



*This is my day.
God has given me this day
to use as I will.
I can waste it or use it
for good.
When tomorrow comes,
this day will be gone
forever, leaving
something in its place.
May God, who has given
me this day,
also give me the wisdom
to know how to live it -
To be directed to add
good to it and not evil.
And may the life, which
He also gave me, be well
spent for this day.*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Dennis Joseph Fonder

WHO WAS BORN

September 8, 1943 - Sisseton, South Dakota

AND CALLED TO HIS ETERNAL HOME

February 24, 2026 - Milbank, South Dakota

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

Saturday, February 28, 2026 - 10:30 a.m.

St. Lawrence Catholic Church

Milbank, South Dakota

CELEBRANT

Father Tom Hartman

MUSICIANS

Sandy Tucholke & Nancy Johnson, Accompanists

Nicholas Fonder & Veronica Fonder, Violinists

St. Lawrence Funeral Choir

LECTORS

Cheryl Schweer | Rita Fonder

GIFT BEARERS

Heidi Meyer | Natalie Meyer | Anton Fonder | Joseph Fonder

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Brendan VanSanbeek | Danielle Wollmuth | Brian Fonder

ALTAR SERVERS

Keaton Johnson | Nathan Fonder

Bryan Meyer | Simon Hicks | Thomas Hicks

PLACING OF THE PALL

Julie Vanderberg | Linda Ellis-Smith | Jennifer Meyer

Diane Senesac | Suzanne Thompson | Mary Ellen Joachim

CASKET BEARERS

Andrew Wollmuth | Samuel Fonder | Adam Ellis | Thomas Fonder

Nicholas Fonder | Ethan Senesac | Robby Thompson | Elijah Madsen

HONORARY CASKET BEARERS

All of Dennis's Grandchildren & Great-Grandchildren

INTERMENT

St. Lawrence Cemetery - Milbank, South Dakota

APPRECIATION

Dennis's family is grateful for your attendance at this service. Your expressions of kindness and love are deeply appreciated. Following the graveside service, please join the family for a time of fellowship and luncheon in the church dining room.

Mundwiler Funeral Home - Milbank, South Dakota

Dennis Joseph Fonder was born on September 8, 1943, in Sisseton, SD, to Bernard and Catherine (Jurgens) Fonder. He was the beloved son of a faith-filled, hardworking farming family. At just three weeks old, his family relocated to Milbank, where he was raised on a farm northeast of the town.

Dennis received his early education at Melrose #9 School and continued his studies at St. Lawrence Catholic School, culminating in his graduation from Milbank High School with the Class of 1961. He began his career at the Valley Queen Cheese Factory, where he worked for nearly three years.

On October 13, 1962, Dennis married his high school sweetheart, Arlene Harriet Campbell, at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Milbank. God abundantly blessed Dennis and Arlene with 11 beautiful children.

In 1963, Dennis and Arlene relocated to a home near Big Stone City, SD, where they began farming. They lived there for seven fruitful years before relocating to a farmstead north of Milbank. In 1994, they moved a short distance from the dairy farm they had established. They built their retirement home, raising beef cattle and farming the land. Dennis dedicated much of his life to the betterment of agriculture, playing a pivotal role in establishing the first organic dairies in South Dakota.

Dennis was a deeply spiritual individual who found solace and inspiration in the quiet beauty of nature. He saw God's goodness each day whether he was out picking rocks or tinkering in his garden.

He felt the presence of God all around him, nurturing his soul and guiding his path. His reverence for the natural world and his commitment to sustainable farming practices serve as a testament to his character, embodying a profound appreciation for life's simple pleasures.

Faith was always a constant presence in Dennis's life. He was an active member of St. Lawrence Catholic Church, where he served on the parish council and contributed to the community. Always mindful of his God-given role of leader, provider and protector of family, Dennis cherished his years spent milking cows, working in the fields and teaching his children the value of hard, honest work. In retirement, gardening was his favorite hobby. He enjoyed sharing the bountiful produce with many of his friends, family, and neighbors.

Left to cherish Dennis's memory are his wife of 63 years, Arlene; his children: Julie (Don) Vanderberg of Sioux Falls, SD; Richard (Helaine) Fonder of Milbank, SD; Linda (Brian) Ellis-Smith of Becker, MN; Bill (Janine) Fonder of Milbank, SD; John (Sandra) Fonder of Milbank, SD; Matt (Ann) Fonder of Milbank, SD; Jennifer (Doug) Meyer of Revillo, SD; Diane (Garrett) Senesac of St. Michael, MN; Suzanne (Robert) Thompson of Summerset, SD; and Mary Ellen (Marc) Joachim of Twin Brooks, SD; 44 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; along with many nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Bernard and Catherine Fonder; son, Joseph Fonder; siblings: Marie Scott, Dale Fonder, and Jim Fonder; and son-in-law, Jeff Ellis.

Please use this QR Code to view

Dennis's online obituary, tribute video, and guestbook.



Treasured Seasons

*To everything there is
a season, and a time
for every purpose
under heaven:*

*A time to be born and
a time to die; a time to
plant, and a time to
pluck up that which is
planted;*

*A time to kill and a
time to heal; a time to
break down and a
time to build up;*

*A time to weep, and a
time to laugh; a time to
mourn and a time to
dance;*

*A time to cast away
stones, and a time to
gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and
a time to refrain from
embracing.*

*A time to get, and a
time to lose; a time to
keep, and a time to
cast away;*

*A time to rend, and a
time to sew; a time to
keep silence and a
time to speak;*

*A time to love, and a
time to hate; a time of
war and
a time of peace.*

