

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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Coordinator of Racial Justice Programming begins work

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Given the rising tension surrounding issues of racial justice and inequality, the Diocese of Des Moines felt compelled to better listen, understand and respond to those marginalized groups.

As a result, Mark Schmidt was hired on a contract basis in his role as coordinator of racial justice programming. His work began Jan. 13 and will conclude by June 25.

“Mark brings his perspective as social worker and theologian to bear upon our often-tense social situation and the circumstances of our Diocese,” said Bishop William Joensen. “He has been a respected member of the Iowa Catholic Conference who now is a faithful member of our Diocese. He brings a prophetic voice and a critical perspective to bear upon our community and local church.”

Schmidt’s duties include developing and executing a plan to address issues of racial justice. This effort will be conducted through the Lent and Easter seasons of 2021.

The scope of the project includes planning, implementing, and coordinating a diocesan wide effort to raise awareness related to issues of racial justice, and identify and promote concrete actions that parishes and parishioners can take to address racial justice.

“One of the things that I am dedicated to doing is making sure that in my work I center the voices of historically marginalized groups: Black, Indigenous, Latino, Pacific Islander and Asians,” Schmidt said. “Too often their voices are either not listened to or there isn’t an avenue that seems open for people most directly harmed by prejudice to be able to speak for themselves.” Schmidt will also work with Catholic Charities to discuss and discern an overall social justice imperative and work with identified stakeholders.

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Lent 2021: Here’s what you need to know



From St. Joseph, Winterset video/Ayden Pugh

Lent, a 40-day season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, began with Ash Wednesday.

Ashes were sprinkled on the top of the head, a practice common in much of the world, rather than by marking the forehead.

This was done to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

At left, Father Tom Dooley, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Winterset and St. Patrick Parish at Irish Settlement, demonstrated ash distribution.

During Lent, we prepare to celebrate the Lord’s Resurrection at Easter.

Living this Lent

The Diocese of Des Moines is offering practical ideas and aids for how to live individually and as families through Lent.

The 40 days of Lent invite Catholics to grow closer to God and learn his mission for each person as followers and witnesses of his love.

At dmdiocese.org/Lent click on the Living this Lent link for practical suggestions range from activities with children to meatless soup recipes and more.

Prayer

The U.S. bishops have created a prayer guide for Stations of the Cross with the intention of overcoming racism. Also, the Diocese has produced prayer aids and reflections for use during Eucharistic Adoration. These can be found at dmdiocese.org/Lent.

Almsgiving

One way to help others is by supporting Catholic Relief Services’ annual Operation Rice Bowl. Get your bowl at your parish or Catholic school.

Fasting

Ash Wednesday
Good Friday

Ages 18-59

Abstinence

Every Friday
during Lent

Ages 14+

When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. Catholics abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the Fridays during Lent. When we fast, we are not only called to abstain from luxuries but work on a true inner conversion of heart to follow Christ more faithfully.

Diocesan updates measures to prevent spread of COVID-19

After re-evaluating protections in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the Diocese of Des Moines lifted its suspension of social gatherings and extended the requirement for masks.

“As we continue to live in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, there are many signs of hope on the horizon, including a steady decline of positive cases and hospitalizations, an almost non-existent flu season, and the increased availability of COVID vaccines,” said Bishop William Joensen.

“Even as conditions improve, we are aware that we have not yet emerged from the pandemic, and continued vigilance and precautions are needed,” he said.

As of Feb. 2, he lifted the suspension on social gatherings but capped attendance to 100 people. While social gatherings are permitted, parishes retain discretion to discern which events are prudent to host and whether a smaller attendance cap is warranted based on the size of the gathering space or other reasons.

The mask requirement will continue until April 11, Divine Mercy Sunday, at which time it will be reconsidered.

“This decision corresponds to the recommendations of public health experts within the local medical community,” said Bishop Joensen.

The changes continue

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La Diócesis de Des Moines ha suspendido la prohibición de reuniones sociales, pero ha extendido la obligatoriedad de las mascarillas

Luego de volver a evaluar las medidas de protección establecidas para mitigar propagación del COVID-19, la Diócesis de Des Moines ha suspendido la prohibición de reuniones sociales, pero ha extendido la obligatoriedad de las mascarillas.

“Conforme seguimos viviendo en medio de la pandemia del coronavirus, hay muchas señales esperanzadoras en el horizonte, incluyendo un constante declive en los casos positivos y en las hospitalizaciones, una casi inexistente temporada de influenza, y un aumento en la disponibilidad de vacunas contra el COVID,” dijo el Obispo William Joensen.

“Aunque las condiciones están mejorando, estamos conscientes que aún no hemos salido de esta pandemia, y que necesitamos seguir alertas y tomando precauciones,” dijo.

A partir del 2 de febrero, el obispo eliminó la suspensión de reuniones sociales, pero estableció un límite de asistencia de 100 personas. Aunque se permitan las reuniones sociales, las parroquias siguen manteniendo la discreción de discernir el tipo de eventos que es prudente llevar a cabo, si se requiere un límite máximo menor, dependiendo del tamaño del espacio para las reuniones y otras razones que consideren necesarias.

El requerimiento de las mascarillas seguirá has el 11 de

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Finding His Face: Honoring health care personnel

Earlier this month on February 11th the Church marked the Blessed Mother's appearance to St. Bernadette at Lourdes, France, in 1858; for nearly three decades this date has also been designated World Day of the Sick. The little spring of water indicated by the woman known as the Immaculate Conception is the source of a current of spiritual cleansing and healing on many levels that draws sick persons and their companions, health care personnel who donate their time and services, and the faithful on pilgrimage to this holy oasis of grace and peace. Whatever personal graces may be received, everyone is drawn into a covenant of care, compassion, and renewed hope. The sick and those who surround them behold each other with a gaze that reflects mutual dignity, vulnerability and equality in God's sight.

Each day at Lourdes, the "malades" and those who accompany them process to a sacred destination where they pray in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, forming a holy community of human and divine love. They seek the face of Jesus and find him in the Blessed Sacrament, AND in each other, where distinctions between sick and healthy fall away. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI meditated when he came to Lourdes in 2008 and presided at Eucharistic adoration, "The sacred host exposed to our view speaks of this infinite power of Love manifested on the glorious Cross." The Emeritus Holy Father encourages those whom he calls brothers, sisters, friends, "Accept to recognize in your lives the presence of



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

him who is present here, exposed to our view. Accept to offer him your very lives!"

For a year we have been presented each day in the media with images of persons ravaged by COVID-19, and the committed, courageous health care personnel who offer their very lives in keeping with their acts of profession to heal, care, and relieve suffering. We do not caricature them by calling them "superheroes," for they are very poignantly human, subject to bone-wearying fatigue, anguish, self-doubts, and personal suffering that is embraced and absorbed from patients, their families, and their professional peers.

Our present Pope Francis observes that before the concrete gaze of those who are most vulnerable, "service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, 'suffers' that closeness and tries to help them." They do not look the other way, but share the human yoke of patients they regard as neighbors and members of one human family. They know the protocols and procedures that are generally prescribed according to the standard of care, yet they are also acute listeners, putting forth the effort of discernment and tendering counsel that respects the irreducible uniqueness of each person.

Health care providers represent medicine's remarkable capacities to intervene and assist the body's natural potentials for healing. Yet where medicine encounters its own limits, nurses, respiratory technicians, CNAs, physicians, paramedics, pastoral care staff and other members of the team remain mediators of mercy, making mobile connections among family members enabling the exchange of precious glimpses of loved ones, the anointed words that help carry patients to the threshold of this life and the next. They are no mere bystanders, but agents of a mystery that enfolds life, death, and the love that endures forever.

Regardless of their own personal faith commitments, health care personnel bear hope that whatever weighs us down or would enslave us in our finitude does not define us or get the last word; they confirm our hearts' intuition that every human face reveals meaning and a treasure that can never be spent or exhausted—both in memory and in eternity. Catholic physician Daniel P. Sulmasy contends, "I am fully persuaded. . . that if a Christian speaks out of the fullness of Christian conviction, and an atheist speaks out of the fullness of atheist conviction, deep spiritual resonances will occur and each can learn enormously from each other."

Yet especially in clinical settings founded as part of a Catholic and Christian mission to care for the lowly, health care personnel both gain access and represent a sacred window artistically stained by Christian inspiration revealing a God who himself has

a face, who is familiar with suffering, who does not skirt but enters into the valley of death with us, only to emerge alive, victorious. Again, Sulmasy: "If medicine is to be a profession, in the fullest sense of the word, it must recognize that it can transcend the limits of its own particularity only if all its particular members practice in a spirit of faith, hope, and love."

The coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on the nobility and selfless dedication of healthcare personnel in our community, our country, and around the world. We lift them up in our hearts and in the prayers, honors and gratitude we extend to them. The pandemic has also displayed the even more luminous dimension of health care when it is performed in the ambiance of Christian faith. In Christ-centered consciousness, the experiences of human relationship, bodiliness, vulnerability, care, and communion are raised in relief by the prospect and reality of death. These aspects of our experience participate in, and dispose us toward, the good who is God himself. They are part of a conversation between God and ourselves, and among our brothers and sisters subject to the same mortality, the same ultimate "passion" as ourselves.

While the Ash Wednesday dusting of ashes may have been performed differently this year, the optional words are the same: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." We all experience death sooner or later; even now, we are invited to experience a kind of "spiritual death" in our acts of faith and

hope, anticipating that what are now is not what we will one day be. We put to rest any recurrent fear and doubts that we will not be at all. Our hope affirms that connectedness, the continuity of all that happens in life, even if it immediately seems to leave us scattered or scratching our heads. God in Christ does not simply await us at the end of our earthly pilgrimage. God in the flesh, in our health care professionals and in his Eucharistic presence, accompanies us every step of the way.

I understand that applications to Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines have not receded but risen in the wake of the pandemic. How many young peoples' hearts have sensed that in pursuing a path that leads to front line encounters with patients, even at personal risk to themselves, they are not simply seeking a career, but are responding to a call of which they are not the source. Like the trickle of water at Lourdes discovered by St. Bernadette at Blessed Mary's prompting—a trickle that has become a stream—in the midst of a pandemic God has unleashed Spirit energy that is irrigating the lives and witness of so many. So many seeds of hope have been sown, leaving us to ponder what other spiritual fruits God has in store for us. As we continue to seek and find God's face in one another, and strengthen the bonds of fraternity and community that transcend whatever distinct roles and relationships we hold, may we deepen the living, Eucharistic faith that is a sacred foundation for all we do, all we are.

Encontrando su Rostro: en Honor del Personal de Salud

A inicios de este mes, el 11 de febrero, la Iglesia recordó la aparición de nuestra Santa Madre a Santa Bernadette en Lourdes, Francia, en 1858; por casi tres décadas, esta fecha ha sido también designada como el Día Mundial de los Enfermos. El pequeño manantial de agua que señaló la mujer conocida como la Inmaculada Concepción es la fuente de una corriente de purificación y sanación espiritual de muchos niveles que atrae a las personas enfermas y a sus acompañantes, trabajadores de servicios de salud que donan su tiempo y sus servicios, y a los fieles que peregrinan a este santo oasis de gracia y de paz. Sin importar cuáles sean las gracias personales que se reciben, todos se acercan a una alianza de cuidado, compasión y esperanza renovada. Los enfermos y aquellos quienes les rodean se observan unos a otros con una mirada que refleja dignidad mutua, vulnerabilidad e igualdad ante la mirada de Dios.

