

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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O Come Let Us Adore Him



They had no parties.
They had no feasts.
They had no choirs.
Just a star in the East.

But they had each other
And they had the Christ.
In a cold, dark world,
God gave them Light.

We stand at the end
Of a cold, dark year.
Amid death and despair,
We ask, "Is God here?"

For we have no parties,
And we have no feasts.
We have no choirs.
Our celebrations ceased.

But we have each other
And we have the Christ.
Joy lives on this season.
God gave us the Light.

Photo by Paul Falk/Knights of Columbus #4108/St. Mary Parish, Ocala

The annual Ocala Lighted Christmas Parade was replaced with a drive-through event this year due to COVID-19. Pictured is a nativity at St. Mary Parish, which participated in the drive-through on Dec. 6.

Christmas magnified

Two—well maybe three—gift stories: Christmas this year came a bit early when my 87-year-old Mom Marilyn presented me with two boxes of Fostoria glass table serving ware that I had given her as Christmas gifts over the years. It was not that she was tired of the items or was sending me a message she has no room for me or my past gifts in her house or her heart; she is trying to simplify her life with a view toward that ultimate day—may be it a long way off—when she is no longer with us. And spare her kids some work in the process.

Of course, I cherish the glassware even more because of the “re-gifting.” It represents the exchange of love and life over the years, and though I haven’t (and won’t) look on eBay to see how much the items are worth today on the market, they have accrued in value to me because they are wrapped in her steadfast spirit, magnified in meaning as they stir memories of shared family presence. Mom, in her selfless way, was always at the center of it all, a nucleus of faith and daily sacrifice on behalf of her family—including the preparation of holiday meals by one who doesn’t like to cook!

In the Preface of the Mass dedicated to Mary, Mother of God, we pray: “She who knew not man becomes a mother; she who has given birth remains a virgin. What joy is hers at your



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

two-fold gift: she is full of wonder at her virgin-motherhood and full of joy at giving birth to the Redeemer.” A two-fold gift: wonder and joy that stem from ongoing exchanges between this daughter of Israel and God. The grace of immunity to original sin is met with the full offering of her body and soul in faith to God; the receptivity to the Holy Spirit in turn respects the integrity of her virginity; the conception of a Son who is the Messiah is followed by the unreserved dedication of this child given back to God—and to a people who sorely need a Savior. Like us.

Second story: Nearly 30 years ago when I left my second assignment as associate pastor to go off for further studies, the pastor, the late Msgr. Joseph Herard, asked if there was anything I wanted as a parting gift. I pointed to his 10-inch tall carved wooden statue of St. John Vianney on his shelf, and said, “That.” He seemed a little sad as he handed it to me, but I still took it.

A year later, when I stopped by on break, he related a true story to me. It seems some months later an unknown fellow

presented himself at the parish office door asking to meet with the pastor. The man told him he had a gift for him, and reached into his big bag and took out a two-foot tall carved statue of St. John Vianney, almost identical to the smaller version he had given to me. Msgr. Joe had never told anyone about giving up his cherished statue. And whoever this mysterious “Santa Claus” figure was, the willingness of this spiritual father, Msgr. Joe, to release something that had great meaning and value to him was met by an even greater—albeit quite surprising—present that bore some resemblance to the initial gift.

The woodworker St. Joseph cherishes his bride-to-be with all his heart. The news that she was pregnant with a son without him must have caused a double sense of grief: his bride has given her heart and body to another, and the son is not naturally his. And, yet, mysteriously, as the message he receives sinks in, and as his paternal, protective instincts are stirred, this just man of faith grasps that both this uniquely favored woman and this Son of sons, true God from true God, was being given back to him by none other than God himself. Talk about high stakes re-gifting!

Pope Francis, in this pandemic year’s message on social friendship, speaks of the love made possible by God’s grace that leads us to “consider the beloved

as somehow united to ourselves.” “All this originates in a sense of esteem, an appreciation of the value of the other.” This is ultimately the idea at the core of the word “charity,” where someone is dear and precious to us, stirring us to freely bestow something upon that person.

The Holy Father then

As we conclude a year in which life seemed to downsize, be simplified, what sort of exchanges does our faith ask of us? How might we take the initiative to gift others simply for their own sake?

refers to reciprocal gifts, borne of the sense of “gratuitousness” that frees us to do things “without concern for personal gain or recompense.” If we lack this sense, then life “becomes a form of frenetic commerce, which we weigh what we give [and give up, I might add] and what we get in return” (see Fratelli tutti nn. 93-94, 139-40).

In what I might propose is the prospective third gift, the pope’s reflection centers on our ability to welcome others into our culture, our country. He challenges us to open our hearts not only to receive children, but those who are different, including migrants and new arrivals to our community. These are persons who will

ultimately enrich our culture, who bring a ferment of values and possibilities and who will magnify our sense of universal solidarity and dignity among all members of the larger human family. Our gift of respect and recognition is expressed in our willingness to “make a place at the table”—at Eucharist, in our schools and neighborhoods, in prospects for employment not simply for scientists or investors, but for those who—like St. Joseph—are skilled laborers. Our support for mothers and fathers who out of a need to protect their children and give them a chance at a decent life, make their way to Africa and then back again—or who come to Iowa—enriches us all as we exchange faith and friendship, decency and generosity with our sisters and brothers under one God our Father.

God gives us Mary and Joseph, and above all, their Son, the long-desired of every nation. As we conclude a year in which life seemed to downsize, be simplified, what sort of exchanges does our faith ask of us? How might we take the initiative to gift others simply for their own sake? If we respond as the Holy Family does, then the God who is never outdone in generosity will be sure to surprise us, bless us, and magnify our hearts and our hope.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Navidad Ampliada

Dos – bueno, tal vez tres – historias de regalos: la Navidad llegó un poco temprano este año cuando mi mamá Marilyn de 87 años me entregó dos cajas de artículos de cristalería para mesa de Fostoria que por años le había regalado yo de Navidad. No es

que ella se hubiera cansado de estos objetos ni que me estaba enviando un mensaje de que ya no tenía espacio en su casa o en su corazón para mí o para los regalos que le había dado; ella está tratando de simplificar su vida con una visión hacia ese día final – que esperemos tarde mucho en llegar – en que ella ya no esté con nosotros. Y evitarles algo de trabajo a sus hijos en el proceso.

Por supuesto, tengo un aprecio adicional a la cristalería porque es un “regalo reciclado.” Estos representan el intercambio de amor y de vida a través de los años, y aunque no he buscado (ni buscaré) en eBay para ver cuánto vale hoy la cristalería en el mercado, ésta ha acumulado valor para mí porque están envueltos en su perseverante espíritu, y su significado se amplía cuando despiertan recuerdos de la presencia familiar que compartíamos. Mi mamá, en su discreto estilo, siempre era el centro de todo, un núcleo de fe y de sacrificio diario a favor de su familia – ¡incluyendo el preparar las comidas de las fiestas por alguien a quien no le gustaba cocinar!

En el prefacio de la Misa dedicada a María, Madre de Dios, oramos: “La que no conoció varón es madre, y después del parto permanece virgen. Se gozó, en efecto, de dos gracias: se admira porque concibió virgen, se alegra porque alumbró al Redentor.” Un regalo de dos gracias: admiración y alegría que surgen de continuos intercambios entre esta hija de Israel y Dios. La gracia de

inmunidad al pecado original se cumple cuando ofrece su cuerpo y alma plenamente en fe a Dios; la recepción del Espíritu Santo a la vez respeta la integridad de su virginidad; a la concepción de un Hijo quien es el Mesías le sigue una dedicación sin reserva de este niño hacia Dios – y al pueblo que necesitaba desesperadamente a un Salvador. Igual que nosotros.

