

New Catholics reflect upon journey to church

By **RENEE WEBB**
 Content and Design Coordinator

New life in Christ was celebrated at Easter Vigil Masses in parishes throughout the world including northwest Iowa. New Catholics were officially received into the church during the vigils steeped in tradition and symbolism.

Three new diocesan parishioners – Marcus Prell of Holstein, Char Lauger of Humboldt and Alan Coleman of Storm Lake – shared thoughts about taking the leap of faith to join the Catholic Church.

Journey to church

For the two men, a desire to have common faith home with their wives and families played a factor in decision to join the church.

“When my wife and I were talking about getting our daughter baptized, we had to go to a meeting at church and something came over me and I asked (myself) if I wanted to be baptized, what steps would it take as an adult,” explained Coleman, who added he had always been spiritual but never belonged to a particular religious denomination.

That’s when church leaders informed him about the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) process.

“I am not sure what it was, but something inside of me knew I felt comfortable here and this is where I wanted to go to church,” said Coleman.

He had been attending church at St. Mary in Storm Lake with his wife, Zoila, for about six months at the time he inquired about joining.

“I am very happy we are both experiencing the same faith,” said Coleman, who finds it important to be on common ground and have the same religious views as his wife and pass on the faith to their daughter Emiliyana.

Prell, a 25-year-old newlywed, also mentioned he wanted to practice the same faith as his wife Savanna.

“We had decided that a church life for us was a necessity,” he said. “Given that I wasn’t



Altar server Brett Petersen lights the baptismal candle of Alan Coleman during the Easter Vigil at St. Mary Parish in Storm Lake. (Submitted photo)

much of a churchgoer at that time, we decided it made more sense if I joined the Catholic Church. As I went along with RCIA and learned more about the church, I totally feel I belong in it.”

It’s a different story for Lauger who noted about four years ago she was determined to study through the entire Bible.

“I allowed myself time to ask and work through any difficult passages along the way. As I did so, I became increasingly more convinced that Catholicism seemed to make the most sense to me biblically,” she explained. “Then one day, because of some various life events, I found myself awkwardly walking in to a Catholic Church for a Sunday Mass.

Everything about that Mass seemed so profound to me and just so inundated with Scripture! I never stopped attending after that. I love the Mass. It’s beyond beautiful.”

Lauger was raised in a Protestant home, attending Baptist churches for most of her life. She described her parents as having strong faith and being committed to the Lord.

“My friends and family are not Catholic and this is difficult for them to understand,” she acknowledged, adding that what she struggled most with was how hard the decision to join the church would be for her husband. “Our faith has always been very important to both of us. He has truly been an example to me of God’s love and grace throughout our marriage. Thankfully, he has been very supportive. He still struggles with some aspects of Catholicism, but there are also many things he appreciates as well.”

Learning the faith

The RCIA process for all three was enlightening.

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EASTER FIRE BRINGS LIGHT TO THE WORLD



Bishop Walker Nickless incenses the Easter candle during the vigil Mass on Holy Saturday at Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City. (Lumen photo by Dawn Prosser)

See photos of Holy Week and Easter services on page 7.

Sioux City Sacred Heart breaks ground on \$6 million project



Father Terry Roder (center) and parish and school leaders break ground on new expansion project. (Lumen photo by Renee Webb)

By **RENEE WEBB**
 Content and Design Coordinator

Shovels broke ground April 24 on the site that will eventually be a parish center at Sacred Heart Parish in Sioux City.

The April 24 groundbreaking ceremony was the kickoff of a \$6 million project funded through the Growing Hearts and Minds campaign that includes both parish and school additions.

John Flannery, president of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, spoke at the ceremony following Sunday Mass at Sacred Heart Church. He opened the ceremony with prayer.

“The opportunity to begin a new building project with this magnitude is rare,” said the school president. “We are lucky to be on the precipice of this expansion.”

Flanery turned the microphone over to Regina Roth, whom he called the “servant leader” of the project, noting, “There is no way we would be standing here today

without your leadership and commitment.”

Roth said about three-and-one-half years ago “the Holy Spirit entered some of us and said you have got to get something done about Sacred Heart so we put a plan together and silently started raising funds and then COVID hit. Everything went on pause and eventually that got lifted.”

She announced the Growing Hearts and Minds campaign is now at \$5.8 million pledged with close to \$4 million cash in hand.

“I thank all of the donors and all of the people who worked on this campaign, and I mostly thank God,” said Roth.

The addition to the church will add a parish center with a large community room, full kitchen, small and large meeting rooms, area for the sacrament of reconciliation as well as remodeled sacristy and vestry for sacred objects and church garments.

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Three priests, many deacons celebrate

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DIVINE MERCY

Celebrating God’s mercy

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PRIEST MOVES: Eight receive new pastoral assignments

The April 7 edition of The Lumen featured the announcement from Bishop Walker Nickless of the new priestly appointments.

The priests' educational background, ordination dates and former assignments are outlined here.

Effective March 29, 2022

Father Cuong Hung (Paul) Nguyen, parochial vicar of St. Mary Parish, Hawarden, and St. Patrick Parish, Akron, is assigned as administrator of St. Mary Parish, Hawarden, and St. Patrick Parish, Akron, with residence in Akron.



He moved with his family to Boone from Vietnam in the 1980s when he was 13. He attended Divine Word College in Epworth and completed theological studies at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

He was ordained a priest of the Society of the Divine Word on June 4, 2000, in Techny, Ill.

Father Nguyen served in Argentina and Chicago, before serving for five years in the Des Moines Diocese. A brother of Father Peter Nguyen, Father Paul asked to serve in the Diocese of Sioux City. He has served at St. Malachy Parish, Madrid; St. John Parish, Ogden; Sacred Heart Parish, Boone; St. Rose of Lima Parish, Denison; St. Ann Parish, Vail; and Sacred Heart Parish, Manning.

Effective June 1, 2022

Father Travis M. Crotty, parochial vicar of All Saints Parish, Le Mars; and St. Joseph Parish, Ellendale, is assigned as Vocation Director of the Diocese of Sioux City and to part-time chaplaincy at Bishop Heelan Catholic High School with residence in the Cathedral of the Epiphany rectory, Sioux City.



A native of Varina, he graduated from Conception Seminary College in 2015 and attended major seminary at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in Shrewsbury, Mo.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 6, 2020, at the Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City.

Effective July 6, 2022

Father Michael J. Cronin, administrator of St. Rose of Lima Parish, Denison; Sacred Heart Parish, Manning; and the Church of St. Ann Parish, Vail, is assigned pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish, Denison; Sacred Heart Parish, Manning; and the Church of St. Ann



Parish, Vail, with residence in Denison.

This native of Holstein attended the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, and St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana. He also completed post-graduate studies via distance learning through the Catholic University of America.

He was ordained on June 6, 2015, at Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City.

Father Cronin previously served at the Cathedral Parish, Sioux City; St. Mary Parish, Storm Lake; and Sacred Heart Parish, Early.

Father Timothy A. Friedrichsen, pastor of Good Shepherd Catholic Parish, Carroll County, is assigned as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Sioux City, with residence in the Sacred Heart rectory.



A native of Schleswig, he attended Divine Word College in Epworth; St. Meinrad School of Theology and American College Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium. He also earned a graduate degree, S.T.D., from the Catholic University of Louvain.

He was ordained to the priesthood on July 21, 1984 at St. Mary Church in Mapleton.

Father Friedrichsen has also served at Holy Spirit Parish and Kuemper High School, Carroll; St. Mary Parish, Willey; Briar Cliff College, Sioux City; Nativity Parish, Sioux City; St. Joseph Parish, Struble; St. Rose of Lima Parish, Denison; St. Ann Parish, Vail; St. Mary Parish, Dow City; St. Boniface Parish, Charter Oak; St. Mary Parish in Ute; Sacred Heart Parish, Early; St. Mary Parish, Storm Lake with ministry to St. Joseph Church, Schaller; St. Bernard Parish, Breda; Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Mount Carmel; St. John Parish, Arcadia; St. Augustine Parish, Halbur; Sacred Heart Parish, Templeton; and St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Glidden along with the worship site of Holy Angels in Roselle. Outside the diocese, he served on the faculty at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Father Douglas M. Klein, pastor of Christ the King Parish, Sioux Center and St. Mary Parish, Rock Valley, is assigned as parochial vicar of All Saints Parish, Le Mars, and St. Joseph Parish, Ellendale, with residence in Le Mars.



This native of Hospers attended Creighton University in Omaha and the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium.

He was ordained to the priesthood on July 6, 1996, at Cathedral of the Epiphany.

Father Klein served at St. Lawrence Parish, Carroll; Blessed Sacrament Parish,



Fathers Doug Klein and Mauro Sanchez distribute Communion during the dedication Mass of the new church at Christ the King Parish in Sioux Center last fall in this Lumen Media file photo. Father Sanchez is presently the parochial vicar at the parish and he will become administrator this summer.

Sioux City; St. Mary Parish and High School, Storm Lake; St. Mary Parish, Rock Valley; and St. Patrick Parish, Akron.

Father Timothy A. Pick, administrator of St. Mary Parish, Remsen, and Holy Name Parish, Marcus, is assigned as pastor of St. Mary Parish, Remsen, and Holy Name Parish, Marcus, with residence in Remsen.



This native of Le Mars graduated from Le Mars Community High School before graduating from Westmar College, Le Mars. He completed seminary studies at St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Indiana.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 2019, at Cathedral of the Epiphany, Sioux City.

He has served at St. Bernard, Breda; Sacred Heart, Templeton; St. Augustine, Halbur; St. John the Baptist, Arcadia; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mt. Carmel; and St. Elizabeth Seton, Glidden.

Father Terry A. Roder, V.F., pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Sioux City, is assigned as pastor of Good Shepherd Catholic Parish, Carroll County, with residence in Breda.



This Remsen native attended Loras College, Dubuque and Kenrick - Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. He earned a master in education from Creighton University in Omaha, Neb.

Father Roder was ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 1988, at St. Mary Church in Remsen.

He has served at Bishop Heelan High School, Sioux City; Nativity Parish, Sioux City; St. Mary Parish, Willey; Kuemper High School, Carroll; St. Joseph Parish, Granville; Spalding High School, Granville; St. Joseph Parish, Dedham; St. Joseph Parish, Struble; St. Joseph Parish and Gehlen Catholic High School, Le Mars; St. Mary Parish, Danbury; St. Joseph Parish, Anthon; St. Mary Parish, Alton; St. Anthony Parish, Hospers; St. Joseph Parish, Granville; and as president of Spalding Catholic Schools.

