

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

Vol. 56, No. 3

March 17, 2023

Matthew 4:16

‘The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light.’



Photo by Phillip Grothus

Deacon Oran Struecker, of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, closed a Taizé prayer service with benediction of the blessed sacrament as a part of that service. Taizé is a meditative form of prayer that originated in France. It combines Scripture readings, music, and meditative silence for contemplative prayer.

Priest used culinary gift to cultivate relationships

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Father Don Bruck, a generous man who used his gift for cooking to build relationships with his parishioners, was a model for someone who wants to be a Christian.

“He set a real example of what that should be,” said his brother, Marvin Bruck.

Father Bruck died Feb. 13 at his home in Harlan at the age of 80.

During his funeral homily, Father Bruck’s good friend, Deacon Pat Davitt, asked for a show of hands of how many in the nearly full church had been invited to Father Bruck’s home for a meal.

Over three quarters of the worshippers raised their hands.



Father Don Bruck

“That’s an example of how gracious and generous he was,” Deacon Davitt said. “He shared so much in his gentle way with all people.”

Father Bruck was among many priests and religious women whose roots were in Shelby County. Born at the Behrendt farm north and west of Panama, he was the oldest of three sons of Joseph and Orevlyn “Orvie” Bruck.

He attended country elementary school, St. Mary’s High School, Conception Seminary

in Missouri and Mt. St. Bernard Seminary in Dubuque.

“By his nature, he was always a kid you suspected might become a priest,” said Marvin. “We grew up in a pretty Catholic community in Panama, Iowa. He always seemed to have a priestly quality about him. He attributed his vocation to his grandmothers and his parents. They encouraged him a lot when he was thinking about doing that.”

Father Bruck was ordained in 1968 at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines by Sioux City

Bishop Frank Greteman at a time when the Diocese was in between bishops.

After ordination, Father Bruck served at All Saints and Christ the King Parishes in Des Moines, then St. Patrick Church in Council Bluffs. He taught at Dowling Catholic High School/St. Joseph Education Center then served St. Augustin Parish for a year.

In 1975, Father Bruck headed back to his rural roots where he served the next 36 years.

Continued on page 10

Dogged days of Lent

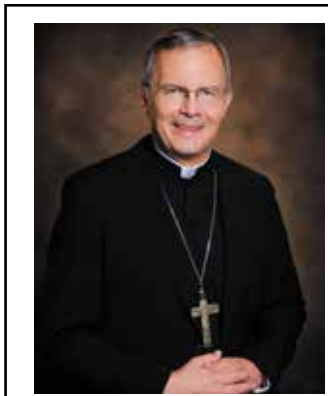
In her poem, "March," Louise Glück paints a word picture that is easy for us Iowans to imagine:

My neighbor stares out the window,
talking to her dog. He's sniffing the garden,
trying to reach a decision about the dead flowers.
It's a little early for all this. Everything's still very bare—nevertheless, something's different today from yesterday. . . .
My neighbor's calling the dog, making her unconvincing doglike sounds.
The dog's polite; he raises his head when she calls, but he doesn't move. So she goes on calling, her failed bark slowly deteriorating into a human voice.

As we press into the latter weeks of March and of Lent, maybe we feel a little bit like the neighbor's dog: sniffing around the tangled debris of death and incipient life, poised to move on to new turf yet chilled and inert in our tracks, hearing but not obeying a voice that beckons to us.

At least, that's a little bit how I feel these days, with all the firmness of intent to practice my Lenten disciplines having been snarled by life events beyond my control, the clock of darkness and light adjusted by human fiat while the darkness and light within me still seem to defy my will to let the light prevail, and the voice I seek to hear in prayer bracketed by other competing voices that offer only a transient escape into "madness."

One is tempted to throw in the towel on this spiritual project of conversion and renewal and say, "better luck next year," but the promptings of the Holy Spirit



By Bishop William Joensen

and the resolve and constancy of some around us who seem to be more dogged in their devotion can keep us from despairing that real change and growth are possible in God's plan and time.

That's the unflagging hope represented by our Diocese's designation of the weekend of the Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 18-19, as "Safe Haven Sunday." This is an initiative of our Marriage and Family Life office coordinated by Adam Storey, with the cooperation of our parish priests and deacons who will engage the readings and address matters of internet safety for children and persons of all ages. In the course of their homilies and parish bulletins and other messaging, they will refer and provide access to resources that can both prevent and help persons proceed on the path of healing and liberation from the scourge of internet pornography and related addictions.

Some of these sources will remain linked in English and Spanish on the Marriage and Family Life section of our Diocese of Des Moines website, including: Educate and Empower Kids; Brain, Heart, World (in English and Spanish); Covenant Eyes;

Road to Purity; Be Broken Ministries; Bloom for Catholic Women; Clean Heart Online (English and Spanish); Integrity Restored; and several others.

In age-appropriate fashion, we seek as faith communities to raise awareness of the ways in which human beauty, the dignity and integrity of our own physical bodies, and our nearly insatiable desire for human connection and the infinite love of God can be co-opted and distorted by malicious parties. These evil actors want to pollute and enslave our minds and hearts and profit off human misery.

In contrast, we want to assist parents, guardians, grandparents and other family members to have the awareness and the tools to protect, nurture, and help young people discover their identity as children of God and come to maturity as disciples of Christ. We aim to rebuff pornographers' insidious redirection of screen time toward hardcore, violent pornography. First exposure occurs at the average age of eight. We want to "call things by their proper name," restoring the appreciation for the goodness of creation and ourselves as privileged bearers of God's image and likeness.

And for those who must humbly acknowledge that their freedom has already been compromised through persistent, immoral internet activity that directly or indirectly contributes to an industry of human trafficking and the victimization of children, women, and men, we want to invite the healing power of Christ's blood and the liberating grace of

the Holy Spirit to be enlisted in practical, therapeutic steps that help weaken and break the cycle of shame, contrition, and refractory self-indulgence.

How often this cycle plays out like a broken record we no longer hear since we have become deadened to our own consciences or steeped in self-reproach. Instead of poetically lingering like dogs sniffing in a garden, how many men -- and increasingly, women -- find themselves feeling like dogs returning to their vomit as the tawdry perversion of the mystery of human sexuality plays out on their mobile and other devices.

So many individuals and married couples, young adults and seniors, are suffering the effects of internet abuse. How frequently priest confessors, counselors and therapists, filled with compassion and not condescension or contempt, try to be the human voice of Jesus, reminding penitents and clients that despite their habitual sins and tendencies from which there is no immediate passing over to the promised land of freedom, holiness, and peace, they are not alone: God relentlessly accompanies them, embraces them, and rejoices each time we turn our face to him.

God's Spirit likewise calls us to form networks of support and accompaniment of one another, to pray together and to enlist accountability partners who serve not as "big brothers" watching over us like a surveillance team, but who as brothers and sisters in Christ humbly and charitably commit themselves to partner on the path that leads from darkness

to light.

In the John 9 Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Jesus replies to his disciples, "We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Safe Haven Sunday is a moment in the Lenten pilgrimage toward the Easter Vigil, when the light of the Risen Christ conquers the darkness of sin and death. It is not meant to be a 'one-off' affair that touches on the topic of internet safety and puts it on the shelf, but a graced opportunity that transforms our parishes, small groups, and families into the people whom God calls us to be. May the reach of our preachers and our personal reflection extend to all the ways in which human freedom is forsaken, where we must radically cast ourselves before the only One who can remove our blindness and sin.

We must also take refuge with one another as communities of faith who transparently call human weakness and those who prey upon it for what they are, so that we do not become ensnared in addiction and its attendant despair. We cannot "do" virtue and remain true to Christ's call by ourselves, any more than we can "do" Lent simply by dint of our own decision and strength.

We trust that whether we perceive conversion and change happening around and within us, in the apparent barrenness of March, "something's different today than yesterday." The Lord and his Church keep calling to us who are not dogs, but beloved humans seeking to abide in the garden where Resurrection light is not merely "one shining moment," but bathes us in every month and season.

Safe Haven Sunday is "a graced opportunity that transforms our parishes, small groups, and families into the people whom God calls us to be."

Terribles Días de Cuaresma

En su poema "Marzo," Louise Glück presenta una fotografía de palabras fácil de imaginar para nosotros en Iowa:

Mi vecina mira fijamente por su ventana,
Hablando con su perro. Él está olfateando el jardín,
tratando decidir sobre las flores muertas,
es un poco temprano para todo esto.

Todo está aún muy llano – Sin embargo, algo es diferente hoy comparado con ayer...

Mi vecina está llamando al perro, haciendo sonidos de perro poco convincentes.

El perro es amable, levanta su cabeza cuando ella le llama,

Pero no se mueve. Ella sigue llamándole,
su fallido ladrar se deteriora

lentamente a una voz humana.

Al entrar en las últimas semanas de marzo y de la Cuaresma, tal vez nos sentimos un poco como el perro de la vecina: olfateando alrededor de los enredados restos marchitos de vida incipiente, deseosos de migrar hacia nuevos terrenos que están aún congelados e inertes en nuestros caminos, escuchándonos, pero sin obedecer las voces que les llaman.

Eso es más o menos como me siento yo en estos días, con toda la firmeza de intención de poner en práctica mis disciplinas de Cuaresma luego de mis renegos por eventos en mi vida que van más allá de mi control, el reloj de la oscuridad y de la luz que se ajustan por decisión humana mientras que la oscuridad y la luz dentro de mí parecen desafiar mi deseo de permitir que la luz prevalezca, y la voz que busco escuchar en mis oraciones se nubla por otras voces que compiten y que solamente ofrecen un temporal escape a la "locura."

A veces se siente uno tentado a tirar la toalla en este proyecto espiritual de conversión y renovación y simplemente decir, "mejor suerte el próximo año," pero los llamados del Espíritu Santo y

la convicción de la constancia de algunos de aquellos que nos rodean y que parecen estar más hundidos en su devoción, son lo que nos puede salvar de la desesperación ante ese verdadero cambio y el crecimiento que son posible en el plan y en los tiempos de Dios.

Esa es la incansable esperanza que representa la designación de nuestra Diócesis del Cuarto Domingo de Cuaresma, el 18 y el 19 de marzo, como "Domingo de Lugar Seguro." Esta es una iniciativa de nuestra oficina de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar, coordinada por Adam Storey, con la cooperación de nuestros sacerdotes y diáconos parroquiales, quienes conectarán las lecturas atendiendo asuntos como seguridad en el internet para niños y personas de todas las edades. En el curso de sus homilias y boletines parroquiales, incluyendo otros mensajes, harán referencia y ofrecerán acceso a recursos que puedan tanto prevenir como ayudar a las personas a encontrar el camino a la sanación y liberación del azote de la pornografía en el internet y otras adicciones relacionadas.

Algunos de estos recursos permanecerán como ligas en inglés y en español en la sección

de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar del sitio web de nuestra Diócesis de Des Moines, incluyendo: Educando y Empoderando a los Niños, Cerebro, Corazón, Mundo (en inglés y en español); Ojos de Alianza; Camino a la Pureza; Ministerios Rotos; Prosperidad para Mujeres Católicas, Corazón Limpio en Línea (en inglés y español); Integridad Restaurada; y muchas más.

En una forma apropiada para todas las edades, buscamos crear consciencia como comunidad de fe sobre las formas en que la belleza humana, la dignidad y la integridad de nuestros propios cuerpos físicos, y nuestro casi insaciable deseo de conexión humana y el amor infinito de Dios pueden ser cooptados y distorsionados por personas maliciosas. Estos seres malignos buscan contaminar y esclavizar nuestras mentes y nuestros corazones para sacar ganancia de la miseria humana...

En contraste, queremos ayudar a los padres de familia, tutores, abuelos y otros miembros de las familias a crear consciencia y a tener las herramientas necesarias para proteger, nutrir y ayudar a los jóvenes a descubrir su iden-

Continued on page 10

THE CATHOLIC

MIRROR

Bishop William Joensen
Publisher

wjoensen@dmdiocese.org

Anne Marie Cox
Editor

acox@dmdiocese.org

Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

kcollins@dmdiocese.org

The Catholic Mirror (ISSN 0896-6869) is published monthly for \$25 per year by the Diocese of Des Moines, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines.

