

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Vol. 57, No. 1

January 19, 2024

“Lord, help us to rise above the darkness”

Perry community focuses on healing, support after school shooting



Above, members of the Perry community gathered in sorrow and support for each other on Jan. 4 after a school shooting at the town’s high school. At right, top, the community gathered at St. Patrick School to pray the rosary. At right, Father Litto Thomas, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Perry, accompanies two students who share their experience with the community at a candlelight vigil.

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

On a cold Jan. 4 evening in central Iowa, members of the Perry community sought solace from each other as they suffered profound grief following an early morning school shooting.

Middle school student Ah-

mir Jolliff died, high school senior and shooter Dylan Butler died, and several people were injured. Ten days later, Principal Dan Marburger died from injuries he suffered while trying to protect his students.

Friends and families, devastated by the tragedy, huddled for a candlelight vigil in Wiese Park at the end of the day. Points of

candlelight broke the darkness as religious and community leaders offered encouragement, prayers, and support.

Together, speakers said, they would get through the tragedy that fell on Perry.

Comfort the sorrowful

“Why God? Why us? Why here?” asked Andrea Brownlee, pastor of First Christian Church

in Perry. “Give us courage to seek comfort in community. Remind us again, and again, and again that we are not alone and that love always wins.”

Father Litto Thomas, pastor of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Perry, prayed: “Dear heavenly Father, in this moment of collective grief, we come before you as community, seeking strength and healing. Our hearts are heavy

and burdened. Yet, we gather here with open hearts knowing that in our unity, there is strength. Lord, help us to rise above the darkness that seeks to engulf us. Instill within us the courage to face the challenges before us and stand resilient in the face of adversity. May this vigil be a beacon of light, illuminating the path to-

Continued on page 11

Make plans now to live Lent fully

With the season of Lent kicking off on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, it’s not too early to start thinking about how to prepare for this time of prayer, fasting, and helping the poor.

Here are a few suggestions.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, a 40-day period of reflection and repentance.

As Catholics prepare for Jesus’ death and resurrection, they fast on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14) and Good Friday (March 29). In doing so, only one full meal is consumed with two smaller meals on those days.

Catholics also abstain from

meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all of the Fridays during Lent. This is a small sacrifice as we remember that Christ sacrificed his life for us.

Living Lent

An array of family-friendly suggestions are available at dm-diocese.org/living-lent.

If it has been a while since you leaned into prayer and repentance, check out the short “how to” guide that explains common Catholic practices in Lent. Learn about people who inspire us in faith by checking out a flyer on feast days during Lent.

Continued on page 6

Deacon embodied service to church, community

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

A servant leader throughout life, Deacon Ron Kohn led quietly and by example.

“He really wanted people to know the message of God: They are loved. If they just turned to God and said ‘Yes’ a wonderful destiny awaits them, and a better journey,” said long-time friend Deacon Mike Carney. “That’s what he wanted people to know. The truth.”

Deacon Kohn, husband, father, community leader, and dea-

con of 35 years died Dec. 30 at the age of 80.

He will be remembered for his service to students, to his church, and to his community.

Born and raised in Cherokee, Iowa, he attended Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska, where he met and fell in love with Joanne Mohr. They



Deacon Ron Kohn

married in St. Patrick Church in Fremont, Nebraska in 1964 and raised a family of two daughters and a son.

A lifelong teacher, Deacon Kohn taught in Waterloo, Nebraska before moving to Glenwood in 1970. There, he coached teams and taught chemistry and physics for 32 years. He earned the respect of his students, who in adulthood continued to call him Mr. Kohn.

He also served his parish, Holy Rosary in Glenwood.

The couple was energized

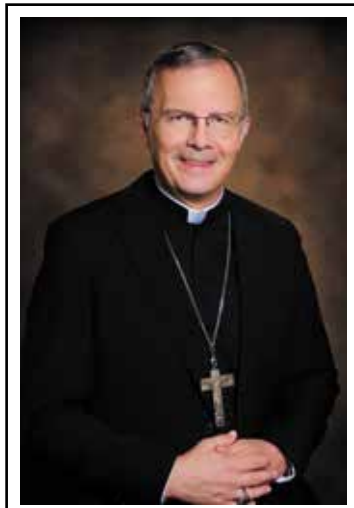
Continued on page 10

Longing for and Leaning into the Mystery

Some years my Christmas decorations come down in mid-January after the Christmas Season ends with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord; some years they stay up until the February 2nd Feast of the Presentation. I want to think with the heart and mind of the Church, but my own instincts are to view the Presentation of Jesus described in Luke 2:22-40 (a passage that appears both in the Christmas Season and on February 2nd) as a sort of extension of the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ. I'd like to reflect on this wonderful Mystery of the Presentation to Simeon and Anna in light of our own diocesan and personal call to bless and leave to others what happens next in God's unfolding mystery of his revelation in our lives.

Advanced in years, Simeon and Anna are remarkable for several reasons, not least of which is their long vigil of expectation and longing—not simply for weeks or months, but perhaps for decades or even generations. Their sustained hope was untarnished by disappointment or bitterness every time a family showed up in the temple for the ritual purification that is analogous to Catholic families who present children for baptism. Simeon and Anna did not wearily take a look at each child who preceded Jesus and say, “Nope, not that one. God, you’ve let me down again.”

Rather, despite their chronological age, I believe they preserved a childlike sense of wonder, beholding the world and each person in it as an instance of God's goodness and generosity, reflecting the glory of a God



Bishop William Joensen

who loves life. They were “illuminators” in the sense that David Brooks describes in his recent book, “How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen.” Brooks observes, “Illuminators see each and every person as a creature endowed with an immortal soul—a soul of infinite value and dignity.” For illuminators, he continues, “You may be chatting with someone about the weather. . . but you are at the same time aware that each person has some transcendent spark within them—the basis of our equality, even if we’re not equal in might, intelligence, or wealth” (Brooks p. 31).

Further, an illuminator generates “admiration—seeing others for the precious creatures they are”—not for who they are not. From this attitude follows great patience and the gift of genuine presence, as the mystery of each child, every woman and man unfolds (ibid., 205-6).

That said, something won-

derfully unprecedented occurs as Mary and Joseph and Jesus present themselves in the temple. The Holy Spirit stirs Simeon and Anna to recognize that the child is one with the Holy Spirit by whom his mother conceived him. This child is not only a reflection of God's glory; he is the glory of God revealed in human form. He is not merely a worthy occupant of the temple; he is the Holy One who purifies and renews the temple in the meekness and mystery of his petite personhood.

The child Jesus may not raise his hand in blessing; as Pope Francis remarks, “This is not the Holy Family of the holy cards.” But those who are privileged to hold him in their arms are profoundly blessed. The Holy Family graces, illuminates, consoles, and consecrates all families, all generations.

Simeon's longing was fulfilled and affords him peace. Anna's fidelity as a widow, who worships and does not whine or lament, enables her to give thanks even for the hardship and loss life visited upon her. That is the grace I pray we can all experience: that we can know the peace of Simeon that freed him to go on to what God had in store for him. We seek the favor of Anna, whose constancy of fasting—from having a husband with whom to grow old together—did not douse her prayer, her ability to give thanks to God with a receptive heart to whatever life dealt her, to that which lies beyond her control. All this, even as the lines between what God sends her and what is due to human frailty and fallibility, seems often blurred.

Together, Simeon and Anna create an atmosphere of hospitality where people set aside their fears, their weaknesses, and swap stories and exchange trust that the mystery and mission that God has bestowed endures beyond appearances (Brooks, p. 249).

Anna and Simeon bolster the vocations of Mary and Joseph to be guardians, not owners, of their child. They are to create a family culture where their child is open to whatever God proposes—even as this will call forth a spirit of detachment, for to live and love in this free manner opens one another to suffering. As Simeon declares, the child Jesus will be both a glorious light beheld by all people, AND a sign who will be contradicted. He will introduce a sword of the Spirit and word who will pierce not simply his parents' hearts, but all hearts.

As a steward and guardian and not owner of the mystery of Christ, I sense the prompting for us to be like Mary and Joseph, and Anna and Simeon, in our openness to the mystery of God's plan for our Diocese. Sometimes God's pilgrimage with us leads us where we might not naturally, willingly want to go. As we soon embark upon a process of more

intentional pastoral planning and soon implement our diocesan strategic vision, and despite our sometimes sterile faith, we are to be committed to bring forth what wise and prophetic figures like Simeon and Anna are poised to behold.

For the Jesus presented to us in Word and Sacrament and one another establishes a temple not made by human hands. He asks that our

hands and hearts remain receptive to a mystery and mission still being revealed. This mission must be constantly refreshed and discerned so that the promise presented in the temple, a promise fully revealed in the person of the child Jesus, might be fulfilled in the life of every person, every household, regardless of age, ethnic origin, or spot in the story of salvation. May Simeon's prayer, which concludes the prayer of the final hour of each liturgical day as it yields to an inviting night of mystery, be our own prayer, so that even in the wake of letting go and pressing on, there might be peace:

“Now, Master, you have let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” Amen!

— ” —
I sense the prompting for us to be like Mary and Joseph, and Anna and Simeon, in our openness to the mystery of God's plan for our Diocese.

— ” —
BISHOP WILLIAM JOENSEN

Anhelando e Inclinandonos en el Misterio

Algunos años quitábamos las decoraciones navideñas a mediados de enero luego de que terminaba la Temporada Navideña

con la Fiesta del Bautismo del Señor; algunos años no las quitábamos hasta el 2 de febrero, la Fiesta de la Presentación. Quiero pensar con el corazón y con la mente de la Iglesia, pero mis propios instintos me hacen ver la Presentación de Jesús como se describe en Lucas 2:22-40 (un pasaje que aparece tanto en la Temporada Navideña como el 2 de febrero) como un cierto tipo de extensión del misterio de la Encarnación de Cristo. Quisiera reflexionar sobre este maravilloso Misterio de la presentación ante Simeón y Ana a la luz de nuestro propio llamado diocesano y personal a bendecir y a dejar lo que nos depara en manos de otros cuando se nos descubre el misterio de Dios al revelarse en nuestras vidas.

Ya avanzados en años, Simeón y Ana son extraordinarios por varias razones, y la menor de éstas no es su larga vigilia de expectativa y anhelo – no simplemente durante semanas o meses, pero incluso por décadas o hasta generaciones. Su continua esperanza no se veía opacada por la decepción o amargura cada vez que una familia se presentaba en el templo para el ritual de la purificación, la cual puede compararse con las familias católicas que pre-

sentan a sus hijos en el bautismo. Simeón y Ana no miraban con cansancio a cada niño que precedió a Jesús diciendo, “No, ese no. Dios, me has decepcionado una vez más.”

