**Welcome to the table of the Lord**

*First Communion a celebration for parishes, families*

The Diocese of Des Moines is joining a national, renewed focus on the Eucharist. The Spirit-led effort will reconnect the faithful to their baptismal call and focus on how important the Eucharist is to our identity as Catholic Christians. The Eucharist is central to the Catholic faith. A Vatican II document (Lumen Gentium) described it as the "source and summit of our Christian faith," and the Catechism of the Catholic Church says the Church "draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ."

A plan from the U.S. bishops invites dioceses to enact a three-pronged approach to the initiative that includes catechesis and apologies; devotion and worship; and conversion and mission. The Diocese of Des Moines is adapting the plan.

**Priests celebrate silver jubilees**

The following priests are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their priestly ordination.

*Father Ambrose Ladu John Daniel*

Father Ambrose Ladu John Daniel, was born in 1967 in the predominantly Islamic country of Sudan, where Christians are persecuted and not allowed to worship publicly.

His father was a photojournalist before joining the Archdiocese of Juba on April 28, 1996. He served as an associate pastor, pastor, chancelor, youth chaplain, vocation director and parish administrator in the Archdiocese of Juba. In 2001, Father Ladu went to South Africa to pursue degrees in computer science (IT), civil and canon law. While in the Diocese of Pretoria, he served as an associate pastor and pastor.

In 2012, he was invited by the Diocese of Des Moines to serve at St. Ambrose Cathedral as associate pastor and refuge coordinator.

"I lift up the broken hearted, shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, console the sorrowful and encourage them to discover their strength, dignity and joy in Christ," he said during his 25th anniversary celebration May 1.

Often, late into the night, one can see his office light on at the rectory of St. Ambrose Cathedral's office. There, he spends hours translating the sacred texts and liturgical books of the Catholic faith into the language of his native community: Lokoya. Only about 10,000 people around the world—9,000 of them in Sudan—speak it, he said.

He built a website, www.lokoyaofsouthsudan.org, YouTube account, Onyok odlong and Facebook account, Lokoya Community through which he publishes the translated texts. He’s working on the Lokoya dictionary (698 pages) and the Old Testament in Lokoya.

The Roman Missal is completed and ready for print. He is looking forward to his 25th anniversary celebration May 1.

**Parish focuses on sin of racism, makes resources available to public**

*By Kelly Mescher Collins Staff Writer*

The following week, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ fall meeting when he pondered what he could do in response.

“One of the conference of bishops’ priorities is to deal with the issue of the sin of racism,” Father Amadeo said. "So that sparked my interest. And then having a conversation with the leaders of AMOS (a local organization that helps find solutions for the most vulnerable in the community), as well as our Peace and Justice Committee [it solidified my decision] to bring this issue to our parish during Lent.”

Spending time in study and prayer seemed to be a reflective way of contemplating this human dignity and social justice issue that was also extremely timely and top of mind for many.

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*Vol. 55, No. 5 May 21, 2021*
Iowa bishops working through the Iowa Catholic Conference have found areas of common ground where we supported positions advanced by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. Nonetheless, her unwillingness to explore options by which a limited number of extra-nationals could be reloca-
ted might be relocated to Iowa is sorely disappointing. Beyond whatever feasible or political considerations underlie her deci-
dion, as Catholic Christians and citizens of our state, both faith and love make it possi-
ble and commits us to seek means where we might extend hospitali-
ity and charity to these fellow human beings in collaboration with the governor, persons of other faiths, and good-willed citizens.

Children, like all of us, find themselves in difficult situa-
tions beyond their control. Chil-
dren face problems, but children themselves are not “problems.”

It means to be truly neighbor to another. I am aware of the charge
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I am reminded of the scene in the classic film,

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take this poor daughter of God into their home? I do not seek
someone who is rich, dwelling in comfort and abundance. I be-
seech the poor woman or man who already has too many mouths to feed, who knows how to stretch the soup and make ends meet. Give me such a poor person who knows that one more mouth to feed is of little consequence, who is rich in faith and trust in God”

When it comes to the situation of displaced children far from our doorstep like Lazarus at the rich man’s house, God help us if we do not respond in love. In the end, if we do nothing and claim that it is someone else’s problem, we show ourselves to be both humanly and spiritually impoverished, to an extent that no amount of government assis-
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The Catholic Mirror May 21, 2021

Catholic Beyond Borders

By Bishop William Joensen

Iowa bishops working through the Iowa Catholic Conference have found areas of common ground where we supported positions advanced by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. Nonetheless, her unwillingness to explore options by which a limited number of extra-nationals could be relocated to Iowa is sorely disappointing. Beyond whatever feasible or political considerations underlie her decision, as Catholic Christians and citizens of our state, both faith and love make it possible and commits us to seek means where we might extend hospitality and charity to these fellow human beings in collaboration with the governor, persons of other faiths, and good-willed citizens.

Children, like all of us, find themselves in difficult situations beyond their control. Children face problems, but children themselves are not “problems.”

It means to be truly neighbor to another. I am aware of the charge often lobbed at Catholics and others who oppose abortion and support the right to life of all human beings from conception to natural death: we are perceived to care primarily for pre-born babies and then disregard them once they are born. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Viable alternatives for housing children should be pursued without further delay. I am aware that many people, including children living in our state, have been impacted by economic and social challenges made worse by the pandemic. I commend our government officials for the practical steps already taken to alleviate their situation. Yet I also think that the situation of displaced children presently dwelling near our country’s southern border is an existential challenge that once again gives us the opportunity to define ourselves as Iowans who step up and seize the moment to do good for others.

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Jane Kinney, administrator at Sacred Heart School in West Des Moines, will retire this July after more than 32 years in education.

Jane served 24 years at Sacred Heart, having served as a principal, assistant principal, religious leader, student support specialist, and third-grade classroom teacher.

“Jane is a person of faith and this faith has been lived out in her dedication to Catholic education,” said Father Chris Hartshorn, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish.

“Jane has a passion for excellence and she has always been an advocate for what is best for our students,” she said. “She has been a blessing to our school at Sacred Heart Parish and she will be missed.”

Passionate about meeting the needs of all learners, Kinney’s legacy includes expanding diverse learner support at Sacred Heart Catholic School.

She partnered with the West Des Moines Community School District to provide special education and Title I services directly to students at Sacred Heart Catholic School.

Under her leadership, the school incorporated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for students with diverse learning needs.

Kinney earned her Master of Science in Education from St. Mary’s University in Winona, Minnesota, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Drake University.

