

# THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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## Jesus' presence in the Eucharist honored



Father Nick Smith, of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny, participates in a Eucharistic procession at his home parish of St. Augustin in Des Moines.



Photo by Lisa Milbrath  
Father Luis Mejia, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, raises the Eucharist at an outdoor altar during a procession.



Photo by Robert Nandell  
The faithful pray at a stop along a Eucharistic procession route at Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines.

Catholics across the Diocese of Des Moines celebrated the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, also known as Corpus Christi, in June. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the Catholic Church teaches that the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood through the Holy Spirit and the instrumentality of the priest. Why? The U.S. bishops explained that "Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist as spiritual nourishment because he loves us." Through his death and resurrection, we can celebrate in the life of God.

## Ignite! Campaign comes to a successful close

By Anne Marie Cox  
Staff Writer

The Ignite! Campaign, a diocesan-wide fundraising effort that spanned several years, has come home to shore, raising \$37 million.

Campaign funds will widen access to Catholic education, support seminarians and retired priests, create an endowment for parish vibrancy programs and fund parish renovation projects.

Reflecting on the campaign's successful completion, Bishop William Joensen is thankful to everyone who participated. "As we celebrate the completion of our campaign, my heart swells with gratitude for the many families and individuals in our Diocese who have given so selflessly. No matter the size, every contribution has played a crucial part in this bold campaign," he said.

The campaign's signature achievement was raising \$19.3 million toward a Catholic Education Endowment. The endowment will be a diocesan mainstay and will complement the Catholic Tuition Organization tax-credit program and Educational Savings Accounts offered by the Students First Act to significantly boost the amount of tuition assistance available to families in need.

The endowment will also play a crucial role in powering the Diocese's Strategic Plans for Schools, which aims to address discrepancies in teacher salaries, retain quality educators, reduce administrative burdens on pastors, and eliminate duplicate business operations across parish schools.

The campaign garnered \$5.7 million toward priest retirement and seminarian education. An additional \$3.4 million is dedicated to a parish renewal and vibrancy endowment, while the parish share component totaled \$6.7 million.

Bishop Joensen is eager to see how the effort will be a catalyst for new possibilities throughout the Diocese.

"Amid trying circumstances these past few years, God has been steadfast in sustaining and even surprising us through the inexhaustible graces exchanged between Our Lord and our diocesan family. God is surely not outdone in generosity; now we are charged to put flesh on our faith and bring to fruition the initiatives God has

## Catholic Charities included in funding to retain, recruit mental health professionals

By Anne Marie Cox  
Staff Writer

When Burmese refugee Mu Paw arrived in the Des Moines area, there were no mental health therapists from her homeland working in central Iowa who could help her.

"It motivated me," she said.

She just graduated from Grand View University with the aim of providing mental health services to her community.

As a recent intern with Catholic Charities, she said, "I was able to work with my community and support them with mental health therapy."

The community needs more therapists like Paw.

Government funds are available to help recruit and re-



Mu Paw

tain mental health professionals to meet a need for more male therapists, therapists who are people of color and those who are bilingual.

In August, Catholic Charities will be added to the list of approved mental health providers whose staff can access the government funds through the

American Rescue Plan Act, better known as ARPA. Catholic Charities has a long history of providing counseling services and serving the refugee and immigrant communities.

The funding and push to improve the community's response to children's mental health crises comes from communities of faith banding together through A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy, also known as AMOS, Polk County Supervisors and others.

They met May 18 to talk about how far they've come and the work that still needs to be done.

### Children in crisis

About six years ago, AMOS asked families what kept them up at night. Parents said they need-

ed services for children in mental health crises.

"Kids were waiting months to see a therapist. They were not getting what they need from a system designed for adults," said Crystal Loving, of First Unitarian Church. A child in the midst of a mental health crisis would be handcuffed, put in the backseat of a police car, and enter the juvenile justice system rather than get the mental health care that was needed.

Much has been accomplished. In Polk County, local organizing groups lobbied legislators and local officials. They were able to put together a plan that would get clinicians to respond to 9-1-1 calls for children in mental health crisis, get a sta-

Continued on page 7

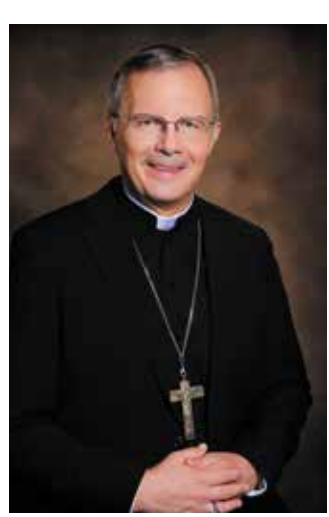
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# Not only the lonely - part one

Given a choice between reading a government report and getting a root canal, I would ordinarily opt for the latter. Yet several people I respect commended the recent advisory study released by the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy: "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: On the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community," and so I read it in one sitting. The stark account of the negative effects of felt social disconnection and loneliness caused by several factors—including but not limited to technology use—was not surprising, but still sobering. The report is not all doom and gloom; there are observations and recommendations that give reason for hope.

Yet, ultimately, what struck me is that the study is issued by an executive branch that often seems pitted against a biblically-based understanding of the human person in community along with the values upheld by our Catholic moral teaching, but here the opposite is the case: the findings and conclusions in fact correspond quite readily with claims about human identity, relationships, and flourishing proposed in the Catholic tradition of philosophy and theology. Human beings are inherently social beings; relationships with each other and active participation in society are essential aspects of human nature; and belonging to a community of faith with diverse members is one of the more salutary factors contributing to human health and well-being.

There is not enough space here to summarize the whole study, so I encourage readers to check it out themselves (<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>). Instead, this month and next I will compare several points raised in the advisory report with reflections on loneliness and belonging by Jean



Bishop William Joensen

Vanier, the late French-Canadian founder of the L'Arche communities for persons with disabilities. (I acknowledge that the credible posthumous claims about Vanier's conduct may have disgraced his reputation, but I don't think they invalidate the practical wisdom contained in his writings; compare Mozart, who may have been a cad and a scoundrel, but still he composed some magnificent symphonies that I believe truly glorify God.) Further, I will draw ties to both our diocesan vision and mission that emerged from our recent strategic visioning process, AND to a Catholic understanding of the mystery and meaning of the Eucharist in this month when we celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi and the beginning of the third, yearlong parish phase of the national Eucharistic Revival.

The glossary at the beginning of the surgeon general's advisory includes words defined in secular terms but consistent with a Catholic attitude toward reality: 'belonging', 'loneliness', 'social cohesion', 'solitude', and 'trust' speak to common experience informed by faith. 'Social cohesion', for instance, integrates several key themes; it is defined as, "The sense of solidarity within groups, marked by strong social connections and high levels of social participation, that generates trust, norms of reciprocity, and a sense of belonging." Social cohesion is congruent with 'communion' in a Catholic lexicon, which I define as: 'the mutual bond that exists among persons in relation who entrust themselves to one another.'

'Loneliness', in contrast, may be paraphrased as the felt distress arising from a sense of isolation or inadequate connections, which occurs when there is an unmet need to belong and interact in individual and group relations with others. The measurable effects of loneliness and social isolation are stark: they

increase the risk for premature death by 26% and 29%, respectively, which exceeds the risk for premature death caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day! "In the U.S., stress-related absenteeism attributed to loneliness costs employers an estimated \$154 billion annually." Half of U.S. adults in 2022 reported experiencing loneliness, which follows when one learns that only 39% feel closely emotionally connected to others.

Yet, there are some counter-intuitive findings in the advisory study: while the pandemic might be implicated in a surge of loneliness, the numbers are roughly the same: 1 in 5 Americans feel more disconnected as a result of the pandemic; a similar number actually feel more closely connected to others. And while persons over 65 might be suspected to have the highest incidence of loneliness, it is actually young persons who are most acutely lonely, which makes sense when one learns that people today spend 24 hours more per month alone than they did in 2003.

Coupled with this trend is the fact that for young persons aged ages 15 to 24, "time spent in-person with friends has reduced by nearly 70% over almost two decades, from roughly 150 minutes per day in 2003 to 40 minutes per day in 2020"—a decrease of 20 hours per month. And despite the proliferation of online communities and Facebook 'friends', the 'social network' of respondents indicated that roughly half of Americans in 2021 had three or fewer close friends as opposed to only 27% with such a limited circle of friends in 1990. And yes, as suspected, the pandemic further significantly shrunk the average 'circle of life' by 16%.

