

Please renew your subscription to The Catholic Mirror today. Use your phone to take a picture of this QR code and it will take you to the online subscription page. Thank you for your generosity!



THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Vol. 54, No. 8

August 21, 2020

Christ Our Life offers in-person and online tickets

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

For the first time ever, the Christ Our Life Conference is offering two ticket options for the biennial event: in-person or online.

Response to this new option has been positive, said conference founders and co-chairs Marilyn Lane and Ellen Miller.

“Our marketing people took a survey and found out 52 percent were still intending to go in person and 47 percent planned to livestream,” said Lane, of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines. “The rest were undecided.”

“We’re so grateful we can give them both,” added Miller, of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianola. “With livestream, we can go all over the world...to give people the beautiful encounter with Christ.”

The conference will be Sept. 26-27 at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. The Catholic event will include its mainstays of daily Mass, confession, Eucharistic adoration, speakers and vendors.

With all of the turmoil in 2020, people are thirsting for a positive message.

“I think there’s going to be an underlying theme from all speakers about the incredible hope that is with us at all times,” Lane said. “And to trust in Jesus and rely on him and he will get us through this.”

Though this will be Bishop William Joensen’s first Christ Our Life Conference, he is confident it will touch hearts and bring people closer to Jesus.

“I speak as one who has not personally attended Christ Our Life in the past, but I know that the students I

Continued on page 10

Back to School

Schools preparing for social distancing, safety and sanitation as students, teachers return to classrooms

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When teachers and students left their classrooms in March, they never imagined five months would pass before they would be together again.

What seemed unimaginable back then is now a new way of living, learning and functioning in the classroom for teachers, staff, students and parents due to COVID-19.

A comprehensive plan was created for the 16 Catholic schools in southwest Iowa in anticipation of the return to school, said Donna Bishop, diocesan superintendent of schools.

“The plan was created through weekly meetings with all of our building administrators in conjunction with each school’s building leadership team members that consisted of faculty, staff, parents, board members and the diocesan medical team,” Bishop said. “We decided as a group which procedures would be diocesan wide and which would be established by schools individually.”

Many parents are relieved their children will be back in school five days a week, Bishop said.

“Our families are extremely appreciative of the quality distance learning we provided in the spring and are very thankful that we are opening our doors for five days a week with onsite learning this fall,” Bishop said. “Many of our schools are seeing enrollment spike.”

St. Luke in Ankeny is one of those experiencing increased enrollment.

“We finished the year at 178 students and currently we have 235 registered,” said Misty Hade, principal at St. Luke. “We believe the uptick of enrollment is because we are providing the five-day option, where the public school is set to do a hybrid.”

St. Luke teachers have put together



Jennifer Simmons, principal of St. Malachy Catholic School in Creston, said the school has protocols for sanitation and social distancing to stay healthy, but also has plans to address the social and emotional needs of their students.

safety packs for families, which includes two face shields and a mask “so they feel comfortable with everything we have in place,” Hade said.

St. Luke also offers a forum for parents to ask questions.

“We really feel like being

transparent about what is happening and what’s going to happen is important,” Hade said.

All diocesan Catholic schools will also offer an online option for families not ready to send their children back to the class-

Continued on page 8

Baking thousands of pies to support parish

Over 900 pounds of flour and butter makes pies, builds community in Council Bluffs

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs has been selling pies to raise funds for six years, and each year the pie-making operation expands. In the past two years, the bakers have made and sold (or donated) more than 1,000 pies during each Thanksgiving season.

Parishioner Margaret Morse had been coordinating pie baking for the Thanksgiving community dinner when

a new idea occurred. Morse teamed up with fellow parishioner Eileen O’Connor: “I said to Eileen, ‘You know, as much as people like pies, I bet we could sell some and make some money for the Church.’”

At that time, the parish was just starting to think about building the new worship center where it now resides. Money from the first pie sales helped build St. Patrick’s new church building, which was completed in May of 2018. The sale continues to be a major contri-

Continued on page 6



Father James Ahenkora, pastoral administrator of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs, pitched in to make pies with volunteers for their summer fundraiser.

Playing for Fish

Father James Ahenkora of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs shared with me that while on retreat recently in Schuyler, Nebraska, he sat by the side of the pond to play his guitar and—lo and behold!—a school of fish came swimming up to the shoreline, drawn by his beautiful music.

I can't remember from my zoology days how fish might "hear," but maybe they felt the pleasant vibrations coursing through the water—or maybe they simply spotted Father James and have learned from previous retreatants that they had a chance of gaining breadcrumbs thrown on the water?

Father James does enlist his guitar as part of his preaching at Mass and in his larger priestly ministry. Music does more than soothe the savage beast; it has the capacity to speak to our hearts, shape our moods and resonate with what's already going on in our souls. Music can expand our capacity to praise God and to draw into ever greater harmony with God's Spirit, drawing us toward God's will to sustain and save us.

Given our COVID-19 mitigation measures, we're singing a lot less at Mass these days. Music ministers might feel particularly frustrated that they are not



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

permitted to express their gifts and let the music already alive in their hearts and minds loose. Our "fast" from liturgical music for the sake of the health and well-being of the Body of Christ is truly a sacrifice for many, and might introduce a sour note or two into the Spirit-led song God instilled in us when we were baptized.

But, as with many of the challenges we face these days to discern what God is doing and why he has allowed so many stumbling blocks to befall us (can we say together, 'derecho?'), we have to be careful so we don't lose the capacity to hear and see the Divine Musician beckoning to us. We risk amplifying our own wills, our own demands, our own disgruntlement to an extent that we drown out the more subtle melody—the whisper, even—of God's overtures toward us. We don't want to be like the folks about whom Jesus exclaimed, "To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children who sit in marketplaces and call to one an-

other, 'We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn'" (Mt. 11:16).

Whether we are musically gifted or not, each of us can sound a note, be a voice that appeals to others, reassures them, helps conduct them closer to Christ. By our presence and accompaniment of others, we can amplify the stirrings God is already strumming in their hearts, enabling them to discover the next step they might take in life, to realize their yearnings for meaning and some place in the larger symphony of God's Spirit. We can be instruments God uses to reveal their vocational call within the Church and the world.

I had the chance recently to visit individually with each of our 19 seminarians to hear what God's grace has been doing in their lives, how the people and parishioners they encountered this summer and earlier in their vocational discernment have helped propel them in the path toward priesthood. God seems to be affirming. I was struck by one of our new seminarians who shared that while in public high school, one of his teachers sensed in him an openness to matters of faith, and who began an ongoing conversation about God, the Church, and what matters

most in life. This teacher was not "preaching" to him, but gave witness through his own docility to the Spirit that here was someone who might hear him, whose longing to know and serve Jesus more deeply only needed someone who was not afraid to "go there."

It was a beautiful moment for me to witness this month the profession of perpetual vows by one of my former students and spiritual directees, formerly Kathleen and now Sister Mary Elisha Gladly, a Religious Sister of Mercy of Alma, Michigan. This former southern Minnesota farm girl has had an interesting path to arrive at the altar: a math education major who edited science books for a publisher for a while in Iowa City, she found niches of space and time to simply sit before the Blessed Sacrament (no mere breadcrumbs for her!), weathering roommates and the occasional discordant note from her family, falling in and out of love, and yet fearlessly allowing Jesus to beckon her over the years to and within the Mercy community in various apostolates, including now as a Catholic school principal and teacher in Colorado.

My privilege for a decade or so as her director was to listen and reflect back to her what I was hearing, sometimes but not

always filling in the spaces of conversation with a note or two as I tried myself to listen for the Spirit's lead. Now, like the beloved in the Song of Songs, she can declare, "The sound of my lover! Here he comes, springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills." "My love speaks and says to me, 'Arise, my friend, my beautiful one, and come!'" (Song of Songs 2:8, 10).

In the midst of these often turbulent times, when it seems like the deluge of concerns and competing claims on our hearts can drown out the sounds of the Spirit, Jesus needs ever more to enlist us as "musicians" of his mysterious will in the lives of our young and not-so-young people who might be called to priesthood, religious life, or simply deeper faith. He invites us to be like the seventy-something year-old woman who one day said to her coffee-klatch partner, "Have you ever thought of becoming Catholic?"—and who became her sponsor as she entered into the Catholic Christian initiation process and professed full communion with the Church this summer. There's still plenty of fish swimming out there—what sort of music are we playing?

Tocando para los Peces

El Padre James Ahenkora de la Parroquia de St. Patrick en Council Bluffs me dijo que recientemente mientras estaba en un retiro en Schuyler, Nebraska, se sentó al lado del estanque a tocar su guitarra y - ¡he aquí! - una escuela de peces se acercó nadando a la orilla atraídos por su bella música.

No puedo recordar de mis días como zoólogo como los peces pueden "oír" pero probablemente sintieron las vibraciones placenteras mientras viajaban por el agua - o simplemente vieron al Padre James y sabían en base a las

visitas de otros asistentes a los retiros que esta era una oportunidad de que les arrojaron algunas migajas de pan al agua?

El Padre James no incluye su guitarra como parte de su predicación ni en su ministerio sacerdotal en general. La música hace más que calmar a la bestia salvaje; tiene la capacidad de hablarnos al corazón, moldear nuestro ánimo y resonar con lo que ya está sucediendo en nuestras almas. La música nos puede llevar hacia la voluntad que tiene Dios de sostenernos y salvarnos.

Dadas nuestras medidas de moderación por el COVID-19, estamos cantando mucho menos en la Misa en estos días. Los ministros de música se sienten particularmente frustrados ya que no

se les permite expresar sus dones y dejar salir la música que tienen viva en sus mentes y en sus corazones. Nuestro "ayuno" de música litúrgica a favor de la salud y el bienestar del Cuerpo de Cristo es verdaderamente un sacrificio para muchos y puede ser considerado como una nota amarga en la canción que, inspirada por el Espíritu, colocó Dios en nosotros cuando fuimos bautizados.

Pero, al igual que con muchos de los retos que enfrentamos en estos días para discernir sobre lo que Dios está haciendo y el por qué ha permitido que tengamos tantas barreras en nuestro camino (¿podemos decir juntos 'derecho?'), debemos de tener cuidado para que no perdamos la habilidad de escuchar y ver al Divino Músico enviándonos sus señales. Corremos el riesgo de incrementar nuestras propias voluntades, nuestras propias demandas, nuestras propias insatisfacciones de modo que asfixiamos la melodía más sutil - o el suspiro, quizá - de las armonías que Dios nos envía. No queremos ser como las personas a quienes Jesús exclamó, "¿Con qué puedo comparar a esta generación? Son como niños sentados en la plaza que se quejan unos de otros: Les tocamos la flauta y ustedes no han bailado; les cantamos canciones tristes y no han querido llorar." (Mt 11:16-17).

Ya sea que tengamos dones musicales o no, cada uno de nosotros puede tocar una nota, ser una voz que apela o que alienta a los demás, que les ayuda a acercarse más a Cristo. A través de nuestra presencia y de nuestro acompañamiento con los demás, podemos animar la energía que Dios está inyectando ya en sus corazones, permitiéndoles descubrir el siguiente paso que deberían tomar en la vida, a darse cuenta de su deseo profundo de significado en sus vidas y de encontrar su lugar en la gran sinfonía del Espíritu de Dios. Podemos ser instrumentos que utiliza Dios para revelar su llamado vocacional dentro de la Iglesia y en el mundo.