Por el contrario, a pesar de su edad cronológica, yo creo que mantenían un sentido casi infantil de maravilla, considerando al mundo y a cada persona como una instancia de la bondad y generosidad de Dios, reflejando la gloria de un Dios que ama la vida. Ellos eran “luminarios” en el sentido que lo describe David Brooks en su reciente libro, *Cómo Conocer a una Persona: el Arte de Ver Profundamente a los Demás y de Ser Visto Profundamente*. Brooks dice, “Los luminarios ven que toda y cada criatura posee un alma inmortal – un alma de valor y dignidad infinitas.” Para los luminarios, continúa, “puedes estar charlando con alguien sobre el clima... pero a la vez están conscientes de que cada persona tiene una chispa trascendental dentro de ella – la base de nuestra igualdad, aunque no seamos iguales en poder, inteligencia, o riqueza” (Brooks, página 31).

Más allá, los luminarios generan “admiración – ver a los demás como las criaturas preciosas que son” – no por lo que no

son. Desde esta actitud siguen con una paciencia y con el don de la presencia genuina, como el misterio que revela cada niño, cada mujer y cada hombre (ibid. 205-6).

Habiendo dicho esto, algo maravilloso y sin precedente sucede cuando María y José y Jesús se presentan en el templo. El Espíritu Santo mueve a Simeón y a Ana a reconocer que el niño es uno con el Espíritu Santo por quien su madre concibió. El niño no

es solamente un reflejo de la gloria de Dios; él es la gloria de Dios que se revela de forma humana. Él no es simplemente un digno inquilino del templo; él es El Santo que purifica y renueva el templo en la mansedumbre y el misterio de su pequeña persona.

El niño Jesús tal vez no pueda levantar su mano en señal de bendición, como lo señala el Papa Francisco, “Esta no es la Sa-

Continued on page 3

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Bishop William Joensen
Publisher
wjoensen@dmdiocese.org

Anne Marie Cox
Editor
acox@dmdiocese.org

The Catholic Mirror (ISSN 0896-6869) is published monthly for \$25 per year by the Diocese of Des Moines, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines. POSTMASTER: Send changes to THE CATHOLIC MIRROR, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. PHONE: (515)237-5046 EMAIL: mirror@dmdiocese.org DIOCESAN WEBSITE: www.dmdiocese.org

Official



On January 3, 2024 Bishop William Joensen relegated Holy Family Church (2217 Avenue B, Council Bluffs, IA 51501), a worship site of Corpus Christi Parish (3304 4th Ave, Council Bluffs, IA 51501), to profane but not sordid use, so that the potential proceeds of the sale of the church building might be used to fund the ministries of the Parish of Corpus Christi, including the educational ministry of St. Albert Catholic School.

Corpus Christi parishioners are able to review the decree of relegation by visiting the Corpus Christi parish offices. The decree of relegation is also posted on the diocesan website at www.dmdiocese.org under “News.”

Wm. Joensen

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

Jason Kurth

Jason Kurth
Chancellor

Playground saints ‘play nice’

By Jennifer Willems
Contributing Writer

For the last seven years, Scott Froyen, a retired CPA who spent many years as vice president of a health insurance company, has been showing people the path to spiritual health through The Saint Builder Foundation.

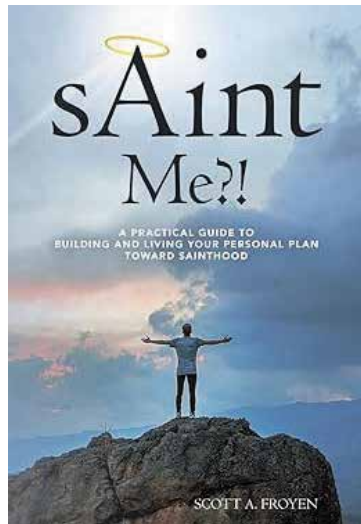
Now he’s asking would-be saints to join him on the playground.

“The world is our playground. We were meant for joy. We had it as kids and somehow we lost it along the way,” said Froyen, who was inspired by observing how children were playing together one afternoon during a walk with his dogs.

“I went back to what my parents and my teachers told me when I went out to play. They told me to be good, play nice and have fun,” he explained. “It’s that simple.”

In fact, those are the three key aspects of his new initiative, Playground Saints Alive.

While The Saint Builder Foundation invites people to combat the seven deadly sins by doing the right things in the right way through God’s grace, being a playground saint takes it to the next level.



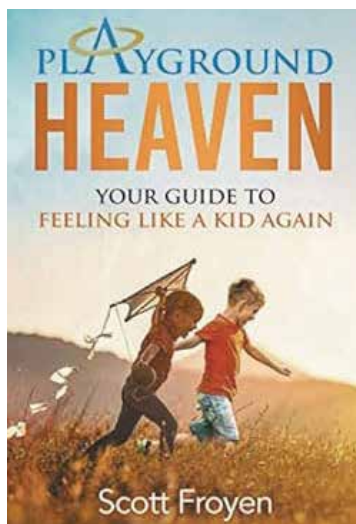
Happiness vs Joy

To “be good” means turning away from the seven deadly sins – pride, avarice, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony and sloth – and being virtuous again, according to Froyen.

People can “play nice” or “do good” by finding out what they’re good at and then helping other people. Froyen said in this way, everyone becomes their best, God-intended selves.

“If we do that, we’re going to have fun, because it is fun to strive for something that you’re interested in, that’s helping other people, that’s challenging and that’s uniting,” he said.

“It’s that simple. We just



make it hard. The world makes it hard.”

And doing all of this leads to joy, which is not the same thing as happiness, said Froyen.

“Joy is unconditional. If you think about it from a Catholic perspective, it’s something we should have, right? We’re given all this, plus a savior, with the promise of eternal life,” he said. “What’s heaven? Joy.”

Happiness is more of a worldly thing and it’s conditional – if I get this or if this happens, then I’m happy. But then you raise your expectations and you’re unhappy again, Froyen said.

“I was constantly chasing happiness and that’s not what I should be chasing,” he acknowl-

edged. “You should let joy find you.”

Challenging and fun

Froyen is establishing an online community he’s calling Playground Saints Alive. What he hopes to offer is simple, interesting, informative, entertaining and engaging content that will help people on their path to becoming saints.

He also plans to offer a daily series in Lent that will include short videos and action steps. One might be to smile at people.

“It’s just trying to do something that’s interesting, yet challenging and fun,” he said.

Froyen and Melanie, his wife of nearly 44 years, founded The Saint Builder Foundation on April 8, 2017. He retired in 2015, while she retired after working as a nurse for more than 35 years. She continues to serve as an advocate at InnerVisions HealthCare, a pro-life pregnancy resource center.

His goal is to “pick up the cross” and try to do “the next right thing and see what happens.”

Together they serve as volunteers for a variety of community and church organizations. They



Melanie and Scott Froyen

are members of the Basilica of St. John in Des Moines.

The Froyens find a great deal of their joy comes from being the parents of two and the grandparents of three.

To learn more about Scott Froyen and his books, “sAint Me?!” and “Playground Heaven,” his blog, and his newsletter, visit saintbuilder.com. For more on Playground Saints Alive, visit playgroundsaints.com.

Anhelando e Inclinándonos en el Misterio

Continued from page 2

grada Familia de las tarjetas sagradas.” Pero aquellos que tienen el privilegio de tomarlo entre sus brazos reciben una profunda bendición. La Sagrada Familia da gracia, ilumina, consuela y consagra a todas las familias en todas las generaciones.

Se cumple el deseo de Simeón lo que le significa la paz. La fidelidad de Ana como viuda quien alaba y no se queja ni se lamenta, le permite dar gracias incluso en la vida difícil y de pérdida que le ha tocado vivir. Esta es la gracia por la que ruego que todos podamos vivir: que sepamos que la paz de Simeón que le liberó para seguir en lo que Dios le tenía destinado. Buscamos el favor de Ana, cuya constancia y ayuno – de tener un esposo con quien llegaría a la vejez – no renunció a sus oraciones, su capacidad de dar gracias a Dios con un corazón receptivo a lo que la vida le deparaba, a todo lo que estaba más allá de su control. Todo esto, incluso cuando las líneas que separan lo que Dios le envía y lo que se debe a la fragilidad y falibilidad humana parecen a veces desvanecerse.

Juntos, Simeón y Ana crean una atmósfera de hospitalidad donde la gente deja de lado sus temores, sus debilidades e intercambian historias y cambian la confianza de que el misterio y la misión que Dios tiene planeada prevalece más allá de las apariencias (Brooks, pág. 249).

Ana y Simeón fortalecen las vocaciones, de las cuales María y José son guardianes y no dueños, de su hijo. Ellos deben crear una

cultura de familia en donde su hijo está abierto a cualquier cosa que Dios le proponga – incluso si su voluntad es llamarle a un espíritu de desprendimiento, porque para vivir y amar libremente de esta forma, abre a unos y a otros al sufrimiento. Como lo declara Simeón, el niño Jesús será tanto una luz gloriosa ante todos los pueblos Y una señal de contradicción. Él presentará la espada del Espíritu y el verbo que atravesará no solamente los corazones de sus padres, sino todos los corazones.

Como protector y guardián, no como dueño del misterio de Cristo, siento que el llamado que tenemos a ser como María y José, y como Ana y Simeón, en nuestra apertura al misterio del plan de Dios para nuestra Diócesis. Algunas veces el peregrinar de Dios con nosotros puede no llevarnos a donde naturalmente deseamos ir. Ahora que estamos comenzando un proceso de planeación pastoral más intencional y que pronto implementaremos nuestra visión estratégica diocesana, y a pesar de nuestra en veces estéril fe, estamos comprometidos a sacar adelante lo que las figuras sabias y proféticas como Simeón y Ana deben representar.

