

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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Persons with disability ministry started at diocese

Patty Origer hired in new part-time role

**By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer**

Patty Origer has been hired as coordinator for Persons With Disability Ministry, a newly created, part-time position at the Diocese of Des Moines.

The goal is to help people with disabilities feel welcomed and included in worship and social activities in our church communities.

“We need to set the example for everyone,” Origer said.

The welcoming atmosphere and sense of inclusion were evident at St. John Parish when Origer’s family moved to Adel.



“We visited the parish before we moved there, and one of the first things we noticed was that there were five to six individuals with a disability involved in Mass,” said Origer, who cares for her young adult son who has a disability. “We thought, ‘This is a welcoming parish.’”

“It takes a village to raise any child,” Origer added. “But to raise a child with a disability – having the support of family, friends and church is really important.”

John Gaffney, director of the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, said Origer is the right person for the job.

“Patty’s life experiences create an authenticity which will be received well in family ministry, with pastors and parish staff and with essential partners within the community.”

She is realistic about the immensity of the mission, Gaffney said, noting that this will take time.

Origer is optimistic people will be willing to embrace any changes.

“It’s important for us as a community to invite and welcome these individuals and families, so together we can all grow in our faith and relationship with God,” Origer said.

Almost time for Lent

Ash Wednesday (Feb. 26) and Good Friday (April 10) are days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics.

For fasting, those who are between the ages of 18 and 59 are to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal.

Catholics age 14 and older abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the Fridays during Lent.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Wednesdays are fun days in Atlantic



Top: Engaging in a game of Jenga during play time at the After School Program is Vince Freund, Tessa O’Brien, Maddie McLaren, Makenna Schroeder and Monte Smith. Right: A St. Valentine’s photo booth was set up for the After School Party. Annabelle Meyer and Addie Freund had fun showing their best sides.



**By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer**

Ss. Peter and Paul Parish has become the go-to hot spot for kids on Wednesday afternoons in Atlantic.

That’s because the parish has filled a need in the community, opening their doors to the kids every Wednesday afternoon after their early school dismissal for teachers’ professional development.

It has become popular with parents and students alike.

It’s also given the parish an opportunity to reach kids they may not have been reaching before, said Father Trevor Chicoine, pastor.

“From a very practical standpoint, it’s become a bridge and has allowed us to get the kids into the faith formation that we wouldn’t otherwise get,” said Father Chicoine. “We have a place

where they can send the kids.

“And in that gap of time, we provide some good faith formation that’s lined up with what they’re doing in class,” he added. “That really extends that afternoon of catechesis.”

Dawn and LaNette Freund, volunteers who created the after school program, said the kids arrive at the parish center at about 2 p.m. They have two hours of time scheduled for homework, reading, a faith lesson, snack and playtime before religious education starts at 4 p.m. Parents pick the kids up at about 5:15 p.m.

Approximately 30-45 kids participate in the after-school program.

“We think it’s important because it offers them a safe place to be,” Dawn said. “The kids can know that they can have fun at church and it helps the parents. Once they get them on the bus, it gets them right to the church.”

It eliminates worries parents

might have had about their kids getting home OK.

And kids hate missing it.

“The kids are pretty enthusiastic and we get pretty excited when they run in,” Freund said. “They look forward to it, and I think the parents appreciate it too.”

Volunteers keep things interesting with different church teachings – the rosary, liturgical calendar and the saints – and service projects, including coloring pictures for the elderly and making Christmas cards for soldiers serving abroad.

“I think the kids feel it’s a fun and tangible way to encounter the faith,” Father Chicoine said. “I think that they’ve started to see church as not just a dull place. It really launches them into their afternoon faith formation class much more prepared and ready to engage.”

Devoted STEM teacher honored

St. Theresa Catholic School teacher Ronda McCarthy won the 2020 IOWA STEM Teacher Award sponsored by Kemin Industries.

The middle school teacher was honored for going above and beyond to inspire student interest in and awareness of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

McCarthy believes STEM education is vital for all students no matter their learning style. She incorporates STEM education in hands-on activities, problem solving and collaboration. She connects students with STEM professionals in the area and through Skype.

She has attended teacher training with the U.S. Naval Academy and brought a SeaPerch program, which involves underwater robotics, to St. Theresa School. When Bishop William Joensen visited her classroom during Catholic Schools Week, she taught him how to fly a drone.

McCarthy received \$1,500 to use for her classroom and \$1,500 for personal use. She was nominated by her principal, Ellen Stemler.



2020 Iowa STEM Teacher honoree Ronda McCarthy hugs two eighth grade students who praised her dedication to students at St. Theresa Catholic School in Des Moines.

Threshold crossed

By Bishop William Joensen

While I had previously thrown coins into the Trevi Fountain based on the popular legend that guarantees one a return trip to the Eternal City, it was a decidedly unique voyage to Rome this past January for my first ever “ad limina” (“to the threshold”) visit of our country’s Region IX (Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Iowa) bishops to the “confessions” that mark a sort of spiritual border before the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and to deepen our collective solidarity with Peter’s successor, Pope Francis.

The week was part working retreat with Masses at four major basilicas and time spent in prayer and reflection, and partly taken with appointments and conferences with the staffs of the various Vatican congregations and councils that represent the administrative extension of the pope’s executive role and ministry. There was also the graced opportunity to get to know my brother bishops and our Des Moines seminarians more deeply. There’s too much to recount in detail, but I offer some highlights:

First, despite some rumblings of misperceptions of the U.S. Catholic Church by our European counterparts, we encountered a largely appreciative and affirming estimate of American Catholicism by several of the groups we met. The Congregation for Education applauded the general state of our K-12 parochial schools, with ongoing dedication by diocesan laity who staff and support schools often once operated by religious communities, while also recognizing that we must continue to be intentional in forming lay administrators and teachers who are “missionary” in their approach to their educational



Photo by Vatican Media

While visiting with Pope Francis, Bishop William Joensen mentioned that he’s a former philosophy teacher. Pope Francis replied: “At last you’ve come down to earth!” As Bishop Joensen departed, he promised to keep his feet, faith and commitment to the people of the Des Moines diocese firmly fixed at ground level.

vocation. Similarly, the Council for Promoting New Evangelization applauded the American spirit that is willing to adopt innovative strategies for bringing the Gospel to bear on the lives of young people and others. While the accent is more upon proclaiming Christ than upon reasserting doctrinal truths, the pending completion of a revised national catechetical directory will ensure that the integrity of the faith is respected while bearing the joy of the gospel to the “nones” and others who’ve yet to encounter Jesus.

The solid cultural values sown in the Heartland were acknowledged in our time with Cardinal Marc Ouellet of Canada, prefect of the Congregation of Bishops. Successful initiatives to promote priestly and religious vocations among men and women on campuses and within dioceses were touted, with the need to foster Hispanic vocations and minis-

try in the spirit of the 5th Encuentro were points of emphasis. The recent canonization of Cardinal Newman can enliven the centers at universities – such as at Drake – that bear his name. Our personal witness as bishops to greater simplicity of life and prophetic presence to our people in the face of racism, opioid and other addictions, and natural disasters such as flooding, is vital.

These notes were echoed in our meeting with Cardinal Peter Turkson (familiar to Des Moines folks from his presence here in conjunction with receiving the World Food Prize), Cardinal Michael Czerny and their staff on the Council for Promoting Integral Human Development. Their scope of responsibility is wide, including advocacy and outreach to migrants and refugees, victims of human trafficking and the distinct category of “internally displaced” persons within countries, includ-

ing those estranged from homes and native cities by the effects of climate change and overall food insecurity.

While we were repeatedly told at the outset of our sessions that Vatican officials and staffs were poised to listen rather than talk, Roman loquacity sometimes prevailed, with mild frustration that we could not more fully engage experts such as Dr. Linda Ghisoni. She combines bioethical expertise with great passion for promoting marriage and family life, including new movements of spirituality and solidarity among young people.

There were more sober moments, including our time with the Secretariat of State where issues of religious freedom, the accord between the Catholic Church and the Chinese government, and the disposition and disclosure of funds entrusted by donors to the Papal Foundation and Peter’s Pence collection were discussed. But there were also frequent opportunities to be grateful for the

support of Vatican officials—including several American priests from various dioceses working tirelessly behind the scenes—to address head-on the effects of clerical sexual abuse and other malfeasance by clergy, whether by the Commission for the Protection of Minors, or the Congregations of the Doctrine of the Faith and for the Clergy. Their efforts to work with survivors, to form and educate church ministers and the faithful, to provide more comprehensive guidelines and norms to safeguard our young people—and to apply church law appropriately to sanction and remove perpetrators or those guilty of misconduct from ministry, are encouraging, even as more needs to be done.

My one-on-one conversations and meals with our seminarians – Reed Flood, Alex Kramer, and Michael Mahoney – assured me that we are heeding the counsel of the Congregation for the Clergy that we should aim for quality men rather than num-

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Official Appointments

Deacon Michael Manno, appointed to diaconal ministry with full faculties, St. Augustin Parish, effective February 11, 2020.

Appointments effective February 17, 2020:

Father John Owusu Agyenman, of the Diocese of Konongo-Mampong, Ghana, to chaplain, Unity Point Hospital and Broadlawns Hospital in Des Moines.

Father Trevor Chicoine, presently pastoral administrator of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Atlantic, and St. Mary Parish, Anita, to pastor, Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Atlantic, and St. Mary Parish, Anita, as well as director of the Office of Worship, Diocese of Des Moines.

