

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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We Sow God's Spirit by Cultivating Connections in Christ.

Hope for the hungry

Churches, charitable groups step up to keep families fed



Photo by Steve Havemann

Parishioners of St. Anthony Church in Des Moines help at the St. Vincent de Paul food pantries in Des Moines. Pictured left to right are: Patty Corrice, Pam Schoonover, Janet Goode, Helene Wilson, and Marie Piper.

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

The Catholic community stepped up to the plate to help those who did not receive federal food benefits in early November during a record 43-day government shutdown.

St. Vincent de Paul, which operates two food pantries in Des Moines – one on Army Post Road and one on 6th Avenue just north of downtown – has seen high need all year, with about 8,000 households and 25,000 people helped from October 2024 to this past September, said Executive Director

Steve Havemann.

When the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP, paused in early November, more people visited the food pantries.

“The last 30 days, I think we’ve seen probably the biggest push that I’ve seen in my 10 and a half years at the food

pantries,” he said.

SVDP, which is supported by 14 Catholic parishes in the Des Moines metro area, offers choice pantries in which people can come once every two weeks for nutritious food. Inviting people to pick what they want

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Immigration enforcement actions addressed by U.S. bishops

BALTIMORE – As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops gathered for their Fall Plenary Assembly in Baltimore, the bishops issued a special message addressing their concern for the evolving situation impacting immigrants in the United States.

It marked the first time in 12 years the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops invoked this particularly urgent way of speaking as a body of bishops. The last one was in response to the federal government’s contraceptive mandate.

In a vote of 216 votes in favor, 5 votes against, and 3 abstentions, the bishops overwhelmingly approved the special message, with sustained applause of the body following the vote.

The full text of the bishops’ Special Pastoral Message follows:

As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and

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Griswold parish merges with neighboring parish

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Our Lady of Grace Parish in Griswold closed Nov. 10, its parishioners invited to become part of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in nearby Atlantic or one of the other nearby parishes.

“This is a painful moment, particularly and especially for the parishioners of Our Lady of Grace,” said the pastor, Father Trevor Chicoine.

Bishop William Joensen will be Our Lady of Grace in rural Cass County on Sunday, Dec.

7 to celebrate the vigil Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and honor the history and legacy of the parish.

Our Lady of Grace Parish, comprised of 37 registered and active families, faced serious financial, structural, and pastoral challenges in recent years. Last summer, Bishop Joensen asked for a thorough review of the parish’s viability.

Led by Father David Fleming, the Diocese’s vicar general, an examination of the parish looked at resources available to carry out the mission of helping people to know and love God. Through en-

agements with parish leadership, this examination looked at worship, evangelization, leadership, the parish’s mission and ministries, faith formation, service, stewardship, and how the community of faith met the spiritual, personal, and social needs of each other.

In a meeting with parishioners to review the findings, the people of Our Lady of Grace told Bishop Joensen they didn’t want a prolonged process in decision making or in closing, if that was the conclusion. Bishop wanted to respect that request.

Sharing the decision was hard

for lifelong parishioners to hear and hard for the pastor to share.

“It’s been the toughest thing I’ve done since I buried my own father,” said Father Chicoine.

He invited parishioners of Our Lady of Grace to become part of any of the other four parishes in the area: Ss. Peter and Paul in Atlantic, St. Timothy in Reno, St. Mary in Anita, or St. Mary in Red Oak.

And he invited parishioners of those three parishes to understand the pain Our Lady of Grace parishioners are experiencing and welcome them not just into the pews but into the broader life of

the parishes.

In the late 1800s, a priest who served parishes in Corning and Red Oak would visit and celebrate Mass in someone’s home for nearby residents.

Shortly after the turn of the century, it was decided to build a small church named St. Mary’s, a mission of St. Mary Parish in Red Oak.

Its first church was built in 1911, though the parish was formally erected in 1918. The present church was dedicated in 1956.



Bishop William Joensen

Less than a week before Thanksgiving, on Nov. 21, we honor the Blessed Virgin in a special way as we recall the event of her Presentation. Sacred tradition tells us that Saints Joachim and Anne, who had been childless, were grateful for the birth of their daughter. In thanksgiving they brought Mary, about 3 years old at the time, to the temple in Jerusalem to be consecrated to God.

In her purity, humility, and gracefulness, Mary's whole being declared "yes" to God long before the Angel Gabriel proposed that she would give birth to Our Savior.

Like Saints Joachim and Anne, we proceed to thank God for the life and blessings he bestows on us and through us to others, for prayers heard, and for his immense love for us mediated by Mary.

For you

As I reflect on this past year, a bounty of blessings is evident. First and foremost, I'm grateful for you. Each of you is a blessing to your families, your parishes, and to our diocesan faith com-

munity. You come to worship, to praise God and accompany one another, sometimes with joy brimming over and sometimes with frustration, grief, and disappointment. Your presence reveals your sustained "Yes" to God. You pause in your busy day for some time with Jesus in Adoration, Reconciliation, Mass, and other devotions. You are patient with squirming little ones, diligent in guiding a parent or grandparent to church, and steadfast in extending your hands and heart to those in need.

For sharing our faith

It is gratifying to behold so many of you actively sharing Catholic faith with your children and grandchildren. Whether through parochial school, family faith formation, or mutual presence at Mass, you give witness to what you cherish most. Your decision to "present" your children to be baptized in the temple that is your parish church is THE most precious gift to your children—the gift of eternal life. This life is nourished by receiving Jesus regularly in the Eucharist. The ancient church father Origen refers to the Eucharist as a "symbol of gratitude"—and not merely a symbol; he says that after prayer, the bread becomes a "Sacred Body": the Body of Christ.

The Eucharist is our act of thanksgiving to God, and animates our gratitude for all God gives us. A Minnesota priest, Father Michael Van Sloun, recalls a congregation that often delights in singing, "Every day is a day of thanksgiving. God's been so good

to me. He's been blessing me. Every day is a day of thanksgiving. Glorify the Lord today."

For international and young priests

I am also grateful to the international priests who humbly said "Yes" when their bishops asked them to leave their homes, their families, and their cultures to become missionary servants in a land many of them had never seen before. At the core of their being is profound love for God and a desire to share that love with others. There are abundant moments when priests transcend any differences in dialect and offer the loving compassion and hope of the Risen Lord in ways that go beyond words.

Over the years, many dioceses have faced a decline in the number of native-born priests. We are no exception. My predecessors faced a decision to either merge or close parishes or enlist international priests to sustain the regular Sunday celebration of Mass. I have generally opted for the latter, though we will continue to discern how to best meet our people's spiritual needs going forward. We look to form and enhance parishes that are vibrant, where people are on fire in their desire to enable others to encounter Jesus in every venue of life. I am told by one of our pastors that over the past five years, more than 1,500 persons of various ages have joined the Catholic Church in their parish. Talk about evangelization!

I am similarly grateful for the special charism of young priests

to awaken hope and bring their passion and fresh expressions of faith to open people's hearts and minds to the Gospel. They have said "yes" to go wherever the Spirit blows in our Diocese.

Three recently ordained priests are assigned to Council Bluffs, one presently serves Shenandoah and Hamburg, another serves three parishes in Cass County, while others are posted in Perry, Carlisle, and Des Moines. Three recently ordained priests serve in our Catholic high schools, with two of them dedicating this past summer ministering to Catholic Youth Camp participants. The joy, happiness, and good humor they radiated, along with the religious sisters who joined them, sparked record numbers of campers to consider a call to priesthood and religious life, to believe that their own vocational "yes" to Jesus can be an access portal to life fulfillment.

For the Church

The Universal Church is enormously thankful for a missionary Augustinian priest who spent decades serving the poor in Chiclayo, Peru, and then said "Yes" to become the successor of St. Peter this past May.

Pope Leo XIV is already charting his own course with the release of the apostolic exhortation "Dilexi Te" (I Have Loved You), complementing the inspiration of Pope Francis.

In this message, Pope Leo encourages us to magnify our personal "Yes" to God by serving others, particularly the poor. When we spend time with and

help our sisters and brothers who struggle to meet their needs for food, shelter, and medical care, our hearts are kindled and we perceive the blessing God supplies us through them.

Our present Holy Father maintains, "Our love and our deepest convictions need to be continually cultivated, and we do so through our concrete actions" (#119).

How grateful we are for the chance to be good for someone else, especially as winter and the holidays approach!

We venerate Mary, presented in the temple and dedicated to God from her very origins. She always points us to her Son, who gave himself as the ultimate gift in sacrifice. St. Elizabeth of the Trinity describes "sacrifice" as "love put into action."

For God's part, the sacrifice of the Son allows love to act decisively on our behalf even after death. For we believe that all but the most stubborn souls are given the opportunity to declare an ultimate "yes" to God that eclipses any "no's" they might have said on earth. Poor souls can become pure souls capable of singing, celebrating, and glorifying God at the heavenly banquet feast.

All the more reason, then, that every day we declare our gratitude to God, imitating Mary in saying "Yes" to whatever God proposes in the circumstances and graced opportunities presented to us.

May you, your families, and those whom you have a chance to grace with your charity have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Una Cornucopia de Gratitud

Menos de una semana antes de la Fiesta de Acción de Gracias, el 21 de noviembre, honramos a la Santísima Virgen de una forma especial al recordar el evento de su Presentación. La tradición sa-

grada nos dice que san Joaquín y Santa Ana, quienes no habían tenido hijos, estaban agradecidos por el nacimiento de su hija. En acción de gracias trajeron a María, de aproximadamente 3 años, al templo en Jerusalén para consagrarla a Dios.

En su pureza, humildad y gracia, María declara plenamente un "sí" a Dios mucho antes de que el Ángel Gabriel le propusiera que fuera quien encarnara a Nuestro Salvador.

Igual que San Joaquín y Santa Ana, nos preparamos para agradecer a Dios por la vida y por las bendiciones que nos otorga directamente y por medio de los demás, por las oraciones que escuchamos y por su inmenso amor por nosotros con la mediación de María.

Por ustedes

Al reflexionar sobre este año pasado, es evidente una abundancia de bendiciones. Antes que nada, estoy agradecido por ustedes. Cada uno de ustedes es una bendición para sus familias, sus parroquias, su comunidad de fe. Vienen a alabar ya bendecir a Dios y a acompañarse unos a otros, en veces rebosantes de gozo y en veces con frustración, dolor y decepción. Su presencia revela su sustancial "Sí" a Dios. Hacen

una pausa en el ajetreo de su día para pasar un tiempo con Jesús en Adoración, Reconciliación, Misa y otras devociones. Son pacientes con los pequeños inquietos, diligentes en guiarlos como padres o abuelos a la iglesia, y prontos a ofrecer sus manos y corazones a quienes los necesitan.

