Diocese conducts campaign planning study

Clergy and parishioners will be asked for feedback on proposed diocesan capital campaign

The Diocese of Des Moines is launching a planning study to determine the level of support for a diocesan-wide capital campaign.

Representatives from the Steier Group, a Catholic development and fundraising firm, will be conducting the study through mid-November. They are seeking feedback on a variety of potential campaign elements including an endowment for Catholic schools, support for seminarians and priests, a faith formation fund, and individual parish needs.

“Bishop Joensen wants to hear from as many people as possible, so we can gauge their interest in addressing these urgent needs,” said Maureen Kenney, Director of Stewardship for the diocese.

During the 12-week study, parishioners will have a variety of opportunities to provide their input. While some will be personally interviewed, others will have the option to complete a mail survey or fill out a survey online.

“We will be providing more information about how to participate in the coming weeks. Details will be published in parish bulletins and provided...Continued on page 9

Faith and farming

Droughts, derecho, COVID-19 and trade with China make 2020 a tough year

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Patrick Gannon was driving home to the family farm north of Colfax when the Aug. 10 derecho blew through.

“I didn’t even know it was going to rain,” said Gannon, a member of St. Mary/Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart. “I was in Newton and it was really black to the west. I said to some folks, ‘It must be raining in Des Moines.’ There was only a 20 percent chance of rain.”

After leaving Newton, Gannon and his grandson encountered high winds and trees blowing on the highway, forcing them to circle around to different roads to find an unblocked route home.

“It was a little scary,” Gannon said.

In his more than 40 years of farming, Gannon has experienced a number of weather events — this was his first derecho.

His corn crop and pine trees bore the brunt of the more than 70 mph winds.

“It just flattened the corn to where it was not mechanically...Continued on page 3

Blessings in disguise

Hybrid and at-home religious education models offer opportunity to evangelize the family

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Close to 12,000 children and teens will be gathering in parishes and homes across central and southwest Iowa for religious education in the coming weeks. Like schools, the pandemic is forcing changes in faith formation.

A survey of the fall religious education ministry in the diocese’s 80 parishes indicate some are doing family-based formation, many are offering online or at-home catechesis and many are moving to a hybrid model with some in-class time...Continued on page 7
**Archangelic Attitudes**

By Bishop William Joensen

When we imitate Mi- chael, we are courageous enough “call them by their name,” as St. John Paul II en- joined, allowing us to be seated and measured by the good God has established and bestowed. We are bold enough to claim that we are “followers of the truth” and “sec- ond one of another real en-emy (Judges 7:16). We resist rebel- reed, or quench the smoldering wick (Matthew 12:20). We must mingle mercy with justice, and define our own frail nature in our neighbor and ourselves. Andconstimenter the already ex- ample of St. Michael’s prayer.

When Raphael enters the house of the blind Tobit, he is on the brink of despair, “Take cour- age! God has healing in store for you!” (Tobit 5:10). Rapha- days that, wherever the first disciples went, “there was great joy” (Acts 8:8). The Holy Father con- tinues, “There are Christians whose lives seem like ‘Lent without Easter,’ even as he un- derstands “the grief of people and our own bickering and finger-point- ing against the ‘wickedness and at- tackers toward those around us and our world. The Sacrament of Reconciliation continues to be an annual blessing for the open- ed parish priests throughout the Diocese, and the gates of mercy remain wide open in our ongo- ing pandemic with permission for general absolution from sin, subject to appropriate circumstances. When we know peace in God’s sight, we find ourselves spending less time searching for the good in the world, and more time praying about how we might anoint oth- ers, to come out of the darkness and way with a word of encourage- ment, gestures of empathy and benign longsuffering that convey to them that “God has healing in store for you!” We ponder and are poised like St. Gabriel, ready to allow the other to speak truth just as God commands us to do.

“Rejoice!” is the angel’s greeting to the people of Tobit. We find Gabriel joy when announc- ing joy to others. In his message, “The Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis notes that “wherever the first disciples went, “there was great joy” (Acts 8:8). The Holy Father con- tinues, “There are Christians whose lives seem like ‘Lent without Easter,’ even as he un- derstands “the grief of people and our own bickering and finger-point- ing against the ‘wickedness and at- tackers toward those around us and our world. The Sacrament of Reconciliation continues to be an annual blessing for the open- ed parish priests throughout the Diocese, and the gates of mercy remain wide open in our ongo- ing pandemic with permission for general absolution from sin, subject to appropriate circumstances. When we know peace in God’s sight, we find ourselves spending less time searching for the good in the world, and more time praying about how we might anoint oth- ers, to come out of the darkness and way with a word of encourage-ment, gestures of empathy and benign longsuffering that convey to them that “God has healing in store for you!” We ponder and are poised like St. Gabriel, ready to allow the other to speak truth just as God commands us to do.

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harvestable,” Gannon said. “We have around 1,000 acres of corn and we destroyed 300 acres of it, which would be about 60,000 bushels. We have federal crop insurance and they came out and said, ‘You’re not going to be able to harvest it.’”

The 60,000 bushels of corn would typically be valued at about $180,000.

Three grain buildings on Gannon’s property were also destroyed by the high winds.

Yet, he feels fortunate compared to many farmers he knows. Their machine sheds were lifted off the foundation by the derecho.

And it didn’t just fly off, it just dropped on their equipment,” he added, noting the combine and tractor damage.

“The John Deere store is really big trying to restore equipment to get through harvest.”

John Splendore, of St. Patrick Parish in Perry, was out of town driving truck for Hy-Line, a poultry breeder based in Dallas Center, when the derecho hit.

“Most farmers have federal crop insurance and that’s going to help considerably,” said Splendore, who added that federal crop insurance and that’s going to help considerably,”

“Typically, cattle producers have a two week window to market the animals, Freund said. COVID-19 threw everything off.

“Beef is a meat of celebration and you think, ‘I’m not going to have money for these crops or sell these pigs,’” Gannon said.

