Baking thousands of pies to support parish

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs has been selling pies to raise funds for six years, and each year the pie-making operation expands. In the past two years, the bakers have made and sold (or donated) more than 1,000 pies during each Thanksgiving season.

Parishioner Margaret Morse had been coordinating pie baking for the Thanksgiving community dinner when a new idea occurred. Morse teamed up with fellow parishioner Eileen O’Connor: “I said to Eileen, ‘You know, as much as people like pies, I bet we could sell some and make some money for the Church.’”

At that time, the parish was just starting to think about building the new worship center where it now resides. Money from the first pie sales helped build St. Patrick’s new church building, which was completed in May of 2018. The sale continues to be a major contribution to the parish.

Over 900 pounds of flour and butter makes pies, builds community in Council Bluffs

Continued on page 6

Back to School

Schools preparing for social distancing, safety and sanitation as students, teachers return to classrooms

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When teachers and students left their classrooms in March, they never imagined five months would pass before they would be together again.

What seemed unimaginable back then is now a new way of living, learning and functioning in the classroom for teachers, staff, students and parents due to COVID-19.

A comprehensive plan was created for the 16 Catholic schools in southwest Iowa in anticipation of the return to school, said Donna Bishop, diocesan superintendent of schools.

The plan was created through weekly meetings with all of our building administrators in conjunction with each school’s building leadership team members that consisted of faculty, staff, parents, board members and the diocesan medical team, Bishop said. “We decided as a group which procedures would be diocesan wide and which would be established by schools individually.”

Many parents are relieved their children will be back in school five days a week, Bishop said.

“Well, our families are extremely appreciative of the quality distance learning we provided in the spring and are very thankful that we are opening our doors for five days a week with onsite learning this fall,” Bishop said. “Many of our schools are seeing an enrollment spike.”

Many parents are relieved their children will be back in school five days a week, Bishop said.

“We really feel like being transparent about what is happening and what’s going to happen is important,” Hade said.

All diocesan Catholic schools will also offer an online option for families not ready to send their children back to the classroom.

Continued on page 8

Christ Our Life offers in-person and online tickets

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

For the first time ever, the Christ Our Life Conference is offering two ticket options for the biennial event: in-person or online.

Response to this new option has been positive, said conference founders and co-chairs Marilyn Lane and Ellen Miller.

“Our marketing people took a survey and found out 52 percent were still intending to go in person and 47 percent planned to livestream,” said Lane, of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines. “The rest were undecided.”

“We’re so grateful we can give them both,” added Miller, of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola.

“With livestream, we can go all over the world…to give people the beautiful encounter,” Lane said.

The conference will be Sept. 26-27 at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. The Catholic event will include its mainstays of daily Mass, confession, Eucharistic adoration, speakers and vendors.

With all of the turmoil in 2020, people are thirsting for a positive message.

“I think there’s going to be an underlying theme from all speakers about the incredible hope that is with us at all times,” Lane said. “And to trust in Jesus and rely on him and he will get us through this.”

Though this will be Bishop William Joensen’s first Christ Our Life Conference, he is confident it will touch hearts and bring people closer to Jesus.

“I speak as one who has not experienced increased enrollment.”

“We finished the year at 178 students and currently we have 233 registered,” said Misty Hade, principal at St. Luke. “We believe the uptick of enrollment is because we are providing the five-day option, where the public school is set to do a hybrid.”

Safety packs for families, which includes two face shields and a mask “so they feel comfortable with everything we have in place,” Hade said.

St. Luke also offers a forum for parents to ask questions.

“Christ Our Life Conference, he is confident it will touch hearts and bring people closer to Jesus. With livestream, we can go all over the world…to give people the beautiful encounter,” Lane said. “And to trust in Jesus and rely on him and he will get us through this.”

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Continued on page 10

Over 900 pounds of flour and butter makes pies, builds community in Council Bluffs

Continued on page 10
Father James Ahenhork of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs shared with me that while on retreat recently in Schuyler, Nebraska, he sat by the side of the pond to play his guitar and—lo and behold—a school of fish swimming up to the shoreline, drawn by his beautiful music.

I can’t remember from my zoology days how fish might “hear,” but maybe they felt the pleasant vibrations coursing through the water—or maybe they simply spotted Father James and have been boating previous retreating that they had a chance of gaining breadcrumbs thrown on the water.

Father James does enlist his guitar as part of his preaching at Mass and in his larger priestly ministry. I recall being struck by one of my former students and seminarians who shared that while in public school, one of his teachers was able to express their gifts and let the music already alive in their hearts and minds flourish. “Our “fast” from liturgical music for the sake of the health and well-being of the Body of Christ is truly a sacrifice for many, and there might introduce a sour note or two into the Spirit-led song God instilled in us when we were baptized.

But, as with many of the challenges we face these days to discern what God is doing and why he has allowed so many stum-bling blocks tobefall us (can we say together, “dercho?”), we have to be careful so we don’t lose the capacity to hear and see the Divine Musician beckoning to us. We risk amplifying our own wills, our own demands, our own diaphragm to an extent that we drown out the more subtle melody—the whisper, even—of God’s overtures toward us. We don’t want to be like the folks about whom Jesus exclaimed, “To what shall I compare this gen-eration? (no mere breadcrumbs!), tolerating companions who dined on the next step they might take unawares?

But instead of being awakened by the Spirit that here was someone who might greet him, who longed to know and serve Jesus more deeply. Nor only someone needed someone who was not afraid to “go there.”

It was a beautiful mo-ment to witness this morning the profession of perpetual vows by one of my former students and spiritual directees, Father Juma-leen and now Sister Elisha Glayd, a Religious Sister of Mercy.

This form of becoming Catholic farm girl has had an interesting path to arrive at the altar: a math education major turned skilled student for books, working as a writer for a while in Iowa City, she found niches of space and time to simply sit by the Blessed Sacrament (no mere breadcrumbs for her!), weathering roommates and the occasional discordant note from her family, falling in and out of love, and yet fearlessly allowing Jesus to catch her heart and her spirit toward and within the Mercy community in various apostolates, including now a Catholic school principal and teacher in Colorado.

My privilege for a de-cade or so as her director was to walk with her through the beautiful mo-ment for me to witness this month her life’s testimony for me to be careful so we don’t lose the capacity to hear and see the Divine Musician beckoning to us. We risk amplifying our own wills, our own demands, our own diaphragm to an extent that we drown out the more subtle melody—the whisper, even—of God’s overtures toward us. We don’t want to be like the folks about whom Jesus exclaimed, “To what shall I compare this generation? (no mere breadcrumbs!), tolerating companions who dined on the note of God’s grace has been doing in their lives, how the people and parishioners they encountered this sum-mer and earlier in their vocational discernment have helped propel them into the ordained priesthood? God seems to be affirming. I was struck by one of my new seminar-ists who shared that while in public school, one of his teach-ers sensed in him an openness to matters of faith, and who began to reflect it to others, especially in marketplaces and call to one an-other. ‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn’ (Mt. 11:16).

We are not musi-cally gifted or not, each of us can source an openness of heart for others, reach out, return, listen, and resonate with what’s audible to us. This is how the millenium’s young people—‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn’ (Mt. 11:16).”

By Bishop William Joensen

**Tocando para los Peces**

El Padre James Ahenkora de la Parroquia de St. Patrick en Council Bluffs me dijo que re-cientemente mientras estaba en un retiro en Schuyler, Nebraska, se sentó al lado del lago para tocar su guitarra y—¡oh! una escuela de peces se acercó nadando a la orilla atráídos por su bella música. No puedo recordar de mis días como zoólogo cómo los peces pueden “oír” pero probablemente sintieron las vibraciones placenteras mientras viajaban por el agua. También recordaba que el Padre James y sabían en base a las visitas de otros asistentes a los retiros a lo que era una oportunidad viva de les arrojar algunas migajas de pan a la orilla.

