

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Vol. 58, No. 3

March 21, 2025

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

St. Albert makes history



Matthew Putney/ MP Media/ IGHS AU



Matthew Putney/ MP Media/ IGHS AU

For the first time in St. Albert Catholic School history, the girls' basketball team won the Class 1A tournament on March 8. The team won in double overtime beating Newell-Fonda 61-58. At left, the team celebrates its victory with a trophy. Above, coach Dick Wettengel congratulates Saintes team members.

Nurturing faith through a retreat culture

A growing retreat culture is a successful outcome of ongoing efforts to focus on key priorities and initiatives taking root in parishes.

By Ryan Johnson
Contributing Writer

The Diocese seeks to create a vibrant retreat culture for young people.

During the Diocese's recent visioning process, parishioners said they wanted more opportunities for young people to grow in faith.

Now, several retreats are starting or returning to central and southwest Iowa.

The growing retreat culture is a successful outcome of ongoing strategic planning initiatives taking root in parishes. One of the Diocese's priorities, accompanying youth in discipleship, aims to enhance opportunities for young people to encounter Jesus Christ and develop their relationship with him.

"Giving our leaders, and youth opportunities where they can experience God outside of the parish setting, and along with other peers, is another foundational block to building up community in our Diocese," said Jessica Pancho, coordinator of diocesan Youth Ministry. "The leaders that have been involved in building up a retreat culture are very well connected to their community life, and understand the value of a retreat, and the effect it can have even after we live out a retreat."

Teens Encounter Christ

A popular retreat for high school students is called Teens Encounter Christ, more commonly known as TEC. Absent

Continued on page 10



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

A Franciscan Sister of the Renewal talks with about 325 young people at the Youth2000 retreat Feb. 21-23. Fostering a retreat culture for youth is a priority of the Diocese. See story on page 13.

Alien or Pilgrim?



Bishop William Joensen

It may not have the dramatic appeal of “Once upon a time,” or “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away,” but for the actively practicing Jew, Moses’s counsel in Deuteronomy 26:5 to present oneself before God and speak these words has a very compelling ring to it: “My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as an alien.”

Jews, as people of God, have a common story that is no fairy tale or blockbuster movie; it is a story of origins traced back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a story of migration and alien status, of oppression and deliverance from the powers that be. It is a story of conversion from alien to resident status. No longer is one identified primarily by where one migrated from, or by wandering about in the desert, but by the destination toward which one goes on pilgrimage. It is a story of promises God keeps, of a covenant where milk and honey flows and tears and anguish are quieted. For God saves. And the appropriate response is to trust, keep his word, be faithful, and give thanks. Be a pilgrim known for his or her hope.

Moses says don’t show up empty handed, when you say, “My father was a wandering Aramean. . .” Bring a gift basket with you, filled with first fruits. The basket will show how grateful you are. And beyond the basket’s contents, the gift that pleases God most is the soil of ourselves,

of the stuff of our own story, of origins, aspirations, and setbacks, of passing over and pressing on no matter what, assured that God keeps his promises.

When it comes to giving God his due and making sacrifice during these weeks of Lent, don’t get caught up in the comparison game, like way back before Abraham when the brothers Cain and Abel made their respective sacrifice and Cain got jealous because Abel’s gift pleased God more—for Abel gave from the heart, and didn’t hold back his best. Cain’s murder of his brother is part of the story—part of our story—and we know that as a result, Cain and his clan were condemned to wander the earth without relief. But we don’t say, “My father was a wandering murderer,” because God intervenes time and again, transforms our origins into a story of salvation and hope.

Yet as with our Jewish ancestors, it seems we human beings can’t stand prosperity. First fruits wither as we test the boundaries, toy with temptation, flex our freedom and our own wills in foolish ways where it seems inevitably somebody gets hurt—others and ourselves. Satan continues to prowl the world like a roaring lion, looking for unwitting persons to tempt, seduce, push over the brink of despair. The promised land of milk and honey is transformed by human sin and self-seeking into a man-made desert from which there is no relief—for days, months, years, centuries.

Exile

The Jews aren’t the only people familiar with exile, of self-imposed alien status. It is our common human tendency. We need a Savior who will honor our origins, our various chapters of life, but who will also rewrite the script once and for all to show that the hope God inspires is well-founded. We may know weakness, sadness, shame on our road of

life, but we are passing over to something greater than this world supplies. We are meant for Kingdom life, where even death itself has no ultimate hold over us. God saves, delivering us from evil, just as we pray and hope in the “Our Father” prayer.

So whether we are Jew or Gentile by origin, male or female, young or old, Latino or Anglo, Karenni, Eritrean, a student, senior, married, single, straight or gay, beyond the familiar refrain, “My father was a wandering Aramean,” there are words that should even more stir our souls as we process more intently into Lent: “Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil” (Luke 4:1). Jesus could have remained distant from us, offered us only a virtual meeting option from his remote location. But instead he comes HERE—into our manmade desert, where neither he nor we are spared temptation. He doesn’t cling to being God, doesn’t flex his supernatural powers when provoked. He remains fully God and human, even while he is not spared the tests that confront him, confront us.

The Spirit equips us

Jesus shows us that Spirit life—the life of grace conferred in all the sacraments, highlighted in the initial part of the pilgrimage of faith in baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist, does not confer immunity from trials and temptations. The Spirit equips us to deal with them on God’s terms: with humility, endurance, wisdom, and faith. The Spirit helps us recall God’s word that we have stud-

ied and prayed over; he reminds us that we belong to God and to others in the Church who confess with us that Jesus is Lord, that he is raised from the dead, and that he hears us every time we call upon his name.

“I hope and pray as your bishop that you have already felt the joy of the Gospel, have cultivated connections and encountered new relationships that can be folded into your friendship with Jesus and with us.”

I hope and pray as your bishop that you have already felt the joy of the Gospel, have cultivated

connections and encountered new relationships that can be folded into your friendship with Jesus and with us. I hope that you consider yourself less an alien in the household of faith and more a pilgrim among pilgrims. For while you, like all of us, may have wandered about at certain points in your life, you are being prompted to turn from darkness to light, to seek the face of Jesus in all his diverse appearances among people in your life.

Temptations may come

And I both caution and encourage you that as you press on earnestly through these weeks of Lent, oriented toward the Easter font of baptism and the altar of our Eucharistic banquet, it wouldn’t be surprising even if you feel the breath of the Evil One upon you in some form, for he really wants to throw you off track from your pilgrim path.

You may not be confronted with the temptation to throw yourself off the parapet of the temple, but as biographer Father Timothy Gallagher, OMV, relates, Venerable Bruno Lanteri (founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary) exposes the typical tactics of Satan, the Enemy of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Lanteri counsels: “Does your past burden you? Do your failings and sins of the past weigh on you? Do they make it hard to believe — really believe — deep down, from the heart—that God

loves you? Be sure this is not the voice of God! Our enemy willingly works in our vulnerabilities, causing this sense of burden.”

The Devil taunts us: “Look at you! Look at how little progress you made this last year, in the last years, in past months. Why do you think it will be any different now, this year? You will never make any real progress.” Again, be aware: this is not the voice of the Spirit but of the enemy.

Rely on God

To pass over these desert times, we do not rely on our power or cleverness; Lanteri encourages that we “need only two gifts of grace: a humble heart and one filled with every greater hope in God. Ask God for these two gifts today. Right now.” For Jesus on the cross merited them for us” (Gallagher, *Overcoming Spiritual Discouragement*, pp. 22-23).

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who is bearing his own Cross, his own acute vulnerability now, once told us, “Here is the key to our salvation, the key for having patience on the journey of life, the key to overcoming our deserts: looking at the Crucifix” (March 18, 2018). Further, “Let us think deeply about the suffering of Jesus, and let us say to ourselves: This is for my sake. Even if I had been the only person in the world, he would have done it. He did it for me. Let us kiss the Crucifix and say, “For my sake. Thank you, Jesus. For me” (April 16, 2014; both cited in Gallagher p. 75).

Jesus did all he did for each one of us. But not so that we remain alien from God or from one another. We are part of a people who each offer him the personal gift basket of ourselves. And he takes us with him to the Cross so that we he can give himself to us, and then give us back to ourselves, filled with the same Spirit who led him into the desert, then to Calvary, and then to life. We need not wander, but wonder at such love—a love that is saving us and drawing us together on our pilgrimage of hope.

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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

¿Extranjero o Peregrino?

Tal vez no tenga el efecto dramático del “Había una vez,” o “Hace muchos años, en una galaxia, muy, muy lejana,” pero para el judío que participa activamente, el consejo de Moisés en Deuteronomio 26:5 de presentarse a uno mismo ante Dios y repetir estas palabras tiene un efecto muy importante: “Mi padre fue Arameo errante quien bajó a Egipto con unos pocos y vivió allí como extranjero.”

Porque los judíos, como pueblo de Dios, tienen una historia en común que no es un cuento de hadas o una película taquillera; si no una historia que se remonta en sus orígenes de Abraham, Isaac, y José. Es una historia de migración y de condición de extranjero, de opresión y liberación de los poderes establecidos. Es una historia de conversión de la condición de extranjero a residente. En el que ya no se identificaba a uno por el lugar de donde migraron, o por su vagar por el desierto, si no por el destino hacia donde van en peregrinación. Ser un peregrino conocido por su esperanza. Es una historia de promesas que Dios cumple, de una alianza donde fluyen la leche y miel y en donde las lágrimas y la angustia se calman. Porque Dios salva. Y la respuesta adecuada es confiar, cumplir su palabra, ser fiel y dar gracias. Ser un peregrino reconocido por su esperanza.