Sadly, many have come to regard loneliness as the "new normal": "less than 20% of persons who often or always feel lonely or isolated recognize it as a major problem." While the experience of loneliness may be endemic to the human condition, Vanier has a mixed regard for this soul state. In his work, "Becoming Human," he observes that loneliness can appear in its more mild forms as a "faint dis-ease, an inner dissatisfaction, a restlessness in the heart." In its more malignant forms, "loneliness can feel like death," as it breeds apathy in the elderly, those with disabilities, or leads to depression in the wake of the subjective chaos that threatens to swallow all persons' sense of peace and purpose. The chaos caused by the absence of connections can foment the temptation

to think that all love is an illusion, that few are to be trusted, and that letting down the psychic barriers which reinforce our self-imposed isolation is only a recipe for further hurt. Vanier captures the sense that something is amiss in his familiar refrain: "Life no longer flows."

Yet, in Vanier's take on loneliness, not all is negative. Loneliness can never fully be dispelled, because, just as St. Augustine observed, nothing on this created earth, including other human beings, "can completely fulfill the needs of the human heart." The human restlessness that results from the heart's longing for the infinite God can be ignored or worse, cancelled, only at the expense of our chance for self-transcendence, for conversion of self and society, for spiritual and social "evolution" to a more mature, inclusive community.

Loneliness, says Vanier, may draw us to the threshold of newfound creative energy that spurs us to "create new things or to seek more truth and justice in the world." For "artists, poets, mystics, prophets, those who do not seem to fit into the world or the way of society, are frequently lonely." "Frequently, it is the lonely man or woman who re-

volts against injustice and sees new ways." One thinks of the fiery John the Baptist as a figure who must have encountered both great joy in the newly-conceived Christ, and great loneliness in the face of the injustice, hypocrisy and dissembling of those who ignored or rejected God.

In my pastoral perspective, it takes honesty, self-knowledge, and courage to admit the nagging ache of our loneliness. Loneliness can be self-induced, or it can be visited upon us by circumstances beyond our control such as the pandemic or other experiences of loss or setback. I believe that loneliness is not a result of God's turning his face from us, for Jesus is always turned toward us, as the Eucharist attests. And belief in his perpetual presence and accompaniment can be a tether drawing us from a sense of disconnection and isolation to communion. To sow seeds of the Spirit and cultivate connections in Christ is a prophetic act of healing, hope, and renewed trust. But more on all this next month.

**Find Bishop's column in Spanish on page 10.**



## Official

Bishop William Joensen has made the following appointments.

**Rev. Daniel Aboagye Adjei**, from sacramental ministry at St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines, St. Theresa, Des Moines, and St. Joseph Parish, Des Moines, to parochial vicar, St. Pius X, Urbandale, effective July 13.

**Rev. Michael Acquah**, to parochial vicar, St. Francis of Assisi, West Des Moines, effective July 13.

**Rev. John Bertogli**, from canonical administrator, Holy Family School in Des Moines, to retirement effective June 5.

**Rev. Maxwell Carson**, while remaining as parochial vicar at St. Patrick, Council Bluffs, and chaplain to St. Albert Catholic School, appointed assistant vocation director for the Diocese of Des Moines, effective July 13.

**Rev. Reed Flood**, offering sacramental assistance at St. Boniface Parish, Waukee, and serving as chaplain at Dowling Catholic High School, West Des Moines, appointed assistant vocation director for the Diocese of Des Moines, effective July 13.

**Rev. James Kirby**, canonical administrator of St. Anne Parish, Logan, and St. Patrick Parish, Missouri Valley, effective July 13.

**Rev. Charles Kottas**, concluding tenure as canonical administrator, St. Albert Catholic School while remaining as pastor, St. Peter, Council Bluffs, to pastor, St. Peter, Council Bluffs, effective June 5.

**Rev. Nivin Scaria**, while remaining as rector of St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish, Des Moines, appointed to canonical administrator, Holy Family School, Des Moines effective June 5.

**Rev. Dan Siepker**, while remaining as pastor for Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, Glenwood, appointed to canonical administrator, St. Albert Catholic School, Council Bluffs, effective June 5.

*William Joensen*

*Jason Kurth*

Faithfully in Christ,  
Most Rev. William Joensen, Ph.D.  
Bishop

Chancellor

## THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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## Ordination

Deacon Jason Lee will be ordained a priest at 5 p.m. on June 23 at St. Ambrose Cathedral. All are invited.

# Congratulations, graduates!



St. Albert Catholic School graduates Grant Springman, of St. Patrick Parish; Gavin Sommerville, of First Christian Church; Nolan Smith, of Corpus Christi Parish; and Lydia Sherrill, of St. Paul Lutheran Church.



Ny'la Jackson, of Holy Family Catholic School, in Des Moines graduates from pre-kindergarten.



Maria and Anna Eide celebrate their graduation from Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines.

Photo by Earl Hulst

Congratulations to all of the graduates.

Among those in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines, 38 high school seniors and 42 eighth graders earned their diplomas from St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.

At Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines, 328 seniors graduated.

More than 430 students in eighth grade earned their diplomas.

## THE FIVE FIRST SATURDAYS DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

### HISTORY OF THIS DEVOTION

In 1917, in the remote village of Fatima, Portugal, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared on six different occasions to the three shepherd children with an urgent message for the world, which concerned the salvation of souls and peace in the world. On July 13, 1917 Our Lady showed the children a vision of hell and said, "You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace...I shall come to ask for...the Communion of reparation to be made on the first Saturdays..." Our Blessed Mother fulfilled her promise eight years later on December 10, 1925, when she appeared with the Child Jesus to Sr. Lucia in her convent cell and said, "Have compassion on the Heart of Your Most Holy Mother, covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them."



### THE INTENTION

This devotion is fulfilled with the intention of consoling and making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for our own sins, for the blasphemies and ingratitude of unrepentant sinners, and for peace in the world.

### OUR LADY'S PROMISE

Then Mary held out her thorn-wreathed Heart and said, "See, my daughter, my Heart encircled by thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Do you, at least, strive to console me, to tell them that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, in order to make reparation to me, on the First Saturday of five successive months, go to confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for a quarter of an hour, meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary."

### HOW TO MAKE REPARATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

The faithful are invited to make the following four steps on five consecutive first Saturdays as part of the devotion.

1. Go to confession on a day of your choosing close to the First Saturday.
2. Receive Holy Communion in a state of grace. For those who may have difficulty fulfilling this requirement on Saturday, Our Lord told Sr. Lucia: "The practice of this devotion will be equally acceptable on the Sunday following the first Saturday when my saints, for a just cause, allow the faithful."
3. Pray five decades of the Holy Rosary. When praying the Holy Rosary Our Lady invited us to interact between the decades: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins; save us from the fires of Hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy."
4. Spend 15 minutes in silent prayer meditating on one or more of the mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

You are invited to morning Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in West Des Moines to celebrate this devotion with me at 7:15 a.m. on July 1.

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# Seminarian ordained a deacon



Photo by Anne Marie Cox



Photo by Robert Nandell

Deacon Luis Cabrera was ordained a transitional deacon on June 9 at his home parish of Christ the King in Des Moines. His ordination as a deacon means he can celebrate the sacrament of baptism and witness marriages. He can preach the homily and preside at funeral services. Next summer, he will be ordained a priest.

## Having dismissed thoughts of priesthood, Smith now ready to enter Jesuit formation

By Alex Nemeč  
Contributing Writer

When Noah Smith walked onto Marquette University's campus his freshman year after graduating from Dowling Catholic High School, he had already written off the idea of becoming a priest despite having thought about it since middle school.

"My older brother was in formation when I was in high school (Father Nick Smith) and it was definitely a topic my friends and family talked to me about," Smith says. "But to be honest, I shut down the possibility because I didn't want to follow in my brother's footsteps. I wanted to be my own person."

Now, four years later, Smith walked across the stage at Marquette's 2023 commencement ceremony, steps closer to the Jesuit priesthood.