Tuve recientemente la oportunidad de visitar individualmente a cada uno de nuestros 19 seminaristas para escuchar qué ha estado haciendo la gracia de Dios en sus vidas, cómo les han ayudado las personas y los miembros de las parroquias en donde han estado este verano, así como aquellos con quienes se han encontrado desde el inicio de discernimiento vocacional a impulsarse en el camino rumbo al sacerdocio al que Dios parece afirmarles. Me sorprendió uno de nuestros nuevos seminaristas quien me compartió que mientras estudiaba en una preparatoria pública, uno de sus maestros percibió

en él su apertura a los asuntos de la fe y con quien inició una continua conversación respecto a Dios, la Iglesia y sobre lo que es más importante en la vida. El maestro no le estaba "predicando," pero le dio testimonio por medio de su propia sensibilidad ante el Espíritu de que había alguien que podía escucharlo, cuyo deseo de conocer y servir a Jesús más profundamente solamente necesitaba a alguien que no tuviera miedo de decirle "sigue adelante."

Fue un hermoso momento para mí el presenciar a inicios de este mes, la profesión de votos perpetuos de una de mis exalumnas a quien daba dirección espiritual, quien llevaba el nombre de Kathleen pero ahora se llama Hermana Mary Elisha Gladly, una Hermana Religiosa de la Misericordia en Alma, Michigan. Esta muchacha campirana exresidente del sur de Minnesota tuvo un camino interesante que le llevó al altar: una licenciatura en educación de matemáticas que luego editó libros de ciencias en una editorial en Iowa City, que encontraba pequeños períodos de tiempo para simplemente sentarse ante el Santísimo Sacramento (¡no solamente migajas!), tolerando compañeras de donde residía y la mala noticia ocasional de su familia, probando suerte en relaciones sentimentales, pero aún así permitiendo sin temor que Jesús la cortejara durante varios años hacia la comunidad de la Misericordia en varios apostolados y ahora como directora y maestra de una escuela católica en Colorado.

El privilegio que tuve por aproximadamente una década como su director espiritual era el de escuchar y reflexionar con ella lo que yo escuchaba, en algunas ocasiones, pero no siempre, llenando los espacios de conversación con una nota o dos cuando trataba yo mismo escuchar la guía

Continúa en la página 6

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Bishop William Joensen
Publisher
wjoensen@dmdiocese.org

Anne Marie Cox
Editor
acox@dmdiocese.org

Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer
kcollins@dmdiocese.org

The Catholic Mirror (ISSN 0896-6869) is published monthly for \$20 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

Bishop Joensen made the following appointments:



Father Ross Parker, diocesan Director of Vocations, to Director of Vocations while also serving as canonical administrator of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Carlisle, effective Aug. 4.

Father Trevor Chicoine, pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Atlantic and St. Mary Parish, Anita, and Diocesan Director of Worship, will also also serving as canonical administrator at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Griswold, and St. Timothy Parish, Reno/Cumberland, effective Aug. 4.

Father Adam Westphal, from canonical administrator to pastor, at Holy Spirit Parish in Creston and St. Edward Parish in Afton, effective Aug. 15.

Deacon Frank Lopez from pastoral and charitable ministry at the Basilica of St. John Parish, Des Moines, to pastoral and charitable ministry at St. Anthony Parish, Des Moines, effective Aug. 4.

Deacon Juan Bustamante from pastoral and charitable ministry at St. Anthony Parish, Des Moines, to pastoral and charitable ministry at the Basilica of St. John Parish, Des Moines, effective Aug. 4.

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

Jason Kurth
Jason Kurth
Chancellor

Support our seminarians

Thanks to the seminarian fund appeal I was able to follow God's call without the added anxiety of a lack of finances. I am so grateful for the monetary support I've received, which has allowed me to focus more on prayer and pastoral service for the people of God. I look forward to laying down the rest of my life for the Church in the great Diocese of Des Moines."

—Deacon Reed Flood



Bishop William Joensen ordained Deacons Reed Flood, Jake Epstein and Brad Robey to the transitional diaconate in June. The three men will be ordained priests for the Diocese of Des Moines next June.

The fall of 2020 brings students and educators back to school including 19 seminarians.

Discernment of a priestly vocation is a commitment of deep prayer and financial support on the part of the entire faith community and each seminarian.

An annual seminarian collection taken up in mid-September supplements support from the Annual Diocesan Appeal and the endowed seminarian fund at the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa. This year, more than \$250,000 is needed to send seminarians to school.

Funds are used to cover the tuition, room and board, and a small monthly stipend for the pre-theologians and theologians.

The college seminarians are expected to help pay for some of their tuition, but the diocese provides a grant each year to get their tuition down to what it would cost to attend a state school. With scholarships and loans the men are able to graduate with little debt.

Those in advanced theological study or theologians rely entirely on the support of the faith community.

"We are tremendously grateful for the support of the people of God," said Father Ross Parker, director of vocations for the diocese. "We are all familiar with the cost of higher education and we want our seminarians to freely discern if they are called to the priesthood.

"If they were saddled with a huge debt from seminary studies it would be hard for them to freely choose priesthood," he said. "Our seminarians put forth a great amount of effort because they understand that people are sacrificing for them and that they deserve to have happy, healthy, holy priests serve in their parishes."

Deacons Reed Flood, Jake Epstein and Brad Robey, who will be ordained priests next spring, are also thankful for the generosity of the faithful.

"What a joy and a bless-

ing and a responsibility it's been to baptize and preach in the name of the Lord as a deacon this summer," Deacon Epstein said. "I experience every day how seminary formation has prepared me practically and spiritually to take up this ministry; I'm grateful to all those in the Diocese of Des Moines who made that formation possible by their financial support."

"The prayers and financial support I've received has greatly helped during my time in seminary formation," Deacon Robey said. "Reflecting on this has strengthened me to finish seminary well as I prepare to be ordained a priest for the diocese next summer."

Support the seminarian collection at parishes the weekend of Sept. 12-13. Gifts notated for the collection can be made directly to the diocese or placed in the parish collection basket. Gifts may also be made online at dmdiocese.org/giving.

The 19 seminarians receive a well-rounded education at a number of different institutions:

- Seminarians in Rome: 4
- Seminarians at St. Paul seminary: 8
- Seminarians at St. John Vianney on the campus of the University of St. Thomas: 4
- Seminarians at Loras College/ St. Pius X seminary: 3

The prayers and support of the faithful bore fruit in the ordination of three transitional deacons in 2020. God willing, three men will be ordained priests for our diocese in June 2020.

Support our seminarian collection at parishes the weekend of Sept. 12-13. Gifts notated for the collection can be made directly to the diocese or placed in your parish collection basket. Gifts may also be made online at dmdiocese.org/giving.

God's heart tugging prompts volunteers to prepare disabled children for sacraments

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

It was providential that a ministry for children with disabilities would be offered at Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, said friends and parishioners Lisa Milbrath and Donna Conn.

As usual, they were both at Mass one typical Saturday evening. Both families always arrived 30 minutes early for prayer, reflection and conversation.

Milbrath turned around and asked Conn: "Do you know if anything's been done for special needs kids?"

Coincidentally, Conn had just ordered materials on sacramental preparation for special needs children to learn more about the ministry. She had felt promptings from the Holy Spirit to do more. Milbrath had experienced those same promptings.

"The Lord has laid it on my heart that something needs to be done for these kids," Mil-

brath said, noting her compassion for this group, as her own daughter has autism.

That conversation and God's tugging on each of their hearts got the ball rolling.

"These kids are children of God and they understand more than what we think they do," Conn said. "And they deserve it."

Their ministry began small and simple with first reconciliation and first communion preparation. They made the announcement to the parish last year and three children came forward with their families.

"It was very positive because [my daughter Abigail] found out she wasn't the only one dealing with issues, and so she really took to the class," said mother Jayne Zitek. "She had a really fun time with the other kids there."

The volunteers were patient with the children – a positive affirmation for both the children and parents.

"The parents were so



Pictured L-R are Lisa Milbrath, Mary Milbrath, Emma Milbrath, Donna Conn, Jayne and Abby Zitek, Rodrigo and Erendira Salinas, and Cesar and Diane Higuera of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs.

excited about their child being able to receive communion and reconciliation," Conn said.

Father Tom Thakadipuram, the pastor, said he was happy Conn, Milbrath and other volunteers came forward.

"It was a great joy to do confession for these children, as

their innocence and readiness to turn their hearts to God with full heart and full engagement," Father Thakadipuram said. "Their spontaneous excitement and freedom to be loved and forgiven was very evident. The caring ministers and parents made all the difference."

Feeling called to start a disability ministry at your parish? Then contact Patty Origer, diocesan coordinator of persons with disability ministry and scheduler of ASL ministry, at 515-237-5073 or email poriger@dmdiocese.org. She'll help you get started!

Border shutdown delays priest's return

After borders close in Ghana, priest thankful to be back in Granger after nearly four months

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When a group of seven parishioners left for Ghana March 4 with their pastor, Father Dominic Assim of Assumption Parish in Granger, they were excited.

The group would be visiting a well in a small village for the local Catholic school. The well was completed last year and funded by the parish.

They also delivered medical supplies to a local hospital, brought gifts of clothing, soccer balls, candy and more for the children at the local Catholic parish.

Assumption parishioners even got the chance to meet Father Assim's mother and other relatives.

Though COVID-19 concerns were growing in the United States, when they left Iowa, there were no known cases in Africa.

The group departed Ghana's capitol of Accra and returned home on March 11. Father Assim would be returning to Granger one week later after spending time with family.

Unfortunately, at that same time everything began changing rapidly in the U.S., said Anita Stahowick, the parish business manager.

"I was communicating with some family back here, but I didn't get the text because of the internet," Stahowick said. "It said, 'You need to get home, because the United States is shutting everything down.'

"I didn't get that text until I got back into New York [and it was too late to warn Father Assim]," she added.

At nearly the same time the president of Ghana announced a COVID-19 positive case and the country's borders were closed indefinitely.

Father Assim had to remain in his homeland and wasn't sure when he would be able to return to his parish. The experience tested, yet strengthened, his faith.

"My prayer was, 'God, may your will be done,'" Father Assim said.

"Every week the COVID situation was getting worse and the president kept saying the borders will remain closed until further notice," he added, leaving him discouraged.

Parish staff were able to keep in touch with Father Assim through Zoom meetings and conference calls, but it wasn't the same without him, Stahowick added.

"My concerns were getting him back," she said. "He was like a lost shepherd and we were the lost sheep. Even though Father John [Ludwig] stepped in and did a wonderful job, we were without our shepherd."

Father Assim was equally concerned about getting back to Granger to serve his people.

He was also in communication with Bishop Joensen about his situation.

"I sent him two emails and he replied to both," Father Assim said. "His response was encouraging, assuring me that he's praying for me and the diocese is praying for me and my safe return. I was very much grateful for that — that really strengthened me."

Finally, on June 25, Father Assim received an email from the U.S. Embassy in Ghana that a flight would depart Ghana's capitol the next day for him and other Americans to return home.

