

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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Tell us what you think

*Your feedback needed
for planning synod*

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Bishop William Joensen wants to hear from you for both a local strategic visioning process and for the synod process that Pope Francis launched last year.

On pages four and five, you will find a survey in English and Spanish that asks your opinion on how the Diocese is doing in a variety of pastoral areas. It also asks you to help rank a variety of issues that are most important.

Bishop Joensen is asking for feedback at a time when Pope Francis is calling the Church to listen more.

Coincidentally, the Diocese of Des Moines is already in a synodal process of listening as it proceeds with a Spirit-led strategic visioning process.

"Synodality will be the way in which parishes, schools and our diocesan offices discern how to implement the diocesan vision and priorities that have emerged from the ground up," said John Gaffney, diocesan director of Evangelization and Catechesis and coordinator of our local synod response.

Questions in the survey stem from themes which emerged in 35 focus groups and many one-on-one meetings with leaders, both clergy and lay, from across the Diocese.

It is hoped that the survey will help the steering committee for the strategic visioning process prioritize these emerging themes. This committee of lay persons, two priests and a deacon couple will meet regularly from the end of January through early April to articulate a proposed strategic vision and corresponding priorities for the next several years.

Your feedback on the survey will be used for both the pope's synod process and for local planning.

The synodal process of listening helps the Church hear the call for renewal, Gaffney said.

"By leaning into synodality during this key moment, we hope that it is not seen as a one-time event, but a prayerful process of discerning together so that decisions are for the good of all," Gaffney said.

USS Iowa commander to visit Catholic school



Students who studied with teacher Ronda McCarthy at St. Theresa Catholic School show the underwater robot they built through a program called SeaPerch. U.S. Navy Commander Quintin James was expected to stop by to meet some of them and see their work during his visit to Iowa.

The commander of the USS Iowa submarine planned to visit St. Theresa Catholic School's science teacher Ronda McCarthy and her underwater robotic SeaPerch program this past week.

U.S. Navy Commander Quintin James was coming

to Iowa at the invitation of the state's Veteran Affairs office for an event at the capitol intended to help veterans learn of the various services available to them, said Bob Kirby, a U.S. Navy veteran who was helping with the visit.

James, who commands the fourth USS Iowa which is un-

der construction in Groton, Connecticut, planned to see students and McCarthy during a stop at St. Theresa Catholic School, along with diocesan Schools Superintendent Donna Bishop and Sarah Derry, of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council.

McCarthy discovered

the SeaPerch program while she was at a teacher training at the U.S. Naval Academy and brought it to St. Theresa School. Other schools adopted the program and she eventually developed a regional competition.

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Welcome to international priests for mission work in parishes, hospitals

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

The Diocese of Des Moines last year welcomed five new priests to minister in parishes and hospitals throughout central and southwest Iowa.

They bring outstanding pastoral skills and a high level of education to parishes, said Humility Sister Jude Fitzpatrick, who coordinates immigration paperwork for international priests.

"I think there's a remarkable spirit they bring to this place from around the world," she said.

The face of the priesthood in the Diocese of Des Moines has been changing since Bishop Emeritus Joseph Charron brought four Nigerian priests to assist with pastoral care in the 1990s.

Today, nearly 30 international priests serve the Diocese. Nearly half of the priests in active ministry in the Diocese are international.

The following introduc-

es the faithful of the Diocese to some of the newest arrivals.

Father Michael Antoh, ordained in 2001, served four parishes in 20 years in his diocese as associate pastor and pastor.

"I served at two parishes with 18 outstations each as an associate pastor and the other two parishes as the pastor and these parishes had six outstations each," he said.

He asked his bishop for an opportunity to have an experience outside of his diocese, which is how he came to the Des Moines Diocese.

Father Antoh was struck by how helpful diocesan staff and parishioners were in welcoming him. He serves three parishes in Shelby County.

"All those who were involved, as far as I was concerned, did marvelous work," he said. "They are active and their sense of purpose is high."

In particular, he's grateful for the warm welcome of Bishop William Joensen.

"I cannot forget the way the bishop received me. In fact,

he showed to me that he's really a father and a good bishop," said Father Antoh.

Father Stephen Audu, of Nigeria, was ordained in 1994. He served as an associate parish priest at one parish and as pastor at two parishes in his home diocese. He also served as spiritual director and as rector of St. Peter the Apostle Seminary.

He served as a chaplain at the University of California-Davis Medical Center before coming to Iowa.

Father Audu holds degrees in philosophy and theology and a Licentiate in Systemic Theology from the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. He penned two books for promoting evangelization in Nigeria and the United States.

He serves as the director of pastoral care at MercyOne in Des Moines.

"I have come to appreciate the Diocese for her generosity and love in welcoming people from other parts of the world," he said. "The Diocese has confirmed and strengthened my conviction

in the universality of the Church. I'm really feeling at home in the Diocese. Des Moines is peaceful and easy to move around in, and has a simplicity that resonates with me."

Father Emmanuel Basse, of Nigeria, arrived last fall.

Ordained in 2014, he had attended a seminary in Nigeria where he earned a philosophy degree. Then he earned degrees in philosophy and theology from the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, and his Licentiate in Biblical theology from the University of Navarra, Spain. He's currently pursuing a doctorate in Biblical Studies from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

He served as a pastor in his home Diocese of Calabar, as a seminary instructor, as a confessor in Portugal and a collaborator in Spain. He served as an associate pastor in various parishes in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles before coming to Iowa.

Diocesan Chancellor

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The worthy Word at work in us

There are different denominational versions of an old joke, but the Catholic one describes a man whose longtime business is going down the drain, to the point that he is drinking too much and contemplating suicide. So he goes to his parish priest to pour out his troubles and seek counsel. The priest advises him, “Go home, take out your Bible, flip through the pages with your eyes closed until you let it fall open to a particular page; then put your finger on the page and open your eyes: read those words and do whatever they tell you.” The man does as he’s told. Three months later he drives up to the parish office in a luxury car, wearing an expensive suit and a flashy watch. He hands the priest a thick envelope full of money and tells him he wants to donate it to the parish in gratitude for the priest’s advice. The priest is delighted and asks him what words in the Bible brought him such good fortune. The man replies, “Chapter 11.”

We get the joke because we know that’s not how things work: playing Bible roulette and filing for bankruptcy are neither the way to enduring material prosperity, nor do they avail of us the spiritual riches God supplies in revealing his Word, Jesus Christ, to us. Our relationship with the Scriptures cannot be a “one-off,” random affair. If we are to encounter the living God who wants to abide with us in every aspect of our lives, then a genuinely lived relationship with God’s word in Scripture is not optional; it is a vital necessity, as much as air, food and water are required for life. God’s word saves.

God wants to reveal not only who he is but who we are in his sight. The Father’s excellent



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

counselor, the Holy Spirit, wants to help us interpret our lives in light of the mystery of his Son’s life, death, and resurrection. God assures us that if we encounter him in his inspired word, we will find meaning, companionship, compassion, and encouragement amid the daily demands that too easily scatter our spiritual focus and wear down our hope. The Scriptures are to be one battery for a spiritual life that never is spent, energizing our hearts so that we do not go into hibernation as disciples or forsake our mission to communicate that Jesus is Lord to a fatigued and often faithless world.

Shortly after I became bishop in 2019, Pope Francis announced that each year going forward, Catholics would mark the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time as the “Sunday of the Word of God.” Analogous to the parent’s reply to children who wonder why we have Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, but not one for kids: “Every day is children’s day,” there might be wags who ask, “Don’t we proclaim the word every Sunday—in fact, every day—at Mass? What’s so special about a Sunday in late January, when the flurry of the Christmas Season has subsided and the rigors of Lent are still weeks away?”

The Holy Father calls us to shine a particular light on the role of God’s word in the life of faith, both as a community and as part of an intimate dialogue between God and each person. We experience anew how the Risen

Jesus himself “opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world.” Our belief in God’s inspired word should strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and dovetails well with our celebration of the Week of Christian Unity and the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. Paul’s letters are the catalyst for our shared conviction with all our Christian sisters and brothers that there is one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of us all. Pope Francis reminds us, “The Bible is the book of the Lord’s people, who, in listening to it, move from dispersion and division toward unity. The word of God unites believers and

Our personal faith exudes a magnetic attraction as people sense that the Church has a place for everyone, and that together our communion itself is the wealth God has set in store.

makes them one people.”

We know tensions that beset us even within the Catholic community (pandemic protocols, reduced conviction that Jesus is sacramentally present in the Eucharistic, inconsistency of Eucharist belief and political positions, liturgical sensibilities that may or may not be linked to prophetic action aimed at social justice and inclusion of diverse members within the Body of Christ).

THE Word of God who is Jesus continues to knock at the door of our hearts, to convert us and enlist us in his saving activity, but only if we are willing to sit at his feet, to daily retreat for even a few brief moments to savor mu-

tual presence, and to allow the combined sweet and bitter taste of his words to season our sense of how we are to share ourselves with others, even in the face of our own personal discomfort or difficult circumstances.

The late Trappist monk Thomas Merton speaks to the awareness that we might cultivate through daily reflection on the readings of Mass via print or electronic platforms, or praying of the psalms connected with the Liturgy of the Hours (readily available on iBreviary or other apps), or profiting as many have by following Fr. Mike Schmitz’s podcasts unfolding “The Bible in a Year.” Merton recounts the inspired recognition that “where you are is where you belong, this is it,” as the only platform for real spiritual growth. “God’s word checks our fantasies of ‘if only’ or the fiction of ‘what if’, but instead calls us to reality that ‘this is me, this is where I’m at, there is where I am offered the opportunity to be with and begin the rest of my life’ ” (Northumbria Community cited by Diarmuid Rooney).

I was struck again during our recent annual Midwest bishops’ retreat at a Benedictine abbey how the combination of singing the Psalms and a few recited verses of Scripture ensures that God’s word is like an arrow piercing the heart and etching God’s live-time communication in my soul. For me, as for many of our priests, each day at home is like a mini-retreat in my Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament spent pondering Scripture and lingering in silence. I was reminded again in complementary reading of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to simply read the readings and then stop actively meditating about them. I allow the Spirit to work in my heart below the conscious level, an

interior process that I must trust is unfolding so that eventually God’s words become words for me, which is an essential step if my words are to become words for others.

We may well have only a few seconds or minutes in the morning rather than a whole hour. It does not take much time for this silent encounter with the Word to become a lasting affair, carrying over into the way we listen to others and respond to them. We are not alone in experiencing what St. Paul experienced on the road to Damascus. We find all that is already good and true in life to be reinforced, but the additional grace afforded by the Divine Teacher permits us to mingle the wisdom and truth of the law and of the prophets with his own words in a new way that enables us to interpret situations in the light of the Spirit. We are able to converse with all persons in a way that fosters connection and not division, for he is the Worthy Word who is working through us and in us.

On the Sunday of the Word of God, as the Week of Christian Unity also draws to a close, my prayer is that we heed St. Paul as he took leave of the presbyters of Ephesus at Miletus, entrusting them “to God and to the word of his grace” while cautioning them against division (see Acts 20:32). We will not be bankrupt but abundantly blessed as the sense of unity of the word of God irrigates the unity of the Church and our love for one another. Our love for God’s word will be one chamber of a heart that loves our Eucharistic Lord. Our personal faith exudes a magnetic attraction as people sense that the Church has a place for everyone, and that together our communion itself is the wealth God has set in store.

