

# THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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## Bishops to meet with pope, fellow bishops during “ad limina”

*Visit includes meetings with departments of the Holy See*

**By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer**

Bishop William Joensen will be in Rome Jan. 12-18 for an “ad limina” visit at the Vatican.

Designed to occur every five years, the “ad limina” includes a meeting with Pope Francis and offices of the Holy See to review the state of the diocese and receive feedback.

Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates will attend; he wrote and directed the preparation of the report before retiring. Bishop Emeritus Joseph Charron is unable to attend.

“Ad limina” is a Latin term “which translated conveys the notion of a pilgrimage to the threshold of the tombs of the apostles St. Peter and Paul,” said Bishop Pates. “The bishops are invited to renew their commitment to the mission of the Apostles, particularly in our unity and collaboration with the current successor of Peter – Pope Francis.”

The visit follows the Vatican’s receipt of the diocesan quinquennial, a 90-page report containing information and statistics on the diocese, organized according to a template established by the Church. (Quinquennial means every five years.)

Sections of the quinquennial would have been divided and sent to the corresponding dicastery (or department of the Roman Curia) for review, said Monsignor Steve Orr, a retired diocesan priest who helped prepare the quinquennial reports for Bishop Maurice Dingman and Bishop Charron.

“The quinquennial report is organized according to the mission of a particular dicastery, and individual sections are reviewed by each of them,” Bishop Pates said.

Bishop Joensen received a copy of the report before his ordination and installation as the 10<sup>th</sup> bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines.

“The report was tremendously helpful in giving a comprehensive overview of the diocese, its people and ministers with all the human and other resources at its disposal,” Bishop Joensen said. “It highlights how the Church of Des Moines is engaged with, and influenced by, the cultural demographics in southwest Iowa in recent years.”

The two-hour meeting with Pope Francis and the other Region IX bishops

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## Stepping out in faith

Young Des Moines couple trust in God’s timing

**By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer**

Just months after getting married, Mary and Seth Sojka of the Basilica of St. John Parish in Des Moines were faced with a major life decision – adoption.

Mary’s nephew Roland was in the foster care system in California because his mother (Mary’s sister) was in prison because of drug addiction.

If the couple chose not to take Roland, he would be adopted by someone in California, losing all ties to blood relatives.

Since his birth he and his two older brothers were often homeless with her.

Adoption was a big decision for a young couple that had been married only six months, Mary conceded, but she and Seth wanted to give God their “yes.”

They pursued Roland for over a year, finally bringing him home in January 2018.

“Roland was unfortunately most affected by [the situation], but you would never know it,” Mary said. “He’s all smiles. I went to school with him and everyone knows Roland’s name – the little kids, the teachers. He is truly a joy to this world.”

Roland’s two older brothers, Wayne and Cyrus, are foster children and being raised by their grandparents Kim and Rand Lehman of All Saints Parish in Des Moines.

All three boys attend St. Pius X Catholic School in Urbandale. They know they are brothers and Kim, Mary and Seth ensure all three spend quality time together.

Seth and Mary admit early on it was difficult caring for Roland, but it was definitely the right decision.

“I won’t say it was easy, because they’ve had a lot of trauma and have not been through the best circumstances in life,” Mary said. “Foster care



**Seth and Mary Sojka with daughter Zelda and son Roland the day of their baptism at the Basilica of St. John Parish in Des Moines with Father Aquinas Nichols.**

is a ministry many are not willing to take on because it’s a huge cross and a huge sacrifice. We had it easier, because he was family, though we had a lot of trauma and difficulties.”

Mary was thankful for Seth’s willingness to bring Roland into the

family and take on the father figure role so early in their marriage.

“He truly took on a cross and he has grown immensely,” Mary said. “He has taken on the dad role like none other. And he just loves Roland and he is

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## Vietnamese priest dies at age 62

Long vocation journey led refugee to Iowa

**By Anne Marie Cox  
Staff Writer**

Father Tan Van Tran, who served parishes and in hospital chaplaincy, died peacefully in his sleep on Dec. 10. He was 62.

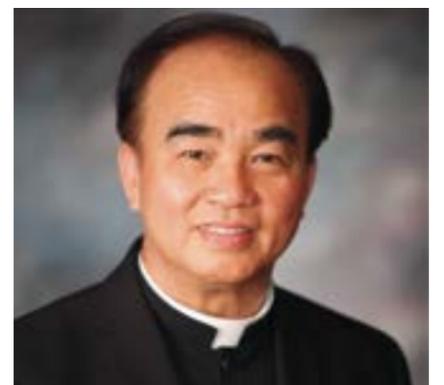
Father Tan was born and raised in

Bien Hoa Province of South Vietnam, the eldest of seven children.

He was a seminarian of the Diocese of Dong nai from 1969-1987.

In 1975, Saigon fell to communists. All seminaries were forced to close. Father Tan made the courageous decision

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**Father Tan Tran died Dec. 10.**

# Unmuted mystery

When the priest Zechariah, husband of Elizabeth and eventual father of John the Baptist, first encounters the angel in the sanctuary and hears that his aging wife is to become pregnant, he is at first reluctant to believe this good news. And so the archangel Gabriel tells him he will remain speechless for his lack of good faith until his son is born (see Luke 1:18-20). In effect, the priest has himself muted the mysterious workings of God, squelching the proclamation of good news.

There are at least a couple reasons why a contemporary “muting of the mystery” has taken place. One, in the wake of the disclosures of clergy abuse of minors and other acts of failed oversight by the Church’s pastors, some persons in society and even in the Church think that priests and bishops have compromised their authority to preach and teach in matters of faith and morals—or even forfeited their authority outright. How can a priest speak credibly to issues of social justice—such as respect for the dignity of persons, including women and children, the option for the poor and most vulnerable, the bonds of solidarity rooted in families where life is generated through the love of husband and wife, and the pursuit of a common good dependent on mutual respect—when some of the brethren have undermined trust and muddied the appeal of these values by their wayward example?

Second, those to whom the Church’s pastors preach—even when priests and bishops live upright lives—may be distracted or disinterested on account of the default static introduced by their ambivalent faith, their willed unbelief. Pope Francis acknowledges that for many young people, “God, religion and the Church seem empty words,” and hence “do not ask the Church for anything. . . except “to be left alone, as they find the presence of the Church a nuisance, even an irritant” (Christ is Alive, n. 39).

Yet to dismiss the preaching of the Gospel, including the message of Christmas that “today has been born for you a savior who is both Messiah and Lord,” based on flawed witness or annoyance at being en-



By  
Bishop  
William  
Joensen

gaged, is to miss the inherent power of the word of God. The Word made flesh is the essence of the Gospel; the Incarnation of God’s Son means that our humanity, weak and wounded, is both the medium and message by which God speaks to us all the time. We don’t need to get the latest phone or device at Christmas to be able to grasp and interpret what our ears and hearts are already “programmed to receive.” The Word of God inscribed in real human lives—both those who preach and in those who may wonder at times but choose to live by faith—presses on to fulfillment as God sees fit. The Lord’s work may be delayed by human failing or inconsistency, but will not ultimately be frustrated, for it bears an energy and potential communicated by the living God, who knows us better than we know ourselves.

In a certain sense, the Church can’t help herself! The Word who is born is the very cause of the Church’s own coming-to-be; as a result, we have been baptized and appointed stewards of a mystery that despite being drowned in the sea of words around us, rings with a clear bell tone that resonates deep within the soul of anyone who takes it to heart, whatever the season.

Priests and bishops, every time they stand before their people, are keenly aware of their own imperfections and how their lives are measured by the very words they proclaim. As Cardinal Avery Dulles observed: “Every preacher preaches to himself.” I find St. Symeon to be a soul companion when he declares: “I wish to be silent—if only I had been able to—but the tremendous marvel causes my heart to beat faster, and opens my mouth, my tainted mouth, and makes me speak in spite of myself.”

When it comes to our young people looking for words worth hanging their lives upon, how much more do we rely upon baptized lay persons, parents and peers alike, who exercise their own priestly vocation when they translate God’s word in scripture sharing, in personal conversations held in trust, in witnessing to faith by lives where what they say and do hang together? If an unexpected pregnancy occurs, as it did for Zechariah and Elizabeth, how can we doubt that God who has allowed this miracle to happen will not also unlock the resources of love and material support in communities who take the mystery of Christmas to be more than a feeling, more than the chance to get and give stuff?

More than ever, we Catholic Christians need to be bolder than going to church on Christmas and calling it a day; we need to unmute the words from the Word who is Jesus. We need to let the mystery of his coming among us as a human like us in all things but sin be the good news we can’t keep to ourselves: “Come, let us adore him!”

# Misterio inmutado

Cuando el sacerdote Zacarías, esposo de Isabel y eventual padre de Juan el Bautista, tuvo su primer encuentro con el ángel en el santuario y escuchó que si esposa de edad avanzada se iba a embarazar, de primera instancia se muestra dudoso a creer las buenas noticias. Y por lo tanto el arcángel Gabriel le dice que se quedará sin hablar hasta el nacimiento de su hijo, debido a su falta de fe (ver Lucas 1:18-20). De hecho, el sacerdote ha enmudecido por sí mismo las maravillosas obras de Dios, sofocando la proclamación de la buena nueva.