Por compartir nuestra fe

Es gratificante el observar a tantos de ustedes compartiendo activamente la fe católica con sus hijos y nietos. Ya sea por medio de la escuela parroquial, formación de fe en familia o en presencia mutua en la Misa, ustedes dan testimonio de lo que aprecian más. Su decisión de "presentar" a sus hijos para que se les bautice en el templo que es su iglesia parroquial es EL regalo más precioso para sus hijos — el regalo de la vida eterna. Esta vida se nutre recibiendo a Jesús regularmente en la Eucaristía. El padre de la iglesia primitiva, Origen, se refiere a la Eucaristía como un "símbolo de gratitud" — y no un símbolo simplemente; él dice que después de cada oración, el pan se convierte en un "Cuerpo Sagrado": el Cuerpo de Cristo.

La Eucaristía es nuestra acción de agradecimiento a Dios y anima nuestra gratitud hacia todo lo que Dios nos da. Un sacerdote

de Minnesota, el Padre Michael Van Sloun, recuerda a una congregación que frecuentemente disfruta cantar, "Cada día es un día de acción de gracias. Dios ha sido tan bueno conmigo. Él me ha bendecido. Cada día es un día de acción de gracias. Glorifiquemos al Señor hoy."

Por los sacerdotes internacionales y jóvenes

Estoy agradecido también con los sacerdotes internacionales que humildemente han dicho "Sí" cuando sus obispos les pidieron dejar sus hogares, sus familias y sus culturas para convertirse en servidores misioneros en una tierra que muchos de ellos nunca habían visto. En el centro de su ser tienen un profundo amor por Dios y un deseo de compartir ese amor con los demás. Hay muchos momentos cuando los sacerdotes trascienden cualquier diferencia en dialecto y ofrecen el compasivo amor y la esperanza del Señor Resucitado en formas que van más allá de las palabras.

Con el correr de los años, muchas diócesis se han enfrentado a la reducción en el número de sacerdotes nativos. No somos la excepción. Mis predecesores enfrentaron una decisión de fusionar o cerrar parroquias o de reclutar sacerdotes internaciona-

les para mantener la celebración regular de la Misa los domingos. Yo generalmente he preferido la segunda opción, aunque seguimos discerniendo el cómo poder seguir satisfaciendo las necesidades espirituales de nuestro pueblo. Buscamos el formar y promover parroquias que son vibrantes, en donde la gente está ardiendo en su deseo de habilitarse unos a otros a encontrarse con Cristo en todas las fases de nuestra vida. Me dice uno de nuestros párrocos que, al correr de los pasados cinco años, más de 1,500 personas de varias edades se han adherido a la Iglesia Católica en su parroquia. ¡Vaya evangelización!

Estoy agradecido de forma similar por el carisma especial de los sacerdotes jóvenes que despiertan la esperanza y traen su pasión y expresiones frescas de fe para abrir los corazones y las mentes de las personas al Evangelio. Ellos han dicho "sí" a ir a dondequiera que los lleve el Espíritu en nuestra Diócesis. Tres sacerdotes recientemente ordenados están asignados a Council Bluffs, uno sirve en Shenandoah y Hamburg, y uno más sirve en tres parroquias en el Condado Cass, y otros más están asignados en Perry, Carlisle y Des Moines.

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Boy brings comfort with big book drive

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

On a cold February day, 10-year-old Joseph Schmedding, of Council Bluffs, was watching a news broadcast on TV while visiting his maternal grandma.

A report on North Carolina’s struggle to recover from the devastating 2024 Hurricane Helene aired. It dropped historic rainfall that caused landslides and severe flooding resulting in more than 100 deaths in the state. The news moved young Joseph.

“I was so sad,” he said. He’d traveled through that area while going to his paternal grandparents who live in South Carolina. “I just thought I had to do something.”

Joseph wondered how children like him would be able to get library books.

Grandma Monica Sciortino, of St. Peter Parish in Council Bluffs, suggested he send books to children in the storm-struck area.

The fourth grader’s desire to help other children, and his parents’ and grandparents’ desire to teach their children how to help others, became a community-wide effort.

Tables for book collections went up at St. Albert Catholic School, where Joseph is a student, and at Corpus Christi and St. Patrick Churches.

“It was more successful than I thought it would be,” Joseph said.

Children’s books, Bibles (“I’m very happy about that,” he said), young adult books and a few adult books piled up. The Knights of Columbus, Serra Club of Council Bluffs, Corpus Christi’s Altar Society, and other community members donated a total of \$1,300 for postage.

In May, the Schmedding family – Kathleen, Neil, little brother Henry and Grandma Sciortino -- took 11 boxes of books to the U.S. Postal Service and shipped them to a community in North Carolina. Another six boxes of books will go to Ukraine.

“I don’t know what I expected but I definitely didn’t expect it to be this successful,” said Joseph. “I thought we were only going to get 10 boxes and I was very wrong. There are not many times in my life when I’ve been proud to be wrong, but that time I was very happy that I was wrong!”

The book drive brought the community together to put their faith into action.

“It’s important that people remember we’re here to serve, not be served,” Sciortino said. “I think it’s important that kids learn that there’s more to life than getting things for yourself. You need to share what you have.”

Joseph might be 10 years old (almost 11, he says) but he seems wise beyond his years when asked about the impact he has on others.

“I can’t go down there and say, ‘Make my thing have an impact.’ I can’t do that. That’s not how it works,” he said. “I can hope that I can make at least one person smile.”

With the book drive wrapped up, Joseph, now in fifth grade, is already eyeing what he might do next, perhaps a food drive.

“I’ll end with a quote,” he said. “I don’t remember who wrote it. It had a big impact on me. ‘Be kind whenever possible for it is always possible.’ What I think that means or what it should mean is try to help people. Be kind because it will not only make the person you’re being kind to feel good, it will also make you feel good.”



Photo supplied by the Schmedding family

Joseph Schmedding (right) and his younger brother, Henry, show some of the books they collected from the Council Bluffs community for other children.



Photo supplied by the Schmedding family

At left, Joseph Schmedding, of St. Peter Parish in Council Bluffs, packs books onto a truck to take to the U.S. Postal Service to ship to Hurricane Helene victims in North Carolina. At right, Joseph takes inspiration from his Grandma Monica Sciortino.

Sign up for The Catholic Mirror newsletter!

Sign up for The Catholic Mirror newsletter - a new bi-weekly digital newsletter launching this Advent. Every issue will feature Catholic news & events from around the Diocese of Des Moines *plus* additional news stories out of the Vatican and USCCB. Sign up today!



Local man aids in elevating saint to a Doctor

St. John Henry Newman:
Convert, saint, and now Doctor of the Church

By Ryan Johnson
Contributing Writer

St. John Henry Newman, a well-known convert to the Catholic Church, was recently elevated to Doctor of the Church.

Pope Leo XIV proclaimed St. John Henry Newman a Doctor of the Church on All Saints Day in Rome on Saturday, Nov. 1.

Newman is only the 38th Doctor in Catholic Church history. His elevation to Doctor of the Church follows his canonization in 2019 by Pope Francis.

For saints to be conferred with the title Doctor of the Church, their theological writings are considered to be of the highest caliber, making them worthy of continued study by all Catholics.

Local Connection: An Expert’s Insight

Ryan “Bud” Marr, Ph.D., was invited to attend the special Mass on All Saints Day. Marr is the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines, and he is a leading Newman scholar.

Marr contributed to the cause for Newman’s doctorate, writing a chapter in the positio (the formal petition) to elevate the saint to a Doctor of the Church.

The portion he contributed focused on St. Newman’s ecclesiology (his understanding of the nature of the Church) and his nuanced views of the Magisterium (Church authority).

The Convert

Long before Newman was canonized a saint in the Church, he was a prominent Anglican minister and academic at Oxford. Although there was a strong anti-Catholic presence in England, Newman converted to Catholicism in 1845.

According to Marr, Newman lived a life of virtue and personal holiness. Newman woke early each morning for silent prayer and to celebrate Mass.

“A vast collection of his letters and diaries allows us to see him as a ‘flesh and blood saint,’ complete with human struggles,” said Marr. “He was serious about the faith. He fasted regularly and lived a holy life. And we have over 30 volumes of his letters and diaries, offering a peek behind the curtain to see his personal struggles and his growth in holiness.”

Newman left a significant influence on education, particularly his foundational book, *The Idea of a University*, and Catholic student centers are often under the patronage of Newman. For



Photo supplied by Ryan “Bud” Marr
Ryan “Bud” Marr, Ph.D., a dean at Mercy College of Health Sciences, is an expert on St. John Henry Newman and contributed to the cause for elevating the saint to Doctor of the Church status.

example, St. Catherine of Siena Student Center is the Newman Center at Drake University.

You may be surprised to learn that the famous author J.R.R. Tolkien of *The Lord of the Rings* lore studied at Newman’s Oratory school in Birmingham, England.

When a friend wrote Newman a letter and said, “I think you’re

going to be a saint someday,” Newman responded, “No, saints aren’t bookish; they don’t write novels like I have. I’ll be happy if I make it to heaven just if they give me the role of polishing St. Philip Neri’s shoes.”

Organic Vision of Authority

As a convert to Catholicism, Marr explained Newman’s views on Church authority and governance evolved.

“Newman held a high view of papal authority, sometimes called Ultramontane,” he said.

Newman’s thought of Church authority shifted to a more balanced, organic image of the Church as the Body of Christ, detailed in Newman’s later writings.

“Newman’s concept of the Catholic Church operated through three offices: 1. Prophetic, the role of the theologians; 2. Priestly, the role of the laity’s devotion and lived tradition; and 3. Kingly, the role of the bishops and the pope in governance,” said Marr.

Newman argued that the hierarchy (Kingly office) should consult with the laity and theologians when making decisions about doctrine, showing a dynamic, balanced view where all members play an important role in preserving tradition, Marr said.

