Pope Francis said he was “moved” by a photo of an old registry that showed his participation as a young man at sessions of overnight Eucharistic adoration at a basilica in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The pope was sent a photo taken by Argentine journalist Lucas Schaerer of the registry from the Basilica of the Blessed Sacrament that featured his name, along with that of his brother Oscar and their neighbor, Gonzalo Bargiela.

In a letter sent to Schaerer and published April 8 in the Spanish Catholic weekly Alfa y Omega, the pope recalled his visits to the basilica between 1954 and 1955. At the time, Jorge Mario Bergoglio was 18-19 years old. He had already had what he called his “San Jose de Flores experience” – the experience of God’s mercy during confession on Sept. 21, 1953 – felt called to priesthood and was living what he described to Schaerer as “a normal Christian life.”

The nocturnal adoration, where participants took turns praying before the Blessed Sacrament throughout the night, had begun at the basilica in 1917. The future pope was registered as the 9,159th person to take part.

Adoration began about 9 p.m. after Spanish Sacramentine Father José Ramón Arísti ti preached, the pope recalled. “When it was your turn, the person before you would wake you up with the phrase, ‘Venite adoremus’ (‘Come, let us adore him’), and from there you go for...”

Continued on page 14

Bishop makes new priest assignments, effective in July

Bishop William Joensen has made the following priest appointments effective July 8:

**Father Raphael Assamah**

is moving from his role as pastor of St. Mary Parish in Shenandoah and St. Mary Parish in Hamburg to become pastor of St. Theresa Parish in Des Moines. Father Assamah was born and raised in Ghana, and studied at seminary in Ghana and Pontifical Urban University in Rome. He holds a master of art in theology and Christian Ministry from Franciscan University of Steubenville and currently is pursuing certification with The John Maxwell Leadership Team emphasizing mentoring and coaching leadership. Ordained in 2008, he served as the youth chaplain at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. In 2014, he answered a need for priests on the island of Jamaica in the Caribbean, by serving at Sts. Peter X and Peter Claver Parishes in the Archdiocese of Kingston. He came to the Diocese of Des Moines in 2016 to serve southwest Iowa.

**Father John Bertogli**, the rector of St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish, will retire. In retirement, he will continue his service as canonical administrator of Holy Family School in Des Moines. He’ll also continue as chaplain to the St. Vincent de Paul society in the Des Moines metro area.

Father Bertogli went to Loras College in Dubuque, St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, and Creighton University in Omaha where he earned a master’s degree in spiritual direction. He was ordained in 1977 by Bishop Mau...
A Family of Families

By Bishop William Joensen

I must admit that when I heard the Holy Father had declared that not only is this a Year of St. Joseph, but also a Year of the Amoris Laetitia (Joy of Love) Family, I sighed a bit and thought to myself, “Can’t we focus on one thing and not stack celebrations on top of one another?” But Bishop Joseph Melling is a Catholic author, and mother who reflects on our contemporary “woke” culture that initially served to protect the health and integrity of the dynamics between men and women, and the unpromisingly good in the fold of his own family of persons. A family is a natural society in the order of creation and as with all things God creates, is to be recognized and received as good in the midst of all the joys, pains, and sorrows that stretch our hearts. “The family images God, who in a communion of persons.” The risen Christ gathers and restores within families this image and likeness of the Holy Trinity, “the mystery from which all true love flows” (AL n. 71). A couple who is open to love and life is “true, living icon—not an idol.” Who reveals that God in his deepest identity is not alone, but a family,” for he has within himself fatherhood, sonship and the experience of the family, which is love, that love, in the divine family, is the Holy Spirit” (AL n. 11).

The uniqueness of the divine family and the love of the three persons enfold all families in their own array of present and absent relationships. An ideal family is a communion of persons, for we all know hopes that are frustrated and factors that go beyond our natural capacities to remain patient, to tender mercy and forgiveness, to be consistently good for each other. Yet the incursions of unexpected pregnancies, divorce, death, sibling rivalry, narcissism, and erosion of trust that confront us do not mean that we are left to our own devices to determine what a family is apart from our discernment of God’s intentions and invitation.

God desires our peace, happiness, and salvation. If we make our own desires and feelings paramount without seeking to gracefully harmonize God’s will with our own, we fashion an artificial solitude for ourselves. We weaken the “glue” of charity among community and reconciliation among members that not only keeps us together but also the foundation upon which greater society depends. Absent reverence for God and one another, we mask our capacity to love and instead inevitably make our

seel selves idols. Pope Francis emphasizes that “sexual love and the social and interpersonal role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.” The Holy Father alerts us to an ideology of gender that “denies difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences. He further opposes the mindset that human life and the human and feminine are separable realities, subject mainly to the wishes of individuals or couples.” The pope cautions us not to isolate our “f” from the organic composite that is our personal reality: “Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. . . Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift” (AL n. 56).

The family in which joyful love takes root and flourishes relies on both mothers and fathers. As St. Thomas Aquinas observes, “Mothers, who are those who love the most, seek to love more than they have been called to love” (AL n. 102). No elaboration of personal rights is complete without including a child’s right “to receive love from a mother and father; both are necessary for a child’s integral and harmonious development.” The complementary contributions of a mother and father allow for a child’s right to receive love from a mother and a father. hunter’s Day is observed, Rep. Enrique Garcia-Elizalde, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianola and Immaculate Conception, St. Mary, renewed for one-year term; continues as diocesan judicial vicar.