She holds professional licenses as a pre-kindergarten-12 administrator and PK special education supervisor with endorsements in K-8 reading, K-12 English as a Second Language, K-8 mild-moderate, and K-8 mental disabilities mild/moderate.

Her professional affiliations include the International Reading Association, National Catholic Education Association, Association for School Curriculum and Development, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Iowa Talented and Gifted, Special Education Advisory Committee, ELL Advisory Committee with Heartland AEA, and Student Teaching Advisory Team member for Upper Iowa University.

Kinney and her husband, a retired teacher, Rychkovsky, of St. Patrick Parish in Corning, are the proud parents of four daughters and the grandparents of twelve grandchildren.

When she’s not at school, she enjoys volunteering for the program when she was invited to join the staff in 1999. She and catechetical leaders Kayla Richer and Marca Schaul grew close and saw the program evolve over the years.

“We’ve changed a lot of the retreats and parent meetings,” she said. “We’ve always tried to focus on educating parents as well as the kids. It can be a challenge with busy lives, but that’s always been important to us.”

She said: “My job has never been a job. It’s what I loved. It was a passion and that makes a difference,” she said.

Rychkovsky was the first class she prepared for First Communion graduated high school so she felt it was time to move on.

Serving as a catechist has helped her own faith life.

“When you teach, you learn,” she said.
The Catholic Mirror May 21, 2021

The Catholic Mirror is looking for stories of faith and inspiration. Contact Kelly Mescher Collins at kcollins@dmdiocese.org with a story idea.

The St. Serra Club of Des Moines honored 40 sisters in the Diocese of Des Moines with a May Day basket on May 1.

Typically, the Serrans host an annual event for the sisters but last year, because of the pandemic, the tradition changed to May Day gifts.

Each sister received a basket with personal care items, snacks, wine, chocolate, cheese, and a spring flower along with a financial gift. Donations include items from Ashworth Vision Clinic, Beavercreek Confections, Boesen the Florist, Craig Dental Center, The Cheese Shop, and cookies made by Mike Mahoney.

The Serrans chose to present May Day baskets to the sisters in recognition of their faithful and dedicated service to the Diocese of Des Moines and all that they do to serve their community and the Church.

School Sisters of St Francis celebrate jubilees

Two School Sisters of St. Francis who served the Des Moines Diocese are celebrating their 60th anniversaries as women religious this year.

**Sister Marianne Kuhn**

Sister Marianne Kuhn was born in Fort Atkinson, Iowa. She served as a teacher/choir director at Sacred Heart School in West Des Moines (1968-1971) and at St. Joseph School in Earl ing (1987-1991).

She also served as a teacher and organist in a school in Minnesota, and a teacher and organist in six schools in the Archdiocese of Omaha and principal at a seventh. She was a teacher/organist in the Dioceses of Denver and Colorado Springs. In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, she served as a driver/secretary. She is currently a volunteer at Sacred Heart in Milwaukee.

**Sister Carol Ann Jaeger**

Sister Carol Ann Jaeger, of Campbellsport, Wisconsin, became an educator and served as a pastoral minister at St. John Parish in Adel from 1991 to 1996.

She spent a significant amount of her years of ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as a teacher, vocation director for her religious community, and in various religious education and pastoral roles in parishes.

She also served in the Dioceses of Madison and Winoona.

Sister Carol Ann currently volunteers at a local convent in Milwaukee.

Cards and donations in honor of the sisters’ years of service may be mailed to the sister’s attention, c/o Jubilee Committee, School Sisters of St. Francis, 1545 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53215.

Free Citizenship Class by telephone

This free citizenship class will prepare you to pass your US immigration citizenship interview.

Experienced teacher will conduct this class bilingual – English and Spanish. Please contact local instructor Jim Supina at (515) 961-2026.

The Catholic Mirror is looking for stories of faith and inspiration. Contact Kelly Mescher Collins at kcollins@dmdiocese.org with a story idea.
Three honored as outstanding role models

Three women were honored by Dowling Catholic High School with alumni awards for serving as outstanding role models.

The Distinguished Alumni Award was given to Marthaellen Florence with Ryan. She holds a BA in Broadcast Journalism. Currently, she serves as faculty chair for the agency's Management. She also serves an agency under the federal Center for Leadership Development. In February of 1995, she taught at St. Albert Catholic High School in Council Bluffs. Six years later, she taught at Regina High School in Iowa City, then returned to the Des Moines Area Religious Council Emergency Food Pantry. She retired in 2017. She had been involved with Teens Encounter Christ retreat for high school seniors, and Residents Encounter Christ prides on retreat program. After 23 years of volunteer work at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville, she retired in 2018.

O’Neill was awarded the Distinguished Young Alumna honor. She attended the University of Notre Dame and Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, graduating in the top 10% percentile of her class in 2010. After medical school, she completed a three-year pediatric residency in Chicago and then returned to Baltimore for a combined residency-fellowship program in neurodevelopmental disabilities. In late 2017, she returned to Chicago and works as an attending physician at Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. O’Neill established the Lurie Children’s Down Syndrome clinic. She specializes in the care of children with autism, developmental delays, intellectual disability, ADHD, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy and complex neurogenetic syndromes.

Meghan O’Neill

St. Albert School names new principal

Stephen Eubanks has been named the new 6-12 grade principal at St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.

Eubanks, a graduate from Omaha’s Gross Catholic High School, brings more than 32 years of educational leadership experience to the role. He holds a Bachelor of Science in biology education degree with a minor in physical science and coaching from the University of South Dakota, a Master of Arts in educational administration and supervision from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and is a certified athletic administrator. He spent most of his educational career in the Omaha Public Schools District, having served as a science teacher, coach, student assistance team coordinator, assistant principal, director of athletics, principal and director of curriculum instruction and support.

“He understands the mission of Catholic education and its value in our community,” said Anne Rohling, president of St. Albert Catholic. “We are truly blessed to have such a man of faith join our team and continue our mission of excellence.”

“I am extremely excited to have Stephen leading the charge for the middle and high school students at St. Albert Catholic,” said Donna Bishop, diocesan superintendent of Schools. “He is a dedicated administrator driven to ensure the academic achievement and social-emotional health of every student. We are blessed to have him join our team.”

Eubanks helped increase student performance at each grade level on state assessments in reading, writing, science and math in Omaha schools. “My tenure in education has taught me that a strong focus on empowering others and cultivating the ideals of pride, unity, and community will maximize achievement and define a culture of excellence,” he said.

Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese’s Victim Assistance Advocate is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of abuse of minors by clergy through a complaint process and in seeking support and counseling services. He can be reached at 515-286-2024 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.

