

# THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Vol. 55, No. 3

March 19, 2021

## Capital campaign gets the green light

Launch held until pandemic nears its end

By Anne Marie Cox  
Staff Writer

Bishop William Joensen has approved a proposed capital campaign after research showed 72 percent of those polled would be willing to support one.

The project won't begin in parishes, though, until the Diocese of Des Moines nears the end of the pandemic and the faithful can gather for celebration of the Eucharist without some of the restrictions currently in place.

The Steier Group, a Catholic fundraising and development firm in Omaha spent three months last fall getting feedback from more than 1,200 Catholics via personal interviews, mail and online surveys.

Potential campaign goals tested included establishment of an endowment to provide more financial aid to Catholic school families, additional funding for the Diocese's growing number of seminarians, priest retirement, and faith formation, as well as support for local parish needs. The Steier Group reported its findings to Bishop Joensen and key groups of diocesan leadership in late November 2020.

After many weeks of discernment, and in consultation

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## Look how far we've come

Throughout pandemic, Catholics have found ways to keep the faith



Monica Morrison, principal of Holy Trinity Catholic School in Des Moines, says protocols in place make her feel comfortable returning to church. She's pictured just before Mass began March 14 with her children Daniel, David and Evelyn at Holy Trinity Church in Des Moines.

By Anne Marie Cox  
Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writers

Think for a moment about what you were doing a year ago today. The World Health Organization had declared a COVID-19 pandemic just days earlier. Schools closed. Sports ceased. Some businesses shuttered and others shifted

online. The world stopped in its tracks.

With necessary restrictions on public gatherings in order to keep the most vulnerable safe, the Church had to find new ways to celebrate Christ's light in the widening darkness.

And find the way it did. One year later, it's plain to see how much the people of the Des Moines diocese have grown.

### Missing Mass and each other

Bishop William Joensen suspended publicly celebrated Mass and sacraments while keeping churches open for prayer, small intimate religious gatherings such as weddings, baptisms, and reconciliation.

Parishioners realized going to Mass was more than a habit. It was something they

loved.

Last spring, Bree Townsend, of St. Mary of Nazareth Parish in Des Moines, began the longest stretch she's ever experienced without receiving the Eucharist.

When weekday Masses resumed for the public last summer, Townsend and her four

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## Military chaplain and devoted priest dies

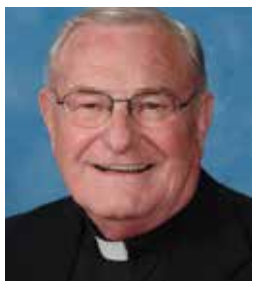
By Kelly Mescher Collins  
Staff Writer

Retired diocesan priest Father James Kleffman of Council Bluffs, who served both his country and parishioners, passed away Feb. 16.

Father Kleffman was the youngest of 10 children and born on a farm near Portsmouth, though the family moved to Council Bluffs while he was still young.

Father Kleffman graduated from St. Francis High School in Council Bluffs in 1952 and attended one year of college at Creighton University before entering seminary at Loras College in Dubuque, where he became good friends with fellow seminarian Monsignor Larry Beeson, who called his friendship "a blessing."

Monsignor Beeson visited Father Kleffman a variety of



Father James Kleffman

times over the years, including in Washington, D.C. and Germany, where he was stationed as a military chaplain.

Monsignor Beeson was always impressed by Father Kleffman's strength and faith. His priestly service included some tough experiences, including shutting down his home parish of St. Francis Xavier in Council Bluffs, which was demolished shortly thereafter.

It also included a very traumatic experience while serving in Vietnam, he recalled.

"He was called upon to

give the sacrament to a dying soldier, and it was his nephew," he said. "That was very difficult for him. I don't know how he did it."

Father Kleffman's niece, Lori Mages, recalled the death of her older brother Billy, 19, in Vietnam.

"He gave Last Rites to my brother a month away from his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday," Mages said. "And Father Jim was just 35."

Father Kleffman escorted Billy's body home.

"He never really talked about how difficult it was to face us when he got here until the last few years," Mages added. "[Father Kleffman] went to a lot of different camps – he wasn't just stationed in one camp.

"I have all of my brother's letters [from Vietnam] and I've read them all," she continued. "And in every one he always mentioned Father Jim [and whether they had seen him or spent time together]. One of the last pictures

we have of my brother Billy is with Father Jim. He was always very avid with a camera, and we always appreciated having those last pictures of him."

His faith never wavered, though.

"Father Jim always said he knew there was never enough chaplains in the service and that was a calling for him," Monsignor Beeson said.

Father Kleffman received military honors at his funeral.

"His faith was relentless – no matter what he dealt with, it was absolutely a total trust," Mages said.

Father Kleffman was a kind, giving "rock of faith" for their very large family, she added.

"I always remember that he would pray sitting with his hands open to the sky, anxious to receive God's grace," Monsignor Beeson added.

Father Kleffman at-

tended major seminary at Mount St. Bernard Seminary, and was ordained to be a priest for the Diocese of Des Moines on June 5, 1960. His assignments from 1960-1968 included: Atlantic, Earling, West Des Moines and a teaching assignment at Dowling Catholic High School. In 1968, he entered the United States Army Chaplaincy, serving at Fort Riley, Kansas; Tay Ninh, Vietnam; and Bremerhaven, Germany until 1972. Returning to civilian life, Father Kleffman served in Des Moines and Council Bluffs. In 1979, he returned to the Army Chaplaincy and was assigned to Worms, Germany and later Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.; Camp Humphreys in South Korea; and Fort Ord, California.

He returned to civilian life in 1995, serving parishes in Missouri Valley, Red Oak, and Imogene until his retirement in 2003.



# Pre-Easter Lilies

The motto for the religious Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who used to staff the former St. Joseph's Academy for girls in Des Moines, is taken from Song of Songs 2:2: "Lilium inter spinas," "A lily among thorns." The lily is often taken to refer to the Blessed Mother. We also know that her husband, St. Joseph, is often depicted holding a staff from which a lily sprouts—suggesting that Joseph's paternal authority is sourced in his care and protection for Mary and her Son Jesus.

The Church celebrates the Solemnity of St. Joseph on Friday, March 19 -- a feast that takes on special luster in this Year of St. Joseph. In his letter, "A Father's Heart," affirming Joseph's patronage of the Universal Church, among the various personal qualities that Pope Francis extols is Joseph's "creative courage" that extends not only to Mary and Jesus, but to all the "least" members of God's family. "Every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect." Joseph is both exemplar and mentor for all of us in the Church, deepening our concern and the will to take responsibility for our neighbor who might otherwise be neglected—or worse, whose dignity might be denied.

While we might get a dispensation from Lenten abstinence on St. Joseph's feast, there are many for whom there is no "meat" or even "daily bread" to sustain them physically or spiritually. Our Lenten almsgiving



By  
Bishop  
William  
Joensen

and other acts of solidarity with persons who need our protection—whether channeled through our diocesan Catholic Charities or other agencies—should deepen the virtue of "creative courage" in us. Inspired, bold initiatives for the 'children' of every age to whom the Holy Father refers allow us to image Joseph in his spiritual fatherhood. They are joined to prayers asking his intercession for all under our watchful, compassionate gaze. Even if, God willing, the pandemic is abating to some degree, the needs of so many of our vulnerable neighbors remain acute. If the next round of stimulus checks finds us in a stable place, not really in need of the added benefit, we might ask ourselves: WWJD/What would Joseph do?

Two days after St. Joseph Day, a different sort of global event occurs on March 21: the tenth annual World Down Syndrome Day, as declared by the United Nations General Assembly. WDS is an occasion for people with Down syndrome, their families, and those work with and care about them to celebrate and raise public awareness by advocating for the rights, inclusion, and flourishing of people with Down syndrome.

The intentional selection of the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the third month

of the year points to the genetic origin of Down Syndrome: Trisomy 21—an extra or third version of human chromosome number 21. Credit for the discovery of the basis for this condition goes to the renowned scientist, physician, and ardent Catholic family man, Dr. Jérôme Lejeune. Dr. Lejeune was a personal friend of St. John Paul II, who appointed him as head of the Pontifical Academy for Life just months before Lejeune's death on Easter Sunday morning 1994.

## We might ask ourselves: WWJD/What would Joseph do?

Called by some "the father of modern genetics," Lejeune would have garnered many more prestigious awards from his scientific peers for his discovery of various chromosomal abnormalities had he not been such a strong advocate for the lives of the intellectually disabled. He was indeed creatively courageous in a culture that sometimes cherishes the flexing of knowledge and power more than the people for whom no therapeutic remedy is available. Today, the temptation to terminate pregnancy upon diagnosis of genetic abnormality remains prevalent. Lejeune's witness strengthens our conviction that our mutual humanity is at stake unless we love and draw such persons into the center of our communities, our church.

In her biographical memoir, *Life is a Blessing*, Lejeune's daughter Clara reflects on the fatherhood of the man who

became anathema to pro-choice adherents, yet who revealed the true nature of freedom: "All the while that my father was spending his days with his patients and their parents, easing their sufferings, while he spent hours with a microscope and a computer looking for a cure. . . while he wiped off the spittle of contemptuous know-it-alls, while he meditated on human nature and the divine plan, he was loving us, too."

Clara continues, "He fed us and lived up to all our expectations in order to give us what he considered to be the most precious gift that a father can give to his children: the gift of knowing that they are loved, infinitely loved by the God of the living. And because he believed that 'the truth will set you free', he also gave us the instruments of this freedom, which he made his own."

No wonder that at Dr. Lejeune's funeral Mass in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, Bruno, a young man who has Trisomy 21, came forward during the prayer of the faithful, took the microphone, and said, "Merci, mon professeur, for what you did for my father and my mother. Because of you, I am proud of myself." No wonder that just a couple of months ago, Pope Francis advanced Lejeune's cause for canonization by recognizing his heroic virtues, enabling this Servant of God to be referred to as Venerable Jérôme Lejeune.

If Lejeune can be said to have carried St. Joseph's staff in his advocacy for the protection of rights and social inclusion of persons with Down's Syndrome,

then we in the Diocese of Des Moines might take further pride in the "lily" of recognition to be given to one of our native daughters who has extended Lejeune's legacy in her own right. Dr. Meghan O'Neill Guzman, a 2002 graduate of Dowling Catholic High School, whose intensity and high level of achievement on the basketball court and in the classroom was translated into her later studies and research at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, is now attending physician at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. She likewise directs the Lurie Children's Down Syndrome Clinic, where her main research seeks to better characterize the comprehensive neurologic status and developmental behavior of children with Down Syndrome. The enduring goal is to provide beneficial therapeutic strategies and interventions for these persons and those who love them. Dr. O'Neill Guzman will be honored after Easter with Dowling's Distinguished Young Alumna Award. Congratulations, chère professeure!

If Dr. O'Neill Guzman might be likened to a lily, I'm not sure I want to describe St. Joseph and Dr. Lejeune as the thorns that surround her. Surely, they each encountered and surmounted the thorny challenges they faced with creative courage. Collectively, they represent a pre-Easter blessing and beautiful source of inspiration from whom we can all take heart--fathers, mothers, and children of God alike!

# Los Lirios Pre-Pascuales

Los Lirios Pre-Pascuales  
El lema de la orden religiosa de la Hermanas de la Caridad de la Santísima Virgen María, quienes eran quienes administra-

ban la extinta Academia St. Joseph para niñas en Des Moines, es tomado del Cantar de los Cantares 2:2: "Lilium inter spinas." "Un lirio en medio de espinas." El lirio se utiliza frecuentemente como referencia a la Santísima Madre. También sabemos que a su esposo San José, se le representa frecuentemente sosteniendo un bastón del cual brota un lirio – sugiriendo que la autoridad paternal de José surge del cuidado y protección que dio a María y a su Hijo Jesús.