William Joensen

Faithfully in Christ,
Most. Rev. William Joensen, Ph.D.
Bishop

Jason Kurth

Jason Kurth
Chancellor

A letter from Pope Francis

During Bishop William Joensen’s visit to the Vatican for the ad limina visit, he brought a gift from the Diocese of Des Moines. The following is a note of gratitude dated Jan. 23 from Pope Francis.

Dear Brother,

I wish to thank you in a particular way for your gracious letter and the generous offering of \$10,000 for the poor, which you presented to me during your ad Limina Apostolorum visit to Rome.

I thank you and all the faithful for this charitable contribution which not only assists me in my ministry but also witnesses to the communion in faith and love of the faithful with the Successor of Peter.

In asking for your continued prayers, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and all the clergy, religious and laity of the Diocese of Des Moines as a pledge of joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fraternally in Christ,

Francis

Umbral cruzado

Aunque ya con anterioridad había lanzado monedas a la Fuente de Trevi basado en la leyenda popular de que eso garantiza el volver a viajar a la Ciudad Eterna, el viaje de enero pasado a Roma fue definitivamente único con motivo de mi primera visita “ad limina” (“a los umbrales”) de los obispos de la Región IX de nuestro país (Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri e Iowa) a las “confesiones” que marcan una cierta frontera espiritual ante las tumbas de los Apóstoles Pedro y Pablo, y para profundizar nuestra solidaridad colectiva con el sucesor de Pedro, el Papa Francisco.

La semana fue en parte un retiro de trabajo con Misas en las cuatro basílicas mayores y dedicando tiempo en oración y reflexión, y en parte reuniones y conferencias con el personal de varias congregaciones y consejos del Vaticano que representan la extensión administrativa del papel ejecutivo y ministerial del papa. También tuve la maravillosa oportunidad de conocer más profundamente a mis hermanos obispos y a nuestros seminaristas de Des Moines. Hay demasiado que relatar para poder darles todos los detalles, pero les ofrezco algunos aspectos:

Primero, a pesar de ciertos rumores de percepciones equivocadas sobre la Iglesia Católica de los Estados Unidos por nuestras contrapartes europeas, encontramos un gran aprecio y una motivante estima hacia el catolicismo americano por parte de los varios grupos con los que nos reunimos. La Congregación para la Educación aplaudió el estado general de nuestras escuelas parroquiales del kinder al 12vo grado, con una continua dedicación de los laicos diocesanos que conforman el personal y apoyo de las escuelas que frecuentemente operan comunidades religiosas, reconociendo a la vez que debemos continuar con una firme intención de formar a los administradores y maestros laicos quienes son “misioneros” en

su labor y vocación educativa. A la vez, el Consejo para la Promoción de la Nueva Evangelización aplaudió el espíritu americano que está dispuesto a adoptar estrategias innovadoras para lograr que el Evangelio se adentre en las vidas de los jóvenes y en los demás. Aunque el énfasis es principalmente el proclamar a Cristo antes que reafirmar verdades doctrinales, aún está pendiente el terminar la revisión del directorio nacional catequético, lo que asegurará que se respete la integridad de la fe a la vez que se comunica el gozo del evangelio a los “ningunos” así como a las demás personas quienes aún no se encuentran con Jesús.

El Cardenal Oullet de Canadá, prefecto de la Congregación de los Obispos, reconoció los valores culturales tan sólidos que se siembran actualmente en las Tierras del Corazón. Entre los puntos de énfasis se celebraron las iniciativas que se han implementado con éxito en la promoción de vocaciones sacerdotales y religiosas entre hombres y mujeres en las universidades y dentro de las diócesis, así como la necesidad de promover vocaciones y ministerio hispano dentro del espíritu del 5to. Encuentro. La reciente canonización del Cardenal Newman puede inspirar a los centros a portar su nombre en las universidades estatales. Nuestro testimonio personal como obispos llevando una mayor sencillez de vida y una presencia profética es vital ante nuestra gente para poder confrontar el racismo, adicciones, incluyendo la de los opioides y desastres naturales tales como las inundaciones.

Estas notas hicieron eco en nuestra reunión con el Cardenal Turkson (quien es familiar para la gente de Des Moines por su presencia aquí con la ocasión de recibir el Premio Mundial del Alimento) y el Cardenal Michael Czerny y su personal del Consejo para la Promoción Integral de Desarrollo Humano. Su área de responsabilidad es amplia, in-



Photos by Vatican media

Seminarians for the diocese – Alex Kramer (top left), Reed Flood (top right) and Mike Mahoney (right) met Pope Francis during the bishop’s ad limina visit. Flood brought an image of Our Lady of Tenderness to be blessed for his sister, who studies at the University of Iowa. He asked the Holy Father to pray for his little sister.

cluyendo la asistencia y apoyo a migrantes y refugiados, víctimas del tráfico humano y la distintiva categoría de las personas “desplazadas internamente” dentro de sus propios países, incluyendo a aquellos alejados de sus hogares y ciudades natales por los efectos del cambio climático y la inseguridad alimenticia en general.

Aunque se nos dijo en varias ocasiones al inicio de nuestras sesiones que los oficiales y personal del Vaticano estaban gustosos de escucharnos, en veces dominó la efusividad romana, con algo de frustración por no poder conectarnos plenamente con expertos tales como la Dra. Linda Ghisoni, quien combina su experiencia en bioética con una gran pasión en la promoción del matrimonio y la vida familiar, que se incluye entre nuevos movimientos de espiritualidad y solidaridad entre los jóvenes.

Hubo algunos momentos sobrios, entre ellos nuestro tiempo con el Secretario de Estado en donde se discutieron asuntos de libertad religiosa, el acuerdo entre la Iglesia Católica y el gobierno de China, y el uso y reporte de los fondos que confían los donadores a la Fundación Papal y a la colecta

para el Fondo de Pedro. Pero también hubo frecuentes oportunidades para estar agradecidos con el apoyo de los oficiales del Vaticano – incluyendo varios sacerdotes americanos de varias diócesis que trabajaron sin descanso detrás de escena – para atender de frente los efectos del abuso sexual clerical y otras malas conductas del clero, ya sea por la Comisión para la Protección de Menores o las Congregaciones de la Doctrina de la Fe o del Clero. Nos motivan sus esfuerzos en el trabajo con los sobrevivientes, para formar y educar a los ministros de la iglesia y a los fieles, en proveer guías y normas más comprensivas en la protección de jóvenes – y para aplicar la ley de la iglesia apropiadamente en la sanción y remoción de los perpetradores y de aquellos que son culpables de mala conducta en el ministerio, aunque se necesita hacer aún más.

Mis comidas y conversaciones uno a uno con nuestros seminaristas Reed Flood, Alex Kramer y Michael Mahoney me hacen sentir seguro de que seguiremos el consejo de la Congregación para el Clero de que debemos buscar hombres de calidad en vez de

número de candidatos hacia el sacerdocio. La capacidad de tener relaciones sociales normales, una continua conversión y una configuración como discípulos de Cristo, así como reflexión interior y oración que permite que los hombres a darse libremente de sí mismos como potenciales pastores en el mundo: todos estos son los ingredientes para las vocaciones que abrazan la cruz y que ayudan a cargar la cruz de aquellos a quienes sirven.

Se nos recordó de la necesidad de apoyo y colaboración fraternal cuando, por azares del destino, al concluir nuestra Misa vespertina en la Basílica de San Pablo Extramuros, llegamos justamente cuando se estaba llevando a cabo una procesión solemne de las reliquias de San Timoteo, con toda la ceremoniosidad medieval que pudieron lograr. San Pablo y San Timoteo eran colaboradores espirituales quienes se motivaban y fortalecían uno a otro, y nuestro grupo de obispos reverentemente nos unimos a la procesión en silencio y en canto,

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Threshold crossed

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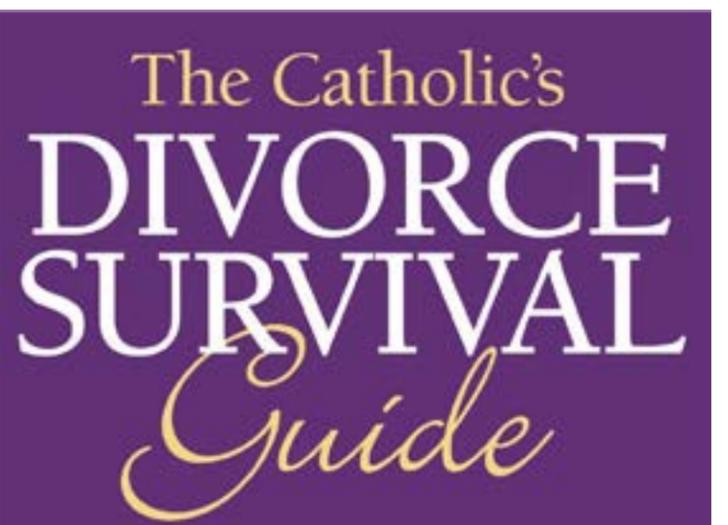
bers of candidates for the priesthood. Capacity for normal social relationships, ongoing conversion and configuration as disciples to Christ, and deep interior reflection and prayer that enable men to freely go out of themselves as prospective shepherds in the world: all of these are ingredients for vocations who will embrace the cross and help take up the cross of those whom they serve.

