Catholic education has long been a big priority for Sharon and Kyle Krause and their family.

In addition to their philanthropic support, they have invested a considerable amount of their time and leadership to ensure that Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines continue to thrive.

So when Bishop William Joensen asked them to serve as General Co-Chairs for the Ignite! Campaign, it was an easy “yes.”

“All five of our children went to Catholic schools, and our daughter taught in one, so we were closely following the strategic planning process for the schools,” said Sharon. “The resulting vision for the future not only aligns with our values but will ensure that the schools in our Diocese will be able to flourish. We want future generations of kids to have the same opportunity that ours had, so this was a natural fit for us.”

As General Co-Chairs, the Krauses played a critical role in leading a successful silent phase for the Ignite! Campaign, helping to secure over $12 million in lead gifts and providing momentum for the diocesan-wide effort currently underway.

“Starting with Kyle’s father, Bill, our family has been very involved at Holy Family School. In volunteering his time at the school, he witnessed first-hand how much the kids and their families valued the gift of an outstanding Catholic education. Without the support of the Catholic community, that opportunity would not be available. The endowment for tuition assistance established through the Ignite! Campaign is going to help many more families across our 16 diocesan Catholic schools realize that dream. With the blessings we’ve received, we look forward to seeing the fruits of our labor come to fruition,” said Kyle.

The Iowa bishops addressed the leaked draft opinion on the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization in a statement released May 23 by the Iowa Catholic Conference. Here is the statement.

Guided by science and faith, Catholics are praying fervently that the U.S. Supreme Court will overturn the claim to a constitutional right to abortion in its ruling on Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. A draft opinion leaked from the Court would seem to indicate majority support for a reversal of Roe v. Wade. This would have the effect of allowing many states to determine their own abortion policy.

We exhort our nation to prioritize the well-being of women, children, and families so that no woman ever feels forced to choose between her future and the life of her child.

Through its charity agencies, and the independent efforts of its members, the Catholic community has a responsibility to assist those in need.

Continued on page 9
Even if we are not formally under siege in our country, the spirit of honest, heartfelt, shootings in recent weeks leaves us saddened, mortified, and at risk of losing hope in our fellow human beings. Ordinary scenes of life—a school, a grocery store, a hospital, and even a church practically in broad daylight, among other places—have become sites of bloodshed and brutal human sacrifice. It’s no longer a matter of merely taking our freedoms for granted; wherever we go, our daily lives can remain at risk, so vulnerable do we find ourselves. And even on rare occasions, those charged to protect us and uphold the public peace seem to fail. Shock and awe can turn into in-dignation and anger—this should not be! Yet, sadly, how often our collective desire for justice, accountable and heightened safety seems to devolve into rein-forcing the status quo. And so we denounce that we ever found out what it has all been for. And even on rare occasions, those charged to protect us and uphold the public peace seem to fail. Shock and awe can turn into in-dignation and anger—this should not be! Yet, sadly, how often our collective desire for justice, accountable and heightened safety seems to devolve into rein-forcing the status quo. And so we denounce that we ever found out what it has all been for.
Couple, moved by Holy Spirit, become foster parents

By Liam Dale
Staff Writer

When asked what love means to them, Jeff and Mindy Schechinger’s answer could be boiled down to one word: sacrifice.

Jeff and Mindy are residents of Portsmouth and attend Holy Mass at St. Mary Parish. In a short sentence, they can be described easily as people who want to love.

About a year ago, they received and adopted their first foster placement, saying, “When we first received him, we knew we had no real qualifications to take him in, but after a little while, we knew he was in the right home.”

“I’ve taken works and, Jeff and Mindy eventually felt moved by the Holy Spirit. Jeff recalled Mindy saying, “If we can do it, then we should.”

From that moment on, their minds were made up. In a matter of months, they received and adopted their first foster placement, saying, “When we first received him, we knew we had no real qualifications to take him in, but after a little while, we knew he was in the right home.”

“I see that every pregnant woman in Iowa has better access to quality prenatal and postpartum care. In all these ways and more, the Catholic Church witnesses to the sanctity of all human life, from conception to natural death, and works to build a true culture of life in our nation. No matter how the Dobbs case turns out, we have a responsibility and opportunity to take action to support the dignity of the human person and the common good.

Please help in these efforts and pray for a favorable ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court, which will lift up the sacredness and dignity of all human life.

Iowa bishops address leaked draft on Dobbs case

The Catholic Church is supporting all women and couples who are facing unexpected or difficult pregnancies, and during the early years of parenthood, through initiatives such as Walking with Moms in Need.

The Church provides abortion healing ministries, most often called Project Rachel Ministry, so that women and men receive forgiveness, healing, and spiritual renewal through Christ’s infinite mercy.

We also encourage those of good will to contact their legislators in support of the “Iowa MOMS” bill, which will ensure that every pregnant woman in Iowa has better access to quality prenatal and postpartum care.

In all these ways and more, the Catholic Church witnesses to the sanctity of all human life, from conception to natural death, and works to build a true culture of life in our nation. No matter how the Dobbs case turns out, we have a responsibility and opportunity to take action to support the dignity of the human person and the common good.

Please help in these efforts and pray for a favorable ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court, which will lift up the sacredness and dignity of all human life.

Ride, raise funds for pregnancy centers

Everyone is invited to Biking for Babies early morning Mass and bike ride to raise funds and awareness for crisis pregnancy centers.

The ride – it’s not a race – is intended to connect young adults with local pregnancy resource centers to raise awareness and resources for pregnant women and their families. Organizations benefiting from the rides will be Agape in Des Moines and Martha’s House Maternity Home in Ames.

On Saturday, June 25, the 7 a.m. Mass begins at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Ankeny, followed by registration, a few speakers and then the ride; a 48-mile ride ($45) leaves at 9 a.m. and a 23-mile ride ($25) leaves at 9:10 a.m. A 5-mile ride children and family option leaves at 9:20 a.m.

The link to register for the local ride is: https://bikingforbabies-kindful.com/c/ankeny-local-ride
Banners available to help parishes, schools kick off national revival

By Liam Dale
Staff Writer

In an effort to help kick-start the U.S. bishops’ Eucharistic Revival initiative, Iowa Catholic Radio Network has begun offering a new resource for local parishes, schools, and other faith-based organizations.

Beyond providing radio programming for the faithful of the Diocese and beyond, ICR has also obtained several educational panels depicting Eucharistic miracles from around the world.

Based on its renowned worldwide success, The Vatican International Exhibition: Eucharistic Miracles of the World has proven to be a powerful tool in the effort to foster authentic devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

What are these panels and where did they come from? These 40 panels are part of a much larger collection of 180 designed by Blessed Carlo Acutis before his death at age 15, said Matt Willkom, ICR’s executive director. “The panels selected for ICR’s display were chosen in order to represent not only the most astonishing miracles throughout history, but also to show that this is indeed a worldwide phenomenon that continues to this present day,” Willkom said, adding that, “the ultimate goal is to communicate God’s love for each and every one of us, that he would humbly himself and make himself so vulnerable...so approachable.”