Reading Newman’s Writings

To read Newman’s writing and learn more about the saint, Marr gives caution about where to start. He recommends not starting with Newman’s heavy philosophical works like *The Grammar of Assent*. Rather, he advises readers to begin with Newman’s more accessible and devotional works, such as the *Parochial and Plain Sermons*.

Marr wrote a book called *Seeking God with Saint John Henry Newman*, which was published by Our Sunday Visitor. “It highlights some of Newman’s most important insights about the

Doctors of the Catholic Church

Throughout the history of the Catholic Church, both men and women have been named Doctors of the Church.

When individuals receive this title, “It’s because the Church believes it is worthwhile for Catholics to continue to study their thought as their thought is considered particularly profound,” said Ryan “Bud” Marr, Ph.D.

Among Doctors of the Catholic Church are St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Ambrose of Milan and St. Thomas Aquinas, as well as female Doctors: St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Avila and St. Therese of Lisieux, known as the Little Flower, who was proclaimed Doctor of the Church in the 20th Century.



Photo by Ryan “Bud” Marr
St. John Henry Newman was elevated to Doctor of the Church on All Saints Day Nov. 1.

faith,” he said. Many of Newman’s writings are in the public domain and available for free online at newmanstudies.org.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Rev. Maxwell Carson – December 12

Rev. Anthony Adibe – December 15

Rev. Michael Peters – December 15

Rev. Luis Mejia – December 17

Rev. Daniel Krettek – December 25

Rev. Daniel Adjei – Dec. 30

Most Rev. Joseph Charron – December 30

Rev. Glen Wilwerding – December 30

The Saint Serra Club of Des Moines is so grateful
for you and your service to the Church.

dmserra.com

Festivals build county faith communities

By Ann Pierson
Staff Writer

Fun and games are always around the corner during summers in Shelby County.

Four parishes in the county host annual picnics in the span of six weeks, each one drawing their community together for timeless fellowship.

St. Mary Panama

St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Panama hosted their longtime picnic the second week of June.

The picnic began with a pancake breakfast in the morning, activities for kids and adults alike throughout the day, Mass in the afternoon, and a live auction and food trucks in the evening.

The picnic not only benefits

the parish and Shelby County Catholic School but also provides enriching connections with people in the community.

Karen Wingert, business manager for St. Mary of the Assumption, said the festival brings people to town to work together.

St. Boniface Westphalia

For the past 153 years, St. Boniface in Westphalia's parish picnic has been a Fourth of July staple.

The picnic began with a crowd cheering on the town's little league teams in their baseball games. One of the games featured the 13-year-olds playing against their fathers, while another involved a neighboring little league team.

Other traditions include an auction, kids' games, paddle wheel, and food stands.

The picnic is a labor of love with planning beginning the August prior to the picnic. But it's worth it.

"The biggest part [of the picnic] is keeping that tradition alive of community coming together and making something so successful," said Brittany Schaben, the parish business manager.

St. Joseph Earling

St. Joseph Parish in Earling held its parish picnic for the first time since the pandemic. Mass started off the evening, and events included bags tournament, food stands, raffles, kids' activities, auction, and a DJ.

A group of six young families worked together to bring back the annual tradition and fundraiser for the parish.

Chris Gaul, lifelong parishioner and head of the Picnic Auction Committee, believes the dedication of St. Joseph parishioners, especially young adults, is the success of the picnic.

"I can't tell you how incredibly proud and lucky St. Joseph is to have a group [young adult parishioners] willing and able to be leaders in the parish," Gaul said. "It seems like everyone is struggling to find young people to fill these roles...and here in Earling, Iowa, we are thriving."

St. Mary Portsmouth

St. Mary Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Portsmouth hosted their picnic the last weekend of



Photo by Carol Stein
A girl enjoys the toys at St. Mary Parish picnic in Portsmouth.

July. Their festivities include a car show, a bike ride, tent stands, a paddle stand, and an auction.

This year, Blue Sunday, a music group from Omaha, played at the picnic.

Ken Stein is a lifelong member of St. Mary's and has helped at the picnic since he was a kid, passing the tradition on to his family who also comes to the picnic each year. He sees the picnic as the perfect opportunity to keep the parish vibrant through the work of the community.

"It's very important to our church to work together for a common goal," Stein said. "This brings people together."



Photo by Janet Bruck
Omaha band Blue Sunday provided entertainment at the summer picnic in Portsmouth.

Fall festival strengthens parish

The summertime fun in Shelby County stretched into fall with St. Michael Parish's harvest festival in Harlan Oct. 12.

The festival included raffles, paddle wheel, a cake walk, bouncy houses, and a country store featuring homemade items from parishioners.

Staley's chicken Dinner was served for dine-in, take-out, or drive-through.

The harvest festival, organized by the Women's Guild, raises funds for the parish and all faith formation activities for the next year, said Angela Buman, director of Religious Education.

Everyone in the parish has a role to play to make the festival a success. Teenagers may run the drive-through while adults donate items or run the stands, said Julie Thraen, president of the Women's Guild.

This strengthens the community.

"God intends us to be present in our community and with other people," Buman said. "The harvest festival supports that."

Don't Miss Your Opportunity to Help Catholic Students and Save on State Taxes for 2025

Gifts to CTO made before year end will help support qualified students during the 2026-27 school year.

In January, the CTO office fielded calls from donors wondering where their tax certificates were for 2024 - unfortunately they forgot to make a gift at any time before the end of the year - and didn't receive a certificate! Even more frustrating, donors last year waited too late into December to make a gift of stock and the transaction wasn't completed until January, also missing the deadline for 2024.

Don't let this happen to you. Uncertain if you've already made a gift? Pick up the telephone and give us a call to verify, 515-237-5010. Planning on a year-end gift of appreciated stock? Start the process by December 15 to avoid a holiday interruption or vacation plan by others getting in the way of your transaction and give us a call to keep watch for your gift's arrival. We'll give you a quick call when it arrives or warn you if we haven't seen it as the clock ticks down, so you can follow up.

Gifts made in calendar year 2025 create the opportunities for families meeting federal poverty guidelines to remain in or begin attending Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines for the 2026-27 school year. Your gift now makes a significant difference in the lives of these families. For the current school year, CTO is directing donor contributions to assist 1,900+ students attending one of our 16 Catholic schools. To qualify, families must be below 400% of the federal poverty limit.

Donors in 2025 will receive a 75% Iowa Tax Credit for the value of their donation. Donors may also designate 75% of their gift to one or more of the schools that mean the most to them.

Visit www.CTO.org/online-donation to make a gift today. Gifts of grain and livestock are also accepted, but a call to the CTO office to confirm arrangements is appreciated.



Catholic Tuition Organization | 601 Grand Ave | Des Moines IA 50309
515-237-5010 | www.CTOiowa.org



End-of-the-year gratitude

Giving that sustains the Catholic mission

By Sue McEntee
Contributing Writer

As the year draws to a close, many of us take time to reflect on our blessings and the ways we can share them with others.

For those who have been strengthened by their Catholic faith, giving back to support their parishes, schools, and ministries is one of the most meaningful ways to express gratitude to God and ensure his work continues.

Why Give?

Every parish, Catholic school, and ministry is a living reflection of Christ’s presence in the world. They form the heart of our faith community — teaching our children, feeding the hungry, offering comfort in times of loss, and celebrating the sacraments that mark our journey of faith. But this vital work relies on the generosity of people like you.

Your gifts make it possible for the Church to be there — not just today, but for generations to come. A year-end or planned gift is more than a donation; it’s an act of stewardship and discipleship, a tangible way to say, “Here I am, Lord.”

What’s in It for You?

Giving generously brings a deep sense of joy and fulfillment that comes only from aligning your blessings with God’s purpose. As Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

From a practical perspective, year-end giving can also offer financial benefits. Charitable gifts made before Dec. 31 may qualify for valuable tax deductions. Many Catholics also find that planning their giving — through a will, trust, donor advised fund, or gifts from retirement assets — allows them to make a more significant impact than they ever imagined, while caring for their family’s needs and stewarding resources wisely.

A planned gift ensures your values live on. It’s a lasting testament of faith — one that continues to support the ministries, schools, and parishes that have shaped your life and the lives of those you love.

How Your Giving Helps Others

Your gift, no matter the size, becomes a source of hope. It supports Catholic education, where young minds are formed in faith and knowledge. It helps parishes

bring people to the sacraments and offer pastoral care in times of need. It strengthens outreach ministries that feed the hungry, comfort the sick, and bring the light of Christ to those on the margins.

Every gift is multiplied in its impact when given with love. Together, our generosity sustains the mission of the Church — today and into the future.

A Call to Faithful Generosity

As you prayerfully consider your year-end and long-term giving, remember that your generosity is a reflection of God’s own love. Whether through an immediate gift or a planned one, your support ensures the flame of faith continues to burn brightly in our Catholic community.

This season, may your giving bring joy to your heart, blessings to others, and glory to God.

For more information, call the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa at 515-237-5044 or reach out via email at contact@cfswia.org.

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

AROUND THE
DIOCESE

Nov. 22 Saturday
Holiday Bazaar

WINTERSET – St. Joseph Parish is hosting a holiday bazaar from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. with unique craft items made by our parishioners and a bake sale. Breakfast and lunch available for a free will offering.

St. Cecilia Blessing Mass

URBANDALE – The Des Moines chapter of National Pastoral Musicians is hosting St. Cecilia Blessing Mass at St. Pius X at 9 a.m. with a reception to follow. All musicians in the Diocese are invited to attend.

Sensory Friendly Mass

DES MOINES – A Sensory Friendly Mass will be at 9 a.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church. A special invitation is extended to people with sensory issues. Families are encouraged to bring materials that can assist with comfort during the liturgy: noise softening headphones, wiggle seats, fidgets, and sensory tools will also be available. A social will follow Mass in the church hall.

Dec. 3 Wednesday
Taizé Prayer

DES MOINES – A Taizé service will be at St Catherine of Sienna from 7-8 p.m. Enjoy quiet music and special readings of the Advent season. All are welcome and bring a friend.

Dec. 6 Saturday

Cookie Walk & Vendor Fair

INDIANOLA – St. Thomas Aquinas Altar & Rosary Society is hosting a Cookie Walk & Vendor Fair from 8-11 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. Purchase festive holiday treats

and unique, local handmade gifts. Enjoy our holiday café with fresh giant cinnamon rolls and cider. Meet our special guest Jolly Old St. Nick. Free admission.