Smith, of St. Augustin Parish in Des Moines, enrolled at Marquette because he wanted to attend a Catholic institution and was enamored by Marquette's urban campus. But what really intrigued him was the Jesuit community.

Unfamiliar with many of the religious orders, Smith says he was intrigued by the community and made an effort to learn more about the Jesuits on campus.

He went to Mass every Sunday, joined Campus Ministry and learned the language associated with the Jesuits, further growing his curiosity. A relationship was forming.

### Fostering relationships

After taking classes in-

structed by Jesuits, Smith says he sought out encounters that helped him get to know the priests better — in particular, Jesuit Father Ryan Duns, his theology professor.

"He has been absolutely instrumental in my success here at Marquette and in my formation," Smith says. "He had a super profound influence on my discernment and my own interest in the Jesuit order."

Father Duns said with how gifted Smith is, he could excel in any field he wanted. But, rather, Smith found himself discerning not what he wanted to do, but who he is being called to become.

"It takes dialogue: prayerful searching, conversation with others and patience," Father Duns says. "I don't know that I offered any profound wisdom, but I think our time together gave him the space to raise the vital questions."

### Discernment

As his relationship with Father Duns blossomed, Smith says the idea of the priesthood became more appealing to him.

"I knew I liked the Jesuits, and I liked the Church's sacramental beliefs and the ability to which a priest can be channel of God's grace," Smith says. "That was beautiful and profound to me in a way that resonated with me



Noah Smith

in a way deeper than I was able to intellectualize or rationalize."

Rather than a cannonball moment like St. Ignatius of Loyola had to jumpstart his spiritual awakening, Smith says his connection with God and a possible life in the priesthood was more of a slow burn, growing into a powerful fire inside him.

"The appeal of the priesthood was a gradual realization for me, and it came from taking classes with the Jesuits and learning more about the order," Smith says. "It was like unveiling a large painting. By the time the veil has completely been removed, you can see it in its entirety and appreciate it for what it is."

Should Smith be ordained, Father Duns said he will be the sort of priest the Church needs today — one with integrity, a sharp mind and a heart able to be touched by others' needs.

### Ready to go

Now, after reams of paperwork, many interviews and days of discernment, Smith is ready to enter his formation.

What does Smith hope to achieve in his formation? An open mind and heart.

"A priest at my high school gave me an adage about entering the priesthood; he said, 'Don't anticipate, just participate,'" Smith recalls. "I try not to frame it as what I want out of the formation process, but instead to be open to the experience."

*Alen Nemeč is a marketing communication specialist at Marquette University. This story is reprinted with permission from Marquette University.*

## From weather predictions to priesthood: Council Bluffs man shares his journey

By Kevin White  
Contributing Writer

Father Ross Caniglia was a TV weatherman until he felt called by God to consider priesthood.

A 2006 graduate of St. Albert Catholic School and the son of Phil and Norena Caniglia, of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Council Bluffs, he was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sioux City in 2019.

He serves as the school chaplain at St. Edmond High School in Fort Dodge and the parochial vicar at Holy Trinity Parish in Webster County.

*Q: Did you know right away upon graduating from St. Albert that you wanted to be a priest?*

*A: Oh, no. I went to Creighton and majored in atmospheric science — meteorology — and had a math minor. I graduated from Creighton in 2010 and became a weekend weatherman in Sioux City at KTIV, the NBC affiliate. I also did some news reporting there.*

*Q: Could you take us through your discernment period and let us know how that all came about?*

*A: To be honest, when I was at St. Albert I had no feeling towards that, really... It wasn't really until college, probably junior year I would say when I was at Creighton.*

*I had some friends that weren't Catholic and they just*

*kind of helped me, kind of challenged some of my beliefs, almost in a sense compelled me to kind of look at stuff and try to figure out more about what we believe as Catholics. Things in college just kind of encouraged me to look deeper into more what my purpose in life was, not just as a vocation but just that pull towards God and that more fulfilling type of life that has him in the forefront.*

*I always wanted to do meteorology from like fifth grade. For me it was kind of a shock, a little bit unexpected to think, well, maybe God could be calling me to be a priest.*

*Eventually I contacted the vocations director in Sioux City and that discernment process continued. So it was just kind of a gradual awakening and taking ownership and having more of a personal encounter with Christ and the church that helped me to be propelled in that direction.*

*Q: We hear you're a talented musician. Tell us about your musical pieces. The first is a chant of the Divine Praises. (It has been released through the Oregon Catholic Press.)*

*A: It's with the Divine Praises, which are typically used at the end of adoration. In a parish or at a seminary or somewhere, at the end you just want to pray that prayer and have it be pretty succinct and simple. This is one way to do that in just a chant, as opposed to just saying it.*

*From my understanding, it's actually kind of a hymn. It's a prayer, but it's also kind of a hymn at the end of adoration. This gives you a chance to sing it. The other cool thing is this setting also has the option to do a four-part harmony.*

*Father Caniglia's second piece is a Mass setting called Mass of Epiphany. It will be published by GIA publications.*

*Kevin White is the director of Communications for St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.*

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# Biking for Babies benefits faith-based pregnancy center

By Becky Kolosik  
Contributing Writer

For more than 38 years, faith-based Agape Pregnancy Resource Center has offered free help and services to pregnant women and families.

The center provides a safe place to have conversations, and for people to find support and care if they are overwhelmed, facing obstacles, or just need a place to listen.

Agape is one of three pro-life organizations that will benefit from funds raised through the Biking for Babies ride through Ankeny on June 24.

Agape has an office on the north side of Des Moines and a satellite location in Indianola.

Free services include pregnancy testing, limited obstetric ultrasounds, sexually transmitted disease testing, educational classes, case management, a baby boutique, laundry access and a hygiene pantry.

“With supporters like Biking for Babies, Agape can serve close to 1,000 clients and 5,300 appointments a year. The support of B4B provides funding for around 60 appointments at Agape annually. What an impact!” said Executive Director Leanna Simpson.

Nurse manager Andra Haglund has been with Agape for a little more than a year. She strives to better understand the needs cli-



The Biking for Babies ride in Ankeny on June 24 will raise funds for three local pregnancy centers: Innervisions HealthCare; Martha's House of Hope; and Agape Pregnancy Resource Center.

ents have, the obstacles they face and how she and Agape can help them reach their goals.

“I am committed to providing patient-centered care that focuses not just on physical health, but also emotional health, spiritual health and social needs,” she said.

Haglund meets with clients one-on-one and says many women and men come to the clinic undecided on the outcome of their pregnancy.

Agape serves individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. They help confirm the dating and viability of pregnancies and connect clients with resources that will help them explore their insurance options and prenatal care options.

Agape is funded solely through individuals, churches and business partners. They also accept donations of both hygiene

and baby items.

“From heartbreaks to victories, we have been able to walk with clients through both the hills and the valleys,” said Simpson. “We are thankful to be able to be present and supportive through every story that we see.”

*This article originally appeared in the April 2023 edition of Indianola Living Magazine and is reprinted with permission. Information about Biking for Babies has been added.*

To register for the bike ride, go to [BikingForBabies.com](http://BikingForBabies.com).



Leanna Simpson

# Donors honored



Photo by Kevin White

The Frank and Neva Shudak family was honored May 19 at St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs, where the couple had funded a large crucifix to be installed at the entrance to the school.

They wished to keep the donation anonymous, but when former President Joe Connolly asked if our school could honor them after they were deceased, Neva replied, “When we’re gone, you can do whatever you want!”

Pictured above are six of the seven living children who were in attendance: Laura (Shudak) Meis ‘78, Karen (Shudak) Tucker ‘72, Dan Shudak ‘69, Marty Shudak ‘82, Jeff Shudak ‘86 and Janet (Shudak) McGruder ‘70. Not pictured is Mike Shudak ‘74.

**Congratulations  
Father Jason Lee!**

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Fr. Lee '19

## Around the Diocese

### June 22 Thursday House of Mercy Game Show Gala

DES MOINES – Doors open for the 2023 MercyOne House of Mercy Game Show Gala at 5:30 p.m. The program begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center. It's a fun-spirited game show-style fundraiser for MercyOne House of Mercy, a comprehensive provider of vital behavioral health care, and the state's largest substance use disorder treatment program for parenting women with children. For more information, visit [MercyOne.org/des-moines/game-show-gala](http://MercyOne.org/des-moines/game-show-gala).