The display, which ICR lends out free of charge, has already been hosted at several parishes within the Diocese since the project’s launch this past December. In fact, Christ the King in Des Moines has used them on two separate occasions. Nationwide speaker Steve Ray recently gave a talk at Holy Spirit Parish in Creston using the display as a backdrop, saying at one point, “You are what you eat.”

The station recommends that parishes with schools attached invite the students to do research projects on one or several of the panels.

“This sort of exposure at such a young age to the reality of Jesus’ Real Presence in the Eucharist is absolutely priceless for the future of the Church,” said Willkom. “A parish mission featuring a speaker (like the one in Creston) would also be invaluable for drawing people more deeply into the Mass.”

The staff at ICR understand that putting together an event like this can have its challenges. That’s why the station is more than willing to help a parish, school, or faith-based organization locate an appropriate speaker, as well as assist with setup and breakdown of the panels. For more information about the display and how to reserve it, visit www.iowacatholicroadio.com.

Students reflect on miracles attributed to the Eucharist

St. Malachy Catholic School in Creston, along with Holy Spirit Church in Creston and St. Edward Church in Afton, hosted the Eucharistic Miracles of the World banners shared by Iowa Catholic Radio Network.

Seventh and eighth grade students spent some time during religion class reading about the different miracles depicted in the banners on display throughout the school building.

Students reflected on why they thought God would produce the miracles.

“Some of their reflections are so deep,” said Principal Jennifer Simmons. “We’ve really enjoyed having this display in our building.”

The banners, which can easily be folded up for transportation, show a variety of Eucharistic miracles researched by Blessed Carlo Acutis.

The following are some reflections from students at St. Malachy Catholic School in Creston after having spent some time with the Eucharistic banners.

Kurtis: “Carlos can be an inspiration to all the graphic designers and filmmakers to create and spread the word of God to the whole world.”

Adyson: “I think this miracle shows that God is seen through the most pure.”

Jayson: On the miracle of Avignon, “Jesus is trying to show us his miracles and powers he has. Jesus wants to protect his host and when we can’t he will. Jesus is leading us to him.”

Ayden: “Carlos did so much and walked so close to God in his short time. We all can be close with God and help the church thrive. We should contribute what we have with our talents just like Carlos.”

Ayden: On the miracle of Sokolka, “The Eucharist is really transformed into Jesus’ body and the wine is his blood. If the bread can be turned into heart muscle, what other signs does anyone need?”

Ayden: On the miracle of Avignon, “God shows us his strength and shows what his grace can do. If he can push the waters for the Eucharist, he can do it for us.”

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of students at Dowling Catholic High School. With generous support of the We Are Maroons Annual Appeal, we are able to fulfill our mission of preparing Leaders for Life, Centered on Christ.

“To get more information on the Eucharistic banners or to reserve a time to borrow them for a parish, school or organization’s event, go to iowacatholicroadio.com.”

“Thank you so much for helping me grow in so many ways at Dowling Catholic. I can’t wait to take these experiences with me throughout my life.” – Maddie M. ’23
Three men to be ordained priests

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Deacon Alex Kramer
Holy Trinity Parish, Des Moines

Deacon Alex Kramer was just a young boy when the Catholic Church made its first impact on his life.

While watching television at five or six years old, a documentary about St. John Paul II’s visit to Iowa came on the television. “Who is the guy in white?” Deacon Kramer asked his parents before deciding that he too wanted to be the pope someday.

This interest in the Holy Father evolved. “The Lord was calling me to be a priest,” Deacon Kramer said.

Serving at the altar during Mass in his formative years was a “blessing.”

“To be close to the holy mystery – close to the sacrifice of the Mass and serving at the altar endowed in me a desire to be a priest,” he continued.

Attending Dowling Catholic High School also offered many blessings, including the opportunity to participate in events that strengthened and nurtured his faith journey, as well as friendships with other young men who wanted to be priests.

These last eight years of seminary have given Deacon Kramer the opportunity to grow deeper in his relationship with God while learning about the priesthood. The world has changed a lot though – even in these past few years.

He looks forward to joining his brothers and sisters in Christ in bringing the light of God to today’s secular world.

“One of the things I look forward to doing most is celebrating Mass, bringing people the Eucharist and being a Christ-like witness to the world,” he added.

“I am so thankful to be a priest and serve the people of God here,” Deacon Kramer said. “Please pray for me and my brother seminarians.”

Deacon Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros
St. Bernard Parish, Osceola

Deacon Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros credited his mother’s devotion to the Catholic faith as the strongest influence on his faith today.

Born and raised in Mexico, his mother taught Deacon Mayorga Landeros and his siblings how to pray. She also made sure they made it to catechism classes every Saturday and Mass every Sunday.

She regularly brought the kids to confession, standing with them in line, awaiting her own turn to “dispel any fears around the sacrament and just plainly and serenely go with us and teach us that it’s a beautiful sacrament.”

As a child, Deacon Mayorga Landeros enjoyed celebrating “Mass” in his room with his siblings.

“I would even lead small pilgrimages around our house with my brother,” Deacon Mayorga Landeros said. “I remember clearly and vividly making a wooden cross with my brother and I would process around the house. I think that’s when the idea of becoming a priest first showed up.”

During his high school years in Osceola, Deacon Mayorga Landeros had a restless heart before returning to a deeper prayer life.

“I remember building a relationship with Mary,” he continued. “I was not even lead small pilgrimages around our house with my brother, Deacon Mayorga Landeros said. “I remember clearly and vividly making a wooden cross with my brother and I would process around the house. I think that’s when the idea of becoming a priest first showed up.”

During his high school years in Osceola, Deacon Mayorga Landeros had a restless heart before returning to a deeper prayer life.

“I remember building a relationship with Mary,” he continued. “This was a beautiful relationship where she lead me to her son again and to the idea of priesthood.”

During his senior year of high school Deacon Mayorga Landeros made a few seminary visits, fully expecting to encounter “young but boring seminarians stuck in the books and in prayer.”

“I went to St. John Vianney seminary back in 2014, and one of the nights we were there the seminarians organized a game of dodgeball. But the following morning they had a holy hour,” Deacon Mayorga Landeros said.

He saw the balance seminary offered: prayer, study, fraternity and games. He was sold – seminary was for him. Deacon Mayorga Landeros is excited to serve the people of the Diocese of Des Moines.

Deacon Nick Smith
St. Augustine Parish, Des Moines

Deacon Nick Smith of St. Augustine Parish in Des Moines said his vocation story began with his family.

“I would say my vocation is the result of a lot of small seeds of faith being planted throughout my life – starting, of course, in my family – in the home where my siblings and I were taught the Catholic faith,” he said.

The Smith family attended Mass every Sunday and learned from a very young age to see the world through the lens of faith.

“One of those seeds that was planted early on was to be able to serve at the altar in the fifth grade...” Deacon Smith continued.

“That was a real eye-opener for me. I was able to participate in the liturgy and Mass more actively – even at a young age.”

“I think at a certain level I knew that what was happening at the altar during Mass was really, really important,” he said. “That the words the priest said to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus were life-changing. It was a miracle.”