La Valiosa Palabra Trabaja en Nosotros

Hay diferentes versiones de un viejo chiste, dependiendo de la denominación, pero la versión católica nos habla de un hombre cuyo negocio de muchos años iba en continua decadencia, al punto de que estaba bebiendo demasiado e incluso estaba el suicidio. Va pues a visitar al sacerdote de su parroquia a descargar sus problemas y buscando consejo. El sacerdote le recomienda, “Ve a casa, toma tu Biblia, recorre sus páginas con los ojos cerrados hasta que quede abierta en una página en particular; entonces coloca tu dedo en la página y abre tus ojos; lee esas palabras y haz lo que te digan.” El hombre hace lo que le dice el sacerdote. Tres meses después llega a la oficina de la parroquia en un auto de lujo, vistiendo un costoso traje y un radiante reloj. Le entrega al sacerdote un sobre lleno de dinero y le dice que quiere hacer un donativo a la parroquia en agradecimiento al consejo del sacerdote. El sacerdote satisfecho le pregunta cuáles fueron las palabras que leyó en la Biblia que le guiaron a ese nivel de fortuna. El hombre le contesta “Capítulo 11.” (En referencia al capítulo 11 de la ley de bancarrota.)

Entendemos el chiste porque sabemos que así no funcionan las cosas: ni jugar a la ruleta rusa con la Biblia, ni el entrar en juicio de bancarrota son formas de lograr prosperidad material ni nos proporcionan las riquezas espirituales que nos da Dios al revelarnos su Verbo, Jesucristo. Nuestra relación con las Escrituras no puede ser un asunto de “excepción” al azar. Si vamos a encontrarnos con el Dios vivo quien quiere convivir con nosotros en todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas, entonces el vivir genuinamente una relación con la palabra de Dios en la Escritura no es una opción; es una necesidad vital, tanto como lo son el aire, la comida y el agua para poder vivir. La palabra de Dios nos salva.

Dios quiere revelarnos no solamente quién es, sino quiénes somos ante su mirada. El excelente consejero del Padre, el Espíritu Santo, quiere ayudarnos a interpretar nuestras vidas a la luz del misterio de la vida, muerte y resurrección de su Hijo. Dios nos asegura que, si lo encontramos en su palabra inspirada, encontraremos significado, compañía, compasión y motivación frente a las demandas diarias que distraen

fácilmente nuestro enfoque espiritual y desgastan nuestra esperanza. Las Escrituras deben ser esa batería de una vida espiritual que nunca se desgasta, energizando nuestros corazones para que no entremos en hibernación como discípulos o para que no dejemos de lado nuestra misión de comunicar a un mundo fatigado y frecuentemente falto de fe, que Jesús es el Señor.

Poco después de que fui nombrado obispo en el 2019, el Papa Francisco anunció que todos los futuros Terceros Domingos del Tiempo Ordinario serían marcados para los católicos como el “Domingo de la Palabra de Dios.” Semejante a la respuesta que los padres responden a sus hijos que les preguntan por qué tenemos Día de la Madre y Día del Padre, pero no un día para los hijos: “Todos los días son días de los hijos,” puede haber quienes se pregunten, “¿Acaso no proclamamos la palabra cada domingo – de hecho, todos los días – en la Misa? ¿Qué tiene de especial un domingo a fines de enero, cuando ha terminado la celebración de la Temporada Navideña y en que se aproximan los rigores de la Cuaresma en las

próximas semanas?”

El Santo Padre nos llama a poner un énfasis especial en el papel que tiene la palabra de Dios en la vida de la fe, en comunidad y como parte del diálogo íntimo entre Dios y cada persona. Volvemos a sentir nuevamente cómo el Jesús Resucitado mismo “abre para nosotros el tesoro de su palabra y nos habilita para proclamar su profunda riqueza ante el mundo.” Nuestra creencia en la palabra inspirada por Dios debe fortalecer nuestros lazos con el pueblo judío y se acomoda de gran forma con nuestra celebración de la Semana por la Unidad Cristiana y la Fiesta de la Conversión de San Pablo. Las cartas de San Pablo son la sustancia de nuestra convicción compartida con todos nuestros hermanos cristianos de que hay una fe, un Señor, un bautismo, un Dios y Padre para todos nosotros. El Papa Francisco nos recuerda, “la Biblia es el libro del pueblo del Señor, quien, al escucharla, avanza de la dispersión y la división hacia la unidad. La palabra de Dios une a los creyentes y los convierte en un solo pueblo.”

Sabemos de las tensiones

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THE CATHOLIC

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Submarine commander to visit school

Continued from page 1

Students “have to build them from scratch. There are a lot of skills they learn throughout the building like soldering and using a power drill. There’s a lot of measuring and math,” she said.

One competition was held before “the pandemic blew us out of the water” and suspended the program, McCarthy said. She hopes to get it going again soon because of the science, technology, engineering and math skills students learn.

“I’m hoping to spark interest for others to develop their own programs,” McCarthy said.

McCarthy was anxious to show the commander what her students can do with the SeaPerch program.

“I’m always excited to share what we’re doing with other people,” she said.

The next project McCarthy will be showing her students, Soapy Cilantro, focuses on genetics and testing whether they have the gene that makes cilantro taste more like soap than a food flavor.

“It’s all about whether or not you have the gene that has been passed down to you that makes cilantro taste like cilantro, or cilantro taste like soap,” she said. “We’re going to run it and find out if they have the gene. It really is cool.”

School planning takes the next step

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Dr. Jerry Deegan is ready to retire after working on implementing the diocesan schools’ strategic plan that consultants recommended in 2018, a proposal that builds a bright future for Catholic education in the Des Moines metropolitan area.

On Dec. 20, 2021, Deegan delivered to Bishop William Joensen a recommendation on behalf of the pastors of all the parishes in the Des Moines area. It lays out a plan to strengthen the organizational and business operation of the Catholic schools in the Des Moines area so that pastors, principals and teachers are able to focus their full energy, time and attention on maintaining the strong faith formation and educational excellence that exists now in the schools.

With the end of this phase of planning, Deegan is stepping down. Bishop Joensen has named Dan Ryan, who holds a doctorate in education and serves

as president of Dowling Catholic High School, as the interim leader of the Des Moines metro area school regional planning initiative. Ryan has assisted Deegan the last two years.



Dr. Jerry Deegan

This is the second time Deegan has retired.

In 2017, he retired from Dowling Catholic High School after serving 41 years there, the last 17 as president. Later that year, Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates asked him to work with the Meitler Group and lead a committee of volunteers to develop a strategic plan for the diocesan Catholic schools.

Deegan collaborated with pastors, school administrators and diocesan personnel. The group looked for common issues that all the Des Moines metro

area schools were facing. Together they researched the region concept and its presence in national trends in Catholic education, listened to questions and concerns, and facilitated discussions that led to answers and consensus on how to address the common issues they faced.

One recommendation of the overall diocesan school strategic plan was to provide more tuition assistance for families. That recommendation is being implemented diocesan-wide with the start of the Ignite capital campaign.

Another recommendation from the overall diocesan school strategic plan was to formalize a more collaborative relationship among all the parishes and schools in the Des Moines area. After more than a year of bi-weekly meetings of pastors in the Des Moines area to study, research and understand the region concept, the pastors gave their recommendation to create a regional system of the schools in the Des Moines area to Bishop Joensen.

“I think the real key to this message is the pastors really embraced the region concept,” Deegan said. “They understand the concept and know there’s still work to be done in its formation.”

Deegan is passionate about Catholic education. He felt his strong relationships in the community plus his understanding of the broad Catholic education models and structures would help the community. It drew him out of retirement to focus on this project.

He could see the possibilities: “It excited me in some ways because I was so convinced that this would have to be the future of Catholic education in the Des Moines area. If there’s anything I could do to give it a little push forward, I’d do it.”

He added: “To me, the real success of this is that the pastors worked together to come to a point of understanding and to a recommendation that people were comfortable with for the right reasons. It really, truly, will help ensure the future of Catholic education in the Des Moines area.”

College students to gather in Des Moines for an encounter with God

A national conference hosted by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, also known as FOCUS, is Feb. 4-6.

The Iowa Event Center in Des Moines will be one of the many hubs across the country at which college students will

come together to participate.

Nearly 500 students are expected from the University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, Iowa State University, Drake University and Loras College.

The SEEK22 regional event will provide a space for

college students to encounter the Lord in a way they have never experienced before through 30+ livestreamed and in-person talks, small group discussions, participation in the sacraments, adoration, fun and fellowship.

SEEK22 will be a launching point for many stu-

dents to dive deeper in their faith and to grow into missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

The conference isn’t just for college students. Many parishes around the country are participating. For more information, go to seek.focus.org.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION OPEN

“Life is an opportunity, benefit from it!” - Mother Teresa

The Catholic Tuition Organization (CTO) has a unique opportunity! After 13 years of leadership as Executive Director, Jeanne Wells Thill has announced her retirement June 30, 2022. The CTO Board of Directors is accepting applications for the position.

CTO provides tuition assistance to more than 2000 students through 16 Catholic schools that embrace a faith-based learning environment. This challenging role seeks donations of more than \$4.5 million annually, supported by a 75% Iowa tax credit for all donors!

The successful candidate will be self-motivated to promote and coordinate CTO across the Des Moines Diocese, must believe in the core values of the organization, be driven by the mission and have the ability to demonstrate this commitment in word and action. The ideal candidate will have a bachelor’s degree in finance, education or related area, knowledge of Catholic schools and 2 to 5 years of related experience, excellent public speaker, proficient with computer technology, data base management and be an organized self-starter.

For a full job description and qualifications, contact Jeanne Wells Thill at jwells@dmdiocese.org. Or, send your cover letter and resume to: **Catholic Tuition Organization**
601 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

**The bottom line? It’s for the KIDS...
and their futures!**

Comparta su opinión y ayude a guiar a la Diócesis

El Obispo William Joensen quiere escuchar su opinión.

La Diócesis de Des Moines está comprometida en un proceso de Visión Estratégica que esperamos traiga nuevas ideas, genere entusiasmo y cree un sentido de visión compartida. Nuestra intención no es cambiar las enseñanzas de la Iglesia si no de renovar todas las iglesias en el suroeste de Iowa.

Su perspectiva, ideas, y sabiduría son necesarias para ayudarnos a priorizar las necesidades que debemos abordar en la Visión Estratégica. Las ideas enumeradas aquí surgieron de las muchas conversaciones que se han tenido hasta ahora, incluyendo 35 grupos de enfoque.

Sus respuestas a estas preguntas se mantendrán anónimas.

1. Primero, por favor evalúe que tan bien estamos como Iglesia Católica en el Suroeste de Iowa en cada una de las siguientes áreas.

Marque solo un óvalo por fila

	Deficiente	Por debajo de promedio	Promedio	Por encima de promedio	Fuerte	No se
Invitar y dar la bienvenida a la gente a la comunidad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ofrecer una profunda formación de fe para adultos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inspirar a nuestros jóvenes y jóvenes adultos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desarrollar habilidades de Liderazgo para el Ministerio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salir, dar alcance y Evangelizar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrar la Eucaristía	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Abordar la Polarización en el Mundo de hoy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delegar más responsabilidad a los laicos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apoyar a las Parroquias Rurales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comunicar y Aplicar la Enseñanza Social de la Iglesia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acompañar y Apoyar a las Familias	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parroquias afiliadas / Colaboración con las Escuelas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ayuda a los Pobres y Refugiados	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ofrecer una Preparación Sacramental Solida	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fomentar la colaboración regional para apoyar los ministerios parroquiales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Segundo, de las quince ideas enumeradas, seleccione cinco que usted piense son las mas importantes para que la Diocesis de Des Moines aborde en sue nueva Vision Estrategica.

Check all that apply.