Rosary Rally

DES MOINES – Join fellow Iowans to pray a monthly rosary the third Sunday of every month at 1:30 p.m. (rain or shine) at the Iowa State Capitol – west side steps. For more information contact Diana Balmaceda, 515-974-7691 or Jeff Pierick, 515-778-6087.

Student Suppers

St. Catherine of Siena Student Center is looking for volunteers to cook and help serve meals for the Sunday evening suppers that follow the 5 p.m. Mass. If you belong to an organization that would like to volunteer, or want to get a group of friends and family together to help, contact Megan Schultz at campusminister@stcatherine-drake.org.

Keep Christ in Christmas

The St. Pius X Knights of Columbus are providing Catholic Christmas cards. Contact Jim Epstein at 515-681-5465 for more information or to have items delivered.

Byzantine Liturgy

A Byzantine Catholic Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Sunday, 11 a.m., at All Saints Church in Des Moines. For more information go to byzantineiowa.org, or contact Father Bruce Riebe at 440-227-5037.

Call to the diaconate

Bishop William Joensen issued the “Call” to Inquiry for the permanent diaconate on Oct. 14. This announcement begins the application and inquiry phase of a five-year formation process for men who feel called to become deacons and their wives.

For more information or to request an application, contact Deacon Jim Houston at vocations@dmdiocese.org.



MaroonFund
DOWLING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL’S ANNUAL APPEAL



To keep our students on the road to success, Dowling Catholic High School relies on the generosity of those who support the We Are Maroons Annual Appeal. The Annual Appeal helps ensure our students and teachers have the resources they need to be successful and impacts every aspect of the DCHS experience, including faith and academic programming, student activities, athletics and the arts.

Now is the perfect time to make a gift to DCHS. As we approach the end of the year, we are seeing more and more supporters choose to donate:

- Shares of stock
- Donor Advised Funds
- Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA (donors 70 1/2 and older)

These options may provide favorable tax benefits with the flexibility to support DCHS!

Your support can truly make a difference in preparing Leaders for Life, Centered on Christ. To donate, please visit www.dowlingcatholic.org/donate or mail a check to Dowling Catholic High School, 1400 Buffalo Road, West Des Moines, IA 50265.

Victim
Assistance
Advocate

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

Hope for the hungry

Parishes, schools, charities pitch in to alleviate hunger

Continued from page 1

respects cultural differences and health issues like allergies.

With the increase in demand, appointments that usually are scheduled every 20 minutes were bumped up to every 15 minutes. About 450 volunteers from the parishes regularly help, and more came out in recent weeks to assist guests.

The Catholic Charities Food Pantry on East Hubbell Avenue in Des Moines also saw more people in the first week of November. Catholic Charities Food Pantry served 21,000 people last year by providing a 3-day supply of food each month. It also served 600-700 people each day who come to the daily window for food rescued from generous organizations like Hy-Vee, Costco, Panera, Anderson Erickson, and others.

On the first weekday when SNAP benefits were paused, “We saw 660 at the window compared to an average of 612 the same week last year,” said spokeswoman Bobbi Jo Smith. “It’s been steady but we were prepared for this.”

Catholic Charities Executive

Director Mike Sheehy joined representatives of the Iowa Food Bank and Des Moines Area Religious Council at a news conference, where leaders said charity food pantries do not have the capacity to take the place of government food assistance.

They called on government leaders to end the government shutdown and restore food benefits as quickly as possible. Sheehy and the other leaders pledged to continue to provide food for those who needed it, but would need support through donations and volunteers.

“We have a foundation of principles that are centered around Catholic Social Teaching and it’s those principles that drive us to have programs that support the most vulnerable and the underserved in our communities,” he said.

There’s nothing shameful in asking for help, and the pantries offer an opportunity for people to give back to their community, Havemann said, adding, “We want to see everyone with dignity and everyone with healthy food to fuel their future.”



Youth from St. Mary Parish in Avoca collected hundreds of items recently to restock their local pantries. They also collected many prayer requests on behalf of the donors.



Photo by Gretchen Watznauer

Eighth graders at St. Theresa Catholic School in Des Moines unloaded and sorted food generously donated to the school pantry by a former school family.

Catholic Daughters luncheon supports charitable works



Photo by Kris Reicks

Council Bluffs Catholic Daughters Court St. Anthony #330 held their Cozy Soup & Dessert luncheon Oct. 22 at St. Peter Catholic Church social hall. Seventy people plus three Council Bluffs police officers were in attendance at the event, which was chaired by Kris Reicks. Proceeds fund charitable projects throughout the coming year. Pictured above: Loyal supporters Carol and Don Schmidt of Corpus Christi Parish.



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Two children’s books guide prayer

Rosary guide for the littlest Catholics

As Candace Camling prayed the rosary for the first time by herself, she realized the series of prayers are both simple and yet complex.

A convert to the faith, the Holy Trinity parishioner thought about her children, then ages 4 and 8, and how she might explain the series of prayers in the rosary to them.

From this experience was born an idea to create a book that is geared toward young children. Now it’s been published and joins two other rosary-related, age-appropriate books available through Ascension Press.

- Ages 0-3 *Learn to Pray My First Hail Mary* illustrated by Camling.
- Ages 4+ - *My First Interactive Rosary Book* written and illustrated by Camling.
- Ages 6+ - *Pray and Think Imaginative Rosary Book* written and illustrated by Camling.

An illustrator by trade, Camling had published *Pray and Think* for older children, but it didn’t have the flaps and textures that young children like.

“I took that concept and started to break it down into how we could make this an interactive book for kids,” she said. Though there were setbacks with the pandemic, her dream has come true and *My First Interactive Rosary Book* is available.

In her new book, the card-



Candace Camling

board pages are indexed with tabs for each of the mysteries, with little flaps under which there are prayers. Wheels can be turned to the day of the week pointing to which mystery to pray that day, all of which helps keep young minds engaged.

“It’s something kids can grow with. It can be something for every age,” Camling said.

The young mother of two has found success in the Catholic press. Using her gifts to share her faith feels fulfilling.

“I prayed: God, if you want to use me for Catholic publishing, I’m open to it and I’ll be happy if that’s the last thing I do for the rest of my life.”

Get the book at Divine Treasures Bookstore in Des Moines or through Ascension Press.

Dad’s poem becomes resource for families

A poem penned for children has turned into a small book for families to share with their kids during nighttime prayers.

A Very Little Office of Compline Night Prayer for Children by Iowa Catholic Radio’s morning host Bo Bonner introduces night prayers, called compline in Latin, along with psalms and songs for families.

The book originated about 15 years ago as a poem Bonner wrote to teach his own children the prayer Benedictine monks say each night before going to bed. Bonner is a Benedictine oblate, a lay person striving to live by the Rule of St. Benedict.

He shared the poem with a friend, Gwenneth Thompson-Briggs, who made a small illustrated version of the poem many years ago for Bonner’s kids.

They considered turning it into a book, but life took them in different directions for a while. Recently, they decided to give their dream another try.

Using just the poem wasn’t enough content for a book, so they began using rhymes with other prayer.

“Night prayer is something elementary to so many people,” said the father of five with his wife, Robyn. “Night prayer is

something we can do with our kids.”

The book is small, perfect for little hands, and is illustrated in a way that evokes memories of children’s books of old with watercolor images that are gentle and dreamlike.

“There’s memorable imagery but that won’t assault the senses of the child,” Bonner said.

“Anything that can get people praying the office is good,” he said. “A short office is easier for some people. Prayers you can memorize are easier.”

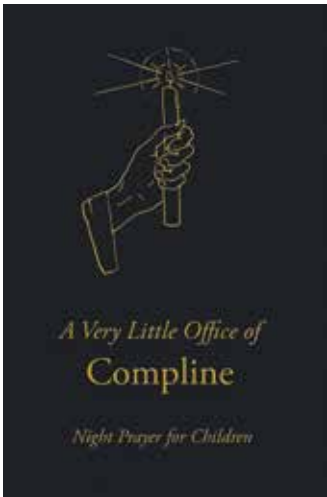
Bonner was raised in Oklahoma in the Baptist tradition. He converted to Catholicism while he was studying in a Protestant seminary. He taught at several universities in areas of philosophy, theology, and literature, and is working on a doctoral degree in Catholic theology at St. Mary’s University in London.

So it surprises him that his first book would be for children.

“God sees better than I do. I would have thought I’d write a



Bo Bonner



1,000-page tome,” he said. Yet in spite of the philosophy and theology he enjoys debating, “God saw fit for a children’s book to be my first book. It’s fitting. The best little philosophers are children who ask a thousand questions.”

Bonner sees fertile ground for beginning a series that looks at the other seven hours of the day that Benedictines pray. While a sequel isn’t planned, perhaps, he muses, providence will have him and Thompson-Briggs collaborate again.

A Very Little Office of Compline Night Prayer for Children is available at Divine Treasures bookstore in Des Moines, at TanBooks.com, and other online retailers.

Book Review

The Years of Ripening speaks of elderhood

By Kenan Bresnan
Contributing Writer

The Years of Ripening
By Joyce Rupp
Published by Orbis Books

Servite Sister Joyce Rupp, in her latest book *The Years of Ripening* invites us to walk the journey of our last two decades of life

together.

She has become a companion for me and she invites all of us to be a companion with her on her journey into what she calls Elderhood, those years after one’s 80th birthday.

In her gentle and graceful way, Rupp covers a wide range of subjects we experience in our later years, ranging from physical, emotional, and spiritual issues.

There are blessings in what we

encounter: “We have the graced time and spacious presence to reflect, integrate, and bring to wholeness the significant features of our individual transformation that were previously set aside or not given enough attention.”

Rupp doesn’t sugarcoat the issues we’re facing. We know we are becoming elderly.

Yet, she says we can look at changes in different ways. “It is our attitude towards them that either instills peace or creates a troublesome angst.”

Rupp quotes author Kathleen Dowling Singh from her tome *The Grace in Aging: Awaken as You Grow Older* in establishing the theme that runs throughout the book: “To live the life of an elder is to ripen into being that is more than simply elderly, more than just old. It involves ripening into clear-eyed acceptance of the way things actually exist.”

Among a plethora of issues that are covered are anxiety and grief. For each, Rupp lists the truth, which might be seen as a negative. But for each, she shows us the positives.

We will experience grief, but we must treasure the love people leave with us, she says. “We can’t live in grief continually as people we love pass away. Every person who leaves, leaves a portion of their love with us.”

