

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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Pope: There is no justification for 'sacrilegious' war on Ukraine

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis again condemned Russia's war on Ukraine, calling it a "senseless massacre" and "sacrilegious" attack on human life.

"Sadly, the violent aggression against Ukraine does not stop, a senseless massacre where each day slaughter and atrocities are repeated," the pope said March 20 after reciting the mid-day Angelus prayer with visitors in St. Peter's Square.

"There is no justification for this!" he told an estimated 30,000 people who had come to the square to pray with him. Pope Francis once again urged international leaders to work together to put an end "to this repugnant war."

Since Russia invaded Ukraine Feb. 24, missiles and bombs have continued to fall "on civilians, the elderly, children and pregnant mothers," he said. "I went to see the wounded children here in Rome. One of them is missing an arm, the other has a head wound," he said. That happened to "innocent children."

The pope had gone March 19 to the Vatican-owned Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital where some 50 Ukrainian children had been cared for since the war began.

The hospital has been providing care for those injured in the war.

How we can help

There are two ways to help the people of Eastern Europe/Ukraine.

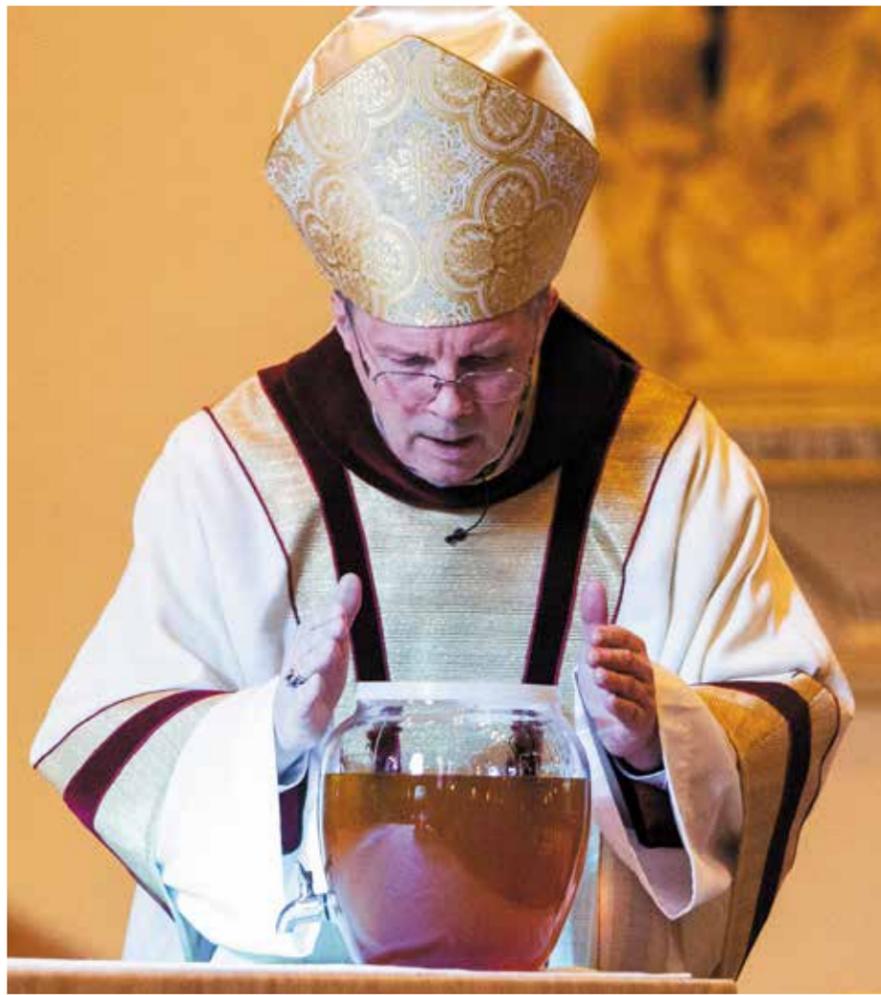
Pray for peace in Ukraine and for the millions of refugees and displaced persons.

If possible, consider a financial gift to a Catholic charity providing relief efforts.

- Diocese of Des Moines collection: dmdiocese.org/giving/special-collection-giving, designate Collection to aid the Church in Central and Eastern Europe
- Caritas Ukraine: caritas.org/ukraine
- Catholic Relief Services: crs.org
- Knights of Columbus kofc.org/en/what-we-do/charity/ukraine.html

Chrism Mass: Consecrating sacramental oils

Priests renew their commitment to serve God's people, imitate Christ



Photos by Father Jim Kirby

The annual gathering for Chrism Mass on April 8 drew the diocesan faith family together for the blessing and consecration of oils that will be used in sacraments celebrated throughout the Diocese in the upcoming year. The Oil of the Sick will be used in pastoral care of those who are ill or infirm from illness of mind or body, accidents or advanced age. The Oil of Catechumens will be used to anoint those just before their baptism. Bishop William Joensen and all priests invoked the Holy Spirit's consecration of the Chrism. All those to be baptized, confirmed, or ordained as priests or bishops will be anointed with this oil. The Chrism will also be used to anoint new church buildings and altars that serve the holy and anointed people of God.

Above: Bishop William Joensen consecrates oil. At right top: Representatives of various communities brought the oils into St. Ambrose Cathedral; youth carried the newly blessed and consecrated oil to the parish hall to be divided for parishes; priests gathered around the altar for the consecration; and oils were prepared for distribution.



MOMS prolife bill supports mothers, babies with needs

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

The Catholic Church in Iowa is advocating for more support for mothers before and after their babies are born.

More Options for Maternal Support, or MOMS, would ensure mothers and their babies have access to prenatal and postpartum care, get material needs met for things like car seats, diapers and formula, and have access to counseling and education services.

"This fills a void in our services statewide," said Sara Eide, associate director of

the Iowa Catholic Conference. "There are agencies and resources for maternal health or families in need, but they are limited. This is a very targeted program to help pregnant women and new moms get the support needed to choose life and support her new baby."

The bill, which has passed the Iowa Senate and now is in the House, would be administered by a life-affirming nonprofit. Pregnancy resource centers would be able to apply for reimbursement for supplies and services provided to pregnant and new mothers.

A second part of the bill would expand Medicaid as-

sistance for women from two months postpartum to 12 months. Data show that at about six months postpartum, many women seek help for mental health issues. It's a very stressful time for any new mom, Eide said.

"It's just so important that we keep access to healthcare available to moms," she said. "With someone else checking in with the mom, the baby's more likely to get regular healthcare visits, too."

The MOMS model of helping families was originally created in 1996 in Pennsylvania and has since spread to 14 states including three that border Iowa: Minnesota, Missouri and Nebras-

ka. The largest program, in Texas, served more than 90,000 women and more than 10,000 men in 2020.

"There's a strong prolife coalition in Iowa and we identified this as a critical need," said Eide. "It's something the prolife community should be focused on."

"We need to be proactive and encourage our legislators that this is the way to be prolife, to support women when they're vulnerable and don't see how they can manage the situation," she said.

"We've had strong support for this legislation from a wide array of stakeholders, and

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A mystery worthy of trust

In 1956 in Paris, France, the 26 year-old cop killer Jacques Fesch languished in prison awaiting trial; a year later he would be found guilty, sentenced to death, and executed at the guillotine. Though he was in solitary confinement, he was on a spiritual journey from being a blasé agnostic to becoming a deeply convicted, heartrending Catholic. He corresponded on April 11th with the one he called “little brother,” who would eventually be known as Father Thomas:

“I promised to write you at the end of Lent so that you would receive my letter for Easter. Forgive this delay. . . . I spent the months of January and February in a state of spiritual euphoria which helped greatly in my search for God, and then, from March on, I fell back into complete darkness. . . . God certainly wants to try me, and evidently he



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

thinks this state of abandonment is the most profitable one for my salvation and my future glory.”

Jacques’ prison cell is far removed from the situation of the disciples in the upper room in the wake of Jesus’ grisly crucifixion and burial. But maybe they are not that different. For all but Mary and some other women, the fact of Jesus’ death likely cast the cloistered few into complete darkness. Their sense of abandonment must have felt like a sort of captivity as they wore an op-

pressive yoke of fear and crushed hopes.

Then Jesus passes through doors locked from within (see John 20:19-23). Before he speaks, he takes in the acrid smell of grief and guilt for not remaining with Jesus to the end. He senses the incredulity expressed in gasps and sighs. While he is entitled to his share of glory, our reality still weighs upon him; he “suffers” what he witnesses, and moves to meet his followers on their terms. Jesus, who sees and suffers with us both before and after his death and resurrection, initiates the Gospel of his mercy. Psalm 85:11 (“Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed”) is practically Jesus’ personal identity card. Jesus unbinds and restores right relationship by the kiss of his mercy. He can pass into locked rooms and into our hearts

because he permits us to claim his heart burning with love if we can bear it.

Mercy is love flowing toward where there is a lack—a lack of right relation/justice, of forgiveness, friendship, trust, joy, peace. Mercy is the decision of love that the world is not to be left alone, troubled and abandoned. Mercy is not mere pity nor sympathy as the world knows them, where these feelings are ultimately ordered to ourselves. Mercy is the extension of Christ’s heart and the rays of his love toward those not bent on making others more aware of what they lack or where they have gone wrong. St. John Paul II, speaking of the God who is rich in mercy, observes, “The person who is the object of mercy does not feel humiliated, but ‘restored to value’ . . . returned to life” (Dives in Misericordia 6.3). We are more than the evidence—

certainly more than our worst affliction, moment, or deed—and far more precious and cherished than we could ever estimate.

In 2000, the Polish saint and pope established the octave day after Easter Sunday as Divine Mercy Sunday. As a young man, he often prayed at the convent just south of Krakow, Poland, where St. Faustina Kowalska lived and died, where she composed a portion of her diary that disclosed her devotion to Divine Mercy. The image that God revealed to her first in Vilnius, Lithuania, and then was refined in Poland, is depicted above the key refrain of her prayer: “Jesus, I trust in you.”

Trust is the substrate of mercy—and a missing element in society and world politics in St. Faustina’s time—a time not all that far removed from our

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Un Misterio que Merece Confianza

En 1956 en París, Francia, Jacques Fesch de 26 años y asesino de un policía yacía en prisión esperando su juicio; un año después fue declarado culpable, sentenciado a muerte y ejecutado en la guillotina. Aunque estaba en confinamiento solitario, estaba en un camino espiritual que partió de ser un agnóstico indiferente para convertirse en un católico de corazón profundamente comprometido. Él se escribía el 11 de abril con quien él llamaba “pequeño hermano” y quien después sería conocido como Padre Thomas:

“Prometí escribirte a final de la Cuaresma para que pudieras recibir mi carta en Pascua. Persona esta tardanza. . . . Pasé los meses de enero y febrero en estado de euforia espiritual lo que me ayudó en mucho en mi búsqueda de Dios, y luego, a partir de mar-

zo, volví a caer en completa oscuridad. . . . Dios ciertamente me quiere poner a prueba, y evidentemente él piensa que este estado de abandono me beneficia para mi salvación y para mi futura gloria.”

La situación en la celda en la prisión de Jacques es muy diferente a la de los discípulos en la habitación superior en la víspera de la terrible crucifixión y entierro sepultura de Jesús. Pero tal vez no sean tan diferentes. Para todos con la excepción de María y algunas de las mujeres, la muerte de Jesús empujó a algunos a enclaustrarse en completa oscuridad. SU sentido de abandono se debe haber sentido como un tipo de cautiverio a la vez que cargaban un pesado yugo de miedo y de esperanzas perdidas.

