Deacon Oran Struecker, of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, closed a Taizé prayer service with benediction of the blessed sacrament as a part of that service. Taizé is a meditative form of prayer that originated in France. It combines Scripture readings, music, and meditative silence for contemplative prayer.

Father Don Bruck, a generous man who used his gift for cooking to build relationships with his parishioners, was a model for someone who wants to be a Christian.

“He set a real example of what that should be,” said his brother, Marvin Bruck.

Father Bruck died Feb. 13 at his home in Harlan at the age of 80.

During his funeral homily, Deacon Pat Davitt, a good friend of Father Bruck, asked for a show of hands of how many in the nearly full church had been invited to Father Bruck’s home for a meal.

Over three quarters of the worshipers raised their hands.

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Father Bruck was among many priests and religious women whose roots were in Shelby County. Born at the Behrendt farm north and west of Panama, he was the oldest of three sons of Joseph and Orvlyn “Orvie” Bruck.

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In 1975, Father Bruck headed back to his rural roots where he served the next 36 years.

Priest used culinary gift to cultivate relationships

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

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Continued on page 10
In her poem, “March,” Louise Glück paints a word picture that is easy for usowants to imagine. My neighbor stares out the window, talking to her dog. He’s sniffing the garden, trying to make a decision about the dead flowers. It’s a little early for this all. Everyone’s still very wary—nevertheless, something’s different today from yesterday.

My neighbor’s calling the dog, making her unconvincing doglike sounds. The dog hears it, he raises his head when she calls, but he doesn’t move. So she goes on calling. Her failed bark slowly deteriorating into a human voice.

As we press into the latter weeks of March and of Lent, maybe we feel a little bit like the neighbor, nosing around the tangled debris of death and incipient life, poised to move on to new turf yet chilled and inert in our tracks, hearing but not obeying a voice that beckons to us.

At least, that’s a little bit how I feel these days, with all the firmness of intent to practice my Lenten disciplines having been renounced by life events beyond my control, the clock of darkness and light adjusted by human fiat while the darkness and light within me still seem to defy my will to let the light prevail, and the voice I seek to hear in prayer bracketed by other competing voices that offer only a transient escape into “madness.”

One is tempted to throw in the towel on this spiritual project of conversion and renewal and say, “better luck next year,” but the promptings of the Holy Spirit and the resolve and constancy of some around us who seem to be more dogged in their devotion can keep us from desiring that real change and growth are possible in God’s plan and time.

That’s the unflagging hope represented by our Diocese’s designation of the weekend of the Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 18-19, as “Safe Havens Sunday.” This is an initiative of our Marriage and Family Life office coordinated by Adam Storey, with the cooperation of our parish priests and deacons who will engage the readings and address matters of internet safety for children and persons of all ages. In the course of their homilies and parish bulletins and other messaging, they will refer and provide access to resources that can both prevent and help persons proceed on the path of healing and liberation from the scourge of internet pornography and related addictions.

Some of these resources will remain linked in English and Spanish on the Marriage and Family Life section of our Diocese of Des Moines website, including Educate and Empower Kids; Brain, Heart, World (in English and Spanish); Covenant Eyes; Road to Purity; Be Broken Minisries; Bloom for Catholic Women; Clean and Pure; and Integrity Restored; and several others.

In appropriate fashion, we seek as faith communities to raise awareness of the ways in which human beauty, the dignity and integrity of our own phy and the bodies, and our nearly inextinguishable desire for human connection and the infinite, are touched and co-opted and distorted by malicious parties. These evil actors want to pollute and enslave our minds and hearts and profit off human misery.

In contrast, we want to assist parents and other family members to help persons proceed on the path of awareness of the work of evil, to protect, nurture, and help young people form their identity as children of God, to come to maturity as disciples of Christ. We aim to rebuff pornographers’ invit to diminish their habitat, to through decent, violent pornog- raphy. First occurrence at the month’s end will prompt us to “call things by their proper name,” restoring the appreciation for the goodness of creation and the sinfulness of all beings of God’s image and likeness.

And for those who must work to protect the defenseless, their freedom has already been communi through persistent, immoral internet activity that di- rectly or indirectly contributes to an industry of human trafficking and the victimization of children, women, and men, we want to in- vite the healing power of Christ’s blood and the liberating grace of the Holy Spirit to be enlisted in practical, therapeutic steps that enable persons to escape the cycle of shame, contrition, and refracto- ry self-indulgence. So when this cycle plays out like a broken record we no longer hear since we have become deadened to our own consciences by stepping in step with sinners in their temptation to do the works of the one who is forsaken, where we must turn our face to God.

“God’s Spirit likewise calls us to turn our eyes from the temptations and accompaniment of one anoth- er, to pray together and to enlist accountability partners who serve not as “big brothers” watching over us like a surveillance team, but who as brothers and sisters in Christ humbly and charitably commit themselves to partner on the path that leads from darkness to light.

In the John 9 Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Jesus replies to his disciples, “We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Safe Haven Sunday is a moment in the Lenten pilgrimage toward the Easter Vigil, when the light of Jesus Christ will overcome the darkness of sin and death. It is not meant to be a “one-off” af- fair that touches on the topic of pornography in the death of the shelf, but a graced opportunity that transforms our parishes, small families, and individuals, and co-opted and distorted by spirituality of faith who transparently call human weakness and those who prey upon it for what they are, so that in abstinence and its attendant de- spair. We cannot “do” virtue and sin in the same breath. We, ourselves, any more than we can “do” Lent simply by dint of our own decision and strength.

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Women’s conference focuses on God’s spirit

The Diocesan Council for Catholic Women wants to support every woman in the Diocese of Des Moines.

One of the group’s goals is to help parishes strengthen their current women’s groups or to help them create a new kind of group that’s adaptable to the needs of today’s woman. A way to do this is by connecting women across the Diocese, sharing their successful events and ministries so they can learn from each other.

One opportunity will be April 22 at St. Joseph Church in Winterset. A gathering called Wide Open Hearts will feature keynote speaker Nell O’Leary, of the ministry called Blessed in She.

“When I think of Wide Open Hearts, what comes to mind is the freedom Jesus wants for us, to give our hearts to him, and the healing he wants to do in us to make that happen,” O’Leary said.

“I look forward to listening to the women I will meet and hearing how they’ve encountered the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit moves them.”

Doors for the conference open at 8 a.m., presentations begin at 9 a.m. Bishop William Joensen will celebrate Mass, lunch will be served, and Father James Ahenkora, of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs, will share his story.

The DCCW board aims to provide a channel for women to share their questions, concerns and needs with the Diocese.

“Our new motto, to reflect who we are and what we do, is ‘Connecting Catholic Women.’ That’s our vision: To reach out to every woman in the pew and to help her grow in her faith in God and in friendship with her sisters in Christ,” said Renee Carney, of St. Patrick Parish in Missouri Valley and president of the DCCW board.

The DCCW is a longstanding umbrella organization serving to unite and serve all Catholic women’s groups as well as women in parishes who have no established group.

To get tickets for the Wide Open Hearts women’s conference, go to tinyurl.com/3m d8xv97 or send a check for $25/ticket to Mary Jo Robinsen, PO Box 497, Atlantic, IA, 50022.

Questions? Call or text Carney at 712-310-2922.