"It was like the good news," Father Assim said. "It was by the providence of God. When I saw that email from the U.S. Embassy, I said, 'Wow, God, you are wonderful.'"

Because Father Assim had spent most of the spring in



Pictured is Father Dominic Assim, pastor of Assumption Parish in Granger, with the children at St. Peter Claver Catholic School in Bansa, Ghana. Behind them is the new well the parish funded that supplies clean, fresh water to the school children.



The mission group from Assumption Parish in Granger included Janet Merry, Brian Carroll, Jodi Bermel, Father Dominic Assim, Kenneth Wiley, Susan Wiley, Anita Stahowick and Thomas Stahowick, who spent time with Father Assim's friend Bishop Joseph Osei-Bonsu, center.

Ghana, the suspension of weekend Masses was lifted the weekend he returned home. He was

able to celebrate his first post-COVID Mass with parishioners on July 11.

Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates retires again

Des Moines Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates will be retiring again next month.

He retired last September when Bishop William Joensen was installed to lead the Diocese of Des Moines.

Just three months into retirement, Bishop Pates was called upon to serve as apostolic administrator for the Diocese of Joliet when Joliet Bishop R. Daniel Conlon went on medical leave. Last May, Bishop Conlon

retired and Bishop Pates continued as apostolic administrator.

In July, Pope Francis named Archdiocese of Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Ronald A. Hicks, vicar general, to serve the Joliet diocese. His installation will be Sept. 29, at which time Bishop Pates will resume enjoying retirement.

The Diocese of Joliet in Illinois serves 564,700 Catholics in a population of about 1.9 million.

Priesthood Sunday honors our spiritual fathers

Priesthood Sunday, an annual opportunity to honor priests, is Sept. 27.

Serra Club members encourage parishioners to send cards of appreciation, notes or a spiritual bouquet to priests in thanking them for an-

swering their vocation call and serving God's people.

Priesthood Sunday is a nationwide event coordinated and sponsored by the U.S. Council of Serra International, an organization of lay men and women whose mission is to foster and affirm vocations to the

ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life in the United States.

The Diocese of Des Moines is blessed with two chapters, the Serra Club of Des Moines and the Serra Club of Council Bluffs.

Back to seminary

Nineteen men return to seminary for the fall semester



The Diocese of Des Moines has 19 seminarians attending seminary this fall. They are: First row (L-R): Dominic Nguyen, Simon Zamani, Max Carson, Bishop William Joensen, Mike Mahoney, Jason Lee, Luke Miksanek. Second row: Luis Cabrera, Liam Dale, Rodrigo Mayorga Landeros, Jonathan Arriola. Third row: Father Ross Parker, Nick Stark, Deacon Brad Robey, Deacon Reed Flood, Nick Smith, Deacon Jake Epstein, Caleb Reichow, Connor Lynch, Stan Asjes and Alex Kramer.

Bishop Joensen, Father Parker and the seminarians were all wearing masks during their time together, excluding the few seconds it took to take this photo.

From Africa to Avoca: Missionary priest marvels at the path God put him on

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

Father Seth Owusu grew up in Wassa Nananko, a village in the western region of southern Ghana. Now, he serves at St. Mary Parish in Avoca and St. Patrick Parish in Walnut.

“When I was a kid, I was very active in church, and also active in town,” he said. “My village happens to be just like Avoca here. Everybody knows everybody, and people know who you are.”

When his parish priest asked if any young men in the parish were interested in taking the entrance exam to go to seminary, there was little interest. “Nobody showed up, I didn’t show up. I didn’t care about seminary,” Father Owusu said.

“Little did I know that the church secretary then submitted my name to the parish priest, that he thought I could go to the seminary. So one day after school, I came home and instead of taking off my uniform, I followed some

friends to their houses. I came back only to be told that Father was here and they were looking for me all over; they couldn’t find me,” he said.

“Father had gone to see who was ready for the entrance exams at the parish center,” he continued. “They told me, ‘Father said you have to go and take the entrance exam.’ They quickly organized some things for me, gave me transportation, and I went. We sat for the exams, interviews were conducted, and that was it. I forgot about it, until another time when I was told one afternoon that I had passed the exams and therefore I should prepare for the seminary.

“That is the story,” Father Owusu said. “Somebody thought I could go to the seminary, he informed the parish priest, they submitted my name, I sat for the exams, and I passed—that was it.”

Father Owusu marvels at how God uses other people and circumstances in our lives to guide us along his path. He was ordained Dec 8, 2001. He has no regrets about where God has taken him.

In 2018 when Bishop

Emeritus Richard Pates asked for two missionary priests from Bishop Joseph Osei-Bonsu of the Diocese of Konongo-Mampong, they sent Father Owusu and Father David Nkrumah (who is pastor at St. Patrick Parish in Audubon and Holy Trinity Parish in Exira). Although he didn’t know what to expect, Father Owusu accepted the assignment with faith: “If it is the will of God, why not?”

That is not to say Father Owusu had no misgivings about the assignment. Expressed with a measure of humor, he said, “One thing is that, as a black—an African—the only one amongst all white Americans, how was I going to survive? But the reception was very, very warm. I discovered that my parishioners are just like my people back home: very accommodating, very understanding.”

Father Owusu spoke of the need for faith and trust in God: “Faith is the greatest treasure and gift that God can give us... Stay blessed, stay safe, and keep trust in the Lord, and everything will be alright.”



Father Seth Owusu said the people of Avoca are like the people back home: “Very accomodating, very understanding.”

Around the Diocese

Sept. 27 Sunday Priesthood Sunday

Serra Club members encourage Catholics to send cards of appreciation, notes or a spiritual bouquet to priests in thanking them for answering their vocation call and serving God's people.

Priesthood Sunday is a nationwide event coordinated and sponsored by the U.S. Council of Serra International.

Sept. 20 Sunday Chicken & Ham Dinner cancelled

LENOX -- Due to COVID-19, St. Patrick Catholic Church has cancelled its annual Chicken & Ham Dinner, normally held the third Sunday in September.

Sept. 26-27 Sat.-Sun. Catholic conference

DES MOINES – Christ Our Life Catholic Regional Conference at Wells Fargo Arena offers in-person and livestream ticket options, \$25. Tickets can be purchased in parishes or at ChristOurLifeIowa.com.

Alpha at St. Francis of Assisi

WEST DES MOINES -- The next Alpha series at St. Francis of Assisi will be Tuesdays from 9-11 a.m. and Thursdays from 6-8 p.m. beginning Sept. 1 and 3 in virtual and in-person formats. Register at eventbrite.com/e/alpha-registration-113640618148. Or email SFAAlpha@saintfrancischurch.org or contact the Adult Faith Formation office at 515-440-1030.

Catholic Daughters elect new officers



Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court St. Anthony #330 in Council Bluffs has newly elected officers for 2020-2022. They are (left to right): Sharon Orton of Corpus Christi Parish as financial secretary; Carol Hollenbeck of Corpus Christi Parish as regent, Layna Beer-Vice, of St. Patrick Parish as regent, Angie Shea of St. Patrick Parish as recording secretary and Felicia Davidson of Corpus Christi Parish as treasurer.

Pies help the parish

Continued from page 1

bution to the parish's mortgage. From humble beginnings, the fundraiser has continued to expand each year. Morse and O'Connor were excited about the pie press which they were able to purchase in 2017 through generous donations.

Previously, volunteers had been rolling and shaping the crusts by hand, but Morse and O'Connor explained how they made a trip to St. Mary in Danbury, Iowa, a parish in the Diocese of Sioux City, which has been making and selling pies for decades, according to Lynn Buth, editor of the *Danbury Review*. There they learned to master the pie press, a pneumatic device

which streamlines the otherwise time-intensive task of rolling out and shaping pie crusts.

Now the team is able to make a prodigious number of pies. Last year, they made 1,400 pies for the annual Thanksgiving sale. Patrons had to choose among pecan, pumpkin, apple, cherry, and French silk pies.

Preparing the ingredients, making, and selling pies on this scale means meticulous spreadsheet accounting. The rows and columns convey the immensity of the operation: "Total flour: 458.46 lbs... Total butter: 251.85 lbs..."

Luckily, most of the ingredients are donated, which

means no worries about making a net profit and the price can remain constant.

"We've not changed our price at all," said Morse. "People donate flour, sugar, and butter, canned pumpkin and evaporated milk. We get a lot of donations, so we see no reason to increase the price for our parishioners."

Spread over several days, different teams of volunteers from all age groups help with different aspects of production, like preparing the crusts, making the filling, folding pie boxes and helping with countless other tasks. The operation can employ 25 to 30 volunteers in the kitchen on any one day.

Like many parish activities, St. Patrick had to switch gears during their annual Fourth of July pie sale due to the coronavirus, but made the transition smoothly.

"We gave it a lot of thought," said O'Connor.

Social distancing called for fewer volunteers in the kitchen and spreading the assembly line out over a greater area. Student volunteers helped to run a drive-in service, delivering pies directly to patrons in the parking lot so they wouldn't have to leave their cars.

Morse and O'Connor have also passed on their pie-making wisdom to parish-

ioners at St. Francis of Assisi in West Des Moines, and look to help other parishes which are interested in starting their own pie fundraisers.

Besides its success as a fundraiser, pie making at St. Patrick also serves as a great community event.

"People are having so much fun just talking and catching up with each other," said Morse.

O'Connor added that, "while this is a fundraiser, I think we all agree that it's as much if not more for community building in the church. I've met so many people I would have never met."

Tocando para los Peces

Continuación de la página 1

del Espíritu. Ahora, como en el muy querido Cantar de los Catares, ella puede declarar, "¡La voz de mi amado! Helo aquí que ya viene, saltando por los montes, brincando por los collados. Empieza a hablar mi amado, y me dice: 'Levántate, amada mía, hermosa mía, y vente.'" (Cantar de los Cantares 2:8, 10).

En medio de estos tiempos turbulentos, cuando parece que

la montaña de preocupaciones y la escala de quejas en nuestros corazones pueden ahogar los sonidos del Espíritu, Jesús necesita más que nunca reclutarnos como sus "músicos" de su misteriosa voluntad en las vidas tanto de nuestros jóvenes como de los ya no tan jóvenes, que pudieran sentir el llamado al sacerdocio, a la vida religiosa, o simplemente una fe más profunda. Él nos invita a ser como la mujer de

setenta y tantos años que un día dijo a su compañera en el café, "¿Has pensado alguna vez en convertirte en católica?" – y que luego se convertiría en su madrina cuando ésta entro al proceso de iniciación católico cristiano y profesó su comunión plena con la Iglesia este verano. Aún hay muchos peces en el estanque – ¿qué tipo de música les estamos tocando?

*We're close in all the ways you need.
Yes, we are located nearby for your convenience.
Through the years, we have formed close relationships with the families we serve.
In a neighborhood, we are there when needed most.
With a skilled and caring staff.
With a warm and comforting atmosphere.
With an area and a place few funeral homes can offer.*



Iles Funeral Homes

Caring for you and your loved ones
www.IlesFuneralHomes.com

Tune in to
**Making it Personal with
Bishop Joensen**



Heard every Friday morning at 9 a.m.