Entonces Jesús atravesó las puertas que estaban cerradas por dentro (vean Juan 20: 19-23). Antes de hablar, siente el agrio olor de dolor y de culpa que

tienen por no haber permanecido con Jesús hasta el final. Él siente la incredulidad que expresan en sus suspiros y resuellos. Aunque a él le corresponde su parte en la gloria, nuestra realidad aún recae sobre él; él “sufrir” lo que atestigua y se mueve para encontrarse con sus seguidores en sus términos. Jesús, quien ve y sufre con nosotros tanto antes como después de su muerte y resurrección, inicia el Evangelio de su misericordia. Salmos 85:11 (“La Misericordia y la Verdad se han encontrado; la justicia y la paz se han abrazado”) es prácticamente la tarjeta de identidad personal de Jesús. Jesús desata y restaura la relación correcta con el beso de su misericordia. Él puede entrar a habitaciones cerradas y a nuestros corazones por él nos permite reclamar su corazón ardiente con amor si podemos soportarlo.

La misericordia es amor que fluye hacia donde falta – una

falta de la relación correcta o justicia, de perdón, de amistad, confianza, gozo, paz. La misericordia es la decisión de amar que no va a dejar al mundo solo, disturbado y abandonado. La misericordia no es simple lástima ni simpatía como las conoce el mundo, donde estos sentimientos se nos ordenan ultimadamente a nosotros mismo. La misericordia es la extensión del corazón de Cristo y los rayos de su amor hacia aquellos que no se enfocan en hacer sentir a los demás lo que les falta o en donde se han equivocado. El Papa Juan Pablo II, hablando del Dios que es rico en misericordia, observa, “la persona que es objeto de la misericordia no se siente humillada, sino ‘revalorizada’ . . . ha vuelto a la vida” (Dives in Misericordia 6.3). Somos más que solo la evidencia – ciertamente más que nuestra peor aflicción, obra o nuestro peor momento – y mucho más preciados y queridos que lo

que pudiésemos estimar.

En el año 2000, el santo papa polaco estableció el octavo día luego del Domingo de Pascua como el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia. Cuando era joven, él rezaba en el convento justo al sur de Cracovia, Polonia donde vivió y murió Santa Faustina Kowalska, donde se compuso una parte de su Diario donde revelaba su devoción a la Divina Misericordia. La imagen que Dios le reveló primero en Vilnius Lituania y que luego se refinaria en Polonia, se representa sobre el refrán clave de su oración: “Jesús, en ti confío.”

La confianza es el sustento de la misericordia – un elemento ausente en la sociedad y en la política mundial en tiempos de Santa Faustina – un tiempo no muy diferente al nuestro. La gente que confía puede ir a donde la

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THE CATHOLIC

MIRROR

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Statement of Des Moines Catholic Diocese Bishop William Joensen in response to Trans Visibility Announcement at Dowling Catholic High School

For more than a year, a dedicated task force in the Des Moines Diocese has been drafting policies, pastoral counsel and support strategies for accompanying persons presenting with gender dysphoria and other challenges relevant to sexual identity. The aim has been to demonstrate clear affirmation of personal dignity, to promote inclusion of individuals in our parishes, schools, and faith community at large, while also representing the truths of Catholic Christian faith reflecting God’s providential design in creating humans as male and female beings in his image and likeness. It is my hope that in coming months these policies and pastoral resources will be made publically available to all the faithful and persons of good will.

Some of these draft policies and pastoral approaches were previewed in August 2021 when I presented an overview of Christian anthropology vis-à-vis issues of sexual orientation and gender identity along with prospective policies to two groups of our diocesan school faculty, staff, and administration. Consultation with current medical and human sciences, with philosophical and theological sources consonant with Chris-

tian tradition, and families who have members who self-identify as transgender or who seek gender affirmation procedures, has occurred. Progress has been made in terms of understanding and integration of natural and revealed sources in a manner that advances our mission to holistically educate and form young people and ourselves as disciples of Jesus Christ in communion with God and one another.

Unfortunately, while well-intentioned, a recent student announcement and prayer at Dowling Catholic High School noting transgender visibility day contained an open-ended reference to human rights and overall content that easily lent itself to a problematic interpretation. The point at issue blurs the distinction between Catholic Church teaching and a larger cultural ethos that is not friendly to the Catholic faith. This latter mindset often seeks to advance a social and political agenda that is antagonistic to our comprehensive understanding of the human person, and that further seeks to deny all sexual difference as a merely human construct. It is understandable that several members of the extended Dowling and diocesan community were seriously concerned that

this brief occurrence was at cross-purposes with their well-founded hopes and expectations that our Catholic schools and other institutions will faithfully witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ that we want to announce and embody in every facet of our daily lives.

I have confidence that Dowling Catholic focuses on forming students within the teachings of the Catholic Church. As shepherd and pastor of the Catholic flock of Southwest Iowa, this experience prompts me to redouble my efforts to teach and guide the faithful as Christ and the Church has entrusted me to do. I look to continue to collaborate with our pastors, school administrators, staff and students, with our catechists and lay ministers, with parents and families to engage all the struggles and challenges familiar to our human condition with confidence and trust that God’s truth sets us free. I pray that we will not fall prey to the forces of division and discord; may we learn from this event and grow wiser as we accompany one another in the Spirit of Jesus, who counsels and enlightens us as we make our pilgrim way to the Kingdom.

Support for priests comes one prayer at a time

1 hour, 1 day, 1 week x 7 sisters equals emerging ministry

By **Andrea Harper**
Contributing Writer

While praying in her home parish, Janette Howe describes having “an interior experience.”

She felt the words, “seven sisters” come to her. She shared with a priest her experience and her discernment to lead something with seven women praying together in solidarity for priests and bishops.

Her priest responded, “Let’s test it by its fruits.”

From a seed of the words “seven sisters,” Howe began to cultivate, to scatter, and to watch her seeds begin to bear fruit. That spring in 2011, the Seven Sisters began at the Cathedral of St Paul in St Paul, Minnesota.

Now, 11 years later, that fruit has flowered into women praying in 1,350 parishes, chantries, seminaries, hospitals and other locations around the world.

Howe shared her story as guest speaker at the recent gathering of the Des Moines Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in Atlantic.

A branch of the Seven

Sisters group has begun in the Diocese of Des Moines.

In this group of women who have a common gift, also called an apostolate, seven agree to each take one day of the week to pray for the needs and intentions of their priest.

Elena Espinoza, a parishioner at Council Bluffs’ Corpus Christi Parish, serves as a leader, called an anchoress. Espinoza is the “Monday” sister who began a group in support of then new priest, Father Enrique Garcia.

Ann O’Toole, also of Corpus Christi Parish, also felt called to the apostolate and began another group of seven sisters for their associate pastor, Father Jacob Epstein. O’Toole assists Espinoza with communication and language barriers she might encounter as a primarily Spanish speaker.

Franciscan Sister Joyce Blum also helps translate for Espinoza.

Corpus Christi’s Seven Sisters are, as Espinoza and Sister Joyce described them, “Some Hispanic, some Latino and one Americano.”

They said they pray to



Photo by Andrea Harper

Several women of a new prayer group at Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs plan for the upcoming week.

strengthen their priests, who in turn will strengthen them.

“We need their strength and they need our strength,” Espinoza said through Sister Joyce. “We are the body of Christ living in communion with one another.”

Although it is not required, their holy hour is prayed in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

“I cannot always go to

the church physically,” said Maria Zimmerman, a member of the Seven Sisters who uses a wheelchair. “I live right down the street from the church so I part my curtains from my window and I turn my face toward Jesus, toward the church and give my hour to Father Enrique from my home.”

The apostolate uses an image of Mary Magdalene pour-

ing expensive oil onto the feet of Jesus for reflection. A “holy wasting,” Howe said, encourages us to set aside time to pray in preparation for what is to come.

For more information on the Seven Sisters, go to sevensistersapostolate.org.

Andrea Harper is a parishioner of Sacred Heart, Woodbine

Happy Easter

Find a four-page guide with family-friendly ideas for how to celebrate the Easter season with intentionality at dmdiocese.org/easter

MOMS legislative proposal would aid mothers with prenatal, postpartum care

Continued from page 1

we are optimistic that the legislature will pass this and the governor will sign it,” she added.

The bill is currently in the House Appropriations

Committee.

To encourage legislators to support the MOMS bill, go to iowacatholicconference.org and click on Action Alert to contact legislators or reach out directly to lawmakers.

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Divina Misericordia
Misa de Vigilia en espanol
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)

Longtime cathedral parish ministers retire

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish will host a reception at noon on May 15 for two long-time, dedicated people who enhanced the way the faithful worship God.

Cantor and liturgy director Debbie Rohrer and custodian Bud Kephart recently retired from the cathedral, where they served for decades. Each of them has been helping at the cathedral during the service of five bishops: Bishops Maurice Dingman, William Bullock, Joseph Charron, Richard Pates and William Jensen.

Rohrer began singing when she was eight years old, taking lessons at Drake University in high school and throughout her days at Iowa State University. She began in 1979 singing with a small group at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church in Ankeny at the urging of Father Gene Koch.

Her first diocesan liturgy she cantored was at Dowling Catholic High School's gymnasium with Bishop Dingman presiding.

"I continued to feel a real calling to liturgy and music, so in the early '80s, I began to attend many liturgy and music workshops throughout the Midwest," she said.



She took on the music director role at St. Joseph Parish in Des Moines when Father Sam Palmer was pastor.

Father Richard Gubbels encouraged her to help the music program at the cathedral parish, where she began as music director and liturgist in 1994.

Rohrer sang at church liturgies to enhance worship of the faithful but also to deepen her own faith life.

"It's an extremely important part of my personal faith journey and my belief that God gave each of us the gift of music to move the spirit and soul in the right direction each day with grace and purpose," she said.

"It is hugely rewarding to assist with the sung prayer of liturgy and worship," she added.

"It is equally as rewarding to know you are contributing to the faithful's experience and understanding of the celebration of the holy Eucharist and beautiful gift of the Word. You become a vessel to help the assembled feel God's presence and strength."

She continues to coordinate weddings and sing at weddings and other events.

Kephart, who converted to Catholicism before marrying his wife, Shirley, in 1974, had been active at the parish in everything from serving on the parish council to helping the St. Vincent de Paul Society. They helped the parish with the renovations after Vatican II.

In the early 1990s, Father Gubbels hired him to do custodial work at the parish. Kephart

did that job during the day while working third shift at an area company.

"Those were some long days," he said.

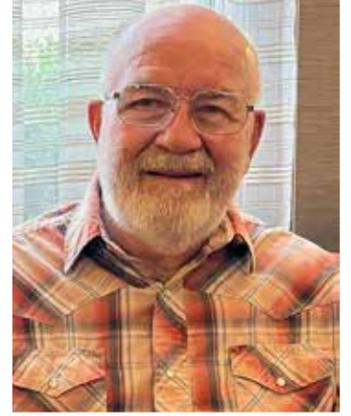
"But when Father Jim Kiernan came, he told me that he had seen me working two jobs, and so he says, 'Bud, I'd like to pay you extra to work at the cathedral only so you get your rest' and so I've been at the cathedral on staff ever since."

Some weeks, he worked seven days between preparing for weekend weddings, weekday funerals and doing maintenance work in between.

Kephart said he's enjoyed helping with fixing stained glass windows and watching the ceiling get repainted.

"It was great," he said. "I've done work in pretty much all of the different parts of the cathedral, top to bottom."

The 25-year military veteran (six years with the U.S. Navy and 19 with the U.S. Army National Guard) feels blessed to have been able to watch over the ambo, altar and chair used by St.



