Vol. 53, No. 6
June 21, 2019

Two will become priests on June 21

All are invited to 7 p.m. ordination at St. Ambrose Cathedral

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Transitional Deacons James Downey and Mark McGarvey will be ordained into the priesthood Friday, June 21 at 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral in downtown Des Moines. All are invited to attend the ordination Mass and reception to follow across the street at the Catholic Pastoral Center.

Their new assignments will begin July 11.

Deacon Mark McGarvey will serve as parochial vicar at St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines.

Deacon James Downey will serve as parochial vicar at Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny from July-September, 2019. Then he will attend the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome for the school year for graduate studies in moral theology. He will live at the Pontifical North American College before transferring to the University of Nebraska – Omaha to earn his bachelor’s degree in business.

“After this summer serving on the West Coast, I will be fighting forest fires this summer on the West Coast, and plans on attending Iowa Western Iowa Community College before transferring to the University of Nebraska – Omaha. He dreams of opening his own business after college. He enjoys his parish community and appreciates the Spanish Mass.

Brian Martinez, of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, graduated this spring from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs. He celebrated his graduation with his mother Francisca Ramos and sister Sofia Martinez Ramos. He will be fighting forest fires this summer on the West Coast, and plans on attending Iowa Western Iowa Community College before transferring to the University of Nebraska – Omaha. He dreams of opening his own business after college. He enjoys his parish community and appreciates the Spanish Mass.

Graduates express gratitude for support, love and faith

By Henry DeAngelis

“Pax Christi

Commencement Speech Dowling Catholic High School

Dowling’s mission is for us to be Leaders for Life, Centered on Christ and while Dowling nurtured us for four years, succeeding as Leaders for Life, Centered on Christ in the future takes intentionality.

This toothpick bridge was built by Jackson Fischer and me in sixth grade, and since then it has traveled with me, through numerous moves, and rested on many a bookshelf. It may not be the prettiest, and is in dire need of repair, but it has stood the test of time, and for the last few years has represented not only Jackson to me, but what he was best at doing, making friends. A project that asked us to build a toothpick bridge out of hot glue, cardboard, and of course, toothpicks, ended up being the project where we would build our friendship.

Continued on page 6

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

In May, hundreds of young people across the diocese marked one of life’s biggest milestones: graduating high school. A few young adults shared their thoughts and reflections on their parishes, high school careers and what’s next as they embark on early adulthood and college.

Brian Martinez
Corpus Christi Parish, Council Bluffs

Brian Martinez recently graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School, and will take on a big job this summer fighting forest fires on the West Coast.

“It will be a wildland firefighter...,” Martinez said. “My uncle’s company is based in Oregon.”

He’ll be extinguishing flames in Oregon, Washington and California.

In the fall, he’ll begin attending Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs. He’ll study there for two years before transferring to the University of Nebraska – Omaha to earn his bachelor’s degree in business.

“I want to be a business owner,” Martinez said.

He has fond memories of high school.

“The teachers and friendships and bonds you create [were the highlights],” he said. “I really enjoyed my time there. There’s definitely a lot of staff that truly care about furthering the education of their students.”

Martinez is happy he’ll be able to continue attending Corpus Christi Parish.

“I really enjoy going to church,” he said. “I like that they’ve always made an effort to have a Spanish Mass. There are a lot of Hispanics in the area and I like that they take the initiative.”

Continued on page 5

A new beginning

As graduates leave their familiar schools for the next phase in their lives, they reflect on the people and values that have influenced them.

By Grace Springman
Class of 2019
St. Albert Catholic School

Today is the day most of us have been waiting for since the first day of senior year. It almost seems unreal that our high school years have come to a close. Many lessons have been learned from both successes and failures that we have experienced with our time at St. Albert. It is hard to think that this graduating class of 2019 will be facing new triumphs and struggles in the months to come.

To this point in our lives, it is important to look back and express gratitude towards the people that paved the path to where we are now. All of our successes and accomplishments could not have been made possible without the people around us. I would like to thank our parents, teachers, grandparents, and guardians for the sacrifice you have made for each one of us. I would also like to thank

Continued on page 14
The Father Jim Kiernan Initiative:
Guiding Principles on Compensation


Father Jim Kiernan had scheduled appointment with me a few days after he died on May 13, 2010. His purpose was to advocate a living wage for all employees in our Catholic parishes, schools and other operations in the Diocese of Des Moines.

This advocacy was assumed by his nephew, Peter Kiernan, and Father Dave Polich. Consultation was conducted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council as well as the Diocesan Finance Council. The outcome was a document entitled “Guiding Principles on Compensation.” It was approved by both councils and recommended to me for implementation.

With this communication, I call for the full adoption of these principles by each parish and school by July 1, 2019. As a full commitment to this aspect of social justice, all of us Catholics desire that those who serve be accorded the dignity that is theirs by providing just wages. Moreover, through this initiative, we are depositories of bringing a moral witness to the broader society.

The aspirational goal is to move toward paying church workers a minimum of $15/hour. Finding it important to model this goal, the Diocese of Des Moines, with the exception of a high school worker, has achieved this minimum rate among our lay employees. Our particular focus these last 10 years, at the diocese, has been to steadily upgrade the compensation scale for those at the lower end of the pay range. To some degree, this has been achieved by our reaching the minimum $15 pay scale. We are committed to continue moving forward in this direction so that our valuable employees can provide for themselves and their families.

This initiative also embraces those employees who serve our institutions on a contracted basis. Father Kiernan felt compelled to take up the cause of decent pay for them when he learned of the grossly insufficient wage of a person who was employed by a contractor in service of an institution in which he lived. He personally benefited from the assistance of the worker. I am fully aware that these new regulations may require additional generosity and some initial strain on finances. The Diocese of Des Moines, though, has been blessed by extraordinary generosity. The aggregate parish income has grown by 32% since 2010. Thus, ostensibly, there are some available funds to address the issue of compensation.

All of us want to do what is necessary to provide resources for our Church employees that recognize their dignity and value. I am grateful to Father Jim Kiernan and subsequently to his nephew Peter and Father Dave Polich for faithfully pursuing the justice which should characterize our institutions. Further applause is directed to the Finance Council of the Diocese of Des Moines and its Presbyterian for developing and espousing church financial practices that will achieve these goals.

I feel privileged and fortunate to establish “The Father Jim Kiernan Initiative” as policy for the Diocese of Des Moines.

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Friday, June 21

Des Moines – “In the Heartland with Bishop Pates”, Iowa Catholic Radio, Des Moines; KVSS, Omaha, 9 a.m.

Monday, June 24

Des Moines – Confirmation, Christ the King Parish, 5 p.m.

Des Moines – Christ the King and St. Anthony Parishes’ Corpus Christi Celebration, St. Anthony Parish, 7 p.m.

Des Moines – Diocesan Finance Council Meeting, Catholic Pastoral Center, Noon

Thursday, June 27

Des Moines – Diocesan Finance Council Meeting, Catholic Pastoral Center, Noon

Des Moines – “In the Heartland with Bishop Pates”, Iowa Catholic Radio, Des Moines; KVSS, Omaha, 9 a.m.

Saturday, June 29

Des Moines – “In the Heartland with Bishop Pates”, Iowa Catholic Radio, Des Moines; KVSS, Omaha, 9 a.m.

