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DACA recipient, mother left Mexico in search of a better life

Jessica Hernandez thanks God

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

Jessica Hernandez, 28, of St. Anthony Parish in Des Moines is grateful for the opportunities the United States has afforded her.

At just 7 years-old, Hernandez's mother left Mexico City with her and her grandmother, seeking a better life. As a single parent, she wasn't making enough to sustain the three of them. Violence was also escalating in the country.

The three took a flight in August 1999 to Des Moines, where they had family who had already immigrated to the United States.



Biological and religious Sisters Jeanie and Elaine Hagedorn remember meeting

Jessica's mother not long after she arrived in the United States at Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines, where they served.

"[Hernandez's mother] said, 'Sister, I want to do something for the church. I want to serve. What can I do?'" Sister Jeanie said.

Though she was new to this country and didn't have much, she already wanted to give back.

"Five dollars is all I have, but I want to do something," Sister Jeanie recalled her saying. "I was so touched by her simplicity and her willingness to give whatever she had."

Her selfless and giving personality is something they've seen her pass along to daughter Jessica, agreed Sisters Jeanie and Elaine Hagedorn. Jessica also gave freely of her time and contributed to the parish community.

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Weekend Masses resume in diocese

Catholics joyful about receiving the Eucharist, joining community of believers

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

In late June all parishes throughout the Diocese of Des Moines were given the green light to celebrate weekend Masses while practicing social distancing, sanitation between services and the use of face masks.

Larry Salvini, of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, was ecstatic about returning to Mass after several months away.

"I called and reserved myself a seat at the 7 a.m. Mass," Salvini said. "I'm going to guess there were maybe 80 people there."

"It just felt so good to go to Mass and receive the Eucharist," Salvini said. "Even though you couldn't socialize it was good to see familiar faces and priests and deacons and to be in the building."

Though he was apprehensive, his fears were soon put to rest.

"When you got to the church, somebody met you at the front door and was wearing a face shield, mask and gloves and they checked you off and took you to a numbered seat," Salvini continued. "You weren't close to anybody else. They really spread the people receiving Eucharist out. The whole experience really felt good for me."

Father Andrew Windschitl, pastor of St. Mary / Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart, said parishioners were eager to receive the sacraments and gave positive feedback after attending Mass.

"One person [said] they were impressed with how it was set



Nate and Keri Guerdet of St. Mary / Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart celebrated their daughter Ava's First Communion on June 20 after it was postponed for months due to COVID-19.

up," Father Windschitl said. "Thankfully, we have the social hall for overflow, which is appropriately spaced. For the first couple weeks we're not doing any singing and no communion line; I'm going through the pews that are va-

cant."

Nate and Keri Guerdet, parishioners at St. Mary / Holy Cross Parish in Elkhart, were excited about attending their first Mass in months for their

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Deacon of humble service dies

By Anne Marie Cox
Staff Writer

Deacon Dennis Kirlin was a humble man of service. In fact, he would have been uneasy about this article featuring him.



"In the end it would be really hard for my dad to read an article about himself," said his son, Dennis. "He would want to highlight the benefit he'd gotten from every person around him."

Deacon Kirlin, of St. Peter Church in Council Bluffs, died June 25 at age 87.

His life was all about serving others.

"His sense of service was what

drew him to the diaconate," said his son. "It wasn't the diaconate that put a sense of service in him. It let him express that well. I enjoy a lot of stories of him well before he was ordained of him serving people in or out of the church just because it was the right thing to do."

For example, early in his career he sold computers. He received an inquiry about computers for inmates at the prison in Leavenworth, Kansas. Deacon Kirlin talked to his boss, supplied computers to the prison, traveled on weekends to talk about computers with inmates and when a promising student completed his sentence and was released, Deacon Kirlin would do what he could to help the person find a job and get a fresh start, said Dennis.

Deacon Kirlin worked at Iowa Western

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Beloved pastor dies at age 60

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

Father Mathai Thomas Kunnel, beloved pastor, has passed away at the age of 60.

Born on Sept. 14, 1959, Father Kunnel grew up in Kottayam, India, a city in Kerala which has the highest Christian population of all the states in India.

He was ordained a priest in the Third Order of St. Francis in 1988, and served in India for 13 years before he was sent by his superior to the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis as a missionary. His first assignment was as an associate pastor at The Church of the Epiphany, at that time the largest parish in the archdiocese.

The pastor he worked under at that time, Father Pat Kennedy, recalled how Father Kunnel adapted to his first as-

signment in the United States with grace and humility. "Tom had a great sense of humor, he was a very good man, a great preacher."

Father Kennedy especially remembered Father Kunnel's great generosity.