Porque el Jesús que se nos presenta en Verbo y Sacramento y cuando ambos establecen un templo que no fue hecho por manos humanas. Él pide que nuestras manos y que nuestros corazones permanezcan abiertos al misterio y a la misión que aún están por revelarse. Esta misión debe renovarse y discernirse frecuentemente para que la promesa que se presentó en el templo, una promesa que se revela ple-

namente en la persona del niño Jesús puede cumplirse en la vida de cada persona, de cada hogar, sin importar la edad, el origen étnico, o posición en la historia de la salvación. Que la oración de Simeón, la cual concluye la oración de la hora final de cada

día litúrgico al entregarse a la invitación de una noche de misterio, sea nuestra propia oración, para que incluso al enfrentarnos a renunciar a algo o a seguir adelante, podamos tener paz.

“Ahora, Señor, según tu promesa, puedes dejar a tu sier-

vo irse en paz. Porque mis ojos han visto a tu Salvador, a quien has presentado ante todos los pueblos: luz para alumbrar a las naciones y gloria de tu pueblo Israel.” ¡Amén!



GROWING THE FAITH

A Campaign for Iowa Catholic Radio

Support the mission to expand Catholic radio across the state!

90.9 FM
KLIX - Creston

94.5 FM
KCSBT - Des Moines

96.7 FM
KCBM - Marshalltown

1150 AM
KWKY - Des Moines



IOWA CATHOLIC RADIO NETWORK

Connecting Listeners To Christ

88.5 FM
KIHS - Adel

95.7 FM
KMFH - Oskaloosa

103.5 FM
KHPR - Fairfield

105.3 FM
KIHC - Chariton



scan to give

ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT FY 2023 REPORT



Brief Summary



By Robert Larson
Chief Administrative &
Finance Officer

Diocese gets a clean opinion by auditors

The financial statements of the Diocese dated June 30, 2023 were audited by the independent certified accounting firm of CliftonLarsonAllen. They issued an unqualified (clean) opinion that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the Diocese of Des Moines in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

The Diocesan Audit Committee, chaired by Ardis Kelley, oversaw the audit process. The Diocesan Finance Council, chaired by Dan Kinsella, approved the audited financial statements.

End-of-the-year results

The Diocese ended the year with an operating deficit of \$68,000. The main factors impacting the results were the following:

- Higher Clergy Care Costs: This is mainly due to the high cost for the Diocese to provide the healthcare for all of our active and retired clergy.
- Increased investment in the diaconate program to increase the number of deacons in our Diocese.
- Inflation: The Diocese's expenses were negatively impacted by inflation.

Capital campaign

Thanks to the many generous donors to the Ignite! capital campaign, the Statement of Financial Position has grown since 2022.

The pledges outstanding at the end of June 2023 were \$14.6 million.

The total amount collected and pledged for the Ignite! campaign is closing in on \$37 million.

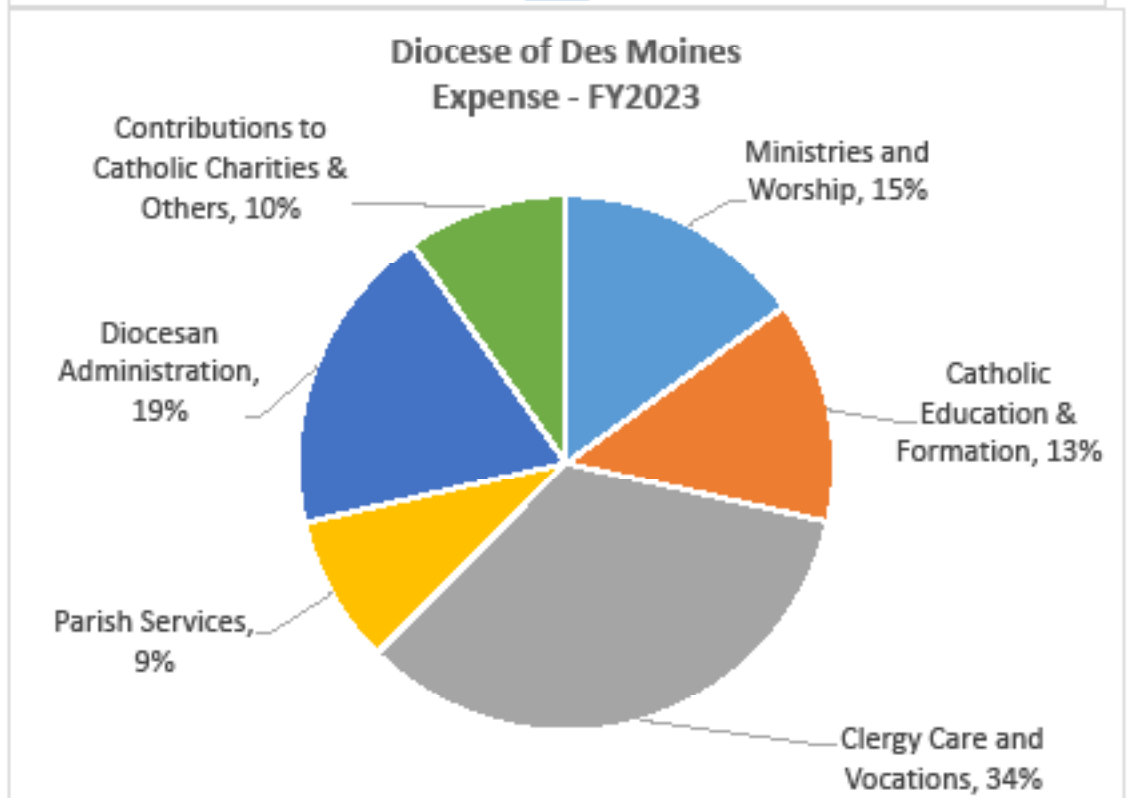
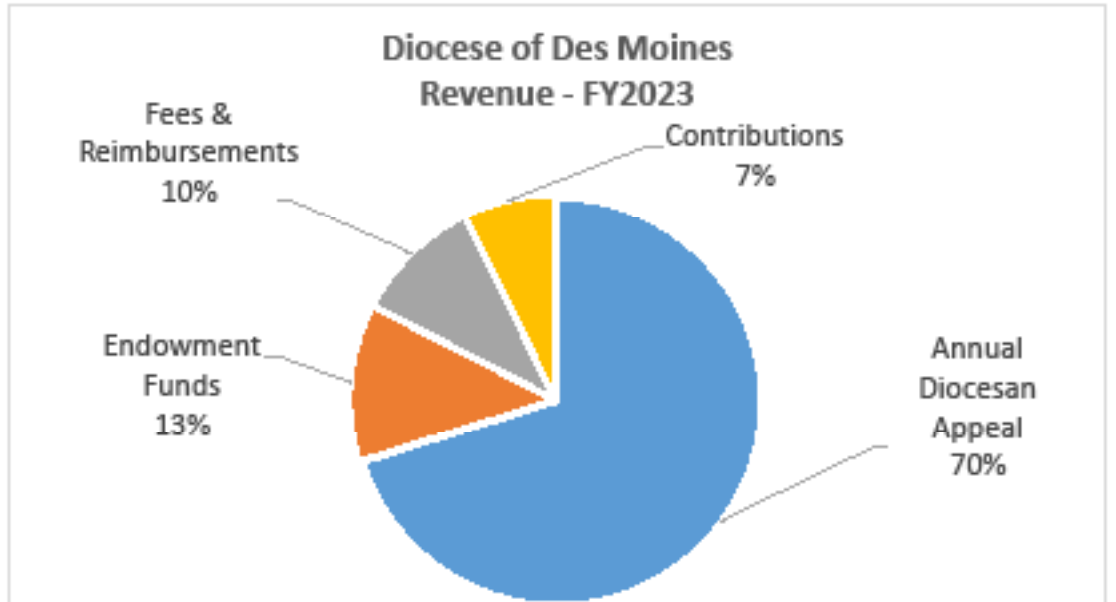
When the funds are received by the Diocese, they will be distributed according to the guidelines provided by the campaign and/or the donor's intent net of the costs to execute the campaign.

Looking forward

As we look to 2024, we look for opportunities to be more efficient and to manage spending to offset the impact of inflation.

We are also investigating how we can use technology to enhance our processes and the services we provide to parishes and schools.

We continue to visit the parishes and schools on site and review internal controls. With the help of the pastor, staff, and finance council members, we continuously work to ensure financial transparency and accountability.



Diocese of Des Moines	
Statement of Financial Position	
Assets	6/30/2023
Investments - ADA collected for Next Year	3,207,996
Unrestricted Cash & Investments	2,573,757
Restricted Investments	7,636,834
Accounts Receivable	2,610,928
Ignite! Capital Campaign Receivable	14,590,689
Fixed Assets	158,015
Pre-Paid Expenses and Other Assets	669,947
Total Assets	\$31,923,357
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	1,783,261
Ignite! Capital Campaign Due to Other Orgs	17,467,328
Priest Medical/Pension Liability	3,128,824 *
Total Liabilities	\$22,379,414
Net Assets	\$9,543,943
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$31,923,357
This financial overview is a summary of the audit by CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA). CLA issued a clean (unmodified) opinion on the financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2023. Full Audit report can be found here: https://www.dmdiocese.org/resources/finance/fy23-financial-audit-report	
*Based on Actuarial reports, the unfunded liability decreased in FY2023	

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

HAMILTON
 LAW FIRM, P.C.
 DES MOINES - STORM LAKE - SIOUX CITY
 Established in 1876, we're one of Iowa's most experienced law firms.
 515.309.3536, 12345 University Ave., Clive, IA 50325

ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT FY 2023 REPORT

Diocese of Des Moines	
Statement of Activities	
Year Ended June 30, 2023	
Revenues	
Annual Diocesan Appeal	4,623,637
Endowment Funds	822,967
Program Service Fees & Reimbursements	668,994
Contributions	480,464
Investment Income	233,844
Total Revenues	\$6,829,905
Expenses	
Ministries and Worship	1,041,466
Catholic Education & Formation	926,345
Clergy Care and Vocations	2,340,460
Parish Services	616,756
Diocesan Administration	1,298,381
Contributions to Catholic Charities & Others	674,163
Total Expenses	\$6,897,572
Operational Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$67,666)
Non-Operational Changes	
Priest Health and Retirement Liability	3,869,891 *
Other Changes	473,031
Total Non-Operational Changes	4,342,922
Change in Net Assets	\$4,275,255

Ministries & Services

Here are the ministries and services offered to the faithful through parishes and schools.

