

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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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

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Next weekend's Christ Our Life Conference held in-person, online

Bishop William Joensen has encouraged people to participate in the Christ Our Life Conference -- either online or in-person -- the weekend of Sept. 26-27. For those attending in-person, face masks will be required in all common areas.

Watch Bishop Joensen's short interview with conference co-founders Marilyn Lane and Ellen Miller at Facebook.com/DMDiocese or on the diocesan homepage at DMDiocese.org. Learn more and buy tickets at ChristOurLifeIowa.com.

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

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Farmers have long depended on God, as their work is filled with many uncertainties, resulting in a deep faith. Patrick and Diane Gannon's trees, corn crop and grain bins took a hit from the derecho. This grain bin was blown off its foundation and the roof ripped off by the strong winds. The Gannons attend St. Mary / Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart.



Blessings in disguise

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



Jill Gerling, coordinator of faith formation at All Sains Parish in Stuart and St. John Parish in Adair, shows the space for good social distancing when religious education begins.

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 parish-

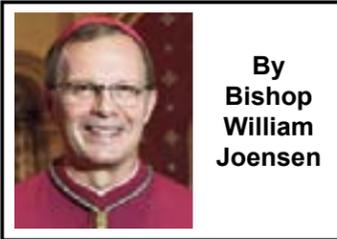
es indicate some are doing family-based formation, many are offering online or at-home catechesis and many are moving to a hybrid model with some in-class time

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Archangelic Attitudes

September 29th is the annual Feast of Saints Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel. The archangels are not fictional superheroes; they are real persons without bodies but with distinctive shares in God's appointed mission. There is no rivalry or competition among them. We pray to them for protection, healing, and sustained joy the Gospel is meant to instill. As with anyone upon whom we set our hearts and devotion, we not only receive grace; we become somehow more like the persons we love. This is my hope in these contentious, sometimes murky and mysterious times: that each of us will become more like the archangels.

Thanks to the friendly prompting of Jeff Pierick and his men's group in West Des Moines, I have rejoined the many faithful praying the St. Michael prayer on a regular basis. Saint Michael, the warrior and protector, battles against the "wickedness and snares of the Devil," who seeks to deceive and seduce us with his lies and lead us to destruction (see Rev. 12:7-9). Michael wields the sword of truth that exposes lies, distills light from darkness and liberates us from the many grey shades of moral relativism. Our culture is rife with spin doctors whose words are slippery and peeled off from reference to reality.



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

When we imitate Michael, we are courageous enough to "call things by their proper name," as St. John Paul II enjoined, allowing us to be sifted and measured by the good God has established and bestowed. We are bold enough to claim that there is such a thing as "human nature" and that our choices and actions either contribute to our flourishing or our downfall, depending on whether we respect the natural law God has inscribed in minds and hearts.

Yet the sword of God's word wielded by Christians in the cause of truth cannot be a slash-and-burn affair, dividing and further polarizing human society, our country, and our Church. We cannot lay proprietary claim to the "Truth" (capital "T") as a way of separating the good guys from the bad guys, deflecting attention away from the fact that we are all sinners seeking to be saved. Sometimes I wonder if our own bickering and finger-pointing within the Church, let alone the wholesale denunciations by various "Catholic" organizations,

make us seem like one more human society set against itself. We don't want to resemble the Midianites of the Old Testament, who, when the men of Gideon broke their jars and blew their horns, wielded their swords against one another instead of their real enemy (Judges 7:16-22). Jesus does not further bend the bruised reed, or quench the smoldering wick (Matthew 12:20). We must mingle mercy with justice, and befriend our own frail nature in our neighbor and ourselves. And that's where the ministry and example of St. Raphael is vital.

When Raphael enters the house of the blind Tobit, the angelic guest says to the man on the brink of despair, "Take courage! God has healing in store for you!" (Tobit 5:10). Raphael ministers healing of physical sight and rescues from despair. He reconciles body and spirit, uniting Tobit in his own person, restoring his household, bestowing blessings and peace. We imitate Raphael when we are agents of encouragement, when we seek to make peace with God, quieting our own self-recrimination sometimes spun outward in our harsh attitudes toward those around us and our world. The Sacrament of Reconciliation continues to be made available by our dedicated parish priests throughout the Diocese, and the gates of mercy

remain wide open in our ongoing pandemic with permission for general absolution from sin under appropriate circumstances. When we know peace in God's sight, we find ourselves spending less time stewing about what's wrong with the world, and more time praying about how we might anoint others we accompany on our pilgrim way with a word of encouragement, 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 announce good news to others, just as God commends us to do.

"Rejoice!" is the angel's greeting to Mary (Luke 1:28). Gabriel found joy when announcing 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 continues, "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter," even as he understands "the grief of people who have to endure great suffering." Yet, "slowly but surely we all have to let the joy of faith slowly revive as a quiet but firm trust, even amid the greatest distress." When happiness seems elusive, we imitate Gabriel and the author of the Book of Lamentations: "I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the stead-

fast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new each morning" (Lam. 3:17, 21-23, cited in EG n. 6).

Adapting Pope Francis' original predecessor, St. Peter, we might ask ourselves, "Am I always ready to give a reason for the [joy] that is in me?" (cf. 1 Peter 3:15). When people encounter me, what sort of spiritual "vibe" do they perceive: someone who is bitter? Cranky? Cynical? Or someone who lifts spirits, is quick to laugh at herself, himself, quick to inject joy into situations, focus on the good in one another and confirms that God is present among us, within us—the basis of all joy? And is there any greater source for regular renewal of joy within us than our reception of the Eucharist—however many precautions we observe these days—where we become like Mary in Gabriel's presence when the priest or minister holds out the host and announces, "The Body of Christ!"?