- Invitar y dar la bienvenida a la gente a la comunidad
- Ofrecer una profunda formación de fe para adultos
- Inspirar a nuestros jóvenes y jóvenes adultos
- Desarrollar habilidades de Liderazgo para el Ministerio
- Salir, dar alcance y Evangelizar
- Celebrar la Eucaristía
- Abordar la Polarización en el Mundo de hoy
- Delegar más responsabilidad a los laicos
- Apoyar a las Parroquias Rurales
- Comunicar y Aplicar la Enseñanza Social de la Iglesia
- Acompañar y Apoyar a las Familias
- Parroquias afiliadas / Colaboración con las Escuelas
- Ayuda a los Pobres y Refugiados
- Ofrecer una Preparación Sacramental Solida
- Fomentar la colaboración regional para apoyar los ministerios parroquiales

Por favor proporcione su perfil demográfico si así lo prefiere.

Datos demográficos (opcional)

3. Género.
 - Masculino
 - Femenino
4. Edad.
 - Menor de 18
 - 19 - 39
 - 40 - 59
 - Mayor de 60
5. Raza.
 - Hispano o Latino u Origen étnico o raza
 - Asiático
 - Afrodescendiente o Áfrico Americano
 - Blanco
 - Dos o más razas
 - Other: _____
6. Lugar de Residencia.
 - Des Moines Metro
 - Área de Council Bluffs
 - Área Rural
 - Other: _____
7. Manera como participa (o su rol)
 - Sacerdote
 - Diácono
 - Líder Laico
 - Miembro / Parroquiano
 - Other: _____

Por favor envíe esta encuesta a Diócesis de Des Moines Oficina de Comunicaciones 601 Grand Ave. Des Moines, IA 50309

Si usted prefiere hacer esta encuesta en línea, use su cámara del teléfono celular y este código QR para ver la versión digital.



Share your thoughts and help guide the Diocese

Bishop William Joensen wants to hear from you.

The Diocese of Des Moines is engaged in a process of strategic visioning that hopes to bring new insights, generate enthusiasm, and create a sense of shared vision. Our intent is not to change Church teaching but to renew all our churches in Southwest Iowa.

Your insights, perspective, and wisdom are needed to help prioritize what should be addressed in the Strategic Vision. The items listed below emerged out of many conversations thus far, including 35 focus group sessions.

Your responses to these questions will be kept anonymous. Thank you.

1. Please evaluate how well we are doing as the Catholic Church in Southwest Iowa in each of the following areas.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Weak	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Strong	Do Not Know
Invite and Welcome People to Community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer Meaningful Adult Faith Formation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inspire our Youth and Young Adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop Leadership Skills for Ministry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reach out and Evangelize	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrate the Eucharist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Address the Polarization in Today's World	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delegate More Responsibility to the Laity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support Rural Parishes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate and Apply Catholic Social Teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accompany and Support Families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foster Parish/ School Collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assist the Poor and Refugees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer Robust Sacramental Preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foster Regional Collaboration to Support Parish Ministries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Select up to five categories that you think are most important for the Diocese of Des Moines to address in its new Strategic Vision.

Check up to five.

- Invite and Welcome People to Community
- Offer Meaningful Adult Faith Formation
- Inspire our Youth and Young Adults
- Develop Leadership Skills for Ministry
- Reach out and Evangelize
- Celebrate the Eucharist
- Address the Polarization in Today's World
- Delegate More Responsibility to the Laity
- Support Rural Parishes
- Communicate and Apply Catholic Social Teaching
- Accompany and Support Families
- Foster Parish/ School Collaboration
- Assist the Poor and Refugees
- Offer Robust Sacramental Preparation
- Foster Regional Collaboration to Support Parish Ministries

Demographic Data (Optional)

3. Gender.

Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female

4. Age (years).

Mark only one oval.

- Under 18
- 19 to 39
- 40 to 59
- 60 or Over

5. Race.

Mark only one oval.

- Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin of any race
- Asian
- Black or African American
- White
- Two or more races
- Other: _____

6. Location of Residence.

Mark only one oval.

- Des Moines Metro
- Council Bluffs Area
- Rural Area
- Other: _____

7. The way you most participate (or your role) in the Diocese of Des Moines

Mark only one oval.

- Priest
- Deacon
- Lay Leader
- Parishioner
- Other: _____

Background

Want to learn more about why Bishop William Joensen launched a visioning process and what has been accomplished so far? Learn more at dmdiocese.org/vision.

Online survey

If you prefer to complete the survey online, use your cellphone camera and this QR code to take you to the digital version.



Send us the survey

If you completed this hardcopy of the survey, please mail it to us:

Diocese of Des Moines
 Communications Office
 601 Grand Ave.
 Des Moines, IA 50309

Around the Diocese

Jan. 25 Tuesday Young Catholic Network

DES MOINES – All young adults are invited to join for the next gathering of the Young Catholic Network in downtown Des Moines. Come for networking, complimentary drinks and appetizers, and always a guest speaker with tremendous insight into living our Catholic faith in the professional world. For more information is contact Justin White in the Faith Formation Office at 515-237-5098.

Jan. 27 Thursday Holy Happy Hour

URBANDALE – will be held at DoMNE House of Prayer (The Daughters of Mary, the New Eve) at 7514 Oakwood Drive with Mass at 5:30 p.m., social 6-6:30 p.m., and then the talk will be 6:30-7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Judi at jb.eilertson90@gmail.com.

Jan. 29 Saturday St. Boniface marks 150 Years

WESTPHALIA – St. Boniface Parish is celebrating 150 years since its founding in 1872. Westphalia was created as a community for German Catholics who envisioned a peaceful village where people could work the land, be self-sufficient, and help one another. The town is located in the central part of Shelby County and currently has a population of 126. On Jan. 29, the town will be kicking off its 150th celebration at the parish hall with doors opening at 5 p.m. and a meal to be served at 6 p.m. The event will be a free-will donation and will also include a raffle and sales of 150th apparel. Everyone is invited. The 150th celebration is July 2 and 3. More information about this event and upcoming events can be found at the Facebook Page: *St. Boniface 4th of July Parish Picnic*.

Feb. 10 Thursday Open House for Nazareth Sisters of the Annunciation

WEST DES MOINES – St. Francis of Assisi is hosting an open house to share information about the Nazareth Sisters of the Annunciation and its efforts to assist them in their work. The event will be held at 7 – 8 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church in the St. Claire Room. Four Nazareth sisters moved to Iowa from Kenya in 2015. They are working at Mercy-One in Des Moines. They live simply and send all of the money they earn beyond basic living expenses back to Kenya to support the work of their fellow Nazareth sisters there.

Other

Alpha is coming

WEST DES MOINES – St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines is beginning Alpha in January for anyone in the Des Moines metro area. The 12-part program includes networking, hearing a short talk on an element of the Christian faith and a chance for each person to share their own questions with

the group. Alpha is an experience we hope that everyone can share in as we build community and open our doors to our neighbors. Alpha isn't so much a course, but an experience! For more information or to register call 515-440-1030.

Cathedral Holy Hours

DES MOINES – All are welcome to join Bishop William Jonsen at St. Ambrose on Monday nights for an hour of Eucharistic adoration and evening prayer. These Holy Hours will be hosted from 5-6 p.m. each Monday. Evening prayer will be livestreamed at [Facebook.com/dmdiocese](https://www.facebook.com/dmdiocese).

Friends, Romans, Iowans podcast

Be sure to check out the Diocesan young-adult focused podcast "Friends, Romans, Iowans." Currently in the second season, this podcast aims to connect the Diocese by hosting casual conversations with Catholic leaders from around southwest Iowa. Episodes can be found wherever you get your podcasts, or at [dmdiocese.org/fripod](https://www.dmdiocese.org/fripod).

Center for Social Ministry

DES MOINES – The Center for Social Ministry's 2022 winter programming is now open for registration. Programs begin the week of Feb. 6. If you have any questions, email director@centerforsocialministry.org or call 515-782-3054.

- Faith & Racial Equity: Exploring Power & Privilege
- Faith and Poverty: A Solidarity Response
- Faith and Poverty: A Biblical Response

World Youth Day 2023

Let's go to Lisbon! The next World Youth Day will be held in 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal, and we're looking for young adults from our Diocese to go. World Youth Day is for young adults out of high school 18+ through their mid-30s. Contact Justin White at 515-237-5098 if you'd like to be included in future communications about World Youth Day 2023.

New name for longtime pro-life group

Pulse Life Advocates replaces Iowans for LIFE

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

PULSE
life ADVOCATES

After some candid conversations and market research, Iowans for LIFE made the decision to change its name to Pulse Life Advocates.

Maggie DeWitte, executive director of Pulse Life Advocates, said the name change is a move in the right direction.

"The idea of changing our name after nearly 50 years of pro-life work in Iowa was a daunting task," DeWitte said. "Change is never easy, but it is sometimes necessary."

"It became clear over the last few years that we needed to appeal to the younger generation as they are the future of the pro-life movement," DeWitte continued. "This name gave new life to an organization that has been on the front lines fighting for our pre-born brothers and sisters as well as those vulnerable to euthanasia and physician assisted suicide. We are excited about the possibilities this new branding will provide for us and look forward to continuing this most im-

portant battle for life in Iowa."

Ryan Parlee, a Pulse Life Advocates board member and digital strategist for Flying Hippo marketing agency in Des Moines, helped navigate the organization through the name change and rebranding.

During his presentation at the annual Christmas gala, Parlee explained how even some of their strongest supporters often confused Iowans for LIFE with the name of another Iowa pro-life organization.

Market research showed people 2 to 1 preferred the new name and 2 to 1 preferred the new logo. Sixty percent of people surveyed felt more comfortable with the new name and 60 percent were more likely to donate to the organization named Pulse Life Advocates.

Pulse Life Advocates started 2022 with the March for Life and is launching the Holy Family webinar project. Learn more at pulseforlife.org.

Wife and mother found a vocation in marriage ministry

Sarah Luft was the quintessential mom who found her vocation in serving her family and helping couples prepare for marriage and family life.

The wife of Deacon Dennis Luft and a longtime diocesan employee in the Marriage and Family Life Office, Sarah died last Nov. 13.

Born Dec. 27, 1945 in Fairmont, Minnesota, her family traveled with her father's work until they settled in Perry. She met Deacon Dennis while she was working at Holcomb's Drug Store, where he would go for lunch while working at the Perry Daily Chief.

An Episcopalian, she converted to the Catholic faith before they married in 1966 so that they would be unified in faith as they raised their family. They were blessed with six children: Mary, Michele, Dennis, Thomas, James and Peter.

Sarah worked in data entry at two companies and in family business enterprises before providing daycare so she could stay home to raise her own children.

Shortly after Deacon Dennis was ordained a permanent deacon in 1993, their pastor, Msgr. Frank Bognanno, invited Sarah to help with the parish's marriage ministry.

"I thought she had a joyful and open spirit, that she was willing to learn, she was willing to help," he said. "She was just open and ready for whatever that ministry would bring."

She served at St. Au-



Sarah Luft

gustin, the Basilica of St. John, St. John in Adel and Ss. John and Paul in Altoona.


Sarah was enthusiastic about young people and their questions about the Church, said Deacon Dennis.

"She just lead them through, kind of like what a mom would do, and bring them to an understanding of what marriage was and what the Church expected of them," he said. "She loved the Church. She loved marriage. She loved people."

Sarah will be remembered for having an open mind and an open heart.

"She was open to all people regardless of what faith they were for, she would walk the walk with them to see where they were coming from," said Deacon Dennis. "She had a heart of gold."

