Woman’s last gift brings joy to youth

By Anne Marie Cox

Jeanine Rothermel never met Cooper Myers, but she brought joy to his life nonetheless.

Cooper, a 13-year-old from West Des Moines who is deaf, was able to attend his first Catholic Youth Camp thanks to a gift from the late Jeanine Rothermel. Pictured with him is Carson Gregory, who became a best buddy to Cooper.

Cooper Myers was able to enjoy Catholic Youth Camp thanks to a gift from the late Jeanine Rothermel. Pictured with him is Carson Gregory, who became a best buddy to Cooper.

He was able to go to camp because of Rothermel. She was a parishioner of Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines who also was profoundly hearing impaired. Born in 1930, she learned to lip read and went to the School for Deaf after graduating from high school in Des Moines. Her lip reading skills offered her the chance to pick up secretarial

Family faith formation empowers parents

By Kelly Mesccher Collins

Kathleen Klein was thrilled to hear about the new Family Faith Formation program at her parish, Sacred Heart in West Des Moines.

“I am really excited about this new style because it really allows the parents and the parish to work together,” said Klein, mother to third grader Danny and sixth grader Kenneth. “I love that the parents take on a deeper role, but that we have the church as a guide to help facilitate that.”

Chris Corrice is the coordinator of Family Formation at Sacred Heart.

“The guiding principle behind everything we do at the parish is to equip families as the first educators in the faith,” he said.

This new format replaces the widely used model of parents dropping off their kids and picking them up an hour or two later.

With the Family Faith Formation approach, the families gather at the parish once a month. Parents meet separately while the kids meet with their

Couple’s generosity benefits families seeking Catholic education

By Anne Marie Cox & Maureen Kenney

Over the last 23 years, more than three quarters of a million dollars have helped pay tuition for needy families in the Diocese of Des Moines who wanted a Catholic education for their children.

This academic year, six schools will receive up to $10,000 each from the Florida-based Kremer Foundation to help children.

“Some people think $10,000 is a drop in the bucket but that’s a lifetime of difference to families and kids,” said St. Anthony School Principal Jennifer Raes.

The generosity comes from the George and Mary Kremer Foundation of Florida.

George came from wealth. He was born in New York City and fondly remembered the religious women who educated him. His wife, Mary, grew up in a devout Catholic family of modest means in Ohio. Her family made Catholic education a priority.

A creator of the first semi-permanent hair dye, George sold his company, Roux, in the late 1970s to Revlon, an international company.

The Kremers used their wealth to take care of everyone in their family, and then thought about how to use the rest of it.

“Mr. Kremer always felt it was a disservice to leave an immense amount of money to anybody,” said Mary Goddard, of the foundation.

The Kremers met Franciscan Sister Trinita Balbach, principal of a local Catholic school in the 1980s. The couple toured her convent and school and wanted to buy the sisters mattresses, new blinds for their windows and a dishwasher.

Sister Trinita objected,

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Faith practiced without a heart wholly turned toward God in a radical manner so that all our initiatives are prompted and oriented by his Spirit, is like cycling without a chain: one might be able to coast for a while, but at some point, one will lose steam and hit the wall. In a biblical sense, the heart is more than the seat of emotions and passions: the heart is the center of one's whole being. It is the place where God can encounter and enliven us so that all we do follows from this abiding partnership.

God ignites our desire to be good for one another, so that our love for God, neighbor and self are more seamlessly united. We step up to take responsibility for our share in God's promise, God's own vision of what life in community, including the community of the Church that is the Diocese of Des Moines, can be.

God gives us his own Son to save us. We gladly receive the Spirit who charted our direction and re-lieves us of the need to enter into every situation as though we've been handed a blank slate. God speaks his love language to us in personal prayer, in communal celebration of the sacraments, and in our service rendered to others. Jesus refreshes our baptismal calling so that we translate the gifts he showers upon us into ground-level patterns of relating that are meant to draw everyone into communion with the heart of Christ.

Jesus knows we are capable of more love; he calls us to be more bold, more prophetic, more visionary by discerning with what St. Paul calls “the eyes of the heart” (Ephesians 1:18) how we might embody Jesus' presence in an even more compelling, attractive way. We live for God in a world that too readily, too fearfully defaults to living solely for itself.

This past Aug. 29, at All Saints Parish in Stuart, Iowa, after months of preparatory discussion and prayer, something significant in the life of our Diocese was more formally set in motion: a group of 21 people from our Diocese representing diverse parishes, ages, ethnic and racial affiliations, professional backgrounds and personal perspectives came together to embark on what we intend to be a Spirit-led process of strategic visioning for our local church over this next year and beyond. More details were in the July edition of The Catholic Mirror (https://www.dmdiocese.org/news/news-dm-dioce-esa-strategic-visioning-process). This visioning steering group is composed of more lay women and men, and is joined by two priests, one deacon couple and supporting staff members from the diocesan pastoral center. All of them have prayerfully said “yes” to the invitation to participate, and I am grateful to all of them for their generous willingness to commit themselves to this process, including co-chairs Maria Gabriela Matamoros of St. Boniface Parish, Waukee, and Dan Kinsella of St. Patrick Parish, Imoego.

We have engaged Dan Ebener of St. Ambrose University in Davenport, a man of deep Catholic faith with vast experience facilitating visioning processes for both non-profit and corporate organizations, and a noted author in the area of organizational leadership, to help facilitate our journey forward. I have been impressed with Dan’s docility to the Spirit in setting forth a dynamic process that will unfold in three phases: (1) Phase One research and formation phase through December of this year. This phase will involve one-on-one interviews with various constituencies, and then will be extended into a series of more than 30 focus group listening sessions (conducted mainly via Zoom) that will include parishioners representing our entire diocesan family as well as persons involved in our mission of education and faith formation. We will also seek to engage persons who no longer identify with the Catholic Church, who are inactive or who may have disaffiliated for whatever reason, as well as gain perspectives from leaders in our larger communities and other faith traditions.

(2) The Phase Two planning phase from January through April 2022 will draw together the results of the research phase and allow the strategic visioning steering committee to incorporate their own formative experiences and reflections. They will develop up strategies and goals that will translate into actions steps that compose the scope and substance of the Strategic Vision. The articulated Vision will be subject to final review and revision through the Easter Season culminating in the Feast of Pentecost. If all goes as planned, (3) Phase Three implementation phase of the Strategic Vision will begin as early as July 1, 2022, and will continue for two-three years and beyond.