We are definitely not angels. But as we ardently pursue truth, we also want to heal, to bring hope and joy to our weary world. We cultivate archangelic attitudes, imitating Saints Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel—and not just on their feast day, but in every time and season.

Actitud de los Arcángeles

El 29 de septiembre es la fiesta anual de Santos Miguel, Rafael y Gabriel. Los arcángeles no son superhéroes ficticios; son personas reales sin cuerpo, pero con un papel específico en la misión encargada por Dios. No hay rivalidad ni competencia entre ellos. Les oramos pidiendo protección, alivio y el constante gozo que debe infundirnos el Evangelio. Como cualquier persona a quien confiamos nuestros

corazones y nuestra devoción, no solamente recibimos gracia; nos convertimos de alguna forma en las personas a quienes amamos. Eso es lo que yo espero en estos tiempos de contención, en veces turbios y misteriosos: que cada uno de nosotros sea más como los arcángeles.

Gracias a la amable invitación de Jeff Pierick y su grupo de hombres en West Des Moines, me he unido a los muchos fieles que rezan regularmente la oración de San Miguel. San Miguel, el guerrero y protector, quien lucha contra la "perversidad y acechanzas del Demonio" quien busca confundirnos y seducirnos con sus mentiras para llevarnos a la destrucción (ver Ap. 12:7-9). Miguel carga con la espada de la verdad que expone las mentiras, produce luz de la oscuridad y nos libera de los muchos tonos gris del relativismo moral. Nuestra cultura está repleta de autores del engaño cuyas palabras son astutas y transformadas de la referencia a la realidad.

Cuando imitamos a Miguel, tenemos el suficiente valor de "llamar a las cosas por su propio nombre," como lo definió San Juan Pablo II, permitiéndonos enfrentar el escrutinio y las medidas que el buen Dios ha establecido e impartido. Tenemos la suficiente resolución para reconocer que existe eso llamado "naturaleza humana" y que nuestras decisiones y acciones contribuyen tanto para nuestra superación o como para nuestro colapso, dependiendo de si respetamos la ley natural que Dios ha escrito en nuestras mentes y en nuestros corazones. Pero aún así, la espada de la palabra de Dios que portan los cristianos en la causa de la verdad no debe ser asunto

de cortar y quemar, dividiendo y polarizando aún más a la sociedad humana, a nuestro país y a nuestra Iglesia. No podemos reclamar propiedad de la "Verdad" (con "V" mayúscula) como una forma de separar a los buenos de los malos, desviando la atención de la realidad de que todos somos pecadores que buscamos la salvación. A veces me pregunto si nuestras propias querellas y acusaciones dentro de la Iglesia, más allá de las denuncias generalizadas de varias organizaciones "católicas" nos hacen parecer más como una sociedad humana enfrentada a sí misma. No queremos parecernos a los madianitas del Antiguo Testamento quienes, luego de que los hombres de Gedeón destruyeran sus jarrones y sonaran sus cuernos, levantaron sus espadas unos contra otros en vez de hacerlo contra sus verdaderos enemigos (Jueces 7:16-22.) Jesús no quiebra la caña resquebrajada ni apaga la mecha que todavía humea (mateo 12:20.) Nosotros debemos asociar la misericordia con la justicia y acoger nuestra propia frágil naturaleza con nuestro prójimo y con nosotros mismos. Y es allí en donde es vital el ministerio y el ejemplo de San Rafael. Cuando Rafael entra en la casa del ciego Tobías, el invitado angelical dice al hombre, quien está ya al límite de la desesperación, "¡Ten confianza, que Dios te curará dentro de poco!" (Tobías 5:10.) Rafael le sana de la vista física y le rescata de la desesperación. Reconcilia cuerpo y espíritu, uniéndolo a Tobías a su propia persona, restaurando su hogar, otorgándole bendiciones y paz. Nosotros imitamos a Rafael cuando somos agentes de inspiración, cuando buscamos hacer las paces con Dios, silenciando nuestra propia recriminación que en

veces se nos escapa en actitudes hostiles hacia aquellos que nos rodean y hacia nuestro mundo. El Sacramento de Reconciliación sigue estando disponible por parte de nuestros dedicados sacerdotes parroquiales en toda la Diócesis, y las puertas de la misericordia continúan abiertas de par en par en medio de nuestra existente pandemia con el permiso de otorgar la absolución general de los pecados en circunstancias apropiadas. Cuando conocemos la paz ante los ojos de Dios, nos encontramos gastando menos tiempo contemplando lo que está mal con el mundo, y más tiempo orando sobre cómo podemos unguir a otros para que nos acompañen en nuestro peregrinar con palabras de ánimo, gestos de empatía, y una benigna tolerancia que nos llame a decirles que "¡Dios te curará dentro de poco!" Deliberamos y tenemos la gracia como San Gabriel, listos para anunciar la buena nueva a los demás, tal y como Dios nos manda a hacerlo. "¡Alégrate!" es el saludo del ángel a María (Lucas 1:28). Gabriel encontró el gozo al anunciar gozo a los demás. En su mensaje "El Gozo del Evangelio," el Papa Francisco hace nota en cuando los primeros discípulos partieron "lentos de gozo" (Hechos 8:8). El Santo Padre continúa, "hay cristianos cuya opción parece ser la de una Cuaresma sin Pascua," aunque él entiende "las personas que tienden a la tristeza por las graves dificultades que tienen que sufrir." Pero aún así "poco a poco hay que permitir que la alegría de la fe comience a despertarse, como una secreta pero firme confianza, aún en las mayores angustias." Cuando la felicidad parece escaparse, nosotros imitamos a Gabriel y al autor del Libro de las