Cada día en Lourdes, los "malades" y aquellos quienes los acompañan hacen procesión hacia un destino sagrado en donde oran en adoración ante el Santísimo Sacramento, creando una santa comunidad de amor humano y divino. Ellos buscan el rostro de Jesús y lo encuentran en el Santísimo Sacramento Y entre ellos

mismos, en donde se eliminan distinciones entre enfermos y sanos. Así como lo meditó el Papa Emérito Benedicto XVI cuando visitó Lourdes en el 2008 y presidió la adoración Eucarística, "la sagrada hostia expuesta ante nuestras miradas nos habla del infinito poder de Amor que se manifiesta en la gloriosa Cruz." El Santo Padre Emérito exhorta a aquellos a quienes llama hermanos, hermanas, amigos, "Acepten el reconocer la presencia en sus vidas de aquel quien está presente aquí, expuesto ante sus ojos. ¡Acepten ofrecerle sus vidas mismas!"

Durante un año hemos sido testigos cada día en los medios de imágenes de personas afectadas por el COVID-19 y por los comprometidos, valientes trabajadores de la salud que ofrecen sus vidas mismas ejerciendo su profesión de sanar, cuidar y aliviar el sufrimiento. No los caricaturizamos llamándoles "super héroes" porque son humanos muy nostálgicamente, estando sujetos a fatigas desgastantes, ansiedad, dilemas y un sufrimiento personal el cual acogen y absorben de sus pacientes, de sus familias y de sus colegas de profesión.

Nuestro Papa actual nos hace ver que, ante la mirada concreta de los más frágiles, "El servicio siempre mira el rostro del hermano, toca su carne, siente

su proximidad y hasta en algunos casos la 'padece' y busca la promoción del hermano." Ellos no voltean hacia otro lado, sino que comparten el yugo humano de los pacientes a quienes consideran como su prójimo y como miembros de una familia humana. Ellos conocen los protocolos y los procedimientos que se decretan generalmente de acuerdo con los parámetros del cuidado médico, pero son también atentos escuchas, poniendo por delante el esfuerzo de un discernimiento y de un cálido consejo que respeta la irreducible peculiaridad de cada persona.

El personal de salud representa las remarcables capacidades que tiene la medicina para intervenir y asistir los potenciales naturales para sanar que tiene el cuerpo. Pero cuando la medicina llega a sus propios límites, las enfermeras, técnicos respiratorios, asistentes de enfermería, médicos, paramédicos, personal de cuidado pastoral y demás miembros del equipo permanecen como mediadores de misericordia, consiguiendo conexiones móviles entre miembros de la familia que permiten el intercambio de momentos apreciados por los seres queridos, las palabras de unión que ayudan a los pacientes a cruzar el umbral de esta vida hacia la próxima. Ellos no son

simples observadores, sino que son agentes de un misterio que se compone de vida, muerte y el amor que perdura para siempre.

Sin importar sus propios compromisos personales de fe, los profesionales de la salud nos dan la esperanza de que no importa qué es lo que nos agobia o lo que nos encadena a nuestra finitud, eso no es lo que nos define o lo que tiene la última palabra; ellos confirman la intuición de nuestros corazones de que cada rostro humano revela un significado y un tesoro que nunca puede gastarse o agotarse — tanto en la memoria como en la eternidad. El médico católico Daniel P. Sulmasy sostiene "Estoy completamente convencido... si un cristiano habla desde la plenitud de sus convicciones cristianas, y un ateo habla desde la plenitud de sus convicciones ateas, se lograrán resonancias profundamente espirituales y podrán ambos aprender enormemente uno del otro."

Sin embargo, especialmente en el ámbito clínico que está fundado como parte de una misión católica o cristiana para cuidar de los más humildes, los profesionales de la salud obtienen acceso y a la vez representan una ventana sagrada teñida artísticamente por inspiración cristiana revelando a un Dios quien tiene un rostro, quien está familiariza-

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New mental health services help fill gap

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

One in five adults, or about 600,000 Iowans, live with some form of mental illness, according to NAMI Iowa (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

Either you have it, or you know someone who does, said Peggy Huppert, executive director of NAMI Iowa.

“There’s a huge need in Iowa for more mental health services across the continuum that includes outpatient community-based as well as inpatient” care, she said.

MercyOne Central Iowa announced the expansion of its behavioral health care services to help fill that gap in two ways.

Last month, the new Joseph and Dorothy Schuster Behavioral Health Center opened its doors, boosting the outpatient behavioral health services offered at House of Mercy in Des Moines by 50 percent. Where the House of Mercy served parenting wom-

en with children, the new center makes the location one of a few in central Iowa to offer treatment to men, women and children with mental health and substance abuse disorders.

And this month, MercyOne Central Iowa, in partnership with Universal Health Services, is phasing in the opening of Clive Behavioral Health, a \$32 million facility adding 100 beds to what MercyOne has already had available. Universal Health Services is a national health system that operates both acute medical, surgical and behavioral health hospitals.

Clive Behavioral Health will offer men, women and children both inpatient and outpatient services.

Other facilities are opening up around the state.

A 75-bed behavioral health facility recently opened in Bettendorf.

Last week, Gov. Kim Reynolds was at the opening of GuideLink Center in Iowa City, which will offer mental health ur-



Clive Behavioral Health is opening in a phased approach. It will offer men, women and children both inpatient and outpatient services.

gent care, stabilization and treatment.

The new MercyOne/Universal Health Services hospital is an investment in the health of the community, said Sandy Swanson, director of business development for Clive Behavioral Health.

“Universal Health Services and MercyOne believe passionately that mental health is

a matter of dignity for our community and we certainly can do better in terms of providing a comprehensive system of care for mental health,” she said.

Mary Neubauer and her husband, Larry Loss, shone a spotlight on the needs of those suffering mental illness in 2017 when they wrote a heartbreaking and honest obituary about their son Sergei’s struggle before he

died at age 18. They’ve become advocates for increased services for others.

“Mercy deserves incredible praise and credit for stepping up for making these services and this new space available,” Neubauer said. “This new hospital with the space that it will have available for children and teenagers is absolutely critical and it’s going to make a difference.”

En Honor del Personal de Salud

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do con el sufrimiento, quien no elude el valle de la muerte, sino que entra en él junto con nosotros, solamente para emerger vivo, victorioso. Nuevamente, Sulmasy: “Si la medicina va a ser una profesión, en el sentido pleno de la palabra, debe reconocer que puede trascender los límites de su propia particularidad solamente si todos los miembros que forman parte de ella la practican en un espíritu de fe, esperanza y amor.”

La pandemia del coronavirus ha hecho brillar una luz sobre la noble y abnegada dedicación de los profesionales de la salud en nuestra comunidad, nuestro país, en todo el mundo. Los reconocemos en nuestros corazones y en las oraciones, honores y gratitud que les ofrecemos. La pandemia también ha demostrado la aún más luminosa dimensión del servicio de salud cuando éste se lleva a cabo en un ambiente de fe cristiana. En una consciencia centrada en Cristo, las experiencias de la relación humana, corporeidad, vulnerabilidad, cuidado y comunión se elevan enfrentando la posibilidad y realidad de la muerte. Estos aspectos de nuestra experiencia participan, y nos ponen a disposición, hacia lo bueno que es Dios mismo. Éstas son partes de una conversación entre Dios y nosotros mismos, y entre nuestros hermanos y hermanas quienes están sujetos a la misma mortalidad, la misma “pasión” final como nosotros mismos.

Aunque este año la distribución de cenizas podrá ser diferente este Miércoles de Ceniza, las palabras opcionales son las mismas: “Recuerda que eres polvo y que en polvo te convertirás.” Tarde o temprano todos enfrentaremos la muerte; pero aún estamos invitados a un tipo de “muerte espiritual” en nuestras obras de fe y esperanza, anticipando que

en este momento no somos lo que un día seremos. Dejamos de lado nuestros recurrentes temores y dudas de que no llegaremos a serlo. Nuestra esperanza afirma que la conexión, la continuidad de todo lo que pasa en la vida, incluso cuando en el presente inmediato parece dejarnos confundidos y rascándonos la cabeza. Dios en Cristo no simplemente nos espera al final de nuestro peregrinar en la tierra. Dios en carne y hueso, en nuestros profesionales de la salud y en su presencia Eucarística, nos acompaña en cada paso de nuestro recorrido.

Tengo entendido que las solicitudes de inscripción en el Colegio de Ciencias de la Salud Mercy en Des Moines no han disminuido, sino que se han incrementado como consecuencia de la pandemia. Cuántos corazones de nuestros jóvenes han sentido que el buscar el camino que les lleve a un encuentro con pacientes en la línea frontal, a pesar del riesgo personal que ellos enfrentan, no es simplemente la búsqueda de una carrera sino la respuesta a un llamado que no surge de ellos. Como el manantial de agua que descubrió Santa Bernadette en Lourdes por instrucciones de la Santísima Virgen – un manantial que se ha convertido en un torrente – en medio de una pandemia, Dios ha liberado la energía del Espíritu y está irrigando las vidas y el testimonio de muchos. Se han sembrado tantas semillas de esperanza que nos dejan pensando sobre qué otros frutos espirituales tiene destinados Dios para nosotros. Conforme seguimos buscando y encontrando el rostro de Dios en los demás y fortaleciendo los lazos de fraternidad y comunidad que trascienden más allá de las distintas funciones y relaciones que tenemos, que podamos profundizar la fe Eucarística viviente y que es principio sagrado de todo lo que hacemos, de todo lo que somos.

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Bishops affirm opposition to death penalty

Iowa bishops affirmed their opposition to the death penalty in a statement Jan. 19 after a bill was introduced that would reinstate it.

The bill was eligible to be debated by the Senate Judiciary Committee at presstime (Feb. 15).

The Iowa legislature abolished the death penalty in 1965.

Iowans can send a message to their state senator on the Judiciary Committee in opposition to the death penalty by going here: [votervoicenet.org/ICC/campaigns/79598/respnd](https://www.votervoicenet.org/ICC/campaigns/79598/respnd).

Here is the statement by the Iowa bishops.

We speak in opposition to the use of the death penalty in any form and to its possible reinstatement in Iowa.

It is a duty of the state to punish offenders and defend the common good. Nonetheless, in a modern society, “More effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2267). The catechism adds, “Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”

In addition, the application of the death penalty has been deeply flawed in our country:

More than 160 persons have been found innocent while on death row. It is likely that innocent persons have been executed.

There is racial bias. More than three-fourths of death row defendants have been executed for killing white victims, even though African-Americans make up about half of all homicide victims.

The use of the death penalty is a long and costly process, more expensive than life without parole.