POSTMASTER: Send changes to THE CATHOLIC MIRROR, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

PHONE: (515)237-5046

EMAIL: mirror@dmdiocese.org

DIOCESAN WEBSITE:

www.dmdiocese.org

CORRECTION

A fish fry dinner at Holy Trinity Church in Des Moines will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost: \$12/adults, \$6/children ages 5-11. Alternate: mac and cheese.

Women's conference focuses on God's spirit

The Diocesan Council for Catholic Women wants to support every woman in the Diocese of Des Moines.

One of the group's goals is to help parishes strengthen their current women's groups or to help them create a new kind of group that's adaptable to the needs of today's woman. A way to do this is by connecting women across the Diocese, sharing their successful events and ministries so they can learn from each other.



Nell O'Leary

One opportunity will be April 22 at St. Joseph Church in Winterset. A gathering called Wide Open Hearts will feature keynote speaker Nell O'Leary, of the ministry called Blessed is She.

"When I think of Wide Open Hearts, what comes to mind is the freedom Jesus wants for us, to give our hearts to him, and the healing he wants to do in us to make that happen," O'Leary said. "I look forward to listening to the women I will meet and hearing how they've encountered the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit moves them."

Doors for the conference open at 8 a.m., presentations begin at 9 a.m. Bishop William Joensen will celebrate Mass, lunch will be served, and Father James Ahenkora, of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs, will share his story.

The DCCW board aims to provide a channel for women to share their questions, concerns and needs with the Diocese.

"Our new motto, to reflect who we are and what we do, is 'Connecting Catholic Women.' That's our vision: To reach out to every woman in the pew and to help her grow in her faith in God and in friendship with her sisters in Christ," said Renee Carney, of St. Patrick Parish in Missouri Valley and president of the DCCW board.

The DCCW is a longstanding umbrella organization serving to unite and serve all Catholic women's groups as well as women in parishes who have no established group.

To get tickets for the Wide Open Hearts women's conference, go to tinyurl.com/3md8vv97 or send a check for \$25/ticket to Mary Jo Robinson, PO Box 497, Atlantic, IA, 50022.

Questions? Call or text Carney at 712-310-2922.

Find family friendly Lent and Easter season resources at dmdiocese.org/Lent2023

Lent focuses on prayer, fasting, charity



Seventh grader Will Gallagher receives ashes from Assistant Principal Elizabeth Brott at Holy Trinity School in Des Moines on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22.



Nate Noon, a middle school/high school social studies teacher and St. Albert graduate, distributes ashes to junior Mya Hinton at St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs.

Catechumen, candidates welcomed

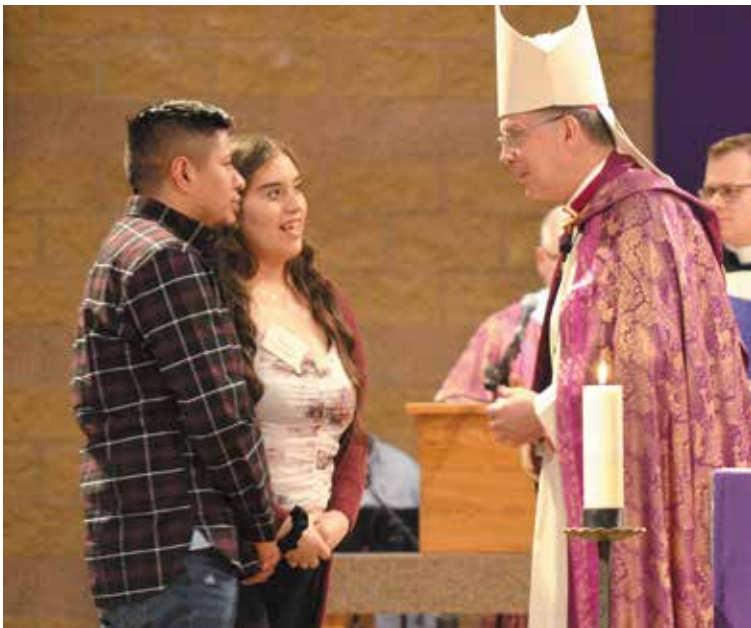


Photo by Anne Marie Cox



Photo by Linda Pfenning

At the Rite of Election Feb. 25 and 26, Bishop William Joensen formally elected the catechumens (those who have never been baptized) to enter the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil. He also welcomed candidates (those who have been baptized in the Catholic or other Christian faith) to come into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. In all, the Diocese of Des Moines will welcome 112 people into the Catholic Church. Pictured at left is Stephany Villarreal with the bishop. Pictured at right is Bishop Joensen with St. Patrick Parish RCIA coordinator Monica Dixon and candidate Sandy Daamgard.



DOWLING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



Parents, alumni, grandparents & friends are invited to celebrate 50 years on Buffalo Road! The night includes dinner, a spirited auction, live music and the chance to win FREE DCHS tuition or a \$5K cash prize!

Scan below for event details and to RSVP!

Sponsorship opportunities available beginning at \$500!

www.dowlingcatholic.org/bash23



PARISH FISH FRY DINNERS

The following are parish Lenten fish dinners on Fridays during Lent, up until March 31 except where otherwise noted.

Altoona, Ss. John and Paul

Dinners will be available for dine in, carry-out or drive thru from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$14/ adults; \$6/ children ages 6-12; free/children ages 5 and under. Alternate: cheese pizza; mac and cheese; add a skewer of grilled shrimp for market price.

Ankeny, Our Lady's Immaculate Heart

Dinners will be served March 17 and 31 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is free-will donation. Alternate: grilled cheese & tater tots.

Ankeny, St. Luke the Evangelist

Dinner will be served from 4:30-7 p.m. on March 17 and 31. Cost is free-will donation. Alternate: mac & cheese.

Atlantic, Ss. Peter and Paul

Dinners will be available for dine in or carry out from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$15/meal. Alternate: mac and cheese or Alfredo with no shrimp for \$10.

Audubon, St. Patrick

Dinners will be served from 5-7:30 p.m. Cost is \$12/adults \$6/ children under 10; free/PK children.

Avoca, St. Mary/St. Patrick, Walnut

Dinners will be served on March 17 from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Legion Hall in Avoca. Cost is \$12/adults and \$6/ children age 10 and under.

Carlisle, St. Elizabeth Seton

Dinners will be available for dine in or drive thru on March 24 from 5-7 p.m. Cost: suggested donation of \$12. Alternate: mac and cheese.

Chariton, Sacred Heart

Dinners will be served from 5-6:45 p.m. Cost is \$12/adults; \$6/ ages 6-17; and free/children ages 5 and under. Alternate: grilled cheese.

Council Bluffs, Corpus Christi

Dinners will be available for dine-in or carry out from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost \$14/adults and \$7/children ages 10 and under.

OUTSIDE DES MOINES

Council Bluffs, St. Patrick

Dinners will be available for dine-in or carryout from 5-7:30 p.m. Cost \$15/adults; \$7/children; free/children ages 5 and under. Alternate: shrimp.

Council Bluffs, St. Peter

Shrimp boil dinners will be served on March 24 from 5-7:30 p.m. Cost \$20/adults; \$10/children.

Glenwood, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

Dinners will be available for dine-in or carry out beginning at 5 p.m. until it is gone. Cost is \$13/ adults; \$4 children. Alternate: mac & cheese.

Granger, Assumption

Dinners will be served dine in or drive up from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is free will donation. Alternate: cheese pizza.

Greenfield, St. John

Dinners will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is free will donation. Alternate: cheese pizza.

Harlan, St. Michael

Dinners will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. Drive thru is available. Cost is \$15/adults; \$5/children ages 4-10; free/ age 3 and under. Alternate: fish tacos (dine-in only), mac and cheese.

Indianola, St. Thomas Aquinas

Dinners will be available for dine in or take out from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$13/adults; \$6/children ages 6-12; free/children age 5 and under.

Logan, St. Anne

Dinners will be available for dine-in, drive through or carryout from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$14/adults; \$7/children ages 5-12.

Missouri Valley, St. Patrick

Dinners will be served from 5-7 p.m. in the parish hall. Cost is \$10/adults; \$8/senior citizens; \$5/ children ages 6+; free/children age 5 and under. Alternate: salad bar; peanut butter & jelly sandwich.

Neola, St. Patrick

Dinners will be served from 5-7

p.m. Cost is \$15/adults; \$5/children ages 5-10; free/children under 5. Alternate: grilled cheese sandwich.

Norwalk, St. John the Apostle

Dinners will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/adults; \$8/ children; free/ages 5 and under. Alternate: cheese pizza.

Perry, St. Patrick

Dinners will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. at St. Patrick School. Cost is \$10/adults; \$5/children ages 5-10; free/children ages 4 and under; maximum \$30 for family with children; shrimp is \$3 extra. Alternate: fish tacos.

Red Oak, St. Mary

Dinners will be available for dine in or carryout on March 17 and 24 from 5-6:30 p.m. Cost is \$12/adults; \$7/children ages 12 and under.

St. Marys, Immaculate Conception

Dinners will be served on March 17 and 24 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$12.50/adults; \$5/children under 12; \$30/immediate family.

Waukee, St. Boniface

Dinners will be served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$12/adults, \$7/children ages 5-10; free/children age 4 and under; \$45/immediate family. Alternate: cheese pizza, spaghetti.

West Des Moines, Sacred Heart

Dinners will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. in the school. Cost is \$13/adults; \$7/children ages 3-10; free/age 3 and under; \$42 family maximum. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza, fish tacos.

West Des Moines, St. Francis of Assisi

Dinners are served from 5:30-7:15 p.m. Cost is \$15/adults; \$6/ children ages 6-12; free/children under age 5 and under; \$40/family cap. Alternate: cheese pizza and mac and cheese.

Winterset, St. Joseph

Dinners will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. on March 17 and 24. Cost is free-will offering. Alternate: cheese pizza, mac & cheese.

DES MOINES

All Saints

Dinners will be served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$10/person; \$5/Children ages 5-12; free/children age 5 and under. Alternate: mac and cheese. There will be live music.

Basilica of St. John

Dinners will be served from 4:45-6:30 p.m. Cost is \$12/adults, \$5/children ages 4-10; free/age 3 and under.

Christ the King

Dinners will be served from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$13/adults, \$5/children. Alternate: cheese pizza.

Holy Trinity

Dinner will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost: \$12/adults,

\$6/children ages 5-11. Alternate: mac and cheese.

St. Ambrose Cathedral

Lunches will be served from 12-2 p.m. Cost is \$6/person.

St. Anthony

Dinners will be available for dine in or drive through from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$12/person.

St. Augustin

Dinner will be served on March 31 from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$15/adults; \$8/children ages 5-15; free/children under 5; \$50/family max. Alternate: cheese quesadillas, grilled cheese sandwiches; mac and cheese.

St. Joseph

Dinners are available for dine in or carry out from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$13/adults; \$5/children; \$40/family max. Alternate: mac and cheese, cheese pizza.

St. Mary of Nazareth

Dinners will be served from 5-6:30 p.m. Cost is \$13/adults, \$25/couple and \$7/children. Alternate: mac and cheese.

St. Theresa

Dinners will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. in the school. Cost is a free will offering. Alternate: shrimp taco, cheese pizza and mac and cheese.

Fish dinners feed communities



Danielle Morshead gets some fish from Marty Herrmann at Assumption Parish in Granger.



Three youth are helping at St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs.



Andy Stout checks on the fish at St. Patrick Parish in Perry.



Parishioners at St. Anne Parish in Logan were ready for a crowd.

Find us on social media:

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

[Instagram.com/dmdiocese](https://www.instagram.com/dmdiocese)

[Twitter.com/dmdiocese](https://www.twitter.com/dmdiocese)

Join us in person or virtually for a holy hour every Monday at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral. [Facebook.com/dmdiocese](https://www.facebook.com/dmdiocese)

Seed of faith, nurtured during quarantine, blossoms

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

A seed planted just before the pandemic and nurtured during quarantine grew into one boy's love for God and a desire to join the Catholic Church.