Catechumen, candidates welcomed

At the Rite of Election Feb. 25 and 26, Bishop William Joensen formally elected the catechumens (those who have never been baptized) to enter the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil. He also welcomed candidates (those who have been baptized in the Catholic or other Christian faith) to come into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. In all, the Diocese of Des Moines will welcome 112 people into the Catholic Church. Pictured at left is Stephany Villarreal with the bishop. Pictured at right is Bishop Joensen with St. Patrick Parish RCIA coordinator Monica Dixon and candidate Sandy Daamgard.

Lent focuses on prayer, fasting, charity

Seventh grader Will Gallagher receives ashes from Assistant Principal Elizabeth Brott at Holy Trinity School in Des Moines on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22.

Nate Noon, a middle school/high school social studies teacher and St. Albert graduate, distributes ashes to junior Mya Hinton at St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.

Parents, alumni, grandparents & friends are invited to celebrate 50 years on Buffalo Road! The night includes dinner, a spirited auction, live music and the chance to win FREE DCHS tuition or a $5K cash prize!

Scan below for event details and to RSVP!

Sponsorship opportunities available beginning at $500!

www.dowlingcatholic.org/bash23
The following are parish Lenten fish dinners on Fridays during Lent, up until March 31 except where otherwise noted.

### OUTSIDE DES MOINES

#### Council Bluffs, St. Patrick
- **Fish dinners** will be available for dine-in or drive-thru from 4:30-7:30 p.m.
  - Cost is $15/adult; $7/children; free/children ages 5 and under. Alternate: shrimp.
- **Shrimp boil dinners** will be served on March 24 from 5-7:30 p.m.
  - Cost $20/adults; $10/children.

#### Glennfield, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary
- Dinners will be available for dine-in or carry out beginning at 5 p.m. until it is gone. Cost is $13/adults; $4/children. Alternate: mac & cheese.

#### Granger, Assumption
- **Dinners** will be served in dine-in or drive up from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is free will donation. Alternate: cheese pizza.

#### Greenfield, St. John
- **Dinners** will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is free will donation. Alternate: cheese pizza.

#### Harlan, St. Michael
- **Dinners** will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. Drive-thru is available. Cost is $15/adults; $5/children ages 4-10; free/age 3 and under. Alternate: fish tacos (dine-in only), mac and cheese.

#### Indianaola, St. Thomas Aquinas
- **Dinners** will be available for dine-in or take out from 5:30-7 p.m.
  - Cost is $13/adults; $6/children ages 6-12; free/children age 5 and under.

#### Logan, St. Anne
- **Dinners** will be available for dine-in, drive through or carryout from 5:30-7 p.m.
  - Cost is $14/adults; $7/children ages 5-12.

#### Missouri Valley, St. Patrick
- **Dinners** will be served from 5-7 p.m. in the parish hall. Cost is $10/adults; $8/senior citizens; $5/children ages 6+; free/children age 5 and under. Alternate: salad bar; peanut butter & jelly sandwich.

#### Neola, St. Patrick
- **Dinners** will be served from 5-7 p.m.
  - Cost is $15/adults; $5/children ages 5-10; free/children under 5. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwich.

#### Perry, St. Patrick
- **Dinners** will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. at St. Patrick School. Cost is $10/adults; $5/children ages 5-10; free/children ages 4 and under; maximum $30 for family with children; shrimp is $3 extra. Alternate: fish fry.

#### West Des Moines, Sacred Heart
- **Dinners** will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. in the school.
  - Cost is $13/adults; $7/children ages 3-10; free/age 3 and under; $40/family max. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza, fish tacos.

#### West Des Moines, St. Francis of Assisi
- **Dinners** are served from 5:30-7:15 p.m.
  - Cost is $15/adults; $6/children ages 6-12; free/children under age 5 and under; $40/family cap. Alternate: cheese pizza and mac and cheese.

### DES Moines

#### All Saints
- **Fish dinners** will be served from 5-7 p.m.
  - Cost is $10/person; $5/children ages 5-12; free/children age 5 and under. Alternate: mac and cheese. There will be live music.

#### Basilia of St. John
- **Dinners** will be served from 4:45-6:30 p.m.
  - Cost is $12/adults; $6/children ages 4-10; free/3 and under.

#### Christ the King
- **Dinners** will be served from 5-7 p.m.
  - Cost is $13/adults; $5/children. Alternate: cheese pizza.

#### Holy Trinity
- **Dinners** will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m.

#### St. Ambrose Cathedral
- **Lunches** will be served from 12-2 p.m.
  - Cost is $6/person.

#### St. Anthony
- **Dinners** will be available for dine-in or drive through from 5-7 p.m.
  - Cost is $12/person.

#### St. Augustine
- **Dinners** will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m.
  - Cost is $15/adults; $8/children ages 5-15; free/children under 5; $50/family max. Alternate: cheese quesadillas, grilled cheese sandwiches; mac and cheese.

#### St. Joseph
- **Dinners** are available for dine-in or carry out from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
  - Cost is $13/adults; $5/children; $40/family max. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza.

#### St. Mary of Nazareth
- **Dinners** will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. in the school. Cost is $13/adults; $7/children ages 3-10; free/age 3 and under; maximum $30 for family with children; shrimp is $3 extra. Alternate: fish fry.

#### St. Theresa
- **Dinners** will be served from 5:30-7 p.m.
  - Cost is free will offering. Alternate: shrimp, tater tots, cheese pizza and mac and cheese.

### Find us on social media:

- Facebook.com/dmdiocese
- Instagram.com/dmdiocese
- Twitter.com/dmdiocese

Join us in person or virtually for a holy hour every Monday at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral.
Facebook.com/dmdiocese

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By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

A seed planted just before the pandemic and nurtured during quarantine grew into one boy’s love for God and a desire to join the Catholic Church.

This Easter Vigil, Tony Ramirez, who says he’s “12 and three quarters” and his father, Celestino, will come into full communion in the Church at Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines. Looking on will be a happy step-grandfather, Pete Grady, and proud grandparents Pete Ramirez, and Mary and Steve Stimmel.

Tony’s interest began several years ago when he would go to church with Grandma Mary and Grandpa Steve.

“I originally thought ‘Man, every Sunday, I could be home doing something else.’” But after I got an image of the Church and the Father, I was really happy about God and that’s okay with me,” said his father, Albert Winfrey.

“I pulled out of my hat any Bible story that popped into my head at the moment,” Mary said. She and Steve bought Tony a youth version of the catechism so he could read about the faith at a level he could understand.

One day, he asked the pastor, Father Mark Neal, a question.

“I ask him how you become a saint. That was the first time I ever talked to him. Ever since then, I really liked him,” Tony said. “I see Father as a celebrity because it’s so cool to me to talk to him after Mass, to learn more about the Church and stuff.”

Ann asked Tony if he’d like to become Catholic.

“His little face lit up and he said, ‘Yeah, I want to be baptized,”’ said Celestino. “At that point, I was mulling things over. I was baptized and got First Communion. I’ve not been confirmed myself.”

He thought, “This is the perfect time to get my confirmation classes as well. So we’re both in class right now. We’re both learning a lot about the Catholic faith.”

The grandparents will play an important role at Easter Vigil. Celestino’s dad, Pete, will be his grandson’s sponsor. And Steve will be his son-in-law’s sponsor.

“We’re both going to be confirmed together,” Tony said. “That’s going to be something I will remember for my whole life!”