Moisés dice, no se presenten con las manos vacías, cuando digan, “Mi padre fue un arameo errante...” traigan una canasta con ofrendas, llena de sus primeros frutos. La canasta demostrará lo agradecidos que son. Y más

Continued on page 14



Official

Bishop William Joensen made the following appointments.

Rev. Michael Acquah, from Diocesan Sacramental Ministry, to Parochial Administrator, St. Mary, Red Oak, and St. Patrick, Imogene, effective January 1, 2025 to July 1, 2025.

Rev. Thomas Thakadipuram, resigned as Pastor of St. Mary, Shenandoah, and St. Mary, Hamburg, effective February 20, 2025. No current assignment.

Rev. Sylvester Okoh, while continuing as Pastor of St. Clare, Clarinda, St. Joseph, Villisca, and Sacred Heart, Bedford, to Parochial Administrator of St. Mary, Shenandoah, and St. Mary, Hamburg, effective February 21, 2025.

William Joensen

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

Jason Kurth

Jason Kurth
Chancellor

Catechumens, candidates prepare for sacraments

At the Rite of Election March 8 and 9, Bishop William Joensen formally elected the catechumens (those who have never been baptized) to enter the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil. He also welcomed candidates (those who have been baptized in the Catholic or other Christian faith) to come into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.



Candidate Zach Hamilton and his sponsor from St. Peter Parish, Council Bluffs, greet Bishop William Joensen.



Catechumen Estefeny Valdez-Adame and her sponsor from Corpus Christi Parish, Council Bluffs, meet Bishop Joensen.



Candidate Deiondre Aranda, and candidate Rekae Manchester (and her son) from St. Mary Parish, Shenandoah, meet Bishop Joensen.



Catechumen Esmeralda Cristal García will enter the Catholic Church through Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines.



Catechumen Natalie Stevens will enter the Catholic Church through Holy Spirit Parish in Creston.



Catechumen Chol Jongroor will enter the Catholic Church through St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish in Des Moines.

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sriesberg@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5046.

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Around the Diocese

March 20-22 Thurs.-Sat. Spring Garage Sale

DES MOINES – Holy Trinity Parish, is holding its annual garage sale on:

- March 20, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.;
- March 21, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.;
- March 22, 9 a.m.-noon.

March 23 Sunday Tap into Faith

ANKENY – Come to the Kings Head to hear and meet Deacon Mark Campbell, executive director of Iowa Catholic Radio, at 7 p.m.

March 28, 29, 30 Fri. – Sun. Book Sale

DES MOINES – Christ the King is having a parish library book sale in the Parish Hall. Donation only.

- Friday 4:30- 7 p.m. (Stay for the fish fry)
- Saturday 9 a.m. – 7p.m. Children’s story hour at 10:30 a.m. Face painting at 1:30 p.m.
- Sunday 8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

New, near-new, and gently used books. All are welcome. Proceeds go to our parish library.

March 29 Saturday Immigration Action

DES MOINES – Come to this workshop at St. Catherine Student Center and Church from 10 a.m. - noon to learn about the needs of local immigrants and what you and your faith community can do to help.

March 30 Sunday Living a Eucharistic Faith

IMOGENE – Come to St. Patrick Church to hear Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers talk about why the Eucharist and Mass matters.

- March 30, 5-7 p.m.
- March 31, 6-7:30 p.m.
- April 1, noon - 1 p.m.
- April 1, 6-7:30 p.m.

April 2 Wednesday Father Mike Schmitz visit

DES MOINES – Come to Community Choice Convention Center to hear “Bible in Year” podcaster Father Mike Schmitz courtesy of Iowa Catholic Radio as he talks about encounter and the Eucharist. Get tickets at IowaCatholicRadio.com.

April 3 Thursday Newman Lecture

DES MOINES – St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Student Center and Church is bringing back its Newman Lecture tradition with a talk and Q & A session hosted by Kellie Markey, founder and executive director of Dorothy’s House. Dorothy’s House helps equip, heal, and support people who have experienced human trafficking. The talk is on Drake University’s campus, in the Sussman Theater in the Olmsted Center, at 7 p.m. All are welcome. Contact Megan Schultz at campusminister@stcatherinedrake.org for any questions.

April 8 Tuesday Unity in Diversity: Embracing Universal Brotherhood and Sisterhood

IMOGENE — Catholic Charities and diocesan Director of Social Justice John Huynh, D.Min. is host-

ing a monthly speaking series on Catholic Social Teaching across the Diocese of Des Moines. This month, he will be discussing diversity in the Church with the Catholic Charities Refugee Services at St. Patrick Church in Imogene at 7 p.m.

April 12 Saturday Mary’s Helping Hands

WEST DES MOINES – A pickleball tournament will be at Valley Community Center, 4444 Fuller Road. Check-in time is 8:45-9 a.m., kickoff is at 9 a.m., tournament play begins at 9:15 a.m. Awards will be given at the conclusion of play around 11:15 a.m. Tournament game will be Crazy 8s. All skill levels are welcome, women only. All participants will receive one individual entry into the Crazy 8s women’s pickleball tournament, snacks and water. Register by March 30 at maryshelpinghandsiowa.org/.

April 14 Monday Nourish for Caregivers

DES MOINES – The monthly support group meeting for those who are caring for a parent, spouse or child will be at 6 p.m. at Holy Trinity Parish.

April 20 Sunday Rosary Rally

DES MOINES – Join fellow Iowans to pray a monthly rosary the 3rd Sunday of every month at 1:30 p.m. (rain or shine) at the Iowa State Capitol – west side steps, 1007 E. Grand Ave. For more information contact Diana Balmaceda, 515-974-7691 or Jeff Pierick, 515-778-6087.

April 25 Friday Celebration of Life Dinner

COUNCIL BLUFFS – St. Gabriel’s Corner Pregnancy Center is celebrating its 19th anniversary with a dinner at Corpus Christi Parish. Wine and cheese social begins at 5:30 p.m. and dinner by Staley’s Chicken served at 6:30 p.m. Keynote speaker George Dennehy will talk at 7:30 p.m. Entertainment provided by Friends of Gabriel’s Corner. For more information and to make your reservations by April 4 email gabrielscornerepc@gmail.com.

May 13 Tuesday Stewards of the Earth

INDIANOLA — Catholic Charities and diocesan Director of Social Justice John Huynh, D.Min. is hosting a monthly speaking series on Catholic Social Teaching across the Diocese. This month, he will be discussing what it means to care for creation as Catholics with the St. Thomas Care of Creation Team at St. Thomas Aquinas Church at 7 p.m.

May 18 Sunday Rosary Rally

DES MOINES – Join fellow Iowans to pray a monthly rosary the 3rd Sunday of every month at 1:30 p.m. (rain or shine) at the Iowa State Capitol – west side steps, 1007 E. Grand Ave. For more information contact Diana Balmaceda, 515-974-7691 or Jeff Pierick, 515-778-6087.

Fish fry dinners

The following Friday fish fry dinner information provided by parishes.

RURAL & WEST SIDE OF THE DIOCESE

AFTON, St. Edward
Dates: March 21, April 4, Afton Community Center, 2020 N. Douglas St. Times: 6-7:30 p.m.; Cost: Free-will donation

AUDUBON, St. Patrick
Date: March 7-11, Times: 5-7 p.m., Cost \$13.

AVOCA/WALNUT, St. Mary/ St. Patrick
Date: March 28 in the St. Mary Parish Hall, Avoca
Time : 5:30-7 p.m.; Cost: \$15/adults, \$5/children ages 4-10; free/children under 4

CHARITON, Sacred Heart
Dates: March 7 – April 11, Times: 5:6:45 p.m. Cost: \$14/adults; \$6/ children ages 6-12; free/children ages 5 and under; Alternate Menu: grilled cheese

CORNING, St. Patrick
Dates: March 28, April 11; Times 5:30-7 p.m.; Cost: Free will donation

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Corpus Christi
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 4:30-7 p.m.; Cost: \$15/adults; \$7/ children; Alternate: Cheese pizza

COUNCIL BLUFFS, St. Patrick
Dates: March 7-April 4
Times: 4:30-7 p.m.
Cost: \$15/adults; \$7/children. Alternate: Cheese pizza

ADEL, St. John
March 14, 21, 28, April 4; 5-7 p.m., \$15/person with a \$50 family max

ALTOONA, Ss. John and Paul
Dates: March 7-April 11;Times: 4:30-7 p.m.; Cost: \$14/adults; \$6/ children ages 6-12; free/children ages 5 and under; \$12/drive-thru Alternate Menu: Mac & cheese, cheese pizza

ANKENY, Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart
Dates: March 14, 28, April 11; Times: 5-7 p.m.; Cost: Free-will offering; Alternate Menu: Grilled cheese & tater tots

ANKENY, St. Luke the Evangelist
Dates: March 7, 21, April 4; Times: 4:30-7 p.m.; Cost: Free-will offering Alternate Menu: Mac & cheese; Grilled cheese

CARLISLE, St. Elizabeth Seton
Dates: March 14, 28, April 11;