Tuesday, July 2 – July 24

Des Moines – “In the Heartland with Bishop Pates”, Iowa Catholic Radio, Des Moines; KVSS, Omaha, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, June 30

Des Moines – 10th Anniversary Mass, St. Peter Vietnamese Catholic Community, 10:30 a.m.

Des Moines – Sending Mass for Hispanic Lay Formation Class, St. Ambrose Cathedral, 4 p.m.

Tuesday, July 2 – July 24 Vacation

Friday, July 5

Des Moines – “In the Heartland with Bishop Pates”, Iowa Catholic Radio, Des Moines; KVSS, Omaha, 9 a.m.

Correction

Father Chris Harshorn’s celebration of his 25th anniversary of ordination to priesthood is July 27 with 4 p.m. Mass and a cookout following Mass at Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines. The Catholic Mirror printed an incorrect date in the May edition of the newspaper.

Bishop Richard Pates celebrated Mass at St. Theresa Church in Des Moines

Father James Ahenkora celebrated Mass at St. Patrick Cemetery near Massena.
The number of refugees entering the United States for resettlement has dropped significantly in the past few years as a result of changes in the annual presidential determination, which occurs each October.

In 2017 approximately 110,000 refugees were allowed into the United States, said Elsie Rotich, refugee resettlement program manager at Catholic Charities in Des Moines. “It’s really slowed down,” Rotich added. She estimates about 100 Catholic Charities organizations have closed their refugee offices.”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is the largest of the nine voluntary agencies that have contracts with the federal government for processing refugees for resettlement in the United States. Catholic Charities Des Moines is a recognized USCCB provider in offering refugee resettlement services.

The Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Office in Des Moines, which focuses almost entirely on family reunifications, has felt the effects of these changes, Rotich added.

“We used to resettle about 213 people every year,” Rotich said. “We had people from Congo, Burma, Eritrea, Bhutan and Somalia.”

“We cannot do that anymore because so many of them are coming from Somalia.”

“I feel really bad about the Somali clients – that really affects family reunifications and their families cannot join them,” Rotich added.

The refugee resettlement community is working hard on advocacy, talking to legislators about the humanitarian crisis and the need for programs to help refugees, Rotich said. They also advocate for funding to provide English classes for the refugees already here.

“There’s a lot of uncertainty in the refugee resettlement world,” Rotich added. “Agencies are closing and this is really destroying the infrastructure that has been there for a long time. Once they close it’s difficult for them to come open again.”

The future remains uncertain for those waiting to find a place to call home.

“It’s a huge humanitarian crisis,” Rotich concluded. “About 65 million around the world are waiting to be resettled.”

To date, the program has welcomed 131 of the anticipated 175 clients this year.

Since 1975, Catholic Charities, in partnership with the Bishop and the diocese, has assisted in the resettlement of refugees fleeing to the United States from war and other dangers.

Opportunity to lend a helping hand

Catholic Charities of Des Moines is looking for partners for its Refugee Resettlement program. Come to a meeting July 23, 5-7 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center to learn more.

A few teams of three to five volunteers are needed to meet with refugee families for four months after their 90-day settlement with Catholic Charities has ended.

The opportunity to welcome the newcomers to the community could mean teaching the refugee family about Des Moines and surrounding area, practicing English, learning about different cultures in central Iowa and helping the family meet its goals to become self-sufficient.

Interested? Contact Monica Sodergren at msodergren@catholiccharitiesdm.org or call 515-237-5068.
**Honor flights offer healing to vets**

By Deacon Terry Schleisman

Top photo: Deacon Terry Schleisman, on the May 21 honor flight to Washington, D.C., kneels at the Vietnam Memorial wall with his hand on the etched names of Charles Brazier and Theodore Mendez, who were killed by a white phosphorous grenade a week after Deacon Schleisman left the country. Brazier was his Jeep driver and Mendez was his mentor.

Above: Deacon Schleisman with Kevin Hudachek, the manager of a Hy-Vee in Ankeny. Hy-Vee was a major sponsor of the trip. Hudacheck helped veterans who needed assistance.

Honor flights are a whirlwind event that touched a lot of hearts. The Honor Flight trip shed a new light on the experiences of many of the veterans. We shared stories, shed tears and had moments of joy. It brought about healing, much like reconciliation does.

Deacon Terry Schleisman has been assigned to St. Mary-Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart for seven years and charitable ministry to St. Mary-Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart for seven years and charitable ministry. He served at Drummond for 20 years as a deacon. He was ordained in August of 2010.

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**Letters to the Editor**

We have received your recent check for $5,847.46, which we posted to the 2018 Catholic Home Missions Appeal. We also received your recent check for $24,173.66 for the 2018 Disaster Special Collection. I am grateful for your assistance in facilitating the generous gifts of the parishioners in your diocese.

Sincerely

Nicole Germain

Office of National Collections

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

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**How to accept criticism: A spiritual exercise**

More than 19 million people tuned in to watch the final episode of “Game of Thrones” on May 21, 2019, making it the most viewed show to ever air on HBO. Yet many were dissatisfied with what they saw, hurling gripe after grouse online. The finale didn’t fit the ethos of what they saw, meaning before the show’s finale aired, meaning a million people lobbed for a re-made season before seeing how it would resolve.

We live in an unfortunate era for online criticism. Critics fling insults they would never dare utter face to face. Defendants – typically privileged public figures – bristle with self-righteousness, doubting their critics “haters,” earning praise for “clapping back” in their own defense.

I wonder if we’re growing too defensive. When we clap back so fiercely, do we take the time to consider the criticism? Are we cooling down enough to find the teaching moment in the hot exchange? Or are we digging our heels in and sticking our fingers in our ears? A media executive once offered a handy guide on when to take criticism to heart. Ask yourself two questions about your critic, she said: Can you trust that this person is acting in good faith and not on some ulterior motive? Does this person have some knowledge of this particular situation that I do not?

If the answers are yes, then heed their words. If the answers are no, make like Taylor Swift and shake it off.

There are moments I look at my choices and judgments of our own. Do I take the time to consider the criticism’s words. If the answers are no, make like Taylor Swift and shake it off. Lately I’ve been struggling to determine when to be gentle with myself and when to push myself to a higher standard. In my sleep-deprived days with an infant, it’s easy to justify the former. But there are moments I look at my choices and I know I can do better. More green smoothies, earlier bedtimes. Less binge TV, fewer donuts. I know it’s all connected: sleep, sugar, the limits of my patience, the frequency of my prayer.

I used to cling to St. Francis de Sales’ quote: “Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself.” It is so tender, so loving. But I’d been missing his subsequent statement, meant to be taken as a whole, to moderate the first part: “Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them. Every day begin the task anew.”

This is a high bar: address a looming “instantly.” St. Francis’ charge is two-fold, pointing us to a middle ground: to both be patient with yourself and to consider your imperfections.

Catholic spirituality equips us with the tools for an examination of conscience and asks us to do so bravely, honestly, daily. This may be harder to do than ever before, in this time when social media makes our personal lives feel public, and we sink in the quicksand of fearing others’ judgment while too readily casting, judgmental eyes on our own.

It may be harder to do than ever before but also more important. We must learn to cast aside unfounded criticism while accepting difficult feedback from trusted sources: a sibling or spouse, a spiritual director, a confessor. And then, with courage and humility, we can “set about remedying” and find a path toward progress. Again and again, sunrise, sunset – we can begin anew.