St. Albert Catholic Opens Corpus Christi Eucharistic Procession

JUNE 6, 2021

11:00 am Bilingual Mass

DIOCESAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & DIVINE MERCY GROTTO

The diocese’s Victim Assistance Advocate is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of abuse of minors by clergy through a complaint process and in seeking support and counseling services. He can be reached at 515-286-2024 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.

Go to StAnthonyDSM.org to download this flyer and share.
June 6 Sunday
Corpus Christi Procession

DES MOINES — St. Augustin Parish is having a Corpus Christi Procession at 3 p.m. Dinner to follow in the parking lot, everyone is welcome to join as they process through the neighborhood. All area Knights of Columbus are invited to dress in their regalia.

June 13 Sunday
Retirement

DES MOINES — Father John Bertogli will retire from active ministry on July 8. He will preside at the 11 a.m. Mass, June 13. A reception will be held in the cathedral parish hall from noon-2 p.m. following the Mass. All are welcome.

June 14 Monday
Holy Family Catholic School Foundation 2021 Golf Classic

NORWALK — The Holy Family Catholic School Foundation golf outing opens at 9:45 a.m. and starts at 11 a.m. at The Legacy Golf Club. All donations go to Holy Family Catholic School. Your registration business will not be sold or given to another party. For more information contact: Todd Misel, of Our Lady of Good Counsel, 515-265-5001; bha1703012@aol.com. For more information contact: Rev. Robert E. Harris, All Saints Church, 650 NE 52nd Ave., Des Moines, IA 50313; 515-265-5001; bha1703012@aol.com

Local KCs bring home honors from convention

Several Knights of Co-

lumbus of the Diocese of Des Moines left the Knights annual convention with honors.

Todd Misel, of Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny, was named Grand Knight of the Year. He was recognized for his tireless work and leadership, particularly during the pandemic. He developed a plan with the help of the Knights of Columbus in his parish reach out to the 2,300 households to let them know their church cared for them. He set up a dedicated phone line answered 24/7 for parishioners in need of assistance. In the final months of 2020, they took 150 calls and logged more than 2,000 hours of community service. Rob Ryan, of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines, was named Knight of the Year. Described as “a model of what every Knight should be” and “the glue that keeps us together,” Ryan encourages all members of the Knights of Columbus to be active, get involved and lead by example.

Father Mark McGeeary was named Chaplain of the Year for the Des Moines Diocese. Father McGeeary “has done an outstanding job assisting his council,” according to Council 12422. He attends meetings, shares updates about events and parish concerns, shows a strong devotion to Mary and encourages his parish to come to him with issues by saying he wants to be their priest.

We’re close in all the ways you need.
Yes, we are located nearby for your convenience.
Through the years, we have formed close relationships with the families we serve.
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Sister Simonini was an ambassador for new life

Longtime educator and Des Moines native Sister Joanne (Lisbeth) Simonini died April 24 in Dubuque. A Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), she died at age 89. She will be remembered for listening to the voices of her students, for her fun-loving nature, her generosity and her commitment to keeping in touch with friends. Sister Joanne was born Aug. 12, 1931 in Des Moines. She attended St. Ambrose Elementary School and St. Joseph Academy in Des Moines. She entered the BVM congregation on Sept. 8, 1951 from Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines. She professed first vows on March 19, 1954 and final vows on July 16, 1959. She taught in Missouri and California, before returning home to Des Moines to teach. Sister Joanne began at St. John School in Des Moines in 1974 as a teacher, then became the principal the following year. One day, she was asked to meet with the pastor and Fa-

theology 3

ther Stephen Orr, who was the chancellor of the Diocese at the time. He had taught for four years before going to the chancery and he wanted to get back into teaching one day. Thus began their 40-year friendship, he said.

She served six years at St. John until the school con-

solidated with others to form Holy Family School in 1981. She became its first principal.

That’s when kindergarten teacher Janet Holms met her. Holms had been teaching at the former Visitaton School.

“Just as I was asked to work with and supportive, al-
ways smiling and never raising her voice,” Holms said. She fondly remembered when some teachers took Sister Joanne and other re-

Minsignor Orr. She called family, friends and the homebound.

Joanne called me at least once a week ever since she’s been here at Mount Carmel,” she said at her funeral Mass. “She knew my calendar better than I did!”

She loved to provide hospitality and she enjoyed a good laugh, she said.

Joanne often told me how proud she was to be a part of this family of sisters,” Monsignor Orr said. She was “proud of the way this congregation has stood for peace and justice, has stood with solitude with immigrants, reaching out in care for the poor, tending to the needs of children, children who were educated by the sisters at all levels, and so much more. She told me the wit-

ness of her sisters in religion always gave her new life.”

In the end,” she said, “she was kind, hospitable and loved people. She was an ambassador of new life. In so many quiet, gentle ways, she lived up to the gospel of the beatitudes.”

Her Mass of Christian Burial was May 3. Burial was in the Mount Carmel Cemetery in Dubuque. She is survived by her niece, cousins and the Sisters of Charity, BVM, with whom she shared life for 69 years.

Memorials may be given to the BVM Support Fund, 1100 Carmel Drive, Dubuque, IA 52003 or online at https://www. bvm sisters.org/support_donate.cfm. 

Around the Diocese

KCs reunite at annual statewide convention

By Dawn Prosser

Contributing Writer

The onset of the pan-

demic in the spring of 2020 led to the Knights of Columbus an-

ual convention’s cancellation and a small online event taking its place. The Iowa KCs were pleased to gather in-person with their brother Knights at the Sioux City Convention Center April 30 to May 2.

“I’m really enjoying being back in-person,” said Jeff Weilink of Story City in the Arch-

diocese of Dubuque and district marshal for the Fourth-Degree Knights.

Organizers noted the in-person attendance was down from the typical 250 Knights to 127 with about 50 participating via livestreaming. The reduced numbers did not dampen enthusi-

asim of the convention-goers.

“You can do all the
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Chariton church to celebrate landmark anniversary

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Chariton was a couple of months in to a yearlong celebration of the 150th anniversary of its founding just as the pandemic arrived. This year, the parish is celebrating “150 plus one” years on June 13. Bishop William Joensen will celebrate Mass, confirm youth and preside at a Corpus Christi procession.

The parish has evolved over the years, first being called St. Anne, when Mass was celebrated in a home. Then it was St. Mary and in its first building. In 1915, it was Sacred Heart and the current parish church was constructed.