Father Mauro Sanchez, parochial vicar of Christ the King Parish, Sioux Center, and St. Mary Parish, Rock Valley, is assigned as administrator of Christ the King Parish, Sioux Center, and St. Mary Parish, Rock Valley, with residence in Sioux Center.



A native of Rio de Parras, Mexico, he attended Conception Seminary, Conception, Mo.; St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana and St. John Vianney Theology Seminary in Denver.

He was ordained to the priesthood on July 9, 2016, in his home parish of Assumption of Mary Church in Querendaro, Mexico.

Father Sanchez has also served at All Saints Parish, Le Mars; Gehlen Catholic School, Le Mars; and Cathedral of the Epiphany, Sioux City.

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WHAT HAPPENS NOW?



In this file photo from Jan. 20, 2006, the congregation and clergy applaud the newly ordained Bishop Walker Nickless following his ordination to the episcopate.

Church law states bishops must submit letter of resignation at 75

By **RENEE WEBB**
Content and Design Coordinator

Bishop Walker Nickless turns 75 years old on May 28 and that means the time to submit to Pope Francis his resignation letter as Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City is fast approaching.

According to Father David Esquiliano, judicial vicar of the diocese, church law requires that bishops submit a letter of resignation to the Holy Father when they reach the age of 75.

"It doesn't mean he will retire right at 75, just that he will submit his letter," explained the canon lawyer. "In practice, the position of the bishop will not change until his resignation is accepted. The bishop is still the bishop. He does not change his title and everything remains in place. He maintains his authority and at Mass we will still pray for him."

Time passes quickly

As his 75th birthday draws closer, Bishop Nickless said he feels that his time here as bishop has passed quickly.

"While there have been some challenges, these 16 years have been filled with so many blessings. I feel fortunate serving with many great clergy, religious and laity to continue the mission of evangelization in this diocese," said the bishop, who acknowledged that change brings with it new opportunities and possibilities. "I'm looking forward to that both on a personal level and for the Diocese of Sioux City."

Even though cardinals also submit their letter of resignation from their diocese at 75, Father Esquiliano said they typically continue to work until they are 80. While the time it takes the pope to accept resignations from bishops and archbishops can range in length, it happens sooner than for cardinals.

The website for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – usccb.org – states that it can take six to eight months or longer for a new bishop to be appointed by the Holy Father.

Generally, the resignation of a bishop is not accepted until the Holy Father has found a suitable candidate for the post. However, the canon lawyer said, "If there is a health issue, the pope may consider accepting the resignation earlier and then the process continues of looking for a new bishop and an administrator is appointed or elected."

When the Diocese of Sioux City's previous bishop was appointed to the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, this diocese became a vacant see and an administrator was elected to serve until a new bishop was in place. After Cardinal DiNardo was reassigned, the late Msgr. Roger Augustine was elected on March 30, 2004, as administrator of the diocese by a group of diocesan priests serving on the College of Consultors. Nineteen months later, on Oct. 31, 2005, then Msgr. Nickless was named bishop of Sioux City and his episcopal ordination was Jan. 20, 2006. This diocese was a vacant see for nearly 22 months.

Bishop's service continues

Given that Bishop Nickless is in good health, he will remain in his position until a new bishop is ordained, or if already a bishop, is installed so this time around, the Diocese of Sioux City will not become a vacant see and no administrator will need to be ap-

pointed. The bishop said he is willing to serve as long as the Holy Father desires.

The time it takes for selecting and appointing a new bishop, noted Father Esquiliano, can vary because some dioceses have diverse and specific needs, especially larger dioceses. For the Diocese of Sioux City, they may try to select a leader who is fluent in Spanish and be a good fit for a rural diocese.

The ultimate decision in appointing a bishop will come directly from Pope Francis. Nevertheless, the process for selecting candidates starts at the diocesan level.

"All bishops are required with certain frequency to submit names of priests they think would make good bishops," explained Father Esquiliano. This is done on a regular basis prior to provincial or statewide meetings of bishops. The bishops discuss the potential candidates and determine which to recommend to the apostolic nuncio, the papal representative in the United States.

After receiving the list of candidates forwarded by a province, the Vatican through the apostolic nuncio conducts their own investigation into the needs of the diocese and suitability of the candidates.

"The bishop will report on the priorities of the diocese and let them know what they might want to look for in a new bishop, such as he should be able to speak Spanish," he said. Input as to the needs of the diocese is sought by others as well.

The nuncio will submit a list of names to the Congregation of Bishops (which will be called the Dicastery of Bishops beginning June 2022).

"They will conduct research at that point. They will send out questionnaires about the candidates to different priests and people who may know them, especially from the chancery or a seminary rector. All this is done under pontifical secrecy," said Father Esquiliano. "They ask questions about the candidate's theology, pastoral skills and even their health."

The proper fit

After the research has been completed and they determine the final candidates are ideal for that particular diocese, the congregation will submit a list of three names to the pope and he selects the bishop.

"It is not unheard of that the candidate would be from the state or even diocese – although the state is more common," said the canon lawyer. "The bishops in Des Moines and Davenport were both priests in the Archdiocese of Dubuque."

It is highly possible the candidates would come from a neighboring diocese, neighboring state or anywhere from the Midwest. However, the Diocese of Sioux City's fourth ordinary, Bishop Frank Greteman, was a native of the diocese.

Presently, there are 10 superannuated dioceses – dioceses where the bishop has surpassed 75 years of age: Boston, St. Cloud, Camden, Kalamazoo, Winona-Rochester, St. Augustine, Portland, Rochester, Phoenix and Wheeling-Charleston. Plus, three more bishops will reach retirement age this year after Bishop Nickless.

This is first in a series of articles outlining the retirement process of Bishop Nickless and the transition to a new bishop.

Three selected to receive Bishop's Scholarships to BCU

Bishop Walker Nickless recently selected three students to receive Bishop's Scholarships to Briar Cliff University in Sioux City for the 2022 school year.

This year, nine students qualified for the scholarship and were interviewed by a committee appointed by Bishop Nickless.

After reviewing the applications and taking into consideration the committee's recommendations, Bishop Nickless offered scholarships to the following students:

- **Chelsey Bieret** of Wall Lake, a student at East Sac County High School and parishioner at St. Joseph Parish
- **Molly Bormann** of Bode, a student at Bishop Garrigan High School and parishioner at Divine Mercy Parish
- **Trey Jungers** of Newell, a student at Newell-Fonda High School and parishioner at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Fonda

All three students accepted the scholarship and will be attending Briar Cliff University this fall.

In her application, Bieret wrote, "My faith has grown tremendously over the past few years. I'm happy that I've been able to grow my faith and trust that I'm in Christ's hands. My faith is extremely important and I always try my best to do what God would approve of."

The scholar said she will most likely go into college without declaring a major, though she knows that "God will lead me in the right direction in school and help me find my future."

In a letter of support for Bieret, Father Joe Dillinger wrote, "Chelsey reflects the faith, social, moral and virtuous values of a truly good Christian. Chelsey has learned and lived the teachings of Jesus, loving God and neighbor."

Bormann wrote in her application that her faith is an important part of her life because "I believe that God guides us in everything we do. I believe that everything happens for a reason and that God puts people in our lives to guide us. I would not be who I am without the people who have influenced my life."

"I think that it is very important to have a relationship with God especially with the nursing career I am going into," said the scholarship recipient, who is currently a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

When Father Steven McLoud was asked to write a letter of recommendation for Bormann, he said he knew of her family's active involvement in their parish, but wanted more information from the applicant before writing his letter.

In his letter of recommendation, Father McLoud said, "I was impressed by the depth of her responses (to my questions), the level of faith she has as a high school senior and her desire to learn and grow more in her faith, a primary reason she tells me for choosing to attend BCU."

Jungers wrote in his application that his Catholic faith has been "a pivotal role in my academic success for numerous reasons. I feel that my relationship with God allows me to prevail through obstacles and challenges that shape me into a better, more faithful man."

"I am excited to make my Catholic faith an even bigger part of my journey by attending Briar Cliff University," he said. "As I become a more educated Catholic, I am excited to learn of ways to apply my faith towards virtually every aspect of my life. It will guide me towards a fulfilling life and will bring me peace of mind."

Jungers plans to study accounting at Briar Cliff.

Father Craig Collison wrote a recommendation letter for Jungers. In the letter, he wrote Jungers has served the parish as a Mass server and also helped train new Mass servers for the parish.

"He has been faithful to his religious education classes all through his school years," said the priest. "Many times, after young people receive the sacrament of confirmation, they feel that their 'formal' education in their faith is completed, and they feel they need not come to religious education classes anymore. That has never been the case with Trey."



Bieret



Bormann



Jungers



Next step

Seminarian Jake Rosenmeyer, front row, third from left, was recently installed as an acolyte at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis. This is the next step in his formation journey, which allows him to serve at Mass and bring Communion to the sick and the homebound. Rosenmeyer and his class are pictured with Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. (Submitted photo)

Boone County parishioners learn about pastoral planning in their area

By **KATIE BORKOWSKI**
Communications Specialist

Parishioners part of the Boone County Catholic Community gathered on April 7 to learn about pastoral planning efforts that will be occurring in their churches due to shifting demographics in the diocese.

Deacon Mark Prosser, chief of staff and director of pastoral planning, offered a presentation outlining the proposals for the parishes in Boone County – Sacred Heart in Boone, St. Malachy in Madrid and St. John in Ogden.

Sacred Heart is proposed to assume St. Malachy, which would become a secondary church and St. John will continue to have church building status.

The gathering opened with introductory comments from Father Tim Johnson, pastor. Father Ross Caniglia, parochial vicar, and parish deacons were also in attendance.

“Once we got notice there would be changes coming to our parishes here in Boone County, we asked if he (Deacon Prosser) would come down and explain exactly some of the information going into the changes and the reasoning for the changes to happen,” said Father Johnson.

The priest offered a prayer, “Lord, we thank you for the gift of faith that draws us together and the gift of faith that allows these parishes to grow as a community. We ask your grace upon our meeting this evening as we receive the information and ask our questions acknowledging that our faith is very important as we move into the future.”

Pastoral planning

Deacon Prosser acknowledged he is the person most parishes do not like to see because he is there to talk about pastoral planning and reorganization of parishes in the diocese.

“On behalf of the bishop, this is one of the responsibilities I have to move that process forward because of the drastic shift in demographics that our diocese and in some cases our state and nation are under as it applies to people participating actively in their faith and in Catholicism,” he said. “We have heard about this many times over the last few years.”

Deacon Prosser shared the good news that Boone County is one of the areas that experienced a small amount of growth in the last census and “your parishes have shown that, too.”