Christina Capecci is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.
A new beginning for graduates

Continued from page 1

Elise Schafer
St. Joseph Parish, Mt. Ayr

Elise Schafer of St. Joseph Parish in Mt. Ayr, graduated Mount Ayr Community High School this year. She’s looking forward to attending Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota to study psychology. She hopes to one day go to medical school and study psychiatry or neurology.

Schafer was active throughout high school in individual and large group speech and group.

She’s also a singer. “I sing for all of our home athletic events – football, basketball, sometimes track and softball and baseball,” Schafer said.

She sang for FFA, the Iowa State Fair and even sang the National Anthem at Principal Park in Des Moines.

Schafer’s been involved in local plays throughout her time in high school and had the opportunity to be Mary Poppins for the school play, Schafer said.

She’s also active at her parish, St. Joseph in Mt. Ayr.

“I’m a Bible school teacher,” she said. “I teach kindergarten and first grade Catholicism with a fellow classmate.

Elise got a question for “Ask a Priest” and its author, Father John Ludwig? Send it to communications@diocesece.org.

Caitlin Bissen
St. Michael Parish, Harlan

Caitlin Bissen of St. Michael Parish in Harlan recently graduated from Harlan High School. She plans to attend Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois to major in theater and minor in music.

“My career goals or aspirations after college is to work for a theater company – whether that’s community theater or professional theater,” Bissen said. “I want to work in that capacity in some way, whether it’s a writer or producer or director.”

She shared her theater talents with the local community growing up. Bissen was president of the drama club and helped start the community theater in Harlan.

I got to be an assistant director for our Hairspray musical and also got to student direct a spring play and do all the casting,” Bissen continued.

She graduated in the top 10 of her class and gave a speech at the graduation ceremony.

“In my speech I alluded to the point that in kindergarten we planted the seeds in the milk cartons and how those grew,” Bissen said. “And then when they grew they all looked similar. And I made that connection to all of us – how we are graduating. We were planted in the Harlan community, had the same support, and even though we all bloomed differently into our passions, we all shared the same roots in that we came from Harlan.”

She has been actively involved at her parish with singing, faith formation, service projects, fish fry dinners and liturgical events.

“My faith is important to me, because it’s taught me to love everybody you meet,” Bissen said. “I think that’s very important as you go to college when you meet people with different backgrounds. I try to be understanding with them and love them as God has loved you. And in that way I know I am doing what God wants me to do. That’s important. I know that no matter what trials I face...he’s there for me to show me the way.”

Tessa Powers
Holy Spirit Parish, Creston

Tessa Powers of Holy Spirit Parish in Creston recently graduated Creston High School. She was valedictorian of her class.

She plans to attend Southwest Community College in Creston in the fall and eventually transfer to one of the seven or four year colleges in Iowa to study something in the field of science.

Powers was involved in band, speech team, the National Honor Society and 4-H.

Though she’ll miss some of her friends, Powers is happy her family and parish community will be close by while she’s attending community college.

“I definitely enjoy going to church,” Powers said. “It’s nice to see people in the community there, and my faith has definitely helped me through school.

“My faith will definitely guide me in the future and keeps me on the right track,” she concluded.
Henry DeAngelis speech
Continued from page 1

It was reflecting back on how Jackson and I became friends that I realized how good he was at making friends, after all - it’s what he did. And through this great skill he taught us, as a class, how to build our bridge.

So, over these four years, we as a class became the living embodiment of this toothpick bridge. We all started off as separate toothpicks, ready to be built, but not knowing how we would fit together or what we would create. And Dowling is the cardboard on which we built our bridge. Giving us the solid support we needed to build upon.

Our relationships and connections are the glue that holds us all together.

Each moment of adversity is the bridge being tested. Over the years we as a class have faced a lot of adversity, from all trying to pass that one class we just didn’t quite get, to shoveling our cars out of the snow, to all the personal battles we’ve fought inside our heads.

Each bit of adversity is a test. And the question during these tests is always the same. Will we stick together as a community? Or will we crack under the weight?

Now, each time we struggled, or made a mistake a little glue strand might have broken off, or a toothpick might have shifted its place, but overall our bridge still held, because those people, or relationships, still had other toothpicks and glue strands to lean on.

But sometimes there are tests that put the entire bridge under stress. From world events, to the passing of someone in our community whether it be Jackson Fischer, or Rebijn Alcyon, Trevor Schwager, Sue Swift, one of the Anmes, or any of the other members we lost during our time at Dowling.

Every time our community has gone through one of these events, though, it is Dowling and our faith, that has kept us upright, Dowling that has only ever let our bridge bend to a knee in despair.

As we leave Dowling I will be leaving this toothpick bridge that has represented Jackson Fischer to me for so many years at Dowling, as a way for our class, and the school to build upon or what we would create. And Dowling is the cardboard on which we built our bridge. Giving us the solid support we needed to build upon.

So, although we are all leaving Dowling I will be leaving this toothpick bridge that has represented Jackson Fischer to me for so many years at Dowling, as a way for our class, and the school to build upon or what we would create. And Dowling is the cardboard on which we built our bridge. Giving us the solid support we needed to build upon.
Catholic Daughters convention

The Iowa Catholic Daughters of the Americas held their 53rd biennial convention April 26-28 in Okoboji. National Regent Elect Sherry Nilles, of St. Patrick Parish in Sheldon, returned to her home state for the event.

Nilles explained how the Catholic Daughters have changed over the 116-year history of the group. They’ll continue to evolve and embrace change, she said.

New officers installed are: 1st Vice State Regent Rita Carlson, Holy Trinity Parish in Fort Dodge; 2nd Vice State Regent Kaye Stock Arndorfer, St. Laurence Parish in Carroll; State Secretary Suzanne Torrey of Immaculate Conception Parish in Cherokee; and State Treasurer Sandra Burgart, of Holy Family Parish in New Hampton.

The newly elected 2021 Nomination Committee members are: Judy Block, of St. Mary Parish in Ashton, Becky Larson, of St. Peter & Paul Parish in West Bend, Julie Nordal, of St. Cecilia Parish in Algona, Christina Rosch, of Holy Trinity Parish in Fort Dodge, Brenda Vore, of St. Michael Parish in Sioux City, and alternate Carol Hollenback, of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs.

Bishop Drum celebrates its 80th anniversary

Eighty years ago, the Sisters of Mercy started Bishop Drum Retirement Community for aging seniors in the Des Moines community supplying compassionate care and creating a history of innovation.

The Bishop Drum community invites everyone to celebrate 80 years of service on Tuesday, July 9 at 4 p.m. with food and entertainment at 5837 Winwood Dr. in Johnston. Go to homeishere.org for details.

The Bishop Drum community strives for innovation in providing good care. It had the first Alzheimer Care Unit in Polk County and was the second certified Assisted Living facility.

Today, CHI Living Communities Bishop Drum Retirement Center continues that tradition of ministry by providing care that meets all levels of need from independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing and rehabilitation to long-term care.

Last fall, Bishop Drum earned the Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval for Nursing Care Center Accreditation and Post-Acute Care Certification. It was the first organization in Iowa to do so.

Throughout this anniversary year, Bishop Drum has celebrated with planned activities such as:

• 80 reflections of our history in pictures, thoughts, and prayers;
• 80 acts of random kindness throughout our community;
• 80th anniversary community celebration on July 9.