John Paul II during his visit to Iowa. The furniture is used in the cathedral's St. Anne Chapel.

"What a pleasure," he said.

Even though this Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus knows every nook and cranny of the historic worship space, he said the best part of his job was the people, from the priests, parish staff and diocesan employees to the Life in the Spirit folks and families seeking sacraments.

"I've had a lot of volunteers off and on over the years. That's priceless."

Sensory-friendly family inclusion Mass slated for May

Some families don't attend Mass together because they're fearful that a family member with a disability may be disruptive to others.

Or maybe that family member can't tolerate loud sounds, crowds or bright lights.

The Diocese's Disability Ministry is hosting a sensory-friendly family inclusion Mass at 3 p.m. on May 22 at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines. Father John Ludwig will preside. All are welcome to attend and an ice cream social will follow in the parish's social hall.

The Mass will have lower lights, softer music, Scripture from the children's lectionary and a short, more literal homily.

"In an effort to embrace and welcome all, we invite any person with sensory issues or disabilities to celebrate Mass without the fear of stigma," said Patty Origer, coordinator of Persons with Disability Ministry.

Those with autism, Down's syndrome, developmental/intellectual disabilities, de-

mentia, Alzheimer's, and other disabilities are welcome.

"Sometimes families split up and to go Mass at different times so their loved one doesn't disrupt other people's prayer," Origer said. "At this Mass, we invite all families with sensory issues or disabilities to come together without fear and celebrate our faith together."

This is the first step in providing opportunities for priests and parish leaders to work toward next steps of offering Masses such as this on a regular basis at parishes, Origer said.

Families are encouraged to bring materials that can assist with comfort during the liturgy: noise canceling headphones, wiggle seats, fidgets, etc. Example materials will be provided for individuals to try out that include: wiggle seats, headphones, picture missals and sunglasses. Voice noises and physical movements are welcomed at this Mass.

For more information, contact Origer at poriger@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5073.

Freedom to Serve

Symposium
April 19

Drake University | Sussman Theater

1 p.m. - 5 p.m., 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Why religious freedom? Join us in exploring this question away from the usual politics with an esteemed slate of speakers. This symposium will help enhance and enrich your own engagement in the public arena when it comes to talking about religious freedom. The symposium is jointly sponsored by the Diocese of Des Moines and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To register, please use the following link: <https://iafreedomtoserve.eventbrite.com>.

Camille Johnso, JD
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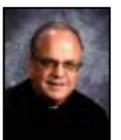
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Beloved pastor becomes “honorary Iowan”

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Father Raphael Assamah was honored as an “official Iowan” by the Iowa House of Representatives for his dedication and service to the residents of Hamburg during the floods of 2019.

Now the pastor of St. Theresa Parish in Des Moines, Father Assamah was the pastor of St. Mary Parish in Hamburg when historic flooding devastated the town three years ago.

“The flood victims found strength and resolve to rebuild from a faith source in the form of Father Raphael Assamah,” the resolution said.

“When Father Assamah arrived to take his post as pastor of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Hamburg, Iowa, he did not know that he would be the right man for the right job at the right time, for he was chosen to protect his parish from both the flood and COVID-19,” the resolution continued.

“While flooding rivers devastated towns and villages along their banks, they also took a toll on the spirits of residents, but the raging Missouri and Nishnabotna rivers were no match for the 5-foot, 7-inch sturdily built and energy-filled priest from the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra, Ghana,” said the resolution.

“Fearing the devastation would lead his small parish to despair, Father Assamah deployed a power mightier than mere raging rivers: the power of faith, hope and charity...” it said.

“Father Assamah knew that praying together would strengthen the community’s resolve to build together, hope would make the community’s future brighter, and charity would bring the community’s members together with the larger community of the Diocese of Des Moines.”

Nick Critelli, a parishioner of St. Theresa Parish, suggested the resolution.

“When extraordinary people go unrecognized, we all lose,” he said.



Photo by Kelly Mescher Collins

Supporters of Father Raphael Assamah surround him after he was honored as an “official Iowan” by the Iowa House of Representatives on April 6. Joining him with parishioners of St. Mary Parish in Hamburg are: Nick Critelli, far left, who suggested the resolution; Rep. Jon Jacobsen of Council Bluffs, top right, who introduced the resolution; Rep. Eddie Andrews from Johnston, center top row; and Father Michael Amadeo, vicar general and pastor of Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny, in the second row to the right.

A group of parishioners made the three-hour drive to be their former pastor receive the honor from St. Mary Parish in Hamburg at the Capitol by 8 a.m. to watch honor.

Serrans build a culture of vocations across the Diocese

Serra International quietly contributes to the Catholic faith.

The Diocese of Des Moines has two Serra Clubs: one in Des Moines and one in Council Bluffs.

Members are lay Catholics of all ages and backgrounds who ensure the future of the Catholic Church by creating a “culture of vocations.”

Their mission is three-fold: 1) promote and support vocations to the priesthood and support priests in their sacred

ministry, 2) encourage and promote vocations to the consecrated life, and 3) assist members to recognize and respond, each in his own life, to God’s call to holiness in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

Serrans take their name from Franciscan missionary St. Junipero Serra, the 18th century founder of a string of California missions.

Father Ross Parker, diocesan director of Vocations for the Diocese of Des Moines, said, “Serra Club is a wonder-

ful organization that supports our priests and sisters through prayer, invitation, encouragement, and ongoing communication.” He said the annual priest cookout is often a highlight of the year for many priests.

Beyond this, Serra Club of Des Moines hosts an annual dinner for Bishop William Joensen to support vocations, prepares May Day baskets for religious sisters in the Diocese, hosts a luncheon for seminarians, sends birthday greetings along with a small financial gift

to each seminarian, and more.

Other activities for the club members includes monthly Mass, social time, adoration, and attendance at diaconate and priestly ordinations.

The Serra Club of Council Bluffs meets for twice-monthly Mass, and a general meeting and speaker monthly. They also host a Christmas dinner with the bishop for all seminarians and their families annually, and an annual dinner for all seminarians who are participating in the Institute for

Priestly Formation at Creighton.

The Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa invests funds on behalf of Serra Club of Des Moines.

To support the Serra mission with a donation, you can find the Serra Club of Des Moines Religious Fund on the foundation’s website under “Donate.” If you’d like to be involved in the Serra Club of Des Moines or Council Bluffs, contact the Vocations Office at 515-237-5050.



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)

Around the Diocese

April 19 Tuesday

Freedom to Serve

DES MOINES – A symposium focusing on the freedom of religion cosponsored by the Diocese of Des Moines, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organizers of Iowa Religious Freedom Day and Drake Bulldog Catholic will be at Drake University from 1-5 p.m. and 6:30-9 p.m. Seats are available for “Freedom to Serve: Why Religion is Vital in a Pluralistic Society” by going to <https://iafreedomtoserve.eventbrite.com>.

April 22-23 Thurs.-Frid.

Climate Change Conference

CLIVE – Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive, Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Indianola, and Iowa Interfaith Power and Light are hosting an ecumenical conference on church and climate change. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. on April 22 and ends at 5 p.m. on April 23 at Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive. Presenting at a workshop is Kent Ferris, director of Social Action and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Davenport. He'll speak on Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* and climate change. For more information, contact Heartland Presbyterian Church, 641-414-4876 or email Hugh8@juno.com. The conference is free and participants may register on the Des Moines Presbytery website.

April 24 Sunday

Divine Mercy Sunday

DES MOINES – Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated at Christ the King Catholic Church, with confessions from 2-3 p.m., Di-

vine Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m. and Mass at 3:30 p.m. Sign language interpretation and reception to follow Mass. Learn more at divinemercydesmoines.com

May 5 Thursday

Bishop Drumm Guild Garage Sale

This garage sale will be held each Thursday morning May 5 – Sept. 1 on Bishop Drumm's campus in Johnston. Hours are from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Donations are accepted on the Thursdays of the sale at the garages located on the campus or by calling Helen Thull at 515-669-4621. No computers, baby cribs or car seats, old electronics or TVs will be accepted. Household goods, clothing and furniture welcome.

May 10 Tuesday

Altar and Rosary Salad Supper and Card Party

DES MOINES – The Basilica of St. John's Altar and Rosary Society will hold its annual Salad Supper and Card Party from 5-9:30 p.m. A variety of salads will be available as well as a raffle for a hand-made quilt. Doors are open at 5 p.m. with serving beginning at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$8 each and are available from an Altar and Rosary member or at the door.

May 26 Thursday

St. Vincent de Paul Golf Outing

PLEASANT HILL -- The 2022 Fight Food Insecurity Golf Fundraiser will be at Copper Creek Golf Course. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 10 a.m. All proceeds from this event will go towards keeping SVDP food pantries open to help ensure that no

person, especially children, go hungry. Registration is \$150 per person which includes hosted food and beverages. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. For more information contact Randi Radosevich at resourcedirector@svdpsdm.org.

June 2 Thursday

InnerVisions Gala

DES MOINES – InnerVisions HealthCare is holding its annual fundraising gala at the Iowa Events Center. Cocktails at 5 p.m., dinner and program 6:30-8:30 p.m. RSVP before May 21. For tickets contact Bryan Gonzalez, 515-280-4706 or bryan@ivhcare.org, ivhcare.org/23022gala.

June 12 Sunday

Charity Tea

WEST DES MOINES -- Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court Ave Maria #302 (representing members from all Des Moines parishes), will hold its annual Charity Tea at St. Francis of Assisi Parish at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door, and can be purchased through any CDA Court member or by sending an email requesting more information to oxana.bedore@gmail.com.

June 16 Thursday

House of Mercy Game Show Gala

DES MOINES -- The 2022 MercyOne House of Mercy Game Show Gala is presented by Community Choice Credit Union and produced by MercyOne Des Moines Foundation. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., program starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center.

Parish social event returns



St. Patrick Parish, Irish Settlement, Dance Committee: Renae Irlmeier, Molly Dolan, Father Thomas Dooley, Amy Hall, Katie Eads, Claire King

St. Patrick Parish at Irish Settlement held its dinner/dance/auction on March 19 after a two year absence.

The last dance was held on March 14, 2020. Back then, with COVID-19 spreading, the parish struggled with whether or not to hold the dance. Ultimately, along with Father Tom Dooley's blessing, the dance committee decided to do it. A highlight of the event was a roll of toilet paper auctioned at \$120. Little did we know that the following Tuesday, Gov. Kim Reynolds would issue a State of Public Health Disaster forcing many closures.

“We are thankful for the opportunity to celebrate with our parishioners and community friends,” said the dance committee. “We look forward to our next St. Patrick's Day event and extend a warm invitation to all to join us for fun, faith and shenanigans!”

St. Vincent de Paul leader honored



St. Vincent de Paul Des Moines Executive Director Steve Havemann was honored with the *Business Record's* 40 Under 40 award. With him are current President Bill Ehm and three past presidents: Jim Wachuta, Don Lamberti, Havemann, Ehm, and Dr. Chuck Korte.

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.

We need a few good people

The Diocese of Des Moines is looking for a Director of Finance, educators, and staff for various positions in parishes.

Go to dmdiocese.org/careers to see if your skills and our openings are a good match!

Reach more than 30,000 Catholics in central and southwest Iowa by advertising in

The Catholic Mirror.

Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdiocese.org

for call 515-237-5054 for more information.

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.



Theologian: We must learn from the lessons of the pandemic

Charles Camosy is concerned about modern challenges facing healthcare delivery, particularly for the elderly, in light of the pandemic.

As inaugural research fellow of the new Center for Human Flourishing at Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines, the author and theologian Camosy spoke April 6 in the Diocese of Des Moines about how American culture tends to disregard those who are not deemed productive.