Segunda historia: hace casi treinta años cuando terminé mi segunda asignación como párroco asociado para regresar a los estudios, el párroco, el ya fallecido Monseñor Joseph Herard, me preguntó que si quería yo algo como regalo de despedida. Señalé a una estatua de 10 pulgadas tallada en madera de San Juan Vianney y le dije, “Eso.” Él se veía un poco triste cuando me la entregaba, pero aún así la tomé.

Un año después cuando fui a visitarlo durante las vacaciones, él me contó una historia sorprendente para mí. Al parecer unos meses después, un hombre desconocido se presentó a la puerta de la oficina parroquial pidiendo reunirse con el párroco. El hombre le dijo que tenía un regalo para él y abriendo la gran bolsa que traía y sacó una estatua tallada de San Juan Vianney que medía dos pies, casi idéntica a la versión más pequeña que me había obsequiado. Monseñor Joe nunca le dijo a nadie sobre cómo se había desprendido de su querida estatua. Y quienquiera que haya sido este misterioso “Santa Claus,” la voluntad de este padre espiritual, Monseñor Joe, a de-

shacerse de algo que tenía gran valor y significado para él recibió en recompensa un regalo aún más grande – y por cierto muy sorprendente – que se asimilaba al regalo original.

San José el carpintero adora a su futura esposa con todo su corazón. La noticia de que estaba embarazada con un hijo que no era de él, debe haberle causado un doble sentido de dolor: su novia había entregado su corazón y su cuerpo a alguien más, y el hijo no era suyo naturalmente. Y aún así misteriosamente, cuando el mensaje que recibe surte efecto y sacude sus instintos paternos y de protector, este hombre de fe justo entiende que esta mujer tan favorecida y este Hijo de hijos, Dios verdadero de Dios verdadero, le estaba regalando nada más que a Dios mismo. ¡Pensemos en un alto nivel de regalo reciclado!

En su mensaje en este año de pandemia respecto a la amistad social, el Papa Francisco

nos habla del amor que la gracia de Dios hace posible y que nos lleva a “considerar al amado unido a nosotros de alguna forma.” “Todo esto surge de un sentido de estima, el aprecio por el valor de los demás.” Este es definitivamente la idea en el centro de la palabra “caridad,” cuando alguien es querido y apreciado por nosotros, motivándonos a dar libremente algo a esa persona.

El Santo Padre habla sobre los regalos recíprocos, asumiendo el sentido de “gratuidad” que nos libera para hacer cosas “sin esperar ningún ganancia personal o recompensa.” Si no tenemos este sentido, entonces la vida “se convierte en un comercio ansioso, está siempre midiendo lo que damos [y a lo que renunciamos, puedo agregar] y lo que recibimos a cambio.” (ver Fratelli tutti, números 93-94, 139-140).

En lo que yo podría pro-

Continuar en la pagina 4

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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Official

Bishop William Joensen has made the following appointment that became effective Nov. 11, 2020.

Rev. Mr. Troy Thompson, from Our Lady of the Americas Parish, Des Moines, to St. Pius X Parish, Urbandale, until Sept. 1, 2023.



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

Jason Kurth
Jason Kurth
Chancellor

Accident inspires daily family prayer online

The family has been saying 54-day rosary novenas for decades

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

On July 5, Mark Eischeid and a friend decided to take advantage of the nice weather on the holiday weekend by taking their motorcycles out for a ride up to Boone Ledges.

On their way home they came to a gravel corner near Jamaica for their turn. Eischeid realized he was going too fast when he reached the corner, and was thrown from his bike, landing in the ditch next to the gravel road.

He was in a lot of pain. But Eischeid, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Bayard, insisted they call a friend to pick him up and bring him home. His friend picked him up and drove him to the hospital in Guthrie Center.

"I'm told that as soon as I got out of the car, I went down in a heap," Eischeid said. "They ambulated me to Methodist Hospital in Des Moines."

The X-rays revealed he had a broken pelvic bone, broken clavicle, and eight ribs broken in 13 different locations.

Two days later surgeons plated, glued and grafted the ribs together – the pelvis would heal on its own. Nine days after his accident they plated and screwed his clavicle back together.

"Everybody says that is a really painful surgery, but they had me on all of the [pain meds]," Eischeid said. "I was belly laughing the day after they plated those ribs."

His very large family – he and 12 living sisters, all practicing Catholics, based mostly in Guthrie Center and Bayard – rallied around him, surrounding him in prayer.

One of his daughters knew her father was in the middle of one of his 54-day rosary novenas – a long-held family tradition. She asked the family to help him finish his novena while he was hospitalized.

"My sisters said, 'Let's just do a Zoom novena,'" Eischeid said. "They must have felt sorry for me, because they helped me finish my Novena, and we all enjoyed it so much."

The 54-day novena is something their mother, Leona Eischeid, prayed her entire life. She would pray a 54-day novena,

and as soon as she finished, she'd start a new one, said sister Carol Laughery.

The novena comes from an appearance of Mary to young girl who yearned for healing, according to John Huynh, diocesan director of Faith Journey. Mary directed the girl to pray three novenas for healing and three immediately after for thanksgiving, resulting in 54 days of prayer.

"When we were little, we would all climb on the bed," remembered Leona Eischeid. "We have pretty much been saying rosaries our whole life."

In fact, there were a number of occasions when one of the adult Eischeid children received good news and told their mother about it – who said she'd just finished praying a 54-day rosary novena for that specific situation.

"On her deathbed she said, 'Pray the novena – it's a miracle,'" said Laughery, also a member of St. Patrick in Bayard.

These long-held family traditions inspired all of the living Eischeid siblings and a handful of nieces and nephews to continue praying the novena as a family. They meet online every night at 6 p.m.

"I'm thinking it's going to go on forever," Eischeid said. "We just enjoy it so much. If I had to lay money down, I bet we'll be doing it for the rest of our lives."

Sister Judy Eischeid said she's happy about that.

"Mark's accident became a blessing in our family," she said. "Because Mark had a motorcycle accident and he couldn't have visitors, his daughters started this Zoom... We finished his, and now we all have our special requests."

"I just feel like Mom is with us," Judy added.

It also offers the siblings a chance to socialize and reconnect every day before praying.

"It's just made our faith stronger and just pulled us together," Laughery said. "We've always been close, [but this made us closer.]"



Mark Eischeid of St. Patrick Parish in Bayard on his motorcycle.

Eischeid broke a pelvic bone, his clavicle and eight ribs in 13 locations. While he was in the hospital, his family helped him finish his 54-day rosary novena.



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Latin Americans social distance and celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

On the Dec. 12 feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, parishes with a large Hispanic presence are typically bursting at the seams with faithful from Latin American countries.

Often a standing-room-only crowd squeezes together in the back of churches and along the walls near the aisle.

Festivities usually include a procession, dancing, food and celebration.

In light of COVID-19, parishes had to find new ways to celebrate the “Empress of the Americas.”

Father Fabian Moncada, pastor of Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines and a native of Colombia, celebrated the midnight Mass outside in the parking lot. People were asked to stay in their cars for the celebration of the Mass and the Eucharist was distributed through the car windows.