Feast of Corpus Christi

A celebration of the life of Sister JoAnne Talarico, CHM will be June 25 at 1 p.m. in Our Lady Of Peace Chapel in the Bishop Drum Retirement Center in Johnston.

JOIN US FOR THE 1ST COMBINED CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION

Saint Anthony Church & Christ the King Church
15 Indianola Rd. in Des Moines, IA on Sunday, June 23 11:00 a.m.

Please honor us with your presence for this first joint celebration of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. This bilingual Mass at the Grotto combines the St. Anthony 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and Christ the King’s 3 p.m. Mass. After Mass you are welcome to join us in our long held tradition of processing with the Most Blessed Sacrament throughout our neighborhoods followed by lunch and the St. Anthony Pillar of the Parish Award recognition with Christ the King to honor Sister Maria R. Huerta Amezcua.

A New Missalette for Participation in the Liturgy: Sing A New Song

Sponsored by the Orate Institute of Sacred Liturgy, Music and Art • www.orateinstitute.org

The Best Worship Resource You’ll Ever Find!

Sing A New Song is a Catholic worship resource combining new music settings for the Lituragies and Commissions Antiphons of the Roman Calendar, with Lectionary for Mass to provide a comprehensive and reusable resource for the Mass. The music settings are arranged and composed by Rt. Rev. Marcel Rooney, O.S.B., creating melodies accessible to average parishioners. The Masses are organized by the Roman Calendar, with Liturgical Years A, B, and C each represented within a separate volume. These hard-cover volumes have the benefit of being as long-lasting as the Roman Missal and Lectionary, eliminating the need for annual, soft-cover resources. Volumes A and C are available to order from A-R Editions in Middleton, Wisconsin. Volume B will be published in 2020. To learn more about Sing A New Song, call Lance Ottman at 608-203-2569 or visit https://www.areditions.com/publishing-services/sing-a-new-song.html
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<th>Engaged couple says Catholic faith is a priority</th>
<th>Sponsor couple coaches engaged to see marriage as sacrament</th>
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<td>By Kelly Mescher Collins</td>
<td>By Clare Heinrich</td>
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<td>Their relationship began with a dance.</td>
<td>It is a challenge to juggle a rich faith life with an active family’s schedule.</td>
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<td>“Camden asked me to a dance our junior year of high school at Dowling, and we started dating a couple of months later...” said Sydney Bishop, now 22 and a lifelong member of St. Theresa Parish in Des Moines. “We’ve pretty much been together ever since then.”</td>
<td>Matthew and Holly Hamden want not only live out their vocational role through marriage, they are active in their faith and encourage other young couples to do the same.</td>
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<td>After graduating high school and into college, the two continued dating, though they were now hundreds of miles apart.</td>
<td>Now celebrating 18 years of marriage and five children, the Harndens are a marriage preparation sponsor couple at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines. Formerly from Sacred Heart and St. Boniface Parishes, the couple had participated individually in ministries such as Christ Renews His Parish and RCIA, but they sought out a ministry that would allow them to work together.</td>
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<td>After attending Truman State University in Missouri for one year, Sydney returned to Des Moines to study nursing at Mercy College while Camden went to Notre Dame.</td>
<td>During marriage preparation, the sponsor couple walks the engaged couple through several steps that will encourage them to view their marriage as a relationship with Christ, a true vocation.</td>
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<td>“When he independently owned a Catholic identity and wanted to pursue a relationship with Jesus more,” Sydney said. “And I would say for myself that was the same.”</td>
<td>“You can live the modern family life and have Christ at the center of it,” said Matthew.</td>
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<td>“I think college was also the first time that I really felt like I knew the person of Jesus and wanted to pursue that more,” Sydney continued.</td>
<td>Preparation work usually consists of four meetings at the sponsor couple’s house where they go through the FOCUS questionnaire, which invites the engaged couple to look at their relationship moving forward and how they plan to incorporate Christ into their lives.</td>
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<td>“And so I think we grew in different ways as we got more serious and began to talk about things of a more serious nature and be more vulnerable with each other and about what was going on in our hearts and souls. We each wanted that from a future spouse.”</td>
<td>The sponsor couple then has the opportunity to share experiences from their own faith journey through marriage and parenthood.</td>
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<td>Maintaining a long-distance relationship wasn’t always easy, Sydney said. But they looked to Christ as their example.</td>
<td>“One of the biggest reasons we do this is because we want our kids to see the value we put on the sacrament of marriage,” said Holly.</td>
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<td>“I think you learned how to be in a relationship through a relationship with Jesus,” Sydney added. “You learn communication, sacrifices and patience through a relationship with Jesus. As each of us grew in a relationship with Christ, our relationship changed.”</td>
<td>The Harndens know how important it is to foster this relationship with Christ, especially during married life. Despite their commitments to work, school, and extracurricular activities, they prioritize this ministry because they strive to help young couples establish a solid foundation in the faith and they are touched by the stories they hear from both new couples and other sponsor couples.</td>
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<td>It’s extremely important to them both to have their wedding in the Catholic church.</td>
<td>“We see it as a fundamental, foundational way to impact our community and the world,” said Matthew.</td>
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<td>“The grace that will be conferred upon us – it comes from all the sacraments,” said Camden, age 22. “But also the aspect of the sacrament relating to marriage and representing Jesus in the church and the love between them.”</td>
<td>The Harndens plan to remain in their ministry as a sponsor couple for years to come. They also encourage others to reach out to priests, deacons, and lay leaders for their testimonials on vocational life.</td>
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<td>“If we were to get married outside the church on an island, there would be this romantic love,” Camden continued. “But in the church we participate in the divine love and what Christ has for the church that I don’t think we’d get elsewhere. And it challenges us and elevates us to be better for each other.”</td>
<td>It is a challenge to juggle a rich faith life with an active family’s schedule. Matthew and Holly Hamden want to live out their vocational role through marriage, they are active in their faith and encourage other young couples to do the same.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In this day and age, it seems like it’s easier than ever to let faith fall by the wayside, Camden said. “It’s easy to see people our age, and everybody really, get caught up in trends, popularity and what everyone else thinks,” Camden said. “Something I really admire about the church is this solid thing – this rock where it’s not as much concerned about being popular but about doing what’s right – no matter the consequences or reactions from others.”</td>
<td>It is a challenge to juggle a rich faith life with an active family’s schedule. Matthew and Holly Hamden want to live out their vocational role through marriage, they are active in their faith and encourage other young couples to do the same.</td>
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<td>“My faith is important to me,” Camden said. “Both of us grew up in Catholic families. It’s really important to me to have a relationship with Christ and being able to encounter Christ in the Eucharist.”</td>
<td>Matthew and Holly Hamden want not only live out their vocational role through marriage, they are active in their faith and encourage other young couples to do the same.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The couple plan to get married Sept. 7, 2019 at St. Theresa Catholic Church in Des Moines.</td>
<td>The Harndens know how important it is to foster this relationship with Christ, especially during married life. Despite their commitments to work, school, and extracurricular activities, they prioritize this ministry because they strive to help young couples establish a solid foundation in the faith and they are touched by the stories they hear from both new couples and other sponsor couples.</td>
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Parishes to tackle pornography with prevention and healing

By Adam Storey
Contributing Writer

This fall, five diocesan parishes will work to address the issue of pornography in our culture. These efforts will be in partnership with the diocesan Evangelization and Catechesis Office and the Marriage and Family Life Office. The goal of this initiative is to provide education for families, addressing both the harms of pornography and the powerful tools that are available for prevention and healing. The approach will involve educational opportunities for parents, addressing the issue with the whole parish, and providing resources that can help families and communities win the battle against pornography.