Lamentaciones: "Esto reflexionó en mi corazón, y por eso esperé: el amor del Señor no se ha acabado, ni se agotarán sus misericordias; se renuevan cada mañana." (Lam. 3:17, 21-23, mencionadas en EG no. 6.)

Adaptando al predecesor original del Papa Francisco, San Pedro, podemos preguntarnos a nosotros mismos, "¿estoy siempre listo para dar respuesta al [gozo] que hay en mí?" (cf. 1 Pedro 3:15). Cuando la gente se encuentra conmigo, ¿qué tipo de "vibra" espiritual perciben: alguien que está amargado? ¿Malhumorado? ¿Cínico? O alguien que eleva los espíritus, que no tarda en reírse de sí mismo/a, que rápidamente inyecta gozo en las situaciones, enfocándose en el bien de unos con otros y que confirma la presencia de Dios entre nosotros, dentro de nosotros — la base del gozo? ¿Existe acaso dentro de nosotros una mayor fuente de constante renovación de alegría que la recepción de la Eucaristía — a pesar de las muchas precauciones que observamos en estos días — en donde nos hacemos más como María en presencia de Gabriel cuando el sacerdote o el ministro sostiene la hostia y anuncia, "¡El Cuerpo de Cristo!"?

Definitivamente no somos ángeles. Pero al buscar arduamente la verdad, también queremos sanar, traer esperanza y alegría a nuestro desgastado mundo. Cultivamos actitudes de arcángeles, imitando a santos Miguel, Rafael y Gabriel — y no solamente en su día pero en todo momento y en toda temporada.

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

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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 busy 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 breaking even is a best-case scenario.

Before the derecho, the drought had already been weighing on farmers throughout western Iowa.

“You could tell that it was going to be a lower yield even before the storm came through. Of course, it depends if you have early beans or late beans as far as how bad the drought is going to affect them,” Splendore added, predicting that soybean bushels per acre would be about half the size. “My guess is 20-30 bushels to the acre. Normal around here is 45-65 – that’s an average yield.”

John Freund of Ss. Peter & Paul Parish in Atlantic, said the drought will negatively impact harvest.

“We’ll probably be at 50 to 55 percent of yields from last year,” Freund said.

“There’s increased costs of production,” he added. “We won’t cover our production costs this year.”

Freund’s family farming operation also has feed lot cattle, which took a direct hit from COVID-19, due to the closure of restaurants and drop in travel.

“It’s been a huge capital drain on our industry....” Freund said. “Beef is a meat of celebration or travel. There’s no travel and people are scared, and when they don’t move they don’t spend money on beef. We haven’t shown a profit of any lot of cattle since mid-March.”

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



Photo by Lanette Freund

John Freund, of Ss. Peter & Paul Parish in Atlantic, said crops have been negatively impacted by the drought. This is his cornfield outside of Atlantic.

“When they shut everything 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 unmerchandise to hotels and restaurants.”

The beef industry quickly shifted from 40 percent retail to 75 percent retail when restaurant and travel sales nosedived, 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 animals.

“You look at the devastation and you think, ‘I’m not going to have money for these crops

or sell these pigs,’” Gannon said. “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 little bit, but we’re all gonna get by and he’ll lead us in the right direction.”

The three men agree - they don’t know how they’d handle the ups and downs of farming

without their faith.

“A lot of people say farming is the biggest gamble in the world, but if you have faith it’s not - it averages out every time,” Gannon added.

Farming and faith go hand-in-hand, said Freund.

“It’s in our prayers every 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 together.”

Tune in to
**Making it Personal with
Bishop Joensen**



Heard every Friday morning at 9 a.m.

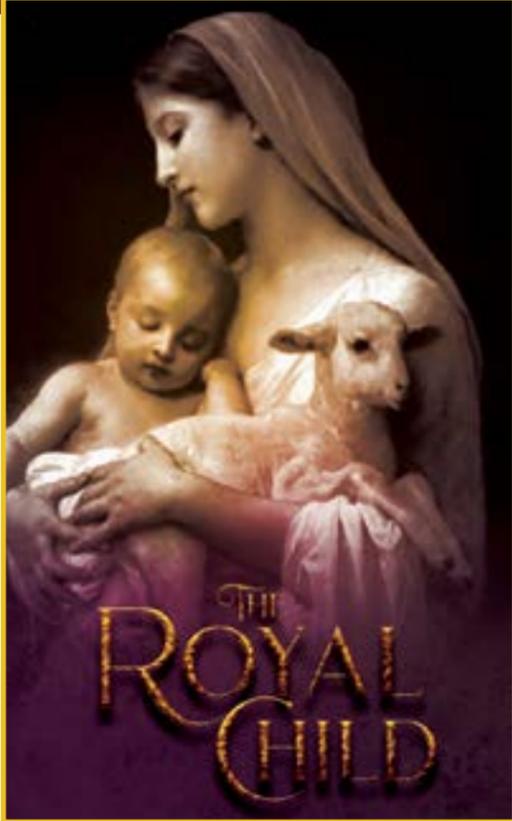
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Consejero sobre Asistencia de Víctimas

El Consejero 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.