La Iglesia celebra la Solemnidad de San José el viernes 19 de marzo – una fiesta que tiene un significado especial en este Año de San José. En su carta, "Con Corazón de Padre," afirmando el patronazgo de José sobre la Iglesia Universal, entre las varias cualidades personales con que el Papa Francisco exalta a José es su "valentía creativa" que extiende no solamente hacia María y Jesús, sino hacia a todos miembros "más pequeños" de la familia de Dios. "Cada persona necesitada, cada pobre, cada persona que sufre, cada moribundo, cada extranjero, cada prisionero, cada enfermo son "el Niño" que José sigue custodiando." José es tanto ejemplo como mentor para todos nosotros en la Iglesia, haciendo más profundo nuestra preocupación y la voluntad de tomar responsabilidad por nuestro prójimo quien de otra forma estaría desatendido – o peor aún, a quien podría negársele su dignidad.

Aunque podamos obtener una dispensa de la abstinencia de Cuaresma en la fiesta de San José, hay muchos para quienes no hay "carne" ni siquiera "el pan nuestro" para sostenerles física o espiritualmente. Nuestras obras de caridad en la Cuaresma, así como otros actos de solidaridad con las personas que necesitan de nuestra protección – ya sea por medio de nuestra organización diocesana de Caridades Católicas u otras agencias – deben profundizar la virtud de la "valentía creativa" en nuestro interior. Inspirados, las iniciativas firmes por los 'niños' de todas las edades a quienes se refiere el Santo Padre nos crean una imagen de José en su paternidad espiritual. Nos unimos a sus oraciones pidiendo su intercesión por todos aquellos bajo nuestro vigilante y compasivo cuidado. Incluso si, con el favor de Dios, la pandemia está terminando de en cierta forma, las necesidades de muchos de nuestros prójimos vulnerables siguen siendo graves. Si la próxima ronda de cheques del estímulo nos encuentra en un lugar estable, sin que en realidad necesitemos el beneficio adicional, deberíamos preguntarnos a nosotros mismos ¿qué haría Jesús?

Dos días después del Día de San José, ocurrirá un evento de cierto nivel global el 21 de marzo: el décimo Día Anual Mundial de Síndrome de Down, según lo declaró la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas. El WDS (por sus siglas en inglés) es una

ocasión para que las personas con síndrome de Down, sus familias y que aquellos quienes trabajan y que cuidan de ellos puedan celebrar y crear mayor conciencia pública promoviendo los derechos, la inclusión y el éxito de las personas con síndrome de Down.

La selección intencional de 21er día del tercer mes de año apunta al origen genético del Síndrome de Down: Trisomía del par 21 -- una versión extra o tercera del cromosoma humano número 21. El descubrimiento de la base de esta condición se le acredita al reconocido científico, médico y ferviente hombre de familia católico, Dr. Jérôme Lejeune. El Dr. Lejeune era un amigo personal de San Juan Pablo II, quien le nombró presidente de la Academia Pontificia para la Vida, a sólo unos meses antes de la muerte de Lejeune en la mañana del Domingo de Pascua de 1994.

Llamado por algunos como "el padre de la genética moderna," Lejeune pudiera a ver recibido muchos más prestigiosos premios de sus colegas científicos por su descubrimiento de varias anomalías en los cromosomas si no hubiera sido tan fuerte promotor de las vidas de las personas con discapacidades intelectuales. Él fue verdaderamente creativamente valiente en una cultura que en veces celebra más las muestras de conocimiento y de poder que a las personas para quienes no existe un remedio terapéutico. El día de hoy sigue prevalente la tentación de termi-

nar un embarazo como resultado del diagnóstico de una anomalía genética. El testimonio de Lejeune fortalece nuestra convicción de que nuestra naturaleza humana está en riesgo a menos de que amemos y atraigamos a esas personas al centro de nuestras comunidades y de nuestra iglesia.

En su memoria biográfica, *La Vida es una Bendición*, Clara, la hija de Lejeune, reflexiona sobre la paternidad del hombre quien llega a aborrecer a los promotores de "pro elección" y que aun así revelan la verdadera naturaleza de la libertad: "Durante todo el tiempo que mi padre pasaba sus días con sus pacientes y sus padres, aliviando su sufrimiento, cuando él pasaba horas con un microscopio y una computadora buscando una cura... mientras él se limpiaba lo que le escupían los presuntos sabelotodo, mientras él meditaba sobre la naturaleza humana y el plan divino, él nos amaba a nosotros también."

Clara continúa, "Él nos alimentó y vivió cumpliendo todas nuestras expectativas para poder darnos lo que él consideraba lo que era el regalo más preciado que podía darle un padre a sus hijos: el regalo de saber que son amados, amados infinitamente por el Dios de los vivos. Y debido a que él creía que 'la verdad os hará libres,' también nos dio los instrumentos de esta libertad, los cuales hizo propios."

No hay duda por la cual

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THE CATHOLIC

MIRROR

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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.

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## Two seniors among candidates for top honor

Two Catholic school high school seniors are among 4,500 candidates nationally for the 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

Anna Schewe, of St. Albert Catholic High School in Council Bluffs, and Aileen (Lele) Nigg, of Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines, were selected from nearly 3.6 million students who are expected to graduate from U.S. high schools this year.

Candidates are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character

and involvement in community and school activities. Inclusion in the program is one of the highest honors for graduating high school seniors.

Each year, up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars are chosen. A panel of educators will select about 600 finalists in early April and finalists will be announced in May.

Schewe is a parishioner at Corpus Christi Parish/Carter Lake.

Nigg is a parishioner at Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines.

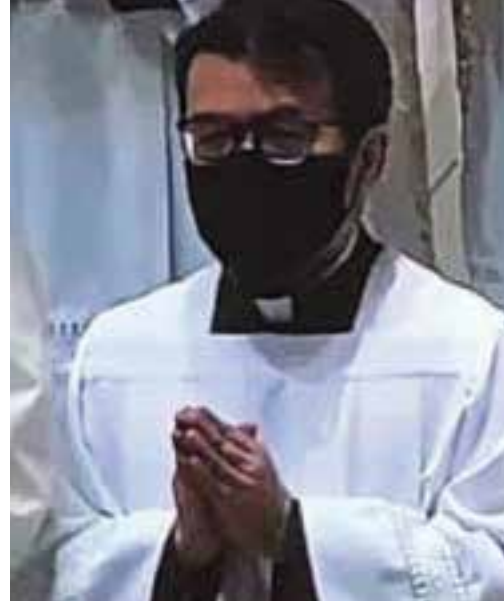


Anna Schewe



Aileen Nigg

## Seminarians take next step toward ordination



Seminarian Luis Cabrera was instituted as Lector on Feb. 9 at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Cabrera was one of 16 theology seminarians installed as Lectors, the second of four distinct rites that lead up to ordination to the priesthood.



Seminarian Michael Mahoney received the Ministry of Acolyte on March 7. Mahoney is in his second year of formation at the Pontifical North American College at the Vatican. He has two more years before being ordained to the priesthood.

## Capital campaign will begin when pandemic ends

Continued from page 1

with pastors and other diocesan leaders, Bishop Joensen gave approval to move forward with the campaign.

In a recent letter to study participants, he shared: "Having taken to heart all the constructive comments and suggestions generated during this study, I have prayerfully discerned that we will move forward with a diocesan-wide capital campaign to enhance and strategically impact Catholic education, evangelization, priest retirement and seminarian education in our local Church."

Although the results of the study were positive, many respondents voiced their concern

about the campaign in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"I am keenly aware of the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to parishes and households," Bishop Joensen said in his letter to participants. "Through the first half of 2021, we will focus solely on the 'preparation/silent' phase of the campaign. I am committed in my position that parish-level campaign participation will not begin until we can regather to celebrate the Eucharist without some of the restrictions presently in place. We will continue to monitor our situation and adjust our campaign timeline accordingly."

The preparation phase of the campaign began in mid-Janu-

ary. The Stewardship Office, in concert with the Steier Group and several clergy and lay leaders, is in the process of assembling a campaign leadership team with representation across the Diocese.

The first step was the formation of a Clergy Committee. Led by co-chairs Father Dan Kirby and Father Joe Pins and consisting of pastors from every region in the diocese, the Clergy Committee will work over the next few months to de-

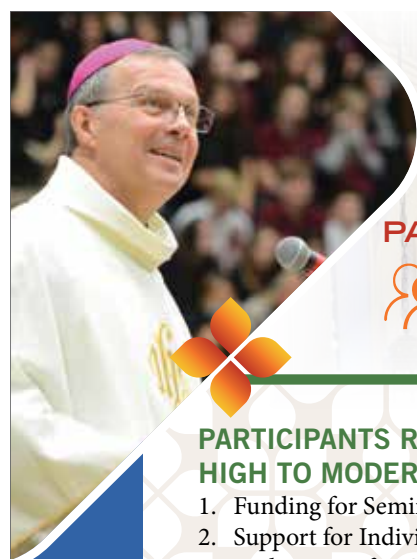
termine and finalize policies and procedures for the campaign. Their hard work and due diligence will result in recommendations for Bishop Joensen to review and approve.

Many questions, such as those surrounding goals, as well as how and when parishes will be asked to participate, will be answered in the next several months.

Bishop summarized his letter to participants with the following: "This is an opportunity for those to whom we minister and ourselves to realize the abundant life, mercy, strength, hope and love of Jesus Christ."

Bishop William Joensen

Watch for updates on the diocesan website dmdiocese.org, in The Catholic Mirror, and via social media in the weeks and months to come.



### Planning Study Results BY THE NUMBERS:

#### PARTICIPATION

153 personal interviews with clergy and laity

1,038 surveys were completed via, mail, online and virtual listening sessions

#### PARTICIPANTS RATED ALL OF THE PROPOSED GOALS AS HIGH TO MODERATE IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:

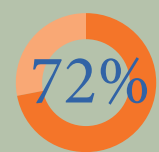
1. Funding for Seminarian Education and Priest Retirement
2. Support for Individual Parish Needs
3. Endowment for Catholic Schools
4. Establishment of a Faith Formation Fund



*It takes faith to magnify faith in a world searching for a place to call home.*



are in favor of a campaign



will make a personal gift



185 respondents indicated that they would assist with personal solicitations of gifts on behalf of the campaign



66 clergy and lay leaders respondents indicated that they would serve on a diocesan-level clergy or campaign committee

SUPPORT FOR A CAMPAIGN





# Legislative roundup from the Capitol

By Tom Chapman  
Contributing Writer

During the next couple of weeks, the House and Senate will be focusing on debating bills passed by committee.

## Housing

The House Judiciary Committee passed HF 442, a bill which would provide additional legal protections for mobile home park residents. An amendment was approved which makes the bill just a blank placeholder for future negotiations as they work something out.

## Education

The same committee also passed a bill regarding fundamental parental rights (HF 714). The bill is intended to codify current case law in Iowa that the right to direct the care and education of a child is a parent's fundamental right.

HSB 240 passed the House Education Committee. The bill doubles the tuition and textbook tax credit taken by parents to 25% of the first \$2,000 in educational expenses. The committee also passed HSB 242 to allow private nonprofit groups to run charter schools.

