan Wills, a professor at the University of Notre Dame, spoke about digital evangelization Feb. 8 at Xavier High School in Appleton.

said. But he is not suggesting

that parents ban their use, noting that the Vatican hasn't said to "shut it down."

He issued two challenges: create silence in your life and recognize that social media is "the filtered life" and not realistic.

"My worry is that young people think, 'my life is a blooper reel and everyone else's life is a highlight reel.' They think that everyone else is winning," Fr. Wills said.

Instead, he encouraged the teen-agers to embrace the Christian life and recognize they are part of the Paschal Mystery of life, death and resurrection. "We suffer, but our suffering won't be in vain," he said. "When we recognize our need for Christ, that's the opening. That's how God gets into our life."

In an interview, Fr. Wills said parental control software can have a place in the home, but warned that it can give a false sense of security.

Our full story appears in the Feb. 17 issue.

FRANKLY, FRANCIS



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

From the time we were small we are taught that it is not nice to boast. In my land, those who boast are called "pavoni" (peacocks). It is right, because boasting about what one is or what one has, apart from a certain arrogance, also reveals a lack of respect toward others, especially toward those who are less fortunate than we are.

In this passage from the Letter to the Romans, however, the Apostle Paul surprises us, as at least twice he exhorts us to boast. Of what, then, is it right to boast? Because if he exhorts us to boast, it is right to boast about something. And how is it possible to do this, without offending others, without excluding someone?

In the first case, we are invited to boast of the abundance of the grace with which we are permeated in Jesus Christ, by way of the faith.

+ Pope Francis,
Feb. 15, 2017

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Couple seeks to give Hispanic couples preparing for marriage a good foundation

BY SAM LUCERO | THE COMPASS

GREEN BAY — Abril and Manuel Sosa enjoy many leadership roles at St. Willebrord Parish, where they have been members for about 16 years. They team up to teach the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in Spanish to catechumens (people who have not received any Christian sacraments) and participate in numerous liturgical ministries.

But the Sosas, who have been married for 16 years and have two children, Monica, 15, and Alejandro 12, say their most meaningful ministry is serving as presenters in the marriage preparation program, "Nuestro Matrimonio en El Señor" ("Marriage in the Lord"). Sponsored by the Diocese of Green Bay's Living Justice Department, it is funded through the Bishop's Appeal.

While the Sosas have actually been involved

in marriage preparation at St. Willebrord for two years, it's only been one year that the Spanish-language program became a diocesan ministry.

"The first year we were kind of nervous about it," said Abril. "We love it. We love to share our faith and see how people are transformed by Christ, so it's been a blessing."

Our full story appears in the Feb. 17 issue.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

No meat on Fridays

PATRICIA KASTEN | THE COMPASS

1 Church law requires all Catholics over age 14 to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all Lenten Fridays. Canon law (n. 1253) notes that all Fridays are penitential days, which is why Fridays were traditionally meatless days all year.

2 Early Christians fasted on Fridays because the Lord Jesus died on a Friday.

3 The second-century teaching, called the Didache, told Christians to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

4 In 866, Pope Nicholas I made abstinence on Fridays a universal rule of the church.

5 For centuries, many animal byproducts — not just meat — fell under the Lenten ban. This included lard, butter, cheese and eggs.

A tool to monitor students' growth

The more time we spend with another person, the more we get to know them — their interests, hobbies, personality, humor, family or habits. Just like our relationships grow with time and intentionality, so



BISHOP'S CORNER

Bishop David Ricken

too does our relationship with Christ. We have the great privilege of introducing Jesus Christ to our young people throughout the diocese. Our parishes and schools are continually partnering with parents to bring the life, teachings and message of Jesus into the lives of our youth where they can experience him in a personal relationship.

One of the many tools the parishes, schools and the diocese uses to monitor a student's growth in coming to know Jesus is through the ACRE national assessment, which attempts to take a small portion of the student's knowledge of Jesus, along with the teachings of the church, and place it into a larger context. This isn't the only — nor should it be the only — assessment or evaluation tool for a religious education program or school, but it serves as one way in which to assess, strengthen and improve catechist formation, teacher training, evangelization, catechesis and discipleship.

The ACRE isn't meant to be a comprehensive evaluation, but rather it provides us valuable information regarding the growth of our students in their relationship with Christ and his teachings, and identifying what can be improved in a parish or school, what could be clarified about Jesus, and how to continue to grow in relationship with him as disciples.

The objective of ACRE is to measure one's

knowledge of Christ, knowing that the more we really know someone, not just know about someone, the more we will yearn to grow in relationship with them. This is the essence of discipleship. Topics such as the creed, prayer, community life, morality, sacraments and liturgy, and missionary spirit are measured in a way that allows a parish or school to evaluate its own approach and methods in evangelizing and catechizing young people.

This assessment can prove to be a useful tool just like any evaluation can be. For instance, tools such as the ACT, SAT, employee performance evaluations, temperament/personality tools, and interviews can prove helpful in gaining an understanding of people or situations. That is why I ask that each parish and school administer the ACRE assessment in fifth, eighth and 11th grades — so that each institution or ministry can continually have a baseline to see what they are doing well and what they might need to improve. In March, I ask that all parishes and schools administer this assessment to their grade levels so that we can receive the results in a timely and useful fashion.

When we stop evaluating and asking questions, we often settle for the status quo and fail to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit. When we use tools like this in a positive way, the Spirit can inspire, move and prompt us to move forward in bringing more young people to Christ by new methods, ardor, and expressions. As St. Paul said in his letter to the Thessalonians, "Test everything; retain what is good" (1 Thes 5:21). What a hopeful journey we are on together — to continue improving the way we bring Jesus into the hearts of our youth! May we continue together as disciples on the way!

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Parish SNAPSHOT



Dawn Welling, director of the Children's Choir of Holy Family Conservatory, is surrounded by children from St. Gregory Parish in St. Nazianz. The conservatory, based in Manitowoc, and St. Gregory School offer children a chance to participate in the choir.

BENJAMIN WIDEMAN | FOR THE COMPASS

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