

THE CATHOLIC MIRROR

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March gladness!



Photo credit: UI Athletics



Photo by Donnie Woods

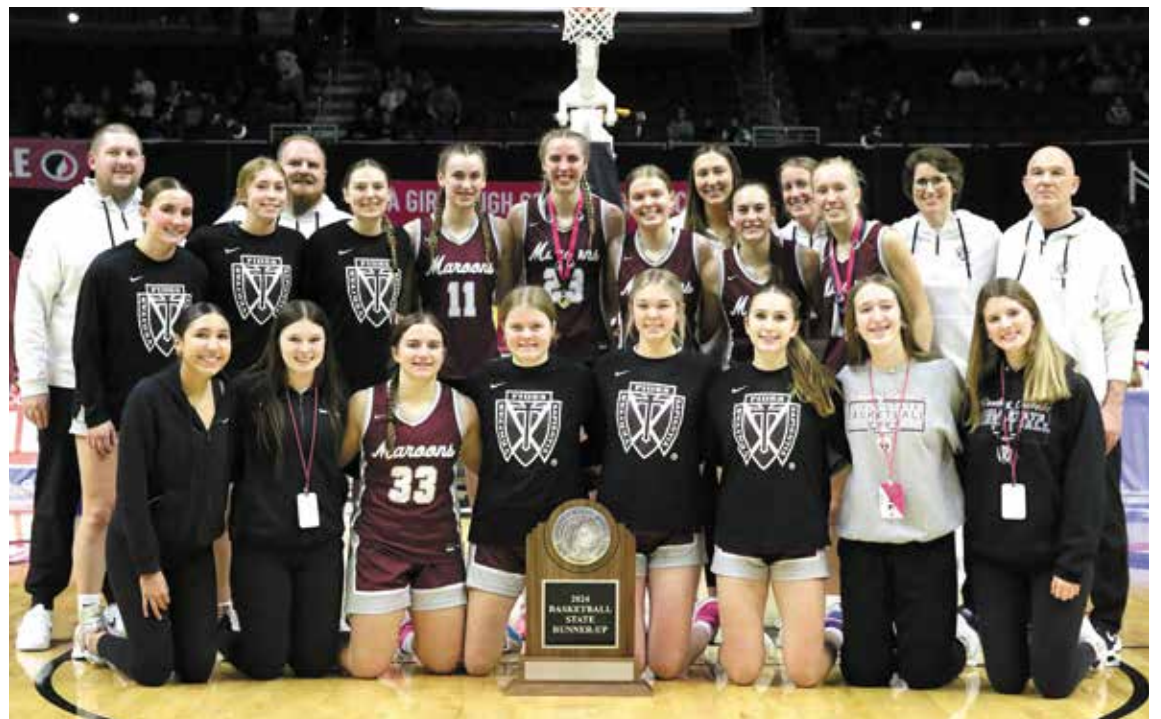


Photo by Earl Hulst

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School and Dowling Catholic High School alumna Caitlin Clark leads the Iowa Hawkeyes into her final NCAA Tournament after shattering several records this season, including for career scoring. She is expected to be selected first in the WNBA draft on April 15.

Top photo, the St. Albert Catholic School Saintes ended a historic season in the Class 1A state semi-final, the first time the team won a state tournament game in 24 years and the first time it clinched a Hawkeye Ten Conference championship. Above, the Dowling Catholic High School girls' basketball team made it all the way to the state Class 5A tournament championship.

Deacon was a servant leader

Deacon Marvin Klein, husband, father, farmer, community leader, and deacon of over 49 years died Feb. 11 at the age of 88.

A servant leader throughout life, he will be remembered for his years of humble service to his church, to his local community and his brother deacons and their wives.

He was born at home on a farm north of Earling in 1935. With the exception of college, time in the Army Reserve and a short career in Omaha, he lived in west central Iowa his entire life.

While home from college, he met Dolores Stessman. Marvin and Dolores were married in 1960. In 1963, they moved to a farm in Dunlap. Where they

were blessed with six children.

In 1970, he began to discern that he had a calling to serve as a permanent deacon, so he began studying and was ordained in 1974.

In a history of the Des Moines diocese, he said his pastor at the time, Father Adam Rice, suggested he consider becoming a deacon.

"I was on board right away," he said.



Deacon Marvin Klein

Continued on page 14

Pope: Act of Contrition is affirmation of God's mercy

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – A Christian's awareness of being sinful should be directly proportional to their "perception of the infinite love of God," Pope Francis said.

"The more we sense God's tenderness, the more we desire to be in full communion with him and the more evident the ugliness of evil in our lives becomes," the pope said in a speech written for priests and seminarians attending a course on confession offered by the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience.

Priests whose main ministry is hearing confessions in the major basilicas of Rome also attended the audience March 8. The pope's text, which he did not read but was distributed to participants, focused on the Act of Contrition, the prayer that penitents recite during the sacrament of reconciliation.

The awareness of God's love and mercy, the

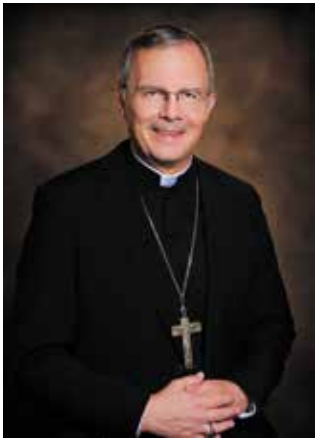
pope wrote, "pushes us to reflect on ourselves and our actions, and to convert."

"Let's remember that God never tires of forgiving us and that we should never tire of asking him for pardon," he said.

Pope Francis wrote that "it is beautiful" when a penitent, reciting the Act of Contrition, recognizes that God is "all good and deserving of all my love."

The prayer means that the penitent promises to put God at the center of everything, making God "the foundation of every order of values, entrusting everything to him," the pope wrote. And making love for God first also means loving the people and the planet God created, always seeking what is best for them.

Making their act of contrition, penitents also say, "I firmly resolve with the help of thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin."



Bishop William Joensen

Out of Darkness, Light

This coming April 8, a considerable swath of the United States mainland will experience a total solar eclipse. It's been nearly seven years since the last one occurred on American soil on August 21, 2017. I recall that day well: my then 14 year-old nephew Michael and 12 year-old niece Olivia and I road-tripped from Central Iowa down to Northeast Missouri, hoping to place ourselves squarely in the "path of totality." That morning, finding Interstate 35 clogged with traffic south of Des Moines, we exited and took off on local roads, stopping to make brief visits at St. Patrick Parish, Irish Settlement, and St. Patrick Parish, Corning, on our way past Maryville, MO.

We kept scanning the skies, hoping to find a clear patch that would allow maximum viewing of the eclipse. To my nephew's great disappointment, just as the magic moment arrived when the sky turned dark and the pasture in which we were parked became eerily quiet, the clouds returned and so even our special sunglasses were of no avail gaining a direct view of the occluded sun. I felt like I had let them down, even as I was grateful for the chance to share this unique experience with them.

Little did I realize it then, but the trip down-and-back afforded me a sample tour of territory that two years later would compose part of our Diocese to which I was called to serve as

your bishop. My search for the play of darkness and light as a unique physical phenomenon unintentionally drew me into the region where darkness and light are spiritual antagonists that we

Darkness and light are spiritual antagonists that we must recognize and call by name.

must recognize and call by name. Though darkness may momentarily have its day, as people of faith in southwest Iowa, ultimately we must be discerning, protective, and intent on remaining in solidarity with one another so that we might repeatedly return to abide in the light. While "daylight savings time" is a human construct, there is only one Light who prevails over the darkness of sin and death, who saves us from ourselves and our supposed mastery over the forces of nature.

Only humans themselves can eclipse their own dignity, the God-given radiance that reveals and reflects our identity as daughters and sons created in God's image. Only humans can obscure the perception of other persons as their equals. We alone among all creatures can sadly silence the stirrings of conscience that either confirms the connections we are to cultivate in Christ, or convicts us for the disruption of relations where the weak and the strong,

the young and old, the racially and religiously diverse are set against one another.

The Passion

In the evangelist Mark's Passion narrative that will be proclaimed this year on Palm Sunday, as Jesus is crucified and mocked by those surrounding him, we read: "At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon," the time when Jesus cries out and breathes his last (Mark 15:33, 37). Even the heavens and earth are denied light as Jesus enters the ignominy of death. But strangely, in death, his true identity as Son of God is raised in relief for those with eyes to witness and hearts ready to be convicted for our part in this tawdry drama. The chiaroscuro of the crucifixion, the vivid interplay of light and dark, should be preparation for us to return to our senses and hasten with the women and apostles to the place where the body is sealed in darkness. The tomb becomes the portal of possibility for us to bask in the light on the first day of the week and every day, which means we recognize and treat one another as persons of incomparable dignity regardless of location, limitations, or lifespan.

IVF and life

In mid-February, in an 8-1 decision that was alternatively mocked and lauded in various quarters, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that human embryos who come to exist through vitro

fertilization procedures (IVF), even if they are held in a state of cryopreservation, should be considered to be children. While I will not relate all the circumstances that led to this decision, Justice Jay Mitchell summarized the Court's ruling:

"The central question presented. . . which involve [sic] the death of embryos kept in a cryogenic nursery, is whether [Alabama's Wrongful Death of a Minor] Act contains an unwritten exception to that rule for extra-uterine children. . . The answer to that question is no: the [Act] applies to all unborn children, regardless of their location. . . . Unborn children are 'children' . . . without exception based on developmental stage, physical location, or any other ancillary characteristics."

Christ's love for us is personal; he restores the dignity we had once forsaken.

Critics of the ruling, who are inclined to view an early stage embryo as a "clump of cells" and not as a genetically distinct and whole human being, were particularly put off by the scriptural resonances of language employed by the majority justices: "We believe that each human being from the moment of conception, is made in the image of God."

The case exposes again the

many ethical and personal issues surrounding IVF practices. The heart-wrenching and holy desire of infertile couples to conceive is serviced by clinics competing in the marketplace based on posted success rates in helping these couples successfully "produce" a child. As Aaron Kheriaty, MD, notes, "Multiple cycles are frequently necessary to achieve pregnancy, and . . . because egg harvesting is an invasive and sometimes risky procedure, IVF cycles typically aim to create many embryos as possible—usually more than the couple intends to bring to birth." It is not uncommon that in addition to the simple motive to become pregnant, couples are also understandably wary of implanting children with genetic abnormalities, and so pre-implantation screening prompts them and clinicians to discard these embryos.