### June 23 Friday Ordination to the Priesthood

DES MOINES -- Ordination to the priesthood of Deacon Jason Lee will be at St. Ambrose Cathedral at 5 p.m. All are welcome!

### June 24 Saturday Iowa March for Life

DES MOINES -- The Iowa March for Life will begin at 1 p.m. There will be a rally on the west steps of the Iowa Capitol followed by a walk to the Iowa Supreme Court building. The march is an opportunity to proclaim the value of human life and advocate for the protection of life in the law.

### June 24 Saturday Biking for Babies

DES MOINES -- Ride one of several bike routes in Ankeny to raise awareness, raise funds and form disciples through the Biking for Babies program. Go to [BikingForBabies.com](http://BikingForBabies.com) for details.

### June 25 Sunday The Best Is Yet to Be

NEOLA -- Dominican Sister Janet Schaeffler will speak about growth, depth, and joy, particularly in the things that matter. This workshop is for you: you who are maturing persons of integrity, touching the world with your tremendous love. This seminar will take place from 11:30-2:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Parish in Neola.

### July 22 Saturday Ignatian Retreat Day

URBANDALE -- Mark your calendar for Emmaus House's Annual Ignatian Retreat Day. The presenter is Amy Hoove. Held at St. Pius X in Urbandale, all are welcome to join us for a day of retreat. Find details at [TheEmmausHouse.org](http://TheEmmausHouse.org).

### July 26 Wednesday RAGBRAI

DES MOINES -- The four Iowa dioceses are teaming together to coordinate Mass as RAGBRAI rides through the state. For Des Moines, St. Ambrose Cathedral will offer Mass at 5 p.m. More

information will be coming in the upcoming weeks.

### Aug. 19 Saturday Eucharistic Procession

DES MOINES -- Join the Diocese in a Eucharistic procession starting with 9 a.m. Mass at the St. Anthony grotto, then walking a 1.4-mile route to St. Ambrose Cathedral. The procession supports an effort by the U.S. bishops to draw people back to the source and summit of the Catholic faith: the Eucharist.

### Cathedral Holy Hours

DES MOINES -- All are welcome on Monday nights at St. Ambrose Cathedral for an hour of Eucharistic adoration and evening prayer beginning at 5 p.m.

### Now through Sept. 28 Bishop Drumm Guild Garage Sale

JOHNSTON - This garage sale will be held each Thursday morning on Bishop Drumm's campus from 8:30-12:30 pm. Donations are accepted on the Thursdays of the sale at the garage located on the campus or by calling Helen Thull at 515-669-4621. No computers, baby cribs or car seats, old electronics or TVs will be accepted. Proceeds help fun activities and extras for Bishop Drumm Retirement Center.

## 'Be Welcoming' invites viewers to deeper prayer



Photo by Chelsea Dellaca

"Be Welcoming" sculpture by Timothy Schmalz was installed on the east side of St. Ambrose Cathedral's campus, along Sixth Avenue, and was blessed by Bishop William Joensen.

## 4 dioceses cycling 4 Christ

As RAGBRAI riders look for food to replenish their energy after a long day's ride, they'll also be able to find spiritual food to sustain their spirits.

The four dioceses of Iowa will offer Mass at several of the overnight stops during the RAGBRAI ride through the state in July in the spirit of the national Eucharistic Revival.

"We hope our '4 Dioceses cycling 4 Christ' initiative generates enthusiasm among the riders, the communities they ride into and our parishes," said Barb Arland-Fye, editor of The Catholic Messenger of the Diocese of Davenport. "The initiative is one response to Pope Francis' call for our Church to go out, to listen to and accompany people who are not sitting in our pews."

"As riders and support teams focus on developing their physical health during RAGBRAI, they also have the opportunity to nourish their spiritual well-being through the reception of the Eucharist. This allows them to find rest and seek spiritual fulfillment alongside their physical endeavors," said John Huynh, who helped coordinate this project for the Diocese of Des Moines.

Sioux City Bishop Walker Nickless will kick off the spiritual element of the ride by presiding at a welcome Mass Saturday, July 22 at 4 p.m. at St. Boniface Church, 703 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St. in Sioux City. A Blessing of the Bikes will

be at 3:45 p.m. before the Mass.

"I am happy that we can share information with RAGBRAI riders about Catholic-sponsored events across the state of Iowa. We thank all the parishes and schools who are participating to make the event fulfilling and comfortable for our guests," said Dawn Prosser, director of Communications for the Diocese of Sioux City.

Here are the locations and times of subsequent Masses:

- Tuesday July 25 – Ames – Church and Mass time to be determined.

- Wednesday July 26 – Des Moines – 5 p.m. Mass at St. Ambrose Cathedral. Also, a pass-through option is at St. Malachy Church in Madrid, where there will be a Mass at 8 a.m. with adoration following until noon. St. Malachy is off Hwy 210 and the bikers on the "World Record" day will be going right past the church.

- Thursday July 27 – Tama-Toledo – Evening Mass at St. Patrick Church followed by a dinner.

- Friday July 28 – Coralville – 6:15 p.m. Mass at St. Thomas More Parish with Davenport Bishop Thomas Zinkula as celebrant.

For more specific information, watch the diocesan website at [dmdiocese.org](http://dmdiocese.org). Details are expected to be posted by early July.




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# Funding will help retain, recruit mental health professionals

Continued from page 1

bilization center at Easter Seals, and have mobile crisis responders available to go to children in crisis. Parishioners of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny were among the community organizers with AMOS, saying their Catholic faith compelled them to seek help for the needy and vulnerable children.

## More work to do

In 2021, organizers realized the community needed male therapists, therapists of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, and multilingual therapists; they needed to recruit and incentivize retention.

For example, Orchard Place in Des Moines serves 7,000 children and families annually, 50

percent of them from communities of color. Yet only 20 percent of their staff are from communities of color, said Anne Starr, CEO of Orchard Place.

Of 350 employees, about 120 are like Derly Beacom, who would like to earn a master's degree and stay in the field but they don't have the money to pursue the degree.

"I hope to serve Latino families because I know how intimidating it can be" to seek help, said Beacom. "I want families to feel comfortable to see someone who looks like them and speaks their language."

## Help coming

Project Iowa connects job seekers to employers and vice versa.

"We will be providing loan repayments to 90 therapists in

Polk County. These are people who are making sure we have representation among our therapists. We want to attract new talent coming out of school and also look to retain current therapists who are committed to serving local populations in Polk County," said Gaby Palacios.

Current therapists working at approved organizations and who are willing to commit to five years of working with those providers can get up to \$20,000 to help pay off student loans, she said.

## Solidarity

Looking out at the crowded room filled with people of varying faith traditions working together, Bishop William Joensen found hope in people searching for solutions for children and their families.



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Pastor Jonathan Whitfield, of Corinthian Baptist Church in Des Moines, chats with Bishop William Joensen before a community meeting about children's mental health resources in the Des Moines metro area.

"Things are unfolding in a beautiful way through the solidarity of spirit that we are able to form with one another," he said. Together the community can help service providers, "those who feel

this call, this vocation from God that we as brothers and sisters in Christ and children of Abraham together can support."

# Diocese grateful for generosity in capital campaign

Continued from page 1

ignited," he said. "Together, may our collective creativity and collaboration in the Spirit of Jesus energize us for the journey that lies ahead."

## Campaign impact

Many of the 79 participating parishes have already started receiving their parish share funds, setting in motion dozens of parish share projects. From community enhancement projects at St. John Parish in Adel to replacing church windows at St. Mary Parish in Shenandoah, these projects, along with others, are improving worship experiences and extending the lifespan of parish facilities across the Diocese.

For Bob Johnson, campaign chair at St. John in Adel, receiving the parish share funds has been instrumental in installing handicap accessible buttons on main entrances and restrooms, Roku TVs in classrooms and a parking lot/sidewalk renovation project.

"Receiving these funds is helping us facilitate a more welcoming space for us to gather and

build community," he said. "We are grateful for our parishioners' response and are delighted to know that our efforts here at St. John's will also impact many others throughout the Diocese."

The campaign's impact is also being felt among seminarians. Luke Mohan, of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, is grateful that campaign funds will help offset his educational expenses, allowing him to direct his focus toward his discernment and formation process.