“COVID-19 threw every-thing down, you can imagine what it does to cash flow,” Freund continued. “Animals get too big, you can’t stop feeding them. So then they become unmerchantable to hotels and restaurants.”

The beef industry quickly shifted from 40 percent retail to 75 percent retail when restaurant and travel sales nose-dived, he said.

“It’s a huge shift for any industry and we had to do that overnight, and you know that doesn’t happen overnight,” Freund added.

Pork producers also struggled with product overflow. Stories emerged of farmers who felt forced to euthanize because there was no market for their an-

imal. “You look at the devastation and you think, ‘I’m not going to have money for these crops or sell these pigs,’”

But I always come back to the fact that God never lets you have more than you can handle. And I always think, ‘We’ll be OK. God will take care of us.’”

Farmers were already feeling the pinch even before COVID-19, droughts and the derecho because of trade disputes with China, leaving “prices... fairly pressured,” Splendore said.

“I guess my faith gives me the strength not to worry about different problems that might arise,” Splendore continued. “I think it’s God’s will and he’s going to take care of all things. I might still suffer a lit-tle bit, but we’re all gonna get by and he’ll lead us in the right direction.”

The three men agree - farming and faith go hand-in-hand, said Freund.

“It’s our prayers ev-ery day,” Freund said. “You have to thank the good Lord for the blessings that you had, like last year, and also asking for help on years like this.”

Food production is not on farmers alone - God is their co-creator.

“We just borrow his resources to produce something so we can survive,” Freund continued. “We borrow his land and his weather to produce for the rest to eat, so we have to be good stewards of it. He gives us all the tools - we’ve just got to put it to-gether.”
Priest serves those highly vulnerable to coronavirus

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

Since arriving in the Des Moines diocese last year, Father Bede Inekwere has limited his time outside of the Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in Johnston.

The Nigerian-born priest, who arrived in 2019, serves as chaplain at the retirement center, where he ministers to a population highly vulnerable to COVID-19.

He also serves the frontline healthcare workers who are taking care of the patients and residents at the retirement center.

He limits his outside exposure to minimize the chances of bringing the virus to those he serves. Nonetheless, he feels blessed during the health crisis to be at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center.

"During this unprecedented time of pandemic when people are spiritually disillusioned, I was closer to them in emergencies. I do counselling not only to patients and residents, but also staff that needed both emotional and spiritual supports," he said.

Father Bede is grateful for his co-workers at Bishop Drumm and the people of Des Moines who he serves: "To my fellow priests and humble men and women of good spirit who work to implement the services of stewardship in this time of COVID-19, I remain grateful."

"It is such a blessing to have Father Bede’s presence on campus," said April Young, director of mission integration and chaplain at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center. "Particularly this year, I know it has brought great consolation to the residents and their families to have him available to visit and minister the sacraments."

Father Bede Inekwere comes from 6,000 miles away. He was born in Umuakagu, a town in the state of Imo which lies in the southeast (and predominantly Catholic) region of Nigeria.

He described the hardships he faced in seminary. As the son of a humble farmer, he was not always able to cover his tuition.

“Every term, I will be among those sent home for school fees,” he said. “While my classmates were at home receiving lectures, I had to spend more weeks at home, doing farm work pending when my fees will be completed before I return to the seminary.”

Despite the difficulties, Father Bede persevered through 15 years of formation, being ordained for the Diocese of Okigwe on Sept. 9, 1995. He served in parishes for nine years, until he was sent to the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium.

After receiving a master’s degree in religious studies, he completed his studies in southern California, receiving his doctorate with special interest in comparative religion from the University of the West.

After a short stint in the Diocese of Fresno, Father Bede felt called to join the Clinical Pastoral Education Training Program in Davenport.

“When I was in Fresno, I had a dream,” he explained. “I was sitting beside the sick people, praying for them, comforting them, and supporting them, and I knew it was another call.”

That program soon led him to Unity-Point Health in Des Moines. He began serving here in 2019.

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ENGAGING WITH CIVILITY

How can we best enter the political discussion? One thing that might help us build a "culture of encounter" with those we might disagree with is to practice civility. Because we have many Catholics all over the political spectrum, the Catholic Church is one of the institutions in the country that is well-positioned to bridge the gap of divisiveness.

To help with this, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has launched a “Civilize It” campaign. The purpose is to invite Catholics to model civility, love for neighbor, and respectful dialogue.

There are three elements to the “Civilize It” campaign:

CIVILITY. Recognize others’ human dignity, treat others with respect.
CLARITY. Stand up for your convictions while seeking to understand others. Root my viewpoints in the gospel and a well-formed conscience.
COMPASSION. Presume other’s best intentions and listen with empathy. Strive to understand As Catholics, we should rather be criticized for too much charity than too little. The language we use is important.

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IOWA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
The public policy voice of the bishops of Iowa,
330 42nd St., Des Moines, IA 50312 • 515.243.6256
www.iowacatholicconference.org • info@iowacatholicconference.org

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During a memorial Mass for Carlo Salvo, his chalice and paten were presented to Deacon Reed Flood. Salvo, a founding parishioner of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, was a man of faith, family, friendship and served his country with distinction during World War II. “I know Carlo will be very pleased that Deacon Reed will very soon be offering Mass with his chalice and paten,” said Father Dan Kirby, pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish in Norwalk and a friend of Salvo. Pictured with him are: Diann Potter-Madison, Mike Salvo, Deacon Reed Flood, Nancy and Steve Salvo.
meet our newest seminarians

these two seminarians started classes at st. pius x seminary at loras college on aug. 26.

please keep them in your prayers as they study and discern god's will for their lives.

by stanley asjes

liam dale, of sacred heart parish in west des moines, said it was parish youth group events that pulled him into taking his faith seriously.

through the youth group, dale found himself at national catholic youth conference 2017. he remembered his prayer during eucharistic adoration at the event: “god, please, i’ll do whatever you want.”

“then i started listing off things, like ‘would i lift up a car for god? yes, sure, i’d lift up a car.’ eventually i got through the list and i thought, ‘would i be a priest? yeah, i’d be a priest.’ i felt peace with that, then i thought, ‘wait a minute, no i do not want to be a priest.’ i’m going to go back track on that and kind of put it on the back-burner,” he said.