The Student First scholarship program, HSB 243, passed a subcommittee but did not get taken up for a vote by the full

Education Committee. The program would offer state-funded scholarships for some public school students

to attend a nonpublic school. A diverse number of parents were present to speak in favor of the bill. Two students from Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines also did a great job speaking to legislators.

What the Legislature finally passes regarding parental choice in education has not yet been decided.

The Iowa House has passed and sent to the Senate several bills supported by the ICC.

- HF 452, which would provide authorities with additional resources to complete investigations of trafficking in humans.

- HF 318, providing a state-funded preschool opportunity for "younger" five-year-olds

HF 294, which requires insurance companies to pay the same rate for mental services that are provided by telehealth as in-person.

The Iowa Senate has passed and sent to the House these bills supported by the ICC.

- SF 541, setting up a task force on human trafficking
- SF 522, outlawing el-



Tom Chapman

der abuse in the areas of theft, consumer fraud and neglect. The thinking on this is to protect adults who are made vulnerable by age, much as we do children.

- SF 577 passed the Senate Ways and Means Committee. It provides the opportunity for grieving parents to receive a certificate of non-viable birth for a child who was born but not alive outside the womb.

The ICC continued to lobby against SF 492 and HF 754, which would but unemployment insurance benefits for bigger families and institute a one-week waiting period for benefits. A new fiscal note predicts that the one-week waiting period itself would keep more than \$23 million in benefits from workers who have lost a job through no fault of their own.

The ICC is also working against HF 434, which would allow for over-the-counter access to contraceptives. The legislation will undercut the physician-patient relationship. Any prescription medication carries risks, which is why they require a prescription. A pharmacist is also relying on a questionnaire that may or may not be answered accurately by the patient. It might be tough to adequately assess a patient's risk.

*Tom Chapman is the executive director of the Iowa Catholic Conference.*

# Church awaits word on national historic designation

St. Anthony Catholic Church in Des Moines is on its final leg of a journey toward being added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The parish waits for the National Park Service to decide if St. Anthony Church can carry the historic title.

St. Anthony Parish seeks the historic designation because of its design as a Lombardy Romanesque Revival church.

Msgr. Frank Chiodo spearheaded the effort.

St. Anthony Parish has long served the immigrant community. It has deep roots in the Italian community, having been started in 1906 as an Italian missionary church. Italian immi-

grants came to Des Moines in the early 1900s to work on the railroads. Today, the parish welcomes Hispanic immigrants.

The parish maintains a school that offers an innovative Spanish immersion program.

Other properties in the diocese that are on the registry include: St. Patrick Church in Imogene, St. Boniface Catholic Church in Westphalia, St. Patrick Church and rectory in Perry, the Basilica of St. John in Des Moines, St. Ambrose Cathedral and rectory in Des Moines, the Catholic Pastoral Center in Des Moines, St. Patrick Church in Irish Settlement and St. Peter Church and rectory in Council Bluffs.



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Des Moines

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April 10, 2021

Diocesan Council Of Catholic Women

Calling ALL Catholic Women to join us for this **free** conference from 9:30-11:30 sponsored by the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW). Barbara Heil is the featured speaker. She is a former Pentecostal minister and now a dynamic and inspirational Catholic speaker.

**You must register in advance for this meeting:**  
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**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](mailto:advocate@dmdiocese.org).



## Walk for clean water

The global pandemic has highlighted a critical need in parts of the world for access to clean water.

To raise awareness of global water issues and to raise funds for the Sisters of St. Francis' Sister Water Project, the sisters invite the public to "Walk for Sister Water" now through March 22, in honor of World Water Day on March 22.

The Sister Water Project was launched in 2006 by the Sisters of St. Francis and their associates to bring safe water to the villagers of Tanzania and Honduras.

Here's how the walk works: Dedicate time to walk the distance of 5K (3.1 miles) any time through March 22. This can be in a neighborhood, park, trail or even on a treadmill. It can be done all at once or over the course of several days. While walking, consider that this is the distance that some men, women, and children in parts of the world have to walk daily to obtain clean water.

Take photos of yourself walking and post on social media with the hashtag #WalkForSisterWater or email to communications@osfdbq.org.

After your walk, consider making a donation to the Sister Water Project by mail: 3390 Windsor Ave, Dubuque, Iowa 52001 or online at osfdbq.org/swpdonate.

"This walk is about raising awareness and standing in solidarity," said Sister Maureen Leach.

For more information, contact Sister Maureen 563-583-9786 or leach@osfdbq.org. Visit the Sister Water Project website at osfdbq.org/sisterwaterproject.

Listen to Bishop William Joensen's interview with Sister Maureen about the water project at iowacatholicradio.com/making-it-personal.

**The Catholic Mirror is looking for stories of faith and inspiration.**

Contact Kelly Mescher Collins at kcollins@dmdiocese.org with a story idea.

## Tax time is a good time to consider the CTO

By Lauren Elliott  
Contributing Writer

"Have you filed your taxes yet?"

It is a common question this time of year. Generally, there are two responses:

"Nope. I wait as long as possible because I always have to pay."

"Absolutely! I get a refund so I want to file as soon as possible."

Those who typically owe additional taxes may want to consider taking advantage of the 65% Iowa tax credit by donating to the Catholic Tuition Organization. CTO donors subtract 65% of their gift directly from their calculated state income tax. This most often results in an income tax refund rather than an additional payment.

Those who received a tax refund already can increase

the amount of their refund, up to the full amount of their tax liability with the 65% Iowa tax credits from CTO. Not only do they receive tax benefits (the highest credit in Iowa), but a gift to the CTO means they are providing families in the diocese with tuition assistance to Catholic schools.

### Who receives tuition assistance?

Consider this: the average family size of current CTO recipient families is 4.3 members with an average gross income of \$58,006. Assuming one high school and one elementary student, their average tuition is \$11,966. Without CTO, this family would be spending 21% of their total gross income just on tuition.

Many families could not afford to send their children to Catholic schools if not for CTO.

Families can apply by

April 2, and will know by May 31, what their tuition assistance will be for this fall. Information on how to apply can be found online at CTOIowa.org.

### Why donate to CTO?

Donors contribute to CTO primarily to support families and Catholic schools that instill strong moral values into children from when they first begin their education all the way to high school graduation.

Donors value the academic excellence at our schools as well and desire to give the gift of helping families in our diocese afford high quality, faith-based education for their children.

The 65 percent Iowa tax credits on every dollar donated is why many donors give more to CTO.

A \$1,000 contribution actually costs less than \$350, yet the full amount of the contribution helps families in need.

### Impact on Catholic schools

In nearly half of the schools in our diocese, more than 50% of the student body receives CTO and those families rely on CTO to afford tuition. But what if CTO wasn't available to those families?

What would happen if half the student body could no longer afford tuition and had to leave? What would happen to Catholic schools?

How can you help?

Donors can give online at CTOIowa.org or print a donation form and mail with a gift to the Catholic Tuition Organization, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Instructions for giving appreciated stock are also at CTOIowa.org.

*Lauren Elliott is a staff member at the Catholic Tuition Organization*



## Blessman International Catholic Pilgrimage

- Visit Catholic heritage sites
- See the sites of Blessed Benedict Daswa
- Take a trip to Kruger National Park and see South African wildlife
- Do missional outreach at Blessman International sites

Get your vaccine and travel with us!  
(Vaccine not required)



Trip Cost:  
\$6000 USD covers all necessary in-country costs including airfare\*

\*Note that if cost of flights surge there could be a surcharge





## Around the Diocese

### March 19 Friday

#### Year of St. Joseph

Bishop Joensen will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph at 3 p.m. at St. Joseph Church in Winterset. The Mass can be viewed via the parish's social media or on its website [saintjosephwinterset.net](http://saintjosephwinterset.net). Find resources for the year's celebration at [dmdiocese.org/resources/bishop-initiatives/year-of-st-joseph](http://dmdiocese.org/resources/bishop-initiatives/year-of-st-joseph).

### March 26 Friday

#### Christ Mass

Christ Mass will be at St. Patrick Church in Imogene at 2 p.m. It is not open to the public due to the pandemic. The faithful are invited to watch the livestream through the parish's Facebook page [@stpatrickimogeneia](https://www.facebook.com/stpatrickimogeneia).

### April 9-11 Friday-Sunday

#### Radix Retreat for HS Seniors

Registration is still open but filling fast for April's Radix retreat for high school seniors. All high school seniors of the Diocese are invited for this weekend of prayer focused on cultivating our roots in Christ and his Church so that they can remain strong after high school. Go to [dmdiocese.org/radix](http://dmdiocese.org/radix) for information and registration.

### April 10 Saturday

#### DCCW Conference

The Des Moines Diocesan Council of Catholic Women's Spring Conference is open to all Catholic women for a virtual encounter to renew and refresh in these difficult times. Featured speaker is Barbara Heil, a former Pentecostal minister and now a Catholic speaker who will talk on "Women of the Kingdom, Living as Daughters of God." Bishop William Joensen will be joining. It will be a morning only event (9:30-11:30 a.m.) and it is free. Register on the diocesan website and a link will be sent to you to join us. This might be a great opportunity to have a watch party at your church hall or just tune in at home. Grab a cup of coffee and enjoy the morning with other Catholic women around the diocese. Register in advance for this meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/648123456789>

### April 16 Friday

#### Tear of Joy

COUNCIL BLUFFS – Arrow Osborne, a former marine and Ohio policeman, will share his story of Our Lady of the Tear of Joy at 5 p.m. at

St. Patrick Parish. For more information, go to [tearofjoy.net](http://tearofjoy.net) or call Kathy Graeve at 402-680-4370.

### April 17 Saturday

#### Tear of Joy

COUNCIL BLUFFS – Arrow Osborne, a former marine and Ohio policeman, will share his story of Our Lady of the Tear of Joy at Gabriel's Corner following the 8 a.m. Mass at the pro-life pregnancy center. For more information, go to [tearofjoy.net](http://tearofjoy.net) or call Kathy Graeve at 402-680-4370.

#### Tear of Joy Talk

NEOLA -- Arrow Osborne will present his story of Our Lady of the Tear of Joy at St. Patrick Parish beginning at 6:30 p.m.

### April 20 Tuesday

#### Faith & Racial Equity: Exploring Power & Privilege

The Center for Social Ministry's eight-week program awakens small groups to economic systems, public policies, cultural norms, and hidden biases that empower some and oppress others.

The first half of the module introduces a framework for understanding and recognizing racial disparities in power and privilege.

Sessions 5-8 take a deeper dive into specific issues related to power and privilege.

The program is offered online from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, or to register, go to [csm.coursetorm.com](http://csm.coursetorm.com).

### April 23 Friday

#### Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

AFTON – St. Edward Parish in will be starting Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 1 catechist formation. The training will be on Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (April 23-24, May 7-8, Aug. 20-21, Sept. 10-11, Nov. 12-13 and Feb. 4-5, 2022). Level 1 catechist formation is for adults seeking to serve children who are three to six years old. This training is at least 90 hours. This is the foundational training for all succeeding levels of catechist formation. To find out more about CGS go to [cgsusa.org](http://cgsusa.org) or to register for the class go to [uccat.org](http://uccat.org).

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#### Virtual Piano Benefit Concert for Mary's Meals

All are welcome to a virtual concert played on four grand pianos from four different parishes:

St Francis of Assisi, St Boniface, St Augustin, and Our Lady's Immaculate Heart.