"I, along with future seminarians, will benefit from the fund for seminarians, which enables us to study for the priesthood without having to try and work simultaneously," he said.

Bob Lawler, a campaign cabinet member, shed light on his experience.

"As a general rule, no one enjoys asking people for money. What made this easier was to clearly understand the goals and the importance they have on the future of our Diocese," he said. "Working alongside so many dedicated, caring people and witnessing the outpouring of support on the journey to meet

the stretch goal was humbling and gratifying."

## Campaign rewind

Preparations for the Ignite! Campaign began in 2020 with a planning study that indicated the potential to raise \$35 million to \$45 million. The campaign launched in 2021 with a silent phase led by Bishop Joensen that focused on securing funds for the Catholic Education Endowment.

With robust and early backing for the endowment, the campaign's public phase featured a unique approach – regional case statements. This meant that funds raised at each parish were allocated to various campaign initiatives, with the distribution deter-

mined by the parish's proximity to a Catholic school.

The parish phase unfolded throughout 2022 in three overlapping waves. Each wave was a complex undertaking driven by the concerted efforts of dozens of pastors, parish leaders, and over 1,000 volunteers who attended orientation and training sessions, made appeals and gave testimonials at their parishes.

Maureen Kenney, director of Stewardship, sees the campaign as a narrative of unity, commitment and shared faith.

"From the silent phase to the public phase, the campaign has fostered a sense of community across the Diocese, which is especially important given we began

the effort on the heels of a global pandemic that stifled the opportunity to gather for months," she said.

Kenney added that the regional case statements demonstrated the balance between addressing local needs and the diocesan vision. At the same time, the wave structure highlighted the resilience and adaptability of parish communities, with every pastor, leader, and volunteer playing a pivotal role.

"This campaign has been more than a fundraiser," Kenney said. "It has affirmed our collective spirit and commitment to building a legacy or life, church and community in southwest Iowa."



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**From St. Anthony to St. Ambrose, Eucharistic procession planned**

Join the Diocese of Des Moines in a public profession of faith with a Eucharistic procession slated for Aug. 19.

In keeping with the spirit of the national Eucharistic Revival, Bishop William Joensen will celebrate an outdoor Mass beginning at 9 a.m. at the grotto at St. Anthony Church in Des Moines. At the conclusion of Mass, a 1.4-mile Eucharistic procession will begin at the grotto and lead to St. Ambrose Cathedral downtown, ending with Benediction.

Concluding the day of fun, faith and fellowship, a lunch reception will be at the Catholic Pastoral Center across the street. Shuttles will provide rides back to vehicles that may be parked at St. Anthony Church.

This is the second annual Eucharistic procession. Last year's procession route began at the Basilica of St. John and led to St. Ambrose Cathedral.

The procession supports an effort by the U.S. bishops to draw people back to the source and summit of the Catholic faith: the Eucharist.

A phase focusing on diocesan revival has ended and a new phase of the process has begun with a focus on renewal within parishes. During this year, parishes will strengthen liturgical life through celebration of the Mass, opportunities for adoration, missions, sharing resources and more.

Parishes may encourage small faith-sharing groups to consider using a new five-part video series called "Why Mass?" found at WhyMass.org. Additional resources will be coming to parishes in the fall.

The renewed emphasis on a diocesan and parish level on the Eucharist will culminate with a National Eucharistic Congress July 17-21, 2024. Up to 80,000 Catholics are expected at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis to reconsecrate their hearts to the source and summit of the faith.

Following the national gathering, the emphasis will move to a year of going out on mission. The Church prays that the Holy Spirit will send the faithful on mission to spread the gift of the Eucharist with others.

# Put faith into action via investments

By Sue McEntee  
 Contributing Writer

How do you connect your faith with your investing and philanthropy? It's easy. Read on.

Some people like to invest with their values and beliefs in mind. One investment strategy used by the Diocese of Des Moines and the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa is called Catholic values investing.

This is an approach that seeks to align your investments with the values of the Catholic Church. It's used by parishes, schools and individuals who want their values to be represented in the investments they hold. The Catholic Foundation uses them to screen more than 98% of its three portfolios. With this approach, investors can ensure their portfolio reflects the teachings of the Catholic Church.

While Catholic values investing began more than 50 years ago, this approach to investing in a religiously compliant way dates back even further. Quakers and

Methodists started investing this way in the mid 1800s when they stood against the slave trade and backed up their beliefs with their money.

In 2003, the U.S. bishops established an investment guide defining how Catholic investors should approach investing.

Catholic investing prohibits investing in companies that take part in activities that it morally opposes.

While Catholic investing does emphasize an exclusionary or taking-things-out approach, it's also about supporting companies that are doing good. They like to call this approach inclusionary or bringing good things in. For example, a company that commits to cleaning up our environment may be attractive to Catholic investors.

The U.S. bishops have implemented three objectives of investing in alignment with the values of the Catholic Church. They include:

- Avoid doing harm through investment exclusions,
- Actively working for

change through corporate engagement, and

- Promoting the common good through impact investing.

In 2021 the bishops revised the guidelines and now take a firm stance on climate change. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops expects Catholic investors to do their part, not only through investment exclusions but also active corporate engagement and impact investing (inclusionary).

Catholic investors want to avoid companies that participate in things like racial and gender discrimination; human rights violations; tobacco and other harmful drugs; pornography and other forms of adult entertainment; manufacturing of weapons, from nuclear bombs to firearms and predatory lending.

Catholic-minded investors want to promote companies that participate in growing access to affordable housing; improving the environment and climate; have high-quality corporate and social governance and responsibility; have an impact on de-

pressed communities and high labor standards, including safe workplaces and good wages.

Once you've decided that you want to invest with your values, you need to make a plan. This is where a relationship with an organization like the Catholic Foundation or your financial advisor will come in handy. You need to start by writing a statement of intent, specifically listing the areas you want to avoid, as well as the areas you want to include.

Just as there are different approaches to Catholicism, there are different approaches to Catholic investing. Know that this process can take time, but with dedication, research and education, you can make sound investments that align with your Catholic values.

If you're curious about Catholic values investing and want to know more, consider reaching out to the Catholic Foundation at cfswia.org, 515-237-5044 or by contacting your financial advisor.


*Sue McEntee is the executive director of the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa.*

## Bishops: Avoid investing in companies that don't share Catholic values

Protecting Human Life	Protecting Human Dignity	Enhance The Common Good	Pursue Economic Justice	Save Our Global Common Home
Direct participation in abortion, euthanasia or assisted suicide	Production of pornography	Production of indiscriminate and irresponsible weapons	No additional investment restrictions in this category	Consistently fail to initiate policies aligned with Paris Agreement
In vitro fertilization	Gender reassignment services/surgeries	Manufacture of firearms (unless exclusively for hunting/military/law enforcement)		Caused/contributed to biodiversity loss without remediation
Research that results in end-of-life or makes use of tissue from life ending activity	Manufacture (or >10% of sales from) contraceptives	Primarily focused on gambling, tobacco, recreational cannabis		Directly depleted or degraded water
				Extract resources without complying with Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
				No-compliant with UN Global Compact

**RESTRICTION**

**The USCCB encourages Catholic institutions to "not invest," "consider divestment," or "avoid" companies engaged in the above activities as well as those companies that are not genuinely engaging with shareholders.**



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# High school graduates share wisdom, advice

*Cherish people along life's journey*

Faith in Christ a unifying theme during high school years, keep it strong moving forward

By Anna Helton  
Contributing Writer

Dear Class of 2023,

We have gone throughout our high school careers constantly yearning for that one minute to end. That one minute that class would end, that one minute that practice would get over, or that one minute that we got to go to lunch.

But as I stand before you today, I am wishing that we still had that one more minute. One more minute in Spanish class, one more minute to ride a bus home after a big win, or one more minute to walk the halls. But unfortunately our time at St. Albert has come to a close, and it's up to us what we will do beyond these four walls.

This graduation today is much larger than you or me. It is a thank you to our parents and family who have supported us through this journey. It is a thank you to all the teachers who believed in us, and it is a sign to all the grades below us that yes, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not an oncoming train, as Sister Judy likes to say.