Rev. Christopher Fontanini, from pastor of St. Theresa Parish, Des Moines (effective April 11, 2021), to pastor of Corpus Christi, Indianola, and Immaculate Conception, St. Mary, renewed for six-year term; continues as diocesan judicial vicar.

Rev. Vincent Ronsonke, interim canonical administrator of St. Theresa Parish, Des Moines (effective April 11, 2021 to July 8, 2021)

Rev. Nipin Thakidipuram, from pastor of Corpus Christi, Council Bluffs, to pastor of St. Mary, Shenandoah, and St. Mary, Hamburg, renewed for six-year term; continues as diocesan judicial vicar.

Rev. Raphael Assamah, from pastor of St. Mary Parish, Shenandoah, and St. Thomas Parish, West Des Moines, renewed for three-year term; continues as diocesan judicial vicar.
Debo admitir que cuando escuché que el Papa Francisco había declarado que estaría en el Año de la Familia “Gozo del Amor”, esperaba que “todo este año espiritual que se llevará a cabo el mes de mayo comienza con la fiesta de San José, el mes de junio a causa de la muerte de George Floyd. El congreso estatal Ako Abdul-Samad, un hombre musulmán cuya presencia misma evoca un sentido de autoridad conferida por Dios, tomó el microfóno y lanzó un desafío retórico a los hombres jóvenes en la multitud, llamándolos a respetar a las mujeres por quienes son y que no las vieran como objetos solamente por sus cuerpos. Él les ordenó a no vivir como un montón de deseos cen- trados en sí mismos, pero a levantar y cumplir con sus responsabilidades como hombres por nuestra propia semi divina y el amor de las tres perso- nas que han servido para proteger la familia, en la manifestación de protesta contra las organizaciones, hay algunas personas que siempre han estado intentando el sentido de cualquier_
Priests say appreciation for the Eucharist has grown

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

There appears to be a greater appreciation for what was lost and now found.

When Masses were suspended in March 2020 due to the pandemic, a sense of shock and loss spread.

Public celebration of the Eucharist was suspended throughout the country to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Church doors in the Diocese of Des Moines remained open so people could privately pray at their parishes.

Loss of the Eucharist was heartbreaking for many, said Monsignor Frank Chiodo, pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Des Moines.

Throughout the pandemic, Eucharistic adoration was offered daily at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Des Moines with social distancing in the church.

The presence of Jesus in the Eucharist offered a sense of connectedness with the Lord, who offered the faithful security and hope at a time of desperate need, said Monsignor Chiodo.

The faithful rejoiced when Mass and reception of the Eucharist was offered again publicly.

“Not a few tears were shed when Mass once again was offered,” Monsignor Chiodo said. “The absence of public Mass did make so many hearts grow fonder of the value of a Mass. Many continue to watch the streamed Mass but so many have told me that they are praying for the day that they can feel safe enough to return.”

Sometimes people don’t recognize how precious something is until it’s absent, said Father Trevor Chicoine, diocesan director of the Worship Office and pastor of parishes in Atlantic and Anita, and canonical administrator of parishes in Griswold and Remo.

“I think in a way, perhaps we had all just assumed that in this country we would always have access to frequent reception of Holy Communion,” he said. “We know that such frequent reception and ease of access has in fact not been the case for most Catholics and Christians for most of history, and in many parts of the world such frequent access remains only a dream.”

“I think we better understand what a gift it is to assist at Holy Mass, receive communion, and be with each other,” Father Chicoine added.

The community of Southwest Iowa pulled together to support the church.

“Thanks to the help of one of our local radio stations, we were able to livestream Mass the very Sunday morning Masses were suspended,” Father Chicoine said.

“I’ll never forget that first Sunday going back to the rectory and seeing the line of cars full of folks who were pulling up to our new parish dropbox to drop tithes. This wasn’t merely just a heartwarming moment for a pastor who was worrying about parish bills, but a huge symbol: All these folks had been at home watching Mass and wanted to tangibly participate in the only way they could at the moment.”

Publicly celebrated Masses and the Eucharist brought hope to people suffering from the pandemic.

“One person said to me ‘Well, maybe we will make it through this after all,’” said Father Chicoine.

That sentiment seems to be widespread. Recently Father Chicoine was able to celebrate Mass at a retirement community for the first time since the pandemic began.

“For many of the folks who reside there, it had been over a year since they received Jesus in Holy Communion – an unthinkable separation for these faithful Catholics,” he said. “Tears were shed all around.”
Bishop William Joensen adjusted the COVID-19 mitigation policy by allowing for every pew to be used for seating in the 80 churches in the Diocese of Des Moines effective April 1. Households are still asked to observe social distancing between other households within each pew, and when possible between pews.

Additionally, baptismal fonts and holy water fonts could be refilled after the Easter Vigil, and scholars of four to five singers at safe distance from the congregation are now permitted.

Masks will continue to be required on church property. “These adjustments are in response to our improving public health situation, which includes declining hospitalizations, a low percentage of positive COVID tests, and the increased vaccination rate,” said Bishop Joensen.

“The adjustments are also a part of an incremental approach that will unfold over time. This approach allows us to respond to positive developments and yet remain vigilant, knowing that we have not yet emerged from this pandemic,” he said.

Two concerns are the virulence of new strains of COVID-19 and the impact of spring break travel.