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Transitional deacon accepts gifts of chalice, paten



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.

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 front-line 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 grew up at a time when there were few priests to serve his community.

His mother had a large role in his vocation.

"My mother used to take me to prayer groups. She used to advise me on the need to serve God and humanity through priesthood," said Father Bede. "Based on my mother's advice, I was challenged to go to junior seminary in the 1979 academic year."

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 school 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.



Father Bede Inekwere

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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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."



Dominic Hguyen grew up in Vietnam before his family moved to Iowa in 2010. He attended Hoover High School in Des Moines, and completed an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering at Iowa State University earlier this year.

He received his calling early on at 7 or 8 years old.

"I still remember when I prayed with a nun

who was my aunt and she taught me how to pray," said Hguyen. "I felt 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 Hguyen 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, Hguyen 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 Hguyen's mind while he kept in touch with Father Ross Parker and began to attend discernment retreats.

Hguyen has begun the two year pre-theology program of St. Pius X Seminary at Loras College, where he will complete the prerequisite philosophy classes before beginning major seminary.

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: dmdiocese.org/giving/special-collection-giving

Dowling graduate Sister Mary Esther makes final profession



Sister Mary Esther with her brother Father James Downey

By Kelly Mescher Collins
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.

Sister Mary Esther graduated from Dowling Catholic High School in 2007.

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

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 (Pat), 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.)

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.

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."

A client at the Thanksgiving food pantry event last year wrote, "Thank you for your help not only today, but every day you are here for us." These are a few of the many comments received from clients.

"We are grateful to our donors who extend the opportunity to offer these services," said Debra Powers, Catholic Charities Development Director.

Meeting the needs in our community.

"As a social ministry, Catholic Charities offers excellent programs which serve a variety of people in need of essential services," said Barbara Decker, J.D., who joined Catholic Charities as executive director in 2018.

"Throughout the pandemic, our staff has adapted to ensure our programs and services remain open despite financial and logistical challenges," she said. "We thank them for their exceptional contributions as we continue to assess and innovate to find the best ways to provide quality services to the Diocese of Des Moines."

Will you invest in our programs and services?

Last year was our first annual appeal, and it was an exciting beginning for a new fundraising initiative.



"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.

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Religious education programs serve 12,000 students across diocese

Continued from page 1



Catechist Elizabeth Williams teaches at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola.

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 lessons include movies that focus on themes, discussion questions and a take-home packet of hands-on material.

“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.

Ss. Peter & Paul Parish in Atlantic had recently begun a collaborative effort with parishes in, Anita, Griswold, and Cumberland/Reno, offering children’s activities and faith formation after school on days when the students were dismissed early from school. Now, that’s on hold as the parish pivots to an at-home mod-

el of formation.

Julie Williamson, director of religious education, found a family-based curriculum.

From an educational hub called The Pastoral Center, Williamson found Faith Stories, a new program of 15 sessions that families will do, two per month. Parents and children will work together to read the story, ask questions and discuss how God appears in daily life.

Catechists will check in on groups of four to six families offering them support, encouragement and connection to the parish.

The plan relies on the help of parents.

“Our focus is helping the parents feel confident in their faith and sharing that, praying with their kids,” Williamson said.

Jill Gerling agrees about the pandemic possibly presenting an opportunity for parishes to invite parents to play a more active role in their children’s growth in faith. She’s the coordinator of faith formation for All Saints Church in Stuart and St. John Parish in Adair.

“I think my dream for this is to get families involved a little more,” said Gerling, director of religious education in Stuart.

After considering the number of children in the parish program and the space available, Gerling created a limited in-person schedule of every other week meetings for the youth, with an online component available on the other weeks.

“I’m hoping with this online component, parents will become more active in their role as catechist in their children’s lives, as parents are God’s first teachers,” she said.

Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny is going with two separate models.

The at-church sessions meet in smaller groups on alternating weeks, (week A & week B).

The at-home sessions will be led by parents. A catechist will check in at least monthly to be a resource, make sure they are accessing the links to the lessons on the parish website, ask if there are any questions that need staff support and assist with any other needs a family might have that would help them be successful with content implementation, said Tom Primmer, director of religious education.

Both models have two age and developmentally appropriate lessons per month for youth and families to be supported with in their efforts in lifelong faith for-

mation.

“I’ve told my staff my two words for this year are fluidity and flexibility,” said Primmer. “I’ve had to put into practice now more than ever what I teach and preach; that is that there is the element of mystery in our faith. I have to live, walk and model living in mystery.”

Overall, there are at least three changes that can be seen as blessings, said John Gaffney, diocesan director of Evangelization and Catechesis.

One benefit is the shift to include at-home learning strengthens the domestic church, he said.

Another is that an emphasis on adult faith formation is in synch with the new Directory for Catechesis and direction from the U.S. bishops.

Lastly, the new religious education programs are attracting new volunteers and relying on more seasoned veterans at the same time.

“Catechetical leaders new and old are all on the same page,” Gaffney said. “It means we have to lean on each other as a community to get through this together not only to survive but to thrive. There are lots of opportunities for growth.”