Ministries & Worship:
Worship Office
Hospital Chaplains
Tribunal Office
Communications/Mirror
Family/Marriage Ministry
Hispanic Ministry
Catholic Education & Formation:
Catholic Schools Office
Faith Formation & Evangelization
Clergy Care & Vocations:
Diaconate Formation & Continuing Education
Vocations & Seminarians
Priest Medical Insurance & Retirement
Priest Care and Continuing Education
Parish Services:
Bishop's Office
Parish Financial Reviews
Human Resources
Diocesan Administration:
Building and Depreciation
Finance & Technology
Administrative Services & Stewardship

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

The requirements of this devotion are to be 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.

You are invited to morning Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in West Des Moines to celebrate this devotion at 7:15 a.m. on Feb. 2.

Paid Advertisement

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 month, 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."

In pastoral letter dated Oct. 13, 1930, Leiria (Portugal) Bishop Jose Alves Correia da Silva said the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to three young children between May 13 and October 13, 1917 were credible and he encouraged devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

The bishop also said the Blessed Virgin Mary's appearances were a great source of joy and the faithful had a duty to "reciprocate her goodness."

They could do this by:

- Living a pure life
- Observing the 10 Commandments and precepts of the Church
- Respecting and submitting to the instructions of the Apostolic See (Pope).

In addition, the bishop recommended the faithful:

- love God in a special manner through the Eucharist,
- practice a devotion to Mary,
- practice a devotion to St. Joseph,
- pray for the souls in purgatory,
- pray at least 5 decades of the rosary daily,
- avoid sin, particularly sins of the flesh
- avoid immoral attire
- avoid immoral readings
- do penance, and
- show charity to all particularly the sick and the poor.

Lenten resources focus on families

Continued from page 1

Living Lent resources include activities for families, meat-free soup recipes, weekly conversation starters and more. Use the family Lenten planner to plot out a course of prayer and action for the coming weeks.

Lenten Fish Fry Dinners

Parishes organizing a fish fry dinner, pasta dinner or other event that focuses on prayer or charitable causes during Lent can invite people by going to dmdiocese.org/events or emailing communications@dmdiocese.org. Include the name of the parish, town, cost, and any alternatives to fish.

Get involved

What is almsgiving? It's giving money, time, services or resources to the poor.

Lent is a time when families and individuals can share their time, talent, and treasure with the needy in their communities.

Anyone looking for ideas



can contact Catholic Charities. With a domestic violence shelter and counseling in Council Bluffs, and a food pantry, family homeless shelter, counseling and refugee services in the Des Moines metro area, there are many needs. From volunteers for the food pantry to donation drives that provide hats and gloves to the homeless, and financial contributions for the needy, there are numerous ways to help. Contact Catholic Charities Community Relations Manager Emily Klisares at 515-

237-5078 or email eklisares@catholiccharitiesdm.org to explore possibilities.

Chrism Mass

On Friday, March 22, the diocesan-wide Chrism Mass will be celebrated at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral. All are invited. During the Chrism Mass, oils will be blessed and consecrated by Bishop William Joensen and distributed to parishes.

The oils include:

- The Oil of the Sick, used in the rite of the anointing of the sick.
- The Oil of the Catechumens, used in the sacrament of baptism.
- The Sacred Chrism, which is used in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and holy orders, as well as the consecration of altars and dedication of churches.

Advertise in The Catholic Mirror!

Call 515-237-5046 or
email
communications@dmdiocese.org.

Blizzard pauses church activities



Father Brad Robey found snow half as tall as a doorway at St. Peter and Paul Parish in Atlantic during a Jan. 12 snowstorm. The storm prompted the closing of schools and parish events. Due to the severity of the winter storm, Bishop William Joensen granted a general dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation to the faithful of the Diocese for the Jan. 13-14 weekend.

Around the Diocese

Jan. 20 Saturday Chili and Pie contest

COUNCIL BLUFFS – Corpus Christi is holding its annual chili and pie contest from 5-6:30 p.m. in the Great Hall at the parish to benefit its sister parish in Colombia. Cash prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in both chili and pie contests. No entry fee nor cost to attend this event; free will offering will be for helping families in Colombia. Raffle, silent auction and an evening of chili, soups, desserts and fellowship. Contact parish office at 712-323-2916 to register/enter your chili or pie in the contest.

Jan. 21 Sunday American Spiritual Concert

WEST DES MOINES – All are invited to hear the talents of dramatic soprano Patricia Bach as she gives an American Spiritual concert at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Come and enjoy an inspiring evening of music with their basis on scripture texts from 4-5 p.m. All are welcome for some fellowship with a light reception immediately following the concert. All donations will benefit seminarians in Ghana.

Jan. 25 Thursday Nourish for Caregivers

URBANDALE – The next monthly Nourish for Caregivers support group in the Des Moines metro area is Jan. 25 from 6-7:30 p.m. at St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, Archangels meeting room. For more information, contact Deacon Dan Maxcy at danm@holytrinitydm.org or Deacon Jim Houston at pastoralcare@saintpiuschurch.org.

Jan. 27 Saturday Parish Auction and Dinner

NEOLA – St. Patrick Parish is holding its annual parish auction and dinner with dinner and raffle at 4:30 p.m. and the live auction at 6 p.m. For more information call the parish office at 712-485-2750.

Jan. 27 – Saturday Trivia Night

NORWALK – St. John the Apostle is hosting a trivia night at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 6 p.m. Cost is \$15 per person with a maximum of 8 per team. Prizes will be awarded for 1st and 2nd place teams. Sloppy Joes and non-alcoholic drinks are available for a freewill donation. You can bring snacks to share at your table and BYOB. Tickets can be purchased at the parish office or

call 515-981-4855.

Feb. 8, 15, 22 Thursday St. Thomas Classical Academy

ALTOONA – The St. Thomas Classical Academy will host family visit days Feb. 8, 15 and 22 and March 7. STCA is a classical hybrid academy supporting the Catholic homeschool community with students from 1st grade through high school. The academy focuses on the beauty and order of art, literature, music, poetry, Latin, math, and the natural world. Questions? Visit stthomasclassical.org or contact Mike Smith at msmith@stthomasclassical.org to schedule a family visit.

March 1-3 Friday-Sunday College student retreat

INDIANOLA – St. Thomas Aquinas Parish will host a retreat entitled “Spiritual Impact Bootcamp” for all college students led by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, known as FOCUS. For more information, go to <https://tinyurl.com/STASIB>

March 2 Saturday Shamrocks & Shenanigans

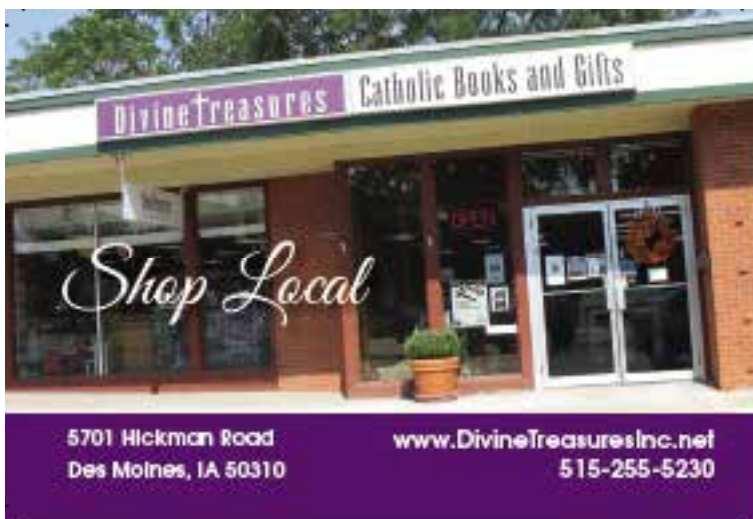
DES MOINES – Join Catholic Charities for its annual fundraiser Shamrocks & Shenanigans at The Shop in downtown Des Moines. Prepare yourself for a unique evening of Irish fun in support of our vital programs which assist those most in need in our communities. Visit catholiccharitiesdm.org or follow us on social media at @CCDesMoines.

March 17 Sunday Faith and Family Game

DES MOINES – Catholic Charities will be at the Iowa Wolves Faith and Family Day game at 3 p.m. at the Iowa Events Center. Be on the lookout for how you can get discounted tickets to the game while supporting Catholic Charities.

March 15-17 Friday – Sunday Book Sale

DES MOINES – Christ the King is having a parish library book sale in the parish hall. Cost for books is donation only. Dates and times are: Friday 4:30- 7 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. Children's story hour at 10:30 a.m. Face painting at 1 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. New, near-new, and gently used books. Inventory includes children's, classics, religious fiction and non-fiction, and more. All are welcome. All proceeds go to the parish library.



5701 Hickman Road
Des Moines, IA 50310

www.DivineTreasuresInc.net
515-255-5230

CARING ABOUT YOUR LOSS AND SHARING IN YOUR FAITH

Prayer to St. Joseph for a Happy Death

*O blessed Joseph who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary,
obtain for me, I beseech you, the grace of a happy death.*

In that hour of dread and anguish, assist me by your presence,

*and protect me by your power against
the enemies of your salvation.*

*Into your sacred hands, living and dying,
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I commend my soul.*

Amen

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

**CALDWELL PARRISH
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY**

Urbandale • Adel • Winterset • CaldwellParrish.com

National March for Life draws Iowans

Two busloads of Iowans expect to be a part of the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 19.

The pro-life march continues to be important after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned in 2022 Roe v Wade, which for nearly 50 years said there was a constitutional right to abortion, said Danny Pierick, a senior at Dowling Catholic High School and vice president of the Students for Life club.

In overturning Roe v Wade, the Supreme Court said abortion was an issue for states to address.

“Last year, the march was huge because it was the year after Roe v Wade was overturned,” he said. “This year, it’s building up more because abortion is becoming more of a debated topic in our country with the states.”

The trip is a pilgrimage, not a vacation, Pierick said.

“We’re driving in a bus for 20 hours and doing a lot of walking, which is not always fun when it’s 10 degrees outside,” he said. “It’s not about having fun. It’s about advocating for those who can’t advocate for themselves. The whole point of the march, for us, is to promote the sanctity of life for others, the unborn, to speak for those who don’t have a voice.”

Dowling Catholic teacher Taylor Fernholz said supporting the national March for Life is one way to help students approach political activism for the sake of the unborn.

“Ultimately, the March for Life is a good opportunity for kids to take prolife seriously,” he said. “You show up in D.C. and see thousands of other kids there. (They think) I’m not alone in this. Other kids are serious about this, too.”

The U.S. bishops, through their document Faithful Citizenship, encourages participation in political life, said Fernholz.