This Easter Vigil, Tony Ramirez, who says he's "12 and three quarters" and his father, Celestino, will come into full communion in the Church at Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines. Looking on will be a happy stepmom, Ann "Charlie" Ramirez, and proud grandparents Pete Ramirez, and Mary and Steve Stimmel.

Tony's interest began several years ago when he would go to church with Grandma Mary and Grandpa Steve.

"I originally thought 'Man, every Sunday, I could be home doing something else.' But after I got an image of the Church and the Father, I was really happy being invited to the church," he said. "I love singing and reading the Scriptures... There's always something about every reading that will speak to me."

During the pandemic, when



Ann "Charlie", Celestino and Tony Ramirez with Bishop William Joensen after Tony and Celestino were formally welcomed to come into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

he had to distance himself from Celestino and Ann for health reasons, Grandma and Grandpa would teach him nighttime prayers, tell him stories from the Bible, talk about the saints, and their own experiences relating to the Church.

"I pulled out of my hat any Bible story that popped into my head at the moment," Mary said. She and Steve bought Tony a youth version of the catechism so he could read about the faith at a level he could understand.

One day, he asked the pas-

tor, Father Mark Neal, a question.

"I ask him how you become a saint. That was the first time I ever talked to him. Ever since then, I really liked him," Tony said. "I see Father as a celebrity because it's so cool to me to talk to him after Mass, to learn more about the Church and stuff."

Ann asked Tony if he'd like to become Catholic.

"His little face lit up and he said, 'Yeah, I want to be baptized,'" said Celestino. "At that point, I was mulling things over. I was baptized and got First Communion. I've not been confirmed myself."

He thought, "This is the perfect time to get my confirmation classes as well. So we're both in class right now. We're both learning a lot about the Catholic faith."

The grandfathers will play an important role at Easter Vigil. Celestino's dad, Pete, will be his grandson's sponsor. And Steve will be his son-in-law's sponsor.

"We're both going to be confirmed together," Tony said. "That's going to be something I remember for my whole life!"

Tony already feels like an evangelizer. After Mass on the day of the Rite of Election, when

Bishop William Joensen formally elected Tony and other catechumens (those who've never been baptized) to enter the Catholic Church, a man at the donuts and coffee line asked him how the RCIA classes were going. The man had not been confirmed.

"I told him this is really fun. I think you'd really enjoy doing it," Tony said. The man responded that he's probably going to go to the RCIA program in the fall.

"That really spoke to me because I invited someone to get confirmed," Tony said.

This faith journey the Ramirez family has traveled is remarkable, Celestino said.

"There's been so many instances along the way when we felt the finger of God touch our path and our lives. It's absolutely inspired us."

Perhaps the best part of the experience is that Tony has a relationship with God, said Celestino.

"We find him taking comfort in the Lord during hard times now," he said. "I absolutely hear him saying, 'You know, I think I need to pray about this.' It just warms our heart."

Students look forward to becoming baptized

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Two sixth graders will be baptized and enter the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

Both boys are new to St. Joseph School in Des Moines, where they experienced religion class for the first time.

Amir Winfrey said his decision came after going to religion classes. Some of the first things he learned were about the sacraments and the Ten Commandments.

"I was interested and wanted to learn more," he said.

He went home and told his parents what he was learning.

"He wants to know more



Amir Winfrey

about God and that's okay with us," said his father, Albert Winfrey. "I believe everybody has their own path to God."

His school administrator, Jodi Halligan, remembers the day he approached her about it.

"He walked up to me on a

Monday and said, 'Mrs. Halligan, how do I become Catholic?'"

Why?

"Because I want to learn more about God," he said.

Amir's favorite parts of the Mass are when he sings in the choir or does a reading. He likes to be involved in the Mass and eagerly awaits the day he can be an altar server.

Zachary Phan wants to become Catholic "because you get to learn about God more and see what he has done for you, for the community, and for society."

Zachary's father, Tom Phan, was baptized about three years ago at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Ankeny. Recently, Zachary came to live with his dad.



Zachary Phan

"I wanted to put him in a good school, especially a Catholic school," said Tom. "That's how it all got started."

Tom talked with Father Chris Fontanini, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, about Zachary's interest in the faith.

Zachary's favorite part of going to church is the quiet prayer time.

As for the faith, Zachary said: "My favorite part is learning what Jesus did to help people."

He and Amir have been meeting with Halligan on Wednesdays after school to learn more about the faith.

Watching the two youth come into the church benefits the whole parish, said Father Fontanini.

"I think it's heartening when they see young people wanting to embrace the faith. That's certainly a positive witness for all of us," he said. "It's a win-win for everyone."

Children to join church family at Easter Vigil

From day one, when Mindy and Jeff Schechinger considered fostering children, it was understood that the children would be joining them every Sunday for Mass at St. Patrick Church in Neola.

"The first thing (Mindy) did was introduce them to her church family," said Shannon Nye, the parish's director of religious education.

Over time, the children learned about the Catholic faith, participated at Mass by bringing up the gifts and decided they wanted to become Catholic. They are in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children, a process for learning and growing in faith.

"When we told them that (joining the church) was an option, they could join the church, there was no hesitation," Mindy said.

As darkness falls at Easter Vigil, the Schechinger family will be at church celebrating as Alvaro, 12, Christopher, 10, Joy Angel, 9 and Isaiah Daniel, 8, enter the Catholic Church.

"My boys are so anxious to be altar

servers," Mindy said. "They've already done the training because they want to be ahead of the game. After Easter, they can be put on the schedule."

Mindy herself went through RCIA about 10 years into her marriage.

"I would want people to know if this is something they've ever considered, they should seek out information and see if it works for them," she said. "If it's on somebody's heart, they should pursue it. It's hard but I've never regretted it."

Nye says she expects she'll continue to see the Schechinger children at weekly faith formation sessions.

"They will continue to get the faith formation behind the sacraments," she said.

The Schechinger family has adopted six children in recent years.

"It's just beautiful because the kids are trying to learn the Mass and partake with the Mass by bringing up the gifts," Nye said. "They're a very, very involved family."



The Schechinger family greets Bishop William Joensen at the Rite of Election at St. Patrick Church in Council Bluffs.

Around the Diocese

March 17-19 Friday-Sunday Book Sale

DES MOINES – Christ the King Parish is having its parish library book sale. Donation only. The times of the sale are: Friday 4:30-7 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. New, near-new, and gently used books. Inventory includes children's, religious (Catholic and non-Catholic), fiction and non-fiction, history, classics, home and garden, inspirational, some poetry, travel, sports, and more. All are welcome. Proceeds go to our parish library.

March 19 Sunday Staley's Chicken Dinner

NORWALK - St. John the Apostle Parish is hosting a fried chicken feast in the parish hall from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Everyone is invited! Cost is adults/\$12; ages 6-12/\$6 and kids under 5 eat free. A silent auction will be held. Auction items include a lawn mower, iPad tablet and more. For more information contact Gary and Mary Haselton at 515-321-3873 or the parish office at 515-981-4855.

March 21-23 Tues.-Thurs. Lenten Series

DES MOINES – St. Augustin Parish in Des Moines invites everyone to a three-day Lenten speaker series focused on Our Lady of Fatima. The series runs from 7-8 p.m. each evening. Guest speaker Rex Teodorio, of the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, will talk about the prophecies of Our Lady of Fatima, the science of social conformity and how it affects our spiritual lives, and the coming great chastisement and the great conversion. Childcare is available \$10/child maximum \$25/family and includes

snack, drink and craft. RSVP to Tom Donnelly via text 515-988-0491 or email tjdonnellyiowa@gmail.com.

March 22 Wednesday Taizé Service

DES MOINES – A Taize service at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, will be held 7-7:45 pm. This Taizé Lenten prayer experience is a time to rest in God, to let the words listened to and sung penetrate our being. There is no teaching. This is just a simple service: short chants, repeated over and over in candlelight, plus some short Scripture readings. And silence.

March 28-June 6 Tuesdays Grief Support Group

ANKENY – Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish is hosting Lean on Me, a grief support group of the Catholic community of Ankeny. We will meet on Tuesdays from 7-8:30 p.m. Sometimes in our life we all have pain. We all have sorrow. Lean on us when your life has been forever changed by a death. For more information or to register please contact Julie Shannon RN, a certified grief educator, at 515-250-9316 or Mary Shook RN at 515-777-0185.

April 1 Saturday Mardi Gras

DUNLAP – St. Patrick Parish will celebrate Mardi Gras beginning at 5:30 p.m. with dinner (free-will offering) featuring Staley's chicken, followed by games and entertainment, live auction and a raffle. Questions? Email churchspsh@gmail.com.

April 11 Tuesday Come Learn More

ANKENY -- The Nazareth Sisters of

the Annunciation is an order of sisters based in Kenya that serves the poor in and around Nairobi. Since 2016, four sisters moved to Des Moines to work at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center. These sisters live simply and send all of the money they earn beyond basic living expenses back to Kenya to support the work of their fellow sisters there. Come to an open house from 7-8 p.m. at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish to learn more about the sisters. Questions? Contact Steve Craig at 515-205-6916 or mberaig1@msn.com.

April 13-May 11 Thursdays Called & Gifted

WAUKEE – St. Boniface Parish is hosting a Catholic spiritual gifts discernment process from 1:30-3:30 p.m. in the Romero Room at St. Boniface Church. Cost is \$49 for all sessions and materials. Discover your charisms (spiritual gifts) and begin to discern God's call with the Called & Gifted process. Register by March 31 and find details at stbonifacechurch.org/called-gifted or call Faye Akers at 515-987-4597.

May 25 Thursday St. Vincent de Paul Golf Outing

PLEASANT HILL – St. Vincent de Paul is hosting its annual Golf Fundraiser to Fight Hunger at Copper Creek Golf Course. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 10 a.m. Registration is \$150 per person which includes food and beverages. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Contact Randi Radosovich at resourcedirector@svdpdsm.org if you're interested.

Joy on the Journey group celebrates love



Photo courtesy of Dick Janousek

The Joy on the Journey group came together at St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs to celebrate love on Valentine's Day. Franciscan Sister Joyce Blum from Corpus Christi Parish joined in for prayer, reflection and sharing. Joy on the Journey is for widowed or divorced to support those suffering from loss through prayer and time together.

Support for families with special needs children



Author Kelly Mantoan shared with a crowd some thoughts from her book *Better Than Ok: Finding Joy as a Special Needs Parent*.

PRAY WITH US

For the last year, Bishop William Joensen and the Diocese of Des Moines have been praying to renew Eucharistic faith and worship among God's people and to ask the Holy Spirit for inspiration and guidance for the Diocese of Des Moines. As a strategic visioning process

continues, Bishop Joensen invites everyone to join him in praying that we will fulfill our share of God's mission in Southwest Iowa, so that every person might encounter Jesus Christ and experience his call to friendship and communion.

Diocese of Des Moines Visioning Prayer

O God, you share with your people, your church, the mission to be the saving love of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

As a people of faith in southwest Iowa, send the Holy Spirit to ignite in us:

Sincere conversion to see, hear, think and act as Jesus;

Greater unity and bonds of peace;

Missionary zeal to spread good news that will spark a world aflame with love;

Genuine care for each other, especially those feeling lost or left out; and

Willingness to bear together the yoke that Christ makes light.

May our strategic visioning in the Diocese of Des Moines make us ever more focused, discerning, and free to fulfill our calling as a people made whole by the Heart of your Beloved Son.

Accompany us along the Way that leads to heaven, surrounded by Holy Mary, Joseph, and all the saints with whom we hope to dwell forever in communion with you,

+Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen



Diócesis de Des Moines Oración de Visión

Oh Dios, tú compartes con tu pueblo, tu Iglesia, la misión de ser el amor salvador de tu Hijo y nuestro Salvador, Jesucristo.