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 Ss. 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.”

For 18 years, this parish has been practicing household-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

“Kitchen Table Faith,” a dedicated website).

Parish Connections—a final activity or project for households to complete and connect back with the parish community.

The parish is partnering in this project with St. Joseph Educational Center, which serves 24 parishes in the Des Moines metro area. Director Tom Quinlan, who will prepare the Sunday gospel reflections, also is drawing in national presenters to provide a message of hope and faith for parents and all adults on a monthly basis.

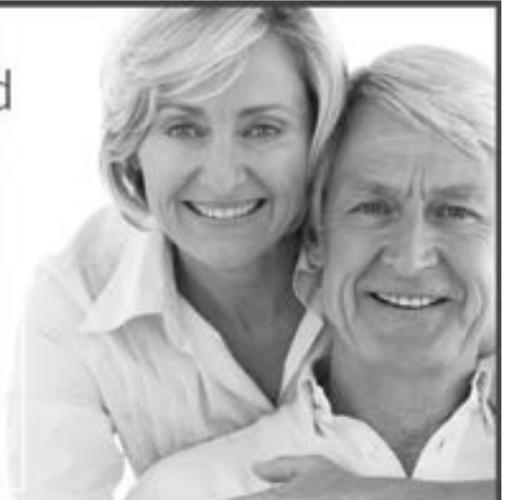
The parish and SJEC are inviting leadership of all parishes in the Des Moines diocese to check out Kitchen Table Faith and consider using all or part of it, adapting it for their own use.

“Use what we’re providing and make it your own,” Quinlan encouraged parishes. “Kitchen Table Faith is flexible so parishes can add their own videos and their own flavor, so customize it.”

“It’s not without hazards or risks,” said Father Fitzgerald. “We’re fully aware of that as well. But I think it offers the great advantage of taking the technology seriously and in a flexible method. It can reach a wide array of households in a parish and to invite all members of the parish into an interactive process. That’s really the center of intergenerational faith formation: A means to draw adults, teens and young children into a process of listening, praying and growing together.”

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Knights' leader focuses on service, veterans and families

By Dan Russo
Witness Editor

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.



Iowa Knights of Columbus State Deputy Paul Lee, left, helps a group of Knights of Columbus in Perry at a Knight's home. They then moved on to help an elderly neighbor remove debris after the derecho last month.

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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.



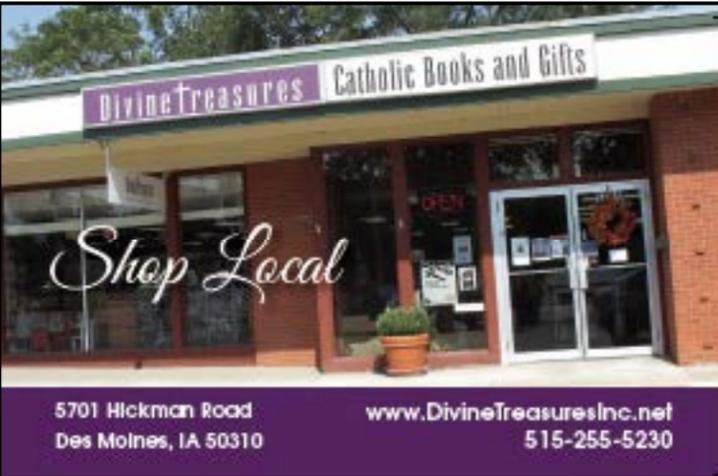
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Victim Assistance Advocate
 The diocese's Victim Assistance Advocate is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of sexual abuse of minors by clergy through a complaint process and in seeking support and counseling services. He can be reached at 515-286-2024 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.



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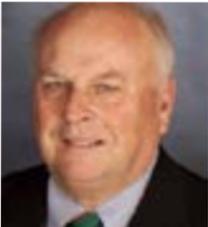
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W-2019530 08/18

DMACC students celebrate first year of Catholic club

**By Kelly Mescher 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 Chmelka, 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," Chmelka 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, vice-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," Chmelka 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



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.

really helps college students like me stay active in my faith and continue to grow in in this time of my life."

Learn more at Catholic-

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

Students head back to school



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



St. Malachy Catholic School fourth graders accept personal protective equipment from the local hospital, Greater Regional in Creston. Pictured are Kynzlee Seddon, Hadley Purdum, Ryder Baird, Mason Johnson and Matthew Warner.



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



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.



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

School is back in session for in-person learning at all 16 Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools.

Many parents across the diocese have responded favorably to the re-opening plan and several Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools have experienced enrollment growth as a result, said Donna Bishop, diocesan superintendent of schools.

While schools are open for in-person learning, parents were also provided the option of high-quality remote learning for their student. To date, approximately 10 percent of students have opted into remote learning. In the event that schools are directed to close again, all students will be able to quickly pivot to remote learning that continues their rigorous and personalized educa-

tion., Bishop said.

"Our goal was to open all Diocese of Des Moines schools for in-person learning," Bishop said. "For some families however, the remote learning option may be necessary for medical or other reasons. We wanted to give families options that would best meet their needs during these unprecedented times."



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Jim Witte
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2020 Fundraising Progress

Goal: \$3,876,850
as of August 31, 2020



The crosses we bear are calling us to be saints

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 it

Marriage and Family Life

By Adam Storey



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 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 astorey@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5056.

