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 Otty, a retired diocesan priest who helped prepare the quinquennial reports for Bishop Maurice Joseph 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 10th bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines.

“The report was tremendously helpful in giving a comprehensive overview of the diocese, its people and ministries 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

Continued on page 11

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, 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 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...Continued on page 11

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 to attend.

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.

Continued on page 11

Father Tan Tran died Dec. 10.
The Catholic Mirror   December 20, 2019

Unmuted mystery

By Bishop William Joensen

When the priest Zacchaeus, son of Ilma and František, born in Prague, met the angel Gabriel, the first time he encountered 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 faith until his son is born (see Luke 1:18-20). In effect, the priest has himself muted the mysterious workings of God, declaring himself to be mute to the evidence of the Church’s pastors preach—even when priests themselves walk contrary to the values by their wayward example? How can a priest speak credibly to preach and teach in matters of faith and the inherent power of the Word which is Jesus Christ? How can our humanity, weak and wounded, be heard and understood? The medium and message by which God speaks to us all the time. How can a priest speak credibly to preach and teach in matters of faith and the inherent power of the Word which is Jesus Christ? How can our humanity, weak and wounded, be heard and understood? 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 communicate to ears and hearts are already “programmed to receive.” The Word of God inscribed in real human lives—both those who preach and in whom may at times choose to live by faith—presses on to fulfillmen when 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 certain cases, the Church can’t help herself! The Word who is born is the Word who is Jesus Christ. The Church acknowledges that for many young people, God, religion and the Church seem empty or disinterested on account of the Church’s pastors preach—even when priests themselves walk contrary to the values by their wayward example? How can a priest speak credibly to preach and teach in matters of faith and the inherent power of the Word which is Jesus Christ? How can our humanity, weak and wounded, be heard and understood? 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 communicate to ears and hearts are already “programmed to receive.” The Word of God inscribed in real human lives—both those who preach and in whom may at times choose to live by faith—presses on to fulfillmen when 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.

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Parishes celebrate feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

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

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

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 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.

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.
Actions speak loudly when it comes to love

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 be grudged it is usually hurtful. How many things do spouses and children sometimes do in order to be noticed?” (126)

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 de- nial 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 cele- brate 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.

Kelly Mescher Collins is multimedia journalist for the Diocese of Des Moines and writer for The Catholic Mirror.
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 children (bingo?) with children.

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.

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

Young people from across U.S. to attend 45th 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 the Iowa Supreme Court also struck down a mandatory 72 hour waiting period for women seeking an abortion.

DeWitte said the judges overturned 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 laws 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 until birth.) We really have to get this done.”

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.
**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.

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

Contact Kelly at 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@polkcountyiowa.gov.

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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, 7:30 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 Indi- anola Knights from St. Thomas Aqui- nas 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, $5/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 Botani- cal 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 Sierra Room on Sun- days, 5-7 p.m., through April 5. Ses- sions include a meal, video, and open discussion in this 11-week program. Alpha is open to all adults. Register at eventbrite.com/e/alpha-registra- tion-7056546615 or for more infor- mation email SFAAAlpha@saintfran- cischurch.org or call 515-440-1630.

**Jan. 17-19**

**Retreat**

PANORA — Those who have lost a loved one through death, divorce or separation are encour- aged 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 Evangeli- st Catholic School is hosting the fourth annual Green Gala. The evening will include dinner, dancing, live auction and silent auction. Vis- it site-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 in Mass at St. Anthony Parish is at 5 p.m.

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Enthusiastic young Church energized at NCYC

Teens across our diocese join nearly 20,000 in Indianapolis

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.

By Anne Marie Cox

Staff Writer

Enthusiasm for Jesus.

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.

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.

Enthusiasm for Jesus.

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

Photos by Anne Marie Cox
ADVENTURE AWAITS

For generations, thousands of young people have followed the bending road that leads to Catholic Youth Camp in pursuit of adventure, joy, prayer, and fellowship. On average, over 1,500 children and teens from across the region attend our co-ed, sleep-away summer camp every year.

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
515-309-1936
OFFICE@STMCENTER.COM

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...
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 Georgio 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 Georgio 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 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 and click on “Capital Campaign,” then “Donate.”

Thank you!
Volleyball and cross-country make state, football players give back

St. Albert Catholic High School fall sports
By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

St. Albert Catholic High School had a successful fall sports season. Freshman Carly McKeen qualified for the state cross country meet after placing 12th at districts.

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

Senior Bennett Heisterkamp placed 4th 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 24th 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 4th] 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 3rd in the Hawkeye 10 Conference and qualified for the state tournament.

Senior Jordyn Blaha

Senior Annie Flood ran cross country all four years at Dowling Central High School.

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 will last a lifetime. The championship is a memory that she will cherish in her high school career and has no regrets.

“I’m happy with the results, and had been working on improving my time for months. 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.

“This was a really 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.”

The football team had 5 wins and 4 losses this season. They finished 2nd in their district.

Senior Bennett Heisterkamp of St. Albert placed 4th 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 10th 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. Above: Senior Katie Broderick, whose team won the state swimming championship. She signed a letter of intent to swim at Indiana University.

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 Gripple, 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, 2019 that they would be bringing Roland home. One year later – Jan. 9, 2020 – 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 Zel-da 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.”

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 accompanied her back to her former parish 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 Buellock.

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 25th 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 Amado 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. Intermemt will be at Good Shepherd Cemetery in Huntington, California.
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 Catholic Christian faith to love and others sought out by word of mouth. The bishop chose to be close to God and have hope," he said.

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.

"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.

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.

Bishops make “ad limina” visit

Continued from page 1

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 quinquennal report can be found at dmdioce.se/about-us/diocesan-directory at the bottom of the page.

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CNS Photo/Barb Arland-Fye
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 be alongside those who are in need.”

“The elderly, grandparents, 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.”

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

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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.”

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Christmas Eve -- December 24
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4 p.m. Parish Hall
8 p.m. Church ** (Solemn Mass*)

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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
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 for 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.”

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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 ofNCYC participants is not new for the Iowa archdiocese, the effort by its young people to help their peers from other dioceses also attended 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 travel 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 Bernardo.

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.

The Catholic Mirror.

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The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau in Missouri has an opening for Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1, 2020. The diocesan school system includes 23 elementary and 3 high schools. Requirements: Active Catholic, advanced degree in Educational Administration, certifiable in State of Missouri, and experience in Catholic school administration, preferably on a diocesan level. Ability to promote Catholic mission of the schools is a high priority. Must also be willing to travel throughout the diocese. Competitive salary, excellent health benefits, and retirement based on diocesan guidelines. Send cover letter and resume to Janet L. Smith, Chancellor, 601 S. Jefferson, Springfield, MO, 65806. You may also call (417) 866-0841 or Email jansmith@dioscg.org to request an application packet.

The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau in Missouri is seeking a Principal for Notre Dame High School in Cape Girardeau, MO, effective July 1, 2020. Qualified applicant must be an Active Catholic, have Missouri principal certification, have a Master’s degree in School Administration (or be working toward it) with 3-5 years of Catholic school experience. Administrative experience preferred. To request an application packet please contact Anne Buckley at the Catholic Center, (417) 866-0841, abuckley@dioscg.org.

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— Rev. David Ambroz
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