Existen por lo menos un par de razones de por qué se ha llevado un “enmudecimiento del misterio” contemporáneo. Uno, cuando comenzaron a relucir los casos de abuso del clero contra menores, así como otros casos en que faltó la vigilancia de los pastores de la Iglesia, algunas personas en la sociedad e incluso en la Iglesia piensan que los sacerdotes y los obispos han comprometido su autoridad para predicar y enseñar sobre asuntos de la fe y moralidad – o que incluso han renunciado a su autoridad por completo. ¿Cómo puede un sacerdote hablar con credibilidad respecto a problemas de justicia social – tal como el respeto a la dignidad de las personas, incluyendo mujeres y niños, las opciones para los pobres y para los más vulnerables, los lazos de solidaridad que tienen raíces en las familias que es donde se genera la vida por medio del amor entre un esposo y una esposa, así como la búsqueda del bien común que depende del respeto mutuo – cuando algunos de sus colegas han ignorado la confianza y enturbiado el valor de estos valores con su vergonzoso ejemplo?

Segundo, aquellos a quien los pastores de la Iglesia predicán – incluso en donde los sacerdotes y obispos llevan vidas ejemplares—muchos se distraen o pierden interés debido a la estática prevalente a que les lleva su fe ambivalente y la incredulidad voluntaria. El Papa Francisco reconoce que, para muchos jóvenes “Dios, la religión y la Iglesia parece palabras vacías,” y por lo tanto “no piden nada de la Iglesia...” excepto “que los dejen en paz, ya que sienten que la presencia en la Iglesia es una molestia, e incluso irritante.” (Cristo está Vivo, n. 39).

Aún así, el desechar la prédica del Evangelio, incluyendo el mensaje de Navidad en que “hoy le ha nacido un salvador que es ambos Mesías y Señor,” en base a testimonios inconsistentes o la molestia de estar involucrado, es perderse del poder inherente de la palabra de Dios. El Verbo hecho carne es la esencia del Evangelio; la encarnación del Hijo de Dios significa que nuestra humanidad, débil y quebrantada, es a la vez el medio y el mensaje por el cual Dios nos habla todo el tiempo. No necesitamos el teléfono o instrumento más moderno esta Navidad para poder capturar e interpretar los que nuestros oídos y nuestros corazones están previamente “programados a recibir.” La Palabra de

Dios inscrita en verdaderas vidas humanas – tanto como para aquellos que predicán como para aquellos que en veces pueden en ocasiones distanciarse pero que deciden vivir en la fe – nos presiona a cumplir como Dios lo considera adecuado. El trabajo de Dios puede retrasarse por faltas o inconsistencias humanas, pero al final no será sofocado, ya que carga con la energía y potencial que comunica el Dios vivo, quien nos conoce mejor de lo que nos conocemos a nosotros mismos.

En cierto sentido, ¡la Iglesia no puede ayudarse a sí misma! El Verbo que nace es la causa misma de la existencia misma de la Iglesia; como resultado, hemos sido bautizados y nombrados administradores de un misterio que, a pesar de ser sumergido en el mar de palabras que nos rodea, y que repica un llamado que resuena profundamente en el alma de quienquiera que desee acogerlo en su corazón, sin importar la temporada del año.

Los sacerdotes y obispos, cada vez que se presentan ante su pueblo, están profundamente conscientes de sus propias imperfecciones y de cómo sus propias vidas están sujetas a las medidas de las palabras que ellos proclaman. Como observaba el Cardenal Avery Dulles, “Cada predicador se predica a sí mismo.” Veo que San Simeón es un amigo de las almas cuando declara: “Deseo permanecer callado – si solo hubiera podido hacerlo – pero tan gran maravilla hace que mi corazón lata más rápido, y abre boca, mi imperfecta boca, y me hacer hablar a pesar de mí mismo.”

Cuando hablamos de nuestros jóvenes que buscan palabras que sean lo suficientemente valiosas en las cuales basar su vida, ¿qué tanto más dependemos de los laicos bautizados, padres de familia y compañeros de trabajo, quienes ejercen su propia vocación sacerdotal cuando traducen la palabra de Dios en las Escrituras, compartiéndola, en conversaciones personales, en dar testimonio de fe con sus propias vidas dondequiera que hablen o se reúnan? Si se presenta un embarazo no planeado, como les sucedió a Zacarías y a Isabel, ¿cómo podemos dudar que Dios, que ha permitido que se milagro se realice, no vaya a abrir la puerta a recursos de amor y de apoyo material en las comunidades que se observan el misterio de la Navidad como algo más que un sentimiento, como algo más que la oportunidad de dar y recibir cosas?

Más que nunca, los Cristianos Católicos necesitan ser más atrevidos que solamente ir a la iglesia en Navidad y considerarlo como una responsabilidad cumplida; necesitamos inmutar las palabras del Verbo que es Jesús. Nosotros necesitamos dejar que el misterio de su venida entre nosotros como un ser humano igual que nosotros en todo aspecto excepto en el pecado, sea la buena nueva de la que no podemos guardarnos: “¡Venid y adorémosle!”

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How has your faith been impacted recently?  
Text us at 515-223-1150 using #Bishop and he may talk about it on an upcoming show!

# Parishes celebrate feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Hispanic communities commemorate Mary's appearance to Juan Diego in Mexico in 1531



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Hundreds of faithful parade from Our Lady of the Americas Church to St. Ambrose Cathedral Dec. 11 for a Mass on the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

## Hispanic Ministry



By Bibiana Lemus

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a fundamental figure in the Catholic faith and her life exemplifies how our almighty Father works in our lives.

The Virgin of Guadalupe dates back to Tepeyac, which is located in the suburbs of Mexico City. On Dec. 12, 1531, an indigenous man named Juan Diego saw an apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Aztec clothing.

The Virgin asked Juan in his indigenous language to tell the bishop to build a sanctuary.

Juan Diego went and told the bishop about the apparition and the request, but the bishop did not believe Juan and demanded proof.

Then, the Virgin reappeared before Juan Diego and ordered him to collect roses. Juan took the roses to the bishop, and when he opened his cloak dozens of roses fell to the ground and revealed the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe printed inside.

When I think of the different ways in which she has influenced my faith, I think of humility, simplicity and charity.

Humility is one of the most central values we should have as Catholics. Our Lady of Guadalupe teaches us that pride and selfishness is something we should avoid. Our Lady of Guadalupe remained humble, appearing to an Indian who at that time period had no significant value.

Then, Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared in a very simple way; her cloak, her dress, her belt, and her hair down.

Our world puts material wealth above all else. Material and fashion pastimes, the latest technology, luxury vehicles, name brand clothing and current fashion trends blind us.

Although there is nothing wrong with enjoying all this, it is essential to remember that the consumption of these belongings can distract us from God. It makes us believe true satisfaction can be found in the physical world rather than in the spiritual.

Last but not least, charity. This value is at the heart of everything Our Lady of Guadalupe did. Being a mother of all America implies being charitable and extremely generous in your own actions.

The story of Our Lady of Guadalupe should encourage us to adopt these values in our own lives and in the way we treat others.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a perfect and beautiful example of how God can transform us from ordinary people to extraordinary people.

*Bibiana Lemus is a parishioner of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs.*

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe es una figura fundamental en la fe católica y su vida ejemplifica cómo nuestro Padre Todopoderoso trabaja en nuestras vidas.

El origen de la Virgen de Guadalupe se remonta al 12 de diciembre de 1531, en Tepeyac, que se encuentra en las afueras de la Ciudad de México, un indígena llamado Juan Diego tuvo una aparición de la Virgen de Guadalupe en ropa azteca. La Virgen le pidió en su lengua indígena que fuera a decirle al obispo que le construyera un santuario. Juan Diego fue y le dijo al obispo sobre la aparición y la solicitud, pero no le creyó y exigió una prueba. Entonces la Virgen reapareció ante Juan Diego y le ordenó recoger rosas. Juan llevó las rosas al obispo y cuando abrió su timal, docenas de rosas cayeron al suelo y revelaron la imagen de la Virgen de Guadalupe impresa en el interior.

Cuando pienso en las diferentes formas en que ella ha influido en mi fe, pienso en la humildad, la simplicidad y la caridad. La humildad es uno de los valores más centrales que debemos tener como católicos. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe nos enseña que el orgullo y el egoísmo es algo que debemos evitar. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe permaneció humilde apareciéndose

a un indígena que en ese tiempo no tenían valor importante.

Luego, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe apareció en una manera muy simple; su manto, su vestido, su cinta, y el cabello suelto.

Nuestro mundo pone la riqueza material sobre todo lo demás, nos ciegan los pasatiempos materiales y modas; la última tecnología, los vehículos lujosos, la ropa de marca, y tendencias de moda actuales. Aunque no hay nada de malo en disfrutar de todo esto, es fundamental recordar que el consumo de estas pertenencias puede distraernos de Dios. Nos hace creer que la verdadera satisfacción se puede encontrar en el mundo físico más que en lo espiritual.

Por último, pero no menos importante, la caridad, este valor está en el corazón de todo lo que hizo Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Ser madre de todo América implica ser caritativo y extremadamente generoso en las propias acciones. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe debe aspirar a que adoptemos estos valores en nuestras propias vidas y en la forma en que tratamos a los demás.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe es un ejemplo perfecto y hermoso de cómo Dios puede transformarnos de personas comunes a personas extraordinarias.