It should go without saying that I will be keenly engaged and involved throughout this process. I approach my second anniversary as your bishop at the end of September, and have been privileged during more recent months of the pandemic to finally engage many of you in person throughout the Diocese. I have some intuitions and hopes for the form of the vision that will emerge from this process. Yet I humbly recognize that if I were to prescribe beforehand the major features of the vision I would risk becoming a sort of self-appointed Pharisee who thinks he has God’s ways all figured out by himself. We all have our respective sensibilities of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and a member of Christ’s body in these remarkable times; unless we are humble enough to mingle our personal visions together and patiently place ourselves under the tutelage of the Spirit, cultivating trust and the willingness to speak from our hearts to one another, we’ll be wasting our time. And none of us wants that.

Twenty one people from the Diocese representing diverse parishes, ages, ethnic and racial affiliations, professional backgrounds and personal perspectives came together to begin a strategic visioning process.

Exciting and yet, demanding, possibilities are before us, thanks to the God who never gives up on us. God wants no person, no capacity to receive the Spirit-infused Word who is his Son, to go to waste. Together, united in heart and mind, I hope we may be inspired, discerning, and ever poised to support this initiative by prayer and any opportunity given to participate. God’s Kingdom vision presses on, calling us to assist him in bringing forth communion where love is exchanged, and life flows uphill and downhill with the pulse of Spirit propelling us. We keep true faith with Christ and one another, with hearts that see what God wants us to see, so that we can go where God wants us to go.

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Faithfully in Christ,
Most Rev. William Joensen, Ph.D.
Bishop

Faithfully in Christ,
Bishop William Joensen

By Bishop William Joensen

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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Photo by John Gaffney

Dan Ebener, of St. Ambrose University in Davenport, is facilitating the strategic visioning process for the Diocese of Des Moines.

Visión con los Ojos del Corazón

La fe que se practica sin un corazón volteando plenamente hacia Dios de una forma radical de modo que todas nuestras iniciativas se originen y se guíen por su Espíritu, es como andar en bicicleta sin cadena: uno puede avanzar un poco pero llegaremos al punto en que perdamos toda nuestra energía y paremos en seco. En un sentido bíblico, el corazón es más que el conjunto de emociones y pasiones; el corazón es el centro mismo de nuestro ser. Es el lugar en donde Dios puede encontrarnos y animarnos para que todo lo que hagamos surja de esta permanente colaboración. Dios enciende nuestro deseo de ser buenos unos con otros, para que nuestro amor por Dios, por el prójimo y por nosotros mismos estén en una más perfecta unión. Tomar parte en nuestra responsabilidad en la promesa de Dios, la visión misma de Dios de lo que puede ser la vida en comunidad, incluyendo a la comunidad de la Iglesia que es la Diócesis de Des Moines. Dios nos entrega a su propio Hijo para salvarnos. Nosotros le recibimos con gusto como el Verbo Encarnado que marca nuestro rumbo y nos libera de la necesidad de enfrentar toda situación como si estuvieramos
Memorial Garden for the Unborn under construction

St. John Parish in Adel will soon welcome the entire community to enjoy the Memorial Garden for the Unborn.

The garden was "purely a work of the Holy Spirit," sponsored by the parish’s Respect Life Committee and Knights of Columbus, said Chris Oberreuter, committee chair and knight.

The $17,000 project will include a nearly six-foot tall mon-ument engraved with the words: "In loving memory of the children you were born I dedicated you..." "People don’t know what to do when they have a miscarriage," Oberreuter said. "So we wanted to give a resting place."

The Memorial Garden for the Unborn will be situated behind an existing Mary Garden on the north side of the church. The Knights of Columbus raised money to build a new rosary walking path around the Mary Garden, leading to the Memorial Garden for the Unborn.

A portion of the memorial garden will be filled with stones. Individuals and families are welcome to write or engrave the name of a child on the stone and then place it in the rock garden as part of the memorial. The garden will also include a shade tree and benches.

“Then they know they have a place they can visit,” Oberreuter said. “[The vision] was to bring parents, grandparents and individuals together, bring them closer to God and lift them and their babies to God.”

Jeanne O’Connor, a member of the Respect Life Committee and St. John Parish, said the garden was created for the entire community—not just for the church and its parishioners.

“It’s for anybody that would like to utilize the garden and find peace,” O’Connor said.

The committee hopes people find the garden to be a place of comfort, peace, quiet and reflection. Bishop William Joensen will bless the garden on Sunday, Oct. 10.
The Catholic Mirror   September 17, 2021
www.dmdiocese.org

skills and she worked as an administrative assistant in the insurance industry for decades. Rothermel died in 2020. Through her estate, she left gifts to her parish, Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Joseph Educational Center and the Diocese of Des Moines’ Deaf Ministry.

Her gift to Deaf Ministry paid for interpreters and an assistant for Cooper. It also benefited others through a ripple effect. Campers accepted Cooper, included him and extended supportive camaraderie that reflects the Christ-like environment of CYC, said Alex Kautzky, executive director of the St. Thomas More Center, home of CYC.

Some kids asked their parents if they could learn sign language, said Molly. And the college sophomore who provided assistance to Cooper at camp said working with the teenager was the most profound thing that’s ever happened to him.

Carson Gregory, who was studying at Loras College to be a lawyer, has changed his life’s goal. “After working with Cooper and living with the experience that that entailed, I felt called to change my life,” he said. “I decided to transfer schools to study neuroscience and disability studies. Hopefully, one day I will work in health care with people who have a disability.”

Though Gregory was an aide, he became much more to Cooper. They developed a tight-knit bond, said Molly. They became more like “best buddies.” The diocese’s Deaf Ministry program also allowed for Cooper to have a sign language interpreter at Vacation Bible School. The Diocese will continue to focus on needs within the deaf community so others may benefit from Rothermel’s gift, said John Gaffney, diocesan director of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Through various estate plan options, individuals or families can leave a lasting legacy of helping others. To learn more, contact the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa at 515-237-5044 or email contact@cfswia.org.

Through her bequest, woman brings joy to youth

Continued from page 1

Jeanine Rothermel left a legacy of helping others through her will. She left funds for the Diocese’s Deaf Ministry program, which provided support for Cooper Myers to go to Catholic Youth Camp for the first time with sign language interpreters and a helper. Pictured above, he stands to the side while playing a popular game called gaga ball.