“then i went to oklahoma my junior year summer,” said dale. “there, i met two very, very good examples of men who had gone to seminary, but one was a priest and the other one was a father of three. they both told me about their experience in seminary. at that moment, i thought, ‘oh man, sounds like nothing could go wrong!’ but i was dating somebody at the time, so then i thought, ‘eh, maybe, maybe not.’”

the valley high school graduate was again confronted with god’s call at ncyc 2019. “the keynote speaker that night had talked about vocations,” he said. “i really took that to heart during adoration, and there was a change in my heart where i thought, ‘yes, god, you are worth losing whatever it is i might lose.’ i sat on it a couple months to make sure i wasn’t just going off on a whim or something.”

his parents, kenneth and lori dale, were thrilled with their son’s decision to join seminary.

“We were happy that he was choosing to discern the priesthood at seminary,” said lori. “it is the perfect path for him.”

at first, she was concerned: “by senior year, he started attending 6:30 a.m. mass every morning before school, which for a parent of a teenager, made me concerned that something bad was happening at school. why does a teenager need so much time in church? well, one day he said, ‘i want to be a priest.’ what a relief! all was well, very well indeed!”

“obviously, he’s got a lot of years yet to discern what god wants, and we pray that he answers that call, whatever it is,” said father chris hartshorn, pastor at sacred heart in west des moines. “hopefully, priesthood is that call for him, god willing, and it will take root in his heart and he’ll continue to grow.”

support our seminarians

on sunday, sept. 13, a special collection was held for the seminarian fund which provides support for the education of these men and others discerning priesthood within the diocese of des moines. the high cost of education is often a major impediment for men looking to enter seminary. this fund allows the diocese to ease the financial burden of seminary formation.

to contribute, visit: dmdioce.org/giving/special-collection-giving

dowling graduate sister mary esther makes final profession

by kelly mescher collins

support staff writer

dowling graduate sister mary esther (formerly known as laura downey) professed her final vows with the dominican sisters of mary, mother of the eucharist on july 22.

her brother is father james downey, who currently serves as parochial vicar at our lady’s immaculate heart and st. luke parishes in ankeny.

in a video on the dominican sisters’ website, sister mary esther said she grew up watching her parents pray and going to church with them.

“They instilled in us that god has a beautiful plan for your life,” she said.

she recalled meeting a sister when she was 7-years old.

“and i remember my dad bending down and saying, ‘maybe you’ll be a sister.’”

“growing up, the desire to be a bride of jesus was the most romantic idea,” she said.

“When i was 13 i went to a eucharistic weekend conference, and really recognizing jesus in the eucharist and knowing that this is jesus and he loves me so deeply, and i want to love him back,” she said.

“watching her sisters courageous actions “for the sake of god” inspired her to do more.

“community life is family life -- you’re like family, and that brings me a lot of joy doing things with them,” sister mary esther said.

sister mary esther said she is filled with gratitude and joy.

“i feel the calling coming up at that moment. and then, day by day when i was growing up, the call inside me is still there.”

immigrating to the united states put nguyen into a new place with a new culture and a new language.

the valley high school graduate was 16 when i was growing up, the call inside me is still there.”

immigrating to the united states put nguyen into a new place with a new culture and a new language.

in the midst of this huge adjustment, “i felt like my vocation had maybe changed to marriage,” he said.

however, at the invitation of his pastor, father joseph ly quy chu, nguyen attended an andrew dinner, which is an opportunity for young men to talk with priests and the bishop about what the priesthood is like. the idea of priesthood remained on nguyen’s mind while he kept in touch with father ross parker and began to attend discernment retreats.

nguyen has begun the two year pre-theology program at st. pius x seminary at loras college, where he will complete the prerequisite philosophy classes before beginning major seminary.

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Around the Diocese

Sept. 27 Sunday
Priesthood Sunday

Thank you for your life of service to our parish community. The fourth Sunday of September is a special day set aside to honor the priesthood in the United States. It is a day to reflect upon and affirm the role of the priest as central to the life of the Church.

This event offers an opportunity for all parishioners to honor their parish priest(s) by expressing their support and appreciation for service to the Church, and in particular to their parish. Parishioners are invited to leave a card with words of gratitude and tribute for their priest(s).

This nationwide event is coordinated and sponsored by the US 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 USA.

More than 7,700 Serrans nationwide, including the Serra Club of Des Moines and the Serra Club of Council Bluffs, collaborate with their bishops, parishes, and vocation directors to fulfill this mission. Through this ministry, Serrans work to further their common Catholic faith.

60th Wedding Anniversary Celebration

The family of Marvin and Dolores Klein of Dunlap is hosting a card shower in honor of their parents 60th wedding anniversary on Saturday Sept. 5. They were married in Earling at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Their family includes Bill Klein, Ann Klein-Gredys (Par), Paul & Jodi Klein, Gene & Teri Klein and John & Jayne Klein. They have 6 children (1 deceased), 20 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Cards of congratulations will reach them at 1106 Montague St., Dunlap, IA 51529. Marvin was ordained a permanent deacon to the Des Moines Diocese by Bishop Maurice Dingman in April, 1974.

Oct. 10 Saturday
Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy Rally - Prayers for Our Country

DES MOINES - St. Anthony and St. Joseph Parishes invite you to join us in praying the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet for our country - that America will once again be healed and united under one God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. This event will be held at the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel & Divine Mercy at St. Anthony Catholic Church Grotto. (Edison & SW 1st Street). Please plan to meet at the Grotto at noon. A small procession of a few parishioners will begin at the church carrying a statue of Mary down to the Grotto where we will be assembled waiting to pray. (To all those participating we will follow the health and safety guidelines set by the Des Moines Diocese. Masks are encouraged.)

Examples of positive impacts are illustrated by clients.