We know there is a special need to offer sympathy and support for the victims of violent crime and their families. However, we oppose reinstatement of the death penalty in order to send the message that the cycle of violence can be broken without taking life. We ask the people of Iowa, and especially members of the Catholic Church, to join us in opposing capital punishment out of respect for our common human dignity and in light of the teachings of Jesus about vengeance.

Most Rev. Michael Jackels
Archbishop of Dubuque
Most Rev. R. Walker Nickless
Diocese of Sioux City
Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula
Diocese of Davenport
Most Rev. William Joensen
Diocese of Des Moines

Legislation working its way through process

The Iowa Catholic conference, the official public policy voice of the bishops of Iowa, advocates for policies that respect the life and dignity of the human person and apply the principles of Catholic social teaching to critical issues of the day.

Here is an update on legislation followed by the ICC.

Pro-life

We recognize that each person is created in the image and likeness of God.

That’s one reason it was so disappointing in 2018 when the Iowa Supreme Court found a fundamental right to abortion in the state constitution, making abortion difficult if not impossible to regulate by the legislature.

As a result, the Iowa Catholic Conference has been working alongside many others to correct that decision and clarify that there is no right to abortion to be found in the state constitution.

A proposal to amend the Iowa Constitution has already passed the Iowa House. It passed a subcommittee in the Senate and is eligible for consideration by the full State Government Committee.

The amendment would not end abortion in Iowa as some claim.

Education

The ICC continues to support expanding options for parents in the education of their children.

Senate File 159, among many provisions, contains a proposal to allow a small number of public school students in so-called “failing” schools to get a scholarship to attend a nonpublic school. The bill also contains an increase in the tuition and textbook tax credit for public and nonpublic

school parents.

As the primary educators of their children, parents have the right to choose the school best suited for them. We are asking legislators to provide additional help to nonpublic school parents to fulfill their responsibility in educating their children.

Thousands of parents pay to send their children to Catholic schools in Iowa. But we often think about those parents who want their children to have that education, but simply can’t afford it.

Why shouldn’t they have an opportunity? The Church sees this as an issue of distributive justice.

“School choice” is not the silver bullet to solve all problems with education in the state. But to give additional parents an opportunity to help their children – that’s a good thing.

We are now asking members of the Iowa House to expand the proposal to help some of our current students in Catholic schools. You can review and send a message to your representative here: <https://www.votervoicenet.org/ICC/campaigns/79857/respnd>.

The ICC is also working in support of a bill (Senate File 168) to require that special education services for nonpublic school students be provided onsite at the location of the nonpublic school.

Additional issues

HF 294 – requires health insurance companies to reimburse telehealth services at the same rate as

in-person. This would be a benefit to Catholic Charities’ counseling programs. (Support)

HF 434 – provides for “over the counter” access to contraception without the involvement of the woman’s doctor. Any prescription medication carries risks, which is why they require a prescription. (Oppose)

HF 383 – provides for notification of the possibility of reversing a medication-induced elective abortion. (Support)

SF 212 & HF 475 – legalizes assisted suicide. (Oppose)

SSB 1004 – restores the death penalty. (Oppose)

COVID-19 Relief

Following proposals from the Biden Administration and members of Congress regarding a new COVID-relief package, several bishop chairmen of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote to all members of Congress in support of an additional package.

The USCCB supports the inclusion of immigrants and refugees in any relief package. An action alert for Congress on the issue is here: <https://www.votervoicenet.org/JFI/Campaigns/80024/Respnd>.

Vaccines

If you would like to write to drug companies in support of developing vaccines with no connection to abortion at all, here’s a page to help you do that: <https://www.usccb.org/prolife/biomedical-research>.

Small word change in prayer

The Catholic Church has asked English-speaking countries to change one word in the Mass prayers to be consistent with the translation used worldwide.

In the prayer that concludes “... in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever” there is no mention of “one” in the Latin. The correct translation will drop the word “one” so the prayer is “...in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.”

The Church is always reviewing translations in an ongoing effort to ensure that, as one Body of Christ, the Mass is celebrated with the same prayers in all languages. Occasionally, there is a word interpreted differently in another language.

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments wrote to bishops of English-speaking countries with this change so that all in the Church are using the same translation.

The Catholic Mirror is looking for stories of faith and inspiration. Contact Kelly Mescher Collins at kcollins@dmdiocese.org with a story idea in the Diocese of Des Moines.



SAVE THE DATE

Virtual Spring Conference
April 10, 2021

Calling ALL Catholic Women to join us for this free conference (morning only) sponsored by the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW). Barbara Heil is the featured speaker. She is a former Pentecostal minister and now a dynamic and inspirational Catholic speaker. Look for more details and registration information in the March issue of *The Catholic Mirror*.



LENTEN FISH FRY

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

Dates: February 12 - March 26

Time: 4:30-7:00 p.m. drove-up carryout only

Cost: suggested donation of \$10 per meal

Menu: Fried fish, baked potato, green beans, mac & cheese .

Coordinator of Racial Justice Programming
Continued from page 1

He will collaborate with diocesan department directors, Catholic Charities leadership and parishes. Part of his work includes articulating and sharing a broad vision of Catholic Social Teaching and applying those teachings to the issue of racial justice.

“Mark provides a unique perspective on racial justice,” said Dr. Barbara Decker, executive director of Catholic Charities. “His background in social work with studies in Church, liturgy and Black Catholic history will foster a meaningful review, as well as, provide varied resources on this important need.”

Catholic Charities looks forward to working with Schmidt to further assess and advance social justice initiatives in support of the Catholic Social Teachings, Decker added.

“I am thankful to Barbara Decker, head of Catholic Charities of our Des Moines Diocese, for her commitment and collabo-

ration in bringing Mark onboard,” Bishop Joensen added. “I expect that he will call us all to greater self-reflection, conversation and solidarity as we respect the dignity of all persons regardless of race or nationality.”

Adam Storey, vice-chancellor, agrees.

“Mark Schmidt’s work will be a great blessing for our Diocese, as he’ll help us do what Jesus did, drawing close to the marginalized and listening to voices we don’t always hear,” said Storey. “Mark is passionate about following the Gospel wherever it leads, and I am excited about the ways his work will enrich our Diocese.”

Schmidt’s prior work included serving as director of Respect Life and Social Justice for the Archdiocese of Dubuque, as well as parish ministry as a pastoral associate.

Local grants awarded for addressing hunger and poverty in southwest Iowa

Eight local organizations that address hunger and poverty were awarded grants through the CRS Rice Bowl program.

The grants totaling \$6,805 stem from the local 2020 Catholic Relief Service (CRS) Rice Bowl Grants.

Four organizations received grants from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. Southwest Iowa charitable organizations received funding for their programs that help those in need in the community.

Those receiving grants through the CRS Rice Bowl program are:

- Catholic Charities Outreach Center: Food Pantry program
- Children and Family Urban Movement: food for Breakfast Club
- DMARC: supports food pantry network
- Good Samaritan Fund – Perry: food, referral service, hunger-awareness

- New Visions Homeless Services: Mohm’s Place (feeding homeless families)
- Perry Area Emergency Food Council: food, referral service, hunger-awareness
- Caring Hands: Backpack Food Bags to students in the SE Polk School District
- St. Michael’s Charity Fund – West Central Community Action and Shelby County Community Outreach

CRS Rice Bowl annual campaign supports programs that prevent hunger and poverty around the world. The local grant funding is 25 percent of the total amount raised through the CRS Rice Bowl campaign in the Diocese of Des Moines during Lent (40 days leading to Easter) in 2020.

The remainder of the funds was distributed to over 40 countries overseas where CRS operates humanitarian response and development programs. The

grant committee consisted of: Dan Werner, Tim McEntee, Janet Elwer, Bill Konnath, Holly Ackermann.

CCHD grants were awarded to four organizations in the metro area and Council Bluffs totaling \$5,733.

- Center for Social Ministry: educational programs
- Christ’s Hands Outreach Retreat: annual week long summer program for 6-8 graders
- Faith in Action: spring break service experience
- Inter-Faith Alliance: assistance for rent, medical, & utilities

CCHD, a program of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is committed to supporting organizations led by low-income individuals as they work to break the cycle of poverty and improve their communities.



WWW.CTOIOWA.ORG

Applications are available at all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines or apply on-line at www.fairapp.com

**Application deadline
April 2nd, 2021**

PARA ESPAÑOL: NICOLE CASTILLO WALLER
ENLACE MULTICULTURAL
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Tuition Assistance Available!
Asistencia de matrícula disponible!

The first qualification for families to receive tuition assistance is income. State law requires families to be at or below the following income guidelines. Once a family qualifies, they can receive tuition assistance based on their financial need.

*Family Size	**Maximum Income	*Family Size	**Maximum Income
2	\$ 69,680	5	\$124,160
3	\$ 87,840	6	\$142,320
4	\$106,000	7***	\$160,480

*** Add \$18,160 for each additional dependent

* Family size includes parent(s)/guardian(s) and total number of dependents plus others living in household
** Families/households are eligible for CTO assistance if their total income is at or below the above listed income level reported on Line 9 of federal income tax form

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Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdiocese.org to learn more.
Find rate sheet and deadlines at dmdiocese.org/catholic-mirror

Fry Days: Lenten fish dinners heating up

The following are parish Lenten fish fry dinners on Fridays during Lent, Feb. 19 to March 26 except where otherwise noted. Also all dinners are drive through only unless otherwise noted.

Outside the Des Moines metro area

Adair, St. John – 515-523-1943

Dinners are available Feb. 26, March 12 and 26 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal. Please approach from the west through the alley north of the parish hall. Alternate: shrimp

Adel, St. John – 515-993-4482

Dinners are available on Feb. 9, 26, March 5 and 26 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is a free-will donation. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwich

Altoona, Ss. John & Paul - 515-967-3796

Dinners are available from 4:30 – 7 p.m. Suggested donation is \$10 per meal. Teens will sell small bags of cookies for a free will offering to support Youth Ministry service trips.

Ankeny, Our Lady's Immaculate Heart - 515-964-3038

Dinners are available on Feb. 26, March 12 and 26 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is a free will donation. Alternate: grilled cheese.

Atlantic, Ss. Peter & Paul – 712-243-4721

Dinners are available from 5:30 – 7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal.

Inside the Des Moines metro area

Des Moines, All Saints – 515-265-5001

Dinners are served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal

Des Moines, St. Theresa – 515-279-4654

Dinners are served from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Cost is a free-will offering. Drivers are asked to enter the parking lot west of the church closest to the Parish Rectory on 60th Street and head up the hill to the parking lot closest to the school playground. We'll have volunteers

Granger, Assumption – 515-999-2239

Dinners are available from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is a free-will donation. Alternate: cheese pizza; dessert is included.

Carlisle, St. Elizabeth Seton – 515-989-0659

Dinners are available from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal. Alternate: mac & cheese. Pie will be available for a free will donation.

Council Bluffs, Corpus Christi – 712-323-2916

Dinners are available on Feb. 19, March 5 and 26 from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is a \$10.