Parish celebrates its 10th anniversary with Mass, Eucharistic procession

Corpus Christi Parish celebrated its 10th anniversary on July 11. The parish celebrated with Mass and a Eucharistic procession.

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Family faith formation empowers parents

St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish just began a family-based religious education process. Here, youth enjoy the first gathering.

Father Litto Thomas joins the kids in outdoor activities at their first Family Faith Formation gathering on Sept. 9 at Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines.

Continued from page 1

catechists. The next three weeks the family gathers for religious education in their home.

“[Parents] – you’re the primary educators for the children,” Corrice said. “We want to parent with you – all of us work together.”

This year’s teachings will be based on the Bible, with each month having a theme and Scripture passages for reflection. Some week’s lessons include activities and games. The parish will be offering Family Faith Formation in both English and Spanish.

Corrice is excited about the new Bibles the parish has purchased to accompany the faith formation.

“It’s one of the more deluxe Bibles – it’s really nice. I think it sends the message: ‘We really believe in you and we want you to have a really great Bible,’” said Corrice. It includes reading plans, stickers and other features. “It’s got everything you could ever want.”

This new approach is a great opportunity for not just the family, but the entire community, Klein said.

“I love that it allows the community to come together as one,” she said. “So the Catholic school kids and the public school kids come together – no matter their school and no matter their background.”

Klein hopes these positive interactions result in more engagement and interaction amongst families at events and before and after Mass.

St. Mary Parish in Red Oak and St. Michael Parish in Harlan have been using the Family Faith Formation approach for over a year.

Some parents had reservations at first.

“There is a learning curve,” said Alan Vonnahme, director of religious education at St. Mary Parish. “A lot of parents do not feel like they are qualified or know enough.”

Vonnahme assures parents that he and the volunteers are there to help parents with any questions they might have.

“It’s a cultural shift,” Vonnahme said. “We’re putting the responsibility more on the parents.”

Rhonda Buck, director of Faith Formation at St. Michael Parish in Harlan, said many parents feel intimidated and are reluctant to become the primary teacher – feeling they do not know enough.

“A lot of parents feel awkward and uncomfortable,” Buck said. “But God doesn’t expect perfect – he expects participation. Just say a little prayer to the Holy Spirit and you will be amazed that he will [come through].”

Learning styles vary from person to person, so Buck provides families with a variety of tools and resources, including information packets, YouTube videos, an activity or craft, inspiring songs and more.

“We’ve all made that pep talk [to parents] – ‘You can do this. I’m here for you,’” Buck added. “I’m supplementing you – you aren’t supplementing me.”

Being back together for their once a month gatherings after COVID-19 has been positive.

“They’re really enjoying that,” Buck said. “Everybody seems to respond really well to having the whole family together.”

But the weekly lessons in the home are just as vital.

“It gives you the opportunity to take the time and focus on family and focus on faith,” Buck concluded. “And I think that’s something the whole world could use a lot more of these days.”

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.

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You are invited...To a Pro-Life Christmas Gala
By Anne Marie Cox

As students carried their chairs into the gym at St. Malachy School in Creston for the first Mass of the school year, students Owen Weis and Ayden Purdum sat in the back looking at computer screens that showed sound and video.

Student Kurtis Bradley stood at the far corner with an iPhone in a gimbal that stabilizes video.

Students Jaxson Jon- dle and Matthew Rudolf were on either sides of the room with iPhones in tripods, waiting for the action to begin.

Father Adam Westphal began to celebrate Mass, and the video crew of seventh and eighth graders sprung into action. Caden Simmons moved his camera in place by the center aisle. The cameramen made sure the video they were shooting was in focus and close enough to capture what was happening, yet far enough away to respect the celebration of the liturgy.

This collection of budding videographers and video editors is an outgrowth of the pandemic. “It grew from such a tiny idea of an idea into a great club that our students love,” said Principal Jennifer Simmons.

When the pandemic be- gan, retired computer scientist Steve Heffern, who remembers the days of cutting 8mm film, offered to help Father Westphal, who was recording and posting Mass online.

Eighth grader Caden Simmons helps livestream a Mass at St. Malachy School in Creston.

Father Adam Westphal was recording and posting Mass at St. Malachy School in Creston, Iowa, and students Owen Weis and Ayden Purdum were in the gym while social distancing. The other students would need to watch livestreamed Mass from their classrooms.

Heffern hailed his own equipment to the school to livestream the Mass, and Simmons asked if the students could help. The video club was born.

“They picked it up quickly,” he said.

After doing several projects, the club was asked if it would record or stream the high school musical, “The Boyfriend.”

“We could do it while we were there,” said Simmons.

“I like technology,” said student Jaxson Jon-dle. “It makes things fun.”

“It was a new opportunity, maybe a career path I could choose,” Weis said. “We worked some videos on their own with their phones, but they hadn’t worked as a team. They know what they’re supposed to do, they know what’s expected of them and they know what the other people on the crew are doing.”

Heffern isn’t the only one having fun. “It was a new opportunity, maybe a career path I could choose,” Weis said. “It makes things fun.”

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Heffern isn’t the only one having fun. “It was a new opportunity, maybe a career path I could choose,” Weis said. “It makes things fun.”
Diane McKee, a long-time advocate for domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking survivors in the Council Bluffs region, is retiring from Catholic Charities at the end of the year.

Her right hand helper, Sapan Sharma said, “I’m still in denial.”

“We’re all in denial,” said Laura Hessburg, public policy director for the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

They wish McKee well in retirement, though they’ll miss her calm and steady hand combined with a nonjudgmental approach to the difficult work of helping those traumatized by vio- lent crime.

McKee’s gifts will be missed.

“Diane really embodied a shared value for concern for the well-being of people and she brought that to her work,” Hessburg said.

McKee’s involvement in Catholic Charities began as a vol- unteer.

She was teaching junior high reading in 1987.

“I had been doing that for a couple of years and decided that’s not really where my pas- sion was,” she said.

She volunteered for Catholic Charities domestic vio- lence and sexual assault program in Council Bluffs. She would go to the hospital and take sexual assault or domestic violence vic- tims to a Catholic Charities shel- ter.

In 1989, she joined the staff; it was just her and one other person.

In the mid-1990s, more federal dollars for crime victims began to come to the program, and more staff was hired.

McKee, now the pro- gram manager, learned all aspects of victim services. She’s been a direct service worker, a volunteer coordinator, court advocate and more. It’s hard work.