A recent client of a Financial Empowerment class offered through our Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault program said the course was “very accommodating and I enjoyed the opportunity to learn other ways to improve myself and my situation,” and “this class was 100 percent helpful for my future.”

An annual donation impacts positive change

Participate in this year’s Catholic Charities Annual Appeal

By Beth Gibbins Contributing Writer

Who would have imagined the significant disruption and loss in central and southwest Iowa communities and the world as they continue to experience COVID-19? Through Catholic Charities donors’ generous contributions, the organization continues to make a positive change in helping people in our community in the midst of a pandemic.

Catholic Charities connects people with life-changing experiences that inspire potential and growth. With four facilities located in Des Moines and Council Bluffs, it offers services in health, education, employment, housing, advocacy, and food assistance. Programs include Counseling, Emergency Family Shelter, Food Pantry, Refugee Services, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking.

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“Only through your generous spirit and support can we continue to advance our mission and impact positive change,” said Powers. Debra Powers, development director, can support donors in a review of the annual appeal. She is available to respond to the interests and needs of those who want to support Catholic Charities. Contact her at 563-275-9643 to set up a giving plan, sponsor an event, or personalize a contribution.

To donate online and read more about Catholic Charities, Diocese of Des Moines, go to www.catholiccharitiesdm.org.

Beth Gibbins is the marketing director for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Des Moines.
Religious education programs serve 12,000 students across diocese

Continued from page 1

and some at-home time. This will require more effort on the part of parents, which catechetical leaders say may be a blessing in disguise.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola is among those going with a hybrid model. Parents can choose at-home materials for their child, or have their child attend an early Wednesday session for two weeks at church then two weeks at home, or a later Wednesday session for two weeks at home and then two weeks at church. The two weeks on, two weeks off will work if they have to quarantine a particular class without disrupting the entire program.

The at-home resources include movies that focus on themes, discussion questions and a take-home packet of hands-on materials.

“We see this as an opportunity to evangelize the parents as well. So we are planning to send parent “Cliff Notes” so if they are not sure of something, they can refer to the notes,” said JoAnn Sayre, director of religious education, in the parish’s Return to Learn plan.

So, Peter & Paul Parish in Atlantic had recently begun a collaborative effort with parishes in, Anita, Griswold, and Cum- mington/Redfield offering at-home activities and faith formation at school on days when the students were dismissed early from school. Now the parish is planning the parish pivots to an at-home model. They have their child attend an early Wednesday session for two weeks at home then two weeks at church then two weeks at home and then two weeks at church.

For 18 years, this parish has been practicing house-centered faith formation, which involves everyone—parents and other adults, teens and younger children—in a common experience. This season, the intergenerational faith formation is going online as Kitchen Table Faith, linking households and catechists through the Internet.

Kitchen Table Faith’s “menu” for each month, web-based and interactive, will include:

- Main Dish (essentials for each household) – a live session Sunday or Wednesday evening, recorded for further access; an adult session with a featured national presenter; and reflections on the Sunday gospel passages.
- Side Dishes and Desserts—a monthly range of activities and resources for the household to customize its menu of faith formation for the month. Suitable to various ages, interests and abilities, these are many ways to explore the Catholic tradition and Christian discipleship. These too are web-based (on

Welcome to Kitchen Table Faith, where families grow together

By Anne Marie Cox Staff Writer

If catechists look close enough, they’ll see the pandemic offers an opportunity, according to Father Tim Fitzgerald, pastor of St. John and Paul Parish in Altoona.

“What looks like calamity is really grace cleverly disguised,” he said in a diocesan Zoom meeting with faith formation leaders. “It’s an opportunity for us to really transform faith formation in our parishes.”

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CEDAR FALLS — Paul Lee, a member of St. Stephen the Witness Catholic Church and Student Center in Cedar Falls, made history in June 2019 when he was elected state deputy for the Iowa Knights of Columbus.

The husband and father recently reflected on the Knights’ activities in 2019-2020, just before beginning the second half of his two-year term as leader of the organization.

At age 33, Lee was the youngest person and the first African American to be elected to the top position in the international Catholic fraternal organization’s Iowa branch, which has about 32,000 members statewide and about 1.9 million globally.

“Our mission this year has truly been one of service,” Lee reflected. “Not just service externally, but also service internally.”

Lee and the other state officers worked with local Knights councils in reaching out in service to communities, including those outside the Catholic Church.

A second initiative in the past year has been to recognize veteran members for decades of service, which led to the creation of a Hall of Fame and the first induction ceremony involving Knights from across the state.

“Service through the Knights is not just about those who are called to leadership roles,” he said. “It’s also someone who has been active for 35 years and has run your local pancake breakfast or Easter egg hunt. It takes all of those pieces to put the body of Christ together.”

The third initiative this year has been an effort to remind members and others that the Knights are called to be an organization for families.

The Knights have held food drives, fundraisers for people with intellectual disabilities and other projects. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has begun, many Knights councils have involved family members in efforts to deliver food and other supplies to those in need or to call people who may be isolated.

In the coming year, Lee and other Knights state leaders plan to focus on “lifting up the voice of everyone and leaving no neighbor behind.”

Reprinted with permission from The Witness, a newspaper of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.
Comprehensive campaign planning study

Continued from page 1

through our various social media platforms,” Kenney said.
A fact sheet that outlines each of the proposed campaign goals will be available for all participants. The information collected during the study is confidential and will be used to recommend how the diocese should proceed if it moves into a major fundraising campaign.

“We are very excited about the study and hope people will take the time to share their thoughts,” Kenney said. “We are one Catholic family and need to make this decision together.”

The Steier Group, based in Omaha, Nebraska, has directed a number of successful diocesan-wide campaigns throughout the country, including a $53 million campaign in the nearby Archdiocese of Omaha, Nebraska. The firm is currently directing efforts for the Archdiocese of Seattle and the Diocese of Nashville.

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W-2019530 06/18

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.
Students head back to school

Students at St. Augustin Catholic School in Des Moines watch a livestream of Mass.

Seventh graders Mackenzie Ayala and David Austin, of St. Joseph Catholic School in Des Moines, practice map skills by creating their own maps of Grandview Park.