All Saints
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 5-6:30 p.m.; Cost: \$11/adults; \$5/ children ages 5-12; free/children under 5; Alternate Menu: Grilled cheese; macaroni & cheese

Basilica of St. John
Dates: March 7 – April 11
Times: 4:45-6:30 p.m.; Cost: \$12/ adults (age 11 and above); \$5/children ages 4-10; free/children age 3 and under; \$50/family; Alternate Menu: Mac & Cheese

Christ the King
Dates: March 7 – April 11
Times: 5-7 p.m.; Cost: \$13/adults, \$5/children; Alternate Menu: Cheese pizza, Shrimp with French fries or mac & cheese

CRESTON, Holy Spirit
Dates: March 14, 28 at St. Malachy School, 403 W. Clark St.; Times: 5-6:30 p.m.; Cost: \$12

EARLING, St. Joseph
Dates: March 7, 21; Times: 5:30-7:30 p.m.; Cost: \$15/adults; \$10/ children ages 3-10; free/ages 2 and under. Alternate Menu: Mac & cheese

GREENFIELD, St. John
Dates: April 11; Times: 5-7 p.m.; Cost: Free-will donation

HARLAN, St. Michael
Dates: March 7-April 11 – Dine in or drive thru; Times: 5:30 - 7 p.m.; Cost: \$15/adults; \$5/children ages 4-12; free/ages 3 and under Alternate Menu: Fish tacos (dine in only), mac & cheese

INDIANOLA, St. Thomas Aquinas
Dates: March 7-April 11; Times: 5:30-7 p.m.; Cost: \$13/adults; \$6/ ages 6-12; free/ages 5 & under; Take-outs are available.

LOGAN St. Anne
Dates: Feb. 28 – April 11; Times: 5–7 p.m. - Drive thru, Dine in or Take out; Cost: \$15/adults; \$7/ages 5-12

MASSENA, St. Patrick
Dates: March 14; Times: 5:30-7 p.m. Cost: Free-will donation; Alternate Menu:Mac & cheese, desserts

MISSOURI VALLEY, St. Patrick
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 5-7 p.m.; Cost: \$15/adults; \$12/senior citizens; additional discount for kids; Alternate Menu: soup & salad

NEOLA, St. Patrick
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 5–7 p.m.; Cost: \$15/adults; \$5/ages 5-10; free/ages 4 & under; Alternate Menu: Grilled cheese

PERRY, St. Patrick, (in the school gym, 1302 5th St.)
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 5:30 – 7 p.m.; Cost: \$10/adults; \$5/ ages 5-10; free/ages 4 & under; \$40 for a family with children; Alternate Menu: \$3 more for shrimp

RED OAK, St. Mary
Dates: March 7, 21, April 4; Times: 5-6:30 p.m.; Cost: \$15/adults; \$10/ ages 5-11; free/under age 5; Alternate Menu: fish tacos

ST. MARYS, Immaculate Conception
Dates: March 14, 21, 28, April 5; Times: 5-7 p.m.; Cost: \$30/immediate family; \$12.50/adults; \$5/children under 12

WINTERSET, St. Joseph
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 5:30 – 7 p.m.; Cost: Free will offering; Alternate Menu: Cheese pizza; Mac & cheese

DES MOINES METRO AREA

Times: 5-7 p.m. (dine-in, carry-out or drive thru); Cost: Free-will offering – suggested \$15/adults; \$10/children; Alternate Menu: Mac & cheese

GRANGER, Assumption
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. (dine in or drive-up); Cost: Free-will donation; Alternate Menu: cheese Pizza

NORWALK, St. John the Apostle
Dates: March 7-April 11; Times: 5:30 – 7 p.m.; Cost: \$13/adults; \$11/ children ages 5-12; free/ages 4 and under ; Alternate Menu: Cheese pizza

URBANDALE, St. Pius X
Dates: March 14, 28, April 11; Times: 5-6:30 p.m.; Cost: Free-will offering; Alternate Menu: Mac & cheese; cheese pizza
Soup Supper
Dates: March 7, 21, April 4; Times: 5-6:30 p.m.; Cost: Free-will offering Alternate Menu: Grilled cheese

DES MOINES

Holy Trinity
Dates: March 7, 28, April 11
Times: 5:15-6:30 p.m.; Cost: \$12/ adults; \$8/children ages 6-11; free/ children age 5 and under; Alternate Menu: mac & cheese; fish tacos

St. Ambrose Cathedral
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; Cost: \$10/ person

St. Joseph
Dates: March 7 – April 11
Times: 4:30–7:00 p.m. (dine in or carry out); Cost:\$13/adults; \$5/children’s menu; \$40/family max Alternate Menu: Cheese pizza; mac & cheese; dessert available

St. Mary of Nazareth
Dates: March 7, 14, 28; April 4, 11; Times: 5-6:30 p.m.; Cost: \$13/ adults; \$25/couple; \$7/children ages 12 and under; Alternate Menu: mac & cheese

St. Theresa
Dates: March 7 – April 11; Times: 5:30-7 p.m.; Cost: Free-will offering Alternate Menu: Cheese pizza, mac & cheese, fish and shrimp tacos, desserts



Lenten reconciliation services

During Lent, Catholics are called to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The following are opportunities for communal penance services. These services provide for an examination of conscience and absolution of venial sins. Opportunities for confession of mortal sins will be available at these services. Other parishes may be offering reconciliation services. Check with your parish.

- Adel**
St. John, March 30, 3 p.m.

Altoona
Ss. John and Paul, April 10, 7 p.m.

Ankeny
Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart, April 3, 6:30 p.m.

Atlantic
Ss. Peter and Paul, March 23, 2 p.m.

Des Moines
• St. Mary of Nazareth, March 23, 2 p.m.
• St. Joseph, March 12, 7 p.m.
• St. Theresa, April 2, 6:30 p.m.
• St. Augustin, March 6, 6:30 p.m.
- Granger**
Assumption, April 2, 6:30 p.m.

Neola
St. Patrick, April 15, 7 p.m.

Urbandale
St. Pius X, March 30, 4 p.m.

Waukee
St. Boniface, April 1, 6 p.m.

West Des Moines
St. Francis of Assisi, March 11, 7 p.m.

Weston
St. Columbanus, April 9, 5 p.m.

Night to Shine spreads joy



Photo supplied by Sacred Heart Church
Andy Eure, of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines, and his friend Alaysia Brown walk the red carpet into a Night of Shine celebration.

It was a night to remember on Feb. 7, when two parishes celebrated the dignity of life in honoring people with special needs. Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines hosted its second Night to Shine, and St. Mary Parish in Shenandoah hosted its first. Night to Shine, founded by the Tim Tebow Foundation, encourages churches around the world to host a special night for anyone living with disabilities ages 14 and older that includes a red-carpet entrance, a friendly crowd and paparazzi, hair and make-up stations, limousine rides, gifts, a catered dinner, and dancing. It’s a time when “every guest is honored as a



Photo by Sara Nicole Mindful Photography
Audrey Goodman, of St. Mary Parish in Hamburg, has a blast singing at the Night to Shine event at St. Mary Parish in Shenandoah.

king or a queen, the way God sees them each and every day,” according to the Night to Shine website. “Through the years, we have truly seen this event transform into a movement of the Holy Spirit through churches honored guests, volunteers, and supporters, all seeking to give glory to God by celebrating and advocating for people with disabilities and the value of life.” For more information on Night to Shine, or on ways to support opportunities for those with disabilities through the diocesan Disability Ministry Endowment Fund, contact Patty Origer at poriger@dmdiocese.org or Sue McEntee at smcentee@cfswia.org.

Chrism Mass


All are invited to the annual Chrism Mass, at which Bishop William Joensen will bless and consecrate oils that will be used in sacraments throughout the Diocese in the coming year.
Friday, April 4 5 p.m.
St. Patrick Church, Council Bluffs

St. Jude’s Novena

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

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

Thank you, St. Jude.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Rev. John Dorton – March 3

Rev. John Bertogli – March 5

Rev. Andrew Windschitl – March 5

Rev. Ross Parker – March 9

Rev. Robert Harris – March 10

Rev. Ryan Andrew – March 11

Rev. Rodrigo Landeros – March 13

Rev. Wayne Gubbels – March 15



Rev. Dean Nimerichter – March 16

Rev. Patrick Amedeka – March 17

Rev. John Owusu-Agyemang – March 17

Rev. Michael Mahoney – March 23

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



dmserra.com

From student to teacher: Eighth graders share faith

By Jake Shama
Contributing Writer

At St. Patrick Catholic School in Perry, eighth graders aren't just learning about their faith. They're teaching it.

Twice a year, these students take on the role of teachers, leading prayer retreats for their younger peers, a unique program that fosters both faith and leadership.

A crucial part of the eighth grade curriculum is preparing students to share their faith as they transition to public high school, said Ashley Taylor, eighth grade religion teacher and fifth-to-eighth grade math teacher.

"A big piece of eighth grade religion is really teaching my students about, 'How do I actively share my faith in ninth grade,'" she said. "Ninth grade is their opportunity to experience what it's like to share their faith in different ways with community members as well."

These prayer retreats, held around All Saints Day and during Catholic Schools Week, have become a cornerstone of the school's service activities. Each retreat features a different theme, allowing students to delve into various aspects of their faith.

