

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Vol. 55, No. 3

March 18, 2022

Strategic visioning process makes progress

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

One year ago, Bishop William Joensen invoked the Holy Spirit and enlisted a diverse group of lay faithful and clergy to envision and discern the direction the Diocese of Des Moines should pursue in the coming months and years.

The process that was initiated has made great strides.

Together with the bishop, the Strategic Visioning Steering Committee has begun to focus upon themes that have emerged among 38 focus groups, 40 one-on-one interviews, and nearly 2,600 survey responses in English and Spanish.

Feedback has been offered by a host of persons with diverse experiences and points of view, ranging from priests, lay parish staff and leadership, youth and young adults, people in the pews, as well as non-practicing Catholics and others who belong to other faith traditions or no organized religion at all.

The synthesizing and interpretation of data continues to be a revelatory and Spirit-led process. The top themes that emerge will have an impact upon diocesan outreach, programs and resources for the next three-to-five years.

A key element of the visioning process involves listening to members of the faithful. Bishop Joensen and the Steering Committee are grateful for the many folks who completed the online survey or the alternate version that appeared in the January edition of *The Catholic Mirror*. Everyone who wanted to be heard had an opportunity to share his or her thoughts, said Dan Ebener, of Quad City Leadership Consulting. He is the primary facilitator for the Diocese's visioning process.

Listening was a critical factor contributing to the success of this effort, said Dan Kinsella, co-chair of the Strategic Visioning Steering Committee.

Continued on page 7

'Stop this massacre'

Kyiv Post @KyivPost

Jesus Christ statue being taken out of Armenian Cathedral of Lviv, #Ukraine, to be stored in a bunker for protection. The last time it was taken out was during WWII.



The Kyiv Post posted this photo on Twitter March 6. It shows a statue of Jesus being taken out of the Armenian Cathedral in Lviv, Ukraine, to be stored in a bunker for protection.

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Appealing again for an end to the war in Ukraine, Pope Francis said those who invoke God to promote or justify violence "pro-

fane his name."

"In the name of God, I ask: Stop this massacre," the pope said March 13 at the end of his Sunday Angelus address.

With thousands of people gathered under the bright sunshine of a Roman spring to pray the midday Marian prayer, Pope



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Pope Francis gives his blessing after leading the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on March 13. Appealing again for peace in Ukraine, Pope Francis said those who support violence profane the name of God.

Francis turned their attention to Mariupol, Ukraine, a city named in honor of Mary; it has been besieged by Russian troops for two weeks.

The city, he said, "has become a martyred city of the heart-wrenching war that is destroying Ukraine."

"Before the barbarity of the killing of children, of innocents and unarmed civilians, there are no strategic reasons that hold up," the pope said. The only thing to do is "to stop the unacceptable armed aggression before it reduc-

Continued on page 15

Des Moines joins school regionalization trend from a position of strength

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Catholic schools in the Midwest and the Upper Plains region were among the first to begin close collaborations by forming school systems and they've seen a number of successes as a result.

The Des Moines metro area schools are joining this trend.

Eleven Catholic grade schools in the Des Moines metro area plus Dowling Catholic High School will be part of the Des Moines Region Catholic Schools while retaining their own names, uniforms, sports teams and other aspects that make them unique.

Wade Marshall has a bird's-eye view of the evolving governance structure of Catholic schools given his position as vice president of member services of the National Catholic Educational Association.

He's seen the benefits

that schools have realized by working more closely together through regionalization or the creation of school systems for multiple schools. There is a reduction in duplicated tasks, centralized purchasing and a broadening of the support for the ministry of Catholic education.

"The pastor is very involved in Catholic culture, religious education and all the things that make a Catholic community what it is, the charisma," Marshall said. "But the church isn't burdened with all the administrative aspects of running a school: central warehouse purchasing, accounts receivable, etc. You don't need someone in the parish doing all of that."

Plus, by including area parishes without Catholic schools, "you can ask for the larger group to keep that school viable and everybody else in the whole Catholic community is participating in keeping Catholic education alive

and strong," he said.

The Diocese of Des Moines has seen regionalization in Shelby County, where parish schools came together to form Shelby County Catholic School, and in Council Bluffs, where five elementary and two high schools eventually came together under one roof "up on the hill" to create St. Albert Catholic School.

Father Chuck Kottas, canonical administrator for St. Albert School, said the Des Moines community will find benefits once a school system is established. The Council Bluffs Catholic schools regionalized out of necessity and found the benefits include a stronger community supporting the mission of Catholic education.

"It was ingenious," said St. Albert President Ann Rohling. "We wouldn't have Catholic schools now if we hadn't done that."

Continued on page 10

Ryan named president of new diocesan region schools system

Bishop William Joensen has named Dr. Dan Ryan as president of the new regional system for 12 Catholic schools in the Des Moines metropolitan area.



Ryan will continue to serve as president of Dowling Catholic High School while leading the Des Moines Metro Region Catholic Schools.

"Dr. Ryan brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position and I am confident he will be an effective leader in this new combined role," said Bishop
Continued on page 10

Triptych of Witnesses

It's not just a Lenten thing, but the vale of tears stirred by the awareness of suffering humanity both remote and near to us seems especially thick and heavy these days. The onslaught of evil wrought by the monstrous dictator, Vladimir Putin of Russia, grinds on to what seems like an inevitably horrific outcome in Ukraine, regardless of what disuasive measures world leaders adopt. While some might judge us as impotent bystanders, we do well to heed the caveat that those who consort with evil, even in the good-willed attempt to rebuff evil, often end up becoming like those whom they seek to vanquish. The prospect of World War III is no fantasy video game, but looms ominously before us, and so we mobilize all the humanitarian aid, all the economic and political sanctions, and most importantly, all the spiritual capital in the form of prayer and penance that we can. We pray in particular that Our Lady of Fatima and St. Michael the Archangel will bind the hands of Satan and his minions, that Russia will be stopped, Putin will return to sanity and receive his just punishments, and that Ukraine and the world will be restored to peace.

And nearer to home, the staccato sound of gunshots shattering a normal March Monday afternoon in Des Moines as school was dismissed at East High School further rocked the world of students, staff, surrounding neighborhoods and the entire community. Six teenage assailants, in what seems to be a premeditated slaying gone awry, shot and killed 15-year-old Jose David Lopez and left two others seriously injured. Any blithe presumption that central Iowa is a zone of relative tranquility compared to other places was deflated, as our latent fears that we



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

cannot fully protect our children and loved ones from random acts of violence were again evoked. Again, people turn to God and to one another in prayer vigils and communal gatherings for support and consolation in the wake of such trauma.

The Mass of Christian Burial celebrated for Jose by Fathers PJ McManus and Reynaldo Hernandez Minero at Christ the King Parish on Des Moines' South Side was intended to provide balm and peace for Jose's mother, Deborah, his brothers and all who love him. It was a moment to be reminded that whatever evil we encounter, however much death seems to be an abrupt terminus for all we hold dear, both life and death are in the hands of the Lord Jesus, for he has conquered death and opened heaven through the blood of his Cross. The miasma of war, episodic bloodshed, and general disregard for human life and dignity pale in comparison to the transcendent power of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

All of us in our own way look for signs of God's presence in darkness, for seeds of hope that will allow us to go on in trust and not become paralyzed by fear and despair that "God has left the building" of a world that humans seem bent on ruining. In brief order, I propose three sources of hope for me personally—a "triptych of witnesses"—that maybe will bolster your own spirits.

The first is the Ukrainian people themselves. While millions have fled and continue to flee the hot breath of the beast from the east as refugees understandably seek to protect their children, dependents and themselves, how many more have remained resolute and even returned to do what

ever good they can. The relief efforts, the heroic resolve displayed by President Zelensky and his colleagues, the popular resistance in the streets, and most of all, the unflagging faith of the people and their religious leaders, are remarkably inspiring in these dark days. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, led by its shepherd Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Galicia, by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and other Christian pastors, have been stalwart in guiding their flocks through their valley of darkness, in resisting the temptation to hatred and hardened hearts by praying ceaselessly for the enemy, and in keeping alight the lamp of naked trust in God's providence.

I'm struck by the account of Father Mateusz, a Roman Catholic parish priest in Kyiv, who along with roughly 30 of his parishioners have been keeping vigil in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in their underground air raid shelter. In contrast to the "upper room" where Christ dined with his apostles, in this "lower room" the vivid sense of God's presence fills the space. Fr. Mateusz related the experience that came to him in prayer before Our Eucharistic Lord: "I said to the Lord, 'I am ready for everything, and I thank you for my whole life'."

In communion with one another, persons are fortified in their belief that their heavenly Father wills good for them, and will hand over his Son and not a scorpion in response to their ceaseless prayers. They are, strangely enough, happy in the sense that Jesus elaborated in



Archbishop
Sviatoslav
Shevchuk of
Kyiv-Halych, head
of the Ukrainian
Catholic Church
CNS photo/Ukrainian
Catholic Church

the Beatitudes: "Blest are those who mourn. . . who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness." If each of us is able to say each day to God, "I am ready for everything, and I thank you for my whole life," how free we would be, and how much more we would accompany each other and Jesus as emissaries of peace who help put violence and evil back in its place.

The second witness is Saint Óscar Romero, whose March 24th anniversary of his 1980 martyrdom in San Salvador reminds us that only by nonviolent means and the power of God's word proclaimed can the nefarious designs of human regimes be toppled and the Kingdom of God shine forth.

Despite the political pressures that sought to muzzle him by pulling the plug on his weekly radio messages and the threats to his life, Archbishop Romero was not cowed by the menace of terrorists and stayed true to his vocation to the end, so that his people might do the same.

Months before he was slain, this good shepherd commended his flock: "Christ's best microphone is the church, and the church is all of you. Let each one of you, in your own job, in your own vocation—nun, married person, bishop, priest, high school or university student, day laborer, wage earner, market woman—each one in your own place live the faith intensely and feel that in your surroundings you are a true microphone of God our Lord."

Romero's blood was mingled with Jesus' own blood when the assassin's bullet struck him down while celebrating Mass, magnifying the mystery played out before him: "This is the Eucharist: proclamation of the Lord's death, proclamation of his life, optimism of men and



St. Oscar Romero
CNS photo/
Rhina Guidos

women who know that they are following, even amid the darkness and confusion of our history, the bright light of Christ, eternal life." It is this light of life that we pray now shines brightly on the face of Jose David Lopez as he passes over to restful waters in company with Jesus and saints such as Archbishop Romero.

Finally, and while he is not officially a saint yet (!), I draw personal inspiration from the example of my uncle who is my Mom's brother, Monsignor Ralph Simington of Waterloo, Iowa. I was present to help Uncle Ralph celebrate his 60th anniversary of priestly ordination a few days before the actual date, March 17, which seems most fitting for this apostle of mirth and joy who revels in his Irish heritage. As seminary classmate to our Diocese's Father John Acrea and Father Frank Palmer, who also celebrate their 60th Jubilees this year, Uncle Ralph served as school counselor to youth, as long-time pastor especially in rural parishes where he was much beloved, as merciful confessor, and patient and wise listener to so many including his nephews and niece. To be in Uncle Ralph's presence is to always be on the verge of a chuckle and a hug. His own humility as he now bears his own cross of physical infirmity complements his witness as a faithful priest for God's people, and an attractive and humane source of inspiration for present and future priests like me. Congratulations Uncle Ralph! Blessings upon you, Fathers John and Frank, as you celebrate your 60th year of serving our Diocese!

Together, the Ukrainian people, St. Óscar Romero, and some priests near and dear to us are all witnesses who help us keep hope that our own time is not ultimately swirling into darkness and death, but ascending to where the Lord of history and eternity is seated at the Father's right hand.