Photo by Corpus Christi Hispanic Ministry

Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations at Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs.



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Children dressed as St. Juan Diego at St. Ambrose Cathedral.



Dancers at the Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations at Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines.

## OPINION

# Actions speak loudly when it comes to love

One of the many things I look forward to during the Christmas season is driving around with my family and looking at Christmas lights.

We usually get hot chocolate for the kids, crank up some Christmas music, and always stop at a few favorite spots. (Props go to The First Church of the Open Bible in Des Moines, for a light and music show which always captivates my kids!)

During this season, there is plenty to see and do. We have Christmas lights and decorations, there are office parties and family gatherings, there is gift planning and giving.

It can feel like a sensory overload, and that got me thinking of Pope

## Marriage & Family Life

By  
Adam Storey



Francis' invitation to really see each other, which he extends in his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia)*. Pope Francis observes that the "experience of love is expressed in that 'gaze' which contemplates other persons and ends in themselves" (AL 128) and he goes on to

say, "a look of appreciation has enormous importance, and to begrudge it is usually hurtful. How many things do spouses and children sometimes do in order to be noticed!" (128)

Actually, seeing someone takes time, because we need to be willing to focus on the person before us, and not just the many tasks on our to-do list.

Seeing another person takes a denial of self, as I have to free myself from my own priorities, thoughts and worries and be willing to attend to the other.

Put another way, seeing each other is not just passive, but it takes an active decision to love.

It's hard work, and yet it's so im-

portant, because genuine happiness and fulfillment are always fruits of love.

So as we end Advent and celebrate Christmas, let's take a few moments to slow down and really see each other. To cultivate the "gaze" of love, which lets us truly attend to each other.

Another invitation of this season is to take the time to be seen, to receive the gaze of love that Jesus extends to all of us.

*Adam Storey is the diocesan director of Marriage & Family Life. He can be reached at [astorey@dmdiocese.org](mailto:astorey@dmdiocese.org) or 515-237-5056.*

# Not all gifts come in shiny packages

I was kickboxing at my gym the Friday before Thanksgiving last year.

While performing a common move called a switch kick, I heard a loud noise that sounded like a whip cracking, and my left leg seemed to fly out from underneath me. I fell to the ground, dumbfounded. It felt like someone had whacked the back of my leg with a rod, but turning around proved no one was there.

By the grace of God, I felt just a mild burning sensation in my swollen and purpling ankle – no real pain. But I knew something was not right. My body had seemingly failed me.

I decided to call my husband, Jason, to bring me to the emergency room.

That was the beginning of seeing Jesus at work in others who helped me that night and throughout the months to come.

Friends rushed to grab my cell phone, jacket and shoes as I sat waiting. My friend Rob stayed by my side and helped my husband get me into the truck.

At the ER, medical staff determined I had likely ruptured my Achilles tendon and would need surgery. I was stunned.

The following Monday at the surgeon's office, I learned I would be spending at least six weeks on crutches and could do no high impact activity for six months. I would also need several months of physical therapy.

As a longtime runner and kickboxing enthusiast, this was very bad news.

It also meant I would spend months separated from my community of friends (my "workout family") that I so enjoyed and saw almost daily.

The morning of surgery – the day before Thanksgiving – Jason and I went to 7 a.m. Mass at St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines and I received an anointing of the sick from Father Trevor Chicoine before heading to outpatient surgery.

My surgeon told me later my Achilles tendon was shredded and looked like two mops that he sutured back together. I knew God was at work in his skilled hands.

I spent our family's Thanksgiving on my sister Amy's living room couch with my foot propped up, iced and on a regular rotation of painkillers.

Though this was something I definitely did not want, it allowed others to serve me. And in those moments of service, I saw Jesus.

It was not always easy. I felt like a child as my sister walked through the

## Guest Column

By Kelly  
Mescher Collins



Thanksgiving buffet line, asking me what she should put on my plate.

Jason fetched my drinks, brought me an ice pack, meds and books as I recovered from surgery at home. He became my caretaker – setting up a shower bench, listening to my concerns and screwing ice tips onto my crutches as the weather changed and snow and ice moved in.

While sleeping, he often dodged my hard, plastic oversized boot and was now the only one capable of carrying our small, elderly dog outside to use the bathroom umpteen times a night.

Things got scary about a week after my surgery when a blood clot was discovered at our second trip to the ER. I was quickly put on blood thinners, and I thanked God it was caught early. I saw kindness and concern in the eyes of doctors and pharmacists.

Jason willingly hauled up the Christmas tree and loads of totes filled with decorations so we – okay, he – could fill the house with some much needed Christmas cheer.

My sister Amy hosted a girls' Christmas baking weekend and my sister Jody became my "baking buddy," carrying my pans of cookies to and from the oven. She even made a "gingerbread Kelly" fit with crutches, a boot and blonde hair. We all laughed when she texted photos to family members who couldn't make it. I felt their love, care and concern.

At Mass, the priests and Eucharistic ministers happily came to the back of the church to bring me communion.

Coworkers and friends at the Catholic Pastoral Center were generous, kind and helped me in a variety of ways, including filling and carrying my water bottle, making Walgreens runs and offering encouragement and support.

Moments of darkness rose to the surface, particularly as I found online stories of people with Achilles ruptures who never fully recovered.

Some seriously negative "self-



**Kelly Mescher Collins' sister Jody Geest of St. Luke Parish in Ankeny created this "gingerbread Kelly" at their girls' Christmas baking weekend last year.**

talk" started creeping in about my recovery and regaining my strength. But I soon identified and rejected these lies and their source. (John 8:44: When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies.)

The evil one's whisper campaign on me had begun, and he would have relished a downward spiral of depression and despair about my situation. (John 10:10: A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy....)

My trust was in God though. And I knew all things were possible through him.

My physical therapist seemed happy about my recovery, giving me much hope. And in early April, I returned to my kickboxing classes, though with many modifications for the first month. By early June, I was given a plan to very slowly return to running.

My appreciation for my body and what it can do has increased profoundly. I have a renewed enthusiasm for kickboxing

and running. I've even been eyeing potential half-marathons and marathons for 2020.

And I've actually even grown to like the big vertical scar on the back of my ankle – it reminds me of all I've overcome.

Physically, I feel just as strong as I did before the accident. Mentally and spiritually, I'm stronger.

The Bible says, "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1: 2-4)

I would have strongly disagreed last Christmas, but now I am actually thankful for all I went through and view it as a gift.

*Kelly Mescher Collins is multimedia journalist for the Diocese of Des Moines and writer for The Catholic Mirror.*

## Ask a Priest

*Q. In Protestant traditions the minister does everything. Why is it that we Catholics have so many of the laity involved?*

**A. SOME PROTESTANTS** would take issue with your statement that the minister “does everything.”

And we must be careful about putting all Protestants into one group. There are wide differences among non-Catholic Christians.

If it seems that sometimes “the minister does everything,” it might be because some of those congregations are smaller in numbers than many Catholic parishes.

In any case, ministry is the responsibility of every Christian, not just those ordained.

*Q. How do we get younger people involved in the Church’s ministries?*

**A. I WOULDN’T LIMIT** it to younger people. Maybe this will help. Jesus taught adults and played with the children. Too often, we teach the children and play (bingo?) with the adults.

I think children react positively or negatively to the behavior of their parents.

Parents serve as a model to their children when they are involved in their parish.

If parents have a strong connection to the Church, their children often do as well.

In any case, faith and liturgical participation are bigger than our juggling of numbers.

Religion is not well served if we think in terms of “marketing.” Jesus began with only twelve. If we live our faith rather than just speak it, others will want to join us.

*Q. I’m a communion minister at my parish. I feel honored to serve in this role. Some people want to receive communion in the mouth rather than in their hand. I find it difficult to place the host in their mouth sometimes, and when I do, I often get my fingers damp from their saliva. This doesn’t seem terribly sanitary. Can you comment?*

**A. THE CHURCH** gives people the option of receiving in the mouth or in the hand.

I share your concern about cleanliness when people received in the mouth.

To me, it seems more natural to look at the communicant in the eye and share with them the Body of Christ. Neither form of receiving is more or less reverent.

Got a question for “Ask a Priest” and its author, Father John Ludwig?

Send it to: [communications@dmdiocese.org](mailto:communications@dmdiocese.org).

## Iowans for LIFE to march in capitol, begin battle for constitutional amendment

Young people from across U.S. to attend 45<sup>th</sup> March for Life in January

By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer

When three Iowans for LIFE buses depart Des Moines Jan. 24 for the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., they’ll be focused on prayer, education and witnessing for life.

Libby Smith, a junior at Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines and co-president of the Students of Life club, will be making her first pilgrimage to the march.

“I’m looking forward to the youth rally. I saw the list of speakers and I was so excited that Abby Johnson will be there,” Smith said of the former Planned Parenthood employee who became a nationally recognized opponent of abortion. “I’ve seen the *Unplanned* movie and loved it and I’m really excited to see her speak.”

She’s also looking forward to marching with thousands of fellow pro-lifers from across the United States and the solidarity she’ll find amongst her peers.

“You know you’re not the only one fighting for it,” she said.

While marching, they’ll also be thinking about the work ahead in Iowa, said Maggie DeWitte, executive director of Iowans for LIFE.