El Padre James no inc-umiere su guitarra como parte de su predicación ni en su ministerio sac-erdal en general. La música hace más calmar a la bestia salvaje; tiene la capacidad de habitarnos al corazón, moldear nuestro ánimo y resonar con lo que ya está sucedien-do en nuestras almas. La música nos puede llevar hacia la voluntad que tiene Dios de sostenernos y salvarnos.

Dadas nuestras medidas de moderación por el COVID-19, estamos cantando mucho menos en la Misa en estos días. Los minis-tros de música se sienten par-ticularmente frustrados ya que no les permite expresar sus dones y dejar salir la música que tienen viva en sus mentes y en sus cora-zones. Nuestro “ayuno” de música limítiga a favor de la salud y el bienestar de los fieles y de Cristo es verdaderamente un sacrificio para muchos y puede ser considerado como una nota amarga en la can-ción, que inspirada por el Espíritu, coloco Dios en nosotros cuando fuimos bautizados.

Pero, al igual que con muchos de los retos que enfrenta-mos en estos días para discernir so-bre lo que realmente quiere Dios en su Arte, necesitamos hacer más y tocarles una nota a cada uno de nuestros 19 seminaristas de acuerdo con lo que ha sido enseñado y lo que ha sido permitido que tengamos tantas barreras en nuestro cam-ino. (¿Podemos decir juntos ‘dercho’?), debemos tener cuidado para que no perdamos la habilidad de escuchar y ver al Divino Música-co enviándonos sus señales. Corre-mos el riesgo de incrementar nuestras propias victorias, nos olvidamos de nuestras propias demandas, nuestras propias insatisfecciones de modo que nos olvidamos de la salvación pos-sit – o el suspiro, quizás – de las harmonías que Dios nos enviemos. No queremos ser como las personas a quién Jesús exclamó, ‘¿Qué es este cantar a la prisa!  ¿Con qué puedo comparar a esta generación? Son como niños sentados en la plaz-a que se quejan unos de otros. Tus tocamos la flauta y ustedes no bailado; cantan cantos canónicos y no han querido llenar’ (Mt. 11:16-17).

Ya que estamos tendiendo dones musicales, cada uno de nosotros puede tocar una nota, ser una voz que opine o que ali-en-ta a los demás, que les ayuda a acercarse más a Cristo. A través de nuestra presencia y de nuestro acompañamiento con los demás, esta armonía que está en el corazón de Dios está inyectando ya en sus corazones, permitiéndonos descub-rir el camino justo que deberíamos tomar para tomar en la vida, a darse cuenta de su deseo profundo de profundizar y decidir su camino para seguir en su vía. No podemos ser instrumen-tos para revelar el llamado vocacional de la Iglesia y en el mundo.

La oportunidad de viajar individual-men-te a cada uno de nuestros 19 seminaristas para escuchar qué ha estado haciendo la gracia de Dios en ellos en sus vidas, cómo les ha ayudado-da las personas y los miembros de las parroquias en las que han estado este verano, así como aquellos con quienes se han encontrado desde el principio, que les den un foco al impulsarse en el camino rum-bo al sacerdocio al que Dios parece llamado. Me sorprendió ver a algunos de nuestros nuevos seminaristas qui-en me comparte qué mientras estu-diaba en una preparatoria públi-co, uno de sus maestros percibio en él su apertura a los asuntos de la fe y con quien inició una conti-nuación de reflexiones, aprender de la Iglesia y sobre lo que es más importante en la vida. El maestro que sirve de escucha, quien a la vez lo escucha, y quien a su vez el le dio testimonio por medio de su propia sensibilidad ante el Espíritu de que había alguien que podría escuchar, cuyo deseo de conocer y servir a Jesús más profundamente solamente necesitaba a alguien que no tuviera miedo de decirle “sígueme adelante.”

Fue un hermoso momen-to para que después de todo este mes, la profesión de voto perpetuo de una de mis ex-alambradas en nuestro noviciado, quien llevaba el nombre de Kathleen pero ahora se llama Hermana Mary Elisha Glayd, una Hermana Religiosa de la Misericordia en Alma, Michigan. Esta muchachita campesina exresiden-te del sur de Minnesota tuvo un camino interesante que le llevó al altar: una licenciatura en edu-ca-ción de matemáticas luego editó libros de ciencias en una edi-torial en Iowa City, que encontraba que no era lo correcto, decidió ser simplemente sentarse ante el Santi-simo Sacramento (¡no solamente contemplación!) y después de una larga y de residencia y la nota ocasional de su familia, buscando suerte en relaciones sentimentales, decidió intentar algo nuevo tras el año que Jesús la cortejara durante vari- os años hacia la comunidad de la Misericordia en varios apostolados y ahora como directora y maestra de una escuela católica en Colora-do.

El privilegio que tuve por aproximadamente una década, como maestra en el escuchar y reflexionar con ella lo que yo escuchaba, en alguna medida, fue ver cómo se desarrolló su camino llegando los espacios de conversa-ción con una nota o dos al cual se escuchó en una ocasión y después de uno y otro, en el encuentro de la escucha. Y así, al comprender la necesidad de llevar el escuchar y reflexionar con ella lo que yo escuchaba, en alguna medida, fue ver cómo se desarrolló su camino.
Support our seminarians

Thanks to the seminarian fund appeal I was able to follow God’s call without the added anxiety of a lack of finances. I am so grateful for the monetary support I’ve received, which has allowed me to focus more on prayer and pastoral service for the people of God. I look forward to laying down the rest of my life for the Church in the great Diocese of Des Moines.”

—Deacon Reed Flood

The fall of 2020 brings students and educators back to school including 19 seminarians. Discernment of a priestly vocation is a commitment of deep prayer and financial support on the part of the entire faith community and each seminarian.

An annual seminarian collection began in mid-September supports support from the Annual Diocesan Appeal and the endowed seminarian fund at the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa. This year, more than $250,000 is needed to send seminarians to school.

Funds are used to cover the tuition, room, and board, and a small monthly stipend for the pre-theologians and theologians.

The college seminarians are expected to help pay for some of their tuition, but the diocese provides a grant each year to get their tuition down to what it would cost to attend a state school. With scholarships and loans the men are able to graduate with little debt.

God’s heart tugging prompts volunteers to prepare disabled children for sacraments

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

It was providential that a ministry for children with disabilities would be offered at Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, said friends and parishioners Lisa Milbrath and Donna Conn.

As usual, they were both at Mass one typical Saturday evening. Both families always arrived 30 minutes early for prayer, reflection and conversation.

Milbrath turned around and asked Conn: “Do you know if anything’s been done for special needs kids?”

Coincidentally, Conn had just ordered materials on sacramental preparation for special needs children to learn more about the ministry. She had felt promptings from the Holy Spirit to do more. Milbrath had experienced those same promptings.

“The Lord has laid it on my heart that something needs to be done for these kids,” Milbrath said, noting her compassion for this group, as her own daughter has autism.

That conversation and God’s tugging on each of their hearts got the ball rolling.

“These kids are children of God and they understand more than what we think they do,” Conn said. “And they deserve it.”

Their ministry began small and simple with first reconciliation and first communion preparation. They made the announcement to the parish last year and three children came forward with their families.

“It was very positive because [my daughter Abigail] found out she wasn’t the only one dealing with issues, and so she really took to the class,” said mother Jayne Zitek. “She had a really fun time with the other kids there.”

The volunteers were patient with the children – a positive affirmation for both the children and parents.

“The parents were so excited about their child being able to receive communion and reconciliation,” Conn said.

Father Tom Thakadiparam, the pastor, said he was happy Conn, Milbrath and other volunteers came forward.

“It was a great joy to do confession for these children, as their innocence and readiness to turn their hearts to God with full freedom to be loved and forgiven,“ Father Thakadiparam said. “Their spontaneous excitement and freedom to be loved and forgiven was very evident. The caring ministers and parents made all the difference.”

Support our seminarian collection at parishes the weekend of Sept.12-13. Gifts noted for the collection can be made directly to the diocese or placed in your parish collection basket. Gifts may also be made online at dmdioce.org/giving.
Border shutdown delays priest’s return

After borders close in Ghana, priest thankful to be back in Granger after nearly four months

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When a group of seven parishioners left for Ghana March 4 with their pastor, Father Dominic Assim of Assumption Parish in Granger, they were excited.