"Pope Francis resists a throw-away culture when it's state sponsored," he said. Examples are war, terrorism, the death penalty, abortion and euthanasia.

The pandemic, Camosy said, spotlighted the many, particularly elderly people, who died alone without the comfort of loved ones or the sacrament of the sick.

It also highlighted problems facing the elderly in general.

With projections that the number of people with dementia will double in 20 years and triple in 30 years, the United States is set up for a catastrophe, Camosy said.

What's important, he said, is to treat the elderly like they're human beings, like they're equal to others, he said.

There's a move to provide robot-related care or algorithm care, instead of human caregivers, Camosy said.

There also is a growing move to allow euthanasia, particularly for those with dementia. "Once the slope of legalized medical killing gets going, it's very hard to stop the slide," he said.

Society must focus on

restoring human dignity that respects the elderly. In the short-term, this can be done by putting families first.

"Just as parents and other adults had an obligation to make great sacrifices when we were in need as children, we have an obligation to make similar sacrifices for them," Camosy said.

On a broader scale, more dialogue among faith traditions could help.

"Christians, Muslims and Jews agree all human beings have inherent dignity because they reflect the image and likeness of God," Camosy said. "Perhaps a genuine dialogue can find overlapping consensus."

In the long term, the Catholic Church may need to take action.

"What happens if after about 10 years not much has changed or, God forbid, things get even worse? If cultural change is not on the way, I propose religious organizations must mobilize for an all hands on deck response of our own," Camosy said. "That response needs to start now if it's going to be ready in 10 years. Speaking as a Catholic Christian, while this task is daunting, not only does the Church have the international reach to mobilize, it is also consistent to responding to the sign of the times."

Camosy ended on a positive note by saying there are things governments, churches and families can learn from the pandemic.

"We haven't reached that stage of terrible darkness," he said. "We can rekindle a broad cultural fire. That would be the better option."

Crane exhibit honors human dignity



Above, artist Pam Douglas demonstrates how she makes a paper crane to represent each Iowan who died from COVID-19. Top right, more than 9,400 cranes are on display at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny. The display goes to Loras College in Dubuque this summer.



As the world watched the number of people dying, many all alone, in growing numbers due to the pandemic that began two years ago, real people's lives seemed to be reduced to statistics.

This, according to artist Pam Douglas, of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines, needed to be addressed.

"Who would have believed then that this virus would remain not just in 2020 but also 2021 and continuing, albeit at lower rates, in 2022?" she told a group at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny recently.

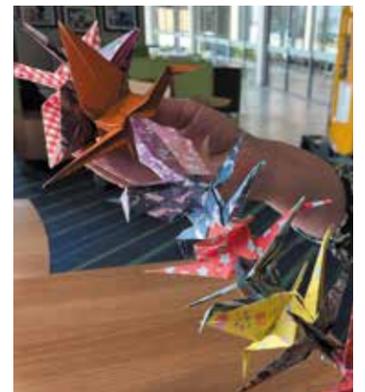
In an effort to recognize the human dignity of each person who died, and to pray for them, she began making paper cranes. Her exhibition entitled "Folding Cranes: Enfolding Community", which now numbers more than 9,400 for the Iowans who have died from the virus, is at DMACC.

"I wanted to honor the dignity and humanity of all Iowans who've died as a result of COVID, to share compassion and not political differences," she explained at an event commemorating the second anniversary of the start of the pandemic.

"I sought to create a sense of community over Iowans' experience in this historic health care issue," she said.

"I wanted to offer a tangible place for reflection, individually and collectively, especially in counties hardest hit by COVID in Iowa. And consequently, to positively affect the grieving and healing processes of those who've lost loved ones. At this point, everyone knows someone impacted by COVID," she added.

Douglas chose cranes for her artwork because the bird, with



a broad wingspan, carries significant symbolism in many cultures.

"I've felt a profound desire to express my solidarity in this collective loss," she said. "I'm grateful for this sense of purpose."

The exhibit will go to Loras College in Dubuque over the summer.

Youth Ministry Coordinator

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church of West Des Moines, IA, is seeking a full-time Youth Ministry Coordinator. This position provides vision and coordination for SFA's efforts in ministry to youth (7th - 12th grades). This includes FISH/EDGE weekly sessions, monthly activities, catechesis, service opportunities, and coordination of Confirmation sacramental preparation. The start date is flexible, with the goal of having an employee fully on-board by July 1, 2022.

Please submit resume and cover letter to: Human Resources Coordinator, 7075 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines, IA 50266. Or by email: communications@saintfrancischurch.org

Rosary for the Unborn

Every Saturday 10-11 a.m.

All are welcomed to help us fight this pro-life battle for saving the lives of the unborn

Planned Parenthood (Public Sidewalk)
1000 E Army Post Rd

Jeff Pierick 515-778-6087
Kathy Biederman 641-660-8446

CARING ABOUT YOUR LOSS AND SHARING IN YOUR FAITH

Prayer to St. Joseph for a Happy Death

*O blessed Joseph who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary,
obtain for me, I beseech you, the grace of a happy death.
In that hour of dread and anguish, assist me by your presence,
and protect me by your power against
the enemies of your salvation.
Into your sacred hands, living and dying,
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I commend my soul.*

Amen

John & Mark Parrish,
parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi

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Friend reflects on friendship with the real life Father Stu

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

The first time Alex Kautzky, of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, met Father Stuart Long was at his ordination.

Born and raised in Helena, Montana, Kautzky and her family had been longtime friends with Father Bart Tolleson, who was ordained with Father Long, otherwise known as Father Stu.

“My Mom has a charisma for making people feeling comfortable, and she’s a great host,” Kautzky said. “She struck up a friendship with Father Stu, and he was just a part of our lives.



Alex Kautzky

“And as he got sicker and sicker towards the end, my Mom would go over during the day and pick him up and get him out of the nursing home,” she continued. “My Dad would go over there in the evening and pray back-to-back rosaries with him.”

The life and conversion of Father Stu is so inspiring that actor Mark Wahlberg knew he had to make it into a movie. “Father Stu” was released in theaters April 13. Wahlberg plays Father Stu and Mel Gibson portrays Father Stu’s dad, Bill, who helped take care of the priest in his final days in the face of his debilitating illness.

In his early adult life, Father Stu had a career in boxing before moving to Hollywood to make it as an actor. After a near death experience, he had a conversion of heart and decided to become a Catholic priest.

At a preview screening event last month at the HyVee Ron Pearson Center in West Des Moines, Kautzky and friend Maddie Maher had the opportunity to interview Wahlberg for their podcast, “Friends, Romans, Iowans.”

“It’s the most fulfilling role I’ve ever played,” Wahlberg said during the interview.

Wahlberg said he hopes people leave the movie feeling inspired.

“In these difficult times, everyone is dealing with uncer-



Photos supplied by Alex Kautzky

A movie about the life and legacy of Diocese of Helena Father Stuart Long (top photo) is in movie theaters. Above, Father Long’s dad, Bill, Father Bart Tolleson, actor Mark Wahlberg, and Father Long’s sister.

tainty,” he said. “I hope people leave feeling really optimistic and hopeful about what lies ahead.”

The two women also interviewed Father Bart Tolleson of the Diocese of Helena for their podcast.

People were drawn to Father Stu, both Kautzky and Father Tolleson said, and he responded by making himself available at all times as a resident in a nursing home.

“All of his ministry was really done in a way that there wasn’t time to spare,” said Kautzky, who also works in ministry as executive director of the St. Thomas More Center, home of Catholic Youth Camp. “He never lost his sense of humor, but also worked to bring everyone around him to holiness.

“People sought that out,” she continued. “They were

always setting up chairs for his Mass and confession. I remember going to Mass in the nursing home. The whole community wanted to be there with him at his Mass.”

Kautzky enjoyed the movie and felt it was true to the life of Father Stu. The film contains adult language though, and is not meant for children.

“I know they really didn’t want to sugar coat it,” Kautzky said. “It’s a gruff movie. I was glad to see that they told his story that was honest to who he was. They captured his spirit well – his personality, that spirit of determination.”

Find the “Friends, Romans, Iowans” podcast on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Google Podcasts and at Speaker.com.



CNS photo/Sony Pictures

Mark Wahlberg stars in the movie “Father Stu.” The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is R – restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

Review

Movie a tribute to priest with grit, determination

“Father Stu” is a hard-edged yet deeply moving dramatization of the life of Stuart Long (Mark Wahlberg).

With the continuance of his somewhat successful boxing career rendered too dangerous by a medical condition, he moves to Los Angeles and tries to reinvent himself as a Hollywood star, winding up instead as a directionless supermarket clerk.

But things begin to turn around for him when he falls at first sight for a devout religious education teacher (Teresa Ruiz). To please her, he goes through the motions of becoming Catholic, his conversion only becoming real after a near-death experience that also sets him on an unlikely path toward the priesthood, much to the consternation of his emotionally abusive father (Mel Gibson) and caring but unbelieving mother (Jacki Weaver).

A tribute to a future cleric who showed dogged determination and grit in the face of a series of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, writer-director Rosalind Ross profile also showcases his unconventional but effective approach to preaching the Gospel.

Grown viewers will easily get past the earthy language with which the script is filled to appreciate the film’s faith-inspiring core. But the persistent vulgarity, while justified in context, may prove more problematic for younger movie fans who might otherwise benefit from this portrait of a vocation. The movie contains some physical violence, a bloody accident, offscreen premarital sexual activity, about a half-dozen uses of profanity, several milder oaths, pervasive rough and crude language.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is R – restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

Newest seminarian welcomed

Kyle Rowan, of Sacred Heart Parish in Bedford, joined the diocesan seminary program this semester.

He first became interested in becoming a priest when his pastor invited him to serve in his parish. He attended various retreats and faith-filled trips in high school, though the call was not intense.

After high school, he attended Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas to strengthen his Catholic foundation.

Rowan spent his summer after freshman year at Catholic Youth Camp.

“This summer was the most transformative summer I have had in my life,” he said. “I had the opportunity to work closely with three of our Diocese’s youngest seminarians and one of our newly ordained priests.”

Experiences throughout the summer helped light a fire in his heart to more deeply consider what God wanted him to do with his life. In his sophomore

year of college, he started attending weekly meetings of a men’s discernment group.

He also met with diocesan Vocations Director Father Ross Parker.

As he continues his way through college, Rowan hopes to grow close to other young men who are considering what God wants them to do with their lives.

“I pray that God continues to call me to the vocation of becoming a priest for this beautiful Diocese and I look forward to seeing all of you in the Eucharist,” he said.

Young men interested in exploring a vocation to the priesthood or religious life should email Father Parker at vocations@dm-diocese.org or call 515-237-5050.



Kyle Rowan

Do you have a good story idea for The Catholic Mirror?
Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdiocese.org or call 515-237-5054.

Happy Easter

Find a four-page guide with family-friendly ideas for how to celebrate the Easter season with intentionality at dmdiocese.org/easter



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Priests celebrate 60 years of dedicated service

Father Acrea found a passion in education, parish ministry

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

While Father John Acrea was in high school in Missouri Valley, he had a conversion experience that changed his life.

Someone gave him a book to take home, saying it was about Church history. It was not. "The Quest for Happiness" penned by the Venerable Louis Granada was a text used in religious education.

"When I got home, I wondered 'What's in here?' I opened it up and the first paragraph, the first words I read go: 'The almighty Father, Creator of the universe, loves you!'" he said.

"It caused an explosion in my heart and that was it," said Father Acrea. "All of a sudden, I realized God loved me and that changed my life. It was a big stepping stone."

As he reflected on his 60th anniversary of ordination to priesthood, which is June 3, he said he initially didn't understand why he was called to be a priest.