“There has been transition from generations, from grandmother of our Lord, Jesus, to mother of our Lord, Jesus, and now to Jesus Christ himself,” said Father Samuel Danso, the pastor.

The parish honors the generations of parishioners who built and supported the parish. Behind the altar are statues of St. Boniface and St. Patrick, representing a tribute to the Irish and German traditions of those who started the parish. A statue of St. Anthony of Padua is also in the church for Italians of the parish.

Gloria Lee has been a parishioner for all of her 85 years. She was baptized and married at Sacred Heart Church and her children were baptized and raised in the parish. She has fond memories of a beautiful baptismal font, pews who served there, and a time when boys sat on one side of the church and girls on the other in front. She said the church has been a cornerstone in her life.

“My church has always been my family,” she said. “If you need something, just come to one of them and they’ll do anything for you.”

She compiled the history of the parish with a book on the early days of the church that her father had plus photos and papers from the parish office.

The church was updated a little more than 20 years ago. But parishioners didn’t get around to rehabbing the windows, eight of which are from the former church building. When parishioner Jay- nane Hardie was next door to the church pumping gas into her car at the Casey’s General Store, she glanced up at the bell tower of the church to see that a window had fallen out.

“We decided it was time to do something,” she said. The parish raised the funds and repaired the windows and put a protective storm window by the window on the east side of the church that didn’t have them. The work was finished last year. The next project may be restoring a light in the bell tower.

Hardie said: “People tell me it makes them feel like God is at home.”

The parish honors the intercession of Mary to help re- solve a conflict among chieftains. Father Robert Harris

Four priests celebrating silver jubilees this year

Continued from page 1

for donors and people of goodwill to assist in printing this Missal.

Father Mathew Antony

Father Mathew Antony, born in 1966, comes from a strong Catholic family in the southwest part of India in the province of Kerala. This part of India was evangelized by St. Thomas the Apostle in 52 A.D. He has two older brothers and two younger sisters. After high school, he went on to study for the priesthood and was ordained on May 2, 1996. He served St. Francis School in the southern part of India before going to the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas. There, he had several assignments. He came to the Diocese of Des Moines in 2015, where he served St. Patrick Parish in Audubon, Holy Trinity Parish in Exira. Currently, he is the pastor of All Saints Parish in Stuart and St. John Parish in Adair.

The most rewarding part of being a priest is being with people at different stages of their lives, joyous moments as well as sad moments, he said. The best part, though, is having “the grace to bring Jesus’ Real Presence to them in the Holy Eucharist, and being an extension of Jesus in the sacrament of reconciliation.”

Father Mathew celebrated his 25th anniversary with family, relatives and friends on April 24 in Kerala, India. A local celebration at All Saints Church in Stuart will be June 13.

Father David Nkrumah

Father David Nkrumah, born in 1963 in Wawasi, in the central region of Ghana. He was ordained on July 20, 1996 in the Diocese of S e k o n d i T a k s a d i. After ordination, he served as an associate pastor at St. Francis Xavier Parish, where he was responsible for 24 communities, or stations, connected to his parish.

“Three times I had accidents, once I was bitten by scorpion, many times I passed the night in a car because not all the stations have rectories,” he said. “Many times I was beaten by rains. But in all these I came to realize that God from day one never promised me that the journey would be easy.”

He became pastor of a parish in the western region of Ghana, where he focused on the intercession of Mary to help resolve a conflict among chieftains. Then he returned to his first parish, where he built a grotto and perpetual adoration chapel to enhance the spiritual life of parishioners.

He served one more parish in Ghana before coming to the Diocese of Des Moines in 2018, where he serves as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Audubon and Holy Trinity Parish in Exira.

Father Nkrumah is glad he followed his vocation calling. “My love for the people of God and joy in living the Gospel have brought me great fulfillment as a priest and unworthy servant of God’s people,” he said. “The people I have worked with, the lives I have influenced and the ensuing experiences have enriched my life in many ways.”

Father Nkrumah will celebrate his silver jubilee on July 25 at the 10:30 a.m. Mass in Audubon.

Father Robert Harris

Born in 1954, Father Bob Harris attended Rose- sevelt High School in Des Moines, Car- dinal Stritch College in Milwaukee and Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corner, Wisconsin before being ordained on Dec. 14, 1996 at Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish in An- keny by Bishop Emeritus Joseph L. Charaton, C.P.P.S.

Sacred Heart Church in Chariton refurbished its windows in time for its 150th anniversary.
Three seminarians to be ordained deacons

Transitional diaconate ordination is the final step before becoming priests

by Kelly Mescher Collins

Three diocesan seminarians will be ordained transitional deacons this year. Alex Kramer, currently studying at the Pontifical North American College in Vatican City, will be ordained in the fall in Rome. Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros and Nick Smith will be ordained Friday, June 11 at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines. This Mass and liturgical celebration, while closed to the public to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, will be livestreamed at Facebook.com/DMDiocese. This is the final step for the three men before they are ordained priests in 2022.

Alex Kramer
Holy Trinity Parish, Des Moines
Studying at Pontifical North American College, Vatican City

Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros
St. Bernard Parish, Osceola
Studying at St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

Nick Smith
St. Augustin Parish, Des Moines
Studying at St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

Alex Kramer said stirrings in his heart for the Church came early.

“While in kindergarten, I watched a documentary about the Vatican and the pope,” Kramer said. “I didn’t really understand everything that was going on in the documentary, but I knew that it was about the Church and it was beautiful. Starting from that point and on, I wanted to be the pope.”

Looking back and thinking how unrealistic that was, Kramer said many benefits came from this desire.

“First, I wanted to learn as much as I could about the pope and the Church,” he said. “Secondly, I was fascinated and really in love with the Church.”

“I was able to nurture that attraction to the Church at Catholic school,” Kramer continued, recalling the impact becoming an altar server had on him and his faith.

“When I was in fourth grade at Holy Trinity, I had the opportunity to be an altar server,” he said. “I excitedly volunteered and was even allowed to miss a few minutes of school every morning to serve daily Mass. This brought me closer to the sacraments and especially the role of the priest at Mass.”

Attending Dowling Catholic High School helped Kramer better understand his Catholic faith in the classroom and deepen his relationship with Jesus on retreats, such as Kairos and Radix.

“I started looking realistically at what a career in the Church is,” Kramer said. “I had the opportunity to attend events like an Andrew Dinner, where young men meet with priests and have a meal together just to talk about what it means to be a priest.

“I was able to be an altar server at Dowling, which is a different atmosphere than when serving at a parish, and got to know other Christ-centered men,” he continued. “These were great gifts that I am so thankful for receiving from my time at Dowling.”