The most recent retreat, held during Catholic Schools Week, saw the seven eighth-grade students each choose impactful character traits of saints to teach to younger students. Sta-

tions were set up throughout the school, where eighth graders led activities tailored to different age groups. Kindergarteners counted Hail Marys, seventh graders explored holy friendships and crafted friendship bracelets, and other students participated in guided meditations and lessons on virtues.

"One of my students taught about Marian devotion and really spent time about why it's important to be devoted to Mary," Taylor said. "They had to have good reasons about why they chose those traits."

The eighth graders quickly learn to adapt their lessons and teaching styles to engage different age groups, adjusting to four different groups throughout the two-hour teaching time.

And they learn that being a teacher isn't as easy as it looks.

"I've had a couple students who are convinced that they will be great teachers and have decided that they would like to teach in a Catholic school ... which is a great way to be able to support our Catholic schools for those future years," Taylor said.

The impact on the eighth graders is profound. They gain confidence in their faith, develop leadership skills, and learn to articulate their beliefs to others. For the younger students, the retreats provide a unique opportunity to learn from their peers, fostering a sense of community and shared faith.

The entire school participates



Eighth grader Sughey Sanchez leads her peers in prayer. Students learned different ways to pray like the saints.

in the day of prayer, culminating in a whole-school rosary in the gym, forming a "human rosary." The teachers, including those not directly involved in religion classes, provide unwavering support, reinforcing the school's commitment to faith-based education.

"Our students really care about their faith and they care about this school," Taylor said. "It's really neat to see everybody come together and see the importance of being a lifelong learner as a Catholic and what that really means, not just in the context of math or ELA but in the context of our faith and our growth as disciples."



Students show off their friendship bracelets, created as part of a lesson in how to choose friendships that help them follow God by studying the friendships between different saints.

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Opportunities feed the faithful

About 2,000 people took advantage of a couple of events March 1 to grow in their faith

Men’s conference a success



Photo by Ryan Buck/Ascension Cinema

Men packed a conference room wall to wall to hear a variety of speakers at the first Forge conference on March 1. Forge is a men’s group dedicated to building a community of healthy fathers, strong families, and empowered evangelizers. For more information, go to myforge.org.

Nearly 900 men filled the Embassy Suites on March 1 in what was the largest Catholic men’s conference in Des Moines in recent memory.

Men heard from Father Boniface Hicks, Matt Birk, John Bishop, Ph.D., Dr. Leonard Sax, Damon Owens, Jon Leonetti, and Pete Burak. Bishop William Joensen celebrated the opening Mass, and hundreds of men received the sacrament of confession.

“I’m grateful to Bishop Joensen for his support. In what was certainly a busy Catholic weekend around town, I’m thrilled that we packed the room,” said Bishop, who is the executive director at Forge.

“We know of men away from the Church for decades who went to confession. What is perhaps most inspiring is that the conference has spawned dozens of new Forge small (men’s faith-sharing) groups throughout Des Moines and central Iowa. Thank you to all who attended!” he said.

Men can sign up for a group by clicking the small group button on the homepage of myforge.org.

The next Forge conference is already on the books for Feb. 28, 2026 (myforge.org/conference2026). Confirmed speakers include Edward Sri, Ph.D., Jason Evert, Paul J. Kim, and Dr. Matthew Breuninger.

For those who couldn’t make

the conference, scan the QR code below to see John Bishop’s closing keynote.



Bags to Mats delivers to Micah House



The Shelby County Bags to Mats project recently delivered seven mats to Micah House in Council Bluffs. Three of the mats were crocheted from an anonymous donor. Twenty bags and boxes of winter clothing, gloves, and socks were also delivered from several families. Heather Beekhuizen, the director of Micah House, said there is a great need for warm gloves, shoes, and boots. Pictured in photo (l-r) are Betty Foxhoven and two workers from Micah House.

Scripture scholar draws a full house at St. Francis



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Nearly 1,000 people filled St. Francis of Assisi on March 1 to hear author, teacher, and noted Scripture scholar Scott Hahn, Ph.D., connect salvation history in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

It was a full house at St. Francis of Assisi Church in West Des Moines on March 1 when the faithful heard nationally renowned Scripture scholar Scott Hahn, Ph.D. share insights on the road to Emmaus, salvation history, and the Our Father.

“Scott Hahn made a splash here at St. Francis,” said the pastor, Father Joseph Pins.

“He taught all of us the wonder and beauty of the connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The close to 1,000-person audience learned a significant amount of biblical scholarship from a well-known source,” he said. “All of us here at St. Francis were pleased to open this day to all people from around the state of Iowa.”

Sue Osweiler, of St. Thomas Parish in Ames, arrived a half hour before Mass kicked off the morning and the parking lots were filling up.

“It’s a blessing to have someone like him come to our area,” she said. “I’ve read some of his books. His approach to things as a convert has always intrigued me. His dynamic method of speaking and reaching out to people grabs your attention.”

Lois Edwards, of St. Francis Parish, was excited to come, saying she appreciates Hahn’s down-to-earth style of speaking and his explanation of how the stories in the Old Testament connect with the stories in the New Testament.

“I’m a fan of Dr. Hahn,” said Keith Kapsch, of St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines. “I’ve read a couple of his books. He’s just so gifted in how he pieces everything together to the point where you think, ‘I never thought of it that way before’ and then you can’t unsee it once he explains it.”

His wife, Joleen Kapsch, said, “I found myself chuckling at times. This is so obvious, and yet we miss it. He pieces the stories together so beautifully and presents it so well.”

Support the mission of our Diocese, of sowing God’s Spirit in central and southwest Iowa, through your gift to the Annual Diocesan Appeal.



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New radio morning show host welcomed

Spirit Catholic Radio recently welcomed a familiar voice to its weekday local morning show, Spirit Mornings.

Damian Montez has joined the show as co-host with Jen Brown.

Montez, who has been with Spirit Catholic Radio for four years as production manager, took on the new role after the morning show's former co-host, Bruce McGregor, stepped down in February.

"Jen and I go way back," Montez said. "We actually worked together years ago at other radio stations. I feel very blessed to be on this new journey with her and saying what the Holy Spirit guides us to say to bring our listeners closer to Christ. I get to have the best of both worlds every day – my faith and radio!"

Valeri McMahon, marketing director for Spirit Catholic Radio, invites everyone on the west side of Iowa to listen to the local Catholic morning show weekdays from 7-9 a.m.

"The chemistry on the Jen and Damian team is infectious," she said. "Whether they are talking about saints, local news, Sunday's Mass readings with priests from the listening area, or interviewing national-



Damian Montez, longtime productin manager at Spirit Catholic Radio Network based in Omaha, is th new morning co-host with Jen Brown on KVSS, which can be heard throughout western Iowa.

ly known speakers, your day is going to start out the right way because of Spirit mornings."

Montez and Brown can be found at various events in the Des Moines Diocese.

Find previous podcasts, an upcoming guest lineup, and more at spiritmornings.com.

Spirit Catholic Radio carries "Making It Personal With

Bishop Joensen" on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and shares podcasts of previous shows online at spiritcatholicradio.com/program/in-the-heartland/. The network covers most of Nebraska through several stations and western Iowa through 102.7 FM KVSS.

Bishop Seitz speaks on immigration, lauds Iowa bishops

By Dawn Proesser
Contributing Writer

Bishop Mark Seitz of the Diocese of El Paso, known as a "border bishop" offered a keynote presentation on immigration March 2 for the St. Catherine of Siena Dialogue Series.

Several hundred filled the Sheslow Auditorium at Drake University for his "Broken at the Border" presentation.

Although immigration and immigration enforcement have long been divisive issues in the United States, concerns became heightened after President Donald Trump declared a national emergency and issued several executive orders on immigration Jan. 20 and 21.

Iowa bishops lauded

Bishop Seitz thanked his host, Des Moines Bishop William Joensen for the invitation to speak and for the leadership of the four bishops of Iowa on the topic of immigration. He referenced the Nov. 19 bilingual message to Iowa migrants published by Bishop Joensen, Sioux City Bishop Walker Nickless, Dubuque Archbishop Thomas Zinkula, and Davenport Bishop Dennis Walsh.

"I want to express my gratitude to Bishop Joensen and all the bishops in Iowa who have been so clear and spoken with a united voice on this important issue," the El Paso bishop said. "In Texas and across the country, we've been moved by your witness here in Iowa."



El Paso Bishop Mark Seitz

Church and immigration

Although immigration is currently a prominent topic, the bishop pointed out that the Catholic Church has historically been involved in immigration.

"The role of the Catholic Church in the United States has always been an immigrant church, whether the Spanish setting in the southwest, the Germans who immigrated to Iowa to tend to the fields or the recent arrivals from Mexico and Central America. Many of these persons came to this country bringing their Catholic faith," Bishop Seitz explained. "For historical reasons, the Catholic Church in this country is particularly sensitive to the immigration question."

Catholic parishes should be concerned with the fate of the undocumented and their families as they are members of American Catholic parishes.

"Documents or no documents, they are an important part of U.S. and there must be a response. As St. Paul said to the Corinthians, 'If one suffers, all suffer. We're part of the same body.' There's a role for everyone in addressing the situation of migrants in this country that we're facing today. We need to learn new ways to collaborate," the El Paso bishop said.

Turning away refugees and asylum seekers and mass deportation plans "are fundamentally incompatible with the moral law and certainly incompatible with the Gospel."