"The place where we were at was not the easiest place, but he was always supportive," he said. "When I was on sabbatical, I visited him at home in India and he treated me like a king. Hospitality was part of who he was... There are a lot of people who are going to miss him."

It was in the Twin Cities where he met Bishop Richard Pates, then an auxiliary in that archdiocese. Bishop Pates recalled how Fa-



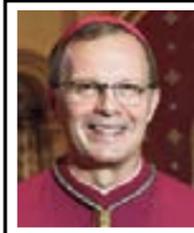
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Flats, Furloughs and Sabbath Rest

In early July I finally set out on the Great Western Trail for what I hoped would be a bike ride down to Martensdale and back. I sailed along for the first ten miles, but then my back tire flatted and so I pulled over to change the tube. I'm not the most adept at bike maintenance, and sure enough, I pinched the tube while installing it, and so was quite receptive to the friendly group that stopped to lend a hand and get me back on the road. Ten more miles, two more flat tires—the last one coming after I changed the rear tube for the third time and turned my bike upright, only to have the front tire hiss at me without even mounting the bike. “God, this is not funny!”

Thank goodness for the Good Samaritan who gave me one last tube. I gave up on destination Martensdale, turned around and headed home, fretting and fixated for the whole twenty miles on my bike's condition. I never was able to get into the contemplative “zone,” where bodily rhythm liberates the mind and senses to behold the green undulating fields and majestic tunnel of trees surrounding me—the true joy of cycling in Iowa, with or without RAGBRAI.

Even though we are free once again to celebrate Mass and other sacraments in common, and though we have been blessed with another sundrenched Iowa summer, many of us are finding it hard to find our “zone” of measured activity, freedom, and refreshment. Pandemic-induced fears, political



By
Bishop
William
Joensen

and social tensions, and other interior factors can thwart our ability to simply breathe, release our cares, and be wholly present before God and the beautiful world he has created. Jesus promises us that if we come to him and assume his yoke, we will find rest for ourselves (Matthew 11:29). Yet many of us struggle with a yoke we have partially pulled down upon ourselves, a pinched life that prevents us from truly beholding what is before us. While we are made in God's image, we do not automatically imitate God's contemplative capacity to find repose in what he has done, to acclaim the goodness of what surrounds us, and to habitually abide—even for a few minutes, let alone for 24 hours, in this Sabbath state of soul.

Jesus' invitation to be “yoked” with him is an offer to experience real freedom, to let the frustrations and fears that oppress us—stirred by our vulnerabilities, the prospect of illness and even death—to recede and no longer claim our heart as an “occupied zone.” When the “eyes of the heart” (cf. Ephesians 1:18) gaze toward God, our physical flesh is drawn into a more holistic union of trust and self-offering that sees

all things according to God's perspective. God's repose becomes our own—a beatitude moment that by grace we become more habitually able to extend. We develop an enduring contemplative posture that weathers the distractions and setbacks life tosses our way.

For two weeks of July, in a sacrificial spirit of solidarity with those who are experiencing setbacks caused by the pandemic, and in the interest of good stewardship, staff at the Diocese of Des Moines Pastoral Center are on a two-week furlough where they are to refrain from work. Outsiders might bemusedly see this as an additional two weeks of vacation, but given the servant hearts of our employees and default tendency to check email and keep abreast of work before it piles up, we know that any ability to actually rest and be refreshed will be an intentional affair. It will require discipline and practical steps to resist our own acquired natures. Fr. Donald Hagerty observes, “Whereas in former times, distraction was a common difficulty in the struggle to give full concentration to prayer or work, now it has become a kind of ‘companion presence’ in many lives. . . . It is as though a compulsive need for distraction had become a new drug-resistant disease of the mind, and nothing could tame or halt it.” The unconscious attachment to distraction becomes an impediment to cultivating a genuine spirituality, let alone finding Sabbath rest for oneself. Communication

and access to information, says Hagerty, assume “an aggressive mode when outside of work they preoccupy our mind to excess, insisting on attention, demanding to be used.”

Hagerty's proposed remedy is no surprise: we need to shut down our devices at intervals if we are to experience the light of God's self-disclosure and achieve insight into the world and ourselves. “Training ourselves in a taste for the silent hour in solitude. . . must become a cultivated choice.”

Does this strike us as bleak advice more likely to squelch our joy and peace rather than restore these precious gifts? Perhaps Pope Francis' counsel is more upbeat, appealing: we must link our love and appreciation for nature with our living Eucharistic faith. On this five-year anniversary of his encyclical, *Laudato Si' / 'On Care for our Common Home,'* in Chapter VI the Holy Father commends a contemplative ride in the world around us: “There is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dew-drop, in a poor person's face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things” (n. 233). The yo-yo outer-inner movement and back again expands our horizons and places all earthly cares in proper perspective. We can exhale our pent-up tensions and breathe in the Spirit that pervades all God's handiwork.