“On a federal level, it’s not likely we’ll get an amendment to the Constitution,” he said, “but it’s not a bad idea to remind representatives and senators to look out the window and see all the youth who do want that.”

He and Father Reed Flood will be accompanying the Dowling Catholic students going on the march.

“I think it’s an important thing in our Catholic schools to not be afraid to talk about prolife issues and any other Catholic issue,” Fernholz said. “It’s kind of complicated to talk about something that is a contested political issue when you’re a teacher in a high school. On the other hand, no Catholic high school should be afraid to say what the church says. Catholic high school teachers are here to teach what the church teaches.”

Health care executive passionate about making a difference

By Jennifer Willems
Contributing Writer

Health care has always been a family affair for Angela Mortoza, CEO of Dallas County Hospital.

“At first I thought I was going to be a teacher and I went to the College of Saint Mary in Omaha,” she said. But after the first semester, Mortoza did some soul searching.

A native of Perry who attended St. Patrick Church and School, she watched her grandmother, Buelah Aeck, serve as a nurse at the hospital, and her mother, Suzanne Hollar, work as a respiratory therapist there.

“Nursing was still a giving type of profession – that’s what I wanted to do with teaching. That’s how I ended up going to Mercy School of Nursing,” Mortoza explained.

After receiving an Associate of Science in Nursing, she went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2005 at Mercy College of Health Sciences. She spent 21 years at the bedside of patients in the medical-surgical unit and then the neonatal intensive care unit at MercyOne in Des Moines, eventually managing the pediatric emergency department.

What brought her joy was getting to know her patients.

She has always tried to put one of her loved ones in the shoes of her patients. Spending time with them, getting to know them and helping them was rewarding.

“It was a nice connection to be able to make. I’m a people person, so making connections was something I enjoyed.”

Making a difference

Over time, Mortoza wanted to continue her education and work in a critical access hospital, which typically serves rural communities and is smaller. She pursued her Master of Science in Health Care Administration at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, graduating in 2010.

She served first as CEO at Adair County Health System in Greenfield, and joined Dallas County Hospital in 2016.

“I wanted to be able to make a difference for patients and for staff and be an administrator that gets to know people on a personal level,” Mortoza said. “I think that’s what drew me to a smaller hospital – just being able to give back to my profession but also be in more of a supportive role.”

Returning to Perry has brought back a lot of memories for Mortoza as she reconnects with people she knew at Perry High School. It’s important to her that they are getting great care at Dallas County Hospital and that her knowledge of the community enables her to find the resources they need.

Health care a ‘natural’

Mortoza has been married to her husband, Rick, for 33 years and they have four children. The family affair with health care continues with Rick, who also



Angela Mortoza

graduated from Mercy, as did their eldest daughter, Alexandra McCombs. Rick works at Mercy as a house supervisor on the night shift, while Alexandra is a cardiac quality control coordinator at Mercy Iowa Heart Center.

They also have a son, Joseph, and twins Tori and Nick. Tori is going to nursing school in Oklahoma and interested in geriatrics.

The Mortozas live in Winterset and are members of St. Joseph Parish. Her mother lives with them.

“When I moved there, I became part of a really great church family and currently that’s still my support,” Angela said.

“I’m passionate about nursing and I think it’s a great career, just because you can do so many things with it,” she explained. Mortoza looks forward to exploring some other roles (hospice volunteer, rocking babies in the NICU, respite care) when it’s time for the next chapter.

St. Jude's Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, please pray for us; St. Jude worker of miracles, please pray for us; St. Jude help of the hopeless, please pray for us.

Say this paper 9 times a day, with a sincere heart, by the 8th day your prayers will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised.

Thank you, St. Jude.

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.



InnerVisions HealthCare has a staff nurse opening. Qualifications include a passion for the mission and values, excellent verbal and written communication skills, and a team player. The ability to manage crisis and challenging situations professionally, calmly and effectively is critical. A bachelor’s degree is preferred, 3-5 years of nursing experience is desired, and IA RN Licensure must be in good standing. Limited OB Ultrasound training provided. Compensation commensurate with experience.



Please email resume to
info@innervationshealthcare.org.

Family: The myths and truths

“Family.”
Sit with this word.
Reflect and ponder it.
See where it takes your mind.

It is a word that can move us from a sense of romance for the future to an exaggerated memorialization of the past.

Family brings joy, comfort, warmth, and security. It will also inevitably bring hardship, disappointment, grief, and conflict. The longer we live, the more likely we are to experience the full range of what “family” has to offer. These descriptors of what comes with family are not about people being “good” or “bad.” They are merely the fruit or consequences of being in a family relationship.

A family myth is usually generalized as some sort of ideology about topics such as: love, support, and caring that is needed from a family. Myths may also have an opposite side, such as: what family will never become or what family would never do to one another.

Occasionally, the way we think creates family myths such as:

- “we will always...”
- “my family would never...”
- “since we are faithful...,” or
- “bad things won’t happen to our family.”

Let’s Get Psyched

By Deacon Randy Kiel



I’d like to say that these are hopeful thoughts, but actually they are not hope. They are myths. Hope must be based upon reality, such as “our hope is based upon Jesus Christ.”

He is a reality.

Family, being human, will eventually bring about many undesired experiences and emotions. People are the hardest part of life to do. Wherever two or more people are gathered, especially in a family, therein lies the moment-by-moment risk of tension, disappointment, hurt feelings, or conflict.

One of the more common myths is, “If we teach our children to love, then they will grow up and not have conflict.” But conflict will inevitably come. Trying to get through family conflict can often lead to even muddier waters than the conflict itself.

There are common mistakes we make when attempting to resolve a family conflict. (It is worth the mention that conflict between little children is far more resolvable than between grown children. Most often, with the help of good parenting, small children are more malleable to confess their wrong-doings and forgive one another.)

When conflict happens within the grown-up family, resolve becomes more difficult due to many factors. The most common factor is called “that other person.” Perhaps, the following ideas may be helpful if you ever find yourself in the midst of unwanted family conflict:

- Accept your part in the conflict. Address the other person’s fault later. Humility heals; pride divides.
- Don’t expect the person to see your side. They can’t. They are hurt. Give compassion instead of needing to be understood.
- Don’t demand an apology. If you do, entitlement may be showing itself.
- Allow the other person to be who they are. Needing someone to change is about you, not them. Resolve comes from love, not control.
- Remember, not only are “they” hard for “us,” but likewise “we” also are hard

for “them.” Family is not the enemy in life.

• Be careful about recall; no two people recall the same event the same way. Build for the future so as not to get stuck in the past.

The family myths that may develop are not inherently bad, but are most often expressions of what we have wanted in life and how we have wanted to be loved. They are formed from a personal sense of ideals. It is up to each of us to accept the life we have been given as well as the family into which we were born.

It is all within the will of God, the Father in his Most Holy Trinity, who is our eternal family. Family is created in the image of God. Ours is very human, yet holy by the very fact that God created it; His family, the Trinity, is divine. Into this eternal family we are most welcomed. The longing for this most holy and eternal family is not a mythical longing but rather it is the fulfillment or our baptismal call.

“Lord, may you guide our families through all conflicts and trials to the truth of your unending love and unceasing joy in whom you have created us to be.”

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

What’s the difference between a bishop, archbishop?



I’ve Been Wondering...

Father John Ludwig

Q. I’ve always wondered what the difference is between a bishop and an archbishop, and for that matter, a cardinal.

A. Well, there’s not a lot of difference. An archbishop is usually in charge of a larger diocese – an archdiocese. A bishop is in charge of his own diocese. In Iowa, the Archbishop of Dubuque is referred to as the Metropolitan. He can call a meeting of the bishops of his area to discuss matters that are of import to all of them. So, the three other dioceses in Iowa (Davenport, Des Moines, and Sioux City) can join the archbishop in dealing with common issues. However, each bishop alone is in charge of his diocese.

Cardinals are appointed by the pope. Ordinarily they serve for life, although after age 80 they can no longer serve to elect the next pope. Most of them are bishops or archbishops, but cardinals don’t necessarily have to be bishops. Often cardinals are asked to advise the pope on important issues. Some popes have

invited cardinals to serve him in his role as universal pastor. This is definitely the case with Pope Francis. They are always advisory to the pope who makes the final decisions.

Q. There has been a lot of talk about the Synod held in Rome last October. Can you shed some light on what Pope Francis has in mind for the Synod?

A. I’ll try. The word synod comes from the Greek which means “on the road together.” Last October was session one of the Synod on Synodality. The second session will be held next autumn. This Synod broke some new ground in that other people besides bishops, were invited to take part and even vote. Bishops and priests and laymen and laywomen met together for about a month to talk to each other about important matters in the Church. There were a number of commentators that thought there would be earthshaking breakthroughs on current issues such as the

possible ordination of women as deacons, perhaps a new approach to LGBTQ Catholics, etc. Some expressed disappointment when it seemed that those issues didn’t seem to advance very much. However, right from the start, the Synod was designed to get people talking to one another, not necessarily to “solve” complex issues in the short term. With that as the goal, the Synod could be rated as an extraordinary success. The participants sat at round tables and discussed the various topics with just one thing in common – their status as Baptized Catholics. In past synods only bishops took part. This time, at the same tables, were bishops, cardinals, even the Pope himself, discussing with sisters, priests, and laypeople. If individuals were looking for something earthshaking, this was it. Next fall, the participants will gather again to continue dialoging and, as Pope Francis has planned all along, listening to one another.

Q. Recently a friend of mine expressed an interest in learning more about the Church and perhaps becoming a Catholic. I wasn’t sure what to tell her. Can you help me in following up on her interest?

A. Years and years ago, when someone wanted to become a Catholic, they would make an appointment with

a priest who would “give them instructions.” There was a lot of good that came from that approach. For one thing, the inquirer and the priest often became good friends, and any subject could be discussed at some length with care and attention. The drawback was that no one else was involved in the process. Sometimes, the inquirer was more “joining the priest” than “joining the Church.”

In today’s Church, the approach involves (1) other inquirers, (2) a team of catechists, (3) sponsors, etc. Like with any faith formation process, the procedure has a little more structure. Inquirers can learn from other inquirers; sponsors can reflect on their own faith and their participation in the Church; catechists can develop a fuller explanation of the Scriptures, the practices of the Church, and the Sacraments. The process was originally designed for those who had never been baptized, but many parishes have adapted it to include those who join the Church from other Christian denominations. This process also includes rites at several Sunday Masses, so that the whole parish can witness and be part of welcoming new members.