Harlan, St. Michael – 712-755-5244

Dinners are available on from 5:30-7 p.m. for dine-in as well as drive thru. Cost is a \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 4-10 and free for children under 3 with paid adult. Alternate: fish taco (dine-in only), mac & cheese

Indianola, St. Thomas Aquinas – 515-961-3026

Dinners are in the parish center from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal.

in the parking lot directing traffic. Alternate: fish & chip dinner with coleslaw or gourmet macaroni and cheese or a 7" cheese pizza and mac and cheese

West Des Moines, Sacred Heart – 515-225-6414

Dinners are served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/meal Alternate: cheese pizza and mac & cheese. There will be a "walk thru" to pay and pick up meals in the parish center.

For more information on Lenten activities for families, prayer, fasting and service, go to dmdiocese.org/Lent

Around the Diocese

Cathedral Holy Hours

All are welcome to join Bishop William Joensen at St. Ambrose Cathedral on Mondays 5-6 p.m. for an hour of Eucharistic Adoration and evening prayer. Evening prayer will be livestreamed on at [Facebook.com/dm-diocese](https://facebook.com/dm-diocese).

Registration for Catholic Youth Camp open

Campers driving up to the St. Thomas More Center in Panora in June, July and August for Catholic Youth Camp will find new cabins, a renovated Dingman Lodge and double the number of paid summer staff hired to ensure safety procedures are followed so everyone can have a safe experience. For information on how to register or apply for sponsorship, go to stmcenter.com.

March 1 Monday Beyond the Book

Beyond the Book is a Center for Social Ministry program designed to highlight both the important works of social justice literature and those who work to live them out. Each two-hour class focuses on an important literary work in an area touching on some aspect of social justice and a Q&A session led by a Des Moines community member who is actively engaged in the featured social justice work. The program is free of charge, but a free will donation will be taken. Participants are responsible for acquiring, and reading, their own book before the session.

The next book is *The Book of Unknown Americans* by Christina Henriquez. The event will be 6:30-8:30 p.m., with Sonia Reyes-Snyder, of the Office of Latino Affairs. Go to <https://csm.coursestorm.com/> for more information, or to register. Learn more about all our programming at <https://csm.coursestorm.com/>.

March 26 Chrism Mass

The faithful are invited to watch the annual Diocesan Mass at which oils and sacred Chrism are blessed for sacramental use throughout the diocese. Chrism Mass can be seen from St. Patrick Church in Imogene by watching a livestream beginning at 2 p.m. on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricki-mogeneiowa>

April 10 Saturday

DCCW Conference

All Catholic women are invited to join a virtual encounter to Renew and Refresh. Our featured speaker is Barbara Heil, a former Pentecostal minister and now a dynamic and inspirational Catholic speaker. Bishop William Joensen also will be speaking. It will be a morning only event and it is free. You are invited to a Zoom meeting – DCCW Annual Convention. Register in advance for this meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZYqf--tqTjEtZSgwMk-tOVNrSBz7aFSYA9v>

DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP, St. Thomas Aquinas Church and Catholic Student Center, Ames

St. Thomas Aquinas Church and Catholic Student Center, Ames, IA, is actively seeking a full-time Director of Worship (start date 7/1/2021) to energize and engage parishioners through music and liturgy for all parish celebrations. Key responsibilities include directing and planning seasonal and regularly-scheduled weekend liturgies; recruitment, formation, and scheduling of all liturgical ministers, including readers, extraordinary ministers of holy communion, sacristans, mass coordinators, hospitality ministers, cantors, pianists, and adult and youth music volunteers; serving as pianist/organist at weekend masses and on Holy Days; organizing music for the faith formation program; supervision of audio-video equipment; coordination of music for funerals and weddings; and leading the parish liturgy commission. Full position description and application instructions are available at goSTA.link/worship.

Superintendent of Schools

The Catholic Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph is seeking to fill the Superintendent of Schools position effective July 1, 2021. The Superintendent position will oversee all diocesan schools, and in partnership with each Pastor, all parish schools and early childhood centers, as well as the Diocesan Catholic School Office. This position is full-time, reports to the Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese and includes ground travel to schools as needed.

For more information, and to apply, please visit Employment Opportunities at kcsjatholic.org.

The Catholic Mirror is looking for stories of faith and inspiration.

Contact Kelly Mescher Collins at kcollins@dmdiocese.org with a story idea in the Diocese of Des Moines.



News & Events for Faithful Listeners

Tune in for our
2021 Spring Care-A-Thon!
Monday, Feb. 22 - Friday, Feb. 26

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Retired priests, teachers get vaccinated



Father John Ludwig is among the retired priests who have received their vaccine for COVID-19.



St. Albert Catholic School teachers Jayne Applegate, class of 1998 (5th grade), Lucy Burgan (1st grade), and Kim Gorman, class of 1979 (4th grade) received their vaccine for COVID-19.

Popes Francis, Benedict receive their first doses of vaccine

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Both Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have received the first dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 after the Vatican started vaccinating its employees and residents Jan. 13.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican Press Office, confirmed the news Jan. 14.

While it was reported widely that Pope Francis received the vaccine Jan. 13, the retired pope's secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, told Vatican News that Pope Benedict received his shot the morning of Jan. 14.

The archbishop had told the German Catholic news agency KNA Jan. 11 that the 93-year-old pope, who lives in a converted monastery in the Vatican Gardens, and his entire household staff wanted to be vaccinated as

soon as the vaccine was available in Vatican City State.

He told Vatican News that the retired pope has been following the news «on television, and he shares our concerns about the pandemic, about what is happening in the world, about the many people who have lost their life because of the virus.

There have been people he knows who have died because of COVID-19, he added.

Archbishop Ganswein said the retired pope is still very sharp mentally but that his voice and physical strength have weakened.

“He is very frail and only can walk a little with a walker.” He rests more, “but we still go out every afternoon, despite the cold, in the Vatican Gardens,” he added.

Nurses continue serving



Retired nurses Marcia Dusing, Nancy Orth, and Dixie Kavars, all of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs, are serving the community by helping with the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Denise McNitt got a call last November from someone offering help to CHI (Catholic Health Initiatives) Hospital in Council Bluffs.

A retired head nurse from the hospital, Dixie Kavars, was watching the news about the pandemic and wanted to help. She knew other retired nurses who could be of service, too.

McNitt, the vice president of patient care at CHI, was thrilled with the offer. But at that point in the pandemic, she didn't know when vaccines would be arriving or how they'd be distributed.

Still, she said, “I'm sure we'll be able to use you.”

In December, she had more information and called Kavars, who had assembled other retired nurses in a crew called the Reruns. Kavars arranged a spreadsheet with names of more than 25 retired nurses, shifts and jobs they'd do.

“I think we were all willing to help out,” said Marcia Dusing, of St. Patrick Parish. “It's a nice way to give back. The sooner we get everybody vaccinated the sooner we can get back to what

we used to know.”

“Everybody was anxious to help,” said Mary Shaughnessy-Swisher, of Corpus Christi Parish.

The hospital provided two staff nurses for the shots. The Reruns did just about everything else from welcoming people, making sure they were lined up appropriately, offering directions, cleaning the chair and table after every use and monitoring an area the newly vaccinated went to ensure they experienced no side effects.

“The thing that got me the most was when one of the nurses who works in critical care came in,” said Shaughnessy-Swisher. The nurse received her vaccine and went to the waiting area.

“Her eyes welled up. I said, ‘Are you okay?’ She said, ‘These are tears of joy.’ It was kind of emotional,” Shaughnessy-Swisher added.

McNitt came over and praised the nurse for her devotion and service, saying she worked extra shifts and was an excellent critical care nurse.

Everyone applauded, Shaughnessy-Swisher said. “That's the highlight. She was just so, so happy that she had finally gotten one.”

By mid-February, the Reruns had helped inoculate about 800 people at CHI. Thanks to their help, the hospital could keep staff in their assignments serving those who were sick.

Once the hospital staff received vaccines, the Reruns offered to help with the Pottawattomie vaccination clinics for teachers and first responders in the Council Bluffs community.

“A lot of these nurses have kept their nursing license so they really felt like it was an obligation to find a way to contribute,” McNitt said.

Many of the retired nurses felt a calling to serve, either because of their careers in health service or their faith. Several are involved in Legion of Mary.

“I think all the nurses that are helping, all the Reruns, have that sense of community,” Kavars said. When God gives a person the gift of being able to go to school and learn how to be of service through nursing, it feels like they should be giving back even if they're retired, she added.

Once the pandemic wanes, McNitt is sure she'll find more opportunities for the Reruns.

“We just discovered a whole new volunteer pool for the hospital,” she said.

COVID-19 prevention measures

Continued from page 1

the Phase III stage of reopening parishes. Details can be found at dmdiocese.org/coronavirus.

“I believe these decisions prioritize our ability to continue to worship God as Christ's Body, and best serve the common good,” said Bishop Joensen.

“We have all been challenged in various ways, and at this stage of the pandemic COVID fatigue can set in. While all mitigation efforts require sacrifice, we remain vigilant and find consola-

tion and strength in the essentials of our faith,” he said.

“We meet Jesus in the Eucharist, who calls the weary and burdened to himself and offers us spiritual rest (Matthew 11:28). We know that even in the midst of uncertainty and fear, God's providential care accompanies us, for his love never ends.

The bishop concluded: “May we continue to be agents of unity, peace, and hope to our parishes and to our local and larger communities. Let us continue to lift one another up in prayer and soli-

Continuación de la página 1

abril, Domingo de la Divina Misericordia, fecha en la cual se reconsiderará la medida.

“Esta decisión corresponde con las recomendaciones de expertos en salud pública y la comunidad médica local,” dijo el Obispo Joensen.

Los cambios continúan con el nivel de Fase III de reapertura de las parroquias. Pueden encontrar más detalles en dmdiocese.org/coronavirus.

“Creo que estas deci-

siones ponen como prioridad nuestra posibilidad de seguir alabando a Dios como Cuerpo de Cristo, y la mejor forma de servir el bien común,” dijo el Obispo Joensen

“Todos hemos sido afectados en varias formas, y en esta etapa de la pandemia del COVID podemos sentirnos fatigados. Aunque todos los esfuerzos de mitigación requieren sacrificios, debemos permanecer alertas y encontrar consuelo y fuerza en lo esencial de nuestra fe,” dijo.

“Encontramos a Jesús en la Eu-

caristía, quien llama hacia sí a los cansados y a los agobiados ofreciéndoles reposo espiritual (Mateo 11:28). Sabemos que en medio de la incertidumbre y del temor, la providencia y el cuidado de Dios nos acompañan, porque su amor nunca termina.”

El obispo concluyó: “Que continuemos siendo agentes de unidad, paz y esperanza para nuestras parroquias y para nuestras comunidades locales y generales. Sigamos animándonos unos a otros en oración y en solidaridad en el Espíritu.”

MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT
WWW.DMDIOCESE.ORG/GIVING

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Streaming workshop offers guidance and support to parishes

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

One of the many uses of Annual Diocesan Appeal funds is supporting the parishes throughout the Diocese.

One example was a streaming workshop, held Jan. 28 via Zoom. All parishes throughout the Diocese were invited to attend to learn more about how to create a sense of inclusion and community through livestreaming worship and other church activities.