Tony already feels like an evangelizer. After Mass on the day of the Rite of Election, when Bishop William Joensen formally elected Tony and other catechumens (those who’ve never been baptized) to enter the Catholic Church, a man at the donuts and coffee line asked him how the RCIA classes were going. The man had not been confirmed.

“I told him this is really fun. I think you’d really enjoy doing it,” Tony said. The man responded that he’s probably going to go to the RCIA program in the fall.

“That really spoke to me because I invited someone to get confirmed,” Tony said.

This faith journey the Ramirez family has traveled is remarkable, Celestino said.

“There’s been so many instances along the way when we felt the finger of God touch our path and our faith. It’s absolutely inspired us.”

Perhaps the best part of the experience is that Tony has a relationship with God, said Celestino.

“We find him taking comfort in the Lord during hard times now,” he said. “I absolutely hear Him saying to me, ‘I know, I think I need to pray about this.’ It just warms our heart.”

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Two sixth graders will be baptized and enter the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

Both boys are new to St. Joseph School in Des Moines, where they experienced religion class for the first time.

Amir Winfrey said his decision came after going to religion classes. “Something else. But first things he learned were about the sacraments and the Ten Commandments.”

“I was interested and wanted to learn more,” he said. He went home and told his parents what he was learning.

“He wants to know more about God and that’s okay with us,” said his father, Albert Winfrey. “I believe everybody has their own path to God.”

His school administrator, Jodi Halligan, remembers the day he approached her about it.

“He walked up to me on a Monday and said, ‘Mrs. Halligan, how do I become Catholic?’”

Why?

“Because I want to learn more about God,” he said.

Amir’s favorite parts of the Mass are when he sings in the choir or does a reading. He likes to be involved in the Mass and eagerly awaits the day he can be an altar server.

Zachary Phan wants to become Catholic “because you get to learn about God more and see what he has done for you, for the community, and for society.”

Zachary’s father, Tom Phan, was baptized about three years ago at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Ankeny. Recently Zachary came to live with his dad.

“I wanted to put him in a good school, especially a Catholic school,” said Tom. “That’s how it all got started.”

Tom talked with Father Chris Fontanini, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, about Zachary’s interest in the faith.

“I think it’s heartwarming when they see young people wanting to embrace the faith. That’s certainly a positive witness for all of us,” he said. “It’s a win-win for everyone.”

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

From day one, when Mindy and Jeff Schechinger considered fostering children, it was understood that the children would be joining them every Sunday for Mass at St. Patrick Church in Neola.

“The first thing (Mindy) did was introduce them to her church family,” said Shannon Nye, the parish’s director of religious education.

Over time, the children learned about the Catholic faith, participated in Mass by bringing up the gifts and decided they wanted to become Catholic. They are in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children, a process for learning and growing in faith.

“When we told them that (joining the church) was an option, they could join the church, there was no hesitation,” Mindy said.

As darkness falls at Easter Vigil, the Schechinger family will be at church celebrating as Alvare, 12, Christopher, 10, Joy Angel, 9 and Isabell Daniel, 8, enter the Catholic Church.

“My boys are so anxious to be altar servers,” Mindy said. “They’ve already done the training because they want to be ahead of the game. After Easter, they can be put on the schedule.”

Mindy herself went through RCIA about 10 years into her marriage.

“I would want people to know if this is something they’ve ever considered, they should seek out information and see if it works for them,” she said. “If it’s on somebody’s heart, they should pursue it. It’s hard but I’ve never regretted it.”

Nye says she expects they’ll continue to see the Schechinger children at weekly faith formation sessions.

“They will continue to get the faith formation behind the sacraments,” she said.

The Schechinger family has adopted six children in recent years.

“It’s just beautiful because the kids are trying to learn the Mass and partake with the Mass by bringing up the gifts,” Nye said. “They’re a very, very involved family.”

Children to join church family at Easter Vigil
March 17-19 Friday-Sunday Book Sale

DES MOINES – Christ the King Parish is having its parish library book sale. Donation only. The times of the sale are: Friday 4:30-7 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. New, near-new, and gently used books. Inventory includes children’s, religious (Catholic and non-Catho- lic), fiction and non-fiction, history, classics, home and garden, inspira- tional, some poetry, travel, sports, and more. All are welcome. Proceeds go to our parish library.

March 19 Sunday

Staley’s Chicken Dinner

NORWALK – St. John the Apostle Parish is hosting a fried chicken feast in the parish hall from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Everyone is invited! Cost is adults/$12, ages 6-12/$6 and kids under 5 eat free. A silent auction will be held. Auction items include a lawn mower, iPad tablet and more. For more information contact Gary and Mary Haselton at 515-321-3873 or the parish office at 515-981-4855.

March 21-23 Tues.-Thurs.

Lenten Series

DES MOINES – St. Augustin Parish and Des Moines invites everyone to a three-day Lenten speaker series focused on Our Lady of Fatima. The series runs from 7-8 p.m. each even- ing. Guest speaker Rex Tediosi, of the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, will talk about the prophecies of Our Lady of Fatima, the science of social conformity and how it affects our spiritual lives, and the coming great chastisement and the great conver- sion. Childcare is available 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and includes lunch, drink and craft. RSVP to Tom Donnelly by text 515-988-0491 or email tjdonnellyiowa@gmail.com.

March 22 Wednesday

Taize Service

DES MOINES – A Taize service at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, will be held 7:45-8:45 p.m. This Taizé Lenten prayer experience is a time to rest in God, to let the words listened to and sung penetrate our being. There is no teaching. This is just a simple service: short chants, repeated over and over in candlelight, plus some short Scrip- ture readings and silence.

March 28-29 June 6 Tuesdays

Grief Support Group

ANKENY – The Nazareth Sisters of the Annunciation is an order of sisters based in Kenya that serves the poor in and around Nairobi. Since 2016, four sisters moved to Des Moines to work at MercyOne Des Moines Med- ical Center. These sisters live simply and send all of the money they earn beyond basic living expenses back to Kenya to support the work of their fellow sisters there. Come to an open house from 7-8 p.m. at Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Parish to learn more about the sisters. Questions? Contact Steve Craig at 515-205-6916 or miregai@msn.com.

April 13-May 11 Thursdays Called & Gifted

Waukee – St. Boniface Parish is hosting a Catholic spiritual gifts discernment process from 1:30-3:30 p.m. in the Romero Room at St. Bon- iface Church. Cost is $49 for all ses- sions and materials. Discover your charisms (spiritual gifts) and begin to discern God’s call with the Called & Gifted process. Register by March 31 and find details at stbonifacechurch- org/called-gifted or call Faye Akers at 515-987-4597.

May 25 Thursday

St. Vincent de Paul Golf Outing

PLEASANT HILL – St. Vincent de Paul is hosting its annual Golf Fundraiser to Fight Hunger at Copper Creek Golf Course. Registration starts at 8 a.m. with a shotgun start at 10 a.m. Registration is $150 per person which includes food and bever- ages. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Contact Randi Radov- ich at resourcedirector@svdpdsm. org if you’re interested.

Joy on the Journey group celebrates love

The Joy on the Journey group came together at St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs to celebrate love on Valentine’s Day. Franciscan Sister Joyce Blum from Corpus Christi Parish joined in for prayer, reflection and sharing. Joy on the Journey is for widowed or divorced to support those suffering from loss through prayer and time togeth- er.

Support for families with special needs children


Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese’s Victim Assistance Advocate, Sam Porter, is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps people who are or were minors when they were victims of abuse by the clergy through a com- plaint process. He also helps them seek support and counseling services. Porter can be reached at 515-286-2024 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.