In the March print edition of The Catholic Mirror, the name of the mother of Jose David Lopez is incorrect. Her name is Deborah. We regret the error.

Tríptico de Testimonios

No es solamente una cosa de Cuaresma, pero el valle de lágrimas provocadas por la consciencia del sufrimiento de la humanidad, tanto a lo lejos como cerca de nosotros que parece especialmente espeso y pesado en estos días. La ofensiva de maldad desatada por el monstruoso dictador, Vladimir Putin de Rusia, arrastra hacia los que parece un resultado inevitablemente terrorífico resultado en Ucrania, sin importar las medidas de disuasión que han adoptado los líderes mundiales. Aunque algunos nos juzguen como observadores impotentes, hacemos bien en estar atentos ante las advertencias de que aquellos que se asocian con el mal, incluso en un intento de buena voluntad de revertir el mal, frecuentemente terminan convirtiéndose en algo semejante a aquello que buscan eliminar. El prospecto de una Tercera Guerra Mundial

no es una fantasía de video juego, pero nos acecha inquietantemente y por lo tanto movilizamos toda la ayuda humanitaria, todas las sanciones económicas y políticas y, más importante aún, todo el capital espiritual en forma de oración y ayuno que nos sea posible. Oramos particularmente para que nuestra Señora de Fátima y San Miguel Arcángel aten las manos de Satanás y sus secuaces, que detengan a Rusia, que Putin vuelva a la cordura y que reciba un castigo justo y que se restaure la paz Ucrania y en el mundo.

Y más cerca de casa, el ensordecedor sonido de disparos que destroza una tarde normal de un lunes de marzo en Des Moines a la hora de la salida de la Preparatoria de East sacudió al mundo de estudiantes, personal, habitantes circunvecinos y la comunidad entera. Seis agresores adolescentes en lo que parece ser un atentado

premeditado que se salió de control, dispararon y mataron a José David López de 15 años e hirieron de gravedad a dos más. Se desvaneció cualquier presunción de que el centro de Iowa es una zona de relativa tranquilidad cuando la comparamos con otros lugares, al ver como se evocan nuevamente nuestros temores latentes de que no podemos proteger completamente a nuestros hijos y a nuestros seres queridos contra actos fortuitos de violencia. Nuevamente, la gente voltea hacia Dios y hacia los demás en vigiliyas de oración y en reuniones comunitarias que buscan apoyo y consuelo en respuesta a estos eventos.

La Misa de Sepultura Cristian que celebraron para José los Padres PJ McManus y Reynaldo Hernández Minero en la Parroquia de Cristo Rey en el sur de Des Moines buscaba ser alivio y paz para Deborah, madre de José,

para sus hermanos y para sus seres queridos. Fue un momento para recordad que no importa el nivel de maldad con el que nos encontremos, por mucho que parezca que la muerte sea un final abrupto de todo lo que queremos, tanto la vida como la muerte están en las manos del Señor Jesús, porque él ha conquistado la muerte y abierto el cielo por medio de la sangre de su Cruz. La mística de la guerra, los episodios de derramamiento de sangre, y la indiferencia generalizada por la vida y dignidad humanas, se palidecen al compararse con el poder trascendente del Misterio Pascual de la Pasión, Muerte y Resurrección de Jesús.

Todos nosotros buscamos en nuestro propio estilo por señales de la presencia de Dios en la oscuridad, buscando semillas de esperanza que nos permitan seguir adelante con confianza y

Continued on page 14

THE CATHOLIC

MIRROR

Bishop William Joensen
Publisher

wjoensen@dmdiocese.org

Anne Marie Cox
Editor

acox@dmdiocese.org

Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

kcollins@dmdiocese.org

The Catholic Mirror (ISSN 0896-6869) is published monthly for \$25 per year by the Diocese of Des Moines, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines. POSTMASTER: Send changes to THE CATHOLIC MIRROR, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

PHONE: (515)237-5046

EMAIL: mirror@dmdiocese.org

org

DIOCESAN WEBSITE:

www.dmdiocese.org

Hamburg parish breaks ground

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

On a sunny Sunday morning, the parishioners of St. Mary Parish in Hamburg broke ground for a new religious education center, a dream come true.

The resiliency, determination and faith of the people have been tremendous.

"I'm totally amazed at what they've done," said Monsignor Ed Hurley.

Three times, the parish of 70 families in the far southwest corner of the Diocese of Des Moines tried to replace a 125-year-old rectory that served as a religious education center. A flood, the pandemic, and then sky-high building costs set them back. Over the years, the parish raised significant funding, but in light of the cost increase, it wasn't enough.

The new building will have five classrooms for the parish's 42 religious education youth. Two of the classrooms can be made into larger areas, an office, a small kitchenette and restrooms.

"Our capital campaign

brought \$300,000 in pledges and donations," said parishioner Cheryl Phillips. "Had the prices stayed where they were, it would've covered the cost of the building when we added the savings we had invested."

The Diocese of Des Moines launched the Parish Solidarity Fund, a means for parishes in the diocesan family to help each other. Several parishes were asked to pledge to the effort, and others were asked to take up a second collection.

The goal was to raise \$400,000. To date, a total of \$413,122 has been raised, said Maureen Kenney, diocesan director of Stewardship. This includes a \$100,000 commitment from the Diocese and five-figure commitments from some parishes totaling \$256,925.

"We are so pleased that more than 50 parishes and their parishioners have participated in this effort so far, standing in solidarity with their sister parish, St. Mary Parish in Hamburg," Kenney said.

Funds raised over the goal for St. Mary will go into the Parish Solidarity Fund to be used the next time a parish is in need

of help. On March 13, the parish broke ground for its new religious education center.

The aid that came to St. Mary Parish is a story of a family of parishes helping one of its own.

There have been times when neighboring parishes helped each other. As St. Francis of Assisi in West Des Moines was getting off the ground, Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines and St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale helped.

And when St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Ankeny was getting started, Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish, also in Ankeny, helped.

In the case of St. Mary Parish in Hamburg, the broader diocesan family of parishes came together to provide financial assistance.

"I think that's a concept that would be great for us going forward," said Monsignor Hurley. "I think it's important here that one of the overall consequences of this is that we realize that we are all in this together, whether you're urban or rural, that we're willing to help each other."

Camosy coming to Des Moines

Well-known theologian and author Charles Camosy will be in Des Moines April 6 to speak as the inaugural research fellow of the new Center for Human Flourishing at Mercy College of Health Sciences.

"It's not only a privilege to have Charlie back, but it's been an honor to have him here at the beginning of creating the center because so much of what his research reflects is what we hope to do and provide for people," said Bo Bonner, the director of the center.

Universities and colleges have two main goals, Bonner said. They exist to educate and to produce knowledge.

In a faith-based environment, Mercy College educates students for health care careers.

The college created the Center for Human Flourishing for producing knowledge. The best of the colleges and universities produce knowledge that is reflective of their mission, Bonner said.

"For us, founded by the Sisters of Mercy, our concern is about human flourishing, a broad concept that entails the whole person blossoming into the fullness of who they are," he said. This is addressed through healing but also through education, economics and religion.

"To be flourishing, to be truly healthy, is a holistic concept," Bonner said. "For us, the knowledge we should produce is rooted in practical wisdom."

Camosy will talk about applying that practical wisdom to "on the ground" work of the college, Bonner said.

A professor at Fordham University, Camosy has been instrumental in helping the Center for Human Flourishing get off the ground. His recent books focus on bioethics; one in particular centering on the "throw-away culture."

"It embodies that terminology by Pope Francis about what a Catholic medical ethic will look like," Bonner said.

Camosy, a prolific author, has written about elder care and what we've learned since the pandemic. A new book will be coming out on Christian nursing ethics. He mentions Mercy College several times and talks about the Sisters of Mercy and their role in Catholic nursing.

To hear Camosy, come to the Catholic Pastoral Center in Des Moines on April 6 at 6 p.m. The discussion will be videotaped for future viewing. For more information, go to mchs.edu/flourish.



Charles Camosy

Making it Personal

with Bishop Joensen



Deepen your faith this Lenten season with inspiring Catholic radio. Hear all of Bishop Joensen's previously broadcast shows at IowaCatholicRadio.com/personal



"Making it Personal with Bishop Joensen" is sponsored by the Serra Club of Des Moines and Council Bluffs. Learn more at DMSerra.com

Find creative ideas, prayer suggestions and more to help you and your family live Lent.

dmdiocese.org/lent

Divina Misericordia
Misa de Vigilia en español
Abril 23 sabado 7:00 p.m.
Iglesia Cristo Rey
5711 SW 9th Street

Jesus, En ti confio

Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia - 7pm

Misa - 8pm

Confesiones Después de la Misa

"Deseo que el mundo entero conozca Mi infinita misericordia. Deseo conceder gracias inimaginables a aquellas almas que confían en Mi misericordia" (Diario 687)

Young adults offer outreach to peers

The following young adults from the Diocese of Des Moines are serving others through the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, otherwise known as FOCUS.

Stories by Kelly Mescher Collins

Cristina Bañuelos

Home Parish: St. Ambrose Cathedral, Des Moines

Born and raised into a devout Catholic family, Cristina Bañuelos experienced a deepening of her faith while attending Iowa State University.

“My freshman year, I just felt called to go to retreat at the Newman Center and I encountered Christ in the Eucharist,” said Bañuelos, a graduate of Dowling Catholic High School. “I became involved in the Newman Center in every way I knew how.”

She attended Bible study, lead a Bible study and became friends with the FOCUS missionaries on campus. One of the missionaries challenged her to re-think her faith so that Christ

was at the center, not just a part of her busy life.

“The missionary said: ‘Is Christ just a part of your life or at the center of your life?’” Bañuelos said. “And I knew at that moment I wanted him to be in the center of my life. They really walked with me and gave me a lot of discipleship.”

They also walked with Bañuelos as she pondered what to do with her life upon graduation from ISU.

“I wanted to fall the most in love with Christ,” Bañuelos said. “And the people who were most in love with Christ were the missionaries.”

After attending FOCUS

training, she felt convicted.

“[Evangelizing] is not just the cherry on top of being Catholic, but the foundation of being Catholic,” Bañuelos said. “It’s incredibly important to spread the love of God to every single person and to invite them to live a Christian life.”

Bañuelos does that every day now in her role as a FOCUS missionary. She and three other FOCUS missionaries serve at New York University. They also see students who attend nearby Parsons School of Design, The Kings College and the Fashion Institute of Technology.

“With the city there’s lots of loneliness – more than

other places,” Bañuelos said. “There’s a lack of being known and a lack of being loved. The way that manifests is a lot of students will just try and do anything in order to stand out and be seen and be known.”

The Catholic Center at NYU provides a place to heal from the lack of home, she added.

“It’s a place to invite people into your life, in the sense of a family,” Bañuelos said.

Cooking together, sharing a meal, intentional conversations and game nights provides the sense of friendship and community that is so simple but so desperately wanted and needed amongst young adults right now.



Cristina Bañuelos

Charles Putbrese

Home Parish: St. John Parish, Norwalk

While attending Loras College in Dubuque, Charles Putbrese’s older sister Marie told him he should get involved in FOCUS on his campus.

He did get involved and attended FOCUS Bible study, events and conferences.

“It was good to come together as a group of men and build up the fraternity,” Putbrese said. “We’re not alone in this faith.”

“The FOCUS missionaries just encouraged me to walk

with other men and they encouraged group sharing, but also accountability for going to Mass, going to Bible studies and having these discussions and growing in the faith – challenging each other’s ideas,” Putbrese added.

It was while attending a FOCUS conference in Arizona that he fully realized the impact these missionaries had on his life.