Iowa Catholic Radio
1150 am | 88.5 fm | 94.5 fm
or stream at
www.IowaCatholicRadio.com

Spirit Catholic Radio Network
102.7 FM

Solar panels benefit the environment and the budget

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

All Saints Parish in Des Moines has recently completed its transition to using solar energy.

Mary Treanor, the business manager at All Saints, said the parish responded to a call by the diocese in 2018 for the use of renewable energies in Catholic facilities.

Instead of the conventional rooftop mounting, the solar panels were installed on the ground in order to make future roof repairs easier.

"Our only challenge was working around our septic tanks and lateral lines," said Treanor.

The system became fully operational in May.

All Saints enlisted the services of Red Lion Renew-

ables to install a solar power array for the church.

"They came out and saw all of our land, and said, 'Definitely, we can do something.' So they worked with us for over a year and it's up and going now," said Treanor.

Red Lion Renewables connects investors with churches, schools, and towns seeking to move to the more environmentally friendly solar power, said Terry Dvorak, founder and CEO. It has worked with Catholic parishes in Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Chicago. Solar doesn't make sense for every parish, but when it does, there's no out-of-pocket expense, said Dvorak.

He confirmed that All Saints follows St. John the Apostle Parish in Norwalk, which had previously worked with Red Lion Renewables to plan and execute its solar installation.



All Saints Parish in Des Moines recently installed solar panels to reduce the parish's carbon footprint and save money.

The project at All Saints was spurred on both by a desire to reduce the parish's carbon footprint (thus helping to maintain the environment), and as a

money-saving measure. Since the system became fully operational in May, "our maintenance bill has been virtually zero," said the pastor, Father Robert Harris.

The parish expects to see continued savings.

Blackbaud data security incident

The Diocese of Des Moines was recently notified by one of its third-party service providers, Blackbaud, that a data breach had occurred sometime between last Feb. 7 and May 20. Blackbaud offers cloud-based fundraising and finance services for not-for-profit organizations.

Those responsible for the attack were able to access information belonging to several of Blackbaud's clients, including the Diocese of Des Moines, as well as Catholic Charities, and the Catholic Tuition Organization.

Data that was accessed may have contained information such as name, mail and email address, date of birth, phone numbers, giving history, etc. for donors and vendors of the diocese, Catholic Charities or Catholic Tuition Organization.

Sensitive information that was not taken or accessed in-

cludes Social Security numbers, tax ID numbers, bank account, and credit and debit card information. Blackbaud encrypts such information for donor and vendor protection and therefore none of this information was part of the incident.

Blackbaud paid the ransomware demand to protect customer data and mitigate potential identity theft. The Diocese of Des Moines was not asked to and did not pay any part of the ransom paid by Blackbaud.

Based on third-party investigations with law enforcement, Blackbaud does not believe any data went beyond the cybercriminal, was or will be misused, or was disseminated or will be available publicly. Blackbaud has assured the diocese it has been monitoring the web in an effort to verify the data accessed by the cybercriminal has not been misused.

Upon learning of the data breach, the Diocese of Des Moines launched its own Data Security Response protocols.

While there is a no need for our donors or vendors to take any action at this time, the diocese is sharing this information in the interest of transparency. As a best practice, it is recommended that individuals remain vigilant and promptly report to the proper law enforcement authorities any suspicious activity or suspected identity theft.

Gov. Reynolds returns right to vote to felons

Gov. Kim Reynolds signed an executive order Aug. 5 returning the right to vote for many people who have committed felonies and served their prison sentence. Those convicted of homicide are not included. While returning citizens still are obligated to pay restitution, full payment of the obligation is not required to be able to vote.

"We appreciate Gov. Reynolds issuing the executive order," said Tom Chapman, executive director of the Iowa Catholic Conference. "Our Catholic tradition supports the

community's right to establish and enforce laws that protect people and advance the common good. But our faith also teaches us that both victims and offenders have a God-given dignity that calls for justice and restoration, not only punishment."

Iowa is the only state that by law permanently strips people with a felony conviction of their right to vote. The Iowa Catholic Conference continues to support a state constitutional amendment to end lifetime disenfranchisement in Iowa.

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@polkcountyia.gov.



CARING ABOUT YOUR LOSS AND SHARING IN YOUR FAITH

Prayer to St. Joseph for a Happy Death

*O blessed Joseph who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary,
obtain for me, I beseech you, the grace of a happy death.
In that hour of dread and anguish, assist me by your presence,
and protect me by your power against
the enemies of your salvation.
Into your sacred hands, living and dying,
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I commend my soul.*

Amen

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

CALDWELL PARRISH
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY

Urbandale • Adel • Winterset • CaldwellParrish.com

DES MOINES' ONLY CATHOLIC-OWNED & OPERATED FUNERAL HOME.

5701 Hickman Road
Des Moines, IA 50310

www.DivineTreasuresInc.net
515-255-5230

Diocesanwide Catholic school guidelines and protocols

Changes to improve the overall safety and well-being of students and staff:

- Limit access to school buildings and campuses to students, staff, authorized guests and volunteers
- Limit shared objects and materials used at schools
- Prohibit use of drinking fountains (except for refilling stations)
- Encourage students and staff to bring water in reusable containers
- Send water bottles home daily for cleaning
- Keep student belongings separated
- Cancel all student field trips and travel until further notice
- Follow lunch food program safety guidelines
- Review and monitor re-opening plans throughout the year

New daily cleaning protocols:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the school buildings
- Clean and disinfect the schools
- Use EPA approved cleaning and disinfecting products and equipment

Healthy hygiene practices:

- Enable students and staff to regularly wash hands and use hand sanitizer
- Ensure personal health and safety through handwashing, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes
- Make available hand sanitizer throughout the schools

Protective equipment to stop the spread of COVID-19 while protecting students and teachers:

- Students and staff will wear face coverings when entering/exiting the building and when maneuvering in the hallways (e.g. the bathroom). Face coverings are particularly helpful when physical distancing is not feasible.
- Proper wear and use of face coverings will be taught and reinforced by classroom teachers

To the extent possible, physical distancing will be practiced in the classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, on the playground during recess/lunch and during drop off/pick up. The following measures will be taken:

- Teach physical distancing practices
- Maximize space between student desks as much as possible
- Reduce extra items from the classroom to allow for more space
- Avoid congestion when students use restrooms
- Stagger recess/lunch and designating play areas by grade
- Reduce hallway traffic during traffic periods
- Limit direct contact during drop-off and pick-up procedures
- Promote physical distancing in the office area

Other measures implemented:

- Minimize sharing materials and supplies
- Require materials stay with students or in their classroom
- Stagger release times from classrooms to reduce the number of students in the hallway at any given time
- Encourage social distancing protocols during recess

Back to School



Desks spaced six feet apart at St. Malachy Catholic School in Creston.

Continued from page 1

room.

The number of positive cases and community spread of COVID-19 will be re-evaluated every two weeks by the Diocese of Des Moines.

Ann Andersen, principal of Shelby County Catholic School in Harlan, said their small class sizes allow them to spread desks out at least six feet apart. They are busy planning for sanitation, safety and social distancing. Plexiglass will also be installed in some parts of the school where social distancing is difficult.

"Most [parents] really want their kids in school," Andersen said. "I've had a couple that were concerned about their kids wearing masks, and you just reassure them."

Jennifer Simmons, principal at St. Malachy Catholic School in Creston, said they will also address the social and emotional needs of their students.

"We need to address that first," Simmons said.

"Many kids have not been exposed to groups of people since March," Simmons continued, including recess and times kids are accustomed to being in close physical proximity. "All of these things are going to come into play and so we're just creating a new, safe normal that looks different than it ever has in the past."

It's a challenge for everyone, Simmons added, but teachers and administrators are all working hard to create the safest situation possible.

Their faith has carried them through these difficult times.

"I'll tell you – it's been challenged," Andersen said. "This morning I did the reading of the day with Jesus walking on the water with the disciples in the boat. And the reflection was – Jesus is in the boat... It all comes back to what God is doing to get us through this."

To find updates and letters from the schools superintendent, visit dmdiocese.org/catholic-schools/covid-19.

Hand sanitizer distributed to Catholic schools



Nearly 170 gallons of hand sanitizer made at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women at Mitchellville were distributed to Catholic schools and parishes in the Des Moines diocese.

St. Albert seeking new executive director

St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs is looking for a new executive director.

Deacon Vernon Dobelmann served as the school's executive director under a new administrative structure created through a strategic plan to strengthen the school. After one year, he has decided to spend more time with his family out West.

"Deacon Vernon Dobelmann brought energy and enthusiasm to the newly created executive director position at St. Albert last year," said Bishop William Joensen to the school community. "As he steps down from this role, we want to thank him for his dedication and perseverance.

"Under his leadership, the unique cradle-to-college school stabilized enrollment and staff retention, strengthened and deepened the faith formation program and began a capital campaign," said Bishop Joensen. "We are grateful for all that he has accomplished in his short time with the Diocese of Des Moines and wish him well as he moves to be closer to his extended family, and to wherever the Spirit leads."

A search has begun for his successor.

For more information on the position or to submit an application, email diocesan Schools Superintendent Donna Bishop at dbishop@dmdiocese.org.

**Follow Catholic Schools of the
Diocese of Des Moines
on Facebook at
[Facebook.com/dmdioceschools/](https://www.facebook.com/dmdioceschools/)**

From middle school to Ivy League law school? Sixth grader tackles college class during quarantine

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

When classes across the diocese moved online during the quarantine, Bella Benson thrived, doing well in the new digital style of at-home learning, said her mother, Leanne.

Bella, a sixth grader at Christ the King Catholic School in Des Moines, did so well, in fact, that she often found herself looking for things to do when her schoolwork was complete.

“By 10 a.m. she had nothing else to do,” Leanne said.

After doing some research, Leanne discovered many Ivy League schools were offering free online classes, and told Bella it could fill the time and keep her learning. What she didn’t expect, however, was for Bella to pick Introduction to American Law through the University of Pennsylvania as her choice.

Though taken aback at first by the level of course difficulty, Leanne helped her get going.

“She registered and we got her signed up,” she said. “It was an 8-week online course and she did it ... watching online classes and doing homework online.”

Bella said she was inspired to take the course after reading the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and was drawn to the character Atticus, a law-

yer.

“I feel like I got a better understanding of law and all of the different types,” Bella said. “I did enjoy it.”

She also expected it to be harder than it was – she earned a 100 percent on her final exam and a final grade of 91 percent.

Leanne admits she had reservations about Bella’s class choice.

“To be honest, I was doubtful Bella would be able to understand the level of education taught,” Leanne said. “Bella thrives in her studies, but I was nervous she could fail. Bad mom moment! She definitely proved me wrong.”

Patrick Benson, Bella’s father, said “I knew she could do it. I’m so proud of her.”

The entire experience taught Bella life lessons beyond an introduction to American law.

“I learned to have faith in myself, even when others don’t believe in me,” she said. “I learned that college can be at your own pace and you need to keep yourself accountable to complete the homework and stay on track. This is something I learned in *The Leader in Me* at Christ the King School. I also learned how to be proactive with unexpected time on my hands.”

Bella will be a seventh grader at Christ the King this fall.