The net result is that today, no one truly knows how many human embryos dwell in dark, cold storage tanks, though estimates for the U.S. range from 500,000 to millions. While some propose allowing other couples to adopt these embryos, to implant them and bring them to term, the fact is that only a tiny minority of these embryos will see the light of day.

As a young priest, I was privileged to accompany several couples dealing with infertility as they bore this cross and attempted multiple medical interventions to discover the root cause; they usu-

Continued on page 14

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De la Oscuridad, la Luz

Este próximo 8 de abril, una considerable porción de la parte continental de los Estados Unidos van a presenciar un eclipse total de sol. Han sido casi siete años desde que tuvimos el último eclipse en territorio americano el 21 de agosto del 2017. Recuerdo bien ese día: mi sobrino Michael, quien entonces tenía 14 años y mi sobrina Olivia de 12 años viajaron conmigo por carretera del centro de Iowa hacia el noreste de Missouri, esperando ubicarnos centradamente en el "camino de la totalidad." Esa mañana, al ver la Interestatal 35 saturada de tráfico al sur de Des Moines, salimos y viajamos por las carreteras locales, deteniéndonos a hacer unas visitas cortas a la Parroquia de St. Patrick, en Asentamiento Irlandés y la Parroquia de St. Patrick en Corning, en nuestro camino hacia Maryville, MO.

Estábamos revisando el cielo continuamente, esperando en-

contrar un espacio despejado que nos permitiera ver el eclipse a lo máximo. Para gran decepción de mi sobrino, justo cuando llegó el mágico momento el cielo se oscureció y el pastel en donde estábamos estacionados se envolvió en un tético silencio, regresaron las nubes y ni siquiera nuestros lentes especiales no sirvieron para poder tener una vista clara del sol cubierto. Sentí como si les hubiera quedado mal, a pesar de que me sentía agradecido por la oportunidad de compartir esta experiencia única con ellos.

En ese momento no me di cuenta, pero el viaje de ida y de regreso me dio un recorrido que me mostró parte del territorio que dos años después representaría parte de la Diócesis a la cual iba a ser llamado a servir como su obispo. Mi búsqueda del juego entre la luz y la oscuridad como un fenómeno físico único me llevó accidentalmente a una

región en donde la oscuridad y la luz son antagonistas espirituales a los cuales debemos reconocer y llamar por su nombre. Aunque la oscuridad puede temporalmente parecer estar a la delantera, como un pueblo de fe del suroeste de Iowa, a final de cuentas debemos ser discerniente, protectores y tener la intención de permanecer en solidaridad unos con otros para que podamos una y otra vez regresar a nuestro espacio en la luz. Aunque el "horario de verano" es un invento humano, solamente hay una Luz que prevalece sobre la oscuridad del pecado y de la muerte, quien nos salva de nosotros mismos y de nuestro supuesto dominio sobre las fuerzas de la naturaleza.

Solamente los humanos mismos pueden eclipsar su propia dignidad, la brillantez que nos ha concedido Dios y que revela y que refleja nuestra identidad como hijos creados a imagen de Dios.

Solamente los humanos pueden oscurecer la percepción de otras personas como sus semejantes. Tristemente solamente nosotros de entre todas las criaturas podemos silenciar los llamados de la conciencia ya sea que confirmen las conexiones que debemos cultivar en Cristo, o condenarnos por interrumpir las relaciones en donde los débiles y los fuertes, los jóvenes y los viejos, los que son diferentes racial o religiosamente se enfrentan unos con otros.

En la narrativa de la Pasión del evangelista Marcos que se proclamará este año el Domingo de Ramos, cuando Jesús está crucificado y los que le rodean se burlan de él, leemos: "Llegado el mediodía, la oscuridad cubrió todo el país hasta las tres de la tarde," la hora en que Jesús grita y exhala su último aliento (Marcos 15:33, 37). Incluso a los cielos y a

Continued on page 15



Join us in supporting the mission of the Church of southwest Iowa.

Together, we make Jesus known and loved

Support for the ADA funds ministries and services for parishes

Now is the time to lend a hand in supporting the mission of the Catholic Church in central and southwest Iowa: To sow God's Spirit by cultivating connections in Christ.

The Annual Diocesan Appeal, also known as the ADA, provides 70 percent of the funds

that support Bishop William Joensen and his staff to offer services to the 80 parishes that comprise the Diocese of Des Moines. These services include: Accompanying youth and families on their faith journey; providing for seminarians, along with active and retired priests;

forming and providing ongoing development for permanent deacons, celebrating Mass and sacraments in multiple languages, and more.

Here are just some examples of how we support the work of the Church.

Make a gift at dmdiocese.org/giving.

Prison Ministry

"I lost my family," said Matthew Griffins. "I lost all my material things, and I lost my job. I pretty much lost everything."

Now, he's involved with transitional ministry at Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs, helping those in prison and those who've been released.

"I got out of my addictions and started living a different life," he said. "I'm so grateful that I want to share it with others."

Deacon Bob McClellan leads a prison ministry offering compassion and the

teachings of Jesus' unconditional love. "Jesus told us to go out into the



Matthew Griffins

fringes and take care of those people, bring his message to them," said Deacon McClellan, of Corpus Christi Parish. "That's what I'm doing with the transitions group, helping men moving from what they had to something new, different, and better."

He has several people who take the Liturgy of the Word to the local jail. They bring Jesus and they bring hope.

"Deacon Bob has had a big impact on my life," Griffins said.



Deacon Bob McClellan

Priests

We are able to support the many men who commit their lives to ministering to us because of your sacrificial gifting, said Bishop William Joensen.

Father Daniel Adjei, born and raised in Ghana, had never heard of Iowa. Yet, God's spirit led him to minister at St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale.

His goal is to share the love of Christ with others.

"I just want to radiate Christ through everything I do," he said.

"We are so fortunate to have these gentleman coming from other parts of the world to help us with our priestly duties here," said St. Pius X parishioner Jane Welch. "For one, because without them, we obviously don't have enough. Number two, it helps us appreciate how much we really have."

The Des Moines Diocese has 40 priests whose origins are international out of a total of 70 active priests, said Humility Sister Jude Fitzpatrick, senior advisor

to the Bishop.

"The ADA supports attorney fees and immigration fees that are imposed for each level of immigration for which we apply," she said. "That can amount to multiple thousands of dollars for each priest that we welcome to our Diocese."

Support from the faithful to welcome international priests is more than important. "It's absolutely vital to us," she said.



Father Daniel Adjei

Diversity

The ADA funds efforts to welcome newcomers and to provide the sacraments in multiple languages, said Mayra Moriel

de Banuelos.

"The Diocese recognizes the diversity of the Church and also recognizes the

pastoral needs," she said. "We have not only Masses in Spanish or other languages, but we also have all the services and the administration of sacraments in Spanish and other languages."

Father Ly Chu is the pastor of St. Peter Vietnamese Catholic Community, where he says the faith community is like a big family.

"God the father and all are brothers and sisters in Christ," he said.

Parishioner Kaleb Ngyuen appreciates celebrating the faith while following cultural customs.

"Whenever you have your culture around you, it just makes you feel more comfortable," he said.



The Diocese provides services to parishes to help them meet the needs of diverse parishioners.



Father Ly Chu celebrates Mass with Deacons Paul Tran and Quan Tong in honor of the Vietnamese New year.

Make a gift to the Annual Diocesan Appeal today!



Fish, fellowship, & friendship



Parishioners of St. Theresa Parish in Des Moines cook up a tasty meal. Pictured are: Tony Chicoine, Paul Chicoine, and Dave Mraz.



Father Chris Fontanini, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Des Moines, has his fish dinner. He's joined by Tammie Dixon, Maria Dixon, Olivia Blair, Carmen Negrete, Elin Dank, and Inez Chavez.



St. Patrick Parish in Imogene serves soup suppers hosted by a different church committee or group each Thursday evening during Lent. Groups include: volunteers, Altar Society, Parish Council, Finance Council, NCYC students, and Faith Formation students. Stations of the Cross kick off the evening. Pictured above are: Annie Silverston, Mary Anne Johnson, Laurie McGargill, and Therese Sunderman.



Chris Hinds, of St. Patrick Parish in Perry prepares a feast for the community.



Cindi Aldrich, of Ss. John and Paul Parish in Altoona, enjoys a fish fry with grandsons Matthew and Vincent.



A delicious meal is served up at St. Anne Parish in Logan.



Pat Baumhover, of Sacred Heart Parish in West Des Moines, is ready to serve.

Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs has a crew serving dessert: Zarah Taylor, Mary Jane Quandt, Connie Feyerherm, Ruth Ann Duff, Donna Lear, and Ina Kuenstling.



Tap into Faith brews up encounters, friendships, & community

By Jennifer Willems
Contributing Writer

On a nice evening in late October, a young couple stopped at Fenders Brewing on the square in Polk City for a break from their bike ride.

Little did they know they would end up learning about Mary and the rosary as part of Tap into Faith.

"Afterward I said, 'What church do you go to?' They said, 'We don't go to church. We just happened to pop in for a beer and decided to stay. We must be here for a reason tonight,'" recalled Holly Madison, who owns Fenders Brewing with her husband, Jason.

"And they left with rosaries," Jason said.

"This is what we want. This



Father Jason Lee, parochial vicar of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church in Ankeny, kicked off Tap into Faith last August at Fenders Brewing in Polk City. The program is held on the fourth Sunday of the month.

is exactly what we want," Holly said.

The Madisons are members of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish in Ankeny. She is the administrative assistant at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines and he works as an IT administrator when he isn't brewing beer and homemade root beer.

Married 22 years, they have three daughters: Sydney, a junior at Iowa State University; Olivia, a junior at North Polk High School; and Harper, a second-grader at St. Luke the Evangelist School in Ankeny.

They started Tap into Faith with the help of Patty Mayer, director of adult faith formation at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. The program is open to people of all ages and hosted by Fenders on the fourth Sunday of each month, with the exception of May (which is Memorial Day weekend), June and July.

People start to gather at 7 p.m., with the speaker following from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The first event was last August and featured Father Jason Lee, parochial vicar at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. That night people had an opportunity to "get to know the new priest."

Other topics have included the afterlife (November), mental

health (January), and the vocation of marriage (February). Bishop William Joensen will be the speaker on March 24.

Providing an invitation

Mayer said adult faith formation covers the spectrum from those who are dipping their toes in the water to those who are farther along on their faith journey.

"I'm always looking for ways to spread the faith and be able to evangelize and help them grow in their faith, and this is a perfect opportunity for people to come and be comfortable," she said.