Como un pueblo de fe en el suroeste de Iowa, envía al Espíritu Santo para que encienda en nosotros:

una sincera conversión para ver, oír, pensar y actuar como Jesús;

una mayor unidad y lazos de paz;

un afán misionero para compartir la buena nueva encendiendo al mundo con amor;

un genuino cariño unos con los otros, especialmente con aquellos que se sienten perdidos o excluidos; y

el deseo de cargar juntos con el yugo que se hace ligero con Cristo.

Que nuestra visión estratégica en la Diócesis de Des Moines nos haga aún más enfocados, discernientes y libres para cumplir con nuestro llamado como pueblo que encuentra plenitud por el Corazón de tu Amado Hijo.

Acompáñanos en el Camino que nos lleva al cielo, rodeados de la María Santísima, José y todos los santos con quienes esperamos habitar por siempre en comunión contigo,

+Padre, Hijo, y Espíritu Santo. Amén.



Victim Assistance Advocate

The diocese's Victim Assistance Advocate, Sam Porter, is a staff member at Polk County Victim

Services. He helps people who are or were minors when they were victims of abuse by the clergy through a complaint process. He also helps them seek support and counseling services. Porter can be reached at 515-286-2024 or Sam.Porter@polkcountyiowa.gov.

Come see what Catholic schools are all about! Go to dmdiocese.org/schools, find a school close to you, and make an appointment for a tour.

Guess who's coming to dinner?

Surprise potlucks warm hearts and friendships during cold winter months

**By Elizabeth Elliott
Contributing Writer**

Parishioners from Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Atlantic and St. Mary Parish in Anita never know until the night of their parish dinner who is going where for their monthly gathering.

Hosts don't know ahead of time who is coming, and guests don't know until that night where they're going.

The idea grew from Beverly Ginther's hometown Maryville, Mo., parish where her sister and mom are parishioners.

"They had been doing it for many years, and so I thought it was a really cool idea," Ginther said. "I thought it was neat, so I brought it back here."

For the past three years, from January through April, individuals 18 and older from Ss. Peter and Paul Parish and St. Mary Parish sign up as hosts or participants on the fourth Sunday of every month.

Ginther confirms their availability and asks the hosts their plans for a main dish and desires for side dishes. Hosts supply the main dish and drinks.

After everyone is confirmed, Ginther will give the guests an address of where they are going.

"I get a little anxious and worked up when I call people because it never goes perfectly. It never does," she said. "I can understand that."

Dinner is a surprise for everyone.

"The people that are hosting don't know who's coming. The people that are participating don't know whose house they're going to," Ginther said. "I know

in today's modern technology world, you could look up on your smartphone and figure out whose address you're going to."

But, she advised, "Don't ruin part of the fun."

People are building camaraderie among those that participate.

"Especially the elderly, they love to get together," Ginther said. "They would like to do it every month, year-round really."

She said for whatever reason, it's hard to get hosts.

"There are some people that love to entertain but other people do not," Ginther said.

The point of the gatherings is to get to know people that you might not necessarily get to know in the parish.

Ginther dispels a misconception among some people concerned about what they'll talk about. It's just dinner, she said.

"Some people say they can't sit down and talk about church for an hour," she said. "We don't talk about the church at all."

The meals are meant to create deeper connections.

"You can communicate better with other people when you have a personal relationship," she said.

Father Trevor Chicoine, the pastor, said he's seen a few good fruits come out of this program.

"Not only has it led to a mixing around the parish so that folks who didn't know each other get to know each other, but through conversations, it's organically led different folks to find out about other things going on in the parish that they might be interested in," he said. "It's a totally blind date and it's really easy to incorporate new members."



Rural Iowa parishes strengthen their bonds with monthly dinners in the winter and early spring. Where the guests are going, and who is doing the cooking, is always a surprise.



From January through April, parishioners at Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Atlantic and St. Mary Parish in Anita have "blind date" dinners to get to know each other.

HONOR YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER

Is there a special teacher, administrator or school volunteer you want to recognize? Consider nominating them to be honored at the 2023 Bishop's Celebration of Catholic Schools. Nominate someone today at bit.ly/3IabSMi.



Get your message out to 30,000 Catholic households in central and southwest Iowa. Contact Sandy at 515-237-5046 or sriesberg@dmdiocese.org.



dmdiocese.org/Lent2023

Find family-friendly resources to help you truly live the Lenten season. Find children's activities such as Hide the Alleluiah, or flash cards for learning the Hail Mary, to a family almsgiving project planner, stories about the feast days within Lent and seven meatless soups for Lent. Produced by the Diocese of Des Moines and the St. Joseph Evangelization Center.

We're close in all the ways you need.
 Yes, we are located nearby for your convenience.

Through the years, we have formed close relationships with the families we serve. As neighbors, we are there when needed most.

With a skilled and caring staff.

With a warm and comforting atmosphere.

With answers and options few funeral homes can offer.



Celebrate Life the Way You Live It
www.IlesCares.com

DID YOU KNOW

you can pay for tuition using
a tax reduction plan?

529 Plans offer tax
benefits to you
when paying your
child's K-12 tuition.



Call now to learn how to use the 529 Plan for
your children, grandchildren, or others you love!

in partnership with

 **The Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa**
515-237-5044 | www.catholicfoundationiowa.org

Divine Mercy celebrations

Divine Mercy Sunday, celebrated the first Sunday after Easter, recognizes a message Jesus shared in private revelations to St. Maria Faustina Kowalska. In them, Jesus emphasized that God is merciful. All of the following events are on Sunday, April 16 unless otherwise noted.

Des Moines Area

**Basilica of St. John,
Des Moines**
Mass at 10:30 a.m. with Bishop
Emeritus Joseph Charron. C.P.P.S.

**Christ the King Parish, Des
Moines**
Reconciliation 2-3 p.m., Divine
Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m., Mass at
3:30 p.m. Livestreaming and sign
language interpretation available.

**Our Lady's Immaculate
Heart Parish, Ankeny**
Divine Mercy Chaplet cards and
images on display.

**St. Francis Parish,
West Des Moines**
April 15, 8:30-3 p.m. - Freedom

in Christ Conference with Dr.
Matthew Breuninger
April 16, 2:30-3:30 p.m. - Holy
Hour with sung Divine Mercy
Chaplet

**St. Luke Parish,
Ankeny**
Eucharistic adoration and con-
fessions from 2-3 p.m. and the
Divine Mercy Chaplet sung at 3
p.m.

**St. Pius X Parish,
Urbandale**
Divine Mercy Chaplet begins 20
minutes before Mass on April 15
at 5 p.m. and before the Sunday
Masses at 7 a.m., 9 a.m. and 11
a.m.

Adel

St. John will celebrate after 9
a.m. Mass.

Chariton

Sacred Heart will pray the Divine
Mercy chaplet after the 10:30
a.m. Mass. Confessions also
available during the chaplet.

Creston and Afton

Holy Spirit (Creston) and St. Ed-
ward (Afton), led by the pastor
and the Catholic Daughters of
the Americas will hold a Divine
Mercy prayer service with adora-
tion of the Blessed Sacrament at
St. Edward Church at 11:30 a.m.
Priests will be available for rec-
onciliation.

Missouri Valley

St. Patrick will pray the Divine
Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m.

Granger

Assumption will host a benedic-
tion at 3 p.m.

Neola

St. Patrick will celebrate with 2
p.m. opening prayer, the rosary,
Eucharistic adoration, reconcilia-
tion, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy
at 3 p.m. and conclude with ben-
ediction.

Perry

St. Patrick youth group will host
a dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 1
p.m. in the school gym.

Woodbine

Sacred Heart will host Eucharis-
tic adoration at 3 p.m.

If you're looking for
a way to get your
message to 30,000
households in central
and southwest Iowa,
consider advertising in
The Catholic Mirror.
515-237-5057



Christ the King Catholic Church Divine Mercy Sunday

Sunday, April 16th

Sacrament of Reconciliation 2:00 p.m.

Divine Mercy Chaplet 3:00 p.m.

Mass at 3:30 p.m.

Live Streaming and
Sign Language Interpreter

Refreshments following Mass in the Parish Hall

FREEDOM IN CHRIST CONFERENCE with DR. MATTHEW BREUNINGER

Join us this Divine Mercy weekend for a
day of powerful talks on God's healing
love! Our speaker, Dr. Matthew Breuninger
is an assistant professor of psychology at
Franciscan University of Steubenville and a
licensed clinical psychologist. His talks will
examine the nature and cause of wounds and
outline a six-step process for identifying and
removing barriers to God's healing grace.

Co-Sponsored by
St. Francis of Assisi and Iowa Catholic Radio

The event is free and lunch will be provided.
Register at saintfrancischurch.org/events



SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2023 | 8:30-3:00 | ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, WEST DES MOINES

Blind lector sees God's love, mercy

By Elizabeth Elliott
Contributing Writer

Blindness doesn't keep Mary Clarke from fully experiencing and sharing her faith.

Clarke was in her 20s when she was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a hereditary eye disease generally resulting in total blindness.

"As I see it, there are three kinds of sight. There is the physical sight which I don't have although I have my other senses," Clarke said. "Then there is the sight brought on by reasoning which we all share and then there is the contemplative sight which to me is the most profound sight because it opens our soul up to the magnificent Spirit of God's love and mercy."

"There is the contemplative sight which to me is the most profound sight because it opens our soul up to the magnificent Spirit of God's love and mercy."

-- Mary Clarke

She learned Braille as an adult and said her Braille reading is slower than those who developed the skill at an early age.

"When I am preparing a reading for Mass, I will read it over many times before I read it at Mass," she said. "This has proved to be a tremendous spiritual bless-

ing for me since as I read it over and over, I gain new insights into the deeper meanings of the readings."

Clarke said she believes she can help others struggling with their challenges by accepting her challenges through God's grace.

"This may sound rather strange, but by not being able to see distractions around me, I find myself focusing on my spiritual sanctum as I participate in the Eucharistic celebration," she said.

Her role as lector began when she was attending Mass at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Catholic Church in Ankeny. Monsignor Steve Orr had asked parishioners to consider volunteering to be lectors.

She said she had an overpowering urge to volunteer: "At the same time I was saying in my heart, 'God, this is crazy... I had not read in front of people since I had lost my vision.'"

The thought persisted so she was put in touch with individual training lectors.

"I contacted the Xavier Society for the Blind. They sent me the Proper for the Sunday Masses and I began to lector at Sunday and daily Masses," Clarke said.



Blind since she was in her 20s, Mary Clarke has learned to cope with her challenges through the grace of God. She lectors at St. Boniface Parish in Waukee.

"For the daily Masses, the staff at OLIH would send me the readings on my computer and I would transcribe them into Braille."

Clarke has been able to enter into many aspects of the church, with the help of materials that are made for the blind.

After becoming a widow in 2012 and through 2020, Clarke managed her own home in Ankeny before moving to Waukee.

She continues to lector at St. Boniface.

The Xavier Society has provided her with many different materials.

"It's inspirational to see the commitment of our patrons to their faith and some of the barriers that they've overcome to actively participate on a daily and weekly basis in their parishes," said Malachy Fallon, executive director of

the Xavier Society for the Blind, a nonprofit organization founded in New York City in 1900.

Its co-founders were a blind teacher of blind children, Margaret Coffey, and Jesuit Father Joseph Stadelman.

To learn about the services offered by the Xavier Society for the Blind, go to XavierSociety-ForTheBlind.org.

CTO offers a win-win; help families & earn tax credits

By Mark Reed
Contributing Writer

Have you filed your taxes yet?

It is a common question this time of year. Most often there are two responses:

1. Nope. I owe additional taxes, so I am waiting until the deadline.

2. Absolutely! I am getting a refund, so I already filed.

If you typically owe additional taxes, you may want to consider taking advantage of the 75% Iowa tax credit by donating to the Catholic Tuition Organization. CTO donors subtract 75% of their gift directly from their calculated state income tax. Often this results in a tax refund rather than an additional payment.

If you already receive a tax refund, you can increase your refund, up to the full amount of your tax liability with tax credits from CTO. Not only is the 75% tax credit highest in Iowa, but a gift to CTO means you are providing families with tuition assistance to attend our Catholic schools.