Bella Benson, of Christ the King Catholic School in Des Moines, completed an online law class through the University of Pennsylvania this spring as a sixth grader. She earned 100 percent on her final exam.

CATHOLIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE CHRIST OUR LIFE

September 26 & 27, 2020 • Wells Fargo Arena • Des Moines, Iowa

World-Class Speakers:

Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC

Sr. Miriam James, SOLT

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers

Mirjana Soldo

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow

Jon Leonetti

Steve Angrisano



Doubting Thomas
1602-1603
Caravaggio

FOR OUR SEARCHING SOULS

All-Weekend Pass: \$25 Adults \$15 Student/Youth
In-Person and Livestream tickets
ChristOurLifeIowa.com 866-319-0616

Christ Our Life Conference Sept. 26-27

Tickets: \$25 for adults, \$15 for college-age students and younger.
Attend in-person at Wells Fargo Arena or livestream the event
Purchase tickets for in-person or online at christourlifeiowa.com/tickets/
See full schedule at ChristOurLifeIowa.org

Masks will be required in all common spaces, including building entrances and exits, adoration, confession, restrooms, concession stands, exhibitor booths and anywhere on the concourse.

Christ Our Life Conference

Continued from page 1

was teaching, seminarians and parishioners from northeast Iowa were inspired and activated in their faith," Bishop Joensen said. "They found the talks and major liturgies and the chance for individual confession to be beautiful and often a transformative source of grace for them in their lives, and so I look forward to witnessing that firsthand this year."

Bishop Joensen encourages the faithful to find a way to participate.

"People have to prayerfully discern what is their best mode of participation – livestreaming or on-site attendance," he continued. "I think God will touch them wherever they are, but we must give God the opportunity by turning our hearts and faces and attention towards him."

Father Donald Calloway, one of the keynote speakers and author of 14 books, including *Consecration to St. Joseph:*

The Wonders of our Spiritual Father, is planning to speak about the role the saint can play in our lives.

An uplifting conference such as this is needed in today's trying times, Father Calloway said.

"God has not given up on us," he added. "It might seem like that, but he's given us an extraordinary grace right now. The church is coming to such a greater awareness right now in seeing the importance of St. Joseph, and I think that has been saved for our times. St. Joseph has always been loved, but in the background. And with the stuff going on in the world, we're really giving a lot of emphasis to him – and I think it's about hope."

Local Iowa Catholic Radio personality Jon Leonetti has been an emcee since the event's inception in 2010. He's seen the tremendous impact of this event.

"Lives are changed by this conference," Leonetti said. "I've seen it firsthand in the lives of family and friends. With that being said, these are different times indeed, and the organizers understand that the message of hope and love through Jesus and his church are needed now more than ever. So in a particular way, my hope is that those who attend or stream this conference will walk away with a renewed confidence in the presence of God in their lives."

This year Leonetti, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, will also give one of the keynotes about the saints.

"I like to think of their example as the street lamps that illumine the path we are called to walk on towards Jesus," Leonetti said.

Tickets are \$25 for the entire weekend for adults and \$15 for college-age students and younger. Priests, religious, and deacons may attend free of charge. Order tickets at christourlifeiowa.com/tickets/.

View the full conference schedule at ChristOurLifeIowa.org.

Christ Our Life safety measures

After rigorous discussions with various leaders, including Bishop William Joensen and Wells Fargo Arena, the 2020 Christ Our Life Conference is proceeding with a number of safety measures in light of COVID-19.

Precautions range from reducing arena attendance by more than half the typical number to livestreaming as a new ticket choice, from thorough cleaning to mandating that masks be worn in all common areas.

Wells Fargo Arena protocols include:

- Deep disinfection of the entire events center daily.
- Disinfection of seats prior to Saturday's events and again for Sunday.
- Train staff on disinfection and safety equipment.
- Use EPA-approved disinfectant for COVID-19 and many other pathogens.
- Use electrostatic sprayers for 360 coverage on touch point surfaces.
- Pre-and post-event disinfection of surfaces includes door handles, furniture, restroom fixtures and dispensers, elevator buttons, escalator rails, handrails.
- Constant disinfection of touch points during event.
- Elevator operators will wear masks and gloves and be the only ones to touch the elevator buttons.
- Sanitation stations will be located at entries, elevators, escalator landings, docks, restrooms, and auxiliary spaces.

- Less lobby and foyer furniture to comply with social distancing standards.
- Building air filters' replacement.
- Event set-up built in accordance with CDC and social distancing guidelines.

Additional steps that COL will take:

- Limit in-person capacity to 3,500, about half the typical number of attendees
- All seats will be socially distanced.
- Add more entryway ticket screeners to allow easier, social distanced access into the arena.
- Require all attendees, volunteers and vendors to wear masks in common areas, such as when entering or exiting the building, while in adoration or confession, and anywhere on the concourse, such as visiting exhibitors, restrooms, concession stands, etc.
- Livestream the event (same price as in-person ticket) so people may attend from the safety of their homes.
- Limit music compared to other years.
- Use safety precautions regarding lines for and receiving the Holy Eucharist.
- Space exhibitors farther apart from previous years.
- Offer ongoing prayers throughout the planning and holding of the event.



News & Events for Faithful Listeners

Save the Date

Iowa Catholic Radio's
Fall 2020

Care-A-Thon

Live on Air
September 28 - October 2

Your support helps us connect people to
Christ through the airwaves.

Support our Care-A-Thon by calling
515-223-1150 or by going to
IowaCatholicRadio.com/donate

Connecting people with Christ and His Church on their faith journey
www.IowaCatholicRadio.com | 515.223.1150



AIR CONDITIONING - REFRIGERATION - HEATING
COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS - MED GAS - BUILDING AUTOMATION
CERTIFIED BACKFLOW TESTING - PLUMBING
www.excelmechanical.us



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.

PRESIDENT – INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY

Incarnate Word Academy (St. Louis, Missouri), a college-preparatory secondary school for young women, challenges young women of faith to achieve their God-given potential as academically successful Women of the Word, following the example of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, by promoting human dignity, thereby empowering themselves and others to make a positive impact on the world.

Position Summary: Incarnate Word Academy is seeking a President for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond who can provide visionary leadership, overall direction and administration of the schools operation, consistent with the school's mission statement and the charism of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, the sponsoring entity of the Academy.

Minimal Requirements

- Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.
- Master's degree or above is desired.

Application Deadline: September 10, 2020

For further information see:
www.iwacademy.org/PresidentSearch

Interested candidates should submit cover and resume via email to iwasearch@iwacademy.org

Got a story idea?

We are looking for stories of hope, inspiration and faith!

Tell us your idea and we may feature it in an upcoming issue of

The Catholic Mirror.

Email kcollins@dmdiocese.org or acox@dmdiocese.org

Sister Feehan, who served throughout the diocese, dies after 65 years in religious life

Sister Lucille Feehan (Mary Robert), 83, died Tuesday, Aug. 4, at Bishop Drumm Care Center in Johnston.



Mary Lucille Feehan was born Feb. 5, 1937, in Melrose, Iowa. She entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1955 and professed vows in 1958.

Sister Lucille served as

a cook at Ottumwa Heights College, a domestic worker at Our Lady of Lourdes convent, Bettendorf and at St. Vincent Home, Davenport, where she also cared for children.

In the Diocese of Des Moines, she served as a secretary for St. Pius X School in Urbandale and St. Albert School in Council Bluffs. She returned to domestic service at St. Patrick Parish in Imogene and St. Anthony convent in Des Moines. She also served as a dietary technician at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines.

Sister retired in 1999 to care for her mother.

She is remembered fondly for her love of sewing, her generosity, and her Irish humor. Admittedly, her laughter got her into trouble from time to time. Reflecting on the ups and downs of religious life, Sister Lucille declared that "it takes both the thorn and the blossom to make a beautiful rose."

A funeral service was at St. Patrick Parish in Melrose on Aug. 12. Burial was at Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Melrose. Memorials may be made to the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. Condolences to the family may be left online at tharpfh.com.

Longtime Shelby County educator dies

School Sister of St. Francis Leta Heese (Alexandra), who lived her religious vocation as an educator and administrator, died on July 31 at Sacred Heart in Milwaukee.



have come from Shelby County.

She was born on July 9, 1926, in Earling. She was received into the School Sisters of St. Francis on June 13, 1945; made her first profession of vows in 1947; and made final (perpetual) vows in 1953.

In the Diocese of Des Moines, she ministered as a principal and teacher at her home parish, at St. Joseph School in Earling, from 1969 to 1981. She also ministered in Wisconsin and Nebraska.

In her retirement, she served in the ministry of prayer and presence at New Cassel Re-

tirement Center in Omaha, Nebraska, in 2012 and at Sacred Heart, Milwaukee, from 2013 until she passed away.

Sister Leta is survived by a brother, Vince Heese of Earling; many nieces and nephews; and the School Sisters of St. Francis Community, with whom she shared her life for 75 years.

A private funeral liturgy was held at St. Joseph Convent Chapel in Milwaukee. Interment was at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Milwaukee.



Bishop Drumm offers a sense of comfort in a safe, uplifting and supportive environment which includes:

- Daily socialization opportunities with great friends and neighbors
- On-site programs and events to stay active
- Room service with chef-prepared meals



Ask about our move-in specials going on now!

*Restrictions apply.

For more information, call our trusted advisors, Brenda or Brian today at 515.303.4511.



Bishop Drumm

Independent Living Assisted Living
Skilled Nursing Rehabilitation

5837 Winwood Drive | Johnston, Iowa 50131

homeishere.org



Celebrating “I Am”

Let's Get Psyched

By
Deacon Randy Kiel



what God is, he himself is the only one who defines who he is. He is always to be known as “I Am.”

If we do not know who we are through him in this way, but attempt to define ourselves, then we could be headed toward that dreaded term called narcissism. “Oh, look at me! Look who I am!” Yikes! Perhaps we have heard statements such as “Oh, that person is so narcissistic!” or “Well you know, we all have a little bit of narcissism inside.”

Let's be careful with this term. It does identify a psychological personality disorder, but so rarely is it used correctly, let alone kindly. It is not meant to be used casually and is more often a judgmental statement of cruelty.

Let's go back to that rabbit hole. If a person searches to define their identity by their own sense of importance and/or prominence, then they could be headed to dethrone the very deity of God himself as the great I Am. Scripture is quite clear that it is not wise to try to dethrone the

creator of the universe. Of course, we can see what or, should I say “who” is lacking in this wisdom. Narcissism itself strives to be the center of its own universe, not offering the self over for praiseworthy acts but seeks the worthiness of others' praise. When we search for our identity through the world's wisdom or riches, Christ tells us that this is actually when we become lost. “He who finds his life will lose it but he who loses his life for Christ's sake will find it” (Mt. 10:39).

Jesus was teaching a lesson in spiritual living that took psychology a couple of centuries to identify, narcissism. If we look at narcissism through the eyes of science only, our sight of recovery will be limited. When seeing it through the lens of Jesus, we will see hope. The I Am always tells us who we are. He is the author of life and death. Through humility we find him; through humility we find ourselves.