"My goal is to make faith more open and talked about," according to Holly, who explained that people are often fearful of offending someone or being accused of pushing their faith on others.

"But you can evangelize. You can tell them what you love," she said. "We're giving the invi-

tation. Whether they do anything with it or not, that's up to them."

Important conversations

Cari Spear, a member of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart, said she enjoys what happens at Tap into Faith.

"There's always more to learn about the faith," she said. "You get to see people – new friends and old friends. It just feels like a community."

For Paul Mortiz, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Ankeny and an investor in Fenders Brewing, "it's just a neat thing to do on Sunday night with friends and listen to somebody talk about something other than football and basketball and sports, and talk about faith, which is what we need to be talking about."

For more on Fenders Brewing and Tap into Faith, visit fendersbrewing.com.



Photo by Jennifer Willems

Holly and Jason Madison, owners of Fenders Brewing in Polk City, stand behind the bar just before Tap into Faith started on Feb. 25. They established the monthly program last July.



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- ⦿ To apply: withodyssey.com/iowa
Applications open April 16th, 2024
Deadline June 30th, 2024

Around the Diocese

March 15-17 Fri. – Sun. Book Sale

DES MOINES – Christ the King is having a parish library book sale in the parish hall. Cost for book is donation only. Dates and times are: Friday 4:30- 7 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. Children’s story hour at 10:30 a.m. Face painting at 1 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. All are welcome. All proceeds go to the parish library.

March 17 Sunday Iowa Wolves Faith & Family

DES MOINES – Catholic Charities will be at the Iowa Wolves Faith and Family Day game at 3 p.m. at the Iowa Events Center. Go to CatholicCharitiesDM.org to find out how to get tickets.

Staley’s Fried Chicken Dinner

NORWALK – St. John the Apostle 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 \$12/adults, \$5/children ages 6-12, kids 5 and under eat free. A silent auction will be held in conjunction with the dinner. Carry out is available. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

150th Anniversary

NEOLA – St. Patrick Parish is celebrating its 150th anniversary with Mass at 9:30 a.m. and dinner at 11 a.m. Free-will donation will be accepted.

Pray a Monthly Rosary

DES MOINES – Join fellow Iowans to pray the rosary on the third Sunday of every month at 1:30 p.m. (rain or shine) at the Iowa State Capitol, west side steps. For more information call Diana at 515-974-7691 or Jeff at 515-778-6087.

March 21 The Masculine Genius

DES MOINES – There’s a decline in male participation in religious worship, interest in marriage, and general engagement in economic and political life, says John Bishop, Ph.D., director of Forge. Doors at the Tea Room, at 713 Walnut St. open at 7 p.m., talk begins at 8 p.m. For more information, go to myforge.org/

event/dr-john-bishop-the-masculine-genius/

March 22 Friday Chrism Mass

DES MOINES – Join Bishop William Joensen for the annual Chrism Mass beginning at 5 p.m. at St. Ambrose Cathedral. Bishop Joensen will bless oils and consecrate Chrism that will be used in sacraments throughout the diocese in the coming year.

March 27 Nourish for Caregivers

DES MOINES – Nourish for Caregivers is an ongoing ministry that gathers monthly to support the spiritual needs of family caregivers. The next meeting is at 6 p.m. at Holy Trinity Church in Des Moines. For additional information contact Deacon Dan Maxcy at danm@holyltrinitydm.org or Deacon Jim Houston at pastoralcare@saintpiuschurch.org.

April 3 Wednesday Newman Lecture

DES MOINES – St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Student Center and Church is bringing back its Newman Lecture tradition with a talk and Q&A session hosted by Kellie Markey, founder and executive director of Dorothy’s House. It helps equip, heal, and support people who have experienced human trafficking. The talk is at 7 p.m. on April 3 at Drake University in the Sussman Theater in the Olmsted Center. All are

welcome. Contact Megan Schultz with questions.

April 5 Friday Gabriel’s Corner

COUNCIL BLUFFS – Celebration of Life Dinner will be held on April 5 with a wine & cheese social at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. at Corpus Christi Parish Hall. The keynote address will begin at 7:30 p.m. with speaker Shantel Dudley.

April 14 Women of Worth

WEST DES MOINES – Enjoy a prolife musical event called Women of Worth featuring the story of St. Joan of Arc at 3 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church. Tickets are \$10/person, \$25/family at PulseForLife.org. Proceeds support Pulse Life Advocates and Mary’s Helping Hands.

April 20 Meeting Jesus in the Eucharist COUNCIL BLUFFS – The

Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, also known as DCCW, is offering its an annual women’s conference focusing on “Meeting Jesus in the Eucharist” from 8:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Corpus Christi Parish featuring Liz Kelly, Angela Copenhaver, Mass with Bishop William Joensen and more. Cost is \$25/person. Email DesMoinesCCW@gmail.com for more information.

Knights, youth partner in fundraiser for pediatric cancer patients



The Knights of Columbus partnered with the Norwalk, Iowa High School Dance Marathon team on Jan. 28 to raise money for the University of Iowa Pediatric Cancer Patients and Research. This is an annual collaboration between both groups. The Knights and team members prepared and served a biscuits and gravy breakfast to 166 people, raising \$1,868, which was presented to the dance team on Feb. 5 to support their campaign.

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Experience the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

On June 23 - June 25, 2024, the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage will be making it’s way through the Diocese of Des Moines.

During these 3 days you are invited to journey with Jesus in the Eucharistic processions, celebrate Mass, and participate in Holy Hours and overnight adoration.

You are invited to attend as many events as you interested in and able to. All events are **FREE** to attend, but registration is encouraged to allow parishes to plan for food at lunch/dinner and overall attendance.



June 23-25, 2024

Council Bluffs | Glenwood | Imogene | Shenandoah

Scan the QR code to learn more about the event, explore the full schedule for each day, and register.



Reach more with small faith-sharing groups

By Ryan Johnson
Contributing Writer

An increasing number of parishioners are seeking fellowship and engaging in religious studies through small groups.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church has responded to this demand with a new program: Reach More.

A Wisconsin-based organization called The Evangelical Catholic developed Reach More as a mission process to reach people in their communities.

Larry Laughlin, a member of the parish, was one of six point persons who played a pivotal role in launching this grassroots evangelism effort in 2023 at St. Francis with the approval of Father Joseph Pins, the pastor, and Katie Patrizio, the director of Faith Formation.

Subsequently, the point persons began discerning its first formation group of adults.

The core team carefully discerned who should be selected for the inaugural formation program. Eventually, they chose 30 individuals, including some married couples, to spearhead this new endeavor. The individuals participated in a 12-week formation program to prepare them to go out and establish small group gatherings in their homes.

"We let God walk us through the process and who should be selected for the program," Laughlin said.

One distinguishing feature of this program and other parish-led initiatives is that the small group leaders are given the autonomy to determine the format for the gatherings. The parish does not impose specific meeting times or require the use of a particular Catholic booklet. In essence, it's led by parishioners but not specifically by parish staff.

"We want to build the leaders' prayer lives, emphasizing Christ first so that they start their small groups. We're going to recommend some resources to get the groups going," Laughlin said. "We don't tell them what they have to do. This is their apostolate."

Building Prayer Lives

Small group leader Alan Eoriatti says that, following the pandemic, there was a consensus among Catholics he knows: There's a need to get people together and build relationships with a focus on prayer, Scripture, the sacraments, and the faith.

The small group leaders gather once a quarter for huddles and share ideas, resources and feedback from their meetings. At a recent huddle, a leader shared a story about an attendee receiving the sacrament of reconciliation after almost 60 years, said Eoriatti. Other individuals reported



Photo by Larry Laughlin

A formation class for Reach More at St. Francis Parish focuses on how to invite people to encounter Jesus through small faith-sharing groups.

attendees admitted going back to Mass after an extended period.

Laughlin echoed Eoriatti's feedback from the huddle with a story about people's reactions to being invited to a small group.

"One couple that is running a small group was inviting other couples to join them," Laughlin said. "They made four phone calls, and each person that they called started crying on the phone after the invitation, saying 'I can't believe you called me. I've been praying that something would come into my life to bring me back into formation with Christ.' The country and our diocese are all desperately wanting a relationship with Christ."

At small group meetings, leaders can let the conversation go in different directions, depending on the needs of the individuals. This may include discussions about particular sacraments and the benefits of receiving them, such as reconciliation and Holy Communion.

"This effort is bringing Catholics back to the sacraments," Eoriatti said. "It's enhancing our faith and allowing us to experience it more fully when we're engaged in these conversations."

Laughlin believes St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church is the only parish in the Diocese of Des Moines that is using the program. He hopes it continues to flourish and more small groups will be formed in the community.

He also noted that it's not strictly intended for Catholics. Other Christians and non-Christians can

be invited to the small groups for fellowship and discussion.

Learn more about Reach

More on The Evangelical Catholic website: evangelicalcatholic.org/

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Welcome into the Catholic Church

One act of mercy turns man's life around

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Johnathan Manchester admits he was not heading in a good direction.

In his early years, he went to an evangelical church with his parents. But after a family issue arose in his late teens, Manchester grew angry with God and became atheist for a while. He started getting involved in some criminal activities.

His former neighbor, Zeb Burkhiser, said Manchester had changed.

"I remember him working at Walmart. He wouldn't even look at you, wouldn't acknowledge you," Burkhiser said. "He was like a different person and not in a good way."

It took one act of mercy to completely change Manchester's life.

On Dec. 30, 2022, this married father found himself facing criminal charges.

"That was a big smack in the face," he said. "It was a really big wake-up call."

For his sentence, he was fined.

He sees that fine as an act of mercy, and says it changed his life.

"I could have faced some jail time."

It was a low point in his life. Though he had started going back to the evangelical church, it was more to keep up appearances.

"I was not really concerned about the message. I just wanted to go back so I could present myself in a better light. I was still selfish about it."

After receiving the fine, he began to do some research.

"I wanted to take my Chris-

tianity a little more seriously and see how I could go about doing this the right way instead of being selfish and going for appearances and presentation. I was looking for what this is supposed to be. That led me to the early Church and trying to figure out how the ones who lived right after Jesus established their church and traditions. Ultimately, that led me to the Catholic Church."

About that time at the evangelical church, he ran into his old neighbor, Burkhiser, who is Catholic and was there to support his wife, who was evangelical then.

Manchester peppered Burkhiser with questions about the Catholic faith.

One year ago, Manchester decided to take the plunge and go to a Catholic church for a fish fry.

He liked it.

He'd done so much research that when he met the pastor of St. Mary Parish in Shenandoah, he said Father Tom Thakadipuram thought he was a cradle Catholic.