“In those early days, I had some put-my-head-down-on-my-desk-and-cry days,” she said.

In 1999, a fire destroyed a home used as a shelter for abuse victims. McKee rallied the community, applied for grants and helped lead a capital campaign that resulted in the construction of a new shelter and office space opened in 2002, that can accommodated up to eight families with 24 beds and staff.

Staff at the dom- estic violence and sexual assault program were brought together under one roof, formerly known as the Phoenix House: They pro- vide a 24-hour emergency shelter and crisis phone line, court ad- vocacy, educational groups and outreach to under-served popula- tions in nine counties surrounding Council Bluffs in southwest Iowa.

In 2013, Iowa regional- ized victim services and created a competitive grant process to help fund services. Catholic Charities was awarded grant money for its region and expanded services.

McKee’s counterpart at the Crisis Interven- tion and Advocacy Cen- ter, based in Adel and serving 10 counties, coordinates her friend’s collaborative spirit.

“In 2013, Diane and I were both writing massive grants at the same time and there was a winter storm. We were trying to bring our grants together to make sure they were encompassing the entire 19 counties that our two agencies served together,” said Johna Sullivan. “We were burn- ing the midnight oil, testing and emailing back and forth, sharing narratives from our grants. It was a huge collaboration between our two agencies to come together and write this grant.”

The latest expansion of services assists victims of human trafficking and offers education in the community. Catholic Char- ities now employs 30 people in the domestic violence and sexual assault program.

“The growth has been exponential,” said Sharma, a close friend and assistant program manager. “I think it’s Diane. She’s a visionary. She’s up for the challenges.”

From Council Bluffs to the state Capitol, McKee took what she learned from survivors to advocate for change for the common good in her community and beyond.

“When I first met her I thought she was an attorney,” Hessburg said. “She was just ra- zor smart when she went to the Capitol connecting what she and her staff did with survivors and policies. She brought that reality to her work and always made it about those shared values.”

“Diane is very, very committed to the well-being of sexual assault survivors,” said Beth Barnhill, executive direct- or of the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

She described McKee as an anchor, a steady presence.

“She’s been able to very calmly and carefully talk to peo- ple. She has a quiet way of doing important work,” Barnhill said.

McKee is known for her patience.

“THERE were times I’ve just sat here and thought, ‘Oh my gosh, I would not have the patience she did right now with what is going on,’” said Teresa Hensley, a longtime financial as- sistant for the program.

She’s also known for her hands-on approach.

“She’s always been our maintenance person, too,” Hensley said. “During COVID, she was replacing ceiling tiles. She was covering shifts on week- ends. We all try to pitch in but, right now she’s trying to unplug the kitchen sink without getting her plumber. She’s always trying to save us a buck!”

McKee is hard working and professional, but also fun.

One day a meeting was occurring on the first floor. People had arrived and they were waiting for McKee.

“I went upstairs to find her and there she is rolling on the ground with the kids,” Shar- ma said. “That’s how Diane is. Or, out of nowhere you would hear Diane just busting out an old song down the corridor. She hears something, she’ll start singing. That is so much like her.”

What motivates McK- ee is the impact one person can have on another. Her staff’s out- reach can change the trajectory of a victim’s life. They focus not just on the emergency at hand, but on how they can help victims achieve their goals for the future.

“This job was not her only job but it was a mission for sure and she believes in the cause,” Sharma said. “She’s al- ways thinking about how to make it better for survivors.”

Deb Debbaub, director of grants programs for Iowa West Foundation, described McKee as key to collaboration among agen- cies in the community.

“She definitely in Coun- cil Bluffs is perceived to be the cornerstone and the representa- tive of Catholic services,” Deb- baub said. “She always steps for- ward to collaborate and provide information and services to our community. She’s always think- ing about how to make life better for others.”

Barbara Decker, exec- cutive director of Catholic Charities, praised McKee’s leadership.

“She’s an exceptional leader and a passionate advocate in helping others in need,” she said. “We will miss Diane: her positive outlook, her diligence, and strong work ethic. We wish her well and extend deep grati- tude for her many contributions to Catholic Charities and commu- nities for a job well-done!”.}

McKee is retiring at the end of the year and is looking for- ward to more time for backpack- ing, biking, running and maybe a little more traveling.

Hessburg said: “She’s just one of those people who are too good to be true.”
Hispanic parents attend a conference Aug. 28 offered by the Diocese: “Strengthening the Domestic Church.”

Bishop William Joensen visited students at St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School in Ankeny, which just completed a new building addition.

Strengthening the domestic church conference

Kevin Ramos Viera, a sophomore at St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs, studies cells in biology.

St. Theresa School seventh graders Jude Gross and Zak Gai return to school in Des Moines.

Couple’s estate has been helping Des Moines students for 23 years

Continued from page 1

saying she had six sisters who could wash dishes. What she really needed was help for kids who weren’t sure they’d be returning to school the following year because of the cost of tuition.

“He wrote out a check,” Goddard said. “That sort of planted the seed of what he could do with his money.”

The Kremers and Sister Trinita picked five schools and gave them $4,000 each for a few years.

“It worked so well that we decided to go further,” Goddard said. By the time George died in 1997, he was giving 54 schools money to help children with tuition.

“[I] don’t think at that time he ever realized the reach he was going to have,” Goddard said.

When George died, he put half of his estate in the foundation, which invested the funds and expanded the number of schools and students, particularly in the Great Lakes region and the Midwest.

“Those were areas where our money got the most bang for its buck, meaning the tuitions were most reasonable,” Goddard said. The foundation helps students in small to medium size schools where tuition rates are about $5,000 or less and have a large percentage of children that come from financially challenged families.

Twenty three years ago, former St. Anthony School Principal Joe Cordaro saw a need for assistance and received it.

“I don’t think at that time he ever realized the reach he was going to have,” Goddard said.

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Principal Kandace Pattillo said her school used metrics from the Catholic Tuition Organization to determine which students needed the assistance.

“[O]ur school has given out more than $70 million in tuition grants and the principle of the trust continues to grow.

“It’s perpetual,” Goddard said. “It will go on beyond all of us.”

Tuition grants

The following schools have received tuition grants from the Kremer Foundation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Tuition Grant</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christ the King School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Family School</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>$162,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Anthony School</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Patrick School</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Pius X School</td>
<td>16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>$776,647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This includes tuition grants of $10,000 each for the six schools for this school year that will help pay the tuition for 95 children.