Father Luis Mejia, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Perry and a native of El Salvador, said his people have a strong attraction to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

“We have a big celebration down in El Salvador [on this feast day], because we are called mestizo – European and Indigenous mix,” Father Mejia said. “And Our lady of Guadalupe is our color. We feel that she is Our Lady, for us. She is the brown lady, and we identify with her.”

Though celebrations were scaled down this year, the people are still drawn together in prayer and solidarity.

“It’s significantly challenging times, but these challenging times move us to gather together in the spirit of [Our Lady of Guadalupe,]” Father Moncada said. “Any kind of race, any kind of culture, any kind of language can join together in the spirit.”

“Our Lady of Guadalupe has been the queen of Latin America...,” Father Moncada added. “We are all the same body of Christ in the church.”



The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe was celebrated in a more subdued manner than usual this year to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Yet parishes found ways to honor Our Lady on her feast day that is particularly special to the Hispanic community.



Navidad Ampliada

Continuar en la pagina 4

poner es la perspectiva de un tercer regalo, la reflexión del papa que se centra en nuestra capacidad de acoger a otros en nuestra cultura, en nuestro país. Él nos reta a abrir nuestros corazones no solamente a recibir a los niños, sino a quienes son diferentes, incluyendo a los migrantes y los recién llegados a nuestra comunidad. Estas son personas quienes ultimadamente enriquecerán nuestra cultura, quienes traen una levadura de valores y posibilidades y quienes ampliarán nuestro sentido de solidaridad universal y dignidad entre todos los miembros de la familia humana en general. Nuestro rega-

lo de respeto y reconocimiento se expresa en nuestra disponibilidad de “hacer espacio en la mesa” – en la Eucaristía, en escuelas y vecindarios, en potenciales trabajadores no únicamente para científicos o inversionistas, pero para aquellos quienes – como San José – son obreros calificados. Nuestro apoyo a madres y padres quienes debido a la necesidad de proteger a sus hijos y de darles una oportunidad de tener una vida decente se abren camino a África y de vuelta – o quienes vienen a Iowa – nos enriquece a todos al intercambiar fe, amistad, decencia y generosidad con nuestros hermanos y hermanas bajo un Dios, nuestro Padre.

Dios nos da a María y a José, pero más que nada, a su Hijo, que es tan deseado en toda nación. Al concluir este año en el cual la vida parece haberse reducido y hecho más simple, ¿qué tipo de cambios pide nuestra fe de nosotros? ¿Cómo podemos tomar la iniciativa de dar a los demás simplemente por su propio beneficio? Si respondemos como lo hace la Sagrada Familia, entonces el Dios a quien nada ni nadie supera en generosidad, nos sorprenderá verdaderamente, bendiciéndonos y ampliando nuestros corazones y nuestra esperanza.

¡Feliz Navidad y un Bendecido Año Nuevo!

A CHRISTMAS CONCERT FOR YOU

In a Christmas season darkened by disease, division and discouragement, you are invited to celebrate the joy and hope of the holiday by watching “The Lessons, Reflections and Carols of Christmas” a livestream Christmas concert presented by Umeri, the Drake University alumni choir. This event, which features music, readings, and reflections written especially for this celebration, was recorded at St. Ambrose Cathedral (without an audience) and can be accessed anytime between Dec. 12 and Jan. 6. Please use the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd1rPwPhXY1-Wood6Ln6npWg>

Bishop William Joensen is the presider and is joined by readers from Holy Family School, Dowling Catholic High School, and other members of the Drake and Des Moines communities. A 25-minute prelude, played by members of the Des Moines Symphony precedes the concert.



Join us in spiritual communion



A nativity scene stands near St. Augustine Church in Milo, part of Holy Trinity of Southeast Warren County Parish.

Photo by Erica Wadle

Due to social distancing requirements and space limitations, some churches are asking parishioners to reserve their seats for Christmas Masses ahead of time. Those who cannot physically be present are invited to be spiritually present.

Parishes across the diocese are broadcasting Christmas Masses for those who cannot attend. The following is a list of some parishes that are livestreaming Masses online. Contact your parish if it is not listed below regarding the availability of its online Christmas Masses.

City	Dec. 24	Dec. 25	Platform
Ankeny			
Our Lady's Immaculate Heart	7 p.m.		YouTube; olih.org
Atlantic			
Ss. Peter & Paul	4 p.m. & 10 p.m.	10:30 a.m.	Sspeterpaulandmary.org
Des Moines			
All Saints	4 p.m.	9 a.m.	
Basilica of St. John	4 p.m. & 6 p.m.	Midnight 10:30 a.m.	Basilicaofstjohn.org/live-telecast; Facebook; YouTube
Holy Trinity	6:30 p.m. & 10 p.m.	8:30 a.m.	Facebook
St. Ambrose	4 p.m.		Diocese of Des Moines Facebook
St. Anthony	4 p.m. & 8 p.m.	8 a.m. (English) 9:30 a.m. (Latin) 11 a.m. (English) 1 p.m. (Spanish)	Streamspot Facebook YouTube
St. Joseph	4 p.m.		Website: stjosephcatholicdsm.org
St. Mary of Nazareth	4 p.m., 6 p.m. & 9 p.m.	9 a.m.	Facebook
Granger			
Assumption	4 p.m. & 6 p.m.	9 a.m.	Assumptiongranger.org, Click on the YouTube button
Glenwood			
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary	4 p.m.		Facebook
Neola			
St. Patrick	6 p.m.		Facebook for St. Patrick & St. Columbaus
Red Oak			
St. Mary	6 p.m.	10:30 a.m.	Facebook
Urbandale			
St. Pius X	4 p.m., 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.	9 a.m.	YouTube
Waukee			
St. Boniface	3 p.m.		YouTube
West Des Moines			
Sacred Heart	4 p.m. (English) 6 p.m. (Spanish)	9 a.m.	Facebook, YouTube

PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

(For those who may wish but for whatever reason are unable to receive holy communion)

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen

ORACION POR UNA COMUNION ESPIRITUAL

(Para aquellos que desean pero que por cualquier razon no pueden recibir la sagrada comunion.)

Creo, Jesus mio, que estas real y verdaderamente presente en el Santisimo Sacramento.

Te amo sobre todas las cosas, y deseo vivamente recibirte dentro de mi alma.

Pero no pudiendo hacerlo ahora sacramentalmente, ven al menos espiritualmente a mi corazon. Y como si ya te hubiese recibido, te abrazo y me uno del todo a Ti.

Senor, no permitas que jamas me aparte de Ti. Amen.

ADVENT

Preparing hearts and homes for Jesus' coming help families focus on what is truly important at this time of year.

The diocese offers a wealth of Advent resources for families for the days leading up to Christmas. Go to dmdiocese.org/Advent2020 for a fun guide full of simple ideas for creating family Christmas traditions. Also find prayer reflections and suggestions for incorporating acts of kindness into your Advent.



Reach 35,000 households by placing an ad in The Catholic Mirror.

Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdiocese.org or call 515-237-5054 to learn more.