Dowling Catholic’s chaplain at the time, Father Zach Kautzky, and local priests, including Monsignor Gerald Stessman, Monsignor Frank Chiolo and Father Michael Amaedo were wonderful examples of how the Church is young and vibrant.

Looking at the young men from his diocese who were already attending seminary helped Kramer seal the deal.

“They are all joyous and Christ centered, which is something I strive for,” Kramer concluded. “When I was considering joining the seminary there were many young men who were answering the call.”

Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros

“When I was six years old one of my favorite pasttimes was planting jalapeno and cilantro seeds,” said Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros, who is originally from Mexico and moved to the U.S. when he was 11-years-old.

He also enjoyed spending his free time cutting plants and growing them next to each other at the expectancy of “new and weird creations.” He also liked mixing the pollen from different small flowers, attempting to create new ones.

“I was a curious boy,” Landeros said.

His mother recognized her son’s interest in plants and seeds, and used those interests to help Landeros better understand God.

“One day my mom told me a story -- a story of how God had created all plants and living things,” he said. “She said plants were manna stored in a shell that when planted and fed water, sprouted leaves and a stem and later created new manna. Through her words and story, I depicted yellow powder preserved inside the seeds which later appeared as pollen. I then wondered if I could actually create something new considering God had already created them as they were.

She proceeded by telling Landeros how God had a plan for all of us -- a perfect plan.

“As for the seeds, they too play a role, the role of creation of God,” Landeros said. “That in itself I planted a seed in me, constantly wanting to sprout but oppressed. But I knew that a seed, unless rotten, will eventually sprout. The preserved manna in the seed was not polluted but a plan, fed by faith and words.”

Landeros recalled pivotal events that took place on a special birthday, March 13, 2013.

“I was paying special attention to the news that day, and then I saw what I had been waiting for -- a new pope had been elected: Pope Francis,” said Landeros of the fellow Latin American. “For the rest of the day, classes, academics and teachers were depri- vated. I spent the rest of my birthday searching everything about the new pope and watching live broad- casts from Vatican City. March 13, 2013 was definitely a life-changing day. I finally decided to pursue God’s plan, a plan that had been sprouting for a long time. I decided to become a priest.”

Nick Smith

“Throughout the next several months, I felt closer to the Lord than I had ever been,” he said. “I even attended a seminary visit, although I did not feel particularly called to the priesthood at that time. My faith began to become a personal relationship, not merely a theological or moral system.”

In the fall of his junior year in high school, Smith had a profound experience that changed his perspec- tive on seminary.

“I was in adoration before the Blessed Sacra- ment when, in the silence, gazing upon the priest doing benediction, I felt a movement in my heart saying ‘That is where I want you to stand,’” Smith said. “In this moment, I heard Jesus’ invitation to me to stand in the place of the priest -- to be his priest -- in order to give him to his people.

“I discerned this call throughout the rest of my junior year with the help of priest mentors, attended another seminary visit, and by the summer before my senior year, I was ready to apply for the seminary,” Smith said. “Discerning and receiving a priestly vocation has been a life of abundance. Jesus calls seminarians and priests to a unique and intimate relationship with himself that, even amidst the difficulties, is filled with the peace and joy that every heart desires.”

Remembering Father Jim Kiernan

“Don’t Just Make The Sign of The Cross. PRAY IT!”

Passed into eternal life on May 15, 2016

See ordination photos, wish our seminarians a happy birthday and more at facebook.com/dmvocations
Catholic Youth Camp welcomes kids back for faith, fun

By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer

“Money should never be a reason kids don’t get to go to camp,” Alex Kautzky, executive director of Catholic Youth Camp, has said for years. That’s why CYC never turns away any child who would like to attend camp.

Opportunities to attend camp are made possible by CYC’s sponsorship program, donors and fundraisers.

There are 32 kids attending this summer from the refugee community at St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish in Des Moines. They are originally from Eritrea, a country many have fled due to persecution.

Destiny Welsh Teixeira, a member of St. Ambrose Cathedral, has helped the kids raise money and find donors for several years.

“We have third grade students through seniors attending this year - 12 elementary and middle school students and 20 high school students,” Welsh Teixeira said. “We invite students from all communities within our parish, but the ones attending this year are all from the Kunama community.”

Positive word of mouth spreads - the group keeps getting bigger every year.

“One high school student recently told me, ‘I love how we go to Mass every day and sing,’” she said. “Many of them have mentioned they feel closer to God and have grown in their faith because of CYC. They really enjoy all of the activities, but sharing their faith with those around them is a life-changing experience.”

The group still has nearly $5,000 to raise to send all 32 youth to camp - they’ll be raising money through yard work and fundraisers.

“If you would like to make a donation to this group, contact Welsh Teixeira at dwelsh8@gmail.com or make a Venmo donation to @Destiny-Welsh.”

But don’t wait to get your kids signed up - spaces are extremely limited, already surpassing registration numbers at this time in 2019.

“We are trending higher than we ever have before,” Kautzky said. “We are full or nearly full on all of our camps.”

When we cancelled summer 2020, we immediately set our eyes on 2021,” Kautzky continued. “It could be the most important camping season of our children’s lives, and we are really gearing up for the first normal activity that kids are going to be able to be involved in since the vaccination rollout.

“There is a huge demand and huge value,” she added. “Parents are seeing the value even more now than ever.”

Staff members are ready and raring to welcome them, hiring double the staff for the 2021 season.

“It just allows us to do more in terms of faith programming and [unique opportunities],” Kautzky said.

This year CYC will be offering a Spa Night in the girls’ cabins and Pirates at the Pool for the boys.

CYC will also offer 15 outdoor activities, including a new foam zone and an entirely reimagined week for high schoolers that will include inflatables and laser tag.

Camp incorporates the Catholic faith component multiple ways, including the celebration of Mass every day, faith programming, confession and a renewed focus on the Eucharist. This year, they will highlight the life of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a teenager who had a love for Jesus and spent his free time building a website to document Eucharistic miracles around the world. He died in 2006 at age 15.

A diocesan priest will continue the tradition of serving at camp for the summer. Three diocesan seminarians will also inspire youth, interact with the kids and serve as a joyful witness to their faith, Kautzky said.

“We feel confident it’s going to be an amazing and safe summer with all of the faith and the fun that we have always offered,” Kautzky concluded. “I think it’s going to be the best ministry we’ve offered at CYC, and we are excited to get the summer underway.”

Learn more and register at STMCenter.com.