Janet Bradford is playing five sacred pieces. Three of them are her original arrangements of sacred hymns. There is an opportunity for a free will donation to help Mary's Meals. To see the virtual concert and learn of her journey in creating the concert go to <https://christourlifeio.wa.com/2021/02/my-widows-mite-lent-2014/>

#### Cathedral Holy Hours

All are welcome to join Bishop Joensen at St. Ambrose on Monday nights for an hour of Eucharistic Adoration and evening prayer. These Holy Hours will be hosted from 5-6 p.m. Evening prayer will be livestreamed at [Facebook.com/dmdiocese](https://www.facebook.com/dmdiocese).

#### Registration for Catholic Youth Camp opens

Registration for Catholic Youth Camp at the St. Thomas More Center in Panora is open. Sponsorships and registration are available at [stmcenter.com](http://stmcenter.com).

## Lenten Fish Fry Dinners

The following are parish Lenten fish fry dinners on Fridays during Lent until March 26 except where otherwise noted. Also all dinners are drive through only unless otherwise noted.

#### Adair, St. John – 515-523-1943

Dinners are available Feb. 26, March 12 and 26 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal. Please approach from the west through the alley north of the parish hall. Alternate: shrimp

#### Adel, St. John – 515-993-4482

Dinners are available on Feb. 9, 26, March 5 and 26 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is a free-will donation. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwich

#### Afton, St. Edward - 641-782-5278

Dinners are available on March 5 and 19 at the Afton Community Center, 240 N. Douglas St., from 5:30-7 p.m. Drive in from the west side of the community center and pick up will be at the north door in the alley. Cost is a free-will donation

#### Altoona, SS John & Paul - 515-967-3796

Dinners are available from 4:30 – 7 p.m. Suggested donation is \$10 per meal. Teens will sell small bags of cookies for a free will offering to support Youth Ministry service trips.

#### Ankeny, Our Lady's Immaculate Heart - 515-964-3038

Dinners are available on Feb. 26, March 12 and 26 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is a free will donation. Alternate: grilled cheese.

#### Atlantic, SS Peter & Paul – 712-243-4721

Dinners are available from 5:30 – 7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal.

#### Carlisle, St. Elizabeth Seton – 515-989-0659

Dinners are available from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal. Alternate: mac & cheese. Pie will be available for a free will donation.

#### Council Bluffs, Corpus Christi – 712-323-2916

Dinners are available on Feb. 19, March 5 and 26 from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is a \$10.

#### Creston, Holy Spirit -- 641-782-5278

Dinners are available on March 12 and 26 at from 5-7 p.m. Drive from the west side of the church and pick up will be at the west basement door by the kitchen. Cost is \$9.

#### Granger, Assumption – 515-999-2239

Dinners are available from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is a free-will donation. Alternate: cheese pizza; dessert is included.

#### Hamburg, St. Mary 712-382-2871 or 382-250-0169

Dinners are available from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is a free-will donation. Alternate: cheese pizza; dessert is included.

#### Harlan, St. Michael – 712-755-5244

Dinners are available on from 5:30-7 p.m. for dine-in as well as drive thru. Cost is a \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 4-10 and free for children under 3 with paid adult. Alternate: fish taco (dine-in only), mac & cheese

#### Indianola, St. Thomas Aquinas – 515-961-3026

Dinners are in the parish center from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal.

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#### Des Moines Area:

#### Des Moines, All Saints – 515-265-5001

Dinners are served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per meal

#### Des Moines, St. Theresa – 515-279-4654

Dinners are served from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Cost is a free-will offering. Drivers are asked to enter the parking lot west of the church closest to the Parish Rectory on 60<sup>th</sup> Street and head up the hill to the parking lot closest to the school playground. We'll have volunteers in the parking lot directing traffic. Alternate: fish & chip dinner with coleslaw or gourmet macaroni and cheese or a 7" cheese pizza and mac and cheese

#### West Des Moines, Sacred Heart – 515-225-6414

Dinners are served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/meal Alternate: cheese pizza and mac & cheese. There will be a "walk thru" to pay and pick up meals in the parish center.

# Making it Personal

with Bishop Joensen



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#### Interview topics include:

- Carrie Gress, author of "The Anti-Mary Exposed"
- Paul Lee, Iowa's youngest and first African American State Deputy for the Knights of Columbus
- Father Al Schmitt, first Catholic priest to die in WWII
- "Fatima" movie producer Rose Ganguzza
- Ascension author / bi-racial priest Father Josh Johnson
- Dan Burke, author of "Spiritual Warfare and Discernment of Spirits"

For more information on Lenten activities for families, prayer, fasting and service, go to [dmdiocese.org/Lent](http://dmdiocese.org/Lent)



# Faithful grow closer to Jesus through St. Joseph



Betty Foxhoven leads the rosary, which was followed by a presentation on St. Joseph and the Litany of St. Joseph before lunchtime at St. Joseph Parish in Earling.

By Anne Marie Cox  
Staff Writer

Last fall, when Betty Foxhoven's mother was dying, Betty was in the middle of a 33-day process of consecrating her life to St. Joseph.

"She had a very peaceful death," Foxhoven said of her 94-year-old mother. "I came back that night to my daily consecration to St. Joseph and finished on Nov. 1."

Foxhoven, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Earling, is confident that the support and intercession of her parish's patron saint helped her through that tough time.

"I have to say, I felt a closeness of St. Joseph during that time of my mother's last days on earth and getting me through the grieving process," she said. "Yep, I guess I kind of got hooked" on St. Joseph.

Foxhoven's parish is among several that are offering a process to parishioners for consecration to St. Joseph. Pope Francis renewed interest in the foster father of Jesus when he declared this the Year of St. Joseph in celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration that the saint would be the patron of the Universal Church.

About 20 people have been gathering weekly for prayer

## Celebrate in spirit

Bishop William Joensen will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph at 3 p.m. at St. Joseph Church in Winterset. View the Mass on the parish's social media or on its website [saint-josephwinterset.net](http://saint-josephwinterset.net).

## Year of the Family starts March 19

In celebration of the fifth anniversary of the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*), Pope Francis is kicking off a Year of the Family beginning March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis addressed the challenges families face, the love that exists within families, and pastoral care of families following two synods on the family held in 2014 and 2015.

and lunch (observing social distancing and mask guidelines) with the help of the Catholic Daughters group. The consecration prayers end just in time for the March 19 Solemnity of St. Joseph.

St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale is encouraging small groups to do the consecration.

"I had some friends do it and having daily or weekly accountability partners helps you stay focused and remember to reflect and pray every day," said Sam Montang, the parish's coordinator of youth ministry.

Her parish will begin the process at the end of March, concluding on St. Joseph's second feast day, St. Joseph the Worker on May 1. They'll offer the consecration process again in the fall.

"A lot of people I think are unfamiliar with consecration in general," Montang said. "Over the course of a year, we'll be talking about what it means."

What does it mean to consecrate one's life to St. Joseph?

"It's really placing our lives in the hands of Jesus through St. Joseph," said Father Joe Pins,



Vickie and Jim Shepherd, of St. Joseph Parish in Des Moines, are consecrating their lives to St. Joseph during this year honoring the model of fatherhood.

pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Des Moines. The faithful can do a consecration to Mary and St. Joseph because through them, one can grow closer to Jesus.

Vickie Shepherd, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Des Moines, was thrilled when

her parish began a consecration. She and her husband are doing it.

"I just think this is so exciting that we can do this. When Pope Francis said this was going to be the Year of St. Joseph, that was even more exciting," she said.

"We've seen so many conversions through Mary in our family and with some of our friends, it's just been amazing in the last year," Shepherd said. "I'm excited to see what happens as we go through this consecration to St. Joseph."



## The Diocesan Celebration of *Divine Mercy Sunday* Sunday, April 11th

Christ the King Catholic Church  
5711 S.W. 9th Street

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 p.m.  
Divine Mercy Chaplet: 3:00 p.m.  
Mass at 3:30 p.m.

Sponsored by Divine Mercy Des Moines  
For more information visit our website  
[www.divinemercydesmoines.com](http://www.divinemercydesmoines.com)



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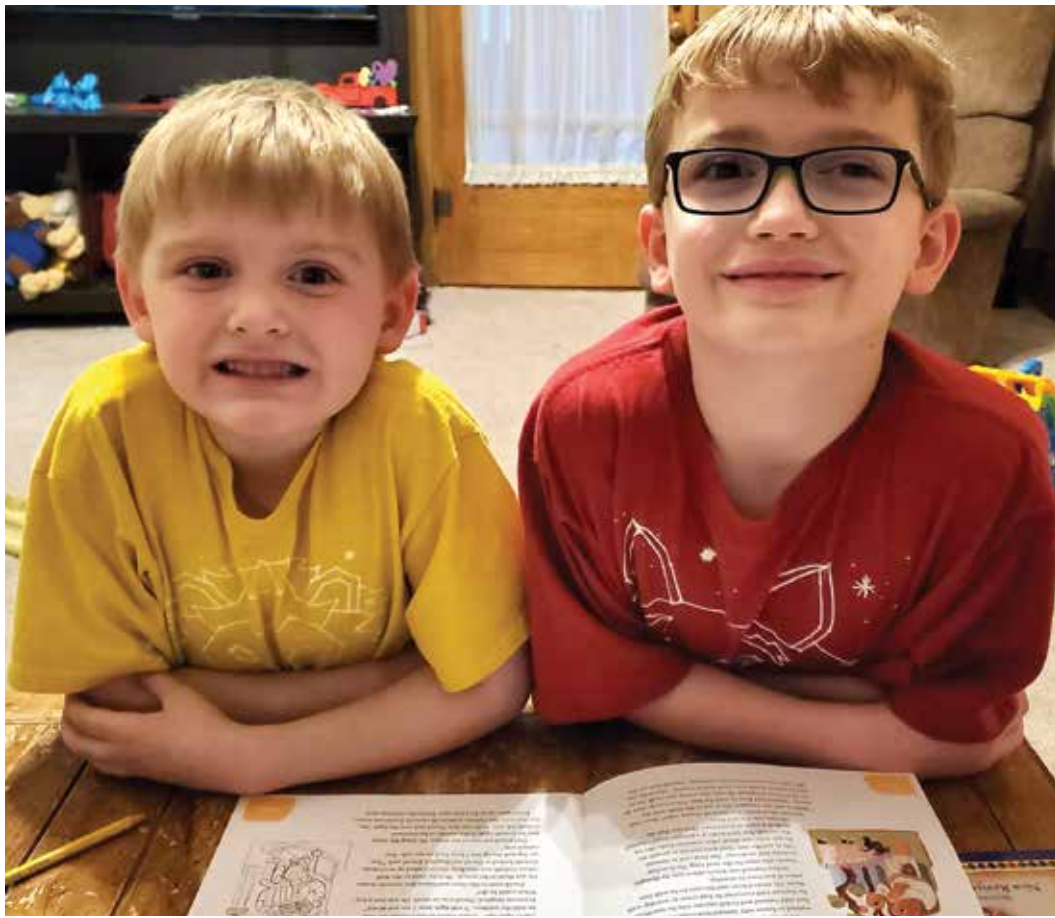
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# What have we learned?

*Ss. Peter and Paul, Atlantic*



Above(l-r): Second grader Joseph Yock said, "I like learning about people from the Bible with my brother. There are fun activities and pictures to color. I also get to learn about first reconciliation and first communion." His brother, kindergartener Jonathan, said, "I like the coloring pages and reading about people from the Bible."



Left: Benny and Gavin McLaren have been working on their faith lessons with their grandmother, Melinda McDermott, on Wednesday afternoons. The boys have enjoyed it and McDermott said, "It has been a good adventure for the boys and myself."

Above: Eleven-year-old Olivia told her mother Beverly Ginther that she enjoyed doing religious education at home. Ginther said, "We are reading from the Bible and we are discussing our faith, which has been a blessing."