Come see what Catholic schools are all about! Go to dmdioce.org/schools, find a school close to you, and make an appointment for a tour.

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

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 Sav- ior, Jesus Christ.

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

Greater unity and bonds of peace;

Missionary zeal to spread good news that will spark making light.

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, sur- rounded 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.

Dioecesis de Des Moines Oración de Visión

Oh Dios, tu compartes con tu pueblo, tu iglesia, la misión de ser el amor salvador de tu Hijo y nuestro Salvado- dor, Jesucristo.

Como un pueblito de fe en el suroriente de Iowa, envía al Espíritu Santo para que encienda en nosotros una sincera conversión para ver, olí, pensar y actuar como Jesucristo; una mayor unidad y lazos de paz; un afirmar misión para compartir la buena nueva encendiendo al mundo con amor; un garito caritativo con los otros, especialmente con aquellos que se sienten perdidos o excluidos, y el deseo de cargar juntos con el juego que se hace ligero con Cristo.

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

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


Photo courtesy of Dick Jansman


Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese’s Victim Assistance Advocate, Sam Porter, is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps people who are or were minors when they were victims of abuse by the clergy through a complaint process. He also helps them seek support and counseling services. Porter can be reached at 515-286-2024 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.

Come see what Catholic schools are all about! Go to dmdioce.org/schools, find a school close to you, and make an appointment for a tour.
Guess who’s coming to dinner?

Surprise potlucks warm hearts and friendships during cold winter months

By Elizabeth Elliott
Contributing Writer

Parishioners from Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Atlantic and St. Mary Parish in Anita never know until the night of their parish dinner who is going where for their monthly gathering.

Hosts don’t know ahead of time who is coming, and guests don’t know until that night where they’re going.

The idea grew from Beverly Ginther’s hometown Maryville, Mo., parish where her sister and mom are parishioners.

“They had been doing it for many years, and so I thought it was a really cool idea,” Ginther said. “I thought it was neat, so I brought it back here.”

For the past three years, from January through April, individuals 18 and older from Ss. Peter and Paul Parish and St. Mary Parish sign up as hosts or participants on the fourth Sunday of every month.

Ginther confirms their availability and asks the hosts their plans for a main dish and desires for side dishes. Hosts supply the main dish and drinks.

After everyone is confirmed, Ginther will give the guests an address of where they are going.

“I get a little anxious and worked up when I call people because it never goes perfectly. It never does,” she said. “I can understand that.”

Dinner is a surprise for everyone.

“The people that are hosting don’t know who’s coming. The people that are participating don’t know whose house they’re going to,” Ginther said. “I know in today’s modern technology world, you could look up on your smartphone and figure out whose address you’re going to.”

But, she advised, “Don’t ruin part of the fun.”

“People are building camaraderie among those that participate.

“Especially the elderly, they love to get together,” Ginther said. “They would like to do it every month, year-round really.”

She said for whatever reason, it’s hard to get hosts.

“There are some people that love to entertain but other people do not,” Ginther said.

The point of the gatherings is to get to know people that you might not necessarily get to know in the parish.

Ginther dispels a misconception among some people concerned about what they’ll talk about. It’s just dinner, she said.

“Some people say they can’t sit down and talk about church for an hour,” she said. “We don’t talk about the church at all.”

The meals are meant to create deeper connections.

“You can communicate better with other people when you have a personal relationship,” she said.

Father Trevor Chicoine, the pastor, said he’s seen a few good fruits come out of this program.

“No only has it led to a mixing around the parish so that folks who didn’t know each other get to know each other, but through conversations, it’s organically led different folks to find out about other things going on in the parish that they might be interested in,” he said. “It’s a totally blind date and it’s really easy to incorporate new members.”

Rural Iowa parishes strengthen their bonds with monthly dinners in the winter and early spring. Where the guests are going, and who is doing the cooking, is always a surprise.

From January through April, parishioners at Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Atlantic and St. Mary Parish in Anita have “blind date” dinners to get to know each other.

Honor your favorite teacher

Is there a special teacher, administrator or school volunteer you want to recognize? Consider nominating them to be honored at the 2023 Bishop’s Celebration of Catholic Schools. Nominate someone today at bit.ly/3IabSMi.

Get your message out to 30,000 Catholic households in central and southwest Iowa. Contact Sandy at 515-237-5046 or sriesberg@dmdioce.se.org.

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Living LENT

dmdioce.se.org/Lent2023

Find family-friendly resources to help you truly live the Lenten season. Find children’s activities such as Hide the Alleluia, or flash cards for learning the Hail Mary, to a family almsgiving project planner, stories about the feast days within Lent and seven meatless soups for Lent.

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Divine Mercy Sunday
March 17, 2023
www.dmldioce.org

Christ the King Catholic Church

Divine Mercy Sunday
Sunday, April 16th
Sacrament of Reconciliation 2:00 p.m.
Divine Mercy Chaplet 3:00 p.m.
Mass at 3:30 p.m.
Live Streaming and Sign Language Interpreter
Refreshments following Mass in the Parish Hall

Des Moines Area
Basilica of St. John, Des Moines
Mass at 10:30 a.m. with Bishop Emeritus Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S.
Christ the King Parish, Des Moines
Reconciliation 2-3 p.m., Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m., Mass at 3:30 p.m. Livestreaming and sign language interpretation available.
Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish, Ankeny
Divine Mercy Chaplet cards and images on display.
St. Francis Parish, West Des Moines
April 15, 8:30-3 p.m. - Freedom in Christ Conference with Dr. Matthew Breuninger
April 16, 2:30-3:30 p.m. - Holy Hour with sung Divine Mercy Chaplet
St. Luke Parish, Ankeny
Eucharistic adoration and confessions from 2-3 p.m. and the Divine Mercy Chaplet sung at 3 p.m.
St. Pius X Parish, Urbandale
Divine Mercy Chaplet begins 20 minutes before Mass on April 15 at 5 p.m. and before the Sunday Masses at 7 a.m., 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Missouri Valley
St. Patrick will pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m.

Granger
Assumption will host a benediction at 3 p.m.

Neola
St. Patrick will celebrate with 2 p.m. opening prayer, the rosary, Eucharistic adoration, reconciliation, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3 p.m. and conclude with benediction.

Perry
St. Patrick youth group will host a dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the school gym.

Woodbine
Sacred Heart will host Eucharistic adoration at 3 p.m.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST CONFERENCE
with DR. MATTHEW BREUNINGER
Join us this Divine Mercy weekend for a day of powerful talks on God’s healing love! Our speaker, Dr. Matthew Breuninger is an assistant professor of psychology at Franciscan University of Steubenville and a licensed clinical psychologist. His talks will examine the nature and cause of wounds and outline a six-step process for identifying and removing barriers to God’s healing grace.
Co-Sponsored by St. Francis of Assisi and Iowa Catholic Radio
The event is free and lunch will be provided. Register at saintfranciscurch.org/events

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If you’re looking for a way to get your message to 30,000 households in central and southwest Iowa, consider advertising in The Catholic Mirror. 515-237-5057
Blind lector sees God’s love, mercy

By Elizabeth Elliott
Contributing Writer

Blindness doesn’t keep Mary Clarke from fully experiencing and sharing her faith. Clarke was in her 20s when she was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a hereditary eye disease, generally resulting in total blindness.

