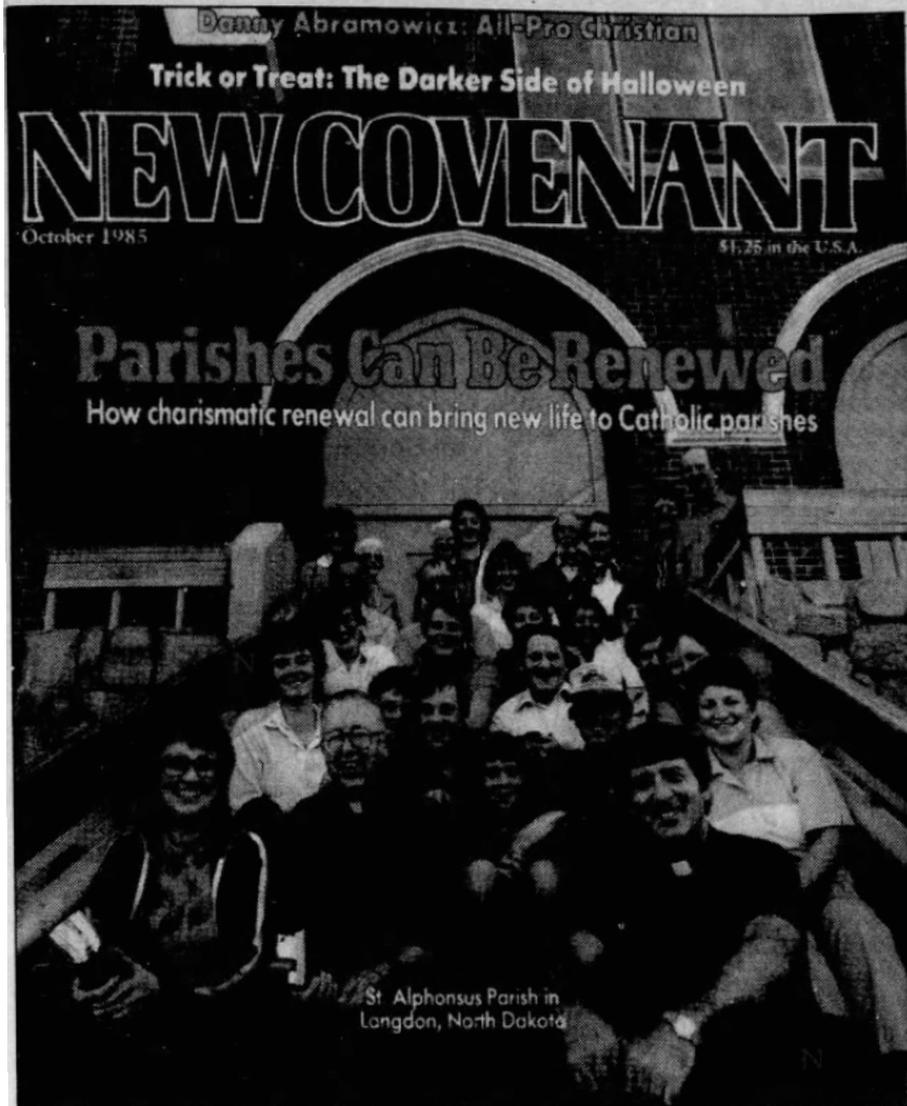


Magazine features Langdon parish



The October cover of New Covenant magazine.

By Michele Cook
Herald Staff Writer

St. Alphonsus Church, Langdon, N.D., is featured in the October issue of a national Catholic magazine and the parish's spirited, and sometimes controversial pastors are pictured on the cover.

Editors of New Covenant, a Catholic-oriented magazine with a circulation of 77,000, selected St. Alphonsus and a Michigan parish for a story on charismatic renewal. A headline proclaims the churches "spiritual powerhouses."

Eighteen months ago, St. Alphonsus suffered a spiritual crisis of sorts when a vocal group of parishioners challenged liturgical changes and new adult education programs. The Rev. Ken Gallagher, a forthright minister who once described his style as "spirited, demanding, challenging," bore the brunt of the attack. Gallagher's associate pastor, the Rev. Tony Salzbrunn, was one of his teachers in the seminary 20 years ago.

In the spring of 1984, the Rev. Justin Driscoll, bishop of the Fargo Diocese until his death in November, received a petition signed by 180 people that called for Gallagher's dismissal. Forty parishioners later expressed their feelings in a more public display by boarding a bus in front of St. Alphonsus and driving to a

church in nearby Mount Carmel.

Driscoll visited St. Alphonsus several times and called upon parishioners to support their pastors and work for reconciliation. In an interview with the Herald a year ago, Driscoll said, "Father Gallagher just went too fast. . . . I've asked him to cut back on his zeal."

Gallagher also called for reconciliation — from the pulpit and in a news conference with Driscoll in July 1984. "Nobody wants to continue this fight," he said. "It's getting nobody anywhere."

The magazine's managing editor and author of the story, Fred Lilly, said he learned about St. Alphonsus through a priests' fraternity based in Ohio. Lilly quoted Gallagher as saying the opposition to his ministry is "all part of the cross you have to face."

Among the changes introduced by Gallagher and Salzbrunn are weekly prayer meetings attended by as many as 100 people, and an adult education program that culminates in a ceremony called a Faith Celebration. A special Mass that focuses on spontaneous prayer has been added on Sundays.

Gallagher is in Europe and could not be reached for comment. Salzbrunn did not return phone calls.