Unlike those who think they can casually write themselves a summer pass from sacraments and take a holiday from practicing their faith, Pope Francis begs to differ; he maintains, “It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation.” Jesus enters the material world and infuses his presence in the Eucharist; it becomes the center of the universe and molten core of life and love, whether it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church or in a grand cathedral. “The Eucharist joins heaven and earth”; it is “also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation” (n. 236).

Simply stated, when we are fueled by the Eucharist, our ability to find rest and refreshment, to place fears back in the box where they belong, never runs flat. We are free to slip beyond ourselves and our frustrations, to find nature—including our own human nature—as friendly, hospitable, waiting to be discovered and cherished anew. We overcome the temptation to view nature as some antagonistic opponent God visits upon us like some sick joke leaving us stranded at the side of life's road. Dread of the unexpected melts away in the face of our childlike anticipation to behold the treasures God is poised to present to us. Whether it's Sunday or any other day of the week, our habitual faith attitude beckons: Let's ride!

Ponchaduras, Suspensiones y Descanso Sabático

A inicios de julio pude por fin salir a la Gran Pista del Oeste hacia lo que esperaba iba a ser una rodada en bicicleta hasta Martensdale y de regreso. Pedaleé las primeras diez millas y mi llanta trasera se pinchó por lo que tuve que detenerme a cambiar la cámara. No soy muy habilidoso en el mantenimiento de las bicicletas y, por supuesto, pinché la cámara cuando la estaba instalando, por lo que acepté con gran agrado la

ayuda que me ofreció un amable grupo para que pudiera regresar a mi trayecto. Diez millas después, dos ponchaduras más — la última sucedió luego de haber cambiado la cámara trasera y enderezar mi bicicleta, solo para escuchar la llanta delantera silbar antes de que pudiera subirme a ella. “¡Dios, esto no es gracioso!”

Gracias a Dios por el Buen Samaritano que me dio una última cámara. Renuncié a mi destino de Martensdale, me di la vuelta y regresé a casa, consternado y enfocado en la condición de mi bicicleta por las veinte millas de mi trayecto. Nunca pude entrar en la “zona” contemplativa, en donde el ritmo corporal libera la mente y los sentidos frente a los verdes y ondulantes campos y túneles de árboles que me rodean — el verdadero gozo de andar en bicicleta en Iowa, con o sin RAGBRAI.

Aunque nuevamente tenemos la libertad de celebrar la Misa y los demás sacramentos en comunidad, y aunque hemos tenido la bendición de otro verano soleado de Iowa, muchos de nosotros nos hemos podido encontrar nuestra “zona” de actividad mesurada, libertad y de alivio. Los miedos inducidos por la pandemia, las tensiones políticas y sociales, y otros factores interiores pueden entorpecer nuestra capacidad de simplemente respirar, deshacernos de nuestras preocupaciones, y estar plenamente en presencia de Dios y del maravilloso mundo que ha creado. Jesús nos promete que, si venimos a él y tomamos su yugo, él nos concederá reposo (Mateo 11:29). Pero muchos de nosotros luchamos contra un yugo que nos hemos puesto en nosotros mismos, una vida presionada que nos previene de observar plenamente lo que tenemos frente a nosotros. Aunque estamos hechos a la imagen de Dios, no imitamos automáticamente la capacidad contemplativa de Dios para encontrar reposos en lo que ha hecho, para aclamar todo lo bueno que nos rodea y habitual-

mente cumplir — aunque sea por unos minutos, menos aún por 24 horas, en este estado Sabático del alma.

La invitación de Jesús a cargar con “su yugo” es una oferta de vivir la verdadera libertad, de dejar las frustraciones y temores que nos oprimen — alentados por nuestras vulnerabilidades, la idea de enfermarnos o incluso de morir — a retroceder y no considerar nuestros corazones como “espacios ocupados.” Cuando los “ojos del corazón” (cf. Efesios 1:18) se dirigen hacia Dios, nuestra carne física se dirige hacia una unión de confianza más holística y de mayor entrega propia que ve todas las cosas de acuerdo con la perspectiva de Dios. La respuesta de Dios se convierte en la nuestra — un momento de beatitud que por la gracia podemos ofrecer más habitualmente. Desarrollamos una postura contemplativa duradera que tolera las distracciones y los obstáculos que nos pone la vida en nuestros caminos.