As the church enters into the season of Lent, the bishop challenged the audience members to adopt a Lenten practice to consider the difficulties that those who migrate might experience and then consider how they can help.

An immigration action workshop featuring ways to help will be at 10 a.m. on March 29 at St. Catherine of Siena Church and Student Center in Des Moines.

Watch Bishop Seitz's presentation here: stcatherinedrake.org/dialogue-series/

Immigration Action Workshop

Take part in the third aspect of St. Catherine of Siena's new dialogue series focused on the common good. An Immigration Action workshop will be at 10 a.m. on March 29 at St. Catherine of Siena Church and Student Center in Des Moines.

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Join us in supporting the mission of the Catholic Church in southwest Iowa with a gift to the Annual Diocesan Appeal. Your gift will help support ministries like those below.



Clergy Care & Vocations

Jose Santos and his wife, Viviana, of Christ the King Parish in Des Moines, are in the diaconate formation program.

“I want to thank God first, because he has made this call to the vocation of the permanent diaconate possible. Thanks to my family, to the pastor of this parish, and to the Diocese. God is very generous when we open our hearts. The Diocese’s Diaconate Office helps us in our training with materials and the costs of our studies. Thank you all very much for supporting this program!”



Parish Services & Diocesan Administration

George McNulty, business manager at St. Boniface Parish in Waukee, needed help with a computer issue.

“We experienced a pretty significant computer system challenge. It required some significant collaboration to address. When it happened, one of the first calls I made was to Greg Miller, the Diocese’s information technology manager. Greg was informative and helpful. He took me through some steps, he listened, and he connected me to the people and resources needed to resolve the situation...Our support of the Annual Diocesan Appeal helps to ensure that all parishes have access to people like Greg.. Thank you for your support of the ADA and thanks to you, Greg, for your responsiveness and professionalism. It was very much appreciated!”



Faith Formation & Ministries

Megan Schultz, campus minister at St. Catherine Student Center in Des Moines, offers faith formation opportunities to college students.

“Because of your contributions to the ADA, we are able to foster a community of faithful college students here at Drake University. At St Catherine’s, because of the ADA support, we are able to do everything from bring retreats to our students to serve meals off campus, to have faith formation for our students. We are very blessed by these contributions. In this community, our students are able to encounter the person of Jesus Christ and then learn how to share his love with others. Thank you for your support of the ADA and thank you for your support of Campus Ministry!”



Tribunal, Communications & Worship

Margy Gammel, trustee and parishioner of Holy Spirit Parish in Creston, appreciates the assistance her parish receives from the Diocese.

“I realize that there are areas where, if we need help as a parish, that help is there. I’m not sure that one priest or one secretary in a parish could be able to handle annulments, or what needs to be done for baptism. The oils that come from Holy Thursday, all of those things are part of what the Diocese is doing.”

Please make a donation by scanning the QR code or visit dm-diocese.org/giving



Nurturing faith by growing a retreat culture



Photo by Gigi Wilwerding

A team meets at the St. Thomas More Center in Panora to plan a return of Teens Encounter Christ, more commonly known as TEC. From left to right: Denton Patrick, of St. Boniface Parish in Waukee, Michael Halbach, of St. Luke Parish in Ankeny, and Megs Howes, with St. Theresa Parish in Des Moines. The team hopes the first retreat will be early 2026.

Continued from page 1

from the Diocese of Des Moines since 2007, the national retreat is making a local comeback, and the effort is being led by a combination of young people and adults.

Gigi Wilwerding, the director of youth ministry at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Des Moines, expresses her strong support for the Diocese’s renewed commitment to youth retreats.

“It’s vital that we provide these opportunities for all young people, especially those who may not have access to retreats through a Catholic high school,”

Wilwerding says. “Every young person in our Diocese deserves the chance to experience the transformative power of a retreat.”

Notably, her father-in-law, Bernie Wilwerding, was a key figure in introducing TEC to the Diocese. Today, Gigi’s daughter, Catherine, is contributing to the relaunch efforts as part of her work for the National Youth Advisory Council. The first TEC retreat will be in 2026, with three to four more scheduled for 2027.

The TEC retreats will be held at the St. Thomas More Center near Panora, Iowa. It’s central-

ly located in the Diocese and a blessing for Catholics throughout the region, said Jason Anderson, executive director of the center.

As the home to Catholic Youth Camp, the center is thoughtfully designed to foster meaningful religious experiences for youth and young adults. Beyond diocesan-led retreats, numerous groups use the St. Thomas More Center, bringing their dedicated retreat teams and extending warm hospitality to participants.

Youth 2000

On Feb. 21-23 the Youth 2000 retreat for high school students

drew about 325 youth to St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines for a weekend of prayer, inspirational talks, adoration, and Mass with Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

“I feel that before this retreat, I had really lost my purpose,” said Augustine O’Hagan, of the Basilica of St. John Parish. “I was empty aiming at a standard of sinlessness without truly comprehending why it was I was striving for that. I became detached from God and my spiritual life was hollow.

“But coming to this retreat, I found myself face to face with God. I was really reminded of why I continue, and it really drew me back towards God. Here I was sitting in near constant adoration, close to Christ in the Eucharist, comforted and strengthened by his presence. And what is heaven but eternal adoration?” O’Hagan said.

“It was very heartening to have this totally focused on the true presence in the Eucharist, literally centered around Christ’s presence in the sacrament,” he added. (Read more on page 13.)

Additional Opportunities

Families with eighth graders can participate in a weekend retreat called “My Jesus: Friends at His Table.” It will take place March 29-30 at St. Thomas More Center.

In April, a three-day weekend retreat designed for high school seniors called Suscipe (pronounced soo-shee-pay) will be available. Suscipe is a Latin word that means “receive.” It was popularized by St. Ignatius of Loyola and his Spiritual Exercises. The retreat starts at 6 p.m. on April 11 and ends at noon on April 13 at St. Thomas More Center.

And on May 9 – 11, high school freshmen and sophomores can participate in a retreat called “Never Alone,” which focuses on the gift of the sacrament of confirmation.

It is being organized by National Evangelization Teams, more commonly known as NET Ministries, a missionary organization that focuses on inviting Catholic youth into a deeper relationship with their community and Jesus. This retreat will also be held at St. Thomas More Center.

“I think what Bishop (William Joensen) is encouraging our leaders and our youth in trying to build a retreat culture, the idea that community life and encountering Jesus, can happen outside the day-to-day routine,” Pancho said.

Find additional information about youth ministry and retreats on the Diocese of Des Moines website in the ministries and faith section.



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Parishioners on a Jubilee journey, both physically and spiritually



Brenda Wedemeyer, of St. John Parish in Adair, was the first to send the Diocese a picture of her completed passport with stamps from each of the five pilgrimage sites in the Diocese of Des Moines. She will receive a small booklet with thoughts from Pope Francis on hope to use as she continues her faith journey.

Brenda Wedemeyer, of St. John Parish in Adair, was the first to send in a picture of her completed passport card after having visited and prayed at the five pilgrimage churches in the Des Moines Diocese. “What a blessing to have been able to visit these parishes!” she said. “I am working toward a private consecration and this pilgrimage has been a great experience toward that end.” Portia Washington, of the Basilica of St. John Parish, also visited all five sites. “This was an enjoyable journey,” she said.

“Thank you for the opportunity to visit the parishes.” The five pilgrimage churches during this Jubilee Year of Hope are:

- Ss. Peter and Paul, Atlantic
- Corpus Christi, Council Bluffs
- St. Ambrose Cathedral, Des Moines
- Basilica of St. John, Des Moines
- Christ the King, Des Moines

Making It Personal With Bishop Joensen

Tune in to Bishop William Joensen’s podcast to hear about his recent trip to South Africa, about NET Ministries, the latest happenings at St. Boniface in Waukee and more.

iowacatholicradio.com/making-it-personal

On Prayer

By Monica Pugh



If I might start something over in my life, perhaps I would attempt to be a professional flutist. I started playing in fifth grade just like kids do today. I practiced but never enough to sit first chair. It wasn’t important to me. I occasionally practice at home and sometimes I participate in the community band. I love playing my flute.

A few years ago, three of my sons participated in community band with me. We played our different parts creating harmony with all of the other musicians. Hearing a band or orchestra play today, my heart reacts to the music and I have a longing to participate. My reaction to music is what I can imagine God feels when we pray. He longs to hear our prayers and be in friendship with us through prayer.

The last couple of months I have talked about the definition of prayer and how to pray humbly as we bow our heads. But Monica, you say, “I still don’t know where to start. I don’t know how to pray. How do I do this?”

The most perfect place to start is at Mass with fellow parishioners just like playing in a band. The Holy Mass is the highest form of prayer. It is a communal act of worship. The priest leads us as we each take our turns back and forth reciting the words of the Mass. Music brings rhythm to the Mass as we sing the songs and the Mass parts. Each time I go to Mass, I start again. I don’t have to practice. I can enter the sanctuary and participate with everyone. There are no chairs at Mass based on how well we all pray. Everyone at Mass is sitting in the first chair.

St. Augustine is credited with saying, “He who sings, prays twice.” During Mass, as we sing the Mass parts and the Psalm response, our hearts join in unison. A well-studied phenomenon is heart rate variability synchronization. When people sing together their hearts beat together. This syncing at Mass, combined with the prayers of all the angels and Communion of Saints, is the perfect place to humbly surrender our hearts in prayer.