We are admonished to not falsely represent ourselves through deeds or the presentation of who we are. It is known that this commandment is intended to guard against overt lying and perjury, but a grandiose sense of self-importance or even a debased sense of self through false piety might be a covert form of identity deception, a false witness. Have you ever met this person? Have you ever been this person? They are either so high on their

own pedestal that they are untouchable and unbeatable at everything or they are so low that nobody could ever lift them up. By contrast, we surely have met many “real” people as well. People who know who they are in Christ. This is a prayerful matter for us all to consider.

Let's do some self-reflection now. Have I been defining myself through worldly standards and measures? Am I aware of where Christ may increase, and I might decrease? How long has it been since I have swallowed my pride rather than choking from it?

Who am I? The answer to this question is neither from trend, group think, cultural response, nor any form of self-proclamation. It is not a cognitive decision to become a person, but rather it is a spiritual matter.

We are sons and daughters of the great I Am. Great, not because God is measured as the greatest on any earthly scale, but great because he is the one and only creator. Today, may we all say a word of gratitude in our prayers for giving us such a humbled understanding of who we are through Christ.

“Thank you, Lord, for making me, me!”

Deacon Randy Kiel is the founder of Kardia Counseling and serves Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines.

Submitting to the will of God

Marriage and Family Life

By Adam Storey



On Aug. 27 we celebrate St. Monica's feast day, a beautiful motherly example for all of us. I think she's especially important for us today, as so many of us share in the painful experience of family members no longer practicing the faith.

That experience is my own, and I'm often praying for family members and friends who have left the Church.

As I've been thinking of St. Monica, a few lessons have stood out to me which I think are important for us all. The first and most important lesson (and maybe the hardest to live) is that throughout St. Monica's life, she lived in a way that recognized God was in charge, and she was not. St. Monica fervently prayed and fasted for St. Augustine's conversion, and also the conversion of her husband and mother-in-law, all of whom were

eventually baptized. She was tempted to try to take control, like when she initially refused to let St. Augustine stay at her house as a Manichean. Eventually in a dream she was assured that St. Augustine would return to the faith, and from that point on she accompanied him and prayed, even when he tried to literally escape the continent she was on!

I'm often tempted to neglect prayer and instead try to take control of situations through action, foolishly think-

ing that my will is better than the Lord's plans. St. Monica shows us a better way.

St. Monica is also an example of profound patience. She prayed for St. Augustine for 17 years, and for her husband and mother-in-law even longer. That is beautiful to us, who know the end of the story, but imagine what it must have felt like during year 16. Lord, are you even listening?!

This is a common experience for anyone devoted to prayer, and as the theologian Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis notes “we must submit ourselves to the long process of waiting, of repeating our request day and night... His silence must gradually become his crystal-clear Word, telling us to ask for better things, infusing into our hearts his own Spirit” (Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word Volume 1).

Finally, I am struck by how

personal St. Monica's petitions were. St. Monica had the faith to move mountains, and yet when she prayed, she prayed for her husband, her son, her mother-in-law. This reminds me that God's will is most often found in the people right next to us, in the communities we've been given. We certainly can and should pray for global experiences and for our far away brothers and sisters, but we should never let global concerns distract us from the people, and places, that are right before us.

So this August let's hold St. Monica up as an example of hope, patience and prayer. St. Monica pray for us, and for our families, that we might know Jesus more deeply and follow him more closely.

Adam Storey is the diocesan director of Marriage and Family Life. He can be reached at astorey@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5056.

Mapping it out: how to intimately learn Catholicism

Guest Column

By Christina Capecci



Fifteen years after Richard Louv's bestseller, *The Last Child in the Woods*, was published, it is more relevant than ever. I'm fascinated by his insights on the “nature-deficit disorder” ailing kids.

I was struck by a passage about his 1950s Midwestern childhood: “I knew my woods and my fields; I knew every bend in the creek and dip in the beaten dirt paths. I wandered those woods even in my dreams.”

His knowledge of that place was so intimate, so vivid that it continued in his dreams, flashing like a movie reel. I want that for my kids, an elixir for the high-tech, low-attention world forming young minds.

Louv sees it the same way. “Nature is reflected in our capacity for wonder,” he wrote.

Shortly after I started reading Louv, I came upon a book that put legs on my yearning. *Make Map Art: Creatively Illustrate Your World*, written by the sister-brother pair Salli Swindell and Nate Padavick, is a tool kit to turn readers into map makers – complete with compasses, cartouches, legends and landmarks.

Swindell and Padavick's line art

is folksy and simple. Their lines are not parallel. Their squiggles don't always connect. The goal is not perfection. It is, in fact, imperfection – evidence that the maps are hand drawn, not computer generated.

A map bursts with old-timey charm. When was the last time you pulled out a map from the glove compartment and used it as a guide?

Swindell and Padavick's maps feel nostalgic and whimsical, like an invitation to silence the phone and study nature. Maps “define our place in the world, inspire daydreaming and ignite the wanderlust in all of us,” they wrote. “Maps are about remembering.”

Yes!

Suddenly I was compelled to

map out the island that has become our refuge this summer. We have played beneath its gnarled oaks and soaring eagles. We have felt the pulse of the Mississippi River, the island's clock, setting a pace entirely our own.

Mapping it out tested my knowledge of the island. You cannot map something if you do not know it well. Google Earth provided a helpful reference. Studying the island's hooks and nooks made me feel like a Girl Scout again.

Just as the doodles can be crooked, the landmarks can be quirky. Swindell and Padavick call it your “personal geography.” So I marked trees that had meaning to us – “bent oak,” “climber,” “eagles perch” – and delineated the “short cut,” “picnic spot” and “garden.”

The authors point out that anything can be mapped: future goals, passions, memories of your hometown.

It occurred to me what a rewarding challenge it would be to map out Catholicism. Just as a budding arborist turns to a tree field guide, my reference already exists, a comprehensive summary of our faith: the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

This book gets a bad rap as a stuffy rulebook. But it is poetic and probing, a distillation of salvation history, an introduction to saints and Scripture elegantly curated.

The catechism shines a flashlight on life's biggest questions. What is a soul? See part 1, section 1, paragraph 33. What is the goal of human existence? Refer to part 3, section 1, paragraph 1719. It is our map of the oldest Christian faith.

My edition is only as tall as my hand, and when I hold it, I feel awe, mindful of the treasures tucked within.

Wouldn't it be silly to practice Catholicism and miss out on this excellent guide? Wouldn't it be ungrateful – irresponsible even – to inherit this faith but pass it up before reading its handbook?

To be a good steward – of land or of faith – is to do your homework, to get to know something well. That knowledge paves the way to gratitude and caretaking. And so just as I study the island this summer, cedar by cedar, I'll be turning over the catechism, stone by stone.

Christina Capecci is a writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

Ask a Priest

Q. A few years ago some parishes began joining hands with others at Mass during the Lord's Prayer. Mostly now, however, the faithful extend their hands in the "orans" gesture – with hands uplifted. Someone told me that we should not "imitate the priest" with this gesture. Can you comment?

A. Whoever told you that doesn't know how ancient that "orans" gesture for prayer is. One need only look to the Book of Exodus 17:11 to see that Moses used that same gesture when praying for victory over the Amalekites. The parishioners are not imitating the priest or trying to take over his role in the liturgy. They're simply praying as Jesus did when they pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven . . ."

Q. What is the process for decommissioning a church?

A. We live in a world of recycling. Many material things we make use of can be recycled for new purposes. So too with older church buildings. It's important to remember that a physical building is simply the "home" of the church, the worshipping faithful. I have not found a specific rite for decommissioning a church building.

In the past a church would lose its consecration or solemn blessing in two principal cases. One case was through the destruction of the building. Another case is if the local bishop reduces the building to profane use, as is still foreseen in Canon 1222 of the Code of Canon Law. Many dioceses have reduced the number of parish churches because the population no longer sustains the use of a building which once served a lively parish commu-

nity. We have to remember that the church is not in the business of maintaining museums. Sad as it may seem to some, even a once well-loved church building can outlive its usefulness.

Q. When do you call for a priest for the Sacrament of the Sick?

A. Oh my. Well, it used to be that when sick people saw the priest coming, they thought to themselves, "I'm a goner!" Before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the Sacrament of the Sick (then referred to as Extreme Unction) was conferred only once in a person's lifetime. That restriction has been removed. Now, many parishes celebrate the Anointing of the Sick at weekend Masses throughout the year. When in doubt, make the request to your pastor.

Q. Have any popes visited nations during time of war?

A. In medieval times, when there were still the "Papal States" popes actually led troops into battle. Thank God that's no longer the case. In more recent times, Pope Pius XII was in Rome during World War II. Italy was aligned with Germany and Japan against the Allies. So Pius didn't have to make a visit anywhere else. He was in the midst of the war. Happily, popes today try to prevent war in whatever ways they can. Pope John Paul II commented, "When we go to war, everyone loses."

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

Suicide and melancholy

Guest Column

By Father
Ron Rolheiser



We no longer understand melancholy. Today we lump all forms of melancholy together into one indiscriminate bundle and call it "depression." While a lot of good is being done by psychiatrists, psychologists, and the medical profession in terms of treating depression, something important is being lost at the same time. Melancholy is much more than what we call "depression." For better and for worse, the ancients saw melancholy as a gift from God.

Prior to modern psychology and psychiatry, melancholy was seen precisely as a gift from the divine. In Greek mythology, it even had its own god, Saturn, and it was seen as a rich but mixed gift. On one hand, it could bring soul-crushing emotions such as unbearable loneliness, paralyzing obsessions, inconsolable grief, cosmic sadness, and suicidal despair; on the other hand, it could also bring depth, genius, creativity, poetic inspiration, compassion, mystical insight, and wisdom.

No more. Today melancholy has even lost its name and has become, in the words of Lyn Cowan, a Jungian analyst, "clinicalized, pathologized, and medicalized" so that what poets, philosophers, blues singers, artists, and mystics have forever drawn on for depth is now seen as a "treatable illness" rather than as a painful part of the soul that doesn't want treatment but wants instead to be listened to because it intuits the unbearable heaviness of things, namely, the torment of human finitude, inadequacy and mortality. For Cowan, modern psychology's preoccupation with symptoms of depression and its reliance on drugs in treating depression show an "appalling superficiality in the face of real human suffering." For her, apart from whatever else this might mean, refusing to recognize the depth and meaning of melancholy is demeaning to the sufferer and perpetrates a violence against a soul that is already in torment.

And that is the issue when dealing with suicide. Suicide is normally the result of a soul in torment and in most cases that torment is not the result of a moral failure but of a melancholy which overwhelms a person at a time when he or she is too tender, too weak, too wounded, too stressed, or too biochemically impaired to withstand its pressure. Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, who eventually did die by suicide, had written earlier about the melancholic forces that sometimes threatened to overwhelm him. Here's one of his diary entries:

"The force which drew me away from life was fuller, more powerful, and more general than any mere desire. It was a force like my old aspiration to live, only it impelled me in the opposite direction. It was an aspiration of my whole being to get out of life."