Durante dos semanas en el mes de julio, en un espíritu de sacrificio y solidaridad con aquellos que están sufriendo estragos por la pandemia, y con un interés de buena administración, el personal del Centro Pastoral de la Diócesis de Des Moines estará en una suspensión de dos semanas en donde abstenerse de trabajar. Desde el exterior podría verse esto simplemente como dos semanas adicionales de vacaciones, pero debido a los corazones serviciales de nuestros empleados y a su tendencia natural a revisar sus correos electrónicos y mantenerse al tanto del trabajo antes de que se acumule, sabemos que cualquier habilidad de descansar verdaderamente y renovarse va a ser una tarea intencional. Va a requerir de disciplina y de pasos prácticos para resistir sus propias naturalezas. El Padre Donald Hagerty observa, “Considerando que, en tiempos anteriores, la distracción era una dificultad común en la batalla de ofrecer una plena

concentración en la oración o en el trabajo, ahora se ha convertido en un tipo de ‘compañía presencial’ en muchas vidas. . . . Es como si la necesidad compulsiva de distraerse se hubiese convertido en una enfermedad resistente a los medicamentos y que nada puede calmarla o detenerla.” El inconsciente apego a la distracción se convierte en un impedimento para cultivar una genuina espiritualidad, menos aún encontrar el reposo Sabático para uno mismo. La comunicación y el acceso a la información, dice Hagerty, asumen “un modo agresivo cuando se está fuera del trabajo y preocupan sus mentes excesivamente, insistiendo en la atención y exigiendo que se le utilice.”

El remedio que propone Hagerty no nos sorprende: necesitamos apagar nuestros dispositivos en intervalos si es que queremos sentir la luz de la presencia misma de Dios y lograr observar verdaderamente el mundo y a nosotros mismos. “El entrenarnos a nosotros mismos en el sabor del silencio de una hora en soledad. . . debe convertirse en una opción cultivada.”

¿Nos suena esto como un consejo deprimente que más parece querer reprimir nuestro gozo y nuestra paz en vez de tratar de restaurar estos preciosos dones? Tal vez el consejo del Papa Francisco sea de mayor ánimo y consuelo: debemos conectar nuestro amor y aprecio por la naturaleza con nuestra fe viva en la Eucaristía. En este quinto aniversario de su encíclica ‘Laudato Si’ / ‘Sobre El Cuidado de la Casa Común,’ en el Capítulo IV el Santo Padre recomienda un paseo contemplativo en el mundo a nuestro alrededor: “hay mística en una hoja, en un camino, en el rocío, en el rostro del pobre. El ideal no es sólo pasar de lo exterior a lo interior para descubrir la acción de Dios en el alma, sino también llegar a encontrarlo en todas las cosas” (n. 233). El movimiento exterior a interior y una vez más del yo-yo expanden nuestros horizontes y pone todas nuestras preocupaciones ter-

renales en su apropiada perspectiva. Podemos exhalar esas tensiones que tenemos embotelladas y aspirar el Espíritu que impregna todas las obras de Dios.

A diferencia de aquellos que piensan que pueden casualmente darse a sí mismos vacaciones veraniegas de los sacramentos y un descanso en la práctica de su fe, el Papa Francisco se atreve a oponerse, declarando, “Es en la Eucaristía en que todo lo que se ha creado encuentra su mayor exaltación.” Jesús entra en el material del mundo e infunde su presencia en la Eucaristía, se convierte en el centro del universo y núcleo ardiente de vida y de amor, ya sea que se celebre en el humilde altar de una iglesia rural o en una grandiosa catedral. “La Eucaristía es el cielo y la tierra,” es “también una fuente de luz y de motivación en nuestras preocupaciones por el medio ambiente, llevándonos a ser custodios de toda la creación” (n. 236).

Dicho de forma sencilla, cuando nos estimula la Eucaristía, nuestra capacidad de descansar y renovarnos, de poner nuestros temores de vuelta en la caja en donde pertenecen, nunca se poncha. Tenemos la libertad de escurrirnos más allá de nosotros mismos y de nuestras frustraciones, para encontrar la naturaleza — incluso nuestra propia naturaleza humana — como algo amigable, hospitalario, esperando a ser nuevamente descubierta y apreciada. Superamos la tentación de ver la naturaleza como a un Dios antagonista y opositor que nos visita como una mala broma y que nos deja tirados a un lado del camino de la vida. El temor a lo inesperado se desvanece cuando enfrentamos nuestra anticipación como de un niño de contemplar los tesoros que Dios desea poner ante nosotros. Ya sea en un domingo o cualquier día de la semana, nuestra habitual actitud de fe nos dice: ¡Salgamos a pasear!

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Dental office gives free care to hundreds

By Stanley Asjes
Staff Writer

Despite all the negative news these days, Catholics across the diocese are still doing great things for others.

Dr. David Jones joined the Catholic Church in 2004 and is now a member of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs.