How to support local students with Catholic education

Individuals and families can help children who qualify for tuition assistance by donating to the Catholic Tuition Organization. The CTO collects donations and distributes them to students in the Diocese’s 16 schools who qualify. For more information go to CTOIowa.org or call 515-237-5010.

Free Citizenship Class

This free citizenship class will prepare you to pass your US immigration citizenship interview.

Experienced teacher will conduct this class bilingual – English and Spanish. Please contact local instructor Jim Supina at (515) 963-2926.
As they enter the seminary for the first time, these young men share what made them decide to take the next step in discerning their vocation.

By Greg Kinser
St. Anthony Parish, Des Moines

I have always been drawn to the religious life. I was raised in a Christian (Protestant, not Catholic) home and my faith has always been at the heart of my life. For four years, I served as a missionary with Child of God International, which now serves as a mentor to those in prison. In my senior year of high school, my lifelong best friend, Dominic, became interested in the Catholic faith. Together we made the decision to join RCIA and ever since our confirmation, we have felt at home in the Catholic Church.

Interestingly, I never really felt called to the priesthood until over a year after being confirmed into the Catholic faith. I studied graphic design at Iowa State University. After my first year at Iowa State, I was faced with a difficult decision - whether to stay in the graphic design field or to pursue my vocation. I was looking for a way to bring my faith into my daily life. I was confused, yet I was filled with a deep peace.

That peace that I felt while pulling weeds has remained with me and only deepened to this day, over three years later. When this feeling of peace did not go away, I considered what might be God’s will for me, the more I prayed and considered what might be God’s will for me, the more interior peace I felt about being a priest (despite a bit of exterior anxiety). Around this time I began attending the Traditional Latin Mass, which both deepened my faith in general and really awakened me to the gravity of the priesthood.

When this feeling of peace did not go away, I resolved to enter seminary and continue my discernment there. Please, in your charity, pray for my fellow seminarians and me as we discern if God wills us to be priests.

By Luke Mohan
St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines

I attended grade school at my home parish of St. Francis of Assisi before going on to Dowling Catholic High School and eventually earning a Bachelor of Arts in Physics from Grinnell College. I am now attending St. Paul Seminary for two years of pre-theology.

While I was raised Catholic, being a priest never seriously crossed my mind until my sophomore year of college. I was considering changing majors and career paths and for some reason I thought, “You should consider whether you are called to the priesthood.”

At first, I hoped this “consideration” would lead to crossing the priesthood off a list of possible life paths. This did not happen, and the more I prayed and considered what might be God’s will for me, the more interior peace I felt about being a priest (despite a bit of exterior anxiety). The Lord has been exceptionally consoling me as we discern if God wills us to be priests.

By Blake Riffe
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, West Des Moines

Growing up, I had a strong desire to live a meaningful and purposeful life. For most of my life, that looked like becoming a husband and father, staying engaged with parish life through a lifetime of discipleship, and pursuing a career in electrical engineering.

Through many ups and downs, the Lord started planting seeds in my heart — and scattering them through the lips of those around me — that perhaps he was calling me to reconsider what I was previously so certain of.

For quite a while, I tried to satisfy that interior unrest through more engagement and ministry opportunities in the parish and across the Diocese, job changes, the list goes on and on.

When I finally realized I had been planning and scheming my own way through my vocation discernment without honestly inviting the Lord to shepherd me in this journey, I was slowly opened to the idea that the Lord was calling me to seriously discern the priesthood. Previously insurmountable walls in my heart started to be removed.

The Lord has been exceptionally consoling on my vocation journey so far, and I am grateful for all the works that he continues in my heart and in my life.

Iowa seminarians gather for prayer, discussion before heading back to school

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Seminarians from all four Iowa dioceses met in early August to discuss how to address issues related to charity for their own benefit and as future clergy who will be helping others. Their gathering was part of an annual statewide conversation sponsored by the Iowa Knights of Columbus that gives them an opportunity to get to know each other.

Catholics live in a culture that is hypersexualized and unhealthy habits, said keynote speaker Father Sean Kilcawley, of the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska. He serves his diocese’s Office of Family Life and is an adviser to IntegrityRestored.com, a nonprofit that seeks to help heal families affected by pornography.

Sixty percent of Christian men seek out pornography at least monthly, he said.

“So that means 60 percent of the men in church are not living a life that’s congruent with the faith,” he added.

Young people, between the ages of eight and 11 are being exposed to pornography, Father Kilcawley said.

“We need to be able to address things directly and competently in a way that gives people hope that their life can change,” he said.

“Freedom is possible and I hope that, in their formation, (the seminarians) know that they’re encouraged to do whatever they need to do to be free but more than that, they’re equipped to give that same encouragement to the people they serve,” he said.

Des Moines seminarian, Deacon Nick Smith, said Father Kilcawley’s discussion was helpful.

“He’s been talking about, for us as seminarians, how we can help be better ministers to those who struggle with the virtue and are trying to progress with that.”

“I think it speaks to the challenges people go through,” said Dubuque Archdiocesan seminarian Thiet Hoang. “It’s a good reflection for us to reassess ourselves.”

The discussion was threaded with hope, said Dubuque Archdiocesan seminarian JC Yiga.

“The whole spiritual life is a battle, right? You want people to have hope that they’re never stuck in a particular sin. God’s mercy is always there,” Yiga said.

“While it is a battle out there, the mercy of God is always strong.”
The following sisters of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary celebrate jubilees this year. Cards may be sent in care of the Sister, to Humility of Mary Center, 820 W. Central Park Ave., Davenport, Iowa 52804.

**Sister Miriam Anstey**
A native of Cumberland, in the central part of the Diocese of Des Moines, Sister Miriam Anstey entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1946 and made her first profession in 1949.

Her ministry in music education saw her in the Iowa schools of St. Alphonsus in Davenport, St. Therese in Des Moines (1958-59), Gehlen in Lamars and St. Joseph School in Fort Madison. She taught in Minneapolis, served in leadership at the former Marycrest College in Davenport, served in California and in leadership at Emmerson College in Boston.

Sister Miriam was the director at the Humility of Mary Center and was the music director of St. Anthony Parish in Davenport.

After retirement, Sister Miriam spent many years volunteering for inner city ministries in Davenport. She currently lives in Davenport and is active in a ministry of prayer and witness.