We were reminded of the need for fraternal support and collaboration when, by happenstance, at our concluding afternoon Mass at the Basilica of St. Paul-outside-the-Walls we arrived just as a solemn procession of the relics of St. Timothy was taking place, with all the medieval pageantry they could muster. Ss. Paul and Timothy were spiritual co-workers who offered encouragement and strength to each other, and our group of bishops reverently joined the procession in silence and song, graced to deepen our own bond as

successors of the apostles.

Of course, it almost goes without saying that the highlight had come the day before when Bishop R. Walker Nickless of Sioux City presided and preached at the Mass at the crypt in the lower level of St. Peter’s Basilica. He spoke movingly of the unfolding deepening of Peter’s love in the face of Christ’s merciful probing of his soul. And then, after Mass, we were ushered into the papal apartments as a group of bishops, priests and seminarists, where the Holy Father dedicated two-and-a-half hours to engaging us in a private audience. He is truly a shepherd after Christ’s heart who is energized by genuine dialogue; with the aid of a translator, he proved untiringly receptive to fraternal repartee, where he displayed with amazing stamina and good humor, and did not skirt the tough questions about life-related issues, or the sorry matters surrounding the former cardinal and now Mr. Theodore McCarrick.

A couple light moments included being asked whether he takes a regular day off, to which he responded by beating his breast and confessing, “I am a sinner,” who maybe eeks out a couple hours’ relaxation on rare occasions listening to music, chatting with friends, or taking a brief walk—not bad for an 83-year-old with one lung! And when I prefaced a question about the engagement of North and Latin America by saying I was formerly a philosophy teacher, he retorted, “At last you’ve come down to earth!” The lighthearted photo as we parted company was in response to my promise to him that I would keep my feet, faith, and commitment to the people of the Des Moines Diocese firmly fixed at ground level—which, having “crossed the threshold” of the earthly nucleus of our Roman Catholic faith, is what—with lots of prayers and regular reminders from others—I intend to do. After all, I promised the pope!



Is anyone in YOUR family DIVORCED? Please give someone a copy of this ad or invite them to *The Catholic's DIVORCE SURVIVAL Guide* 12-week group which begins March 23rd in The Blessed Mother Room, 820 Porter Ave, Des Moines, on the Christ the King Campus. Cost of \$30 per person includes a “Personal Survival Guide” and all materials for 12 weeks. Find comfort and counsel consistent with Catholic teachings. For more information call Deacon Tony Valdez at 515-979-2301 or email him at t.valdez@me.com Visit www.catholicsdivorce.com

OPINION

Show your love every day

February can be a busy month in Marriage and Family Ministry, as we celebrate National Marriage Week and Valentine's Day, and as many of our parishes host marriage enrichment events, talks, and celebrations.

During this time it's easy to get caught up in the busyness and forget to celebrate my own marriage, to honor my own wife, and to incarnate our love.

"Incarnate our love" might be a clunky description, but the concept is simple. Valentine's Day is a reminder that our love needs to take on flesh: Through date nights, through flowers and cards, through setting aside distractions and just being together.

And while February is a time when our whole society celebrates love,

Marriage & Family Life

By
Adam Storey



it's important to remember that our love needs to take on flesh, not just once a year but on a daily basis. We do this in words of affection, in small acts of service, and in taking the time to linger with each other, even if only for a few moments before work or bed.

Letting our love become incarnate is vital because it is what helps keep

our love alive!

One way to think about this is to notice that often our emotions flow from our actions. We live in an age that greatly, and rightly, values authenticity, or being true to oneself.

But in the spirit of authenticity there is sometimes the perception that in order to be true to oneself, my actions always need to follow my emotions. If I don't feel "in love," then gestures of love are seen as out of place, or worse, dishonest.

And yet, ask any married couple and they will tell you that it's precisely when we least feel "in love" that we need to foster actions of love, because it's through these choices that we can draw passion back into a marriage.

So I'm grateful for National Marriage Week and Valentine's Day. I'm grateful for the reminder that love needs to take on flesh, it needs to be chosen and acted upon every day.

It needs to become incarnate, because it's when love becomes incarnate that it is given the space to grow. I live this out very imperfectly in my own life, but February is a great opportunity to renew our commitment to incarnate love!

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

Love lived in a profound way

Jan. 22 marked the 47th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision by the U.S. Supreme Court legalizing abortion in our country. As marchers prepared to descend on Washington, D.C., I hoped and prayed for the day when the march will no longer be necessary.

I have been involved with the pro-life movement for many years. This involvement has given me the privilege of meeting people like Abby Johnson, Pam Tebow (Tim's mom), Alveda King and others. I have been impacted by speeches from these fine people, and I have had the privilege of sharing a speaking platform with some of them at pro-life events. Knowing we are not

Guest Column

By Deacon Vernon
Dobelmann



alone in this battle helps us persevere.

The anniversary of Roe v. Wade this year did not find me at a large pro-life event. Instead, I attended a small funeral for someone I had never even met. It was for the sister of one of our coach-

es here at St. Albert Catholic School. I do not know any of the family members well, but I attended the funeral because of their connection to our school. I am so glad I did. This was the most powerful pro-life event I have ever attended!

The written obituary was beautiful. It gave a historical sketch of a life well-lived, and it also pointed to a family who understands love in a profound way. The funeral liturgy was an uplifting experience in the midst of the sorrow and grief of the family. The pastor summed it up well when he said, "The world needs families like yours."

I walked out of church at the end of the service wishing I had known Mary Pat. I could almost feel the joy and

love she must have emanated to everyone around her. It was a snowy and dreary day outside, but my heart was filled with sunshine because of this hour of prayer.

I extend my condolences to the entire Heithoff family. I can only imagine the sense of loss you feel. Please know of my prayers for all of you.

Eternal rest grant unto Mary Pat, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Reprinted with permission from Deacon Vernon Dobelmann's blog Articulating Hope. Deacon Dobelmann is the executive director of St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.

OBITUARY

Mary Patricia Heithoff

Mary Patricia Heithoff peacefully passed from this life into the loving arms of God and her parents on Jan. 17.

She was born in Council Bluffs on June 14, 1958 to Robert and Donna Heithoff.

She was diagnosed with Down syndrome, and at that time there were no pamphlets, no early intervention centers, no support groups, no anything to help her parents.

In fact, doctors told them that she would be feeble-minded and helpless, she would not live more than 18 years, and she would be a burden for them and their other children.

The experts advised them to place her in an institution.

They didn't do that.

They believed there was value in every life. They brought her home to five siblings and raised her along with them and the two other children who were born subsequently.

Her family did not dwell on what Mary could not do – instead they taught her all they could and delighted in every milestone she achieved.

What they didn't expect is what she would teach them and every person lucky enough to know her: how to live joyfully, how to laugh, how to love.

She was a trailblazer for all those born after her with Down syndrome.

She showed them by example that they could live a full and extraordinary life – that their extra chromosome did not have to limit them but in fact was their superpower.

Mary was a strong, happy, and optimistic woman who positively impacted the life of everyone she met.

She accepted her friends and loved ones just as they were, with no conditions and no judgment.

Her smile could make one feel like the most important person in the world.

The Heithoffs were twice blessed when another child with Down syndrome was born into their family in 1973.

Mary loved her brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews, but she particularly doted on her little brother Joe. They had a special bond that was a joy to witness.

She attended Dr. Lee Martin Therapy Center, volunteered at Rose Kennedy School, and worked at

Vocational Development Center (VODEC).

She loved singing and dancing, Elvis and the Fonz, coloring, her dog Coco, Diet Coke, and talking with her loved ones about everything.

Mary is survived by her brothers and sisters, her nieces and nephews, and 22 great nieces and nephews.

The funeral Mass was Jan. 22 at St. Peter Catholic Church in Council Bluffs.

Memorials are suggested to SWI Educational Foundation c/o Robert Heithoff Memorial Scholarship Fund or to Bethany Lutheran Home.



Umbral Cruzado

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con la gracia de poder profundizar nuestros propios lazos como sucesores de los apóstoles.

Por supuesto, queda de más decirlo, que el momento cumbre se llevó a cabo el día anterior cuando el Obispo R. Walker Nickless de Sioux City presidió y predicó en la Misa en la cripta en el nivel inferior de la Basílica de San Pedro. Él habló emotivamente sobre la profunda revelación del amor de Pedro al

ver cómo Cristo buscaba su alma tan misericordiosamente. Y luego, después de Misa, se nos condujo hacia el apartamento papal como grupo de obispos, sacerdotes y seminaristas, en donde el Santo Padre nos dedicó dos horas y media conectándose con nosotros en una audiencia privada. Él es verdaderamente un pastor que sigue el corazón de Cristo quien se energiza con diálogos genuinos; con la ayuda de un intérprete, se mostraba determinadamente receptivo a conversaciones fraternales, en

donde mostró su sorprendente vitalidad y buen humor, y sin esquivar las preguntas difíciles sobre asuntos relacionados con la cultura de la vida, o los lamentables hechos que rodean al ex cardenal y ahora laicizado Señor McCarrick.