Comfortable with the fish fry dinners, Manchester was ready for the next step. He asked his friend Burkhiser to take him to Mass.

Burkhiser, who is a parishioner at St. Patrick Parish in Imogene, sometimes goes to Mass at St. Mary in Shenandoah. That's where they went.

"I told Johnathan: 'Before we go in, here's what's going to go on. You can do everything we do, stand up, sit down, kneel, I will help with prayers printed in the missalette. The only thing you can't receive is the Eucharist, but you can receive a blessing,'" Burkhiser said. "I think that really helped because it made Johnathan feel welcomed."

"He went to Mass the one time with us. Then he just started



Johnathan Manchester, who was baptized in an evangelical church, will come into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil at St. Mary Church in Shenandoah. Pictured are sponsor Zeb Burkhiser, Johnathan Manchester, Father Tom Thakadipuram, and Rekae Manchester.

going on his own. Then he started taking his family. Then last summer, he came up to me and said he wanted to join the Catholic Church and would I be his RCIA sponsor. I said I'd be honored to."

Manchester and his wife, Rekae, baptized their older son last October, and their newborn

twin boys were baptized last Christmas. Manchester was baptized at the evangelical church. He will come into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil, and he says his wife may start the RCIA process and come into full communion with the Catholic Church next

year.

His faith journey has followed a winding road and, as he prepares for the Easter Vigil, he reflects on his path forward: "All I can do with the rest of my life is try to give back to God the same mercy God he gave me. I try to give that to everyone around me."

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Look up the Diocese of Des Moines on social media for the latest news, features and photos.

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



Director of Music and Liturgy

St. Thomas Aquinas Church and Catholic Student Center is seeking a full-time Director of Music and Liturgy. The ideal candidate will be in love with their Catholic faith, have a deep relationship with Christ and have an understanding of Catholic music and liturgy. Major responsibilities include planning and implementing music for liturgies. Coordinating the recruiting, training and supervision of liturgical ministers. Ministering to families for funerals, weddings and other liturgical celebrations. Maintaining audio/visual equipment, and creating a conducive atmosphere for the Sacred Liturgy and an encounter with the love of God. Five years' experience in parish ministry, a bachelor's degree in music (or equivalent musical experience), and training in Catholic Liturgy. A competitive salary is offered commensurate with qualifications including benefits. A complete job description is available with this link: www.staparish.net/information/DirLitMusic2024.pdf. Applications can be sent to MLsearch@STAParish.net.

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.

Welcome into the Catholic Church

Teens look forward to joining the Church

Alex McCulley, 15, wanted to grow closer to God.

With his mom being ill for a while, he wanted to ask God for help.

“I reached out to my friend. He brought me into the Wednesday classes, where I started learning and becoming closer to God,” he said.

About this time last year, he went to his first Mass with his mom at St. Michael Parish in Harlan.

It was Easter Sunday and he admits he was nervous.

“I was kind of shy because I didn’t know much about the prayers or what was going to go on,” he said.

But he kept coming.

“The feeling the Mass gave me, just coming in and walking out, was really indescribable,” McCulley said. “It made me feel really good.”

He took classes from the former religious education director and with Father Clement Owusu, the pastor.

He’s learned about prayer, which helps him.

“If I ever need to pray about something, it takes a lot off my mind and my chest,” he said.

At the Easter Vigil in a few weeks, he will be baptized, confirmed and receive his first Holy Communion.

For now, he goes up the communion line with his arms crossed for a blessing.

For anyone who might be considering coming into full communion with the Catholic Church, McCulley says: “Go to Mass. Pay attention. Keep on praying because it’s helped me a lot. And read the Bible.

“It’s definitely changed me for the better.”

Kobe Klaassen, 15, was baptized Lutheran and went to Sunday school every week.

Last year, he had to decide if he wanted to be confirmed in the Lutheran Church.

He gave it serious thought.

“I heard my classmates had an opportunity to be confirmed in the Catholic Church,” he said. “I talked to friends. I kind of decided maybe the Lutheran Church wasn’t for me.”

Klaassen had heard a lot of good things about Father Clement Owusu, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Harlan.

“I heard a lot of good things about Father Clement and how great of a father he is to this church. Also, I had been to fish fries and met people who helped bring me into the church,” he said.

Klaassen has been attending a class with Father Owusu and others preparing to receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil.



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Alex McCulley and Kobe Klaassen will come into the Catholic Church at St. Michael Parish in Harlan at the Easter Vigil.

Among the things he’s learned during his studies, is that God’s spirit works in ways we don’t always understand.

“A lot of people say they can’t hear God’s answer, but you have to look for the little things,” he said. “It builds off of that and

you realize he’s doing so much in your life.”


Klaassen said he was nervous going to his first Mass.

“Once I left that Mass, it just changes your perspective,” he said. “It’s not as hard as you think.”

Pilgrimage to France

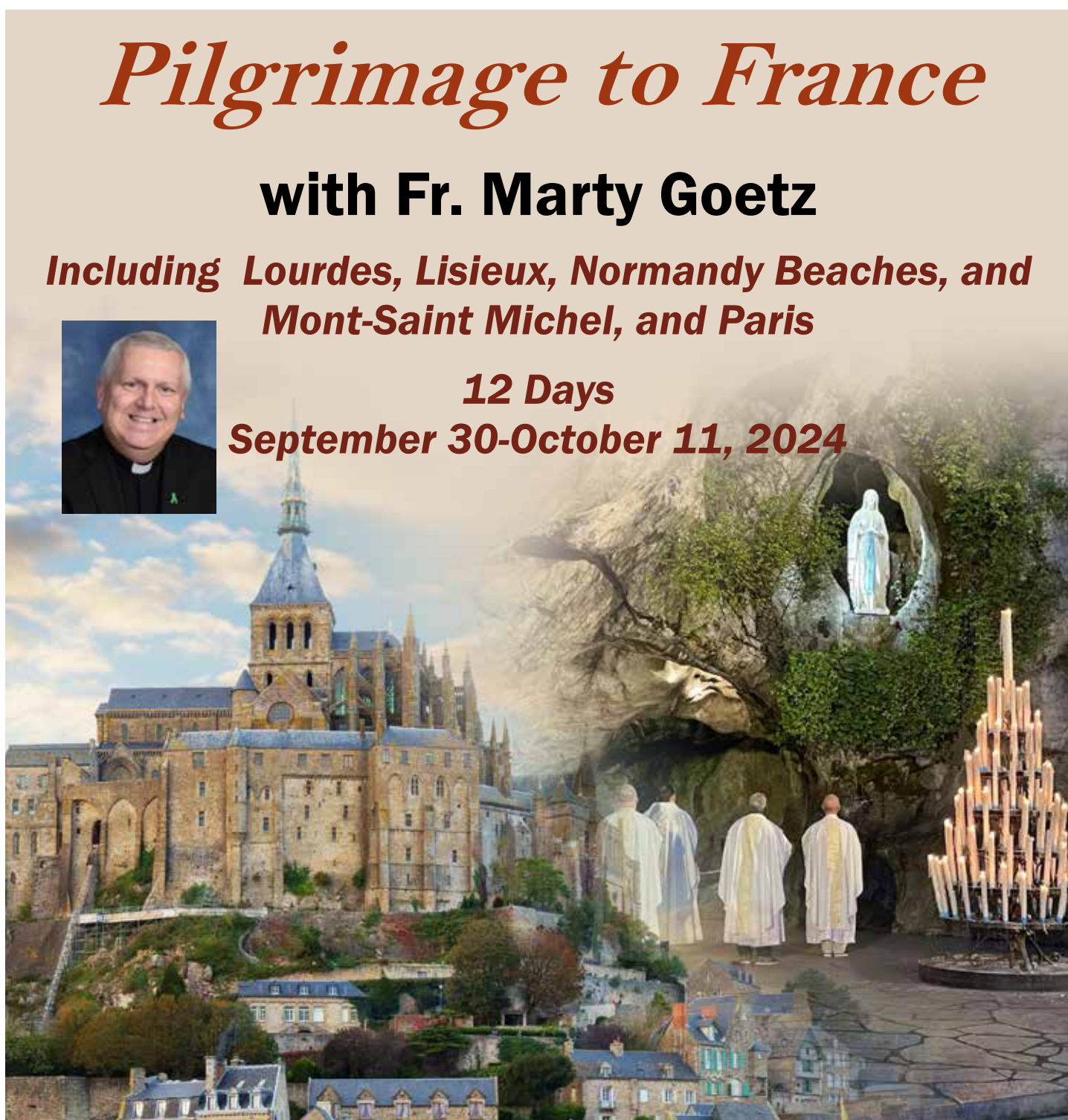
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Unlocking educational opportunities

Financial assistance for southwest Iowa families

By Mark A. Reed, Sr.
Contributing Writer

In the pursuit of quality education for all, Iowa stands at the forefront, offering families two invaluable resources – School Tuition Organizations, called STOs, and Iowa Education Savings Accounts, known as ESAs.

Families living within the Diocese of Des Moines are not only encouraged but should explore the benefits of both programs, as qualified applicants can receive assistance from both avenues.

Here's why families should consider these opportunities and how they can shape the educational future of their children.

Dual Support: STOs and ESAs Working Hand in Hand

Understanding the financial challenges families face, Iowa provides a dual support system through STOs and ESAs.

Eligible families can and should apply for assistance from both programs, ensuring comprehensive financial aid for their children's education.

This combined approach aims to break down barriers and make quality education accessible to all.

STOs: Opening Doors to Educational Equality

Iowa STOs, like the Catholic Tuition Organization play a pivotal role in providing financial assistance to students of families facing economic constraints.

To qualify for CTO, a family's income should be at or below 400% of federal poverty guidelines. This support is available for students in K-12 grade levels, creating opportunities for a diverse range of learners.

ESAs: Educational Futures with Flexibility

Iowa ESAs take a forward-thinking approach, offering financial flexibility and planning for families.

ESAs are available to all new/transfer students, kindergarten students, and current students whose family income is at or below 400% of the federal poverty guidelines.

A unique feature of ESAs is that any remaining funds in the student's account can be used for future tuition costs or other eligible education expenses, providing families with financial foresight and planning.

Key Dates for Application: Act Now for a Brighter Tomorrow

For families considering assistance through CTO, the application deadline is Monday, April 15.

This is a crucial opportunity for eligible families to secure financial aid for the '24-'25 academic year.

It is imperative to act promptly and not miss out on this chance. To apply visit fairapp.com, using school code 450 and password 450ddm.