The group would be visiting a well in a small village for the local Catholic school. The well was completed last year and funded by the parish.

They also delivered medical supplies to a local hospital, brought gifts of clothing, soccer balls, candy and more for the children at the local Catholic parish.

Assumption parishioners even got the chance to meet Father Assim’s mother and other relatives.

Though COVID-19 concerns were growing in the United States, when they left Iowa, there were no known cases in Africa.

The group departed Ghana’s capital of Accra and returned home on March 11. Father Assim would be returning to Granger one week later after spending time with family.

Unfortunately, at that same time, everything began changing rapidly in the U.S., said Anita Stahowick, the parish business manager.

“I was communicating with some family back here, but I didn’t get the text because of the internet,” Stahowick said. “It said, ‘You need to get home, because the United States is shutting everything down.’”

“I didn’t get that text until I got back into New York [and it was too late to warn Father Assim],” she added.

At nearly the same time the president of Ghana announced a COVID-19 positive case and the country’s borders were closed indefinitely.

Father Assim had to remain in his homeland and wasn’t sure when he would be able to return to his parish. The experience tested, yet strengthened, his faith.

“My prayer was, ‘God, may your will be done,’” Father Assim said.

“Every week the COVID situation was getting worse and the president kept saying the borders will remain closed until further notice,” he added, leaving him discouraged.

Parish staff were able to keep in touch with Father Assim through Zoom meetings and conference calls, but it wasn’t the same without him, Stahowick added.

“My concerns were getting him back,” she said. “He was like a lost shepherd and we were the lost sheep. Even though Father John [Ludwig] stepped in and did a wonderful job, we were without our shepherd.”

Father Assim was equally concerned about getting back to Granger to serve his people.

He was also in communication with Bishop Joensen about his situation.

“I sent him two emails and he replied to both,” Father Assim said. “His response was encouraging, assuring me that he’s praying for me and the diocese is praying for me and my safe return. I was very much grateful for that – that really strengthened me.”

Finally, on June 25, Father Assim received an email from the U.S. Embassy in Ghana that a flight would depart Ghana’s capital the next day for him and other Americans to return home.

“It was like the good news,” Father Assim said. “It was by the providence of God. When I saw that email from the U.S. Embassy, I said, ‘Wow, God, you are wonderful.’”

Because Father Assim had spent most of the spring in Ghana, the suspension of weekend Masses was lifted the weekend he returned home. He was able to celebrate his first post-COVID Mass with parishioners on July 11.

Priesthood Sunday honors our spiritual fathers

Priesthood Sunday, an annual opportunity to honor priests, is Sept. 27.

Serra Club members encourage parishioners to send cards of appreciation, notes or a spiritual bouquet to priests in thanking them for answering their vocation call and serving God’s people.

Priesthood Sunday is a nationwide event coordinated and sponsored by the U.S. Council of Serra International, an organization of lay men and women whose mission is to foster and affirm vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life in the United States.

The Diocese of Des Moines is blessed with two chapters, the Serra Club of Des Moines and the Serra Club of Council Bluffs.

Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates retires again

Des Moines Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates will be retiring again next month.

He retired last September when Bishop William Joensen was installed to lead the Diocese of Des Moines.

Just three months into retirement, Bishop Pates was called upon to serve as apostolic administrator for the Diocese of Joliet when Joliet Bishop R. Daniel Conlon went on medical leave. Last May, Bishop Conlon retired and Bishop Pates continued as apostolic administrator.

In July, Pope Francis named Archbishop of Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Ronald A. Hicks, vicar general, to serve the Joliet diocese. His installation will be Sept. 29, at which time Bishop Pates will resume enjoying retirement.

The Diocese of Joliet in Illinois serves 564,700 Catholics in a population of about 1.9 million.
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Father Seth Owusu grew up in Wassa Nananko, a village in the western region of southern Ghana. Now, he serves at St. Mary Parish in Avoca and St. Patrick Parish in Walnut.

“When I was a kid, I was very active in church, and also active in town,” he said. “My village happens to be just like Avoca here. Everybody knows everybody, and people know who you are.”

When his parish priest asked if any young men in the parish were interested in taking the entrance exam to go to seminary, there was little interest. “Nobody showed up, I didn’t show up. I didn’t care about seminary,” Father Owusu said.

“Little did I know that the church secretary then submitted my name to the parish priest, that he thought I could go to the seminary. So one day after school, I came home and instead of taking off my uniform, I followed some friends to their houses. I came back only to be told that Father was here and they were looking for me all over; they couldn’t find me,” he said.

“Father had gone to see who was ready for the entrance exams at the parish center,” he continued. “They told me, ‘Father said you have to go and take the entrance exam.’ They quickly organized some things for me, gave me transportation, and I went. We sat for the exams, interviews were conducted, and that was it. I forgot about it, until another time when I was told one afternoon that I had passed the exams and therefore I should prepare for the seminary.

“That is the story,” Father Owusu said. “Somebody thought I could go to the seminary, he informed the parish priest, they submitted my name, I sat for the exams, and I passed—that was it.”

Father Owusu marvels at how God uses other people and circumstances in our lives to guide us along his path. He was ordained Dec. 8, 2001. He has no regrets about where God has taken him.

In 2018 when Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates asked for two missionary priests from Bishop Joseph Osei-Bonsu of the Diocese of Konongo-Mampong, they sent Father Owusu and Father David Nkrumah (who is pastor at St. Patrick Parish in Audubon and Holy Trinity Parish in Exira). Although he didn’t know what to expect, Father Owusu accepted the assignment with faith: “If it is the will of God, why not?”

That is not to say Father Owusu had no misgivings about the assignment. Expressed with a measure of humor, he said, “One thing is that, as a black—an African—the only one amongst all white Americans, how was I going to survive? But the reception was very, very warm. I discovered that my parishioners are just like my people back home: very accommodating, very understanding.”

Father Owusu spoke of the need for faith and trust in God: “Faith is the greatest treasure and gift that God can give us… Stay blessed, stay safe, and keep trust in the Lord, and everything will be alright.”

Back to seminary

Nineteen men return to seminary for the fall semester


Bishop Joensen, Father Parker and the seminarians were all wearing masks during their time together, excluding the few seconds it took to take this photo.

From Africa to Avoca: Missionary priest marvels at the path God put him on

By Stanley Asjes  
Staff Writer

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From Africa to Avoca: Missionary priest marvels at the path God put him on

By Stanley Asjes  
Staff Writer

Father Seth Owusu said the people of Avoca are like the people back home: “Very accommodating, very understanding.”
Continuación de la página 1

Pies help the parish

Continuad from page 1

bution to the parish’s mortgage.

From humble begin-

nings, the fundraiser has contin-

ued to expand each year. Morse

and O’Connor were excited

about the pie press which they

were able to purchase in 2017

through generous donations.

Previously, volunteers

had been rolling and shaping

the crusts by hand, but Morse

and O’Connor explained how

they made a trip to St. Mary

in Danbury, Iowa, a parish in the

Diocese of Sioux City, which has

been making and selling pies for
decades, according to Lynn Buth,

editor of the Danbury Review.

There they learned to master

the pie press, a pneumatic device

which streamlines the otherwise
time-intensive task of rolling out

and shaping pie crusts.

Now the team is able to make a
prodigious number of pies.

Last year, they made 1,400
pies for the annual Thanksgiv-

ing sale. Patrons had to choose

among pecan, pumpkin, apple,

cherry, and French silk pies.

Preparing the ingredi-

ts, making, and selling pies on

this scale means meticulous

spreadsheet accounting. The

rows and columns convey the

immensity of the operation: “To-

tal flour: 458.46 lbs... Total but-
ter: 251.85 lbs...”

Luckily, most of the ingredients are donated, which

means no worries about making

a net profit and the price can re-

main constant.

“We’ve not changed our

price at all,” said Morse. “People

donate flour, sugar, and butter,
canned pumpkin and evaporated
milk. We get a lot of donations,

so we see no reason to increase

the price for our parishioners.”