The comparison between 1990 and 2020 when it comes to sacraments and numbers for the most part was trending down but, in a few areas, there was a bump up in numbers

for 2021.

“That’s good news for Madrid and Boone, unfortunately it is not the trend we are seeing throughout the diocese,” said Deacon Prosser.

The director of pastoral planning pointed out the bishop has to look at “how we are managing our parishes, how are our parishes functioning and really do his best and have the pastors, the parish leaders and the faithful do their best to stop looking over our shoulders on how we have done things in the past and look forward on how we are going to do things in the future.”

“The bishop gets beat up pretty good on this topic and having to deal with mergers of parishes,” said Deacon Prosser. “He doesn’t get up every morning and dance around his house wondering who he gets to close or merge today. It is very difficult and a hard decision. He has to deal with these numbers because his number one goal for every one of us in this room is to ensure we have access to the Eucharist, access to the liturgy and access to the sacraments.”

The deacon explained the bishop is trying to create a structure of streamlining things for the pastors and “hopefully empowering the laity to step up and take on more responsibilities with our pastors to operate our parishes.”

“Our bishop is doing his best to reconstruct how we do business and how we look at and define our parishes to ensure that we can have the Eucharist, have the sacraments and have our churches as best we can for years to come,” said Deacon Prosser. “How do we plan? That is what pastoral planning is trying to address – to reinvent our parishes, to try and bring groups of parishes merged canonically together so they can work together to return vitality, ministries and the sacraments in a new and different way based on a lot of different factors.”

Questions, reactions

Before addressing questions and comments from those gathered, Deacon Prosser answered some of the most commonly asked questions about finances, closing a church, canonical mergers, local decisions, finance councils, parish representation, lay directors, other committees and terminology.

“My one question is, if you say the number one goal is having access to the Eucharist and the liturgy, I am not understanding why we are not going to have Mass in Ogden as long as we have two priests here,” said Megan Ulrich, director of religious education at Sacred Heart.



Deacon Mark Prosser leads the pastoral planning meeting held recently at St. Malachy in Madrid. (Lumen photos by Katie Borkowski)

Deacon Prosser responded that Ogden St. John already has church building status. There had been an agreement that while a retired priest lived in Ogden, Sunday Mass could still be celebrated. When the retired priest moved on, the Masses should have stopped.

Jessica (Gannon) Christensen, a parishioner at Sacred Heart who was attending Mass in Ogden, shared she is scared and nervous about what will happen if Mass is no longer celebrated in Ogden.

“I feel like if we don’t have enough physical space for the number of parishioners, they just aren’t going to come,” she said. “I know that isn’t in the heart of the bishop. Something is going to happen if we don’t think about more than just our Boone County. I feel like I need to know what we can do to bring people together and still look to the future.”

Christensen pointed out Mass in Ogden is two thirds full with a Mass also being celebrated 15 minutes away in Boone. She acknowledged it is confusing and frustrating.

“I am not angry anymore,” she said. “I am scared that we are not going to foster our Catholic community the way we need to here.”

Deacon Prosser agreed that there are a lot of people who are scared.

The diocese is tracking Mass counts, and it is a work in progress, he said.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included having deacons celebrate Communion services, religious education programs operating at each location, tithing decrease, under-



Father Tim Johnson offers the opening prayer for the pastoral planning meeting in Madrid.

standing the true presence in the Eucharist and vocations.

“It is a different church than when I walked in nearly 30 years ago,” said Father Johnson. “I don’t understand everything that is going on. Sometimes I get a little disillusioned or disappointed. I have to look back to my faith to carry me through those situations. I still love the Eucharist. Father Ross and I both love the Eucharist. We love the people that we work with. We understand the difficulties. It is not easy for me either, but I have to maintain that faith.”

Sacred Heart kicks off expansion project

FROM PAGE 1

The school portion of the project will add three classrooms – music, art and preschool classrooms – new secured school office upgrades, reworked gathering space, maintenance office/storage and other improvements.

Kate Connealy, principal of Sacred Heart School, told those gathered that this expansion project has been a long time coming as for the last eight years “we have been using every nook and cranny of this building,” such as the art teacher having an office in the boiler room.

“A school is not about the brick and mortar. It’s about the people who are inside,” she stressed. “Sacred Heart has amazing, dedicated, talented, faith-filled teachers and students. I am so excited for them to have some renovated and new spaces to make their jobs easier.”

Father Terry Roder, pastor, said with this project there was so much to be thankful for as it will allow more people to gather without impacting the school.

“We are excited about the possibility for the parishioners and the community to come here to find a home, to find an opportunity to gather with others in good faith and love,” he said.

In prayer, Father Roder asked for God’s blessing upon the grounds for those that gathered “to share your word and your ways” and for the safety of the workers.

Deacon Tom Morgan blessed the grounds and those gathered with holy water before parish representatives broke the ground.

In an interview held prior to the groundbreaking ceremony, Father Roder spoke of



Deacon Tom Morgan blesses the crowd and musicians during the groundbreaking ceremony at Sacred Heart.

the needs of the parish and school. He pointed out that the parish has had to rely on use of the school lunchroom and gymnasium for gatherings such as funerals dinners because there is no parish hall.

“That creates problems with security because the two buildings are together and conflicts for timing when we have to work around the school lunches,” the pastor noted. “It puts restrictions on when we can do funeral liturgies and gatherings because we don’t have meeting rooms available for parish use during the school day.”

Father Roder said this project came out of a parish and school family survey regarding the current and future needs.

The Growing Hearts and Minds capital campaign silent phase had started prior to the pandemic, but was halted for a period of time before it started back up in late

2020 and early 2021. By March of 2021, \$3.85 million had been pledged of the \$5 million original campaign goal.

“We met our goal, but the pandemic and inflation have moved the goal,” said Father Roder, explaining the new goal is about \$6 million. “We have enough pledged at this time to begin the main part of the construction and hopefully save ourselves a few dollars to get things ordered now because supplies just keep going up.”

Father Roder commended the Sacred Heart parishioners in reaching the campaign’s original goal and surpassing it.

“We are hoping that by this summer we will reach our new goal,” said the pastor, who anticipates the building process to take about 18 months. “A lot will depend on the availability of building materials and the weather like any construction job.”

Briar Cliff receives \$2 million grant for healthcare training facility

Briar Cliff University in Sioux City was awarded a \$2 million grant by the U.S. Department of Commerce on April 26 to remodel and expand a former residence hall to create a healthcare training facility.

Toller Hall on the campus of the university will be renovated to create the Health Care Workforce Training Facility thanks to the grant through the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program that is part of the American Rescue Plan.

According to a press release by the Economic Development Administration, this project will provide new health sciences training classrooms, labs, and facilities needed to double the current enrollment of students and produce a highly trained healthcare workforce.

This EDA grant will be matched with \$1.6 million in local funds.

“The Economic Development Administration supports locally-driven economic development strategies to drive workforce expansion to create stronger, more resilient regional economies,” said Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo. “This EDA investment will renovate a former residence hall at Briar Cliff University to support expanded healthcare workforce development programs, preparing students for highly-skilled, good-paying jobs.”

JUBILARIANS: Three priests, deacons mark milestone anniversaries

By **KATIE BORKOWSKI**
Communications Specialist

Three priests of the Diocese of Sioux City will celebrate 25 years of priesthood this year.

The jubilarians will be honored at a Mass with Bishop Walker Nickless on May 2 at St. Mary Church in Storm Lake. Deacons of the diocese who are celebrating milestone anniversaries will also be honored.

The three jubilarians are Father Dan Greving, pastor at Alton St. Mary, Granville St. Joseph and Hospers St. Anthony; Father Peter Duc Hung Nguyen, parochial vicar at Sioux City Holy Cross Parish and Vietnamese community ministry; and Father Francis Makwinja, chaplain at Holy Spirit Retirement Home in Sioux City.

Gratitude

Father Greving grew up on a farm between Willey and Dedham in Carroll County. His home parish was Willey St. Mary. He was educated at the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio and St. Joseph Seminary in Dunwoodie, N.Y.

Bishop Lawrence Soens ordained Father Greving and Father Nguyen on June 7, 1997, at Holy Spirit Church in Carroll. The cathedral was under renovation at the time.

During his time as a priest, Father Greving said what stands out most for him is gratitude – “my own and that of others for the ministry entrusted to me.”

He has served at Immaculate Conception Parish, Sioux City; St. Joseph Parish, Wesley; Sacred Heart Parish, Livermore; St. Benedict Parish, Kossuth County; St. Joseph Parish, Neptune; Assumption Parish, Merrill; St. Joseph Parish, Ellendale; St. Joseph Parish, Struble; St. Mary Parish, Danbury; St. Mary Parish, Mapleton; St. Joseph Parish, Anthon; and St. Mary Parish in Oto.

“Life is fast...it’s a bit of a blur,” said the priest about celebrating 25 years. “I am grateful for God’s providence for all of my priestly assignments and before – the education, the school of prayer in the home, the days on the farm, the seminary – all were a big part of my formation to serve as a priest.”

Father Greving acknowledged he is “happy and proud to be a priest. My boast is in the Lord in any good he accomplished through this priest of Jesus Christ.”

Dedication to God, Holy Family

Father Nguyen was born in South Vietnam and his family came to the United States, specifically to Boone, as refugees in 1975 after the Vietnam War. He was educated at Divine Word College in Epworth, and St. Paul (Minn.) Seminary.

As stated previously, he was ordained on June 7, 1997, with Father Greving at Holy Spirit Church in Carroll.

Father Nguyen explained every day when he celebrates morning Mass he thanks God for his calling to the priesthood.



Father Dan Greving of the Pilgrim Cluster Parishes during the triduum. (Submitted photo)

“I love my priesthood,” he said. “I love celebrating the sacraments – baptism, Eucharist, confession, weddings, funeral and anointing of the sick. I love my parishioners. I love every moment of it.”

Father Nguyen has served at Holy Spirit Parish, Carroll; Holy Family Parish, Lidderdale; St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Glidden; Sacred Heart Parish, Ruthven; Sacred Heart Parish, Ayrshire; St. Joseph Parish, Wesley; St. Benedict Parish, Kossuth County; St. Joseph Parish, Bode; Cathedral of the Epiphany, Sioux City; and St. Boniface and St. Joseph Parishes in Sioux City.

He said celebrating 25 years is “unbelievable. Twenty-five years has gone fast. I thank God for allowing me to become a priest.”

“I dedicate everything to God and the Holy Family,” said Father Nguyen. “Mary the Mother of God, St. Joseph and all

the saints help me out every day of my priesthood. I am honored to be a priest. I try my best to be a good and holy priest. As a human being, I am a sinner like everyone else.”