“I knew I wanted to do something within the church,” Putbrese said. “I wanted to give back to others. I would not be the

person I am today without the missionaries that walked before me and walked with me.”

Putbrese became a FOCUS missionary and began his first assignment in June 2020 at Carroll College in Helena, Montana.

“I’m very grateful,” Putbrese said. “It’s so beautiful and the people up here are so kind and welcoming.”

He’s appreciative of the college’s perpetual Eucharistic adoration and 14 Bible studies up

and running. Earlier this month, they hosted the FOCUS Seek retreat, where nearly 200 young people from Carroll College, the University of Montana, Montana State and Western Montana were in attendance.

“I love being a missionary,” Putbrese said. “There’s so much investment in my personal life and spiritual life. They want us to be the best people we can be so we can better serve.”



Charles Putbrese
(bottom right corner)

John Bishop

Home Parish: St. Theresa Parish, Des Moines

John Bishop has nothing but praise for the Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

Bishop was introduced to FOCUS in his early beginnings at college, and stuck with it as he moved across the country earning his bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

Bishop was a FOCUS

student leader during his time at both Benedictine College and Baylor University, where he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees. He also was a campus missionary at the University of Maryland. He earned his doctorate in theology from Catholic University in Washington D.C.

He currently serves as a

director of formation at the FOCUS headquarters in Colorado, where he oversees a number of initiatives and writes curriculum for FOCUS Bible studies. He also teaches and forms missionaries.

“I think FOCUS is answering one of the biggest needs of the church today, and that is spreading the faith amongst

young people – especially on college campuses,” Bishop said. “College campuses are probably the biggest place in the United States where we are losing Catholics. FOCUS is trying to turn that tide.”



John Bishop

Anne Gradoville

Home Parish: Holy Trinity, Des Moines

“I grew up in a really good Catholic family,” said Dowling Catholic High School graduate Anne Gradoville. “We went to Mass, did all the right things.”

Attending Mass and participating in conferences and being a leader were things she enjoyed.

“But it was often success oriented,” added Gradoville, who likes to compete and win. “The personal side was missing.”

After graduating from Dowling Catholic, she attended the University of Northern Iowa and played golf at the collegiate level.

“I knew going to college I wanted to be involved in the Newman Center, but I was also living a separate life with athlet-

ics,” Gradoville said. “I was in a Bible study, yet super immersed in athletic culture and living this double standard, this double life.”

When she was a junior, four FOCUS missionaries arrived at UNI.

“FOCUS came and radically transformed our campus and transformed my life,” Gradoville said. “I became friends with the missionaries – one played a sport. I didn’t realize I could combine my sport and faith.”

She agreed to start a Bible study for athletes, but was concerned that no one would come. While attending a FOCUS winter conference, she came to the realization that a prayer relationship with God has to come first.

“I basically just had a radical realization that I wasn’t praying very consistently,” Gradoville said. “And so I asked the female missionary to walk with me.”

Gradoville learned how to pray and grow in intimacy with the Lord. Today, he takes center stage in her life.

Before graduating college she felt called to become a FOCUS missionary, and now serves at The Ohio State University.

“My favorite part of being a FOCUS missionary so far has been being able to run towards holiness with the students and my teammates,” Gradoville concluded. “It has been beautiful to witness transformation and



Anne Gradoville

growth in my own life, along with the lives of so many of the girls I spend time with.”

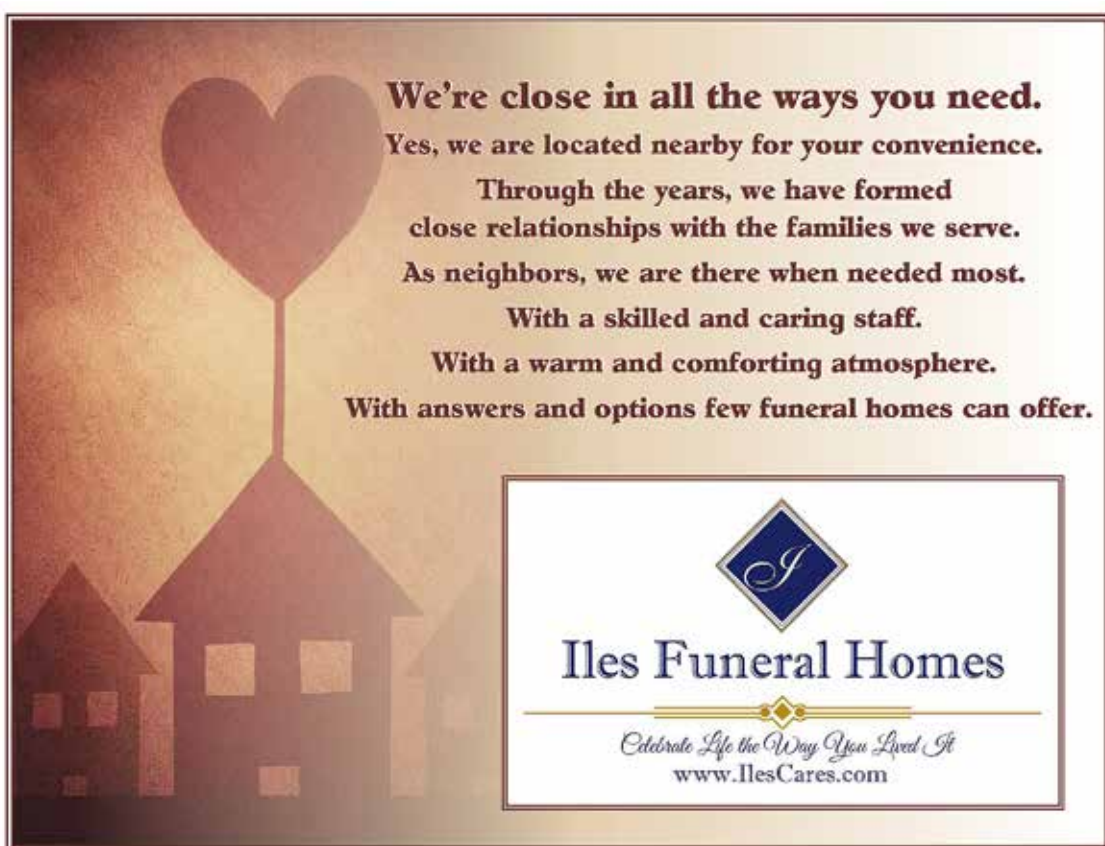
The next Young Catholic Network gathering is Tuesday, March 9, at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Des Moines. Socializing at 6 p.m., presentation at 7 p.m. Come hear Dr. Jon Thompson, deputy state medical examiner, and Dr. Ramona Thompson, MercyOne pathologist, as they speak on the topic of “Faith, Family, Forensics, and Frenzies.”

Community grieves, prays following shooting




Photo by Mayra Moriel de Banuelos

Deacon Randy Kiel led a bilingual rosary and prayer vigil Saturday, March 12, at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Des Moines for all those affected by the fatal shooting at East High School.



We're close in all the ways you need.
 Yes, we are located nearby for your convenience.
 Through the years, we have formed close relationships with the families we serve.
 As neighbors, we are there when needed most.
 With a skilled and caring staff.
 With a warm and comforting atmosphere.
 With answers and options few funeral homes can offer.



Iles Funeral Homes

Celebrate Life the Way You Lived It
www.IlesCares.com

PULSE
 life ADVOCATES

FREE ONLINE WEBINAR



“The Holy Family”
 The ‘Soul’ Solution For a Wounded World

FEATURING:
 Bishop William Joensen, Msgr. Frank Chiodo,
 Bill Donaghy, Dr. Ray Guarendi, Joe Stopulos
 Maggie DeWitte, Tom Quiner

LEARN MORE / REGISTER TODAY:
www.pulseforlife.org

Pray with us

For the last year, Bishop William Joensen and the Diocese of Des Moines have been praying to renew Eucharistic faith and worship among God’s people and to ask the Holy Spirit for inspiration and guidance for the Diocese of Des Moines.

As a strategic visioning process continues, Bishop Joensen invites everyone to join him in praying that we will fulfill our share of God’s mission in Southwest Iowa, so that every person might encounter Jesus Christ and experience his call to friendship and communion.

Diocese of Des Moines Visioning Prayer

O God, you share with your people, your church, the mission to be the saving love of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

As a people of faith in southwest Iowa, send the Holy Spirit to ignite in us:

Sincere conversion to see, hear, think and act as Jesus;

Greater unity and bonds of peace;

Missionary zeal to spread good news that will spark a world aflame with love;

Genuine care for each other, especially those feeling lost or left out; and

Willingness to bear together the yoke that Christ makes light.

May our strategic visioning in the Diocese of Des Moines make us ever more focused, discerning, and free to fulfill our calling as a people made whole by the Heart of your Beloved Son.

Accompany us along the Way that leads to heaven, surrounded by Holy Mary, Joseph, and all the saints with whom we hope to dwell forever in communion with you,

+Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen



Diócesis de Des Moines Oración de Visión

Oh Dios, tú compartes con tu pueblo, tu Iglesia, la misión de ser el amor salvador de tu Hijo y nuestro Salvador, Jesucristo.

Como un pueblo de fe en el suroeste de Iowa, envía al Espíritu Santo para que encienda en nosotros:

una sincera conversión para ver, oír, pensar y actuar como Jesús;

una mayor unidad y lazos de paz;

un afán misionero para compartir la buena nueva encendiendo al mundo con amor;

un genuino cariño unos con los otros, especialmente con aquellos que se sienten perdidos o excluidos; y

el deseo de cargar juntos con el yugo que se hace ligero con Cristo.

Que nuestra visión estratégica en la Diócesis de Des Moines nos haga aún más enfocados, discernientes y libres para cumplir con nuestro llamado como pueblo que encuentra plenitud por el Corazón de tu Amado Hijo.

Acompáñanos en el Camino que nos lleva al cielo, rodeados de la María Santísima, José y todos los santos con quienes esperamos habitar por siempre en comunión contigo,

+Padre, Hijo, y Espíritu Santo. Amén.



Ash Wednesday brings in Lent



Father Paul Monahan distributes ashes to Father Seth Owusu, of St. Mary Parish in Avoca, at Risen Son Christian Village.

Strategic visioning process

Continued from page 1

“We are all many parts but one body. Our ethnic perspective and our physical geography do make a difference in what is important to us,” he said. “We have to listen to everyone.”

Maria Matamoros, a co-chair of the Steering Committee, pondered how the Diocese can assist parishes in supporting a stronger and more personal connection to God.

“We need to start with the connection to God, finding that personal relationship with Jesus,” she said. “To build a relationship with someone, you have to first get to know them, inspiring a thirst for knowledge of God through intentional and meaningful evangelization efforts.”

Steering Committee member Jennifer Simmons, principal of St. Malachy School in Creston, is grateful the Diocese conducted the survey as part of its research.

“I thought they did a nice job making sure the views of the people spending time in the pews every week were heard, but I also feel they did a great job trying to reach out to those who have fallen away from the church,” she said. “I worked hard to find those who had fallen way from the Church and encouraged them to take the survey. I want their voices heard.”

As the Steering Commit-

tee and Bishop Joensen interpret what the Holy Spirit is disclosing in the data and interviews, the Diocese will need to think boldly and creatively, Ebener said.

During March, the Steering Committee and Bishop Joensen will continue to discern the top themes and identify strategies for moving forward.

The Steering Committee will provide final recommendations to Bishop Joensen in April. From there, diocesan staff will begin strategic planning to determine what action steps need to be adopted to make the vision a reality in the next three to five years.

“I truly believe the Holy Spirit is working through this committee and all who have participated in the process. The exciting part is where it’s going to take us,” said Matamoros.

“This is the perfect time to do this,” Kinsella said. “I think if we execute this properly and follow the Holy Spirit, it will lead us to places that are better than any place else we could be.”