Around the Diocese

Ongoing Events

Reflections & Carols of Christmas

Bishop William Joensen, joined by representatives of the Catholic community and Umeri, Drake University's alumni choir, has recorded a livestream Christmas concert/prayer service at St. Ambrose Cathedral. This event, which features music, Scriptures, and reflections written especially for this celebration, can be accessed any time between Dec. 12 and Jan. 6 at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd1rPwPhXYIW0od6Ln6npWg>

Catholic Youth Camp

The staff at Catholic Youth Camp are busy planning a great 2021 summer. Registration is open now. Campers will find new cabins, a renovated Dingman Lodge and double the number of paid staff hired to ensure safety procedures are followed so everyone can have a safe experience. For more information on a fun and faith-filled summer, go to stmcenter.com.

Center for Social Ministry

Registration is open for registration.

• Beyond the Book - Designed to highlight important social justice literature and local organizations.

• JustFaith Ministries Programs - These small group programs will help you explore today's issues through the lens of your faith and formulate a personal/group response.

• Time to Talk - Unique sessions designed to provide a safe space for discussion on relevant social justice issues.

Learn more about our programming at centerforsocialministry.org.

Coaches honored for their dedication, service

Tom Wilson

Dowling Catholic High School Athletic Director Tom Wilson entered the Iowa Football Coaches Association's Hall of Fame.

Wilson coached at English Valleys, Wilton, Ball State

University and Dike-New Hartford before leading the Maroons.

He has a career record of 264-64 including a 171-25 mark at Dowling Catholic through the 2020 semifinals.

He led 21 playoff teams and coached in 11 title games, including three runner-up finishes

at Dike-New Hartford.

His Dowling Catholic squads have won a state-record seven straight championships and have won eight overall.

He has also been a three-time Iowa Football Coaches Association Coach of the Year.

Tom Heithoff

St. Albert girls basketball coach Tom Heithoff is joining the KMA Sports Hall of Fame.

A 1971 graduate of St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs, Heithoff served 40 years in Catholic education, 30 of those at St. Albert.

He served as head girls coach at St. Albert Catholic School for 19 years beginning in

1987. He amassed 279 wins, five state tournament appearances and 11 district championships.

"Tom is well-deserving of this award because of his great dedication to St. Albert and the Saintes' basketball program," said Ken Schreiber, St. Albert athletic director. "We appreciate all of the time and effort he has put in throughout the years. We appreciate that he is continuing to make a difference in the Saintes'

program today."

For Heithoff, being involved in the school is a family tradition. He told KMAland.com his father supported teachers, coaches and the school board.

Read more about Heithoff here: https://www.kmland.com/sports/2020-21-kma-sports-hall-of-fame-class-tom-heithoff/article_e705c17c-dbd0-11ea-90b7-57fda4127915.html

Local March for Life planned

Iowans for LIFE plans to kick off the new year with a March for Life in Des Moines on Jan. 9 at the state capitol beginning at 10 a.m.

The march was announced at the Iowans for LIFE annual banquet, held online last month. The group traditionally has taken several charter buses to Washington, D.C. for the national march. In light of health concerns with the pandemic, a local march was organized as an alternative.

"Even in the cold and even in the snow, our presence is needed. You need to bear witness and be a voice of the thousands of boys and girls who have been snuffed out in their mothers'

womb," said Iowans for LIFE Executive Director Maggie DeWitte.

The group launched an apologetics toolbox in the last year, and next year will add videos to the resource. Supporters look forward to meeting people at the Iowa State Fair in 2021 and raising awareness of the group's respect life curriculum.

"Don't be discouraged," said DeWitte.

"We know that the battle (to save and respect life) is not won through elections or legislation or law," she said. "It's one in changing the hearts and minds of every human being we encounter."

Bishop imposes restrictions, supervision on priest *Investigation finds misconduct; but not sexual abuse of a minor*

Rev. Robert "Bud" Grant will return to ministry with restrictions and supervision, following an investigation into an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor. Evidence gathered during the investigation established the allegation did not meet the criteria necessary to take to the Vatican for further review or canonical trial.

Since the investigation began last March, Des Moines Bishop William Joensen and the diocesan Allegation Review Committee gathered and reviewed the evidence, including the initial complaint, examined an investigative report produced by a third party, and consulted with experts in church law. The state's Attorney General's office and law enforcement in Polk, Pottawattamie and Scott Counties are aware of the allegation of behavior occurring in the early 1990s.

The investigation clearly established that the allegation did not meet the criteria of sexual abuse of a minor as defined by Church law at the time of the incident, because the complainant was above majority age. However, it was also established that Father Grant engaged in behavior in select instances in the early 1990s that violated the Sixth Commandment and his priestly promises.

Given the seriousness of the misconduct, Bishop Joensen determined it both necessary and prudent to issue restrictions on Father Grant's ministry. While not a judgment of guilt with regard to the allegation of abuse of a minor, these restrictions impose remedial measures and parameters for further exercise of priestly ministry by Father Grant. The restrictions are as follows:

- No touch policy for anyone younger than 24 years old except for exchanging the sign of peace with handshake or offering blessing during public celebration of the sacraments.

- All one-to-one ministry with individual up to 24 years of age, including the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation, or other academic support is to be in an accessible space visible to the public.

- No individual meeting in a rectory, parish, academic or other setting is permitted when no else is present in the building or natural space (park, outdoor campus setting, etc.).

- Any offsite ministry, course-related or social gatherings with individuals up to 24 years of age must have an adult older than age 24 present.

These restrictions are in place for one year, to be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Church law does not allow for perpetual restrictions in this situation.

In addition, Father Grant has agreed to a monitor, who will supervise his activities, and is not to engage any ministry beyond his current assignments without express permission from Bishop Joensen.

Father Grant has been on administrative leave since last March. He is expected to return to teaching at St. Ambrose University in Davenport and offer sacramental ministry at a rural parish with the approval of the school and Davenport Bishop Thomas Zinkula.

Father Grant was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Des Moines in 1984. After ordination, he served in team ministry in three Shelby County parishes: St. Mary in Portsmouth, St. Mary in Panama and St. Boniface in Westphalia. He served on the faculty at St. Albert High School from 1988-1994. Since 1994, he has served on the faculty of St. Ambrose University. He has served as a sacramental minister at St. Andrew Parish in Bluegrass, Iowa, since 2008.

Victims of sexual abuse by clergy and their families are encouraged to contact the diocesan Victim Assistance Advocate Sam Porter for counseling opportunities or to file a complaint. Porter can be reached at 515-286-2024 or at Sam.Porter@polkcountyia.gov.



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Healthcare professionals lean on faith during these trying times

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When the pandemic first hit Iowa back in March, hospitals braced for the worst.

Jennifer Phillips, nurse leader at Iowa Lutheran Hospital in Des Moines, said she and her colleagues were grateful they had time to prepare.

“New York didn’t know it was coming,” Phillips said. “We at least had some warning. New York was a tornado; we saw the hurricane coming.”

There was a lot of fear and uncertainty.

“As a nurse and healthcare professional, I had a strong desire to go help [in New York],” said Phillips, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale. “I didn’t feel scared. This is where my faith comes in. I knew that God would provide the answers and would provide what I needed. If my time was going to be coming, it was already planned. And if God wanted me to help people in my nursing care, he would find a way for me to do that.”

Wendy Mescher, a registered nurse at Audubon County Memorial Hospital in Audubon, said her faith gets her through these trying times.

“I think you just have to take it one day at a time and put your faith in God that it will all work out...,” she said. “I do keep a rosary in my purse and pray if a patient isn’t doing well or if they are having a lot of pain. Sometimes I just go to the bathroom and say a Hail Mary. Or if it’s a rough shift, I’ll say an Our Father.”