“Because of this reality, while we are relaxing the above practices, we are also extending the mask requirement for the foreseeable future; as the unknown factors are manifested, it will again be reviewed,” said Bishop Joensen. All other mitigation practices will remain in place.

The adjustments were made based on the input of diocesan priests, consultation with a regathering team, and most importantly, consultation with local medical experts. The medical experts have helped the diocese discern the proper timing and ordering of relaxations.

The Diocese is monitoring the public health situation on a daily basis, and if conditions continue to remain stable or improve, relaxations will continue in an incremental way. Alternatively, if the conditions significantly deteriorate, the Diocese may find it necessary to reinstate previous guidelines.

“I recognize that the pandemic has left many of us feeling weary and frustrated,” said Bishop Joensen. “Let us continue to pray for one another.”

How Everyone Can Benefit From Planned Gifts
Matching your financial goals to your philanthropic dreams!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Goal</th>
<th>Your Gift</th>
<th>Your Method</th>
<th>Your benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a gift while leaving more of your estate to your heirs</td>
<td>Gifts of Retirement Assets (IE: 401-K, IRA)</td>
<td>Name us as the beneficiary of your retirement plan, and pass less tax assets to your heirs.</td>
<td>Avoid up to 60% income tax on your retirement assets; pass more of your estate to heirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a gift that costs you nothing during your lifetime</td>
<td>Gifts through your Will or Trust (“Bequest”)</td>
<td>Include a gift of cash, property, or a share of your estate through your will.</td>
<td>A gift that does not affect your cash flow, and you can adjust your gift as circumstances change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a gift while avoiding capital gains liability</td>
<td>Gifts of appreciated stock or securities.</td>
<td>Give us appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual funds to sell and use the proceeds.</td>
<td>Make a significant gift; receive an immediate income tax deduction; pay no capital gains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a gift and receive a “paycheck” for life</td>
<td>Charitable Gift Annuity</td>
<td>Donate cash or securities in a plan where the remainder comes to us upon your death.</td>
<td>Diversify assets, avoid or defer capital gains tax, receive charitable tax deduction, secure often greater income and possible inflation protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a gift and receive a steady income for life</td>
<td>Charitable Remainder Unitrust, Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust</td>
<td>Share your assets with us in a plan that gives you an income for life and where the remainder comes to us upon your death.</td>
<td>Make an extraordinary contribution that costs you nothing now and can be achieved by simply signing your name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a large gift at little cost</td>
<td>Gift of Life Insurance</td>
<td>Donate a life insurance policy you no longer need or name us in an existing one.</td>
<td>Take a tax deduction now; take possible future deductions through gifts to pay policy premiums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan a future gift in the simplest way</td>
<td>Gift the balance of your account (POD or TOD)</td>
<td>Designate the balance of your bank or brokerage account, retirement plan, annuity or life insurance policy to us.</td>
<td>Make an extraordinary contribution that costs you nothing now and can be accomplished with a signature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a gift that preserves your assets for your heirs.</td>
<td>Charitable Lead Trust</td>
<td>Use appreciating assets to create a trust that will pay us income for a period of years and then will pass the assets back to you or your heirs.</td>
<td>Shelter your growing assets and benefit us immediately; reduce or eliminate gift and estate tax.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on any of the gifts or information listed above, please call the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa at 515-237-5044.
The Iowa Senate has issued new action alerts on critical issues. Go to iowacatholicconference.org/voter-voice for these alerts.

The Iowa Catholic Conference has amended the House version of the Protect Life Amendment (HR 5) and sent it back to the House. It’s time to contact your representative and senator and ask them to complete work on the amendment.

In June 2018, the Iowa Supreme Court identified a fundamental right to abortion in the Iowa Constitution. We believe almost no existing or future regulation of abortion can survive a court challenge in Iowa. The Protect Life Amendment would clarify that Iowa’s Constitution does not contain a right to abortion. We recognize that each person is created in the image and likeness of God. Direct attacks on innocent persons are never acceptable. This is why abortion is such an important issue.

Recently at the state Capitol, the Senate on April 6 and was sent back to the House.

As members of the General Assembly approach the final stage of the legislative session, the Iowa Catholic Conference is actively engaged in that social justice work.

The House Education Appropriations Committee has introduced the budget bill for the Department of Education. There is a proposed increase in funding for textbooks used in nonpublic schools to $772,000, compared to $652,000 last year. The bill also includes status quo funding for nonpublic school students to take community college classes.

Redistricting

Drawing new lines for legislative districts takes place every 10 years, and 2021 is one of those years. The process has typically been accomplished by the legislature in a nonpartisan way.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Census Bureau may not be able to deliver data for the redistricting process in Iowa until the September deadline is past.

The Iowa Supreme Court announced that if the General Assembly is not able to meet the constitutional deadline, the court is prepared to meet its constitutional responsibility by implementing a process which permits, to the extent possible, the redistricting framework set forth in Iowa law.

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

The Catholic Mirror April 16, 2021

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Follow Iowa Catholic Conference for latest legislative proposals

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Around the Diocese

Monday, April 19
Holy Hour
DES MOINES – Join Bishop William Joensen for a Holy Hour at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral, livestreamed at Facebook.com/dm diocece.