Matamoros hopes the faithful are as excited as the Steering Committee is about their role in future plans.

“I hope people read this [account] and think, ‘Wow, sounds like great things are coming to the Diocese and our parishes, and each one of us will get to be a part of it,’” she said.

Special Invitation to All Fun Loving Catholics!

Join us at this unique event produced by the Iowa Catholic Radio Foundation to benefit Iowa Catholic Radio Network.

BENEFITING THE IOWA CATHOLIC RADIO FOUNDATION

CELEBRATE COUNTRY CONCERT

JULY 24 at 7pm

IOWA EVENTS CENTER MAIN BALLROOM
Opening performance by Allie Colleen
celebratecountry.org

Iowa Catholic Radio Network

IOWA CATHOLIC RADIO FOUNDATION
Des Moines, IA

You can participate in one of three ways:

- ~ Be a VIP: Enjoy pre concert festivities and great seats
- ~ Be a Sponsor: Your company will enjoy a special benefits package based on three option levels to choose from
- ~ Be a Guest: Purchase general admission tickets early to get the good seats

For more information, place your phone camera on this QR code to visit our website, celebratecountry.org or contact Belle@iowacatholicradio.com.

© Iowa Catholic Radio Foundation 2022

Jesus, I Trust In You

Diocese of Des Moines Celebrates

Divine Mercy Sunday

April 24th

Christ the King Catholic Church

5711 SW 9th Street

divinemercydesmoines.com

Confessions 2-3 pm * Divine Mercy Chaplet 3 pm *** Mass celebrated by Bishop Joensen 3:30 pm**
Sign language interpretation at Mass Reception to follow Mass

"I desire that the whole world know My infinite mercy. I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in My mercy." (Diary 687)

Welcome

The Catholic Church warmly welcomes all those who will come into full communion with the Church at the Easter Vigil.

Family took a deep dive into the Catholic Church and liked what they found

Justin Williams grew up a Jehovah's Witness until his teenage years, when his parents divorced and he turned his back on organized religion.

But something tugged at him to learn more about faith and God. He studied comparative religions in college and considered himself a Buddhist for a time.

He met his wife, Nicole, who also wasn't in a faith tradition, but who wanted to forge a connection to God and a church.

They moved frequently and, with three boys, it was hard to find time to settle into a church community. Justin kept his fingers in faith, though, through long conversations with friends who are faith-filled people.

"I consider myself a seeker of knowledge but I feel very spiritual and very in touch with maybe more the mystic

sides of things," he said. "I always felt a calling to pursue that more. I guess the influence of my very, very good friends linked up with somewhat of a personal experience. I tried meditating and praying for the first time in a very, very long time and I had a miracle of an experience. It was very clear to me that I needed to explore a relationship with God more."

When the pandemic began, the couple decided to move their children to a Catholic school and chose St. Francis of Assisi in West Des Moines.

Justin and Nicole decided to go to Mass at St. Francis.

"St. Francis is a good place with good values, surrounded with like-minded individuals and part of a good community," he added. "We took a deeper dive and found a lot of positivity and

welcomes. I didn't know what to expect, but people were nice and they were not pushy."

The couple's children were learning about faith in school, and Justin and Nicole start the RCIA process.

"I just love going to church," Nicole said. "It makes me feel good. It helps me to be a better person."

An incident last New Year's Eve highlighted for Nicole how much the family was beginning to rely on faith.

They decided to spend New Year's Eve at the Mall of America. A shooting occurred, and they were separated with Justin and the toddler in one area and Nicole and their boys, ages 10 and 7, huddled with others in a store.

"I could see their stress start to rise up and I said, 'Boys, let's pray.' It was interesting because neither of my boys even hesitated for a second because they'd been going to Catholic school now," said Nicole.

"We got down on our knees in a super crowded store and started praying. We prayed out loud. It wasn't weird and it wasn't awkward and we really got peace from it," she said. "When we were done, we felt better. A year ago, we would never have done that. We would have



just sat there scared."

The faith they found in the midst of the chaos brought them security and peace.

The RCIA has been a win for Justin and Nicole.

"I like coming together and studying and learning," he said. He appreciated Father Ray McHenry sharing the symbolism and history of the faith, and Father John Brobbey's presence.

"Father Brobbey is a really spectacular person," Justin

said. "I like his energy and his approach, and you can tell he's a man of conviction and has a lot of joy to share."

As the family prepares to enter the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil, they take comfort in the faith.

"It feels good," said Nicole. "I'm giving (the boys) something that will last the rest of their lives."



LENTEN FISH FRY

SS John and Paul Parish
1401 First Ave. S, Altoona

Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus

- Dates:** Feb. 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8
Time: 4:30-7:00 p.m.
Cost: Dine in and carry out is \$13 for adults; \$6 for children (ages 6-12); free for children 5 and under.
Cost for drive thru: suggested \$11 free will offering
Menu: Fried and baked fish, baked potato, green beans, coleslaw, mac & cheese, cheese pizza.

How does one become Catholic?

Each year, parishes welcome new Catholics through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, also known as the RCIA program. Those who have not been baptized into a Christian tradition are known as catechumens. Those who have already been baptized and seek full communion with the Catholic Church by receiving confirmation and Eucharist are called candidates.



the
Bash
ON BUFFALO

Saturday
April 9th

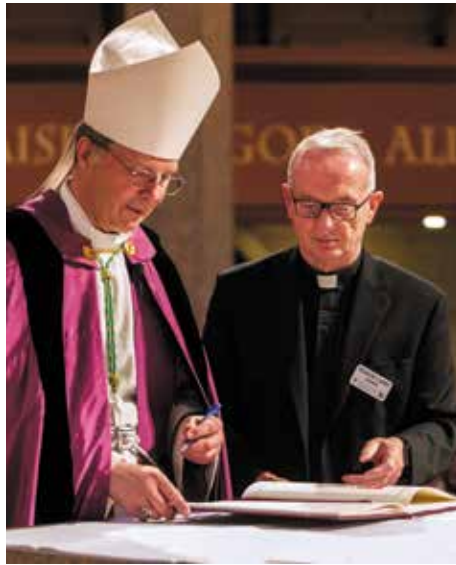
LIVE & SILENT AUCTION - MOBILE BIDDING
\$5,000 RAFFLE DRAWING

Visit dowlingcatholic.org/events or call
Carolyn at 515.222.1095 for more information.

Rite of Election welcomes candidates, catechumens



Bishop William Joensen greets Cesar Martinez of Our Lady of the Americas Parish.



Bishop Joensen signs the Book of the Elect with St. Anthony Deacon Larry Kehoe.



Sacred Heart parishioners celebrate after the Rite of Election at St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines.
Photos by Rev. Jim Kirby

Man's "ah-ha" moment changed trajectory of his life

Deep inside Brad Floden, there has always been a connection to God.

But alcohol clouded his judgment and he strayed from faith.

Baptized and raised Presbyterian, his parents divorced when he was young. During summer visits to see his father, he became acquainted with the Church of Christ.

During his 20s and 30s, alcohol kept him from "firing on all cylinders" and something always seemed to take precedent over going to church, he said. He was spiritual and saw God in nature, but didn't practice any particular faith tradition.

Over time, he eased back into religion.

About 15 years ago, friends took him to a Lutheran church.

"I kind of enjoyed it. I felt moved every time I was there.

I went more frequently than not," he said. "I felt it was something I could identify with. It was so uplifting."

About six years ago, he began dating an Irish Catholic girl who took him to Mass. He felt lost, not knowing the ritual, the prayers and what was happening. He would attend Mass with her while still going to his Lutheran church.

It was the summer of 2019 when he had his "ah-ha" moment.

"I quit drinking one day. I almost had an epiphany and thought: This isn't the way I want to live my life anymore. I quit cold turkey," he said.

Diagnosed with heart failure, his priorities changed.

"I started talking to my girlfriend's mother, who is very deep in her faith," he said. He realized he was becoming more drawn to the Catholic tradition

rather than his church.

"So I started going to Mass more regularly, not just Easter and Christmas anymore. Then, not clouding my mind with alcohol, I really started to focus on the

"I need this. I feel like I have just grown so much that it makes me want more."

Brad Floden

message and I'm really learning things," Floden said.

He wanted to learn more about the Rite of Christian Initiation, but he also wanted to make sure he would be committed once he made a decision to become Catholic.

"I tried a million times to quit drinking, to settle down, to find a closer relationship with

God that went beyond my personal spirituality but more of a structured relationship with God, being involved. Belonging. I really started to see that going to St. Pius," he said.

"It took me a couple of years inquiring about it. Then last fall, I really felt like I was ready. I like what I'm seeing. I like what I'm hearing and I feel closer to God because I feel informed," he said.

Floden contacted RCIA director Mary Sue Lone. He was more concerned that the church would reject him.

"My big concern was that the Catholics wouldn't want me," he said. Lone explained that the RCIA process is more about his discernment about the Catholic Church rather than the other way around.

As the RCIA process progressed, he said he's fallen in love with the faith.



"I need this. I feel like I have just grown so much that it makes me want more," he said. "When I walk into Mass, the greeters know me by name and Father knows me by name and other parishioners know me by name. It's different from anything I've ever experienced."

Shared faith journey has been "absolutely amazing for us"

Jen McLeran called her husband, John, in the middle of the day after visiting a Catholic church.

"I've been hugged by God," she said with tears rolling down her face.

"I knew, right then, that's where we needed to be," said John.

Jen, who grew up Catholic, had married John, who did not grow up in a faith tradition but always believed in God. She fell away from practicing her faith, but in recent years had been longing to go back. She and her son, also named John, had been visiting churches, looking for the right fit.

"Even though we weren't practicing, she grew up that way and still believed," said her husband. "We have had a lot of conversations over the years about how much she believes in God."

John and Jen decided their 6-year-old daughter, Jaley, would attend a private school and, during a tour of St. Francis Catholic School in West Des Moines, Jen asked if she could see the church. It was at that visit to the church when Jen felt the strong embrace of God that led



her to tears of joy.

"I knew it was absolutely the place I wanted our daughter to go to school," Jen said and even more so that St. Francis was the parish she was longing for, missing and needing.

It was the visit for Jaley that moved the whole family.

"I dropped the check off for the deposit. I immediately went into the parish hall office, registered the family, and asked what I needed to do to get re-en-

gaged in the faith," Jen said. She inquired about the process for her and Jaley and options for her husband and son. She then took the material provided by the parish office and discussed it with the family.

She went to reconciliation, and Jaley was baptized this past December.

John said if his daughter was going to be Catholic, he would, too.

"Family is important and very meaningful and so is family support. The older I've gotten, the more heartfelt that has become, and the more seriously I take it. Time is precious, we need to make the most of it," he said. He made the decision to join the RCIA program.

Son John independently decided to join his father in the RCIA process to become Catholic. Together, they will be baptized, confirmed and receive the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

"We figured as a family it would be a good idea to get into church, as we had already been discussing it," said the son. "What a better place to come than where my sister goes to school."

Once he went to St. Francis, he knew that was his

faith home.

"People were so accepting of us not knowing anything," he said of the open, friendly environment.

He's joining the Catholic Church for himself, but said it was nice to come into the faith with his family.

"I actually enjoy going to my class on Thursdays. I enjoy the people. I also enjoy how it's very well put together. It's just a really good feeling," he said.

Finding faith has changed the McLeran family.

"We never used to pray before dinner or meals. We pray at mealtimes now," said the father. "I also never used to make an effort to pray when waking up or going to bed. Those are things we do now, and we pray as a family. With our son being almost 19, to see him put forth the effort and make a choice for his faith journey and to be with us as a family, when he doesn't have to be but chooses to, is joyous. It's brought us together, and completely closer as a family. We share this journey now and beyond and we're sharing it together. It's been absolutely amazing for us."