This was one of many times when the seed was planted that maybe the priesthood was something God was calling Deacon Smith to consider.

“But it wasn’t until later in high school that I really started to think seriously about priesthood...” he said. “I continued to engage in opportunities to engage with my faith, including serving at Mass, going to adoration, praying a little more often.”

As a senior in high school, he realized that the next step had to be seminary.

“I moved on to St. John Vianney College seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, where I really began to dive into a life of prayer – studying philosophy, being around other young men who were also serious about their faith and serious about following the will of God,” he continued. “And it really was in the seminary where I think my vocation was truly confirmed and where I began to really love the priesthood as a life given over to God completely.”

Congratulations to Deacon Jason Lee

Deacon Jason Lee was ordained by Bishop William Joensen to the transitional diaconate on June 10 at his home parish, St. Boniface in Waukee. This is Deacon Lee’s last major step before his ordination to the priesthood next year.

Deacon Lee will be serving St. Michael Parish in Harlan this summer.
**Around the Diocese**

**June 25, Saturday**

**Mental Health First Aid**

URBANDALE – St. Pius X Parish is hosting in-person trainings for Mental Health First Aid from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Learn to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. Program includes a 7.5-hour highly interactive training in a group in-person setting. Some virtual pre-work is required. There is no cost due to generous Amerigroup funding through Catholic Charities. To register go to: https://go.iastate.edu/HE0GYX or call St. Pius X at 515-276-2059. For questions about the topic, contact Dr. David Brown at dbrown@iastate.edu.

**NAMI Ride 4 Recovery**

NAMI Southwest Iowa's Ride 4 Resilience and Recovery is its annual signature fundraiser for free programs in southwest Iowa all year. Catholic Charities, in partnership with Amerigroup, are proud sponsors of this event. There is a 9.6-mile Family Route and a 44.4-mile Challenge Route from Wabash Trace. Registrations taken online until June 22. Walk-in registrations are welcome at the event. For registration and event details, go to: https://namisouthwest-iowa.com/ride-4-resilience-and-recovery.

**Biking for Babies**

ANKENY – Join prolife advocates and walkers/joggers for one of three bike rides that raises funds and awareness for crisis pregnancy centers. Biking routes are offered as a 48-mile ride, a 23-mile ride, and a 5-mile children and family ride at staggered times that follow a 7 a.m. Mass at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish.

The link to register for the local ride is: bikingforbabies-bloom.kindful.com/ankeny-local-ride

**St. Timothy Parish Reunion**

RENO, IA – St. Timothy Parish will host a reunion at the church hall and grounds, 69488 Wichita Road, Cambreland, IA. A social hour will begin at 4 p.m. with barbecue supper at 5:30. Please bring a lawn chair. All former parishioners, neighbors and anyone interested in St. Timothy’s are invited. Please join us to reminisce and reconnect. Contact 712-621-5833 with questions.

**July 9 Saturday**

**Saint Patrick Celebration**

IMOGENE – St. Patrol Parish will celebrate “Bless Our Heritage” jubilee, a celebration that was postponed in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. Festivities run from 9 a.m. to sundown on the church grounds culminating with fireworks at the ballfield. High-style, a self-guided cemetery walk, cemeterial, catered dinner, variety show and more are on the agenda. Bishop William Joensen and the clergy of the diocese will attend.

**July 21-Sept. 8 Thursdays**

**Sacred Land: Food and Farming**

These Holy Hours will be hosted Monday nights for an hour of Eucharistic adoration and evening prayer. These Holy Hours will be hosted from 5:30-6 p.m. each Monday. Evening prayer will be livestreamed at Facebook.com/dm diocese.

**Cathedral Holy Hours**

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**The Catholic Mirror subscription appeal**

Help us continue to provide news and inspiring stories of faith to you each month by taking a subscription to The Catholic Mirror.

Each year, all registered and active parishioners within the Diocese of Des Moines are asked to support The Catholic Mirror monthly newspaper with a $25 voluntary subscription.

Funds raised help offset the cost of producing and distributing The Catholic Mirror – a cost of about $140,000 annually. Subscriptions can be purchased by check payable to The Catholic Mirror (601 Grand Ave. Des Moines, IA 50309) or onlinediocese.org/giving/special-collection-giving.

Your support is instrumental in bringing important news and inspirational stories of faith to central and southwest Iowa and beyond. Thank you!

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**Hibernians celebrate priest’s anniversary**

The Ancient Order of Hibernians, Polk County Chapter, celebrated their chaplain, Father Frank Palmer, who marked his 60th anniversary of priestly ordination. The Hibernians presented Father Palmer with gift cards. Pictured in the first row, left to right are: Shannon Maher, Tom Sacco, Jim Watts, Father Palmer, and Jeff Ibbitson. In the second row left to right are: John Langin, Denny O’Grady, Bob Quinn, Mike Fleming, Jim Duffy, and Bill Henry.

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**PRAY WITH US**

**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.

Diocesan Leaders will mark a year of strategic visioning in southwest Iowa with a lawn chair. All former parishioners, neighbors and anyone interested in St. Timothy’s are invited. Please join us to reminisce and reconnect. Contact 712-621-5833 with questions.

The link to register for the local ride is: bikingforbabies-bloom.kindful.com/ankeny-local-ride

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**The Catholic Mirror**

**Reach more than 30,000 Catholics in central and southwest Iowa by advertising in The Catholic Mirror.**

Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdioce.se for call 515-237-5054 for more information.
On the move: Five longtime diocesan leaders retire
Finance director’s steadfast, calm nature guided Diocese during challenging times

Dan Kinsella and Paul Carlson have spoken countless times late into the night and over the weekend on urgent diocesan finance matters.

It’s that dedication, integrity and poise during tough times that exemplified what a gift Carlson has been to the Diocese as he prepares to retire after 20-plus years.

Carlson, of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Ankeny, has addressed overall accounting and financial reporting and analysis functions to ensure that diocesan asset and liability integrity and safeguarding is maintained. His service extended to 80 parishes and 16 schools within the Diocese.

He addressed challenging situations and managed relationships,” he said. Carlson guided the Diocese through the pandemic, one of the most trying of times.

Bishop William Joensen praised Carlson’s steadfast leadership. “Paul has been a trusted, worthy, knowledgeable and vigilant steward of our resources,” he said. “During the start of the pandemic and when I was a relatively new bishop, Paul steadily guided us through a variety of creative options to help the Diocese navigate one of these trying times in recent memory.”

Kinsella added: “His demeanor is always the same. He is an absolute rock and pillar to lean on regardless of what is happening around him.”

Diocesan Stewardship Director Maureen Kenney said Carlson has been collaborative. “Paul has an unassumingly natural way about him that fosters the leadership and participation within the large diocesan network he’s served for many, many years. You could count on his decision making to be constructive, transparent and a precedent that will serve the Diocese for generation to come.”

Carlson has helped other Catholic organizations and Catholic Charities with their finances. “Throughout the years, Paul has provided wise counsel and guidance in achieving financial sustainability in support of Catholic Charities. We will miss Paul’s expertise and, in particular, his friendship and collegiality to all he has mentored and helped,” said Catholic Charities Executive Director Barbara Becker.

