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 ask 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.

“Syndiality 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 synodal process and for local planning.

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

“By leaning into syndiality 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.

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

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 under 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.

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-

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Welcome to international priests for mission work in parishes, hospitals

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.

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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.

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 10

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 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 Bassey, 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

Continued on page 10
There are different denominational versions of an old joke, but the Catholic one describes a man whose long-term 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 advice. 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 envelope filled with 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 what words in the Bible brought him such good fortune. The man replies, “Chapter 11…”

“The Holy Father tells 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 en- ablons to proclaim its unfathom- able riches. Our belief in God’s inspired word should strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and dovetail well with the Catholic vision of a new Week of Christian Unity and the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. It is a time for an in-depth discussion on 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 makes them one.”

We know tensions that beset us as members of a Catholic community (panedical protocols, reduced conviction that Jesus is sacramentally present in the Eucharist, misunderstanding of the charac- rist faith and political positions, liturgical sensibilities that may be damaged in the liturgical- ic 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 saving our- ty, but only if we are willing to sit at his feet, to daily retreat for even a brief season to mavor satural presence, and to allow the combined sweet and bitter taste of his words to season our sense of the sacredness of life and our values that differ, or 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 the readings of Mass via print or elec- tronic platforms, or praying of the psalms connected with the Litur- gies during the Mass (especially available on liturgy or other apps), or by following many have by follow- ing Fr. Mike Schmitz’s podcasts unfolding “The Bible in a Year.”

Merton recounts the inspired rec- ognition 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 ‘I’ll do it’, and calls us to reality that ‘this is me, this is where I am, there is where I am offered the opportunity to be with and live in the reality of my life’ (Northumbria Community cited by Diarmuid Rooney).

“Every day is children’s day,” says Paul. Paul’s letters are the catalyst for us all. Pope Francis has stressed that there is one faith, one God and Father of us all. Pope Francis reminds us that there is one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of us all. 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.

Hay diferentes versiones de un viejo chiste, dependiendo de la denominación, pero la versión católica nos habla de un hombre cuyo negocio en bancarrota estaba en continua decadencia, al punto de que estaba bebiendo demasiado e incluso estaba suicidándose. Va pues a visitar al sacerdote de su parroquia a desahogarse con los problemas de su vida cotidiana. El sacerdote le recuerda decir: “Vaya y tome su Biblia, pase por una página de sus ensayos, lee las páginas y haz lo que te digan.”

El hombre se lo pone en práctica y al cabo de tres meses vuelve al sacerdote para declararse rico. El sacerdote le pregunta cuáles fueron las palabras que le hiciesen ser rico.

“Capítulo 11…”

El sacerdote le responde: “El Papa nos habla de un hombre cuya vida se encontraba en una situación difícil y comer por su cuenta. Entonces vuelve a la parroquia y comenta: “Estoy viendo cómo el dinero se ha vuelto una bendición en mi vida.”

“Bien, ahora piensa en cómo se ha vuelto una bendición para los demás.”

El hombre se lo pone en práctica y al cabo de tres meses vuelve al sacerdote para decir que ha acumulado una gran cantidad de dinero. El sacerdote le pregunta: “¿Cómo ha podido hacer tanto dinero en tan poco tiempo?”

El hombre responde: “He estado leyendo el Evangelio de Lucas en un nuevo estudio de la Biblia que he adquirido.”

El sacerdote le pregunta: “¿Qué ha aprendido de ese estudio?”

El hombre responde: “He aprendido que el dinero no es lo más importante en la vida. He aprendido que lo más importante es ser feliz.”

El sacerdote le pregunta: “¿Cómo lo has logrado?”

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El sacerdote le pregunta: “¿Cómo lo ha...
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, Soaply 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 or not you have the gene that makes cilantro taste like soap than a food flavor. It’s all about whether or not you have the gene that has been passed down to you or not you have the gene that makes cilantro taste like soap than a food flavor.

“By Anne Marie Cox

The Catholic Mirror   January 21, 2022

Submarine commander to visit school

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 McCarty 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.

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 Meiter Group and lead a committee of volunteers to develop a strategic plan for the diocesan Catholic schools.

Deegan, a registered electrical engineer, 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 regional 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 worked together to come to their recommendation to create a regional system of the schools in the Des Moines area to Bishop Joensen.

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 Universities, 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 not 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 students to dive deeper in their faith and 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.