“As I see it, there are three kinds of sight. There is the physical sight which I don’t have although I have my other senses,” Clarke said. “Then there is the sight brought on by reasoning which we all share and then there is the contemplative sight which to me is the most profound sight because it opens our soul up to the magnificent Spirit of God’s love and mercy.”

“Mary Clarke

There is the contemplative sight which to me is the most profound sight because it opens our soul up to the magnificent Spirit of God’s love and mercy.”

Mary Clarke

She learned Braille as an adult and said her Braille reading is slower than those who developed the skill at an early age.

“When I was preparing a reading for Mass, I will read it over many times before I read it at Mass,” she said. “This has proved to be a tremendous spiritual blessing for me since as I read it over and over, I gain new insights into the deeper meanings of the readings.”

Clarke said she believes she can help others struggling with their challenges by accepting her challenges through God’s grace.

“This may sound rather strange, but by not being able to see distractions around me, I find myself focusing on my spiritual sanctum as I participate in the Eucharistic celebration,” she said. Her role as lector began when she was attending Mass at Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Catholic Church in Ankeny. Monsignor Steve Orr had asked parishioners to consider volunteering to be lectors.

She said she had an overpowering urge to volunteer: “At the same time I was saying in my heart, ‘God, this is crazy... I had not read in front of people since I had lost my vision.’”

The thought persisted so she was put in touch with individuals training lectors.

“I contacted the Xavier Society for the Blind. They sent me the Proper for the Sunday Masses and I began to lector at Sunday and daily Masses,” Clarke said.

Clarke said she was in her 20s, Mary Clarke has learned to cope with her challenges through the grace of God. She lectors at St. Boniface Parish in Waukee.

For the daily Masses, the staff at OLJH would send me the readings on my computer and I would transcribe them into Braille.”

Clarke has been able to enter into many aspects of the church, with the help of materials that are made for the blind.

After becoming a widow in 2012 and through 2020, Clarke managed her own home in Ankeny before moving to Waukee.

She continues to lector at St. Boniface Parish in Waukee.

Do you know someone who lives their faith in a way that's inspiring? Do you see someone’s faith witnessed in a way that draws people closer to Christ? Who among us is sowing God’s Spirit, planting those seeds of faith that one day will bear fruit?

Contact us with your story ideas at communications@dmdioocese.org or 515-237-5046.

CTO offers a win-win; help families & earn tax credits

By Mark Reed
Contributing Writer

Have you filed your taxes yet? It is a common question this time of year. Most often there are two responses:

1. Nope. I owe additional taxes, so I am waiting until the deadline.
2. Absolutely! I am getting a refund, so I already filed.

If you typically owe additional taxes, you may want to consider taking advantage of the 75% Iowa tax credit by donating to the Catholic Tuition Organization. CTO donors subtract 75% of their gift directly from their calculated state income tax. Often this results in a tax refund rather than an additional payment.

If you already receive a tax refund, you can increase your refund, up to the full amount of your tax liability with tax credits from CTO. Not only is the 75% tax credit highest in Iowa, but a gift to CTO means you are providing families with tuition assistance to attend our Catholic schools.

Who receives tuition assistance?

Consider this: there are 4.6 members in the average CTO recipient family, which earns $66,000 annually. Assuming one high school and one elementary student, their average tuition cost is $13,365. Without CTO, that family is spending 20% of their income just on tuition! Who of us who make $66,000 could afford $13,365 in tuition? It is obvious that these families could not afford a Catholic education without CTO.

Families can apply for tuition assistance by April 18 for the 2023-24 school year. Application information can be found at CTOIowa.org.

Why donate to CTO?

The primary reason donors contribute to CTO is to support families and our Catholic schools that instill strong moral values and academic excellence. Donors desire to help families afford a high quality, faith-based education for their children.

Many donors give more to CTO for the tax credit. A $1,000 contribution costs less than $250, yet the full amount of the contribution helps families in need.

How can you help?

Donate online at CTOIowa.org or print a donation form and mail with your gift to the Catholic Tuition Organization, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Instructions for giving appreciated stock are also on our website.

CTO means you are providing families with tuition assistance to Catholic schools that instill strong moral values and academic excellence. Donors desire to help families afford a high quality, faith-based education for their children. Many donors give more to CTO for the tax credit. A $1,000 contribution costs less than $250, yet the full amount of the contribution helps families in need.

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Volunteer “English as a second language” teachers needed

Volunteer English as a second language teachers are needed to increase English proficiency in the Des Moines community. Patience and kindness are more important than experience.

Contact Jim Supina at 515-961-2026 for more information.

www.PulseForLife.org
515-255-4113
Contribuido de página 2

La edad de ocho años. Queremos llamar las cosas por su propio nombre... “llamar las cosas por su propio nombre” restaurando el aprecio... Los primeros encuentros con la pornografía se dan en promedio a... (Texto cortado)

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Los primeros encuentros con la pornografía se dan en promedio a... Por medio de una actividad que han comprometido su liberación... 

Continuado desde la página 2

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Pensemos en que, ya sea que percibamos la convergencia y el cambio alrededor de nosotros y dentro de nosotros, en la aparente llanura de marzo, “algo es diferente esta vez... El Señor y su Iglesia no siguen llamando a quienes no somos perros, sino a cuidar de aquellos que vuelven a su vómito como perros que vuelven a su vómito como perros que vuelven a su vómito...” De la misma forma, el Espíritu de Dios nos llama a formar... 

Terribles Días de Cuaresma

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Priest used culinary gifts to bring people together

Continuado desde la página 1

He served... (Texto cortado)

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At Christmas Eve, he... (Texto cortado)

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The Catholic Mirror March 17, 2023

www.dmdiocese.org
Pope: Jesus asks that no one be excluded from his table

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Catholic Church is not selective: each one of its members is a sinner and part of the holy, faithful people of God, Pope Francis said in an interview marking his 10 years as pope.

Vatican News March 10 published excerpts of the interview with RSI, a Swiss radio-television broadcasting in Italian. The full interview was to be aired and available online March 12.

Responding to why some people feel excluded from the church, the pope said, “Sin is always there. There are men of the church, women of the church who create this distance.”

“When there are gaps, the church is not a home for some, it is not selective,” the pope said.

“The holy, faithful people of God are this: everyone.”

Pope Francis waves to the visitors in St. Peter’s Square gathered to pray the Angelus on March 5.

When asked how much he has changed since his election March 13, 2013, he responded, “I am old. I have less physical endurance, the knee injury was a physical humiliation, although it is healing well now.” He said he felt “a bit ashamed” having to use the bus, always with people.

When Jesus asks that everyone be brought to his table, “it means that no one is excluded,” the pope said.

“From the time before he was elected pope, he pointed to the late Argentine philosopher, Amelia Podetti, who said that to the late Argentine philosopher, bringing to the papacy, he pointed out the ends of the earth.”

He mentioned how he used to catch the underground, the street. I used to walk a lot. I felt “a bit ashamed” having to use the bus, always with people.

When Francis was asked what a pope misses most, he responded, “from the time before he was elected pope, he pointed to the late Argentine philosopher, Amelia Podetti, who said that “reality is better seen from the extremes than from the center. One understands universality from a distance.”

Speaking about the problem of war and conflict in the world, he said a third world war is underway. “It started in bits and pieces and now no one can say it is not worldwide. The great powers are all caught up in it. The battlefield is Ukraine. Everyone is fighting there.”