Speakers included Father Ken Halbur, pastor of St. Luke Parish in Ankeny; and Wilfrido Matamoros, business and communications manager at Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines. They established livestreaming at their parishes and understand the benefits and challenges.

Kerry Graffunder and Dave Phelps, from Audio Video Electronics, also offered tips and

advice. Their company installed the audio system at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines several years ago and will soon be installing new cameras and equipment to achieve a professional livestream for Masses at the cathedral, including Bishop William Jonsen's 12:10 p.m. Mass and special events, such as ordinations, and more.

Nearly 60 people from around the Diocese tuned in for the workshop and participated in a Q&A session at the end.

"I think it was good to share our resources and give others ways of doing things," Father Halbur said. "We have a number of parishes that are doing very professional [livestreams] and others that are kind of winging it and are struggling."

It was beneficial to share information with those less experienced to give them help and recommendations so they can better serve their parish community, he said.

"I think this is import-

ant because we are all part of a parish family," Father Halbur added. "While you can go online and watch Mass at EWTN or at the Vatican or other things, it's good to have that connection to your own parish and see your own church and see your own pastor. You see the people you know and it's familiar, and we like the familiar. It gives you a connection."

Father Mark Neal, pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines, said attending the workshop was beneficial.

"Just before Christmas, we were able to install a permanent live streaming system in our church," Father Neal said. "The workshop helped confirm that we are on the right track and gave some ideas for how we might upgrade the quality of our streams. It was helpful to hear what other parishes are doing."

Diane Nitzel, information technology support at St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines, said "It was nice to see what other parishes in the dio-



The Diocese of Des Moines Streaming Workshop was hosted for Catholic parishes to help them better reach their parishioners.

cese were doing in regards to live streaming and share ideas."

Sarah Sheerin, director of youth ministry at Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines, said while the streaming at their parish

is already well established, she appreciated the opportunity to see who was in charge of streaming at other parishes for networking purposes.

SHEPHERDING THE FAITHFUL

ADA forms hands and feet of Christ through the diaconate

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Deacons serve the Diocese of Des Moines in a variety of ways, said Deacon Ron Myers, who is co-director of the diocesan diaconate formation program with his wife, Tammy.

"The ministry of the diaconate is three-fold: word, sacrament and charity," said Deacon Myers, who also serves Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines. "These ministries can commonly be seen through assisting at the altar, proclaiming the Gospel, preaching, performing baptisms, witnessing marriages, and presiding at wakes and funerals."

During formation, each candidate also develops an Icon of Christ ministry – a ministry that continues after ordination through works of charity. Consid-

ering the number of active deacons, ministries are wide-ranging.

The work of the diaconate - ordained deacons and their wives, if married - strengthens the overall mission of the Church.

"Sharing Scripture, building up the faithful through evangelization and reaching out to those most vulnerable in the world" are part of the mission, Deacon Myers said. "The diaconate community is the increasing army of the Lord, continually touching more hearts, saving more souls."

The critically important formation is funded through the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

"The formation process involves formal seminary education and pastoral studies," Deacon Myers said. "The expense of four and one-half years of college level study and formation activities would be beyond the reach of

most men and/or couples discerning the call to serve the people of the diocese. The monetary and prayerful support of fellow Catholics is essential to encouraging someone to respond positively to the call and successfully move through the journey to ordination and a life of service to the people of the Diocese."

Dan and Kelly Maxcy, of St. Mary of Nazareth Parish in Des Moines, are going through diaconate formation.

The couple appreciates the support of their formation team, a group of deacons and their wives who guide them from the very beginning through the process, Kelly said.

They also appreciate the monetary support of the faithful.

"We're so lucky that the support we get from the ADA gives us the capability to go to formation not only here in town,



Dan and Kelly Maxcy of St. Mary of Nazareth Parish in Des Moines are currently in diaconate formation and are grateful for the support of the ADA.

but formation in seminary, so we can take the knowledge, pastoral learning, and bring that back to

the people," Dan said.



2021 ANNUAL
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44% SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

40,000
Hispanic Catholics with outreach and ministry needs

1,765
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80
parishes with ministry and administrative services

21,695
employees and volunteers undergo screening and training to ensure a safe environment for our children

9% HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED

\$140,000
in local COVID-19 Relief Grants

\$56,000
in local Derecho Relief Grants

25,000
individuals served by Catholic Charities

4
Catholic hospitals offering Mass, Communion and Anointing of the Sick



ENCOUNTERING CHRIST

Young people who gave to ADA receive letter of appreciation from Bishop

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When the priest talks about the needs of the parish and the importance of giving at Mass, even tiny ears are listening.

Ethan and Audrey Trettin, ages 14 and 11, heard Father Chris Hartshorn, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines, asking for people to give to the Annual Diocesan Appeal during his announcements.

Both kids decided giving to the ADA was worth it.

"I decided to do it because I know that they needed the money," said Audrey. "And Father Chris has been talking about it a lot and asking for money and how we were so close to reaching

our goal. I just really wanted to help."

Audrey has her money split into three different categories: church, savings and spending. "And so I took all of the money that had been in my church container [and gave it to the ADA]."

"I try really hard to help the church and [it] brings me closer to God," Audrey said. "And I thought that would be good to help."

She gives not just her treasure, but her time and talent as well by serving as an usher and altar server (when we are not in a pandemic).

They were pleasantly surprised when they received a letter of gratitude from Bishop William Joensen for their donations. The Bishop thanked Ethan

and Audrey for their gifts, said he would be praying for them and encouraged them to pray as well.

"It was really good," Audrey said. "I knew I didn't need a letter, but the fact that he went out of his way to write us felt really good."

Maren Trettin said she and her husband Michael were proud of the kids for giving back.

"We try to involve them when we donate money to different places," Maren said. "We just want to be in the habit [of giving] and for them to see how important it is. We are really blessed to be born in the situation we are in and to be able to give. It's a blessing from God and we just want them to carry [giving] into adulthood and they can make their own decisions."



Ethan and Audrey Trettin of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines received a letter of appreciation from Bishop Joensen after giving to the ADA.

HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED

Tribunal Office offers hope and healing to divorced

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

The Annual Diocesan Appeal supports people who are hurting in the wake of a divorce.

"I often partner closely with the Tribunal Office, to help individuals heal after a divorce and to help individuals identify obstacles to marriage, so that they can remove those obstacles," said Adam Storey, diocesan director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

"The most important pastoral care a person receives after a divorce and as they petition for an annulment is accompaniment and healing," he continued.

The Diocese assists parishes through programs, including The Catholic Divorce Survival Guide, and training and support for assisting parishes in these efforts.

Deacon Tony Valdez and his wife, Eileen, are local leaders for The Catholic Divorce Survival Guide. Both were divorced before meeting each other, and know firsthand the pain and heartache

involved.

"A big need is to realize they are not alone, that the Church is here for healing and support," Deacon Valdez said. "Another need for them is to regain their dignity again by being able to talk to others in a safe environment."

Oftentimes people recover their identity when they realize they are not the only ones going through a divorce. They may carry a burden or embarrassment among family and friends in this situation, Deacon Valdez added.

"Divorce or separation is like a wound that, if it is not addressed, will fester," he said. "It needs to be cleaned out in order for it to heal. It is important for them to understand that feelings of anger, betrayal and grief are all part of this process."

Deacon Tony and Eileen Valdez hope the process leads people to understand that forgiveness is the key to healing. They help people work through their many questions about receiving communion, handling the kids, finances and more. Deacon Tony and Eileen also point them

in a positive direction if they would like to visit with a priest or feel ready to start the annulment process

The Church proclaims the Good News of God's vision for marriage and family life in all its integrity and beauty, he said. At the same time, it extends God's mercy and healing to all who live out God's invitation imperfectly.

"The Marriage and Family Life Office and the Tribunal both have vital parts to play in this work," Storey added.

Father Christopher Pisut, judicial vicar for the Tribunal, works on the canonical annulment process.

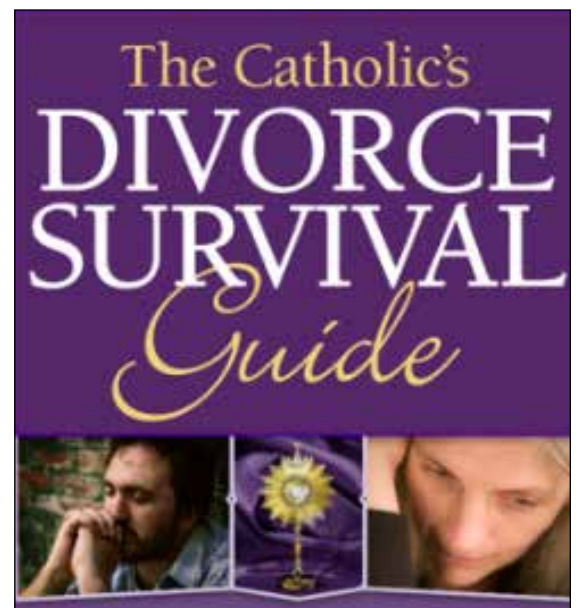
"We want to be compassionate in the Tribunal when we are working with people and be sensitive to their difficult situations they are going through," Father Pisut said. "We help people achieve that end, even if it's canonical and legal, recognizing that reality will help people achieve that sort of normalization they are looking for."

The Tribunal helps people better understand the annulment process, he added.

"A lot of people can fall into the trap of thinking there's hoops you have to go through, but that's because of the Church's ultimate respect for marriage," Father Pisut continued. "We don't want to be in a position of being dismissive of the previous marriage... We take this so seriously. We presume that they are valid, until proven otherwise, and go through the steps to ascertain that and show respect for previous marriages."

The ADA is critically important for walking with those dealing with the hurt and pain of a divorce and annulment.

"Without ADA support, our Diocese would not be able



Deacon Tony and Eileen Valdez of St. Anthony Parish in Des Moines lead the local Catholics Divorce Survival Guide, which is funded through the ADA.

to assist people petitioning for annulments at no cost," Storey said. "Also, ADA support is what allows us to provide opportunities for education, support, and accompaniment for married couples and for those who have suffered through a divorce."



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Opportunities for grace abound in the Year of St. Joseph

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

The Vatican says plenary indulgences will be granted to Catholics not only through prayer and penance, but also through acts of justice, charity and piety dedicated to the foster father of Jesus during the Year of St. Joseph.

Among the conditions for receiving an indulgence are a spirit detached from sin, receiving

sacramental confession as soon as possible, receiving Communion as soon as possible and praying for the Holy Father's intentions, according to the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience.

There are several ways to obtain the indulgence throughout the year. One can "meditate on the prayer of the 'Our Father' for at least 30 minutes or take part in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on

St. Joseph."

In his apostolic letter, "Patris Corde" ("With a father's heart"), Pope Francis declared this the Year of St. Joseph. He said that as a "just man" who guarded "the intimate secret that lies at the bottom of the heart and soul," St. Joseph practiced the virtue of justice in "full adherence to the divine law, which is the law of mercy."