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 14 Catholic schools that embrace a faith-based learning environment. This call replaces role seeking a candidate with more than 54.3 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 action and work.

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 relations skills, proficiency with web, social media, technology, data base management and be an organized self-starter.

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

The bottom line is: 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**

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Segundo, de las quince ideas enumeradas, seleccione cinco que usted piense son las mas importantes para que la Diócesis de Des Moines aborde en su nueva Visión Estratégica.

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
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Por favor proporcione su perfil demográfico si así lo prefiere:

**Datos demográficos (opcional)**

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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.
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.*

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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
   - Support 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
   - Parishoner
   - 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 dmdioce.se/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
Jan. 27 Thursday
Holy Happy Hour
URBANIALE – 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 6:30-6 p.m., and then the talk will be 6:30-7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Judi at jh.elerton09@gmail.com.

New name for longtime pro-life group
Pulse Life Advocates replaces Iowans for LIFE
By Kelly Mescher Collins Staff Writer

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 important 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 pulselife.org.

Feb. 10 Thursday
Open House for Nazareth Sisters of the Annunciatory
WEST DES MOINES – St. Francis of Assisi is hosting an open house to share information about the Nazareth Sisters of the Annunciatory 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 sell all 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 up 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
WEST DES MOINES – All are welcome to join Bishop William Joensen at St. Ambrose on Monday nights for an hour of Eucharistic adoration and evening prayer. These Holy Hours will be hosted from 5:45-6:45 p.m. each Monday. Evening prayer will be livestreamed at Facebook.com/dmdiocece.

Friends, Romans, Iowans podcast
Be sure to check out the Diocese of Des Moines’ 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 south-west Iowa. Episodes can be found wherever you get your podcasts, or at dmdiocece.org/podcast.

Wife and mother found a vocation in marriage ministry
Sarah Luft worked in data entry at two companies and in family business enterprise 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 Bogomanno, 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. Augustine Parish is celebrating 150 years
Boniface 4th of July Parish Picnic.

Founded in 1872, Boniface Parish is celebrating its 150 year anniversary this year.

Jul 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.

Center for Social Ministry
www.DivineTreasuresInc.net – 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@centersocialministry.org or call 515-255-3054.

• 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 of high school 18 through their mid-20s. Contact Justin White at 515-237-5098 if you’d like to be included in future communications about World Youth Day 2023.

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 united in faith as they raised their family. They were blessed with six children: Mary, Michele, Dennis, Thomas, James and Peter.

Sarah Luft was the pastor at St. John the Baptist in Altoona.

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Sarah Luft was the pastor at St. John the Baptist in Altoona.
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 and Jesus [a lot].”

Mark and Becky have been raising their grandchildren for a few years. 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 grandchildren 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.

“Don’t be afraid to ask for help,” Davis told customers. “We’re here for you.”

Germany and Austria

Visit CollinsTravel.biz and click on “Pilgrimages” or contact Jason at Jason@CollinsTravel.biz or call 309-781-5757

Join us for this Incredible Journey of Faith and Adventure to Germany and Austria July 15-25, 2022!

Things we’ll see in Germany:
- World-renowned “Passion Play” - held every 10 years
- Historic Munich city center named after the Blessed Mother
- Beautiful, ornate Catholic churches, many of which survived WWII
- Dachau Concentration Camp and Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest
- Neuschwanstein Castle

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.
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 faithfulness of the faithful have been. 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. 

The Financial 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 Finance Council is 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 ranked tied for 7th out of 177 dioceses for financial transparency by a national group (Voice of the Faithful)," said Kelley.

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

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 Flood of 2019 significantly damaged the church hall and the basement of the rectory, where religious education classes occurred. Insurance covered the repair and remodeling 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 effective getting through this pandemic in much better fashion than we thought,” Kinsella concluded. “Now, the best is yet to come.”

Audit Committee brings in a fresh eye with new auditors

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

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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.

...
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 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.