Who receives tuition assistance?

Consider this: there are 4.6 members in the average CTO recipient family, which earns \$66,000 annually. As-

suming one high school and one elementary student, their average tuition cost is \$13,365. Without CTO, that family is spending 20% of their income just on tuition! Who of us who make \$66,000 could afford \$13,365 in tuition? It is obvious that these families could not afford a Catholic education without CTO.

Families can apply for tuition assistance by April 18 for the 2023-24 school year. Application information can be found at CTOIowa.org.

Why donate to CTO?

The primary reason donors contribute to CTO is to support families and our Catholic schools that instill strong moral values and academic excellence. Donors desire to help families afford a high quality, faith-based education for their children.

Many donors give more to CTO for the tax credit. A \$1,000 contribution costs less than \$250, yet the full amount of the contribution helps families in need.

How can you help?

Donate online at CTO-Iowa.org or print a donation form and mail with your gift to the Catholic Tuition Organization, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Instructions for giving appreciated stock are also on our website.

Do you know someone who lives their faith in a way that's inspiring? Do you see someone's faith witnessed in a way that draws people closer to Christ? Who among us is sowing God's Spirit, planting those seeds of faith that one day will bear fruit?

Contact us with your story ideas at communications@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5046.

Volunteer "English as a second language" teachers needed

Volunteer English as a second language teachers are needed to increase English proficiency in the Des Moines community. Patience and kindness are more important than experience.

Contact Jim Supina at 515-961-2026 for more information.

PULSE
life ADVOCATES
Defenders of the Defenseless Since 1972
www.PulseForLife.org
515-255-4113

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

WIDE OPEN HEARTS
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
April 22, 2023

Doors open 8:00am
Presentations 9:00am
Closing 3:30pm
Winterset, Iowa
St Joseph Parish Hall

Hosted by the Des Moines Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

\$25 INCLUDES LUNCH
REGISTER NOW

To register online type the following in your browser such as Google or Safari.

tinyurl.com/3md8vv97

Another way to register online is to use your smartphone camera to scan the QR code on the left above Neil's photo.

If you wish to pay with a check, mail check payable to DSM DCCW for \$25 to Mary Jo Robinson, PO Box 497, Atlantic IA 50022. Include name, address, phone, and email.

??? Renee Carney 712-310-2922 call or text

ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED
Bring your daughter, your mother, your friend

Terribles Días de Cuaresma

Continued from page 2

idad como hijos de Dios y que puedan madurar como discípulos de Cristo. Buscamos opacar la desviación maliciosa hacia la pornografía gráfica y violenta. Los primeros encuentros con la pornografía se dan en promedio a la edad de ocho años. Queremos “llamar las cosas por su propio nombre” restaurando el aprecio por la bondad de la creación y de nosotros mismos como portadores privilegiados de la imagen y semejanza con Dios.

Y para aquellos que quienes deben reconocer humildemente que han comprometido su libertad por medio de una actividad persistente e inhumana en el internet que, directa o indirectamente, contribuye con una industria de tráfico humano y de victimización

de niños, mujeres y hombres, queremos llamar al poder salvador de la sangre de Cristo y a la gracia liberadora del Espíritu Santo para que sean parte de pasos prácticos y terapéuticos que ayuden a debilitar y romper el ciclo de vergüenza, contrición y retracción de auto indulgencia.

Qué frecuentemente suena este ciclo como un disco rayado que ya no podemos escuchar porque nos hemos convertido en un callejón sin salida de nuestras propias consciencias o entrado en el auto reproche... En vez de mantenernos poéticamente fijos como los perros que olfatean en un jardín, cuántos hombres – y un número creciente de mujeres – se encuentran a sí mismos como perros que vuelven a su vómito como la vergonzosa perversión del mis-

terio de cómo funciona la sexualidad humana en sus teléfonos celulares y otros dispositivos.

Tantos individuos y parejas casadas, adultos jóvenes y viejos, están sufriendo los efectos del abuso del internet. Con qué frecuencia los sacerdotes confesores, consejeros y terapeutas, llenos de compasión, nunca condescendientes ni con desprecio, tratando de ser la voz humana de Jesús, recordando a los penitentes y clientes que, a pesar de sus pecados y tendencias habituales de las cuales no hay un pase inmediato a la prometida tierra de la libertad, santidad y paz, no están solos: Dios les acompaña sin descanso, les abraza y se llena de gozo cada vez que volteamos nuestro rostro hacia él.

De la misma forma, el Espíritu de Dios nos llama a formar unos con otros, redes de apoyo y de acompañamiento, a orar juntos y a conseguir compañeros de responsabilidad que sirvan no solamente como hermanos mayores que están siempre como guardias vigilantes, sino como hermanos en Cristo, humilde y caritativamente comprometiéndose a caminar juntos ese camino que lleva de la oscuridad a la luz.

En el Evangelio de Juan para el Cuarto Domingo de Cuaresma, Jesús responde a sus discípulos, “tenemos que hacer el trabajo del que me envió mientras es de día, porque luego llega la noche y ya nadie puede trabajar. Mientras esté en el mundo, yo soy la luz del mundo.”

El Domingo de Lugar Seguro es un momento en el peregrinar de Cuaresma rumbo a la Vigilia Pascual, cuando la luz del Cristo Resucitado conquista la oscuridad del pecado y de la muerte. No debe ser este un asunto aislado que trata el tema de seguridad en

el internet y luego ponemos en la repisa, pero una oportunidad en gracia que transforme nuestras parroquias, pequeños grupos y familias en el pueblo al que Dios nos llama a ser. Que el alcance de nuestros predicadores y de nuestras propias reflexiones personales se extiendan de todas las formas en que se abandona la libertad humana, en donde debemos presentarnos radicalmente ante es quien puede eliminar nuestra ceguera y nuestro pecado...

Debemos también refugiarnos unos con otros como comunidades de fe quienes llaman por su nombre y con transparencia las debilidades humanas y a aquellos que atentan contra ellas, para que no nos enredemos en las adicciones y las desesperaciones que acarrean. No podemos “hacer”

la virtud y permanecer firmes en el llamado de Cristo por nuestra propia cuenta, no más de lo que podemos “hacer” la Cuaresma simplemente mediante nuestras propias decisión y fuerza...

Confiamos en que, ya sea que percibamos la conversión y el cambio alrededor de nosotros y dentro de nosotros, en la aparente llanura de marzo, “algo es diferente hoy comparado con ayer.” El Señor y su Iglesia no siguen llamando a quienes no somos perros, sino muy amados humanos que buscan permanecer en el jardín donde la luz de la Resurrección no es meramente “un momento brillante” sino que nos baña en todo mes y en toda temporada...

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.

Priest used culinary gifts to bring people together

Continued from page 1

He served the following parishes: St. Peter in Defiance; St. Clare in Clarinda; St. Joseph in Villisca; Sacred Heart in Bedford; St. Mary in Red Oak; St. Patrick in Council Bluffs; St. Thomas Aquinas in Indianola; St. Mary in Shenandoah; St. Mary in Hamburg; and in 2004, he went to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish in Glenwood until his 2011 retirement.

Father Bruck devoted much time and energy to the Marriage Encounter program, said his friend, Father David Polich.

He also was a founding

member of a group of priests in the Diocese modeled on the international Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests.

“He had a real fondness for his brothers in that group and that was a big thing in his life,” said Marvin.

Father Bruck retired to Harlan, in Shelby County, where he would assist with weekend Masses and other ministries.

“When he retired, he told people he was engaged in a ministry of hospitality,” said Father Polich. “That was part of his life in parishes where he served as well.”

Father Bruck may have felt most comfortable in his kitchen, where he’d make a pot roast or chicken, mashed potatoes and vegetables for that evening’s guests.


“At different times, he would grill a steak or something on his outside grill but he quit doing that because he couldn’t visit with his guests. He’d fix everything inside his oven,” said Deacon Davitt.

Father Bruck would invite to his home friends, family and those with nowhere to go on special occasions.

“At Christmas Eve, he would see if there was a recent widow or widower or somebody who didn’t have a place to eat. He would invite those people to come to his house and have a meal and share with them a conversation or maybe play cards,” said his friend, Father Ken Gross.

“For his 50th anniversary of ordination, he didn’t have a big event. He decided to have smaller events and told people if they would want to contact him, he would prepare a meal and they would visit,” said Father Gross.

In a closing prayer at Father Bruck’s funeral, Bishop William Joensen said: “There is sadness in parting, but we take comfort in hope that we will see him again and enjoy his company and friendship.”



Ecclesiastical Restoration
Joseph L. Loving
Studio Joe's
302 Ave. F
West Point, Iowa 52656
Cell: 319-470-8646
studiojoes@mchsi.com
Refurbishing & Restoration
Altar Refinishing 23K Gold Leafing



save the Date



IOWACATHOLICRADIO.COM

CELEBRATE COUNTRY CONCERT

7.15.23

At The Iowa Events Center

Contact belle@kwky.com or call 515-223-1150
for VIP and sponsorship info.

SPONSORED BY:



VALIANT WEALTH
FAMILY OFFICE



Community
Choice



BALL
TEAMS
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES



FAREWAY



BSB
DESIGN

Pope: Jesus asks that no one be excluded from his table

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Catholic Church is not selective: each one of its members is a sinner and part of the holy, faithful people of God, Pope Francis said in an interview marking his 10 years as pope.

Vatican News March 10 published excerpts of the interview with RSI, a Swiss radio-television broadcasting in Italian. The full interview was to be aired and available online March 12.

Responding to why some people feel excluded from the church, the pope said, "Sin is always there. There are men of the church, women of the church who create this distance."

"There is a bit of the vanity of the world, feeling more righteous than others, but it is not right," he said. "We are all sinners. At the hour of truth put your truth on the table and you will see that you are a sinner."

When Jesus asks that everyone be brought to his table, "it means that no one is excluded," the pope said.

"When the guests did not come to the feast, he said go into the main roads and invite to the banquet whomever you find: the sick, the good and the bad, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, everyone," he said.

"We must not forget this: the church is not a home for some, it is not selective," the pope said. "The holy, faithful people of God are this: everyone."

When asked how much he has changed since his election March 13, 2013, he responded, "I am old. I have less physical endurance, the knee injury was a physical humiliation, although it is healing well now." He said he felt "a bit ashamed" having to use a wheelchair.

The thing he misses most from the time before he was elected pope is "walking, going down the street. I used to walk a lot. I used to catch the underground, the bus, always with people."

When asked what a pope "from the ends of the earth" brings to the papacy, he pointed to the late Argentine philosopher, Amelia Podetti, who said that "reality is better seen from the extremes than from the center. One understands universality from a distance."

Speaking about the problem



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis waves to the visitors in St. Peter's Square gathered to pray the Angelus on March 5.

of war and conflict in the world, he said a third world war is underway. "It started in bits and pieces and now no one can say it is not worldwide. The great powers are all caught up in it. The battlefield is Ukraine. Everyone is fighting there."

Asked what he would say if he were able to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, he said, "I would speak to him as clearly as I speak in public. He is an educated man."

The pope explained how the day after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, "I went to the Russian embassy to the Holy See to say that I was willing to go to Moscow if Putin would give me a window to negotiate." Sergey Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, "wrote to me saying thank you but now is not the time."

"Putin knows I am available. But there are imperial interests there, not only of the Russian empire, but of empires elsewhere," he said. "It is typical of the empire to put nations in second place."

The conflicts in Yemen and Syria and what is happening to "the poor Rohingyas in Myan-

mar" are also close to the pope's heart. "Why this suffering? Wars hurt. There is no spirit of God. I don't believe in holy wars."

Pope Francis praised his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, who died Dec. 31, 2022, and spoke about how good it was to have him nearby.

"I would ask for his opinion. He would tell me what he thought; he was always balanced,

positive, a wise man," he said.

The pope has repeatedly said he does not plan on resigning any time soon, but when asked what would lead him to step down, he responded that it would be the kind of fatigue that "does not make you see things clearly. A lack of clarity, of knowing how to evaluate situations. A physical problem, too, perhaps."