She tells of trials that we have and those that are yet to come; Trials that are full of pitfalls and promises laced with hope, gratitude and growth.

It is a relief to know others have the same feelings and concerns that I do.

She talks of the simple things older people do, like tripping on a curb (which I have done) or trying to use the wrong gift card. She shares her experiences with embarrassments which are faced by elders all of the time.

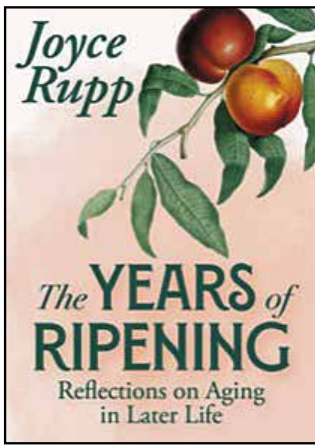
She illustrates her insights with excerpts of humorous and thoughtful conversations with others. For instance, she asked a 94-year-old how he was doing; he replied that he didn’t buy green bananas anymore.

How do we develop a positive approach to aging? Rupp says it’s a habit of deliberately focusing on the positives rather than the negatives.

A well-known author, spiritual director, and retreat director, Sister Joyce starts several sections of her latest publication with poems. A favorite, entitled the “Pulse of Positivity” illustrates how one can see the good amid



Sister Joyce Rupp



struggle: “Another ache in your arthritic joints greets you when you slowly awaken, but then you turn to see the sunrise gloriously coloring the crimson sky.”

Perhaps the phrase that gives me hope and inspires me the most focuses on the effect we have on others. “Much has been poured into the chalice of my being, and much is to be emptied from it to benefit humankind,” she wrote.

I feel blessed to have this book. I consider it a valued companion as I enter the ups and downs of being a proud member of the Elderhood.

Kenan Bresnan, a parishioner of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola, writes a blog on Substack called *Faith is Simple*. It can be found at kenanbresnan.substack.com/.



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Source: April 2023
Forbes.com

Synodality means ‘walking together’

By John Gaffney
Contributing Writer

From a Methodist boy growing up on the east side of Des Moines to representing the Diocese of Des Moines, I found myself with my wife, Jane, at the Jubilee celebration for Synodality along with over 1,000 clergy and laity representing dioceses around the world.

God has certainly had plans for me that I hadn’t even dreamed for myself.

It began in 1979 when my friend Julie and I went to Living History Farms to see St. John Paul II. I thought it would be the only time I would see a living pope, even if it was at a great distance from where I was in the field.

Three popes later, I met Pope Leo XIV in the Pope Paul VI Hall in Vatican City.

Although that is a great privilege, I brought to this gathering the memories of accompanying youth and young adults to encounter Jesus for 23 of my 29 years as a lay ecclesial minister.

I remember freezing cold temperatures when Jane and I slept outside in a cardboard box at Reggie’s Sleepout to bring awareness to teen homelessness.

I remember 12 National Catholic Youth Conferences (better known as NCYC), countless Teens Encounter Christ (also



Photo by John Gaffney

John and Jane Gaffney, of St. John the Apostle Parish in Norwalk, participated in the Jubilee of Synodality at the Vatican.

known as TEC), and other retreats.

I remember teaching middle school religion as well as crying and praying with teens when they found out a classmate had died of a drug overdose.

I remember World Youth Day in Poland in 2016 when Jane and I had the honor of leading a group of 63 young adults and priests for an experience of Church like no other.

Synodality means “walking together.” It’s a way of being Church where everyone has a voice—not because everyone votes on doctrine, but because

everyone’s lived experience helps the Church understand where the Holy Spirit is leading.

I guess I have been synodal all my Catholic life. That is why the passage from Jeremiah is as alive today as when it was written: We do not know the plans God has for us.

However, by listening and dialogue, we will better chart the course for our parishes and Diocese.

John Gaffney is the diocesan director of the Evangelization and Mission team.



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On Prayer

By Monica Pugh



The Lord’s Prayer

“Let’s pray an Our Father,” are words we often hear when we gather with family and friends or our parish community. One of the most beautiful things about prayer is how we can pray the common prayers all together in one voice. But the Our Father, the Lord’s Prayer, is different because it was given to us by Jesus as recorded in the gospels of Matthew 6 and Luke 11. It is a communal prayer within the communion of saints.

I admit for many years of my life I dismissed this prayer as a part of Mass and one children must learn to recite. But it is the number one prayer to use in community where we first acknowledge God’s holiness and continue with seven petitions including asking for forgiveness.

The Lord’s Prayer is the perfect prayer that comes to life in our souls when we are open, surrender our fears, and pray the words from the depths of our heart. It includes asking for forgiveness because unforgiveness blocks our prayers and ability to understand how God loves.

We pray to God, our Father, guided by the Holy Spirit, through and because of Jesus’ death on the cross for each one of us. Jesus gives us this prayer, just like he did for his disciples who witnessed his death on the cross.

Not only did they witness Jesus’ death, but they were also willing to be persecuted or die for their unwavering belief in their Savior, our Messiah.

This prayer recently took on new meaning for me as I prayed it during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with a fresh attitude, a broken, humbled attitude, with my heart and soul open to receive from God.

As life happens to each of us, we hope to learn how to surrender every good and bad moment to God. Prayer is our willingness to accept God’s love no matter what or how we pray and no matter whether we are experiencing joy or sorrow. But if we choose unforgiveness in our hearts, receiving and giving in prayer can be blocked.

Learning how to pray, forgive, and seek forgiveness is a continual spiritual journey we are all encouraged to take so we can experience the fullness of knowing God’s grace and mercy through the death of his son. We can begin our journey this Advent with how we pray the Lord’s Prayer whether alone or in community.

As we near the end of our pilgrimage through the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, we are reminded of what a Jubilee year was in Leviticus 25 for the ancient Israelites.

It was a year of rest, freedom, restoration, and cancelation of debts.

It was a time of new beginnings and forgiveness.

As the new liturgical year begins, consider the sacrament of reconciliation while also praying the Our Father any time with an open, surrendered, forgiving heart.

Begin your year again with fresh thoughts, eyes, and prayers in hope of receiving God’s love to overflowing so that you can give it away. Our diocesan year of prayer may be ending; but our prayers are always beginning again.

Monica Pugh is the Faith Formation director at St. John the Apostle Parish in Norwalk.

Friends Of Catholic Worker Coat Giveaway Des Moines Catholic Worker Fund, Inc.

We are planning a winter coat and winter gear giveaway at DM Catholic Worker House on November 25, 2025. Last year, 130 coats, 80 sweatshirts and hats, gloves and socks were distributed to low income and homeless folks in the DSM inner city. This year we would like to increase those numbers. Will you help?

Checks can be sent PO Box 1386, Ankeny Iowa 50021 or online at FriendsOfCatholicWorker.com

What’s so wrong about that?

The struggle of right and wrong

So, you find yourself caught in the middle of a dilemma and are struggling with what to do. I’d like to begin by paying you a compliment: One who struggles is strong. The struggle with right and wrong is a sign of strength within one’s mind; it is the conscience. To struggle with anything is a sign of strength, not weakness. Knowing this helps us battle the inner voices of criticism and condemnation when personal struggles arise.

The tension between right and wrong is a discerning process that becomes particularly challenging when facing a moral dilemma. A moral dilemma exposes itself when the internal questions pose “both” sides of the dilemma at the same time. For example: “What should I do?” “You know what to do.” “No, I don’t.” “Yes, you do, do the right thing.” “But I’m not sure.” “Yes you are.” It can go on and on.

Recently, I found myself in the midst of a moral dilemma. One day I saw a magazine on our kitchen table that I occasionally buy. I don’t buy it often because it comes with a hefty price. So, at first glance, I thought my wife must have bought this treat for me. Then I realized that I had already read this particular edition while I was in the lobby of my doctor’s office just days before. I was glad to now own it because I didn’t have time to finish a certain

Let’s Get Psyched

By Deacon Randy Kiel



article when my name was called by the nurse for my appointment. While I leafed through the magazine, something else caught my eye. On the back cover was the address of my doctor’s office. It was then I realized that I had walked out of the clinic with that magazine in my hand. I was in a moral dilemma. I was caught between “What’s so wrong about taking a little old magazine?” and “Yikes, I’m a thief.” Was I going to justify this or face what was right to do? My internal conversation began to wreak havoc within my mind. Only I could end this dilemma. Either keep the magazine because I wanted it or return it to the clinic and have a clean conscience. Which did I value more? Sounds silly now, but every dilemma that we find ourselves in is difficult in those few moments. I decided to do the RIGHT thing; I returned to the clinic to “face the music” even though this music sounded like a dirge.

I made the twenty-minute drive to the clinic while rehearsing “my confession” the whole way. I opened the door, and the receptionist recognized me from being there earlier in the week. “Well, what are you doing back here so soon?” she asked. I hesitated for maybe only 1.5 seconds, just long enough to hear my inner self speak a silent lie. So, I grabbed my inner self and pushed him toward the receptionist’s counter and said as fast as I could, “Ma’am, I walked out of the office with this magazine and mistakenly took it home, so I’m returning it to you.” I could hear an inner defensive voice screaming to protect me, just as a child would fight for his innocence, “But I didn’t mean to. It was an accident.”

The receptionist responded kindly, “Oh, you didn’t have to bring that back, most people never do.” I playfully responded, “Well, thank you, but you see, if I didn’t bring it back, I’d have to tell my priest all about it in confession, and I don’t want to have to do that.” She looked stunned and then said, “You mean, people really do that? They actually go to confession?” At this point I internally giggled because I had not expected that my recompense for thievery (accidental as it may have been) was about to turn into a spiritual joy. I said, “Oh yes, and we actually look

forward to it. Forgiveness feels great.” She responded, “Well, I’ve been a Christian my whole life, but I’ve never heard Catholics talk like that”. So, I encouraged her to listen to some YouTube teachings about Catholicism and reconciliation and then I invited her to attend a Mass sometime. She asked, “Which church has the best mass?” I answered, “They are all the best! A miracle happens every time!” We both laughed.

As I left the clinic, through the double glass lobby doors I watched the receptionist carefully place the magazine back on the lobby coffee table as she smiled and slightly shook her head. I smiled as I opened my car door and said to myself, “Jesus, You made my day” It was as though I could hear him respond. “Randy, you made my day.”