Never a dull moment

Father Makwinja is from Malawi, Africa. He was ordained to the priesthood on July 12, 1997, at Martyrs of Uganda Parish in Kasina in the Diocese of Dedza by Bishop Gervase Chisendera.

As the chaplain at Holy Spirit Retirement Home, Father Makwinja prays with the residents and staff, celebrates the sacraments, plays games and spends time with the residents. He considers time spent engaging with the residents as “ministry of presence.”



Father Makwinja celebrates Mass at Holy Spirit Retirement Home in Sioux City. (Submitted photo)

“What stands out in my years as a priest is that there has never been a dull moment,” he said. “I have felt that the spirit of God has always been there to lead me.”

For the first three years after his ordination, he served in a Malawi parish. This was followed by 11 years in the school system before coming to the Diocese of Sioux City. Upon arrival in Sioux City, Father Makwinja was assigned to serve a parish before being appointed as chaplain of Holy Spirit Retirement Home.

“When I was celebrating 15 years of priesthood, someone asked me how it felt,” said the jubilarian. “I told her that it felt like only 15 months had passed. Even now, as I celebrate 25 years, it’s like the time doesn’t add up to that. I think St. Peter in his second letter says something akin to this when he says that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”

Father Makwinja said his years as a priest have been “a time of joy. It has been a time of staying close to God as I pray and minister to his people, especially in the celebration of sacraments.”

“I have felt ‘humbled and blessed’ especially when people have invited me to be part of the important moments of their lives like baptism, first Communion, marriage, sickness and even death,” he said. “It is an experience which I wish many young people would have in the church. For this reason, I would like to finish by asking all the families in our diocese to continue praying hard for vocations.”



Father Peter Nguyen, right, celebrates Mass for the Vietnamese community in Sioux City. (Lumen file photo)

Celebrating priestly and diaconate ordination anniversaries!



Fr. Dan Greving
25 years



Fr. Francis Makwinja
25 years



Fr. Peter Nguyen
25 years

Deacon jubilarians

40 years: Deacon Jeffrey Gallagher and Deacon Jerome Reicks

30 years: Deacon Gerald Bertrand, Deacon Frank Dunn, Deacon Ronald Forrest and Deacon Larry Sitzman

15 years: Deacon Richard Billings, Deacon Mark Prosser, Deacon Raymond Rosburg, Deacon Michael Stover and Deacon Mark Wyant

Thank you, FR. DAN GREVING,

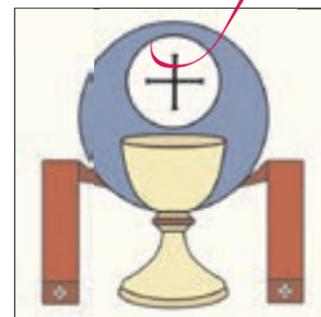
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CONGRATULATIONS **Fr. Dan Greving**

on your **25th anniversary!**

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Father Peter Nguyen & Deacon Larry Sitzman

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2022 Chrism Mass open to the faithful

Bishop calls upon priests to rouse the weary

By **DAWN PROSSER**
Director of Communications

For the first time in three years, the faithful were able to participate in the annual chrism Mass with Bishop Walker Nickless and the priests and deacons of the Diocese of Sioux City at the Cathedral of the Epiphany.

(A limited Mass was held in 2021 with only clergy and chancery staff attending due to COVID-19 concerns.)

“The last (public) chrism Mass was celebrated on this day, April 11, but that was in 2019,” Bishop Nickless addressed the crowd. “COVID-19 and the reaction to the pandemic took its toll on many events and touched many lives.”

He offered prayers for those who died and their families, and prayers for the 16 priests who died since the 2019 chrism Mass.

Serving the people of God

As a chrism Mass includes the renewal of ordination vows and renewal of commitment to priestly service by the diocesan priests, the bishop asked his priests during his homily to think back to their own ordination Masses.

“This is your day to remember your ordination to the priesthood of Jesus Christ,” the bishop addressed his priests. “Reflect upon that day, whether it was two years or 50 years ago.”

At a priestly ordination, Bishop Nickless explained, priests promise obedience, to live simply and promise “celibacy for all our lives so that we could serve our God and his people completely without compromise.”

The attending deacons and laity were thanked for their support of the diocesan priests in carrying out the church’s work.

“Your prayerful support of our priestly ministry is a gift that we cherish each day of our ministry,” the bishop said. “You are the reason we were ordained as priests – to offer sacrifice on your behalf.”

The readings from the Mass helped to illustrate the priests’ call to service to the people of God, Bishop Nickless pointed out in his homily.

“Today, we heard both in our Gospel of Luke and from Isaiah, ‘The spirit of the

Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me.’ On (Palm) Sunday, we heard the words, ‘The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them,’” the shepherd said.

The bishop pointed out he and his priests have been sent by God to serve their parishioners dealing with current, everyday struggles.

“We are appointed to speak to a weary world. Weary from the pandemic, weary from the violence in our streets, weary from the tragedy of the war in Ukraine ...,” Bishop Nickless said, noting the division in the church and division in the world also weighs heavily on the people.

Rouse up the faithful

The shepherd called upon his priests to “ignite a flame of hope” in the faithful entrusted to their care and “rouse them up with resurrected hope and even joy, despite our own weariness and burdens.”

In the era of changes in the diocese due to the decreased participation in the sacraments and declining numbers of priests, the bishop again called upon his priests to assist the faithful in the transitions.

“Our people need us to assure them that all is not lost and that our faith and trust in Jesus Christ will, in the end, bring about new and renewed ways to worship and celebrate our unity as the body of Christ,” he said.

Personal prayer and a close relationship with the Lord are essential, the bishop told the priests. He asked them to pray for each other and to pray for him as their bishop. The laity were also asked to pray for their bishop and their priests “who were sent and appointed to rouse you up in a weary world.”

The renewal

Following his homily, Bishop Nickless addressed his priests and reminded them of their ordination vows and asked if they would renew those vows at the Mass.

“Are you resolved to be more united with the Lord Jesus and more closely confirmed to him, denying yourselves and confirming those



Diocesan priests process into the Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City for the chrism Mass held April 11. During the liturgy, the priests renewed their vows. (Lumen photos by Dawn Prosser)

promises about sacred duties towards Christ’s church which, prompted by love of him, you willingly and joyfully pledged on the day of your priestly ordination?” he asked.

The assembled priests responded jointly, “I am.”

The priests also pledged to be “moved only by the zeal for souls” as they follow Christ in their priestly duties.

Sacred oils

In addition to the renewal of priestly promises, a blessing of the oils that will be used in the diocesan parishes for the upcoming church year is a component of a chrism Mass.

Following Communion, Father Augustine Peter, chaplain of MercyOne Siouxland Medical Center, presented the oil of the sick to the bishop.

“May the sick who are anointed with this oil experience the compassion of Christ and his saving love in body and soul,” Bishop Nickless said upon receiving the oil.

Santa Fernandez, director of faith and sacramental formation at the Sioux City Cathedral Parish, presented the oil of catechumens to the bishop.

“Through anointing with this oil, may our

catechumens who are preparing to receive the saving waters of baptism be strengthened by Christ to resist the power of Satan and reject evil in all its forms,” the shepherd said.

Presenting the holy chrism was Deacon David La Mar of Boone Sacred Heart and Madrid St. Malachy parishes.

“Through anointing with this perfumed chrism may children and adults who are baptized and confirmed, and presbyters who are ordained experience the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit,” Bishop Nickless said.

The Sioux City Holy Cross Benedictine sisters presented the gifts and the perfumed balsam, which the bishop would mix with the chrism.

Following reception of the oils, Bishop Nickless poured the balsam into the chrism vessel and mixed them. He then breathed over the opening of the vessel before praying over the chrism.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the chrism is a sign of the Holy Spirit, and by breathing on the chrism, the bishop “recalls the spirit of God ‘moving over the face of the waters’ at creation (Gen 1:12),” and also the appearance of the resurrected Christ to the disciples and “he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ (Jn 20:22).”

“May this oil be the chrism of salvation for those born again of water and the Holy Spirit and may it make them partakers of eternal life and sharers of heavenly glory,” the bishop prayed over the chrism at the end of the Mass prior to the final blessing and dismissal.



Bishop Nickless pours balsam into the oil before mixing and blessing the chrism.

SERVICE-MINDED SPRING BREAK



Some teens hit the beach for spring break while several students from Bishop Heelan High School in Sioux City went on a mission trip to Colorado to serve others. At Catholic Charities’ Samaritan House in Denver the students made sandwiches, cleaned, organized and made Easter baskets for over 300 residents. At the Missionaries of Charity convent, the students scrubbed walls and ceilings in the women’s shelter and hand washed many donated blankets. Campus Minister Lexi Ricke said after a day of volunteer work, a hike at Golden Gate Canyon State Park to see the beauty and magnitude of God’s creation was truly a gift. (Submitted photo)

The Enlightened CATHOLIC

What is the church teaching on the Feast of the Ascension?

Traditionally known as Ascension Thursday it was celebrated 40 days after Easter. However, in most dioceses in the United States including the Diocese of Sioux City the feast day has been transferred to the following Sunday. This year the Feast of the Ascension in this diocese will be celebrated May 29.

The Ascension is the event when Jesus – 40 days after his resurrection from the dead – rose into heaven by his own power as his bodily time on earth came to an end. The Ascension is referenced in Scripture in Mark 16, Luke 24 and the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles along with other passages. Every time Catholics pray the creed, we profess our belief in the ascension when we say: He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church sums up the importance of the Ascension in 665:

Christ’s Ascension marks the definitive entrance of Jesus’ humanity into God’s heavenly domain, whence he will come again (cf. Acts 1:11); this humanity in the meantime hides him from the eyes of men (cf. Col 3:3).

The catechism continues: Jesus Christ, the head of the church, precedes us into the father’s glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his body, may live in the hope of one day being with him forever.

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Diocesan parishes journey to *The Cross and Resurrection*



Bishop Walker Nickless blesses the palms prior to Mass on Palm Sunday at Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City.



Father Brad Pelzel baptizes a young parishioner during the Easter Vigil at Immaculate Conception Church, Mater Dei Parish in Sioux City.



Father Tim Johnson speaks with young parishioners during the Easter Mass at Boone Sacred Heart Church.

Candles light the darkened church during the Easter Vigil processional at Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City.



Easter candle at Cherokee Immaculate Conception.



Father David Hemann speaks to those joining the church at the Easter Vigil at Blessed Sacrament Church, Holy Cross Parish in Sioux City.