Hubo un par de momentos amenos como cuando le preguntamos si tiene un día libre regular, a lo que respondió, golpeándose el pecho y confesando, "Soy un pecador," quien probablemente en raras ocasiones

escurre un par de horas para relajarse y escuchar música, conversar con amigos, o dar un paseo caminando – ¡nada mal para un hombre de 83 años que tiene solamente un pulmón! Otro fue cuando hice una pregunta sobre la conexión entre Norte y Latino América en que le dije que yo antes era profesor de filosofía, a lo que contestó "¡Al fin has bajado a la tierra!" La sencilla y cálida foto que nos tomamos al partir fue en respuesta a la promesa que le hice de que mantendría mis pies,

fe y compromiso con el pueblo de la Diócesis de Des Moines firmemente fijos a nivel del suelo – lo cual, al haber "cruzado el umbral" del núcleo terrenal de nuestra fe católica y romana, es lo que – con muchas oraciones y continuos recordatorios de los demás – tengo la intención de hacer. Después de todo, ¡se lo prometí al Papa!

Ask a Priest

This month, we're featuring questions from confirmation candidates at St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs.

Q. I haven't gone to confession since my first reconciliation. Father, I still am not sure how a priest can forgive sin? Can you help me better understand?

A. Reconciliation gives us a chance to look over our lives and:

1. Be grateful for the blessings and gifts God has given us, and
2. Consider what we have failed to live up to and begin again.

I'm sure that a priest will be happy to help you since it's been a while since your first reconciliation. I should point out that God forgives sin; the priest is there to proclaim that, and also to be of help to you to follow the Lord more intentionally. The prayer of absolution contains these words: "I absolve you from your sins IN THE NAME of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Not in the priest's own name.)

Q. Why does God allow bad things to happen to people?

A. I'll bet you might someday become a philosophy teacher! Your question is one that people have struggled with since the beginning of time. The Old Testament book of Job is a reflection on a good person who falls on very bad luck. Check it out. A Jewish Rabbi, named Harold Kushner, wrote a book entitled "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." It's a good meditation on some of life's mysteries. There

are some things that we just can't figure out.

Q. Can you stop being a priest if you want to?

A. The Church has a process called "laicization." If a priest no longer wants to serve as a priest, he can apply to be laicized. This means that he is returned to the lay state rather than the clerical state.

Q. Are you proud to be a priest?

A. Yes.

Q. If you are a priest, do you always have to work at a church or can you be a priest in other ways?

A. Priests serve the Church in many different ways. Some are teachers; some are chaplains at hospitals or in the military; some serve in diocesan offices; some are missionaries. But almost always, in churches or chapels, they celebrate the sacraments in addition to their main ministry.

Q. Did you ever not believe in God?

A. Not really. I've had times in my life when God seemed distant and hard to reach. What I've come to realize is that I can't know everything. One big help for me is meditating on the ways that Jesus taught and healed. Check out the gospels, which are filled with them.

Got a question for "Ask a Priest" and its author, Father John Ludwig? Send it to: communications@dmdiocese.org.

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March 8th, 9th, 10th
2020

St. Anthony Catholic Church - Parish Hall
5:30PM - 8:00PM
Mass, Dinner & Program
See full schedule online

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Video Presentations by:

LENTEN FISH FRY

SS John and Paul Parish
1401 First Ave. S, Altoona
Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus

Time: 4:30-7:00 p.m.
Cost: \$10 for adults; \$5 for children (ages 6-12); free for children 5 and under.
Menu: Fried and baked fish, baked potato, potato salad, green beans, mac & cheese, cheese pizza. Four shrimp on a stick is available for \$4 more. Take out and drive-thru are available. There will also be a youth desert table.

Pilgrimage to Germany and Austria
Presented by Collins Travel and Pilgrimages

Act fast - just a few spots left! Space limited to 20 people!

Hosted by Father Andrew Windschitl pastor of St. Mary /Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart in the Diocese of Des Moines... ..and Jason Collins, founder of Collins Travel and member of St. Francis Parish, West DesMoines Fourth Degree, Knights of Columbus

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Trip includes daily Mass, confession, time for shopping & relaxation!

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Around the Diocese

Feb. 23 Sunday

Spaghetti & Meatball Dinner
CHURCHVILLE – Annual all-you-can-eat Italian spaghetti and meatball dinner in the Churchville Assumption Shrine Hall, two miles northwest of Martensdale, from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Cost is \$8/adults, \$3/children ages 5-10. There will also be a silent auction.

Feb. 25 Tuesday

Catholic Widows and Widowers
WEST DES MOINES -- Business meeting at 2 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church. For more information contact Judy LaRonde at 515-988-7791.

March 1 Sunday

Country Style Breakfast
INDIANOLA – The Knights of Columbus will host a breakfast fundraiser at the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Hall from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. featuring pancakes, egg bake, sausage, ham, hash browns, biscuits and gravy. \$5/adults and carry-outs, \$3/children. Proceeds go to the scholarship fund.

March 8 Sunday

Lenten Taizé Prayer Service
WEST DES MOINES – Taizé will be held 7-8 p.m. in the St. Francis of Assisi church sanctuary. Details at saintfran.cischurch.org or 515-440-1030 or lenten-taize-prayer.eventbrite.com.

March 15 Sunday

Fried Chicken Dinner
NORWALK – St. John the Apostle Parish is hosting a fried chicken dinner from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults, \$5/children ages 6-12 and free for children age 5 and under.

March 20, 27, April 3 Fridays

Widowed, Divorced, or Separated?
DES MOINES – Beginning Experience® is a program intended for those suffering the loss of a spouse through death, divorce or separation. Open house is 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Augustin Church. Questions? Contact Father Bob Schoemann at 515-418-1938, Daryl Stahl at 515-480-6617, or Dana Reed at 515-975-3745.

Catholic Daughters raffle

COUNCIL BLUFFS – All six Fridays of Lent, Feb. 28-April 3, the Catholic Daughters Court St. Anthony #330 annual Lenten raffle will be at two fish fry locations: St. Patrick and Corpus Christi, both in Council Bluffs. Both dinners run 4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. Main raffle item at both sites is a 14" ASUS Chromebook, along with several other prizes. Separate ticket collection boxes for each item. \$1/ticket or 6/\$5.

March 27-29

Friday-Sunday Library Book Sale
DES MOINES – Christ the King Parish library book sale is March 27, 4-7 p.m.; March 28, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; and March 29 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

March 28 Saturday

Bishop Dingman Peace Award
DES MOINES -- Catholic Peace Ministry's 25th annual Bishop Dingman Peace Award event will be at Holy Trinity Church. Food and fellowship in the parish hall at 6 p.m., speaker and award program in the sanctuary at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50. Scholarships are available. This year's peace award recipient is Carla Dawson and the keynote speaker is Johnny Zokovitch, executive director of Pax Christi USA. For more information or to reserve tickets, call Patti McKee at 515-803-1152 or email catholicpeaceministry@gmail.com.

March 28 Saturday

DCCW Conference
ATLANTIC – The 91st annual Des Moines Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW) conference will be at Ss Peter and Paul Parish Hall. All women are invited. Keynote speaker is Barbara Heil. Bishop William Joensen will be our celebrant at Mass. Registration at 8 a.m.; conference begins at 9 a.m.; event ends at 3 p.m. There is a \$25 fee due by March 18 which includes continental breakfast and lunch. More information go to the website: desmoinesdccw.org or contact Carolyn Smith at 712-527-4206 or Connie Sampers at 712-623-2369.

July 18 Saturday

Ignatian Retreat Day
DES MOINES – The 5th annual Ignatian retreat day with Jesuit Father Bob Dufford will be at St. Mary of Nazareth Catholic Church from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Registration will begin at 8:15 a.m. The cost is \$50 (scholarships are available). For more information and to register visit the Emmaus House website: theemmaushouse.org/ignatian-retreat-day or contact Kevin O'Donnell at 515-282-4839, kevin@theemmaushouse.org.

Lenten Fish Fry Calendar

The following are parish Lenten fish fry dinners on Fridays during Lent, Feb. 28 to April 3 except where otherwise noted.

Adair, St. John

Served on March 6, 20 and April 3 from 5-7 p.m. Free-will offering. Alternate: shrimp.

Adel, St. John

Served on Feb. 28, March 6, 27 and April 3 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$8/adults; \$5/children; \$25/family living in same house. Alternate: grilled cheese. Dessert bar is available for a free-will offering.

Altoona, Ss. John and Paul

Served from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults; \$5/children (ages 6-12); free/children ages 5 and under. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza. Take out and drive-through are available.

Ankeny, Our Lady's Immaculate Heart

Served on March 6, 20 and April 3 from 5-7 p.m. Free-will offering.

Ankeny, St. Luke the Evangelist

Served on March 27 from 5:30-7 p.m.

Atlantic, Ss. Peter and Paul

Served from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults; \$5/children (ages 6-12); free/children ages 5 and under. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza. Take out and drive-through available.

Audubon, St. Patrick/Exira, Holy Trinity

Served from 5-7:30 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults; \$5/children (ages 5-10); free/children ages 5 and under.

Carlisle, St. Elizabeth Seton

Served on March 6 and 20, and April 3 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults and \$5/children under age 12. Alternate: mac and cheese.

Chariton, Sacred Heart

Served from 5-6:45 p.m. Cost is \$9/adults and children ages 6-17; free/children age 5 and under. Alternate: fish tacos, pasta w/marinara.

Council Bluffs, Corpus Christi

Served from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$11. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza

Elkhart, St. Mary-Holy Cross

Served on Feb. 28, March 13 and 27 from 5-7 p.m. Free-will offering.