Tuesday, April 20
Beyond the Book
DES MOINES – The Center for Social Ministry hosts Beyond the Book, an in-depth look at a book focusing on social justice and a speaker engaged in that social justice work. Behold the Dreamers, by Imbolo Jeffrisz. Dates for listening sessions are to be determined. If you or someone you know is interested in participating, please contact Mark Schmidt, coordinator of Racial Justice programming, at 515-259-0711 or catholiccaucasialjustic@gmail.com.

Monday, April 26
Holy Hour
DES MOINES – Join Bishop William Joensen for a Holy Hour at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral, livestreamed at Facebook.com/dm diocece.

Saturday, May 22
Men’s Conference

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May 22, 2021
Embassy Suites, Downtown DSM
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Speakers:
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Consejero sobre Asistencia de Víctimas

El Consejero sobre Asistencia de Víctimas es un empleado de Polk County Victim Services. Ella ayuda a víctimas de abuso sexual por parte del clero durante el proceso de la queja y buscando servicios de apoyo y consejería. Pueden comunicarse al 515-286-2028 o en advocate@dmdiocece.org.
Priest celebrates 60 ‘fantastic’ years of service

**By Anne Marie Cox**
**Staff Writer**

Father Paul Koch remembers when he was in the seminary and Boston Cardinal Richard Cushing put out a call. The cardinal was founding the Society of St. James, an international organization of diocesan priests who would be missionaries, and he was looking for priests to join. Shortly after his ordination May 28, 1961, Father Koch received permission from Des Moines Bishop Edward Daly to join the fledgling society. Father Koch celebrates his 60th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood this year. The bulk of his priestly ministry was in service to the people of Bolivia. “We were parish priests who volunteered for the St. James Society to work in Latin America mostly, in parishes without priests,” said Father Koch. “That was my work all of those 46 years as a parish priest. I’m not famous for having founded anything or any big idea. I was just a simple parish priest who loved it dearly.”

Born in Panama in Shelby County, a graduate of Loras College and Mt. St. Bernard Seminary in Dubuque, Father Koch followed his inspiration and big brother, the late Father Eugene Koch, into religious life. After ordination, he taught for two years at Dowling High School before leaving Iowa. He served five years in a high-altitude farming area in western Bolivia, five years in the mining town of Oruro and then went to Santa Cruz in the tropics, where he was a pastor of a parish with 35 missions. “It was really challenging and, of course, it was just fantastic!” he said. When he returned home to Iowa, he was asked to settle in Council Bluffs and work with the budding Hispanic community in that city. Now, he lives in Harlan with Father Clement Owusu.

Father Koch has no plans to celebrate his anniversary, but says he’s grateful for his vocation. “It was fantastic,” he said. “I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

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### Travel to South Africa with Bishop Joensen

**Blessman International Catholic Pilgrimage**

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Honing 250 years

Five priests are celebrated
Also celebrating

Father Hess on priesthood: ‘It’s a wonderful life’

As Father Larry Hoffmann reflects on 50 years as a priest, he sees Christ working through him to help people in the Diocese of Des Moines.

Perhaps it began with a mistake in his sacramental preparation at his childhood parish of St. Mary in Panama that led him to strongly desire receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.

He went through the preparation for receiving his First Communion, only to learn as the special day approached that his birthday was later than that of fellow students. He wasn’t old enough for his First Communion, and as a result, he had to wait a year and do the preparation a second time.

By then, this was just really important to me,” he said. “That whole thing sort of really heightened my interest in and feeling about faith and Jesus and his presence.”

Having grown up in Shelby County, a fertile area for vocations, becoming a priest was as real a possibility as becoming a doctor or lawyer.

When he got older, Father Hoffmann entered the seminary. Just before he was ordained a transitional deacon, he questioned his vocation, fearful of having to give sermons. He went on a retreat and, “somewhere along the line, I heard the Lord say, ‘That’s right. You can’t do it, but I can do it in you.’”

“Something went on and got ordained. Through the years, God has done through me all kinds of things.”

Educated at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri; Aquinas Institute of Theology in Dubuque; and St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, he was ordained May 29, 1971.

His ministry has taken him to rural and urban parishes: St. Joseph in Des Moines; team ministry based in Leon; St. Anne in Logan; Holy Family in Mondamin; St. Joseph in Ankeny before retiring in 2018. While retired, he was asked to serve as co-counselor for six months.

What has been satisfying as a priest has been simply being with people.

“You were there, you were consulting with them, consoling them. So often, they wouldn’t really hear what you said. They were going through their experience. Being with people during those tragic circumstances is very important,” he said.

Variety is the spice for Father Gross’s life

A young priest planted an important seed for Father Ken Gross.

While Father Gross was in high school, he got to know Father Ralph Goeser, who served at St. Boniface Parish in Westphalia.

“He was interested in the things I was interested in, like baseball and basketball and some of the sports,” said Father Gross. “He seemed like a regular guy. It really helped me to know that priests aren’t just sacramental priests but they’re also with the people. That made quite an impression on me.”

Though Father Goeser died just 10 years after ordination, he planted a seed that went on to bear fruit with Father Gross, who is celebrating his 50th anniversary of priesthood ordination this year.

Father Gross studied at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri; Aquinas Institute of Theology in Dubuque; and St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

His ministry centered on parish life. He served at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines; St. Augustine in Des Moines; St. Mary in Anita; St. John in Adair; St. Joseph in Casey; St. Clare in Clarinda; St. Joseph in Villisca; Sacred Heart in Bedford; All Saints in Des Moines; Holy Family in Council Bluffs; St. Mary in Red Oak; St. Patrick in Imogene; St. Patrick in Massena; and St. John in Greenfield.