Carlson is grateful for his years serving the Diocese. “The years flew by and I feel honored to have worked with so many talented, dedicated and wonderful people throughout the Church of southwest Iowa. I look forward to the next opportunity God presents me with.”

Robert Larson, of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, has been named the new Finance director.

Mercy Sister Susan Widdel was a gift for being able to talk to just about anybody about just about anything.

And if the topic is the Chicago Cubs, all the better. She can talk baseball with the best of them.

Sister Susan is retiring from Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish after serving 22 of her 55 years in ministry in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

She has provided pastoral outreach to the homebound and grieving, guided folks on their spiritual journey, served as a company and prayed with people.

Sister Susan retires after serving as a hub for homebound RCIA, Stephen Ministry

Sister Susan Widdel

Deacon couple retires after 20 years of growing seeds of diaconate vocation

For about 20 years, Deacon Ron and Tammy Myers have led the formation of candidates considering a vocation to the permanent diaconate.

They spent two week-ends every month for 11 months of the year in Missouri or Iowa with the latest class of candidates, then a week of summer school, time on retreats, completing paperwork, organizing family activities into accompanying couples on the formation journey.

With 10 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and the realization that it was time to refocus on family, they’re stepping down.

Deacon Myers “had just been about every Protestant faith” when he met Tammy at their work. She invited him to go to St. Benedict Heart Catholic Church with her, she served as his sponsor, he became Catholic and they married.

“I just had this feeling that I was at home,” he said when they sat near the tabernacle in church for the first time, “I was here. I belonged. I didn’t understand why, it was so serene, quiet and relaxed. I was at peace.”

After some time, Dea- con Myers felt called to be a per- manent deacon and was ordained in 2001.

Tammy and Deacon Ron Myers

About that time, there were new guidelines from the U.S. Bishops on diocesan formation and Bishop Joseph Char- ron, C.PP.S., was having the Des Moines Diocese’s program re- viewed. Deacon Myers served on the committee, saw the job description for the coordinator of the revised program, applied and got the job.

He and Tammy set up a core team of deacon couples that provide support for the those in formation.

“It’s the lifeblood of the formation,” he said. As co-leaders of the diaconate formation process, Dea- con Myers and Tammy were inspired “to see couples who thought they were totally immersed and in touch with their faith develop and flower into a whole new, broader, stronger re- lationship with God and each oth- er and with those around them.”

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After some time, Dea- con Myers felt called to be a per- manent deacon and was ordained in 2001.

Tammy and Deacon Ron Myers

About that time, there were new guidelines from the U.S. Bishops on diocesan formation and Bishop Joseph Char- ron, C.PP.S., was having the Des Moines Diocese’s program re- viewed. Deacon Myers served on the committee, saw the job description for the coordinator of the revised program, applied and got the job.

He and Tammy set up a core team of deacon couples that provide support for the those in formation.

“It’s the lifeblood of the formation,” he said. As co-leaders of the diaconate formation process, Dea- con Myers and Tammy were inspired “to see couples who thought they were totally immersed and in touch with their faith develop and flower into a whole new, broader, stronger re- lationship with God and each oth- er and with those around them.”

“Tommie and I are forward to the next opportunity God presents me with.”

Robert Larson, of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, has been named the new Finance director.

Sister retires after serving as a hub for homebound RCIA, Stephen Ministry
Regional schools planning update

Progress continues on the collaborative planning initiative for the new Des Moines Regional Catholic Schools.

The regional board of directors will be comprised of lay members and clergy who will exercise authority in the following areas: compensation planning, tuition rates, tuition assistance management, business operations, communications, governance and policy.

Dr. Dan Ryan, president of the regional schools system, announced the following lay members. The names of the clergy will be announced as they are appointed by Bishop William Joensen.

- Steve Lacy, regional board chair, former CEO and executive chairman of Meredith Corp.
- Mary Coffin, former executive vice president with Wells Fargo
- Miguel Hadad, vice president of Finance at Beal Dermene Construction
- Brian Johnson, senior vice president for Care’s General Stores
- Mark Schaul, former president and chair of financial officer of SNI Companies
- Luis Valdes, former president and CEO and current chairman of Principal International

In the area of business operations, it has been determined that St. Joseph Catholic School will be the first to pilot the regional business model, which will include a common chart of accounts and joint budgeting process.

Staff members from St. Joseph have been meeting with the regional business operations committee to begin planning for the upcoming fiscal year. Additional schools may also be engaged during the pilot period. Budgets and school operations will remain the same for the 2022-2023 school year.

Another important step underway is development of the agreement between the region and each parish. This agreement will reflect that parishes will retain ownership of each school building and will address key categories including educational materials, technology, maintenance and grounds, utilities, insurance and others.

Conference for African priests, women religious to be in Des Moines

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Twice postponed because of the pandemic, a gathering of African Catholic priests and religious women will be held in Des Moines July 27-30.

The African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States, will bring together missionary priests and religious women from across the country for two purposes.

“This is an opportunity to meet our own African brothers and sisters, priests and religious,” said St. Paul Father Alphonse Enelichi, president of ACCCRUS and a missionary priest serving the Great Falls-Billings Diocese in Montana. “We can meet each other, interact with each other and it gives us a sense of belonging as Africans, as one.”

The convention is also an opportunity for attendees to hear speakers and learn.

“We can engage in conversations on the topics that are relevant to cultural institutions in America,” said Father Enelichi. “By listening to topical presentations, it prepares us to be more effective and more competent in our various ministries in our various apostolates. Also, we get more information on how to respond to the social challenges, cultural challenges, ecclesial challenges that we experience since we all come from a different place.”

The priests and religious women coming to the conference have a variety of backgrounds. Father Enelichi, for instance, is a missionary priest from Nigeria who served eight years during civil war in Liberia before going to Canada, then serving in Texas prior to going to Montana.

Within the Diocese of Des Moines, there are African priests from Ghana, Nicaragua, and Kenya.

“As African clergymen and women religious, our individual presence and services sometimes fall through the cracks unrecognized within the multi-cultural and multiracial dynamics of American society,” said Father Enelichi. “Our annual convention gives us not only a sense of belonging but provides us with the opportunity for our collective presence as African missionaries to be visibly recognized and our voice to resonate more audibly within American socio-cultural and ecclesial environment.”

Theology professor Daniel McGuire, Ph.D., of the University of Providence in Great Falls, Montana, will provide the keynote centered on the theme “Called to be Witnesses of Christ in a Wounded World.”

ACCCRUS was established in 2004 by the U.S. bishops to provide spiritual and social support to African priests and religious working in the United States. The group is grateful to Bishop William Joensen and the Diocese of Des Moines for hosting the convention.

The public is invited to celebrate the concluding Mass on Friday, July 29 at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral. Bishop Joensen will be the celebrant.

“This convention, by God’s grace, could be very remarkable and a memorable event,” said Father Enelichi. “With that in mind, I would like to say on behalf of ACCCRUS our profound gratitude to Bishop Joensen for keeping the doors open to receive us back to the diocese after two years and for his generous sponsorship and all of the resources. He has met us at every level to assure the success of his convention.”