Three St. Albert seniors earn top awards



Alex Gast



Joe Goltl



Allison Narmi

St. Albert Catholic School, in Council Bluffs, congratulates three seniors for earning prestigious awards from the Hawkeye Ten Conference.

Allison Narmi and Joe Goltl were two of only 22 seniors selected from the more than 1,400 in the conference to be named to the Hawkeye Ten Conference All-Academic Team. Seniors needed an ACT score of at least 29 to complete an application form. Selection to the team was based on academics, leadership, character and school/community service.

Alex Gast was one of 11 in the conference to receive the Hawkeye Ten Character Award. Selection was based on the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Each school could nominate only one senior.

The students will be honored at a banquet in Atlantic on April 6.

The Catholic Mirror is looking for story ideas from around the Diocese. If you have a suggestion, email us at communications@dmdiocese.org.

Director of Child & Family Faith Formation, St. Boniface Catholic Church, Waukee, Iowa

Do you have a passion for helping children and families grow in faith? Are you called to guide and support parents as they introduce Jesus to the kids in their lives?

St. Boniface is seeking a Director of Child & Family Faith Formation for our growing parish of 1,800 households. The position will plan, lead, implement, and evaluate formation programs for families with children ages PreK through 8th grade, as well as oversee family-based preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

This position will work collaboratively with other team members in the parish Evangelization & Faith Formation Office, as well as with all parish staff and our outreach ministry leaders.

The ideal candidate will have a depth of reflective spirituality, as well as proven experience inviting and forming parents and other adults as catechists and core team members. Must be a practicing Catholic, have a degree in Theology or certificate in religious education or Diocesan catechetical training/certification, or have experience in a related field with a minimum of three years coordinating parish child and family formation.

Desired start date is May 2022 or earlier. Full position description and application instructions are available at <https://stbonifacechurch.org/employment>



ST. BONIFACE
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Des Moines Catholic Region Schools formed from a position of strength

Continued from page 1

“St. Albert is in the strongest position that it has been in my 25 years here,” said Father Kottas. “President Rohling and her leadership team have brought St. Albert to new heights. St. Albert will be a good model for the Des Moines region to work with on the consolidation.”

Other pioneers in school regionalization include: Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, which formed in 1991; Holy Family Catholic Schools in Dubuque, which formed in 2001; and Green Bay Area Catholic Education, also known as GRACE, which formed in 2008.

Benefits of creating a school system address both the cost side of running the schools and the income side of helping families afford tuition.

Echoing Rohling, Kyle Groos, the president of Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, said: “If we didn’t have the school system, we would not have many Catholic schools in our city today.”

The system was created “at a time when you started looking around and you see Catholic schools competing against each other for students and outbidding for personnel,” he said. It was decided “if we’re going to keep Catholic schools open, we need to come together to leverage resources, use economy of scale.”

His advice: Be patient. “It’s a long journey, but the fruits of this will bear out.”

St. Francis Xavier Catholic School System in Appleton,

Wisconsin has seen a number of successes with its school system created in 2012, said President Philip Riley, Jr.

A central office handles budgeting, enrollment, technology and administrative tasks. Financially, a foundation benefits all the schools in the system. The school system’s annual gala brought in a record amount of fundraising dollars.

Like Rohling and Groos, Riley said: “I don’t think we would be where we are now had we not done that. Change is hard, but it’s good.”

Holy Family Schools in Dubuque, formed in 2001, regionalized to take advantage of economies of scale, said Brian Kane, chair of the board of education.

“I think it was the right direction,” he said.

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium has seen an increase in enrollment since it was launched in 2012 with 1,400 students. Today, it has 1,700 students.

Successes include a central office that handles common tuition, pay scales for staff, contracts and human resources for all schools, and more, said Executive Director Mike Goetz.

Des Moines Diocesan Schools Superintendent Donna Bishop served at the Omaha consortium prior to coming to Des Moines.

“I came as assistant superintendent and executive director of the consortium school immediately following the Meitler strategic plan to implement the reactive approach to try and save

schools by moving seven schools into five due to shrinking enrollment,” she said.

The centralization of business and best faith and education practices saw enrollment grow in the first two years.

“Enrollment increases occurred to the level of re-opening one of the schools that was closed. The consortium of schools became the pilot schools for best education practices that were then shared out to the other 49 elementary schools within the Archdiocese of Omaha,” she said.

The consortium schools provide an excellent education at the lowest per pupil cost among the 54 elementary schools, Bishop said.

“I am excited to see similar results with the Des Moines Region Catholic Schools from the proactive stance versus the reactive stance,” she said. “We must run our schools with successful business models in order to stay in the education business for generations to come.”

The Diocese of Des Moines has looked to school systems already set up to learn from them.

Dr. Jerry Deegan, who assisted with the strategic planning, said Des Moines is coming at the process from a position of strength.

“It was a blessing that the strategic planning process recommended the creation of the Des Moines region while our schools are still strong,” he said. “This collaborative work will help all of the schools going forward.”

Ryan to be president of diocesan school system

Continued from page 1

Joensen.

In a letter to Dowling Catholic High School parents, Ryan focused on a collaborative approach between the high school and the 11 elementary schools that will comprise the new school system.

“Much of the work in my current role is focused on advancing the mission of Dowling Catholic and planning for the future,” he said. “This requires a strategic approach and recognition of the shared mission and interconnectedness of all Catholic schools in Des Moines.”

The regional school model addresses efficiencies that can be found on the business side of running the schools. However,

the schools will remain diocesan schools. Faith formation and academics will remain in collaboration with the diocesan Catholic Schools Office, continuing with diocesan initiatives for best practices in education. They also will continue to follow the Diocese’s strategic plan in faith formation.

Ryan was named after a national search lead by diocesan Schools Superintendent Donna Bishop and Steve Lacy, former CEO and executive chairman of Meredith Corp.

Ryan, who is originally from St. Peter Parish in Council Bluffs and a graduate of St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs, served as superintendent of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Sioux City prior to com-

ing to the Des Moines area.

He and Des Moines Diocesan Schools Superintendent Donna Bishop, who led a consortium of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Omaha, had collaborated on improving education in a partnership between the Archdiocese of Omaha and the Diocese of Sioux City that established a preschool-12th grade model school between the two dioceses.

Bishop and Ryan also worked together to provide professional development for the Diocese of Sioux City administrators.

For more information on the Des Moines regional school plan, go to DSMRCSplan.org.

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.

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.

Ehm honored for “fantastic job” at Serra Club

Honored recently for his work with the statewide Serra Club is Bill Ehm, of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines.

Ehm was honored with the “Face of Serra” award at a recent U.S. Serra Council rally in Dallas. The award recognizes current and former district governors in U.S. Serra for exemplary performance of their duties in this leadership position.

“He did a fantastic job in this role, visiting all the clubs and encouraging them in their Serra work for vocations,” said Mike Downey, president-elect of the United States Serra Club.

Ehm served as district governor from about 2017 to 2021, when he retired. Susie Flood, mother of Father Reed Flood, took his place.

The Iowa district includes six Serra Clubs with a total of more than 320 members.



Bill Ehm, of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines, was recently honored for his work with the statewide Serra Club. Pictured with him (on left) is his wife, Rose Ann Shea, and Mike Downey, of St. John Parish in Adel. Downey is president-elect of the U.S. Council for Serra International.

Local man to serve Serra Club on a broader scale

Nineteen years ago, Mike Downey agreed to help former high school teacher and then diocesan Vocations Director Father John Acrea with marketing efforts to support priesthood and religious life.

“I decided I kind of liked this work,” he said.

Today, Downey is president-elect of the U.S. Council for Serra International. Beginning June 1, he’ll serve a two-year term as president of the largest and oldest of the 10 worldwide Serra Councils that foster and affirm priesthood and religious vocations. Through their work, members grow in their own holiness.

They do this through prayer, service and fellowship.

“It was the service side that impressed me when I worked with Father Acrea,” said Downey, a member of St. John Parish in

Adel.

Father said he needed 2,500 envelopes stuffed and the Serrans were there. Father needed help setting up tables and chairs, and serving pizza for sixth grade vocation days at schools. Serrans were there.

At one point, he remembers the administrative assistant for the diocesan Vocations director being out sick and Serrans answering the phone just to make sure, if a call came in, there was someone there to answer it.

Serrans also offer prayer opportunities and appreciation events for the priests, seminarians, sisters and the bishop.

“All the Masses, all the rosaries you pray, all the hours in adoration, you might not see the fruits of that for a year, a decade, or ever,” Downey said. “You just have to go on faith and do what you can to create a culture of vo-

ocations in a diocese so a call can be heard.”

Downey looks forward to using his gifts to help vocations to priesthood and religious life on a broader scale.

As president of United States Serra Club, he’ll be helping 7,500 members in 200 clubs across the country. There are about 12,500 Serra Club members worldwide.

The Serra Club is the only lay apostolate officially aggregated to the Vatican.



Contribute to the ADA today
at dmdiocese.org/giving

93rd Conference Des Moines Council of Catholic Women

Join us for

A VISION for the FUTURE

Saturday, April 2, 2022

REGISTRATION
& BREAKFAST

8:00 am

CONFERENCE

8:45 am–3:00 pm

St. Peter & Paul Parish Center
105 West 5th, Atlantic, Iowa

Maureen Hoffmann & Janette Howe
“The Power of One” & From the Seven
Sisters Apostolates

\$25
Registration

Mass with
Bishop William Joensen

For more information on our conference call
Connie at 712-623-2369 or Sandy 712-755-7371

www.desmoinesdccw.org



Director of High School Ministry,

St. Boniface Catholic Church,

Waukee, Iowa

Are you called to lead high school youth into a personal relationship with Jesus? Do you have the ability to connect with and accompany teens throughout their faith journey?

St. Boniface is seeking a full-time Director of High School Ministry for our growing parish of 1,800 households on the western edge of the Des Moines metro area.

The position is responsible for planning, implementing, overseeing and evaluating high school ministry (9th - 12th grade), which includes both a family-based Confirmation Program and formation of post-confirmation youth.

The ideal candidate will be a practicing Catholic and faithful to the Magisterium of the Church with a love for liturgy and the sacraments, as well as demonstrate a depth of reflective spirituality and a growing relationship with Christ.

Must have a Bachelors of Arts in Catholic Theology, Certificate in Religious Education, Diocesan Catechetical training/certification; or in a related field with three years of coordinating a high school ministry program.

Desired start date is May 2022 or earlier. Full position description and application instructions are available at <https://stbonifacechurch.org/employment>



ST. BONIFACE
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Join us for our Lenten Fry-Day Nights Fish Fry

Friday 5:00pm – 6:30pm

March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8

Adults: \$10; Children 4–10 years: \$3

Basilica of St. John

1915 University Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa
Call (515) 244-3101, ext. 0



Positions Open - St. John Parish, Adel

Business Manager - Full time: Administers the day-to-day business functions of the parish and provides support for special events and projects. Visit our website for full a job description at www.stjohnsadel.org. Please email a resume and cover letter to Rev. Remigius “Remi” Okere at okere.remi@gmail.com by March 31, 2022.

Secretary - Part-time: The parish secretary provides administrative and related office services to the parish staff, councils, committees, and parish members. Visit our website for full a job description at www.stjohnsadel.org. Please email a resume and cover letter to Rev. Remigius “Remi” Okere at okere.remi@gmail.com by March 31, 2022.

Spiritual house cleaning prepares us for new life

Later this month my wife is due with another child, and she's entered into the "nesting" phase of pregnancy, where all house cleaning takes on a new level of urgency.