"Therefore, those who, following the example of St. Jo-

seph, will perform a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, will also be able to obtain the gift of the plenary indulgence," it said.

Indulgences will also be granted to families and engaged couples who recite the rosary together and thus imitate the "same climate of communion, love and prayer lived in the Holy Family."

Other acts of devotion include entrusting one's daily activities and prayers for dignified employment to St. Joseph, recit-

ing the litany or any "legitimately approved" prayer to St. Joseph.

During this time of pandemic, the Apostolic Penitentiary also decreed that special indulgences will be granted to the elderly, the sick and all those who "for legitimate reasons are prevented from leaving their home" by "reciting an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph and committed to fulfilling the conditions as soon as possible."

Prayer to Saint Joseph

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven.

Amen.



Oración a San Jose

A ti, bienaventurado San José, acudimos en nuestra tribulación; y después de invocar el auxilio de tu Santísima Esposa solicitamos también confiados tu patrocinio.

Por aquella caridad que con la Inmaculada Virgen María, Madre de Dios, te tuvo unido, y por el paterno amor con que abrazaste al Niño Jesús, humildemente te suplicamos vuelvas benigno los ojos a la herencia que con su Sangre adquirió Jesucristo, y con tu poder y auxilio socorras nuestras necesidades.

Protege, Providentísimo Custodio de la Sagrada Familia la escogida descendencia de Jesucristo; aparta de nosotros toda mancha de error y corrupción; asístenos propicio, desde el cielo, fortísimo libertador nuestro, en esta lucha con el poder de las tinieblas.

Así como en otro tiempo librasteis al Niño Jesús del inminente peligro de la vida, así ahora, defiende a la Iglesia Santa de Dios de las asechanzas de sus enemigos y de toda adversidad, ya cada uno de nosotros protégenos con el perpetuo patrocinio, para que, a tu ejemplo y sostenidos por tu auxilio, podamos santamente vivir y piadosamente morir y alcanzar en el cielo la eterna felicidad.

Amén.

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Family lifted by prayers, support from parish community

Kristi Allison's trust in God inspires others



This is one of Kristi Allison's favorite photos of Matt with his daughter Anna, taken in January 2020. The Allison family attend Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny.

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Last year was tough. But an unfortunate few had it even worse than most.

Kristi Allison of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny and her three children – two in junior high and a special needs daughter – watched helplessly as their husband and father Matt suffered a terminal illness and un-timely death in 2020.

Those who know Allison saw just how strong her faith was when her husband, Matt, 50, passed away.

In March 2019 he went in for his 50-year-old colonoscopy and doctors found a "massive tumor that had metastasized his entire abdominal cavity," Allison said.

"In early April of 2019 they did a 12 hour surgery where they moved the tumor and tried to remove as much as they could because it was so invasive through his abdomen," she continued. "He went into chemo. And [the cancer] was so aggressive that it was already back by September."

They went to the Mayo Clinic for experimental treatments.

"But by February 2020 he was just too ill and ended up in the hospital,"

Allison said. "He was dehydrated, he couldn't eat anymore, and with the pandemic we needed somebody to come to the house."

By March 2020 hospice was regularly coming to the house until Mother's Day.

"The plan was to go into hospice [in Johnston temporarily] to see if he could get some fluids," Allison said. "He was in a lot of pain and constantly nauseous and ill. And by Tuesday he couldn't stand up anymore. And by Wednesday he wasn't talking to me anymore."

Matt passed away on May 22, 2020.

Because of the pandemic, only one person could be in the building at a time to visit.

"We had to get special permission for my sons to come in and say goodbye," Allison said.

The parish community rallied around the family, offering up prayers, dropping off food and sending cards and messages of hope.

"Father Michael [Amadeo] was wonderful at that time," she continued. "He came out to the funeral home and did Mass there [because of COVID-19 restrictions]. We livestreamed it on Facebook."

Father Amadeo spoke with them about their loss.



This is the last family photo of the Allisons taken in April 2020 before Matt's passing in May. Pictured are Matt, Kristi, Evy, Anna, Max and dog Ella.

"Kristi persevered [through] that loss..." Father Amadeo said. "But also what I saw within her was this faith..."

Sadness because her spouse was gone, but also consolation in knowing there's more.

"To see her persevere with the kids, her focus was on the resurrection..." Father Amadeo added, though knowing full-well death could not be avoided. "But it gave them some hope, instead of the gloom and doom of 'dad's not here...' Now their dad is with God; dad is embraced in God's love."

Though the pandemic created a number of challenges, it also offered a silver lining.

"There was a blessing with the COVID – we were home together," Allison added.

Her strength in the face of adversity has made an impact on the people around her.

"I have so much admiration and respect for Kristi. I consider her one of my friends and... a symbol of God's strength to me," said Mary Sankey, associate director of faith formation at OLIH. Allison's trust in God blew her away.

Allison's impact is not limited to the church community.

Nicole Ryan of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines is a co-worker and good friend to Allison. They both serve special needs kids in their jobs.

"Kristi is a wonderful co-worker," Ryan said. "She is very upbeat, gentle, patient, humble, smart, loving and has a

witty sense of humor. She really is always focused on others – even when it comes to all the issues she has had to deal with this past year. She lives her faith by her actions and the way she lives her life. Her words are always upbeat and loving."

Kristi and Matt clearly made peace with his diagnosis and lived life to the fullest right up to the end, Ryan added.

"Kristi's faith was evident in her attitude as she went about her day working with kids with special needs and then going home and taking care of her family without one complaint..." Ryan continued. "Kristi is showing us her faith by her actions and attitude – she doesn't need to use words as her actions speak volumes."

"I am blessed to call her friend and to have witnessed true sacramental love," Ryan concluded.

Sister Susan Widdel, pastoral minister at OLIH, connected Allison with a Stephen Minister and kept the family in her prayers.

"We have an All Souls Day special Mass to remember people that have died in the past year. She had all of the kids there," said Sister Widdel, recalling how she saw daughter Anna looking through the memorial photos in search of her dad.

But this isn't the end.

"We didn't lose him, we know where he is – in heaven, and to remember that," Allison said. "And so I'm not sad necessarily for him, he's no longer in pain. I'm more sad for us, because we miss him. But we're doing ok."



Evy, Max and Anna Allison are pictured with the cremation bench that Kristi and Matt picked out together before his passing.

OPINION

Remember the lessons of the pandemic

Recently I have been thinking about the story of the unclean spirit, who after leaving an afflicted person, returns later and brings back seven other spirits, making the new condition worse than before (Matthew 12:43-45).

This struck me because in some ways I think the pandemic has cast out certain unclean spirits that once infected my family life. It has forced me to pause from the constant busyness that I often seek out, and instead replace that with more games and books with my children, more one-on-one time with my wife, more time to complete some of those home repairs on my years-old list.

The pandemic has disrupted my illusions of control and has drawn me outside of my narrow focus of my own agendas and myself. I have felt like our family

Marriage and Family Life

By Adam Storey



life, if not our kitchen floor, could be described as “empty, swept clean, and put in order” (Matthew 12:44).

This spring, as vaccines are becoming more accessible and the pandemic is slowly starting to abate, our family has started to refill that once empty space. While it’s a great relief to see hope on the horizon, I also want to make sure I do not refill my life with the same stuff as before, or even new, more harmful things.

I must continually be on guard not to fill the void with distractions, such as social media or the news, outlets I often use to avoid doing God’s will in the present moment.

Now that we are back in Lent (it feels like we never left!), my family is trying to focus on filling our lives with the things that truly bring peace and joy. This year my family has grown in prayer, in rest, and in just enjoying each other’s company.

I hope my family will remember and benefit from all our time together, and be intentional about keeping it in the future. I hope we will remember the quiet and choose it again even when we do not have to, or want to. I hope our hearts are filled with the Holy Spirit, so that there is no longer any space for unclean spirits or his friends. It will be a work in progress

for sure, imperfectly lived, and yet there is hope!

As we emerge from the pandemic, it will be tempting to think we can finally get back to the important things. Pope Francis reminds us that marriage and family life are the most important things we can all attend to, with the love in our homes being “a perennial source of strength for the life of the Church” (Amoris Laetitia 88).

No matter what the last year has looked like for you, this Lent let’s all pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to waste more time together with our families, even when we don’t have to!

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

The living Jesus is waiting for you

Carlo Acutis was a regular teenage boy who enjoyed playing video games, hanging out with his friends and coding on a computer.

But what set him apart was his devotion to Jesus. Born in London in 1991 and raised in Italy, he spent his free time attending daily Mass and weekly confession. He was devoted to the Eucharist, the rosary and Jesus, whom he imitated by loving those around him, including the homeless and lonely.

Carlo was very good with technology, and used his skills to show case the Eucharist. He built a website cataloguing all documented cases of Eucharistic miracles around the world.

Unfortunately, Carlo passed away from leukemia in 2006 at age 15.

Admittedly, I was unaware of Carlo until his beatification on October 10, 2020. He instantly caught my attention though. Here was a young man on the road to sainthood who lived in my generation, surfed the internet, worked on computers and had a deep love for Jesus like me.

While digging deeper into the life of Carlo for this column, I discovered our lives had “touched” years prior. My husband and I attended a Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibition at St. Patrick Parish in Neola in July 2016. Turns out this traveling exhibition, which has been on display at thousands of parishes around the world, was created and designed by Carlo.

If you’re unfamiliar with Eucha-

Faith that Conquers

By Kelly Mescher Collins



ristic miracles, you’re likely not alone. It’s when a consecrated host changes in appearance to human blood or tissue. But a “miracle” is not proclaimed until lab tests confirm the host contains human blood and/or human muscle or tissue.

One of the more well-known Eucharistic miracles occurred in Lanciano, Italy, in 750 AD. The priest doubted the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist while celebrating Mass. During the consecration, the bread and wine transformed into what appeared to be flesh and blood.

Of course, modern technology did not exist in 750 AD for testing purposes. But more than 1,200 years later, scientists did a thorough exam. It revealed:

- The coagulated substance is human blood, AB blood type, with the same protein distribution as found in normal, fresh blood.
- The consecrated host is human muscular striated tissue of the myocardium, left ventricle of the heart; arteries, veins,

the branch of the vagus nerve and adipose tissue all can be identified.

- Like the blood, the flesh is also fresh, living tissue, because it “responded rapidly to all the clinical reactions distinctive of living beings” (Ascension Press).

After Eucharistic hosts showed signs of blood and tissue in 1992 and 1996 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, they were sent for testing by then Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio (now Pope Francis). The forensic doctor, Professor Frederick Zugibe at Columbia University in New York, examined a host, not knowing its source. He said: “If white blood cells were present (in the heart tissue), it is because at the moment you brought me the sample, it was pulsating.”

I share this scientific documentation to drive home a point – the living Jesus is waiting for you at Mass and in Eucharistic Adoration. And during this time of Eucharistic Renewal in our diocese, I love pointing out that we Catholics have the privilege of experiencing something very special.

When Professor Zugibe learned the source of the Argentinian sample, he was very moved, exclaiming: “I do not believe it.”