St. Joseph, St. Anthony, and St. Theresa Parishes in Des Moines are tackling this issue along with St. John in Greenfield and St. Patrick Parish in Mussera. As Father James Ahenkora of St. John and St. Patrick said, “The Church cannot be silent on this issue. Her prophetic voice must be heard to bring help and solace to her children who struggle with pornography.

While pornography use is common and profoundly destructive, we are excited and hopeful about our efforts.

Father Joe Pines, of St. Joseph Parish in Des Moines, said, “As its essence, pornography is a lie. It twists the truth of what love is.”

Love is always greater than sin, and the truth is always more powerful than lies, he said.

In recent years, our understanding of this issue has been greatly enhanced, whether that be research into the harms of pornography, the development of technology to help prevent pornography exposure, or the expansion of resources that assist in healing.

The most important thing is to help people know that there is hope and freedom, and that the Church is here to support them in healing.

God’s love is greater than this struggle, and God wants to reach out more than the counterfeit of love and happiness that pornography provides.

To learn more about the diocesan efforts contact John Gaffney at 515-237-5026 or Adam Storey at 515-237-5056. To learn more about the resources available for those addressing this issue visit covenantries.com.
Couple overcomes doubts as children pursue religious life

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

When parents learn their son or daughter is thinking about a calling to religious life, a number of concerns arise.

Bob and Susan Downey knew them all too well. Of seven children, two are pursuing religious life.

When their daughter, Laura, said she was thinking of religious life, they weren’t surprised. Laura’s whole life had been in the Church.

When their other daughter, Lauren, said she wanted to be a nun, they were also not surprised. Lauren had been in a group home, and the experience was a positive one.

Bob had a little concern, though. “We’re just used to the children being different all the time,” he said. “We’re just used to the children changing.”

But when their son, James, expressed interest in the priesthood while he was still a student at Dowling Catholic High School, it caught Bob by surprise.

For real?

His first concern was whether James was experiencing a real calling.

Bob is an engineer and his dad was an engineer. He said he saw great potential in James to become an engineer. He pressed his son: “Do you really believe God’s calling you?”

Changing mind

A second concern was what might happen if James changed his mind.

What does a person do with a philosophy degree? Couldn’t James get his engineering degree and then go to the seminary? Then he’d have a practical degree he could fall back on if things didn’t work out in the seminary.

Bob reasoned that if God had been calling James to be a priest, that call existed in the past, in the present and would be there in the future.

On the other hand, there are a lot of distractions in college, Susan said. If James put his calling on hold during college, the distractions might deaden his hearing and, by not responding right away, he could eventually rationalize away a true vocation.

Church problems

A third concern was the number of the problems the Catholic Church faces in general:

“Some people look at the Church and say, ‘You got problems. Why would you want to be a priest or sister?’” said Bob. “I could see that.”

Yet, Susan believes the Church is in the midst of a renewal and God is calling people to religious life. Bob and Susan encourage parishioners to pray for their priests and affirm their vocation, and to pray for more vocations.

“Parents need to be encouraged,” she said. “They’re part of the renewal. If God’s calling your child, he is calling them to a life of joy and fruitfulness for the church.”

Leaving the nest

Bob and Susan had no concern about giving their children to the Church, but realize it is difficult for many parents.

When Bob and Susan were in Rome for their son’s diocesan ordination, it occurred to Bob that their son belongs to a larger group now.

“He belongs to a lot more people now than just us,” said Bob. “I could see that.”

Fear of the unknown

Their last concern was simply fear for their children.

Would their daughter and son be happy in a vocation to religious life? Every time Bob talks to his daughter, now known as Sister Mary Esther, he asks her if she has joy. Each time he asks, she says, “Yes.”

Theresa Welch, whose son, Anthony, now known as Brother Pier Giorgio Frassati, is in the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. Her son’s religious community lives a very poor, simple life. Welch wonders if he’ll be okay. Yet she knows he needs to be in a community and living with the Franciscans suits his personality.

Cathy Robey, mother of seminarist Brad Robey, was surprised that he was discerning priesthood and, knowing that he tends to be quiet, was concerned because she thought priests needed to be outgoing.

“Now I can’t see him doing anything else,” she said.

As young people discern what God calls them to do with their lives, they, too, may have concerns, Susan said. They may question whether they would be a good priest or religious woman.

She said the best thing to do is to listen, really listen, to your child and assure them that God loves them, that he has plans of great joy for them, and as their parents, you will walk with them as they search this out.

Father and son discover God’s love through reconciliation

This past month, my son, Gabriel, went to confession for the first time and he received his First Communion.

I have to say that watching him prepare for these sacraments has been one of the highlights of my fatherhood. My wife does so many things well, and the way she accompanied Gabriel through the process, reflecting with him and inviting him deeper, was simply amazing.

One of the beautiful moments for me was watching Gabriel prepare for his first confession. He wrestled with his examination of conscience, wanting to make sure he brought all his sins.

He was a little nervous, having the same fears in his heart that all of us have experienced: “What will Father think when I say this?”

And yet he was excited, because he knew that in this sacrament he gets to hear Jesus say to him personally, “Go in peace, your sins are forgiven.”

When Gabriel left the sacrament he got to hear Jesus say to him personally, “Go in peace, your sins are forgiven.”

I am convinced that one of the most important messages each of us needs to hear is that we are loved, that we are lovable. We need to hear it over and over again, and we need to hear it no matter what situation we’re in and what we’re going through.

And praise God, Jesus knows that about us, so he gave us the sacrament of confession in order to hear, out loud, those words.

If you’ve been away from this sacrament I’d invite you to go back, and if you have found freedom and peace in this sacrament please share that experience with others.

The world needs this treasure of mercy and love, and we need to share it!

Marriage & Family Life

By Adam Storey

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Adam Storey is the diocesan director of Marriage & Family Life. He can be reached at astorey@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5056.

Diocese of Des Moines
Marriage Anniversary Masses

Join Bishop Pates for his annual anniversary Masses, praying with couples celebrating milestone anniversaries! On August 3 Bishop Pates will be celebrating an anniversary Mass during the 5:15 p.m. vigil Mass at St. John Catholic Church, 303 NE Elm St, Greenfield, IA 50849, and on August 4 Bishop Pates will be celebrating an anniversary Mass during the 8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Ambrose Cathedral, 607 High St, Des Moines, IA 50309. A certificate of blessing is available with registration for couples celebrating milestone anniversaries (5 year increments and 50+ years), and a light reception will follow both Masses. Reserved seating will be available for these couples and their families during the Mass.

To register for either Mass call Cathy Gearhart at 515-237-5044 or email her at cgearhart@dmdiocese.org

family life. For more information, contact Adam Storey at astorey@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5056.
Longtime lawyer, charitable supporter and advocate dies

By Kelly Mecher Collins
Staff Writer

Devout Catholic and successful real estate lawyer Bill Lillis died on May 8. He was a member of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines.

Born and raised in Williamsburg, Bill received his undergraduate degree from Drake University before attending Creighton University for law school.