COVID-19 numbers in Audubon County are not as high as the bigger cities, yet residents still need to be careful.

Though Mescher’s husband was spared from the virus, she and her two daughters had mild cases of COVID-19 earlier this fall. But her uncle passed away at the hospital from the coronavirus in a neighboring county on Thanksgiving Day.

“If patients come in and say they want to be seen in the ER and need a COVID test, we usually meet them at the ER door,” said Mescher, a member of St. Augustine Parish in Halbur. “I usually have on a VersaFlo clear mask that circulates air. They have a rapid test that gives them results within 15-20 minutes.”

She comes to work prepared and takes steps to prevent the spread.

“I wear a normal uniform, but I always keep an extra uniform in my car. I also keep one in my locker in Audubon,” said Mescher, who takes several showers a day. “I shower out before I come home to protect the community.”

She has seen about a half dozen COVID-19 cases in Audubon. If their symptoms are severe, patients are transported to Omaha or Des Moines, where they have ventilators and more advanced equipment.

Mescher also works



ABOVE: Wendy Mescher, a registered nurse at Audubon County Memorial Hospital, wears a VersaFlo mask when meeting patients who are potentially COVID-19 positive.

RIGHT: Jennifer Phillips, a nurse leader at Iowa Lutheran Hospital in Des Moines, said the nurses all lean on and support each other during these challenging times. The healthcare professionals have been working many extra hours and caring for patients with acute symptoms for many months, and it is taking its toll.

part-time at the Manning Regional Hospital, where she often helps COVID-19 patients.

“We seem to have a lot of pregnant nurses and we try to keep them from COVID,” Mescher said. “We don’t know the ramifications of those moms or of baby getting COVID.”

She and fellow nurses work hard to walk with patients through their uncertainty.

“I think the best thing to ease people’s anxiety is the knowledge that you can share with them,” Mescher said. “If things are getting worse or getting better, people like to know those things. And I think showing compassion and education is really key to help people through it.”

Pampering ill patients and offering tender loving care, especially when families can’t be present with their loved ones, are how she cares for her own daughters when they are sick, Mescher added.

“We try to let patients see family as much as they possibly can...,” she said. “I really do think the best medicine and best motivation for people is to have their family around them.”

“The idea of a patient dying alone is one of a nurse’s worst fears,” Mescher added. “If you know the patient is dying you try to be with the patient if the family’s not there.”

Simmons and Mescher said their team of nurses is like a family whose members lean on and support each other during these trying times.

Nine months into this pandemic, healthcare professionals are burned out, Simmons said.

“I have at least three team members that I had to help make a mental health plan, because

they were feeling like they didn’t want to be a part of this world anymore,” Simmons said. “It was a shock to me.”

Trusting in God is the best way to get through this, she concluded.

“My pastor, Father David Fleming, did a sermon about the disciples in the boat and Jesus was calling them to step out on the water,” Simmons said. “And if you got distracted by all the stuff going on – political, COVID, and other concerns, you would start to sink.”

Moral of the story: keep your eyes on Jesus – not your troubles.



Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese’s Victim Assistance Advocate is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of sexual abuse of minors by clergy through a complaint process and in seeking support and counseling services. He 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.

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Follow the Light

Marriage and Family Life

By Kara Storey



My dad's favorite day of the year is Dec. 21 - the winter solstice.

"The shortest day of the year," he always reminds me. "From here on out the days get longer!" Living in the woods of central Minnesota, it mainly means he can start looking at seed catalogs and dream about planting his garden!

I do admire him in that instead of focusing on the darkness, he turns his face to the promise of greater light. It's no coincidence that in the darkest moment of the year, we also celebrate the birth of Christ, who is the light of the world (Jn. 8:12).

Journeying through this Advent in a particularly broken, bruised and divided world, my family is focusing on the gift of Jesus as our light in this darkness.

But my heavenly Father has also convicted me in recent months that instead of lamenting the darkness "out there," I must first heal the divisions in my own heart. I must

ask Jesus to shine his light into the darkest recesses of my heart, the corners where I have secretly tucked away my sins and judgments, my knuckles white as I hold fast to "my" ways, doubting the Lord's promise that the cost of discipleship will not break me.

But his reassuring whisper to trust him slowly pries away my fingers to allow his healing rays to cauterize my wounded heart. For the more whole I am, the more I'm able to respond to Jesus' call to also bring his light to the world (Matt. 5:14).

This light of Christ or "flame of faith," as the rite of baptism says, is a gift I am supposed to "keep alive in my heart."

But what are signs of a lively faith?

St. Paul gives us a model when he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22).

It's easy this season to see the flame burn bright in my children. Their faces are radiant with joy as they gaze upon the Christmas tree. There is peace in their eyes as they gently play with their wood nativity scene. There is love in their hearts as they snuggle in to read "one more" Christmas story.

But it's not as easy to see it amidst the pain in our families, our marriages, our parishes and our cities. Yet, there is hope remembering we aren't the only generation to cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

As Isaiah reminds us each Advent: "The people who walked in darkness have

seen a great light" (Isa. 9:1). Even the Israelites, God's chosen people, wandered and waited thousands of years, longing for the Messiah.

In all times and all places, the human heart has ached for Jesus, just like ours do today.

In these last days of Advent, may our weary hearts "prepare him room," so that we may more perfectly reflect his light and love to our neighbor.

And come Christmas, may we peacefully and joyfully look to him, who is the Light, to guide us no matter the crosses of this life. May we echo St. John Henry Newman's poetic words, "Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on. The night is dark and I am far from home, Lead thou me on."

Kara Storey is a freelance writer who worships at the Basilica of St. John in Des Moines.

In spite of our differences, we're on a common journey

Hopefully all of *The Catholic Mirror* readers are aware that the diocese is committed to helping us understand each other and respect each other with its Civilize It Iowa campaign. I would like to share a thought or two.

This past election has been rough on many of us.

We felt friction with other Catholics, neighbors and acquaintances.

The needs for an emphasis such as Civilize It come from the fact that the world that we live in is one that has tension between the three major factors that make up yours and my society or way of life.

I have always referred to it as the CDC problem. I started labeling the tension this way before the COVID-19 outbreak. I am beginning to think I might have to rename it. Essentially, it is this: Catholicism-Democracy-Capitalism, the three forces in our life. I have found that they really don't go together that well.

Guest Column

By Kenan Bresnan



Catholicism is about faith and truth. Democracy is about individuals coming up with what is next or possible. Capitalism is about profit.

We have to live with each.

Capitalism, or our economic structure, is about profit, not truth or the individual. With the entrance of technology as a major factor in it, it is widening the gap of have and have nots in the labor market.

Democracy is about what a majority of its voting citizens can agree on. It is not about profit or truth.

Catholicism is not about this world as such but a separate world, the Kingdom of God upstairs and downstairs not profit or what we can agree on.

All of us struggle with how we intertwine these three factors in our life. We do it differently. Catholics who think differently about these things, still have taught my children religious education, joined with me in discussion and formation groups, been there for each other's funerals, walk in the same communion line and prayed to the same God.

Two quotes have always affected

my thinking on this tension. The first from Abraham Lincoln in his second inaugural about God and the Civil War: "Both read the same bible and pray to the same God and each invokes his aid against the other. . . . The prayers of both could not be answered -- that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purpose."

The second quote everyone knows: "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." This was Christ's response when presented with a government coin. His response says that neither government nor money is why he came.