ABOVE: Father Michael Cronin, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Denison, kneels before the Blessed Sacrament as it is reposed. RIGHT: Father John Gerald, pastor at Jefferson St. Joseph, washes the feet of a young parishioner on Holy Thursday.

The Easter Vigil at St. Cecelia Church in Algona, Divine Mercy Parish was celebrated by Father Matthew Solyntjes.



ABOVE: Men of Madrid St. Malachy participated in the Extreme Way of the Cross. LEFT: The recessional at St. John the Baptist Church, Divine Mercy Parish, for the Easter Vigil.



The Odebolt St. Martin faith formation students performed a re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross. The role of Jesus was performed by Isaac Hoefling. The St. Martin Choir provided music for the re-enactment. The program also included the Divine Mercy Chaplet and was under the direction of Doug and Julia Mogensen. (Submitted photo)



A Kuemper staff member serves donuts to students in the cafeteria at Kuemper Catholic School in Carroll. All lay employees at parishes, schools and other entities throughout the diocese are eligible for lay health insurance. (Submitted photo)

Diocese uses money from reserves to prevent increase in lay health insurance premiums

By **KATIE BORKOWSKI**
Communications Specialist

Lay staff and diocesan entities including parishes and schools throughout the Diocese of Sioux City are receiving a gift of sorts for the 2023 fiscal year (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) with no increase in health insurance premiums.

“We are projecting a potential deficit. We are likely to spend more in claims and administrative fees than we are going to collect in premiums,” said Margaret Fuentes, diocesan director of human resources. “But we have the self-insured claims fund that supports our program. Between good investment returns and some years of lower claims than projected, we have been able to build the fund and we feel we can use some of these funds to ease the premium burden to our locations now.”

She said the diocese feels they can take this action and “give our locations some relief from increasing costs. Everywhere they turn costs are higher as we all know. This is a place where we can give them a break and just keep the premiums the same into the next fiscal year.”

According to Fuentes, 75% of the diocese’s lay staff at the parishes, schools, Central Catholic Offices and other employers participate in the diocese’s health insurance program.

“What Wellmark projected for us, for a break-even scenario, we should increase by 4.27%,” she explained. “They look at past claims history and do we have any large claimants out there. Our group is big enough that our statistics from an underwriting standpoint are credible, but there are always those unknowns. Who is going to leave our employment? Who is going to come on board? What is going to be newly diagnosed? We don’t have any better insight to those items than anybody else does.”

Reserves

The diocese became a self-insured employer in 2001, Fuentes said, noting this resulted in great cost savings for the organization.

“We have been able to save a tremendous amount of money in claims over the years,” she said. “We only paid for what we used. By being prudent with our investments and having some good claim years, we have been able to build the fund and have funds available to offset years like we have here.”

Royce Ranniger, diocesan di-

rector of administrative and fiscal affairs, explained the reserve fund was “created through premiums paid by employees and diocesan employers.”

“For example, if we charged premiums of \$100 and our claims were only \$50, we had \$50 to add to the reserve fund,” he said. “The insurance reserve funds are invested with the other investments of the diocese with a long-range perspective. We have realized good investment returns, which adds to our surplus reserve.”

Ranniger pointed out the lay health insurance fund is “another example whereby having all entities of the diocese participate, we are able to be so much more efficient in our operations.”

“Anytime you can reduce increases in premiums, it is not only beneficial for our schools and parishes but also for our employees,” he said. “This is the case in any year not just this year. In three of the last five years, we have not had any increases in our premiums to our entities or employees.”

Insurance committee

The diocesan insurance committee was included in the discussion to take money out of the reserve fund.

Jessica Hughes, director of finance at Holy Spirit Retirement Home in Sioux City, is in her first year serving on the diocesan insurance committee.

“By avoiding an increase this year and utilizing reserves we are demonstrating our commitment to attracting and retaining employees,” she said. “(In) the last two years, employees, as well as employers, have seen a sharp increase in inflation. Because of our due diligence and maintaining a healthy reserve, this is one way we can offset what would have been an otherwise increase in healthcare premiums.”

Father Dan Guenther, pastor of St. Mary in Humboldt, has served on the insurance committee for about 20 years.

“The reserves have built up in recent times simply because we have had some good years for investments,” said the priest. “That plus in recent years we haven’t had any major claims. That puts money into your coffers that you don’t need to pay out. I don’t think we’ve made any changes the last few years (to lay health insurance).”

Father Guenther added if the money is accumulating and “we

can do this, why not give it back where it came from.”

Employees at St. Mary Parish and School in Humboldt will not experience an increase in premiums this year.

“It is just not going to be as expensive,” said Father Guenther. “Instead of increasing what parishes and employees pay, if we can absorb some of that, we are doing them a favor. I think our people appreciate it.”

When diocesan entities were informed there would not be a change in coverage amount this year, Fuentes said she received some positive responses.

“The budgeting process can be overwhelming and making ends meet at each school, parish and other entities is a challenge. I think the locations were pleased ...” said Fuentes.

Healthcare industry

The healthcare industry itself, Hughes said, has seen “drastic changes over the last two years and none that were easy.”

“Holy Spirit employees have fully embraced the literal everyday changes to COVID-19 regulations, and they have done an exceptional job at maintaining a safe and healthy environment for the residents,” she said. “Staffing shortages are also being faced, specifically in nursing positions, so in addition to readjusting wages to be more competitive, this is another way we can retain employees as well as attract new employees.”

Hughes has worked in other healthcare facilities that were self-funded, but she has “never seen where there wasn’t at least a small cost-sharing increase for employees.”



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Catholic Charities adds Fort Dodge therapist

Catholic Charities of the Sioux City Diocese added therapist Lisa Conner, LMHC, NCC, to the agency’s Fort Dodge office.

Executive Director, Amy Bloch, LISW, said, “We are expanding our therapy team in Fort Dodge so we can continue to provide high quality mental health services and meet the demand for care in the area. Lisa is a great fit for Catholic Charities and brings wonderful experience helping both children and adults heal and find renewed hope. She will also be providing on-site therapy at Boone Sacred Heart and other area schools.”



Lisa Conner stands in front of the Fort Dodge Catholic Charities office. (Submitted photo)

Conner is trained in Resolve Through Sharing counseling for couples who have lost babies through early loss, stillbirth or miscarriage. She and her husband returned to Iowa from Delaware to be closer to family.

In Delaware, Conner worked with at-risk youth and their families as a Mobile Outreach Therapist after completing a graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling at Liberty University located in Lynchburg, Va. She joins therapists Darla McEnroe, LMSW, NCC and Emily McCullough, LMFT, CADC.

The Fort Dodge location serves people of all faiths and backgrounds and offers a sliding-fee scale for those who cannot afford to pay the full cost of therapy. No one is turned away for the inability to pay for services. Most insurance plans, Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Medicaid, and Medicare are also accepted.

The Fort Dodge office is open for appointments on Mondays and Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesdays 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Wednesdays 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Fridays 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. To schedule, call 515-576-4156 or email info@cathchar.com. To learn more about Catholic Charities, visit cathchar.com.



Future vocations?

Second grade students at Ogden St. John Church “played Mass” during their religious education classes recently. Second grade students around the diocese will receive their first Communion this spring. (Submitted photo)

LA PRENSA DE IOWA SPANGLISH WEEKLY

LA PRENSA's bilingual email newsletter, 'Spanglish Weekly,' celebrates the beauty of the Latin idiosyncrasy to communicate with neighbors, friends and peers.

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Rekindling belief in real presence

Explaining to a Protestant family member the Catholic teaching of the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist, a friend told me she prayed her words resonated with him.

"If you truly know what the Eucharist IS – who wouldn't want that?" she asked me.

As the church is well into the Easter liturgical season, the recent Holy Thursday Mass commemoration of the institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood is still fresh in our minds.

It's widely known that there is a crisis in the church regarding the lack of belief in the true presence. A 2019 Pew Research Center on Religion survey brought the topic back to the forefront of Catholic media.

Bishop Walker Nickless learned at a recent U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) meeting that June 2022 kicks off a multi-year national Eucharistic revival effort "to reinvigorate devotion in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist."



LUMEN MESSAGE

Dawn Prosser

Bishop Andrew Cozzens, shepherd of the Crookston (Minnesota) Diocese, is the chair of the revival initiative. (He recently spoke to our diocesan priests at a Lenten Day of Reflection.)

Eucharistic Revival: My Flesh for the Life of the World describes the program mission, "To renew the church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist."

The vision of the revival committee is to create "a movement of Catholics across the United States, healed, converted, formed and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and sent out in mission 'for the life of the world.'"

This winter, the USCCB launched the Eucharistic-Re-vival.org site for clergy and parish leaders. Corpus Christi processions and eucharistic events will be encouraged and resources will be provided.

In 2023, a Lenten social media campaign will begin and resources for parish small groups will be available. July 2024, a pilgrimage of regional processions to the National Eucharistic Congress will be planned to include in-person and virtual components. The hope is to eventually send forth 80,000 eucharistic missionaries.

The revival is designed to carry on beyond 2024 due to the momentum gained at the congress, along with resources

made available by the committee.

However, the excitement has already begun. Earlier this month, the USCCB announced that a relic of Blessed Carlos Acutis was presented by Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino of the Diocese of Assisi-Nocera Umbra-Gualdo Tadino in Italy to the USCCB.

The archbishop presented a first-class relic, Acutis' pericardium, to Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York and Bishop Joseph Espaillat, auxiliary bishop of New York at St. Rita of Cascia – St. Pius V Church in Bronx, N.Y.

Cardinal Dolan and Bishop Espaillat accepted the relic on behalf of the USCCB, guardian of Acutis' relic during the Eucharistic Revival.

Opportunities for the faithful throughout the United States to venerate the relic will be made available during the revival. The USCCB noted information as it is finalized will be available at Eucharisticrevival.org.

Many of us in the United States learned of 15-year-old Acutis and his devotion to the faith in the fall of 2020 when he was beatified in Assisi. Many described the young man as a Catholic inspiration for the millennial generation.

He was described by Vatican News as a normal, popular and good-looking teenager. He enjoyed playing soccer and video games, using technology and eating ice cream.

Acutis also lived a life of Christian charity, often giving what he could to those less fortunate in Assisi. The teen encouraged his peers to live according to Christian morals when he witnessed his classmates straying from a Christian lifestyle.

Known for his devotion to the Eucharist, the future saint became interested in the history of the eucharistic miracles at the age of 11. Acutis was able to use his computer to research the miracles and then cataloged the miracles onto a website, still accessible in multiple languages at miracolieucaaristici.org.

He wanted the public to understand the power of the Eucharist as he "could not understand why stadiums were full of people and churches were empty," according to Vatican News.