Spaces are filling up quick for this summer’s camp. Learn more and register at STMCenter.com.

Sponsorships make CYC possible for everyone

Kids from the St. Ambrose refugee community raise money and find sponsors to attend Catholic Youth Camp.

By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer

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Sponsorships make CYC possible for everyone

Kids from the St. Ambrose refugee community raise money and find sponsors to attend Catholic Youth Camp.
Parish creates vision plan to engage and welcome the faithful

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

During the 2020 pandemic, leadership at St. Anthony Parish in Des Moines saw the need to create a vision and strategy to inspire people to return Mass and faith formation activities when it was safe.

“I think the pandemic is a wake-up call to have a vision for the future,” Monsignor Frank Chiido said in a video posted to the St. Anthony website. “I think we are naïve to think everything is going to be restored to pre-pandemic conditions. I think this is a turning point in our lives.”

Monsignor Chiido and other leaders at St. Anthony gathered to discern goals, milestones, and specific activities for parish engagement throughout a three-year period to grow and transform the parish.

“This three-year plan will be the guiding document for decisions made at the parish,” Monsignor Chiido wrote in a letter to parishioners.

With a mission to “Go and Make Disciples,” the parish’s focus is on the four pillars of prayer, hospitality, discipleship and evangelization.

“As we look at the vision for the future, we are focusing on hospitality and prayer and evangelization and to invite others to share a relationship with Jesus Christ,” the pastor said.

“Over the course of time we looked at those four pillars and then we broke them into goals we wanted to achieve over this next three year period and the tasks needed to accomplish that,” said parishioner Jim O’Donnell, a member of the Blue Ribbon vision committee. “We want to increase the spirituality of our parishioners.”

It has pushed them to think outside the box using their creativity.

“As we look at the vision for the future, we are focusing on hospitality and prayer and evangelization and to invite others to share a relationship with Jesus Christ,” the pastor said.

Spiritual participation includes increasing Mass attendance, building a strong community of parishioners can practice the faith by serving those in most need and serve as witnesses to our faith.

Increasing online interactions related to St. Anthony Parish by 100 percent from December 2020 to December 2021.

Identifying opportunities in the Des Moines metro community where parishioners can practice the faith by serving those in most need and serve as witnesses to our faith.

Selecting an international parish and/or community to establish a long-term relationship with, where parishioners can practice the faith by serving those in most need and serve as witnesses to our faith.

Learn more at stanthonydsm.org.

Parishioner Katie Fitzgerald was one of many Vision Plan Committee members who appeared in a video and shared excitement about their plans for the parish to build community and increase engagement.

“I’m just really excited about what we’ve got going on...hopefully you’ll be excited too and want to get involved,” Fitzgerald said. “We’d like to get some more dinners going and fun things for us to do together to try and build relationships and create that energy and chemistry between the people.”

The people – the Body of Christ – and the relationships with one another are a big part of church. Laughing, hugging and fun conversations are things Fitzgerald is working hard to bring back now that the COVID-19 vaccine is readily available.

Parishioner and team member Julie Konkol said they are bringing back things from the past that made St. Anthony what it is today.

“We have great things in store for our beautiful parish of St. Anthony’s,” Konkol said.

Watch the vision plan video and learn more at stanthonydsm.org.

Director of Faith Formation - Adel

Director of Faith Formation – St. John Parish in Adel, a growing parish with over 400 households, is seeking a full-time catechetical leader committed to promoting lifelong faith formation for all ages. The leadership position is responsible for the total faith formation program of the parish, as designated by the pastor, for adults, youth, and children; including A) Theological B) Catechetical and C) Administrative aspects. The qualified applicant will be committed to developing the faith life of others and possess excellent organizational and interpersonal skills. Abilities to connect with people of all ages and work closely with other parish and diocesan catechetical teams are essential. This position requires flexible hours including evenings and weekends. Full description and details can be found at www.stjohnsadel.org. Send resume and references by June 30th to:

St. John’s Parish
Attn.: Father Remi Okere
8201 Hickman Rd.
Adel, IA 50003
Phone: (515) 993-4482
E-mail: office@stjohnsadel.org
Lori Gianz, Parish Secretary
St. John’s Catholic Church, Adel, IA
515-993-4482
stjohnsadel.org

Parish sets lofty goals as part of vision plan

St. Anthony Parish in Des Moines has some lofty goals for drawing the faithful back to Mass and engaging them in a variety of opportunities as life returns to “normal” now that vaccines are available. These include:

• Increasing Mass attendance from official October 2019 Mass counts by 20 percent by October 2022
• Increasing opportunities for prayer as a community to include confession, Eucharistic Adoration and daily rosary through December 2023.
• Promoting a welcoming culture by enhancing the Sunday Mass experience.
• Creating opportunities to engage new parishioners and provide opportunities for fellowship weekly for the St. Anthony community.
• Implementing a structured, developed youth ministry program for students in grades 9-12 that allows them to develop their faith in a peer focused setting.
• Developing an Adult Faith Formation program that meets the spiritual and non-spiritual needs of our parishioners (ie: individual spiritual growth, marriage enrichment, singles, divorced, bereavement, financial, physical health, etc.)
• Increasing online interactions related to St. Anthony Parish by 100 percent from December 2020 to December 2021.
• Identifying opportunities in the Des Moines metro community where parishioners can practice the faith by serving those in most need and serve as witnesses to our faith.
• Selecting an international parish and/or community to establish a long-term relationship with, where parishioners can practice the faith by serving those in most need and serve as witnesses to our faith.

Learn more at stanthonydsm.org.
Mary’s heart and ours: Allowing joy and sorrow to coexist

By Kara Storey

Let’s Get Psyched!

By Deacon Randy Kiel

The Catechism of the Catholic Church recognizes that the soul is the defined purpose of God’s revelation to humanity. There should be a primary intentionality in the life of all in or not listening at all. How then does sin influence a person’s psychopathology? To answer this, we must focus on sin’s effects on human solidarity. When a person commits a sin, that sin affects both the one in the sin and those around him.

There are two meanings of “listen.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it wounds the natural law inscribed into human hearts and souls. In other words, sin is the desire and choice to perform a distorted good with the idea that the distorted good is better than the true good for a person. When a person tells a lie about themselves to a friend, this person has then substituted the true good of honesty and integrity for a false perceived good, that being image or attention.