Along with the other dentists and staff at Omni Dental in Council Bluffs, he has been giving free dental care to hundreds of uninsured and low-income children in the Council Bluffs area.

For the past 12 years, Omni Dental has been offering free dental care through the "Give Kids a Smile" program, which unites several dental practices across Council Bluffs for one day a year to bring free dental care to kids in need.

Caring for kids in need doesn't end there, said Jones.

"Generally, from there we'll take a case or two—one or two of those kids—and then often times when we see them, they need a lot of work, so what we end up doing is taking them in for a follow up and we continue to see them," he said.

During the six weeks they were completely closed due to the coronavirus, the practice was still able to offer free service to a few uninsured or underinsured patients in dire need.

Most recently, the dental practice has expanded its charitable work with "Omni Cares," a program which offers free dental services to low-income adults a couple of days during the year.

Despite the fears and slowdowns of the coronavirus, their charitable dental work for low-income families has con-

tinued to expand.

Omni Dental is planning to expand starting in July.

"We're going to have the team nominate patients that we've seen in our practice who need treatment, but can't necessarily afford it," said Jones.

"We'll choose one of those patients per quarter and we'll do the treatment for them."

The charitable work is a win-win: Not only is it good for the community, but also keeps things positive for the whole staff, said Jones.

Father Tom Thakadipuram, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish, said Dr. Jones is active in the parish, serving on the Finance Council and as a lector. "He's a very dedicated Catholic," said Father Thakadipuram.

Omni Dental serves the Council Bluffs area through seven partners at five practices.



Dr. David Jones (left) and dental hygienist Jessica Cook (right) with a patient during the 2018 Give Kids a Smile campaign.

DACA recipient found better life in U.S.

Continued from page 1

It wasn't until high school that Hernandez realized her situation was very different from her peers.

"I was wanting to work or get into a study abroad program or take a trip with the marine biology class in high school," she said. "And because I didn't have a social security number, it was the first notion that my legal status prevented me from doing things [others could do]."

After graduating from Lincoln High School in 2009, Hernandez went to Iowa State University for four years on a full ride scholarship from Science Bound – a program created to help encourage people of color in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields.

It was during her time in college that President Barack Obama introduced DACA, otherwise known as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – providing the nearly 700,000 "dreamers" legal status with a work permit and social security number. Though still considered illegal immigrants, DACA protected them from deportation and allowed them to legally work in this country.

Hernandez's cousin called her the day DACA became a reality.

"I didn't have access to news or radio because we were out in the field [doing college research]...," Hernandez said. "He said, 'Yes, we're able to work now and have a social security number.' And I just remember bawling and crying out of happiness."

She graduated from ISU with a degree in microbiology in 2014 and began working in a nutritional analysis center immediately after college. But her work felt somewhat empty, and she felt called to something more.

It was another religious, Sister Blanca Contreras, who came to Des Moines with the Catholic Extension Sisters Exchange Program from Mexico, who told Hernandez about the newly created position at the Diocese of Des Moines, the coordinator of Hispanic Youth Ministry. Sister Blanca encouraged her to apply.

Hernandez got the job and has been actively ministering to young Hispanics throughout the diocese since January 2016.

Though DACA provides legal working status to young Hispanics, anxieties remain, as they renew their work permit every two years.

"There's always this sense of doubt about whether it's going to go through," she said.

In 2019 and 2020,

DACA recipients were on edge awaiting the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on whether the Administration could end the program. If the program was eliminated, this would have given immigration services the authority to deport Hernandez and hundreds of thousands of others.

On June 18, the Supreme Court ruled that the DACA program would stay in place for now, although there are news reports the current administration will again start the process to eliminate it.

Hernandez is extremely grateful she can continue to do God's work in the Diocese of Des Moines.

In fact, she is currently in graduate school part time, earning her master's degree in theology and pastoral ministry from Boston College. Her education is paid for entirely by a grant through Catholic Extension. She hopes to graduate in May 2021 and plans to use her knowledge and skills to continue providing ministry, outreach and support.

"Our faith always calls us to love our neighbor and be welcoming to our neighbor – no matter their background," Hernandez said. "You still have to show the face of Christ."

Bishops: Consider contacting senators in support of DACA

By Mayra Moriel de Banuelos
Contributing Writer

Last month about 5,500 young adults from Iowa who are under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) experienced anxiety and fear as they waited for the U.S. Supreme Court's decision that could have ended the program.

DACA is an immigration policy launched in 2012 by the Obama Administration calling for deferred action for certain undocumented young people who came to the United States as children. This status provides them with a temporary permit to live and work in the United States.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled DACA can continue, pointing to administrative omissions when President Trump ordered the suspension of the program.