The pope explained how the day after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, “I went to the Russian embassy to the Holy See to say that I was willing to go to Moscow if Putin would give me a window to negotiate.” Sergey Lavrov, Russia’s foreign minister, “wrote to me saying thank you but now is not the time.”

“Putin knows I am available. But there are imperial interests there, not only of the Russian empire, but of empires elsewhere,” he said. “It is typical of the empire to put nations in second place.”

The conflicts in Yemen and Syria and what is happening to the poor Rohingyas in Myanmar are also close to the pope’s heart. “Why this suffering? Wars hurt. There is no spirit of God. I don’t believe in holy wars.”

Pope Francis praised his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, who died Dec. 31, 2022, and spoke about how good it was to have him nearby.

“I would ask for his opinion. He would tell me what he thought; he was always balanced, positive, a wise man,” he said.

The pope has repeatedly said he does not plan on resigning any time soon, but when asked what would lead him to step down, he responded that it would be the kind of fatigue that “does not make you see things clearly. A lack of clarity, of knowing how to evaluate situations. A physical problem, too, perhaps.”

Caring About Your Loss

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, 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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Wisdom, help us with technology

One of the greatest joys of my life is being a father to my five children. Giving the opportunity to teach them, and hope to grow such a profound gift! It is my nature to be overly confident, and yet it is not in a way that I hope to guide my kids, I often experience the quiet, subtle voice in the back of my head that says, “You don’t know what you’re doing.” Somewhat confusing and unsettling, but most of the time I can peacefully concede that it’s right!

By Adam Storey

We should also recognize that none of us can or should, try to raise our kids alone. Parenting goes well beyond just mom and dad, and even beyond the extended family, to the broader community. A primary community for every Catholic ought to be his or her parish. The broader community can be a place of support in times of need and it can remind us that although our context is unique, the challenges we face are not new.

If I’d like to suggest that one vital place of education for families is the issue of internet safety, and healthy internet practices. Technology continues to change faster than our ability to keep up, and while it can offer many blessings, its temptations and negative effects are easy to see and well documented. As internet use and social media apps become more deeply embedded in culture, boundaries seem harder to set and issues more difficult to navigate.

This is why the Diocese is celebrating Safe Haven Sunday on the weekend of March 18-19. Safe Haven Sunday is an opportunity to highlight the many effective internet safety resources that are available to families and individuals. Helping build a culture of healthy internet use is a communal effort not only by what it produces, but also by how it touches human life and whether it strengthens or weakens the dignity of the human person. Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content; they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken the family, weaken or diminish the quality of justice in our land.”

The meatpacking plant worker expressed worries that kids working at a meatpacking plant would be taking on a certain risk of injury because of their young age. He and his wife were among 15 to 20 steps to the west side of school were sharing their concerns about Iowa’s proposed legislation with Bishop Thomas Zinkula last week in Columbus Junction. The bishop said he would share their concerns with the other Iowa bishops and the Iowa Catholic Conference, which is the public policy voice for the Catholic church in Iowa.

Now we need to advocate on behalf of our minors. Go to legis.iowa.gov/legislation to read the bill (SF 167). Send a message to your Iowa legislators to pass a law that keeps our minors out of meatpacking plants. The Iowa Catholic Conference is also tracking this legislation and other bills that may impact marriage and family life. More information can be found on the diocesan website by clicking on the Marriage and Family Life ministries page.

Go beyond putting up with life and find joy

We rejoice when it’s dry and complain when it’s wet, as if the weather has some simple purpose. But the weather delivers more than that. It gives him the opportunity to start to break the case of “approved career and technical establishments and rendering plants, provided about slaughtering and meatpacking establishments are particularly hazardous off limits, such as meatpacking plants and rendering plants in the state of “approved career and technical establishments,” and it can remind us that although our context is unique, the challenges we face are not new.

As the woman offers Jesus well-water to quench his bodily thirst, he offers her living water which would quench her thirst for God. Not surprisingly, she understands that the terms of her living spring are distinct from stagnant well-water. She’s eager to receive the inexhaustible supply of water, which Christ offers her, since it would free her from the arduous task of coming to the well each day.

By Barb Arland-Fye

That would not permit the directors of the U.S. Department of Labor to extend waivers for students to work in meatpacking establishments, rendering plants, or wholesale retail or service establishments are particularly hazardous for the employment of minors between 16 and 18 years of age or detrimental to their health or well-being” (https://tinyurl.com/n78m4ch).

Furthermore, “The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) identifies the “many serious safety and health hazards in the meat packing industry” that include “exposure to high noise levels, dangerous equipment, slippery floors, musculoskeletal disorders, and hazards "of ammonia (which is used as a refrigerant)” (https://tinyurl.com/mv37znbk).

Meatpacking plant workers can also be exposed to biological hazards associated with handling live animals or exposures to feces and blood which can increase the risk for many diseases.” Meatpacking and rendering plant employers are required to adopt and implement comprehensive control measures as required by law but how effective are these measures? How effectively do they adhere to them? Workers may have the maturity to comply consistently with these measures.

Other concerns to consider: how many financially strapped families might apply pressure on their 14- to 17-year-old sons and daughters, explicitly or implicitly, to work in a meatpacking plant to help make ends meet? The proposed bill also calls for an extension of work hours for teens. How would working a couple of extra hours a day affect a teen’s ability to complete schoolwork and advance his or her education?

“Economic Justice for All,” a pastoral letter of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, would be worth reflecting on as we consider the answers to these questions (https://tinyurl.com/tency7yy). In the opening paragraph, the bishops state: “Our faith calls us to measure this economy not only by what it produces, but also by how it touches human life and whether it strengthens or weakens the dignity of the human person. Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content; they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken the family, weaken or diminish the quality of justice in our land”.

The meeting the meatpacking plant worker expressed worries that kids working at a meatpacking plant would be taking on a certain risk of injury because of their young age. He and his wife were among 15 to 20 steps to the west side of school were sharing their concerns about Iowa’s proposed legislation with Bishop Thomas Zinkula last week in Columbus Junction. The bishop said he would share their concerns with the other Iowa bishops and the Iowa Catholic Conference, which is the public policy voice for the Catholic church in Iowa.

Now we need to advocate on behalf of our minors. Go to legis.iowa.gov/legislation to read the bill (SF 167). Send a message to your Iowa legislators to pass a law that keeps our minors out of meatpacking plants. The Iowa Catholic Conference is also tracking this legislation and other bills that may impact marriage and family life. More information can be found on the diocesan website by clicking on the Marriage and Family Life ministries page.

Go beyond putting up with life and find joy

We rejoice when it’s dry and complain when it’s wet, as if the weather has some simple purpose. But the weather delivers more than that. It gives him the opportunity to start to break the case of “approved career and technical establishments,” and it can remind us that although our context is unique, the challenges we face are not new.

As the woman offers Jesus well-water to quench his bodily thirst, he offers her living water which would quench her thirst for God. Not surprisingly, she understands that the terms of her living spring are distinct from stagnant well-water. She’s eager to receive the inexhaustible supply of water, which Christ offers her, since it would free her from the arduous task of coming to the well each day.

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I hope your first answer to the question in this title is “Yes” because actually sometimes it is broken.

While no one can fix all the problems of a broken system, we can fix some of them, especially the ones that are broken within each one of us. Working to improve our own perception of mental health is a long-term challenge; but it is one we can help support by the Christian community as well.