Greece and the Greek Isles

In the Steps of St. Paul, the Apostle
11 days November 11-12, 2022
hosted by Rev. Robert E. Harris
All Saints Catholic Church
Visiting: Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Syros, Santorini, Delphi, Kalambaka, Thessaloniki
including a 3-day cruise to the Greek Isles & Turkey
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SPACE IS LIMITED AT THIS SPECIAL PRICE!
Iowa Catholic Conference offers a round-up on legislative session

By Tom Chapman  Contributing Writer

The following is an up-date on some of concern to the Catholic Church in Iowa that arose in the legislature this past session.

MOMS bill

The Iowa MOMS bill (More Options for Maternal Support) was approved, meaning pro-life agencies will receive $500,000 to support pregnant women and new moms with baby essentials and counseling. Unfortunately, however, funding was not included for the expansion of coverage for mothers who receive Medicaid from two months post-partum to a year.

Education

The Students First-Education Savings Accounts proposal from Gov. Kim Reynolds, Senate File 2369, did not get brought up for a vote in the House before adjournment. We do not know how all of the representatives would have voted on the issue. Voters can ask their legislators and candidates what they think.

State support for nonpublic school students received status quo funding for next year, including $852,000 for textbooks, about $9 million for transportation services and $1 million for concurrent enrollment (college classes).

Gaming

The House and Senate approved a compromise gaming expansion bill, House File 2497. The good news is that it was amended to take out the legalization of gambling on e-sports (video games).

The bill legalizes “cashless gaming,” which makes it possible to transfer money from a bank account to a phone app to the machine, rather than walking to visit an ATM. The app will be required to show the “800-BETS-OFF” number for problem gambling.

Support for Children

The U.S. bishops support an expansion of the child tax credit to reduce child poverty.

Last year, more than 36 million families received a monthly payment through the expanded Child Tax Credit program. The expanded credit proved to be extremely effective at reducing child poverty, lifting 3.7 million children above the poverty line.

Unfortunately, the expansions expired at the end of the year. According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the current credit is not structured to serve the children who need it the most. The poorest children are not eligible to receive the full value of the credit because their parents don’t earn enough money.

Contact members of Congress now to strengthen the Child Tax Credit, including by making it fully refundable so that the full credit is available to the lowest-income families. Go here for the action alert and more information.

Passion for Catholic education spurs couple to help lead capital campaign

Continued from page 1

received, it is an honor to do as much as we can to help.”

This spirit of gratitude has led Sharon and Kyle to invest their considerable energy and talent into similar endeavors that align with their Catholic values. Sharon is owner of Dalla Terra Ranch, Iowa’s only organically certified sheep ranch in Boon, which recently gifted 70 acres of the ranch to establish a new nonprofit called In Harmony Farm. The farm provides land access to socially disadvantaged farmers so they can build regenerative farming and business skills, scale operations to support themselves and their families, and build wealth in their under-served communities. The farmers come from all over the world where farming was once their livelihood.

“I believe the work we are doing at In Harmony Farm closely aligns with Catholic teachings,” said Sharon. “When Pope John Paul II visited Iowa in 1979, he said ‘You are stewards of some of the most important resources God has given to the world. Therefore, conserve the land well, so that your children’s resources God has given to the world are conserved for them and children generations after them will inherit an even richer land than was entrusted to you.’

“There are so many parallels but, the main takeaway is that it is our responsibility to use our gifts to make things better for those who follow. We hope and pray that many will see the Ignite! Campaign in the same way.”

Job Opening: Director of Religious Education
St. Mary in Grinnell, Iowa

We are seeking a full-time DRE to lead PreK-12th faith formation, organize adult Bible studies, and engage families in parish life. Benefits available. Applications will be accepted through March 31st. Job description can be found at https://www.stmarygrinnell.com/ or by emailing grinnelstmary@diodav.org

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529 Plans offer tax benefits to you when paying your child’s K-12 tuition.

Call now to learn how to use the 529 Plan for your children, grandchildren, or others you love!

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Sacred Rituals for Every Day
June 25, 2022, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Our sacred rituals help us experience each day with its special quality and to begin in it such a way that we are embraced by God’s blessing.

Father Anselm Gruen, OSB, PhD, monk, from Germany, world-renowned speaker, spiritual guide and author. His books have been translated into 35 languages; 20 Mill copies sold.

Register now at www.StBenedictCenter.com

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: Personality and Prayer
July 15, 7:30 p.m. – July 17, 1 p.m.

We will pray with the various ways we resist Jesus’ relating with us. The goal of working with the Myers-Briggs types is to understand personality preferences, career likes and dislikes, power and intimacy.

Fr. William J. Jarema, MS, MDiv, MAS, from Colorado Springs, CO, presents workshops and retreats nationwide.

Register now at www.StBenedictCenter.com

Praying with Icons
July 23, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Come, let the gaze of our loving God and the glory of icons touch you and teach you. We shall explore the work and wonder revealed in these holy images, even learning the amazing process of applying gold leaf that glintens, to reveal the light of holiness.

Margie Walker has been a spiritual director and retreat leader for 30 years.

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REMEMBERING FATHER JIM KIERNAN

“Don’t Just Make The Sign of The Cross. PRAY IT!”

Passed into eternal life on May 15, 2016

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Passed into eternal life on May 15, 2016

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Students from Holy Trinity of Southeast Warren County Parish are honored by fellow parishioners.

Below, graduation day was celebrated for eighth graders at St. Joseph Catholic School in Des Moines.
A lease for a new life in Iowa

By Beth Gibbins Contributing Writer

As of June 10, all of Catholic Charities’ Afghan clients have a pathway to permanent housing.

This is a significant accomplishment to celebrate for Afghan clients and the Refugee Services team at Catholic Charities. Housing more than 300 Afghans in central Iowa within a defined period of time was both challenging and rewarding, knowing that self-sufficiency is a primary objective for all refugee resettlement activities.

Due to scarcity of available housing in the area, as well as the number of dwellings needed for arrivals, clients and refugee staff worked together to identify the best housing arrangement for each family.

This month, housing is now a reality for all clients.

In August of 2021, many Afghans had to flee from their native country to seek refuge and re-settle in a new country. While many were already affected by trauma and loss, those individuals who were evacuated and flown to U.S. military bases for a few months also needed to resettle in a new state, seeking a new home with new customs and cultural norms.

This humanitarian evacuation was fast-paced and required diligence, commitment and mutual understanding by all.

This time-sensitive and distinctive resettlement also impacted refugee resettlement agencies across the United States.

For example, in the past few years, Catholic Charities and U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), another local resettlement agency, were resettling only a small number of refugee arrivals due to the pandemic and decreased refugee arrivals. Staff at both agencies had dwindled, with Catholic Charities employing only four employees in the refugee office. Other refugee resettlement agencies had made the decision to discontinue services.

In the first two weeks of October 2021 and with six days’ notice, Catholic Charities received 31 cases of Afghans, totaling 85 individuals. On average, 20 Afghan arrivals would arrive each week for the rest of the month.