Aiden Tunink, Andrea Perla and Justin Carrillo participate in adoration at St. Patrick School in Perry.

St. Albert Catholic School third grader Ares Rathbun take some time to read.

By Kelly Meschel Collins
Staff Writer

Des Moines Area Community College student Kabrina Brady, a member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Des Moines, was inspired by the faith, friendships and bible study at the Newman Catholic Student Center on the Drake University Campus.

“I really just wanted to see the same sense of community at DMACC,” Brady said. “And then really encourage people to deepen their faith, because I think a really important part of our faith is finding others who share the same belief.”

She helped launch the Catholics of DMACC club last fall with a vision of creating “a community of Catholics and be the light of Christ at DMACC.”

They hope to help others find a community of fellow believers who can share their Catholic faith and build friendships.

Catholics of DMACC partnered with Grand View University’s Viking Catholics to build a wider community of young Catholic college students in the Des Moines metro area. It’s been a win-win for both schools, said Caleb Chemelka, Viking Catholics president.

“Grand View is more of a smaller school so we have trouble getting students engaged in certain activities, and especially activities of faith,” Chemelka said. “We have an opportunity here at Grand View to expand our club, and [DMACC] really gave us some perspective on things we can do to better our faith community.”

The two clubs hold a combined bible study once a month, and also share fun opportunities for fun and fellowship, including hiking excursions, bonfires, bowling, rock climbing and more.

“We do a lot of fun fellowship opportunities to build up relationships,” Brady added.

The two clubs also join the Catholic Newman Center at St. Catherine of Siena Parish on the Drake University Campus, which attracts many students. 

Nathan Priest, president of Catholics of DMACC, said he was immediately drawn to the club’s approach, and has already made lots of new friends.

“The idea of meeting other like-minded Catholics was really appealing,” Priest said.

Participating in prayer activities together, such as the rosary, Eucharistic adoration, Mass and confession also drew him in.

“That’s what set it apart for me,” Priest added.

The three all agreed they are at a time in their lives when many of their peers are apt to stray from their faith.

“I think [the club] really keeps me grounded,” Chemelka said. “We know now that college can be a troubling time, especially in matters of faith, and having a group of people…for these fellowship events really helps college students like me stay active in my faith and continue to grow in this time of my life.”

Learn more at CatholicsofDMACC.wordpress.com, find @CatholicsofDMACC on Instagram or email nathan-priest@outlook.com or call 641-891-1912.

The Catholics of DMACC Club in Ankeny have their own events and have also partnered with Viking Catholics at GrandView University and the St. Catherine Catholic Newman Center at Drake University for social events, bible studies, Masses and more.
The crosses we bear are calling us to be saints

By Adam Storey

On Sept. 14 we celebrated the feast of the Triumph of the Cross. I feel like this feast day should have a special observance during 2020, when all of our crosses have felt a bit heavier!

In so many ways, through the pandemic, natural disasters, racism, and the violence and division that we see in our country, we all have been carrying a heavy load for some time now.

It’s not fun, so why would the Church have a feast day dedicated to the cross? How can St. Paul say “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved is the power of God”? (1 Corinthians 1:18)

I think we can celebrate the cross because it is through the cross that death is defeated and that God’s reign breaks into the world. And Jesus loves us so much that he invites us to participate in his saving work. That means we are called to share in the cross, but also share in the glory of the resurrection.

God does not desire our suffering, but because death has been defeated we can know that in any suffering we will still “conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

None of what I’ve said makes the cross easy to bear.

It does however give me hope, and it’s primarily hope that comes from knowing that the cross does not have the final word.

This is a painful time for sure, but I am convinced that this is also a time when God is inviting us to become the saints we were made to be, and at a time when God’s transformative grace is being gratuitously offered.

Lord, let your kingdom break into this world! Let us be transformed by your grace, make us agents of peace, unity and love. And let us all become the saints you have called us to be!

Adam Storey is the diocesan director of Marriage and Family Life. He can be reached at adstorey@dmdioce.se.org or 515-237-5056.

A Wisconsin pilgrimage

Guest Column

By Donna Marie Seuferer

St. Philomena is a place of outdoor devotional areas. The theme of the shrine emphasizes the sacredness of building Holy Hill and the manpower required to haul load after load of building materials and priceless stained glass uphill to create the masterpiece.

I thought about Adele Brise who dedicated her life to educate and catechize the youth in her time, as requested by Our Lady.

And then the martyrdom of St. Philomena and the agonies of Our Lady who suffered the most at the crucifixion.

When I reflect on these collective measures taken to secure the common message, it strengthens my resolve as a Catholic to faithfully use and humbly appreciated the gifts that we have been given in our holy Catholic Church.

Donna Marie Seuferer is a parishioner at St. Bernard Parish in Osceola.

Seeking the spiritual side of homeostasis

If you follow these articles that I write, then you know I’ve noticed that I’m sort of a “word” guy.

Since my profession revolves around communication, as do many others, I have come to realize the importance of every word we use. I deeply enjoy etymology. (That’s a fun google search).

The power of our words is measurable for its effects upon others. Whether written or spoken, our words can create a smooth path of communication or a calamitous crash of misunderstood concepts.

We have all had to learn new vocabulary in our lifetime, especially with the increase of technology. While many words have been added to our vocabulary list, many other words seem to disappear from our local vernacular.

I can remember when “groovy” was a new word. I, for one, am glad that word is gone. While there is no perfect form of communication, it is not only healthy, but wise for us to hold our own communication styles in check for continued improvement and growth.

I want to encourage you to admit, to change a pattern of anything is hard to do. Why change so hard?

When we attempt to break any homeostatic condition, we will always cause some form of psychological alarm, whether that be stress, fear, or even panic.

If the system was thrown off balance by some form of threat, be it drought, disease, invasion or anything else, we would have to find our way back to balance.

This is one of the intended ways God created man. And as soon as the unusual circumstance would pass, we learned to go back to “normal” as quickly as possible.