There's still a lot we don't understand about suicide and that misunderstanding isn't just psychological, it's also moral. In short, we generally blame the victim: If your soul is sick, it's your fault. For the most part, that is how people who die by suicide are judged. Even though publicly we have come a long way in recent times in understanding suicide and now claim to be more open and less judgmental morally, the stigma remains. We still have not made the same peace with breakdowns in mental health as we have made with breakdowns in physical health. We don't have the same psychological and moral anxieties when someone dies of cancer, stroke, or heart attack as we do when someone dies by suicide. Those who die by suicide are, in effect, our new "lepers."

In former times when there was no solution for leprosy other than isolating the person from everyone else, the victim suffered doubly, once from the disease and then (perhaps even more painfully) from the social isolation and debilitating stigma. He or she was declared "unclean" and had to own that stigma. But the person suffering from leprosy still had the consolation of not being judged psychologically or morally. They were not judged to be "unclean" in those areas. They were pitied.

However, we only feel pity for those whom we haven't ostracized, psychologically and morally. That's why we judge rather than pity someone who dies by suicide. For us, death by suicide still renders persons "unclean" in that it puts them outside of what we deem as morally and psychologically acceptable. Their deaths are not spoken of in the same way as other deaths. They are doubly judged, psychologically. (If your soul is sick, it's your own fault.) And morally, your death is a betrayal. To die by suicide is worse than dying of leprosy.

I'm not sure how we can move past this. As Pascal says, the heart has its reasons. So too does the powerful taboo inside us that militates against suicide. There are good reasons why we spontaneously feel the way we do about suicide. But, perhaps a deeper understanding of the complexity of forces that lie inside of what we naively label "depression" might help us understand that, in most cases, suicide may not be judged as a moral or psychological failure, but as a melancholy that has overpowered a suffering soul.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website ronrolheiser.com.

Jesus – I know you are near

Guest Column

By Kelly
Mescher Collins



The COVID-19 pandemic has hit everyone hard. I can't think of one single person who hasn't experienced loss in some shape or form.

The derecho Iowa "hurricane" added insult to injury – blowing down trees, flattening crops and damaging the dignity of many. The weathered, beat up properties now reflect the morale of many during this very long year of 2020.

In the three days my husband and I were without power and seven days without internet (and counting), I began wondering what message God was sending his people in such unprecedented times?

During this week without power and internet, I felt transported back in time to my childhood on the farm. It was a simpler time.

Raised on a farm in west central Iowa – before internet and streaming services, no air conditioning and no cable on our one television – it was relatively easy to hear and see God. And there were always reasons to depend on him.

Such is the case after the dere-

cho. No power means no air conditioning. It also means no television or internet – not even on our phones since a nearby cell tower took a hit. Admittedly, my husband and I were a little bored at first.

Yet, these are perfect breeding grounds for finding God. Much like my upbringing, there were few distractions and a strong desire to lean on and connect with our Creator.

Growing up, my siblings and I merely had to step outside to see God at work. His creation was everywhere – blooming flowers, chirping birds, domestic and wild animals, towering trees and growing crops. As a child, I often wan-

dered into the mysterious groves on our property to further explore and be at one with nature and our Creator.

I crave those simple times of my past. And here it was, "forced" upon me, and surprisingly – welcomed. I relished the lack of distractions and noise – both audible and digital (excluding my neighbor's generator).

My appreciation for nature – the beautiful sunrise, rabbits hopping through the yard in the early morning hours, and yes, even the squirrels hanging upside down as they eat out of our bird feeders, gives me an even greater appreciation for their Creator – our Creator.

It reminded me of the simplicity of the Lord – and his ability to reach us where we are.

A week prior (electricity and internet still intact) I was scrolling through Facebook at 6 a.m. to discover St. Francis Parish in West Des Moines' live Eucharistic adoration. I felt a tugging at my heart to stop and stay for a little while. For months, I had been consistently seeking a deeper

closeness with Jesus amid uncertain times and difficult situations. And here he was again, inviting me in.

I stopped scrolling and sat with Jesus in the Eucharist for over 30 minutes. And let me tell you, his presence (though online) penetrated my being. I know many say Mass is not the same online. But that was not the case with my Eucharistic adoration experience. The Lord was *there* – with me – intimately. Just the two of us. I have since thought of it as "Facetime" with my Creator. Jesus met me where I was at that morning – unexpectedly – yet extremely welcomed.

And I have no doubt that if you turn down life's volume a notch or two and look around you'll find that Jesus is with you in many unexpected ways, too – ready to meet you where you're at.

Kelly Mescher Collins is multimedia journalist at the Diocese of Des Moines.

Recognizing 75th anniversary of atomic bombings



Left: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe prays at Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima Aug. 6, 2020, the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city. (CNS photo/Kyodo via Reuters) A girl prays after releasing a paper lantern on the Motoyasu River facing the gutted Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima on the 75th anniversary. (CNS photo/Yuriko Nakao, Reuters)



possession and use of nuclear are immoral," the archbishop added, describing one of the pontiff's address during his visit. "The pope stressed the need for unity and working together toward a world free of nuclear weapons and committed the church to the goal."

In response to Pope Francis' appeal, Bishop Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama of Hiroshima July 7 launched the Nuclear-Free World Foundation in collaboration with three peace organizations to support people working toward the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was approved in 2017 by a majority of United Nations member states. The Holy See became one of the first entities to ratify the agreement.

The fund will support peacemakers' work until 50 nations ratify the pact. Through July 7, 39 nations had ratified it, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs reported.

Bishop Malloy said the U.S. bishops remain dedicated to the vision for disarmament expressed in their 1983 pastoral letter "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response."

The document committed the bishops, he said "to shaping the climate of opinion which will make it possible for our country to express profound sorrow over the atomic bombing of 1945. Without that sorrow, there is no possibility of finding a way of repudiating future use of nuclear weapons."

The prelates concluded the webinar with prayers in Japanese and English, respectively, seeking peace, reconciliation and understanding among all people.

CLEVELAND (CNS) -- The path to true peace requires the world to abolish nuclear weapons, an American bishop and a Japanese archbishop said as the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings at the end of World War II approached.

Speaking during a 30-minute webinar Aug. 3, Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, and Archbishop Joseph Mitsuki Takami of Nagasaki, Japan, reiterated long-standing calls by the bishops' conferences of both countries that the world must reverse the path toward a renewed arms race because of the threat it poses to God's creation.

"As long as the idea that weapons are necessary for peacemaking persists, it will be difficult to even reduce the number of nuclear weapons, let alone to abolish nuclear weapons. It would be ideal if the U.S. and Japan could truly reconcile with each other and work together for the abolition of nuclear weapons," Archbishop Takami said.

Recalling the words of Pope Francis, who during his visit to Japan in November 2019 called the world to remember its moral obligation to rid the world of nuclear weapons, Bishop Malloy said that all nations must "find the means for complete and mutual disarmament based on a shared commitment and trust that needs to be fostered and deepened."

The bishops expressed concern that the world has overlooked the massive destructiveness of nuclear weapons as experienced in Japan in 1945 when U.S. atomic bombs detonated over Hiroshima Aug. 6 and Nagasaki three days later.

Maryann Cusimano Love, associate professor of international politics at The Catholic University of America, hosted the prerecorded online event, introducing it with an overview of Catholic peacebuilding efforts in Japan and the United States.

She said church-based efforts are rooted in Catholic theology, which holds that just peace is possible through a sustained commitment to achieve nuclear abolition. She said the

threat of nuclear war has grown in recent years as international arms control treaties have been abandoned and more nations seek to add such weapons of mass destruction to their arsenals.

Archbishop Takami, president of the Japanese bishops' conference, opened his remarks by explaining how he is a survivor of the bombing of Nagasaki, his hometown and the center of Japan's Catholic faith community. He was in his mother's womb at the time.

"I did not witness the horrific scenes that unfolded immediately following the bombing myself. But my maternal grandmother suffered burns all over her body and died a painful death after one week without receiving any medical attention," the archbishop said.

He recalled that two of his aunts died as a result of the bombing. "My married aunt's body was never found and her husband also died," he said.

Another aunt, a nun, was working outdoors when the bomb detonated. "She was exposed to the hot blast and was in pain for 12 days before dying," he said.

At Nagasaki's Urakami Cathedral, where 24 parishioners were preparing to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when the bomb exploded, little remained standing, he said.

Of the 12,000 parishioners about 8,500 died, the archbishop added. The bombing was "spiritually damaging" to many parishioners, who he said lost their faith and left the church.

Archbishop Takami drew widely from the words of St. John Paul II, who visited the two cities in 1981, delivering an urgent appeal that all people commit to a future without nuclear weapons.

The speech prompted the Japanese bishops' conference to designate the period from Aug. 6-15 each year as 10 Days of Prayer for Peace starting in 1982. During the time people are called to pray, reflect and act on behalf of peace, he said.

"Pope Francis went one step further and declared that the

Religious leader reflects on racism, religious life today, future of vocations

(CNS) - If religious life was once a cruise ship -- imposing, steady, populated -- that transported sisters in one uniform trip, today the vocation calls for smaller vessels fit for the uncharted waters each community must navigate, still eyeing the same horizon, said Sister Jayne Helmlinger, president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The destinations that beckon each sister or community will determine the vessel they choose for their voyage, said the Sister of St. Joseph of Orange, California, in her presidential address before a virtual audience of 1,000 sisters and guests. She spoke on the second day of the annual assembly, hosted virtually, Aug. 13.

Just as some may need to figure out how to land their large ships in shallow waters, she said, others might need diving equipment to reach the most vulnerable "who are invisible and lost beneath the waves of capitalism, infrastructures of exclusion, and power systems that deny entry."

Representing 80% of women religious in the United States, congregational leaders in LCWR have spent the last several years discerning the role of sisters in a modern society, one that's increasingly secular, diverse and interconnected.

Now, that context includes a "pandemic within a pandemic," as Sister Helmlinger called it, referring to both the global coronavirus still claiming almost 1,000 lives a day in the U.S., and the issue of systemic racism brought to the center of national discourse following protests.

The assembly's theme, "God's Infinite Vision: Our Journey to the Borders and Beyond," prompted Helmlinger to reflect on borders surrounding racism, religious life today, emerging orientations and the future as women religious -- and the vulnerability that accompanies the hard looks each dimension requires.

Leading by example, Sister Helmlinger put her vulnerability on full display.

What was once "holy disquietude" for Sister Helmlinger -- a sensation in her soul that arose as the pandemic began to shift realities earlier this year -- has now transformed into "holy anger," she said, after watching the May 25 footage of George Floyd dying at the hands of Minneapolis police.

"This part of God's vision is infinitely clear to me: We have work to do, sisters, in our complicity in enabling the insidiousness of racism to flourish within and around us," she said.

Inspired by the biblical story of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus, Sister Helmlinger said that watching the video of Floyd's death she felt that the "scales covering my eyes were peeled away" regarding systemic racism and white privilege.

Then the vulnerable work began, her journey to Damascus.

In the small reflection groups following Sister Helm-

linger's address, Sister Eileen White, a Grey Nun of the Sacred Heart, said they reflected on Sister Helmlinger's focus on vulnerability, how for them that manifests in their not knowing "how to be a leader in this time," while still needing to confront the church's and their congregation's complicity in racism. Sister White is also chair of LCWR's Region 3, which includes Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Still, as one sister said in the group-sharing, "Vulnerability painfully frees me from over-responsibility, needing to know it all, that it's all up to me."

