



An introduction of Barry Metzentine and David O'Neill and reflections on the National Convention of the Knights of Columbus

We have two new laborers in the vineyard of the Diocese. Barry Metzentine is Director of Religious Education and Faith Formation, and David O'Neill is taking over as Director of Youth Ministry.

Barry is an Oregon native who comes to us from Denver as both an experienced businessman and a well-trained catechist. It will be his task to support our parish programs of religious education and sacramental preparation for children, to enhance our efforts to bring people to the Church through RCIA, and to expand opportunities for adults to learn more about the Faith.

David O'Neill joins us from Pocatello, but he is an Australian by birth and upbringing, with over 13 years of experience in youth ministry in his homeland and in Idaho. In his new post David will oversee our summer camps at the Powell Butte Retreat Center and promote youth retreats and rallies for our young people to come together on a diocesan level during the school year. You'll find more information on the backgrounds of Barry and David elsewhere in these pages. I'm very happy to welcome them and their families to the diocese.

The second week of July I attended the National Convention of the Knights of Columbus in Anaheim. It was an impressive and inspiring

event, most of all for the powerful and articulate defense of religious liberty that was given voice in the general sessions. The more this attitude of determination on the national level can circulate down to the local, the safer our freedom will be as we face the threat to Catholic conscience in health care.

From the Knights' Convention I flew north to Alaska for the 50th Anniversary of the Diocese of Fairbanks. It was an education. Many Fairbanks parishes are accessible only by plane, boat, or snowmobile; and many Catholics consider themselves fortunate if they receive sacraments from a priest every two or three months. There are only 17 active priests in this diocese which is twice the size of Texas. Yet Fairbanks Catholics take well-deserved pride in the deep faith, unyielding determination, and obstacle-crossing imagination that have planted the Church so firmly in this vast and difficult region. In comparison to Fairbanks' 409,000 square miles the 66,000 of the Baker Diocese seem small. But what counts in both is bridging the distance to the human heart with the Good News of the One who has drawn near to us all as the Word made flesh.