Let’s look at the definitions of these two terms: “listen” and “psychopathology.” As we struggle on our own path, we may vacillate between different generation’s behavioral definitions and those of our neighbor’s. What is my cross?” one might ask. Your cross is simply being you. Mental health difficulties are neither some type of characteristic defect nor some type of psychopathology. As we struggle on our own path, we may vacillate between different generation’s behavioral definitions and those of our neighbor’s. Mental health difficulties are neither some type of characteristic defect nor some type of psychopathology. As we struggle on our own path, we may vacillate between different generation’s behavioral definitions and those of our neighbor’s.

I’ve always thought it a beautiful coincidence that the words “listen” and “sincere” are spelled with the same letters. For me, it means that truly to listen is to do so with intentionality and a sense of grace. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “listen” as to hear and understand what you’ve heard, and to hear what others want to say and share. The difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is a physical, biological act — one that you do with your ears. Listening is something you do with your heart. Listening requires patience and complete selflessness. If you are a good listener, it is one of the key virtues to allow joy and sorrow to coexist in our lives, as well as in the lives of others.

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Eucharist is the goal

Guest Column
By Father John Ludwig

Father John Ludwig is retired in the Diocese of Des Moines.

I’ve Been Wondering...

Q. I heard someone say that at Mass not only do we focus on Christ's sacrifice, but we bring our own to Mass. What does that mean?

We actually think of sacrifice as something that we give up – say during Lent someone might give up chocolate or alcohol or cigarettes.

Often enough, we will give up something as a favor to a loved one. During Mass we remember that Jesus gave up his life for his followers. If we want to be like Jesus, then we learn to give up things for others. Parents give up much of their time and energy in the process of raising their children. Spouses give up things for each other.

When we think about the sacrifices that Jesus made, we unite our own sacrifices with his. We do that not to make ourselves miserable but rather to show our love for each other.

We are willing to sacrifice for others because we love them.

Our heart is stronger than our wounds

Guest Column
By Father Ron Rolheiser

Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website rolheiser.com or on Facebook, facebook.com/ronrolheiser

Our heart is stronger than our wounds

Ten years before his death in 1996, Henri Nouwen was beset by a depression that nearly broke his heart.

While in treatment, he wrote a very powerful book, The Inner Voice of Love, in which he was able to share his struggles and the efforts it took to overcome them. At times, he felt completely overwhelmed by his wounds and obsessions and was on the edge of drowning, of collapse, when the only thing he could do was cry.

Eventually though, he found again his inner strength and emerged resilient, ready to re-enter his life with renewed energy. Remarkably on what he learned from this inner collapse and his eventual return to health, he writes that, in the end, our hearts are stronger than our wounds.

That’s a powerful affirmation of a hard-earned truth; but is it always true? Are our hearts always stronger than our wounds? Do we always have the resources deep down to overcome our wounds?

Sometimes yes, as in the case of Nouwen; but sometimes no, as we see in the broken lives of so many. Sometimes it seems wounds overwhelm the heart.

Perhaps one poignant example can serve to illustrate this. There is a sad, tragic, haunting line in the well-known song, I Dreamed a Dream, from the popular musical, Les Miserables. The story told in Les Miserables, as we know, is based on Victor Hugo’s classic book by that title which tells a series of stories about how poverty and oppression can break the hearts, backs, and bodies of the poor.

One of Hugo’s characters, Fantine, is a single mother, abandoned by the man she loves and nursing a broken heart. She is also struggling to provide for her daughter with the basic needs of life, struggling with a job and working conditions that are ruining her health, and struggling with sexual harassment from her boss that culminates in her unfair dismissal from her job. At a certain point, it’s too much, her health breaks, she collapses, and in her dying farewell sings out a lament that suggests that our hearts can be stronger than our wounds; but sometimes there are storms we cannot weather. Sometimes the heart cannot weather the storm and collapses under the weight and impact of its wounds.

Who’s right – Nouwen or Fantine? I suspect they both are, depending on one’s circumstance, inner health, and emotional resources. An old adage is that whatever doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger! True enough, providing it doesn’t become some other collapse of this sort, due to a broken heart, a broken psyche, a broken relationship, was more than it could bear. And sometimes it does. Sometimes what weighs us down does kill us.

I suspect that everyone reading this has had a first-hand experience of someone you knew and loved breaking down and dying, either by suicide or some other collapse of this sort, due to a broken heart, a broken life, a broken relationship.

By John Huynh

Our heart is stronger than our wounds

“Whatever sets Christian faith apart from most other religions (as well as from all prosperity gospels) is that Christianity is a religion of grace and not primarily of self-effort (important though that is).”

As Christians, we don’t have to save ourselves, don’t have to get our lives right all on our own. Indeed, nobody ever does. As St. Paul says so clearly in his farewell message in Romans 1-8, none of us ever get our lives right on the basis of our own strength. That’s also true in terms of overcoming our wounds.

All of us are weak and break down sometimes. However, and this is the point, when the storms of life overpower us, when we reach down to strength to withstand the ‘storm of life’ we are perhaps to realize that the storm is stronger than we are, we need to reach still deeper and there we will find that God’s heart is stronger than our brokenness.

John Huynh is the diocesan director of the Faith Journey program.

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Resources for all age groups were made available to learn about sin of racism

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

For their Lenten focus on the sin of racism, Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny relied heavily on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ document, Open Wide Our Hearts. The parish offered something for everyone from youth to high schoolers to adults. This included:

• The parish opened Lent with speaker Tobias Winright, associate professor of theology at St. Louis University, for a virtual gathering about the USCCB document, Open Wide Our Hearts – the catalyst for these Lenten activities.

• A Lenten booklet was made available and converted into a blog online with additional features. This was the foundation to raise awareness of racism, take to prayer, and be introduced to Saints of Color.

• Small groups were created for those who wanted to take what they were learning from the booklet/blog and go deeper into conversation with others virtually.

• Parishioners were encouraged to watch one video per week: The Power of an Illusion, explicit/takeatest.html for free at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html.

To learn more about the sin of racism. They will be left up on the website for anyone who would like to use them, found at olih.org/the-sin-of-racism-open-wide-our-heart.

A Lenten project is that “It was like something that was shared after our career. Two of my nephews are 15 – and I am aware – of the struggles they were having…watching the protests and the riots and how hard life is for people of color. And there’s not much they can do about it. They are going to be judged based on the color of their skin and it saddens me, because you can’t change other people’s hearts and minds.”

The videos made available were particularly popular amongst parishioners.

“Was that one of the beautiful things about what we did…some of the videos we put out and encouraged people to watch just really brought home how engrained…cultural racism really is,” Mayer added.

The sin of racism

A variety of activities were made available to the parish to learn more about the sin of racism. They will be left up on the website for anyone who would like to use them, found at olih.org/the-sin-of-racism-open-wide-our-heart.