In January 2019, the heartbeat law was struck down by a state judge who ruled the law violates the Iowa Constitution and



Caitlyn Dixson, Jeanne Wells, Vickie Vorwald and Maggie DeWitte, executive director of Iowans for LIFE, at the March for Life in Washington, D.C. last year.

may not be enforced.

The Iowa Supreme Court stated “a woman’s right to decide whether to terminate a pregnancy is a fundamental right under the Iowa Constitution.”

The Iowa Supreme Court also struck down a mandatory 72 hour waiting period for women seeking an abortion.

DeWitte said the judges overstepped their bounds and “legislated from the bench.”

Their ruling now makes abortion a right on par with freedom of speech and freedom of religion, DeWitte continued.

“They created a fundamental right to abortion...,” DeWitte added. “If you have a fundamental right, you can’t restrict it or limit it in any way.”

Iowans for LIFE is already at work, though it won’t be

a quick or easy process.

“The only way to undo this is a constitutional amendment,” DeWitte said. “In order to pass that constitutional amendment it has to pass two consecutive legislative sessions. We have to get it passed this January and [next year’s] session and then a vote goes to the people. So this is a multi-year process and really our only option.”

The outlook is grim for the unborn if Iowa doesn’t pass the constitutional amendment.

If *Roe v Wade* is overturned, abortion law goes back to the states, DeWitte said. “We could become the abortion mecca. We would be just like New York and Illinois (where abortions are permitted up until birth.) We really have to get this done.”

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## Around the Diocese

### Dec. 20 Friday Beginning Experience

DES MOINES – Those who have lost a spouse through death, divorce or separation are encouraged to gain the support of Beginning Experience at an open house, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Augustin Church. Contact Father Bob Schoemann at 515-418-1938, Daryl Stahl at 515-480-6617, or Dana Reed at 515-975-3745.

### Dec. 22 Sunday Drake Choir

DES MOINES – A Drake University alumni choir called Umeri will present The Lessons, Reflections, and Carols of Christmas at 3 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral. The event features Scripture readings, reflections by Dr. Charles Anthony Silvestri, choral pieces, and Christmas carols. Conductor is Dr. Aimee Beckmann-Collier. Readers include Bishop William Joensen, students from Holy Family School and Dowling Catholic High School. Free and open to the public.

### Jan. 3 Friday Catholic Widows and Widowers

DES MOINES – First Friday Mass at 8:30 a.m. at St. Anthony Church. Brunch will follow at the Cub's Club on Southwest 1<sup>st</sup> Street. For reservations or more information contact Judy LaRonde at 515-988-7791.

### Beginning Experience

DES MOINES – Those who have lost a spouse through death,

divorce or separation are encouraged to gain the support of Beginning Experience at an open house, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Augustin Church. Contact Father Bob Schoemann at 515-418-1938, Daryl Stahl at 515-480-6617, or Dana Reed at 515-975-3745.

### Jan. 5 Sunday Country Style Breakfast

INDIANOLA – The Indianola Knights from St. Thomas Aquinas Parish will be hosting a country style breakfast from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the parish hall. \$5/Adults and carry-outs, \$3/children (6 to 12), free for children 5 and under. Open to the general public.

### Jan. 9 Thursday Catholic Widows and Widowers

DES MOINES – Meet at 1 p.m. for lunch at the Trellis Restaurant after touring the Botanical Center. For reservations or more information contact Judy LaRonde at 515-988-7791.

### Jan. 12 Sunday Alpha at St. Francis

WEST DES MOINES – Alpha will be held at St. Francis of Assisi in the Serra Room on Sundays, 5-7 p.m., through April 5. Sessions include a meal, video, and open discussion in this 11-week program. Alpha is open to all adults. Register at [eventbrite.com/e/alpha-registration-70765466415](http://eventbrite.com/e/alpha-registration-70765466415) or for more information email [SFAAlpha@saintfranciscchurch.org](mailto:SFAAlpha@saintfranciscchurch.org) or call 515-440-1030.

### Jan. 17-19

#### Retreat

PANORA – Those who have lost a loved one through death, divorce or separation are encouraged to come to terms with that loss and begin to move forward with the support of Beginning Experience at a weekend program at St. Thomas More Center. Contact Father Bob Schoemann at 515-418-1938, Daryl Stahl at 515-480-6617, or Dana Reed at 515-975-3745.

### Feb. 8 Saturday Green Gala

ANKENY – St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School is hosting the fourth annual Green Gala. The evening will include dinner, dancing, live auction and silent auction. Visit [slte-school.org/greengala](http://slte-school.org/greengala) to buy tickets and for more information on event sponsorships.

### Ongoing Events

#### Wednesdays – Divine Mercy Chaplet

DES MOINES – The Divine Mercy chaplet is prayed at 7 p.m. at St. Augustin Chapel.

#### Sundays -- Latin Mass

DES MOINES – The Latin Mass at St. Anthony Parish is at 5 p.m.

## Catholic Charities assists needy during the holidays



Chris and Janice Welp, of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines, consider ways to help Catholic Charities at a giving wall on display at the No Room at the Inn event on Dec. 6.



Drake University students Brooke Doohen, Anna Holden, and Madeline Leone, of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, were among the helpers handing out 871 holiday food boxes serving 1,985 individuals at the Catholic Charities Outreach Center in Des Moines. Thanks to partners MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center, Britton Transport, St. Pius X Catholic Church Homeless and Outreach Committee, and all of the volunteers, board members and staff who pitched in.



News & Events for Faithful Listeners

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The Catholic Mirror.**

Contact Kelly at  
[kcollins@dmdiocese.org](mailto:kcollins@dmdiocese.org) or  
call 515-237-5054 to learn more.

### Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese's Victim Assistance Advocate is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of sexual 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@polkcountyia.gov](mailto:Sam.Porter@polkcountyia.gov).

**Reach 35,000 households by placing an ad in The Catholic Mirror.**

Contact Kelly at [kcollins@dmdiocese.org](mailto:kcollins@dmdiocese.org) or call 515-237-5054 to learn more.

# Enthusiastic young Church energized at NCYC

Teens from across our diocese join nearly 20,000 in Indianapolis



Youth from St. Mary Parish in Hamburg met up with Bishop William Joensen at the National Catholic Youth Conference.



Youth from St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish in Des Moines checked out the thematic village, featuring activities and booths of organizations from all over the United States.



Emma Hughes, of Holy Rosary Parish in Glenwood, Ava Hughes of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs, Ellie Scarborough and Kate Hughes, both of Holy Rosary, sing karaoke in the thematic village.

**By Anne Marie Cox  
Staff Writer**

Imagine 20,000 teenagers and their chaperones, swaying to praise music in the dark by their stadium seats, while holding the light on their phones up high at the conclusion of Mass.

Thousands of points of light, together in faith.

The young church is a light that can inject enthusiasm, bring new ideas and encourage families and friends to be faithful in following Jesus. This was the message at the National Catholic Youth Conference in mid-November in Indianapolis.

"I really like it here because I find it so interesting how, out of 20,000, we all share that same love for God with Jesus Christ and we share that connection with one another," said Julia Fergus, of St. Mary of Nazareth

Parish in Des Moines.

From Hamburg and Dunlap to Des Moines, more than 550 teenagers and chaperones from across the diocese embarked on a life-changing pilgrimage to NCYC.

There was little downtime on this short adventure. The youth were entertained by Christian pop duo For King & Country and other bands. The pope spoke to the youth through a video and his representative to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, delivered a message.

They were inspired by Rwanda genocide survivor Immaculee Ilibagiza to forgive, learned from Mark Hart (the "Bible Geek"), heard Father Augustino Torres, Katie Prejean McGrady and other nationally known speakers.

Waukee's youth minister at St. Boniface Parish, TJ Irvin, had been away for a few years but

was happy to be back with teens from his parish.

"To come back and feel the power of Christ is moving but more important is to see the youth actually connect," he said.

"I absolutely love it," said youth minister Andrea Fisher, of St. Mary/Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart. "It's inspiring to see all these kids continue their enthusiasm for Jesus."

Some of the speakers opened up a new understanding of the Catholic faith for the teens.

"I really liked Immaculee (Ilibagiza). She made me think of God in a different way," said Ozzy Torres, of St. Bernard Parish in Osceola.

"I think I'll have a different perspective because of all the different stories. They talked about real life events" that relate to the Bible, said Juan Daniel Lopez, also of St. Bernard Parish.

The breakout sessions

were popular.

Oliver Sheaff, of Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines, said he learned how to deal better with stress, while Josh Spencer, also of Holy Trinity, learned about social media and how it can affect one's opinion of oneself.

Josie Taggart, of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny, went to a session on emotional virtue for a drama-free life with speaker Sarah Swafford.

The youth learned from one another, too.

"Kids get to learn from the experiences of other kids," said Juwan Yugusuk, of St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish.

"Our Lord is always there for us," said Dah Meh, of St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish.

Some youth returned after the last gathering.

"I went two years ago and I had a fantastic experience. I learned a lot about different saints

and different perspectives on different gospel readings which is really important to me," said Jerriann Richardson, of Holy Rosary Parish in Glenwood. She liked the message from Pope Francis about "tenderness and mercy and I think that's something I will keep in my mind for a couple of years."