We've lived in our home for eleven years, and so our closets have had plenty of time to build up clutter, and dust has been undisturbed for almost a generation in various hard to reach places. But in this eleventh hour, I've been told that it all needs to change, and now!

I'm trying to convince my wife that unfolded laundry will not in fact hinder the baby's arrival, but on some level I do understand her impulse, and I also find nesting particularly appropriate during Lent.

Marriage and Family Life

By Adam Storey



My family is preparing our house to welcome a new member, and Lent is about preparing our hearts for welcoming the Paschal Mystery, God's victory over death and invitation to new life. In Lent we ought to take steps to clear out the clutter of our hearts, and even take the time to address those "hard to reach" places in our hearts, like deep-seated habits, neglected wounds, and our venial sins that we so often

try to justify.

How do we enter into this spiritual "house cleaning"? The Church proposes to us prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Sometimes, I'm tempted to approach these practices as if they're meant to cause me suffering. As if Lent is a time to toughen up, so that we'll be worthy of Easter.

Instead, these practices are about purifying our hearts, helping us clean out the distractions in our spiritual lives so that we can more fully *receive* the gift that is offered at Easter. Our sacrifices during Lent are not about becoming stronger, or even more disciplined; they're about making space in our hearts so that we're truly free to receive all the good things that God wants to give us. Lent should be a joyful

work, and like all work in the spiritual life it's less about our effort, and more about what God is doing within us.

I tend to grumble a bit when cleaning out the closets of my home, but I know I'll be grateful when our new daughter arrives and I can focus on the gift of a sleeping baby in my arms. I hope we can all joyfully and fully embrace the gift of Lent, when we undertake spiritual "house cleaning" so that we can receive the gift of new life at Easter!

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

Gone are the days of "crazy"

Are the days of referring to people as crazy truly gone?

For real?

Somewhat, but not so long ago "gone" that we cannot touch the history of this word through the stigmatism against those suffering from a mental health condition.

Crazy!

What a painful word this has been for so many people.

Psychologically, it is a word that no longer exists nor was it ever a viable condition.

Yet, why do words such as this exist, even to this day?

We came by the struggle of stigmatizing people who experience psychological issues quite naturally when mental health became the "business of institutionalization" in the mid-1800s.

Consider the following: In America, the last mental, "insane", asylum to close was in 1994. It was built to house 250 patients and during its heyday it housed over 2,600 patients. A New York asylum housed as many as 13,500 at one time giving it the title of the world's largest mental asylum. At one point in the 1950s, more than half a million people were institutionalized at one time, many for life.

So, what has happened to the

Let's Get Psyched

By Deacon Randy Kiel



word "crazy?"

It still is a frequently used word in our vocabulary. "That's crazy!" or "I'm having a crazy hair day!" At our times of being overwhelmed with emotion, one can think "I'm about to go crazy!" These are most often "bad" days due to the intensity of stress and emotion, not related to mental illness.

So why was it that so many were institutionalized with diagnoses of crazy or insane? Mostly because we were so young in the knowledge of psychiatry. As we reflect on this history, sadly we see that most were hospitalized for depression, anxiety, reactions to trauma, addiction, and grief. Now, with the help of medications and various therapeutic options, the numbers of people needing hospitalization have been greatly reduced. When hospitalization is needed, it is not because someone is crazy.

Verses from the song, "Gee, Officer

Krupke" from the musical "West Side Story", depict this historic yet current tension of stigmatism as well:

Officer Krupke, you're really a square.

This boy don't need a judge, he needs an analyst's care!

It's just his neurosis that oughta be curbed.

He's psychologically disturbed! Gee, Officer Krupke, we're very upset;

We never had the love that ev'ry child oughta get.

We ain't no delinquents, we're misunderstood.

Deep down inside us there is good!

The struggle for these young men, known in this musical as hoodlums, is to figure out if they were psychologically disturbed or somehow yet of any good. This song epitomizes the tension of stigmatized identity.

One of our founding Church fathers, St. Justin Martyr, taught us that deep down inside of all of us there is good. He gave us a new term to help us know that we are fundamentally good, not corrupt. The term is called *logos spermatikos*.

This theology is taught by our

Catholic Church. It is a Greek phrase which means that deep down inside of every person lives a seed of the Divine Word of God. It came from God's having breathed his very own nature inside of us at the creation of man. It is thus our responsibility, as Catholics, to bear this witness unto others in all we do.

With today's understanding of mental health, it is evident that the continual need to release stigmas of mental health from a person's character as some sign of weakness. Through the spirit of *logos spermatikos*, may we see that strong people can experience depression, secure people can have anxiety, well-motivated people can develop an addiction, and those who are grieved are profoundly sad.

May we continuously remain aware that the human is not able to be perfect, but in this earthly life we are all wounded. And with those wounds, we are granted the daily opportunity to follow our most perfectly wounded Savior. So, we pray,

"O God, come to my assistance."
"Lord, make haste to help me."

Deacon Randy Kiel is the founder of Kardia Counseling and serves Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines. To connect with him, email randy@kardiacounseling.com.

Freedom to serve: Religious liberty

Nina Rosenstand, in her book *The Human Condition*, contends that, among other characterizations, the human person can also be characterized as the story-telling animal.

Rosenstand elucidates her argument by citing historical evidence as well as a natural anthropological need in the human person to communicate by speech, written words, signs, drawings, etc. always in the form of stories.

God, of course, is the author of the greatest love story in all of creation: the story of love, fall, and redemption.

Our story began in a beautiful garden created out of love just for us. Alas, temptation entered: "Take and eat," the serpent said to the woman, "for you surely will not die." (Gen. 3:4)

The woman and the man then consumed from the forbidden tree and their eyes were opened to find shame in their bodies where there should have been no shame.

But the author of our story is Mer-

Guest Column

By John Huynh



cy and Love. The disastrous consequence of 'the fall' which reduced humanity to bleak nihilism was eradicated a little more than 2,000 years later, when the Word became incarnate in the person of Christ Jesus and was hung on the cross.

Even to this day, the serpent still says to you and to me, "Take and eat! For surely you will not die."

The evil one continues in trying to convince us as if to say: "The fruit that you are eating will allow you to feel good, do what makes you happy, and you will do all of this in the name of freedom and choice,"

And so do we blame that serpent

for blockading our road to God?

Of course we can, but we have to also remember that we are also very much responsible for the actual blockade itself since we are quick to deny our own faults and failures.

We gladly eat from the tree, but we are also very glad to point to the serpent and accuse him for giving the fruits to us—like our first parents.

We need to, instead and especially during this Lenten season, acknowledge that we've eaten from the tree and point a finger at ourselves and admit: my most grievous fault!

It is only when we can say this that we can come to the table where Christ tells us, 'take and eat, for this is my body given for you...and blood which would be shed for you.' (Lk 22:19-20)

Sure the fruit from the tree may seem to taste better, but it neither nourishes the body nor the soul the way Christ's body and blood does. The fruit of the tree will demand nothing of us; if anything, it

encourages us to maintain a steadfastness to our own 'this is my body, and I can and will do anything with it I wish—even to destroying it.'

The flesh of Christ will demand much of and from us, even our very own lives. It forces us to recognize that 'this is my body, and it will be given up for you!'

Yes, the flesh of Christ is harder to consume, but as Jesus reminds us, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Mt 7:13-14) May we be a Lenten people who feasts at the Eucharistic Table and not the Tree of Knowledge.

John Huynh is the diocesan director of the Faith Journey program. He can be reached at jhuynh@dmdiocese.org or at 515-237-5006.

Religious freedom symposium shares insights

Freedom of religion is the first freedom listed in the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution.

However, as society has become more secularized, religious liberty has become imperiled.

Burdens are sometimes placed on religious institutions and individuals that limit their full participation in the public square while remaining faithful to their religious convictions.

This was most apparent as our country attempted to navigate the pan-

Food for the Journey

By John Huynh

dem. For instance, in some states casinos were allowed to reopen while churchgoers were told they couldn't all worship together.

These were clear not impartial decisions and they are especially true for religious traditions which are in the minority category, whose convictions are not always

part of the mainstream culture.

Hoping to shed light and encourage conversation on this matter, we are hosting a free symposium at the Sussman Theater at Drake University called "Freedom To Serve: Why Religion Is Vital in a Pluralistic Society," on Tuesday, April 19. The event is co-sponsored by the Diocese of Des Moines, along with local congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the organizers of Iowa Religious Freedom Day, and Drake Bulldog Catholic.

A limited number of seats are available but you can sign up at iafree.domsoserve.eventbrite.com.

This will be a great opportunity to gain some vital insights on this essential freedom from academics, faith leaders, students, and each other in the interactive afternoon sessions and evening panel dis-

cussion.

Our freedom to worship God and to follow the dictates of our conscience is paramount in order to achieve human flourishing.

When this freedom is endangered, other kinds of freedom will necessarily follow.

Religious liberty enriches our conversation on important public issues. Pray for our Church and political leaders that together we can find a solution that respects our respective roles in society!

We hope to see you at Drake University on April 19.

John Huynh is the diocesan director of the Faith Journey program. He can be reached at jhuynh@dmdiocese.org or at 515-237-5006.

The best farewell gift

Father Ron Rolheiser



In his farewell speech in John's Gospel, Jesus tells us that he is going away but that he will leave us a parting gift, the gift of his peace, and that we will experience this gift in the spirit he leaves behind.

How does this work? How do we leave peace and a spirit behind us as we go?

This is not something abstract, but something we experience (perhaps only unconsciously) all the time in all our relationships. It works this way. Each of us brings a certain energy into every relationship we have, and when we walk into a room, that energy in some way affects what everyone else in the room is feeling. Moreover, it will stay with them after we leave. We leave a spirit behind us.

For example, if I enter a room and my person and presence radiate positive energy: trust, stability, gratitude, concern for others, joy in living, wit, and humor, that energy will affect everyone in the room and will remain with them after I have left the room, as the spirit that I leave behind. Conversely, even though my words might try to say the contrary, if my person and presence radiate negative energy: anger, jealousy, bitterness, lying, or chaos, everyone will sense that, and that negative energy will remain with them after I leave, coloring everything I have left behind.

Sigmund Freud once suggested that we understand things the clearest when we see them broken, and that is true here. We see this writ large, for instance, in the case of how a long-term alcoholic parent affects his children. Despite trying not to do so, he will invariably bring a certain instability, distrust, and chaos into his family, and it will stay there after he is gone, as the spirit he leaves behind, short-term and long-term. His person and his presence will trigger a feeling of distrust and chaos, and the memory of him will do the same.

The same is true in reverse vis-à-vis those who bring positive energy, stability and trust, into a room. Unfortunately, often at the time, we do not sense the real gift that these persons bring and what that gift does for us. Mostly it is felt as an unspoken energy, not consciously perceived, and only later in our lives (often long after the persons who did that for us are gone) do we recognize and consciously appreciate what their presence did for us. This is true for me

when I think back on the safety and stability of the home that my parents provided for me. As child, I sometimes longed for more exciting parents and naively felt safety and stability more as boredom than as a gift. Years later, long after I had left home and learned from others how starved they were as kids for safety and stability, I recognized the great gift my parents had given me. Whatever their human shortcomings, they provided my siblings and me with a stable and safe place within which to grow up. They died while we were still young, but they left us the gift of peace. I suspect the same is true for many of you.

This dynamic (wherein we bring either stability or chaos into a room) is something which daily colors every relationship we have, and is particularly true regarding the spirit we will leave behind us when we die. Death clarifies things, washes things clean, especially regarding how we are remembered and how our legacy affects our loved ones. When someone close to us dies, our relationship to him or her will eventually wash clean and we will know exactly the gift or burden that he or she was in our lives. It may take some time, perhaps months, perhaps years, but we will eventually receive the spirit he or she left behind with clarity and know it as gift or burden.