Spreading over several
days, different teams of volun-
teers from all age groups help

with different aspects of produc-
tion, like preparing the crusts,
making the filling, folding pie

boxes and helping with countless

other tasks. The operation can

employ 25 to 30 volunteers in the
crude kitchen on any one day.

Like many parish ac-
tivities, St. Patrick had to switch
gears during their annual Fourth

of July pie sale due to the coro-
navirus, but made the transition

smoothly.

“We gave it a lot of

thought,” said O’Connor.

Social distancing called

for fewer volunteers in the kitch-

en and spreading the assembly

line out over a greater area. Stu-
dent volunteers helped to run a

drive-in service, delivering pies
directly to patrons in the park-

ing lot so they wouldn’t have to

leave their cars.

Morse and O’Con-

nor have also passed on their

pie-making wisdom to parish-

ioners at St. Francis of Assisi in

West Des Moines, and look to

help other parishes which are in-

terested in starting their own pie

fundraisers.

Besides its success as a

fundraiser, pie making at St. Pat-

rick also serves as a great com-

munity event.

“You are hard to catch

calling up with each other,” said

Morse.

O’Connor added that,

“while this is a fundraiser, I think

we all agree that it’s as much if

not more for community building

in the church. I’ve met so many

people I would have never met.”

Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court St. Anthony #330 in Council Bluffs has

newly elected officers for 2020-2022. They are (left to right): Sharon Orton of Cor-
pus Christi Parish as financial secretary; Carol Hollenbeck of Corpus Christi Parish

as regent, Layna Beer-Vice, of St. Patrick Parish as regent, Angie Shea of St. Pat-

rick Parish as recording secretary and Felicia Davidson of Corpus Christi Parish as tra-

surer.

Catholic Daughters elect new officers

Tune in to

Making it Personal with
Bishop Joensen

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102.7 FM

August 21, 2020

The Catholic Mirror

Among the Diocese

Sept. 27 Sunday
Priesthood Sunday
Serra Club members en-
courage Catholics to send cards of
appreciation, notes or a spiritual
boquet to priests in thanking them
for answering their vocation call
and serving God’s people.

Priesthood Sunday is a

nationwide event coordinated and
sponsored by the U.S. Council of
Serra International.

Sept. 20 Sunday
Chicken & Ham Dinner cancelled

LENOX -- Due to COVID-19, St. Parish. Catholic
Church has cancelled its annual
Chicken & Ham Dinner, normally
held the third Sunday in September.
Solar panels benefit the environment and the budget

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

All Saints Parish in Des Moines has recently completed its transition to using solar energy.

Mary Treanor, the business manager at All Saints, said the parish responded to a call by the diocese in 2018 for the use of renewable energies in Catholic facilities.

Instead of the conventional rooftop mounting, the solar panels were installed on the ground in order to make future roof repairs easier.

“Our only challenge was working around our septic tanks and lateral lines,” said Treanor.

The system became fully operational in May.

All Saints enlisted the services of Red Lion Renewables to plan and execute its solar installation.

The project at All Saints was spurred on both by a desire to reduce the parish’s carbon footprint (thus helping to maintain the environment), and as a money-saving measure. Since the system became fully operational in May, “our maintenance bill has been virtually zero,” said the pastor, Father Robert Harris.

The parish expects to see continued savings.

Blackbaud data security incident

The Diocese of Des Moines was recently notified by one of its third-party service providers, Blackbaud, that a data breach had occurred sometime between last Feb. 7 and May 20.

Blackbaud offers cloud-based fundraising and finance services for not-for-profit organizations.

Those responsible for the attack were able to access information belonging to several of Blackbaud’s clients, including the Diocese of Des Moines, as well as Catholic Charities, and the Catholic Tuition Organization.

Data that was accessed may have contained information such as name, mail and email address, date of birth, phone numbers, giving history, etc. for donors and vendors of the diocese, Catholic Charities or Catholic Tuition Organization.

Sensitive information that was not taken or accessed includes Social Security numbers, tax ID numbers, bank account, and credit and debit card information. Blackbaud encrypts such information for donor and vendor protection and therefore this information was part of the incident.

Blackbaud paid the ransom in order to protect customer data and mitigate potential identity theft. The Diocese of Des Moines was not asked to and did not pay any part of the ransom paid by Blackbaud.

Based on third-party investigations with law enforcement, Blackbaud does not believe any data went beyond the cybercriminal, was or will be misused, or was disseminated or will be available publicly.

The project at All Saints was spurred on both by a desire to reduce the parish’s carbon footprint (thus helping to maintain the environment), and as a money-saving measure. Since the system became fully operational in May, “our maintenance bill has been virtually zero,” said the pastor, Father Robert Harris.

The parish expects to see continued savings.

Gov. Reynolds returns right to vote to felons

Gov. Kim Reynolds signed an executive order Aug. 5 returning the right to vote for many people who have committed felonies and served their prison sentence. Those convicted of homicide are not included. While returning citizens still are obligated to pay restitution, full payment of the obligation is not required to be able to vote.

“We appreciate Gov. Reynolds issuing the executive order,” said Tom Chapman, executive director of the Iowa Catholic Conference. “Our Catholic tradition supports the community’s right to establish and enforce laws that protect people and advance the common good. But our faith also teaches us that both victims and offenders have a God-given dignity that calls for justice and restoration, not only punishment.”

Iowa is the only state that by law permanently strips people with a felony conviction of their right to vote. The Iowa Catholic Conference continues to support a state constitutional amendment to end lifetime disenfranchisement in Iowa.

Caring About Your Loss and Sharing In your Faith

Prayer to St. Joseph for a Happy Death

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

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### Diocesanwide Catholic school guidelines and protocols

**Changes to improve the overall safety and well-being of students and staff:**
- Limit access to school buildings and campuses to students, staff, authorized guests and volunteers.
- Limit shared objects and materials used at schools.
- Prohibit use of drinking fountains (except for refilling stations).
- Encourage students and staff to bring water in reusable containers.
- Send water bottles home daily for cleaning.
- Keep student belongings separated.
- Cancel all student field trips and travel until further notice.
- Follow lunch food program safety guidelines.
- Review and monitor re-opening plans throughout the year.

**New daily cleaning protocols:**
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the school buildings.
- Clean and disinfect the schools.
- Use EPA approved cleaning and disinfecting products and equipment.

**Healthy hygiene practices:**
- Enable students and staff to regularly wash hands and use hand sanitizer.
- Ensure personal health and safety through handwashing, avoiding contact with one’s eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Make available hand sanitizer throughout the schools.

**Protective equipment to stop the spread of COVID-19 while protecting students and teachers:**
- Students and staff will wear face coverings when entering/exiting the building and when maneuvering in the hallways (e.g. the bathroom). Face coverings are particularly helpful when physical distancing is not feasible.
- Proper wear and use of face coverings will be taught and reinforced by classroom teachers.

**To the extent possible, physical distancing will be practiced in the classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, on the playground during recess/lunch and during drop off/pick up.** The following measures will be taken:
- Teach physical distancing practices.
- Maximize space between student desks as much as possible.
- Reduce extra items from the classroom to allow for more space.
- Avoid congestion when students use restrooms.
- stagger recess/lunch and designating play areas by grade.
- Reduce hallway traffic during traffic periods.
- Limit direct contact during drop-off and pick-up procedures.
- Promote physical distancing in the office area.

**Other measures implemented:**
- Minimize sharing materials and supplies.
- Require materials stay with students or in their classroom.
- stagger release times from classrooms to reduce the number of students in the hallway at any given time.
- Encourage social distancing protocols during recess.

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### Hand sanitizer distributed to Catholic schools

Nearly 170 gallons of hand sanitizer made at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women at Mitchellville were distributed to Catholic schools and parishes in the Des Moines diocese.

### Back to School

Desks spaced six feet apart at St. Malachy Catholic School in Creston.

**Continued from page 1**

room.

The number of positive cases and community spread of COVID-19 will be re-evaluated every two weeks by the Diocese of Des Moines.