"I came in 2017 and really grew in my faith that year so I decided to come and do it again," said Isabella Maloney, also of Holy Rosary Parish. "When we received the pope's message, that was so inspirational to me, that he was so invested in the young people, and so I'm going to go out and try to spread the word as much as I can."

Bishop William Joensen celebrated Mass with the Des Moines diocesan delegation. He encouraged the youth and their chaperones to share what they learned.

"Now what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. But what happens in Indy, can't remain in secret. For when you return to our Des Moines diocese, people will be able to see. They'll say, 'I know you but there's something more, the way your lamp lights and burns.' For your ongoing friendship with Christ and that oil of your anointing and burning love will help light not only the diocese but the world!"

**Youth from Christ the King Parish in Des Moines pose by the NCYC letters.**

Photos by Anne Marie Cox





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Our ministry formula is simple: Get kids outside, saturate them in the beauty of Catholicism, expose them to young adults who are living their faith, and infuse every moment with the type of silly, loud, and messy fun that only summer camp can provide. Simple, yet we've found it to be wildly effective.

*So this summer, come to Catholic Youth Camp and encounter Christ, immerse yourself in the beauty of the Catholic faith, and live the adventure of his call.*

For more information, visit **STMCENTER.COM**

*"Our son loves the fact that CYC is centered around Christ and truly enjoys being able to worship with his friends every day. He can't wait to return each summer!" -Crista Eischeid*



### CONTACT US

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### WHO?

Students entering 3rd grade through high school graduation in the '20-'21 school year

### WHERE?

Located on Lake Panorama, camp is approximately 1 hour from Des Moines and 1.5 hours from Council Bluffs

### HOW DO I REGISTER?

Registration is conducted on a "first come, first serve" basis and is done exclusively online. If you need to register in a language other than English or do not have access to a computer, please contact us at 515-309-1936.

### SPONSORSHIP?

Catholic Youth Camp strives to make camp available to ALL families. If you need financial assistance for fees, please visit the Sponsorship tab of our website or call the office.



Follow Us On...



"Our child talked nonstop for days after returning from camp. He loved all the field games, swimming, dance parties and the campfire. He especially liked his counselor, Jonah. He can't wait to return next summer." -Tracy McCormick (Mom of Luke, Age 8)

## TO THE HEIGHTS!

Our theme for summer 2020 is 'Verso L'alto' This is the short Italian phrase that was sketched onto a black and white photo of a cliff side by the late Pier Giorgio Frassati in 1925. Directly translated, Verso L'alto means "To the Heights." As a young outdoorsman, an accomplished mountaineer, and a future saint, it's no surprise that Frassati was always looking upward.

Camp formation will focus on the life of Blessed Pier Giorgio and three other saints, and how they inspire us to grow in our relationship with Christ.

*Verso L'alto "is the synthesis of his mode of living: always to search for that which is higher, to set off beyond ourselves, towards the highest of what it means to be man."*

(Pier Giorgio Frassati: Non Vivacchiare ma Vivere, pg. 5).

Join us this summer as we turn our gaze upward by diving into the radical, transforming, adventure of Christ's call.



# ADVENTURE *is here*



## OUR CHALLENGE

While programming at the St. Thomas More Center remains high quality, our facilities are showing their age – which jeopardizes the camp's long-term sustainability.

Lack of updates, decades of camper use and deferred maintenance have created a backlog of renovation and construction projects. Earlier this year, we launched a major capital campaign to provide funding for critical needs such as:

- Building New Cabins | Estimated Cost: \$2 million
- Renovating Dingman Hall (kitchen and dining areas) | Estimated Cost: \$1.5 million
- Improving the Pool | Estimated Cost: \$1.5 million
- Growing our Endowment | Estimated Goal: \$500,000

To read our detailed plans, please visit [stmcenter.com](http://stmcenter.com) and click on "Capital Campaign". Construction is underway, and this summer's campers will be the first to enjoy our new cabins.



We've already raised nearly \$2.5 million, thanks to the generosity of many supporters, including the Diocese of Des Moines. But our work is not yet complete.

## HOW YOU CAN GIVE

With your help, we can ensure another generation of campers makes memories, and more effectively fulfill our mission of serving youth and young adults as they become joy-filled disciples of Christ. Please consider lending your support to our campaign.

- If you received a call or e-mail from a campaign volunteer, please respond.
- If you received a letter with a pledge card, please complete and return it.
- Visit [stmcenter.com](http://stmcenter.com) and click on "Capital Campaign," then "Donate."

*Thank you!*

## St. Albert Catholic High School fall sports

# Volleyball and cross-country make state, football players give back

By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer

St. Albert Catholic High School had a successful fall sports season.

Freshman Carly McKeever qualified for the state cross country meet after placing 12<sup>th</sup> at districts.

Boys' cross country qualified for state after placing 3<sup>rd</sup> at districts. The team placed 7<sup>th</sup> at the Class 1-A state cross country meet.

Senior Bennett Heisterkamp placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the Class 1-A state cross country meet.

Heisterkamp said he felt good about the results, and had been working on improving his time for months.

"My junior year at the state meet I got 24<sup>th</sup> and I knew I wanted to do better and get a medal," Heisterkamp said. "I worked hard in the off season, ran every day and put in a lot more miles than I had before. I changed up my eating habits and cut out the junk food."

"It felt really good to cross the finish line [in 4<sup>th</sup>] and know that all my hard work paid off," Heisterkamp continued. "I didn't want to regret not giving 100 percent and that I could have done better. I was happy with the seniors and the team."

The volleyball team finished out the season with a record 24 wins and 10 losses. They finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Hawkeye 10 Conference and qualified for the state tournament.

Senior Jordyn Blaha



Allie Petry, left, and senior Jordyn Blaha playing volleyball for St. Albert Catholic High School.

said though she's played club volleyball, nothing compares to competing for St. Albert.

"I'm closer with the people of St. Albert," Blaha said. "When I play with them it's different because we're all so close."

It's sad saying goodbye, Blaha added.

Senior Kylie Collins is one of the high school's only swimmers. Since St. Albert does not have its own team, Collins swims for Lewis Central in Council Bluffs.

"I placed well at state; wish I could have made it to finals but I went my fastest time of the whole season in the 100 backstroke so I was happy with it," Collins said. "The three relays that qualified did good considering that there were some really fast teams there."

Collins has been swimming since she started lessons very young and team swimming

at age 9.

The football team had 5 wins and 4 losses this season. They finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in their district. The football players also gave back, donating a combined 200 hours of community service to local parishes.

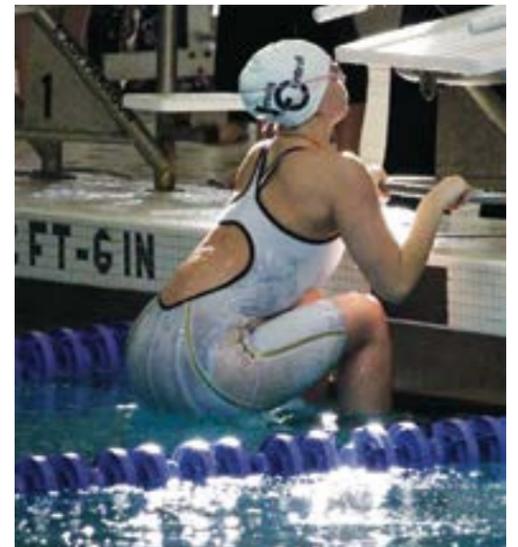
"All in all, it was a great fall for St. Albert sports teams," said Athletic Director Ken Schreiber. "I'm very proud of our athletes and coaches. The hard work they put in this fall was unbelievable. Not only did they excel on the fields and court, they excelled in the classroom."

"Our cross country, volleyball and football teams all achieve the Excellence of Academics Award from the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union," Schreiber added. "Again, we are very proud of our accomplishments this fall."



Senior Bennett Heisterkamp of St. Albert placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the Class 1-A state cross country meet.

Senior Kylie Collins is one of only two St. Albert student swimmers. She swims for Lewis Central High School in Council Bluffs.



## Dowling Catholic High School fall sports

# Girls' swimming, boys' cross country and football win state championships

By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer

Dowling Catholic experienced another outstanding season of fall sports, said Athletic Director Tom Wilson.

"Our girls' swim and dive won the first state championship in school history while boys' cross country and football also claimed championships," Wilson said. "We have been blessed with good, hard-working student-athletes and very dedicated coaches."

Senior Katie Broderick said winning the state swimming championship is a memory that will last a lifetime.

"It was just really great," said Broderick, who has signed a letter of intent to swim at Indiana University.

"I'm looking forward to getting faster and moving up to the next level," Broderick said.

Senior Berit Quass has enjoyed representing Dowling in the pool.

"Winning the team title put the cherry on top," said Quass, who has signed a letter of intent to swim at the University of Tennessee. "[Saying goodbye]

is bittersweet. I'm ready to move on and go to college, but also sad leaving all your friends that are in grades below you."

The boys' cross country team took the state championship for the third time in four years.

"Everyone went crazy [when we got the results]," said senior Zach Fry. "We all started singing and hugging each other. It was a really good feeling. It was our senior year – it was going to be our last time doing the cross country meet, and it was a really special experience I'll never forget."

The girls' cross country team placed 10<sup>th</sup> at the state tournament. Senior Annie Flood also ran at state individually. She enjoyed running for Dowling all four years and hates saying goodbye to the sport.