And so, we need to take seriously the fact that our lives belong not just to us but also to others. Likewise, our deaths do not belong only to us, but also to our families, our loved ones, and the world. We are meant to give both our lives and our deaths to others as gift. If this is true, then our dying is something that will impart either a gift or a burden to those who know us.

To paraphrase Henri Nouwen, if we die with guilt, shame, anger, or bitterness, all of that becomes part of the spirit we leave behind, binding and burdening the lives of our family and friends. Conversely, our dying can be our final gift to them. If we die without anger, reconciled, thankful for those around us, at peace with things, without recrimination and making others feel guilty, our going away will be a sadness but not a binding and a burdening. Then the spirit we leave behind, our real legacy, will continue to nourish others with the same warm energy we used to bring into a room.

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



I've Been Wondering...

Father John Ludwig

(These questions are from the seventh grade class of Holly Cleghorn at St. Francis of Assisi School in West Des Moines.)

Q. How do we know we will get to heaven? What if you die unexpectedly and your spirit is not clean? Do you go straight to hell? Is there anything that makes you go straight to heaven or straight to hell? If you go to hell, can you ever get out? If you go to heaven, can you get sent down to hell? What is heaven like? This might be bad to say, but what if there is no heaven? -SO

A. WE DON'T KNOW. God is a God of surprises. God knows that we make mistakes, that we can be thoughtless, that we can do awful things. But God also knows that our lives are not made up of only our bad actions. Our existence isn't all good or all bad. We are a combination.

When we die, we don't know how things will be. Even so, we believe that God is good, compassionate, and loving.

We think of heaven and hell as physical places. But even St. John Paul wrote that heaven is not a physical place. It's hard, maybe impossible, for us to think of heaven in only spiritual ways.

What is heaven like? Well, we'll have to wait to find out. What if there is no heaven? Well, we're better off speaking and acting as though there is. Our lives and the lives of others will be much better if we live that way. I believe that God has wonderful things in store for us.

(These questions are from the class of Mr. Dan Nieland at Sacred Heart School in West Des Moines.)

Q. I have been wondering why did God give us the ten commandments? - Amelia Howard

A. THE COMMANDMENTS are intended to give us some guidance in our lives. God wants us to live peaceably with our neighbors and even with our enemies. Following them will help us to do that.

Q. How many saints are there in total? - Carlos Garcia

A. GOOD QUESTION. Lots of saints – most of them never canonized. What really matters is that we have their witness of faith that can help us to become saints ourselves.

Q. Why are there different types or versions of Mary? - Scarlett Ramirez

A. Mary was a common name at the time of Jesus, just as it is for us today. Several people named Mary are referenced in

the New Testament, but the one we venerate is Mary the mother of Jesus.

Q. What is the most important corporal work of mercy? Saray Martinez

A. I THINK THAT ALL of them are important. We should try to live up to all of them rather than choosing one and ignoring the others. The spiritual works of mercy are also something we can try to live. Pope Francis declared a whole year of mercy some time back. If we live lives of mercy and compassion, we will have fulfilled the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Q. Do we know for sure what Jesus looked like? - Maureade Lawler

A. NO. IT WOULD BE nice to know, but we don't know. Over the centuries, lots of artists have done paintings and sculptures to represent Jesus, so that will have to suffice for us.

Q. In Mass why do we sing after the first reading? - Kennedy Klein

A. MUSIC HAS LONG been an important part of our liturgical practice. Some of it is instrumental; and some of it is vocal. We sing the Psalm Response both to praise God in song and to give a pause between the two readings. Also, we sing a Gospel acclamation ("Alleluia" or "Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ") before the Gospel is proclaimed.

Q. What is going to happen to the people that have never heard of Jesus? - Addisyn Ross

A. WELL, WE WOULDN'T know about Jesus unless someone else told us about him. That's been going on for two thousand years. Missionaries in particular take the Gospel to places that haven't heard of Jesus. We all can be missionaries in our own day. Sharing the love and compassion of Jesus is the best way. We can do that every day. As for those who haven't heard of Jesus, we believe that God's goodness is given to them too.

Q. Were people happy or sad when Jesus was born? - Haley Petersen

A. WE CAN BE SURE that Mary and Joseph were more than happy. Today, all of us are happy that Jesus was born into our world. About other people at the time when Jesus was just a toddler, we simply don't know.

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

Charitable giving provides tax benefits

By Jeanne Wells Thill
Contributing Writer

Once upon a time, many charitable gifts were linked with the benefit to the deduction of taxes as much as the benefit of the dollars contributed to the charity.

Regardless of the motivation of the donor, the recipients of the program, scholarship or food pantry initiatives recognize with gratitude the financial gifts of the donor and the direct impact on their spiritual or educational growth, and the welfare of their family.

Tax benefits are still tax benefits; and whether a tax deduction or a tax credit, the contribution from the donor benefits many

others far beyond the tax benefits received.

The best charitable contribution, in terms of tax benefits, is to the Catholic Tuition Organization. A donor receives 75 percent of their contribution back in the form of tax credits reducing the total amount paid to the state at tax time. Some donors calculate their total Iowa tax liability, then donate to CTO and totally wipe out their Iowa tax liability.

"I'd rather support our Catholic school students than pay Iowa taxes," they say.

How does that work?

First, look at line 38 on your Iowa income tax return. If your income on line 38 is \$76,450, you will owe \$4,513 in Iowa taxes. Consider giving CTO \$6,000 and you will receive

\$4,500 in tax credits. Do the math: \$4,513 - \$4,500 = \$13! If you have already paid Iowa taxes through your regular paycheck, you will receive at least \$4,500 back.

Gifts of grain have their own additional tax benefits as do gifts of appreciated stock.

When you donate appreciated stock, you do not pay capital gains tax either. As always, ask your tax advisor about the benefits available to you when giving to the Catholic Tuition Organization.

Contributions to CTO provide tuition assistance to families who want to send their children to Catholic schools, and who just cannot afford to do so. For this current school year, \$3.2 million in tuition assistance was

provided to 2,000 students at our sixteen schools in the Diocese of Des Moines. Since the inception of CTO, total tuition assistance has been \$34.7 million!

"I am so grateful, I can't even put into words how grateful I am that my daughter goes to this Catholic school," said one mom.

"She's loved here. They are all a part of her family. That's what Jesus wants...for us all to be loved."

Jeanne Wells Thill is the executive director of the Catholic Tuition Organization.

Tríptico de Testimonios

Continued from page 1

que no nos paralicen el miedo y la desesperación porque "Dios ha salido del edificio" de un mundo al que los humanos parecen incapaces de manejar. En un breve orden, propongo tres fuentes de esperanza para mí personalmente – un "tríptico de testimonios" – que pueden fortalecer sus espíritus.

El primero es el pueblo mismo de Ucrania. Aunque millones han escapado, y continúan huyendo como refugiados del ardiente aliento de la bestia de oriente buscando razonablemente proteger a sus hijos, dependientes y a sí mismos, cuántos más han permanecido firmes e incluso han regresado para ayudar de cualquier forma que puedan. Los esfuerzos de asistencia, la convicción heroica que han mostrado el Presidente Zelensky y sus colegas, la resistencia popular en las calles y, más que nada, nos inspiran marcadamente la incesante fe de la gente y de sus líderes religiosos en estos días de oscuridad. La Iglesia Ucraniana Griega Católica, bajo el liderazgo de su pastor el Arzobispo Sviatoslav Shevchuk de Kyiv-Galicia, la Iglesia Ortodoxa Ucraniana y otros pastores cristianos, que han mostrado firmeza en la guía de sus rebaños a través del su valle de tinieblas, resistiendo la tentación de sucumbir al odio y a la dureza de corazón haciendo incesante oración por el enemigo y manteniendo encendida la lámpara de confianza plena en la provisión de Dios.

Me emociona el relato del Padre Mateusz, un sacerdote parroquial católico romano en Kyiv, quien junto a un grupo de aproximadamente 30 de sus parroquianos se ha mantenido en vigilia en adoración ante el Santísimo Sacramento en su refugio subterráneo antiaéreo. En contraste a la "habitación superior" en donde Cristo cenó con sus apóstoles, en esta "habitación inferior" el espacio se llena con el sentimiento intenso de la presencia de Dios. El Padre Mateusz relata la experiencia que sintió al orar ante Nuestro Señor Eucarístico: "Le dije al Señor, 'estoy listo para cualquier cosa, y te agradezco por toda mi vida'."

En comunión unos con otros, las personas fortalecen su creencia en que su Padre celestial desea el bien para ellos y que nos entregará a su Hijo, no un alacrán, en respuesta a sus incesantes oraciones. Ellos están, por raro que parezca, felices en el sentido que Jesús mencionó en la Bienaventuranza: "Bienaventurados los que lloran... los que son perse-

guidos por causa de la justicia." Si cada uno de nosotros puede decir a Dios, "estoy listo para cualquier cosa, y te agradezco por toda mi vida," cómo seríamos libres y cómo podríamos más los unos a los otros y a Jesús como emisarios de paz que ayudan a regresar a la violencia y a la maldad a su lugar.


El segundo testigo es San Óscar Romero, cuyo aniversario este 24 de marzo de su martirio en 1980 en San Salvador nos recuerda que solamente por medios pacíficos y por el poder de la proclamación de la palabra de Dios se pueden derrumbar los nefastos designios de los regímenes humanos para que el Reino de Dios siga brillando. A pesar de las presiones políticas que buscaron amordazarlo desconectando su mensaje semanal por radio y con amenazas contra su vida, el Arzobispo Romero no se dejó intimidar por las amenazas de terroristas y permaneció firme a su vocación hasta el final, para que su gente pudiera hacer lo mismo.

Meses antes de ser asesinado, este buen pastor recomendó a su rebaño: "El mejor micrófono para Cristo es la iglesia y la iglesia son todos ustedes. Que cada uno de ustedes, en su propio trabajo, en su propia vocación – religiosas, personas casadas, obispos, sacerdotes, estudiantes de preparatoria o universitarios, peones, asalariados, vendedoras del mercado – cada uno en su propio lugar viva la fe intensamente y haga que se sienta alrededor de ustedes son un verdadero micrófono de Dios nuestro Señor."

La sangre de Romero se mezcló con la propia sangre de Jesús cuando la bala de su asesino lo derribó mientras celebraba la Misa, magnificando el misterio que se representaba ante él: "Esta es la Eucaristía: proclamación de la muerte del Señor, proclamación de su vida, optimismo de hombres y mujeres que saben a quién están siguiendo, incluso en medio de la oscuridad y confusión de nuestra historia, la luz brillante de Cristo, vida eterna." Esta es la luz de vida por la que hoy hacemos oración para que brille incesantemente en el rostro de José David López ahora que se dirige a aguas tranquilas en compañía de Jesús y sus santos, tales como el Arzobispo Romero.

Finalmente, y aunque aún no es un santo oficialmente (!), recibo una inspiración personal con el ejemplo de mi tío quien es el hermano de mi mamá, Monseñor Ralph Simington de Waterloo, IA. Estuve presente para ayudar en la celebración del 60

Continued on page 15




CALDWELL PARRISH
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY

*Caldwell Parrish: Caring about your loss and your faith.
Des Moines' Only Catholic-Owned & Operated Funeral Home!*

You don't need to settle.
Funeral preferences change.

You are not obligated to fulfill your service with the funeral home where you purchased your pre-plan. If you have pre-planned with another funeral home and they are no longer what you have in mind, take comfort knowing that Caldwell Parrish honors all existing pre-arrangements. There's never a fee for the transition to our funeral home. Make an appointment today to discuss your options.