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Creston couple leans on God while raising grandchildren

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Mark and Becky Hoffman, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Creston, have been raising their grandchildren for a few years.

These past few years have been difficult, Mark and Becky admit. But they have been leaning heavily on their faith, which gets them through.

They work hard to instill the faith in the kids, ages 10 and below.

“We treat them like our own,” Mark said. They had two of the children baptized and are preparing to have the youngest baptized.

The oldest received her First Communion with her peers.

She’s “in religious education classes and she just loves it,” Becky said. “We pray every night before we go to bed. We talk about God all the time and I have books that we read. We talk about God and Jesus [a lot].”

Raising them is rewarding, but definitely not without its challenges, the Hoffmans said.

“I always remind myself that God never gives you more than you can handle,” Becky said. “That’s daily. Daily I remind myself of that.”

Becky said she’s in constant conversation with God.

“I always ask for guidance, for as many times as I’ve been brought to my knees and just in tears and asking for help,” Becky added.

For as long as they can, Mark and Becky will be there for the grandchildren.

The Hoffmans are grateful their employers are flexible and understanding.

In fact, Mark’s supervisor at the Creston HyVee, Brian Davis, has a deep understanding of the situation.

“My grandma adopted [me and my siblings],” said Davis. “Mark wants his grandkids to stay together. If my Grandma wouldn’t have adopted us, my brother and two sisters probably would have gotten split up.”

Davis understands the sacrifice Mark makes for his family.

“Just yesterday he needed to take the day off – the girls were both sick and he felt bad about missing work,” said Davis. “I said, ‘No, you need to take care of your family first. Get the kids to feeling better.’”

The regulars at the store know Mark for his friendly personality and willingness to help.

“When he’s on vacation, a lot of customers ask, ‘Where’s

Mark?’” Davis added.

Father Adam Westphal, pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Creston, got to know the Hoffman family when preparing for the kids’ baptisms.

“It’s good to have people, such as the Hoffmans, who put their faith into action in such a wonderful way for our church and community,” Father Westphal said. “We’re blessed to have them.”

These past few years have been humbling for Mark and Becky, but also revealing.

“I learned that we are strong,” Becky said. “We are very strong and we are very forgiving. But I wouldn’t have it any other way.”



Mark Hoffman (right) is honored at his workplace for his service. Hoffman and his wife, Becky, find strength in thinking that God doesn't give them more than they can handle.

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pastor of St. Mary / Holy Cross Parish, Elkhart
Celebrant of trip’s daily Mass

Jason Collins, Founder of Collins Travel and Pilgrimages
and member of St. Francis Parish, WDSM
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- Neuschwanstein Castle

Things we’ll see in Austria:

- Eucharistic Miracle location, Seefeld
- Salzburg Cathedral, survived bombing during WWII, and other churches
- Ancient salt mine on tour
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- Take tram ride into Austrian Alps
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Contact us if you’ve got a story idea!

You can reach out to **Kelly Mescher Collins** at kcollins@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5054.

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Audit shows the faithful ‘put their money where their heart is’

“Beautiful display of generosity” buoys Diocese during pandemic

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

In reviewing an annual audit of the Diocese of Des Moines for the last fiscal year, it strikes the chair of the diocesan Finance Council just how generous the faithful have been.

“I’m awestruck at the beautiful display of generosity that has continued in one of the more difficult, stressful, tenuous times that probably any of us remember. We’re incredibly grate-

ful for that,” said Dan Kinsella, chair of the diocesan Finance Council and a managing partner at Deloitte. He consults with local businesses and Fortune 500 companies on how to manage their risks.

The audit determined that the Diocese is following standard accounting practices. (See story by Paul Carlson on page 9.)

But more than that, it shows that parishioners were generous when the pandemic struck, and the Diocese was a good steward of those resources, Kinsella

said. Paraphrasing an old saying about putting one’s money where one’s mouth is, he said the faithful put their money where their heart is.

“We’ve been given a lesson through the pandemic to reflect on what’s important to us and it’s been pretty clear of the importance of faith,” Kinsella said. “I think that’s become pretty clear.”

When the pandemic began, the Diocese took steps to minimize increases in the Annual Diocesan Appeal, which funds services the Diocese provides parishes and Catholic schools.

And yet, “we have achieved our goals faster than



Dan Kinsella

ever, which is unheard of,” Kinsella said. What that says to him is that people put their money toward what truly matters to them: their faith.

Another example is the outpouring of support the faithful are offering to help St. Mary Parish in Hamburg, which has struggled to build a center for religious education of its youth.

The Flood of 2019 significantly damaged the church hall and the basement of the rectory, where religious education classes occurred. Insurance covered the repair and remodel of the church hall. The rectory, built in 1895, posed a problem. The cost to repair and bring it up to code was too extensive.

“People have had the opportunity to think it through and have found it in their heart to help,” Kinsella said.

He urged the faithful to keep moving forward in support of their faith. Complete a survey

online at dmdiocese.org/vision or on pages three and four of this edition of *The Catholic Mirror* and consider what role everyone can play in sharing the faith with others.

“We’ve demonstrated this commitment during this challenging time,” he said. “We’re good at taking care of everything within our four walls but our church is our people. How do we continue to advance our church with all of the abundance of blessings and resources we have in a way that engages our part of the world in an opportunistic fashion: to evangelize, to grow, to meet folks at the margins, to handle the challenging societal issues in a Christ-like way. I think we have such an opportunity to do that.”

“We’ve proven we’re effectively getting through this pandemic in much better fashion than we thought,” Kinsella concluded. “Now, the best is yet to come.”

Second Collections

Last fiscal year (ending June 30, 2021) the Diocese of Des Moines raised the following for second collections:

Catholic Communications - \$15,455

Catholic Relief Services - \$14,773

Catholic Campaign for Human Development - \$11,895

Church in Africa - \$10,851

Disaster Relief - \$64,327

Holy Land - \$43,285

Home Missions - \$6,174

Peter’s Pence - \$10,831

Religious Retirement - \$40,406

Rice Bowl - \$32,113

World Mission - \$13,434

Audit Committee brings in a fresh eye with new auditors

The diocesan Finance Council, with the guidance of an active Audit Committee, voluntarily employs an independent certified public accounting firm to perform annual audits or reviews of the diocese’s and affiliate entities’ financial statements.

This year, the Audit Committee went through the steps to bring in a new firm with the goal of taking a fresh look at the financials, said Audit Committee Chair Ardis Kelley.

The Finance Council hired Clifton Larsen Allen based on their extensive experience auditing dioceses and Catholic Charities organizations.

“I am pleased to say that once again we received an unqualified opinion on our audit reports, which is the highest level of assurance that our financial statements are reliable,” said Kelley.

The diocese’s Finance department and the Audit Com-

mittee are tasked with ensuring the accuracy of the diocese’s financials as well as being accountable and transparent with parishioners and other supporters.

“Speaking of transparency, I am also pleased to report that our diocese is rated tied for 7th out of 177 dioceses for financial transparency by a national group (Voice of the Faithful),” said Kelley.

To read the full Diocese of Des Moines audit for Fiscal Year 2021, go to <https://www.dmdiocese.org/resources/finance/fy21-financial-audit-report>

Diocese of Des Moines

Statement of Activities

Year Ended June 30, 2021

Revenues

Annual Diocesan Appeal	\$4,201,794
Endowment Funds	\$1,299,836
Program Service Fees & Reimbursements	445,830
Paycheck Protection Program	\$345,200
Contributions & Grants	\$435,635
Investment Income	563,148
Total Revenues	\$7,291,443
Expenses	
Ministry and Worship	\$832,423
Catholic Education & Evangelization	\$899,944
Clergy Care and Vocations	\$1,995,708
Parish Services	\$591,073
Diocesan Administration	\$967,222
Contributions to Catholic Charities & Others	\$612,606
Total Expenses	\$5,898,977
Operational Surplus/(Deficit)	\$1,392,466
Non-Operational Changes	
Priest Health and Retirement Liability	\$1,968,704 *
Transfer to Catholic Pastoral Center Foundation	(\$2,110,357)
Investment Earnings on Restricted Funds	\$860,501
Other Changes	(199,648)
Total Non-Operational Changes	\$519,200
Change in Net Assets	\$1,911,666

This financial overview is a summary of the audit by CliftonLarsenAllen (CLA). CLA issued a clean (unmodified) opinion on the financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2021.