"It's definitely sad," said Flood, who is satisfied with



her high school career and has no regrets.

Flood will lace up her running shoes yet this spring when she runs track for Dowling Catholic.

The football team also took home the state championship for a record 7<sup>th</sup> straight season, beating archrival West Des Moines Valley.



Left: Senior Annie Flood ran cross country all four years at Dowling Catholic. Above: Senior Katie Broderick, whose team won the state swimming championship. She signed a letter of intent to swim at Indiana University.



L-R: Dowling's boys' cross country team are Jordan Daniel, Mike Grippie, Lucas Martin, Will Ode, Zach Fry, Sam Hall and Cade Muller.

## Young Des Moines couple step out in faith

Continued from page 1

so good with Roland and so patient with Roland.”

Seth spends a lot of time working with Roland, getting him caught up on numbers, letters and more.

“He’s been amazing and it’s definitely helped him grow,” Mary added.

The couple often lean on God, which “made our marriage stronger when we had our hard times and weak moments and learning to take care of a 3 ½ year old who has been traumatized.”

“God knew what he was doing when he brought me Seth...,” Mary continued. “He’s definitely been the rock this family has needed through all of this.”

Throughout this process, Mary has come to see how much God loves each of us – including Roland.

“When we see what God did for Roland, you have to take a step back and go ‘Wow,’” Mary said.

During the adoption process, Seth and Mary were also trying to conceive, and discovered fertility issues.

“I really struggled...I didn’t realize how much love and time and attention Roland would need, but God did,” Mary said, noting God’s perfect timing. “God knew just what he would need. He wanted Roland to just fully come into our family and have his needs met.”

The couple found out Jan. 9, 2018 that they would be bringing Roland home. One year later – Jan. 9, 2019 – Seth stopped at the grocery store to buy Mary flowers in celebration of her 1-year anniversary of becoming a mother to Roland. When he arrived home, Mary also had a surprise – she was pregnant.

“If we had gotten pregnant that first year of marriage, the conversation around Roland would have been significantly different,” Seth conceded, admitting that they may not have been as open-minded about adopting.

Mary delivered baby Zelda Sept. 9 – just three days before Roland’s formal adoption hearing, which had been scheduled for months.

“There was the option to reschedule,” Seth said. “And Mary said, ‘We’re not missing the court date.’ She marched right down there and all four of us were there for the court hearing and we finalized the adoption. It was a joyous occasion.”



**Roland, at left, is pictured with his brothers. The two older boys live with Kim and Rand Lehman of All Saints Parish in Des Moines. Roland lives with his parents, Seth and Mary Sojka in Des Moines, who made his adoption official earlier this year.**

A few weeks later, Seth and Mary held a joint baptism for Roland and Zelda at the Basilica with the pastor, Father Aquinas Nichols. (It is frowned upon for adoptive parents to make religious decisions for foster children until adoption becomes legal.)

“I would put that day right up there with our wedding day...,” Seth said. “The placement of Roland with us was life-changing. As much as it was an announcement of him formally kicking off his Catholic faith...it was almost a closure to a chapter of him not formally being a member of our family to him formally and forever being a member of our family.”

Last month Kim travelled to California to greet her daughter as she was released from prison. Kim accompanied her back to Iowa, and she is now living with the Lehmans and her two boys in Ankeny. They are now working on finding her a good job.

“She’s so nervous. I told her, ‘God doesn’t need you to be qualified. He brought you here in a miraculous moment. Just put your trust in Jesus,’” Lehman said, pointing out all the positive changes she’s seen in her daughter. She now joins Kim at 5 a.m. every morning to drink coffee, pray and

read the Bible.

“I’ve seen our prayers are always answered, and I’ve seen how God has touched lives that were broken and that had no hope...,” Kim said. “That fact that my daughter was lost and now is found. God has touched her heart and I can see that God has made this his mission. So we sit back, continue to pray and give it to him and then he does the rest.”

## Vietnamese priest dies at age 62

Continued from page 1

to continue to be a seminarian even though it meant persecution by the state.

Many of his friends were jailed.

Father Tan lived for seven years with his bishop. He studied philosophy and theology in an underground seminary from 1976-1983. The following three years, he served in pastoral work.

In 1988, Father Tan escaped Vietnam by boat alongside other Vietnamese. After five days of dangerous sailing, his boat reached Malaysia. He spent seven months in Malaysia and six months in the Philippines, living, sharing and ministering to other poor and suffering refugees.

Father Tan arrived in the United States in April, 1989, and by June was in the Diocese of Des Moines.

He earned a Master of Divinity degree from Sacred Heart Seminary in Hales Corners, Wisconsin.

In 1992, at the age of 35, his long vocational journey culminated with ordination to the priesthood. He was among six seminarians who were ordained at the Des Moines Civic Center by Bishop William Bullock.

Upon becoming a priest, he began his ministry in parishes: St. Patrick in Missouri Valley; St. Theresa in Des Moines; St. Patrick in Bayard; St. Joseph in Jamaica; St. Patrick in Corning; St. Patrick in Lenox; and Corpus Christi in Council Bluffs.

Most recently, he had served as a hospital and nursing home chaplain in the Council Bluffs area and as sacramental

minister to Holy Family Parish in Mondamin.

Father Tan became the only foreign-born priest in the diocese when he was ordained, said Monsignor Larry Beeson. Today, the diocese is served by many international priests.

Father Tan will be remembered for his gift for music.

“He was talented musically, played the violin, organ, and piano,” said Monsignor Beeson. “He played the violin when he celebrated his 25<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary with the priests.”

Father Tan was also multilingual.

“He spoke English when he came here, but knew French and some Italian,” said Monsignor Beeson.

“He was very generous in helping anyone in need,” Monsignor added. “He had a great sense of humor and always had a smile on his face.”

At the Mass of Christian Burial, Father Michael Amadeo said, “Father Tan in his life constantly laid down his own self for the sake of others, whether that meant fleeing from Vietnam, whether that was to help his siblings, whether it was to be with one who just lost a loved one. Father Tan laid down his life because he knew the Father’s love, and knowing of the Father’s love then shared that with others.”

A visitation was held on Dec. 15 at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines. A Mass of Christian Burial was Dec. 16, also at the cathedral. A memorial Mass was Dec. 19 at St. Peter Catholic Church in Council Bluffs. Internment will be at Good Shepherd Cemetery in Huntington, California.

# CARING ABOUT YOUR LOSS AND SHARING IN YOUR FAITH

**Prayer to St. Joseph for a Happy Death**

*O blessed Joseph who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary,  
obtain for me, I beseech you, the grace of a happy death.  
In that hour of dread and anguish, assist me by your presence,  
and protect me by your power against  
the enemies of your salvation.  
Into your sacred hands, living and dying,  
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I commend my soul.  
Amen*




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## Bishop: Witnessing at ICE check-in is going to peripheries

By Barb Arland-Fye  
Catholic News Service

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (CNS) -- Bishop Thomas R. Zinkula of Davenport, was among 18 people who packed the reception area of a federal facility in Cedar Rapids, keeping vigil as Alejandro Guzman checked in with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers.

Guzman, a 29-year-old Mexican, is not Catholic but gave thanks for the presence of Bishop Zinkula and the others participating in the Catholic Day of Action to Protect Refugee Families and Children Nov. 27. The Iowa City Catholic Worker, Guzman's sponsor, and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, organized the event.

"We're all together. We're in solidarity. One human family," the bishop said during a roundtable discussion at the Catholic Worker House in Iowa City that preceded the check-in with ICE officers in Cedar Rapids. Nine immigrants currently live

at the Catholic Worker House, a place of hospitality that Guzman and others sought out by word of mouth.

Bishop Zinkula looks to Pope Francis as his guide to go out to the peripheries to encounter other people. The bishop chose to witness an ICE check-in, saying that accompanying Guzman "is an opportunity to practice our Catholic Christian faith to love our neighbor and to show support along the way."

The bishop listened intently as the immigrants shared their stories one by one. Most fled violence, crime and poverty in the northern triangle of Central America or, in Guzman's case, Mexico. He said he had been kidnapped and tortured by a drug cartel in his early 20s.

After escaping and making his way to the United States, he found work on the West Coast, but a traffic violation led to his arrest and incarceration in a privately run immigration prison in California. He remained there for 14 months until a donor posted \$25,000 bond. The Iowa Catholic



CNS Photo/Barb Arland-Fye  
**Davenport Bishop Thomas R. Zinkula prays with a group that includes Alejandro Guzman, a Mexican immigrant, and Emily Sinnwell, of the Iowa City Catholic Worker House after Guzman's check-in with Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Cedar Rapids on Nov. 27.**

Worker House agreed to sponsor Guzman, who also seeks asylum. "You deserve to be treated with dignity and respect," the bishop said to several people. "I care

about you very much, as much as anyone in the diocese."

"Be strong, be courageous. Stay close to God and have hope," he said.

Arland-Fye is editor of *The Catholic Messenger*, newspaper of the Diocese of Davenport.

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## Bishops make "ad limina" visit

Continued from page 1

will occur on Thursday, Jan. 16.

Region IX is comprised of the 15 Catholic bishops of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas. The Region IX bishops will have a free exchange of questions and ideas, Monsignor Orr added, which is helpful to the bishops and the Holy Father.