In short: throughout the vast majority of our human history, significant change was almost invariably a threat to our well-being and needed to be managed or removed immediately in order to return to a state of homeostasis.

Currently, we are experiencing many possible threats to our homeostasis. Eventually, we will normalize because normalization is what the human mind continually pursues. Our future will not be known as the “new normal” but more as “finally normal.”

Naturally, it will be somewhat different because change begets change.

Our spiritual nature seeks homeostasis as well. This is why the deepest sense of peace and stability available to man is through Christ.

He is the one who works the world into balance and order, controls the storms of life, and sets our souls to rest. It is he who takes us from a state of sin to a state of grace.

Many may wrestle to accept this because it truly is mysterious to us all how he works.

Donna Marie Seuferer is a parishioner at St. Bernard Parish in Osceola.

Let’s GetPsyched

By Deacon Randy Kiel

“Homeostasis” now that’s a mouthful—is a word that was coined less than 100 years ago, describing a phenomenon as old as humanity. It comes from the Greek, meaning, “man’s sameness”, referring to any process that living things use to actively maintain fairly stable conditions necessary for survival.

Since the creation of man, homeostasis—a kind of dynamic stability—is homeostasis essential to our well-being. For man’s well-being and needed to be managed or removed immediately in order to return homeostasis, the status quo.

Thus, throughout the vast majority of our human history, significant change was almost invariably a threat to man’s well-being and needed to be managed or removed immediately in order to return to a state of homeostasis.

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Donna Marie Seuferer is a parishioner at St. Bernard Parish in Osceola.

Deacon Randy Kiel is the founder of Kardia Counseling and serves Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines.
Q. I saw in the news recently that Cardinal Timo-
thy Dolan praised President Donald Trump and remem-
bered “We need you now more than ever.” Church leaders who promote individual candidates were criticized, but Dolan’s words sounded just like the Cardinal was giving a campaign speech for the Presi-
dent. Could you comment?

A. It’s received a lot of publicity, and not all of it has been good. Bishops, cardinals, priests, and deacons have a privileged role in proclaiming the gospel. And the gospel often has many chal-
 lenges for us all. Whether church leaders like or agree with a particular candidate or not is not the issue. Those leaders are given the responsi-
bility to speak about issues, not candidates. The bishops them-
selves in the conclusion to “Faithful Citizenship,” http://
www.usccb.org/issues-and-ac-
tion/faithful-citizenship/ de-
scribe a better approach. This is what that document says:

“The Church is in-
volved in the political pro-
cess but is not partisan. The
Church cannot champion any candidate or party.”

“The Church is en-
gaged in the political process
but should not be used. We
welcome dialogue with politi-
cal leaders and candidates; we
seek to engage and persuade public officials. Events and
photo ops cannot substitute for serious dialogue.”

“The Church is prin-
cipled but not ideological.”

Q. The corona virus pan-
demic has affected most of
the world. Here in the Unit-
ed States, you and local and
state governments have is-
sued warnings and imposed restrictions on public gather-
ings. Even when some of the restrictions have been lifted, Church leaders, acting out of caution, have maintained some restrictions. When will this come to an end?

A. I don’t own a crystal ball, but I suspect there will have to be major restrictions for quite a while. The rea-
son is that without a vaccine that can prevent people from getting Covid-19, opening up the economy also opens up the public to increased risk of infection. Large numbers of people have already died. No-
body likes this situation, but those are the facts. As im-
portant as the Mass and sac-
raments are to Catholics, they don’t restrict us from personal prayer, good works, and comp-
assion. Those are what the teaching of Jesus was most about. While we have to “fast” from the Eucharist at this time, we can still live fervent Chris-
tian lives. Let’s focus on what we CAN do.

Q. Will Jesus Christ come back to Earth?

A. One of the acclamations in the Eucharistic Prayer used to say: “Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.” That accla-
mation was eliminated when the English version of the Roman Missal was published about six years ago. Now and when Christ will come again has befuddled us beginning with the very early believ-
ers. They assumed that the return of Christ would come during their lifetime. We still live with the mystery, but con-
sidering that God is not bound by the constraints of time and space, it’s not up to us. We live our lives in the confidence that God is always with us and that we can pray to Jesus at any time, for any need.

Got a question for “Ask a Priest” and its author, Father John Ludwig? Send it to com-
 munications@dmdioce.org.

Mystical experience and everyday people

Guest Column

By Father Ron Rolheiser

What kinds of things help induce mys-
ticism in our lives? I was asked that question re-
tently and this was my immediate, non-reflected,
answer: whatever brings tears to your eyes in ei-
ther genuine sorrow or genuine joy; but that re-
sponse was predicated on a lot of things.

In the popular mind mysticism is mis-
understood badly. We tend to identify mysticism with what’s extraordinary and paranormal, and see it as something for the spiritual elite. For
most people, mysticism means spiritual visions and ecstatic experiences which take you outside of normal consciousness.

Mysticism can be that sometimes, though normally it has nothing to do with visions, altered states of consciousness, or states of ecstasy. Rather it has to do with a seeing clarity of
mind and heart. Mystical experiences are experi-
ences that cut through all the things that normally block us from touching our deepest selves, and they are rare because normally our consciousness is cut off from our deep, true, virgin self by the influence of ego, wound, history, social pressure, ideology, false fear, and all the various affects we
should and shed like clothing. Rarely are we ever in touch with our deepest center, without filters, purely. But when we are, that’s what makes for a mystical experience.

Mysticism, as Ruth Burrows defines it, is being touched by God in a way that’s beyond words, imagination, and feeling. God, as we know, is One
ess, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. So any time we are genuinely touched by one-
ness, truth, goodness, or beauty, without anything distorting that, we’re having a mystical experi-
ence. What might that look like?