Glenwood, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$9/adults; \$3/children. Alternate: mac and cheese.

Granger, Assumption

Served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is free-will donation. Alternate: homemade veggie or cheese pizza.

Greenfield, St. John

Shrimp boil on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 6:30 p.m. Cost is a \$20/person or \$150/table of 8.

Hamburg, St. Mary

Served on April 3 from 5-7:30 p.m. Cost is free-will donation. Alternate: mac and cheese.

Harlan, St. Michael

Served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults; \$5/children ages 4-10; free/children under age 3; \$35/parents and dependent children. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwiches. Carryout is available.

Indianola, St. Thomas Aquinas

Served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults; \$5/children ages 6-12; free/children under age 5. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwiches. Carryout is available.

Logan, St. Anne

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$9/adults, \$8/seniors age 60+, \$5/children ages 5-12; free/children age 4 and under. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwich.

Neola, St. Patrick

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$9/adults, \$4/children ages 5-10; free/children under age 5. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwich

Missouri Valley, St. Patrick

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$8, \$4/children. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza, salad bar, peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Norwalk, St. John the Apostle

Served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$8/adults, \$6/seniors, \$3/children age 12 and under. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza.

Osceola, St. Bernard

Served from 5:30-7 p.m. in the school. Cost is \$9/adults; \$5/children ages 4-13; free/children under age 4; \$30/family. Alternate: grilled cheese, mac and cheese.

Perry, St. Patrick

Served from 5-7 p.m. in the school. Cost is \$8/adults; \$4.50/children ages 10 and under; \$25 for family with children. Alternate: fish tacos; shrimp for an additional \$2.

Red Oak, St. Mary

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$8/adults (ages 12+); \$4/children ages 5-11; free/children under age 5. Alternate: mac and cheese

St. Boniface, Waukee

Served from 5-7 p.m. Stations of the Cross at 5:45 p.m. Cost is \$10. Alternate: spaghetti, cheese pizza.

Des Moines Area

All Saints

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$9/adults, \$4/children ages 6-12; \$5/children under age 6; Alternate: grilled cheese sandwich, mac and cheese.

Basilica of St. John

Served from 4:45-6:45 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults, \$3/children ages 4-10; free/children age 3 and under; Alternate: egg rolls, Spanish rice, mac and cheese.

Christ the King

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults, \$5/children (only includes cheese pizza); Alternate: cheese pizza.

Sacred Heart, West Des Moines

Served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults (ages 11+), \$5/children ages 3-10; free/children under age 3; \$40/family. Alternate: cheese pizza and fish tacos.

St. Anthony

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults, \$5/children.

St. Augustin

Served on March 27 and April 3 from 5-7:30 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults & teens, free/children age 12 and under; \$40/family. Alternate: taco & salsa bar, mac & cheese, grilled cheese sandwiches, cheese quesadillas.

St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines

Served from 5:30-7:15 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults (ages 13+), \$5/children ages 6-12; free/children under age 6. Alternate: cheese pizza and mac & cheese. Scouts will host a dessert fundraiser (priced a la carte).

St. Joseph

Served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$9/adults, \$7/children ages 6-12; free/children under age 6; \$40/immediate family. Alternate: tuna noodle casserole, mac and cheese.

St. Mary of Nazareth

Served from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults; \$9/seniors age 60 and older; \$5/children under age 12. Alternate: mac and cheese.

St. Theresa

Served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is free will offering. Alternate: Fish tacos, veggie and cheese pizzas, mac and cheese and assorted home baked desserts.

Lunch on Fridays

St. Ambrose Cathedral

Served from noon-1 p.m. in the parish hall. Cost is \$5. Menu: fish sandwich, chips, fruit, water.

Reconciliation opportunities

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Recognizing and repenting for one's own sins and errors is difficult, but essential, Pope Francis said.

“To understand (one's) sin is a gift from God, it is the work of the Holy Spirit” who helps each person realize “the evil I have done or that I may do,” the pope said Feb. 12 during his weekly general audience.

The following is a list of communal reconciliation services in the Des Moines metro area. Contact your local parish for individual reconciliation times.

March 3

St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines at 7 p.m.

March 8

Immaculate Conception, St. Marys at 9 a.m.
All Saints, Des Moines at 2 p.m.

March 9

Our Lady's Immaculate Heart, Ankeny at 7 p.m.

March 10

Holy Trinity, Des Moines at 7 p.m.

March 22

St. Boniface, Waukee at 1 p.m.

March 24

St. Joseph, Des Moines at 6:30 p.m.

March 25

Assumption, Granger at 6:30 p.m.
St. Theresa Church of the Child Jesus, Des Moines at 7 p.m.

March 26

St. Pius X, Urbandale at 7 p.m.
Ss. John and Paul, Altoona at 7 p.m.

March 28

Basilica of St. John, Des Moines at 10 a.m.

March 29

St. John the Apostle, Norwalk at 1 a.m.
St. Mary, Elkhart at 1 p.m.
St. Mary of Nazareth, Des Moines at 3 p.m.

March 31

St. Luke the Evangelist, Ankeny at 6:30 p.m.
Sacred Heart, West Des Moines at 7 p.m.

April 1

St. Augustin, Des Moines at 6 p.m.
Individual reconciliation times at St. Ambrose Cathedral, which serves parishioners and downtown Des Moines workers, are as follows.
• Saturdays: Feb. 29, March 7, 14, 21, 28 and April 4 — 2:30-3:30 p.m.
• Tuesdays of Lent, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, and April 7, 11-11:30 a.m.
• Wednesdays of Lent March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8, 11 a.m.-noon and after the 12:10 p.m. Mass

Christ the King expands daily Mass and confession times

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

To better meet the needs of the community, Christ the King Parish changed its daily Mass and confession schedule.

The parish now offers daily Mass five days a week – Monday through Friday at 5:30 p.m., said the pastor, Father PJ McManus.

Previously, the most well-attended Masses were at 5:30 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays. Their one morning Mass – 8:40 a.m. Wednesdays – typically had low attendance, fewer than 30 people.

“So it seemed pretty obvious what we ought to do,” said Father McManus, who serves the parish alongside associate pastor Father George Komo. Hispanic chaplain Father Jose Reynaldo also serves the parish part-time.

“Daily Mass is the heartbeat of a parish,” Father McManus said. “While the bulk of our people live week-to-week on the Sunday Eucharist, the Church itself comes together every day so that ‘from the rising of the sun unto its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.’

“Having Mass available daily, and having Mass available in as convenient a way as reasonably possible for the largest number of people, is a serious obligation on the part of the Church,” he continued. “Of course, the lo-

cal Church is more than just my parish, which is why I consulted with other pastors before making the change.”

People are responding positively to the expansion.

“Attendance is up at all the Masses,” Father McManus said. “I would say we average around 80 people. Some nights more, some nights less.”

The parish has also been flooded with people attending confession.

“We keep getting more and more business for confession,” he said. “So the two [time periods offered previously] were Tuesday night at 6 p.m. and then Saturday morning. We would habitually be hearing confessions for three hours Tuesday night and four hours Saturday morning.”

The parish expanded, offering the sacrament every evening at 6 p.m. after Mass Monday through Friday.

“If you build it, they will come,” Father McManus said. “It’s a good hour and a half of confession every night.”

The parish also offers confession Saturday evenings at 4 p.m. before their 5 o’clock Mass and again on Sundays at 4:30 p.m. after the Spanish Mass.

Attendance at the adoration chapel has also been up.

“We wanted to draw a clear connection between Mass celebrated as a whole and the adoration chapel,” Father McManus said. “So at the end of the



Photo by Kelly Mescher Collins

Father PJ McManus is pastor of Christ the King Parish.

3:15 p.m. Mass every Sunday, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the church. The remnants from that Mass are exposed and it’s put out for about an hour before benediction.

“On Saturday, about an hour before Mass, the sacraments are brought out of the chapel and put in the church for an hour of adoration,” he continued. “And so what happens in the chapel is just an extension of what happens at Mass.”

The response to the new schedule has been positive.

“People really like the idea of having Mass and confession every day,” Father McManus said, noting that he likes the idea of planning strategically with

neighboring parishes to best meet the needs of the people.

Parishioner Carlos Arreola Duran enjoys the new schedule.

“Whenever I go to Mass, I end up going to confession, even if I went the day before,” Duran said. “I feel at home whenever I go there.”

Diane Stringer said she attends Mass as often as possible.

“I’m really happy and grateful to have all the 5:30 Masses,” Stringer said. “It’s really great for those of us in the workforce that can’t go to morning Mass, and so this is like a dream come true.”

Debbie Mathis was born and raised at Christ the King. She

New schedule:

Confession
Monday - Friday
6 - 7 p.m.

Saturday:
4 - 4:45 p.m.

Sunday:
4:15 - 5 p.m.

Mass
Monday, Tuesday
5:30 p.m.

Wednesday - Friday
8:40 a.m., 5:30 p.m.

Saturday - 5 p.m.

Sunday - 7:30 a.m.
9 a.m., 11 a.m.,
3:15 p.m. Spanish

First Friday - 7 p.m.

and her husband, Mike, remain parishioners there, despite their 10 years living in Ankeny. The pair typically attend Mass at least five times a week.

“My husband and I are very fortunate in many, many respects of our lives,” Mathis said. “And we just feel it’s a wonderful way to give thanks to God.”