*Based on Actuarial reports, the unfunded liability decreased in FY2021

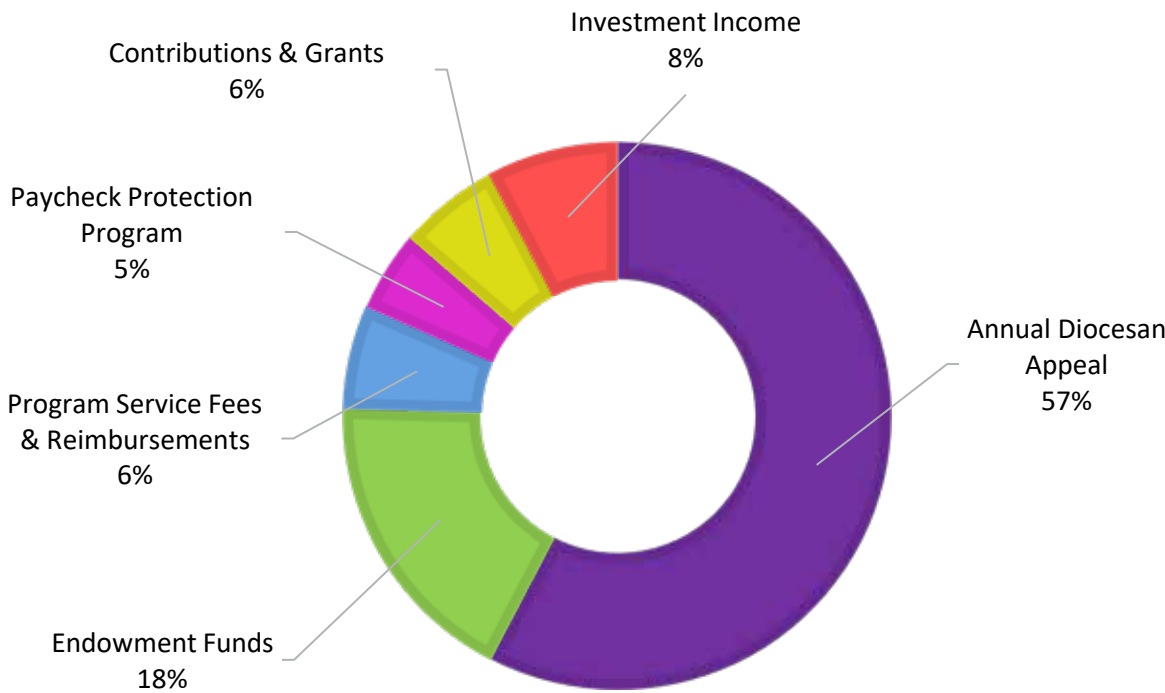
Diocese of Des Moines

Statement of Financial Position

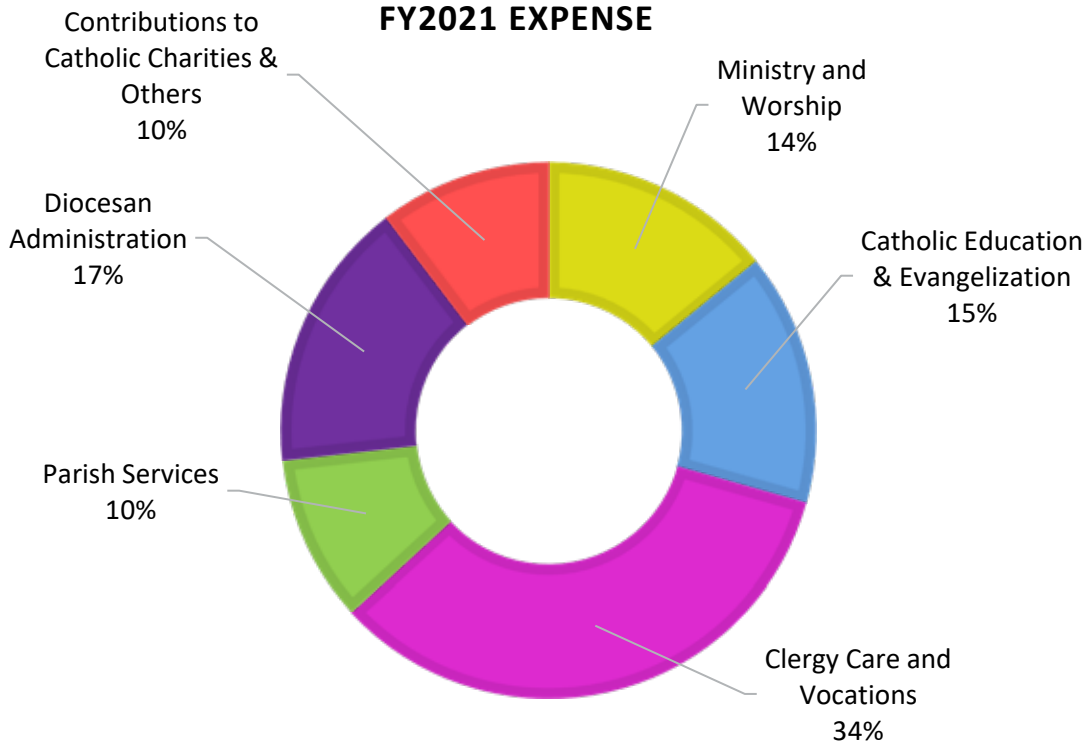
Assets	6/30/2021
Cash	\$659,324
Investments - ADA	\$3,616,163
Unrestricted Investments	\$3,111,034
Restricted Investments	\$3,791,444
Accounts Receivable	\$1,265,096
Ignite! Capital Campaign Receivable	\$6,449,746
Fixed Assets	\$131,843
Other Assets	\$529,740
Total Assets	\$19,554,391
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	\$1,496,683
Ignite! Capital Campaign Due to Other Orgs	\$6,064,686
Priest Medical/Pension Liability	\$7,822,696
Total Liabilities	\$15,384,065
Net Assets	\$4,170,326
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$19,554,391

This financial overview is a summary of the audit by CliftonLarsenAllen (CLA). CLA issued a clean (unmodified) opinion on the financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2021.

**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES
FY2021 INCOME**



**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES
FY2021 EXPENSE**



Annual audit results released

**By Paul Carlson
Contributing Writer**

The financial statements of the diocese dated June 30, 2021 were audited by the independent certified public accounting firm of CliftonLarsenAllen LLP, which issued an unqualified opinion. This opinion means that they found that our financial statements are fairly and appropriately presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The Diocesan Audit Committee chaired by Ardis Kelley oversaw the audit process and the Diocesan Finance Council chaired by Dan Kinsella approved the reports.

The Diocese was able to increase its unrestricted investment balance to \$3.1 million, which is the equivalent of approximately six months of operating expense. The strong market produced \$563,000 in investment gains and we qualified for forgiveness of the \$345,000 Paycheck Protection loan. We reduced our operating expenses below the prior two years and were able to reduce each parish's goal by at least 5% as we completed the 2020 Annual Diocesan Appeal campaign.

The Ignite capital campaign quietly got underway with pledges of \$6.5 million received by June 30, 2021 from some generous donors. All of the funds received by the Diocese will be distributed according to the campaign goals except for approximately 4% that will be needed to cover the campaign expenses.

A year ago, I pointed out in this column that the Diocese was awarded a \$2.1 million grant by the State Historical Board for the Catholic Pastoral Center

building which is on the National Register of Historic Places. This year the Catholic Pastoral Center Foundation was created with a Board of Directors tasked with watching over this beautiful building that currently houses the Diocese, Catholic Tuition Organization, Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa, and Catholic Charities. The Diocese in turn contributed the entire award to this group.



Paul Carlson

The Diocese is the owner of four restricted investment accounts that had a value of \$3.8 million as of June 30, 2021. The largest of these is the self-insured property insurance plan that 91 Catholic entities within the diocese participate in with a fund balance of \$1.6 million. We fully fund the depreciation of our equipment, furniture, and cars and have \$880,000 available for their replacement. We also have two funds that total \$1.3 million dedicated for Campus Ministry and Clergy Residence needs.

The parishes saw weekend collections and fundraising income increase 1.5% over the previous year. Like the Diocese, parish and school investments grew in 2021 due to the strong financial markets. We continue to visit the parishes and schools on site and review the internal controls in place. With the help of the pastor, staff, and finance council members, we work toward greater financial transparency and accountability.

Paul Carlson, director of Finance, has served the Diocese for the past 21 years.

Finance leaders share their knowledge to help the Diocese

The Diocese of Des Moines has continued to be greatly served by members of the Diocesan Finance Council.

Each member is a leader in his or her industry, parish, and community; and the diocese is grateful for their collaboration and consultation.

Throughout 2021-2022, the council members have assisted and advised the bishop and the Diocesan Finance Department on a variety of projects and issues, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

The Diocesan Finance

Council is comprised of twelve voting members, one ex-officio member, and three non-voting staff members.

Members also serve on the following committees: Audit, Budget, Executive, Parish Accounting, Retirement, and Risk Management.

Each committee meets outside of regularly scheduled Finance Council meetings to discuss specific projects in greater detail and then provides reports to the rest of the Council.

Name	Workplace	Parish
Cassie Edgar	Attorney - McKee, Voorhees, & Sease, PLC	St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines
Matt Gronstal	President - Council Bluffs Savings Bank	St. Patrick, Council Bluffs
Ardis Kelley	Senior Vice President and CSO - Federal Home Loan Bank	Sacred Heart, West Des Moines
Dan Kinsella	Audit and Enterprise Risk Services Partner - Deloitte	St. Patrick, Imogene
Tom Mahoney	Retired Chairman and CEO - ITA Group, Inc.	St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines
Tim Marcisak	CEO - Nishna Valley Credit Union	Ss. Peter & Paul, Atlantic
Dan Ochylski	CEO - Growth Financial Partners	Sacred Heart, West Des Moines
Stephanie Sarcone	Attorney - Bradshaw, Fowler, Proctor, & Fairgrave, P.C.	St. Anthony, Des Moines
Patrick Smith	Senior Trial Attorney - Nationwide	St. Augustin, Des Moines
Krista Turner	PEO Branch Manager - Oasis, a Paychex Company (PrismHR)	St. Boniface, Waukee
<i>Appointed by Presbyteral Council (Voting):</i>		
Msgr. Ed Hurley	Vicar of Finance - Diocese of Des Moines	Retired
Father Joseph Pins	Associate Vicar of Finance - Diocese of Des Moines	St. Joseph, Des Moines
<i>Ex-Officio (Non-Voting):</i>		
Bishop William Joensen	Bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines	
<i>Staff (Non-Voting):</i>		
Paul Carlson	Director of Finance - Diocese of Des Moines	St. Luke the Evangelist, Ankeny
Laura Hofstrand	Accounting Manager - Diocese of Des Moines	
Jason Kurth	Chancellor - Diocese of Des Moines	St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines

Tune in to "Making it Personal" with Bishop William Joensen on Iowa Catholic Radio and Spirit Catholic Radio Network.

Upcoming shows feature:

Jan. 28:
Catholic Schools Week

Feb. 4:
Tom Chapman, Iowa Catholic Conference

Feb. 11:
Maggie DeWitte, Pulse Life Advocates



Welcome to our newest priests



Father Michael Antoh
Ordained in 2001
Originally from Ghana
Graduated college in 1998, St. Peter's Regional Seminary in Ghana in 2001
Post graduate work at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana in 2002
Canonical administrator, St. Mary, Portsmouth, St. Mary, Panama, St. Boniface, Westphalia



Father Stephen Audu
Ordained in 1994
From Nigeria
Graduated college in 1991, Ss. Peter & Paul Major Seminary in Nigeria in 1994
Post graduate work at University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein in 2003, Illinois.
Director of pastoral care at MercyOne in Des Moines



Father Emmanuel Effiong Bassey
Ordained in 2014
From Nigeria
Graduated college in 2005, St. Joseph Major Seminary in 2010
Post graduate work in Spain in 2019, pursuing a doctorate in the United States
Canonical administrator, St. Patrick, Corning and St. Patrick, Lenox



Father John Brobby
Ordained in 2003
From Ghana
Graduated college in 1999, St. Peter's Regional Seminary in Cape Coast in 2003, post graduate work in Rome in 2016
Parochial vicar, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, West Des Moines

Continued from page 1

Jason Kurth had asked him to share a short biography so that Father's parishioners at St. Patrick in Lenox and St. Patrick in Corning could become familiar with him before he arrived.

In his introduction to his parishes, he said he "comes with the desire of offering himself in the service to the flock of Christ, with the hope of journeying with them through these challenging times of our nation and world."

For Father Emmanuel Offiong, of Nigeria, one could say a vocation to missions runs in his family. Ordained in 2003, he has been involved in parish and school ministry over the years and served as a missionary in the Caribbean Island of Grenada for three years.

"I am the product of Irish missionaries who arrived in Calabar in 1903 to evangelize the southern part of Nigeria," where he was born, he said.

"It is really a give-back time for me, my bishop, and indeed my entire family who have already produced four priests: (the late) Father Michael Offiong, Father Francis Offiong, Father Cyril Offiong (with the Society of Divine Vocation) my immediate younger brother, himself a missionary," he said.

Father serves as a chaplain at Unity Point

Hospital in Des Moines.

Father John Brobby, of Ghana, was ordained in 2003. He earned a degree in philosophy and a License in Philosophy while studying in Rome. He serves as parochial vicar at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines.

Father Brobby came to Iowa from New York City, where he served as parochial vicar a parish and assisted with religious education, visiting the sick, celebrating Mass and reconciliation and helping the congregation live a faith-based life.

While in Ghana, he served on his diocese's College of Consultors, helping leadership with a strategic vision, assisted with various evangelization efforts around the Diocese, coordinated with regional political and civic leaders and addressed social, economic and faith-based issues.



Father Emmanuel Etim Offiong
Ordained in 2003
From Nigeria
College in 1998, St. Joseph Major Seminary in Nigeria in 2003
Post graduate work at the University of Calabar in 2014
Chaplain, Unity Point Hospital, Des Moines

Injury leads woman to become aware of & meet a community need



Members of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, the local Lions Club and others are making hand muffs, a sensory tool used among those with dementia and others.

An injury Mary Hume experienced opened her eyes to a community need.

Now, she's rallying others to help meet that need.

In 2016, Hume fell on stairs, injuring her spine and breaking her leg.

While she spent time recovering at a nursing home, she discovered many residents paced or fidgeted. She asked God for direction on how she could assist.

"I was very disturbed that so many I knew and worked with had Alzheimer's and were agitated, pacing," she said.

Two weeks after going home, she read an article in a Lions Club magazine about ladies in the United Kingdom who knit or crocheted twiddle muffs for Alzheimer's patients, and an idea was born. A twiddle muff is a kind of cuff or tube made out of material or yarn that has an opening for each hand to go through. Inside and around it, there are small things that one's fingers can fidget.