These four years have gone by incredibly fast and I would not have wanted to spend them with anybody else. As I look out into



Anna Helton

the crowd filled with students I have known since kindergarten, I am hopeful. Hopeful for our future. After today, our futures are uncertain yet bright. There are going to be obstacles and bumps along the way, but that is a given with anything. I hope that you will make the best of whatever you do and remember to cherish the people along the way. Cherish this moment right here, surrounded by the ones you love.

Class of 2023, good luck and I wish you all the best. And for the upcoming seniors, take it slow, because soon enough you're going to be in our seats and wishing for one more minute. Thank you.

*Anna Helton graduated from St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.*

By Taylor Tallman  
Contributing Writer

Good evening class of 2023, family, and friends. My name is Taylor Tallman, and I was voted as the Pax Christi award recipient for this year's graduating class. It is an honor to be in front of you today, and in my time with you I want to share a little bit of our class's Dowling story.

Each member of the class of 2023 came to Dowling with their own personal story - one that would continue to change and mold into the one we find ourselves living today. Little did we know our stories would interact with each other, creating chapters that would change the story of our lives.

In chapter one of our Dowling story, we experienced new surroundings, new friends, and new classes. More importantly, we learned the valuable skill of using a locker combo. During this chapter, we took the opportunities around us, adjusting to our new surroundings. Whether it was immediate or eventual, we met many of our lifelong friends during this chapter. Our first chapter of Dowling was going along pretty smoothly until the ultimate plot twist: a pandemic. Managing virtual classes was challenging, but the class of 2023 could still feel the love and warmth from the Dowling community.

In chapter two of our Dowling story, we juggled the challenge of hybrid learning. Through our classes, we found the passion for certain subjects, and maybe the opposite of passion for others. We rose as leaders in our class, both academically and spiritually. We continued to become involved in the Dowling community, finding safe spaces in many of our friends who would continue to support us. We excelled in our sports, passions, and talents. Many of us took a step in our faith, getting confirmed with the support of our family and friends.

Chapter three of our Dowling story was eventful to say the least. Our first high school dances, challenging classes, leadership positions, kairos, college visits, school plays.

While chapter three was exhilarating, it came with many challenges for our class. I can still remember one part specifically. It was a normal day, but walking into school, I could immediately tell the mood was off. I ignored it

as best I could and made my way to my first period class. There were whispers and expressions of shock, but I didn't know anything until I was called over by my friend from grade school. My story would be forever changed by what she said next: our friend and classmate Marshal McManus had passed away in a car accident the previous night. I can still remember every moment. I can remember the tear streaked faces I passed in the hallway. I can remember how gentle teachers were. I can remember the prayer service we had.

But most of all, I remember the sense of community I felt at Dowling that day. I felt so surrounded by care, hope, and prayer, so much that it's hard to put into words. The Dowling community surrounded our students with so much love. They were there for us when we needed it most, telling us we were never alone. The Dowling community taught us what it means to be the face of Christ to someone else. I'll always remember how students, teachers, and staff alike packed the pews in the church at his funeral as we said goodbye to our student, classmate, and friend. This moment reminds me what it means to be a Maroon, and to this day it makes me proud to say I am part of this Dowling community.

Many of our visitors may not know this, but the class of 2023 filled the Dowling chapel during school the day after Marshal's passing. I saw community, care, faith, and ultimately love, things that I hadn't noticed were right in front of me throughout my Dowling story. Looking back, I am positive these feelings were the peace of Christ in the midst of our suffering, and I know Marshal was smiling down on us that day. He would be so proud of us and the way he brought many of us together in our faith.

Our final chapter, chapter four, was thrilling. From our spring musical, trips to Iceland and Brazil, and football games to final choir and band concerts, and grad parties, this chapter was packed with action. It served as the perfect chapter to wrap up our Dowling story, and many memories have come from what we've experienced this past year.

And now, as we write the final sentences to chapter four, we can't help but look back and



Taylor Tallman

see how grateful we are for everything Dowling has provided for us. Our lives truly wouldn't be the same without our Dowling story and the help of every single person here.

As we look back on the class of 2023's Dowling story, it's easy to notice all the blessings that have come from it. Our faith in Christ was a unifying theme throughout our Dowling story, and I want to challenge everyone to keep this theme as you move on to the next chapters of your life. I've learned that the most important thing we can have in our lives is a relationship with Jesus. He has his hand waiting there for us, we just have to meet him halfway. When we live our lives united to Christ, we can finally feel the peace He provides. The peace of Christ doesn't mean your story is comfortable all the time, but it means Jesus always has your back. You are so loved, and you don't have to walk these next chapters alone. Always remember that Jesus is there for you in every page of your upcoming chapters.

As we flip to our next chapter in life, remember that your Dowling story will feed into others' stories, just like ours did four chapters ago. No matter where you came from, you were a part of the Dowling class of 2023, and no matter where you're going, you will always be a Maroon.

To the class of 2023, you have the future in your hands. Now go forth and set this world on fire.

*Taylor Tallman was awarded the Pax Christi honor at graduation from Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines. This is an edited version of her speech. The full speech can be found at dmdiocese.org.*

## Tribal honor bestowed for milestone



St. Albert Catholic School student Rowan High Horse received an eagle plume from her father, Paul. When Lakota Nation tribal members achieve significant milestones in their lives, they are honored with an eagle feather. Females get plumes and males get feathers. Rowan's advancement from fifth grade to middle school earned her the honor.

### 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@polkcountyia.gov.

Watch for the latest news from the Diocese of Des Moines at [dmdiocese.org](http://dmdiocese.org).

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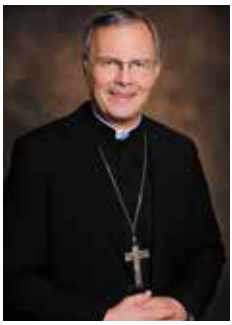
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# No Solamente los Solitarios – I era Parte



By Bishop William Joensen

Si me dieran la oportunidad de escoger entre un reporte gubernamental y una endodoncia, ordinariamente escogería esta última. Aún así, muchas personas a quienes respeto me recomendaron el estudio consultivo que publicó el Cirujano General de los Estados Unidos, el Dr. Vivek Murthy: “Nuestra Epidemia de Soledad y de Aislamiento: Sobre los Efectos Curativos de la Conexión Social y la Comunidad,” por lo cual lo leí en una sola sentada. El cruel relato de los efectos negativos de un sentimiento de desconexión social y de soledad que causan varios factores – incluyendo, pero sin limitarse a éste al uso de la tecnología, – no me sorprendieron, pero me abrieron los ojos. El reporte no es totalmente devastador y pesimista; tiene observaciones y recomendaciones que nos dan razón para tener esperanza.

A la vez, lo que me sorprendió es que el estudio lo publicó un órgano ejecutivo que frecuentemente parece estar enfrentado a un entendimiento basado en enseñanzas bíblicas sobre la persona humana en la comunidad así como de los valores que sostenemos por nuestra enseñanza moral católica, pero el caso aquí es lo opuesto: los descubrimientos y conclusiones corresponden de hecho muy cercanamente con las afirmaciones sobre identidad humana, relaciones y desarrollo que propone las tradiciones filosóficas y teológicas católicas. Los seres humanos son innatamente seres sociales; las relaciones unos con otros, así como una participación activa en la sociedad, son aspectos esenciales de la naturaleza

humana; y la pertenencia a una comunidad de fe con variedad en su membresía es uno de los factores más recomendables que contribuyen a un sano bienestar en la humanidad.

No tenemos suficiente espacio aquí para resumir el estudio en su totalidad, pero animo a los lectores a leerlo ustedes mismos (<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>). Este mes y el próximo voy a comparar varios puntos que marca el reporte consultivo con reflexiones sobre la soledad y la pertenencia de Jean Vanier, el difunto francés-canadiense fundador de las comunidades de L’Arche para personas con discapacidades. (Reconozco que las acusaciones creíbles hechas post mortem sobre la conducta de Vanier puedan haber deshonrado su reputación, pero no creo que invaliden la sabiduría práctica que tienen sus obras; comparémoslo con Mozart quien pudo haber sido un bribón y un canalla, pero de igual forma compuso unas sinfonías magnificentes las cuales creo verdaderamente glorifican a Dios.) Además, voy a hacer conexiones tanto con nuestra visión y misión diocesanas, las cuales surgieron de nuestro reciente proceso de planeación estratégica. Y de un entendimiento católico del misterio y el significado de la Eucaristía en este mes en que celebramos la Fiesta de Corpus Christi y el comienzo de la tercera fase, de todo un año en las parroquias, del Reavivamiento Eucarístico nacional.