Serving in rural communities was natural for Father Gross, whose parents and 12 siblings farmed 160 acres.

“I’ve always been one who felt God in nature,” he said. “The whole family connection with the farm and with faith, those are things that were just pretty basic and also helped in my decision to pursue the seminary and priesthood.”

He liked the variety each day brought him in the parishes.

“You never knew what was going to present itself,” he said.

And when outreach was challenging, he also saw opportunities for growth such as serving those in hospitals, prisons or working with addicts.

While he’d like to have a celebration for his anniversary, he’s waiting a while to plan it with hope that the pandemic will wane.

An avid bike rider, Father Gross is enjoying retirement by helping in parishes both inside and outside of Des Moines and exploring the bike trails.

Father Hoffmann 
A vehicle for Christ’s work

21 parishes blessed with Father Gubbels’ leadership

Father Aubrey finds fulfillment in accompanying others on their faith journey

One of the most rewarding aspects of Father Bob Aubrey’s 50 years as a priest has been the opportunity to be with people during their most difficult days.

“I feel extraordinarily blessed to be called to serve God’s people in this way,” he said. “I have a phrase that occurs often in my homilies: ‘Though I am dust and ashes, I have learned that the Lord loves me. I don’t understand it. I don’t understand it at all, but I’ve just come to believe it.’”

As he marks a half-century since his priestly ordination, he reflected on the years he’s shared God’s love as a parish priest and a 26-year ministry to the sick at MercyOne Des Moines.

Born in Philadelphia, Father Aubrey went to St. Charles College and St. Mary’s Seminary, both in Baltimore. He was ordained by Bishop George Guilfoyle on May 29, 1971, in Camden, New Jersey.

He came to the Diocese of Des Moines in 1982, and served at St. Patrick Parish in Masse- na, St. Timothy Parish in Cumberland, and Holy Rosary Parish in Glennwood.

In 1994, he studied clinical pastoral education and in 1995, he began serving St. John Parish in Cumming while working part-time at MercyOne.

In 2001, he began city hospital chaplaincy at the following hospitals: Methodist, Methodist West, Broadlawns, Lutheran and Blank.

While serving as a chaplain, he ministered at Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart in Ankeny; St. Theresa in Des Moines, St. Mary Parish in Jamaica, and St. Patrick in Bailey Yard. He retired in 2011.

A few aspects of ordained ministry stand out as being most rewarding for him.

Lead worship and preaching allows him to be a bridge builder, connecting people with God.

“It’s a privilege to lead in prayer,” he said. “That has been powerful.”

Serving as chaplain, he had a unique opportunity to accompany people during difficult times in their lives.

“They would tell me stuff they might not tell their spouse,” he said. “Just the privilege of being able to walk in other people’s inner gardens is something that I never took for granted.”

One-on-one support and offering reconciliation were also highlights of priestly ministry for Father Aubrey.

“I just feel honored and privileged to be called the way that I have been, to be a vehicle for God’s grace,” he said.

While his ordination anniversary is next month, he’s not setting a celebration date just yet because of the pandemic. But when he does, his celebration will likely be at his parish, St. Joseph in Des Moines.

For information about a vocation to the priesthood or religious life, go to vocationsonline.org or vocations@dmdiocese.org.
Hamburg parish hoping third time’s the charm

In 2019, parishioners of St. Mary Parish in Hamburg were about to launch a capital campaign to take down an old building and replace it with a new multifunctional one. Then a devastating flood swept through the town. The building effort took a back seat to the immediate work of restoring the church’s flooded basement, businesses, homes and farm fields that were inundated by the Mississippi River.

The next spring, parishioners felt the time was right to try again and were prepared for a Commitment Sunday in March to launch the capital campaign. Then the pandemic hit.

“This spring, St. Mary parishioners are hoping finally they’ll be able to get their project off the ground. Hamburg is a small community and has been through so much,” said parishioner Teresa Jamison. “The people are on the road to recover. We fall into that. Our church is a pillar. I think it’s an important sign to show we are here and still alive to the rest of the community.”

A white two-story building that has served the parish for more than 125 years no longer meets the needs of the parish. If parishioners wanted to fix it up, it would cost half as much or more as a new building, said parishioner Cheryl Phillips. The building sits next to the church on land that is several feet below the floodplain. The new building will have a lobby that’s at ground level, and then have a lift that will take people up to the main part of the building, said architect Rick Emswiler.

A concrete base around the building will protect it from floodwater, he added.

The new building will have five classrooms for the parish’s 42 religious education youth. Two of the classrooms can be made into larger areas, an office, a small kitchenette, and restrooms. The building can be added onto if needed in the future, said architect Rick Jamison.

“Hamburg is a small community and has been through so much,” said parishioner Cheryl Phillips. "We want it to look like the church, not a Morton building,” said parishioner Carolyn Mahar. "We’re a small parish, but we have a lot of kiddos and we want to make sure we have the best facility to serve them.”

The pastor, Father Raphael Assamah, has been supportive of the parish’s determination to replace its classroom space.

“‘He’s a real supporter of our parish,’ said Phillips. "We certainly have had challenges. But we work together to get things done,” said parishioner Carolyn Mahar.