He came for the Kingdom of heaven; we all want join together on that journey.

Kenan Bresnan is a parishioner at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola and retired from Catholic Charities. He can be reached at kenbresnan@gmail.com.



Civilize It Iowa



Civilizalo Iowa

2020: One for the history books

Before ringing in the new year at midnight on Dec. 31 and ushering in 2021, I expect to see a lot of TV personalities and social media posts proclaiming, "Good riddance 2020!" and #WorstYearEver.

When the ball drops and the clock strikes 12, we may have well entered the most anticipated year ever – mainly because it's *not* 2020 anymore.

But the reality is that even though we'll have left 2020 in the dust, much will remain the same. We'll still be wearing face masks, social distancing, and mostly working and learning from home – at least for the first few months of 2021.

We'll still want to protect vulnerable friends and family by limiting our exposure, for fear we may unknowingly pass along COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations will likely not change anytime soon. And it will take some time for vaccinations to be distributed – though it definitely gives us great hope.

But despite all of 2020's ugly glory, there's a silver lining. It changed you.

It made you stronger. It increased your patience (whether you liked it and know it or not.) I hope it gave you more compassion. And it gave you ample opportunities to reflect.

A devotional passage

Faith that Conquers

By Kelly Mescher Collins



jumped out at me on Facebook shortly after deciding this column's topic. Running across it seemed providential. It's title? *Perfect through sufferings*.

"Steel is the product of iron plus fire. Soil is rock plus heat and the crushing of glaciers. Linen is flax plus the water that cleans it, the comb that separates it, the flail that pounds it, and the shuttle that weaves it. In the same way, the development of human character requires a plus attached to it, for great character is made not through luxurious living but through suffering. And the world does not forget people of great character..."

"Suffering is a wonderful fertilizer for character," the passage continues. "The great objective of this life is character, for it is the only thing we can carry with us into eternity. And gaining as much of the highest

character as possible is the purpose of our trials."

Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl wrote about memorable prisoners in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*: "We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last human freedom – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Suffering is an "ineradicable" part of life, Frankl says.

"The way in which a man accepts his fate and all of the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity – even under the most difficult circumstances – to add a deeper meaning to his life," Frankl wrote.

I'm not pretending 2020 wasn't hard. It was. It was trying, sorrowful, isolating and more. We all had our trials – and I'm no exception.

In this year of troubles, I turn time



and again to my favorite Scripture passage, hoping each time to surrender ever more to God's promises.

"Have no anxiety about anything, but in prayer, petition, and thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

January 1, 2021 may not offer the magic switch back to normal we've all been hoping for. But with God by our side, I know we've got this.

Kelly Mescher Collins is Multimedia Journalist at the Diocese of Des Moines. She can be reached at kcollins@dmdiocese.org.

Grandfather shares wisdom on prized possessions

Every week, Udaya M. Kabadi, MD receives a question from his family. Dr. Kabadi, a St. Francis of Assisi parishioner, writes out a thoughtful response. One week, his family asked him: "What are your favorite possessions? Why?" After reading his answer, they encouraged him to share his answer with readers of *The Catholic Mirror*. His reply to his family will run in two parts. Watch the January edition of the diocesan newspaper for part two.

Guest Column

By Udaya M. Kabadi, MD



them even if I thought I could.

Therefore, one's family must never be considered as one's possession.

By definition then, the possessions are the things one has garnered or gathered or various states attained and nurtured throughout life and thus evolving with time and usually end with one's demise.

However, there are exceptions. Whatever I consider to be my prized possessions are described individually in the following paragraphs.

Health

Health is one of the most important

possessions as far as I am concerned. Without good health, progress in career and life itself is limited if not prevented. Fortunately, I was blessed with superior health for most of my life and so was my sweetheart, Mary, until about five years ago when she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia.

By God's grace I continue to be in excellent health. Utmost gratitude to him as my being healthy has immensely helped me take care of her at home.

Of course, there has been an occasional hiccup. Only a lone hospitalization throughout my life of 78 years is absolutely noteworthy. A sudden totally unexpected hospitalization in 1980 taught me a lesson though: I should not take anything, especially health, for granted.

Wealth

I was often wrong in my initial years of my career to think that being wealthy was not healthy. However, over the years, I have realized that to be a myth. Wealth includes 'talent, treasure and time' not just 'riches' as

most believe.

Talent is a God-given gift. Every human being is born with a talent. Some identify and nurture it. Others recognize and never put in efforts to let it grow and still others never are aware of it.

Treasure is the material wealth either inherited and/or gained by hard work and appropriate savings or investment.

Time is a gift to everyone and each of us has to learn to use it to achieve goals.

Most importantly, the wealth is for sharing. Without wealth, charity does not exist. Without wealth, enterprise and entrepreneurship are obsolete. I concur that wealth may make a person arrogant and proud. But wealth comes in handy to perform many good deeds if one keeps the head on one's shoulders.

I am convinced that 'it is in giving that we receive' and 'the more one gives, even more the one receives'.

Dr. Udaya Kabadi, author of the book "Rain Drops" will continue his column in next month's edition of The Catholic Mirror.

What are your favorite possessions? Why?

When the question was presented, my initial answer was my immediate, my closest family, my parents, my siblings, my wife, my children and grandchildren.

The more I thought about this answer, even more I was convinced that the answer was totally wrong, too selfish.

Soon, it dawned on me that 'family' is not a possession. Possession is the state of having, owning, or controlling something. As my kids grew up, I learned I could not control

Ask a Priest

Q. I hear all the time people saying "o my god" or "god" when talking to other people. Is this taking the Lord's name in vain? Thank you, Suszan Leinen

A. I AGREE, IT'S pretty common. Sometimes that could just be the initials OMG or omg – which, I suppose could also stand for "Oh my gosh."

Decades ago, many parishes had "Holy Name Societies." The purpose was to encourage men of the parish to use language that wasn't careless or disrespectful. It seems that some people wouldn't have any trouble saying "my lord" but might not say "my God."

The people of Israel and many Jewish people even today do not use the word "God" because to use God's name was somehow a familiarity or a power over the divine. Instead, they use the term "the Lord" – his title.

The Jerusalem Bible uses the term "Yahweh" while other translations use the terms "the Lord." Some of my family's earlier generations said "my land" instead of "my Lord." Or they might say "for heaven's sake" rather than "for God's sake." Perhaps people have gotten a little loose in their speech.

Q. What are your favorite Catholic online resources?

A. THERE ARE COUNTLESS online resources these days. Most Catholic colleges and universities have websites with lots of information.

Many Catholic dioceses, parishes, and publications (including *The Catholic Mirror*) have websites as well (dmdiocese.org). It depends on what you might be looking

for. Usually a good search engine will offer a number of options.

Q. Is the Diocese of Des Moines growing or slowing due to COVID-19? How are our seminaries and prospective deacons doing their preparation? Is each group still preparing/meeting as a group?

A. LIKE MANY grade schools, high schools, and colleges, seminaries and diaconal formation programs have had to face the restrictions of the pandemic. Some are doing this virtually, but not all. Who knows how long this will last? Principals, provosts and college presidents have to compare notes on how to conduct business in the best way.

Q. How many priests and religious sisters serve in our diocese? How many will be retiring in the next two - three years?

A. RIGHT NOW there are 112 priests in our diocese. Of them, 37 are retired. One is on medical leave, and two are on administrative leave.