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\$ -	\$ 6,500.00
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When you Do itemize on your tax return:	
To Any Charity*	To CTO
\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
\$ 3,200.00	\$ 1,120.00
\$ 1,000.00	\$ 6,500.00
\$ 4,200.00	\$ 7,620.00
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PLEDGE TODAY www.CTOIowa.org or call (515) 237-5010... Fulfill Your Pledge by December 15, 2020

Shepherding the Faithful

Support is critical for priests of diocese

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Contributions to the Annual Diocesan Appeal are used to support active and retired members of the clergy.

The Diocese of Des Moines pays 100 percent of the health care premiums for all active and retired priests – an expense of more than \$700,000 per year. About half of the \$700,000 comes from the Diocesan Priests' Medical Endowment Fund and the remainder of the expense is covered by the ADA.

An additional \$60,000 is set aside for the Priests Pension Fund from the ADA. The Priests Pension Fund supports the financial needs of 34 retired priests and two retired bishops of the diocese.

Retired priest Monsignor Ed Hurley, who serves as vicar of finance for the Diocese of Des Moines, said it's extremely important to support our retired priests.

"These guys work 50 years serving our faith community and they deserve to retire and have their needs taken care of

– part of the deal is offering a pension to them," he said.

Many people may not realize our retired priests continue to serve, despite their "retired" status, he added.

"We really rely on our retired priests for help with coverage," Monsignor Hurley said. "Most of them are pretty darn busy doing coverage. If you're halfway healthy, you're busy. The parishes still rely on you for help."

Father Larry Hoffmann, co-vicar for retired priests, said the retired priests' current way of life would not be possible without the generous support of the people of the Diocese of Des Moines. Priests would be in financial trouble without the assistance of the ADA and other generous donors.

"Without help with the cost of healthcare and without the pension, Social Security wouldn't begin to cover the costs of hardly any of those things," he said.

"The retired priests are



Father Ed Hurley

very appreciative and thankful for the ADA so they can care for themselves well into their retirement and not become a burden in other ways," Father Hoffmann said.

Most people work for many years to enjoy the last few in the comfort of retirement. In the case of our priests, they work until they are 70 if their

health remains good.

Please prayerfully consider a gift to the ADA to support our priests in active and retired ministry today. A growing number of aging priests in our diocese require additional funding to ensure the Priests Pension Fund and Priests' Medical Endowment Fund can meet the full need into the future. Please also prayerfully consider a bequest or beneficiary designation for one or both of these funds.



Give online at
dmdiocese.org/giving



Father Ken Gross and Father Bob Schoemann enjoy retirement while helping parishes and various ministries.

Helping People in Need

Catholic Charities earmarks ADA funds for operation costs not covered by grants

Catholic Charities, with the valuable assistance of the Annual Diocesan Appeal, helped 25,000 people in 2019 through its mission of empowering individuals and strengthening families.

Catholic Charities serves our most vulnerable neighbors in their time of greatest need. It is through the generosity of others that Catholic Charities can provide this help.

Forty-eight percent of Catholic Charities funding comes from individuals and matching company dollars.

Catholic Charities has five programs covering a wide range of services. They provide care and advocacy for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence, professional counseling, shelter, food, refugee resettlement, and more.

"In all of the diocese's 23 counties, we are either providing direct support or working with very generous people who want to offer donations to those in need," said Dr. Barbara Decker, executive director of Catholic Charities in the Des Moines diocese.

Grants and donations are often earmarked for specific outreach efforts. With this fundraising going to direct client service, how does Catholic Charities pay for the administrative costs associated with offering these services?

This is where the Diocese of Des Moines comes in. With a gift from the ADA, Catholic Charities receives funds that can be directly applied to opera-

tions.

"The Annual Diocesan Appeal makes a difference in covering those costs that aren't otherwise covered by specific grant program funding," said Deb Powers, development director for Catholic Charities.

The diocese was the largest individual donor to Catholic Charities last fiscal year. The funding provided about 7.2 percent of the Catholic Charities' annual budget.

"In the future, we hope to leverage this funding for matching dollars in our grant requests," Powers said. "By supporting the Annual Diocesan Appeal, we can have a hand in supporting the ministry of Catholic Charities to those who need our help."



A long line stretches around the shelves of food at the Catholic Charities outreach center in Des Moines. Gifts to the Annual Diocesan Appeal help those served by Catholic Charities.

Your contribution to the Annual Diocesan Appeal makes an impact!

<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">ENCOUNTERING CHRIST</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">ministries that bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">11,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">children encounter Christ in parish faith formation</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">35,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">households receive the Good News in The Catholic Mirror</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">17</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Catholic Schools with professional training, supervision and oversight</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">THIS IS YOUR FAITH IN ACTION</p>
<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">ministries that open the door for people to receive God's mercy</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">400</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">engaged couples undergoing marriage preparation</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">1,533</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Confirmands sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">1,761</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">new members of the faith through Baptism</p>	
<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">25,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">individuals served by Catholic Charities</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">175</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">refugees resettled as members of the Body of Christ</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$115,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">in local flood relief grants</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">4</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Catholic hospitals offering Mass, Communion and Anointing of the Sick</p>	

Encountering Christ

Youngest among us are contributing to the ADA

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When Father Chris Hartshorn encouraged his congregation to give to the annual diocesan appeal at Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines last fall, even the smallest of ears were listening.

Jill Kinnison was at Mass that day with her 10-year-old daughter, Amanda, who was keenly attuned to his message.

“I went into the pitch about the appeal and all of the areas it impacts – vocations, health care for priests, Catholic Charities and helping those in need,” Father Hartshorn said. “We can’t do it ourselves and we need to support the diocese and Catholic Charities to do what we do.”

Hearing that a portion of the funds collected through the ADA went to Catholic Charities, which supports some of the most vulnerable in our diocese, prompted Amanda to act.

She donated her own \$5 to help.

“Amanda was listening to his messages and decided that’s what she wanted to do,” Jill said. “She wanted to help whoever it could.”

Her good deed did not go unnoticed. In fact, she received a letter of gratitude from Bishop William Joensen.

“Your donation will help your parish and me tell the people of southwest Iowa about Jesus!” Bishop Joensen wrote. “Thank you for acting as a good steward of the gifts God has given you and for recognizing them at your young age of ten. God takes delight in you!”

“My prayer is that you continue to learn about your faith and share it with others through acts of charity and service. You are meant to be a saint, Amanda, and your parents, school teachers, and pastor will help you become one,” Bishop Joensen continued in his letter.

“The saints in heaven, especially our Blessed Mother, Mary, will also help you, and I encourage you to pray to them often. I look forward to when I can join you in celebrating the

sacrament of confirmation at Sacred Heart in just a few years,” Bishop Joensen concluded.

The entire Kinnison family was excited about the personal note from Bishop Joensen.

“We felt like it was a big honor that she received the letter and we actually showed it to grandparents, too,” Jill said.

The letter from our bishop meant “a lot – because I’m on the path to being a saint,” Amanda said.

“I liked it,” Amanda added. “It felt good.”

Father Hartshorn said he’s constantly amazed by the generosity of others – including the youngest of donors.

“When you present the need and the solid case of what we need and why we need it, [I’m amazed] at how generous people are,” Father Hartshorn said. “And it’s beautiful that a young person responded in that way. It’s a beautiful sign for all of us and what we are called to do as disciples of Jesus.”



Ten-year old Amanda Kinnison of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines received a letter of gratitude from Bishop William Joensen for her ADA donation.

Supporting Local Communities of Faith

St. Patrick in Council Bluffs surpasses ADA goals

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs recently surpassed its goals for the Annual Diocesan Appeal, leaving the parish with an unexpected windfall of \$12,000.

The money will be used to help pay down the loan on the construction of a new church.

“This is kind of ‘unexpected’ money that we would not necessarily expect to be receiving anyway,” said Darin Hecker, the parish manager. “I also think that our parishioners appreciate the pay-down of the building loan.”

Matt Gronstal, chair of the finance council, said the new church has been extremely positive for the St. Patrick community.

“Our new church is a beautiful new worship site with plenty of parking and a wonderful parish hall,” he continued. “It

also includes classroom spaces and meeting rooms. We have positioned St. Patrick’s Parish to be able to thrive for decades to come.”

Parish support has always been high, but this year was exceptional.

“I believe the ADA was successful due to the strong momentum created when we moved to our new church building,” Gronstal added. “Our membership has seen a strong increase and we now have approximately 1,000 families.”

Parishioners have embraced the quick and convenient online giving option, Hecker added.

Gronstal also credits the strong leadership of Father Glen Wilwerding and now Father James Ahenkora.

The outpouring of support for the ADA is extremely positive, Hecker added.

“I think that this is good

news for our St. Patrick community, because it shows how deeply our parishioners are committed to their Catholic faith,” Hecker continued. “I think it also shows how much our parishioners appreciate what the Diocese of Des Moines does for us and how much value they provide our parish.”

The parish was regularly encouraged to give to the ADA, which assists in educating our seminarians, caring for our retired priests as well as assisting those in need.

“I am certain that the weekly announcements and encouragement from our priests help with the donations,” Hecker said.

Parishioners also know and expect the ADA appeal each year, and plan their donations accordingly, Hecker added.