In her address, Sister Helmlinger continued to expand on the inner work she's been doing regarding racism and privilege, wondering if, "at times, we become too uncomfortable in our own skin when we pilgrimage into this terrain of racism, leaving too quickly, crossing back over to a place of comfort and protection," she said, calling it a "false protection" since divisive borders remain intact.

Only when one chooses to "venture into the depths of our being" will they be filled with "God's transformative grace" to love one another, she said.

"It is a journey across the immense divide that societal structures and systems work so unceasingly and insidiously to uphold. This is our Damascus journey, our Emmaus journey, where we find God in our midst."

Though the average age of a sister keeps climbing -- now approaching 80 -- Sister Helmlinger said that the narrative need not be one of diminishment and scarcity, but opportunity and imagination, "a time to harness our collective creativity for religious life itself."

Sisters who listened to her address, later sharing their reflections in small groups, clung to Sister Helmlinger's analogy of cruises and small boats, finding it to be a helpful image for the varying needs of older and younger sisters.

As someone in Sister Theresa Sandok's reflection group said after the address, "there's a lot of empty rooms on that cruise ship, and it's falling apart," Sister Sandok told Global Sisters Report. Getting off and finding new vessels that respond to the needs of the world is the challenge before them, said Sister Sandok, president of the Servants of Mary and member of the LCWR board of directors.

To treat one's home congregation "as if we are islands unto ourselves" is a disservice to religious life, Sister Helmlinger said.

"As religious life evolves in the United States and beyond, so too must our structures and focus as an organization assisting elected leaders in their ministry of leadership," she said.

"Let us board our vessels and know that where one of us is present, we are all present," Sister Helmlinger said. "The holy wind of the Spirit is blowing; will we sail with or against?"

Salvadoran bishops demand justice after seminary rector is fatally shot

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- During his Aug. 8 homily, Bishop Elias Bolaños Avelar of Zacatecoluca, El Salvador, admitted he was still struggling with the Aug. 6 killing of a priest from his diocese, who was also rector of the philosophy department at the St. Oscar Romero Seminary in Santiago de María.

Many young men knew him as a rector of their seminary, but priest friends knew Father Ricardo Cortez, who was in his 40s, as the "philosopher of Agape, the philosopher of love," because of his great smile and friendship, Bishop Bolaños said during a homily at the priest's funeral Mass.

Authorities said they found the lifeless body of the priest near a road, close to a car he was driving, after being alerted early Aug. 7, but he may have been killed the day before. No one has been charged, but Bishop Bolaños made a brief mention in his homily that perhaps someone connected with a parish may have been involved.

Father Cortez is the third priest killed in the country in the last 18 months, and most of the country's bishops showed up to the funeral Mass to demand justice for the killing. Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas of San Salvador read a statement from the bishops' conference, calling the killing a "sacrilege," condemning it as an "abominable crime," and demanding an investigation.

But by dying in such a way, said Bishop Bolaños, the priest was sharing the experience of the many in the country, living in "a world of violence where others are killed with ease. That's what happened to our good Father Ricardo."

Catholic baker's sweet treats make occasions 'a little more meaningful'

BROOKLYN, N.Y. (CNS) -- Genevie Alejandro never expected her future in the baking entrepreneurial world to begin with a bishop.

But in April, she made her first batch of sugar cookies, shaped as priests with their Roman collars, for the birthday of Bishop Steven J. Lopes, who heads the Houston-based Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

"I did not want to mess them up!" Alejandro said in an interview from Texas with The Tablet, newspaper of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York. "Not many people have the opportunity to make cookies for a bishop."

She credits her new business venture as a result of two distinct, unrelated factors: the free time in lockdown due to the global pandemic and being rooted in faith and service within the traditions of her loving Mexican Catholic family.

"My mom is a sweetheart, she's always shown love," Alejandro said. "We didn't grow up poor, we didn't grow up rich, but she always put her heart and made those special little efforts."

Alejandro was raised in a small town called D'hanis, located west of San Antonio, where a lot of her extended family -- from grandparents and great-grandparents to her aunt and cousins -- lived close by.

As a child, faith was instilled by the guidance of her maternal grandmother, who made sure Alejandro followed stern rules like waking up for the early Mass on weekends and not eating an hour before it started. For her start in baking, she credits her great-grandmother, Vicenta: "Every Christmas she made a cookie. We called it 'reposteria,'" which, in Spanish, means making pastries or baked goods.

Alejandro's idea to start baking for others came after college when she was based in St. Louis. There, she met a family who baked cookies for local firefighters. She took that idea with her when she moved back to Texas to work in Houston. When she volunteered with the nonprofit Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Alejandro and her little sister made cookies for Houston firefighters.

After people started raving about the taste of her cookies -- that she bakes with a special Mexican vanilla -- Alejandro decided she would consider doing it more often for friends and families during the holidays. Then the pandemic hit. But the lockdown didn't stop her from baking. Instead, it allowed her more free time to dedicate to her business.

"I decided to name my company Simply Yummy -- I wanted to keep it simple ... and I wanted to make sure that



Priest cookies made by Genevie Alejandro.

the cookies were really good," she said.

One of her customers is her college friend Jo Anne Castillo, a parishioner at St. Thomas Aquinas Church outside of Houston. She ordered cookies from Simply Yummy for her family members' birthdays.

"They taste fresh, soft and filling," Castillo said. "There is definitely a unique ingredient that I don't find in any other cookie, but I doubt Genevie will tell me what it is."

On June 29, her brother, Armando, ordained as a priest for the ordinariate in the middle of a global pandemic. Although he was worried about how that might affect his ordination, she reminded him to surrender it to God and His will.

Alejandro's gift to the church and her brother was sweet -- 90 treats that included customized priest-shaped

cookies, vestments and all, and chalice-shaped cookies representing the Eucharist.

"I'm very honored to be his sister," she said. "Making cookies for his ordination was ... out of love."

A labor of love meant a lot of time around a table, with her family, crafting the special dough.

Her mission isn't to make a profit, but to treat her business as a ministry, sharing her time and talents to make cookies for low-income families or single-parent households and not charge as much as competitors or boutique bakers.

"I have a full-time job and this is mainly a hobby," she said. "If I can help someone and make their birthday, or baptism, or ordination, or whatever it is, a little more meaningful with dessert, that's the best that I can do. That's all I can ask for."

Advertisement



TO DONATE to CTO and receive 65% Iowa tax credits, go online:

www.CTOIowa.org

Accepting pledges with payment by December 15, 2021



The bottom line? It's for the KIDS and their futures!

Holy Trinity Beacon of Excellence for Des Moines Family

When Katie and Craig Vasquez started planning their children's education, they never imagined Catholic School would be part of that plan. They'd decided to enroll their eldest son in 3-year-old preschool at Holy Trinity in Des Moines because that program wasn't offered many places. However, after a short time there, they knew they'd found a home for the entirety of their children's education.

"The program was just unlike any other," said Katie Vasquez. "From then on, we knew we had to find a way to continue Catholic education for all our children."

Fast forward to today. Their oldest child is now going into second grade, and they've had four other children. A lot has changed for the Vasquez's but not their commitment to Catholic education.

Defying Expectations

"Neither Craig nor I attended Catholic school growing up," Katie said. "So, we didn't know what to expect from Holy Trinity. But we can say, the school has widely exceeded our expectations in every way." Katie marvels how each year their children attend, they are more impressed.

"Every teacher our children have had continues to amaze us," she said. They show God's love through their personalized teaching. In talking with other family members and friends, it's obvious this is not found in every school."

When Katie thinks about the progress her children are making at Holy Trinity,



Craig and Katie Vasquez with their five children at their youngest son's baptism at Holy Trinity on Aug. 2, 2020.

she sees them well above average. They love learning and look forward to going back to school. Their test scores are also high in math and reading.

But Katie says what makes Holy Trinity truly special, is the spiritual learning and growth her children receive.

Growing in Faith

Watching the way her children treat each other, friends and other classmates at school, Katie and Craig can truly see the spiritual formation they receive at Holy Trinity. She sees her children growing in friendships rooted in faith and treating each other as Christ would.

"They even hold each other accountable in the way they treat each other," she said. She says it's inspiring to see. Their religious instruction at Holy Trinity has inspired Katie and Craig to grow in their own faith.

"We feel called to deepen our faith so we can learn along with them," Katie said. "Our children attending Holy Trinity has inspired us to become better Catholics."

A Message to CTO Donors

Katie believes if anyone considering a donation to CTO would visit her children's school for just five minutes, they would see just how valuable their donation is. To see all the bright, smiling faces receiving an excellent academic and spiritual education, donors would recognize the huge impact their contribution has on children and families.

"There truly is no dollar amount I could place on the gift of Catholic education," Katie said. "No dollar amount is high enough to describe what my children receive at Holy Trinity."

Without CTO, it wouldn't be possible for many families to afford Catholic education. And when donors give to CTO, their dollars are in excellent hands.

Just look to how Catholic schools got through this spring and distance learning due to COVID-19.

"The teachers and staff at Holy Trinity just went above and beyond to ensure our children were still provided with the high quality education we expect at Holy Trinity," Katie said. "I don't feel like our children fell behind at all. They're right on track despite distance learning."

"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act." - Psalm 37:5

St Joseph

- model of faithful fatherhood & protector of the Holy Family

We follow the example of St Joseph to showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves—in time—protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness.

—Pope Francis

The bond of sincere friendship can be found in our Band of Brothers—the Knights of Columbus. Go online and start the easy process at kofc.org/joinus. See what we can do together to protect God's gifts.



Scan to learn more about the Knights

Lift Every Voice... Join the Knights of Columbus — visit www.kofc.org/join

To Learn More www.iowakofc.org | Follow us on [facebook/IowaKnightsOfColumbus](https://www.facebook.com/IowaKnightsOfColumbus) and [Facebook.com/caballerosdecoloniowa](https://www.facebook.com/caballerosdecoloniowa) | on twitter.com/IAKnights



Walker Bormann
Assistant General Agent
563-219-5800
Eastern Iowa



Jeremy Brockelsby
402-651-7613
Council Bluffs,
Glenwood, Red Oak
& Shenandoah



Dan Ginther
515-460-3411
Carlisle, Altoona,
Elkhart and
Des Moines



Donnie Kenkel
712-579-9066
Council Bluffs,
Atlantic, Stuart,
Greenfield & Neola



Rob Ryan
515-490-8753
WDM, St. Francis
& Sacred Heart,
Grimes, Clive,
Johnston & Ankeny



Pete Seuntjens
712-880-0044
Harlan, Earling,
Audubon, Dunlap
& Logan



Steve Tatz
515-201-6568
Serving
Des Moines
Councils including
Perry, Waukee
& Urbandale



This can be you!
Available in areas
near you!
Grinnell, Colfax,
Newton and
Des Moines



*Protect your Assets.
Get Quality Care.
Prepare for the future.*

Long-term care insurance helps to ensure that financial resources and support are in place when you need them most.

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



Neil Pfeifer
General Agent
Northeast Nebraska,
Southwest and
West Central Iowa
402-379-0180
neil.pfeifer@kofc.org



BORMANN AGENCY

Mike Bormann

General Agent

563-689-6801

michael.bormann@kofc.org