**75 YEARS**

**Sister Regina Mary Cratty**
Born in Des Moines in 1933, Sister Regina Mary Cratty entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1951 and made her first profession in 1954. Her ministry of teaching found her in Iowa at St. Anthony in Des Moines (1954-60), Sacred Heart in West Des Moines (1966-68), St. Mary Parish in Oskaloosa, Sacred Heart School in Davenport and Lourdes Memorial School in Bettendorf. She also taught in Montana. She was also coordinator of the House of Prayer in Davenport. Sister Regina Mary currently lives at Humility of Mary Center in Davenport and is active in a ministry of prayer and witness.

**70 YEARS**

**Sister Harriet Ping**
Sister Harriet Ping (M. St. Edward) was born in 1932 in Fort Madison, Iowa. She entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1951 making her first vows in 1954.

She taught in Davenport, Ottumwa, Le-Mars, Marshalltown and Fort Madison. In the Diocese of Des Moines, she taught at St. Joseph in Dunlap (1961-64). She also taught in Montana. Sister Harriet was a librarian at Marycrest College and worked in administration at Martina Place Assisted Living (1997-2002) in Johnston, Iowa.

After retirement, Sister Harriet enjoyed volunteering at Our Lady of the Praire Retreat near Westland, Iowa. She lives at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in Johnston, where she is active in a ministry of prayer and witness.

**60 YEARS**

**Sister Sheila Seng**
Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1943 Sister Sheila Seng (M. Mark Gregory) entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1962 and made her first profession in 1964.

She taught at St. Joseph in Nevada (1965-66) and St. Pius X (1966-68) in Des Moines. She also taught in Rock Island, Illinois, and both taught and served as assistant principal in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Sister Sheila continues to substitute teach in Colorado.

**Sister Helen Strohman**
A native of Keswick, Iowa, Sister Helen Strohman (M. Maurice) was born in 1932, entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1951 and made her first vows in 1954.

Her ministry of teaching took her to Davenport, Marshalltown, Ottumwa and St. Donatus. In the Diocese of Des Moines, she taught at Assumption Grade School in Granger (1977-78), Christ the King (1978-79), St. Anthony and Holy Trinity in Des Moines (1978-86).

She helped create the volunteer program Seeds of Hope while in Des Moines (1983-84).

She also taught in Minneapolis and in Mississippi. She was the director of the YES Program in Canton, Mississippi and a pastoral minister at St. Joseph Church in North English, Iowa. She was director of the Rainbow Literacy Center and worked for the MADCAAP Educational Program in Canton. Sister Helen currently lives in Mississippi.

**25 YEARS**

**Sister Barbara Goss**
Barb Goss is celebrating 25 years as a CHM associate.

She was born in Cascade, Iowa, and has been a CHM associate since 1996.

She was previously a vowed member of the Dubuque Franciscan community. Later she built relationships with Humility sisters and became an associate.

Goss has a background in teaching, pastoral ministry and dedication to social justice and people in need. Currently she is a Humility staff member at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in Johnston, Iowa.

**Come and See weekend**

Are you – or is someone you know – a single Catholic woman, age 19 to 35, contemplating God’s call in your life?

The Adrian Dominican Sisters invite you to a weekend of discernment. Come and see for yourself if God could be calling you to life as a Dominican Sister.

The Come and See weekend is Oct. 8-10, at Weber Retreat and Conference Center on the Adrian Dominican Sisters’ Motherhouse Campus in Adrian, Michigan. The weekend offers you the opportunity to meet other women discerning God’s call; join the Adrian Dominican Sisters for Sunday liturgy; spend time in prayer, reflection, silence, sharing, and fun.

There is no charge. You are our guest. Please register online at https://tinyurl.com/ADSDiscern. For more information, contact Sister Katherine Frazier, OP, at vocations@adriandominicans.org.

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Sisters celebrate decades of dedicated service

The Hispanic parish festival draws crowd

Reach 35,000 households by placing an ad in The Catholic Mirror.
A call for donated vessels and vestments for a poor church in Kenya went out to central and southwest Iowa. The response was overwhelming. Parishes in the Des Moines Diocese donated 18 chalices, 6 ciborium, 95 chasubles, 3 crucifixes, dozens of altar clothes and church banners, boxes of candles, a computer and an iPad. In addition, the Anita Library donated children’s books for a Kenyan orphanage.

“It’s amazing to realize how much good can be done with so little effort,” said Steve Gruba, M.D., a parishioner of St. Patrick Parish in Corning. The donations came about through a friendship Gruba had developed with his former pastor, Father Lazarus Kirigia, who is from Kenya. Father Kirigia now serves St. Mary Parish in Red Oak and St. Patrick Parish in Imogene.

Before the COVID-19 era, I used to make one or two trips to Kenya with a group of physicians and nursing students to hold medical camps,” Gruba said. There, he met Father Eliud Mwenda, a parish priest in the Diocese of Meru, which is Father Kirigia’s home diocese. Gruba received pictures from Father Mwenda. The priest was showing the crowd in his church. Built for 20 families, he served 80 families every Sunday. He mentioned that his diocese was poor and they could not provide newly ordained priests their own chalice.

Gruba talked with Father Kirigia about how they might help. Father Kirigia asked for and received permission from Des Moines Bishop William Joensen to invite parishes in central and southwest Iowa to make a donation of items they no longer needed.

“Diocesan priests cleaned out their parish closets of anything useful for building up the Church in Kenya,” said Gruba. His brother-in-law made candle holders to replace the broke coffee mugs that were being used. The donations “are now on their way via ocean container shipping to find new life in enhancing the worship service in humble churches in Kenya,” said Gruba. “Who knew that cleaning out the closet would have such a great impact?”

Cleaning of parish closets benefits parishes in Kenya

MEMORIAL MASS FOR THE UNBORN

A Memorial Mass for all the lives lost through the violence of abortion. Together we will plead to the Lord to stop the evil of abortion.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2021

Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel & Divine Mercy

GROTTO

NOON

ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Join us for this important Memorial Mass to remember and pray for the millions of babies whose lives were lost through abortion. At this Mass, we will pray for the unborn and for the women and men suffering from the tragic effects of abortion. The Mass will be held at the Grotto, just north of St. Anthony Church. Chairs will be set up but feel free to bring your own in case they are filled up. All are invited, please bring everyone to join in this important Mass. More information contact Tom Hanson tehanson4@msn.com 515.770.7648

If the weather is bad, the Mass will be moved into the church.

Sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 12482

We’re looking for stories of inspiration!