As we face spiritual and relational dilemmas, may we always choose the right responses such as saying, “I’m sorry” and “I forgive you” and “Lord, please forgive me” while we lean on God’s strength to listen to that inner voice of conscience that will tell us to always do the right thing.

Deacon Randy Kiel serves Christ the King Parish in Des Moines. He is the founder of Kardia Counseling. Connect with him at Randy@KardiaCounseling.com.

Staying with Jesus means going forth

To stay with Jesus is to be changed by him; and to be changed is to go. The Gospels show that “staying” was never static for the Apostles; it was a lesson of movement. Jesus formed his disciples not to remain cloistered in comfort but to be drawn out of themselves into the life of God and, ultimately, into the world he loved (cf. Mk 3:14).

The call to “stay with Jesus” is first a summons to conversion. When Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, he imagined triumph instead of the cross. Jesus immediately rebuked him: “You are thinking not as God does, but as humans do” (Mk 8:33). Conversion—metanoia—means precisely that shift from human calculation to divine plan, from selfishness to self-gift. This radical re-ordering of the heart is the foundation of discipleship.

But the paradox of the Gospel is that such staying is inseparable from going.

Jubilee of Hope

By John Huynh, D.Min.



The one who abides in Christ cannot remain still because love cannot remain contained. To follow Jesus is to walk behind him on the road to Jerusalem: the road of service, suffering, and resurrection. “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (Mk 8:34). The verbs are all dynamic. We stay by moving with him.

Mark’s Gospel traces this journey of conversion in three acts. The disciples must learn that greatness lies not in dominance but in service; that authority is mea-

sured by love; that salvation is not the preservation of life but its offering. Jesus never condemns the desire to be great; instead, he redefines it (cf. Mark 10:43–44). Staying with Jesus therefore means letting our ambitions be purified until our work, our ministry, and even our striving for holiness become service rather than self-promotion.

At Pentecost, this conversion reaches its climax. Those who once argued about rank now speak of “the mighty acts of God” (Acts 2:11). Their tongues, once divided by ego, are united in mission. The Spirit turns their staying in the upper room into a going forth to the ends of the earth. They no longer seek to make a name for themselves but to proclaim the name of Jesus.

For us, the lesson is clear: to stay with Jesus is thus to enter his movement toward the margins—toward the sick, the stranger, the poor, and the forgotten (cf. Lk 4:18–19). The conversion he asks of us is not

only inward but outward: to move from indifference to solidarity, from comfort to compassion, from hoarding to giving. When we think as God thinks, we begin to see every person as our neighbor and every injustice as our concern.

Staying with Jesus, then, means making his mission our own so as to heal what is broken in the world. It means walking with him toward the cross, toward resurrection, and toward others. Staying with Jesus means our faith becomes love in action and conversion becomes justice lived out. To stay is to go, because love always moves outward, and where love moves, justice follows.

John Huynh, D.Min., is the director of Social Justice for the diocese of Des Moines and Catholic Charities. He can be reached at jhuynh@dmdiocese.org.

A beacon of hope at every stage

Each October, the Catholic Church observes Respect Life Month, a time to reflect on the sanctity of every human life – from conception to natural death.

While many focus on defending the unborn, our faith calls us to cherish and uphold the dignity of each person at every stage of life.

Matthew 25:40 encapsulates the work of InnerVisions, a free medical clinic that serves women with unplanned pregnancies, the best: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.”

Founded to provide life-affirming care to women facing unplanned pregnancies, InnerVisions HealthCare has grown into a beacon of hope not only for voiceless unborn children, but also for women, men, and families navigating some of life’s most difficult moments.

Rooted in Catholic values, InnerV-

Guest Column

By Bryan Gonzalez



isions embraces the Corporal Works of Mercy – feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and more – not as abstract principles, but as daily realities.

At our core, the Corporal Works of Mercy are about offering an encounter of hope. Our medical staff sees Christ in others, particularly those who are vulnerable or suffering.

At InnerVisions, this encounter begins before the pregnant woman walks through

our doors and extends throughout the pregnancy, even after the baby is born: whether she is pregnant and unsure, healing from trauma, or seeking medical care, she is met with compassion, not judgment.

Medical professionals and trained volunteers provide free pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, STD testing and treatment, prenatal education and referrals, and material support.

But even more than services, they offer presence. They accompany each woman with the dignity she deserves, regardless of her circumstances or decision. In doing so, they reflect Christ’s mercy – going beyond simply offering life-affirming alternatives to abortion.

In a culture that often reduces “pro-life” to politics, InnerVisions reminds the world that respecting life is also about accompanying people in their suffering.

One patient shared, “They don’t stop caring when the baby is born. That’s when I ended up needing more help, and they knew where to point me.”

This holistic approach challenges us to expand our own understanding of what it means to be pro-life.

Are we feeding the hungry?
Are we welcoming the stranger?
Are we visiting the sick or imprisoned?

Organizations like InnerVisions show that being pro-life is not just about what we’re against, but what – or rather, who – we’re for.

For more information or to support InnerVisions, visit www.ivhcare.org.

Bryan Gonzalez is the director of development for InnerVisions HealthCare. He can be reached at development@innervisionshealthcare.org.

Why I give my time, treasure to my parish

Guest Column

By Don Ceretti

I’ve been part of Christ the King Parish for as long as I can remember — almost 70 years now.

I was baptized here, went to school here, attended religious education here, got married here, and raised my own family here. This parish has been the constant backdrop of my life.

I became a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus and served as Grand Knight of my council for two years.

Additionally, I am a member of the Parish Finance Council.

Recently, I found myself walking through the church on a quiet afternoon, sunlight streaming through the stained-glass windows.

As I looked up and down, I saw the names etched on the placards below in those colorful panes—the donors who helped build and sustain this parish over the decades.

What struck me wasn’t just the beauty of the windows, but the memories behind each name. I knew nearly every one of them. They were my friends, my parents’

friends, the people who sat beside me at Mass or coached Little League or served on the parish council. Their sacrifices—of time, talent, and treasure—made this parish what it is today.

Standing there, I realized it’s now my turn. Just as they did their part for their faith, their families, and their neighbors, it’s time for me to do mine the same.

That’s why I’m giving my time to help lead our capital campaign and why my family is making a financial commitment as well.

This isn’t just about bricks and mortar; it’s about preserving the heart of our faith community for generations to come.

We are being called to strengthen our parish home—to fix what needs fixing, to invest in faith formation, and to ensure that Christ the King remains a place where people encounter Christ in one another.

As I look around our pews today, I see something beautiful and new. Our parish is growing, welcoming many new families—especially Spanish-speaking families who bring with them a deep, vibrant faith.

That inspired me when I suggested our campaign theme: Viva Cristo Rey — Long Live Christ the King. It’s a phrase full of history and conviction, the last words of



many martyrs in Latin America who gave their lives for their faith. It reminds us that our mission is timeless and universal.

This campaign is our generation’s chance to say those same words—not just with our voices, but with our actions. Viva Cristo Rey! Long live Christ the King—in our church, in our families, and in our hearts.

Don Ceretti is a lifelong member of Christ the King Parish in Des Moines.

Young people search for something greater

When I think of being sent, the first thing to come to mind is when Jesus sends the disciples out to “make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19), which is a call that still stands for each and every one of us today.

We are called to share the Good News with everyone we encounter.

The encounters don’t have to be big and grand to make a lasting impact.

Our actions should show the overwhelming love of the Father. God puts us where he needs us, not just for our benefit but for the benefit of others as well.

It doesn’t need to be a long theological conversation to spark the light of Christ in someone else.

It can be something as simple as smiling at people you pass on the street and reminding people that they are loved by God.

I think at times we focus too much on using the most technical word for some-

Guest Column

By Catherine Wilwerding



thing, and we lose people along the way. There is a time and place for every big word in the Church, but more often than not, young people are not looking for big words, they are searching for something greater.

They are searching for the unconditional love of God whether they know that in the moment or not. Sometimes that search leads them to being “sent” to the National Catholic Youth Conference. While it might not seem like they are being sent in the tra-

ditional meaning of the word, God is using the experiences for something greater.

In my sophomore year, I went to NCYC for the second time. I was a young person who wasn’t sure of my place in the Church. I knew that God had plans for me.

My favorite Bible verse is, “I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.” (Jer 29:11)

I just didn’t know what the plans were yet. The Lord worked in my life in amazing, wonderful ways at NCYC that year. I had never felt so loved by a group of complete strangers and felt the Holy Spirit moving so much.

I was able to pray with and for people I had never met.

The homily at the closing Mass moved me in ways I didn’t know were possible. Yet little did I know that after that experience I would be sent to be a part of the National Youth Advisory Council.

That love I felt and the Holy Spirit moving is something that I continue to feel during the monthly meetings of NYAC.

I feel it when we are all talking about our projects and how my fellow council members have been called to serve their communities.

I feel it when we talk about what is going on in our lives.

I feel that love and the Holy Spirit moving the most when we pray.

Catherine Wilwerding, of Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines, is a member of the National Youth Advisory Council.

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We’re building a new Mirror on a strong foundation

With this edition of *The Catholic Mirror*, we close one chapter and begin a new one.

Our content, which aims to teach, inform, and inspire is shifting next month from the traditional newspaper format to a new model of evangelization.

Why are we changing? Simply put, the way people consume news and information has changed. We want to engage with you and other Catholics in southwest Iowa using contemporary tools and processes to better serve everyone.

Our new approach is a hybrid one that will include both print and digital communication.

In December, we’ll begin a free digital newsletter that will be sent to your email inbox twice a month. It will include an inspiring story and news from around the Diocese.

In order to receive this e-newsletter, you’ll need to subscribe. (We don’t want to clutter your inbox with unwanted email. We all get enough of that!) We invite you

Note from the Editor

By Anne Marie Cox



to subscribe by visiting dmdiocese.org/newsletter.

Then, early next year we are excited to present a new version of *The Catholic Mirror* in full-color magazine format. Sent six times a year, it will be delivered automatically to most registered Catholic households in the Diocese, just as the newspaper version has been.

Each issue will focus on one of our pastoral priorities:

- Welcome and Care
- Youth
- Young Adult
- Domestic Church (families)

- Encounter Christ
- Communication.

We hope you like the new magazine, spend time with it, and support it.