With a brief reprieve in November, Afghan arrivals resumed in December 2021 through spring 2022. Compared to regular resettlement placement in a year, these numbers were a significant increase. During this same period, refugee resettlement staff numbers, including case managers, also increased to meet this growth of refugee arrivals.

The pace was unprecedented for all central Iowa resettlement agencies, along with their community partners.

Refugee resettlement means certain standards and needs are met for clients, including airport reception, housing, employment, school enrollment, medical appointments, public benefits, cultural orientation, bus training, English language classes and other services.

Agencies have 90 days of funding and resources to complete these activities.

Local partners include hotels, law enforcement, hospitals, school districts, parishes, donors, government officials, as well as volunteers.

“Arrivals from Afghanistan were incredibly different from the refugees we normally serve,” said Catholic Charities Refugee Services Manager Kelyn Anker. “This was a humanitarian effort on a huge scale. I am so grateful for our Catholic Charities team and our community partners who worked tirelessly to meet the need.”

One client recently shared his experience. He worked with the U.S. military as a soldier for 12 years in Afghanistan. He arrived in February 2022 with his wife and three teenage children. They were housed in temporary housing and provided a case manager who spoke their language.

He expressed gratitude for his case manager’s support and availability.

“Whenever we called our case manager, she either responded, or sent someone else to meet our needs,” he said. He commented that the pace of life is much faster in America, but indicated that his family was happy and comfortable.

They have since moved to an apartment in West Des Moines. He is working and his children are registered for school for the fall semester.

“We are honored to help the people of Afghanistan during this challenging time,” said Scott Caldwell, director of programs at Catholic Charities. “Our refugee staff and volunteers, under the leadership of Kelyn, have been responsive and taken seriously the varied and many needs of our clients. Working with our funding partners, including the USCRI (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops), we have consistently communicated and addressed any unique circumstances as they have been presented.”

When client housing is secure, the refugee transportation staff coordinates pick-up and delivery of furnishings, including donated items. To learn how you can help the Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement program, visit catholiccharitiesdm.org.

Refugee milestone:

Total Afghan arrivals in the Des Moines metro: • Approximately 700 Catholic Charities clients: • 111 cases totaling 308 individuals From October 2021 to present.

One of several information sessions for Afghans in Iowa regarding immigration options at the Drake Legal Clinic.

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• 111 cases totaling 308 individuals

From October 2021 to present.

Prayerful icon painting

Prayerful icon painting

An icon workshop organized by Sharon Gleich, of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, was held May 20-22 at St. John and Paul Parish in Altoona. Master iconographer Drazen Duplov of Madison, Wisconsin guided participants through a step-by-step process of painting an icon of Jesus in the Byzantine style. Meals were donated and provided by Women In God’s Service, also known as WINGS. The icons were blessed by Father Mark McGeary. Another class in the Diocese of Des Moines is planned in fall 2022 with the same instructor.

CAREING 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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DES MOINES’ ONLY CATHOLIC-OWNED & OPERATED FUNERAL HOME.
Retired officer trusts God in retirement

By Paul Milone

I do know that God has always been with me. He has led me to where I am now. Just 13 years ago, he grew tired of waiting on me to come to Him, so God came to me. He took this broken down, self-absorbed, callous, impatient control freak and made me new.

I can’t say that I waited patiently for him though. He came to me when I was not even looking. Now I follow him, even though I sometimes try to go back to the old Paul and be in control of everything. It is yet another learning point, that when we give our lives to Christ, it is not the end of our journey, rather it is simply the beginning.

Remember, when we fear about going through our next door, it is generally fear of the unknown. And therefore we can overcome that fear by simply trusting in the Lord our God that He has already seen where we are going because to him, the future is already a memory.

Paul Milone is a parishioner at Holy Rosary Parish in Glenwood.

Guest Column

By Paul Milone

Prior to being a police officer, I was a counselor of sorts. And given the positions I attained on the police department, I have found myself being the counselor to other cops when life deals those curve balls, dangers, pain, suffering, and unknowns.

My go-to discussion was to tell them that going through the next door of life was easier than they thought. Just knock, and God shall open the door for you. (Jn 1:12-13) I will guide you and for all so to that sites may be forgiven. Do this to memory of me.

What are we to make of these words if we give them some closer considerations?

First, it’s important to know that the word “door” is used throughout the being of which, with other parts, form the human person. The word “body” refers to the

hard to open? Just knock and go through it, have no fear. It all sounded good in my head and really cool when it came out of my mouth over the years. But at the time, the doors I was going through were like the one described in the first part of this reflection.

And to me, those are the easy doors. But when it came time for me to retire from the SWAT team last year, the next door I had to open was the hardest door I had come into contact with.

I felt like when I went through it, it slammed behind me and it was instantaneously and permanently locked. No going back. I also felt like it was a door to nowhere, walking into a massive, dark, empty room.

No signs of where to go from here, no receptionist, no lights leading the way. Just me in a dark silent room. So much for being confident in the words of Matthew 7:7

I found myself wondering if my faith was fraudulent. If I was a big talker but not a believer. Heck, I teach faith formation at my church. I attend weekly Mass. I pray daily. I give witness to my faith in front of large groups. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my savior.

But this door I went through kicked my butt, so to speak. And to top it off, I just went through another door, one that led to retirement. It was the final door of my career.

I wondered if my reaction will be the same so I am praying about this door. Not praying that God has chosen a good path for me, but rather praying that I can lift up my will to that of God’s will. Praying that he can help me follow the path laid out before me. Proverbs 3:6:7. Trust in the Lord, and all your ways will be established on your own understanding, in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your path straight.

We hear them so often that they have now become either prosaic, poetry, or quotidian.

What are they? They are the words of consecration at every Mass: “Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body, which will be given up for you...Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. In it is my blood shed for you and for all so to that sins may be forgiven. Do this to memory of me.”

The Eucharist – Food that transforms us

By John Huynh

Food for the Journey

We wonder about how we are transformed as a walking Christ. Called to give our body and blood. We give our body, our whole lives, to others by giving up our time, our energy, our treasure to those who need us. We must be mindful to give not only to those who deserve these things from us, but to give especially to those who we think least on serving of them; for Christ calls us to love even our enemies (Lk 6:27).

In imitating Christ to shed our blood, we offer our death events to God: our physical and/or spiritual sufferings, our humiliations, our physical and/or mental illnesses, our failures in trying to live our calling to love.

We offer them in hope so that we may remember ourselves that no suffering is meaningless, and neither is God indifferent to them.

We offer them to know that our sufferings matter to God and we hope to find redemption in them.

In other words, the Eucharist transforms us into a living sacrifice.

John Huynh is the director of the diocesan FaithJourney program and coordinates the Catechetical Institute. To reach him email jhuynh@dmdiocease.org or call 515-237-5006.

If it hadn’t been for that sister

By Brenda Wedemeyer

thoughts went to her. Her smile. “There’s someone who lives her faith every day,” is what I thought. “I want to be like her!”

Well, as you can guess, becoming a nun is not really an option for a young Baptist girl.