Father John Ludwig is a retired priest of the Diocese of Des Moines. Send your questions for him to communications@dmdiocese.org.



One of the best gifts you could give your spouse!

Join our free marriage enrichment program, **The Third Option**, which meets the second and fourth Mondays of the month from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Mercy College, 928 6th Ave, Des Moines, IA 50309. Participants should use the north parking lot.

Couples can join at anytime!

This program is for all couples whether they are facing obstacles in their marriage or just trying to make a good thing better! Couples will walk through 14 skills-based workshops, listen to a couple who has overcome comparable frustrations, and provides support group discussions on suggested exercises / tools.

If you have questions, or would like to register contact Julia Burdt at 515-201-4766 or julia.burd@ gmail.com. You can also contact Adam Storey at astorey@dmdiocese.org

Finding grace in every joy and challenge

My family and I ended 2023 with a wedding, as we were privileged to witness dear friends enter into the sacrament of marriage.

The wedding was out of town. We rented a house with other close friends, so the whole weekend was filled with fellowship, laughter, and excitement.

Kara and I left the weekend feeling filled up; it was a gift to us to enter the New Year on such a high note. Whether it was watching the profound joy in the bride and groom's eyes, or laughing with friends at our rental house, or dancing with my four-year-old daughter non-stop at the reception (she wouldn't even let her mom cut in), the whole weekend was marked by

Marriage & Family Life



By Adam Storey

a deep freedom and a profound hope.

This couple, and the whole wedding, was a reminder to us that "Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church" (Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation "Gaudete et Exsultate" 9).

Now, the guests probably wouldn't attribute any particular holiness to them-

selves, but this was the "ordinary holiness" that Pope Francis often speaks of. It was an example of a dependence on God and a confidence in him that can transform every aspect of our lives, even the most mundane.

The community was a living witness to Pope Francis' observation that "to depend on God sets us free from every form of enslavement and leads us to recognize our great dignity."

This is not to say the wedding guests were perfect, or completely detached from the daily struggles of life. In fact, one of the joys of the weekend was an opportunity to talk with our friends about struggles, trials, and questions on our hearts.

Instead, it was a reminder that even

in the midst of struggles, the Lord invites us to freedom and joy, and that this is an invitation extended to us all.

The wedding truly was a gift, which helped set 2024 off on the right foot for my family.

My prayer for this year is that we can continue to walk in this graced awareness, this freedom and joy which comes from the love of Jesus.

And I pray that all of us may recognize that grace in our lives, in every circumstance and trial!

Adam Storey is on the Evangelization & Mission team. He can be reached at 515-237-5056 or astorey@dmdiocese.org.

Saluting the chroniclers: Put 2024 on paper

He began at the beginning: "Left St. Paul Jan. 23rd 98 at 4:30 P.M."

In a leather-bound journal, his neat cursive scrolled in pencil across graph paper, Frank Storms charted his epic pursuit: to strike gold in Alaska.

He arrived in 1898, in the middle of a stampede – some 100,000 prospectors who made up the Klondike Gold Rush. The Minnesota man was convinced he had what it took, attaching a newspaper clipping that quoted "the millionaire miner" Dr. F.T. King: "No one should go to Alaska in the hope of finding gold unless he is possessed of a good physique, indomitable will and tenacity and a willingness to work long and hard and at anything that presents itself."

Frank chronicled his travels in detail, providing summaries and lists. He noted all his supplies. He documented his Christmas menu: oyster soup, fish, roast, Alaska baked beans, creamed potatoes and mince pie, then a pipe with two friends. And he illustrated his odyssey, sketching tributaries of the Yukon River and "Old Sam's Cabin" where he stayed.

Frank didn't find gold, returning home due to a broken hip. But he did leave his family a treasure: his journal.

More than a century later, we pore over his pages, awed by his daring and his diligence – the latter, necessary for us to

Twenty Something



By Christina Capecci

learn of the former.

Every Christmas Eve we pause from our festivities to salute Great Grandpa Frank and the Knights of Pythias, the fraternal organization under which he traveled.

His story lives on.

I've been thinking about journaling, which is both a lost art and a spiritual exercise. Last May, in a fit of end-of-school-year sentimentality, I resolved to begin a simple family journal. I was pained by how quickly it all goes. Journaling felt like the surest way to slow time, to keep all the days from blurring together. They are too sacred to blur.

This was the underlying belief, a sense of urgency and sanctity stirring deep within.

I'd purchased a leather journal and tried to replicate Frank's pencil cursive. But what works for me is sitting down at my

desktop computer and tapping a few quick sentences into a Google document. Sometimes right before bed. Sometimes in the window between turning on the stove and bringing water to a boil. Sometimes not at all. (That's part of the deal – no pressure.)

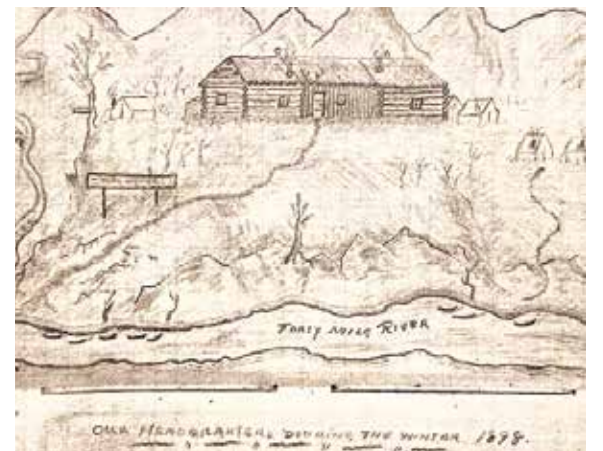
I can think of no better way to launch a new year than to document it. Start with the simplest stuff: the date, the weather. Then keep it simple. What you did, what you ate, who you saw.

A journal requires neither analysis nor poetry. It is the recording itself that counts.

It strikes me as an inherently Catholic undertaking: to see each day as a profound gift, however ordinary; to recognize the dignity in each person and encounter; to possess an abiding gratitude, a heart of thanksgiving.

Every January I recall a passage from the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, as much prayer as poem: "And now let us believe in a long year that is given to us – new, untouched, full of things that have never been."

It is a matter of faith: We believe in



A page from the journal of Frank Storms.

the year given to us by God. We marvel at its novelty, things that are not only new but "have never been." It sounds so clean and hopeful, like a fresh blanket of snow.

That's how God sees each new life conceived: a unique and unrepeatable soul, someone who has never been, who will change the course of human history. All the details of that life matter, so we give witness to each day, each gift – pencil to paper, fingers to keys.

"Here's what happened," we write.

And we mean, "Thank you."

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

My Top Ten books for 2023

There are thousands of new books published each year and they join the millions that are already in print. And so, a book has to find you as much as you have to find it. Also, it is said that the book you need to read finds you at just that time when you most need to read it. With this as a background, let me list the top ten books that found me in 2023 at an apropos time.

In the area of spirituality

- Tomas Halik's, "Touch the Wounds – On Suffering, Trust, & Transformation," takes the biblical image of Jesus inviting the apostle Thomas to touch his wounds so as to overcome his weak faith and universalizes it as an invitation for each of us. Are you having faith doubts? Reach out and touch those places where Christ is still wounded in our world.

- Karl Rahner, "Servants of the Lord." This book is more than fifty years old but is worth reading and rereading. It's in one of the essays in this book that Rahner offers us his famous maxim: In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we learn that ultimately in this life there is no finished symphony.

- Bill Cain, "The Book of Cain." This is a very personal book written by a man, a Jesuit, who keeps a journal while he is keeping vigil with his mother as she is dying of a terminal disease. The book is full of poignant reflections on life, love, imperfection, and letting go.

By Father Ron Rolheiser



- Ben McBride, "Troubling the Water – The Urgent Work of Radical Belonging." This is the book on social justice that I most recommend this year. McBride works among the poor in Oakland, California, and beyond some of his practical recommendations as to how each of us might become more involved in justice work, the great strength of this book is what he invites us to in terms of heart and attitude while working for justice. He puts some practical skin on what this means in terms of working with a community as opposed to being a lone ranger, and on how to remain empathic in the face of opposition and hatred.

- Connie Zweig's, "The Inner Work of Age – Shifting from Role to Soul" is an excellent book on aging. Her subtitle says it well; the task in aging is to shift from role to soul. The book makes some valuable suggestions on how this is done.

- Kim Colella, "Spirit Embraced: A Guiding Memoir for a Life Authentic." This is a very personal book, a memoir, which traces out her own journey in life.

How does someone mature? We each have our own path, but Colella shares the path she took and there is much we can learn from reading her story. I'm also proud to say that she is a former student of mine.

In the more academic realm:

- Brian Swimme, "Cosmogogenesis: An Unveiling of the Expanding Universe." Leaning on great theological thinkers (such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry) Swimme (who is a scientist) proposes a vision that incorporates how our universe began, how it is bent in terms of its ongoing evolution, and how all of this is meant to all end up in a powerful vision of hope. Contemporary astrophysics and the Bible can befriend each other. Brian Swimme will give you that link.

- Philip Sheldrake, "Julian of Norwich: In God's Sight – Her Theology in Context." The book is somewhat heavy academically, but it is a first-rate textbook on Julian of Norwich.

- Lisabeth During, "The Chastity Plot." This is a brilliant (and basically very fair) history of the concept of chastity within Western culture. From its ascetic roots in Christianity, through its social roots in the centuries of arranged marriages in which women were often the victims of patriarchy, through its romantic roots in Victorian England, this book highlights the various nuances and modalities of chastity – and leaves us with the question, Can anyone

today say the word purity without a cringe?

Novels:

- 2023 was not a good year for me in terms of reading novels. Although I read a number of novels, all of which had received good reviews, only one of them stood out for me, Barbara Kingsolver's, "Unsheltered."

Special mention:

The renowned scripture scholar Raymond E. Brown wrote monumental works on both the birth and the death of Jesus. The editors at "Worship," recognizing that these great commentaries would be inaccessible to most everyone outside of an academic classroom, invited him to condense these into a series of short, popular booklets. Brown did this brilliantly and has left us five short popular books (all by Liturgical Press) that contain his deep insights.

- "Coming Christ in Advent"
- "An Adult Christ at Christmas"
- "A Crucified Christ in Holy Week, Essays on the Four Passion Narratives,"
- "A Risen Christ at Eastertime"
- "A Once and Coming Spirit at Pentecost."

They are a treasure, worth rereading every year during their proper season.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through ronrolheiser.com.