A Wisconsin pilgrimage

My husband, Kevin, and I recently headed to Wisconsin on a trip that in the end gave me a greater appreciation for the gifts of our Catholic Church.

We started at Dickeyville Grotto, built in the 1930s. You'll see an impressive array of devotional themes in artful displays painstakingly hand-constructed of beautiful rocks, shells, stalactites, fossils, glass, and coral.

Then we went to Holy Hill Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians. Holy Hill sits prominently atop the highest elevation in the Milwaukee basin amid mature native forest. The double-spired upper church is an architectural beauty with stained glass soaring to towering ceilings.

Attached to the main church is the Shrine Chapel which features a carved statue of Our Lady formerly displayed at the 1876 World's Fair. Crutches left behind attest to decades of miraculous healings. Visit the bookstore, outdoor Stations of the Cross, and hiking trails. Enjoy a worms-eye view of the towering church

Guest Column

By Donna Marie Seufferer



above while picnicking on the grounds below.

On to the only Church-approved Marian apparition site in the entire United States, The National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help is home to an 1859 apparition of Our Lady. The Apparition Chapel, located in the crypt, marks the apparition site and provides veneration of relics. The Fathers of Mercy offer daily Mass and confession. The rural setting is beautifully serene.

Kevin and I went to the National Shrine of St. Philomena in Briggsville. St. Philomena is an early Christian virgin-martyr whose bones were discovered in the Roman catacombs. The shrine fea-

tures a first-class relic of the saint in the main church, venerated in the side altar next to the Blessed Sacrament. An outdoor shrine entrenched with artistic symbolism offers information about the saint's life.

Lastly, we visited the Shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe on the bluffs of the Mississippi outside La Crosse. The theme of the shrine emphasizes the sanctity of human life. The Guadalupe shrine is a world-class Catholic pilgrimage site, a large complex expertly laid out among stately native trees.

Reminiscent of an old-world Spanish mission, colors taken from the miraculous Guadalupe image are used in textiles throughout the shrine.

Large displays of colorful blooms direct you into the experience as you scale up to the main church elevated high on the bluff. The ascent itself moves your senses heavenward as you encounter many outdoor devotional areas.

Visiting the various religious sites, I could not help but think about the many people involved -- their individual

stories and the sacrifices made. I thought about Father Matthias Wernerus who worked long hard hours in the sun to provide a place of prayer and to honor Our Lord at Dickeyville. I considered the task 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 appreciate the gifts that we have been given in our holy Catholic Church.

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

Seeking the spiritual side of homeostasis

If you follow these articles that I write, then, most likely, you have 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 immeasurable 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 continual improvement and growth.

But, as we all must admit, to change a pattern of anything is hard to do. Why is 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.

Let's Get Psyched

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 - has been essential to our well-being. For example, if we get too hot, we have bodily mechanisms such as sweating to cool us down. And if those don't work, we've learned to move into the shade, find cool water to pour over ourselves, and/or drink. Sociologically, homeostasis has also served us well throughout history. The ability to create and maintain stable family and working groups made it more likely that people would be able, over time, to prosper and grow.

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 man's well-being and needed to be managed or removed immediately in order to return to homeostasis, the status quo.

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.

It is he who puts the world into balance and order, calms 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.

Our minds cannot fully comprehend God. He is beyond our reasoning ability.

He is a matter of faith, not a matter of fact. Such a purposed design of perfect homeostasis given for us from God.

While our humanity seeks the shallows of comfort and pleasure, our spirituality yearns for the depths of stability and mystery. This is the yearning for Christ himself.

Therefore, let us be thankful that we worship a God who never changes.

Regardless of what differences may come to the world as we know it, God remains constant. Regardless of what we may have done in the past or will do in the future, God remains constant. He will never see any of us any differently than as his loved ones.

Now, that is good news for this change of seasons.

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

Ask a Priest

Q. I saw in the news recently that Cardinal Timothy Dolan praised President Donald Trump and remarked "We need you now more than ever." Church leaders who promote individual candidates worry me. It almost sounded like the Cardinal was giving a campaign speech for the President. 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 challenges for us all. Whether church leaders like or agree with a particular candidate or not is not the issue. Those leaders are given the responsibility to speak about issues, not candidates. The bishops themselves in the conclusion to "Faithful Citizenship," <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/> describe a better approach. This is what that document says:

"The Church is involved in the political process but is not partisan. The Church cannot champion any candidate or party."

"The Church is engaged in the political process but should not be used. We welcome dialogue with political leaders and candidates; we seek to engage and persuade public officials. Events and photo ops cannot substitute for serious dialogue."

"The Church is principled but not ideological."

Q. The corona virus pandemic has affected most of the world. Here in the United States, the federal and state governments have issued warnings and imposed restrictions on public gatherings. Even when some of the restrictions have been lifted, Church leaders, acting out of caution, have maintained those restrictions. When will

this come to an end?

A. I don't own a crystal ball, but I suspect we'll have major restrictions for quite a while. The reason 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. Nobody likes this situation, but those are the facts. As important as the Mass and sacraments are to Catholics, they don't restrict us from personal prayer, good works, and compassion. Those are what the teaching of Jesus was most about. While we have to "fast" from the Eucharist at this time, we still can live fervent Christian 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 acclamation was eliminated when the English version of the Roman Missal was published about six years ago. How and when Christ will come again has befuddled us beginning with the very early believers. They assumed that the return of Christ would come during their lifetime. We still live with the mystery, but considering 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 communications@dmdiocese.org.