He married his wife, Kathleen, in 1967 and the two settled in Des Moines with their kids. Bill began his legal career at the Polk County Attorney’s office and later joined a local law firm that would eventually bear his name – Lillis O’Malley Law Firm.

“He was an excellent lawyer,” said longtime friend and former colleague Lillis O’Malley Law Firm. “He was very thorough in all their ducks in order and T’s crossed. He was very thorough and good at what he did. He was excellent at it.”

His brother, Terry Lillis of St. Francis Parish, agreed that “if there was any big deal to be done, Bill was probably involved.”

Bill was instrumental in Des Moines University’s move to West Des Moines, Terry added. He also worked on incorporating the Tanger Outlet Mall as part of Williamsburg, so the local sales tax would benefit his hometown.

He often reached out to others in his profession and never lost his composure, said Dan Manning Sr., managing partner at Lillis O’Malley.

“Bill was just as good a humanitarian, Monsignor Hess added. "He became a big pleader of their cause and promoter of their cause," Monsoon Hess said. “He also got people to support and help Anawim Housing. He did an excellent job of that.”

Bill was also a member of the Dowling Catholic Foundation Board, and a supporter and advocate of many organizations, including United Way, Men on the Move, Des Moines Art Center, Drake University, Salisbury House, Easter Seals and Central Iowa Shelter and Services.

Bill was just as good a friend as he was lawyer and humanitarian, Monsignor Hess added, noting his loyalty.

“You couldn’t have a better one,” Monsignor Hess said, recalling a time he drove himself to Arizona and Bill called and checked in on him every day.

“That’s how he was,” Monsignor Hess added. He made the extra effort to let people know he cared, Terry added.

“He was very thoughtful, Terry said. “He had [an old] college friend whose mother turned 100 and he called her on her birthday….He was very thoughtful on writing people notes or cards for their birthdays or when grandkids were going off to college.

“When he was in the hospital for six weeks in intensive care, there were very few moments someone wasn’t coming in and asking about Bill and how he was doing,” Terry added. “He left quite a legacy – he’ll be missed.”

Monsignor Hess said he’ll miss Bill’s positive personality.

“When you were around him he was very uplifting and encouraging and that’s what I miss the most about him,” Monsignor Hess said.

Bill was also good at showering his family with love and attention.

“He would go to St. Louis to see the kids and [drive down] to see the kids and grandkids in Kansas City…,” Monsignor Hess said. “He did that all the time. He kept track of them and looked after them. He never missed a birthday and always was forever giving them gifts and presents and all of that stuff.”

Bill even took the whole family – including spouses and grandkids – on a trip to Italy a few years ago.

“He was very dedicated to his family and grandkids,” Monsignor Hess said.

In addition to family, Bill’s Catholic faith was a priority.

“He was a very strong Catholic,” Terry said.

“When I was at Dowling, he would go to daily Mass,” Monsignor Hess said. “He always had a rosary in his pocket. So he was very devout – a totally committed Catholic guy.”

Reach 35,000 households in the Diocese of Des Moines by placing an ad in the Catholic Mirror. Email kcollins@dmdiocese.org.
Diocese nears conclusion of emergency operations planning

Parishes encouraged to submit plans before June 30

By Kelly Meacher Collins Staff Writer

The nine month long emergency planning process for parishes across the Diocese of Des Moines is nearing its conclusion. Parishes are encouraged to have their plans submitted by June 30 for review, said June Colacecchi, owner of JHC Associates, LLC, who was hired by the diocese to help with parish emergency operations planning. She will be reviewing the plans and offering feedback.

It was five years ago that Bishop Richard Pates endorsed a proposal to promote a safety culture at all of the parishes and schools. He asked each entity to form a safety committee and it was input from some of these groups that led to the hiring of Colacecchi to help all parishes develop their own plan on how to deal with the different emergencies that come our way, said Paul Carlson, diocesan director of Finance.

Each month parishes have had access to new information about different emergencies that come our way, Carlson said. They have had access to new ideas from their emergency operations planning process and offering feedback.

At the advice of the law enforcement community, Bishop Richard Pates had declared all parish and school campuses "Weapons free zones.” During May and June, decals were handed out or mailed to all parishes. Parishioners were encouraged to train their people. Each other, Carlson said.

Colacecchi encourages parishes to train their people. So for example, if you have an expectation that the ushers in your Mass evacuate the building in a fire, then their level of training needs to be high enough to know exactly what portion of the church exits through what doors.”

They need to know some basic first aid in case people are injured trying to evacuate. She also urges parishes to test their evacuation plan.

“I encourage parishes to at least once, actually [evacuate] at the end of Mass,” Colacecchi said. “Time yourself. How long does it take to exit the building? And maybe follow that up with an activity on a nice day and invite the fire department to watch and give you some tips. Seems like a crazy idea, but until you actually do it you don’t know how long it’s going to take to clear your building.”

Annette Roth, parishioner and chair of the Finance Council of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Des Moines, has been drafting her parish’s plan. She is grateful for the process. “I’ve learned a whole lot…,” Roth said. “Honestly, it makes me more aware of these things.

“I have learned more about our policies and when the doors are locked or unlocked,” Roth continued. “I’m more aware of the challenges that face us on a college campus and near a part of Des Moines that has more police activity than some other areas might. We’re learning how to be a parish and be open and be also want to keep people safe.”

Learn more the diocesan emergency operations planning at dmdiocese.org/resources/safety/emergency-operations-planning.

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Germany & Austria July 24-August 2, 2020 with Father Andrew Winschel Diocese of Des Moines

The Holy Land October 2020 with Father Michael Amadeo Diocese of Des Moines

Longtime minister retires

By Clare Heinrich Staff Writer

Even as he prepares to retire as business manager position at St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs, Deacon Emmet Tinley plans to remain active in his community.

“Deacon Emmet has been an extremely valuable member of the St. Patrick’s family for decades,” said Matt Gronstal, Finance Committee chair for St. Patrick Parish.

He has been a loyal and faithful servant both as a deacon as well as the business manager. He successfully guided the church through the construction and financing of our new church building project and the related capital campaigns,” Gronstal said. “In addition, he has volunteered countless hours within the broader Catholic community in Council Bluffs including serving both Mercy Hospital and St. Albert Schools.

“Since we created a more considered retirement,” Gronstal added. Deacon Tinley was ordained a permanent deacon in 2006. He and his wife, Susan, originally passed on the opportunity to journey into the diaconate in 1984. Each of them had just completed their master’s degrees and with six children, they decided they needed to spend more time at home. They waited until the next cohort, which would be the first with new formation changes that allowed both the husband and wife to participate together.

“Emmet’s ministry has been that wonderful mix of holiness and humility,” said Deacon Jim Obradovich, director of Diaconate for the Diocese of Des Moines. “He offered himself in the service of the church in western Iowa so unselfishly for so many years. At our ordination Bishop hands us the book of the Gospels and tells us to believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach. Emmet did that, and did that so very well.”

Serving at different Masses has given Deacon Tinley the opportunity to learn more about the parishioners. If you’re set on going to one particular Mass, you have no idea who goes to the same parish but at a different time,” he said. “I have the opportunity to get to know those at every Mass.”

Outside of the parish, Deacon Tinley plans to continue his role as chaplain at Mercy Hospital. He and Susan are stepping down from the leadership team for ongoing diaconate formation. They enjoyed this ministry because it allowed them to assist candidates while serving together.