Senior Living Excellence

Edencrest.

JAYBIRD SENIOR LIVING

SEVEN BEST

Seven Exceptional Edencrest Locations to Serve You!

Edencrest at Timberline 515-422-8096 14001 Douglas Pkwy, Urbandale, IA 50323	
Edencrest at Riverwoods 515-250-3052 2210 E Park Ave, Des Moines, IA 50320	Edencrest at Green Meadows 515-204-7467 6750 Corporate Dr, Johnston, IA 50131
Edencrest at The Legacy 515-422-8096 2901 Cedar St, Norwalk, IA 50211	Edencrest at Beaverdale 515-250-3052 3410 Beaver Ave, Des Moines, IA 50310
Edencrest at Siena Hills 515-313-3814 455 SW Ankeny Rd, Ankeny, IA 50023	Edencrest at The Tuscany 515-313-3814 1600 8TH SE, Altoona, IA 50009

Deacon Kohn dies

Continued from page 1

by a Cursillo retreat, and when he decided to apply for the diaconate, Joanne joined him in the formation process.

Ordained in 1988, Deacon Kohn served in a variety of ways. He was a catechist, having helped with the confirmation program for 35 years and with the RCIA process for a while. He was a 4th degree Knight of Columbus, and with his wife served at the local food pantry.

“There weren’t too many functions at the parish where he wasn’t at,” said Father Dan Siepker, pastor at Holy Rosary. “He was always willing to lend a hand.”

Deacon Kohn will be remembered as a mild-mannered person who always had a positive outlook on life.

“He tried to see the best in people and tried to bring out the best in people, too,” said Father Siepker.

“He liked bringing people closer to God,” said Joanne. “He felt like he was helping them on the way.”

Deacon Kohn was a mentor. He helped Theresa Romens when she began as a faith formation leader at the parish.

He also was a pillar of the community, Romens said. “A pillar holds you up. You don’t even notice pillars sometimes. He never walked in front of you. He always walked beside you. He was that kind of leader,” she said.

Deacon Carney knew his friend for nearly 25 years, meeting when he first moved to Glenwood.

“He’s responsible for me being who I am. He kept encouraging me to look into the diaconate. I finally entered into formation,” said Deacon Carney. “He’s been a great inspiration to me. He’s one of the finest deacons I’ve known.”

He remembers his mentor as being remarkably calm and thoughtful, a humble man with a huge heart.

Deacon Kohn will be remembered for his community service.

He would hunt for bargains at garage sales and auctions, finding items that could be sold with the money used for the local food pantry or items for garage sales that would benefit the local Leukemia/Lymphoma Society (in memory of a grandson who died of leukemia).

“He was always out there buying boxes with a variety of stuff, which usually held a gem or two, that we could resell in a garage sale,” Joanne said.

He also served his community through elective offices. He served three terms as a Mills County Supervisor, and last November was elected to his third term as mayor. The former city administrator was appointed by the Glenwood City Council to complete his two-year term.

He helped his city through historic flooding in 2019, through the pandemic, and in death wanted to help by asking that memorials be given to the city for a new disc golf course.

At his essence, Deacon Kohn was a servant leader, a prayerful and faithful man.

Joanne said: “He knew Jesus as his brother and savior.”

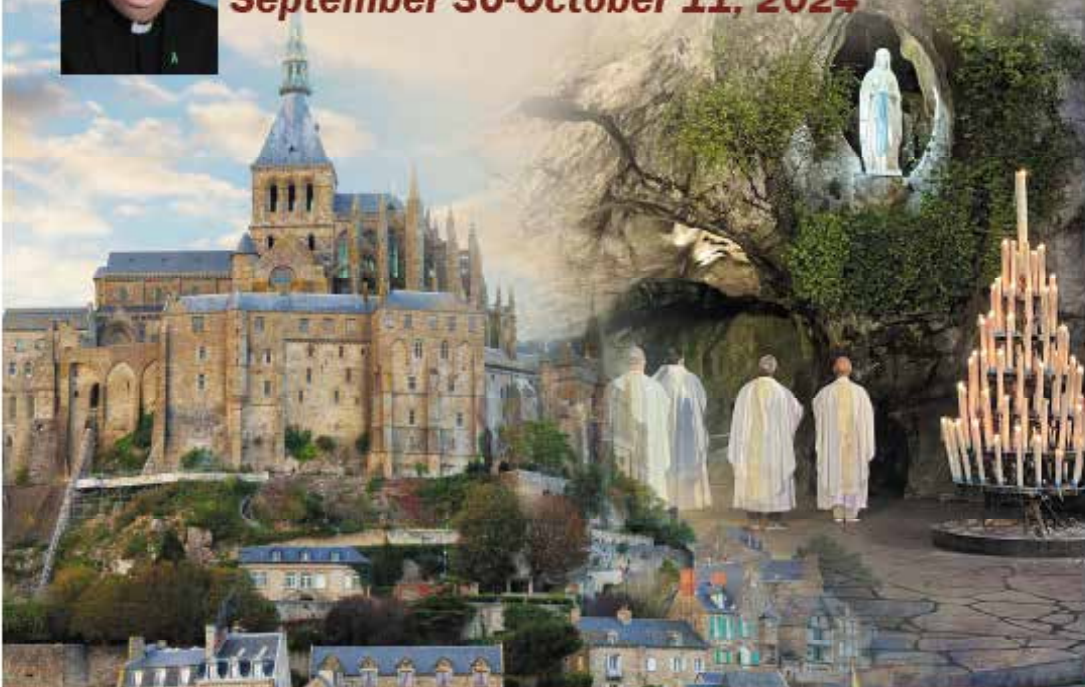
Pilgrimage to France

with Fr. Marty Goetz

Including Lourdes, Lisieux, Normandy Beaches, and Mont-Saint Michel, and Paris



12 Days
September 30-October 11, 2024



For more information contact:

Ceci Triska-email: ceci.triska@gmail.com

979-543-8575 please leave message

select international tours

800-842-4842 mirela@select-intl.com



St. Thomas Classical Academy

family visit days Feb. 8, 15 and 22 and March 7

STCA is a classical hybrid academy supporting the Catholic Homeschool Community of greater Des Moines supporting students from 1st grade through high school. At St. Thomas, we immerse ourselves in the beauty and order of art, literature, music, poetry, Latin, mathematics, and the natural world. Exploring these gifts, we seek to awaken a sense of wonder in our students and to encourage their natural pursuit of virtue and knowledge. If you are interested in learning more about our school, please visit our web page at stthomasclassical.org or contact Mike Smith, our Director, at msmith@stthomasclassical.org to schedule a family visit.

Des Moines Catholic Worker House Fund

Do you have an upcoming Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA? Do you have a donor advised fund? The Des Moines Catholic Worker House Fund is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Your donations would be used to support the hospitality ministry of the Des Moines Catholic Worker House by providing food and other necessities to the homeless population of Des Moines.

Donations can be sent to

Des Moines Catholic Worker House Fund
P.O. Box 1386 Ankeny, Iowa 50021

Or go to:

<https://www.catholicfoundationinc.org/make-a-donation/parishes-schools-and-organization-giving/>

Consejero Sobre Asistencia de Víctimas

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

Blessings offer opportunities to become more aware of God's unconditional love

The following is a statement from the Diocese of Des Moines following the release of a Vatican document called *Fiducia Supplicans*.

In a declaration issued on Dec. 18, the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith answered pastoral questions that have been recently raised by holding that a simple, spontaneous request for a blessing may be granted to individual persons whose life situations might involve irregular relationships, such as same-sex unions.

The document, entitled *Fiducia Supplicans: On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings*, distinguishes between blessings that are appropriately sacramental or may be ritually administered in a liturgical setting, in contrast to simple, spontaneous blessings that people request as they desire God's help or grace when they have a particular pastoral need.

Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández, the principal signer of the declaration, maintains that the Catholic Church is open to those who come to God "to ask for his help to live better, and also to involve the Holy Spirit so that the values of the Gospel

may be lived with greater faithfulness."

The document further observes that a prayer prior to the blessing "could ask that individuals have peace, health, a spirit of patience, dialogue, and mutual assistance – but also God's light and strength to be able to fulfill his will completely."

Blessings "lead us to grasp God's presence in all the events of life and remind us that, even in the use of created things, human beings are invited to seek God, to love him, and to serve him faithfully."

The declaration does not alter the definition of marriage nor does it legitimate same-sex unions in the eyes of the Church. When it comes to persons in same-sex civil unions, the declaration does not permit pastoral blessings as part of a liturgical act or a ritual that seems to resemble a sacrament, including and especially a wedding ceremony. Rather, it focuses on the simple blessings people sometimes request when they visit a shrine, spontaneously speak with a priest, or in other informal moments.

The declaration stipulates that persons should not be sub-

ject to an "exhaustive moral analysis" as a precondition for a simple blessing. At the same time, it notes that individual persons in civil unions or same-sex households should not construe any simple blessing as a "legitimation of their own status." As in any broader sense of blessing, persons are to "beg that all that is true, good, and humanly valid in their lives and their relationships be enriched, healed, and elevated by the presence of the Holy Spirit."

A blessing may be given at the discretion of an ordained minister. Clergy are bound to ensure that any blessing they perform avoid any possibility of scandal or confusion in terms of the attire, gestures, or words they employ.

The declaration concludes by invoking the authoritative teaching of Pope Francis, who conveyed his approval of the document in an audience with Cardinal Fernández. The pope exhorts the faithful to believe that "The [heavenly] Father loves us, and the only thing that remains for us is the joy of blessing him, and the joy of thanking him, and of learning from him to bless."

Perry community seeks healing through unity

Continued from page 1

ward healing and unity," he said.

Fourth grader Jax Sanchez, his mother, Valerie, and father, David, were at the vigil service standing in solidarity and support with their community. They moved to Perry about six years ago.

Perry's sense of togetherness and unity is "what we love about this community. They take care of each other very well," Valerie said.

The next day, Bishop William Joensen spent most of the school day at St. Patrick School to provide support and ministry to members of the community. Father Thomas met with the Jolliff and Butler families, offering them assistance in whatever way possible. The church was open longer than usual for those who wanted to visit, nightly rosaries were prayed, and a second collection was taken for the victims of the shooting.

Bury the dead

Though he was a member of First Christian Church, the funeral for Jolliff was at St. Patrick Church, which could hold more people.

"It's a beautiful testament to the spirit of ecumenism and community collaboration," said Father Thomas.