However, this protection for DACA recipients, also known as dreamers, is temporary. The president can terminate the program by following a specific procedure more carefully.

Iowa's Catholic bishops in the Iowa Catholic Conference called on the U.S. Senate to pass legislation to

protect young people affected by DACA.

Last year in June, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Dream and Promise Act, H.R. 6. This law would give those that today benefit by the DACA program legal certainty with regards to their immigration status and a path to citizenship. The Senate introduced a similar bill (S. 874) in March of 2019 but it has been stuck with no action at the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Both Iowa Senators Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst are members of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate. They both have the opportunity to become cosponsors and promote the passing of the bill.

"The dignity of every human being, particularly that of our children and youth, must be protected," the bishops said in a July 6 statement. "We call upon Congress, particularly the Senate, to protect these young people in law, and failing that, for the president to continue the DACA program."

Mayra Moriel de Banuelos is the diocesan coordinator of Hispanic Ministry

Bishops ask president to commute sentence

Iowa's four Catholic bishops – Dubuque Archbishop Michael Jackels, Sioux City Bishop R. Walker Nickless, Davenport Bishop Thomas Zinkula and Des Moines Bishop William Joensen – asked President Donald Trump to commute the federal death sentence of Iowan Dustin Honken and others related to the 2004 murder of five people to life in prison without the possibility of parole. In doing so, the government could punish the offenders and defend the common good.

"It is our concern that the death penalty contributes to a growing disrespect for the sa-

credness of all human life," they wrote through the Iowa Catholic Conference in a July 1 letter. "We believe that state-sanctioned killing would not deter or end violence, but instead perpetuate a cycle of violence. We oppose the death penalty to follow example of Jesus, who both taught and practiced the forgiveness of injustice."

Attorney General William Barr had announced last year the federal government was reinstating the federal death penalty. As of press time, Honken was scheduled to be executed in July.

Two-week furlough begins

Diocesan staff of the Catholic Pastoral Center will be on furlough July 11-24 to exercise prudent financial stewardship and stand in solidarity with parishes and schools, which are sacrificing due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

During the furlough, the entire diocesan staff at the Cath-

olic Pastoral Center, with only a few exceptions, will be unable to work or able to work only in response to essential tasks and emergencies. Out of office email and phone messaging will provide information on how to receive support.

Neither Catholic Charities nor the Catholic Tuition

Organization staff will be on the furlough (Catholic Charities continues to serve clients through the pandemic); and the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa will have a partial furlough meaning they will accept calls and voicemails to the main number or to Sue McEntee the executive director.

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Contact Kelly at kcollins@dmdiocese.org to learn more.

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

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

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Around the Diocese

September 2020

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mation contact Moe Kauzlarich at 515-778-3596 or www.fopwalk.org/event/2497.

Note from the editor: We are accepting calendar events again. Please send the name of the event, date, cost and contact information to communications@dmdiocese.org.

Consejero sobre Asistencia de Víctimas

El Consejero sobre Asistencia de Víctimas es un empleado de Polk County Victim Services. Ella ayuda a víctimas de abuso sexual por parte del clero durante el proceso de la queja y buscando servicios de apoyo y consejería. Pueden comunicarse al 515-286-2028 o en advocate@dmdiocese.org.