Ruth Burrows describes a mystical ex-
perience which radically changed her life when
she was eighteen years old, a senior at a private
high school for young women operated by an or-
servant order of nuns, on a retreat preparing for graduation, and not very mature. She and one of her friends were not taking this retreat very seriously, pass-
ing notes to each other and pulling pranks during the conferences. At a point, their antics were dis-
turbing enough that the nuns pulled them out of
the group and had them sit in silence in a chapel, chaperoned by a teacher, whenever the rest of the

Watch Bishop Joensen’s reflections...

plus, his Wednesday Mass livestreamed at 12:10pm on Facebook

We welcome Letters to the Editor

The Catholic Mirror welcomes Letters to the Editor written by parishioners of the Diocese of Des Moines. Letters should pertain to issues of faith. Please keep letters to 300 words or less. Send to communications@dmdioce.org or The Catholic Mirror 601 Grand Ave.

Des Moines, IA 50309

Opinion

The Catholic Mirror September 18

By Othobe father Ron Rolheiser

Wealthy people are what that document says:

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By Father Ron Rolheiser

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turbing enough that the nuns pulled them out of
the group and had them sit in silence in a chapel, chaperoned by a teacher, whenever the rest of the

class was at a conference. At first, Burrows con-
fessed, they continued their joking around, but
the hours were long and the silence eventually wore her down. Sitting alone, bored and irritated, a mystical experience graced her, uninvited and unexpec-
ted. And it came, upon her as a vision or an ecstasy, but as a moment of searing clarity. At a certain moment, sitting alone, she saw her-
self with absolute clarity for who she really was, in all her immediacy and in all her goodness. It changed her life. From then on she knew who she was – beyond ego, wound, immaturity, peer pres-
sure, ideology, and all affectation. In that moment she knew her deepest self purely (and the only thing that was extraordinary was its extraordinary clarity).

So, what kinds of things might induce mystical experiences in our lives? The short an-
swer: anything that takes you beyond your ego,
your wounds, your affectations, and the powerful social pressures within which you breathe, that is, anything that helps put you in touch with who you really are and makes you want to be a better person. And this can be many things. It might be a book you read; it might be the beauty of nature; it might be the sight of a newborn baby, a crying
child, a wounded animal, or the face of someone suffering; or it might be what you feel deep down when you receive an expression of love, bless someone, express genuine contrition, or share helplessness. It can be many things.

“Father,” she was asked after teaching a course, I assigned the students a number of books to read, among them Christopher de Vinck’s, Only
the Heart Knows How to Find them – Precious Memo-
rial for Faithless Time. This is a series of autobiographical essays within which de Vinck simply shares very warmly about his marriage, his children, and his home life. At the end of the semester a young woman, with de Vinck’s book in her hand, said to me: “Father, this is the best
book I’ve ever read. I’ve always fancied myself a
very free, liberated person and I’ve slept my way
through several cities, but now I realize that what I want is what this man has. I want sex to take me home. I want a home. I want the marriage bed. I
know now what I need!”

Reading Christopher de Vinck’s book had triggered a mystical experience inside her, not unlike the one described by Ruth Burrows. Reading The Story of a Soul by Therese of Li-
ieux generally does that for me.

So, here’s my counsel: seek out what does that for you. It doesn’t have to bring tears
to your eyes, it just has to point you with seeing clarity towards home!

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be con-
 tacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.
Deacon Community XIII celebrated its 10th anniversary of ordination on Aug. 14, when 13 men were ordained the permanent diaconate. Pictured here are the deacons and their wives during the Rite of Candidacy in 2007 at Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri.

Deacon Community XIII celebrated its 10th anniversary of ordination on Aug. 14, when 13 men were ordained the permanent diaconate. Pictured here are the deacons and their wives during the Rite of Candidacy in 2007 at Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri.

PORTLAND, Ore. (CNS) -- While the foothills of Oregon’s Cascade Mountains have been ablaze, creating red apocalyptic skies and leaving five small towns in ashes, most of the churches in the Archdiocese of Portland have not burned and many have offered shelter to thousands of evacuees.

On Sept. 9, two deaths in Marion County and one in Jackson County were reported, but Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said she feared that many more lives were lost.

Ann Brophy, pastoral associate at Sacred Heart Church in Medford, stood on her front porch the night of Sept. 8 and watched the small towns of Phoenix and Talent incinerate just a few miles south.

“It was terrifying,” said Brophy, who lives in an area where residents are to be ready to leave at a moment’s notice. One Sacred Heart parishioner in Phoenix lost her mobile home to flames not long after gathering up photographs of her husband, who died two years ago. Brophy said she expects that many more parishioners will report being suddenly homeless.

The interior of St. Pius X Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is seen after the Aug. 10 derecho windstorm. A rubber covering on the roof was blown off causing water damage. (CNS photo/courtesy Michael Becker via The Witness)

Derecho Relief Fund was established and special weekend collection held

In response to recent local and global disasters, Bishop William Joensen asked all parishes in the Diocese of Des Moines take up a special collection at all of their Masses Aug. 29-30.

On Aug. 10, a straight-line windstorm, called a derecho, hit Iowa with hurricane-force winds. The storm caused severe damage to crops, businesses and homes. The derecho caused an estimated $4 billion in damages.

The Diocese of Des Moines is working with the Des Moines Catholic Charities to help individuals and families most severely affected. A derecho Relief Fund has been established for this work of mercy, and Bishop Joensen is asking individuals and families to prayerfully consider making a donation during the collection at one of the Masses or online at www.dmdiocese.org/giving

Donations will provide direct relief to those with the greatest need. If funds collected meet the needs in southwest Iowa, the diocese will contact neighboring dioceses impacted by the derecho, including the Archdiocese of Dubuque and Diocese of Davenport, to share these relief funds.

Funds will also be collected at Mass for those impacted by the tragic explosion in Beirut, Lebanon. The blast killed hundreds and injured thousands on Aug. 4, when 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate detonated at the city’s port. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked Catholics to offer a response of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and advocacy. Donations can be made at www.dmdiocese.org/giving. Funds collected will be sent to Catholic Relief Services for distribution.