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

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

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

www.CaldwellParrish.com



Scotty McCreery
SAME TRUCK

American Idol winner and multi-platinum singer/songwriter

Scotty McCreery

LIVE! July 24th, 2022
at the Iowa Event Center Main Ballroom
Des Moines, IA

Scan the QR code to get your tickets now!

\$50 tickets available

CELEBRATE COUNTRY CONCERT 2022

celebratecountry.org





Education Celebration and more at the state capitol

By Tom Chapman
Contributing Writer

The next legislative deadline is this Friday. After the deadline only bills that have passed one chamber and a committee in the other chamber will be eligible for consideration. Appropriations and tax bill are not subject to the deadline.

BISHOPS AT THE CAPITOL

Bishops Thomas Zinkula of Davenport and William Jonsen of Des Moines visited the Capitol recently for meetings with legislative leaders and participants in the Education Celebration.

Among other issues, the bishops discussed their long-standing support for Education Savings Accounts as well as for the "Iowa MOMS" bill to provide additional support for pregnant and parenting moms.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Several hundred parents and students took part in the Education Celebration at the Capitol. You can check out some

photos on our Facebook page. The governor's Students First scholarship plan, House Study Bill 672, was passed by a House subcommittee the same day. The ICC supports the bill to help some parents afford tuition to a Catholic school.

In addition to many Iowans who spoke at the hearing, the subcommittee also heard from Walter Blanks, Jr. and Nathan Cunneen, the "School Choice Boyz" from the American Federation for Children. They are direct beneficiaries of school choice programs in Ohio and Florida, and travel around the country speaking on behalf of school choice.

LASTLY

This year's Iowa Prayer Rally for Life will be held at the state Capitol Monday, March 21. The rally will be in the rotunda at 1 p.m. We will be encouraging legislators to take action on the "Iowa MOMS" bill.



Tom Chapman

Cardinals go on mission of hope

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Two cardinals arrived at separate destinations on one mission entrusted to them by Pope Francis: to bring relief, hope and encouragement to suffering Ukrainians.

Polish Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, papal almoner, arrived in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv March 8 and met with Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki, head of the Latin-rite Archdiocese of Lviv.

Father Andriy Soletsky, a spokesman for Archbishop Shevchuk, told Catholic News Service March 9 that Archbishop Shevchuk traveled from Kyiv to Lviv the day before specifically to meet with Cardinal Krajewski and help him fulfill the mission Pope Francis had entrusted to

him. That may include helping the cardinal get to Kyiv "if possible," Father Soletsky said.

Lviv has not been shelled, "thanks be to God," Father Soletsky said, but the city in Western Ukraine is being overwhelmed with displaced people gathering there to try to find rides, trains or buses to Poland, Hungary or Romania. People are sleeping in line at the train station and every church has opened as a shelter.

But with Lviv's population having doubled in the past two weeks, he said, the ability to shelter and feed everyone is becoming critical.

Prior to his arrival in Ukraine, Cardinal Krajewski met with Caritas volunteers helping refugees in several Polish cities near the border with Ukraine.

According to the Polish Catholic weekly Gosc Niedziel-

ny, the Polish cardinal was asked by journalists if he was afraid of entering a war zone.

"I am afraid, as everyone is afraid, but I went to confession before leaving; I have no debts, I wrote a will," he said. "I go freely to bring the Gospel. I want to be with these people."

Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, interim president of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, arrived in Budapest, Hungary, March 8 and visited the Keleti train station where he met with Caritas volunteers and thanked them for their work.

The cardinal met March 9 with Zsolt Semjén, Hungary's deputy prime minister, who assured him Hungary would welcome all refugees from Ukraine "without limits."

Pope pleads for peace: 'Stop the massacre'

Continued from page 1

es the cities to cemeteries."

"With pain in my heart, I unite my voice to that of ordinary people who implore an end to the war," he said. "In the name of God, listen to the cry of those who are suffering and stop the bombings and attacks."

Negotiations to end the war must begin seriously, he said, and the humanitarian corridors

agreed upon to evacuate civilians and to bring basic necessities to people in besieged towns must be respected and secure.

With the U.N. Refugee Agency reporting March 13 that almost 2.7 million refugees had fled Ukraine since Feb. 24, Pope Francis thanked all the individuals and agencies in the neighboring countries who have welcomed them, and he encouraged continued generosity.

He also asked Catholic parishes and religious orders around the world "to increase moments of prayers for peace."

"God is the God only of peace, he is not the God of war," he said. "Those who support violence profane his name."

Pope Francis led the people in the square in a moment of silent prayer that God would "convert hearts to a firm desire for peace."

Tríptico de Testimonios

Continued from page 1

aniversario de la ordenación sacerdotal de mi Tío Ralph unos días antes de la fecha original, 17 de marzo, la cual parece ser la fecha ideal para este apóstol de la alegría y el gozo que revela sus orígenes irlandeses. Como compañero de clases del Padre John Acrea de nuestra diócesis y el Padre Frank Palmer, quienes también celebran sus Jubileos de 60 años como sacerdotes, mi Tío Ralph sirvió como consejero escolar para jóvenes, párroco de muchos años especialmente de parroquias rurales en donde fue muy querido, conocido como un confesor misericordioso quien escuchaba pacientemente y con sabiduría a tantos, incluyendo a sus sobrinos y sobrina. Estar en la presencia del Tío Ralph era estar siempre ante una inminente risa y un abrazo. Su propia humildad,

ahora que carga con su propia cruz de enfermedad física es el complemento de su testimonio como un fiel sacerdote para el pueblo de Dios, y una fuente de inspiración atractiva y humanitaria para futuros y presentes sacerdotes como lo es para mí. ¡Felicidades, Tío Ralph! ¡Bendiciones para los Padres John y Frank en su celebración de 60 años de servicio a nuestra Diócesis!

Juntos, el pueblo de Ucrania, San Oscar Romero y algunos sacerdotes cercanos y queridos para nosotros, son todos testigos que nos ayudan a mantener la esperanza de que en nuestros tiempos no nos estamos cayendo ultimadamente a la oscuridad y a la muerte, sino ascendiendo a donde el Señor de la historia y la eternidad está sentado a la derecha del Padre.

EXCEL MECHANICAL CO., INC.
AIR CONDITIONING • REFRIGERATION • HEATING
COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS • MED GAS • BUILDING AUTOMATION
CERTIFIED BACKFLOW TESTING • PLUMBING
www.excelmechanical.us
(515) 288-1450

HAMILTON LAW FIRM, P.C.
DES MOINES - STORM LAKE - SIOUX CITY
Established in 1876, we're one of Iowa's most experienced law firms.

Reactivate YOUR LIFE!
VERO NEUROPATHY CAN HELP YOU
get back to the life you deserve.

A unique clinical treatment- drug-free, non-surgical approach with the most advanced
NEUROPATHY PAIN RELIEF TECHNOLOGY!

515-644-VERO (8376)



DR. JOSIAH FITZSIMMONS
DC, BCN

Board Certified Doctor in Neuropathy by the American College of Physical Medicine

5525 Mills Civic Pkwy #120, West Des Moines

SCAN TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE!
VeroNeuropathy.com



EMBARK ON YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY WITH BROTHERS.



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*

Knights of Columbus are called to serve others. Our first principle is Charity. When Knights of Columbus come together they accomplish great things.

Walk with your brothers this Lent to follow Christ and change lives.



Walker Bormann
Assistant General Agent
563-219-5800
Eastern Iowa



Dan Ginther
515-460-3411
Carlisle, Altoona,
Elkhart and
Des Moines



Donnie Kenkel
712-579-9066
Council Bluffs, Atlantic,
Red Oak, Glenwood,
Avoca/Walnut,
Shenandoah &
Portsmouth



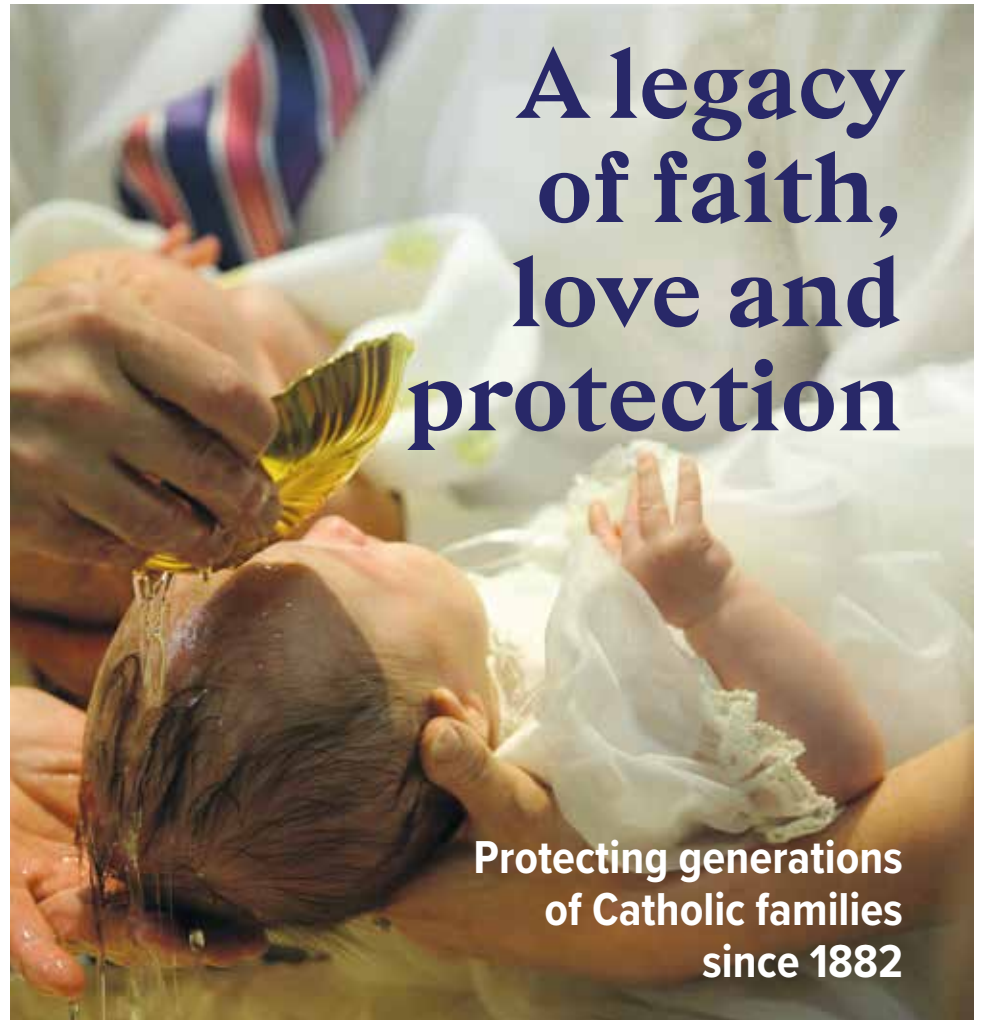
Rob Ryan
515-490-8753
WDM, St. Francis
& Sacred Heart,
Grimes, Clive,
Johnston & Ankeny



Pete Seuntjens
712-880-0044
Harlan, Earling,
Audubon, Dunlap
& Logan



Gregory Waddle
515-218-3550
All Saints,
St. Augustin,
St. Anthony's
and Christ the King



A legacy of faith, love and protection

Protecting generations of Catholic families since 1882

LIFE INSURANCE • DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE • LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE • RETIREMENT ANNUITIES



Neil Pfeifer
General Agent
Northeast Nebraska/
Western Iowa
402-379-0180
neil.pfeifer@kofc.org



Mike Bormann
General Agent
563-689-6801
michael.bormann@kofc.org