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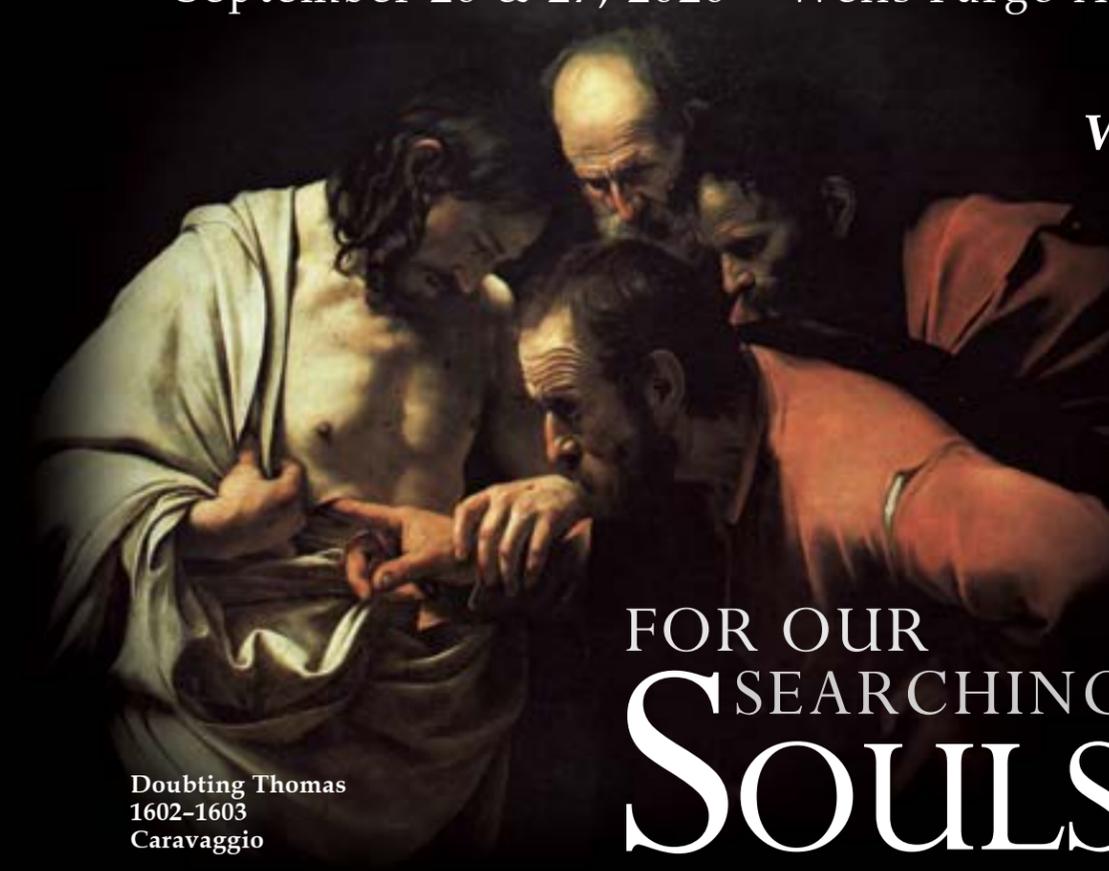
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Three sisters have passed away

On June 14, three Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, based in Dubuque, Iowa died.

Sister Carolyn (Lester) Farrell was born in Des Moines (Holy Trinity Parish) on Nov. 2, 1934, the oldest of seven children. She professed her final vows in 1961.

Sister Farrell dedicated her life to education, serving schools in Davenport, Chicago and Dubuque. While she was the director of continuing education at Clarke University, she served on the Dubuque City Council and as mayor in 1980. She was a regional representative for her congregation, interim president of Mundelein College, associate vice president at Loyola University, founding director of the Gannon Center for women and Leadership, director of the Roberta Kuhn Center in Dubuque



and served as a member of the board of trustees at Clarke University. In retirement, she continued to advocate for women and justice.

At her visitation, fellow BVM Sister Betty Voss shared through her tears how “Carolyn was not a hugger, but she loved with a huge, compassionate, humble heart, a wise and caring heart. That was the underpinning of all her service, all her work, all the struggles for justice that she engaged in, and everything she did. All this emanated from that huge loving heart.”

Sister Kathleen Marie Carr was born in Seattle on Feb. 19, 1947, and professed her final vows in the congregation in 1974. She served across the West and Midwest, including a post at Drake University from 1984 to 1987. Fellow BVM Sister Mary Diane Forster, remem-



bered Sister Carr for her “passion, devotion, and joy.”

Sister Carr died in Mercy Hospital, Dubuque, at the age of 73.

Sister Dorothy (Agnes Cecile) Feehan was born in Oak Park, Illinois on Feb. 15, 1927, and took her final vows as a BVM sister in 1952.

Sister Feehan worked at Clarke University, served as an elementary teacher in Fort Dodge, Sioux City, and Chicago, and served as a principle and spiritual director in Missoula, Montana.

At Sister Dorothy’s visitation, her niece Barbara said, “Aunt Dot will always be a light in our lives. She will continue to teach us to be filled with joy and see things from our heart as she did.”

Sister Feehan passed away at the age of 93.



Sister celebrates 75th jubilee

Mercy Sister Karen Yarkosky is celebrating 75 years of religious life.

Born and raised in Albia, Iowa as one of eight children, she graduated from high school in 1943 and moved to Des Moines where she took a job with an insurance company.

She lived at St. Catherine Hall, where she first felt a calling to religious life.

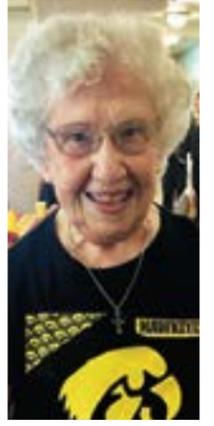
In 1945 Sister Karen entered the Mercy novitiate, Mt. Loreto in Council Bluffs. She spent 38 years as a school teacher and in 1986 she was approached by her friends, Sister Martina Woulfe and Sister Lillian Keller, to consider joining them at Bishop Drumm.

She spent 22 years at Bishop Drumm until her retirement in 2008.