Almost 40 years had to go by before I could realize that what I was searching for was in fact my conversion to the Catholic faith. And all through those years, I always wondered what happened to that actual person whose smile meant so much to me so many decades ago?

Even before my conversion, I always held in high respect those men and women who stuck to their faith and provided role models for others, especially sisters. That’s why, to this day, I enjoy spending any time I can with the sisters of our Diocese. I was privileged to accompany the international sisters of the Diocese of Des Moines to a morning retreat at the Domus Trinitatis Contemplative Center for Retreat & Renewal in Willey on May 21.

For more information on the Center, or the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT), email homeofthetrinity@gmail.com or call 712-292-3011. Facebook: facebook.com/homeofthetrinity. Web: www.homeofthetrinity.com; www.solt.net.

Brenda Wedemeyer is a member of St. Mary Parish in Guthrie Center.

Religious women from other countries who are serving in the Diocese of Des Moines gathered May 21 for a retreat at the Domus Trinitatis Contemplative Center in Willey, Iowa.

More than 50 years have gone by since I was touched by the smile of a Dominican sister. That smile remains in my memory to this day. It was because of that smile that I eventually became a convert to the Catholic faith.

I was raised in the non-denominational (basically Baptist) faith. My mother instilled a great love for God in those early years and for that I am forever grateful. My mother was raised in the non-denominational (basically Baptist) faith. My mother brought me toward the table where a few of the other sisters were having their lunch.

I introduced myself. What a blessing to find the actual person whose smile meant so much to me so many decades ago!

I was never the same so I am praying about this door. For even my conversion, I always held in high respect those men and women who stuck to their faith and provided role models for others, especially sisters. That’s why, to this day, I enjoy spending any time I can with the sisters of our Diocese. I was privileged to accompany the international sisters of the Diocese of Des Moines to a morning retreat at the Domus Trinitatis Contemplative Center for Retreat & Renewal in Willey on May 21.

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Brenda Wedemeyer is a member of St. Mary Parish in Guthrie Center.
Milestone of two lives joining as one.

Summertime is filled with graduation parties, a time marked by closing one chapter of life before venturing out to start a new one. Summers are also filled with weddings – a joyous occasion celebrating the first batch of strawberries from the garden. Baling hay for the first time. Picking the first batch of strawberries from the garden. Summertime marks a lot of milestone of two lives joining as one.

Excitement builds as major summer events begin, reaffirming my love of the season. The first day of vacation. The first day of the Downtown Farmer’s Market. The first day of the Des Moines Arts Festival. The first day of RAGBRAI. The first day of the Iowa State Fair.

Summer once again offers us new opportunities. The first day hitting the bike. The first time going on a family road trip. Appreciating beautiful flowers in our yard that looked dead for so long.

More and more, good things come to an end at some point – even if just temporarily. The joy of winning a blue ribbon at fair is joined by the sorrow of saying goodbye to animals you may have helped raise, show and sell.

The joy and relief of detasseling your last corn field. But also the dread and sadness in saying goodbye to friends at attending college different than yours.

As summer comes to a close, graduates move away from home for the very first time. Their excitement is paired with parents’ grappling with a flood of mixed emotions. Celebrations are familiar. Warm. Comforting.

New chapters and major life changes can feel scary. Unfamiliar. And sometimes solitary. But these moments offer us the opportunity to lean on God and his promises.

“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—plans of peace and not of woe, so as to give you a future of hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Questions on the creed, heaven

A. JESUS IS COMPARED TO THE SACRIFICED LAMB that was part of the ritual before Moses. How did the people of Israel see their sacrifice leading them to the Promised Land. We believe that Jesus, crucified and risen, leads us from death to new life.

Q. Does Heaven last forever? Or is there some other place that you can go to? - Griffin Grube

A. WE REFER TO OUR LIFE WITH GOD as eternal life or life in the kingdom or heaven. But we have to remember that these terms refer not to a physical place (like Boston or Paris) but to a spiritual place that God has yet to reveal to us.

Q. I’ve been wondering why Jesus is known as a lamb? - Bridget Brunstad

Father John Ludwig

Q. What does it mean in the Apostles’ Creed that Christ descended into hell? Did Christ actually go to hell before ascending into heaven? Why? Why was “descended into hell” removed from the Nicene Creed that we now say at Mass? When was this changed?

A. A. LITTLE BACKGROUND. The Nicene Creed is not the same as the Apostles’ Creed. In fact, the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. first formulated a Creed which was then affirmed and edited by the council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. On the other hand, the Apostles’ Creed was once thought to be the end of the Nicene Creed. Neither of the creeds has been changed. When these creeds were first introduced, it was common to think of the earth as flat – heaven up and hell down. Of course, we know that the earth is round and is a small part of the universe. No doubt, the phrase refers to the fact that Jesus in fact died and was raised. Some translations use the term “descended to the dead” rather than “descended into hell.”

Q. Why is the Nicene Creed so important? Is it just for the early Church’s belief. The Nicene Creed is similar to the Apostle’s Creed, and at Mass, the Apostles’ Creed may be used in lieu of the Nicene Creed. So, you see, “descended into hell” was not in the Nicene Creed. Rather it was in the Apostles’ Creed. Neither of the creeds has been changed.

Q. I have been wondering why Jesus is known as a lamb? - Bridget Brunstad

Father Ron Rolheiser

If we genuinely trust scripture, our own experience, and our own sanity, we can only conclude that God has a sense of humor, and a robust and sneaky one at that. Where’s the evidence?

A generation ago, Peter Berger wrote a remarkable little book entitled, A Humor of Angels. Unlike Aquinas, Anselm, Descartes, and a number of renowned philosophers, he didn’t try to “prove” the existence of God through logic and argumentation. Rather, he simply examined a number of very ordinary human experiences and pointed to what’s hidden inside and behind the walls of those experiences. For instance, when a mother looks at her frightened child at night, assuring the child that there is nothing to fear, does she do this in good faith only because at some deep level she intuits that ultimately everything is all right. In effect, unconsciously, she is praying a Creed.

Now, one of the experiences Berger highlights is the experience of humor. Here’s his thesis: no matter how oppressive power has power, something that sets us above any situation within which we find ourselves. Our sense of irony and humor is something in our soul sets us above anything that can beset us.

And, this can have its source in the only one who can set the stage for the skit who made us. Thus, not only must God have a sense of humor, humor must be something inherent within the nature of God, since humor is good and God is the author of all that is good.

There’s a school of classical philosophy that believes God has four transcendent properties. God, it teaches, is One, True, Good, and Beautiful – to this we can add, Humorous. Moreover, this can be inferred from more than just the fact that sometimes we sense that humor manifests our transcendence within a given situation. More importantly, we can infer that humor is something that is intrinsic to the component parts of love. God is love, and humor is undesirably an important part of love.

When the classical Greek philosophers defined love, they highlighted a number of components within it, namely, erotic attraction, obsession, friendship, pragmatic arrangement, and altruism. However, they also highlighted another component, playfulness/banter/humor. How insightful. Humor, along with healthy banter and playful teasing, are part of the grease that enables us to sustain relationships long term, despite the inevitable over-familiarity, hurt, disappointment, and boredom that beset even the most loving relationships. Humor helps make it all work. Thus, ideally, it is an innate part of love, it is an innate part of God.