*St. Patrick, Neola*



Left: "Having our church, St. Patrick's, open daily to visit/pray/meditate has been such a blessing to us," said Mark and Geri Bjorling.

Right: "I do more spiritual reading. I spend about an hour each day. The times that I cry while doing my readings, I know God is closer to me then," said Jan Divin.



*St. Anne, Logan*



"Going into quarantine, it was very hard for me to see the silver lining. But because I had no distractions such as school or sports, my relationship with God was the strongest it's ever been. I truly think God used quarantine to make us focus more on him than on distractions of this world," said Ava Goldsmith (center).

"I never knew how much I would miss the church community until I couldn't go," said Kyrstan Myer (right).

"Throughout this whole pandemic, I have realized how important Mass really is to me. Watching it on TV is definitely not the same as going to real Mass and that is what I missed the most," said Courtney Sporrer (far left).

## Look how far we've come

Continued from page 1

boys went once a week. They found that they enjoyed the intimate setting.

"We got to know people in church better because it was a smaller group," she said. She wants to continue taking her sons to a weekday Mass in the summertime.

The McGrath family, of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, also missed their Sunday morning routine. So parents Neal and Kendall, and their children Tori, Karly and Daniel, created a new tradition.

"We actually would still get up on Sunday mornings and get ready, but then we'd go to my parents' house and we'd go to a computer screen to watch Mass and have lunch afterwards," said Kendall.

In the adjustments like these families made, Father Trevor Chicoine, diocesan director of the Worship Office, sees a "general appreciation of our faith more."

"In many ways, prior to the pandemic, I think a lot of us were 'box-punching' Catholics. That is to say, we did what we needed to do to fulfill obligations," he said. "Suddenly, we've been forced to choose — choose to engage with our faith, choose to practice. Nobody's forcing us. Many folks have had to think about what will work for them, find what feeds them.

"There's definitely a certain reflectiveness that permeates us, which perhaps didn't penetrate so finely before."

They say that as more people get vaccinated, they're seeing more people appear at Mass. On a recent weekend, Monsignor Frank Chiodo saw more people at St. Anthony Church than the week prior. Deacon Randy Kiel, of Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines, saw a larger crowd recently.

"It was wonderful!" he said.

### Finding God in the silence

With choirs and congregations silenced and parishioners separated for their own safety, Catholics had to try harder to hear God speaking to them.

"One of the things I noticed was that gradual acceptance that we couldn't escape or change the pandemic, so people had to gradually learn how to surrender and be in the midst of it," said Kevin O'Donnell, spiritual director and co-director of Emmaus House.

We were "acknowledging our vulnerability and dependence on God. There was a deepening sense of trust in God," he said.

In the silence and solitude people experienced, they could be "aware of God's gentle voice guiding them," O'Donnell said. "Gradually, people shifted from asking that the pandemic would end to listening to God and being present to how God is present to them right in the midst of it. Even in surprising ways — ways they might not have expected."

Without the busyness of everyday life, people who visited

with spiritual director Tom Green, of Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines, struggled with a feeling that they should be praying more.

"I tried to help them see that there is not an increased expectation that we pray more during times like this, but that we pay attention in prayer to what's stirring in us, whether it's loss or confusion or doubt or even despair," he said.

One question his own spiritual adviser recently asked: What will he miss about the pandemic?

"That's a pretty powerful, insightful question," Green said. "Most people are trying to get away from the pandemic, but there are some graces that we probably encountered."

Prayer became more prominent in many homes.

With his four children, two nephews and a niece at his home, Joe Tallman, of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, suggested they say a rosary together when the pandemic began.

"Here they all are praying this rosary with a candle on the dining room table. I had to take a moment to appreciate the gift it was to pray with them," he said. "They were so quiet and reverent. We started a family rosary. It was just beautiful, and it was something we continued."

The pandemic afforded the faithful an opportunity to revive the practice of spiritual communion, "the act of asking, desiring and imploring our Lord to enter our soul as if we were receiving him sacramentally at Mass," said Father Fabian Moncada, pastor of Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines.

"When I was offering streaming of the Holy Mass, I would hold the chalice and the Holy Host, convinced that my brothers and sisters as a virtual congregation were living with me through the spiritual communion," he said.

### Seeing blessings in the cloud

Technology became a saving grace during the pandemic, keeping people employed, connecting family and friends, and helping the faithful attend Mass virtually. It allowed parishes to reach people in new ways that are likely to stick around long after the pandemic ends.

Tech-savvy parishioners stepped up to help their pastors use smartphones or tablets to livestream Mass so people could worship via Facebook, YouTube and parish websites.

Kendall McGrath said her husband, Neal, is not in a faith tradition, but he's now watching Mass online and has discovered some Bible study groups.

"It has been able to allow us to have those religious conversations," she said. "We're doing a Bible study right now that's on the Gospel of Mark. That's kind of cool that we were able to do that because of creating that tradition of finding things online."

Green, the Holy Trinity spiritual advisor, and his wife,





Char, did a rotation of watching Mass at five different parishes they have attended in the past: two local, one in California, one in Chicago and one in New York.

“That’s a real joy,” Green said. “It created not only a desire to return to Mass but to return to Mass at our home parish.”

Leaders realized the importance of staying connected digitally for maintaining community and prayer. Digital connections facilitated the building of new relationships, too.

Diocese-wide retreats were offered on Zoom, religious education and youth ministry sessions were held online, faith-sharing groups gathered while participants sat at their own kitchen tables, and training continued for pastoral leaders.

“What has been wonderful for these opportunities has been the cross-section of ages and participants from many different areas of the diocese,” said John Gaffney, diocesan director of Evangelization and Catechesis. “It’s been fun to see people make new connections and build relationships with those they would have never made contact with normally.”

Parishes now see a future ministry in livestreaming. They’re installing permanent streaming equipment and envisioning digital communication as a way to reach beyond parish boundaries.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines was not streaming at all before the pandemic. Now, the parish can’t imagine not streaming.

Fathers Ray McHenry and Mark McGeary call it both a challenge and a benefit.

“It has enabled us to extend the Church’s reach beyond the building for parishioners

who have not felt safe to return to Mass, for those in care facilities or in remote locations. That has translated to all our liturgical practices including weddings and funerals.”

By making streaming more a permanent part of outreach, “we will not only survive post-pandemic, but thrive, by sharing God’s love and mercy to those who would never darken the doorstep of a church building,” Gaffney said.

**Staying strong in schools**

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines paved the way for continuing education throughout the pandemic.

“The Catholic schools were, hands down, the leaders when the pandemic started. They knew what they were doing,” said Joe Tallman, a parent and teacher at St. Pius X Catholic School in Urbandale.

“The pandemic has challenged all of us in new ways,” said Schools Superintendent Donna Bishop. “We are grateful for the partnership that has been strengthened with faculty and parents in the efforts to work together in providing continuous learning for our students.”

Sacred Heart Catholic School parents Laurie and Steve told the school, “I will never forget that gray Sunday when we could hardly believe this was all happening and there you were with smiles and hope and faith.”

A parent of three children at St. Patrick Catholic School in Perry said, “St. Patrick School has been extraordinary with this difficult and confusing time ... The workload not only keeps my middle schoolers busy but motivated.”

And parent Desiri Wilwering, who has a child at Shel-

**When will things get back to normal?**

COVID precautions will continue in the Diocese for the time being.

The faithful are encouraged to check with their parish to learn if reservations are required for Triduum and Easter services. This was required in many parishes for Christmas to allow for social distancing.

Masks are required on church property at least until Divine Mercy Sunday, when the Diocese will reconsider the rule. The decision is based on protecting our ability to celebrate Mass and the sacraments and to protect the common good, and is in accord with current public health recommendations.

Social distancing also is required. Schools are in session. Staff are working on getting vaccinated. Staff at the Des Moines metro area Catholic schools have received their second vaccination.

“As the public health situation continues to improve, the Diocese will make adjustments to our COVID mitigation efforts, in consultation with medical experts and our regathering team,” said Adam Storey, vice chancellor and a member of the regathering team of priests and laity of the Diocese.

As more people receive vaccinations and feel comfortable returning to church, there is an opportunity for Catholics to invite someone to come with them.

“Emerging from the pandemic will be an opportunity for renewal,” Storey said. For the latest information, go to [dmdiocese.org/coronavirus](http://dmdiocese.org/coronavirus).

by County Catholic School in Harlan, was impressed with the school maintaining a connection with her family.

“My SCCS child’s teacher continues to connect with me, as do other personnel, to see how our family is doing.”

**Rediscovering family time**

When most schools and after-school activities closed, families found they had more time on their hands. Some re-evaluated how they were spending their time and decided to make changes.

Bree Townsend, the St. Mary of Nazareth parishioner, and her husband, Brad, decided to homeschool their four boys, ages 7 to 11, through the pandemic. “We never would have done this otherwise,” she said.

The Townsend family even used their newfound time to start their own book club.

“I think that’s something we might carry on into adulthood,” Bree said. “We’ve had fun reading and discussing books as a family. It’s been a highlight of the day.”

When activities stopped last spring, Tallman and his wife, Jen, found they had time to reflect on what was important in life.

“We had fallen into the trap prior to the pandemic of divid-

ing and conquering: I’ll take the kids to this and you take the kids to that. We were split as a family. Along the way, the sacrifice was that family time,” he said.

“That has changed. That will be the new normal: us doing things together. There’s an appreciation for time together as a family and time together as a married couple.”

**Gathering to grieve**

Throughout all the cancellations, the changes, and the improvisations, one sobering truth stands out: More than 530,000 Americans have died of COVID-19. Millions have suffered due to the loss of a loved one, but because of restrictions and distancing, their grief is incomplete.

Although no members of the Tallman family died from COVID, they saw friends’ families suffer a loss.

“We’ve had five teachers who lost parents,” Tallman said. “They’re still grieving. That process is going to be really long.” He hopes to soon support his coworkers in person. “I’ve had friends suffer and haven’t been able to walk that walk with them.”

Helping people cope with stress and sadness, regardless of whether they lost someone, will be paramount.

“We see people dealing with the pandemic in many different ways,” said Scott Caldwell, Catholic Charities director of programs and a licensed independent

social worker. “Many people are feeling isolated and disconnected. As we see positive progress with vaccines, taking some proactive steps like taking a break from watching the news and social media, getting out in nature, or doing a long-delayed project can help regain perspective.”

The Catholic Charities Counseling Program offers therapy for those trying to sort through a calendar year’s worth of upheaval (515-237-5045 or [sister@catholiccharitiesdm.org](mailto:sister@catholiccharitiesdm.org)).

“We have all had a collective loss. We have all suffered in some way — some much more than others,” said Gaffney. He and Becky Eldredge, a spiritual director and author, are creating a program, to be shared nationwide, that teaches how to help people recover from pandemic-related trauma.

“Some experienced the loss of a loved one. Some lost their livelihood,” Gaffney said. “Some employees carried the weight for many of us: those in health care, education, meat processing plants, grocery stores; those who protect us like police, firefighters, and EMTs.

“Some had to parent and work in the same place. Children lost access to friends and the love of learning. This is what we will try and help clergy and lay leaders with: how the Church can accompany others out of this trauma.

“Our faith has the answer.”



The pandemic afforded the faithful an opportunity to revive the practice of spiritual communion, said Father Fabian Moncada, pastor of Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines.



## Sisters launch yearlong social justice series

Catholic sisters from 24 congregations in four states are launching a yearlong, live-streamed conversation series on the leading social justice issues. Each episode is free and open to the public.