Ann Andersen, principal of Shelby County Catholic School in Harlan, said their small class sizes allow them to spread desks out at least six feet apart. They are busy planning for sanitation, safety and social distancing. Plexiglass will also be installed in some parts of the school where social distancing is difficult.

“Most [parents] really want their kids in school,” Andersen said. “I’ve had a couple that were concerned about their kids wearing masks, and you just reassure them.”

Jennifer Simmons, principal at St. Malachy Catholic School in Creston, said they will also address the social and emotional needs of their students.

“We need to address that first,” Simmons said.

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### St. Albert seeking new executive director

St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs is looking for a new executive director.

Deacon Vernon Dobelmann served as the school’s executive director under a new administrative structure created through a strategic plan to strengthen the school. After one year, he has decided to spend more time with his family out West.

“Deacon Vernon Dobelmann brought energy and enthusiasm to the newly created executive director position at St. Albert last year,” said Bishop William Joensen to the school community.

“As he steps down from this role, we want to thank him for his dedication and perseverance.

“Under his leadership, the unique cradle-to-college school stabilized enrollment and staff retention, strengthened and deepened the faith formation program and began a capital campaign,” said Bishop Joensen. “We are grateful for all that he has accomplished in his short time with the Diocese of Des Moines and wish him well as he moves to be closer to his extended family, and to wherever the Spirit leads.”

A search has begun for his successor.

For more information on the position or to submit an application, email diocesan Schools Superintendent Donna Bishop at dhsbishop@dmdiocese.org.

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### Follow Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Des Moines on Facebook at Facebook.com/dmdioceeschools/

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When classes across the diocese moved online during the quarantine, Bella Benson thrived, doing well in the new digital style of at-home learning, said her mother, Leanne.

Bella, a sixth grader at Christ the King Catholic School in Des Moines, did so well, in fact, that she often found herself looking for things to do when her schoolwork was complete.

“By 10 a.m. she had nothing else to do,” Leanne said.

After doing some research, Leanne discovered many Ivy League schools were offering free online classes, and told Bella it could fill the time and keep her learning. What she didn’t expect, however, was for Bella to pick Introduction to American Law through the University of Pennsylvania as her choice.

Though taken aback at first by the level of course difficulty, Leanne helped her get going.

“She registered and we got her signed up,” she said. “It was an 8-week online course and she did it …watching online classes and doing homework online.”

Bella said she was inspired to take the course after reading the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and was drawn to the character Atticus, a lawyer.

“I feel like I got a better understanding of law and all of the different types,” Bella said. “I did enjoy it.”

She also expected it to be harder than it was – she earned a 100 percent on her final exam and a final grade of 91 percent.

Leanne admits she had reservations about Bella’s class choice.

“To be honest, I was doubtful Bella would be able to understand the level of education taught,” Leanne said. “Bella thrives in her studies, but I was nervous she could fail. Bad mom moment! She definitely proved me wrong.”

Patrick Benson, Bella’s father, said “I knew she could do it. I’m so proud of her.”

The entire experience taught Bella life lessons beyond an introduction to American law.

“I learned to have faith in myself, even when others don’t believe in me,” she said. “I learned that college can be at your own pace and you need to keep yourself accountable to complete the homework and stay on track. This is something I learned in *The Leader in Me* at Christ the King School. I also learned how to be proactive with unexpected time on my hands.”

Bella will be a seventh grader at Christ the King this fall.

Bella Benson, of Christ the King Catholic School in Des Moines, completed an online law class through the University of Pennsylvania this spring as a sixth grader. She earned 100 percent on her final exam.
Christ Our Life Conference
Sept. 26-27
Tickets: $25 for adults, $15 for college-age students and younger.
Attend in-person at Wells Fargo Arena or livestream the event
Purchase tickets for in-person or online at christourlifeiowa.com/tickets/
See full schedule at ChristOurLifeIowa.org
Masks will be required in all common spaces, including building entrances and exits, adoration, confession, restrooms, concession stands, exhibitor booths and anywhere on the concourse.

Christ Our Life Conference
Continued from page 1

was teaching, seminarians and parishioners from northeast Iowa were inspired and activated in their faith,” Bishop Joensen said. “They found the talks and major liturgies and the chance for individual confession to be beautiful and often a transformative source of grace for them in their lives, and so I look forward to witnessing that firsthand this year.”

Bishop Joensen encourages the faithful to find a way to participate.

“People have to prayerfully discern what is the best mode of participation – livesreaming or on-site attendance,” he continued. “I think God will touch them wherever they are, but we must give God the opportunity by turning our hearts and faces and attention towards him.”

Father Donald Calloway, one of the keynote speakers and author of 14 books, including Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father, is planning to speak about the role the saint can play in our lives.

An uplifting conference such as this is needed in today’s trying times, Father Calloway said.

“God has not given up on us,” he added. “It might seem like that, but he’s given us an extraordinary grace right now. The church is coming to such a greater awareness right now in seeing the importance of St. Joseph, and I think that has been saved for our times. St. Joseph has always been loved, but in the background. And with the stuff going on in the world, we’re really giving a lot of emphasis to him – and I think it’s about hope.”

Local Iowa Catholic Radio personality Jon Leonetti has been an emcee since the event’s inception in 2010. He’s seen the tremendous impact of this event.

“Lives are changed by this conference,” Leonetti said. “I’ve seen it firsthand in the lives of family and friends. With that being said, these are different times indeed, and the organizers understand that the message of hope and love through Jesus and his church are needed now more than ever. So in a particular way, my hope is that those who attend or stream this conference will walk away with a renewed confidence in the presence of God in their lives.”

This year Leonetti, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, will also give one of the keynotes about the saints.

“I like to think of their example as the street lamps that illuminate the path we are called to walk on towards Jesus,” Leonetti said.

Tickets are $25 for the entire weekend for adults and $15 for college-age students and younger. Priests, religious, and deacons may attend free of charge. Order tickets at christourlifeiowa.com/tickets. View the full conference schedule at ChristOurLifeIowa.org.

Christ Our Life safety measures

After rigorous discussions with various leaders, including Bishop William Joensen and Wells Fargo Arena, the 2020 Christ Our Life Conference is proceeding with a number of safety measures in light of COVID-19.

Precautions range from reducing arena attendance by more than half the typical number to livestreaming as a new ticket choice, from thorough cleaning to mandating that masks be worn in all common areas.

Wells Fargo Arena protocols include:

• Deep disinfection of the entire event center daily.
• Disinfection of seats prior to Saturday’s events and again for Sunday.
• Train staff on disinfection and safety equipment.
• Use EPA-approved disinfectant for COVID-19 and many other pathogens.
• Use electrostatic sprayers for 360 coverage on touch point surfaces.
• Pre-and post-event disinfection of surfaces includes door handles, furniture, restroom fixtures and dispensers, elevator buttons, escalator rails, handrails.
• Constant disinfection of touch points during event.
• Elevator operators will wear masks and gloves and be the only ones to touch the elevator buttons.
• Sanitation stations will be located at entries, elevators, escalator landings, docks, restrooms, and auxiliary spaces.
• Less lobby and foyer furnishing to comply with social distancing standards.
• Building air filters’ replacement.
• Event set-up built in accordance with CDC and social distancing guidelines.

Additional steps that COL will take:

• Limit in-person capacity to 3,500, about half the typical number of attendees
• All seats will be socially distanced.
• Add more entryway ticket screeners to allow easier, social distanced access into the arena.
• Require all attendees, vendors and vendors to wear masks in common areas, such as when entering or exiting the building, while in adoration or confession, and anywhere on the concourse, such as visiting exhibitors, restrooms, concession stands, etc.
• Livestream the event (same price as in-person ticket) so people may attend from the safety of their homes.
• Limit music compared to other years.
• Use safety precautions regarding lines for and receiving the Holy Eucharist.
• Space exhibitors farther apart from previous years.
• Offer ongoing prayers throughout the planning and holding of the event.