Pope: Helping, welcoming others creates a culture of fraternity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Taking in and welcoming others must be done without expecting anything from them in return, Pope Francis said.

It is "this gratuitousness" that creates a culture of friendship and fraternity, he said March 9 at the Vatican.

"We often talk about the contribution that migrants give or can give to the communities that receive them. This is true and important. But the fundamental criterion lies not in how useful the person is, but in the intrinsic value" of the human person, he said.

People deserve "to be welcomed not so much for what they have or can have or can give, but for who they are," the pope said during an audience with people taking part in a weeklong course offered by the Fraterna Domus retreat center in Sacrofano outside of Rome to people involved in hospitality or reception services.

The more a community is "imbued with this attitude of openness and welcome," he said, the more it becomes capable of "integrating all its members."

CARING ABOUT YOUR LOSS AND SHARING IN YOUR FAITH

Prayer to St. Joseph for a Happy Death

O blessed Joseph who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary, obtain for me, I beseech you, the grace of a happy death.

In that hour of dread and anguish, assist me by your presence,

and protect me by your power against the enemies of your salvation.

Into your sacred hands, living and dying,

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I commend my soul.

Amen

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

CALDWELL PARRISH
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY

Urbandale • Adel • Winterset • CaldwellParrish.com

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



5701 Hickman Road
Des Moines, IA 50310

www.DivineTreasuresInc.net
515-255-5230

Shop Local

Wisdom, help us with technology

One of the greatest joys of my life is being a father to my five children.

Getting to play with them, teach them, and see them grow is such a profound gift!

It is my nature to be overly confident, and yet at the same time when trying to guide my kids, I often experience the quiet, subtle voice in the back of my head that says, "You don't know what you're doing." Sometimes that voice is discouraging and unsettling, but most of the time I can peacefully concede that it's right!

Being a parent is one of the greatest privileges that a person can experience in life, and we should thank God for this gift daily. At the same time, it is profoundly hard, and we should ask God for the grace to do it well.

Marriage and Family Life

By Adam Storey



We should also recognize that none of us can, or should, try to raise our kids alone. Parenting goes well beyond just mom and dad, and even beyond the extended family, to the broader community.

A primary community for every Catholic ought to be his or her parish. The broader community can be a place of support and encouragement, and it can remind us that although our context is unique, the

challenges we face are not new.

I'd like to suggest that one vital place of support for families is the issue of internet safety, and healthy internet practices. Technology continues to change faster than our ability to keep up, and while it can offer many blessings, its temptations and negative effects are easy to see and well documented. As internet use and social media apps become more deeply embedded in our culture, boundaries seem harder to set and issues more difficult to navigate.

This is why the Diocese is celebrating Safe Haven Sunday on the weekend of March 18-19. Safe Haven Sunday is an opportunity to highlight the many effective internet safety resources that are available to families and individuals. Helping build a culture of healthy internet use is a commu-

nal issue, and so the educational and healing resources that are offered are relevant for all.

More information can be found on the diocesan website by clicking on the Marriage and Family Life ministries page.

As we celebrate Safe Haven Sunday, I'd ask that we all pray for wisdom when it comes to engaging technology, and that we become familiar with, and utilize, the many tools out there that foster education, prevention of harmful content, and healing when someone has been exposed to pornography, and other harmful material on the internet.

Adam Storey is the diocesan director of Marriage & Family Life. He can be reached at astorey@dmdiocese.org.

Keep minors out of meatpacking plants

Keep minors out of meatpacking plants

A man from a parish in our diocese says the meatpacking plant where he and his wife are employed has some simple jobs but also some very dangerous jobs. He says workers are "poorly taught" in their jobs. He wonders why Iowa legislators would have even thought of allowing minors to work at a meatpacking plant. Federal and state law prevent minors from working in a meatpacking plant because of the particularly hazardous nature of such employment.

Yet, Iowa legislators advanced a proposed bill last week that would allow minors ages 14 to 17 to work in jobs currently off limits, such as meatpacking plants and factories, as part of a training program through their school or employer. The proposed bill, which deals with youth employment, prohibits "Work activities in or about slaughtering and meatpacking establishments and rendering plants, provided that work activities in office, shipping and assembly areas shall not be prohibited" However, a new section made an exception in the case of "approved career and technical education, work-based learning, internship, registered apprenticeship programs, and student learners" (<https://tinyurl.com/mubb6x8b>).

The bill's supporters added an amendment March 6 to Senate File 167

Guest Column

By Barb Arland-Fye



that would not permit the directors of the departments of Labor and Education to extend waivers for students to work in mining, explosives, radiation, logging or slaughtering/meatpacking. That is an encouraging development. However, the bill remains a work in progress, said Tom Chapman, executive director of the Iowa Catholic Conference.

To make that amendment stick, we should remind our legislators of the Code of Federal Regulations regarding child labor regulation. It states, "The following occupations in or about slaughtering and meat packing establishments, rendering plants, or wholesale retail or service establishments are particularly hazardous for the employment of minors between 16 and 18 years of age or detrimental to their health or well-being" (<https://tinyurl.com/n78m4cyh>).

Furthermore, "The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) identifies the "many serious safety and health hazards in the meat packing industry" that include "exposure to high noise

levels, dangerous equipment, slippery floors, musculoskeletal disorders, and hazardous chemicals (including ammonia that is used as a refrigerant)" (<https://tinyurl.com/mr3v7nbk>).

Meatpacking plant workers can also be "exposed to biological hazards associated with handling live animals or exposures to feces and blood which can increase the risk for many diseases." Meatpacking plants implement common hazard control measures as required by law but how effective are these measures? How effectively do employees adhere to them? Would teens have the maturity to comply consistently with these measures?

Other concerns to consider: how many financially strapped families might apply pressure on their 14- to 17-year-old sons and daughters, explicitly or implicitly, to work in a meatpacking plant to help make ends meet? The proposed bill also calls for an extension of work hours for teens. How would working a couple of extra hours a day affect a teen's ability to complete schoolwork and advance his or her education?

"Economic Justice for All," a pastoral letter of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, would be worth reflecting on as we consider the answers to these questions (<https://tinyurl.com/mryz3p8u>). In the opening paragraph, the bishops state: "Our faith calls us to measure this econo-

my not only by what it produces, but also by how it touches human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person. Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content; they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken family life, advance or diminish the quality of justice in our land" (1).

The meatpacking plant worker expressed worries that kids working at a meatpacking plant would face even greater risk of injury because of their young age. He and his wife were among 15 to 20 meatpacking plant workers who shared their concerns about Iowa's proposed legislation with Bishop Thomas Zinkula last week in Columbus Junction. The bishop said he would share their concerns with the other Iowa bishops and the Iowa Catholic Conference, which is the public policy voice for the bishops.

Now we need to advocate on behalf of our minors. Go to legis.iowa.gov/legislation to read the bill (SF 167). Send a message to Iowa's legislators to pass a law that keeps our minors out of meatpacking plants. The Iowa Catholic Conference is also tracking this legislation and other bills that matter to us as Iowans of faith (iowacatholicconference.org).

Barb Arland-Fye is the editor of The Catholic Messenger, the newspaper for the Diocese of Davenport.

Go beyond putting up with life and find joy

We rejoice when it's dry and complain when it rains. But in an arid country, such as the Holy Land, rain is considered to be God's blessing. The presence or absence of water makes the difference between life and death.

Although walking in the heat of the noon-day sun wasn't life-threatening for Jesus, he certainly felt tired, hot and very thirsty. So he sat by Jacob's well, near a Samaritan town.

But unfortunately he had no bucket with which to draw water from the well. That must have been very frustrating! But, then, a woman came to draw water from the well. That would have been unusual in the heat of the midday sun. But perhaps her complicated love life forced her to avoid the mockery of the other women who would have come to the well in the cool of the early morning or evening.

What surprised the Samaritan woman was that Jesus spoke to her and asked her for help. Traditionally Jews despised Samaritans as being semi-pagans and had nothing to do with them.

But Christ's thirst and his need for the Samaritan woman to draw him some water gave him the opportunity to start to break down the religious barriers which normal-

Seeds from Scripture

By Father Lazarus Kirigia



ly would have kept them apart. It's so often the case that responding to each other's needs makes the barriers, which separate us, irrelevant.

As Jesus treated the Samaritan woman with unexpected respect, she gained confidence and a fascinating conversation ensues. This developed from Christ's thirst and his request for water.

There's a wonderful exchange here. As the woman offers Jesus well-water to quench his bodily thirst, he offers her living water which would quench her thirst for God. Not surprisingly, she understands this in terms of bubbling spring water, as distinct from stagnant well-water. She's eager to receive the inexhaustible supply of water, which Christ offers her, since it would free her from the arduous task of coming to the well each day.

Obviously they've been talking at cross purposes, with the woman thinking in terms of the kind of water that quenches physical thirst, while Jesus spoke metaphorically of a water which alone could satisfy our longing for God.

As the conversation developed she gained the confidence to raise the question as to where God should be worshipped – a sore point between Samaritans and Jews. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that the day would come when worship of God would no longer be localized on Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans or in the temple of Jerusalem for the Jews. As Jesus died on the cross for everyone, he would break down the barriers which keep us apart. Now God can be worshipped in spirit and truth anywhere by everyone.

Gradually the Samaritan's faith in Jesus progressed from first addressing him as, 'Sir,' then to calling him a prophet, and finally to suspecting him of being the promised Messiah – a title Jesus accepts from her, but not from the Jews.

Excitedly, she rushed to tell her neighbor about the man she thought might be the Christ. As she invited them to 'come and see' she expressed the mission of the Church. As they believed in Jesus they be-

came the first fruits of God's harvest. Jesus stayed with them for a week.

There is a famous Latin expression, "Nemo dat quo non habet." It means "you cannot give what you do not have." You cannot bring God to others if you do not have him yourself. The opposite of this expression is also true. It is powerful and life transforming. "We cannot help but give him who we have." If we have the Lord, then we cannot keep him from others. Our very being will not allow us to keep the joy within us secret.

We join the Samaritan woman in proclaiming the joy within us. We continually experience God's love, mercy and compassion. Now, world, go out to the well, and meet the Source of our Joy. Let his mercy and compassion into your lives, world.

Allow him to transform you from putting up with life to living in the joy of the Lord. Go out to the well, world, and meet Jesus.

Father Lazarus Kirigia is the pastor of St. Mary Parish in Red Oak and St. Patrick Parish in Imogene. His column is based on the Gospel for March 12, Jn 4:5-42.

Mental health crisis: Want to help?

I hope your first answer to the question in this title is “Yes” because actually something is broken.

While no one can fix all the problems of a broken system, we can fix some of them, especially the ones that are broken within each one of us. Working to improve our own perception of mental health is a long-term challenge; but it is one we can help fix.

This may seem like a quick and easy fix, but it is not; it is actually quite difficult. It requires a change of mindset. To create a change within any person’s thinking takes a serious and determined effort. If we listen closely, we might hear words of wisdom swirling around our minds, but if we listen even more closely, we may hear some thoughts that may be defeating and pessimistic, promoting a sense of hopelessness or judgmentalism. Sometimes these internal thoughts are easily recognizable and at other times they are hidden in disguise.

If we are not careful, some of these thoughts might eventually turn into conversations with negative outcomes. Let’s call these conversations “broken mental health narratives.”

These types of conversations can further decline the mental health of both parties of the conversation, the speaker and the listener.

Many of these narratives have moved

Let’s Get Psyched

By Deacon Randy Kiel



from generation to generation. We can fix these; and yes, I use the word “fix” because, when something is broken, it needs to be fixed.

The first fix needs to be within ourselves. Listen to several broken mental health narratives:

The Medication Conversation

Person A to person B, “Medication for depression or anxiety might be helpful, but only as a last resort. Have you tried trusting God for your healing?”

Person B hears: “Medication is for the weak. I must not be as strong as Person A. I am a failure again. If I was stronger in my faith, I wouldn’t have this struggle.”