I thank everyone who has allowed us to share their stories over the years in the newspaper version of *The Catholic Mirror*, and I look forward to sharing future faith journeys of your fellow Catholics in the upcoming magazine.

I also want to thank you, our devoted readers. *The Catholic Mirror* couldn’t exist without your kindheartedness during our annual subscription drive and the Annual Diocesan Appeal, your compelling calls and notes with story ideas, and yes, even your constructive criticism. We’re grateful for your feedback!

Our diocesan publication is a labor of love. It is strong because of the solid foundation laid by editors who’ve come before me. Editors, writers, and photographers shared their talent with *The Catholic Mirror* over many decades because they believed in its mission: to reflect God’s love among us.

As we bid farewell to the newspaper and introduce the magazine, I want to thank my predecessors. It is because of them that Catholics in southwest Iowa have had a faith-filled, trustworthy source to inspire them and help them grow in their faith.

The Catholic Messenger
Father John Molyneux, 1936-1940
Msgr. Ray Conley, 1941-1962
Father Dan Clarke, 1962-1975
Peter Dubec, 1975-1986
The Catholic Mirror interim
Sister Mira Mosle, BVM, 1987-1988
The Catholic Mirror
Jennifer Willems, 1988-1990
Bob Baldwin, 1991-1994
Tom Chapman, 1994-2002
Anne Marie Cox, 2002-present

Anne Marie Cox is a parishioner of St. Pius X Church in Urbandale. She can be reached at acox@dmdiocese.org.

First diocesan hermit consecrated

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Bishop William Joensen consecrated the Diocese of Des Moines' first hermit.

The former Victoria Carver, now known as Sister Teresa Charbel, was consecrated as a diocesan hermit on Oct. 16 at the Basilica of St. John.

She's taken a circuitous path to consecrated life. At age 79, she's a mother of four, grandma to 11 and great-grandma to five. She was divorced in 1980, and her marriage was annulled by the Church in 1984.

She's a recovering alcoholic who converted to Catholicism in 2000.

"Recovery is rooted in regular prayer and other daily practices that build virtue and foster humility," she said. "As I surrendered to God in desperation and continued in faith, his power enabled me to do what I could not, and I began to experience miracles in my life."

Intense and committed intercessory prayer, when one of her children faced a health crisis, led her deeper into prayer.

"People began asking me to pray for their intentions, and my heart got bigger, growing in charity, as I prayed for others," she said. Involvement in a lay religious movement led her to a spiritual director, daily adoration, and praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

She committed her life to the Lord on retreat and thought she was called to found a women's religious order in the Diocese of Des Moines.

"Though Bishop (Richard) Pates agreed and, in 2015, supported the concept I proposed, my efforts bore little fruit."

She met regularly with Monsignor Larry Beeson, her pastor at the Basilica of St. John, Father



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Sister Teresa Charbel, formerly known as Victoria Carver, was consecrated as a diocesan hermit last month.

Aquinas Nichols, who shared steady support and experience, and her spiritual director, Benedictine Father Boniface Hicks, who confirmed her call to consecrated life, eventually recommending she inquire with her bishop about becoming a diocesan hermit. Father PJ McManus, pastor of Christ the King Parish, helped her write a proposal for consecration as a diocesan hermit. Father Ray Higgins, co-vicar for those in consecrated life, provided fellowship and ongoing formation along with the international sisters serving the Diocese.

"The next year, I met with newly installed Bishop Joensen, who was open to exploring my request for eremitic consecration, helping close the door on founding a new order," she said.

She met two hermits from Nazareth Hermitage in Missouri, and learned from them.

During her consecration, Sis-

ter Teresa made vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to the Bishop. After her name will be the letters ER.D., for "eremitic," a descriptor of a hermit and "diocesan." She wears a white habit that stretches from her hair down to her feet.

She spends most of her time praying for the needs of the Diocese of Des Moines, including vocations to the priesthood and religious life, for the Church and for the world. She provides spiritual direction to a few people, and has supporters who help her continue to live in a hermitage/home in Urbandale.

Her life's journey, disappointments, wrong turns and all, have led her to where she is today.

"I just want to give God everything, all I got. Sometimes, my everything is puny, but he loves me, he's rescued me, and he's called me to follow him. How could I say 'No?'"

U.S. bishops address immigration concerns

Continued from page 1

the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones.

Despite obstacles and prejudices, generations of immigrants have made enormous contributions to the well-being of our nation. We as Catholic bishops love our country and pray for its peace and prosperity. For this very reason, we feel compelled now in this environment to raise our voices in defense of God-given human dignity.

Catholic teaching exhorts nations to recognize the fundamental dignity of all persons, including immigrants. We bishops advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation's immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and national security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together.

We recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system for the sake of the common good. Without such processes, immigrants face the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Safe and legal pathways serve as an antidote to such risks.

The Church's teaching rests on the foundational concern for the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). As pastors, we look to

Sacred Scripture and the example of the Lord Himself, where we find the wisdom of God's compassion. The priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (Zechariah 7:10). In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (2 Corinthians 8:9), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (Luke 10:30-37), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (Matthew 25). The Church's concern for neighbor and our concern here for immigrants is a response to the Lord's command to love as He has loved us (John 13:34).

To our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26). You are not alone!

We note with gratitude that so many of our clergy, consecrated religious, and lay faithful already accompany and assist immigrants in meeting their basic human needs. We urge all people of good will to continue and expand such efforts.

We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation, and we are grateful for past and present opportunities to dialogue with public and elected officials. In this dialogue, we will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform.

As disciples of the Lord, we remain men and women of hope, and hope does not disappoint! (cf. Romans 5:5)

May the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe enfold us all in her maternal and loving care and draw us ever closer to the heart of Christ.

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.



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Advocate for Hispanic communities dies

By Lindsay Steele
Contributing Writer

Father Guillermo Treviño, a priest of the Davenport Diocese, passed away in Iowa City on Oct. 31 after a short illness.

He had just returned to U.S. soil after serving as a representative at the Vatican’s World Meeting of Popular Movements.

He was 39 years old. “Words cannot adequately express the deep sense of loss we feel across the diocese,” Bishop Dennis Walsh of Davenport wrote in a statement. “Father Guillermo lived his priesthood with a remarkable and authentic closeness to his people.”

The bilingual priest, ordained at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Davenport in 2015, most recently served as pastor of St. Joseph parishes in West Liberty and Columbus Junction.

Father Treviño was widely known for his advocacy to immigrant communities.

He was a founding member and chaplain of Escucha Mi Voz Iowa (Listen to My Voice), and frequently participated in prayer vigils outside U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities in Iowa.

In 2022, he received the Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award, which recognizes a “young faith-filled Catholic who has demonstrated leadership against poverty and injustice in the United States,” according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The national award “recognizes the leadership, ener-

gy and diverse skills that young people bring to the anti-poverty work of low-income projects and Catholic parishes. It highlights the gifts of young leaders and their Gospel commitment to the poor.”

“Father Guillermo’s heart was consistently with those in need,” Bishop Walsh wrote. “Throughout the current migrant crises, he showed great compassion for the many migrants who find themselves on edge due to aggressive immigration enforcement action. His voice was becoming a beacon of hope and advocacy on this vital issue, gaining national prominence.”

Father Treviño began feeling unwell during his trip to Italy, his sister, Mariela Treviño-Luna, said in a public Facebook post the evening of his passing. Treviño-Luna accompanied him on the week-long trip.

“Initially, we thought it was food poisoning. In Rome and Florence, we visited pharmacies where he was given over-the-counter medicine to help with his symptoms. He started to feel better, so we continued our travels — visiting places like the Vatican, Pisa, Florence, and Milan in Italy.”

He seemed to be on the mend upon their return on Oct. 30, but his symptoms worsened in the early hours of Oct. 31.

“He called 911 at 5 a.m. He was able to document his symptoms so the doctors knew how to proceed when he arrived at the hospital,” she said.

Treviño-Luna wrote that her brother had been living with un-



Facebook photo supplied by The Catholic Messenger

Father Guillermo Treviño, of the Davenport Diocese, is pictured in front of the Vatican in an image from Facebook. An advocate for the Hispanic community, he was recently invited to be part of a panel discussion at Georgetown University and had the distinct honor of traveling to the Vatican as part of the World Gathering of Popular Movements. Davenport Bishop Dennis Walsh said, “His leadership and commitment to justice will be deeply missed by the Church and the wider community he so faithfully served.”

diagnosed diabetes — a disease which also took their father’s life. He died of complications from the diabetes.

After hearing about the pastor’s death, clergy and laity at the two parishes Father Treviño was assigned to almost immediately gathered together. On Oct. 31,

Father Rudolph Juarez celebrated Mass at St. Joseph-Columbus Junction. That same day, parishioners organized a prayer vigil at St. Joseph-West Liberty.

“I would say of both these communities, the respect they have for their pastor is high,” said Deacon Kent Ferris, who also serves at the parishes. “They organized the coming together.”

Deacon Ferris gave the homily at St. Joseph-Columbus Junction on Nov. 2, the feast of All

Souls Day. He reminded the congregation that although we mourn the death of loved ones, “we are an Easter people and that hope does not disappoint.”

Dan Russo contributed to this story.

Lindsay Steele is a writer for The Catholic Messenger in the Diocese of Davenport. This story is reprinted with permission from The Catholic Messenger.

Harlan deacon remembered for his dedication to faith and family

Deacon James Louis DeBlauw, beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, died Oct. 29 surrounded by his three children.

Born in 1944, in Sioux City, he was left on the doorsteps of St. Joseph’s Hospital as a newborn baby, shortly afterward brought to St. James Orphanage in Omaha, Nebraska, and 13 months later was joyfully adopted by Louis and Catheryn DeBlauw. He grew up on his family’s farm near Crofton, Nebraska, where faith, hard work, and family became the foundation of his life.

He received his sacraments and served faithfully as an altar boy at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Constance, Nebraska. His Catholic faith guided him from an early age—shaping his values, his sense of service, and his deep love for others.

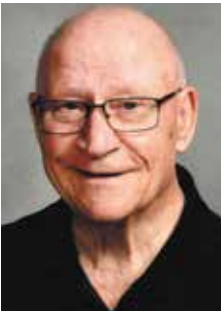
For two years he studied for the priesthood at the Pontifical College Josephinum Seminary near Columbus, Ohio, before discerning a different path. He completed his final two years at Crofton Public School, graduating in 1962.