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 CEO - 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 Marcasak | CEO - Nishna Valley Credit Union | Sts. Peter & Paul, Atlantic
Dan Ochlyski | CEO - Growth Financial Partners | Sacred Heart, West Des Moines
Stephanie Sancone | Attorney - Bradshaw, Fowler, Proctor, & Fairgrave, P.C. | St. Anthony, Des Moines
Patrick Smith | Senior Trial Attorney - Nationwide | St. Augustine, Des Moines
Krista Turner | PEO Branch Manager - Oasis, a Paychex Company (PrismHR) | St. Boniface, Waukee

Appointed by Presbyteral Council [Voting]:
- Msgr. Ed Hurley: Vicar of Finance - Diocese of Des Moines, Retired
- Father Joseph Pins: Associate Vicar of Finance - Diocese of Des Moines

Ex-Officio [Non-Voting]:
- Bishop William Joensen: Bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines

Staff [Non-Voting]:
- Paul Carlson: Director of Finance - Diocese of Des Moines
- Laura Hofstrand: Accounting Manager - Diocese of Des Moines
- Jason Kurth: Chancellor - Diocese of Des Moines
Welcome to our newest priests

Father Michael Antoh
Ordained in 2003
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, St. 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 Effong 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

Hospital in Des Moines.

Father John Brobbey
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

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
Served as parochial vicar at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines.

Father John Brobbey came to Iowa from New York City, where he served as parochial vicar with the diocese of the Carribean 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,” he was born.

“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 Antoh, Father Francis Offong, Father Cyril Offong (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 Brobbey, 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 Brobbey came to Iowa from New York City, where he served as parochial vicar with the diocese of the Carribean Island of Grenada for three years.

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

By mid-2019, she’d distributed 3,000 muff.

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 muff, contact Hume at 416 Oak land Ave., Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503.

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 Lion’s Club magazine about ladies in the United Kingdom who knit or crocheted twiddle muff for Alzheimers’ 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 supplied 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, counseling 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.

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

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Cranes and the Creek Isles
In the State of St. Paul, the Apostle
11 days November 14, 2022
located by
Rev. Richard E. Haas
All Saints Catholic Church
8401 S. River Ave., Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501
712-575-5801

Cranes are a fall and spring migration event that cannot be missed.

“Come and experience the amazing beauty of the river, the sand bar, and the marshland as the cranes migrate,” Haas said.

Cranes are one of the largest species of shorebirds in the United States and can be seen in large flocks as they migrate through the area.

The birds are known for their spectacular display of flying and dancing, which they use to attract mates and establish their territory.

“Experience the magic of seeing these magnificent birds up close,” Haas said.

For more information, text 515-462-4080.

www.CaldwellParrish.com
8201 Hickman Rd.
Urbandale, IA 50322
(515) 276-0551

URBANDALE

8201 Hickman Rd.
Urbandale, IA 50322
(515) 276-0551

AEDEL

735 South 14th St.
Adel, IA 50003
(515) 993-4240

WinterSET

1823 N. John Wayne Dr.
Winterset, IA 50273
(515) 462-4080

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

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

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The birds are known for their spectacular display of flying and dancing, which they use to attract mates and establish their territory.

“Experience the magic of seeing these magnificent birds up close,” Haas said.

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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.

Trip brings special blessing for seminarians

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 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.”

Father Flood said the prayers and letters were important to his mother, Susie Flood, who was ordained a priest last summer. “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.”

Reach 35,000 homes by placing an ad in The Catholic Mirror.

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Serrans’ penpal practice supports seminarians

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

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

“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.

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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.”

100-hour public Bible reading planned


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 lectors 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.
Imagine That!

Imagine that:
Our ancestors, nomads, refugees even,
feeling 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.

This God, who has the last laugh.
We too laugh at God’s plans,
who wouldn’t?

No wonder they laughed at God;
comes to be with re-settlers.
And there our God creates a great resettling,
This God, among the powerless,
of pain and consolation.

Again.

And just when we thought we knew how the story goes.
There are twists and turns, dreams and visions,
as dreams once again from God our surprising God.

Behold, the hand of God at work HERE,
We, descendants of nomads and refugees,
whether we land more toward healthy or cursed mental health.
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 bring 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 to full a 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 no scope of healing, comfort and improvement when we unite our struggles with God because he will tell us the truth.

Deacon Randy Kiel serves Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines and is the founder of Kar- dia Counseling. He can be reached at
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 be able 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 so sharp we have seen them 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. Is that 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 the farthest away. Thus, when investigators try to determine the cause of an explosion they are particularly interested in finding and examining the pieces that are closest to 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 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 particles 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 exciting scientists feel around this new telescope and their hopes that it will show us pictures of particles from the beginning of time, it is hard to 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.

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

Jesus was not just some extraordinary person who performed a few miracles or even one 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.

We are paying attention.

The Son of God, the one who took on human nature and a human body, is our brother, and we are paying attention.