Thirty one of the priests are international priests from other countries. In the next two to three years, about 6 will be retiring.

There are currently 18 seminary students. The 2018 diocesan directory listed 18 religious sisters in our diocese. Many of them are retired. For more information, go to www.dmdiocese.org

Got a question for "Ask a Priest" and its author, Father John Ludwig? Send it to communications@dmdiocese.org.

Our wounds, gifts, and our power to heal

Guest Column

By Father Ron Rolheiser



Nearly 50 years ago, Henri Nouwen wrote a book entitled *The Wounded Healer*. Its reception established his reputation as unique spiritual mentor and he went on to become one of the most influential spiritual writers of the past half-century. What made his writings so powerful? His brilliance? His gift for expression? He was gifted, yes, but so are many others. What set him apart was that he was a deeply wounded man and from that disquieted place inside him issued forth words that were a healing balm to millions.

How does this work? How do our wounds help heal others? They don't. It's not our wounds that help heal others. Rather our wounds can color our gifts and talents in such a way so that they no longer educe resistance and envy in others but instead become what God meant them to be, gifts to grace others.

Sadly, the opposite is often true. Our gifts and talents often become the reason we're disliked and perhaps even hated. There's a curious dynamic here. We don't automatically, nor easily, let the gifts of others grace us. More often, we're reluctant to admit their beauty and power and we resist and envy those who possess them and sometimes even hate them for their gifts. That's one of the reasons we find it hard to simply admire someone.

But this reluctance in us doesn't just say something about us. Often it says something too about the persons who possess those gifts. Talent is an ambiguous thing, it can be used to assert ourselves, to separate ourselves from others, to stand out and to stand above, rather than as a gift to help others. Our talents can be used simply to point to how bright, talented, good-looking, and successful we are. Then they simply become a strength meant to dwarf others and set ourselves apart.

How can we make our talents a gift for others? How can we be loved for our talents rather than hated for them? Here's the difference: we will be loved and admired for our gifts when our gifts are colored by our wounds so that others do not see them as a threat or as something that sets us apart but rather as something that gifts them in their own shortcomings. When shared in a certain way, our gifts can become gifts for everyone else.

Here's how that algebra works: Our gifts

are given to us not for ourselves but for others.

But, to be that, they need to be colored by compassion. We come to compassion by letting our wounds befriend our gifts. Here are two examples.

When Princess Diana died in 1997, there was a massive outpouring of love for her. Both by temperament and as a Catholic priest, I'm normally not given to grieving over celebrities, yet I felt a deep sorrow and love for this woman. Why? Because she was beautiful and famous? Not that. Many women who are beautiful and famous and are hated for it. Princess Diana was loved by so many because she was a wounded person, someone whose wounds colored her beauty and fame in a way that induced love, not envy.

Henri Nouwen, who popularized the phrase, "the wounded healer" shared a similar trait. He was a brilliant man, the author of more than 40 books, one of the most popular religious speakers of his generation, tenured at both Harvard and Yale, a person with friends all over the world; but also a deeply wounded man who, by his own repeated admission, suffered restlessness, anxiety, jealousies, and obsessions that occasionally landed him in a clinic. As well, by his own repeated admission, amidst this success and popularity, for most of his adult life he struggled to simply accept love. His wounds forever got in the way. And this, his wounded self, colors basically every page of every book he wrote. His brilliance was forever colored by his wounds and that's why it was never self-assertive but always compassionate. No one envied Nouwen's brilliance; he was too wounded to be envied. Instead, his brilliance always touched us in a healing way. He was a wounded healer.

Those words, wounded and healer, ordain each other. I'm convinced that God calls each of us to a vocation and to a special work here on earth more on the basis of our wounds than on the basis of our gifts. Our gifts are real and important; but they only grace others when they are shaped into a special kind of compassion by the uniqueness of our own wounds. Our unique, special wounds can help make each of us a unique, special healer.

Our world is full of brilliant, talented, highly-successful, and beautiful people. Those gifts are real, come from God, and should never be denigrated in God's name. However, our gifts don't automatically help others; but they can if they are colored by our wounds so that they flow out as compassion and not as pride.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook [facebook.com/ronrolheiser](https://www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser)

Letters to the Editor

The Catholic Mirror accepts letters to the editor of 200 words or less written by parishioners in the Diocese of Des Moines. Letters can be sent to communications@dmdiocese.org.

Iowa bishops' statement on virus vaccine

There is encouraging news about the development and distribution of vaccines against the coronavirus. Thanks be to God.

Some people have concerns about the safety of the vaccine on account of the speed of its development and of FDA approval.

In this regard, experts explain that the speed is a testimony to scientific advances that turned years into months without compromising safety and scientific integrity.

Some people are concerned, too, about the risk of side effects. There is no scientifically proven link between vaccines and other conditions, such as autism.

It is not uncommon to experience minor side effects from being vaccinated. People may feel temporarily uncomfortable, but the benefit from the vaccine exceeds any burden.

Finally, there is troubling news that some drug companies

used cell lines from the fetal tissue of an aborted baby in the design, development and production of their vaccines.

In response, the USCCB Committees on Pro-life and Doctrine had this to say:

People may in good conscience use the vaccines produced by Pfizer and Moderna, which made only limited use of those unethical cell lines (for lab testing of the vaccine).

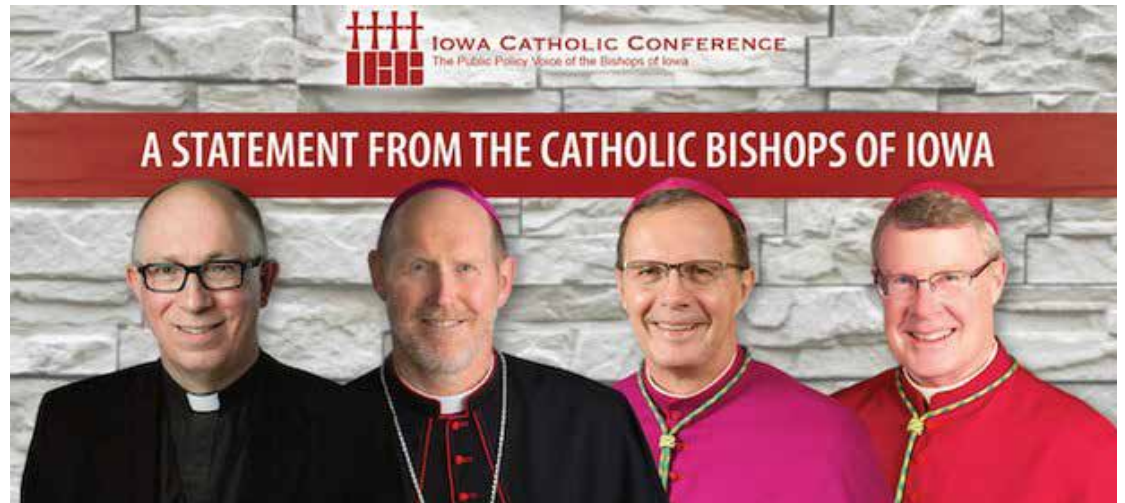
Morally speaking, the vaccine offered by these two companies is relatively remote from the evil of abortion, and so need not trouble anyone's conscience to use either one.

In contrast, some other companies use a cell line from the fetal tissue of an aborted baby in the design, development, production, and lab testing of their COVID vaccines.

If possible, those vaccines should not be used. If

there is no alternative available, however, people may in good faith use them against the serious health risk of COVID.