Save the Date
Iowa Catholic Radio’s Fall 2020 Care-A-Thon
Live on Air September 28 - October 2
Your support helps us connect people to Christ through the airwaves.
Support our Care-A-Thon by calling 515-223-1150 or by going to IowaCatholicRadio.com/donate

Christ Our Life
Special Content

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Consejo sobre Asistencia de Víctimas
El Consejo sobre Asistencia de Víctimas es un empleado de Polk County Victim Services. Ella ayuda a víctimas de abuso sexual por parte del clero durante el proceso de la queja y buscando servicios de apoyo y consejería. Pueden comunicarse al 515-286-2028 o en advocate@dmdiocese.org.
Sister Feehan, who served throughout the diocese, dies after 65 years in religious life

Sister Lucille Feehan (Mary Robert), 83, died Tuesday, Aug. 4, at Bishop Drumm Care Center in Johnston.

Mary Lucille Feehan was born Feb. 5, 1937, in Melrose, Iowa. She entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1955 and professed vows in 1958.

Sister Lucille served as a cook at Ottumwa Heights College, a domestic worker at Our Lady of Lourdes convent, Bethesda and at St. Vincent Home, Davenport, where she also cared for children.

In the Diocese of Des Moines, she served as a secretary for St. Pius X School in Urbandale and St. Albert School in Council Bluffs. She returned to domestic service at St. Patrick Parish in Imogene and St. Anthony convent in Des Moines.

She is remembered fondly for her love of sewing, her generosity, and her Irish humor. Admittedly, her laughter got her into trouble from time to time. Reflecting on the ups and downs of religious life, Sister Lucille declared that “it takes both the thorn and the blossom to make a beautiful rose.”

A funeral service was held at St. Patrick Parish in Melrose on Aug. 12. Burial was at Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Melrose. Memorials may be made to the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. Condolences to the family may be left online at tharphpc.com.

Longtime Shelby County educator dies

School Sister of St. Francis Leta Heese (Alexandra), who lived her religious vocation as an educator and administrator, died on July 31 at Sacred Heart in Milwaukee.

Sister was 94 years old. She was one of many vocations to have come from Shelby County.

She was born on July 9, 1926, in Earling. She received into the School Sisters of St. Francis on June 13, 1945; made her first profession of vows in 1947; and made final (perpetual) vows in 1953.

In the Diocese of Des Moines, she ministered as a principal and teacher at her home parish, at St. Joseph School in Earlham, from 1969 to 1981. She also served as a dietary technician at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines.

Sister retired in 1999 to care for her mother.

Sister Feehan was received into the School Sisters of St. Francis Community, with whom she shared her life for 75 years. A private funeral liturgy was held at St. Joseph Convent Chapel in Milwaukee. Interment was at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Incarnate Word Academy (St. Louis, Missouri), a college-preparatory secondary school for young women, challenges young women of faith to achieve their God-given potential as academically successful Women of the Word, following the example of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, by promoting human dignity, thereby empowering themselves and others to make a positive impact on the world.

Position Summary: Incarnate Word Academy is seeking a President for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond who can provide visionary leadership, overall direction and administration of the schools operation, consistent with the school’s mission statement and the charism of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, the sponsoring entity of the Academy.

Minimal Requirements

- Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.
- Master’s degree or above is desired.

Application Deadline: September 10, 2020

For further information see: www.iwacademy.org/PresidentSearch

Interested candidates should submit cover and resume via email to iwasearch@iwacademy.org
what is God, he is himself the only one who defines who he is. He is always to be known as ‘I Am’.

If we do not know who we are through him in this way, but attempt to define ourselves, then we could be headed toward that dreaded term called narcissism. “Oh, look at me! Who I am!”

Yikes! Perhaps we have heard statements such as “Oh, that person is so narcissistic!” or “You know, we all have a little bit of narcissism inside.”

Let’s be careful with this term. It does identify a psychological personality disorder, but so rarely is it used correctly. Let’s define ourselves, then we could be headed toward the very deity of God himself as the great I Am. Scripture is quite clear that it is not wise to try to dethrone the creator of the universe. Of course, we can see what or, should I say “who” is lacking in this wisdom. Narcissism itself strives to be the center of its own universe, not offering the self over for praiseworthy acts but seeks the worthiness of others’ praise. When we search for our identity through the world’s wisdom or riches, Christ tells us that this is actually when we become more like the one who finds his will lose his life for Christ’s sake will find it” (Mt. 10:39).

Jesus was teaching a lesson in spiritual living that took psychology a couple of centuries to identify, narcissism. If we look at narcissism through the eyes of science only, our sight of recovery will be limited. When seeing it through the lens of Jesus, we will see hope. The I Am always tells us who we are. He is the author of life and death. Through humility we find him; through humility we find ourselves.

We are admonished to not falsely represent ourselves through deeds or the presentation of who we are. It is known that this commandment is intended to guard against overt lying and perjury, but a grandiose sense of self-importance or self-proclamation. It is not a cognitive decision to become a person, but rather it is a spiritual matter.

We are sons and daughters of the great I Am. Great, not because God is measured as the greatest on any worldly scale, but great because he is the one and only creator. Today, may we all say a word of gratitude in our prayers for giving us such a humbling understanding of who we are through Christ.

“Thank you, Lord, for making me, me!”

Deacon Randy Kiel is the founder of Karis Counseling and serves Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines.

Mapping it out: how to intimately learn Catholicism

This book gets a bad rap as a stuffy rulebook. But it is poetic and probing, a distillation of salvation history, an introduction to saints and Scripture elegantly curated.

The catechism shines a flashlight on life’s biggest questions. What is a soul? 

See Seybold’s article in the October issue. What is the goal of human existence? Refer to part 3, section 1, paragraph 1719. It is our map of the oldest Christian faith.

My edition is only as tall as my hand, and when I hold it, I feel awe, mindful of the treasures tucked within.

Is it possible even to inherit this faith but let it pass us up before reading its handbook? Would it not be ungrateful – irresponsible? That knowledge paves the way to gratitude and caretaking. And so just as I study the island this summer, I will be turning over our faith: the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Christina Capecchi is a writer from Irwin Grove Heights, Minn.

Teenagers can be mapped: future goals, passions, hobbies. All the answers are here, the reference I already have, is a book that I turn to for guidance. Ridgely tells us that knowledge paves the way to gratitude and caretaking. And so just as I study the island this summer, I will be turning over the catechism, stone by stone.

St. Monica had the faith to move mountains, and yet when she prayed for her husband, her son, her mother-in-law. This reminds me that God’s will is most often found in the people right next to you, in the communities we’ve been given. We certainly can and should pray for great spiritual experiences and for our far away brothers and sisters, but we should never let global concerns distract us from the people, and places, that are right before us.

So this August let’s hold St. Monica up as an example of hope, patience and prayer. St. Monica prays for us, and for our families, that we might know Jesus more deeply and follow him more closely.

Adam Storey is the diocesan director of Marriage, Family Life. He can be reached at astorey@dmdiocese.org, or 515-217-5056.
Suicide and melancholy

By Father Ron Rolheiser

We no longer understand melancholy. To day we lump all forms of melancholy together into one indiscriminate bundle and call it “depression.” While a lot of suicide is being done by distraught psychologists, and the medical professions in terms of treating depression, something important is being lost at the same time. Melancholy is much more than what we call “depression.” For better and for worse, the ancients saw melancholy as a gift from God.

Prior to modern psychology and psychiatry, melancholy was seen precisely as a gift from the divine. In Greek mythology, it even had its own god, Saturn, and it was seen as a rich but mixed gift. On one hand, it could bring depth, genius, creativity, poetic inspiration, compassion, mystical insight, and wisdom. No more. Today melancholy has even lost its name and has become, in the words of Lyn Cowan, a Jungian analyst, “clinicalized, pathologized, and medicalized” so that what poets, philosophers, but even the sages of ancient mystics have forever drawn on for depth is now seen as a “treatable illness” rather than as a painful part of the soul that we have to work through, but want instead to be listened to because it intuits the unbearable heavi ness of things, namely, the torment of human finitude, inadequacy and mortality. For Cowan, modern psychology’s preoccupation with symptoms of depression and its reliance on drugs in treating depression show an “appealing superficiality in its approach to human suffering. It is apart from whatever else this might mean, refusing to recognize the depth and meaning of melancholy is demonizing the sufferer and perpetuating a violence against a soul that is already in torment.