Simultaneously, the application window for ESAs will begin on April 16 and extends until June 30.

Families are urged to plan ahead, gather necessary documentation, and submit their applications within this timeframe to benefit from the ESA program. For more information or to apply visit withodyssey.com/iowa.

Iowa's commitment to accessible education is evident through the diverse avenues of support available to families.

By applying for financial assistance through both CTO and ESAs, eligible families can pave the way for a brighter educational future for their children.

Act now, meet the deadlines, and invest in the potential that a quality Catholic education brings to the next generation.

For more information about CTO or to donate and receive 75% Iowa tax credits, visit CTOIowa.org or call 515-237-5010.

Mark A. Reed, Sr., Executive Director, Catholic Tuition Organization

St. Albert School restructures leadership

St. Albert Catholic School in Council Bluffs revamped its leadership structure, naming Pat Ryan as chief administrative officer effective July 1, and creating a newly established position of chief advancement officer. A nationwide search has begun to fill this position. Doreen Knuth will remain in her current role as K-8 administrator and 9-12 dean of students. Ryan is a 2000 graduate of St. Albert Catholic and has more than 19 years of experience in leadership at the school along with a deep commitment to the school's mission. St. Albert Catholic is the only birth through 12th-grade academic system in southwest Iowa, serving more than 675 students.



Pat Ryan

New administrator at Des Moines school

Susan Battani was named the administrator for Christ the King Catholic School in Des Moines beginning July 1. She brings nearly 20 years of educational experience in both public and private schools, along with a dedication to continuously improving the educational system for all students. Most recently, she was an assistant administrator at Sacred Heart Catholic School in West Des Moines. Prior to her time there, she was a kindergarten classroom teacher at St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School in Ankeny. Christ the King School offers a faith-based learning environment for children ages 2 through eighth grade.



Susan Battani

Sisters to receive Bishop Dingman Award



Humility Sisters Jeanie and Elaine Hagedorn

Humility Sisters Elaine and Jeanie Hagedorn will be honored with the Bishop Maurice Dingman Award during a celebration April 6 at Holy Trinity Church in Des Moines. Sister Jeanie joined her religious community in 1956, and her sister, Elaine, joined her one year later. The sisters dedicated their lives in service to the poor and vulnerable, and in the work of building peace. They served at Visitation Parish, now called Our Lady of the Americas Parish. Sister Jeanie taught in Catholic schools for more than 30 years, taught English classes for immigrant adults, and coordinated religious education programs for public school students. She served as part of her community's leadership team, and as the peace and justice coordinator for several years. Sister Elaine continued her community and outreach work. This annual event serves as a fundraiser for Catholic Peace Ministry. Tickets are \$50 or an amount that works for you. Please reserve your tickets through catholicpeaceministry@gmail.com or by calling 515-710-9902.

Catholic Charities executive director retires

Catholic Charities Executive Director Barbara Quijano Decker will retire Sept. 27 after five years of leading the social ministry nonprofit. A national search will begin for the organization's next leader. Now serving more than 25,000 in need within the 23 counties of central and southwest Iowa, Catholic Charities has achieved consistent and quality accreditation outcomes through the Council on Accreditation and GuideStar. Prior to joining Catholic Charities, Decker was the president of Mercy College of Health Sciences for more than 12 years. She has also held executive human resource roles at MercyOne and Drake University in Des Moines.



Barbara Quijano Decker

Former Catholic Charities leader dies

The first lay director of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Des Moines, Charles "Chuck" Roth, died March 4 at the age of 88. A graduate of Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines and Loras College in Dubuque, he earned a master's degree in social work from St. Louis University. He worked for Catholic Charities for 27 years, where he served as executive director of the organization and later as development director. He retired to Bella Vista, Arkansas.



Charles Roth

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Come to holy hour to thank Our Lady of Guadalupe for intercession

By Mary Purtle
Contributing Writer

Bishop William Joensen will hold his weekly Monday holy hour at 5 p.m. on April 15 at St. Ambrose Cathedral in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, thanking her for protecting the unborn through the closure of a Planned Parenthood clinic and praying for her continued intercession.

All are invited to join in the prayer.

In 2012, Iowa had 26 Planned Parenthood clinics. Today, it has six clinics in Ames, Iowa City, Sioux City, Des Moines and Urbandale. A Cedar Rapids clinic is temporarily closed but expected to reopen this summer.

On Feb. 8, a sign was found on the doors of the Rosenfield Center clinic on Army Post Road on the south side of Des Moines saying it had been closed.

“The closing represents a culmination of years of prayers by faithful pro-lifers at this very location,” said Maggie DeWitte, executive director of Pulse Life Advocates, in a newsletter to supporters. “Hundreds, maybe thousands of people, stood and prayed with us over the years for the closing of this very abortion mill.”

And last year, the Planned Parenthood clinic in Council Bluffs closed.

Pro-life advocates attribute the closing of the clinics to intercession from Our Lady of Guadalupe. In 2012, a team of volunteers asked the Apostolate of the Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe for a visit to Iowa. An image traveled to Planned Parenthood clinics, churches, schools, and rehabilitation centers.

At the same time, the Iowa Knights of Columbus had a smaller framed image of Our Lady of Guadalupe traveling from parish to parish to end abortion.

Pro-life advocates turned to Our Lady of Guadalupe in prayer as court battles addressed abortion.

A Spring 40 Days for Life campaign continues in several cities in Iowa including Urbandale and Ames through March 24. Go to pulseforlife.org/40-days-for-life/ for details.

At the holy hour, Bishop Joensen will lead the faithful in “thanking Our Lady of Guadalupe and praying for her continued intercession, so that hearts and minds will change, and abortion will become unthinkable.”

Seminarian takes another step forward



Photo by The St. Paul Seminary




Des Moines seminarian Dominic Nguyen was installed as lector along with 16 others at The St. Paul Seminary in Minnesota on Feb. 12. Bishop Chad Zielinski, of the Diocese of New Ulm, (center) celebrated the installation. In the above picture, Nguyen is in the front row to the left of the bishop. In seminary formation, lectors proclaim Scripture readings, recite the Psalms, lead general intercessions in the absence of a deacon and guide the singing and active participation of the faithful during the liturgy. Installation as a lector serves as a stepping stone toward the role of acolyte, transitional deacon, and ultimately, priest. Becoming a lector doesn't necessarily indicate a commitment to the priesthood, but it is a significant milestone on the path toward ordination.



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<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: purple;">96.7 FM</p> <p style="color: purple;">KCRM- Marshalltown</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: purple;">103.5 FM</p> <p style="color: purple;">KHFR - Fairfield</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: purple;">90.9 FM</p> <p style="color: purple;">KLOX - Creston</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: purple;">95.7 FM</p> <p style="color: purple;">KMFH - Oskaloosa</p>

“Then sings my soul”

Music and song have always played a significant role in how societies and their cultures throughout history have been founded, differentiated, and defined.

In the more modern era of our culture, we commonly refer to past decades with references to the music for which they were known, for example: “Remember the music of the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s?” while not always realizing yet that we are currently in the very next decade of music.

I wonder what music this decade will be known for.

As we grow up, (such a kind phrase to describe aging) we have the times when we hear the lyrics from songs of long ago, only to realize we never really knew the correct words or meaning. “Seriously, that’s what that song was about?” I’ll date myself here, but as a teen, I hardly ever knew what Elton John was singing about in most of his songs, such as “Daniel” or “Bennie and the Jets.”

Some say that all confusion sources back to the devil himself, but much of my confusion has come from a lingering youth with leftover naivete. It seems, that as I age, many of the lyrics from my teen-age years are going to forever remain as part of me; some lift me, others haunt me.

Lets Get Psyched!

By Deacon
Randy Kiel



Studies have shown that music is deeply impressive to our minds. It has the power to shape our thoughts about life as we see it today as well as our memories and perceptions of all our yesterdays.

Listening to music while experiencing an event, whether it be negative or positive, will commonly enhance the memory of that event. This phenomenon, known to many as “cue-dependent memory,” implies that the emotional and sensory elements of music become linked to the memory. So, when we hear music and songs from a particular time-period, it recreates the associated memories and emotions.

This is more commonly referred to as nostalgia.

At times, nostalgia can be quite fun, yet at other times, quite melancholic. Melancholia is not simply defined as a sadness

or a depression, but more of an introspective depth of feeling. Our brain’s reward system is activated when we listen to music associated with happy as well as painful memories, releasing dopamine and creating a sense of joy. Other music may evoke a sense of nostalgia which perhaps longs for generations passed.

Whether it be in the happier times or the sadder times, we seem to find music that will accompany us in our days. At this discovery, it becomes our own music. It is natural that we have music. It is natural that we sing; it is part of our mental health and also a sign of the status of our mental health.

When we think about singing to our little ones, we most often sing with a light and bubbly sound and use cute limericks. We might sing, “This Little Light of Mine” and “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” We teach of Jesus through music. It builds memory and recall. It builds relationship. It builds community.

When I was in Catholic elementary school, I can remember hearing the “Tantum Ergo” sung after the Stations of The Cross. The song made me feel warm. It was that sense of melancholia, but even more than that, I felt it was a serious song to God.

Years later, as a young man, upon hearing the very old hymn “How Great Thou Art” I connected the words from the powerful refrain, “Then sings my soul” to the “Tantum Ergo.” I finally figured it out! I realized that when I was a child and we sang songs that made no sense at all to me, such as the “Tantum Ergo,” that my soul understood the words and meanings. Whether it was a sense of melancholia or joy, I knew that it was my soul that was singing.

Now, as a deacon, when I lead others in Benediction and sing the “Tantum Ergo,” I no longer simply hear the voices of people behind me singing but the sound of souls that are “down in adoration,” singing unto the Lord.

Regardless of historical nostalgia, or the current events of life, from the mountain tops to the lonely valleys, may there always be a melody which rings within our hearts that will remind us: “Then sings my soul.”

What does your soul sing?

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

America needs you, Joan of Arc

Guest Column

Who is the most amazing saint in history? If you asked Mark Twain that question, his response would’ve been instant: Joan of Arc. Said the great writer, Joan of Arc is “the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One.”

Joan of Arc really touched the heart of a cynical man who considered his 1886 novel, “Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc,” to be his masterpiece, despite his hostility towards Catholicism. He conceded that he had been “educated to enmity toward everything that is Catholic.” And yet he spent a dozen years researching and writing a most reverent and riveting narrative on the life of a 15th century peasant girl whose greatness was defined by her Catholic faith.

Joan of Arc’s saintliness

Mark Twain’s novel is more relevant than ever, because the essence of Joan’s saintliness is needed more than ever. And what is this essence? Faith. Trust. Courage.