Titled "Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate," each month this series will focus on a different social issue and explore how it intersects with racism, migration and climate in a thought-provoking and engaging conversation. Three panelists from different walks of life, including Catholic sisters, will bring unique perspectives to each session.

"This series is intended to provide a forum for constructive conversation on the big issues of our day, and how each in-

tersects with the major themes of racism, migration and climate," says Sister LaDonna Manternach, BVM, of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dubuque.

"We're looking forward to lively, nuanced conversations among our panelists and to hearing what our audience members have to say on these topics."

Topics include gender equality, care of creation, migration, racial justice, ending human trafficking, eliminating gun violence, economic justice, food security, restorative justice, affordable housing, educational justice and equitable access to health care.

The conversations will be held as a free, public Zoom webinar at 3 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month. Each

episode will also be streamed live on YouTube. For those who want to watch or listen on their own schedule, the recordings of the episodes will be available on YouTube and as a podcast.

"Exploring Intersections" is a project of Region X of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which comprises congregations of women religious in eastern Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska, joined by a few congregations in Wisconsin. Founded in 1956, LCWR represents nearly 80 percent of Catholic sisters in the United States. As a support system and corporate voice for leaders of congregations of Catholic sisters, LCWR develops leadership, promotes collaboration within church and society, and serves as a voice for systemic change.

## St. Luke School recognized by the state

St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School in Ankeny was recognized as an Honor Plus School by the Iowa Department of Education.

The school was recognized for its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, also known as PBIS, in an effort to foster a safe, positive learning environment. PBIS is an evidence-based three-tiered framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day.

The PBIS framework:

- Creates schools where all students succeed.
- Focuses on conditions to support learning by providing positive, predictable and safe environments.
- Reduces major disciplinary infractions and out-of-school suspensions.
- Improves prosocial behavior.
- Boosts academic achievement.
- Improves school climate.

Schools recognized as Honor Plus have demonstrated implementation of universal PBIS features with fidelity. Additionally, these schools offer

classroom systems and family/community involvement, and are developing Tier 2 systems to identify students who may benefit from additional support.

"I am very proud of the staff and students who have fully embraced PBIS as non-negotiable expectations in our school," said Misty Hade, school principal.

"The focus in all of our diocesan schools is to foster safe, positive learning environments," said Superintendent of Schools Donna Bishop. "We are so proud of principal Hade and

the St. Luke education team for their efforts in successfully implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports."

The newest school in the Diocese of Des Moines, St. Luke the Evangelist, opened in 2015 to support the growing Ankeny community. Students in kindergarten - eighth grade receive an education rooted in Catholic values that provides a caring, creative and quality learning environment. To learn more or to inquire about enrollment opportunities, visit [www.slte-school.org](http://www.slte-school.org), or call 515-985-7074.

### BUSINESS MANAGER

St. John the Apostle Parish in Norwalk has an opening for a full time Business Manager. The Business Manager assists the Pastor with the stewardship of the physical, financial and personnel resources of the parish. A Bachelor's degree in Business Administration or Finance with a major in accounting along with business experience and management/supervisory experience is required. In addition, skills in fiscal planning and management, accounting, payroll, competence in computer software, mathematical and reasoning are preferred. St. John the Apostle is looking for a Business Manager with vision and strategic planning experience to help align the Parish growth with the rapidly growing community of Norwalk.

The job description is available on the parish website. If you desire to work in a positive environment with a growing parish, please send your resume to Fr. Dan Kirby, St. John the Apostle Catholic Church, 720 Orchard Hills Dr., Norwalk, IA 50211-9669.

## Time capsule offers glimpse of the past

A time capsule from the cornerstone of the former St. Patrick Church in Council Bluffs revealed a glimpse into the past for parishioners.

A religious newspaper from 1925, a few coins, and a letter about the former church were among the items in the time capsule, said parishioner Jim Bojanski.

The parish built a new worship center on Valley View Drive, near Iowa Western Community College recently. The former church was sold to the YMCA, which will use the property for parking and a park.

Bojanski praised Mark Peitzmeier of Peitzmeier Demolition, and Leo McIntosh, of the YMCA in Council Bluffs, for helping the parish recover assets from the old church building for the new worship site. These included the time capsule, 4,000 cobblestones that will be sold to raise funds for electronic signage, and for moving a large Celtic cross that stood at the top of the old church building.

"They really went out of their way to serve us, to help us as partners," Bojanski said.

He's also grateful to the St. Albert wrestling team, which cleaned and stacked about 2,000 of the cobblestones, which at one time was used for the main street in Council Bluffs.

"The cool thing about the whole deal is for 95 or 96 years, St. Patrick served that community," he added. The property will continue to serve the community through the YMCA.

## Cathedral Holy Hours



Join Bishop Joensen at St. Ambrose Cathedral for an hour of Adoration & Prayer

5-6 PM each Monday

Evening Prayer will be livestreamed on the Diocesan Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/dmdiocese/](https://www.facebook.com/dmdiocese/)



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Federal tax savings	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 1,120.00
State tax savings	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 6,500.00
<b>Total Tax Savings</b>	<b>\$ 4,200.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,620.00</b>
<b>Net Cost to Donor</b>	<b>\$ 5,800.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,380.00</b>

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## God's love covers a multitude of parenting sins

I was having one of those “days” as a parent recently. The kids were bouncing off the walls and arguing non-stop with each other. My toddler was extra clingy and whiny due to cutting her molars. Another child was grumpy at prayer time stating, “Playing with Legos is more fun!” and “I don’t want to talk to Jesus!”

I lost my cool more than once. I harshly scolded and gave steep consequences. I fretted over my child’s faith, wondering if that child had any faith at all. To make it worse, I had deep self-loathing for my negative responses, recognizing it only added to the dysfunction. The interior self-flagellation was intense: No one else’s kids act this way! All my friends’ kids love Mass and prayer! Look at all the mistakes I’ve made! I’ve doomed my relationships with my kids! I am such a bad mom!

After supper that evening, my husband, Adam, encouraged me to take 10 minutes alone. So I barricaded myself in a back bedroom and reflected on what sent the day into a tailspin.

I realized that in the preceding days I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my kids, overanalyzing and critiquing even the smallest of their missteps.

### Marriage and Family Life

By Kara Storey



These expectations stemmed from the fact that because Adam and I, as Catholics, intentionally raise our children differently, I had unknowingly placed extra pressure on myself to “make sure my kids turn out holy!” I bought into the lie that how my kids will turn out is a direct reflection of my mothering. Yes, Satan had weaseled his way into my heart via perfectionism and fear, and I let my anxiety win.

But as I look around lately, it seems like a lot of us are fearful and anxious. We recognize that raising children in the faith is a monumental task. Souls are at stake. Eternal happiness is on the line. As parents, we try to control every aspect of their spiritual and personal formation. We are tempted to believe that if we pray hard enough, protect them enough and do

everything just “right” we’ll be guaranteed faithful and holy adult children.

But in that back bedroom that night, Jesus reminded me he makes saints, not me. And so after a long and wretched day, I surrendered my motherhood to Christ. My heart cried out, “Lord, I have no clue what I’m doing! Help me!” And you know what? The Father met me in my brokenness. As I laid bare my weakness and insecurities, he gave me peace in all the unknowns: I don’t know how my experiment in parenting will turn out. I don’t know if my kids will be kind and generous adults. I don’t know if they will live virtuous lives or remain devout Catholics, let alone become saints.

But my Father also reminded me of all the things I do know, such as how he loves my children more than I do. I know he has a perfect and unique plan for each one of them. I know that he will forgive them in reconciliation and nourish them in the Eucharist. I know that as the “Hound of Heaven,” he will pursue them down whatever dark and winding paths they may choose to take. I know that at some point, my kids will have to make their faith their own, and that usually comes by way of tri-

als and doubts. I know that even if my kids turn their back on the Church, God will never turn his back on them. I know that he gives me the grace I need to be their mom. I know I don’t have to be the perfect mother because regardless of all the mistakes I make, God’s love (and a good counselor) will cover a multitude of my sins.

Internalizing these truths has brought me numerous experiences of interior freedom. I haven’t been perfect, but that isn’t what God, or my kids, need from me. Instead, they need me to model a prayerful life, one that surrenders control and continually seeks wisdom from the Holy Spirit and the Church. My kids need me to be a fountain of mercy and love, lavishing generosity and forgiveness upon their fragile hearts. And when the hard days come, which they will, I will take comfort knowing tomorrow is a new day. As it says in the Rule of St. Benedict, “Always we begin again.”

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

## “Stop taking everything so personally!”

“Stop taking everything so personally!” “Ouch!” That never feels good to hear, does it?

Each one of us reading this column, has either been on the giving or the receiving side of this statement.

While this may sound like common casual communication, it can actually be causation for deep negative relational breakdown. This is due to the fact that at the fundamental core of who we are is a survival instinct that is in place to save the self, therefore, we take everything personally.

Need proof of this? Simply listen to that inner critical voice in your mind. The self-help industry has done a social disservice to so many of us by teaching that we shouldn’t care at all about what people think about us and that not caring is some form of psychological strength. This is nonsense!

I have met countless people who say that they don’t care what others think about them, but in all actuality, they are people who in some way have been hurt by what others think. So therefore, this statement becomes a sense of personal protection.

When any person hears, “Don’t take this personally, but...”, a defense immediately arises from within the hearer’s

### Let’s Get Psyched!

By Deacon Randy Kiel



sub-conscious. In this moment, the mind is bracing to be criticized. This will no longer be a chance for effective communication.

So, why do we tell people to not take certain statements personally? Maybe, we say it with an intention to help. Let’s realize today that these are not helpful. Perhaps, we say it purposefully to be a criticism of the person. We all know that criticism, even constructive criticism, only communicates criticism. Criticism never motivates. Moreover, there is a possibility to use it as a disguise, because the deliverer actually means for the message to be personal, thus protecting himself/herself from being held responsible for the personal assault about to be committed.

Let’s realize several things:

We have been fundamentally and intentionally created as social and communal beings. We are meant to gather and to belong. Caring about what others think

about us and taking things personally comes with the package of being a person. We are not human animals; we are spiritual beings who are formed in the image of the One who created us, our Father God. God thinks deeply about us collectively as a human race as well as each one of us individually and personally. He divinely designed us to be in relationship with others as well as with him. This is very personal. So therefore, we take life very personal in regards to how God and others feel and think about us.

When we assume negative motivations upon ourselves from others instead of asking clarifying questions, then we begin our internal decline and can’t crawl back up the “slip ’n slide” of our mind. These interpretations and clarifications are the responsibility of each and every one of us.

The truth is, our brains process everything personally first and then they objectify second. A healthy mind will work with the tension within to sort out which items are personal and which are not because so many things are personal. We do have a role to play in events. We should take on some responsibility for how our lives unfold.

Our job is not to stop taking things personally, rather it is to take

the right things personally.

We personalize because we are somewhat locked into our own experience and perceptions. If we say “perception is reality” (another disastrous statement), then we would have no need to ever question how we view or perceive life or others. It is essential to realize that there is a reality that reaches far beyond our own perception. This reality is God. He gave us his Son to show his compassion for us. We are to have compassion on one another through empathy. Empathy is the relational vehicle that boundaries the degree of personalization necessary. When we take a moment to empathize with the other — by imagining what a situation is like from their point of view — it becomes much harder to exclusively view life through our own highly personalized lens.

So, therefore my friends, it is with my full hearted intention as your deacon and columnist that I do ask you to take the following statement personally: I love writing these encouraging pieces and helpful thoughts to you. I mean it! Personally!