But as time went on, people would share with him the times when he played a meaningful role in their lives.

Father Acrea studied at Mt. St. Bernard Seminary and Creighton University. Bishop Edward Daly had asked him to get a master's degree in education with a minor in English so he could teach at Dowling High School when it was in Des Moines.

"I hated English," he said. But he did what was asked, and found that he liked to teach. He taught for nine years, served as principal for one year, then studied at the North American College in Rome for a year. He returned to teach for another three years before going to parish ministry.

Father Acrea served both urban and rural parishes, having been at St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, St. Cecilia Parish

in Panora and St. Mary Parish in Guthrie Center.

In 1980, he returned to the faculty of Dowling and the St. Joseph Education Center, serving students and adults for nine more years. Though early in his life he wasn't so sure about teaching, he returned to that ministry time and time again. He fondly recalls becoming a debate coach, having never debated before, and having four state championship teams plus earning fifth in the nation one year.

In 1989, Father Acrea returned to parish life, serving St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish, St. Mary/Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart, Holy Spirit Parish in Creston and St. Edward Parish in Afton.

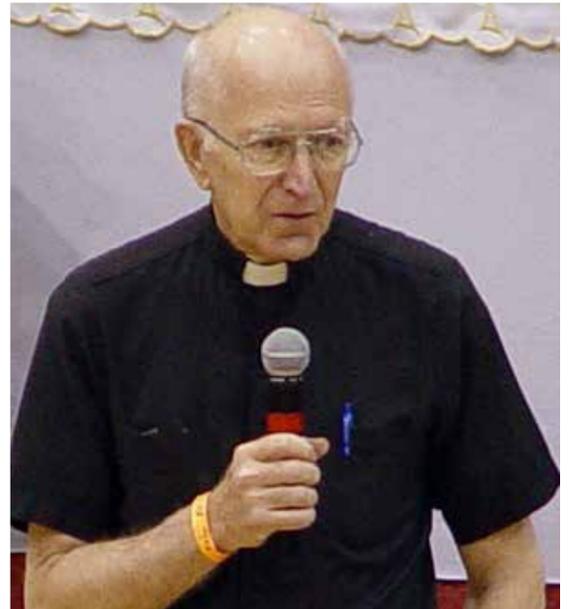
Nine years later, he became the diocesan Vocations director. At the time, there were three seminarians. He pulled together a promotions committee and started looking for innovative ways to reach young men.

Just a few years later, he made local and national news when he launched a website, vo-

cationsonline.com, to recruit seminarians. He wanted to be where young men were spending time, and that was the internet.

A few years later, he served as a director of spiritual formation at St. John Vianney Seminary in Minnesota, then retired in 2007.

In his retirement, Father Acrea can be found frequently at Dowling Catholic celebrating Mass, hearing confessions and assisting at retreats. He was just at the Radix retreat for high school seniors earlier this month.



File photo
Father John Acrea speaks to teenagers at the Youth2000 gathering at Dowling Catholic High School in 2006.

A celebration for Father Acrea's milestone anniversary will be June 11 with a Mass at 4 p.m. and a dinner following at the Basilica of St. John. Cards can be sent to him at 915 Ashworth Road, Apt. 204, West Des Moines, IA 50265.

Father Palmer's service focused on couples, retreats, parish ministry

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Father Frank Palmer calls himself "a simple Italian priest."

His impact over his 60 years as a priest has been anything but simple.

The longtime pastor, teacher and retreat leader has devoted his life to shepherding the faithful through the Church renewal changes of Vatican II and the ups and downs of everyday life.

On June 3, he celebrates his 60th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

Reflecting on his many years of service in both urban and rural parishes, he said the most rewarding part was "meeting with people in their sorrows and their joys and trying to help them."

Raised in a family with five brothers and one sister, Father Palmer had two older brothers who were priests: Fathers Anthony and Sam Palmer. They inspired him to consider a vocation to the priesthood. Priests who served at Dowling High School also encouraged him to consider a religious vocation.

He studied at Mt. St. Bernard Seminary, in Dubuque, in the years before the Second Vatican Council and questioned if the priesthood was right for him.

Then he read an inscription printed in Latin that said, "What shall I give to the Lord for all the things that he has given me?"

"That kind of struck me," he said. "That solidified my decision to be a priest."

Father Palmer was ordained in 1962 by Bishop Edward C. Daly, OP. He began his years of serving parishes at St.

Patrick in Council Bluffs and Immaculate Conception in Creston. In 1968, he became a teacher at St. Albert School in Council Bluffs. In 1974, he and friend Sam Cordaro began a diocesan team ministry called Retreat for the Christian Community, which was used throughout the Diocese of Des Moines, Sioux City, Dubuque, Cleveland, St. Louis and beyond. When Cordaro left, Father Palmer invited his former classmate, the late Father Jim Kiernan, to help.

"We would go into a school and first do an orientation with volunteer parents and faculty for one or two days," he said. "Then we'd take on the whole



File photo
Father Frank Palmer in 2018.

school for four days" as part of parish renewal following Vatican II. Parish retreats were a full week during the evenings.

He served St. Patrick Parish in Bayard and St. Joseph Parish in Jamaica before becoming director of Family Life, which was an office in Catholic Charities, formerly called the Catholic Council for Social Concern.

There, he led Marriage Encounter, Engaged Encounter and Beginning Experience workshops.

"I did a lot of work with couples and I found that kind of fulfilling," he said. "I learned a lot from those folks about real life."

His sister, Mary Grochala, supported his ministry by making lasagna for up to 150 people who would be at his pre-marriage workshops while raising her family of nine children.

"If she's not in heaven, I don't know who else is," he said.

In 1981, he returned to

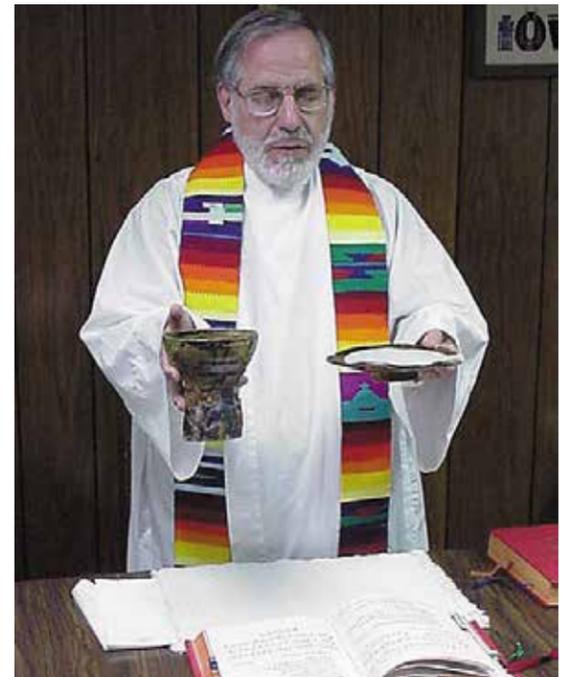


PHoto by Anne Marie Cox
Father Frank Palmer celebrates Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianola in 2001.

parish ministry, serving All Saints and St. Mel in Des Moines, St. Joseph in Winterset, and St. Thomas Aquinas in Indianola.

Retired since 2006, Father Palmer has assisted at St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale and Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines. Currently, he assists at his home parish of St. Anthony in Des Moines.

Sixty years ago, when Father Palmer was ordained a priest, he wrote, "A priest is someone who brings God to men and men to God."

Today, he said, "Hopefully, I'd like to think I did some of that."

While there will not be a gathering to celebrate his anniversary, congratulatory cards can be sent to Father Palmer at 4460 88th St., Urbandale, IA 50322.

Director of Faith Formation

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church of West Des Moines, IA, is seeking a full-time Director of Faith Formation.

The Director of Faith Formation oversees and supervises a comprehensive catechetical program which is family focused and includes First Reconciliation and First Communion preparation. The Director assists the pastor and his advisory committees in guiding and supporting parents in faith formation of their children. The Director of Faith Formation also provides guidance over Adult Faith Formation and Youth Ministry including Confirmation preparation.

Please submit resume and cover letter to:

Human Resources Coordinator, 7075 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines, IA 50266.

Or by email: communications@saintfrancischurch.org

Un Misterio que Merece Confianza

Continued from page 1

Divina Misericordia quiere que vayan. La misericordia es un misterio que merece la confianza; es tanto su causa y su efecto. La misericordia y su compañera la confianza es apostólica y sacerdotal en una era que está siempre tentada a la sospecha, al cinismo, y a la dimisión. Jesús inicia los sacramentos a través del sacerdocio del Reino que él mismo representa como ministerio de misericordia a nombre de su Padre. Hay solamente un sacerdocio de Jesucristo, pero en la diversidad de las partes que componen su Cuerpo, hay diferentes tipos de sacerdocios llamados a comunicar esa misericordia a los demás.

El sacerdocio de los fieles, que se inicia en el Sacramento del Bautismo y se sella y fortifica en la Confirmación, nos libera de las cadenas del pecado original que es nuestra herencia genética. El Espíritu Santo nos mueve a transformar el caos del mundo a un lugar en donde los hermanos pueden vivir juntos en paz como familia. Gracias a Dios por los cientos de personas de todas las edades, de varios países y condados en nuestra Diócesis, que han recibido y que van a recibir los sacramentos de iniciación en la Vigilia Pascual y más allá. Ellos representan una corriente de vidas que reciben la misericordia de Dios quien nos ayuda a reconocer que todos somos peregrinos – y

algunas veces refugiados encaminados a una habitación superior no hecha por manos humanas: la casa del Padre.

El Cardenal Walter Kasper (uno de los preladados alemanes que no han dejado la reserva de la ortodoxia católica) enmarca el tema de la migración de las personas en términos de las obras corporales de misericordia. Él dice que una de las señales y retos de nuestros tiempos es la tarea de absorber individuos que están enfrentando tiempos difíciles en casa y que buscan nuestra aceptación. Pero debemos enfrentar los temores dentro de nuestros propios corazones que siembra xenofobia y hostilidad hacia los extranjeros. Qué proféticos y sacerdotales son los ciudadanos de países como Polonia, la tierra de la Divina Misericordia, quienes están recibiendo millones de refugiados ucranianos. Sitios como la Estación Central de Trenes de Varsovia sirven como "hospitales de campo" logísticos de una renovada vecindad alimentando y vistiendo a los exiliados con la misericordia de Dios. Si los polacos pueden recibir a tantos con relativamente menos recursos a su disposición, ¿podríamos en nuestra proporcional prosperidad encontrar dentro de nosotros la capacidad de absorber "extranjeros" que son humanos como nosotros y que son frecuentemente nuestros hermanos en Cristo?

Agradecemos también

por los sacerdotes ordenados de Jesucristo, incluyendo nuestros sacerdotes diocesanos quienes renovaron sus promesas en nuestra Misa Crismal que celebramos en la Catedral de San Ambrosio. La Misa del Jueves Santos de la Cena de Señor es el "sacramento de iniciación" del sacerdocio ministerial, infundiendo una capacidad habitual de proclamar la palabra de Dios en aquellos elegidos por Jesús, a ofrecer el sacrificio Eucarístico que es la misericordia personificada y a ser un conducto firme de gracia de acuerdo con el plan de Cristo y a la promesa para su Iglesia.