OFFICIAL BANNER: Caldwell Parrish Funeral Home & Crematory Urbandsale • Anel • Winterset • CaldwellParrish.com DES MOINES’ ONLY CATHOLIC-OWNED & OPERATED FUNERAL HOME.
Iowa bishops respond to Iowa Attorney General

Last week (on June 3) the Iowa Attorney General asked the state’s four Catholic dioceses to submit, by Aug. 1, 2019, documents related to clergy sexual abuse so that his office can provide a credible third-party review of the response made to reports. Each diocese, in the interest of transparency and accountability, plans to comply with the Attorney General’s request. In fact, most of the information requested is already a matter of public record. Also, the efforts of each diocese to protect minors from clergy sexual abuse have for many years now been subject to an annual credible third-party review. Our compliance is inspired by the teachings of Jesus and his Catholic Church: that it is right and good to respond to the sin and crime of clergy sexual abuse with sorrow, repentance, amendment of life, and efforts to repair the harm done.

In this regard, if there have been failures in the past, it is not for lack of trying. And after discovering when and where our efforts have fallen short, we will try again; there is no perfection this side of heaven. It is our hope that the Attorney General will use the resources of his office to protect minors from the scourge of sexual abuse wherever it occurs, and not limit his focus just on the Catholic Church.

On June 3, each Catholic bishop in the four dioceses of Iowa received a letter from Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller requesting documentation regarding clerical sexual abuse.

The Diocese of Des Moines, along with the Archdiocese of Dubuque and the Dioceses of Sioux City and Davenport, will comply promptly and fully with the Attorney General’s request. Each of the dioceses is already on record in releasing expansive information regarding perpetrators of sexual abuse and diocesan policies. Those records are on the website of each diocese (Des Moines diocese: dmdioce.se.org). The Catholic dioceses of Iowa have gone on record depicting the horrendous crime of sexual abuse and have taken action to address victims and their needs toward healing.

Victims continue to be the number one concern in each of the dioceses. The dioceses offer counseling grants so long as sought by the victim and have worked through a program of mediation in providing monetary settlements. The Catholic Church today is focused on the healing of victims and preventing abuse from occurring.

We hope that the safety of all children throughout society is addressed. For their benefit, we expect that the scrutiny applied to the Catholic Church be broadened and applied to all organizations, public and private, that serve children. The Catholic Church encourages anyone with allegations of abuse by clergy to contact their local police department or diocesan Victim Assistance Advocate Sam Porter, with Polk County Crisis and Advocacy. Mr. Porter serves as a third party advocate. He does not work for the diocese. He can be reached at sam.porter@polkcountyiowa.gov or 515-286-2015. He can assist the person with making a complaint, and with receiving support and counseling services.

The Catholic bishops in the United States in 2002 issued the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the governing norms. Implementation of the norms related to the charter have affected the policies of each diocese and included the following provisions:

• All allegations of sexual abuse are reported immediately to law enforcement.
• If the allegation is substantiated, the church employee is permanently removed from all church employment.
• A lay review board advises the bishops in each diocese. In the Diocese of Des Moines, the review board consists of professionals including a chief of police, judge, lawyer, psychologist, retired school teacher, priest and deacon.
• The dioceses also provide safe environment training for children and all adults working with them.

In addition, national background checks are made of all staff and volunteers who work with children. The safe environment training and background checks have involved thousands of people.

Compliance with the charter and norms is determined every year by a third party auditor.

In the 17 years of the charter, all four Iowa dioceses have been compliant with the charter and its norms.

• The Catholic Church in the United States has worked diligently at eliminating the scourge of sexual abuse within its quarters.
• In the Diocese of Des Moines, the last substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric occurred in 1997.
• The last credible allegation in the Diocese of Sioux City occurred in 1995.
• The last report of child sexual abuse by clergy or church personnel occurring in the Diocese of Davenport was in 1988.
• The Archdiocese of Dubuque lists June 1996 as the last occurrence of a credible allegation.

For the full text of the Iowa Attorney General’s correspondence, please visit the Diocese of Des Moines website and search for June 3, 2019.

Priestly celebrations

Father Tom DeCarlo, top photo, celebrated his retirement and 50th anniversary of ordination to priesthood on June 9 at McCauley Terrace in Johnston. Above, Father Gene Koch celebrates his retirement on Aug. 11 at Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines with a reception hosted by his family from 2-5 p.m. Open to the public.

Father Vince Rosonke celebrates his retirement on June 23 with a reception following the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Mass at St. Boniface Church in Waukee. Father David Polich will celebrate his retirement on Aug. 11 at Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines with a reception hosted by his family from 2-5 p.m. Open to the public.

Reach 35,000 households in the Diocese of Des Moines with an ad in The Catholic Mirror.

Contact Kelly at kc@lunds@dmdioce.se.org or call 515-237-5054.

The Catholic Mirror. June 21, 2019 www.dmdioce.se.org

IA dioceses to comply with Attorney General’s request

Editor’s Note: This statement has been slightly revised compared to the news release that was distributed so it could more accurately reflect the last date of substantiated clerical sexual abuse of a minor case in the Diocese of Des Moines occurring in real time.

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U.S. bishops take action to respond to church abuse crisis

By Carol Zimmerman

Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- During the June 11-13 spring assembly of the U.S. bishops in Baltimore, it was clear the bishops had to respond to the sexual abuse crisis in the church -- and on the last day of their gathering they approved a series of procedures to begin this process.

Implemented Pope’s document

On June 13, they voted to implement the document “Vos Estis Lux Mundi” (“You are the light of the world”), issued by Pope Francis in May to help the Catholic Church safeguard its members from abuse and hold its leaders accountable.

Approved Accountability

The bishops also approved the document “Acknowledging Our Episcopal Commitments” and promised to hold themselves accountable to the commitments of the charter, including a zero-tolerance policy for abuse. The document says any codes of conduct in their respective dioceses regarding clergy apply to bishops as well.

Approved Protocol

They voted in favor of the item “protocol regarding available nonlegal restrictions on bishops,” which outlines what canonical options are available to bishops when a retired bishop resigns or is removed “due to sexual misconduct with adults or grave negligence of office, or where subsequent to his resignation he was found to have so acted or failed to act.”

Hotline for Reports

Their first action was a vote June 12 to authorize the implementation of a third-party system that would allow people to make confidential reports of abuse complaints against bishops through a toll-free telephone number and online. The system, which would be operated by an outside vendor contracted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, should be in place no later than May 31, 2020. During the first day of the assembly, several speakers discussed the challenge ahead and the need for the bishops to be both transparent and reliable upon lay leadership. The bishops also examined their plans to vote on procedures and policies in response to the abuse crisis, including some they had put aside during their fall general assembly in November at the Vatican’s request. The bishops’ postponement of voting on these procedures was addressed from the meeting’s onset June 11 in a message from Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican’s nuncio to the United States. He noted that there were “some expressions of ‘dissent’ by some U.S. bishops at the previous assembly about postponing votes on items related to the reemergent clerical sexual abuse crisis, but he also stressed that ‘unity prevails over conflict.’”

“Working together provides us with the opportunity to speak and to listen,” said the message from Archbishop Pierre, read by Msgr. Walter Erbi, charge d’affaires at the Vatican’s nunciature in Washington. Archbishop Pierre was at the Vatican for a nuncio meeting.