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

Q. I have noticed several variations on the days we are to say the Mysteries of the Rosary. Some state that while attending Mass on Sunday, to say an Our Father and Hail Mary on Sunday, instead of the Glorious Mysteries. Others, state we are to say the Joyful Mystery from Advent to Lent on Sunday. During Lent that same Our Father and Hail Mary is recited throughout the Mass. Would you clarify what method Catholics should follow? Please explain on why there are so many variations? - Bobbi Marshall, Council Bluffs, Iowa

A. Well, it might be like choosing between two differenturgers. 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 what we choose to pray, as long as we are praying.

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 what 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 this is the will of God, that I should not lose 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 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 it is against both the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Blood 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 the priest or other Communion minister says “the Blood of Christ” it means that Christ is truly present in the species of Blood in the Eucharistic Bread or wine.

The Catholic Mirror Diocese of Des Moines 601 Grand Ave Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Have you ever asked, “Why, Lord?”

Signs, like parables, can serve as doors that open to something bigger on the inside. We’ve been granted a key 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 uncomfort- able with the signs and sacraments we were granted for so long. A sign is an invitation to walk through a door - let’s open it!

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Food for the Journey

Don’t get too comfortable

By Mandie DeVries

I've Been Wondering...

Fr. Jim Ludwig

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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 especially Education Saving 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 stayed employed at a school for two years.

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

**Taxes**

Reynolds also proposed a reduction of state income tax rates 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 to fight against these forms of human exploitation.

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

**Vigil for life**

Catholics across the country are encouraged to observe a vigil night 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**

USCCB statement observing MLK Day 2022

**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 treatment of the “sacred Americans” who as the country commemorated Religious Freedom Day Jan. 16. Dolan, who chairs the U.S. bishops’ Committee for Religious Liberty, expressed particular concern that such rights are under threat 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 statuette 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 allows our children to flourish in 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 with stained glass, statues, and symbols of faith, to earthly reflection of the spiritual realities of the world,” the statement continued.

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

**Verbo para que se convierta en una relación duradera, que se transmi- ta a la forma en que escuchamos y respondemos a los demás. No estamos solos en vivir la experi- encia 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 interpretar nuestra vida, nuestra lengua, nuestra música, nuestro libro de la ley y de los profetas con sus propias palabras de una nueva forma que nos permite interpretar nuestra vida como una forma de la comunicación del Espíritu. Podemos conversar con todas las personas de una manera que promueva la conexión, no división, por qué es que él es La Palabra Valiosa que trabaja por medio de nosotras. En el Domingo de La Pa- labra de Dios, en la conclusión de la Semana por la Unidad Cristi- ana, mi oración es que no enfoc- quemos en San Pablo cuando éste se despide de los presbíteros de la Iglesia de Judá y de la Iglesia de Israel, sino que nos esfuer- cemos en estar con él siempre que nos esfuer- camos por ser parte de una comunidad más amplia. Así es que te invito a reflexionar sobre el tema de las relaciones entre unos, no sólo entre unos y otros, sino entre todos en la comunidad católica. El espíritu de la paz no es sólo una condición de la vida, sino una consciencia que nos permite vivir en paz con las diferentes personas que nos rodean. Pero es también una manera de ser que nos permite vivir en paz con las diferentes personas que nos rodean. Pero es también un modo de ser que nos permite vivir en paz con las diferentes personas que nos rodean. Pero es también un modo de ser que nos permite vivir en paz con las diferentes personas que nos rodean. 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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 25 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 1,950th 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.

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!
Make your resolution this year to do something for someone else. Membership in the Knights of Columbus is about serving others.

Your act of service will also benefit you through enhanced relationships with your family, neighbors and Church.

We are Catholic men who lead, serve, protect and defend. We share a desire to be better husbands, fathers, sons, neighbors and role models who put charity and community first.

Our world needs more Knights of Columbus.  
Our world needs YOU to join today!

Scan the code below or go to kofc.org/joinus to register

Use the code MCGIVNEY2020 for 1 year trial membership*

*Membership in the Knights of Columbus is open to men 18 years of age or older who are “practical” Catholics

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**Make your New Year right!**

**Start your New Year as a Knight!**

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**Make this Year, Make Protecting Your Family the First Resolution You Keep.**

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**Life Insurance • Disability Income Insurance • Long-Term Care Insurance • Retirement Annuities**

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**Start your New Year right!**

**Start your New Year as a Knight!**

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