This year marks the third time St. Mary Parish in Hamburg, in the far southwest corner of the Diocese, has tried to take down a 125-year-old house, shown in the top photo, and replace it with a new facility, shown in an architectural rendering in the bottom photo. Parishioners are hoping nothing stands in their way this time.

The Catholic Mirror April 16, 2021

By Anne Marie Cox

Staff Writer
Volunteers become hands and feet of Christ to serve the poorest

By Kelly Mescher Collins  Staff Writer

When a homeless man was found dead in early February in Des Moines, temperatures had dipped to nearly 6 degrees below zero.

Joe Stevens, co-founder of Joppa, a non-profit assisting homeless in Des Moines, said though volunteers with his group did not know the homeless man personally, they had seen him at Joppa events. The pain of his death cut deep.

“It was very sad and a sense of a deep loss,” said Stevens. “We lost one of our folks — what could we have done differently to help prevent that?”

Joppa helps the homeless access resources, transitional housing, peer support, food, and much more.

The organization receives a large amount of volunteer support and donations from members of St. Boniface Parish in Waukee and Assumption Parish in Granger.

Every December, Joppa holds its annual memorial service outside the Capitol to honor those who died homeless. The service is followed by a Christmas party and dinner in the East Village, run by a small army of volunteers from Assumption Parish.

Assumption parishioner and volunteer Joe Henkels said the parish raises money to purchase the turkey, stuffing, all the fixings, and dessert.

“We do all of the cooking, the serving, and everything,” Henkels said. “Our biggest dinner was 570 meals.

“It’s so rewarding,” Henkels said. “Joppa is the equivalent of the washing of the feet. You’re helping people you may never see again. They need a hand and you can do your part.”

Henkels loves the personal interactions.

“There’s such a stigma. You get to meet them and understand that they are regular people with a different situation,” he said.

Because of COVID-19, Assumption parishioners dropped off turkey and stuffing baskets for volunteers to deliver to encampments at Thanksgiving.

Tracy Wilson, a member of St. Boniface Parish in Waukee, said she and her daughter in high school, Jade, find meaning and fulfillment through their work with Joppa.

“Some people try to justify [not getting involved] and say they are lazy,” Wilson said. “But knowing there’s so much more to the story behind homelessness. And now everywhere you go you see it. … You can’t un-see it.”

The Wilsons help by offering support and delivering food to those in Joppa’s transitional housing through the Circle of Friends program.

Stevens is grateful for the volunteers and parish who help with their homeless ministry.

In the past 5-10 years, volunteers contributed 30,000-40,000 hours annually. Because of the pandemic, the number of volunteers was cut in half, but time donated in 2020 was still at 33,500 hours.

Parishioners at St. Boniface Parish in Waukee have been heavily involved in the Circle of Friends and welcome baskets. They also have many volunteers crocheting mats out of plastic bags for the homeless.

“I must say that the soul of St. Boniface exists for others,” said Father Devany Chimenea, pastor. “There’s something about St. Boniface — if I mentioned a need, there was always somebody who stepped out and said, ‘We’ll help that person.’ Even during the pandemic.”

Getting a parish involved often just takes the courage of one or two people to step out and get the ball rolling, said Joe Henkels, Joppa volunteer from Assumption Parish in Granger.

Learn more about volunteering at Joppa.org.

Joppa’s Circle of Friends is key to helping homeless

By Kelly Mescher Collins  Staff Writer

When Joppa encounters homeless individuals who want help getting off the streets, the non-profit forms a client relationship and helps them create a plan, said Joe Stevens, Joppa co-founder.

This includes finding transitional housing, providing a welcome basket with personal care items, assisting them in finding a job, and/or improving their skill set, and helping them access resources available to them, including transportation to and from the offices they need to visit to make that happen.

Joppa then forms a Circle of Friends for that individual to offer friendship, support, and regular interactions with people who care.

The Williams help by volunteering at one of their many events, gardening, IT work, or writing.

Their faith is central to everything they do.

“We used to talk about how we were totally dependent on God — and we still do that,” Stevens continued. “We know we are doing things beyond our own means and we wouldn’t be able to achieve what we are doing [by ourselves]. I couldn’t sleep at night if I didn’t just turn it all over to God.

“This is a calling,” Stevens said. “We feel that God revealed his purpose for [my wife and son’s] lives, and this is the reason why we were born.”

Learn more about volunteering, making a gift and more at Joppa.org.

Volunteers support the work of Joppa by rescuing food (over 100,000 pounds per year) to volunteering at one of their five annual events, gardening, IT work, or writing.

Scott Rupe was a regular guy who found himself homeless. He credits Joppa for helping him out of homelessness. Read and watch his story at joppa.org/featured_story/reunited-and-restored/.

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Volunteers from Assumption Parish in Granger prepared, cooked, and served the entire Christmas dinner for Joppa’s annual Christmas party for the homeless.

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For the past few years, my family has had backyard chickens.

We’ve established a pattern of adding a few new birds to the flock every couple of years, and we always go out and buy the chickens on Easter Monday. For the first few weeks we keep the chickens in our basement, and I have to say it’s fun to hear their chirps throughout the house and to see my children and watch them with delight.

Even I can admit the chicks are ridiculously cute. There are many days when I might get frustrated with our chickens, like when I have to clean the coop, or chase down an escaped chicken, or try to learn veterinary skills with sick birds.