Sadly, we don’t often picture God that way. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have this in common. We all picture God as male, celibate, solemn— and humorless. How many of us picture God smiling, playful, and having fun?

If you were to draw up a composite face representing God, whose face would you include in this picture? The pious face of the gentle, blond-haired Jesus with a lamb on his shoulder, or the holy face? What do theologians see in our statues of her? The face of Mother Teresa? The face of Theres of Lisieux? The face of Dorothy Day? Of Martin Luther King? Of Oscar Romero? Of Billy Graham? Of Henri Nouwen? Of Rachel Held Evans? The face of your mother or father? Would you also include the face of your favorite comedian or favorite wit? Jerry Seinfel? Bette Midler? Rowan Atkinson? The mischievous face of your col-

Father Ron Rolheiser

Go down to Earth instead of sending his Son Jesus? Also couldn’t God just show/ teach people instead of sending his beloved Son? - Alexander Kavlock

A. WELL, WE COULD only know if God told us why. There are probably all kinds of ways that God could have taught us and redeemed us. In fact, Jesus came to us as one of us, and offered us the privilege of following in his way. If we are smart, we’ll do just that.

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Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website roifornrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook: facebook.com/ronrolheiser.
Bishops call for broad response to address violence

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- In response to the multiple mass shootings in recent weeks, the chairmen of four U.S. Conferences of Catholic Bishops' committees sent a letter to Congress urging lawmakers to "stop the massacres of innocent lives.

"We urge all members of Congress to reflect on the compassion all of you undoubtedly feel in light of these tragic events and be moved to action because of it," the bishops wrote in a June 3 letter.

They said finding a way to stop ongoing acts of violence as demonstrated in Uvalde, Texas, and Buffalo, N.Y., to name just a few examples, requires a broad response that examines "mental health, the state of families, the valuation of life, the influence of entertainment and gaming industries, bullying and the availability of firearms."

And although they see a need for broad reform, they focused on guns in particular, suggesting the many steps toward addressing this endemic of violence is the passage of reasonable gun control measures."

The letter was signed by Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco, chairman of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; and Bishop Thomas A. Daly of Spokane, Washington, chairman of the Committee on Catholic Education.

"We urgently call on members of Congress to work together in a bipartisan fashion to make these horrific attacks less likely to happen again," they wrote.

In 2018, the Iowa Catholic Conference issued a statement encouraging state legislators to consider the passage of a law providing for gun violence restraining orders, support for programs addressing mental illness and addictions, requiring background checks anytime a weapon is sold, and the repeal of the "Stand Your Ground" law.

The Iowa bishops opposed legislation that would restrict the state's ability to regulate weapons in the future. To read the statement go to iowacatholic.org. 

Elaine Arndt, with Moms Demand Action, attends a rally outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington June 8 with fellow members of gun violence prevention organizations, survivors of gun violence and hundreds of gun safety supporters demanding gun legislation.

The Iowa bishops opined that legislation that would restrict the state’s ability to regulate weapons in the future. To read the statement go to iowacatholic.org.

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Pope: Health care must be accessible to all, not select few

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Health care is a fundamental right for all and not a privilege for the rich while the poor and disadvantaged are left to the wayside, Pope Francis said.

“When a country loses this wealth that is public health care, it begins to make distinctions within the population between those who have access, who can have paid health care, and those who are left without health care services,” the pope said June 4 to representatives of the Italian health care association, Federansità.

According to its website, Federansità is a confederation of local health care facilities and hospitals that seek to promote policies “strongly oriented toward a new concept of ‘taking care’ of patients based on proximity, proactivity, personalization and participation.”

In his address, the pope said closeness to patients is “the antidote to self-referentiality” that “breaks the chains of selfishness” and allows health care professionals to view patients “as brothers and sisters, regardless of language, geographical origin, social status or health condition.

Being close to others also means breaking down distances, making sure that there are no first- and second-class patients, and committing energies and resources so that no one is excluded from receiving health care,” he said.

Bishop: Freedom, hope available to us when we meet Jesus in the Eucharist

Continued from page 2

It all makes sense, and suffering is never in vain.

Then, rather than contract in the rigor mortis of self-protective and self-righteous attitudes, I find myself more flexible and responsive rather than kneejerk reactive. All in all, I remain free to choose to be a neighbor, a brother, a civic friend. I am God’s volunteer to go with grace rather than the flow, and above all, to keep hope alive.

I am inspired to imitate people like Jesus, a member of Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines, who with a group of 16 or so fellow parishioners spend a good portion of their Thursday evenings going around neighborhoods knocking on doors. If they open, they try to engage residents to see if there are traces of faith in their life stories, if they have questions or issues they would like to talk about, and if they are open to keeping the conversation open for further visits.

Jesus and his friends have helped to mend broken hearts and hopes, to revive Catholic faith in some of the people they have visited who return to communion with their parish and the universal Church. I need to be like Jesus!

This year’s June 19 Feast of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, marks the official beginning of a three-year Eucharistic revival sponsored by our nation’s Catholic bishops. There are a host (pun intended!) of inspirational initiatives and reflective opportunities and on-line and print materials, culminating in a national assembly in 2024 in Indianapolis. This is all well and good, but just as all politics is said to be local, so is faith. Unless we freely choose to be present to the Presence, to set aside the mobile device and embrace the “inconvenience” of sitting our bodies in motion and at rest before the mystery of the sacrament and of the persons seated around us, any felt security or self-sufficiency will be falsely, cheaply purchased. Only in Jesus do life, suffering, and death make any sense. Only in Christ Incarnate does human life become sacred, regardless of appearances, natural disaster, or humanity-induced tragedy.

Again, the U.S. bishops: “St. John Chrysostom preached that when you see the body of Christ ‘set before you [on the altar], say to yourself: Because of this Body I am no longer earth and ashes, no longer a prisoner, but free: because of this I hope for heaven, and to receive things therein, immortal life, the portion of angels, [and closeness] with Christ” (n. 19).

July 4 may be the one holiday we celebrate our nation’s freedom, but June 19 is one signature occasion informing and inspiring every day we rise from slumber and feast on the freedom and hope available to us each time we celebrate Holy Mass. We meet Jesus in the Eucharist, gain a preview of what it all has been for, and find that along with bread and wine, we, too, are transformed. As the Social Doctrine of the Church describes, we become “people capable of bringing peace where there is conflict, of building and nurturing fraternal relationships where there is hatred, of seeking justice where there prevails the exploitation of man by man. Only love is capable of radically transforming the relationships that [humans] maintain among themselves” (n. 4). The Body and Blood of Christ: Amen!

World Youth Day

The Diocese of Des Moines is going on pilgrimage to Portugal!! World Youth Day is a gathering of young adults from around the world. In 2023, it will be in Lisbon, Portugal. For more information, go to dmdiocese.org/wyd23. See you in Lisbon!

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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