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“And on a practical level, more people will engage in whatever we are doing [during Lent],” – said Patty Mayer, director of Adult Faith Formation at OLIH. “That’s a normal time-frame to put more time and effort into your prayer and faith, and so that seemed to be the best [fit].”

Before the Lenten endeavor began, Mayer was one of three people who shared with the congregation personal experiences of racism – whether firsthand or through family members.

“I have three nephews and a niece who are all biracial,” Mayer said. “I know the conversations that are happening in their house. Two of my nephews are 15 – and I am aware – of the struggles they were having…watching the protests and the riots and how hard life is for people of color. And there’s not much they can do about it. They are going to be judged based on the color of their skin and it saddens me, because you can’t change other people’s hearts and minds.”

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Reactions to the resources made available during Lent were mixed.

“On the one hand I had parishioners and guests question why we should be looking at the sin of racism,” Father Amadeo said. “Some thought it was politically motivated. On the other hand, I had both parishioners and non-parishioners who said they were grateful our parish had the courage to think about this issue and study this issue.”

It was an eye-opening and reflective experience.

“Many people said the thing they heard most often was shock – parishioners did not realize what was actually happening,” said parishioner Jan Brown, who is also a member of AMOS. “I would say many people’s hearts were opened.”

Parishioner Sue Murphy, who is also an AMOS member, said “I think one of the best remarks that was shared after our Lenten project is that “It was like the mustard seed that was planted – now that we have been made aware we are called to action. It hopefully reminds us that we are called to love all of our brothers and sisters.”

OLIH has kept all of its Lenten resources available online and available to anyone interested in using them, found at olih.org/the-sin-of-racism-open-wide-our-heart.
Catechetical instruction is a distinctive ministry of people of deep faith

Continued from page 1

about the vocation of laypeople in his 2013 document, “The Joy of the Gospel.” Bishops’ conferences will need to determine the process of formation and the normative criteria for admission to this ministry and devise “the most appropriate forms for the service which these men and women will be called to exercise,” the pope said.

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, he said, “will soon publish the Rite of Institution of the lay ministry of catechist.” The congregation already is working on revised rites for the ministries of lector and acolyte, which Pope Francis opened to women in January. While millions of lay men and women around the world already serve as catechists, readers and altar servers, formal institution into the ministries signifies that the service is stable, delegated by the bishop and publicly recognized by the church.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, noted how St. Paul VI wrote in 1975 about the importance of laypeople using their gifts for the growth of the entire church. “It has taken almost 50 years for the church to come to recognize that the service rendered by so many men and women through their catechetical commitment truly constitutes a distinctive ministry for the growth of the Christian community,” the archbishop told reporters at a news conference to present the pope’s document.

In his document, Pope Francis noted how teachers of the faith were present from the earliest days of the Christian community and were recognized as having a special gift of the Holy Spirit for carrying out their role within the community. “At times,” he wrote, “the charisms that the Spirit constantly pours out on the baptized took on a visible and tangible form of immediate service to the Christian community, one recognized as an undignified ‘diakonia’ for the community.”

In looking at the history of evangelization, the pope said, “We cannot overlook ‘the countless lay men and women who directly took part in the spread of the Gospel through catechetical instruction. Men and women of deep faith, authentic witnesses of holiness, who in some cases were also founders of churches and eventually died as martyrs.”

Still today, he said, “many competent and dedicated catechists are community leaders in various parts of the world and carry out a mission invaluable for the transmission and growth of the faith.”

Several Catholic colleges will require COVID-19 vaccinations.

By Carol Zimmerman Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- As Catholic colleges grapple with how to reopen in the fall, many are already saying they will require their students to be vaccinated for COVID-19 and some schools are also mandating that staff members be vaccinated.

“Our goal is simple and twofold: to provide a COVID-safe environment in which our students, faculty and staff can pursue our mission; and to help protect the health and safety of our off-campus neighbors,” said Jesuit Father Joseph McShane, president of Fordham University, in an April 16 letter to the college community explaining that all students need to be vaccinated “...with some considerations for medical and religious exemptions” -- by the start of the fall semester.

The number of private colleges requiring COVID-19 vaccinations continues to grow, numbering about 75 on April 27 on a list updated by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Eucharistic renewal initiative kicking off in the Diocese

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national plan to local needs.

The initiative is intended to help each of the faithful come to know and love God more deeply.

“Each one of us, as a unique member of the Body of Christ, is called to transformation through the Eucharist and then, in turn, to share that gift with others,” wrote Bishop William Joensen in a letter to parishes last month.

“Ultimately, there is nothing more essential to our life in Christ than gathering together to celebrate the Eucharist, the sacramental banquet of thanksgiving that Jesus left us,” he said.

John Huynh, diocesan director of the Faith Journey program and coordinator of the Eucharistic renewal initiative, concurred.

“I hope this Eucharistic renewal initiative will remind us of our hunger for the only person who can satisfy our deepest longings,” he said. “Jesus comes to us most intimately through our reception of the Eucharist at the Holy Mass.”

Greg Samorajski, of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines, is on a diocesan committee making plans for the initiative.

“I became a Catholic in the ’90s because of my growing love and understanding of the Eucharist,” he said. “I joined the committee to help others learn about – maybe for the first time – the importance of the Eucharist in our spiritual lives. Through receiving the Eucharist we grow in love into our place in the Body of Christ.”

Upcoming opportunities to reverence the Eucharist may be parish processions, Holy Hours, adoration and benediction. The following are a few processions that are planned:

• St. Anthony Parish in Des Moines on June 6 will have an 11 a.m. bilingual Mass at its grotto followed by a procession and luncheon in celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

• St. Augustine Parish in Des Moines plans a procession and dinner June 6 at 3 p.m. in celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

• Sacred Heart Parish in Chariton will hold a procession June 13 in connection with the parish’s 150th anniversary celebration.

• Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs will have a Eucharistic procession July 11 following its 10 a.m. Mass in celebration of the parish’s 150th anniversary.

Some parishes have begun to offer Holy Hours or opportunities for adoration, when the faithful can spend quiet time in prayer and reflection in front of Jesus in the Eucharist. Bishop Joensen celebrates a Holy Hour at 5 p.m. on Mondays at St. Ambrose Cathedral, which is livestreamed on Facebook.com/dmdiocese. Reflections on the Eucharist can be found at dmdiocese.org/holy-hours.

CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis greets the crowd as he leads the “Regina Coeli” from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican May 17.

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