El glosario al inicio del estudio del cirujano general incluye palabras que se definen en términos seculares pero que son consistentes con una actitud católica hacia la realidad: ‘pertenencia’, ‘soledad’, ‘cohesión social’, ‘aislamiento’ y ‘confianza’ hablan sobre una experiencia común informada por la fe. ‘Cohesión social’, por ejemplo, integra varios temas claves; se define como, “El sentido de solidaridad dentro de grupos, marcada por una fuerte

conexión social y altos niveles de participación social, que generan confianza, normas de reciprocidad y sentido de pertenencia.” La cohesión social es congruente con la ‘comunidad’ en el léxico católico, el cual se define como ‘el lazo común que existe entre personas relacionadas quienes se confían así mismos y los unos a los otros.’

En contraste, la ‘soledad’ se puede parafrasear como el sentimiento de angustia que surge de un sentimiento de aislamiento o de conexiones inadecuadas, el cual ocurre cuando se incumple la necesidad de pertenencia y de interactuar individualmente y en relaciones de grupo con los demás. Los efectos cuantificables de la soledad y del aislamiento social son impresionantes: aumentan el riesgo de muerte prematura entre un 26% y un 29%, respectivamente, lo cual excede el riesgo de muerte prematura que causa el fumar hasta 15 cigarrillos al día! “En los Estados Unidos, el ausentismo relacionado con el estrés y que se atribuye a la soledad tiene costos de hasta \$154 mil millones cada año.” La mitad de los adultos en los Estados Unidos reportaron en el año 2022 sentimientos de soledad, la cual surge cuando nos enteramos de que solamente un 39% siente una cercana conexión emocional con los demás.

Aún así, hay algunos descubrimientos en el estudio consultivo que son contrarios a la lógica: aunque podemos implicar a la pandemia en el aumento en la soledad, los números son aproximadamente los mismos: 1 de cada 5 americanos se sienten más desconectados como resultado de la pandemia; un número similar actualmente se sienten más cercanamente conectados con los demás. Y mientras se pudiera sospechar que las personas mayores de 65 años tuvieran los mayores índices de soledad, la realidad es que las personas jóvenes son quienes están más profundamente solos, lo que tiene sentido cuando nos enteramos de que la gente, hoy en día, pasan solos 24 horas más cada mes comparado al tiempo que pasaban en el 2003.

Aunado a esta tendencia está el hecho que para las personas entre edades de 15 a 24 años

“el tiempo que pasan en persona con sus amigos se ha reducido en casi 70% en las últimas dos décadas, pasando de aproximadamente 150 minutos al día en el año 2003 a 40 minutos al día en el 2020” – los que es una reducción de 20 horas al mes. Y a pesar de la proliferación de las comunidades en línea y ‘amigos’ en Facebook, la ‘red social’ de los entrevistados indica que aproximadamente la mitad de los americanos en el año 2021 tienen menos de tres amigos cercanos, comparado con un 27% quienes tenían, en 1990, un círculo de amigos tan reducido. Y sí, como se sospechaba, la pandemia redujo más significativamente el promedio de ‘círculo de vida’ en un 16%.

Tristemente, muchos han llegado a considerar la soledad como la “nueva normalidad”: “menos del 20% de las personas que regularmente o siempre se sienten solas o aisladas lo reconocen como un problema serio.” A la vez que el sentimiento de soledad puede ser endémico a la condición humana, Vanier tiene una preocupación mixta respecto a este estado del alma. En su trabajo “Haciéndose Humano,” él observa que la soledad puede aparecer en su forma más leve como una “enfermedad leve, una insatisfacción interna, una inquietud del corazón.” En sus formas más severas, “la soledad se puede sentir como la muerte,” ya que crea apatía en los ancianos, en las personas con discapacidades, o puede llevar a la depresión como resultado del caos subjetivo que amenaza con tragarse el sentido de paz y de propósito de todas las personas. El caos que causa la ausencia de conexiones puede fomentar la tentación de pensar que el amor es solamente una ilusión, que solamente se debe confiar en unos pocos y que el bajar las barreras físicas que refuerzan ese aislamiento al que nos hemos impuesto es solamente una receta para mayor sufrimiento. Vanier captura el sentido de que la falta algo se relaciona con su conocido refrán: “La vida deja de fluir.”

Sin embargo, para el punto de Vanier en la soledad, no todo es negativo. La soledad no puede eliminarse completamente

porque, tal como lo observó San Agustín, nada en esta creación terrenal, incluyendo a los seres humanos, “pueden llenar plenamente las necesidades del corazón humano.” La inquietud humana que resulta del deseo del corazón hacia el Dios infinito puede ignorarse, o peor aún, cancelarse, pero solamente a costa de nuestra oportunidad de nuestra propia trascendencia, de la conversión de nuestra persona y de la sociedad, para una “evolución” espiritual y social hacia una comunidad más madura e inclusiva.

La soledad, dice Vanier, puede llevarnos al umbral de una nueva energía creativa que nos motiva a “crear cosas nuevas o buscar más verdad y justicia en el mundo.” Porque los “artistas, poetas, místicos, profetas, y aquellos que no parecen encajar en el mundo o en el estilo de la sociedad están frecuentemente solos.” “Frecuentemente, son los hombres y mujeres solitarios quienes se levantan en contra de la injusticia y buscan nuevas formas de vida.” Uno piensa en el furor de Juan el Bautista como una figura que debe haber sentido un gran gozo al encontrarse al recién concebido Cristo, y haber sentido una gran soledad al enfrentar la injusticia, hipocresía y desentendimiento de aquellos quienes ignoraban o rechazaban a Dios.

Desde mi perspectiva pastoral, toma honestidad, conocimiento interior, y valor para admitir el continuo dolor de nuestra soledad. La soledad puede ser auto inducida, o puede ser causa de circunstancias más allá de nuestro control tales como la pandemia u otras experiencias de pérdida o reveses en nuestras vidas. Yo creo que la soledad no es resultado de que Dios aleje su rostro de nosotros, porque Jesús siempre nos está volteando a ver, como lo muestra en la Eucaristía. Y el creer en su presencia y acompañamientos perpetuos, pueden ser una fijación que nos lleve de un sentido de desconexión y de aislamiento hacia la comunión. El sembrar semillas del Espíritu y cultivar conexiones en Cristo, es un acto profético de sanación, esperanza y de confianza renovada. Pero hablaremos más de esto el próximo mes.



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# Eucharist and friendship

Over the past few years, I've grown more conscious of the nature of many relationships in my life, particularly those of friendship. In the midst of daily activities like mowing the lawn, watching my children play soccer, or watching the players I coach interact with one another, I find myself reflecting on what it means to be a friend. These reflections often lead me to ideas of communion and the Eucharist.

The Church teaches that we are inherently made for communion with each other. This concept is particularly true when we consider the celebration of the Eucharist, a sacrament that highlights unity and togetherness with each other and with God. One of the key ways we form these connections is through friendship. Our actions often draw us closer to communion with each other or distance us from one another, and the Eucharist helps to bridge this gap.

Aristotle, the eminent philosopher, distinguishes three types of friendships:

## Food for the Journey

By John Huynh



friendships of utility, pleasure, and virtue. It's evident that only one of these types seems genuinely desirable.

Friendships of utility view the other person as a means to an end, useful in some material or spiritual way. It's not the friend we love in this type of relationship, but what he or she can offer us.

Friendships of pleasure, often found among young people, come and go with the changing tides of desires. These friendships, centered on immediate gratification, can be ephemeral, flitting from one friend

to another as pleasure dictates.

Neither of these types is enduring. But fear not, there is a third type - the friendship of virtue. Aristotle suggests these are built on the mutual goodness of the friends, their common values, and their mutual love for each other. Genuine friendships bloom from virtue, though the other two types can also evolve into it, given the right nurturing.

The Catholic perspective enriches Aristotle's view on friendship. Christians draw from the sacrament of the Eucharist to seek unity and love in friendships, making it an indispensable element to sustain relationships. Here's how:

First, not only are friends gifts to one another, but the friendship itself is seen as a divine blessing. We as Christians see ourselves as participants in a grand narrative authored by God. Recognizing this instills the sense of divine providence in friendships, seeing them both as personal choices

and the manifestation of God's will. Perhaps a bit bold, but in this view friendship among Christians isn't merely for mutual enjoyment; it's a divine task, a new way of life in Christ.