But on Easter Monday, watching these little birds and the joy they bring me devastates as if she did have an abortion: “Even though I didn’t actually murder my child, I felt like I did, because that was my intention. I went home and slept for the rest of the day. I felt horrible inside. Guilty. Just as if I actually killed my flesh and blood.”

Tami Thomas is a devout Christian. But when an unintended pregnancy occurred when she was 19, she and her boyfriend decided to abort the child until God interceded: “The night before I was to go in for my appointment, I had a very vivid dream. I heard God’s voice speaking to me, telling me not to kill my baby. He told me he loved my baby and had great plans for my baby’s life. Then I saw my baby in the future. I saw that he was a boy. A curly-haired, beautiful boy. He went on to tell me to name him Caleb Joshua and that he loves him and that I didn’t have the right to take his life from him. Even now, all these years later, I am in tears and in awe of what happened that night.”

Kelly Mescher Collins is multimedia journalist at the Diocese of Des Moines. She can be reached at kcollins@dmdioces.org.
God sends comfort in flaps of wings and streaks of light

It can be hard to wrap our minds around the fact that God is always with us. My grandfather and I were always two peas in a pod. Since I was a little girl we’d laugh, joke, and goof around constantly.

In the summer of 2019, I was getting ready for my first, called Youth Camp. I looked forward to that week every year as the highlight of my summer.

That year was different.

The week I was leaving for camp, my grandfather went to the hospital.

The morning I was set to be dropped off at CVC, he stopped at the hospital to visit my grandfather. We walked in and were quickly stopped by my uncles and grandmother. We were in a different room, not his, and talked a bit.

I remember my father talking about funeral plans. Tears began swelling in my eyes, but my mom told me I had nothing to worry about and that I was going to have an amazing week at camp.

At first, that week came and I was leaving the hospital and passing my grandfather’s room, I felt a call to stop in and tell him goodbye. However, we were at CVC excitement, couldn’t get that chance.

The first morning of Catholic Youth Camp I was called into the office by my parish priest, Father Busz Parker. I knew in my heart that something was wrong. He told me of my grandfather’s passing. I broke down crying. I couldn’t believe I had acted so selfishly and didn’t give my grandpa a “goodbye” when I knew I should have.

For the next few hours, I stayed in the chapel praying. I remembered God: “Why now? Why this? This was to be the best week of summer and now it’s the worst week of my life.”

After a few hours, my best friend came over to the chapel, and asked what I would do to go on a walk. As we walked and talked, a swarm of butterflies surrounded us.

My grandfather loved butterflies. He even created a special habitat for them on his land.

At this moment, I knew God and my grandfather were with me. God still remember the huge weight that was lifted off my chest. It was truly a sign from God telling me that I was at CVC for a reason. God knew with my grandfather’s passing that I needed to be surrounded by my best friends in my favorite place.

After a very emotional day, everyone at camp went to the outdoor chapel.

As the prayer service began, I looked up to the gorgeous sky God had created. While gazing into the stars I thought of my grandfather. I also thought of God sending me to CVC for a reason. Suddenly, I was processing the day’s events, a sparkling star went shooting across the sky. I had never seen a shooting star before that night. I knew God was sending me another message of his presence. I knew I was safe and watched over by God.

It is almost two years later and I am still in awe of God’s presence. I know he is with me at all times. Whenever I find myself questioning my faith, I always think back to that night.

The day that was supposed to be the worst day of my life actually ended up being the most insightful and important day of my life. I was being watched over by him.

Anastasia Siebrecht is a parishioner at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Des Moines.

Finding spiritual peace on a hospice bed

One of Dorothy Day’s favorite saints was Therese of Lisieux. Therese Martin, the saint we call “the Little Flower.”

At first glance, this might look like a strange affinity. Dorothy Day was a Protestant, and though she attended church, she was not a believer. In fact, she took a passage from St. Luke to her, “The angel rejoiced over each repentant sinner.”

Dorothy Day knew it was Christ working through her. She recognized that countless people suffer heartbreaks and injustices, endure abuse, are humiliated, live in shame, and shed tears because of heartbreak, poverty, lack of love, and lack of being deemed precious.

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Anastasia Siebrecht is a parishioner at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Des Moines.
Bishop, priests hope new document will deepen faith, spur evangelization

PHOENIX (CNS) -- Holy Week is a spiritual marathon of sorts, packed with liturgies, solemnity and tradition. This year, it also included a powerful document on the Eucharist issued byPhoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted April 1, Holy Thursday. Titled "Veneremur Cernui -- Down in Adoration Falling," it captured the attention of clergy and faithful alike in the days leading up to Easter. Bishop Olmsted hopes the faith of practicing Catholics in the Eucharist will be deepened and fortified, propelling them into giving witness to others. “The primary evangelizers we especially need now are laypeople who are so grateful for their faith," Bishop Olmsted said. The wonder and awe engendered by the Eucharist, he said, spurs these evangelizers who "just can't help but tell somebody once in a while, 'I can't live without going to daily Mass, I couldn't live without doing adoration.' That's what I'm especially hoping for: personal witness of the Eucharist," Bishop Olmsted said. Father John Muir, director of the diocesan Office of Worship and pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Avondale, Arizona, echoed those thoughts. Bishop Olmsted "is calling people who love their faith and are highly engaged to really see their own responsibility to reach out to people in their circle and say, 'Hey, come with me to daily Mass, come with me to eucharistic adoration, come with me to Sunday Mass,'" Father Muir told The Catholic Sun.