"Bingo, that was it," she said. "I asked our Lions Club to join and help make these for the nursing homes in Council Bluffs," she said. None of them could be sold; she wanted all of them to be free for patients.

The following year, she had samples and introduced them to the nursing homes.

"We got such good response," Hume said. "We sup-

plied them to all nursing homes."

She learned that the muffs were appreciated by those with autism, Asperger's and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Soon, Hume and her friends were delivering them to schools, hospice centers, counselling services, dialysis units, police and fire departments and Catholic Charities Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault shelter in Council Bluffs.

"A lady from the shelter met me at a fundraiser garage sale for the Lions Club, saw them and asked to buy one. I said, 'No, but I will give you one.' She suggested I call the shelter and said she wished she had one when she was at the shelter," Hume said.

"Some of our guests at the shelter really take comfort in the twiddle muffs. The muffs are an outlet for nervous energy during some really difficult times," said Sapana Sharma, interim program manager.

By mid-2019, she'd distributed 3,000 muffs.

Ladies from Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs assist, headed by Ruth Ann Duff.

"Each muff we make is made with love and understanding and our prayer that the next owner gets peace from their anguish," Hume said.

To help sew or contribute items for making the twiddle muffs, contact Hume at 416 Oakland Ave., Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503.



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Serrans' penpal practice supports seminarians



Phil and Norena Caniglia, along with other Serra Club members, keep in touch with seminarians.

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

When seminarians are away at school, a letter from home can boost their spirits.

"I remember receiving prayer cards from the Council Bluffs Serra Club for sure around Christmas," said Father Reed Flood, who was ordained a priest last summer. "The Serra Club also sent me a card for my birthday."

Some of the letters were sent from Phil Caniglia, president of the Serra Club of Council Bluffs.

Everyone in the club prays for all the seminarians, he said, and each is assigned a seminarian to pray for in particular.

"That way you can write to them," he said. "Some of the times, you feel like you really get to know them."

Those prayers and letters were important to Father Flood.

"It meant a great deal to me knowing that someone was out there praying for me," he said. "There have been several moments in seminary where I can point back and say, 'Yep, somebody was definitely praying me through that.' Receiving prayers from the Diocese makes me love the Diocese even more."

"After eight years of receiving regular prayerful support from the Serrans, I could - rather remarkably - take for granted that someone was praying for me," said Father Flood. "In the face of this constant stream of prayers I'm immensely humbled. I often think about how many people don't have regular intercessors. This thought makes me want to pray regularly for those who have none."

It meant a lot to Father Flood's mother, Susie Flood, to know that others were praying for her son.

"Reed's eyes would always light up when we would see her," she said of his prayer partner. "I was so humbled and thankful for her continued prayers and support over his years in seminary. It meant the world to me, and I know to Father Reed, as well."

Phil and Norena Caniglia have a son who is a priest serving the Diocese of Sioux City, so they know how important it is to stay in touch with seminarians.

"Most of the boys are good about writing back," Caniglia said. "Writing is kind of a lost art."

Trip brings special blessing for seminarians



Three Diocese of Des Moines seminarians were able to attend the Jan. 6 Mass of the Epiphany in St. Peter's Basilica with Pope Francis over the holiday break. Deacons Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros and Nick Smith and seminarian Jason Lee were in Rome. Deacons Mayorga Landeros and Smith vested and assisted with communion along with their classmates. Lee and his classmates had preferred seating thanks to Archbishop Bernard Hebda, of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. "It was certainly a highlight of the trip so far and a great gift to be able to be so close to the Holy Father during Mass," said Deacon Smith.

100-hour public Bible reading planned

ST. MARTINVILLE, La. (CNS) -- An annual 100-hour, nonstop public Bible reading takes place in St. Martinville in the Diocese of Lafayette Jan. 19-23.

The holy Bible will be read publicly from cover to cover without pause in the square of the diocese's oldest church parish, St. Martin de Tours.

The parish was erected in 1765 and the present church

dates to 1836. The reading will begin at 12:30 p.m. (local time) Jan. 19 and end at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 23, which is Word of God Sunday.

During the four days of continuous reading, 300 lecturers from the various 121 parish churches in the Diocese of Lafayette as well as faith leaders from other denominations from across the Acadiana region will be employed.

In addition to English, selections of the Bible will be read in French, Italian, German, Spanish, Vietnamese, Hebrew, Latin and Greek.

Over 3,000 people usually attend at various times throughout the 100 hours.

The Bible Marathon will be livestreamed on the Fête-Dieu du Teche Facebook page.

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Imagine That!

A reflection written and shared by Father Tim Fitzgerald at the Dec. 19 Umeri concert "The Lessons, Carols, and Reflections of Christmas."

Imagine that:

Our ancestors nomads, refugees even,
fleeing drought and climate change minor by our standards.
We, who have all we need,
who love stability and status and a sense of place.
We, who have everything,
spring from these who had nothing.

So they, and we, meet this God
not in settled stability, but at the edge, in holy instability.
This God of nomads and slaves, of immigrants and refugees.
In the midst of death and birth,
of barren couples and miracle babies,
of pain and consolation.
This God, among the powerless,
moving on the edges, at the margins.

And there our God creates a great resettling,
comes to be with re-settlers.

So it begins:
our ancestors, up from the land of the Chaldeans,
into a new land, resettling among a people not their own.
A migrant couple
who abandon their past,
called into a future they cannot see.

No wonder they laughed at God;
who wouldn't?
Who doesn't?
We too laugh at God's plans,
and God laughs at OURS.
This God, who has the last laugh.

God our surprising God.
So in time, grandson Jacob and his sons and families:
up from the land of the Canaanites,
into the land of Egypt.
Drawn there by the slave boy who made good--
who was saved from death by chance,
his nightmare in a foreign land.
This dreamer who reads the dreams of others
and harbors his own.
This godforsaken tale that saves his clan.
Out of Egypt come hospitality,
compassion for the foreigner,
shelter and food.
Out of nightmare, a dream come true.
Out of crisis, new beginnings,
out of curse, blessing,
out of darkness, light,
out of sure and certain death, new life.

God our surprising God!
So when the preacher announces, I have a dream,
We'd best listen up.
When there are people on the road and immigrants and exiles and desperate refugees,
we'd best not say
 No room at our inn.
 Someone else's problem.
We, descendants of nomads and refugees,
of exiles dreaming of a better life,
are wise to make room for the nomads and refugees and exiles of our day.
Of all people, dare we turn away? Or look away? Or look down on them?

This weary world, now awash with refugees and exiles and immigrants and resettlers.
Behold, the hand of God at work HERE,
the visions of new lives and new lands and new beginnings
as dreams once again from God our surprising God.

Heads up! People on the move, on the road, on the search.
What is God beginning with this great migration, this great displacement,
this great unsettling and resettling?

We think God works best with settlements,
with stability, with prosperous and planted people, with security.
But God is especially at work with the unsettled,
with instability, with those on the road.

This story of salvation unfolds in surprises.

Heads up! For God's grace appears in many disguises:
There are twists and turns, dreams and visions,
exiles and narrow escapes yet to come.
God our surprising God!
And just when we thought we knew how the story goes.

So it is beginning.
Again.

We are made for community

I recently had a conversation with my dad and brothers about ways to support each other in the spiritual life.

Reflecting on the conversation reminded me of how blessed I am to have a family that supports me in my faith. It made me think of all the other communities of support in my life, and it led me to reflect on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, which we celebrate on Jan. 25.

St. Paul is one of the greatest saints in our Catholic tradition, he was an apostle, an author of Sacred Scripture, and perhaps the greatest missionary the Church has ever known. We also know that before he embraced the faith he tried to destroy it, which makes his conversion all the more remarkable.

But today, what most resonates with me about St. Paul's conversion is the fact that it wasn't an isolated experience, but it involved a community of believers.

St. Paul's conversion involved St. Stephen's prayers, and Ananias' support, and immediately following his conversion he surrounded himself with the Christian community in Damascus. From that moment forward, as St. Paul went about the work of God he was constantly accompanied and supported by others.

If St. Paul's conversion and life of faith involved a community, so too should

Marriage and Family Life

By Adam Storey



ours!

We are made for community, and so without people around us to encourage us, celebrate with us, and even challenge us, our faith will soon become lukewarm.

As we celebrate and reflect on St. Paul's conversion, I think it's valuable to ask ourselves who are the people in our lives that help us grow in our faith?

Where do I go when I need to be encouraged, strengthened, and held accountable?

As we celebrate and reflect on St. Paul's conversion, let's all make a commitment to deepen our communal roots. To seek out and connect with those who help us grow in faith, and to be a place of support for others.

If community was necessary for St. Paul, it's necessary for us!

Adam Storey is the diocesan director of Marriage and Family Life

Mental health: We all have it

Mental health.

That can be quite an off-putting term, can't it?

Several years ago, when I shared with someone that I was going to begin writing these articles for *The Catholic Mirror*, they said to me, "Try not to use the term 'mental health'; it sounds so taboo."

"Exactly!" I thought to myself. "Therefore, I need to use it."

We all have mental health; it's whether we land more toward healthy or unhealthy on the continuum. There is no perfect mental health. Just as we get the occasional back spasm or a new diagnosis of a heart condition, we also may get a bout of depression or a wave of anxiety. Mental health is unique to every individual.

Let me take a minute to put a definition around the term, mental health. Mental health is "a state of personal well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community", according to the World Health Organization.

Mental health will also include an individual's ability to enjoy life and achieve the personal resilience necessary to cope with emotional crises that come with life.

At times a person might feel that life is bad. It is not bad; it is hard. It is our state of mental health that will allow us to see or not to see the goodness in life.

Just as many physical conditions have names and categories, so also does psychology and mental health.

The most common term used to categorize our mental health challenges is the term mental disorder. A mental disorder is the cumulative effect of many symptoms coming together that cause a decline in functioning for our sense of well-being. It is a condition that affects one's thinking, feeling, mood, behavior, relationships, daily functions, and ability to sustain a positive perspective on life.

So, for example, the ability to believe that life is great is a sign of mental healthiness. It doesn't mean that life feels good or seems fair all the time. It means that the gift of life is great. What a privilege to live it! If a person doesn't believe this, then there is most likely a mental health matter, therefore a cause for concern.

So, where do spirituality and faith

Let's Get Psyched

By Deacon Randy Kiel



fit in? They are the foundation underneath all mental health matters for us. Our religious and faith life support us by giving us a higher sense of purpose, hope and meaning in life.

Because our religion teaches us not to be self-reliant, but rather to be healthily dependent upon God, we are able to enjoy a stronger sense of confidence, self-esteem, integrity, and self-control. Through our faith life, we are even more able to make sense out of the experiences in life, though making sense does not mean a full understanding.

As Catholics, we come from a long history of deep contemplation, meditation, prayer, and rich tradition.

Through the Church, there is given unto us a perpetual awareness of belonging.

Our opportunity to respond to God as Father offers continuous healing from all the consequences of being human. Walking through life with faith affects one's thinking, feeling, mood, behavior, relationships, daily functions, and ability to sustain a positive perspective on life.

That's right. It affects the entirety of our mental health.

A mental health matter is never to be looked at as sin but rather a struggle that may be taken to the Lord for consolation and strength.

In the eyes of God, there is no shame regarding mental health. Shame will always lie, but there is the hope of healing, comfort and improvement when we unite our struggles with God because he will always tell us the truth. He is Truth and we are loved by him and welcomed by him with whatever our struggles may be.