This may seem like a quick and easy fix, but it is not; it is actually quite difficult. It requires a change of mindset. To create a change within any person’s thinking takes a serious and determined effort. If we listen closely, we might hear words of wisdom swirling around our minds, but if we listen even more closely, we may hear some thoughts that may be defeating and pessimistic, promoting a sense of hopelessness or judgment. Sometimes these internal thoughts are easily recognizable and at other times they are hidden in disguise.

If we are not careful, some of these thoughts might leak out in conversations with negative outcomes. Let’s call these conversations “broken mental health narratives.” These types of conversations can further decline the mental health of both parties of the conversation, the speaker and the listener.

Many of these narratives have moved from generation to generation. We can fix these, and yes, we use the word “fix” because, when something is broken, it needs to be fixed. The first fix needs to be within ourselves. Listen to several broken mental health narratives:

**The Medication Conversation**
Person A to Person B, “Medication for depression or anxiety might be helpful, but only as a last resort. Have you tried trusting God for healing?”

Person B hears: “Medication is for the weak. I must be strong enough to handle my life,” or “I am not weak. I don’t trust God. I like to control my life.”

Fixed thinking: “Medication is valid. It is wholly good and right. It is not a sign of lack of faith or a less than virtuous choice.” Medication should be actively supported by the Christian community as personal choice and not minimized or misjudged.

**The Chance To Be Holy Conversation:**
Person A to Person B, “Have you prayed to be healed of this particular struggle?”

Person B hears: “My disobedience must be kept me ill. Now I have a spiritual problem too.”

Fixed thinking says: “Of course I pray for healing, but my mental health struggles are neither about disobedience nor a lack of faith. It is about courage and responsibility.” Mental health, along with all its struggles, is something that is natural to every person. It is fundamentally NOT a spiritual matter.

**The Worry Conversation:**
Person A to Person B, “Jesus doesn’t want you to worry. Here are some Bible verses that say to stop worrying.”

Person B hears: “Either I am really stupid, or I must be in sin. My worrying is stupid, or I must be in sin.”

Fixed thinking: “While I might ask for prayers and comfort from a particular saint, I am not asking for a miracle, like canonization. My mental health struggles are not my cross to bear. My cross to bear is the whole of my life. My struggles are only a part of me.”

So, wanna help? Let’s work on our mental health perceptions and conversations. Perhaps we have been on both sides of these types of broken conversations. So, we pray to the Lord to continue to increase our awareness of our broken sides and to help us fix this type of broken conversation and to see more fully the person in front of us with dignity and holiness.

O Lord, may our words to others and to ourselves reflect your compassion, truth, and love.

Thank you, readers, for saying “Yes” to helping fix this part of the mental health crisis.

**Deacon Randy Kiel serves Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines. Connect with him at, randy@kardiacounseling.com.**

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**The right path is never out of reach.**

The right path is never out of reach. To reach the final destination by continuing on the correct path makes an important and virtuous difference.

In essence, our entire lifespan on earth is a journey towards eternal life with God. Life is a road; a spiritual road. We continue to journey on. Therefore, when a wayward traveler realizes he is heading in the wrong direction and corrects it to reach the correct destination, he will not continue his mistakes behind and continue on the right path. Though much work may lie ahead, the realization of the wrong path initiates a process of returning to the proper route.

Nevertheless, if a traveler who has been following the correct path makes an incorrect decision at a junction and follows the wrong path, we cannot say that he will reach the final destination by continuing on the erroneous path. Moreover, we cannot assume that his previous good decisions regarding the correct path will guarantee his arrival at the final destination while he is currently on a path that does not lead there.

And so, as a thing is not done that which is finished, we should all recognize that no one has had the strength to carry on in this way. Essentially, she said this to God: I have given up everything for you and now I am alone and afraid. I don’t know what to do and I need the strength to carry on in this commitment.

She prayed this prayer of helplessness, took the train back to New York, and went to see Father Treher, sitting on her doorstep, telling her that she had heard about her and that he had a vision of what she should now do, namely, to start the Catholic Worker. That set the path for the rest of her life. The angel had come and strengthened her.

Notice at what point in these stories the angel makes its appearance - when human strength is fully exhausted. Why not earlier? Because up to the point of exhaustion, we don’t really let the angel in, relying instead on our own strength. But, as Trevor Horroit says, “Only after we have let the angel do its full work in us will angels finally come and minister to us.”

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**The Catholic Mirror March 17, 2023**
By Matthew Liptak
OSV News

MARY RONCHETTI
ARUBUTUS, Md. (OSV News) — The canonization cause of Mother Mary Lange, founder of the nation’s first sustained women’s religious community for Black women, has taken a step forward.

Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, superior general of the Balkan-based Oblate Sisters of Providence, which her religious community received a Feb. 27 email from the Vatican informing the sisters that it has approved the “positio” — the documentation of the life of Mother Lange, which includes both the theological and historical record of her life.

Sister Rita Michelle made the announcement March 5 at her religious community’s motherhouse in Arbutus, just outside Baltimore, during the annual confrerral of the Mother Lange Awards honoring local Catholics active in the Black Catholic community.

More than 300 people broke into applause and cheers at the news. “I don’t want you to go and say Sister Rita Michelle has just gone and proclaimed Sister Mother Lange a saint,” the superior general said, noting that the sisters have long considered their religious community’s founder a saint in their hearts.

Mother Lange established St. Frances Academy in Baltimore in 1828 to educate Black children in an era of slavery.

Mother Lange’s positio will go to the Didizcy for the Causes of Saints for review, Sister Rita Michelle said.

“Once they have conclud- ed the review, it will be sent to Pope Francis, and he will declare Mother Mary Lange venerable,” she said.

“Venerable” is a designation of a sainthood candidate’s heroic virtues. Next would be beatifi- cation, after which she would be called “Blessed.” The third step is canonization. In general, the last two steps require a second miracle attributed to the intercession of the sainthood candidate and verified by the church.

Baltimore Archbishop Wil- liam E. Lori said he was excited to hear the news about the latest development in Mother Lange’s cause.

“With each step forward, more people learn about the life and legacy of Mother Mother Lange,” he said. “She unlocked educational opportunities for children in Baltimore and beyond during her lifetime — and that per- sists today. The Oblate Sisters have worked very hard to help bring about this key develop- ment. And Baltimoreans and many others are delighted.”

The uplifting news was just one highlight of the annual awards ceremony, meant to honor or good the works of dozens of parishioners from traditionally Black churches around the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

It is right for them to be able to express these skills in every sphere, not just within the family,” he wrote in the preface to a book, “More Women’s Leader- ship for a Better World: Caring as the Engine for Our Common Home.”

In the preface, published by Vatican News on Women’s Day, Pope Francis wrote that “it can also benefit from the valoriza- tion of women” by allowing them to do more than just perform a particular function or job and ac- tually transform the culture to be more caring.

In his 10 years as pontiff, Pope Francis has sought to include more women in the work and gov- ernance of Vatican commissions and Roman Curia offices.

According to the latest sta- tistics, there has been a signifi- cant increase in the number and percentage of female employees the past decade, and the number of women in leadership positions has increased.

Today there are 1,165 wom- en working at the Vatican com- pared to 846 in 2013, making up 23.4% of the total workforce, according to Vatican News March 8. When it comes to roles in the Roman Curia, more than one in four employees are now a woman.