By Maggie DeWitte



Her life was a miracle. Born in lowly circumstances, Joan was uneducated but strong in her faith. At the age of 13, she began to hear voices from God. The voices included angels and saints who presented her with a directive: free France from English occupation.

The voices, which included those of the archangels Michael and Gabriel, and Ss. Margaret and Catherine of Alexandria, provided counsel to help Joan govern herself. But by the time she reached the age of 17, her voices’ directive expanded to liberating France from the English. And she did it, at a steep price.

Joan’s courage is contagious

Pulse Life Advocates believe that Joan’s example of utter faith in God and the courage to trust his promptings are immediately relevant to our age. We see the need in the prolife movement. Imagine: if a single Catholic teenage girl relying on nothing other than faith in God could liberate an entire country, just think what an entire Catholic community could do today.

Women of Worth musical event

In order to inspire our local Catholic community, Pulse is hosting a musical event with the theme of “Women of Worth.” It will feature a set of songs composed just for this event that honors the Blessed Mother, Ruth of the Old Testament, and especially Joan of Arc in a piece presented theatrically.

The event begins at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 14, at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in West Des Moines, followed by a wine, cheese and cookie reception.

This event doesn’t just support Pulse

Life Advocates, it also supports our friends at Mary’s Helping Hands.

If you’re not familiar with his incredible ministry, Mary’s Helping Hands provides hope, love, and support for expecting mothers who may need a helping hand with basic needs for their child’s first two years of life.

So we’re asking you to bring diapers, baby clothing up to size 2T, and nursery items to this event for Mary’s Helping Hands to distribute to their clients.

Pulse shares office space with these “women of worth,” and we see the difference they’re making in the world on a daily basis.

The price for admission to “Women of Worth” is \$10 per adult or \$25 per family. Reserve your seats online at PulseForLife.org.

Maggie DeWitte is the executive director of Pulse Life Advocates. She can be reached at mdewitte@pulseforlife.org.

Honoring Father Ray

Guest Column

We just completed one of the best months of my 23-year missionary career. We were busy completing the construction of a beautiful new brick church building in South Africa for a small rural Catholic parish. I want to tell you the story of how this came to be.

Father Ray McHenry, who retired from St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines, has faithfully led mission teams to South Africa for the past nine years. I met him 10 years ago to encourage him to come to South Africa with Blessman International on a mission trip. He finally agreed to try it and, like me, fell in love with the African children and the effectiveness of serving them through short-term mission trips.

Typically, 10 to 15 of his parishioners will join him on these annual mission trips.

Last year, I visited with a couple of his parishioners after we had attended a particularly moving Mass at St. Omar Church here in South Africa. This family mentioned that they wanted to make a significant donation in South Africa to honor Father Ray’s legacy and his years of mis-

By Dr. Jim Blessman



sonary service in South Africa.

A month or two later, I received an email from a local priest, Father Noah, requesting financial assistance to build a new church. I simply respond that we lack the budget to do what they ask.

The Holy Spirit spoke to me, and I knew what we should do and that we could accomplish it. I first talked to Father Ray and some of his parishioners in Iowa to be sure they likely liked the idea. I next visited with a bishop in Africa to confirm that he also supported what Father Noah was requesting. He agreed that a new building would be a big blessing to this rural parish, which had been meeting in a tin shack.

The congregation was small, number-

ing around 40 parishioners. Still, they had been meeting for several years, and the village, Rebone, was showing signs of growth with a relatively new strip mall coming to town. Once we had the architect’s drawing, we could price the project at just under \$200,000. They met again with the African bishop and local priest and asked them to provide \$15,000 of the needed funding, which they were happy to commit to.

I then started calling friends of Father Ray, who had traveled to South Africa with him. Within just two weeks, the necessary funding had been pledged, and we were able to proceed with construction plans. We had a great desire to complete this project in time for the church to be dedicated on Father Ray’s mission trip to South Africa, which was just four months away. It seemed an impossible time frame, but we all felt the Lord leading us to proceed and do our best.

Our son Dustin and long-term employee Maxwell led the construction team, and we miraculously completed this grand project on time and on budget. We also gave the church a new well and Enviro Loo

toilets.

What began as a heartfelt desire to honor Father Ray McHenry’s legacy evolved into a collective effort that spanned continents. “We extend our deepest gratitude to all who participated in this incredible journey. May the echoes of worship within these walls be a blessing to the Lord. With hearts full of thanksgiving, we look forward to the blessings this church will bring to the people of Rebone, leaving an indelible mark on the landscape of both Des Moines and South Africa.



Father Ray
McHenry

Dr. Jim Blessman, a former doctor at MercyOne, is president & founder of Blessman International. This blog was originally published at blessmaninternational.org on Jan. 30. See a picture of the new church at <https://www.dmdiocese.org/blog/building-faith-bridging-continents-and-leaving-a-legacy>.

Painting beneath the painting: Faith that endures

I was a first grader when I made my inaugural trip to Disney. This month – decades later – I returned with a first grader and a fresh set of eyes.

So much came back to me. My favorite ride then remained my favorite ride now: Pirates of the Caribbean. I remembered not only the sight of the swashbucklers but the feel of the bobbing boat winding through water and the smell of the dank walls.

It had been there all along, tucked in an inner recess of my 6-year-old heart. The experience had stuck, like an old photo captured on the sticky page of an album. I just hadn't realized.

I've tended to think of my memory bank as static, always accessible in equal supply. But the older I get, the more dynamic it seems. Parenthood amplifies this, offering another go-round, layers of nostalgia as soft and warm as an old patchwork quilt.

So much that is learned in childhood endures. The songs. The prayers. The

Twenty Something

By Christina
Capecchi



prayers turned into songs. The wispy, wistful soundtrack for "Anne of Green Gables" that sounds like growing up. The parts of the Mass, as familiar as your parent's hand. The welcome that invokes our Triune God in one breath: "The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." The drama of the consecration and Jesus' direct invitation: "Take this, all of you, and eat of it." The marching orders at closing to "go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

Pick up a beloved childhood book and be amazed. The story is still there. The Wild Things still dangling from tree

branches with Max, their wild rumpus in full swing. Richard Scarry's mice still zipping along in their pencil-mobile. The old man still resting on "The Giving Tree," now a stump.

The things we forgot we'd forgotten. Memories that never left us, though decades have passed without a single thought. Invisible but not erased.

I've been searching for the words to describe this happy, haunting sensation. It is as once new and familiar – the warmth of recognition plus the tingle of novelty.

Leave it to the Italians to capture it: *pentimento*. It is an art term used to describe traces of a previous work, an artist's change of mind. Most often it refers to original marks in a painting that were painted over but reappeared over time. The painting beneath the painting.

Pentimento may show a head or hand that the artist first sketched in a slightly different place. A dramatic example is Picasso's "The Old Guitarist," where the outline of a woman's head appears at a

90-degree angle from the guitarist's neck. Conservators used X-ray images to further decipher what lay beneath, extracting more of the woman's body and another face at her neck.

To me, *pentimento* is hopeful: the original marks of childhood endure, the stories and songs and sanctifying graces.

When we worry about the record number of "nones," those Americans who claim no religious affiliation, I like to preface the stats. We do not see what may be slowly unfolding. We do not know what painting is hidden beneath the painting. It is the very passage of time that allows for *pentimento* – the gradual erosion of oil paint, sometimes over centuries, like a person's tough exterior or recent departure from faith.

Their story is not over. And though it may be buried very deep, long ago, something sacred remains.

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

What's the role of candles in the Church?



I've Been Wondering...

Father John Ludwig

Q. Now that we are in Lent, we speak of the "40 days." It seems that if we count from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, we have 46 days, so how are the 40 days computed? -M.Z., Des Moines

A. THE GOSPELS TELL us that Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness in preparation for his public ministry. We also see that Noah and his companions and animals were on the Ark after the floods rained down for 40 days. The people of Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years. Moses ascends Mount Sinai and spends 40 days and nights twice (the first

time he came down to the golden calf; the second time he returned with a second set of the Ten Commandments).

The six Sundays during the Lenten season (as with all Sundays in the year) are considered "little Easters." So, if we subtract those six Sundays, we have exactly 40 days. It should also be noted that beginning on Holy Thursday evening through Easter Sunday evening, we observe the "Sacred Triduum" the three holy days.

We practice 40 days and 40 nights of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent to prepare for an encounter with God.

Q. As a child I remember praying for Christian unity meaning that everyone would become Catholic. What does praying for Christian unity mean today? -M.Z., Des Moines

A. JESUS PRAYS for his followers, "that they all may be one" (John 17:21ff.) Some believed that if all Christian denominations became one, they would all become Catholic. Following the Second Vatican Council we've come more and more to respect and reverence the people and the leaders and the traditions of the many Christian denominations. In 1999, the World Lutheran Federation and the Vatican signed an agreement about the rift that had taken place 500 years before. The work of ecumenism goes on today. St. John Paul II wrote in his encyclical "Ut Unum Sint" (That They May Be One) that his role is to strive for the unity of all Christians, not just Catholics.

There is unity in identifying as children of God through baptism. Think of Eucharistic Prayer III: "Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you: in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world."

Praying for all the followers of Christ is the task of all of us.

Father John Ludwig is a retired priest of the Diocese of Des Moines.

READERS: If you have a question about Scripture, the Church, the liturgy, etc., take a moment and send it to *I've Been Wondering, The Catholic Mirror, 601 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50309.* or email it to communications@dmdiocese.org.

Aging as a natural monastery

What is a monastery?

How do monasteries work?

St. Benedict (480-547 AD), who is considered the founder of Western monasticism, offered this counsel as an essential rule for his monks: "Stay in your cell and it will teach all you need to know."

Properly understood, this is a rich metaphor, not a literal counsel. When he is telling a monk to stay in his cell and let it teach him what he needs to know, he is not referring to a literal monk's cell in a monastery. He is referring to the state of life in which a monk or anyone else finds himself or herself.

Sometimes this has been expressed in Christian spirituality as being faithful to your duties of state. The idea here being that if you are faithful in love and in good heart to the situation in life in which you find yourself, life itself will bring you to maturity and virtue.

For example, a mother who gives herself over in selflessness and fidelity to raising her children will be brought to maturity and altruism through that process. Her home will be her monk's cell and she will be metaphorically the abbess of the monastery (with some very young monks) and staying inside that monastery, her home, will teach her all she needs to know. She will be raising children, but they will also be raising her. Motherhood will teach

her what she needs to know and will turn her into a wise elder, a biblical and archetypal Sophia.