"Lord, may you hold us tightly and comfort us as we walk daily in the midst of all life's struggles that we encounter."

Deacon Randy Kiel serves Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines and is the founder of Kar-dia Counseling. He can be reached at

Don't get too comfortable

Food for the Journey



By Mandie DeVries

Are we too comfortable with our Catholic faith? After long years following Christ, we can get so used to the message of Christianity that we barely notice how revolutionary and terrifyingly awesome it is. Lucky for us, the Lord knows our nature to get comfortable with anything and places signs in our midst to invite us back to awareness and – hopefully – a deeper relationship with the mystery before us. That is, if we choose to accept the invitation.

Have you ever stopped to notice, for example, that the most prominent statue in our churches is of a dead or dying man being tortured? Even if we do notice the crucifix and make the Sign of the Cross over our bodies, does it make us uncomfortable, sorrowful, grateful, prayerful, or even curious? Should we ever be comfortable with this sign, placed in our midst, of a bleeding, mostly-naked man? Do we rec-

ognize the invitation to ask God, “Why?”

Or how about a nativity scene? Most of us are accustomed to washing our hands before holding a newborn, yet how is it that this newborn is placed in a box where animals just had their dinner? The baby in the manger is the King of Creation, but his attendants are shepherds and the poor? And let's not forget the most incredible scandal of the nativity: now, in the arms of a woman, we can actually *look* at God. We get so comfortable with hearing

the words in the Mass, “This is My Body,” but do we ever pause to notice the more shocking sign of the Christ Child which silently cries out, “I AM this Body?”

Or, finally, how much have we really thought of the sign that is the Eucharist? As St. Augustine says about sacraments, “One thing is seen, another is understood.” When we see that tiny host, it should make us all squirm a little bit if we are paying attention. The Son of God, who took on human nature and a human body, said over a piece of bread, “*This is my Body...Do this in memory of me.*” Now the scandal of the creche and the cross of long ago is made present in the scandal of the Eucharist (which is why it is sometimes called the “prolongation of the Incarnation”). The ineffable, uncontainable, infinite One, became see-able, touchable, kill-able, and ultimately, consumable.

Have you ever asked, “Why, Lord?”

Signs, like parables, can serve as doors that open to something bigger on the inside than on the outside if we choose to walk through them. Unfortunately, it's easy to get so comfortable with signs and sacraments that we become like those who look, but do not see, and who listen but do not understand. Remember, prophets and kings longed to see what we see, but did not see it (cf. Lk 10:24). This year, let's get uncomfortable with the signs that we've taken for granted for so long. A sign is an invitation to walk through a door - let's open it!

Mandie DeVries lives in Des Moines where she and her husband homeschool their six children and attend the Basilica of St. John. She is a catechist and trainer for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

At the origins of our universe - Jesus and the Big Bang

Recently NASA launched the James Webb Space Telescope into space, the biggest and most expensive telescope ever built. It will take six months for it to travel a million miles from the earth, find its permanent place in space, and then start transmitting pictures back to earth. Those pictures will be such as have never seen before. The hope is that it will enable us to see much further into space than we've ever seen before, ideally to the very ends of our still expanding universe, right to the first particles that issued forth from the original explosion, the Big Bang, that began time and our universe.

Scientists estimate that our universe began 13.7 billion years ago. As far as we know, prior to that there was nothing in existence, as we understand that today (except for God). Then, out of this seeming nothingness, there was an explosion (the Big Bang) out of which everything in the universe including our planet earth formed. As with any explosion, the parts that were the most intimately intertwined with the expelling force are those driven furthest away. Thus, when investigators try to determine the cause of an explosion they are particularly interested in finding and examining those pieces that were most closely tied to the original force of the explosion, and generally those pieces have been blown furthest away.

The force of the Big Bang is still going on and those parts of our universe that were most intimately intertwined with

Father Ron Rolheiser



its beginnings are still being driven further and further into space. Scientists are investigators, probing that original explosion. What the James Webb Space Telescope hopes to see is some of the original parts from that unimaginable explosion that gave birth to our universe because these parts were there at the very beginning, at the origins of everything that exists. By seeing and examining them, science hopes to better understand the origins of our universe.

Looking at the excitement scientists feel around this new telescope and their hopes that it will show us pictures of particles from the beginning of time, can help us understand why the Evangelist, John, has trouble restraining his enthusiasm when he talks about Jesus in his first Epistle. He is excited about Jesus because, among other things, Jesus was there at the beginnings of the universe and indeed at the beginnings of everything. For John, Jesus is a mystical telescope through which we might view that primordial explosion that created the universe, since he was there when it happened.

Let me risk paraphrasing the beginning of the First Epistle of John (1, 1-4) as he might have written it for our generation vis-a-vis our curiosity about the origins of our universe:

You need to understand of whom and what I am speaking:

Jesus wasn't just some extraordinary person who performed a few miracles or even who rose from the dead.

We are speaking of someone who was there at the very origins of creation, who himself is the foundation for that creation,

who was with God when “the Big Bang” occurred, and even before that.

Incredibly, we actually got to see him in the flesh, with human eyes,

the God who created “the Big Bang”, walking among us!

We actually touched him bodily. We actually spoke with him and listened to him speak,

he who was there at the origins of our universe,

there when “the Big Bang” took place!

Indeed, he is the One who pulled the switch to set it off,

with a plan in mind as to where it should go,

a plan that includes us.

Do you want to probe more deeply into what happened at our origins?

Well, Jesus is a mystical telescope to look through.

After all, he was there at the beginning

and unbelievably we got to see, hear, and touch him bodily!

Excuse my exuberance, but

we got to walk and talk

with someone who was there at the beginning of time.

There are different kinds of knowledge and different kinds of wisdom, along with different avenues for accessing each of them. Science is one of those avenues, an important one. For far too long theology and religion did not consider it a friend. That was (and remains) a tragic mistake since science has the same founder and same intent as theology and religion. Theology and religion have been wrong whenever they have sought to undercut science's importance or its claims to truth. Sadly, science has often returned the favor and viewed theology and religion as a foe rather than as a colleague. The two need each other, not least in understanding the origins and intent of our universe.

How do we understand the origins and intent of our universe? Science and Jesus. Science is probing those origins in the interest of telling us how it happened and how it is unfolding, while Jesus (who was there when it happened) is more interested in telling us why it happened and what it means.



I've Been Wondering...

Father John Ludwig

Q. I have noticed several variations on the days we are to say the Mysteries of the Rosary. Some will state that during Advent, we are to say the Joyful Mystery on Sunday, instead of the Glorious Mystery. Others, state we are to say the Joyful Mystery from Advent to Lent on Sunday. During Lent that seems to change again. Would you clarify what method Catholics should follow? Please expound on why there are so many variations.- Bobbi Marshall, Council Bluffs, Iowa

A. WELL, IT MIGHT BE LIKE choosing between paint colors or wine selections. I encourage people to pray the way they want. The rosary has many options, as you state, but I'm sure that God couldn't care less which one a person uses.

During his papacy, Pope John Paul II added the Luminous Mysteries (or the Mysteries of Light). So, we have those in addition to the Sorrowful, the Joyful, and the Glorious Mysteries.

It can be helpful if you are in a gloomy mood to choose the Joyful Mysteries. Or if you are in a happier mood, you might choose the Sorrowful Mysteries.

It can remind us that we have different moods and seasons in our lives, and the choice of which mysteries to pray can reflect that.

In any case, pray what seems best to you. God will be delighted.

Q. I would like to know if it is a church teaching that more are lost than saved? A friend says that that is church teaching I say it's not. If it is a church teaching where is it located. Thanks, - Fred, Des Moines.

A. I THINK YOU'RE the winner on that one.

Here's what the New Testament has to say about the question: ([Matthew 18:14](#)) “So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones be lost.

And again: ([John 6:39](#)) “And

Liturgy questions on readers' minds

this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.”

And again: (John 3:16) “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life...For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

It seems to me that God is much more interested in our salvation than our condemnation.

Q. Since the Catholic church has discontinued the practice of distributing the Blood of Christ at Mass and I believe that the host is both the body & blood of Christ, should the Communion ministers say: “the Body & Blood of Christ”? when distributing the host and not just the “Body of Christ”? - Bob, West Des Moines.

A. FOR CENTURIES, the Church has held that receiving Communion under the form of bread means that Christ is really present.

After the reforms of the Second

Vatican Council, permission was granted to also receive Communion from the cup. Because of the Covid pandemic, many churches have suspended, for now, the reception of Communion from the cup. The priest continues to receive from the cup.

When the priest or other Communion minister says “The Body of Christ,” it means that Christ is truly present in the consecrated species as well as in the person of the priest and in the assembly.

When we say our “Amen,” it is a profession of faith in that presence. There doesn't seem to be a need to add the words “and the Blood” at the reception of Communion.

We look forward to a time when we can once again receive from the Cup.

Father John Ludwig is a retired priest of the Diocese of Des Moines. Do you have a question for him? Send it to communications@dmdiocese.org or mail it to The Catholic Mirror, Diocese of Des Moines, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

Capitol Comments

Legislative session resumes



Franciscan Sister Mary Lechtenberg received an award from Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg and Secretary of State Paul Pate for her work fighting human trafficking.

By Tom Chapman
Contributing Writer

The following is a summary from the Iowa Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops of Iowa, on proposals made at the state Capitol.

Education

Gov. Kim Reynolds' Condition of the State address on Jan. 11 included a proposed Students First scholarship program for eligible public school parents who would move to an accredited nonpublic school.

These scholarships are essentially Education Savings Accounts, which the Catholic bishops have supported for many years.

The scholarship would be about \$5,400 and public school students (including all incoming kindergarteners from private pre-schools) with a family income of less than 400% of the federal poverty level would be eligible to apply.

Public school students with an individualized education plan would also be eligible. There would be a limit of 10,000 scholarships.

Under the plan, all school teachers, including those in accredited nonpublic schools, would be eligible for a \$1,000 bonus if they stay employed at a school next year.

The governor also proposed increasing public school funding by 2.5%.

Taxes

Reynolds also proposed a reduction of state income taxes to a 4% flat rate by 2026 and eliminating the retirement income tax. Iowa has a general fund balance of \$1.24 billion and nearly \$1 billion in cash reserves.

Government assistance

Several bills related

to verifying eligibility for government assistance were introduced. The ICC will be monitoring the bills for their impact on those who need the help.

We agree that only those who qualify should receive benefits.

Human Trafficking

Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg signed a proclamation marking January as Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

Catholic conference staff had a chance to meet with members of the Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Slavery. The coalition was founded in 2014 by five congregations of women religious: Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of St. Francis, Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters and Sisters of Mercy.

Franciscan Sister Mary Lechtenberg is a co-chair of the coalition and received an award from the Network Against Human Trafficking at the proclamation signing.

There was also an announcement about a new alliance being formed: Iowa Businesses Against Human Trafficking. Every business in the state is invited to join the effort.

Vigil for life

Catholics across the country are encouraged to observe a prayer vigil this week marking the 49th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton decisions legalizing abortion through nine months of pregnancy. Since those decisions, more than 62 million abortions have been performed legally in the United States. The annual pro-life novena, 9 Days for Life, starts on Wednesday. For more information, go to respectlife.org/9-days-signup.

USCCB statement observing MLK Day 2022

Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, shared the following statement in celebration of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2022.

We recall once again this year, the witness and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Let us remember not only the justice that he pursued, but how he pursued it.

Rev. King was driven by the biblical vision of righteousness and truth, a vision that he understood to be reflected in our nation's founding documents. He believed in what he called the "American creed," the belief expressed by our founders that all men and women are created

equal and endowed by God with a sacred dignity and undeniable rights to life, liberty, and equality.