God doesn’t want you to start your prayer life over. Philippians 4:6 says, “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” All prayers, spoken and unspoken, are perfect to him. He wants you to pick up the instrument of your voice, give it a little shine with a clearing of your throat, and speak to him. The habit of taking time to pray takes practice. But the unrehearsed time in prayer is beautiful music each time words are thought or spoken. Each Mass is its own beautiful tune. Each part sung in tune or off-key is prayed twice. Praying Mass with the entire community of believers throughout the world produces a grand symphony full of hope as our notes of prayers rise to heaven and are lovingly received by our heavenly Father.

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

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Now *that’s* vulnerable

One of the most commonly expressed reasons that couples and families seek counseling is for their struggles with communication.

To express oneself clearly so that it represents the intended message is quite a complex skill to develop.

Often, while unbeknownst to us, we adapt uniqueness to our communication skill sets. As we go through life we use terms and expressions that define the region we come from, demonstrate the type of home we grew up in and signify the type of culture we belong to.

Communication is measured on a continuum, and it cannot be perfected. When people don’t think they have any communication problems, they only need to ask someone who is close to them to help them to see the errs of their communication ways. In the workplace, ask a co-worker; if you are a boss, ask the employees; if you are married, ask your spouse, and if you are a parent, ask your children.

We all have communication deficits and difficulties.

Professional communication is most often developed with more proficiency as a skillset than personal communication. To put it bluntly, work-talk is far less intimidating than personal talk. It is far less

Let’s Get Psyched

By Deacon Randy Kiel



vulnerable. Understanding this helps us to comprehend where personal communication breaks down.

Most often people refer to personal communication difficulties as a weak skillset, but if we look deeper it is a problem with vulnerability.

Vulnerability is not a skill; it is a decision. We decide with whom, if anybody at all, we will disclose our personal self.

The three primary tenets of communication needed in the work environment are: **Answer** the questions, **tell** the reasons for your answer and **share** why that was your answer.

As you can surmise, we use these in the tasking side of personal relationships as well. If you are able to have and maintain the first three tenets of communication in your personal relationships, you are able to explore these three additional

tenets of communication: **Exposure** of a vulnerability, **divulge** how that vulnerability came to be and **disclose** the depth of its significance.

When you put all six tenants of communication together, you create the most intimate sort of relationship where both people experience personal significance to the relationship.

The following statements are examples of utilizing this level of disclosure: “I love you.” “I am sorry.” “I forgive you.” It was my fault.” “I want to pray with you.”

The inability to be vulnerable in significant relationships creates a limit on how much those relationships can evolve and deepen. This inability creates a relational block.

It is vulnerability that breaks down this blockage. Vulnerability allows emotional safety and trust to develop with another person. Not being vulnerable hinders the development of relational intimacy.

If we have heard someone say, “I just can’t get close to you” then the last three tenets of communication need worked on so that closeness may exist.

Jesus didn’t simply answer questions as any Jewish Rabbi would do; He exposed who he truly was. He didn’t merely tell of his wondrous deeds; He divulged

that they all came from the Father above. And he not only shared a last supper with his loved ones; He disclosed that he was truly the utmost humble lamb, sacrificed for the meal itself.

The perfect form of vulnerable communication is demonstrated to us by Christ with his disciples. We must consume him so that he may consume us.

Now, that’s vulnerable.

Within the very essence of Jesus’ birth unto his death, his whole life was connected by vulnerability. Life and death themselves are connected by vulnerability. To love another means to love their vulnerability also.

We risk rejection for the need of loving and being loved. We seek the care, attention, guidance, support, and love from another.

We seek God.

And to you, the readers of this article, this deacon says to you, “I love you.”

Once again, that’s vulnerable! That’s communicating.

Deacon Randy Kiel serves Christ the King Parish in Des Moines. He can be reached at Kardiacounseling.com.

Listening as loving: moving beyond ‘good job’

I am a compliment-er by nature. Giving sincere, spontaneous compliments feels as comfortable to me as remarking on the weather – and brings me more joy.

So the contemporary parenting advice to avoid excessive praise gave me pause.

What? Hold off on the “good job”? Dial back the compliments?

It felt counterintuitive.

I decided to dig deeper.

Sure enough, there is solid logic behind the advice. Excessive praise can make a child reliant on external validation versus intrinsic motivation. Emphasize effort, not outcome. Rather than compliment the perfect score on a spelling test, praise the decision to study every day.

The former sparks panic. “Can I recreate this excellent drawing or was it a one-hit

Twenty Something

By Christina Capecchi



wonder?” The latter feels like something that can be replicated. “Yes, I can control how much time I spend shading in this sketch.”

It wasn’t until this month, when I read an article quoting a clinical psychologist on the topic of praise, that it finally clicked – and I began to see it in a new light.

Saying “good job” – my go-to two-syllable compliment – is a conversation ender, explained Dr. Becky Kennedy.

Replacing a conversation-ending compliment with a conversation-starting question builds confidence, she said. “How did you come up with that topic?” “What was it like drawing that?”

She applied the approach to adults. Would you like your boss to simply say “good job” after a strong month of sales or would you prefer an open-ended question inquiring about what had worked well that month?

Suddenly, a question like that, posed with genuine interest, struck me as an innately Catholic response.

As Catholics, we believe in the inherent dignity of each person. Everyone, all walks

of life, made in the image and likeness of God. This is a bedrock belief.

What we do with that belief is the interesting part – where we can exercise creativity and boost confidence. How we can make a difference.

When we ask about someone’s process or uncover their thinking, we dignify them.

Listening is indistinguishable from loving. It works with your child, your cashier, your great aunt and your barista. A tilt of the head, a twinkle in the eye and a three-word request: “Tell me more.”

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

Dark nights of the heart

There are times when our world unravels. Who hasn’t had the feeling? “I’m falling apart! This is beyond me! My heart is broken! I feel betrayed by everything! Nothing makes sense anymore! Life is upside down!”

Jesus had a cosmic image for this. In the Gospels, he talks about how the world as we experience it will someday end: “The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give forth its light, stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.” When Jesus says this, he is not talking as much about cosmic cataclysms as of cataclysms of the heart. Sometimes our inner world is shaken, turned upside down; it gets dark in the middle of the day, there’s an earthquake in the heart; we experience the end of the world as we’ve known it.

However, in this upheaval, Jesus assures us that one thing remains sure: God’s promise of fidelity. That doesn’t get turned upside down and in our disillusionment we are given a chance to see what really is of substance, permanent, and worthy of our lives. Thus, ideally at least, when our trusted world is turned upside down, we are given the chance to grow, to become less selfish, and to see reality more clearly.

Christian mystics call this “a dark night of the soul” and they express it as if God were actively turning our world up-

By Father Ron Rolheiser



side down and deliberately causing all the heartache to purge and cleanse us.

The great Spanish mystic John of the Cross puts it this way: God gives us seasons of fervor and then takes them away. In our seasons of fervor, God gives us consolation, pleasure, and security inside our relationships, our prayer, and our work (sometimes with considerable passion and intensity). This is a gift from God and is meant to be enjoyed. But John tells us, at a certain point, God takes away the pleasure and consolation and we experience a certain dark night in that where we once felt fire, passion, consolation, and security, we will now feel dryness, boredom, disillusion, and insecurity. For John of the Cross, all honeymoons eventually end.

Why? Why would God do this? Why can’t a honeymoon last forever?

Because eventually, though not initially, it blocks us from seeing straight. Initially all those wonderful feelings we feel when we first fall in love, when we first begin to pray deeply, and when we first begin

to find our legs in the world. These are part of God’s plan and God’s way of drawing us forward. The passion and consolation we feel help lead us out of ourselves, beyond fear and selfishness. But, eventually, the good feelings themselves become a problem because we can get hung up on them rather than on what’s behind them.

Honeymoons are wonderful; but, on a honeymoon, too often we are more in love with being in love and all the wonderful energy this creates than we are in love with the person behind all those feelings. The same is true for faith and prayer. When we first begin to pray seriously, we are often more in love with the experience of praying and what it’s doing for us than we are in love with God. On any honeymoon, no matter how intense and pure the feelings seem, those feelings are still partly about ourselves rather than purely about the person we think we love. Sadly, that is why many a warm, passionate honeymoon eventually turns into a cold, passionless relationship.

Until we are purified, and we are purified precisely through dark nights of disillusionment, we are too much still seeking ourselves in love and in everything else. Therese of Lisieux used to warn: “Be careful not to seek yourself in love, you’ll end up with a broken heart that way!” We’d have fewer heartaches if we understood

that. Also, before we are purified by disillusionment, most of the tears we shed, no matter how real the pain or loss, often say more about us than they say about the person or situation we are supposedly mourning.

In all this, there’s both bad news and good news: The bad news is that most everything we sense as precious will someday be taken from us. Everything gets crucified, including every feeling of warmth and security we have. But the good news is that it will all be given back again, more deeply, more purely, and even more passionately than before.

What dark nights of the soul, cataclysms of the heart, do is to take away everything that feels like solid earth so that we end up in a free-fall, unable to grab on to anything that once supported us. But, in falling, we get closer to bedrock, to God, to reality, to truth, to love, to each other, beyond illusions, beyond selfishness, and beyond self-interested love that can masquerade as altruism.