Within the Curia, five wom- en hold the rank of undersecre- tary, and one has the rank of sec- retary. Sister Michelle Smerilli, whom Pope appoint- ed to the No. 2 position at the Diaconate for Promoting Integral Human Development in 2021. It is the highest post ever held by a woman at the Holy See.

The pope has said he inten- ds to appoint the first female prefect of a congregation “to take care of laypeople, and, therefore, wom- en, to lead dicasteries, according to a spirit of Re- vival of the Church,” and to “Praedicate Evangelium,” the pope’s constitution reforming the Curia.

Pope Francis has also, for the first time, included women as full members of Vatican dicaster- ies, when previously that role was reserved to cardinals and some bishops.

Members play a key role and vote along with prefects and secretaries at plenary assemblies. So, while the pope has been bringing more women to “a place at the table” in Rome, he also has opened up new ways for women’s voices to be heard.

His Synod of Bishops on synodality has inspired some 500 women and men from around the world to become synod observers. Those observers are candidates to be named by the pope to be part of the synod of bishops.

Those honored with Mother Mother Lange’s positio will go to the Didizcy for the Causes of Saints for review, Sister Rita Michelle said. “And I wanted to be a powerful woman of God — something I had hoped for and prayed for my entire life.”

The program also included singing performances, opening remarks and a prayer by Auxiliary Bishop Bruce A. Lewandowski, a historic portrayal and presenta- tion of Mother Mary Lange by Catholic storyteller Janice Curtis Greene, as well as formal public recognition for award recipients.

“God spoke to me and told me that I could make a differ- ence,” said Greene, speaking in character as Mother Mother Lange. “And I want to be a powerful woman of God — something I had hoped for and prayed for my entire life.”

The round of applause for women. “Providence did. Providence did. And Providence will,” she prayed. “And this will be my prayer today.”

Mother Lange is one of six African American Catholics who are candidates for sainthood. The others are: Julia Greeley, who after her emancipation from enslavement was canonized in 2010 and named a saint of the Church; Sister Thea Bowman, a Franciscan of Perpetual Adoration, who was a noted ed- ucator and established in 1972 by Father Augustus Tolton, the first publicly known Black Catholic priest in the United States; Sister Henriette Delille, who founded the Congrega- tion of the Sisters of the Holy Family; and Pierre Toussaint, a 19th-century slave and amateur priest who supported many Catholic Charities.

Charitable works.

Pope Mother Lange, Greeley and Sister Toussaint received the ti- tle “Servant of God,” bestowed when a sainthood cause is offi- cially opened. The latter three in the list have been given title “Venerable.”

OSV News photo/CNS news file

This painting depicts Mother Mary Eliza- beth Lange, who founded the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore, the world’s first sustained women’s religious community for Black women. Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, the order’s current superior general, announced March 5, that Mother Lange’s canonization cause has taken one step forward with the Vatican accepting the “positio,” or documentation about her life.
On March 13, Pope Francis celebrated 10th anniversary

10 YEARS OF FRANCIS
A TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF POPE FRANCIS’ PONTIFICATE

2013
- MARCH 13
  Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, is elected pope on the second day of the conclave, becoming the first pope from the Southern Hemisphere and the first non-European elected in almost 1,300 years. The Jesuit was also the first member of his order to be elected pope and the first member of any religious order elected in nearly two centuries.

2014
- JULY 8
  Pope Francis makes his first trip outside of Rome, choosing to go to the Turin Laminated Statue to venerate the body of Jesus Christ and to beg the grace of mercy to the faithful.

- JUNE 8
  Pope Francis, Israel President Shimon Peres, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and others come together in the Vatican Gardens for an unprecedented gathering to pray for peace in the Holy Land.

2015
- SEPT. 19-27
  Pope Francis travels to Cuba then to the United States. He addresses Congress, the United Nations and the World Meeting of Families, canonizes 10 new saints.

- DEC. 8
  Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica to inaugurates a Holy Year of Mercy. He invited churches around the world to designate a holy door as a reminder of his call for reconciliations.

2016
- FEB. 12-17
  Pope Francis travels to Armenia to meet with the Armenian President, the Pope prays for peace and meeting in same church where 1.5 million Armenians were killed during the 1915 massacre.

- APRIL 13
  Pope Francis goes to a maximum security to celebrate the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper and washes the feet of 12 prisoners, including three women and a Muslim man, who was preparing for baptism. The celebration continued a practice he began as archbishop of Buenos Aires and performed every Holy Thursday as pope.

2017
- APRIL 21
  Pope Francis appoints three women as consultants to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the first time women and laypeople were named as active contributors. The announcement came after more than a year’s delay in picking new members for the papal commission, which advises the pope on theological and moral issues.

- AUG. 2
  Pope Francis orders the Vatican’s Secretariat for Communication to issue a new set of rules for its websites,禁止facebook, twitter, and other social media platforms.

2018
- MARCH 13
  Pope Francis celebrates his 80th anniversary as pope.

- JAN. 5
  Pope Francis presides over the annual Mass for Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter’s Square. It was the first time in more than 20 years that a pope celebrated the funeral of his predecessor.

2019
- FEB. 4
  Pope Francis and Imam Muhammad al-Tayyeb, grand imam of Egypt’s Al-Azhar mosque and university, sign the document on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together” during an interreligious meeting in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

- FEB. 21-24
  Pope Francis convenes a summit on child protection and abuse, bringing together nearly 200 church leaders — presidents of bishops’ conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic Churches, superiors of men and women’s religious orders, survivors and Roman Curia officials. The summit at the Vatican included a penitential liturgy.

2020
- MARCH 5-8
  Pope Francis makes a papal visit to Cuba and the United States, celebrating Mass in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, border crossing.

- JULY 4
  Pope Francis makes a papal visit to Cuba and the United States, celebrating Mass in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, border crossing.

- JULY 24-29
  Pope Francis makes a papal visit to Cuba and the United States, celebrating Mass in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, border crossing.

- AUG. 2
  Pope Francis orders the Vatican’s Secretariat for Communication to issue a new set of rules for its websites,禁止facebook, twitter, and other social media platforms.

- SEPTEMBER 27
  Pope Francis convenes a summit on child protection and abuse, bringing together nearly 200 church leaders — presidents of bishops’ conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic Churches, superiors of men and women’s religious orders, survivors and Roman Curia officials. The summit at the Vatican included a penitential liturgy.

If you think God may be calling you to the vocation of priesthood or religious life, contact Father Ross Parker at vocations@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5050.

Iowa Catholic Conference
Find out where the Catholic Church in Iowa stands on a variety of bills in the state legislature by following https://iowacatholicconference.org/blog/
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Michael Bormann
General Agent
563-687-6820
michael.bormannskofc.org

Neil Pfeifer
General Agent
402-373-0180
neil.pfeifer@kofc.org

Walker Bormann
Assistant General Agent
563-260-1500
walker.bormannskofc.org

Dan Ginther
Field Agent
515-461-3431
daniel.ginther@kofc.org

Donnie Kenkel
Field Agent
712-579-9056
donald.kenkel@kofc.org

Rob Ryan
Field Agent
515-400-3753
robert.ryan@kofc.org

Pete Seuntjens
Field Agent
712-880-0044
peter.seuntjens@kofc.org

Gregory Wadde
Field Agent
515-218-3500
gregory.wadde@kofc.org

Justin Wadde
Field Agent
515-975-2688
justin.wadde@kofc.org