Send your ideas to Kelly Mescher Collins at kcollins@dmdiocese.org or call 515-237-5054.
September marks Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and it provides us with an opportunity to rally around the common goal of preventing suicide in our communities.

The issues that divide us have received national headlines, but the issues that lead to death by suicide are ones that we must all face equally. No one is immune from depression, PTSD, substance use disorder, illness, job loss, or any of the myriad of risk factors that can lead someone to consider suicide.

To help end this epidemic, we must put aside our preconceived assumptions and biases about suicide and the people who may be at risk.

Help is available.

As a trusted local behavioral healthcare provider, our team at Clive Behavioral Health is dedicated to changing the national narrative about suicide in a manner that promotes hope, resiliency, equality and recovery. Mental health services that use proven evidence-based treatments and support are available.

If you or someone you know is experiencing an emotional crisis or thoughts of suicide, no-cost 24/7 confidential support and crisis resources are available:

- 2-1-1 – dial 2-1-1 for crisis help or service referrals.
- Your Life Line – Call 1-855-581-8111 or text to 1-855-895-8398
- National Suicide Prevention Life-line 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or via chat from www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Crisis Text Line – text HELLO to 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor.

September marks Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and it provides us with an opportunity to rally around the common goal of preventing suicide in our communities.

For someone to commit suicide, there are periods of desolation and finding a solution! We can become frustrated and wonder why God doesn’t just solve the problem, or clear the confusion. In fact, that presupposition that quick fixes, it can often be tempting to find solutions outside of the faith. If God seems silent, well then there is no shortage of others who are quite vocal, and often willing to provide the answers I want.

With all of this, we must remember that our faith is not about us. Our faith is about the world and those we love. Our faith is about our relationship with God. Our faith is about our relationship with others.

Our faith is about our relationship with God. Our faith is about our relationship with others.

It’s time to stop thinking certain people in our lives are above this epidemic, and time to start seeing everyone around us for what they are – humans. Humans with complex lives, potentially unknown traumas, an equally important worth and value to the world.

Stop assuming, and start asking, “Is everything okay?”

A simple question and conversation can save a life.

Effective treatments and compassionate and knowledgeable mental health professionals are ready and waiting to help.

We all need to join together to educate ourselves, #BeThere for our loved ones. Our lives are too short to watch others fight beyond September and into our everyday lives.

Mary Thompson is the chief executive officer of Clive Behavioral Health.
The hidden power of play; how to be young at heart

Every fall the push to do more intensifies. Sharpen your pencil and dig in. Produce more, study more, socialize more, exercise more, volunteer more.

But we are forgetting something. The very thing we consider the opposite of productivity – play – is, in fact, an accelerator of it. And more importantly, it is central in the Christian path to wellness.

I was reminded of this when I read about Reform, a Catholic wellness practice based in Islip, N.Y. with online programming. The team includes nutritionists, a priest and a doctor. And in their wisdom, they declared play one of the nine pillars of wellness, right alongside sleep, movement, community and faith.

No pillar is more important than the other, and each one enhances the other – movement helps with a good night’s sleep, a good night’s sleep allows for greater community involvement and so on. Play is the most overlooked pillar, dismissed as a matter reserved for kids – something you graduate from around the time you abandon stuffed animals and mac and cheese.

“But if we take life seriously all the time,” the Reform team writes on its blog, “we miss what God calls us to be: childlike. As his children, we are all designed for play – no matter our age.”

What a profound statement. As God’s children, we are designed for play.

At 7 or 70.

Play keeps us young at heart, a fact many adults already know at age 65. She is not the grandma parked on the bench. She’s the one who bula hula. She goes down slides with her grandchildren and encourages them to play in the rain, their clothes soaking wet, pulling out her own rain boots to jump in puddles.

She is inspired by her faith. Her mantra comes from St. Irenaeus: “The glory of God is man fully alive.”

For my mom, play unlocks her creativity. “It takes me out of my world,” she said.

Indeed, play is the brain’s favorite way of learning, and to ditch it at adulthood is to dramatically limit your intellectual growth.

My friend Stephanie enrolled in a Reform program to help process the death of her 18-month-old. Learning to embrace play has been a surprising step forward in her long journey with grief.

This summer Stephanie played with her kids – running through the splash pad with them, baking, going on one-on-one dates. She also pledged to take up a hobby of her own.

As I write, a thunderstorm is rustling through the trees. I hear the sound of rain on the roof. It shifts me into a state of observing. I can step away from the to-do list. I don’t have to outrun the clock. I can simply let autumn unroll. And if I find a good leaf pile, I will jump.

Christina Capecci is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.
Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Szemjén for roughly 40 minutes “in a cordial atmosphere.”

“Among the various topics discussed were the role of the church in the country, the commitment to the protection of the environment, the protection and promotion of the family,” the Vatican said.

In a statement on his Facebook page, Orbán, who views migration as a threat to Europe’s Christian identity, said, “I asked Pope Francis not to let Christian Hungary perish.”

Pope Francis, arriving in his popemobile, was greeted warmly by thousands who lined the street leading toward the Mass site in Heroes’ Square.

In the homily, Pope Francis reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading, in which Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?”

Jesus, he said, addressed the same question to Christians today and requires a response that is “more than a quick answer straight out of the catechism.”

The first step in responding to Jesus’ question, he explained, is to proclaim Jesus as Lord. However, the pope recalled that Jesus told his disciples to “tell no one about him.”

“There was a very good reason: to call Jesus the Christ the Messiah is correct, but incomplete. There is always the risk of proclaiming a false messianism, one of human origins, not from God,” he said.

Nevertheless, to proclaim Christ means also proclaiming his death on the cross, and the Eucharist serves as a reminder of God “as bread broken, as love crucified and bestowed.”

Like Peter, who was scandalized at Christ’s announcement of the suffering he must endure, Christians can also “be blinded by that way of thinking.”

“We, too, can take the Lord ‘aside,’ shove him into a corner of our heart and continue to think of ourselves as religious and respectable, going our own way without letting ourselves be affected by Jesus’ way of thinking,” the pope said.

Lastly, Christians must learn to “walk behind Jesus,” because Christianity is not “a race toward success” but to find true freedom in “not needing to be the center of everything.”

In doing so, Pope Francis said Christians can learn to follow in the footsteps of Christ, “who came to serve and not to be served.”

“The Eucharist impels us to this encounter, to the realization that we are one body, to the willingness to let ourselves be broken for others,” the pope said.