He earned his degree in education in 1966, began teaching in Mapleton, Iowa, and married Dixie Unger, of Norfolk, Nebras-

ka in 1967.

In addition to teaching English and speech, he coached numerous sports, including football, baseball, volleyball, and golf. Baseball was his first and greatest coaching love. His leadership and dedication earned him induction into the Iowa Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame.

He was ordained a deacon in the Catholic Church, where he served faithfully for many years—assisting at Mass, supporting parish ministries, and



Deacon James DeBlauw

bringing comfort to those in need through prayer and service. His ministry reflected the same compassion, humility, and devotion that defined every part of his life.

After earning his school administration degree from Drake University, Deacon DeBlauw served as an elementary principal in Schuyler, Nebraska.

He and Dixie retired to Harlan in 2010.

The deacon’s faith continued to be the cornerstone of his life. He lived each day with humility, gratitude, and kindness—always guided by the quiet belief that faith and family are life’s greatest blessings.

Deacon DeBlauw and Dixie shared 58 years of marriage before her passing in July 2025. He is survived by their three children and their families

Weekend Mass Accompanist

St. Patrick Parish in Perry is looking for an accompanist (piano/organ) who can regularly play for weekend English Masses. Mass times are 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays and 9 a.m. on Sundays. Experience accompanying Catholic Mass is preferred, but those open to learning Catholic liturgy are welcome to apply. A per-Mass stipend and mileage compensation are available.

Those interested should inquire with the parish office by phone (515-465-4387) or email the pastor, Fr. Nick Smith (nsmith@dmdiocese.org)

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Una Cornucopia de Gracitud

Tres sacerdotes recientemente ordenados sirven nuestras escuelas preparatorias católicas, con dos de ellos dedicando el pasado verano dando ministerio a los participantes en el Campamento Juvenil Católico. El gozo, la felicidad y el buen humor que irradian, junto a las hermanas religiosas que los acompañan, motivaron un número récord de participantes que consideran el llamado al sacerdocio y a la vida religiosa, a creer que su propio “sí” vocacional hacia Jesús puedes ser un portal de acceso a la plenitud de vida.

Por la Iglesia

La Iglesia Universal está agradecida enormemente por un sacerdote misionero agustino que pasó décadas sirviendo a los pobres en Chiclayo, Perú y que después dijo “Sí” a convertirse en el sucesor de San Pedro el pasado mes de mayo. El Papa León XIV está ya labrando su propio curso con la publicación de la exhortación apostólica “Dilexi Te” (Te he amado) complementando

la inspiración del Papa Francisco. En su mensaje, el Papa León nos exhorta a magnificar nuestro “Sí” personal a Dios sirviendo a los demás, particularmente a los pobres. Cuando pasamos tiempo con nuestros hermanos con dificultades y pasamos tiempo con ellos, ayudándoles a cumplir sus necesidades de alimento, vivienda y cuidados médicos, nuestros corazones se encienden y percibimos la bendición que nos brinda Dios por medio de ellos. Nuestro Santo Padre sostiene “Hay que alimentar el amor y las convicciones más profundas, y eso se hace con gestos” (#119). ¡Qué agradecidos estamos por la oportunidad de ser bondadosos con alguien más, especialmente cuando se acerca el invierno y las fiestas!

Veneramos a María, a quien presentaron en el templo y dedicaron a Dios desde sus inicios. Ella siempre nos guía hacia su Hijo, quien se entregó a sí mismo como la última ofrenda en sacrificio. Santa Isabel de la Trinidad

describe “sacrificio” como “amor puesto en acción.” Por parte de Dios, el sacrificio del Hijo permite que el amor actúe decisivamente por nosotros inclusive después de la muerte. Porque creemos que todos, excepto a las almas más necias, se les da la oportunidad de declarar un máximo “Sí” a Dios que eclipse cualquier “no” que hayamos dicho en la tierra. Las almas pobres se pueden convertir en almas puras capaces de cantar, celebrar y glorificar a Dios en la fiesta del banquete celestial. Con mayor razón entonces, que declaremos nuestro agradecimiento a Dios todos los días, imitando a María diciendo “Sí” a cualquier cosa que nos proponga Dios en las circunstancias y oportunidades de gracia que nos presenta.

¡Qué ustedes, sus familias, y aquellos a quienes han tenido la oportunidad de agraciarse con su caridad tengan una bendecida fiesta de Acción de Gracias!

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La inmigración, tema prioritario para los obispos de EEUU

BALTIMORE – Al reunirse la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB) durante su Asamblea Plenaria de Otoño en Baltimore, los obispos emitieron un mensaje especial en el que expresaron su preocupación por la situación cambiante que afecta a los inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos.

Fue la primera vez en doce años que la USCCB recurrió a esta forma particularmente urgente de expresarse como cuerpo episcopal. Con 216 votos a favor, 5 en contra y 3 abstenciones, los obispos aprobaron por abrumadora mayoría el mensaje especial, lo que fue seguido de un prolongado aplauso del organismo tras la votación.

El texto completo del mensaje especial de los obispos a continuación:

Como pastores, los obispos de los Estados Unidos, estamos unidos a nuestro pueblo en nuestro Señor Jesucristo, por lazos de comunión y compasión. Nos inquieta ver en nuestras comunidades un clima de temor y ansiedad ante las prácticas de perfilamiento y la aplicación de las leyes migratorias. Nos entristece profundamente el tono que ha adoptado el debate contemporáneo y la creciente denigración de los inmigrantes. Nos preocupan las condiciones en los centros de detención y la falta de acceso a una atención pastoral adecuada.

Lamentamos que algunos inmigrantes que viven en los Estados Unidos han perdido su estatus migratorio de manera arbitraria. Nos preocupan las amenazas contra la santidad de los lugares de culto, y el carácter especial de los hospitales y las escuelas. Nos entristece profundamente cuando nos encontramos con padres que temen ser detenidos al llevar a sus hijos a la escuela o cuando intentamos consolar a familiares que ya han sido separados de sus seres queridos.

A pesar de los obstáculos y prejuicios, por generaciones, los inmigrantes han contribuido inmensamente al bienestar de nuestra nación. Como obispos católicos, profesamos nuestro amor por nuestro país y oramos por su paz y prosperidad. Por este preciso motivo nos sentimos obligados en este entorno a elevar nuestras voces en defensa de la dignidad humana otorgada por Dios.

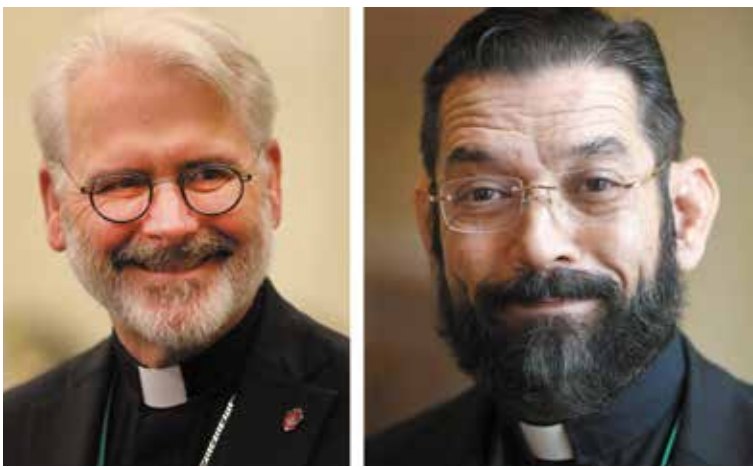
La enseñanza católica exhorta a las naciones a reconocer la dignidad fundamental de todas las personas, incluidos los inmigrantes. Como obispos, abogamos por una reforma significativa de las leyes y los procedimientos migratorios de nuestra nación. La dignidad humana y la seguridad nacional no son valores en conflicto. Ambas pueden alcanzarse con buena voluntad y uniendo esfuerzos.

Reconocemos que las na-

ciones tienen la responsabilidad de controlar sus fronteras y establecer un sistema de inmigración justo y ordenado por el bien común. Sin dichos procedimientos, los inmigrantes corren el riesgo de caer en la trata de personas y en otras formas de explotación. Las vías legales y seguras sirven como antídoto frente a esos riesgos.

La enseñanza de la Iglesia se basa en la preocupación fundamental por la persona humana, creada a imagen y semejanza de Dios. (Génesis 1:27). Como pastores, recurrimos a las Sagradas Escrituras y al ejemplo de Dios mismo, donde encontramos la sabiduría de la compasión de Dios. La prioridad del Señor, como nos recuerdan los profetas, es para los más vulnerables: las viudas, los huérfanos, los pobres y los migrantes (Zacarías 7:10). En el Señor Jesús, vemos a Aquel que se hizo pobre por nosotros (2 Corintios 8:9), vemos al buen samaritano que nos levanta del polvo (Lucas 10:30-37) y vemos a Aquel que se encuentra en los más pequeños (Mateo 25). La preocupación de la Iglesia por el prójimo y nuestra preocupación aquí por los inmigrantes son una respuesta al mandato del Señor de amar como Él nos ha amado (Juan 13:34).

A nuestros hermanos y hermanas inmigrantes, estamos con ustedes en su sufrimiento, pues si



OSV News photo/Bob Roller

Left to right: Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, vice president. They were elected during the Nov. 11 session of the fall general assembly of the USCCB in Baltimore.

un miembro sufre, todos sufren (1 Corintios 12:26). ¡No están solos!

Observamos con gratitud que tantos de nuestros sacerdotes, religiosos consagrados, y fieles laicos ya están acompañando y asistiendo a inmigrantes en sus necesidades humanas básicas. Exhortamos a todas las personas de buena voluntad a continuar y ampliar esos esfuerzos.

Nos oponemos a las deportaciones masivas e indiscriminadas. Oramos por el fin de la retórica inhumana y de la violencia, ya sea dirigida contra inmigrantes o contra los organismos de seguridad. Oramos para que el Señor guíe a los líderes de nues-

tra nación y estamos agradecidos por las oportunidades pasadas y presentes de dialogar con funcionarios públicos y electos. En este diálogo, continuaremos abogando por una reforma migratoria significativa.

Como discípulos del Señor, seguimos siendo hombres y mujeres de esperanza, ¡y la esperanza no defrauda! (Romanos 5,5).

Que el manto de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe nos envuelva a todos en su maternal y amoroso cuidado y nos acerque cada vez más al corazón de Cristo.



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