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@dmdiocese.org or The Catholic Mirror 601 Grand Ave. Des Moines, IA 50309

Mystical experience and everyday people

Guest Column

By Father Ron Rolheiser



What kinds of things help induce mysticism in our lives? I was asked that question recently and this was my immediate, non-reflected, answer: whatever brings tears to your eyes in either genuine sorrow or genuine joy; but that response was predicated on a lot of things. What is mysticism? What makes for mystical experience?

In the popular mind mysticism is misunderstood 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 searing clarity of mind and heart. Mystical experiences are experiences 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, virginal self by the influence of ego, wound, history, social pressure, ideology, false fear, and all the various affectations we don 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 Oneness, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. So any time we are genuinely touched by oneness, truth, goodness, or beauty, without anything distorting that, we're having a mystical experience. What might that look like?

Ruth Burrows describes a mystical experience which radically changed her life when she was eighteen years old, a senior at a private high school for young women operated by an 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, passing notes to each other and pulling pranks during the conferences. At a point, their antics were disturbing 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 confesses, 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 unexpected. And it came upon her not as a vision or an ecstasy, but as a moment of searing clarity. At a certain moment, sitting alone, she saw herself with absolute clarity for who she really was, in all her immaturity and in all her goodness. It changed her life. From then on she knew who she was – beyond ego, wound, immaturity, peer pressure, 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 answer: 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.

Several years ago while 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 Memories 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 Lisieux 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 searing clarity towards home!

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Watch Bishop Joensen's reflections

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



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Oregon's fire: Most churches safe, for now, offering shelter



A neighborhood in Phoenix, Ore., is seen Sept. 9, 2020, after the Almeda fire swept through the area. (CNS photo/Adrees Latif, Reuters)

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.

Derecho Relief Fund was established and special weekend collection held



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)

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.

Deacons celebrate 10th anniversary



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.

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Faithful Citizenship

Bishops of Iowa help community form their conscience

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, housing, 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 edures in our society and should be condemned. Policies should be promoted that will combat 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: Adequate funding for enforcement of environmental laws; support of energy efficiency programs.)

Economic Concerns

Government should give the needs of the poor and vulnerable preferential consideration. (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.)

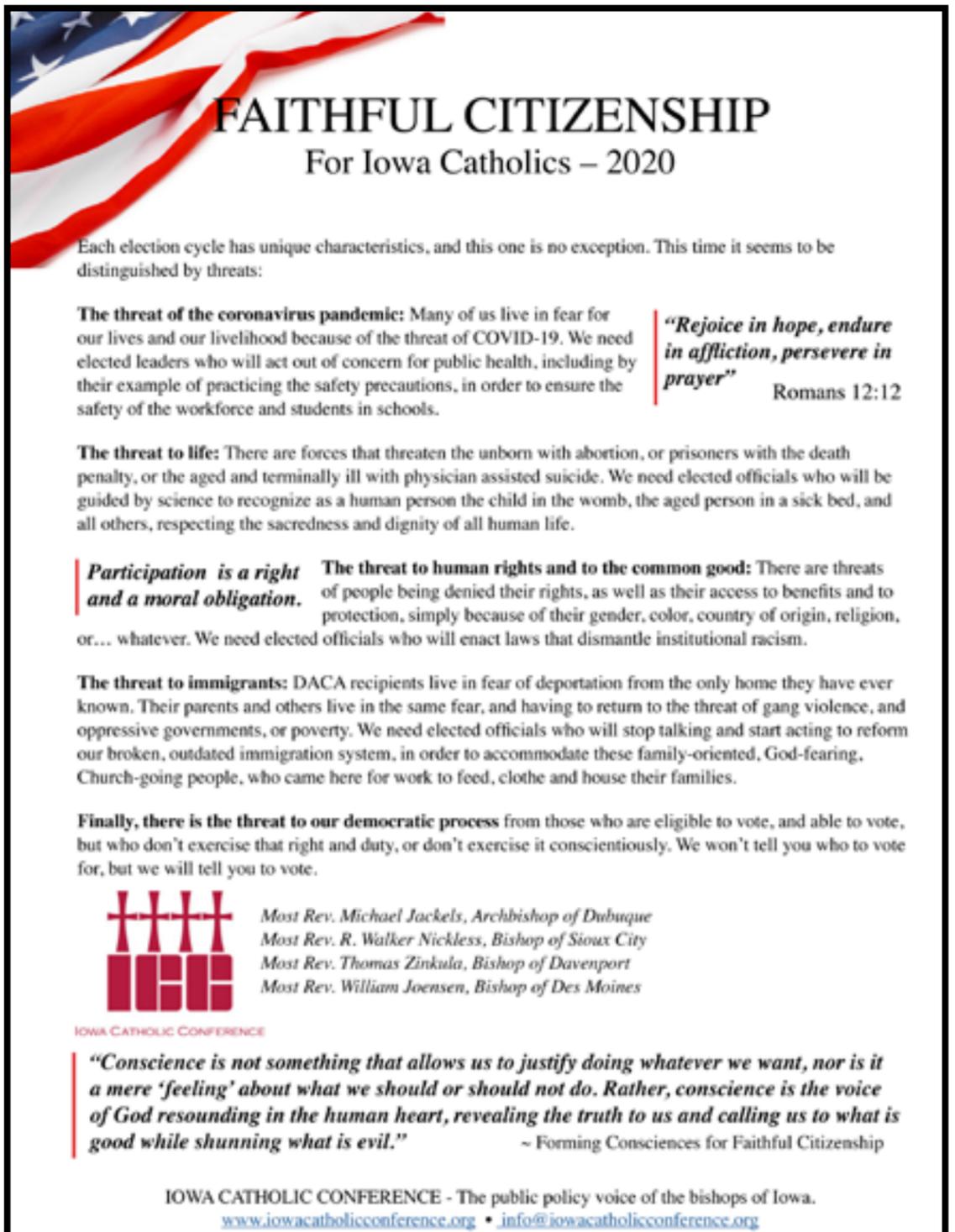
Immigration

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: Support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.)