Fixed thinking: “Medication is valid. It is wholly good and right. It is not a sign of lack of faith or a less than virtuous choice.” Medication should be actively supported by the Christian community as personal choice and not minimized or misjudged.

The Healed Conversation

Person A to Person B, “Have you prayed to be healed of this particular struggle?”

Person B hears: “My disobedience must be keeping me ill. Now I have a spiritual problem too.”

Fixed thinking says: “Of course I pray for healing, but my mental health struggle is neither about disobedience nor a lack of faith. It is about courage and responsibility.” Mental health, along with all its struggles, is something that is natural to every person. It is fundamentally NOT a spiritual matter.

The Worry Conversation:

Person A to person B, “Jesus doesn’t want you to worry. Here are some Bible verses that say to stop worrying.”

Person B hears: “Either I am really stupid, or I must be in sin. My worrying is sin that I need to confess. If I confess my worry, then, my worry will go away”

Fixed thinking: “This whole conversation is a set-up for another mental health crash! Worrying is not a sin, it is the result of a temporary helpless situation that is full of care and concern.” Don’t worry, be happy was a cute song, but poor advice.

The Chance To Be Holy Conversation:

Person A to Person B,

“Remember, many saints had mental health problems too. We all have our crosses to bear.”

Person B hears: “My life is not supposed get any better. Some saints died with this problem so there is no need to keep trying to feel any better than I do.”

Fixed thinking: “While I might ask for prayers and comfort from a particular saint, my suffering is not a requirement for canonization. My mental health struggles are not my cross to bear. My cross to bear is the whole of my life. My struggles are only one part of me.”

So, wanna help? Let’s work on our mental health perceptions and conversations. Perhaps we have been on both sides of these types of broken conversations. So, we pray to the Lord to continue to increase our awareness of our broken thinking, to slow our impetuous responses, and to see more fully the person in front of us with dignity and holiness.

“O Lord, may our words to others and to ourselves reflect your compassion, truth, and love.”

Thank you, readers, for saying “Yes” to helping fix this part of the mental health crisis.

Deacon Randy Kiel serves Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines. Connect him, at randy@kardiocounseling.com.

The right path is never out of reach

Oscar Wilde once wrote that “every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.” He means, of course, that no saint was born free of sin, bar the Virgin Mother, and no sinner is completely void of redemption while he remains breathing. God, in Ezekiel, tells us the same thing: repent and enjoy God’s lavish mercy and love, or sin and bring the justice of God upon yourself as death and destruction.

The passage presents two questions: Can a sinner repent and what happens to their sins? And, can a just man sin and what happens to his righteous deeds and the life lived in obedience to God?

God responds that if a person repents of his sins, he will live, but if a just person sins and dies in sin, he will face punish-

Food for the Journey

By John Huynh



ment.

God, knowing the human person most intimately, anticipates the people’s objection, “But that’s not fair!”

Why should a person who lived in sin their whole life be forgiven while a person who lived a just life be punished for one moment of weakness? In response, the Lord emphasizes in what’s become a col-

loquial phrase, that a thing is not finished until it is done (factum non dicitur quod non perseverat).

In essence, our entire lifespan on earth is a journey towards eternal life with God. As long as we draw breath, we continue to journey on. Therefore, when a wayward traveler realizes he is heading in the wrong direction and corrects it to reach the final destination, he must leave his mistakes behind and continue on the right path. Though much work may lie ahead, the realization of the wrong path initiates a process of returning to the proper route. Nevertheless, if a traveler who has been following the correct path makes an incorrect decision at a junction and follows the wrong path, we cannot say that he will

reach the final destination by continuing on the erroneous path. Moreover, we cannot assume that his previous good decisions regarding the correct paths will guarantee his arrival at the final destination while he is currently on a path that does not lead there.

And so, as a thing is not done that which is not finished, we should all recognize that we are still on the journey towards God. Although some of us may be wayward travelers, straying from the proper path, the Lord reminds us that the right path is never out of reach with just one turn. Receiving the Lord in the Eucharist is a sure way to make that turn onto the correct path towards God.

Waiting for the angel to come

Father Ron Rolheiser



The night before he died, Jesus struggled mightily to accept his Father’s will. The Gospels describe him in the Garden of Gethsemane, prostrate on the ground, “sweating blood,” and begging his Father to save him from the brutal death that awaited him. Then, after he finally surrenders his will to his Father, an angel comes and strengthens him.

This begs a question: where was the angel when, seemingly, he most needed it? Why didn’t the angel come earlier to strengthen him?

Two stories, I believe, can be helpful in answering this.

The first comes from Martin Luther King Jr. In the days leading up to his assassination, he met angry resistance and began to receive death threats. He was courageous, but he was also human. At a point, those threats got to him. Here is one of his diary entries.

“One night towards the end of Janu-

ary, I settled into bed late, after a strenuous day. Coretta had already fallen asleep and just as I was about to doze off the telephone rang. An angry voice said, ‘Listen, nig., we’ve taken all we want from you; before next week you’ll be sorry you ever came to Montgomery.’ I hung up, but I couldn’t sleep. It seemed that all of my fears had come down on me at once. I had reached a saturation point.

“I got out of bed and began to walk the floor. Finally, I went to the kitchen and heated a pot of coffee. I was ready to give up. With my cup of coffee sitting untouched before me, I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward.

“In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hands, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud. The words I spoke to God that midnight are still vivid in my memory.

“I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. Now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I’ve come to the point where I can’t face it alone.’ At that moment I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never

experienced Him before.” (*Strive Toward Freedom*)

Notice at what point in his struggle the angel appears.

In her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy Day shares this story. As a young woman, along with the man she loved, she had been somewhat militant in her unbelief. Indeed, their reluctance to enter the institution of marriage was meant as a statement of their non-acceptance of traditional Christian values. Then she conceived a child and its birth was the beginning of a radical conversion for her. The joy she felt holding her baby convinced her that there was a God and that life had a loving purpose. She became a Roman Catholic, much to the chagrin of the man she loved, the father of her child: he gave her an ultimatum: if you have this child baptized, our relationship is ended. She had the child baptized and lost that relationship (though they continued as friends). However, she now found herself a single mother with no job and no real vision or plan as to where to go now in life.

At one point, she became desperate. She left the child in the care of others and took a train from New York City to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. In her autobiography, she describes how she prayed that day,

how desperate her prayer was. Like Jesus in Gethsemane and Martin Luther King in Montgomery, her prayer was one of raw need and helplessness, of an admission that she no longer had the strength to go on. Essentially, she said this to God: I have given up everything for you and now I am alone and afraid. I don’t know what to do and am lacking strength to carry on in this commitment.

She prayed this prayer of helplessness, took the train back to New York, and not long after found Peter Maurin sitting on her doorstep, telling her that he had heard about her and that he had a vision of what she should now do, namely, to start the Catholic Worker. That set the path for the rest of her life. The angel had come and strengthened her.

Notice at what point in these stories the angel makes its appearance - when human strength is fully exhausted. Why not earlier? Because up to the point of exhaustion, we don’t really let the angel in, relying instead on our own strength. But, as Trevor Herriot says, “Only after we have let the desert do its full work in us will angels finally come and minister to us.”

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

Canonization of Mother Mary Lange takes a step forward

By Matthew Liptak
OSV News

ARBUTUS, Md. (OSV News) -- The canonization cause of Mother Mary Lange, founder of the world's first sustained women's religious community for Black women, has taken a step forward.

Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, superior general of the Baltimore-based Oblate Sisters of Providence, said her religious community received a Feb. 27 email from the Vatican informing the sisters that it has approved the "positio" -- the documentation on the life of Mother Lange, which includes both the theological and historical record of her life.

Sister Rita Michelle made the announcement March 5 at her religious community's motherhouse in Arbutus, just outside Baltimore, during the annual conferral of the Mother Lange Awards honoring local Catholics active in the Black Catholic community.

More than 300 people broke into applause and cheers at the news.

"I don't want you to go and say Sister Rita Michelle has just gone and proclaimed Sister Mother Lange a saint," the superior general said, noting that the sisters have long considered their religious community's founder a saint in their hearts.

Mother Lange established St. Frances Academy in Baltimore in 1828 to educate Black

children in an era of slavery.

Mother Lange's positio will go to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints for review, Sister Rita Michelle said.

"Once they have concluded the review, it will be sent to Pope Francis, and he will declare Mother Mary Lange venerable," she said.

"Venerable" is a declaration of a sainthood candidate's heroic virtues. Next would come beatification, after which she would be called "Blessed." The third step is canonization. In general, the last two steps require a miracle attributed to the intercession of the sainthood candidate and verified by the church.

Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori said he was excited to hear the news about the latest development in Mother Lange's cause.

"With each step forward, more people learn about the life and legacy of our beloved Mother Lange," he said. "She unlocked educational opportunities for children in Baltimore and beyond during her lifetime -- and that impact continues today. The Oblate Sisters have worked very hard to help bring about this key development. Along with so many others, we are delighted."

The uplifting news was just one highlight of the annual awards ceremony, meant to honor the good works of dozens of parishioners from traditionally Black parishes in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The program also included singing performances, opening remarks and a prayer by Auxiliary Bishop Bruce A. Lewandowski, a historic portrayal and presentation of Mother Mary Lange by Catholic storyteller Janice Curtis Greene, as well as formal public recognition for award recipients.

"God spoke to me and told me that I could make a difference," said Greene, speaking in character as Mother Lange. "And I wanted to be a powerful woman of God -- something I had hoped for and prayed for my entire life."

Those honored with Mother Lange Awards were applauded as they were introduced. Over 40 parishioners from a dozen parishes received the awards for leadership and service. Youth were among the awardees.

In his remarks, Bishop Lewandowski recalled the service of fellow Redemptorist Father Thaddeus Anwander, who is considered by the Oblate Sisters of Providence to be the second founder of their order.

Faced with the order's dissolution in its early days, Father Anwander went to the archbishop of Baltimore to plead their case. When the archbishop told him no one in Baltimore wanted "colored" sisters, he persisted anyway -- prostrating himself before his superior.

"At that point, (Archbishop Samuel) Eccleston was ashamed, because a priest got on his knees and begged to be a servant of the women he was intending to dis-

miss -- holy women, women in the service of God's people in the church," Bishop Lewandowski said.

The bishop concluded his remarks by leading the audience in a simple prayer to Divine Providence.

"Providence did. Providence can. And Providence will," he prayed. "Let that be our prayer today."

Mother Lange is one of six African American Catholics who are candidates for sainthood. The others are: Julia Greeley, who after her emancipation from enslavement joined the Secular Franciscan Order and promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; Sister Thea Bowman, a Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, who was a noted educator and evangelist; Father Augustus Tolton, the first publicly known Black Catholic priest in the United States; Sister Henriette Delille, who founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family; and Pierre Toussaint, a formerly enslaved philanthropist who supported many Catholic



OSV News photo/CNS news file

This painting depicts Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, who founded the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore, the world's first sustained women's religious community for Black women. Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, the order's current superior general, announced March 5, that Mother Lange's canonization cause has taken one step forward with the Vatican accepting the "positio," or documentation about her life.

charitable works.

Mother Lange, Greeley and Sister Bowman all have the title "Servant of God," bestowed when a sainthood cause is officially opened. The latter three in the list have been given title "Venerable."

Pope opens path for more women at the Vatican, church

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- At the end of his general audience in St. Peter's Square March 8, International Women's Day, Pope Francis led a round of applause for women.

He thanked the world's women "for their commitment to building a more humane society" through their ability to see and understand the world "with a creative gaze and tender heart."

"It is right for them to be able to express these skills in every sphere, not just within the family," he wrote in the preface

to a book, "More Women's Leadership for a Better World: Caring as the Engine for Our Common Home."

In the preface, published by Vatican News on Women's Day, the pope wrote that "the church can also benefit from the valorization of women" by allowing them to do more than just perform a particular function or job and actually transform the culture to be more caring.

In his 10 years as pontiff, Pope Francis has sought to include more women in the work and governance of Vatican commissions and Roman Curia offices.