The process of aging is a natural monastery. If we live long enough, eventually the aging process turns everyone into a monk. Monks take four vows: poverty, chastity, obedience, and perseverance. The process of aging, which moves us (seemingly without mercy) toward marginalization, dependence on others, away from an active sex life, and into a living situation from which there will be no escape, in a manner of speaking, imposes those four vows on us.

But, as St. Benedict counsels, this can teach us all we need to know, and has a unique power to mature us in a very deep way. Monks have secrets worth knowing. So does the aging process.

This can be particularly instructive vis-à-vis how we can make our final days and our death a more radical gift to others. In the first centuries of Christianity, martyrdom was seen as the ideal way for

a Christian to end his or her days here on earth. It was seen as a radical way of imitating Christ and giving your death away as a gift.

Of course, this had to be rethought after Christianity became the state religion and emperors no longer martyred Christians. What followed then were various attempts at doing this, metaphorically martyrdom. One fairly popular way of doing it was that, after raising their children and reaching retirement, a couple would leave each other and each would go off to a separate monastery and live out the rest of his or her life as a monk or a nun.

Classical Christian mystics speak about how in the last phase of our lives we should enter something they call the dark night of the spirit, namely, that we proactively make a radical decision grounded in faith to move into a situation in life where we can no longer take care of ourselves but must trust, in raw faith, that God will provide for us. This parallels Hindu spirituality which suggests that in the last, fully mature stage of life we should become a sannyasin, a holy old beggar.

I suspect that most of us will never proactively cut off all our former securities and, on purpose, place ourselves in a situation within which we are helpless to provide for and take care of ourselves. But this is where nature steps in. The aging

process will do it for us. It will turn us into a sannyasin and put us into the dark night of the spirit.

How?

As we age and our health declines and we find ourselves more marginalized in terms of having a vital place within society, we will progressively lose our capacity to take care of ourselves. Eventually, if we live long enough, for most of us it will mean moving into an assisted facility, which is in effect a natural monastery.

What an apt metaphor!

An assisted living facility as a natural monastery. The metaphor is also apropos for what it means to (by conscription) enter the dark night of the spirit and what it means to be a holy old beggar, a sannyasin.

In essence it means this: When someone is in an assisted living facility, irrespective of whether he or she is a millionaire or a pauper, the rules are the same for everyone. Since you can no longer take care of yourself (and indeed you don't have to) you live a monastic life of obedience and dependence.

In assisted living, you live by the monastic bell and you die as a holy old beggar.

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

Parishes enhance audio to improve worship experience

By Jennifer Willems
Contributing Writer

Church sound systems may not be the first thing people think of when it comes to evangelization, but they have an important role in how the Gospel is proclaimed and understood by those who fill the pews for Mass.

St. Ambrose Cathedral and the Basilica of St. John in Des Moines and St. Francis of Assisi Church in West Des Moines either improved their sound system or completely overhauled it within the last year, which has been music to the ears of parishioners.

“A 50-year parishioner went to the pastor and said, ‘Father this is the first time I can understand what’s being said from the pulpit.’ He said it’s so clear and it absolutely is,” according to Charles Stastny, business manager and director of operations at the Basilica of St. John. “It’s just been a joy.”

“We’d all like to think that we are – and I include myself in this – so in love with Jesus that it doesn’t matter. I’ll still go to Mass even if I can’t hear, and certainly we have people who have taken that approach,” said Emily Schmid, director of liturgy and

music at St. Francis of Assisi.

“But honestly, if that’s a distraction taking you away from Christ, because you’re distracted by the fact that you can’t hear or the jumbled sound and noise of all the sounds together, then obviously you will go where you can experience Christ,” she said. “We want to make sure there’s nothing impeding people at St. Francis from encountering Christ, especially at our liturgies.”

Father Nivin Thakidipurathu Scaria, rector of St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines, put it simply, quoting Romans 10:17: “Faith comes through understanding.”

Donation supports “Mother Church”

Father Nivin said the sound at St. Ambrose Cathedral has been an issue for about four years, ever since one of the two main speakers pushing sound out from the sanctuary stopped working.

With a donation from someone who wishes to remain anonymous, parish leaders started searching for a solution just after Easter last year. Working with Electronic Sound Company in Des Moines, the church replaced both speakers in September 2023.

Father Nivin said it was important to do this for two reasons, starting with the fact that the elderly members of the parish found it hard to hear what was going on. The second consideration was that diocesan celebrations, such as the Chrism Mass and ordinations, are hosted by the cathedral.

“The church is fully packed on such occasions,” he said. “The cathedral is the mother church of the Diocese and should have a decent sound system.”



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Bishop William Joensen preaches during the Rite of Election Feb. 18 at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in West Des Moines. A new sound system made it easier to hear throughout the church.

The new speakers also benefit groups who come to the cathedral for special occasions, such as quinceañeras. Musicians who once brought their own portable speakers no longer need to do so.

“We are very grateful to the donor family,” Father Nivin said.

Unique challenges addressed

Parish leaders at St. Francis of Assisi and the Basilica of St. John brought in Audio Visual Electronics (AVE) of Minneapolis, Minnesota, to design new sound systems for them. While a similar process was used to measure how sound was traveling around the church, each presented unique challenges.

The basilica is a Lombardy Romanesque church and is nearly 100 years old. It is a long building with a choir loft and many hard surfaces. Accordingly, the reverberation time – how long it takes for sound to bounce from one point to another – is four seconds.

Stastny said one of the ways AVE representatives tested that was by shooting a starter pistol off in various places around the church and measuring the acoustics from front to back and side to side.

What AVE designed for them was a system with 31

new speakers hung strategically around the church and professional grade microphones. Installation was in January 2023 and took about a month. The system can be tweaked by the design team in Minnesota through a computer connection.

Improving “Speech intelligibility”

The sanctuary at St. Francis has eight walls and forms a natural speaker, according to James Wenman, a member of the committee that oversaw the sound system project. A newer church than the basilica, it has a lot of stone and wood.

The problem was that when speakers were added the sound became garbled, making it difficult for the choir, cantor and presider to work together and leaving the congregation struggling to hear, he said.

The solution suggested by AVE was to remove the 16 original box speakers and replace them with 14 new speakers placed in more advantageous positions around the church. They were designed to blend in artistically as much as possible.

The new system was installed in January.

In both churches, the auxiliary speakers are timed to pick up

the sound from a main point – in this case, the altar – and create a continuous wall of sound.

“By doing that, it allows the listener to hear in a much more realistic way, rather than fighting to decide if the sound is coming from behind them or coming from the left or the right,” Wenman said. “It draws attention back to the altar.”

The goal in both cases is “speech intelligibility,” Stastny explained.

Wenman said that is especially important when faith communities are served by priests who may have accents American ears aren’t used to hearing.

“We are blessed with two very strong African priests, but it was almost impossible to hear them at no fault of their own. The room was not benefiting them either,” he said.

Now St. Francis parishioners can be enriched by the priests’ knowledge of biblical texts and spirituality from throughout the world.

“We’re removing barriers from the Mass,” Wenman said. “Having removed one of the barriers has been an eye-opening experience.”



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Those who came to St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines for Ash Wednesday Mass were able to hear more clearly thanks to a new sound system.

Out of darkness, light

Continued from page 1

ally pursued hormonal and other interventions that would assist them and allow them to conceive a child through conjugal relations. We even formed a support group that met regularly, where they shared their experiences and practical wisdom gained, and prayed and socialized together. Some couples became pregnant; others eventually decided to “get off the treadmill” of severe treatment side effects and high costs, and opted for adoption.

Yet along the way, they remained faithful to one another and to the Church’s position that, as the 2008 Vatican Instruction *Dignitas Personae* states, “recognizes the legitimacy of the desire

for a child and understands the suffering of couples with problems of fertility. Such a desire, however, should not override the dignity of every human life to the point of absolute supremacy. The desire for a child cannot justify the ‘production’ of offspring, just as the desire not to have a child cannot justify the abandonment of destruction of a children once he or she has been conceived.” The Instruction continues, “It needs to be recognized that the thousands of abandoned embryos represent a situation of injustice which in fact cannot be resolved.” Ultimately, as Dr. Kheriaty concludes, this injustice “should invite us to reevaluate the practice that created this insoluble quandary in the first place.”

Easter is coming

This year, Easter comes early. It so happens that the timing of Holy Week and the Easter Octave takes precedence over other liturgical celebrations, including the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. This event, when in response to the archangel Gabriel’s proposal on God’s behalf that Mary of Nazareth would become the Mother of Our Savior, her “fiat,” “let it be done,” resulted in the Son of God assuming our humanity by first becoming an embryo in the womb of his Mother. The Annunciation is to be celebrated the day after Divine Mercy Sunday on April 8—the day of this year’s total solar eclipse. As we are per-

haps stirred by this event to behold a few fleeting moments of darkness, may we also be mindful of a God who willingly enters the natural darkness from which all human persons emerge.

Christ is conceived of Mary, is crucified and buried in a tomb in order that we might be drawn from the spiritual darkness we

fashion for ourselves into his own wonderful light. His love is personal; he restores us to the dignity we had once forsaken. May he also restore us to a redeemed sense of how we are to treat one another, including how to translate our desires into a holy path where no one intentionally perishes so that another might live.

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.

De la Oscuridad, la Luz

Continued from page 1

la tierra se les niega la luz cuando Jesús entra en la ignominia de la muerte. Pero de manera extraña, en la muerte, su verdadera identidad como el Hijo de Dios se levanta como alivio para aquellos cuyos ojos fueron testigos y cuyos corazones estaban listos para ser condenados por la parte que jugaron en este triste drama. El claroscuro de la crucifixión, el vivo entrelace entre la luz y la oscuridad, deben ser la preparación para que recuperemos nuestros sentidos y nos apuremos junto a las mujeres y los apóstoles al lugar en donde el cuerpo estaba encerrado en la oscuridad. La tumba se convierte en portal de la posibilidad de que nosotros podamos extendernos en la luz el primer día de la semana y todos los días, lo que significa que nos reconocemos y nos tratamos unos a otros como personas de dignidad incomparable sin importar nuestra ubicación, nuestras limitaciones o la duración de nuestra vida.