La mayoría de los ministerios sacerdotales se llevan a cabo en lugares discretos tales como el confesionario o la habitación de un hospital. Pero en veces la comunidad en general reconoce los actos extraordinarios, como sucedió con el Padre Raphael Assamah, párroco actual de la Parroquia de St. Theresa en Des Moines, cuando este pasado 6 de abril, la Casa de Representantes de Iowa adoptó una resolución formal honrando al Padre Raphael por su trabajo como vasallo asistiendo a la gente de la Parroquia de Santa María en Hamburgo durante la inundación del 2019. El paisaje físico de la comunidad fue devastado, pero así junto a otros, los esfuerzos de asistencia del Padre Raphael ayudaron a librar a su gente de mayor daño y de hecho logró

que se acercaran más como una comunidad espiritual más unida frente al desastre natural. ¡Bravo, Padre Raphael!

Para concluir regresando a la historia de Jacques Fesch, en los días previos a su ejecución, le confió al Padre Thomas "Cuando usted lea esta carta estaré en el cielo y veré a Jesús. Antes de esto, por supuesto, deberá molerse el grano de trigo y triturarse

la uva, pero a qué debo temer si tengo a Jesús." Gracias a la comunicación entre esta alma rebelde que se convirtió en fiel "sacerdote" por el bautismo y aquel quien fue ordenado sacerdote de Jesucristo, ya sea en francés o en inglés, podemos descifrar las palabras escritas en el corazón de Jacques: "¡Jesús, en ti confío!"

Para el papa, elegir un bando significa elegir un "modelo" de paz

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) -- El presidente de Estados Unidos, Joe Biden, no se anduvo con rodeos al llamar al presidente ruso, Vladimir Putin, un "carnicero" que ya no debería estar en el poder.

Sin importar cuánto presionó un reportero al papa Francisco en el avión que iba de Malta a Roma, preguntándole "¿Cuál sería su mensaje para Putin?" o "¿Qué le diría?", el Santo Padre no cedió, insistiendo en que todo lo que ya había dicho a cada líder está registrado públicamente.

El padre jesuita Antonio Spadaro, editor de La Civiltà Cattolica, explicó al día siguiente que el papa quiere ser un pacificador, por eso "no ataca a los líderes religiosos y políticos".

El papa ha condenado esta y todas las guerras, "pero él quiere reconstruir, no separar", escribió el sacerdote en un editorial del 5 de abril en el diario italiano "Il Fatto Quotidiano".

En lugar de emitir una reprimenda en el avión, el Sumo Pontífice le dijo al reportero: "Creo que detrás de su pregunta también hay dudas sobre las guerras justas e injustas".

Y para el papa Francisco, "No existen las guerras justas; ¡no existen!" como dijo a educadores el 18 de marzo.

"El Evangelio sólo nos pide que no miremos para otro lado", expresó; la guerra ahora "está a la vuelta de la esquina. ¿Qué estoy haciendo?"

Reasons To Give To

1

It's for the KIDS...

1,998 kids to be exact!
For 2021-22,
\$3,254,091
was granted to families for
tuition assistance



2

When you're giving
to help so many kids,
you receive a gift too!



75% of your donation
comes back to you as
IOWA TAX CREDITS.
Give \$1000, get \$750 back.
Give \$10000, get \$7500 back.
Yes, it's that easy!

3

After **14** years, Jeanne Wells Thill
is retiring as of June 30th!
Let's **PLEDGE NOW**
as a **thank you** to Jeanne for
her tireless efforts to help families
attend our Catholic schools.



FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION: HELP THE LEGACY CONTINUE!

A mystery worthy of trust

Continued from page 2

own. People who trust are able to go where Divine Mercy wills to go. Mercy is a mystery worthy of trust; it is both its cause and its effect. Mercy and its companion trust is apostolic and priestly in an era that is always tempted to suspicion, cynicism, and resignation. Jesus initiates sacraments through the Kingdom priesthood he enacts as a ministry of mercy on behalf of his Father. There is only one priesthood of Jesus Christ, but in the diversity of parts composing his Body, there are different kinds of priesthood called to communicate mercy to others.

The priesthood of the faithful, initiated in the sacrament of baptism and sealed and fortified in confirmation, liberates us from the bonds of original sin that is our genetic inheritance. The Holy Spirit stirs us to transform the chaos of the world into a place where sisters and brothers can dwell together in peace as a family. Thank God for the hundreds of people of all ages, from various countries and counties in our Diocese, who have received and will receive initiation sacraments at the Easter Vigil and beyond. They represent a stream of lives receptive to God's mercy who help us recognize that we are all pilgrims—and sometimes refugees—heading to an “upper room” not made by human hands: the house of the Father.

Cardinal Walter Kasper (one of the German prelates who has not left the reservation of

Catholic orthodoxy) frames the topic of migration of peoples in terms of the corporal works of mercy. He says one of the signs and challenges of our time is the task of absorbing individuals who have fallen on hard times at home and seek acceptance from us. But we must confront the fears within our own hearts that breed xenophobia and hostility toward foreigners. How prophetic and priestly are the citizens of countries such as Poland, the land of Divine Mercy, who are receiving millions of Ukrainian refugees. Sites such as the Warsaw Central Train Station serve as a logistical “field hospital” of newfound neighborliness feeding and clothing exiles with God's mercy. If the Poles can receive so many with relatively fewer resources at their disposal, might we in our proportionate prosperity find it within ourselves to absorb “aliens” who are our fellow humans, and often our sisters and brothers in Christ?

We are also grateful for ordained priests of Jesus Christ, including our diocesan priests who renewed their ordination promises at our Chrism Mass celebrated at St. Ambrose Cathedral. The Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper is the “initiation sacrament” for the ministerial priesthood, instilling in those chosen by Jesus a habitual capacity to proclaim God's word, to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice that is mercy personified, and to be a steady conduit of grace according to Christ's plan and promise to his

Church.

Most priestly ministry occurs in discreet places such as the confessional or the hospital room. But sometimes exceptional deeds are recognized by the larger community, as happened for Father Raphael Assamah, presently pastor at St. Theresa Parish in Des Moines, when this past April 6 the Iowa House of Representatives adopted a formal resolution honoring Father Raphael for his yeoman's work assisting his people in St. Mary Parish, Hamburg, during the 2019 flood. The community's physical landscape was devastated, yet in partnership with others, Father Raphael's relief efforts helped spare his people from greater harm and actually drew them closer as a tight-knit spiritual community undaunted by natural disaster. Bravo, Father Raphael!

To conclude by returning to the story of Jacques Fesch, in the days before he was executed, he confided to Father Thomas, “When you read this letter I shall be in heaven and I shall see Jesus. Before this, of course, the grain of wheat must be ground and the grape crushed, but what should I fear, since I possess Jesus.” Thanks to the communication between this wayward soul become faithful “priest” by baptism and one who was an ordained priest of Jesus Christ, whether in French or English, we can decipher the words written on Jacques' heart: “Jesus, I trust in you!”

Diocese, in union with faithful around the world, consecrate Russia, Ukraine



Photo by Kelly Mescher Collins

Bishop William Joensen – united with Pope Francis, all the bishops and Catholic faithful around the world – consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 25. At right, he was joined by Father John Ludwig.

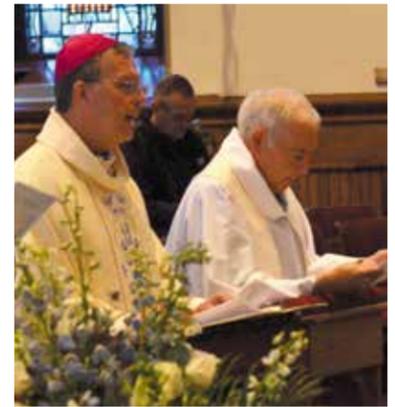


Photo by Eileen Valdez

Donnelly presents credentials as U.S. ambassador to Holy See

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The new U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, Joe Donnelly, officially began his duties April 11, presenting his letters of credential to Pope Francis.

Donnelly, 66, is a former member of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

President Joe Biden nominated him to the Vatican post in October, and the Senate confirmed him in January.

Donnelly said the United States and Vatican “have a very special relationship,” working together “to be a force for good in the world.”

The special areas of col-

laboration, he said, include defending human rights and religious freedom, combating human trafficking, caring for the environment and “advancing peace, security and the rights of children, seniors, women and all of our brothers and sisters everywhere.”

Donnelly also said he and his family “are proud to be members of the



CNS photo/Vatican Media
Joe Donnelly

Catholic faith. From my childhood through my university and law school years at the University of Notre Dame, through years of public service in Indiana and Washington, D.C., the Catholic Church has been a core part of my life and my values.”

Donnelly said he had been “proudly moved” by the power of the church and its members to improve the lives of people around the world.

“As U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, I will do all I can to ensure that the United States and the Vatican work together to advance human rights and dignity,” he said.

Making it Personal
with Bishop Joensen



Listen to Bishop Joensen's interviews anytime 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



The Footprints of GOD

15TH ANNIVERSARY

JOIN STEVE AND JANET RAY AND IOWA CATHOLIC RADIO ON AN EXCLUSIVE PILGRIMAGE TO

THE HOLY LAND

NOVEMBER 11 - 20, 2023

Parents have awesome responsibility

April has been doubly blessed for my family; as we get to enter into the joy of the Easter season, when we remember and renew our baptismal promises, we also get to bring our youngest child, Louisa Day Storey, to the font of baptism.

Louisa was born into our family in March, and now she will be born again into the life of Christ. She will become a “member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1265).

As Louisa’s parents, Kara and I have the profound joy and responsibility of raising her in the faith. This means bringing her to the waters of baptism, and it also means living in such a way that the grac-

Marriage and Family Life

By Adam Storey



es of baptism will be recognizable in her life. Just as I remind all my kids daily of my love for them, I am also called to point to the Father’s love for them, so that the grace of the sacrament of baptism becomes a recognizable experience in their lives.

This responsibility would be overwhelming were it not for the promise that I don’t have to rely on my own efforts or abilities; God’s grace can draw good-

ness out of my failures, and he is able to perfect what is imperfect in my work.

Louisa will receive an “indelible spiritual mark” (CCC 1272) in baptism that can never be lost. I have no idea where her life will take her, but I do know that she will always be a member of God’s family, a God who loves her fiercely and who is rich in mercy.

Kara and I often pray that our children will always remain in the heart of the Church, but we also have peace knowing that God loves our children more than we do, and as the Hound of Heaven, he will pursue our children at all moments, in any circumstance. Just like Louisa will forever be a Storey, even if she were to aban-

don her family, so too she will always be a member of the Body of Christ.

During the Easter liturgy, we recall and renew our baptismal promises. In a particular way I’d encourage all parents to reflect on the great joy, and the great responsibility that we bear, as we incorporate our families into the family of God.

By God’s grace, may we be effective witnesses to God’s love, and may God call home any and all of our children who struggle with their baptismal call!

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

How strong is your identity in Christ?

I recently watched the shows “Inventing Anna” on Netflix and “The Dropout” on Hulu, and it had me thinking about identity. Both shows were based on true stories of women pretending to be someone they are not.

Who do you identify with?

I identify as a fan of the Iowa State Cyclones, particularly during March Madness. They lost – also reminding me that disappointment in life is guaranteed – something with which we can all identify.

Maybe you identified with the underdog – the St. Peter’s Peacocks, who shocked and delighted the nation, making it all the way to the Elite Eight. Dream and believe and see how far it takes you, right? Who doesn’t identify with that? I was also cheering them on after ISU lost.

Some people are embarrassed by how they once identified. One of my five sisters won the title of Pork Princess by the Carroll County Pork Producers in high school, runner up to Pork Queen. Decades later, she still thinks it’s embarrassing.

I can identify with that embarrassment or shame when thinking about major failures or sins of my past. Just keep pushing them down and they will go away, right? Wrong.