Clarity in eyesight comes after disillusionment, purity of heart comes after heartbreak, and real love comes after the honeymoon has passed.

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

325 high schoolers pack gym for Youth2000

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

About 325 high school students gathered to spend time with Jesus and deepen their relationship with him during a Youth2000 retreat.

Through adoration, inspiring talks from Franciscan friars, Mass, and prayer, the youth turned their attention to what’s working in their lives and thanked God, and to areas where they need God’s help.

The retreat, Feb. 21-23 at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, returned after a several-year absence.

Deacon Kelly and Maureen Stone remember driving their kids to the Twin Cities for a Youth2000 retreat years ago.

It came to Boone, Iowa in 2000, then the Diocese of Des Moines, they said.

“It always kept its Eucharistic focus,” said Maureen Stone, of St. John the Apostle Parish in Norwalk.

Last summer, she and her husband, Deacon Kelly Stone, were talking with Deacon Eric and Monica Pugh and John and Jane Gaffney about how nice it would be if that retreat made a comeback in the Diocese.

At the National Eucharistic Congress last summer in Indianapolis, they visited with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal at a booth, and upon returning home, they began planning to bring back Youth2000.

“We were thinking Youth2000 is absolutely Eucharistic focused and it can be right here in the Des Moines area,” said Deacon Stone.

Joseph Stone, of St. Thomas Aquinas in Ames, said the experience was unforgettable.



A “burning bush” structure covered in candles holds a monstrance with the Eucharist during adoration at the Youth2000 retreat.

“During Youth 2000 something amazing happened. Before their Eucharistic healing procession, the sisters asked everyone to find one thing that they wanted to ask Jesus for or ask healing from when the Eucharist was exposed. I took a moment and searched my own heart trying to find what I needed from Jesus and then I found it,” he said.

“The procession started and as the Eucharist got closer to me I suddenly realized in that moment just how much I was loved. I could feel God’s love surrounding me.”

Joseph O’Meara, of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola,

would recommend YOUTH 2000 to anyone in high school.

“All the kids at the orphanage (in Uganda, where he used to live) hoped that one day they would get adopted, and so did I. I thought it would just be a new family (new people), but it was more than that. It was a new life, a new way of living. Especially now that I’m Catholic,” he said.

“I was adopted into a new family but then adopted again into God’s universal family when I was baptized. I can appreciate my faith in a special way because I remember a time when I didn’t have it, a time when I didn’t have much at all for that matter.”



Eric Francisco Pedro, of St. Bernard Parish in Osceola, said, “I wanted to learn more about my faith and the mysteries of the Eucharist. I am really enjoying my time right here, right now.”

Retreatants go to Missouri



Junior high school students from St Mary of the Assumption religious education class in Panama visited the Benedictines of Mary Queen of the Apostles in Gower, Missouri, asking her intercession for each of their needs. They learned about the foundress of the religious community, Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster, who died in 2019. Her incorrupt body rests inside the chapel. Students Adam Ehlert, Jake Wageman, Sienna Michels, Kinsleigh Chadwick and Kynslee Knappv stayed at the home of Jim Sondag (formerly from Portsmouth and his wife, Sandy, formerly from Harlan.

Ministry of Acolyte received



Photo by Pontifical North American College
Seminarian Connor Lynch, of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola, was one of 24 seminarians studying in Rome who received the Ministry of Acolyte from Cardinal Luis Tagle, Pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, at the Pontifical North American College at the Vatican on March 2.

¿Extranjero o Peregrino?

Continued from page 1

allá de los contenidos de las canastas, la ofrenda que complace más a Dios es la tierra de nosotros mismos, o los contenidos de nuestras propias historias, nuestros orígenes, aspiraciones y fracasos, de pascuas y de persistencia a pesar de todo, seguros de que Dios cumple con sus promesas.

Cuando es tiempo de dar a Dios lo que le corresponde y haciendo sacrificios en estas semanas de Cuaresma, no nos quedemos atrapados en el juego de la comparación, como sucedió mucho antes de Abraham cuando los hermanos Caín y Abel hicieron sus respectivos sacrificios y Caín se puso celoso porque la ofrenda de Abel complació más a Dios – porque Abel daba de su corazón y no retuvo lo mejor de sí. Que Caín haya asesinado a su hermano es parte de la historia – parte de nuestra historia – y sabemos que, a consecuencia, Caín y su clan fueron condenados a vagar por la tierra sin consuelo. Pero nosotros no decimos “mi padre fue un asesino errante,” porque Dios interviene una y otra vez, transformando nuestros orígenes en una historia de salvación y de esperanza.

Al igual que nuestros ancestros judíos, parece que los humanos no podemos soportar la prosperidad. Los primeros frutos se marchitan cuando ponemos a prueba los límites, cuando jugamos con la tentación, flexionamos tontamente nuestra libertad y nuestros propios deseos en donde parece inevitable que alguien ca a salir lastimado – otros y nosotros mismos. Satanás continúa acechando al mundo como un león rugiente, buscando a personas distraídas para tentarlos, seducirlos y empujarlos al extremo de la desesperación. La tierra prometida donde manan la leche y la miel se transforma por el pecado humano y por su búsqueda propia en

un desierto hecho por el hombre en donde no hay consuelo – por días, meses, años, siglos.

Los judíos no son los únicos que están familiarizados con el exilio, o la condición de extranjero autoimpuesta. Es nuestra una tendencia humana común. Necesitamos un Salvador que honre nuestros orígenes, nuestros diversos capítulos de vida, pero que también reescriba la historia de una vez por todas para demostrar que la esperanza que Dios inspira está bien fundada. Puede que conozcamos la debilidad, la tristeza y la vergüenza, los trituradores de llantas en nuestro camino de vida, pero estamos pasando a algo más grande que los que este mundo nos ofrece. Estamos destinados a la Vida del Reino donde ni siquiera la muerte tiene poder definitivo sobre nosotros. Dios nos salva, librándonos de todo mal, así como rezamos y esperamos en la oración del “Padre Nuestro”.

Así que seamos judíos o gentiles de origen, hombre o mujer, joven o viejo, latino o anglo, Karenni, Eritreo, estudiante, adulto mayor, casados, solteros, heterosexual u homosexual, más allá de la conocida frase, “Mi padre fue un arameo errante,” hay palabras que deben estimular más aún nuestros corazones conforme entramos con mayor intención a la Cuaresma: “Lleno del Espíritu Santo, Jesús regresó del Jordán y fue llevado por el Espíritu al desierto durante cuarenta días, para ser tentado por el diablo” (Lucas 4:1). Jesús se pudo haber mantenido distante de nosotros, ofreciéndonos solamente una opción de reunión virtual desde su ubicación remota. Pero a cambio él viene AQUÍ – a nuestro desierto hecho por hombres, en donde ni él ni nosotros estamos libres de la tentación. Él no se aferra a ser Dios, nos ejerce sus poderes supernaturales cuando se le provo-

ca. Él se mantiene plenamente Dios y humano, incluso cuando no se le perdonan las pruebas que lo confrontan, que nos confrontan.

Jesús nos muestra que la vida en Espíritu – la vida de gracia otorgada en todos los sacramentos, resaltada en la parte inicial de la peregrinación de fe en el Bautismo, la Confirmación, y la Eucaristía no nos da inmunidad ante las pruebas y la tentación. El Espíritu nos equipa para lidiar con ellos en los términos de Dios: con humildad, resistencia, sabiduría y fe. El Espíritu nos ayuda a recordar la palabra de Dios que hemos estudiado y orado; nos recuerda que pertenecemos a Dios y a otros en la Iglesia que confiesan con nosotros que Jesús es el Señor, que resucitó de entre los muertos y que nos escucha cada vez que invocamos su nombre.

Mi esperanza y mi oración como su obispo es que ya hayan sentido el gozo del Evangelio, cultivado conexiones y encontrado nuevas relaciones que puedan desarrollarse en amistades tanto con Jesús como con nosotros. Espero que se consideren a sí mismos menos como extranjeros en la familia de la fe y más como un peregrino entre peregrinos. Porque, aunque ustedes, al igual que todos nosotros, hayan errado en ciertos puntos de sus vidas, están siendo llamados a salir de la oscuridad hacia la luz, a buscar el rostro de Jesús en todas sus diferentes apariencias entre la gente en su vida.

Y al igual les exhorto y les advierto que cuando ustedes se adentren con vigor en estas semanas de Cuaresma, dirigidos hacia la fuente Pascual del bautismo y el altar de nuestro banquete Eucarístico, no deben sorprenderse al sentir de alguna forma el aliento del Maligno sobre ustedes, porque lo que él realmente quiere es descarrillarlos de su peregrinar.

Tal vez enfrenten la tentación de lanzarse del parapeto del templo, pero como nos relata el biógrafo Padre Timothy Gallagher, OMV, el Venerable Bruno Lanteri, fundador de los Oblatos de María, expone las clásicas tácticas de Satanás, enemigo de Cristo y del Espíritu Santo. Lanteri nos aconseja: “¿Te pesa tu pasado? ¿Las fallas y los pecados de tu pasado son una carga para ti?” ¿Hacen ellos que sea difícil creer – realmente creer – en la profundidad de tu corazón que Dios te ama? ¡Ten por seguro que esta no es la voz de Dios! Nuestro enemigo trabaja específicamente en nuestras vulnerabilidades, causando este sentido de lastre.”