More than a half-century after his death, America faces many challenges — this ongoing pandemic, issues of economic inequality and racial discrimination, violence in our communities, the struggle to welcome immigrants and refugees. In recent years, our nation has also become more polarized and our divisions angrier.

As we look to our future, let us continue to draw from Rev. King's wisdom, especially his commitment to the Beatitudes of Jesus, and the principles of nonviolence and love for our enemies.

In his Letter from a

Birmingham Jail, Rev. King reminds us that we are brothers and sisters, part of a beautiful web of relationships of mutual care, each of us depending on others as others depend on us. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," he wrote. "We are ... tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Let us go forward in that same spirit of fraternity and solidarity, and let us carry on his work for equality and justice. As we remember Rev. King, let us continue to learn from him and imitate his example and prophetic witness.

Cardinal urges prayer to protect religious rights

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York called on people to promote religious freedom as a treasured right for all Americans as the country commemorates Religious Freedom Day Jan. 16.

The cardinal, who chairs the U.S. bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty, expressed particular concern that such rights are violated by rising incidents in recent years of vandalism at churches, where buildings have been damaged, statues toppled

and other damage incurred.

One such incident occurred Dec. 5 when a marble statue of Our Lady of Fatima near the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington was vandalized. Mary's hands and nose were cut off, her face scratched and the cross on her crown broken off.

"Our great tradition of religious freedom has allowed beauty to flourish in our cities and across the American landscape," the cardinal said in a statement

released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Jan. 14.

"Diverse religious communities have built beautiful houses of worship, adorned with stained glass, statues, and symbols of faith, in earthly reflection of the glory and majesty of God.

"In the midst of a popular culture that too often caters to our basest appetites, sacred art and architecture calls all of us to think about ultimate things. All Americans benefit from these religious displays," he added.

La Valiosa Palabra Trabaja en Nosotros

Continued from page 1

que existen entre nosotros, inclusive dentro de la comunidad católica (protocolos de la pandemia, una menor convicción de que Jesús está presente sacramentalmente en la Eucaristía, inconsistencia en creencia Eucarística y creencias políticas, sensibilidades litúrgicas que pueden estar o no relacionados con acción profética enfocada en la justicia social e inclusión de distintos miembros dentro del Cuerpo de Cristo).

La Palabra de Dios, que es Jesús, sigue tocando a la puerta de nuestros corazones, para convertirnos y reclutarnos en su actividad salvadora, pero solamente si estamos dispuestos a sentarnos a sus pies, a retirarnos diariamente, aunque sea por solamente unos momentos, a saborear la presencia mutua, y permitiendo la combinación de los sabores dulces y amargos de su palabra para sazónar nuestros sentidos de cómo debemos compartírnos a nosotros mismos con los demás, incluso al enfrentar nuestras propias circunstancias que nos son difíciles o que nos incomodan.

El ya fallecido monje trapista Thomas Merton hablaba sobre la apreciación que podemos cultivar a través de una reflexión diaria de las lecturas de la Misa ya sea de forma impresa, o con las plataformas electrónicas o rezando los salmos conectados con la Liturgia de las Horas (disponibles en varias aplicaciones), o enriqueciéndonos como muchos lo hacen al seguir la presentación diaria del Padre Mike Schmitz en YouTube explorando "La Biblia en Un Año." Merton menciona el reconocimiento inspirado de que

"en donde estés, es donde perteneces, y se acabó," como la única plataforma para un verdadero crecimiento espiritual. "La palabra de Dios verifica nuestras fantasías de 'si solamente' o la ficción de 'que sería', pero al contrario nos llama a la realidad de 'este soy yo, aquí es donde estoy, ahí es donde se me ofrece la oportunidad de estar y de comenzar el resto de mi vida'" (Northumbria Community citado por Diarmuid Rooney).

Quedé nuevamente sorprendido durante nuestro retiro anual de los obispos del medio oeste en un monasterio benedictino, de cómo la combinación de cantos de los salmos y la recitación de algunos versos de la Escrituras nos asegura que la palabra de Dios sea como una flecha que atraviesa nuestros corazones y que graba la comunicación viva de Dios en mi alma. Para mí, como para muchos de nuestros sacerdotes, cada día en casa es como un pequeño retiro en mi Hora Santa que paso ante el Santísimo Sacramento meditando sobre la Escritura y permaneciendo en silencio. Se me recordó nuevamente al hacer una lectura adicional del Papa Emérito Benedicto XVI de simplemente leer las lecturas y detenerse para pensar en ellas activamente. Le permito al Espíritu trabajar en mi corazón, en mi subconsciente, un proceso interior en cuya revelación debo confiar para que las palabras de Dios se conviertan eventualmente en palabras para mí, lo que es un paso esencial si mis palabras van a convertirse en palabras para otros.

Podemos tener solamente algunos segundos o minutos en la mañana en vez de una hora completa. No toma mucho tiempo para este encuentro silencioso con el

Verbo para que se convierta en una relación duradera, que se transmita a la forma en que escuchamos y respondemos a los demás. No estamos solos en vivir la experiencia de San Pablo en el camino a Damasco. Nos encontramos con todo lo que es bueno y verdadero en la vida para fortalecernos, pero la gracia adicional que el Maestro Divino nos concede nos permite combinar la sabiduría y la verdad de la ley y de los profetas con sus propias palabras de una nueva forma que nos permite interpretar nuestras situaciones bajo la luz del Espíritu. Podemos conversar con todas las personas de una manera que promueva la conexión, no la división, por que él es la Palabra Valiosa que trabaja por medio de nosotros.

En el Domingo de la Palabra de Dios, en la conclusión de la Semana por la Unidad Cristiana, mi oración es que nos enfoquemos en San Pablo cuando éste se despidió de los presbíteros de Efesio en Mileto, confiándoles "a Dios y a la palabra de su gracia" previniéndoles en contra de las divisiones (Hechos 20:32). No estamos en bancarrota, pero sí estamos abundantemente bendecidos como el sentido de unidad con que la palabra de Dios riega la unidad de la Iglesia y de nuestro amor de los unos con los otros. Nuestro amor por la palabra de Dios será la única cámara de un corazón que ama a nuestro Señor Eucarístico. Nuestra fe personal proyecta una atracción magnética cuando la gente siente que la Iglesia tiene lugar para todos, y que estar juntos, en nuestra comunión misma es la riqueza que Dios tiene preparada.

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.

'Pilgrims of Hope' dubbed the motto for Holy Year 2025

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis approved "Pilgrims of Hope" as the motto for the Holy Year 2025.

The motto aims to give a concise sense of the full meaning of the jubilee journey, Archbishop Rino Fisichella told Vatican News Jan. 13.

The words "pilgrims" and "hope" also represent key themes of Pope Francis' pontificate, said the archbishop, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, which is in charge of the Holy Year planning efforts.

The archbishop said the pope approved the motto Jan. 3 and that he is awaiting further instructions from the pope. In the meantime, the council already is working with Vatican and Italian authorities on the best way to welcome a large number of visitors during the year.

Traditionally for holy years, the celebrations begin with the pope opening the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve and ends with the sealing of the door one year later. The holy doors of St. John Lateran, St. Paul Outside the Walls and St. Mary Major are opened for the year, too.

A holy year or jubilee is

a time of pilgrimage, prayer, repentance and acts of mercy, based on the Old Testament tradition of a jubilee year of rest, forgiveness and renewal. Holy years also are a time when Catholics visit designated churches and shrines, recite special prayers, go to confession and receive Communion to receive a plenary indulgence, which is a remission of the temporal punishment due for one's sins.

Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first Holy Year in 1300 and decreed that they would be celebrated every 100 years. But just 50 years later, a more biblical cadence, Pope Clement VI proclaimed another holy year. Pope Urban VI thought holy years should be celebrated every 33 years as a reminder of the time Jesus lived.

Finally, in 1470, Pope Paul II established the celebrations every 25 years, which has been the practice ever since. However, special anniversaries have called for special holy years, for instance, in 1933 to mark the 1,900th anniversary of Jesus' death and resurrection and in 1983 to mark the 1,950th anniversary.

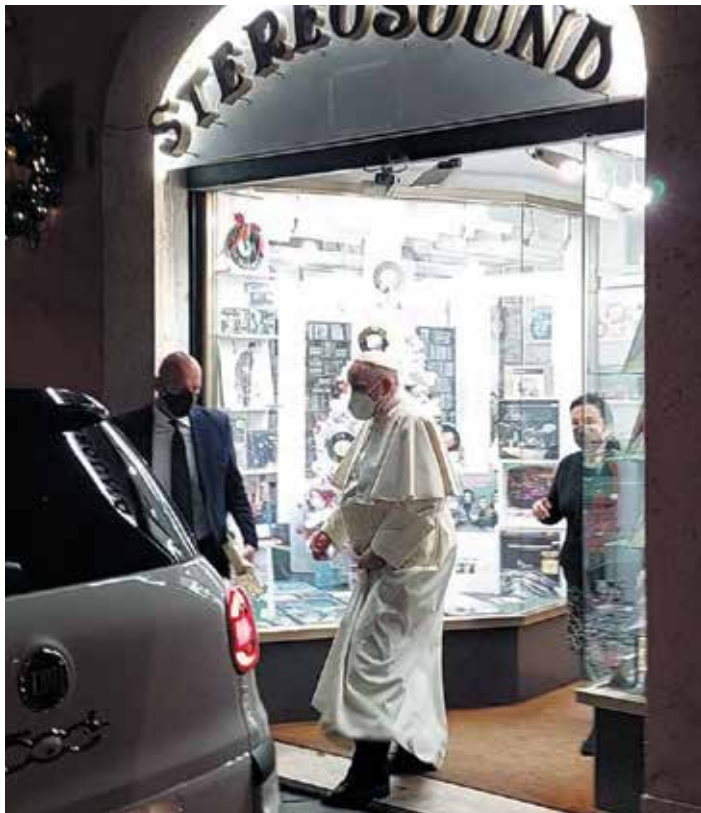
Pope Francis, seeing a need to emphasize God's mercy and to encourage Catholics to return to the sacrament of reconciliation, declared an extraordinary Year of Mercy, which ran in 2015-16.



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to inaugurate the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican in this Dec. 8, 2015, file photo. The pope has approved the theme "Pilgrims of Hope" to be the motto for the Holy Year 2025.

Pope adds to music collection



CNS photo/Javier Martinez-Brocal, Rome Reports

Pope Francis holds a record under his arm as he leaves the Stereo Sound record shop in Rome Jan. 11, 2022. The pope made a surprise visit to the music store he used to go to as a cardinal, receiving a record of classical music as a gift from the thrilled shop owner.

Consejero sobre Asistencia de Víctimas

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

Family FAITH Resources

As parents and grandparents, we want the best for our children and grandchildren. As Catholics, we believe that a living faith — one lived in relationship with Jesus and to the Church — plays a big part in helping our kids reach their potential for living a joyful life. But how to bring a child to embrace faith for themselves is not clear and easy!

To support your family in this important effort, the Diocese of Des Moines is now offering new online resources. *Family Faith Resources* seek to help parents grow their own faith, as well as provide: language to share Catholic faith with their kids, and meaningful and fun practices to help it come alive in day-to-day family life.

The growing collection can be found on the diocesan website: dmdiocese.org Go to *Ministries & Faith Formation* > Religious Education > Parent Tools.

Our 2022 Lenten resources will soon be posted at dmdiocese.org/lent or scan:



Be sure to share this with family & friends. Together we can strengthen Catholic faith in our homes & diocese!



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