The common good of public health takes precedence over any reservation about being treated with vaccines; they will not be effective if people do not use them.



Pictured from left to right: Most Rev. Michael Jackels Archbishop of Dubuque; Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula Bishop of Davenport, Most Rev. William Joensen Bishop of Des Moines; Most Rev. R. Walker Nickless Bishop of Sioux City.

Contributions to special funds ease the financial stress of 2020



An Aug. 10 storm with hurricane-force winds caused much damage throughout Iowa.

Thanks to the generosity of people in southwest Iowa, the Diocese of Des Moines and Catholic Charities raised more than \$132,000 to put back into its communities to help those suffering from the devastating derecho storm last summer and COVID-19.

"The Diocese of Des Moines, in partnership with Catholic Charities, continues to offer a Catholic response to the crises that have faced Iowans in 2020. When we act as one body in Christ, we recognize that we all suffer when one

of our brothers or sisters is suffering," said Maureen Kenney, diocesan Director of Stewardship. "The way in which our faith community has responded to those in need is the evidence of Christ's light shining through the darkness."

On Aug. 10, a straight-line windstorm swept through Iowa damaging property of thousands of individuals and families. A special collection to raise funds for the benefit of those who suffered severe wind damage to crops, businesses and homes raised \$43,819.

At one house in the diocese, a tree fell on a home's roof, the ceiling fell in the living room and kitchen and siding broke off. Debris from the storm has been removed but many are facing high deductibles and long wait lists with insurance companies to assess and repair damages, heightening financial worries.

Catholic Charities is working with a partner social service agency, Iowa Community Action, to identify those who needed help and distribute \$250 each.

"I cannot believe how generous people have been," said Deb Powers, Catholic Charities Di-

rector of Development.

A COVID-19 special relief fund raised \$88,720 for those suffering from the virus. Contributions to the fund continue to support families and the most pressing needs in parishes and schools through the diocese. Catholic Charities works through its contacts and Hispanic ministries to identify individuals who are in need. To date, funds have been distributed in 19 of the 23 counties that comprise the Diocese of Des Moines.

"We are reaching into the counties that we service," said Holly Ackermann, Community Relations Manager at Catholic Charities. "We are helping people with COVID throughout the diocese."

The need for relief in the community remains and is anticipated to rise, especially with an increase in COVID-19 cases in the state and greater hesitation to travel and patronize shops and restaurants in person.

For more information on how to apply for relief, contact Ackermann at hackermann@catholiccharitiesdm.org. Online giving is available at dmdiocese.org/giving.



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Historic year forces creativity, technology innovation

By Caroli Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS)

-- As the coronavirus pandemic upended normal activities and routines across the United States, Catholic parishes, schools and organizations had to quickly, and continuously, find ways to adapt.

For starters, this primarily involved technology: livestreaming Masses and teaching and meeting on Zoom platforms, but it also prompted outdoor worship, drive-through confessions and, as the year went on: a return to socially distanced in-person Masses and classes at Catholic schools and colleges, with reduced crowd sizes.

When the pandemic first hit and dioceses around the country closed churches and bishops issued dispensations for the Sunday Mass obligation, parishes -- with varying degrees of technical know-how -- set up parish YouTube channels for the first time or dusted off their Facebook pages for online streaming.

Father Ken Gill, pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish in Solomons, Maryland, met with his parish staff after the Archdiocese of Washington announced there would be no public Masses as of March 14 and asked: "What can we do to stay connected?"

They decided that with the proper equipment, the parish could

begin livestreaming Masses, so the pastor bought a laptop, a microphone and a camera, and a parishioner helped him set up the connection to livestream daily Masses four days later.

By the next week he was broadcasting a noontime holy hour, praying the Angelus, the rosary, the Divine Mercy chaplet and Benediction with viewers.

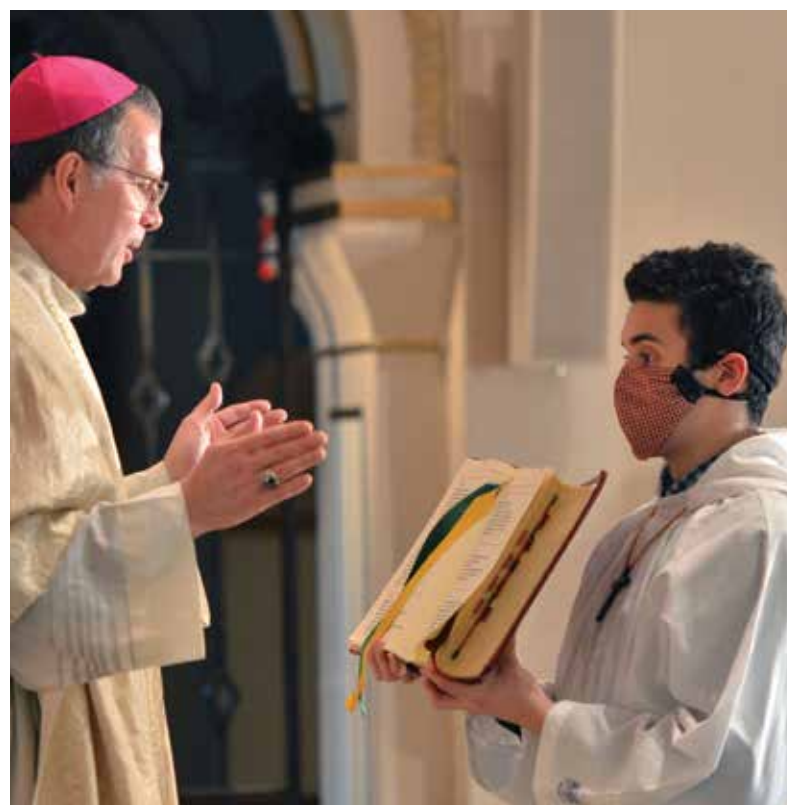
"We're using this opportunity to foment and create a stronger bond of community," he said.

This happened at many parishes across the country and continued once churches slowly reopened because Mass congregation sizes have been limited.

Mary DeTurrus Poust, director of communications for the Diocese of Albany, New York, said in late March their parishioners were "hungry for spiritual connection and for the grounding nourishment liturgy can provide at this really critical and chaotic time."

Parish closures also meant functions such as religious education classes and meetings had to move to an online format, getting many people familiar with Zoom, an online platform they might not have heard of a year ago.

"The internet is the blessing of all blessings" right now, Sister Susan Francois, an assistant congregation leader for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, told Catholic News Service. She has held Zoom video conference meetings with



Bishop William Joensen's Good Friday service earlier this year was livestreamed for the faithful who could not worship together due to the coronavirus. Antonio Banuelos-Moriel was with him wearing a mask.

team members across the country and in other parts of the world.

But Zoom fatigue also set in. Bishop Barry C. Knestout of Richmond, Virginia, used the platform a lot this past year with meetings, conferences and diocesan functions including a diocesan eucharistic congress in early November.

Several bishops said a yearning for the Eucharist presents

an opportunity for the church to begin a new effort of evangelization and catechesis as the public celebration of Mass gradually expands and church leaders determine how best to encourage people to reengage in parish life.

Contributing to this report was Mark Zimmermann in Washington, Sam Lucero in Green Bay and Dennis Sadowski in Cleveland.



Donna Schmidt, of Harlan, was among many who used their sewing talent to make masks for their family, friends and communities.



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