El demonio se burla: “¡Mírate nomás! Mira que poco progreso has logrado este año, en los últimos años, en los últimos meses. ¿Qué te hace pensar que este año va a ser diferente? Nunca vas a conseguir un progreso real.” Nuevamente, estén prevenidos: esta no es la voz del Espíritu, pero del enemigo.

Para atravesar estos tiempos desérticos, no dependemos de nuestro poder ni de nuestras habilidades; Lanteri nos aconseja que “necesitamos solo dos dones de gracia: un corazón humilde y un corazón lleno de esperanza en Dios. Pídele hoy a Dios por estos dos dones. Ahora mismo.” “Porque Jesús en la Cruz los mereció para nosotros” (Gallagher, *Overcoming Spiritual Discouragement*, pp. 22-23).

Nuestro Santo Padre, el Papa Francisco, quien carga con su propia Cruz, su propia aguda vulnerabilidad presente, nos dijo en una ocasión, “Esta es la clave de nuestra salvación, la llave para tener paciencia en el camino de nuestras vidas, la clave para superar nuestros desiertos: ver hacia el Crucifijo” (18 de marzo, 2018). Más aún, “Pensemos profundamente sobre el sufrimiento

de Jesús y digámonos a nosotros mismo: Esto es por mi bien. Incluso si yo fuera la única persona en el mundo, él lo hubiera hecho. Lo hizo por mí. Besemos el Crucifijo diciendo, “Por mi bien. Gracias, Jesús. Por mí” (16 de abril, 2014; ambas incluidas en Gallagher p. 75).

Jesús hizo todo lo que hizo por cada uno de nosotros. Pero no para que permanezcamos ajenos de Dios o a los demás. Somos parte del pueblo que le ofrece a él su propio regalo personal. Y él nos lleva con él a la Cruz para darse a nosotros, y entonces devolvernos a nosotros mismos llenos del Espíritu que lo guio al desierto, luego al Calvario, y entonces a la vida. No debemos vagar, si no maravillarnos ante tal amor – un amor que nos salva y nos une en nuestra peregrinación de esperanza.

Chrism Mass

All are invited to the annual Chrism Mass, at which Bishop William Joensen will bless and consecrate oils that will be used in sacraments throughout the Diocese in the coming year.
Friday, April 4 5 p.m.
St. Patrick Church, Council Bluffs



Experience a Pilgrimage to France, Led by Bishop Joensen and Rev. Trevor Chicoine

Main tour departure is Wed., Aug. 27, 2025. We return on Sun., Sep. 7, 2025.
Optional Pre-Tour leaving Sun., Aug. 23 for Normandy and Mont Saint-Michel (*\$1,969)*



During our 9 nights in France, we will visit Paris, Lourdes, Lyon, Vichy, Paray-le-Monial, Ars-sur-Forman, Avignon, Arles, Aix-en-Provence, Marseille, and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. This exciting program will include daily Mass at local churches and basilicas, a spiritual journey through the Basilique de Sacre-Coeur, dinner cruise along the Seine, tour the of the Roman ruins, and so much more! Participants should expect to walk during much of the tours as this tour will certainly help you get your daily steps in!



The trip price per person is tentatively \$6,559* and includes topnotch accommodations for 9 nights (based on double occupancy), breakfast and dinner daily, ground transportation within France, all gratuities, entry tickets to iconic monuments and sights, and expert guides provided by our travel partner. Trip insurance is not provided by the travel agency, but is strongly recommended.

*Estimated cost. Pricing will be finalized 6 months prior to departure (due to airfare).



Deadline for registration is April 15. With only a few spots left, this trip will be full soon. If you would like more information or a brochure, email Sue McEntee at smcentee@cfswia.org or call 515-393-5239. To guarantee your spot(s) for this trip, email Natalie Delph at natalied@wittetravel.com or call 616-957-8113.

Vatican ambassadors gather to pray for pope’s health

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Four weeks after Pope Francis was hospitalized and one day after the 12th anniversary of the pope’s election, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, celebrated a Mass for the pope with ambassadors accredited to the Holy See.

“We gather in prayer this morning with the intention of the health of the Holy Father, that he

might recover and return among us soon,” the cardinal said March 14.

The Mass was celebrated in the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, a chapel containing the last two murals Michelangelo ever painted: one of the crucifixion of St. Peter and the other illustrating conversion of St. Paul.

Pope moves Kansas-born military chaplain closer to sainthood

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis has advanced the sainthood cause of Father Emil J. Kapaun, a U.S. Army chaplain who gave his life ministering to fellow soldiers in a North Korean prison camp.

Among a series of decrees published by the Vatican Feb. 25, Pope Francis recognized Father Kapaun’s sacrifice as an “offering of life,” a category distinct from martyrdom that the pope established in 2017.

The category and its requirements for sainthood are explained in the apostolic letter, “Maiorem hac Dilectionem,” which comes from the Gospel according to St. John (15:13): “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

The recognition brings Father Kapaun closer to beatification, pending verification of a miracle attributed to his intercession.

Although Pope Francis remained hospitalized for treatment of double pneumonia, he authorized the Dicastery for the

Causes of Saints to promulgate the decrees during a meeting Feb. 24 with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, substitute secretary of state.

Emil Kapaun was born to Czech immigrant parents in Pilsen, Kansas, in 1916, and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Wichita in 1940.

He initially served in his hometown parish before joining the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps in 1944.

Father Kapaun served as a chaplain during World War II and the Korean War. He was captured in 1950 during the Battle of Unsan by Chinese forces after choosing to stay behind with the wounded.

While imprisoned, he ministered to fellow POWs, provided medical assistance and stole food to help alleviate their starvation.

He succumbed to malnutrition and pneumonia on May 23, 1951, in the Pyoktong prison camp.

CTO data supports helping students to attend Catholic schools

Data released recently by the Catholic Tuition Organization (CTO) demonstrates an abundant need to support parents in their choice of a Catholic education for their children even with expanded funding alternatives on the horizon.

In the current school year (2024-25), 1,281 families received CTO tuition grants totaling more than \$2.2 million. The grants assisted with a portion of the tuition for 2,195 students. The majority of families benefiting from support included two-child families, with up to six children in some cases.

CTO is the non-profit organization serving Catholic schools of the Diocese of Des Moines to provide the first-dollars to offset a portion of financially-needy student’s tuition bills. This is possible because hundreds of donors with a strong belief in Catholic education want to make that option available to the next generation of Catholic Church leaders, an important outcome of students attending Catholic school.

Recipient families are hard working with 69% of two-parent families with both adults holding jobs with another 30% of those families with

one parent working. For single parent households awarded aid this year, 93% were working. Only 35 families receiving CTO funding were not employed at the time of their application for support in spring 2024.

The law governing School Tuition Organizations in Iowa, requires families to demonstrate through means testing that their maximum income, based on their family size, each not exceed 400% of the poverty level.

The CTO application process requires the submission of current year tax returns to validate a family need. The chart below shows the current limits:

Family Size	Maximum Income for Family Size (400% of poverty)
2	\$84,600
3	\$106,600
4	\$128,600
5	\$150,600
6	\$172,600
7	\$194,600
	Additional \$22,000 for each additional dependent

Donors to CTO included individuals and businesses that believe in the power and value

of Catholic education and also received a tax credit in Iowa equal to 75% of their donation amount. Any credit in excess of their tax liability may be credited to their liability in the following five tax years or until depleted, whichever is earlier.

It’s not too late to apply for a CTO tuition grant for the 2025-26 school year. Applications are being accepted until April 15, 2025. Families will need to submit their 2024 tax return with their application to be considered for funding. Tuition awards will be announced by each Catholic school before the end of May 2025.

For supporters of Catholic schools who are completing their tax returns and note they are paying income tax to the state of Iowa for 2024, now might be a great time to make a pledge to CTO to offset your estimated Iowa tax expense before this year is over.

Pledges made now must be paid by December 31, 2025 to qualify for a tax credit on a 2025 Iowa income form. To make a gift or pledge, visit the CTO website at CTOiowa.org.

Diocesan state Religion Bee team formed



Pictured is the 2025 Catholic Schools State Religion Bee Team. Students will compete on May 2 in Cedar Rapids at Xavier High School. Left to right: Brady Beck, Gianna Jones, Macky Buyske, Cooper Gifford, and Charlie Pease.

Find out what’s happening in the Catholic community by going to dmdiocese.org/events.

Director of Faith Formation

Our Lady of Holy Rosary Parish in Glenwood is hiring a full time Director of Faith Formation for preschool through High School. This includes sacramental preparation, family and youth activities, and forming catechists.

For more information contact Father Dan Siepker at 712-527-5211. To apply for the position, send a resume with references to holyrosarych@msn.com.

Director of Faith Formation

St. John's Catholic Church in Adel is seeking a Director of Faith Formation. The full-time (35 hour week) position includes benefits with a flexible schedule. Located west of the Des Moines Metro area, St. John's is a growing parish community. This leadership position is responsible for the overall planning and implementation of the religious education and sacramental preparation of the parish. More information can be found on our Parish Website: www.stjohnsadel.org. Application deadline is March 31.

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.

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.

Find us on Facebook and Instagram at: dmdiocese

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Cemetery plots – Ankeny Memorial Garden- Resurrection Garden. Lot 78 space 1&2, \$4,000. (480) 861-2008 text or leave message.

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