Though unable to be there himself, Bishop Joensen offered a reflection for the funeral.

"On behalf of the Catholic faithful of central and southwest Iowa, our hearts and spirits sag with sadness at the wrenching death of Ahmir Jolliff, a child of God whose smile reflected God's light and joy to his family, his classmates, and so many in this Perry community. Erica, as his mother, along with Ahmir's sisters and family, you grace us by allowing us to provide a place where we might commend Ahmir to God and seek the consolation and fortified hope that God's word and the Cross of Christ affords us," he wrote.

During the Week of Christian Unity the following week,



Supporters gathered at a park in Perry to pray and to care for one another after a school shooting.

Bishop Joensen said churches in Perry, Muslims and Jews and people of good will would remember Ahmir "and yes, the Butler family, whose cross is heavy, too. We pledge and commit ourselves to do all within our power to embrace all children, to protect and accompany them so they might gain a sense of belonging, and might grow and flourish.

"We implore God that the shadow of violent death might never again loom over us, and that we might share peace and brotherhood, restored trust, and yes, even a smile, together again," he said.

The Sunday after the tragedy, Father Thomas encouraged his parishioners to look to God for comfort.

"As the Magi presented precious gifts, let us open our hearts to Jesus, offering our pain, grief, and fears before him, trusting that he will transform our brokenness into something beautiful," said Father Thomas.

"Let us be attentive to the whispers of God, discerning his guidance in our collective journey. In the wake of our tragedy, we are called to be a community that supports, loves, and heals. Reach out to one another, extend hands of comfort and understanding, for in our unity, we become a beacon of hope. In times of darkness, our community becomes a testament to the light of Christ shining brightly into the darkest corners."

Get your message out to 30,000 Catholic homes in central and southwest Iowa!
Call 515-237-4035 or email communications@dmdiocese.org

Living LENT

Are you ready for Lent?

This year instead of just surviving Lent, lean in and live it! How? Get ready by making a Lenten plan, follow along with weekly devotionals & reflections, engage in family conversation with starter prompts, and try faith activities for kids of all ages!

Find all our Lent resources at: dmdiocese.org/living-lent

"Making It Personal With Bishop Joensen" can be found at iowacatholicradio.com/podcasts.

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

Hes Funeral Homes

Creating Life's Final Chapter
www.HesFuneral.com

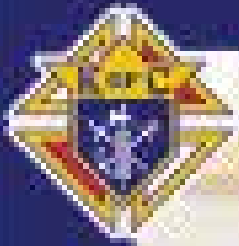
SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF LIFE with a variety of assets, including:

- Cash • Life Insurance • Real Estate • Grain
- Marketable stock & securities
- Retirement assets such as mandatory IRA distributions • And More!

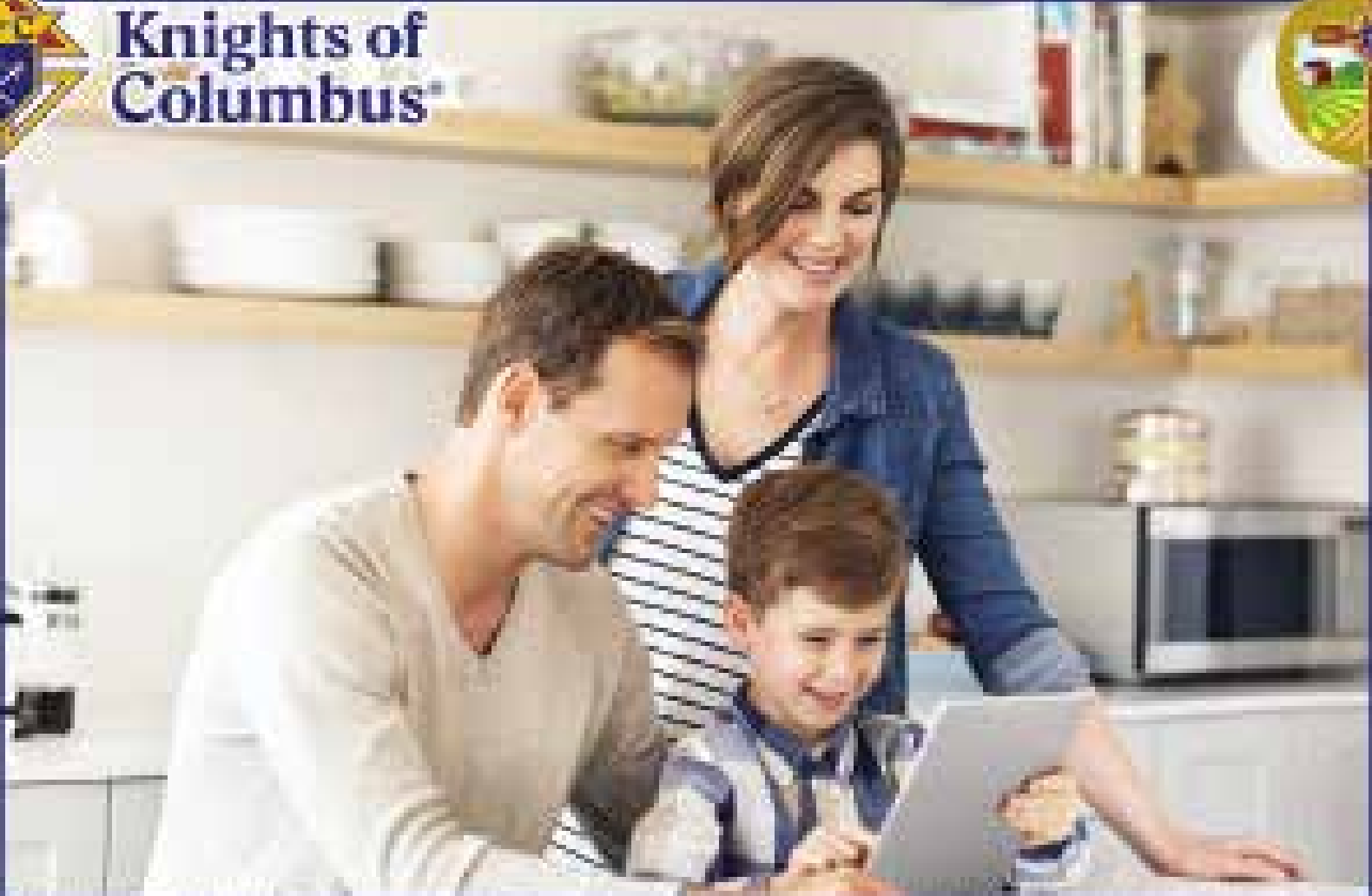
PULSE 515-255-4113 pulseforlife.org
in partnership with The Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa

Protecting Catholic Families Since 1882.

Trust a Catholic company to protect your Catholic family.



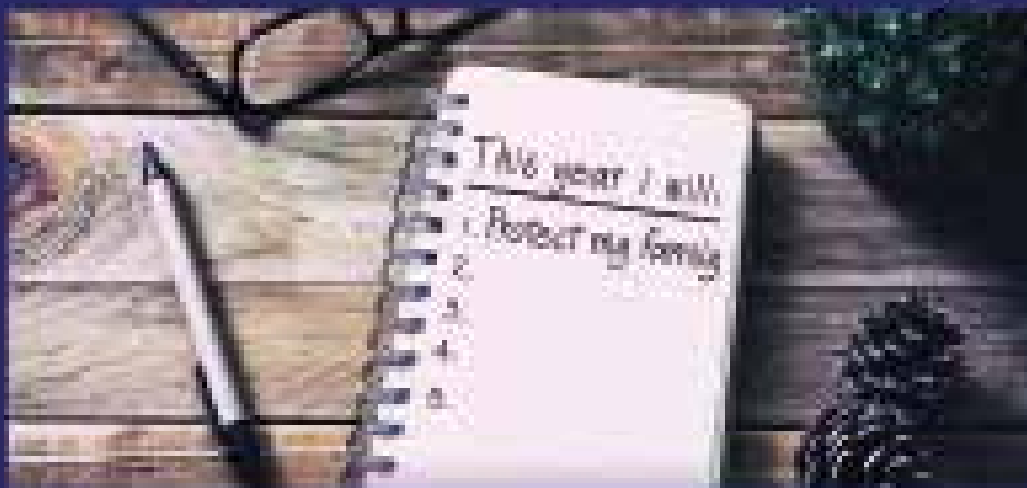
Knights of Columbus



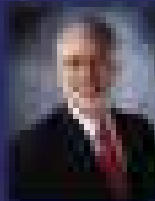
Life insurance, disability, long-term care insurance and bonding services, insurance products are offered through Knights of Columbus. The full range of life, health, dental, CI, CR, DR, ER, FDR, and other products, and complete credit reporting, credit products, general contract, your agent or the Knights of Columbus. Products may vary by state.

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

This Year, Make Protecting Your Family the First Resolution You Keep.



Michael Bozeman
General Agent
662-326-6800
mbozeman@kcof.org
Eastern Iowa



Neil Pfeifer
General Agent
402-376-0463
neil.pfeifer@kcof.org
Western Iowa



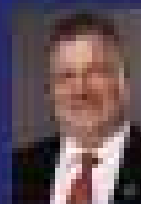
Walker Bozeman
Assistant General Agent
662-276-0200
walkerbozeman@kcof.org
Eastern Iowa



Jeremy Blatzfem
Assistant General Agent
402-793-4776
jblatzfem@kcof.org
Western Iowa



Dominic Kennerl
Field Agent
702-876-8000
dominic.kennerl@kcof.org
**Creston, Wells, Adams, Paul
Oak, Okmoo, Iowa Valley,
Sheldahl, Fortworth**



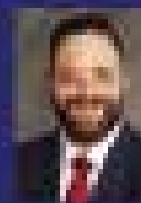
Rob Ryan
Field Agent
515-262-8723
robryan@kcof.org
**West Des Moines, St. Francis,
Sacred Heart**



Pete Szwarcman
Field Agent
712-386-0044
pszwarcman@kcof.org
**Harlan, Shelby, Audubon,
Dunlap, Logan**



Gregory Wiedle
Field Agent
515-248-3550
gregory.wiedle@kcof.org
**St. Augustin, St. Anthony's,
Creston, May**



Justin Wiedle
Field Agent
515-248-3550
justin.wiedle@kcof.org
**Perry, Audubon,
Des Moines/Des Moines**



Knights of Columbus

1882-1883
Knights of Columbus