And that is the issue when dealing with suicide. Suicide is normally the result of a soul in torment and in most cases that torment is not the result of a moral failure but of a melancholy which overwhelms a person at a time when he or she is too troubled, too weak, too wounded, too tired, or too biochemically impaired to withstand its presence. Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, who eventually did die by suicide, had written earlier about the melancholic forces that sometimes threatened to overwhelm him. Here’s one of his diary entries:

“The force which drew me away from life was fall er, more powerful, and more general than any mere desire. It was a force like my old aspiration to live, only it impelled me in the opposite direction. It was an aspiration of my whole being to get out of life.”

There’s still a lot we don’t understand about suicide and that misunderstanding isn’t just psychological and sociological. It is also gener ally blame the victim: If your soul is sick, it’s your fault. For the most part, that is how people who die by suicide are judged. Even though we have come a long way in recent times in understanding suicide and now claim to be more open and less judgmental, the stigma re mains, unfortunately, not the least of the breakdowns in mental health as we have made breakdowns in physical health. We don’t have the same moral and psychological anxieties when someone dies of cancer, stroke, or heart attack. As we study suicide, others study others.

In former times when there was no solution for leprosy other than isolating the person from everyone else, the victim suffered doubly. Today, from leprosy still had the consolation of not being judged psychologically or morally. They were not judged to be “unclean” in those areas. They were pined.

However, we only feel pity for those whom we have not ostracized, psychological and moral failure. That’s my reason why I pity those who are doubly judged, psychologically. (If your soul is sick, it’s your own fault.) And morally, your death is a betrayal. To die by suicide is worse than dying of leprosy.

I’m not sure how we can move past this. As Pascal says, the heart has its reasons. So too does the powerful taboos inside us that militate against suicide. There are good reasons why the Church, especially when there is no breakdown in mental health, because we have made breakdowns in physical health. We don’t have the same moral and psychological anxieties when someone dies of cancer, stroke, or heart attack. As we study suicide, others study others.

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In former times when there was no solution for leprosy other than isolating the person from everyone else, the victim suffered doubly. Today, from leprosy still had the consolation of not being judged psychologically or morally. They were not judged to be “unclean” in those areas. They were pined.

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Recognizing 75th anniversary of atomic bombings

Left: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe prays at Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima Aug. 6, 2020, the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city. (CNS photo/Kyodo via Reuters) A girl prays after releasing a paper lantern on the Motoyasu River facing the gutted Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima on the 75th anniversary. (CNS photo/Yuriko Nakao, Reuters)

CLEVELAND (CNS) — The path to true peace requires the world to abolish nuclear weapons, an American bishop and a Japanese archbishop said as the world celebrates the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings at the end of World War II approached.

Speaking during a 30-minute webinar Aug. 3, Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, and Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami of Nagasaki, Japan, reiterating longstanding calls by the bishops’ conferences of both countries that the world must reverse the path toward a renewed arms race because of the threat it poses to God’s creation.

“As long as the idea that weapons are necessary for peacemaking persists, it will be difficult to even reduce the number of nuclear weapons, let alone to abolish nuclear weapons. It would be ideal if the U.S. and Japan could truly reconcile with each other and work together for the abolition of nuclear weapons,” Archbishop Takami said.

Recalling the words of Pope Francis, who during his visit to Japan in November 2019 called the world to remember its moral obligation to rid the world of nuclear weapons, Bishop Malloy said that all nations must “find the means for complete and mutual reduction of nuclear weapons, a shared commitment and trust that needs to be fostered and deepened.”

The bishops expressed concern that the world has over-looked the massive destructive- ness of nuclear weapons as experi- enced in Japan in 1945 when U.S. atomic bombs detonated over Hiroshima Aug. 6 and Nagasaki three days later.

Maryann Cusimano Love, associate professor of interna- tional politics at The Cathol- ic University of America, host- ed the prerecorded online event, introducing it with an overview of Catholic peacebuilding efforts in Japan and the United States.

She said church-based efforts are rooted in Catholic theology, which holds that just peace is possible through a sus- tained commitment to achieve nuclear abolition. She said the threat of nuclear war has grown in recent years as international arms control treaties have been abandoned and more nations seek to add such weapons of mass destruction to their arsenals.

Archbishop Takami, president of the Japanese bishops’ conference, opened his remarks by explaining how he is a survivor of the bombing of Nagasaki, his hometown and the center of Japan’s Catholic faith community. He was in his moth- er’s womb at the time.

“I did not witness the horrific scenes that unfolded im- mediately following the bomb- ing myself. But my maternal grandmother suffered burns all over her body and died a painful death after one week without re- ceiving any medical attention,” the archbishop said. He recalled that two of his aunts died as a result of the bombing. “My married aunt’s body was never found and her husband also died,” he said.

Another aunt, a nun, was working near the area when the bomb detonated. “She was ex- posed to the hot blast and was in pain for 12 days before dying,” he said.

At Nagasaki’s Urakami Cathedral, where 24 parishion- ers were preparing to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when the bomb exploded, little remained standing, he said.

Of the 12,000 parishion- ers about 8,500 died, the arch- bishop added. The bombing was “spiritually damaging” to many parishioners, who said lost their faith and left the church.

Archbishop Takami drew widely from the words of St. John Paul II, who visited the two cities in 1981, delivering an urgent appeal to all people commit to a future without nu- clear weapons.

The speech prompt- ed the Japanese bishops’ con- ference to designate the period from Aug. 6-15 each year as 10 Days of Prayer for Peace starting in 1982. During that time people are called to pray, reflect and act on behalf of peace, he said.

“Pope Francis went one step further and declared that the possession and use of nuclear are immoral,” the archbishop added, describing one of the pontiff’s addresses during his visit. “The pope stressed the need for unity and working together toward a world free of nuclear weapons and committed the church to the goal.”

In response to Pope Francis’ appeal, Bishop Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama of Hiroshi- ma July 7 launched the Nucle- ar-Free World Foundation in collaboration with three peace organizations to support people working toward the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was approved in 2017 by a major- ity of United Nations member states. The Holy See became one of the first entities to ratify the agreement.

The fund will support peacemakers’ work until 50 na- tions ratify the pact. Through July 7, 39 nations had ratified it, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs reported.

Bishop Malloy said the U.S. bishops remain dedicated to the vision for disarmament expressed in their 1983 pastoral letter “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Re- sponse.”

The document com- mitted the bishops, he said “to shaping the climate of opinion which will make it possible for our country to express profound sorrow over the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in 1945. Without that sorrow, there is no possibility of finding a way of repudiating future use of nuclear weapons.”

The prelates concluded the webinar with a prayer in Japa- nese and English, respectively, seeking peace, reconciliation and understanding among all people.

Religious leader reflects on racism, religious life today, future of vocations

(CNS) — If religious life was once a cruise ship -- easy to get on and off asone pleased, said they reflected on Sister Helmlinger’s focus on vulnerabil- ity, how for them the road to Damascus is wide and deep. Sister White also is chair of LCWR’s Region 3, which includes Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Still, as one sister said in the group-sharing, “Vulnerability painlessly free us from over-re- sponsibility, he said. “It’s a grace to know it all, that it’s all up to me.”

In her address, Sister Helmlinger continued to stand on the inner work she’s been do- ing regarding racism and privi- lege, wondering if, “at times, we become too uncomfortable in our own skin when we pilgrimage into this terrain of racism, leaving us too go out and get something to offer a place of comfort and protec- tion,” she said, calling it a “false protection” since divisive borders remain.

Only when one chooses to “venture into the depths of our being” will they be filled with “God’s transformative grace” to love one another, she said.

“It is a journey across the immensity of political and social structures and systems work so unceasingly and insidiously to up- hold,” is our Damascussen jour- ney, she said. “A Damascussen journey which is always the case where we find God in our midst.”