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



FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP
For Iowa Catholics – 2020

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.

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

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 child in the womb, the aged person in a sick bed, and all others, respecting the sacredness and dignity of all human life.

Participation is a right and a moral 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.

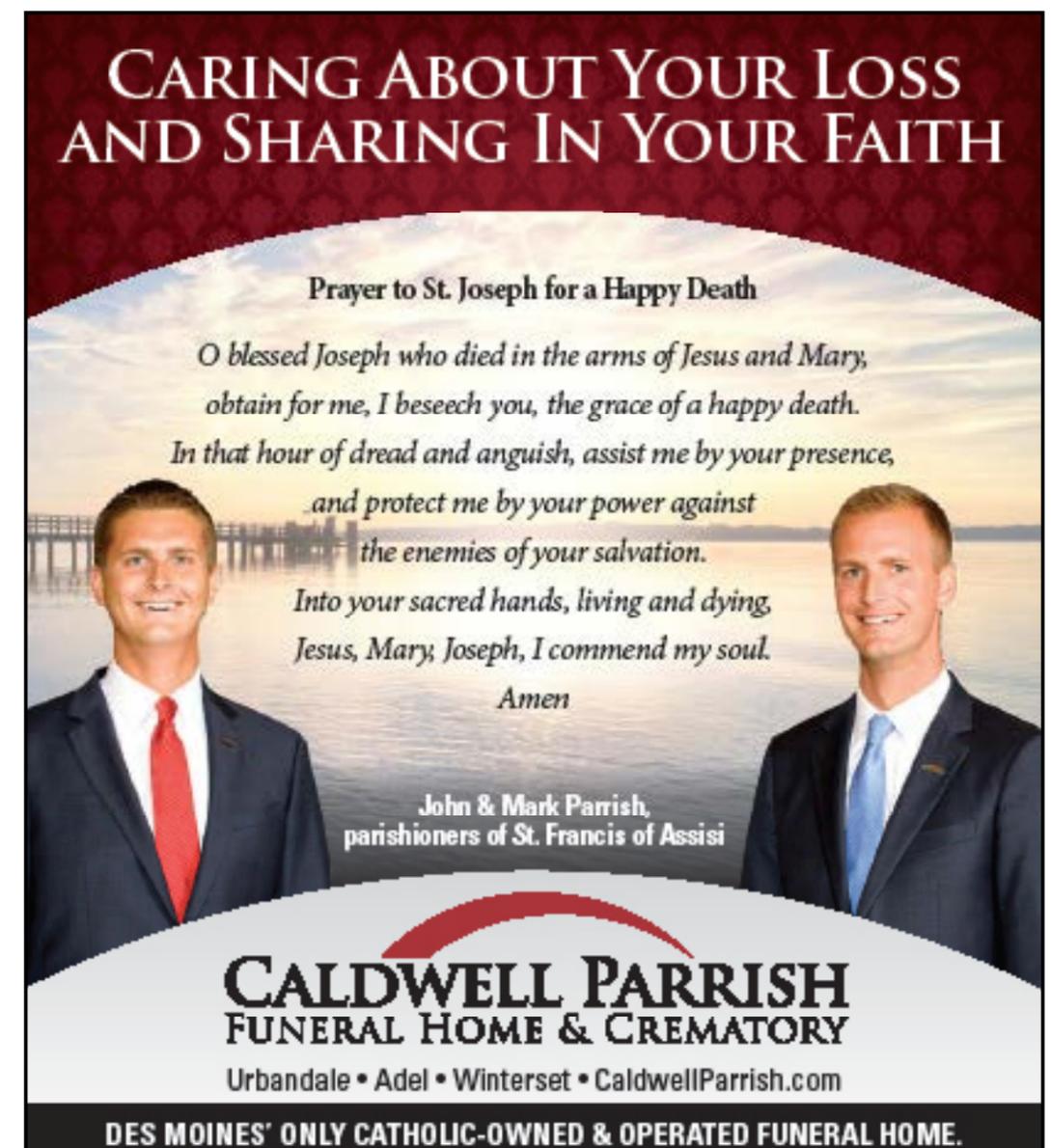
The threat to immigrants: DACA recipients live in fear of deportation from the only home they have ever known. Their parents and others live in the same fear, and having to return to the threat of gang violence, and oppressive governments, or poverty. We need elected officials who will stop talking and 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 from 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 Jackels, Archbishop of Dubuque
Most Rev. R. Walker Nickless, 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 resounding in the human heart, revealing the truth to us and calling us to what is good while shunning what is evil.” ~ Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

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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

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

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It's Much More than a Tootsie Roll



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.



Scan to learn more about the Knights

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