"[The meeting] can serve a dual role," Monsignor Orr said. "There's a level of accountability to the Holy Father and for the bishop's ministry within a diocese, but it also can be an opportunity for self-assessment by a bishop and whoever he wishes to consult with in terms of what is happening in the diocese, what needs to change and what could be strengthened."

Bishops Joensen and Pates will have meetings with the:

- Secretary of State
- Protection of Minors
- Congregation of Bishops
- Congregation of Clergy
- Doctrine of the Faith

Bishop Joensen will also participate in optional meetings with the:

- Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life
- Congregation for Catholic Education
- Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization
- Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- Pontifical Council for Culture

Bishop Joensen looks forward to opportunities for growth, learning and how he can better serve the Diocese of Des Moines.

"I would welcome feedback and responses to the report and proposals or observations

that would enlarge my vision on how we continue as a church together that will equip me to be the leader God has called me to be," he said.

The Region IX bishops will celebrate Mass together at the major basilicas in Rome and have opportunities for discussion and fellowship. In previous visits, Bishop Pates found great value in these gatherings.

"This opened the door to common projects and mutual support," he said. "It also highlighted the common issues which we were addressing: evangelization, religious vocations, the development of the mission of laity in the Church."

Bishop Joensen has a respect and appreciation for the work of his predecessor.

"Bishop Pates has a deeper sense of the challenges facing this region and the larger Des Moines area," Bishop Joensen said. "And I hope for him personally that he can find great satisfaction and appreciation from the Holy Father and others as having been a faithful servant to the people of Southwest Iowa."

Bishops Joensen and Pates will be staying at the North American College in Rome and spend time with three diocesan seminarians Reed Flood, Alex Kramer and Mike Mahoney, as well as Father James Downey, who is currently studying for his licentiate in moral theology in Rome.

Bishop Joensen also will meet up with a group of former students from Loras College, who will be in Rome in January. He will celebrate Mass for them.

The 2019 quinquennial report can be found at [dmdiocese.org/about-us/diocesan-directory](http://dmdiocese.org/about-us/diocesan-directory) at the bottom of the page.

## Pope marks birthday with advice on age

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- On the eve of his 83rd birthday, Pope Francis met with a group of his peers -- although many were a few years younger -- and told them that "old age is a time of grace."

"Grandparents, who have received the blessing of seeing their children's children, are entrusted with a great task: transmitting the experience of life and the history of the family, the community, the people," the pope said Dec. 16 during an audience with members of the Italian National Association of Senior Workers.

Pope Francis, who was born Dec. 17, 1936, told association members that one's later years should be a "season of dialogue," because "the future of a people naturally presupposes a dialogue and encounter between the old and young to build a society that is more just, more beautiful, has more solidarity and is more Christian."

As one grows older, he said, "the Lord renews his call to us. He calls us to preserve and hand on the faith; he calls us to pray, especially to intercede; he calls us to be alongside those who are in need."

"The elderly, grandpar-

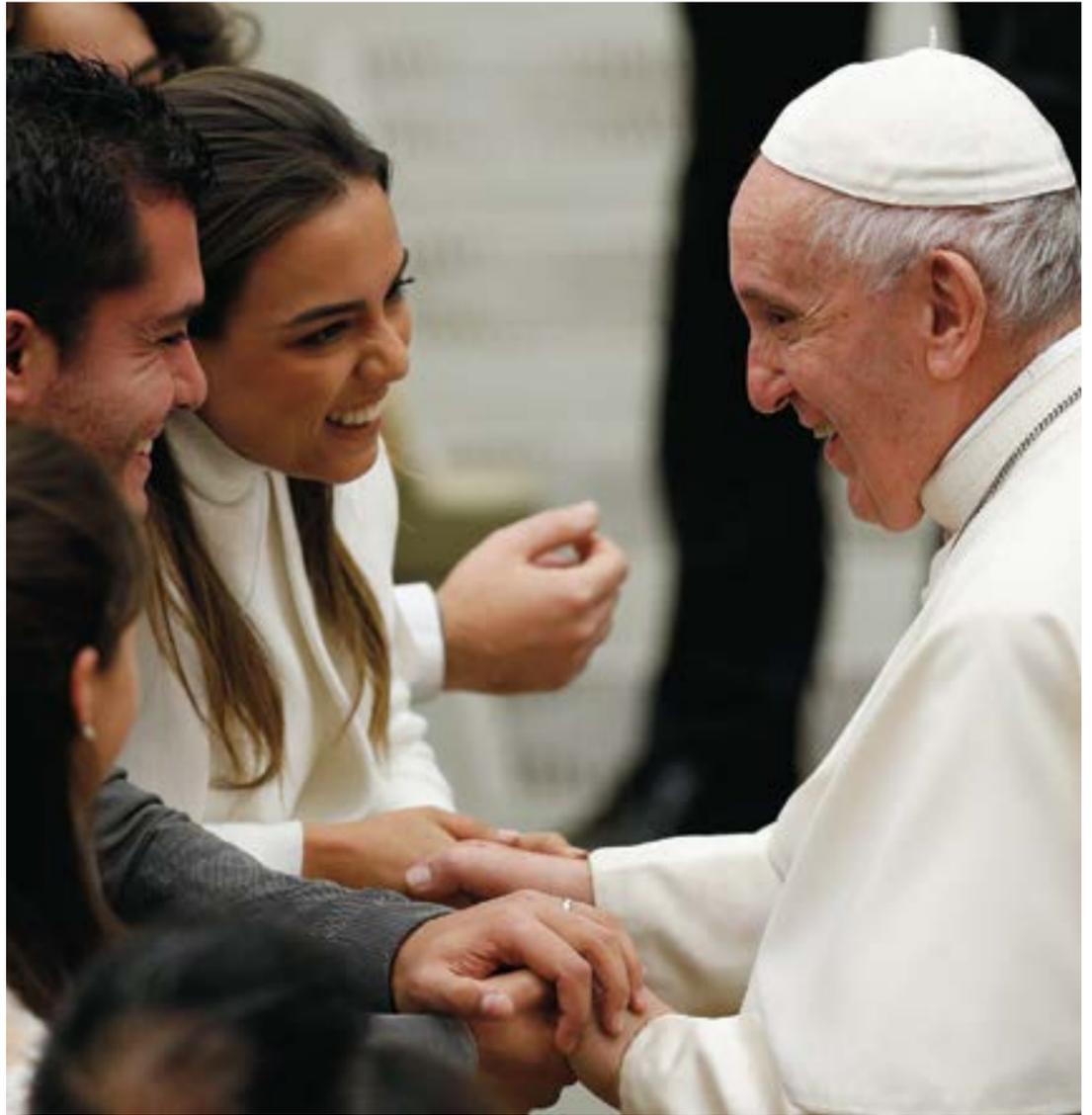
ents, have a unique and special ability to understand the most problematic situations," the pope continued. "And when they pray for these situations, their prayer is strong, it's potent."

By living one's senior years as a gift and a time for dialogue, he said, the elderly show the lie of "the traditional stereotype of the elderly: ill, handicapped, dependent, isolated, besieged by fear, left out, having a weak identity after losing their social role."

Active seniors, he said, also fight a system that focuses more on "costs and risks" than on "resources and potential."

"The future -- and this is not an exaggeration -- will be found in dialogue between the young and the old," he said. "We are all called to fight this poisonous throwaway culture. With tenacity we are called to build a different society, one that is more welcoming, more human, more inclusive," and one where the young aren't ignored because they aren't working yet and the old aren't ignored because people think their financially productive years are over.

"Remember," the pope told them, "talk to young people, not to clobber them, no. To listen to them, to sow something. This dialogue is the future."



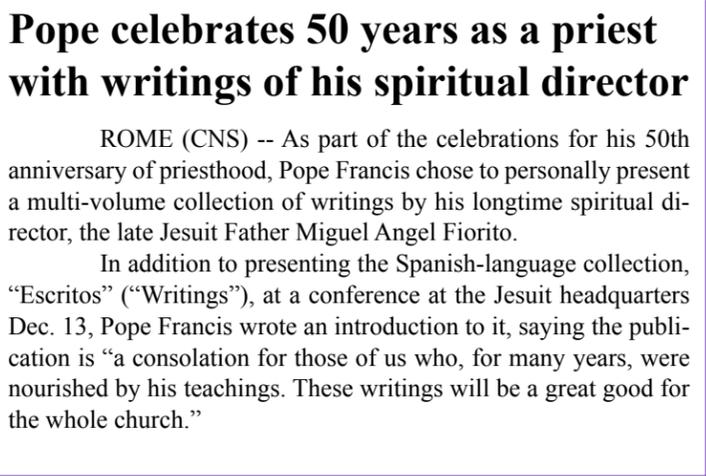
CNS/Paul Haring

Pope Francis greets a newly married couple during his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican on Dec. 11.

### Pope celebrates 50 years as a priest with writings of his spiritual director

ROME (CNS) -- As part of the celebrations for his 50th anniversary of priesthood, Pope Francis chose to personally present a multi-volume collection of writings by his longtime spiritual director, the late Jesuit Father Miguel Angel Fiorito.

In addition to presenting the Spanish-language collection, "Escritos" ("Writings"), at a conference at the Jesuit headquarters Dec. 13, Pope Francis wrote an introduction to it, saying the publication is "a consolation for those of us who, for many years, were nourished by his teachings. These writings will be a great good for the whole church."