Sadly, disbelief is the reaction of many of today’s Catholics.

According to a 2019 Pew Research Center Study, 69 percent of Catholics say they personally believe the bread and wine used in communion “are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”

Just one-third of U.S. Catholics say they believe that “during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.”

Is complacency, secularism or simply forgetting the lessons learned before making our First Communion at the root of this lack of Eucharistic faith?

I do not know for sure. But I do know that spending time with the living Jesus in Adoration and consuming his Eucharistic body at Mass will make you more like him. And the results? Burdens lifted, hearts afire and spirits soaring.

I’m in. You?

Kelly Mescher Collins is a multimedia journalist at the Diocese of Des Moines. She can be reached at kcollins@dmdiocese.org.



Blessed Carlo Acutis died in 2006 at age 15 from leukemia, but his legacy remains. Learn more at carloacutis.com.

Can love really change everything?

As Lent begins I am grappling with how we, as the Church, best respond to these challenging times and faithfully proclaim the Gospel to Catholics and to the world.

A core facet of Jesus’ mission and ministry is both seemingly safe and yet entirely radical: It is never okay to hate. Or, put more aptly in the positive: Always and everywhere, we are called to love. Indeed, we are even further commanded by Jesus to pray for our persecutors (Mt 5:44).

I think we need to lean into this simple but extraordinary Gospel precept in all that we say and do. This unmistakable message of Jesus must be delivered with clarity, repetition and increasing ardency to counter the din of vitriol that is capturing our culture, the fruits of which include alienation and violence.

I believe that tripling-down on this core tenant of Christianity in this moment accomplishes two things:

1. It challenges people (all of us) to

Guest Column

By Tom Quinlan



search interiorly and ask God, in his mercy, to root out all vestiges of hate therein, so as to prepare the way for love to rule our hearts and guide our actions.

2. It invites us to measure all messaging that comes to us (from friends, social media, etc.) against the divine imperative to love, so that anything grounded in hatred will be exposed as a lie profoundly opposed to the person and mission of Jesus.

I also believe that if Catholics can well learn and model the command to love (especially those with whom we disagree),

there will be no more powerful witness in our society to the saving power and truth of Jesus Christ. If Catholics, one by one, shine in this moment (and testify that our love flows from God’s love), conversion of hearts and the repair of social fabric will result.

Can it be so simple? Isn’t it ridiculously naïve to think that love can change everything?

Well, yes and no.

From a natural perspective, there is so much work ahead of us to stabilize and move forward constructively. God yearns for justice and healing and we must participate in both.

However, as believers in a divine reality, we know that all the efforts in the world, without God, will ultimately fail. In our tenaciously-held supernatural worldview, we trust in God’s providence and power. So, we pray that God will cleanse and expand our hearts. And we love with the love of our crucified and risen Savior.

Love does not mean abandoning values and accountability. Love is not the absence of hatred or mere indifferent acceptance. Love is active, constructive, courageous-unto-heroic. It reaches across chasms to offer reconciliation in families and communities. Love becomes possible only when we take the time to get to know another. Love is a complicated holy mystery and it is demanding! Now is a great time to revisit Paul’s simple-yet-profound treatment of love: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

If we refuse to hate, history will judge us well. If we choose to love, by God’s grace we may begin to evangelize our neighborhoods and our workplaces and help to heal our nation. Perhaps this holy season can be a time for us to ask God to purify our hearts...so that we can love better.

Tom Quinlan is the executive director of the St. Joseph Educational Center in West Des Moines.

Make a difference in someone's life

Many years ago, I attended a men's retreat at my parish in Sylvania, Ohio.

One of the speakers was an adoptive dad. He spoke about adoption, and how it changed his life for the better. One comment changed my life forever: "The person you love the most is not related in blood of any type, your wife. So why can't you love an adopted child the same?"

The idea struck me, and I spoke to our parish pastor who directed me to an attorney in Toledo who worked in the adoption field.

When my wife, Jeanne (Kelley) and I went to the attorney's office, there were pictures of many children with dark complexions on her windowsill. They were all from Paraguay and they all lived in the Toledo area. We decided to adopt.

Halfway through the process, our attorney called me while Jeanne was at the grocery store, and told me "Mark, you need to sit down. There are twins!"

We had many roadblocks during the adoption process: Paraguay's govern-

Guest Column

By Mark Page
pictured with his
wife, Jeanne



ment was overthrown, the Immigration and Naturalization Department lost our paperwork twice, our attorney was injured in Paraguay in a boating accident, and we were down to our last cent (it seemed).

Being 29, I had not considered the "cost" aspect of adopting. I had a good job for my age as a sales manager at an automotive parts company, but just one adoption took all our savings, and what I could pull out of my 401K.

When we found

out about twins, I went to the president of my company and asked if I could get into my pension (I truly had no idea this could not be done).

He arranged for me to obtain the funds that we needed. After one year of paying him back, he said: "We found a mistake in our accounting where we owed you some money on your transfer. You no longer owe anything. The slate is clean."

God works in mysterious ways, and this was truly a miracle for Jeanne and me. We had God behind us, and we had faith to get the process done.

In late 1989, Jeanne and I headed to South America for a month, and we adopted twins. We made it back to the United States Dec. 21, just in time to drive to Council Bluffs to be with our family.

Fast forward to 1993, our daughter, Emily, was born, exactly four years from the date we arrived in the United States with Matt and Rob. In 1995, Brian came along!

We were a multi-racial family, but

I never realized it nor did our kids as everyone was treated equally. Now have four successful grown adults (and two grandchildren)!

I wanted to share our family story to encourage others to support life from conception to death. Actions taken do make a difference in the world.

Since Roe vs. Wade, more than 50 million babies have been aborted in the United States.

I have been to Washington, D.C. and participated in the annual March for Life with fellow parishioners, other dads, my son, and friends.

As a Catholic, it may seem like you are sometimes on an island on important life issues, but there are many people who support life. Have courage.

James 2:26 says "Faith without works is dead." I invite you to make a difference in your own way in someone's life in 2021!

Mark Page is a parishioner of St. Patrick Church in Council Bluffs.



I've Been Wondering...

Father John Ludwig

Q. Is it disrespectful to refer to a priest as pastor instead of father?
—Jeff, Norwalk

A. No. "Pastor" is the Latin word for "shepherd." Many priests are pastors of parishes, but not all priests serve in that role. Rather they can be chaplains or chancery officials or teachers or missionaries. Many Protestant clergy are referred to as "pastor". The term "father" seems to be limited to Catholics and Episcopalians.

Q. What is the deal with Eve being created after Adam, and from his rib at that?! God made the male and female animals at the same time, why didn't he create Adam and Eve at the same time as well, and in the same manner? But nope, he had to wait for Adam to need someone else, and had to create Eve from his rib (or any part of his body for that matter).

A. The second and third chapters of the book of Genesis give us the story of "the man" and "the woman" (they don't say Adam and Eve). It's one of two stories in Genesis that speak of God's relationship to creation. The other story can be found in chapter one. Neither story is intended to be an historical account. Rather, they both speak of the goodness of creation and how God is at the center of it, and how evil and goodness are part of the experience of human beings. The people who first heard these stories already had a conception of the roles of males and females, so the descriptions in this first book of the bible don't deal with that conception. Instead, they build on it. If we take

the story in a rigidly literal way, we can get hung up on details that are not all that important.

Q. If God's plan will always prevail in the end, and if we're supposed to have faith in and trust his plan, why even bother with prayer? And what good is our own free will, if God's will is what always happens anyway, and if we pay a heavy price for not choosing what God wants?

A. Prayer is not an avenue to change God's mind about something. Prayer is intended to place ourselves in the presence of God and to commune with God with all our lives. We try to "figure God out" with our human intellect, but we know that God is so much bigger and inscrutable than we are. The Jewish and Christian traditions can bring us into closer union with the Creator of the universe. For Christians, Jesus is the very human face of God. St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits gives us a prayer of abandonment. Sometimes it's referred to as the Suscipe Prayer. It goes like this: Take, Lord, Receive, all my liberty. Take my memory, my understanding, and my entire will. Whatsoever I have or hold, You have given me; I give it all back to You and surrender it wholly to be governed by Your will. Give me only Your love and Your grace, and I am rich enough and ask for nothing more.

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

The triumph of good over evil

Guest Column

By Father
Ron Rolheiser



A colleague once challenged Pierre Teilhard de Chardin with this question. You believe that good will ultimately triumph over evil; well, what if we blow up the world with an atomic bomb, what happens to goodness then?

Teilhard answered this way. If we blow up the world with an atomic bomb, that would be a 2-million-year setback; but goodness will triumph over evil, not because I wish it, but because God promised it and, in the resurrection, God showed that God has the power to deliver on that promise. He is right. Except for the resurrection, we have no guarantees about anything. Lies, injustice, and violence may well triumph in the end. That is certainly how it looked the day Jesus died.

Jesus was a great moral teacher and his teachings, if followed, would transform the world. Simply put, if we all lived the Sermon on the Mount, our world would be loving, peaceful, and just; but self-interest is often resistant to moral teaching.

From the Gospels, we see that it was not Jesus' teaching that swayed the powers of evil and ultimately revealed the power of God. Not that. The triumph of goodness and the final power of God were revealed instead through his death, by a grain of wheat falling in the ground and dying and so bearing lots of fruit. Jesus won victory over the powers of the world in a way that seems antithetical to all power. He did not overpower anyone with some intellectually superior muscle or by some worldly persuasion. No, he revealed God's superior power simply by holding fast to truth and love even as lies, hatred, and self-serving power were crucifying him. The powers of the world put him to death, but he trusted that somehow God would vindicate him, that God would have the last word.

God did. God raised him from the dead as a testimony that he was right and the powers of the world were wrong, and that truth and love will always have the last word.

That is the lesson. We too must trust that God will give truth and love the last word, irrespective of what things look like in the world. God's judgment on the powers of this world does not play out like a Hollywood film where the bad guys get shot in the end by a morally superior muscle and we get to enjoy a catharsis.

It works this way: everyone gets judged by the Sermon on the Mount, albeit self-interest generally rejects that judgment and seems to get away with it.

However, there is a second judgment that everyone will submit to, the resurrection. At the end of the day, which is not exactly like the end of the day in a Hollywood movie, God raises truth and love from their grave and gives them the final word. Ultimately, the powers of the world will all submit to that definitive judgment.

Without the resurrection, there are no guarantees for anything. That is why St. Paul says that if Jesus was not resurrected then we are the most deluded of all people.

He is right. The belief that the forces of untruth, self-interest, injustice, and violence will eventually convert and give up their worldly dominance can sometimes look like a possibility on a given night when the world news looks better.

However, as happened with Jesus, there is no guarantee

that these powers will not eventually turn and crucify most everything that is honest, loving, just, and peaceful in our world. The history of Jesus and the history of the world testify to the fact that we cannot put our trust in worldly powers even when for a time they can look trustworthy. The powers of self-interest and violence crucified Jesus. They were doing it long before and have continued doing it long after. These powers will not be vanquished by some superior moral violence, but by living the Sermon on the Mount and trusting that God will roll back the stone from any tomb in which they bury us.