*Deacon Randy Kiel is the founder of Kardia Counseling and serves Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines. He can be reached at [randy@kardiacounseling.com](mailto:randy@kardiacounseling.com).*

## Take advantage of the feast day Jesus created for you

Divine Mercy Sunday is April 11 this year, a feast day created at the request of Jesus himself.

Jesus made his request to St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun whom he visited countless times in her convent in Poland in the 1930s, when he asked for the Feast of Mercy the Sunday after Easter.

As recorded in Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul, Jesus said: “I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of my tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of my mercy. The soul that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion [on Divine Mercy Sunday] shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day are opened all the divine floodgates through which graces flow. Let no soul fear to draw near to me, even though its sins be

### Faith that Conquers

By Kelly Mescher Collins



as scarlet...”

Through St. Faustina, Jesus also gave humanity the Divine Mercy Chaplet. (Learn how to pray this simple but powerful devotion on your rosary beads at the [divine-mercy.org/message/devotions/chaplet](http://divine-mercy.org/message/devotions/chaplet).)

According to the Diary, Jesus said: “Encourage souls to say the chaplet which I have given you (1541). Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death (687). When they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between my father and the dying person, not

as the just judge but as the merciful savior (1541).”

When my Dad was in his final days and hours in hospice last May, I entrusted him to Jesus, reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet repeatedly for his sake.

And I trusted Jesus would take care of him — a very important part of this devotion.

“The graces of my mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is — trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive. Souls that trust boundlessly are a great comfort to me, because I pour all the treasures of my graces into them. I rejoice that they ask for much, because it is my desire to give much, very much. On the other hand, I am sad when souls ask for little, when they narrow their hearts” (Diary entry 1578).

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is transformative, Jesus said.

“Priests will recommend it to sin-

ners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from my infinite mercy (687). I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in my mercy (687). Through the chaplet you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with my will. (1731)” (TheDivineMercy.org).

Jesus also encouraged devotion to the Divine Mercy image, promising victory over his or her enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death.

Jesus’ messages of love and mercy to St. Faustina are abundant — far too many to include in this column. I encourage you to check out [TheDivineMercy.org](http://TheDivineMercy.org) to learn more. And take advantage of the graces Jesus longs to pour down upon you on Sunday, April 11 — Divine Mercy Sunday. Christ the King Church in Des Moines will have reconciliation at 2 p.m. Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m. and Mass at 3:30 p.m.



# Who inspires you?

Throughout my life, various individuals have inspired me at different stages.

During my childhood, my parents, Aai and Dada, inspired me to be innovative, studious and hard working.

As I got into high school and later on in college, Dada played a major role in inspiring to be a physician despite my immature reluctance. In retrospect, the decision molded me to become the person of 'service' and made my life 'meaningful'. I am utterly grateful.

During my residency training, I took care of poor and destitute and continued that when I came to the United States.

My preceptor during my training in endocrinology inspired me to remain on track in my academic career. Alternatively, the students, the trainees, colleagues and coworkers inspired me to always remain up to date in knowledge and practice in my specialty.

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated when I was barely six years old. He was instrumental in gaining independence for India. I was touched by his life of practicing non-violence, prayer and peaceful coexistence without domination of fellow human beings. He inspired me to practice the same principles in my personal and professional life.

My wife, Mary, has been a devout Catholic all her life. I had promised her even prior to our wedding that our children would be raised in the Catholic tradition. Therefore, our sons were baptized into Catholic faith soon after their birth.

All of them inspired me to convert to Catholicism. In turn, my conversion made me inquisitive about the Scriptures.

## Guest Column

By Udaya M. Kabadi, MD



Scripture study made Jesus become my perpetual inspiration and a role model for my life of service.

Later, I was fortunate to experience audience with St. Teresa of Calcutta. Her dedication to serve the poor, the destitute inspired me to provide compassionate care to the downtrodden as well.

Both Jesus and St. Teresa inspired me to live a prayerful life of self-giving.

Mary started watching Mother Angelica on EWTN, the first Catholic network. I joined her at times. What a courageous nun! She believed in her destiny. She used to say 'I do the ridiculous and God does the miraculous'.

Also St. John Paul II inspired me with his encouragement and efforts to promote and nurture ecumenism and evangelization.

Their inspiration bore fruit resulting in my compilation of a book of Catholic prayers 'Rain Drops'. Almost a thousand copies every year have been given since 1997 to churches in various diocese I resided in for distribution to new communicants, confirmation and RCIA candidates.

In 2007, we returned to Des Moines and we became members of the St Francis Assisi Church. I found 'St Francis Prayer' in the pew. The prayer inspired me

to compose my own Prayer of St Francis Prayer 2:

*Where there is Envy, Let me Sow Gratitude, Gratitude and Generosity,  
Where there is Anger, Sow Patience, Brevity and Serenity,  
Where there is Lust, Sow Chastity, Fidelity and Piety  
Where there is Gluttony, Sow Sobriety and Satiety,  
Where there is Sloth, Sow Motivation, Mobility and Activity,  
Where there is Greed, Sow Prosperity and Charity,  
Where there is Pride, Sow Humility and Humanity  
So, Devine Master, Grant that Virtue conquers Vice and Sin  
And Let me Vie and Strive for Life in Eternity.  
Amen.*

Most recently, Pope Francis has

been an inspiring presence in my life. His exemplary dedication to care for the poor, the refugees, the migrants inspires me to attempt to do the best I can to 'love my neighbor' even in times of distress.

Thus, there have been numerous individuals who have inspired me throughout my life.

The helped me be humble and meek, kind and merciful, gentle and understanding, giving and forgiving, loving and compassionate, pure and holy, grateful and faithful as well as prudent and wise.

Finally, I pray and hope that I give back to humanity multifold what I receive by being an inspiration as well.

The prayer card and the prayer book are available on request by emailing communications@dmdiocese.org.

Dr. Udaya Kabadi is a parishioner at St. Francis of Assisi Church in West Des Moines.

## The Imperialism of the Human Soul

### Guest Column

By Father Ron Rolheiser



In his autobiography, Nikos Kazantzakis shares how in his youth he was driven by a restlessness that had him searching for something he could never quite define. However, he made peace with his lack of peace because he accepted that, given the nature of the soul, he was supposed to feel that restlessness and that a healthy soul is a driven soul. Commenting on this, he writes: "No force anywhere on earth is as imperialistic as the human soul. It occupies and is occupied in turn, but it always considers its empire too narrow. Suffocating, it desires to conquer the world in order to breathe freely."

We need to be given permission, I believe, to accept as God-given that imperialism inside our soul, even as we need always to be careful never to trivialize its power and meaning. However, that is a formula for tension. How does one make peace with the imperialism of one's soul without denigrating the divine energy that is stoking that imperialism? For me, this has been a struggle.

I grew up in the heart of the Canadian prairies, with five hundred miles of open space in every direction. Geographically, that space let one's soul stretch out, but otherwise my world seemed too small for my soul to breathe. I grew up inside a tight-knit community in an isolated rural area where the world was small enough so that everyone knew everyone else. That was wonderful because it made for a warm cocoon; but that cocoon (seemingly) separated me from the big world where, it seemed to my young mind, souls could breathe in spaces bigger than where I was breathing. Moreover, growing up with an acute religious and moral sensitivity, I felt guilty about my restlessness, as if it were something abnormal that I needed to hide.

In that state, as an eighteen-year-old, I entered religious life. Novitiates in those days were quite strict and secluded. We were eighteen of us, novices, sequestered in an old seminary building across a lake from a town and a highway. We could hear the sounds of traffic and see life on the other side of the lake, but we were not part of it. As well, most everything inside our sequestered life focused on the spiritual so that even our most earthly desires had to be associated with our hunger for God and for the bread of life. Not an easy task for anyone, especially a teenager.

Well, one day we were visited by


a priest who gave my soul permission to breathe. He gathered us, the eighteen novices, into a classroom and began his conference with this question: Are you feeling a little restless? We nodded, rather surprised by the question. He went on: Well, you should be feeling restless! You must be jumping out of your skin! All that life in you and all those fiery hormones stirring in your blood, and you're stuck here watching life happen across the lake! You must be going crazy sometimes! But ... that's good, that's what you should be feeling, it shows you're healthy. Stay with it. You can do this. It's good to feel that restlessness.

That day the wide-open prairie spaces I had lived my whole life in and the wide-open spaces in my soul befriended each other a little. And that friendship continued to grow as I did my studies and read authors who had befriended their souls. Among others, these spoke to me: St. Augustine (You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.); Thomas Aquinas (The adequate object of the human intellect and will is all Being); Iris Murdoch (The deepest of all human pains is the pain of the inadequacy of self-expression); Karl Rahner (In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable, we ultimately learn that here, in this life, there is no finished symphony); Sidney Callahan (We are made to ultimately sleep with the whole world, is it any wonder that we long for this along the way?); and James Hillman (Neither religion nor psychology really honors the human soul. Religion is forever trying to save the soul and psychology is always trying to fix the soul. The soul needs neither to be saved nor fixed; it is already eternal – it just needs to be listened to.)

Perhaps today the real struggle is not so much to accept sacred permission to befriend the wild insatiability of the soul. The greater struggle today, I suspect, is not to trivialize the soul, not to make its infinite longings something less than what they are.

During the World War II, Jesuit theologians resisting the Nazi occupation in France published an underground newspaper. The first issue opened with this now-famous line: France, take care not to lose your soul. Fair warning. The soul is imperialistic because it carries divine fire and so it struggles to breathe freely in the world. To feel and to honor that struggle is to be healthy.

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



## I've Been Wondering...

**Father John Ludwig**

*Q. Why was Pope Francis' trip to Iraq so important?*

**A. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS.** First, Pope John Paul II had intended to visit Iraq, but was unable to do so – partly because of the danger at that time and partly because his own health had grown weaker and weaker.

Second, Pope Francis wanted to visit Iraq because it had suffered so much death and destruction over the past 30 years.

Third, the Pope wanted to promote peace among the various religious traditions within Islam. He said that he prayed for a long time to determine if he should make the trip. He knew that there would be large crowds of people, many not wearing masks. In the end, he decided that the effort to go was worth the risk.

One visit from one pope certainly won't change everything in that part of the world, but it does make a small opening both religiously and politically.

*Q. Many people have not been to Mass physically for nearly a year. Is that something that they should mention when they celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation?*

**A. NO. MANY BISHOPS** have dispensed the obligation to attend Sunday Mass during the pandemic. They suggest that people pray virtually via parish websites or YouTube.

They also have asked the faithful to use other methods of prayer until it is safe to gather for Mass once again. With the increase of vaccinations and the general use of masks, that day may

be coming before too long.

*Q. What should I do if I give up something for Lent, and then break my resolution?*

**A. GIVING UP SOMETHING** for Lent is not intended to be a "perfect record." Rather, it's to be a reminder that during these 40 days we are preparing to celebrate the great feast of Easter. If you give up something and then break that resolution, you can still begin again, even in the middle of Lent. The main idea is to be preparing with the rest of the Christian community for the resurrection of the Lord.

*Q. During the past year, many people have died without the Mass of Christian Burial. Can you comment on this?*

**A. FUNERALS GIVE** an opportunity for relatives and friends to give thanks for the life of a loved one. It's been said that funerals are more for the living than they are for those who have died.

For safety reasons, funeral Masses have been limited to a smaller number of people. In some cases, there have been only prayer services in the funeral home or graveside prayers. Many obituaries have indicated that funerals or celebrations of life will be held at a later time. My guess is that families will gather for holidays, birthdays, and other times and remember those who have gone before us. I suspect that there will not be a large number of Masses for individual persons. One consolation is this: every time we go to Mass, we remember all the living and all the dead.