The teen fell ill at the start of his school year in the summer of 2006 with flu-like symptoms. When he didn't recover,



A 2020 poster of Carlo Acutis' beatification in Assisi, Italy, was posted along with a schedule of Feast of St. Francis commemorations. (Vatican News agency photo)

he was hospitalized. As he entered the hospital he told his parents, "I'm not getting out of here."

Acutis was diagnosed at the hospital with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. The devout young man turned to his deep faith and said, "I offer to the Lord the sufferings that I will have to undergo for the pope and for the church, so as not to have to be in purgatory and be able to go directly to heaven."

Pope Francis has called him a role model for young people. He was named as one of the intercessors for the national Eucharistic Revival.

The catalog of eucharistic miracles from Acutis' website was eventually published onto 160 panels that have been displayed at tens of thousands of worldwide parishes.

With the inspiration of Acutis' research and website, the faithful in the Diocese of Sioux City were able to grow their appreciation for the Eucharist close to home recently. In the past few months, Holy Name Parish in Marcus, Holy Family Parish in Emmetsburg and Siouxland Catholic Radio in Sioux City hosted the display of Acutis' eucharistic miracle panels for the public.

If you missed the eucharistic miracle events, you don't have to wait until the revival kicks off this summer to grow in your love for the Eucharist.

In this Easter season, spend time in prayer contemplating the gift of the true presence in the Eucharist, participate in your parish's adoration hours and when you receive the body and blood of Christ at Mass, thoughtfully and joyfully offer your Amen.

Whatever you do for the least

I recently discovered K9s For Warriors, a program with a fierce dedication to saving the lives of both military veterans and rescue dogs. It is backed by scientific research and empowers veterans who fought for our freedom to live a life of dignity and independence.

Graduates of the K9s For Warriors program are able to live a life that they previously did not think was possible. Many have reunited with their families, gone back to school, found renewed enjoyment in life and significantly reduced their need for medication.

Did you know that dogs have an outstanding sense of smell that far surpasses humans? In fact, their sense of smell is 10,000 to 100,000 times better than that of people.

However, it takes more than a good nose to be a service dog. The breeds most commonly used as service dogs share the following key characteristics:

- A desire to work. Your service dog should be happier on a walk or at the dog park than they are laying around at home.
- A calm demeanor. Your service dog can't cause disturbances in public or be easily startled by their surroundings.
- Intelligence. Your service dog has to perform complex tasks that require innate intelligence and good decision making.
- A friendly disposition. Your service dog must be friendly and comfortable around people and other animals.
- A loving disposition. Your service dog must be able to form a strong bond to best serve your needs.

Sign me up – I want one!

I want to share with you a story about a soldier and his highly trained service dog. The dog's name is Major. The soldier often describes the dog as his umbilical cord. In other words, Major helps his owner perform day-to-day tasks. But make no mistake, they are also loving and devoted friends.

Some dogs call for help by barking, but not Major. Once, when his owner, a combat veteran who suffers from PTSD after being wounded in action, was overwhelmed with a seizure, the labrador/pitbull mix called 911 by stepping on his owner's iPhone. Thinking it was a prank or accidental call, dispatchers repeatedly hung up, which forced the service dog to call emergency services not once, but ten times, as reported by the Huffington Post in 2014.

I remember a woman who would bring her service dog to Mass at one of my parish assignments. The dog would quietly lay at her feet until Mass was over, never barking even once during my sermon.

Although dogs were not highly valued when Jesus walked the earth, I just know our Lord would understand how one of his four-legged creatures could provide security and loving support to its earthly master.

I invite anyone, especially veterans, with a similar story to email me with their own story at taofdm1@gmail.com.

Let's say a prayer of thanksgiving for a wounded individual, one who is in some way suffering, whose service dog helps him feel he is never alone:

Heavenly father, I ask for your blessing on individuals and their precious service dogs. They are special animals who lovingly, patiently and most of all, faithfully, accompany them on their pilgrimages through life. Be their divine physician and lead them safely to your kingdom, where there is no more suffering, tears, or sorrow, but only eternal joy. Amen.



VIEW FROM THE SCOOTER

Fr. Dennis Meinen

Working hard for a victory

Much of the world today is glued to the war in Ukraine, deeply engaged by the shocking images of destruction, the criminal targeting of civilians and the bravery and steadfast resistance of the people and their leader to an unjust aggressor.

There are genuine reasons for apprehension and concern. In a world where passion and impulse seem more and more to form the ground for action, a leader of a nation with nuclear power who begins manifesting unjust aggression is dangerous indeed.

But we don't need to look halfway around the world to find war. We ourselves are a country at war. Winning or losing the current war we are engaged in at home will determine whether we see overt attacks on our own soil, whether we are visited by the just fruits of our own complicity with the enemies of God.

There is never armed aggression and conflict unless many spiritual battles have been lost first. Our Lady at Fatima told us that war is a consequence of sin. And sin prevails when we lose the battles against it.

In this country, we have almost stopped waging any kind of offensive against sin, and we are paying the price for that now. As sin becomes more and more mainstream, so does the disturbing increase in random criminal acts.

More often, we see the targeting of ordinary people (often elderly), slapped, beaten or pushed into an oncoming train for no apparent reason, and with no evident concern or sign of remorse on the perpetrator's part.

How can that be?

Just as we don't have aggression and conflict without losing the spiritual battle first, we don't have crimes of aggression or passion unless someone has first lost the struggle with their own temper and self-control.

That was evident in the infamous Will Smith slap at the Oscars. After he publicly slapped Chris Rock in front of millions of viewers over a perceived insult to his wife, the best reaction and counsel came from fellow actor Denzel Washington.

Washington tried to calm Smith but told him:

"At your highest moment, be careful; that's when the devil comes for you."

He is right. The devil likes to disconnect us from the higher powers of our soul, our reason and our will.

He works to get us moving out of impulse and base appetites. It is the practice of virtue that helps to regulate our lower nature.

When virtue and knowledge are united, they become powerful in the battle against sin. They provide, as Father Emmerich Vogt, OP, points out, spiritual antibodies to the infection of sin.

But virtue doesn't seem to interest modern man much. And this was one of the things that caused Jesus untold suffering in his paschal mystery.

It caused him to suffer for the repair of some of the ugliest sins man will ever be capable of committing, conquering them in his own body and through the shedding of his own precious blood.

The devil tries to make us forgetful of the definitive victories the Lord has won over the flesh, the world, sin, death and the devil himself. But that battle and those victories have to be fought and won directly in our own lives. Then Easter becomes a living celebration for us.

When considering pornography, human trafficking, infidelity in marriage, child abuse and other issues, it is salutary to remember that the more spiritual battles we lose, the more likely overt war becomes.

The primary battles are first and foremost within the soul of man and for the spirit of man. These must be won first.

There is a cost to winning the spiritual war that precedes physical war. Jesus shows us that it can be terrible. But he also shows us in resurrection the transformation of all earthly realities of suffering, brokenness, disharmony, death, disillusionment and others.

The glories he reveals in resurrection, in victory, should motivate us to do the hard work that needs to be done, the dying to ourselves we resist so deeply but without which we cannot come to the new, transcendent life Jesus died to give us.

GRACE NOTES

Sr. Anne Marie Walsh

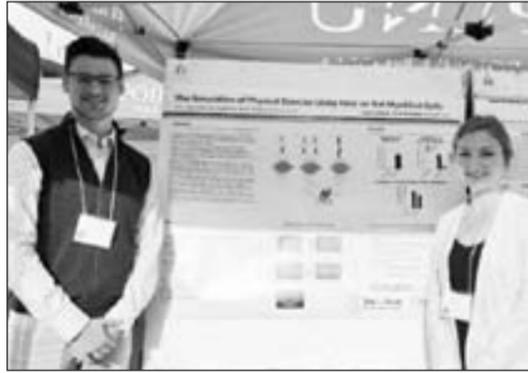
BCU biology, biochemistry students amongst top presenters at WCBSUR Conference

Briar Cliff University faculty and students participated in the 45th West Coast Biological Sciences Undergraduate Research (WCBSUR) Conference and received two outstanding poster presenter awards.

A total of 66 institutions participated in the conference and 150 undergraduate students showcased their research through poster presentations. Only 25 awards were given to best presenters.

Dr. Daniel Jung, associate professor of biology, and Dr. Paul Weber, retired professor of chemistry, supported 11 students from the Carver Molecular Biology Teaching Lab Research Team at the WCBSUR Conference. Through the generous support of private donors and Weber, students were able to share the following research presentations:

- ◆ Extraction and Analysis of M-11 from Prairie Turnip Extract by Quinten Vasa and Mya Hendry
 - ◆ The Simulation of Physical Exercise Using Heat on Rat Myoblast Cells by Sophie Kramper and Brady Brockhaus
 - ◆ The Mechanism of Anti-Inflammatory Properties of Prairie Turnip Extracts Component M11 by Anna Sorenson, Kaegan Held, and Jeremiah Glise
 - ◆ Identification of Nitrogen Removal Bacteria from the Wastewater in the City of Sioux City Wastewater Treatment Plant by Breanna Gill, Kennedy Benne, and Mathew Griesel
 - ◆ Prairie Turnip Extracts Component M11 by Anna Sorenson, Kaegan Held, and Jeremiah Glise
 - ◆ Chloroform Induces IDO for Unique Tumor Environment via Interleukin-27 by Hunter Pitts and RJ Harris
- Kennedy Benne, Breanna Gill, Sophie Kramper and Brady Brockhaus were awarded for outstanding



Brady Brockhaus and Sophie Kramper, Briar Cliff University students, were among four BCU students to be recognized for their presentation.

poster presentations. The WCBSUR Conference is among the oldest, intercollegiate conferences of its kind in the nation. Founded in 1976 by Dr. William Eisinger, professor of biology at Santa Clara University, the conference has been attended by students and faculty representing 193 institutions in 37 states and Canada over its first 44 years. The 2022 conference was held in April at Point Loma Nazarene University, in San Diego, Calif. The goals of the WCBSUR Conference are to provide a forum for undergraduate researchers to present original data they have generated in the fields of biology, biochemistry and biophysics. The conference also strives to foster intercollegiate interactions among students and faculty who share a commitment to undergraduate research in the biological sciences.

ANNIVERSARIES

Jack and Norma Fitzgerald

Jack and Norma Fitzgerald of Spencer will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on May 3.

They were married May 3, 1952, at St. Columbkille Church in Varina. Jack and Norma belong to Sacred Heart Church in Spencer.

They are the parents of Dan Fitzgerald, Debbie (John) Kula, Diane Mozena, Dawn Ressler and DeEtte (Dave) Lee. They have eight grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.