According to the latest statistics, there has been a significant increase in the number and percentage of female employees the past decade, and the number of women in Vatican leadership positions has also grown.

Today there are 1,165 women working at the Vatican compared to 846 in 2013, making up 23.4% of the total workforce, according to Vatican News March 8. When it comes to roles in the Roman Curia, more than one in four employees is now a woman.

Within the Curia, five women hold the rank of undersecretary, and one has the rank of secretary: Salesian Sister Alessandra Smerilli, whom the pope appointed to the No. 2 position at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in 2021. It is the highest post ever held by a

woman at the Holy See.

The pope has said he intends to appoint the first female prefect now that it is possible for laypeople, and, therefore, women, to lead dicasteries, according to "Praedicate Evangelium," the pope's constitution reforming the Curia.

Pope Francis has also, for the first time, appointed women as full members of Vatican dicasteries, when previously that role was reserved to cardinals and some bishops. Members play a key role and vote along with prefects and secretaries at plenary assemblies.

So, while the pope has been bringing more women to "a place at the table" in Rome, he also has opened up new ways for women's voices to be heard.

His Synod of Bishops on synodality has inspired some groups to create surveys specifically for women and compile the findings to send to the synod. The synodal process is meant to be an ongoing exercise for the entire church to learn to come together, to listen more intently and discern what the Holy Spirit is saying.

The World Women's Observatory of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) created a survey, which is open until March 15, for women who held leadership positions during any phase of the synodal process to reflect on concerns regarding the role of women in the church.

Also, researchers from Aus-



CNS photo/Carol Glatz
Speaking at Vatican Radio March 8, International Women's Day, María Lía Zervino, a sociologist and president general of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, presents the preliminary findings of a survey on women who played a leadership role during the synodal process.

tralia's University of Newcastle produced the International Survey of Catholic Women for the Catholic Women Speak network as a way to contribute their voices to the synod. It received more than 17,000 responses from 104 countries and those findings with recommendations were sent to the synod in September. The complete report was presented at the Vatican March 8 by Tracy McEwan, a theologian and sociologist of religion affiliated with the Uni-

versity of Newcastle and a member of the research team.

The presentation, sponsored by Chiara Porro, Australia's ambassador to the Holy See, also included María Lía Zervino, a sociologist and president of WUCWO, who gave the preliminary findings of their survey of more than 400 women who played a leadership role during the synodal process.

Zervino said 26% of respondents said they experienced no obstacles during the synodal process, while 43% of respondents said their "main obstacle" was an ordained minister and 18% said other members of the community were obstacles. Smaller percentages felt a lack of experience or difficulty speaking before a formal audience of church hierarchy was their main obstacle.

Some 69% of respondents felt "effectively involved in decision making" during the synodal process while 20% said they did not. Asked if their opinion had been listened to: 21% said "always," 41% said "usually yes," 12% said "several times," while 23% responded "rarely" or "no."

Both surveys had overlapping findings, one of the most important being that women's views are not a "monolith" and it is the diversity of their experiences, challenges and hopes that can enrich everyone.

CLASSIFIEDS

DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

Our Lady of Holy Rosary Parish in Glenwood, Iowa is looking for a full time, salaried Director of Faith Formation for preschool through high school programs. This would include sacramental preparation, family, and youth activities and forming catechists. This is a vibrant parish nestled in the Loess Hills close to the Omaha Metro. For more information contact Father Dan Siepker at 712-527-5211. To apply for position send resume with recommendations to holyrosarych@msn.com.

On March 13, Pope Francis celebrated 10th anniversary



10 YEARS OF FRANCIS

A TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF POPE FRANCIS' PONTIFICATE

2013



● **MARCH 13**

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, is elected pope on the second day of the conclave, becoming the first pope from the Southern Hemisphere and the first non-European elected in almost 1,300 years. The Jesuit was also the first member of his order to be elected pope and the first member of any religious order elected in nearly two centuries.



● **JULY 8**

Pope Francis makes his first trip outside of Rome, choosing to go to the Italian island of Lampedusa to underline the plight of migrants crossing the Mediterranean and the countless lives lost at sea.

2014



● **JUNE 8**

Pope Francis, Israeli President Shimon Peres, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and others come together in the Vatican Gardens for an unprecedented gathering to pray for peace in the Holy Land.

2015



● **SEPT. 19-27**

Pope Francis travels to Cuba then to Washington, D.C., New York and Philadelphia during his first visit to the United States. He addressed Congress, the United Nations and the World Meeting and Families, canonized St. Junipero Serra and visited the 9/11 memorial in New York.



● **DEC. 8**

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to inaugurate a Holy Year of Mercy. He invited churches around the world to designate a holy door as a reminder of his call for reconciliation.

2016



● **FEB. 12-17**

Pope Francis, on his way to Mexico, stops in Cuba to meet Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow at the Havana airport and sign a joint declaration in the presence of Cuban President Raul Castro. In Mexico, he celebrated Mass in Ciudad Juárez, which borders El Paso, Texas. Hundreds of thousands of people attended the Mass, which included faithful on both sides of the border.

2017



● **APRIL 13**

Pope Francis goes to a maximum security to celebrate the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper and washes the feet of 12 prisoners, including three women and a Muslim man, who was preparing for baptism. The celebration continued a practice he began as archbishop of Buenos Aires and performed every Holy Thursday as pope: including Catholics and non-Catholics, men and women, especially those who are marginalized in the foot-washing rite.

2018



● **APRIL 21**

Pope Francis appoints three women as consultants to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the first time women and laypeople were named as active contributors – not support staff. They joined a growing number of women the pope has named to top-level positions at the Vatican.



● **AUG. 2**

Pope Francis orders the revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to describe the death penalty as morally inadmissible and to affirm that the church "works with determination for its abolition worldwide."

2019



● **FEB. 4**

Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar mosque and university, sign the document on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" during an interreligious meeting in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



● **FEB. 21-24**

Pope Francis convenes a global summit on child protection and abuse, bringing together nearly 200 church leaders – presidents of bishops' conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic churches, superiors of men's and women's religious orders, survivors and Roman Curia officials. The summit at the Vatican included a penitential liturgy.

2020



● **MARCH 27**

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis prays and delivers his extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) during an evening prayer service from St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. St. Peter's Square was empty, and the service was livestreamed.

2021



● **MARCH 5-8**

Pope visits Iraq amidst sporadic violence continuing in the country and COVID-19. He honored those who remained faithful and worked to rebuild the country.



● **JULY 4**

The pope undergoes a three-hour scheduled surgery at a Rome hospital to remove part of his colon. Officials said it was required to treat diverticulitis, when bulging pouches in the lining of the intestine or colon become inflamed or infected. Throughout his pontificate he has suffered bouts of painful sciatica, and knee problems led him to start using a wheelchair in 2022.

2022



● **JULY 24-29**

Pope Francis makes "a penitential trip" to Canada to meet with, listen to and apologize to members of Canada's First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, especially those who experienced abuse or attempts at forced assimilation at church-run residential schools.

2023



● **JAN. 5**

Pope Francis presides over the funeral Mass for Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Square. It was the first time in more than 200 years that a pope celebrated the funeral of his predecessor.



● **MARCH 13**

Pope Francis celebrates his 10th anniversary as pope.



Photos and text: CNS

Iowa Catholic Conference

Find out where the Catholic Church in Iowa stands on a variety of bills in the state legislature by following <https://iowacatholicconference.org/blog/>

At the state legislature we advocate for policies that respect the life and dignity of the human person, and apply the principles of Catholic social teaching to critical issues of the day.

EXCEL MECHANICAL CO., INC.
 AIR CONDITIONING • REFRIGERATION • HEATING
 COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS • MED GAS • BUILDING AUTOMATION
 CERTIFIED BACKFLOW TESTING • PLUMBING
www.excelmechanical.us
 (515) 288-1450

HAMILTON LAW FIRM, P.C.
 DES MOINES - STORM LAKE - SIOUX CITY
 Established in 1876, we're one of Iowa's most experienced law firms.
 515.309.3536, 12345 University Ave., Clive, IA 50325

If you think God may be calling you to the vocation of priesthood or religious life, contact Father Ross Parker at vocations@dmdiocese.org or 515-237-5050.

EMBARK ON YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY WITH BROTHERS.



Our world needs more Knights of Columbus.
Our world needs YOU to join today!
 Scan the code below or go to kofc.org/joinus to register
 Use the code **BLESSEDMCGIVNEY** for 1 year trial membership*

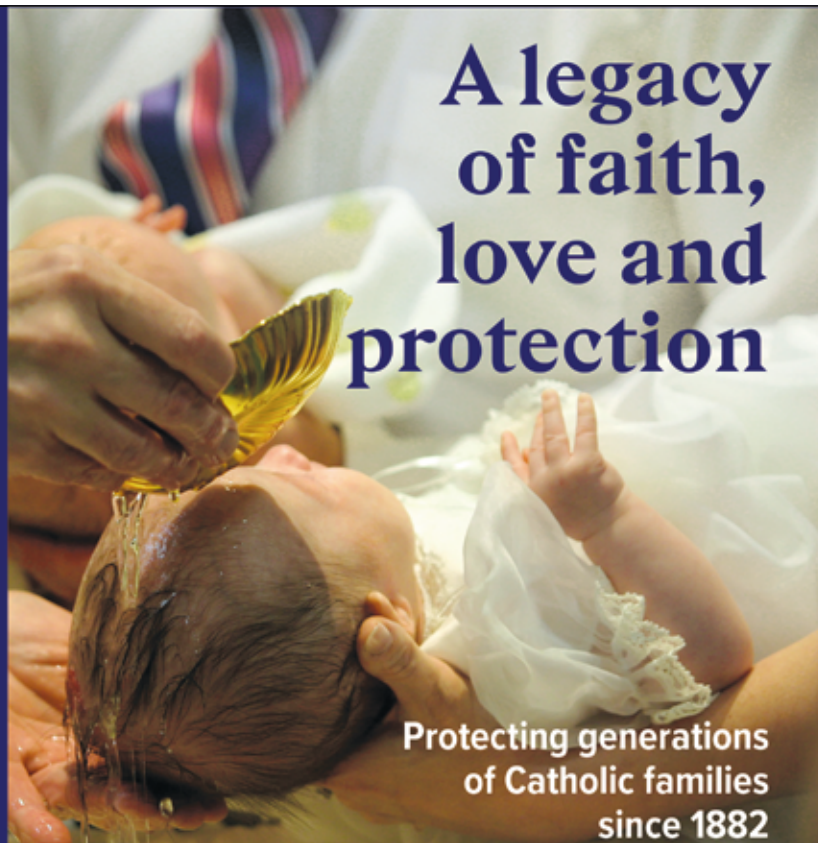
**Membership in the Knights of Columbus is open to men 18 years of age or older who are "practical" Catholics*

Knights of Columbus are called to serve others. Our first principle is Charity. When Knights of Columbus come together they accomplish great things.

Walk with your brothers this Lent to follow Christ and change lives.



kofc.org/join
 Promo Code:
BLESSEDMCGIVNEY


kofc.org/unete
 Código:
BLESSEDMCGIVNEY



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



Michael Bormann
 General Agent
 563-689-6801
michael.bormann@kofc.org



Neil Pfeifer
 General Agent
 402-379-0180
neil.pfeifer@kofc.org



Walker Bormann
 Assistant General Agent
 563-219-5800
walker.bormann@kofc.org



Dan Ginther
 Field Agent
 515-460-3411
daniel.ginther@kofc.org



Donnie Kenkel
 Field Agent
 712-579-9066
donald.kenkel@kofc.org



Rob Ryan
 Field Agent
 515-490-8753
robert.ryan@kofc.org



Pete Seuntjens
 Field Agent
 712-880-0044
peter.seuntjens@kofc.org



Gregory Waddle
 Field Agent
 515-218-3550
gregory.waddle@kofc.org



Justin Wadle
 Field Agent
 515-975-2688
justin.wadle@kofc.org



Knights of Columbus
 © Knights of Columbus,
 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510