“I think that our parish is so successful every year because they do understand what the diocese does for our parish,” Hecker



St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs recently had a \$12,000 surplus after surpassing its ADA goal. The parish has used the money to pay down the construction loan on a new worship center.

said. “It truly amazes and inspires me how, even with the commitment that our parishioners have made to our capital campaign,

they still dig deep into their pockets and continue to support the ADA.”

36

deacons and candidates with medical and retirement income

19

parishes with US Citizenship and immigration services

112

deacons and candidates with training, education and support

52

active priests with medical insurance provided exclusively by the Diocese

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supporting our faith leaders

1,000

employees and volunteers undergo screening and background checks to ensure a safe environment for our children

765

employees with managed benefit plans

80

parishes with ministry and administrative services

40,000

Hispanic Catholics with outreach and ministry needs

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

supporting parishes/organizations



Visit dmdiocese.org/giving for more information on the ADA and charitable giving.

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Bishop William Joensen celebrated Catholic Schools Week Mass at St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.



Photo by Chelsea Krstel

St. Joseph middle school students packed food at Meals from the Heartland as a service project during Catholic Schools Week. They are: Michael Thacker, Richelle Dolores, Grace Meeves, Abby Flaherty, Denise Sanchez, Addison Schaefer, Melissa Marin, Kaelynn Jay, Karla Contreras.



Photo by Kelly Mescher Collins

Bishop Joensen receives the gifts from Ally Anderson, Erin Kleppe and teacher Nick Spike during the Catholic Schools Week Mass at Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines.



Photo by Kelly Mescher Collins

Bishop Joensen and Superintendent of Schools Donna Bishop (far right) congratulated Catholic teachers and administrators with milestone anniversaries, including this group celebrating 35 years. They are Maureen Dempsey of Sacred Heart; Becky Johnson of Christ the King; Jane Brown of St. Augustin and Maureen Casey of St. Augustin.

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John & Mark Parrish, parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi

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Bishop prays for mutual respect, the common good during legislative invocation



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Bishop William Joensen offered the opening prayer at the Iowa House and Senate on Feb. 11. The four bishops of Iowa, through the Iowa Catholic Conference, gathered at the statehouse to talk with legislators.

Update on proposed legislation

**By Tom Chapman
Contributing Writer**

There is a blizzard of subcommittee and committee meetings taking place at the State Capitol as legislators rush to push through their bills.

This Friday, Feb. 21, is the first legislative deadline where non-budget or tax-related bills must be passed out of committee to avoid being set aside.

One positive we've noticed this session is the comeback of bills sponsored by members of both parties. They have been nearly non-existent during the past decade, but this year we've seen bipartisan bills related to mobile home regulation and a tax exemption for food banks.

PROTECT LIFE AMENDMENT

The "Protect Life" constitutional amendment to clarify that Iowa's constitution does not contain a right to abortion, Senate Joint Resolution 2001, passed the Senate on Thursday by a party-line vote of 32-18. The amendment does not ban any abortion.

The House version of the amendment, House Study Bill 577, passed the House Judiciary Committee on Feb. 12. Opponents have requested that a public hearing on the bill take place before a House vote. We'll keep you posted.

OTHER INITIATIVES TO HELP THOSE ON THE MARGINS

As mentioned earlier, bipartisan bills have been introduced (Senate File 2238 and House File 2351) to address protections for mobile home residents. They don't have the same rights that other renters do. These bills were crafted to address recent situations where out of state companies bought up mobile home parks and drastically increased the rent on the lots. Many residents faced eviction.

A subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee is scheduled to meet this afternoon (Monday) to consider their bill. Key parts of the legislation require that landlords must have "legitimate grounds" for eviction

and must give six months' notice for rate increases. The ICC will be working in support of the bills.

House Joint Resolution 14, supported by the Iowa Catholic Conference, would amend the Iowa Constitution to restore voting rights of Iowans with felony convictions.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Several bills supported by the ICC passed out of subcommittee last week. The Iowa Religious Freedom Restoration Act, Senate File 508 passed out of subcommittee last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE STATE CAPITOL

- Feb. 25 from 8 a.m. to noon, Anti-Hunger Day at the Capitol
- Feb 25 Refugee Day On The Hill
- March 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Iowa Prayer Rally for Life

Tom Chapman is the executive director of the Iowa Catholic Conference.

Bishop William Joensen offered the following prayer before legislators on Feb. 11.

Creative, compassionate God:

You bring order and abundance out of chaos.

You speak your Word to us, who bears wisdom, healing, freedom, and renewed hope for those who seek justice and the way of peace together.

Stir your Spirit and release your grace from the heavens upon this assembly of legislators.

May they embrace the charge extended to them by the people of Iowa with humility, integrity, and zeal for the common good.

May they use words to reveal truth, rather than conceal it.

May they engender mutual respect to the extent that they can ardently disagree, yet not dismiss or denigrate their colleagues or opponents.

May the rule of law and the intentions of this State's and this Nation's founders be a yoke they wear worthily, aided by your inspiration and steadfast assistance.

May we enjoy good humor so that we take our duties, and not ourselves, seriously.

And at the end of the day, may we entrust all that are able to achieve and all that remains to be completed to your Divine Providence, so that we may take your blessings home with us for reflection and rest, abiding with you who are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, always and forever. Amen.



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Sunday, April 19th

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Parishes share ideas for bringing people closer to Jesus

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

There once was a parish council that gathered in a circle after every meeting to pray the Our Father.

Instead of facing in, though, they face outward while holding hands and praying.

"Now doesn't that sound hokey? So '70s, right? But what were they saying about themselves?" asked Tom Quinlan, the new director of the St. Joseph Educational Center. "They were saying to themselves, 'We are not about ourselves. We are not insular. We are not going to be an enclave.'"

"There's nothing about the gospel that says, 'Go forth and become a closed system,'" he added. "It's open, so this idea is that our mission is to the whole world, not to ourselves."

Quinlan used this example as he encouraged parish staff and leadership at a recent workshop to help those in parishes and outside parishes build a personal relationship with God. For those who have such a relationship, they could deepen it.

"There should be conversion" and not just involvement in a parish, he said. "No one is outside the reach of conversion."

Quinlan is on a mission to persuade leadership to pursue pastoral renewal and evangelization.

The Feb. 11 workshop for parish leaders, which will be repeated on April 30 at All Saints Parish in Des Moines, was one step toward his goal. Another is reviving a formation program through Creighton University for future parish leadership.

Quinlan arrived in Des Moines last summer, and brings years of parish and diocesan leadership to the metro area parishes he serves. He also brings stories he's picked up from around the country that illustrate the need for ongoing conversion and faith growth.

In San Diego last month, he asked faith leaders what they needed from parents.

Involvement, they said.

"I said, 'How about conversion?' We often think of involvement. We act as if that's the end goal: They come to Mass and sign up for ministries," he

told about 50 people at the workshop. "But if our parents are involved and there isn't much underneath to stand on, it's seed sown in thin soil."

"I really do think our goal needs to be recalibrated. If we rethink involvement to conversion and then involvement, it will be more deeper and more meaningful," he said.

Then he posed this question: "Do people believe their way into belonging or belong their way into believing?"

"The answer," he said, "is 'Yes. Both.' There are many doors to the kingdom of God." There are people who are persuaded by the Catholic system of thought and doctors of the Church.

"Now, I think more people tend to come through relationships, through their heart," he continued. "Sometimes it's through a spouse. Sometimes a neighbor. Often, it's relationship that wins people over to the good



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Tom Quinlan, executive director of the St. Joseph Educational Center in West Des Moines, is encouraging parishes to share what's working in their communities to foster deeper growth in faith.

news of Jesus."

The responsibility of evangelizing belongs to everyone, he said. A step toward finding creative ways to foster conversion is to take advantage of workshops and opportunities to get out of parish silos to see what's working

well in other communities.

For information on the second parish leadership workshop on renewal and evangelization, or the Certificate in Theology and Ministry cosponsored by SJEC and Creighton University, contact sjeciowa.org.

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Chaplain puts trust in God's providence

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

One afternoon, Father Augustin Clement Owusu, a former pastor and spiritual director in Ghana, received a call from his bishop asking for his email address.

The next day, the Diocese of Des Moines sent him information that would start the ball rolling on immigration paperwork so that he could be a missionary to St. Albert School in Council Bluffs.

"I had no idea where I was going. It's my first time in the United States. But I trust God's providence," he said.

He arrived last Sept. 21 and since then has served as a

chaplain, celebrating Mass and reconciliation, offering spiritual advice and being a presence among the students. He can be found eating lunch with students, joining in a choir rehearsal, and helping during sports practices in the gym.

"Father Clement's pastoral care is present in how much he prays for our students," said Katie Grudle, director of Mission and Student Life at St. Albert School. "I have witnessed him deep in prayer at school and on the Kairos retreat. He is also a kind individual who cares for our students whether he is inviting students to daily Mass, helping with lunch, or watching a wrestling match. Plus, his laugh is infectious!"

Father Clement grew



Father Augustin Clement Owusu joined St. Albert Catholic School last year. It's his first time in the United States.

up in a strong Catholic home. His parents and grandparents are

Catholic. He has three cousins in the seminary and a cousin who was ordained a priest in 2010.

"We grew up around the holy rosary. We attended holy Mass every day," he said.

An international priest serving his childhood parish inspired Father Clement and sparked in him an interest in a vocation to the priesthood.

"He served the people so well. He had the people at heart," said Father Clement.