My pork princess sister made it

Faith That Conquers

By Kelly Mescher Collins



out okay though. As a graduate of the University of Kansas, she identifies with the winners – the Kansas Jayhawks – the 2022 NCAA National Champions.

Does how you identify go against the grain?

I’ll never forget the time I was walking across Iowa State University campus between classes amidst a mob of fellow students when I spotted a very tall male from afar sporting a bright yellow Hawkeye sweatshirt. He stuck out like a sore thumb – you couldn’t miss him.

“Seriously?” I thought to myself.

As we were about to pass each other near the Memorial Union, I almost didn’t even look at him. “Why give this guy the satisfaction of acknowledging him and his ‘obnoxious’ sweatshirt?” I thought to myself. But then I did look. And I realized it was my younger brother, whom I identify as family!

I called out his name. And of course I gave him a hard time about his sweatshirt.

“What?” he asked, feigning innocence with a chuckle, smile and shrug. After chatting for a few minutes, he was on his merry way to class – definitely going against the grain.

It takes courage and conviction to go against the grain. Jesus definitely went against the grain. He treated women as equals, stood his ground with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and befriended social outcasts, transforming them. He cast out demons, healed the sick, and even raised the dead. Jesus spoke out against evil and wrongdoing.

It takes courage to speak out. It takes courage to spread the Gospel and the truth of Jesus. But as daughters and sons of the living God, it’s our responsibility.

In the face of sin, Jesus flipped the tables of moneychangers and seats of those selling doves in the Temple. (Matthew 21: 12-13) His anger was righteous and justified. I’ve never flipped tables, but I can identify with Jesus’ anger.

Jesus was not afraid to speak the truth – nor should we, cancel culture or not.

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus discusses his identity with the disciples, ask-

ing them who people say he is, before confirming that he is the Messiah. (Matthew 16: 13-20).

Just a few verses later, Jesus tells us that if we want to identify with him, we must join him in the suffering he endured on Good Friday.

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct.” (Matthew 16: 24-27)

Full of love and trust in my savior, I accept this challenge. My identity is grounded in Jesus.

Kelly Mescher Collins is a multimedia journalist for the Diocese of Des Moines and a member of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines. She can be reached at 515-237-5054 or kcollins@dmdiocese.org.

Catholic from here and elsewhere

Let the peace of our almighty God be with us, dear brothers and sisters.

I still remember the first time that I attended a Mass here in the United States as if it was yesterday.

With no English background, I was able to recognize most of the Mass parts even though from time to time I had the impression of missing some other parts.

I was blaming myself because I thought that I was distracting myself during Mass when I was trying to catch the meaning of words pronounced by the priest.

I am originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C), formerly called Zaire, a country where Masses are celebrated according to the Zairian rite, the only enculturated rite approved for use by the Catholic Church. This rite differs slightly from Roman rite.

So, for our fellow Iowans Catholics brothers and sisters who plan to visit the D.R.C one day, what do they have to expect when attending a Mass there?

First, you will notice the presence of an announcer. This role is not gender-based. The role of the announcer is to

Guest Column

By Ludovic Ngoma



announce the entry of the priest, introduce readings and intervene in the dialogue before the Eucharistic Prayer.

The second element that will probably strike your attention is the performance of liturgical dance by girls whose ages vary between 5-10 years and the musical instruments used during Mass (tam-tam, the gong, hand bell and solo guitar).

Then comes the Mass order after the homily. In the Zairian rite, the penitential rite doesn’t take place in the beginning of the Mass because people must hear God’s words first before asking for forgiveness. Regarding the gift ceremony, people are instructed to say “Oh priest of God here are our gifts, receive them. They manifest our spirit of solidarity and sharing...” This comes after giving their offerings.

Finally comes the most contro-

versial part that consists of invoking names of saints and ancestors who had an exemplary life. This takes place at the beginning of the Mass.

It is important to mention that the Zairian rite was petitioned four years after the Second Vatican Council in 1969 and was granted for use in 1988 by St. John Paul II.

In 2019, Pope Francis celebrated a Mass according to the Zairian at the Sistine Chapel in Vatican in the effort to promote the inculturation of the Gospel.

The Zairian rite is a proof that demonstrates one can pray to the God of Jesus Christ from a culturally centered approach without offending the unity of the Catholic faith. Pope Francis also emphasized that the Zairian rite suggests a promising way for the elaboration of more culturally based rites, such as the Amazonian Rite, in the effort to guarantee the universal tradition of the Church. Acts 2:11 said “People from Egypt and Libya, visitors from Rome heard them declaring the wonders of God in their own native language”.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The Zaire Use of the Roman Rite

is a particular usage of the Roman liturgy granted to the Dioceses of Zaire. Like the Anglican Usage of the Roman Rite (used by former Anglicans and Episcopalians who have joined the Catholic Church), the Ambrosian Rite (the ancient liturgy of the city of Milan) and the Mozarabic Rite (the ancient liturgy of Spain, still celebrated in Toledo, Spanish) it seeks to accompany a particular people in a particular context to help them to pray.

These are all Rites of the Roman Catholic Church. In addition, there are 23 Eastern Catholic Churches fully in communion with the Roman Catholic Church who each maintain their own unique liturgical tradition.

While these Catholics may worship slightly differently, they profess the same faith as Roman Catholics, celebrate the same seven sacraments as Roman Catholics, and are fully in communion with the Successor of St. Peter, Pope Francis.

Ludovic Ngoma is a co-founder of The Congolese Catholic of Iowa. He attends St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines.

Food for those longing for joy and hope

The wonders of the Holy Eucharist bring hope and joy to my soul.

I often find myself thinking, "How did I get invited to the table of plenty to receive the Holy Eucharist in this beautiful church?"

Then remember, it's because I believe, not that I am perfect I experience this opportunity to gather at Mass with a community of believers and sinners much like myself.

I am not alone, in that alone there is hope.

The blessed sacrament forgives our sins when we prepare our hearts. It nourishes our soul with hope that true joy lies ahead if we listen to God.

Food for the Journey

By Gretchen Watznauer



This gift of hope and joy would not be possible without a community of believers.

There are others like me who must pray, give thanks and lean into God's personal message.

We are not alone.

What great joy to know we are

gathered with the angels and the saints, bringing light, love and protection, as well as our earthly fellow parishioners to receive the true sacrifice of Christ. To taste and see the goodness of the Lord, is to be nourished and live! Many days I wonder if I am deserving of this blessing, but my God assures me this is where I belong.

It is here in this moment I find sustaining love, hope and joy for the future.

It's not just in receiving the Eucharist but the anticipation leading up to Eucharist that I find joy. Songs make my eyes well with tears in the wonder of the words sung. There's joyful anticipation of seeing Christ in the priest's eyes, knowing he has been transfigured to deliver us this gift. It's the gift you can never know how much you needed until you received it, embraced it, lived with it.

I am filled with hope and forgiveness, the joy of becoming one with Christ, with my family and with my community.

I find joy in watching family becoming one with Christ through the Eucharist, knowing he will support them in ways I cannot. I observe my students receiving Eucharist with joy, knowing it is a

privilege that not all receive.

How can my week not be filled with miracles and wonder? I am blessed.

The fulfillment of the Eucharist focuses my thankfulness on my blessings. I'm empowered to be an instrument of Christ's peace, ready to serve his world with prayer, joy, and love to meet the needs of others.

I embrace hope in struggles I can't yet conquer, as Christ is one with me, I will not fail. He will give me strength in finding joy to overcome struggles. He gives me hope that our community will work together to make the world a better place.

After partaking in the Eucharist, the week ahead will have more to offer. Even in the moments that are not easy, there is more grace for myself and others.

I hope to be a positive and joyful role model to my family, my peers and my students as I am filled with Christ.

Gretchen Watznauer is a youth minister at Assumption Parish in Granger and assistant principal at St. Francis Catholic School in West Des Moines.

When did we lose basic respect for each other?

Father Ron Rolheiser



When did we lose it? When did we lose that deeply-engrained, forever-sanctioned sense that however much we might disagree with each other or even dislike each other, we still need to accord each other basic courtesy, respect, and politeness?

We've lost that, at least for the most part. From the highest levels of government to the crassest platforms on social media, we are witnessing the death of respect, courtesy, and basic honesty. Nobody, it seems, is accountable any more for even the most basic manners or for honesty. Things we used to punish our kids for doing (name-calling, ethnic slurs, taunting, lying, and blatant disrespect of another) are now becoming acceptable in the mainstream. Even more worrisome is the fact that we feel justified morally in doing it. To be seen as courteous, respectful, and polite is no longer judged as a virtue but as a weakness.

Civility has died.

What's behind this? How did we move from Emily Post to what happens today on social media? Who gave us permission, societal and sacred, to do this?

Blaise Pascal once famously wrote that "men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from a religious conviction." Many people quoted that after the September terrorist attacks of 9/11, as they recognized this in radical Islamism where mass murder was justified and deemed as necessary in God's name.

No doubt, it's easier to see this in someone else because, as Jesus says, it's easier to see the speck in your brother's eye than the beam in your own. That same false belief that gave Islamic terrorists moral permission to bracket all the rules of decency is taking root everywhere today. Why? Religious passion for what one believes is right and the belief that one may get ugly in the cause of truth is prevalent everywhere today and is giving us moral permission to become disrespectful, dishonest, and discourteous in the name of truth, goodness, and God. This justifies itself as being prophetic, as arming us as warriors for truth.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Hatred and disrespect are always the antithesis of prophecy. A prophet, says Daniel Berrigan, makes a vow of love, not of hatred. Like Jesus, a prophet weeps in love over any "Jerusalem" which meets his or her prophecy with hatred. A prophet never brackets the non-negotiable mandate always to be respectful and honest, no matter the cause. No cause, societal or sacred, grants one an exemption from the rules of

elementary human courtesy.

Many people argue against this, pointing out that Jesus himself could be very harsh with those who opposed him. Harsh he was. Disrespectful and discourteous he was not. Moreover, underneath his challenge to those who opposed him, there was always the empathic yearning love of a parent for an alienated child, not the ugliness you see today in our government circles, in social media, and in the stare-you-down hatred we often see between various ideological factions today.

The truth can be harsh and confront us with a very strong challenge, but it can never be disrespectful. Disrespect is an infallible sign that one is not right, that one does not have the moral high ground, and that in this instance one is not speaking for God, truth, and goodness. To bracket the most elementary rules of love is to be a false prophet, caught up in self-interest and self-serving truth.

It is not easy to keep one's balance in a bitter time. The temptation to slide down the ideological roof on one side or the other and please "one's base" seems humanly irresistible. However, irrespective of which side we slide down, right or left, there always comes with this a prescribed rhetoric, a prescribed discourtesy, a prescribed disrespect, and not infrequently a prescribed dishonesty. Along with that slide also comes the self-same righteousness of those who opposed Jesus and believed that they were justified in being disrespectful and doing violence in God's name.

Bitter times, a milieu of hatred and lies, and finding ourselves on opposing sides from each other, tempts us towards what comes naturally: name-calling, disrespect, lack of graciousness, and dishonesty whenever a truth or a lie serves us. Paradoxically, the challenge is in the opposite direction. Given the breakdown in civility today, the call from truth and from God is to be more careful, more scrupulous, and more uncompromising than ever in the respect, courtesy, and graciousness we accord to others.

We hope to be spending eternity with each other, dining at a single table. We do not prepare ourselves nor those we disagree with to take a place at that table by facing off with each other with hatred, dishonesty, disrespect, and coercion, as if that table could be taken by power and violence.

In the end, not everyone at that table will have liked each other this side of eternity, but everyone will be most gracious, respectful, and honest on the other side.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser can be contacted through his website ronrolheiser.com.