Kevin and Monica Pearson

Kevin and Monica Pearson of Boone will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 6. Kevin and Monica will celebrate this milestone anniversary with their family on April 30.

They were married in 1972 at Sacred Heart Church in Boone. The Pearsons have been lifelong members of Sacred Heart Church in Boone, where Monica serves as liturgical director and Kevin is active in the Knights of Columbus.

Their five children are Kelly (Jodi) Pearson of Boone, Molly (Richard Fisher) Pearson of Denver, Colo.; Annie (Jason) Carpenter of Boone, Natalie (Nick)



Lampe of Atlantic and Melissa (Ryan) Moorman of Boone. They have been blessed with 12 grandchildren.

BORN INTO ETERNAL LIFE



AKRON

Gerd Ludwigs, 97, died April 7.
William "Bill" Manley, 87, died April 18.

ALGONA

Kathrine M. Aman, 89, died April 3.

ANTHON

Carla Handke, 73, died April 21.

BANCROFT

George "Sonny" Wolf, 84, died April 20.

BOONE

Carole Dittmer, 84, died April 22.

Ray Hopkins, 84, died April 15.

Mary J. Maybee, 92, died April 20.

Thomas P. "Tom" Sawyer, 74, died April 11.

Catherine R. "Rose" Smith, 99, died April 20.

Margaret "Butch" Blank Uthe, 98, died April 15.

CARROLL

Donald "Don" L. Beidler, 82, died April 9.

Kay Boyce, 78, died April 11.

Mary K. Dirks, 80, died March 27.

Richard "Dick" O'Tool, 81, died April 9.

DANBURY

Julie (Wolterman) Burroughs, 46, of Des Moines, died April 15.

EMMETSBURG

Rose M. Reit, 69, died April 6.

FORT DODGE

Bennett A. Johnson, 95, died April 16.

GILMORE CITY

Betty Stein, 92, died April 11.

LE MARS

Allan "Al" Kellen, 64, died April 8.

Johnnie Newton Jr., 56, died April 4.

MADRID

David Burke, 67, died April 3.

Kenneth Pies, 94, died March 29.

Dr. Marion A. Romitti, 88, of Altoona, died April 18.

POMEROY

Anthony B. Hinners, 58, died April 9.

SCRANTON

Jim "Strauto" Strautman, 66, formerly of Carroll, died April 4.

SIoux CITY

Rodney R. Bertrand, 84, died April 18.

Elvera, "Lois" Chartier, 98, died April 17.

Roger D. Detches, 87, died

Feb. 9.

Michael P. Frohman, 43, died April 1.

Carole I. Mach, 80, formerly of Yankton, S.D., died April 8.

Marcy Jo Martin, 58, died April 19.

Jeanette Orth, 90, died April 1.

Donald D. Phipps, 87, died April 8.

Darrell Pranke, 90, died April 4.

Charles "Dick" Semple, 97, died April 4.

Robert E. Zink, 74, died April 19.

SPENCER

Bonnie K. Welle, 75, died April 3.

STORM LAKE

Elaine Wright, 96, died April 17.

SUTHERLAND

Pearl E. Powell, 100, died April 7.

WEST BEND

Robert Thul, 88, died April 6.

WHITING

Maribel Moreno, 37, died April 2.

Aidan D. Smith, infant, died April 2.

WILLEY

Helen Knobbe Johnson, 93, died April 13.



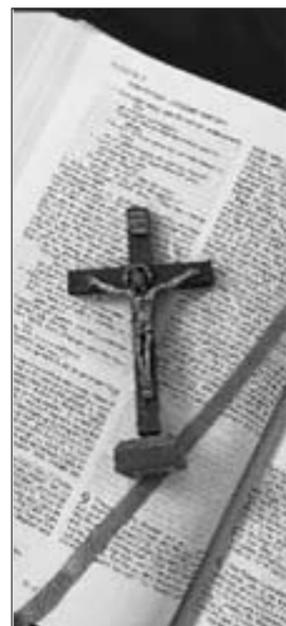
Clothing study

His Little Ones preschoolers of Sheldon St. Patrick recently wrapped up a clothing study unit. The students learned about the features of clothing such as how they close, sizes and designs on them. The preschoolers took a trip to the laundromat and used hand-cranked eggbeaters to make suds. (Left) Olivia, Jay and Clare modeled the paper bag vests they "sewed." (Contributed photo)

UPCOMING AREA EVENT

MAY 13

MercyOne Sioux City – MercyOne Air Med is partnering with LifeServe Blood Center, Iowa's largest nonprofit community-based blood center, to host blood drives in three regions across the state. The donation event, called "Answering the Call to Save Lives" will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Sioux City, Des Moines and Mason City. LifeServe bloodmobiles will accept blood donations at MercyOne helipads at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center and MercyOne Siouxland Medical Center.



WEEKDAY READINGS:

MONDAY, MAY 2

Acts 6:8-15; Psalms 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30; John 6:22-29

TUESDAY, MAY 3

1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Psalms 19:2-3, 4-5; John 14:6-14

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4

Acts 8:1b-8; Psalms 66:1-3a, 4-5, 6-7a; John 6:35-40

THURSDAY, MAY 5

Acts 8:26-40; Psalms 66:8-9, 16-17, 20; John 6:44-51

FRIDAY, MAY 6

Acts 9:1-20; Psalms 117:1bc, 2; John 6:52-59

SATURDAY, MAY 7

Acts 9:31-42; Psalms 116:12-13, 14-15, 16-17; John 6:60-69

MONDAY, MAY 9

Acts 11:1-18; Psalms 42:2-3, 43:3, 4; John 10:1-10

TUESDAY, MAY 10

Acts 11:19-26; Psalms 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7; John 10:22-30

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

Acts 12:24-13:5a; Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6 and 8; John 12:44-50

THURSDAY, MAY 12

Acts 13:13-25; Psalms 89:2-3, 21-22, 25 and 27; John 13:16-20

FRIDAY, MAY 13

Acts 13:26-33; Psalms 2:6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab; John 14:1-6

SATURDAY, MAY 14

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; Psalms 113:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; John 15:9-17



The Saints

Peregrine Laziosi

May 1
1265-1345

Born in Forli, Italy, Peregrine was the only son of well-to-do parents. In his hometown, he joined the enemies of the pope as a teen and eventually became its ringleader. Pope Martin IV sent the leader of the Order of Servites – St. Philip Benizi – as his personal ambassador to try to bring peace to the rebels. The young rebel punched the priest. Peregrine was so moved by the Servite's kind response that he sought forgiveness and in 1292 he joined the Servites. Devoted to Mary, he was a prayerful friar with wise advice. Opening a new Servite house in Forli, Peregrine become known as an effective preacher, confessor and for his ministry to the sick and poor. Over time, he became sick with a cancerous growth on his foot. Physicians recommended amputation and the night before his surgery he prayed for healing. The next morning, no traces of cancer were found. He was beatified in 1609 and canonized in 1726. Peregrine is the patron saint of cancer and illness.

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SIouxLAND CATHOLIC RADIO

Chalk artist draws Marian image during pledge drive, art festival

Marian chalk artist, Maria Loh, from Fargo, N.D., created a Madonna of the Streets chalk reproduction in conjunction with the recent Siouxland Catholic Radio Spring Pledge Drive and First Ever Youth Art Festival. The artist's appearance was funded by a Gilchrest Foundation grant.

The reproduction was created last week in front of the Sioux City radio station.

Loh discovered her passion for chalk art six years ago.

"I knew nothing about chalk until I picked up a box several summers ago and started doodling," Loh said, noting she soon discovered the rich history of street art and the Catholic tradition surrounding chalk art.

Chalking the streets is believed to have its beginnings in Europe between the 13th to 16th centuries. Madonnaris, or chalk artists, traveled to various festivals drawing the Madonna or religious icons using chalk and other materials.

"Madonna of the Streets" is a painting originally created by Roberto Ferruzzi of a girl and her brother. The painting made its first appearance at a Venice art exhibition and has become popularized as it appears to be an image of Mary, Mother of God, and has inspired service to the poor and those helping women and children.

The youth art festival drew 180 entries from Iowa and Nebraska.



Maria Loh of Fargo, N.D., works on the Marian image outside of the offices of Siouxland Catholic Radio on April 23. The chalk artist was brought in as part of the radio station's spring pledge drive that coincided with an art festival sponsored by the station. (Submitted photo)

Briar Cliff University names interim president

Briar Cliff University Board of Trustees announced recently that Patrick Jacobson-Schulte will serve as interim president, effective July 1, 2022.

Effective immediately, Jacobson-Schulte has been promoted to executive vice president to learn from and collaborate with Dr. Rachelle Keck, president, prior to her departure, following her acceptance as Grand View University's next president.

"Briar Cliff's Board of Trustees is passionate about the continued success and momentum of the university. This dedication is unwavering, as we are confident in the future of Briar Cliff University," said Mark Ward, Briar Cliff board chair and 2002 alumnus. "The board has been preparing for interim leadership and a presidential search, and we are grateful to Patrick for his continued leadership and guidance for this special place."



Originally from Lakeville, Minn., Jacobson-Schulte has diverse experience in finance and administration within educational institutions. Most recently, he served as Briar Cliff's vice president of finance and chief information officer, the executive director of finance and operations for Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916, vice president chief financial officer at Dakota County Technical College/Inver Hills Community College, vice president for finance and treasurer at The Sage Colleges, and served as adjunct faculty for nine years.

Jacobson-Schulte received his Bachelor of Arts, Magna Cum Laude, Economics; Master of Business Administration; and will be defending his dissertation for a doctor of business administration degree from St. Mary's University this month.

"Since joining Briar Cliff in June of 2021 as vice president of finance, Patrick has shown his dedication and passion for the university to thrive. He has strengthened the university's finances, strategized departmental excellence, projected financial growth opportunities and enhanced operations," added Ward. "His financial acumen, strategic approach and higher education knowledge has served the university well and will meet our presidential needs in the interim. As a practicing Catholic, Patrick embodies our Franciscan values with a mission to serve and inspire ethical world changers."

Beginning fall of 2022, Briar Cliff's Board of Trustees will launch a presidential search, with the objective to name the university's 12th president by July 2023.

New parishioners reflect on vigil service, future in church

FROM PAGE 1

Again, the two men had similar experience as it was the common faith that drew them in. Once they joined RCIA classes they learned a great deal about Catholicism and found the lessons to affirm their choice to join the church.

"I learned a lot of background and the reason why things are done a certain way. It makes a ton of sense why certain things are important," said Prell, who was raised Lutheran.