Christmas/New Year's  
Mass Schedule  
St. Anthony Parish  
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#### Christmas Eve – December 24

4 p.m. Church \*\* (Solemn Mass\*)  
4 p.m. Parish Hall  
8 p.m. Church \*\* (Solemn Mass\*)

\*\* *Procession of the Star.* A St. Anthony tradition which spans the decades. During the procession at the beginning of Mass, the star proceeds down the church aisle from the loft to the crib, highlighting the trek taken by the shepherds and the three kings. A lovely tradition of our great parish.

#### Christmas Day – December 25

8 a.m. Church  
9:30 a.m. Church – Solemn High Mass in Latin  
11 a.m. Church (Solemn Mass\*)  
1:30 p.m. Church – Spanish (Solemn Mass\*)

\*Solemn Mass indicates the use of incense and the assistance of deacon(s).

#### New Year's Masses

12/31 5:30 p.m. Church  
1/1 8:00 a.m. Church  
9:30 a.m. Church – Solemn High Mass in Latin  
11:00 a.m. Church (Solemn Mass\*)  
12:30 p.m. Church – Spanish

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## Catechism will be updated to include ecological sins, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Following through on a proposal made at the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, Pope Francis said there are plans to include a definition of ecological sins in the church's official teaching.

"We should be introducing -- we were thinking -- in the Catechism of the Catholic Church the sin against ecology, ecological sin against the common home," he told participants at a conference on criminal justice Nov. 15.

Members of the International Association of Penal Law were in Rome Nov. 13-16 for the conference, which centered on the theme, "Criminal Justice and Corporate Business."

Pope Francis also denounced the abuse of law and legislation to justify acts of violence and hatred.

Today's throwaway culture, as well as other "psycho-social phenomenon" pose threats to the common good while insidiously promoting a "culture of hate," he said. These threats, he added, often take the form of "symbols and actions that are typical of Nazism."

"I must confess," the pope said, departing from his prepared remarks, "that when I hear some speeches, some person in charge of order or the

government, I am reminded of Hitler's speeches in 1934 and 1936."

"They are actions typical of Nazism that, with its persecution of Jews, gypsies and people of homosexual orientation, represent a negative model par excellence of a throwaway culture and hate," the pope said. "That is what happened in that time and today, these things are reappearing."

Today's "current of punitivism, which claims to solve social problems through the penal system," has not worked, the pope said. Instead, an "elementary sense of justice" must be applied so that "certain conduct for which corporations are usually responsible, does not go unpunished."

Chief among those crimes, he added, are acts that "can be considered as 'ecocide': the massive contamination of air, land and water resources, the large-scale destruction of flora and fauna, and any action capable of producing an ecological disaster or destroying an ecosystem."

Pope Francis also called on the international community to recognize ecocide as a "fifth category of crime against peace."

## Bishop installs new pastor

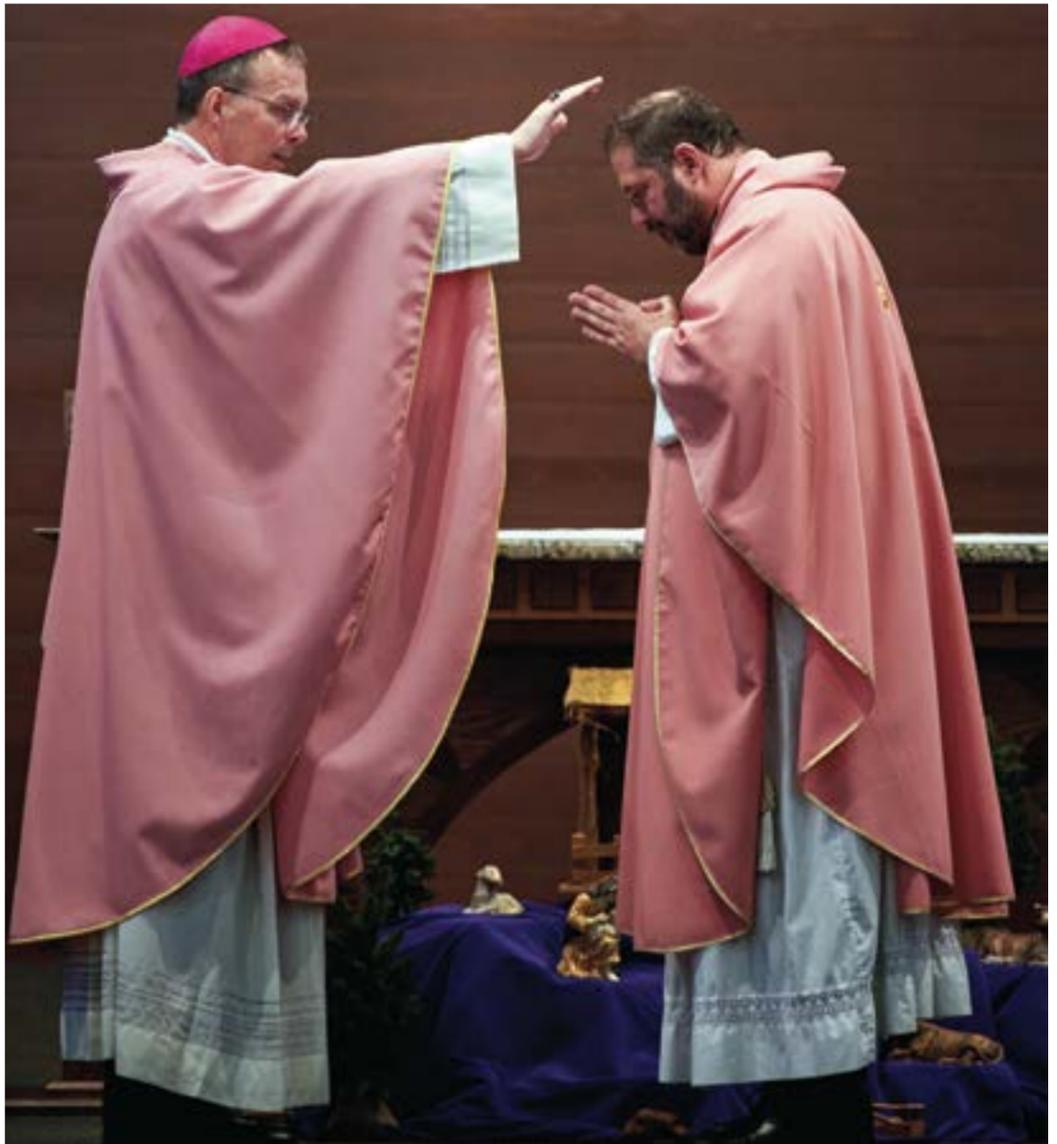


Photo by Michael Gatzke

Bishop William Joensen installed Father Ken Halbur as pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Ankeny on Dec. 14/15. When the bishop installs a pastor, he blesses the relationship between the pastor and parishioners.



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## Iowa youth help California, Alaska teens get to national youth conference

DUBUQUE, Iowa (CNS) -- The Archdiocese of Dubuque sent the largest delegation in the country to the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis.

From Nov. 21-23, more than 1,200 teens and more than 400 adult chaperones from across the archdiocese attended the biennial event, which usually draws close to 23,000 participants.

While having a large number of NCYC participants is not new for the Iowa archdiocese, the effort by its young people to help their peers from other dioceses also attend was a first.

Participants from parishes in the archdiocese raised more than \$5,000 for the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska, and the Diocese of San Bernardino, California, to help offset travel costs for teens in those locations who wished to attend NCYC.

This funding help was the idea of Kevin Feyen, director of adolescent faith formation for the Archdiocese of Dubuque. While talking about NCYC with other diocesan directors from around the country, Feyen learned how expensive it was for dioceses in the western part of the U.S. to send their young people.

"The price for them to attend NCYC was three times more than it is for our teens," said Kevin Feyen, archdiocesan director of adolescent faith formation. Raising the money was his idea. "Most were only bringing 10 to 12 people."

Feyen realized that if participants in his archdiocese were willing to chip in some money, even as little as \$10 per person, they would be able to help offset some of the travels costs for distant dioceses and allow more individuals from those places to attend.

He took his idea to the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, which hosts

NCYC, and the organization suggested the Dubuque Archdiocese with Anchorage and San Bernardino.

At least 13 parishes in the Archdiocese of Dubuque have already made contributions to help these dioceses. Most parishes have sent in \$10 for every person at the parish participating in NCYC, money earned through local fundraisers. Other churches have held second collections at Mass. Some chaperones have even made personal donations.

One of these parishes is St. Mary's in Waverly, which is sending 35 teens to the conference. Julie Feldhake, coordinator of faith formation for students in fifth through 12th grades at the parish, said St. Mary's students have been busy raising money to help young people in Alaska and California.

"Our students had a Valentine's Day bake sale, we sold roses for Mother's Day, we had a silent auction with items or services the teens made, and we also had a bowl-a-thon," said Julie Feldhake, of St. Mary Parish in Waverly. "Each student was asked to donate 10 percent of their silent auction earnings."

Feldhake said their efforts to help others attend NCYC have meant a great deal to her students.



## DIOCESE seeks SUPERINTENDENT of CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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## Principal for Catholic High School

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