Prior to celebrating the closing Mass, Pope Francis met in private with the country’s bishops.

He then met with Hungary’s Ecumenical Council of Churches, along with several Jewish communities. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople was among those at the Mass and the meeting with religious leaders.

Noting the recent celebration of Rosh Hashanah and the Sept. 15-16 observance of Yom Kippur, Pope Francis offered best wishes and expressed his appreciation for the Jewish communities’ efforts to break down the walls that separated Jews and Christians in the past.

Just as God “transformed the desert into a highway to the Promised Land, so he wishes to bring us out of the barren deserts of bitterness and indifference, to that land of fellowship for which we long,” the pope said.

Drawing a parallel on the famed Széchenyi Chain Bridge, which links the eastern and western sides of Budapest, the pope noted that the bridge “does not fuse those two parts together, but rather holds them together.”

“That is how it should be with us, too. Whenever we were tempted to absorb the other, we were tearing down instead of building up. Or when we tried to ghettoize others instead of includ ing them,” the pope said.

“How often has this happened throughout history,” he added. “We must be vigilant and pray that it never happens again.”

Lamenting “the threat of anti-Semitism still lurking in Europe and elsewhere,” Pope Francis said the best way to defuse hatred is “to work together positively and to promote fraternity.”

“The bridge has yet another lesson to teach us,” he said.

“It is supported by great chains made up of many rings. We are those rings, and each of us is essential to the chain. We can no longer live apart, without making an effort to know one another, to prey on suspicion and conflict.”

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Pope Francis greets the crowd as he arrives to celebrate the closing Mass of the International Eucharistic Congress at Heroes’ Square in Budapest, Hungary, Sept. 12. Also pictured in the popemobile is Cardinal Peter Erdo of Estergom-Budapest.

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After warm welcome to Slovakia, pope encourages Christian leaders to unite

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia (CNS) — Hundreds of men, women and children gathered on the tarmac of Bratislava international airport Sept. 12 to welcome Pope Francis for a visit of less than 72 hours.

As Pope Francis made his way down the steps of the plane, the crowd, some of whom were dressed in traditional Slovak clothing, waved yellow and white flags and cheered. Two children presented him with bread and salt, a traditional gift presented to honored guests.

Slovak President Zuzana Caputová greeted Pope Francis, who arrived in the country from Budapest, Hungary, where he met with religious and government leaders and celebrated the closing Mass of the International Eucharistic Congress.

After his arrival in Bratislava, the pope was whisked away to the apostolic nunciature, where he met with ecumenical leaders and reflected on the freedom shared in the country “after years of atheistic persecution, when religious freedom was stifled or harshly repressed.”

He warned them against “the temptation to return to bondage, not that of a regime, but one even worse: an interior bondage.” The pope explained that often, when one feels that “things have quieted down” and settle into the hope “of a peaceful and tranquil life,” the goal is no longer freedom but instead in “the staking out of spaces and privileges, which as far as the Gospel is concerned, are broad and little else.”

“Let us not be concerned only with the things that can benefit our individual communities,” the pope said. “The freedom of our brothers and sisters is also our freedom, since our freedom is not complete without theirs.”
**New global initiative seeks to ‘unlock’ Catechism of the Catholic Church**

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- When is the last time you cracked open the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Odds are, it’s sitting on your bookshelf collecting dust. A new global project, Real + True, seeks to “unlock” the catechism and modernize the way church teaching is presented to a digital age. The catechism “is not just a technical book,” said Real True co-founder Edmund Mitchell, “but it’s written to really change our relationship with Christ.”

Launched Sept. 7, the initiative includes videos, social media content and a podcast organized along the four pillars of the catechism. Each month a new unit will be released, with 12 units for each pillar, totaling 48 units. Aimed at millennial and Generation Z audiences, the content is meant to supplement evangelization and catechesis efforts that already exist as well as be a resource to those seeking answers to questions online, said co-founder Edmund Reyes.

The material is free and available on realtrue.org in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

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**Texas bishops highlight state-funded program to help pregnant women**

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Amid heated discussion surrounding the new abortion law in Texas, which bans abortions from six weeks, Catholic bishops have emphasized the importance of a long-running state program to help pregnant women.

“Texas has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in programs for pregnant moms and families,” said a statement issued by the Texas Catholic Conference, two days after the new law went into effect.

The conference, which is the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops, was referring to the state-funded program Alternatives to Abortion, which started in 2005.

“The program provides funds for pregnancy centers that offer counseling services and resources to women in crisis pregnancies,” said a statement.

As Pope Francis reminds us, our parishes must be islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference.”

The state’s bishops also stressed that “everyone in the parish should know where to refer a pregnant woman in need.” They said this work is also something that has been taken up on the national level with the initiative of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Walking in Moms Need, which helps pregnant women and mothers.

On Sept. 9, the Justice Department sued the state of Texas for the new abortion ban, calling the state law unconstitutional. It is also seeking an injunction to prohibit the law’s enforcement.

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**At National Press Club, Cardinal Gregory praises, challenges media**

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- In his first appearance at the National Press Club as archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory on Sept. 8 emphasized the importance of protecting the environment and upholding the dignity of human life at all stages.

He also answered questions on issues ranging from whether women will ever be ordained Catholic priests -- “I don’t see it changing” -- to affirming that seeking healing for victims of clergy sexual abuse should be the first priority.

Cardinal Gregory took questions from the moderator and the press club’s president, Lisa Nicole Matthews of The Associated Press, for more than half an hour, following prepared remarks that thanked the news media for their work keeping the world “informed, updated and connected as a global community.”

He noted that “words have the incredible power and ability to build, to damage or destroy” and he challenged the news industry and all people “to use our daily words, social media posts, public commentary and personal involvement to care for our neighbors in tangible ways that work for justice at every level.”

He said “civility and respectful dialogue for the purpose of earnest understanding can and should be promoted, most especially when we hold different or even opposing political, religious or other opinions.”

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**Visión con los Ojos del Corazón**

Todos tenemos muestros respectivos sentidos sobre lo que significa ser un discípulo de Jesús y un miembro del cuerpo de Cristo en estos tiempos extraordinarios; a menos de que seamos lo suficientemente humildes para prescribir anticipadamente las características principales de la visión, me arriesgaría a convetirme en cierto tipo de fariseos autonombados que piensa que ya entiendo por sí mismo los planes de Dios.

Visión de los Ojos del Corazón

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