A mediados de febrero, en una decisión 8 contra 1 que luego sería cause de burla y de celebración en varios cuarteles, la Suprema Corte de Alabama sentenció que un embrión humano que llega a su existencia por medio de procedimiento de fertilización in vitro (IVF por sus siglas en inglés), incluso si están en estado de crio preservación, deben ser considerados como niños. Aunque no voy a relatar todas las circunstancias que llevaron a esta decisión, el juez Jay Mitchell resumió la decisión de la Corte:

“La pregunta central que

se presentó... relacionada [sic] con la muerte de embriones que se conservan en un conservador criogénico, es si la ley [de Alabama sobre Muerte Indebida de un Menor] contiene una excepción por escrito a la regla para niños extrauterinos... La respuesta a esa pregunta es no: la {Ley} aplica a todos los niños no nacidos, sin importar su ubicación... Los niños no nacidos son ‘niños’... sin excepción basada en la etapa de desarrollo, ubicación física u otras características adicionales.”

Los críticos de la decisión, quienes tienden a ver un embrión en su etapa temprana como un “bulto de células” y no como un ser humano pleno y genéticamente distinto, se molestaron particularmente por la resonancia del lenguaje bíblico que utilizaron la mayoría de los jueces: “Creemos que cada ser humano desde el momento de la concepción está hecho a imagen de Dios.”

El caso expone nuevamente los múltiples problemas éticos y personales alrededor de las prácticas del IVF. El desolador y santo deseo de concebir de las parejas infértiles al cual sirven las clínicas que compiten en el mercado en base a récords de éxito registrados para ayudar a esas parejas para “producir” un niño exitosamente. Como lo indica Aaron Kheriaty, MD, “Frecuentemente se necesitan varios ciclos para lograr un embarazo, y... debido a que la recolección de huevos es un procedimiento invasivo y en veces riesgoso, los ciclos de IVF típicamente buscan crear tantos embriones como sea posible – generalmente más de los que la pareja tiene por in-

tención de llevar a término.” No es poco común que, además de la simple motivación de quedar embarazados, las parejas también están comprensiblemente preocupados de implantar niños con anomalías genéticas, por lo que las revisiones previas a la implantación los motiva a ellos y al personal clínico a destruir estos embriones.

El resultado neto es que hoy en día, nadie sabe verdaderamente cuánto embriones humanos habitan en fríos y oscuros tanques de almacenamiento, aunque se estima que en los Estados Unidos el rango es de entre 500,000 a millones. Aunque hay quienes proponen que se permita que otras parejas adopten estos embriones, el implantarlos y llevarlos a término, el hecho es que solamente una pequeña minoría de estos embriones llegará a ver la luz del día.

Como sacerdote joven, tuve el privilegio de acompañar a varias parejas que lidiaban con la infertilidad y que cargaban su cruz tratando múltiples intervenciones médicas para descubrir la raíz del problema; ellos frecuentemente se sometían a intervenciones hormonales y de otros tipos que les asistían y les permitían concebir a un niño por medio de relaciones conyugales. Incluso formamos un grupo de apoyo que se reunía regularmente, en donde compartían experiencias y prácticas que habían obtenido experiencia

y también orábamos y socializábamos juntos. Algunas parejas lograron embarazarse; otras eventualmente decidieron “bajarse de la banda sin fin” de los severos efectos secundarios y los altos costos de los tratamientos y optaron por la adopción.

Pero durante el camino, ellos se mantuvieron fieles unos con otros y con la posición de la Iglesia que, como dice la Instrucción del Vaticano Dignitas Personae en el año 2008, ‘reconoce la legitimidad del deseo de un hijo y entendiendo el sufrimiento de las parejas con problemas de fertilidad. Tal deseo, sin embargo, nos debe estar por encima de la dignidad de cada vida humana al punto de una supremacía absoluta. El deseo de un niño no debe justificar la ‘producción’ de descendencia, al igual que cuando el deseo de no tener un hijo no puede justificar el abandono o la destrucción de un niño o una niña una vez que han sido concebidos.’ La Instrucción continúa, “Debe reconocerse que miles de embriones abandonados representan una situación de injusticia que de hecho no puede resolverse.” Finalmente, como concluye el Dr. Kheriaty, esta injusticia “debe invitarnos a reconsiderar la práctica que ocasionó este problema en primer lugar.”

Este año, la Pascua llega temprano. También este año las fiestas de la Semana Santa toman precedente sobre otras celebraciones litúrgicas, incluyendo la

Solemnidad de la Anunciación del Señor. Este evento, en donde como respuesta a la propuesta del arcángel Gabriel a nombre de Dios en que María se convertiría en la Madre de Nuestro Salvador, su “fiat,” “hágase en mí,” tuvo como consecuencia de que el Hijo de Dios asumiera nuestra humanidad convirtiéndose primero en un embrión en el vientre de su Madre. La Anunciación se va a celebrar el día después del Domingo de la Divina Misericordia el 8 de abril – el día del eclipse solar de este año. Al estar posiblemente animados por este evento a contemplar algunos momentos transitorios de oscuridad, podemos también estar conscientes de un Dios que gustosamente persigue la oscuridad natural de la que emergen todas las personas humanas.

Cristo es concebido en María, es crucificado y sepultado en una tumba para que pudiéramos salir de la oscuridad espiritual que hemos fabricado nosotros mismos, hacia su propia luz maravillosa. Su amor es personal; él nos restaura la dignidad que en alguna ocasión abandonado. Que nos restaure también a un sentido de redención sobre cómo debemos tratarnos unos a otros, incluyendo el como convertimos nuestros deseos en un camino santo en donde nadie muere intencionalmente para que alguien más pueda vivir.

Deacon was a servant leader

Continued from page 1

Deacon Klein's class was the second to be ordained in the Des Moines Diocese and one of the first few in the country. They were ordained at the Veteran's Center in Harlan by Bishop Maurice Dingman.

Deacon Klein would have celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination on April 28.

When asked about the memorial moments of his diaconal ministry, Deacon Klein would talk about Oct. 4, 1979. The historic day that St. John Paul II visited Living History Farms. Deacon Klein and Deacon Bob Howe were there to assist the pope at the Mass.

In a 2009 radio interview noting the 30th anniversary of the pope's visit, Deacon Klein said he was surprised that he would serve at the altar.

“At first, I couldn't believe it. It's just like a dream,” he said. “It was awesome.”

Throughout his many years of ministry at St. Patrick, Dunlap and Sacred Heart, Woodbine Deacon Klein witnessed many weddings, assisted at funeral vigil services, funerals with and without Mass, visited the homebound and those in care facilities. He and Dolores were involved with couples needing marriage and baptism preparation and religious education for adults and children.

“You could say he loved life,” said Deacon Gail Stessman, who preached the homily at the funeral.

And he helped others enjoy life through his donations of blood platelets.

“Over the years, he went to Omaha over 250 times” to donate platelets needed for cancer treatment, surgery, and blood disorders, said Deacon Stessman.

The word deacon comes from a Greek word diakonos, which means servant or waiter. Deacon Klein truly lived his life of service to others with the humble heart of a servant.



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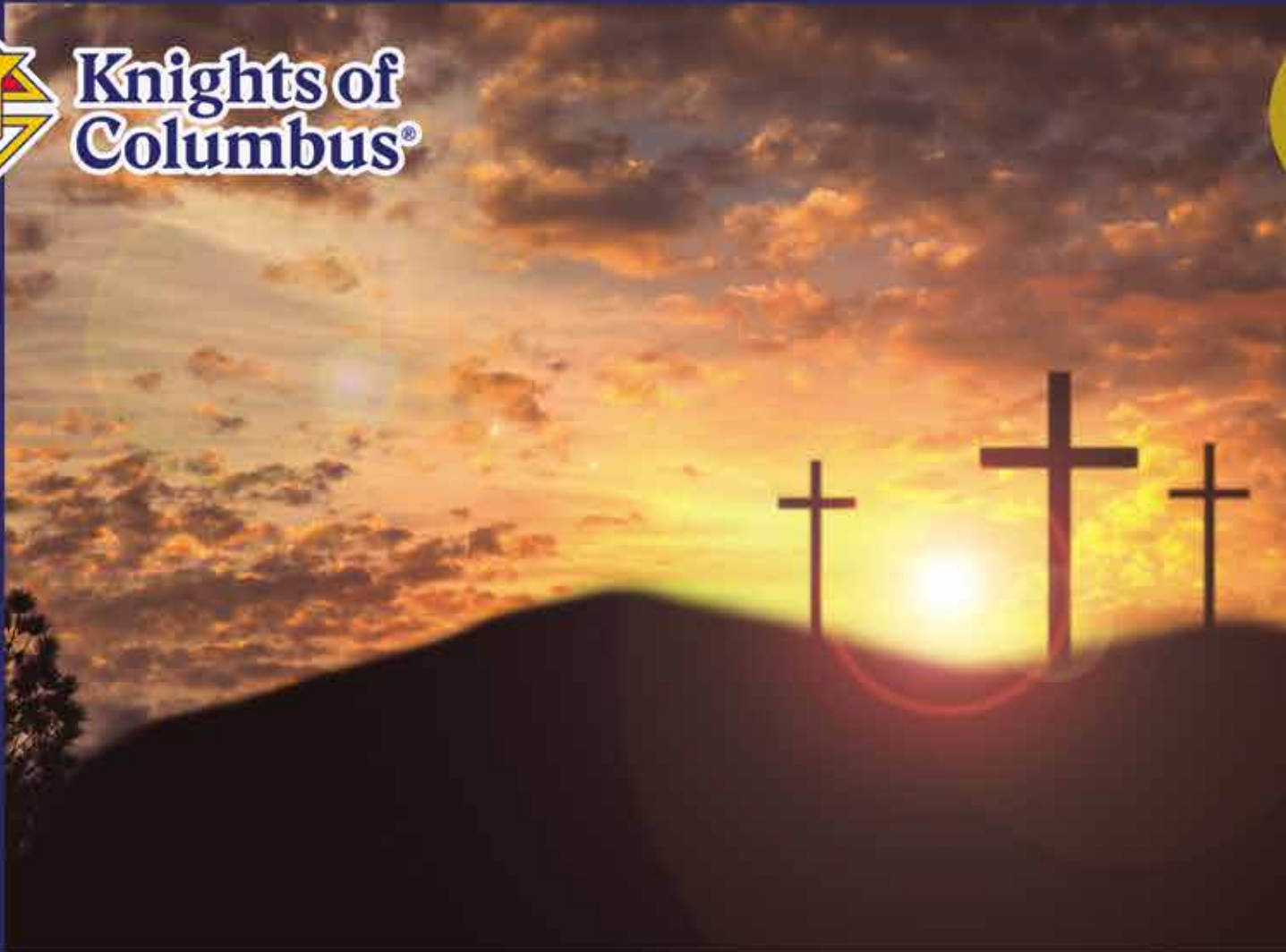
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