Join us for the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration

By Father PJ McManus

Twenty-five years ago, I was at a dance in the basement of Christ the King Church.

It was hot and stuffy and I felt compelled to go out and get some air.

And while getting air, this very clear thought came to my mind: "I want you to be a priest."

A hundred years ago, a young girl was at a dance far away in Poland and had the very same experience.

"How long are you going to keep running from me?" the voice said to her. "I'm yours."

Her name was Faustina Kowalska. We now call her St. Faustina, and she helped bring the message of Divine Mercy

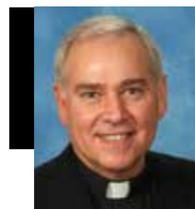
to the whole world.

I want to invite you on Sunday, April 24, to Christ the King for a celebration of God's divine mercy. We'll have confessions available from 2-3 p.m., the Chaplet of Divine Mercy will be sung with great enthusiasm at 3 p.m. and then the Mass itself will be at 3:30 p.m., celebrated by our own Bishop William Joensen.

St. Faustina taught us that mercy is God's greatest attribute, the crowning glory of all the works of his hands. God's mercy is available for each and every one of us – both to receive and then so to give.

Please – won't you join us?

Father PJ McManus is the pastor of Christ the King Parish in Des Moines.



I've Been Wondering...

Father John Ludwig

Q. I've noticed that for the placement of the baptistery inside a church, there are as many places as there are churches. When did the practice begin of placing the baptismal font in the front of the Church near the altar? - Bob, West Des Moines

A. IT SEEMS THAT NO two Catholic Churches are the same: from architecture to furnishings to vestments to songbooks to communion ware, etc.

If we go back several centuries, we see in Europe a separate building for the baptistery. In Pisa, Italy, we are familiar with the leaning bell tower.

But there is also a separate building housing the baptistery and a separate building housing the place where the faithful gather for Mass.

We don't see that in American churches, but we do see an increasing emphasis on the place of baptism from the smaller fonts to the larger baptismal pools.

I'm not aware of any regulations on where the place of baptism is to be located, but during the liturgical renewal following the Second Vatican Council, many churches began to place the baptistery where most of the faithful could see. Often enough that was near the altar.

Many people once thought of baptism as something rather private: after Mass on a Sunday with only family and a few friends in attendance.

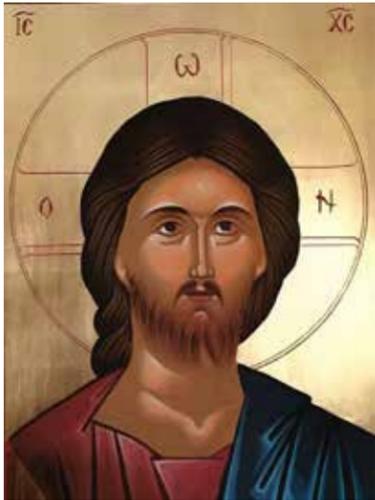
But being baptized, joining the Church, becoming a member of the Body of Christ – all of these are actually communal celebrations of the Church faithful. This is especially evident during the Easter season when we welcome new members into our community of faith.

Many American parishes are so large that some baptisms are celebrated at a Sunday Mass, and others are celebrated at a different time.

Regardless of where the font or pool is located, it's important to remember that a baptism is really never private. We all have a stake in it.

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.

Parish hosting weekend workshop with master iconographer



The group will paint this Jesus icon during the workshop at Ss. John and Paul Parish in Altoona May 20-22.

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Ss. John and Paul Parish in Altoona is hosting an Icon Workshop May 20-22 with master iconographer Drazer Dupor of Madison, Wisconsin.

Dupor will guide participants through a step-by-step process of painting an icon of Jesus in a Byzantine style. By the end, students will have a completed icon ready for varnishing and display.

Sharon Gleich, a member of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines, helped coordinate the event.

"It gives you the opportunity to be in one with the creator as you are bringing this icon to life," said Gleich, who

has attended icon workshops before, which typically last a full week. This is a unique opportunity and introduction to iconography for the greater Des Moines Catholic community.

"He will explain iconography, the process," she continued. "And it's really about the spiritual aspect of praying this image into being. You start with this clean board ...and as you are layering different colors the process starts to materialize."

Cost to attend is \$250 and includes instructions, all painting supplies, lunches, snacks and refreshments. Registration deadline is May 8 and class size is limited. To register, contact Sharon Gleich at 515-954-9405 or email sgleich@comcasat.net.

Capitol update

By Tom Chapman
Contributing Writer

Work is slowing down at the Iowa Capitol because the House and Senate have differing approaches on some issues.

For example, the House has passed several departmental budget bills, but the Senate has not yet taken up any of them.

As the end of the legislative session approaches, we encourage you to make your voice heard to legislators.

The ICC is continuing its work in support of parental choice in education and the Iowa MOMS bill (see story on page 1).

Other matters we're working on include opposition to cashless gambling and unemployment benefit cuts. Follow this link for action alerts and sample messages to legislators: iowacatholicconference.org/voter-voice/

The Iowa MOMS bill, Senate File 2381 passed the Senate last week on a 32-16 vote and goes to the House. All Republicans plus two Democrats voted yes.

The bill includes \$1 million for crisis pregnancy centers/nonprofit agencies' services to pregnant women in such areas as nutrition, housing and employment assistance, child care as well as material items. Fourteen states have similar programs. The legislation would also extend Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women from 60 days postpartum to 12 months postpartum.

Two bills supported by the Iowa Catholic Conference were approved by the

Senate and sent to the governor. Senate File 577 passed by a vote of 46-0. It provides for the availability of birth certificates for "non-viable" children to parents who have suffered a miscarriage. Legislation creating penalties for elder abuse, Senate File 522, also passed the Senate unanimously.



Tom Chapman

Sign up now for an upcoming religious liberty symposium. As of press time, there's still room for you at next week's symposium on religious liberty being held at Drake University in Des Moines.

The event, "Freedom To Serve: Why Religion Is Vital in a Pluralistic Society," is set for April 19 and features nationwide experts. It is being 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. There are afternoon sessions and Bishop William Joensen of Des Moines will be hosting the evening panel.

You can sign up at <https://iafreedomtoserve.eventbrite.com>. Campus parking passes will be provided to registered attendees.

Tom Chapman is the executive director of the Iowa Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the bishops of Iowa.

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Consejero sobre Asistencia de Víctimas

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

Pope: Victory is not raising a flag on a pile of rubble

Celebrating Palm Sunday

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Jesus obeyed the most challenging of commandments: to love one's enemies; and he invites humanity to do the same by breaking a vicious cycle of evil, sorrow and hatred with love and forgiveness, Pope Francis said on Palm Sunday.

"As disciples of Jesus, do we follow the master, or do we follow our own desire to strike back?" he asked in his homily April 10.

Pope Francis began Holy Week with Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square with an estimated 50,000 people -- the first time large numbers of people could participate since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago.

He also made a heartfelt appeal for a ceasefire by warring parties and the start of a "real negotiation," even if it requires "some sacrifice for the good of the people."

Before leading the Angelus prayer after Mass, he asked, "What kind of victory will it be to plant a flag on a pile of rubble?"

Without specifically mentioning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he said, "Put down the weapons. Let an Easter truce begin."



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Pope Francis greets the crowd after celebrating Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 10.

Looking to advertise in The Catholic Mirror?
Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdiocese.org or
515-237-5054.

Cardinal Dolan receives relic



CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

A boy kneels in prayer before an image of Blessed Carlo Acutis during Eucharistic adoration April 7 at St. Rita of Cascia Church in the South Bronx, N.Y.

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino of Assisi, Italy, presented New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan with a first-class relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis for the U.S. Catholic Church's three-year national Eucharistic Revival that begins June 19, the feast of Corpus Christi, and culminates with the national Eucharistic Congress in 2024.

Cardinal Dolan received the relic on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the USCCB's Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, which is spearheading the Eucharistic revival.

The relic's presentation followed adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and an evening Mass April 7 at St. Rita of Cascia Church in the Bronx, according to an April 8 news release from the USCCB.

Blessed Acutis, an Italian teen who died of leukemia in 2006 and was beatified in 2020, is entombed in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi.

The 15-year-old's use of technology to spread devotion to the Eucharist prompted Pope Francis to hail him as a role model for young people today.

He is the patron of the first year of the Eucharistic revival, which the U.S. bishops approved during their fall general session in November in Baltimore. His relic, consigned to the U.S. church for a year, is a fragment of the pericardium, the membrane that surrounded and protected his heart.



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Thank you to all of our volunteers and donors who helped us over the last six months! You made the difference in so many lives!

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Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese's Victim Assistance Advocate, Sam Porter, is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of abuse of minors by clergy through a complaint process and in seeking support and counseling services. He can be reached at 515-286-2024 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.

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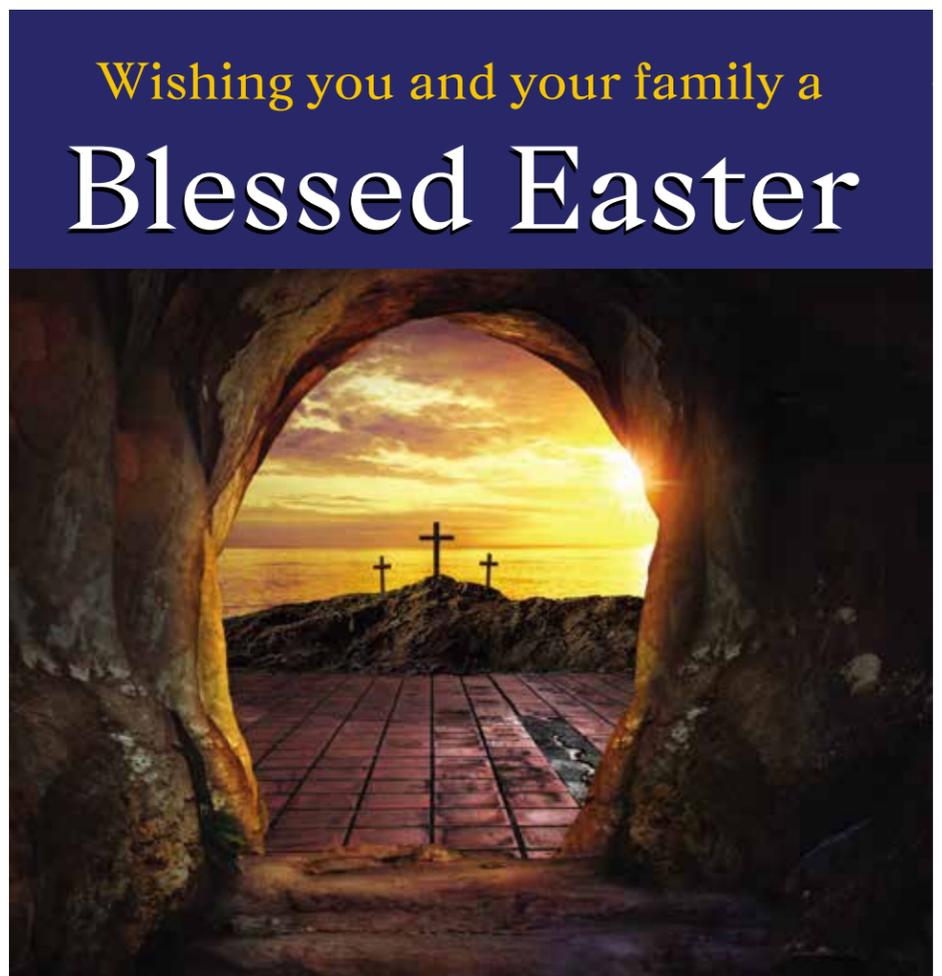
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