The postponement of the votes on the issue allowed the U.S. church to participate more fully at the Vatican’s February summit on the protection of minors, he said. “One of the reasons the Holy Father asked for a delay was that the whole church needed to walk together, to work in a synodal way,” Archbishop Pierre said, “with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to make the path forward clearer.”

“Moving forward was certainly a theme of the assembly, echoed by National Review Board chairman Francesco Cesareo June 11, who called for a greater role for laity in investigating allegations of abuse or reaction to reports of abuse against bishops. He also recommended that the charter “should be revised immediately to explicitly include bishops and demand for greater accountability.”

Bishop Richard Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, speaks from the floor during the spring general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore June 12.

News briefs from the recent U.S. bishops’ meeting

Border bishops address crisis involving children

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- While the sex abuse crisis consumed the June meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore, prelates who work on the border, such as Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, have been facing a different crisis also involving children.

In less than a year, at least six children are believed to have died while in the custody of immigration officials along the border. Immigration along the U.S. southern border once involved almost exclusively men looking for work, but today women with children or entire families are now the ones regularly making the dangerous trek, fleeing poverty and violence.

“I feel that as a (bishops’) conference, we must express ourselves more strongly when it comes to the dignity of immigrants to say that they are not criminals, that they are vulnerable families and we need to invite all the governments involved, not just the U.S., to defend the migrant as a human being, to not cast the person aside as someone who doesn’t matter and is a problem,” Bishop Flores said.

Pro-lifers decry Illinois governor signing into law ‘extreme’ abortion bill

CHICAGO (CNS) -- Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed into law an abortion bill that Illinois’ Catholic bishops said eliminates “even minimal limitations on abortions under previous law” and whose passage by the legislature marked “a sad moment in our history as a state.”

Pritzker signed the legislation June 12.

The Catholic Conference of Illinois, the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops, labeled it “an extreme measure” because it allows “for the abortion of unborn life at any stage of pregnancy and for any reason.”

Across the country in Vermont on June 10, Republican Gov. Phil Scott signed a similarly expansive abortion measure into law. Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of the statewide Diocese of Burlington had said the law “goes far beyond Roe v. Wade.”

Bishops to revise U.S. catechism’s capital punishment section

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- The U.S. bishops voted June 13 to revise what the U.S. church teaches about the death penalty.

The revision will need the approval of the Vatican. Last year, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released the pope’s revision to the teaching on the death penalty in the universal Catechism of the Catholic Church. It says the death penalty is inadmissible.

The bishops made plans to replace its current text in the U.S. adult catechesis with a revised statement to “keep our adult catechesis up to date with the revised universal catechism,” Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles said.

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Bishop Richard Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, speaks from the floor during the spring general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore June 12.
“La Iniciativa del Padre Jim Kiernan”
Principios Básicos en Compensación

El Padre Jim Kiernan había programado una reunión conmigo para algunos días después de su muerte el 15 de mayo del 2016. Su propósito era el de promover un salario digno para todos los empleados en nuestras parroquias católicas, escuelas y otras operaciones en la Diócesis de Des Moines.

Esta misión la asumieron su sobrino Peter Kiernan y el Padre Dave Polich. Se llevó a cabo una consulta con el Consejo Presbiteral Diocesano así como con el Consejo Financiero Diocesano. El resultado fue un documento titulado “Principios Básicos en Compensación.” Ambos consejos aprobaron el documento y me recomendaron que lo implementaran.

Con esta comunicación, he llamado a que se adopten estos principios por parte de cada parroquia y escuela antes del 1 de julio del 2019. Con un pleno compromiso a este aspecto de la justicia social, todos nosotros los católicos deseamos que aquellos empleados puedan proveer para ellos mismos y sus familias. Esta iniciativa también abarca a aquellos empleados que sirven en nuestras instituciones en base a contratos. El Padre Kiernan inició su compromiso con la causa de un pago decente para los empleados cuando descubrió lo ampliamente insuficiente que era el salario de una persona que trabajaba como contratista en la institución en donde él vivía. El se beneficiaba personalmente de la asistencia de este empleado. Estoy plenamente consciente de que estas nuevas regulaciones puedan requerir de generosidad adicional y de un ajuste inicial en las finanzas. La Diócesis de Des Moines, sin embargo, tiene la bendición de una extraordinaria generosidad. El ingreso acumulado de las parroquias ha crecido en 32% desde el 2010. Por lo tanto, claramente, hay algunos fondos adicionales para atender el asunto de la compensación.

Todas queremos hacer lo necesario para otorgar los recursos a los empleados de nuestra Iglesia que reconocen su dignidad y valor. Agradezco al Padre Jim Kiernan y subsecuentemente a su sobrino Peter y al Padre Dave Polich por el perseguir fielmente la justicia que debe caracterizar a nuestras instituciones.

Reconocemos además al Consejo Financiero de la Diócesis de Des Moines y a su Consejo Presbiteral por desarrollar y por acoger prácticas en las finanzas de la iglesia que nos ayudarán a lograr estas metas.

Tengo el privilegio y la fortuna de establecer la “Iniciativa Padre Jim Kiernan” como política de la Diócesis de Des Moines.
“I became too focused on my professional career...,” Deacon McGeary said. “But somewhere along the line I noticed I had lost focus on what was really important. Money had become important, titles at work had become important. It was around 2008 after I had gone through some very, very difficult times in my life that I finally took the time to contemplate God’s plan for me. “What does God want?” Deacon McGeary continued. “What is life really all about? So I did what I hadn’t done in 25 years and I went into the sacrament of reconciliation and my life slowly began to change.” He recognized that his fulfillment was coming from his relationship with Jesus Christ.

Deacon Downey said his call to the priesthood came while in high school. “The first notions towards the priesthood came at a very early age,” Deacon Downey said. “I considered it as one of my many options in life and I would always leave this option open, never completely rejecting it as a possibility.”

As time went on, priesthood fell down the list and Deacon Downey decided he would follow the family legacy in engineering. During high school however, he gradually strayed further from his relationship with God. “Eventually, sin left me blind, which made it hard to hold onto hope, because I couldn’t see the grace God was offering me,” Deacon Downey said. During a particularly low point, God reached out through the First Reading at a Sunday Mass. “With the words of Jeremiah 1, God broke through my blindness and discouragement and gave me the promise of a purpose,” he continued. “A few weeks later, during a high school retreat, I came back to him like the prodigal son and made the first good confession I had made in a while. In that moment of grace and prayer in front of the Eucharist, I now had no question as to what that promised purpose was: the priesthood.”

Even though this call came with an overwhelming sense of peace, Deacon Downey was slowly overcome by fears and began doubting whether he wanted to abandon the family legacy of engineering, a girlfriend, and dreams of a family. So he ran the opposite direction of God’s will. “The problem is: running from God isn’t easy,” Deacon Downey said. “In fact, it’s impossible. Only after a full year and more than my fair share of mistakes, I realized this.”

Soon after, Deacon Downey helped lead the same retreat he attended the year before. “It was there that I surrendered, too tired to keep running, figuring that God’s plan must certainly work better than mine had been,” Deacon Downey said. “To many of the fears and doubts, I still didn’t have an answer at that moment, but I did have trust in God’s promise. And in the eight years since then, God has never broken that trust.”

If you think God might be calling you to the priesthood or religious life, contact Father Ross Parker, director of vocations at the Diocese of Des Moines at vocations@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5050.

Two will be ordained to the priesthood

Continued from page 1

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