## Catholic scholars: Available COVID-19 vaccine is morally acceptable

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A group of prominent Catholic scholars said they believe it is morally acceptable for anyone to receive any of the COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States.

"Catholics, and indeed, all persons of goodwill who embrace a culture of life for the whole human family, born and unborn, can use these vaccines without fear of moral culpability" for abortion, the eight scholars said in a statement released March 5 through the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington.

The statement references the vaccines developed by Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson as well as from AstraZeneca, which is expected to soon file for emergency-use authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The scholars said they agreed with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine, who reiterated in a March 4 video the Johnson & Johnson vaccine "can be used in good moral conscience."

Bishop Rhoades cited in the video an earlier Vatican statement that "has made clear that all the COVID vaccines recognized as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience."

The bishop also repeated comments that he and Archbish-

op Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities, made March 2 that if a choice of vaccines is available "we recommend that you pick one with the least connection to abortion-derived cell lines."

"Pfizer and Moderna's connection is more remote than that of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine," he said in the video.

The scholars said, however, "we think it (is) a mistake to say both that these (vaccines) are morally permissible to use and yet that some ought to be preferred to others."

"There appears to be no real distinction between the vaccines in terms of their connection to an abortion many decades ago, and thus the moral starting point of equivalence," they said.

Ryan T. Anderson, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, joined seven other scholars in developing the statement.

The scholars explained that their conclusion is based on the fact that the cell line used for in the development of the vaccine, known as HEK293, is far removed from the embryonic kidney cells originally obtained from an unborn child that was aborted in the early 1970s.

"The exact circumstance of the abortion are not known, but the scientists producing the cell line were not directly involved and, crucially, the abortion was

not performed for the sake of providing biological materials to researchers," the statement said.

Importantly, there is no ongoing use of aborted tissue to generate HEK293 cells, to modify these cells or to maintain them in the laboratory. Thus the use of HEK293 (and similar immortalized lines) does not create future incentives for more abortions," it added.

The statement expressed as "scientific fact" that "no fetal 'body parts' are present in these immortal cell lines."

"The immortal cell lines are artifacts -- biological products that have been modified and reproduced many times over, and they do not retain the natural function of the tissue from which they were derived," the statement explained.

In response to the question regarding whether the production and use of any of the COVID-19 vaccines "contribute to, cooperate with, or promote any abortion," the scholars said such was not the case because the abortions from which cell lines such as HEK293 were derived occurred decades ago.



CNS photo/Kamil Krzaczyński, Reuters

A Walgreens health care professional administers a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTec COVID-19 vaccine in Evanston, Illinois on Feb. 22.

In addition, they said, no new fetal tissue is being used or needed to maintain the cell lines, which are produced in research laboratories.

The scholars also said that HEK293 cells are commonly used in testing other products, including processed foods, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. The cell line also is used as an alternative to animal testing, they noted. use "has contributed to an enormous number of new medications and medical procedures developed over the last several decades."

"It thus seems fair to say that in addition to the use of HEK293 cells by the scientific community, nearly every person in the modern world has

consumed food products, taken medications or used cosmetics/personal care products that were developed through the use of HEK293 cells in the food, biomedical and cosmetic industries," the statement said.

They concluded there is a strong moral reason for people to receive the vaccines when they become available because it will provide the "greatest possible protection for the most vulnerable among us."

"The attenuated and remote connection to abortions decades ago and the absences of any incentive for future abortions offer little if any moral reasons against accepting this welcome advance of science."

## Pope names woman Scripture scholar as secretary of biblical commission

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis has named Sister Nuria Calduch-Benages, an Old Testament scholar and professor at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University, to be secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

The Spanish member of the Missionaries of the Holy Family of Nazareth is the first woman to hold the position, which involves coordinating the work of the 20 biblical scholars from around the world who study topics in Scripture studies and interpretation on behalf of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

According to the norms of the commission, as revised by St. Paul VI in 1971, the secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission also serves as a consultant to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Sister Calduch-Benages, who will celebrate her 64th birthday March 26, was born in Barcelona, Spain.

### Director of Family Faith Formation

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in West Des Moines, IA is seeking a Director of Family Faith Formation. This is a new and exciting position at Sacred Heart responsible for working in a team environment with the larger Family Formation Team to equip families as the first educators of the faith. This position will implement, support and evaluate family-based formation, parent-led sacramental preparation programs and youth offerings for Sacred Heart families with children from birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This is a full-time, exempt position reporting to the Pastor. **Bilingual applicants (English/Spanish) highly encouraged to apply.** Full job description and details to apply can be found at [www.sacredheartwdm.org/employment](http://www.sacredheartwdm.org/employment).

### Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese's Victim Assistance Advocate is a staff member at Polk County Victim Services. He helps victims of abuse of minors by clergy through a complaint process and in seeking support and counseling services. He can be reached at 515-286-2024 or [Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov](mailto:Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov).



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## Pope: Iraq visit was 'sign of hope' for suffering people

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Despite years of suffering due to war and terrorism, the people of Iraq continue to look to the future with hope, Pope Francis said.

Recalling his recent visit to the country during his weekly general audience March 10, the pope said that while he saw "the opened wounds of destruction," he also saw "around me the joy of welcoming Christ's message."

"I saw the hope of being open to a horizon of peace and fraternity, summed up in Jesus' words that were the motto of the visit: 'You are all brothers,'" he said.

In his talk, the pope said he was grateful to God for the March 5-8 visit, a trip that his predecessor, St. John Paul II, had wanted to make.

"Never before has a pope been in the land of Abraham," he said. "Providence willed that this should happen now, as a sign of hope, after years of war and terrorism, and during a severe pandemic."

Affirming the right of the Iraqi people to live in peace, Pope Francis praised the country's rich history as the "cradle of civilization."

Nevertheless, despite its cultural significance in the world, Iraq was destroyed by war, which is "always the monster that, as the ages change, transforms itself and devours humanity," he said.

Departing from his prepared remarks, the pope denounced arms dealers who profit from war and sold weapons to terrorists not only in Iraq, but in other parts of the world suffering from violence.

"Today, who sells weapons to terrorists, who is carrying out massacres in other parts of the world, such as Africa for example? It is a question I would like someone to answer," the pope said.

The answer to war, he added, is fraternity, which is a challenge for Iraq and "for many regions in conflict and, ultimately, for the entire world."

The interreligious meeting in the ancient city of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, was a significant moment that brought together the spiritual descendants of "our father in the faith," he said.

In Ur, the pope said, "standing together under those luminous heavens -- the same

heavens (from which) our father Abraham saw us, his descendants -- the phrase you are all brothers and sisters seemed to resound once again."

Recalling his visits to Mosul and Qaraqosh, two cities devastated by Islamic State militants, the pope called for prayers for the people so that God may give them the strength to rebuild.

Pope Francis said that, in Iraq, "despite the roar of destruction and weapons, the palm, a symbol of the country and of its hope, has continued to grow and bear fruit."

The same goes "for fraternity: It does not make noise, but is fruitful and makes us grow," the pope said. "May God, who is peace, grant a future of fraternity to Iraq, the Middle East and the entire world!"



CNS photo/Vatican Media

**Pope Francis swings a censer near a partially restored statue of Mary from a parish in Karmless as he celebrates Mass at Franso Hariri Stadium in Irbil, Iraq on March 7. The Islamic State militants decapitated the statue and cut off its hands. The restoration re-attached the head, but left the hands dangling.**

## Los Lirios Pre-Pascuales

Continúa de la página

en la Misa del funeral del Dr. Lejeune en la Catedral de Notre Dame en París, Bruno, un joven que tenía Trisomía 21, pasó al frente durante las oraciones de los fieles, tomó el micrófono, y dijo, "Merci, mon professeur, por lo que hizo por mi padre y por mi madre. Gracias a usted, estoy orgulloso de mí mismo." No cabe duda por qué hace apenas un par de meses, el Papa Francisco avanzó la causa por la canonización de Lejeune reconociendo sus virtudes heroicas y permitiendo que a este Siervo de Dios se le refiera como Venerable Jérôme Lejeune.

Si se puede decir que Lejeune hubiera llevado el bastón de San José en su promoción por la protección de los derechos y por la inclusión de per-

sonas con Síndrome de Down, entonces nosotros en la Diócesis de Des Moines podríamos estar orgullosos del "lirio" de reconocimiento que se le da a una de nuestras hijas que han promovido el legado de Lejeune en sus propias acciones. La Dra. Meghan O'Neill Guzman, graduada del 2002 de Dowling Catholic High School cuya intensidad y alto nivel de éxito en la cancha de basquetbol y en el salón de clases y que luego se traducirían en estudios e investigación en el Colegio de Medicina de la Universidad John Hopkins y ahora médico asistente en el Hospital para Niños Ann & Robert H. Lurie en Chicago. Ella dirige a la vez la Clínica Lurie para Niños con Síndrome de Down, en donde su principal investigación es el caracterizar mejor el estado neurológico y el desarrollo del comportamiento de

niños con Síndrome de Down. La meta final es la de ofrecer estrategias terapéuticas e intervenciones que beneficien a estas personas y a sus seres queridos. La Dra. O'Neill Guzman va a ser honrada después de Pascua con el Premio al Exalumno Joven Distinguido de Dowling. ¡Felicidades, chère professeure!

Si la Dra. O'Neill Guzman puede ser comparada con un lirio, no estoy seguro si quiero describir a San José y al Dr. Lejeune como las espinas que la rodean. De seguro todos ellos encontraron y vencieron los espinosos retos que enfrentaron con valentía creativa. En conjunto, ellos representan una bendición pre pascual y una hermosa fuente de inspiración de parte de aquellos a quienes amamos -- ¡padres, madres y todos los hijos de Dios!

## Woman religious honored as one of International Women of Courage

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Comboni Sister Alicia Vacas Moro, a Spanish missionary sister and registered nurse, was one of 14 women to receive this year's International Women of Courage Award, an annual honor from the U.S. Department of State for women who have demonstrated leadership in their human rights work.



CNS screen grab/Facebook, U.S. Embassy to the Holy See

**Comboni Sister Alicia Vacas Moro**

The 49-year-old woman religious, who is the Jerusalem-based Middle East provincial superior of the Comboni Sisters, has provided medical care to the poor in Egypt and training to women and children in the West Bank.

Last March, she volunteered to go to Italy to care for elderly sisters from her order where 45 of the convent's 60 residents tested positive for the coronavirus and 10 of the sisters later died.

The women's awards were presented during a virtual ceremony at the State Department March 8, International Women's Day.

### Associate Director of Youth Ministry, St. Boniface Catholic Church, Waukee

St. Boniface Catholic Church in Waukee, IA, is seeking an Associate Director of Youth Ministry. The position will plan, lead, implement, and evaluate youth ministry for families of St. Boniface youth ages 6th - 12th grade, as well as oversee family-based preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. This position is responsible for working collaboratively with other team members in the parish Evangelization & Faith Formation Office to support and partner with parents as the first formators of their children in the faith.

The ideal candidate will have a depth of reflective spirituality and be passionate about guiding parents and accompanying youth. Proven experience inviting and forming adult and youth core team members using EDGE, PURPOSE and LifeTeen programs, as well as a minimum three years of experience coordinating parish youth ministry is desired.

Desired start date is June 2021. Full position description and application instructions are available at <https://stbonifacechurch.org/employment>.

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