Though the average age of a sister keeps climbing more and more, Sister Helmlinger said that the narrative need not be one of diminishment and scarcity, but opportunity and imagination, “a time to harness our collective creativity for reli- gious life itself”.

She encouraged those who listened to her address, later sharing their reflections in small groups, clung to Sister Helmlinger’s analogy of rows of constitution, finding it to be a helpful image for the vary- ing needs of older and younger sisters.

As someone in Sister Theresa Sandok’s reflection group said after the address, “there’s a lot of empty rooms on that cruise ship, and it’s falling apart,” Sister Sandok told Global Sisters Report.

Getting off and finding new vessels that respond to the needs of the world is the challenge be- fore them, said Sister Sandok, a Grey Nun of the Sacred Heart and member of the LCWR board of directors.

To treat one’s home con- gregation “as if we are islands unto ourselves” is a disservice to religious life, Sister Helmlinger said.

“As religious life evolves in the United States and beyond, so too must our structures and fo- rms to better enable elected leaders in their ministry of leadership,” she said.

“Let us board our vessels and know that where we are is present, we are all present,” Sister Helmlinger said. “The holy wind of the Spirit is blowing; will we sail with or against?”

August 21, 2020

The Catholic Mirror
Salvadoran bishops demand justice after seminary rector is fatally shot

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- During his Aug. 8 homily, Bishop Elias Bolaños Avelar of Zacatecoluca, El Salvador, reminded him was still struggling with the Aug. 6 killing of a priest from his diocese, who was also rector of the philosophy department at the St. Oscar Romero Seminary in Santiago de María.

Many young men knew him as a rector of their seminary, but priest friends knew Father Ricardo Cortez, who was in his 40s, as the “philosopher of Agape, the philosopher of love,” because of his great smile and friendship, Bishop Bolaños said during a homily at the priest’s funeral Mass.

Authorities said they found the lifeless body of the priest near a road, close to a car he was driving, after being alerted early Aug. 7, but he may have been killed the day before. No one has been charged, but Bishop Bolaños made a brief mention in his homily that perhaps someone connected with a parish may have been involved.

Father Cortez is the third priest killed in the country in the last 18 months, and most of the country’s bishops showed up to the funeral Mass to demand justice for the killing. Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas of San Salvador read a statement from the bishops’ conference, calling the killing a “sacrilege,” condemning it as an “abominable crime,” and demanding an investigation.

But by dying in such a way, said Bishop Bolaños, the priest was sharing the experience of the many in the country, living in “a world of violence where others are killed with ease. That’s what happened to our good Father Ricardo.”

As a child, faith was instilled by the guidance of his maternal grandmother, who made sure Alejando followed strict rules like waking up for the early Mass on weekends and not eating an hour before it started. For her start in baking, she credits a great-grandmother, Bishop Bolaños said: “Every Christmas she made a cookie. We called it ‘repostera,’ which, in Spanish means making pastries or baked goods.

Alejandro’s idea to start baking for others came after college when she was based in St. Louis, there. She met a family who baked cookies for local firefighters. She took that idea with her when she moved back to Texas to work in Houston. When she volunteered with the nonprofit Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Alejandro and her little sister made cookies for Houston firefighters.

After people started raving about the taste of her cookies — that she bakes with a special Mexican vanilla — Alejandro decided she would consider doing it more often for friends and families during the holidays. Then the pandemic hit. But the lockdown didn’t stop her from baking. Instead, it allowed her more free time to dedicate to her business.

“I decided to name my company Simply Yummy because I wanted to keep it simple ... and I wanted to make sure that the cookies were really good,” she said. One of her customers is her college friend Jo Anne Castillo, a parishioner at St. Thomas Aquinas Church outside of Houston. She ordered cookies from Simply Yummy for her family members’ birthdays.

“They taste fresh, soft and filling,” Castillo said. “There is definitely a unique ingredient that I don’t find in any other cookie, but I doubt Genevieve will tell me what it is.”

On June 29, her brother, Armando, ordained as a priest for the ordinance in the middle of a global pandemic. Although he was worried about how that might affect his ordination, she reminded him to surrender it to God and His will.

Alejandro’s gift to the church and her brother was sweet -- 90 treats that included customized priest-shaped cookies, vestments and all, and chalice-shaped cookies representing the Eucharist.

“Touche,” she said. “I’m very honored to be his sister,” she said. “Making cookies for his ordination was ... out of love.”

A labor of love meant a lot of time around a table, with her family, crafting the special dough.

Her mission isn’t to make a profit, but to treat her business as a ministry, sharing her time and talents to make cookies for low-income families or single-parent households and not charge as much as competitors or boutique bakers.

“I have a full-time job and this is mainly a hobby,” she said. “If I can help someone and make their birth- day, or baptism, or ordination, or whatever it is, it’s a little more meaningful with dessert, that’s the best that I can do. That’s all I can ask for.”

Holy Trinity Beacon of Excellence for Des Moines Family

When Katie and Craig Vasquez started planning their children’s church school, they never integrated Catholic School would be part of that plan. They’d decided to enroll their eldest son in a 3-year-old preschool at Holy Trinity in Des Moines because that program wasn’t offered many places. However, after a short time, they knew they’d found a home for the entirety of their children’s education.

“The program was just unlike any other,” said Katie Vasquez. “From the start, we knew we had to find a way to continue Catholic education for all our children.”

Fast forward to today. Their eldest child is now going into second grade, and they’ve had four after children. A lot has changed for the Vasquez’s but not their commitment to Catholic education.

Defying Expectations

“Neither Craig nor I attended Catholic school growing up,” Katie said. “So, we didn’t know what to expect from Holy Trinity. But we can say the school has exceeded our expectations in every way.”

Katie marvels how each year their children attend, they are more impressed.

“Every teacher our children have had has continuously impressed us,” Katie said. “They show God’s love through their personalized teaching. In talking with other family members and friends, it’s obvious this is not found in every school.”

When Katie thinks about the progress her children are making at Holy Trinity, she sees them well above average. They love learning and look forward to going back to school. Their test scores are also high in math and reading.

But Katie says what makes Holy Trinity truly special is the spiritual growth and giving to their children receive.

Growing In Faith

Watching the way her children treat each other, friends, and other classmates at school, Katie and Craig can truly see the spiritual formation they receive at Holy Trinity. She sees her children growing in their faith and shaping roots in faith and treating each other as Christ would.

“They even hold each other accountable in the way they treat each other,” she said. “She says it’s inspiring to see. Their religious instruction at Holy Trinity has inspired Katie and Craig to grow in their own faith.”

“I feel very close to the LORD; trust in him, and he will set me.” - Psalm 37:5

The Catholic Mirror August 21, 2020

Catholic baker’s sweet treats make occasions ‘a little more meaningful’

The Catholic Mirror August 21, 2020

Priest cookies made by Genevieve Alejandro.

Catholic baker’s sweet treats make occasions ‘a little more meaningful’

Genevieve Alejandro

A Message to CTO Donors

Katie believes if anyone considering a donation to Catholic School, it’s our children’s school, for just five minutes, they would see just how valuable their donation is. To see all, the bright, smiling faces receiving an excellent academic and spiritual education, donors would recognize the huge importance their contribution has on children and families.

“There truly is no dollar amount I could place on the gift of Catholic education,” Katie said. “No dollar amount is high enough to describe what my children receive at Holy Trinity.”

Without CTO, it wouldn’t be possible for many families to afford Catholic education. And when donors give to CTO, their dollars are in excellent hands.

Just look to how Catholic schools get through this spring and distance learning due to COVID-19.

“The teachers and staff at Holy Trinity just went above and beyond to ensure our children were still provided with the high quality education we expect at Holy Trinity,” Katie said. “I don’t feel like our children fell behind at all. They’re right on track despite distance learning.”

“Lift up your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will set me.” - Psalm 37:5

August 21, 2020

The Catholic Mirror

Genevieve Alejandro

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The Catholic Mirror
We follow the example of St Joseph to showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves—in time—protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness.

—Pope Francis