The name Jorge Bergoglio, the future Pope Francis, is seen in a registry for overnight Eucharistic adoration at the Basilica of the Blessed Sacrament in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The pope said he was moved by this photo showing his participation in adoration as a young man between 1954 and 1955, when he was 18-19 years old.

PHOENIX (CNS) -- La Semana Santa es un tipo de maratón espiritual, lleno de liturgias, solemnidad y tradición. Este año incluyó también un poderoso documento sobre la Eucaristía redactado el 1 de abril, Jueves Santo, por el Obispo de Phoenix Thomas J. Olmsted. Con el título “Veneremur Cernui – Veneremos Inclinados,” el documento captura la atención tanto del clero como de los fieles en los días que nos llevan a la Pascua. El Obispo Olmsted espera que la fe que los católicos practicantes tienen en la Eucaristía se profundizará y se fortalezca, motivándolos a dar testimonio a los demás. “Los primeros evangelizadores que se necesitan especialmente en este momento son los laicos que son tan agradecidos por su fe,” dijo el Obispo Olmsted. La maravilla y el asombro que genera la Eucaristía, dice, estimula a esos evangelizadores quienes “no pueden evitar decir a alguien de vez en cuando ‘no puedo vivir sin asistir a la Misa diariamente, no puedo vivir sin ir a adoración.’” Eso es lo que estoy esperando: testimonio especial de la Eucaristía,” dijo el Obispo Olmsted. El Padre John Muir, director de la Oficina de Culto de la diócesis y párroco en la parroquia de Santo Tomás Aquino en Avondale, Arizona hizo eco de esas expresiones. El Obispo Olmsted “está llamando a la gente que ama su fe y que está muy involucrada a que vean verdaderamente su propia responsabilidad de llegar a aquellos dentro en sus círculos y decirles, ‘ven conmigo diariamente a Misa, ven conmigo a la adoración eucarística, ven conmigo a Misa el domingo,’” dijo el Padre Muir al diario The Catholic Sun. Lea la carta pastoral en español en: https://dphx.org/venerem-cernui-veneremos-inclinados

Obispo y sacerdotes esperan que un nuevo documento profunde la fe y que estimule la evangelización

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CNS photo/Lucas Schreiber

The Catholic Mirror  April 16, 2021
www.dmdiocese.org
New priest assignments kick in this July

Continued from page 1

rice Dingman, then served in edu-

cation and in parishes.

He went to his alma ma-

ter in the 1980s to join the faculty and as chaplain at Dow-

ling Catholic High School.

His parish ministry took him to multiple churches: Sa-
cred Heart in West Des Moines; St. Patrick Parish in Com-
ington; St. Patrick Parish in Lenox; Ass-

sumption Parish in Churchville; St. Patrick Parish in Irish Settle-

ment; Immaculate Conception in St.

Mary’s; St. Patrick in Council Bluffs; and for the last 16 years at St. Ambrose Cathedral.

Father Timothy Fitz-

gerald is moving from ser-

vicing as pastor of St. J.

o seph Educational Center in

Des Moines and served at

the Center for Pastoral Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame.

H e served parish life, he served St. Peter in Council Bluffs; St. Pius X in Urbandale; St. Clare in Clarinda; St. Patrick in Lenox; St. Joseph in Villisca; Sacred Heart in Bedford; St. Edward in Af-

ton; Holy Spirit in Creston; Our 

Lady’s Immaculate Heart in Ar-

ken; and St. John and Paul in Al-

tona.

In administration, he served as the director of Adult 

Faith Formation and Lay Minis-

try, and the director of Worship for the Des Moines Diocese.

Father Christopher Fontanini’s service as pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola and Immaculate Con-

ception Parish St. Mary has been extended for one year.

Educated at Dowling Catholic High School, Iowa State University, St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, he was ordained in 1997 by Bishop Jo-

seph Charron, C.P.P.S.

He served briefly as a parish 

minister in Connecticut and as a 

pastoral associate in East Longmead, Massachusetts.

In 2003, he was ordained by Bishop Richard Pates in Des Moines as an transitional deacon. He was ordained by Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S.

Father Christopher Hartshorn’s service as past-

or of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines has been extended for an addi-

tional six years.

Father Samuel Hendricks has served at urban and rural ar-

eas of the diocese: Sacred Heart in West Des Moines; St. Mary in Anita; St. John in Adair; St. Joseph in Casey; St. Joseph in Winterland Park; St. Patrick in Irish Settle-

ment; and St. Augustine in Des Moines.

Father John Scaria, who is origi-

nally from India, was ordained in 2016 by Bishop Michael M a t h e w 

Arackal.

He came to the Diocese of Des Moines to serve Sacred Heart Parish in 2019.

Father Thomas Thakadupiram, pastor of Cor-

pus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, is going to be the pastor of St. Peter Parish in Shenandoah and St. Mary Parish in Hamburg.

Born and raised in India, Father Thakadupiram moved to the United States to earn a doc-

toral degree in organiza-

tion learning and development from the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. While there, he served as the school director and assistant in residence. He served as pastor of a parish in St. Paul, Minnesota, concurrently.

Father Thakadupiram returned to India to serve as president of St. Clare College in Bangalore. He moved to northern Western Australia where he served several parishes before coming to the Diocese of Des Moines in 2016, when he began serving Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs.

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