Coleman said after he began to attend the RCIA classes, he gained more understanding of what it meant to be Catholic and a deeper knowledge of its teachings.

Lauger said she will always be grateful for her RCIA group and sponsors, who walked with her on that part of her faith journey.

"They let me ask difficult questions in a safe environment, and each one contributed in such a meaningful way at just the moment I needed it. I really learned so much from that process and feel truly blessed for Father Dan's (Guenther) ability to share his wealth of knowledge in a way that painted such a beautiful picture of Catholicism," she said.

They were all very thoughtful as they selected their confirmation saints.

Lauger selected Anna the Prophetess for various reasons including the time the saint has spent at the temple in prayer. Anna had



Char Lauger, in center, following the Easter Vigil with her sponsors Traci Holm and Wendy Lensing.



Father Dan Rupp, pastor, addresses Marcus Prell, left, during the Easter Vigil.

also recognized Jesus when he was brought into the temple as the promised Redeemer and could not help but tell others about him.

For Prell, he chose St. Vincent de Paul as his saint because he is the patron of charitable giving.

Coleman selected St. Francis of Assisi as his confirmation saint.

"I felt like I really related to him with how he grew up and his rapid change into a totally different ideal of life," he said.

Vigil service

Coleman was one of about 40 new members of the diocesan church who received all three sacraments of initiation – baptism, confirmation and first Communion – at the Easter Vigil.

"It was very comforting and emotional for me to finally be baptized, confirmed and have my first Communion," he said. "They were all special in their own way, but if I had to pick one that stood out, I'd have to say the baptism because for me it was the base, the starting point and foundation of my faith."

Coleman called the vigil service "one of the most important moments of my life."

Both Lauger and Prell had been previously baptized, so were confirmed and received their first Communion at the vigil.

While the experience is hard for Lauger to put into words, she described it as "probably the most profound spiritual moment" of her life.

Prell acknowledged he was a little nervous about the service, having never attended an Easter Vigil and knowing there would be a large crowd.

"It was a unique experience to be part of



Alan Coleman is baptized.

that," he said, noting he looks forward to being able to share in regularly "in the Eucharist – to be a piece of the whole church now. I am also looking forward to sharing the gift of being Catholic with children down the road and being able to talk about the faith with anyone who might be interested."

The future

Now that Coleman has officially joined the church, he plans to explore and discern where he is being called to serve in the church.

Although Prell has completed the sacraments of initiation, he acknowledged "there is still work to be done every day to continue to improve. It feels really good to be able to share that and all the parts of the Catholic Church together."

Tying into his saint, the new Holstein parishioner said he hopes to be charitable with his time and is exploring various ministries to become involved with such as lecturing and serving as a catechist.

"I feel totally at home in the parish," said Prell. "I look forward to getting to know people better – there's a lot to look forward to."

Lauger, too, said she feels the Catholic Church is where she belongs and with so "so many wonderful people at St. Mary's, I will truly feel blessed to be part of their ministry."

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 Father Mark Stoll on the Diocesan Tribunal
 • Monday, May 9 and Saturday, May 14
 Jim Wharton on growing up Catholic
 Also listen at siouxlandcatholicradio.com/

Bill and Catherine Strouth celebrate 69th anniversary
 The family of Bill and Catherine Strouth are requesting a card shower in honor of their 69th wedding anniversary April 11. Their address is: 4939 220th Street Ashton, IA 51232. We wish them many more!
 – Love your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Divine Mercy Sunday

Celebrations throughout diocese focus on God's mercy in our lives

By **DAWN PROSSER**
Director of Communications

"Blood and water. Sangre y agua," Father David Esquiliano said as he opened his homily at the Divine Mercy celebration at the Cathedral Parish where he serves as pastor. The priest explained the rays in the Divine Mercy image of Christ that was revealed to St. Faustina Kowalska, represented blood and water.

The Divine Mercy image was displayed in several diocesan parishes as they offered celebrations April 24, the second Sunday of Easter. The more diverse parishes including All Saints in Le Mars and Cathedral Parish in Sioux City offered their celebrations in English and Spanish.

Trinity Heights Queen of Peace first organized a Divine Mercy prayer service in 2001 in Sioux City and the Divine Mercy movement grew over the years in the diocese. This year, celebrations were also held in Ashton, Hospers, Rock Valley, Storm Lake, Wesley, Willey and possibly others.

Divine Mercy Sunday has long been a popular devotional for the parishioners of Divine Mercy, St. Joseph Church in Wesley according to organizer Deb Trenary.

"The many churches within the new Divine Mercy Catholic Parish have offered Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration for many years," she explained. "We at St. Joseph in Wesley have offered this celebration since 2007 and have always had a wonderful turnout from those in and out of our community."

Trenary said the high level of participation in the Divine Mercy Sunday event in her parish is due to "the realization of Christ's continuing mercy and the very special graces we can receive on that day."

As the West Bend and Kossuth County Catholics have such a strong devotion to the Divine Mercy, when the parishes



Father Shane Deman, diocesan director of vocations and chaplain at Bishop Heelan High School, was the speaker for the Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration held at St. Michael Church, Holy Cross Parish. The event was organized by the Shrine of Trinity Heights Queen of Peace in Sioux City. (Lumen photo by Dawn Prosser)

"In addition to praying for countries and cities, we need to remember to pray for others by name as an act of mercy."

– Father Shane Deman

saw in the country of Poland," he said, asking those assembled if they ever prayed for their own parish, city, state or nation.

St. Barbara appeared to St. Faustina in 1937 and "recommended that I offer holy Communion for nine days on behalf of my own country and thus appease God's anger," Father Deman referenced St. Faustina's diary entry.

"In addition to praying for countries and cities, we need to remember to pray for others by name as an act of mercy," he said. "Always take a moment to offer a prayer for someone who is on your mind as an act of mercy."

Justice and mercy

At the Cathedral of the Epiphany celebration, Father Esquiliano said in his homily that the Gospel reading from John 19 illustrated the meaning behind the Divine Mercy image.

"Blood and water flowed from the side of Christ after he was pierced as we heard in the Gospel," he said. "Blood and water are also represented in the image of the Divine Mercy which our Lord revealed to Faustina, which we commemorate today."

The priest explained that the Lord told St. Faustina that "the pale ray stands for the water that makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the blood, which is the life of souls ... These two rays issued forth from the very depths of my tender mercy when my agonized heart was

opened by a lance on the cross."

"I would argue that the red ray which represents the blood also stands for justice," he pointed out. "He paid a price for our sins. He took up a punishment we deserved. It was his blood that paid the price for our offenses, not ours. His mercy, the Divine Mercy we celebrate today is a big deal. If he had not paid the price with his blood, we would not be sitting here now."

merged last year, the parishioners asked to use the name for their new parish.

"We have been honored to have our new parish named Divine Mercy Catholic Parish," Trenary said. "This is a reminder of discovering God's mercy within the entire Divine Mercy devotion and also a reminder of what our Lord expects from us – to share his mercy in our daily lives with others in whatever way we can."

Will Swanson, Divine Mercy organizer for the Storm Lake St. Mary's event said over 20 attended the nightly novenas with over 50 parishioners attending the April 24 holy hour. The parish had hosted Divine Mercy events for several years. Swanson

explained the local Knights of Columbus council assisted in the preparations for this year's event.

Nearly 200 attended the Cathedral celebration, which was the first Divine Mercy event for the parish. Father Esquiliano explained they wanted to be able to offer a Spanish/English bilingual option for the Sioux City parishioners. He said he was pleased with the attendance for the first year of the celebration at the Cathedral Parish.

A nearly full Holy Cross Parish, St. Michael Church in Sioux City was the host site of the Trinity Heights event this year. Father David Hemann, rector for the shrine and pastor of Holy Cross, led the singing of the Divine Mercy Chaplet as part of the service. Father Shane Deman, diocesan director of vocations, provided the homily.

Living the Divine Mercy

The homilist explained that the event organizers asked him to offer practical advice on living out the concept of the Divine Mercy on a daily basis, "How do I take the fruits of today's celebration and reenact them over and over again?"

St. Faustina wrote in her diary that she was instructed "to pray for the city of War-



Father Steven McCloud, pastor of Divine Mercy Parish, gives a talk during service in Wesley. (Submitted photo)

Father David Esquiliano and Deacon Jorge Fernandez kneel before the Blessed Sacrament during adoration as part of the bilingual Divine Mercy Celebration held at Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City. (Lumen photo by Dawn Prosser)



Church supports MOMS legislation debated now in appropriations committee of house

The Catholic Church in Iowa is advocating for more support for mothers before and after their babies are born.

More Options for Maternal Support, or MOMS, would ensure mothers and their babies have access to prenatal and postpartum care, get material needs met for items like car seats, diapers and formula, and have access to counseling and education services.

"This fills a void in our services statewide," said Sara Eide, associate director of the Iowa Catholic Conference. "There are agencies and resources for maternal health or families in need, but they are limited. This is a very targeted program to help pregnant women and new moms get the support needed to choose life and support her new baby."

The bill, which has passed the Iowa Senate and now is in the House, would be administered by a life-affirming nonprofit. Pregnancy resources centers would be able to apply for reimbursement for supplies and services provided to pregnant and new mothers.

A second part of the bill would expand Medicaid assistance for women from two months postpartum to 12 months. Data shows that at about six months postpartum, many women seek help for mental health issues. It's a very stressful time for any new mom, Eide said.

"It's just so important that we keep access to health-

care available to moms," she said. "With someone else checking in with the mom, the baby is more likely to get regular healthcare visits, too."

The MOMS model of helping families was originally created in 1996 in Pennsylvania and has since spread to 14 states including three that border Iowa: Minnesota, Missouri and Nebraska. The largest program, in Texas, served more than 90,000 women and more than 10,000 men in 2020.

"There's a strong prolife coalition in Iowa and we identified this as a critical need," said Eide. "It's something the prolife community should be focused on."

"We need to be proactive and encourage our legislators that this is the way to be prolife, to support women when they're vulnerable and don't see how they can manage the situation," she said.

"We've had strong support for this legislation from a wide array of stakeholders, and we are optimistic that the legislature will pass this and the governor will sign it," she added.

The bill is currently in the House Appropriations Committee.

To encourage legislators to support the MOMS bill, go to iowacatholicconference.org and click on Action Alert to contact legislators or reach out directly to lawmakers.

DAY OF REFLECTION AT THE GROTTTO



The recent Day of Prayer and Reflection at the Shrine of the Grotto of the Redemption kicked off with a tour of the grotto. The event hosted 33 participants and was led by Msgr. Ed Girres, retired diocesan priest, who is rector of the shrine and resides in West Bend. (Submitted photo)