Many people, perhaps most people, believe there is a moral arc to reality, that reality is bent towards goodness over evil, love over hate, truth over lies, and justice over injustice, and they point to history to show that, while evil may triumph for a while, eventually reality rectifies itself and goodness wins out in the end, always.

Some call this the law of karma.

There is a lot of truth in that belief, not just because history seems to bear it out, but because when God made the universe, God made a love-oriented universe and so God wrote the Sermon on the Mount both into the human heart and into the very DNA of the universe itself. Physical creation knows how to heal itself, so too does moral creation. Thus, good should always triumph over evil - but, but, given human freedom, there are no guarantees - except for the promise given us in the resurrection.

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

The Catholic Mirror accepts letters to the editor of 200 words or less written by parishioners in the Diocese of Des Moines. Letters can be sent to communications@dmdiocese.org.

Bishops support initiative to stop bullying of LGBT youth

NEW YORK (CNS) -- At least 10 U.S. Catholic bishops have signed a statement supporting the Tyler Clementi Foundation in standing up for at-risk LGBT youth in the United States and speaking out against bullying directed at them.

"As we see in the Gospels, Jesus Christ taught love, mercy and welcome for all people, especially for those who felt persecuted or marginalized in any way; and the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that LGBT people are to be treated with 'respect, compassion and sensitivity,'" the bishops said in a statement released by the foundation Jan. 25.

The New York-based foundation is named for Tyler Clementi, a victim of anti-gay cyberbullying, who committed suicide Sept. 22, 2010, at age 18. After his death, his family created the foundation to end online and offline bullying in schools, workplaces and faith communities.

"All people of goodwill should help, support, and defend LGBT youth -- who attempt suicide at much higher rates than

their straight counterparts, who are often homeless because of families who reject them, who are rejected, bullied and harassed, and who are the target of violent acts at alarming rates," the bishops said.

"The Catholic Church values the God-given dignity of all human life and we take this opportunity to say to our LGBT friends, especially young people, that we stand with you and oppose any form of violence, bullying or harassment directed at you," they said. "Most of all, know that God created you, God loves you and God is on your side."

Signing the joint statement were: Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey; Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico; Bishop Steven R. Biegler of Cheyenne, Wyoming; Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego; Bishop John E. Stowe of Lexington, Kentucky; Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger of Tucson, Arizona; Auxiliary Bishop John P. Dolan of San Diego; retired Bishop Ricardo Ramirez of Las Cruces, New Mexico; and retired

Auxiliary Bishops Denis J. Maden of Baltimore and Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit.

Jane Clementi, Tyler's mom, who is co-founder and CEO of the Tyler Clementi Foundation, said: "This is a great beginning."

"I am very grateful to the Catholic bishops who have signed the declaration and are courageously adding their voices to an effort to show God's love by opposing any violence, harassment or bullying behavior against the most vulnerable among us," she said in a statement.

"With this groundbreaking statement, these bishops are saying that all God's children, including our LGBT+ siblings, deserve kindness, respect and compassion," she added.

Clementi told Catholic News Service in an email that the foundation hopes "more bishops will agree to use their voice and add their name to our statement."

This initiative is focused on leadership within the Catholic Church," she said. "We are hopeful that this is the time to find common ground and have conversations with Catholic leaders,

so that every youth sitting in their pews knows they are loved and are not alone, and to make sure families understand that they do not have to choose between their

The Catholic Church values the God-given dignity of all human life and we take this opportunity to say to our LGBT friends, especially young people, that we stand with you and oppose any form of violence, bullying or harassment directed at you. Most of all, know that God created you, God loves you and God is on your side."

child and their church home."

Jan. 25 was chosen as the day to release the statement, she added, because it is the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, "who had a change of heart and mind as he went from an opponent of Christians to one of the church's greatest leaders."

"I am most hopeful that

now is the time for the church's leadership to have a Damascus road experience," Clementi added. "Change is possible. It is always the perfect time to engage in conversation and to show the love and hope of Christ into this world."

In a Jan. 26 statement, the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests applauded the bishops for signing the statement; Archbishop Wester is the group's episcopal moderator.

The Catholic Church says homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered," but the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that those who identify as LGBT "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided," said Father Greg Barras, chair of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests.

In a documentary last fall, Pope Francis said: "Homosexuals have a right to be a part of the family. They're children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out, or be made miserable because of it."

U.S. bishops' react to recent federal actions

The following is a brief summary of reactions by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on a range of federal government actions.

Climate Change

President Joe Biden signed executive orders during his first week in office addressing climate change and the care for our common home.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, expressed support for several of the new administration's environmental priorities.

"In his encyclical *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis presented Christians and all peoples with an integral ecology oriented towards the common good, drawing on the longstanding tradition of Catholic social teaching and rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Archbishop Coakley said. "He warned

us of the danger of a 'green rhetoric' that often coexists with economic privilege and comfort, emphasizing the need to 'hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.'

"President Biden's environmental executive orders resonate deeply with an integral ecology that listens to the 'least of these' (Mt 25:40)" said Bishop Coakley.

Immigration

President Joe Biden issued three migration-related Executive Orders related to removing barriers and restoring due process in the legal immigration system.

The actions include orders to: (1) address root causes of migration from Central America and expand opportunities for legal migration; (2) create a task force to reunify families separated during the prior administration; and (3) strengthen integra-

tion and inclusion efforts for new Americans.

Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, said: "We welcome these Executive Orders on migration, which will help to ensure that immigrants and refugees are treated humanely and in accordance with their God-given dignity. Actions implemented by the prior administration on these issues have directly impacted and harmed immigrants' and refugees' lives, in many cases needlessly instilling fear and creating or perpetuating family separation. The Catholic Church teaches that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and that we must uphold the inherent dignity of each person."

Abortion

President Joe Biden re-

leased a statement announcing his intention to rescind the current regulation governing the Title X family planning program. The current regulation follows federal law by explaining that abortion cannot be part of a Title X family planning program either by using the same office space, sharing financing, or mandating referrals for abortion.

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said: "Although the Catholic bishops have grave concerns about government promotion of contraceptives, we have long supported efforts to ensure that the provision and promotion of abortion is kept physically and financially out of the pre-pregnancy family planning services provided through the Title X program.

"Abortion takes the life of an already-conceived and

growing child, and most Americans agree that abortion should not be used as a method of family planning or as a 'back up' for failed family planning.

"Title X, therefore, draws a bright line between abortion and family planning. In addition to the program explicitly prohibiting taxpayer funding for abortion, its authors further emphasized this intent by stating that, 'the funds authorized under this legislation [shall] be used only to support preventive family planning services, population research, infertility services, and other related medical, informational, and educational activities.' By rescinding this rule, the Administration will be forcing abortion into a pre-pregnancy program specifically designed to exclude abortion; a move which is immoral, impractical, and may also be unlawful."

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Priest: Learning about his baptism was a blessing in disguise

UTICA, Mich. (CNS) – Last August was a roller coaster for Father Matthew Hood, who was ordained to the priesthood -- some might say for the second time, but in reality, for the first time -- Aug. 17, 2020, for the Archdiocese of Detroit.



CNS photo/Michael Stech-schulte, Detroit Catholic

Hood's world turned upside down Aug. 6, when the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a doctrinal note ruling that baptisms using an altered formula -- specifically, those using the phrase, "We baptize you ..." instead of the church's ancient prayer, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" -- are invalid. Thirty years ago, that was the formula a deacon used to baptize Father Hood as an infant at St. Anastasia Parish in Troy.

It was devastating for me to find that out," Father Hood told Detroit Catholic, the online news outlet of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Father Hood has now received his sacraments -- he was baptized, confirmed and received the Eucharist on Aug. 9 and was ordained a transitional deacon Aug. 15 and a priest on Aug. 17.

Even though it felt like little had changed, Father Hood knows that, sacramentally, he is a whole new person now than he was at the beginning of August. Whether he felt it or not, he became a Christian for the first time on Aug. 9.

He said he is not angry at anybody, including the deacon who baptized him as an infant. "I don't think he acted in bad faith. I think there might have been mistakes in terms of formation and understanding of the sacraments. But this was a problem that was addressed, and it was ended."

The Diocese of Des

Father Matthew Hood thumbs through the missal at the altar of St. Lawrence Parish in Utica, Mich., Aug. 21, 2020. Finding out he wasn't a priest was a painful realization, but it also came with the grace of knowing God's providence, he said.

Moines is offering pastoral care for those with concerns in central and southwest Iowa about baptism.

A baptism is conferred by pouring or washing of water, the use of the essential sacramental formula, and with the intent to baptize.

Baptism is the basis for the whole Christian life, the gateway to the life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to sacramental grace.

The Catholic Church presumes all baptisms are celebrated validly.

However, if a parishioner has video of a baptism in which the celebrant can be heard using words that are not the essential sacramental formula, or if a parishioner has witnesses who

can verify that words other than the essential sacramental formula were used, they should contact the Diocese of Des Moines at worship@dmdiocese.org or 515-243-7653. For more information, go to dmdiocese.org/baptism.

Pope is going to Iraq

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis said his trip to Iraq March 5-8 would be an important sign of his concern for the region's Christians, but also an important opportunity to build fraternity through interreligious dialogue.

"In our time, interreligious dialogue is an important component of the encounter between peoples and cultures. When it is viewed not in terms of compromising our own identity but as an occasion of mutual understanding and enrichment, dialogue can become an opportunity for religious leaders and the followers of different confessions, and can support the responsible efforts of political leaders to promote the common good," the pope told ambassadors to the Holy See Feb. 8.

Pope Francis plans to meet March 6 with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, leader of the country's Shiite Muslim majority and then to hold an interreligious meeting with Christians, Muslims and Yazidis on the plain of Ur, widely recognized as the homeland of the patriarch Abraham.

March is small, but group's 'message of solidarity' with unborn strong as ever

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- It was the coldest national March for Life in some years, it was the smallest, and it also may be remembered as the bravest.

A little over 200 people, tightly flanked by members of the Knights of Columbus, endured subfreezing temperatures and wind as they sang hymns and trudged a zigzag route with Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, from the Museum of the Bible to the Supreme Court Jan. 29.

Kelly to lead Knights of Columbus CEO

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (CNS) -- Patrick Kelly, a retired U.S. Navy captain, is the new leader of the Knights of Columbus, succeeding Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, who has headed the international fraternal organization as its CEO for more than two decades.

Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese's Victim Assistance Advocate is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of 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.

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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- "Fatima" movie producer Rose Ganguzza
- Ascension author / bi-racial priest Father Josh Johnson
- Dan Burke, author of "Spiritual Warfare and Discernment of Spirits"

40 Cans for Lent

The Knights of Columbus invite you to please consider participating in the 40 Cans for Lent program as part of your Lenten journey. Simply donate one can of food or a non-perishable item for each of the 40 days of Lent. Drop off your donations at your local parish or food pantry. This donation will benefit those in your parish and in your community. Lent provides an opportunity for each of us to live generously — to show gratitude for God's gifts to us and to share those gifts with others.

"And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." — Colossians 3:17



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