The interior of St. Pius X Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is seen after the Aug. 10 derecho windstorm. A rubber covering on the roof was blown off causing water damage. (CNS photo/courtesy Michael Becker via The Witness)

Derecho Relief Fund was established and special weekend collection held

In response to recent local and global disasters, Bishop William Joensen asked all parishes in the Diocese of Des Moines take up a special collection at all of their Masses Aug. 29-30.

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A properly-formed conscience

The bishops’ role in politics is to help members of the community to form his or her conscience.
- In forming our conscience, we should:
  - Approach any decision to be made with an openness to the truth and what is right.
  - Study Scripture and Church teaching on the subject.
  - Examine the facts/background information from a variety of sources.
  - Enter a time of prayerful discernment about God’s will.
  - Be courageous and act upon our convictions.

Legislative Principles: How do candidates react?

The Iowa Catholic Conference – comprised of the four bishops of Iowa – laid out key legislative principles for the upcoming election. The intent is to serve an educational purpose and not to endorse or oppose any candidate or political party.

Human Life and Dignity

Human life should be protected from conception until natural death as a basic requirement of a just and moral society. It should be recognized that God created each person as male and female. Every person is entitled to basic human necessities, such as good, clean water and air, education, health care, and productive work for fair wages.

Abortion

The unborn have a right to be protected against the violence of abortion. (Legislative example: A state constitutional amendment to clarify that the Iowa Constitution does not grant a right to an abortion.)

Education

Parents have the right to choose the kind of education best suited to the needs of their children. Public policy should assist parents in exercising that right. (Legislative example: Education Savings Accounts)

Racism

Racism, both individual and systemic, is an evil which endures in our society and should be condemned. Policies should be promoted that will end racism and its effects in our civic and social institutions. (Legislative example: Addressing racial profiling by law enforcement.)

Care of Creation

“... We live in a common home which God has entrusted to us ... It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us.” (Laudato Si, #232, #160) (Legislative example: Protection of food assistance programs; measures to increase the availability of affordable housing.)

Health Care

Health care is a human right (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, #166) and essential to protecting human life and dignity, especially for those who may be vulnerable, such as the elderly, the poor, or those with disabilities. (Legislative example: Support additional funding for mental health services; oppose additional work reporting requirements for Medicaid.)

Immigration

Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland. While sovereign nations have the right to control their borders, the Church recognizes that persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families. The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected. (Legislative example: Opposing additional law enforcement of federal immigration laws.)

Religious Liberty

Government should recognize the First Amendment right of religious groups, including religious minorities, to practice their faith and still participate fully in public life. (Legislative example: Supporting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.)

To learn more about Faithful Citizenship and voting discernment visit IowaCatholicConference.org and DMDiocese.org.

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer”
Romans 12:12

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, accept me, I beseech you, the grace of a happy death in that hour of death 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 and Joseph, I commend my soul. Amen

Caldwell Parrish
Funeral Home & Crematory

Reach 35,000 households by placing an ad in The Catholic Mirror. Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdiocese.org to learn more.

Faithful Citizenship
Bishops of Iowa help community form their conscience

Each election cycle has unique characteristics, and this one is no exception. This time it seems to be distinguished by threats.

The threat of the coronavirus pandemic: Many of us live in fear for our lives and our livelihood because of the threat of COVID-19. We need elected leaders who will act out of concern for public health, including by their example of practicing the safety precautions, in order to ensure the safety of the workforce and students in schools.

The threat to life: There are forces that threaten the unborn with abortion, or prisoners with the death penalty, or the aged and terminally ill with physician assisted suicide. We need elected officials who will be guided by science to recognize as a human person the infant in the womb, the aged person in a sick bed, and all others, respecting the sanctity and dignity of all human life.

Participation is a right and a usual obligation.

The threat to human rights and to the common good: There are threats of people being denied their rights, as well as their access to benefits and to protection, simply because of their gender, color, country of origin, religion, or... whatever. We need elected officials who will enact laws that dismantle institutional racism.

The threat to immigrants: DAPA recipients live in fear of deportations from the only home they have ever known. Their parents and others live in the same fear and having to return to the threat of gang violence, and oppressive governments, or poverty. We need elected officials who will stop talking and start acting to reform our broken, outdated immigration system, in order to accommodate these family-oriented, God-fearing, Church-going people, who came here for work to feed, clothe and house their families.

Finally, there is the threat to our democratic process. Even those who are eligible to vote, and able to vote, but who don’t exercise that right and duty, or don’t exercise it conscientiously. We won’t tell you who to vote for, but we will tell you to vote.

Most Rev. Michael Jackeln, Archbishop of Dubuque
Most Rev. B. Walker Nickles, Bishop of Sioux City
Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula, Bishop of Davenport
Most Rev. William Joensen, Bishop of Des Moines

Conscience is not something that allows us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere ‘feeling’ about what we should or should not do. Rather, conscience is the voice of God resonating in the human heart, revealing the truth to us and calling us to see what is good while shunning what is evil.”
- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

When you see Knights in yellow vests that read “Helping People with Intellectual Disabilities,” you should smile. When these Knights are holding their bright cans and collecting donations around town, they are helping to recognize the dignity of every person.

For every donation, each donor is offered a piece of candy by the Knight present, most commonly a Tootsie Roll. Because of these little gifts of appreciation, the “Campaign for People with Intellectual Disabilities” has frequently referred to as the “Tootsie Roll Drive.” It is a popular and successful fund-raisers conducted by Knights of Columbus councils.

The campaign, which stretches back decades, is about more than just candy — it is about serving those with intellectual and physical disabilities. Councils’ participation in this campaign as well as many other fund-raising endeavors last year contributed to the $185 million and volunteered over 75 million hours last year helping various causes.

The Knights of Columbus not only conducts the “Tootsie Roll Drives” in their efforts to help people with intellectual and physical disabilities, but has also partnered with the Special Olympics since its founding along with other programs.

So the next time you see a Knight in a yellow vest asking for donations outside a grocery store, and you receive a Tootsie Roll, remember it’s more than a “Tootsie Roll Drive.” It’s a chance to provide people with intellectual and physical disabilities more resources to live a happy life.