"When I grew up, I was so fascinated by him: his selflessness, his commitment to God's people, and the love he showed. So, I desired to be like him. I left my family and comfort to be with the people of God," said Father Clement.

After ordination in 2011, Father served as an associate pastor for one year and a pastor for

three years before being assigned to a Marian grotto, where people go for retreats and spiritual direction as they seek the face of God. He served the retreat center for three years before being assigned to the Diocese of Des Moines.

Here, he found a small community of priests from his home country who also are missionary priests: Father Dominic Assim, of Assumption Parish in Granger; Father Samuel Danso, of Sacred Heart in Chariton, St. Francis in Corydon and St. Brendan in Leon; Father Francis Amoako, a chaplain at Mercy Medical Center; Father Raphael Assamah, of St. Mary in Shenandoah and St. Mary in Hamburg; Father James Ahenkora, of St. Patrick in Council Bluffs; and Father Philip Yaw Bempong, of St. John in Greenfield and St. Patrick in Massena.

National group of African priests, religious women coming to Des Moines in July for support, learning

African priests and religious women who are serving Catholics across the United States will gather in Des Moines July 22-25 for mutual support and to learn from each other.

Formed in 2004 by the U.S. bishops, the African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States supports the missionary priests and religious women who come to the United States to serve or study.

"International priests serving in the diocese gain pastoral experience in a setting somewhat different from their prior experience and provide significant assistance to the diocese in meeting the needs of the faithful," according to the Des Moines diocesan quinquennial report issued last year.

Conference president Father Alphonsus Enelichi invites all Catholics of the Des Moines diocese to come to the closing Mass July 24. All

are invited to see the richness of several African cultures expressed in the liturgy. Originally of Nigeria, Father Enelichi is a member of the Missionary Society of St. Paul and serves in the Diocese of Great Falls, Montana.

He estimates about 200 will come from every corner of the United States for the convention.

Locally, there are 19 priests of the 71 in active ministry in the Des Moines Diocese who were born in Africa. Another, Father Felix Onuora, retired in central Iowa.

Locally, there are seven religious women from Africa serving in the Des Moines diocese. They serve at St. Gregory Retreat Center in Adair and MercyOne in Des Moines.

For more information on ACCCRUS, go to ACCCRUS.org.

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Happy New Year!



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Bishop William Joensen celebrated the Vietnamese New Year, also known as Tet, with St. Peter Vietnamese Catholic Community in Des Moines on Jan. 26. He was invited by Father Ly Chu to take a scroll, which had a biblical verse intended to guide him through the new year.

International news briefs

Hong Kong diocese cancels Masses to prevent spread of virus

HONG KONG (CNS) -- The threat of spreading the coronavirus has forced Catholic officials in Hong Kong to suspend all church programs Feb. 15-28, including Sunday Masses and the Ash Wednesday liturgy that marks the beginning of Lent.

Ucanews.com reported Cardinal John Tong, apostolic administrator of Hong Kong, said the “disappointing” decision had been made “because the next two weeks will be a crucial time to suppress the epidemic.”

“Some church members may be disappointed” with the diocesan move, the cardinal said in his Feb. 13 pastoral letter. “This is not an easy decision.”

The move comes amid global fears that

the epidemic, now called COVID-19, has worsened in China against the prediction of experts. It has claimed more than 1,300 lives, with more than 60,000 confirmed cases as of Feb. 13, mostly in China.

Hong Kong, which has open borders with China, has reported 50 confirmed cases and one death. The densely populated Hong Kong city-state of 7.4 million people is on high alert to check the virus, as thousands have crossed over from mainland China to avoid the infection, ucanews.com reported.

“At this difficult time,” Catholics must “deepen our trust in God and implement our Christian love for our neighbors and all people,” the cardinal’s message said.

Pope: Knights’ generous help counters culture of indifference

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis praised the Knights of Columbus for their charitable efforts and thanked them especially for helping Christians in the Middle East.

“I thank all the members of your order for seeing in our persecuted and displaced brothers and sisters of that region neighbors, for whom you are a sign of God’s infinite love,” he said in an address Feb. 10 to members of this fraternal service organization.

A delegation led by Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson and including the organization’s board of directors was in Rome to celebrate the 100th anniversary of their active presence in Rome.

The Knights of Columbus was founded in the United States almost 140 years ago, and Pope Benedict XV asked if it could also work with and

assist young people in Rome following World War I.

By opening educational and aid centers in the city, “your order proved faithful to the vision of your founder, Venerable (Father) Michael McGivney, who was inspired by the principles of Christian charity and fraternity to assist those most in need,” Pope Francis said.

The pope recognized the Knights’ ongoing work of “evangelical charity and fraternity in a variety of fields,” particularly “your faithful witness to the sacredness and dignity of human life, evident at both the local and national levels.”

That commitment to protect life has also led the Knights to provide both material and spiritual aid to “Christian communities in the Middle East that are suffering the effects of violence, war and poverty.”

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Pope calls for action on horrors in Amazon

**By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Like so many of Pope Francis’ teachings and major documents, his apostolic exhortation on the Amazon is built on a call for conversion – a new way of seeing, thinking and doing.

“We need to feel outrage,” he wrote, underlining his concern that the world has become too indifferent, too numb or too much in denial about what is happening to the environment, the world and the people in it.

In his apostolic exhortation “Querida Amazonia” (Be-

loved Amazonia), Pope Francis urged people to recognize how much injustice and cruelty has taken place in the Amazon region, and he pleaded for attention to “current forms of human exploitation, abuse and killing.”

Following in the footsteps of “Laudato Si’,” his 2015 encyclical on the environment, the pope said people must approach the Amazon aware that “everything is connected,” which means that care for people and care for ecosystems are inseparable.

In the document, released Feb. 12, he called on political leaders and governments in the Amazon region to take more

seriously their responsibility to preserve the environment and resources and to protect the rights and cultures of all its citizens.

An unusual suggestion Pope Francis made in the document was that people turn to poetry and delve into Amazonian stories to discover how unique the region is and to feel more deeply its importance.

“Those poets, contemplatives and prophets help free us from the technocratic and consumerist paradigm that destroys nature and robs us of a truly dignified existence,” he said.

Poetry helps give voice to beauty and to pain, he said, and it should help wake people up to what is under threat.

Reflection is needed to bring about the true conversion needed to hear and respond to the cry of the region’s people and the cry of the earth, he said. “From the original peoples, we can learn to contemplate the Amazon region and not simply analyze it, and thus appreciate this precious mystery that transcends us.”

“We can love it, not simply use it, with the result that love can awaken a deep and sincere interest,” he wrote. “Even more, we can feel intimately a part of it and not only defend it; then the Amazon region will once more become like a mother to us.”



CNS photo/ Ricardo Moraes, Reuters

A wooden cross is seen in front of a Catholic church as a fire burns a tract of the Amazon jungle being cleared by loggers and farmers near Porto Velho, Brazil, on Aug. 27, 2019. The Vatican released Pope Francis’ post-synodal apostolic exhortation “Querida Amazonia” (Beloved Amazonia) on Feb. 12.

The key to all of Pope Francis’ appeals in the document is to not “look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings.”

“A sound and sustainable

ecology, one capable of bringing about change, will not develop unless people are changed, unless they are encouraged to opt for another style of life, one less greedy and more serene, more respectful and less anxious, more fraternal,” he said.



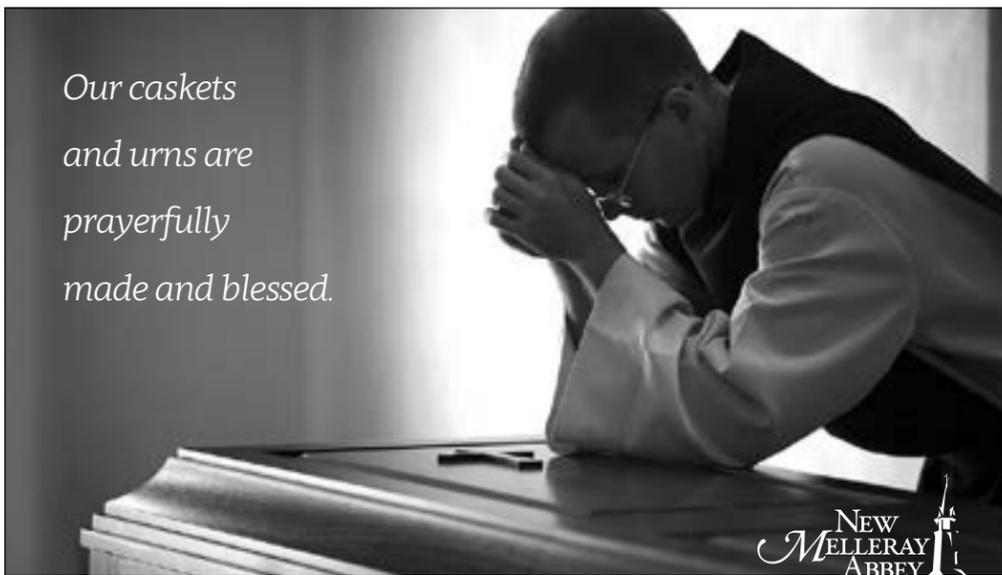
CNS photo/ Paulo Santos, Reuters

Catholic pilgrims travel in a boat during an annual river procession and pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Conception along Brazil’s Caraparu River in Santa Izabel do Para, in the Amazon jungle on Dec. 8, 2012.

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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