Second, Christian love, modeled after the selfless love embodied in the Eucharist, contrasts with Aristotle's concept of love in friendship. Aristotle believes love has its boundaries, but the love seen in Christian friendships, much like the love we witness in the Eucharist, knows no bounds. It sees value in shared suffering and self-sacrifice, even to the point of laying down one's life for a friend, a view found in Christ's ultimate act of love.

This summer, take some time to reflect on your friendships and consider how approaching the Eucharist daily or weekly can foster deeper, more meaningful relationships. Ask yourselves: What kind of friendships do I have, and how can the Eucharist help them grow?

## 'Find the heart of the work'

The U.S. Postal Service just released a stamp that bursts with nostalgia: an homage to the beloved author and illustrator Tomie dePaola. It depicts his best-known character, Strega Nona, who earned him a Caldecott Medal in 1976, clutching her pasta pot and smiling at her peacock.

The stamp inspired me to sift through my Tomie dePaola collection - his saint books, his condensed histories, his quirky stories and spooky tales. So much of Tomie's Catholic upbringing appears in his richly colored folk art - the nuns and friars, the churches and baptisms - and the depiction of family life often mirrors his own Irish-Italian rituals.

Tomie treated young readers with intelligence, addressing their natural questions about life and death with books like "Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs" and the hauntingly beautiful "The Clown of God."

Painting in his New Hampshire studio in a 200-year-old barn, Tomie worked out his own aging. Books like "Now One Foot, Now the Other" and "Quiet" celebrate a gentler, slower pace. The very titles of

## Twentysomething

By Christina Capecechi



some later books capture his philosophy of life: "Angels, Angels Everywhere," "Let the Whole Earth Sing Praise" and "Look and Be Grateful."

Tomie was once asked to offer guidance for creators of children's books. Advice for artists often doubles as advice for living.

His response did not disappoint.

"If I look at my early things, it's not there yet," Tomie said. "I'm too full of myself, too full of showing off, showing how well I could crosshatch, for instance. I think that's the progression of a young artist. You show off and then you - or I - suddenly find the heart of the work. I suddenly began to be faithful to the heart:

the humor, the pathos, whatever is there."

In the age of Instagram, not showing off can feel counter-cultural. We view other people's lives as highlight reels filmed at golden hour and put to acoustic music. We are tempted to play along.

All ages are guilty. We show off on playgrounds and in boardrooms. We brag, we fake it, we one-up each other.

Overcoming the desire to show off is a turning point in the spiritual life. It is the beginning. It's a launching pad for all worthy endeavors - be it the development of a craft or a relationship. It enables us to say important things.

"I don't know." "I don't like that." "I'm scared." "I need help." "I was wrong."

We can confess fear and remorse, and we can express delight and affection.

"I'm excited!" "I'm amazed!" "Wow!" "I love you!" "I want to be with you." (My favorite kindergartener says this to me, and it feels like the ultimate compliment.)

There is freedom in reaching this point and also responsibility. We are free to simply embrace what is, rather than force

what we want it to be.

But this doesn't come easy. We must pay attention long enough and open our hearts wide enough to recognize the heart of the matter. And then, as Tomie instructs, we must be faithful to it.

What is the heart of your work? What is the crux of your vocation when you step back and consider the big picture?

It's not the to-do list, the meeting agenda, the meal plan. It's not our commitments - that stuffy space between calendar and clock.

It's none of the day-to-day shuffle.

It's how we make people feel.

It's how we spend our precious time, how often we laugh and pray and play, whether we notice the sunset and the birdsong and utter "how great Thou art."

It's not what we do but why we do it and who we are - our identity rooted in Christ, his beloved sons and daughters.

Find the heart and cling to it. Everything else will fall into place.

*Christina Capecechi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.*

## Praying as a Christian

Father Ron Rolheiser



There are four distinct kinds of Christian prayer: There is Incarnational prayer, Mystical prayer, Affective prayer, and Priestly prayer. What are these? How are they different from each other?

**Incarnational Prayer.** St. Paul invites us to "pray always". How is this possible? We can't always be praying - or can we? What Paul is inviting us to do is what Jesus asks of us when he tells us to "read the signs of the times". In asking this, Jesus is not suggesting we read every political, social, or economic analysis we can find. Rather, he is inviting us to look for the finger of God in every event in our lives. My parents' generation called this being attuned to "divine providence", that is, looking at every event in our lives and the major events of our world, and asking ourselves: "What is God saying in this event?"

One must be careful in doing this. God doesn't cause accidents, sickness, heartbreak, wars, famine, earthquakes,

global warming, or pandemics; neither does God cause lottery wins or our favorite sports team to win a championship, but God speaks through them. We pray incarnationally when we pick up that voice.

**Mystical Prayer.** Praying mystically is not a question of having extraordinary spiritual experiences - visions, raptures, ecstasies. Mysticism is not about these things. Mystical experience is simply being touched by God in a way that is deeper than what we can grasp and understand in our intellect and imagination, a knowing beyond head and heart. Mystical knowing works this way: Your head tells you what you think is wise to do; your heart tells you what you want to do; and your mystical center tells you what you have to do. For example, C.S. Lewis, in describing his conversion experience, tells us that the first time he knelt down and acknowledged Christ, he didn't do it with enthusiasm. Rather, in his famous words, he knelt down "as the most reluctant convert in the history of Christendom." What compelled him to do that? His words: "God's harshness is kinder than human gentleness, and God's compulsion is our liberation." We pray mystically whenever we hear and listen to the most compelling voice of all inside us, the one that tells us where God and duty call us.

**Affective Prayer.** All devotional prayers (adoration of Christ, litanies, rosa-

ries, prayers asking for the intercession of Mary or a saint, and the like) are ultimately affective prayer, as are all forms of meditation and contemplation. They all have the same intentionality. What is that? In the Gospel of John, the first words out of Jesus' mouth are a question. People are looking at him in curiosity, and he asks them, "What are you looking for?" That question remains throughout the rest of the gospel as an undergirding. A lot of things are happening on the surface, but underneath, there remains always the one nagging, restless question: "What are you looking for?"

Jesus answers that question explicitly at the end of the gospel, on the morning of the resurrection. Mary of Magdala comes looking for him, carrying spices with which to embalm his dead body. Jesus meets her, but she does not recognize him. He then repeats the question with which he had opened the gospel: "What are you looking for?" and gives us its real answer. He pronounces her name in love: "Mary". In doing this, he reveals what she and every one of us are forever looking for, namely, God's voice, one-to-one, speaking unconditional love, lovingly saying our name. At the end of the day, that's what we all are looking for, to hear God pronounce our name in love. All devotional prayer, whether it be for ourselves, for others, or for the world, has this as its ultimate aim.

**Priestly Prayer.** Priestly prayer is the prayer of Christ through the church for the world. The Christian belief is that Christ is still gathering us together around his word and the Eucharist. And we believe that whenever we come together, in a church or elsewhere, to gather around the scriptures or to celebrate the Eucharist, we are entering into that prayer. This is generally called liturgical prayer; this kind of prayer is Christ's prayer, not our own. Moreover, it's not a prayer first of all for ourselves or even for the church, but one for the world - "My flesh is food for the life of the world".

We pray liturgically, priestly prayer, whenever we gather to celebrate the scriptures, the Eucharist, or any sacrament. As well we pray in this way when, in community or privately, we pray what is called the Liturgy of the Hours or the Divine Office (Lauds and Vespers). We are asked to pray regularly for the world in this way by virtue of the priesthood conferred on us in our baptism.

A mature, spiritually healthy Christian prays in these four ways, and it can be helpful to distinguish clearly among these kinds of prayers so as to be praying always and praying with Christ.

*Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author.*

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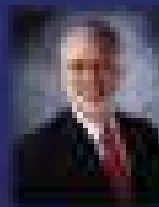
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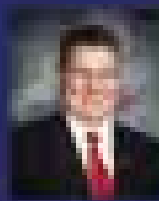
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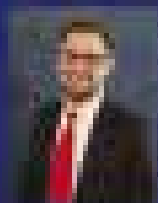
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