Sister Karen reflected on her 75 years with the Sisters

of Mercy: “I am grateful to my merciful and loving God, who called me to be of service to others as a Sister of Mercy. I thank my family, friends and Mercy community who have journeyed with me during these happy and rewarding 75 Mercy years.”

Bishop Drumm Retirement Center invites all to “show-er” Sister Karen with cards to thank and congratulate her on 75 years of ministry. Cards may be sent to 5921 Winwood Drive, Apt 212, Johnston, IA 50131.



Beloved pastor dies at age 60

Continued from page 1

ther Kunnel was a great scholar and pastor.

“He formed a great community wherever he went. He was very outgoing, very positive,” said Bishop Pates, adding he especially remembered the Rural Life Day events which Father Kunnel would organize.

Father Tom Thakadipuram, a longtime friend of Father Kunnel, served his time as a transitional deacon in Father Kunnel’s

home parish. They both ended up in the Twin Cities.

“He was very dedicated to his parish, and was always very creative,” said Father Thakadipuram. He described how Father Kunnel would take parishioners with him on trips back to India to experience the Christian culture and hospitality there.

Father Thakadipuram also shared how his friend grew

up in a farming family in India, and always felt at home in rural Iowa. “He was very close to the earth and nature.”

Father Kunnel came to the Diocese of Des Moines in 2011 and served as pastor at St. Mary Parish in Red Oak and St. Patrick Parish in Imogene. In 2017, he became pastor of three parishes: St. Mary in Guthrie Center, St. Patrick in Bayard and St. Cecilia in Panora.

Betty Donahey, a parishoner of St. Cecilia, was present when he received the bad

health news in June 2019, and along with Maureen Lubeck and Mary Dorsett was one of a trio of women who helped to care for Father Kunnel during his subsequent battle with cancer.

Donahey recalled how he took time every day during the week to say Mass and visit the patients at St. Gregory Recovery Center, a rehab center for people struggling with substance abuse.

Although things seemed to be improving and he was able to return to India to see

his family earlier this year, the cancer re-surfed in April. Eventually, Donahey and the other volunteers were no longer able to provide care for Father Kunnel, and he moved to Kavanagh House in Des Moines, where he passed away on the evening of June 24.

His funeral Mass was held at St. Ambrose Cathedral on June 29, and can be viewed online at caldwellparrish.com.



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Weekend Masses resume



Photo by Anne Marie Cox

Joseph Jones and Paul Dupey assist parishioners at St. Ambrose Cathedral as they enter for Mass on July 5.



Father Tom Thakadipuram of Corpus Christi Parish in Council Bluffs at a recent First Communion.

Continued from page 1

daughter Ava's First Communion, which was held June 20 after being postponed.

"Our reaction to the postponement paled in comparison to her reaction and disappointment," Nate said. "We explained how everything was on hold and provided her the example of how even attending the Mass was on hold."

Ava attends Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program, where the presence of Christ is well explained, and so she really understood what she was missing, Nate added.

The Guerdets are grateful they were able to celebrate the sacrament in such uncertain times.

"Ava herself said, 'It was incredible to hold Jesus' and have him a part of her in this way,'" Nate concluded.

John Mertes, director of faith formation at Holy Trinity Parish in Des Moines, said they are offering Vacation Bible School virtually this year to help foster a sense of community.

"We wanted to offer something to our families where they could still participate," Mertes said.

Families signed up

in advance and will pick up crafts, activities and T-shirts at the school. They'll conclude the week with the traditional picnic while practicing social distancing and wearing masks.

Father James Ahenkora, pastoral administrator of St. Patrick Parish in Council Bluffs, said they are averaging about 65 people per weekend Mass.

"It's been good," Father Ahenkora said. "The enthusiasm has been good and we continue with the online streaming of our 9 a.m. Mass, and that has also been good."

Seeing the joy in people's faces has been very a long time coming.

"Of course, for us priests, we are always happy when we see our parishioners and I was always looking forward to that," Father Ahenkora said.

The first of many First Communion Masses was held the weekend of July 11/12; confirmations will be in September.

He also asks for continued prayers for the pastor, Father Glenn Wilwerding, who is "doing quite well and making improvements."

"We pray for him at every Mass," Father Ahenkora said.

Deacon of humble services dies

Continued from page 1

Community College for more than 30 years in several roles including chair of information technology and dean of business/information technology. He was married to Pat and together they raised Dennis and Ann.

Deacon Kirlin and Pat joined others on a Cursillo retreat in the late 1960s that left them wanting more.

"We met weekly as far as the Cursillo movement," said longtime friend, Deacon Larry Knotek. "We kind of decided maybe we should be doing something else."

At about the same time, Bishop Maurice Dingman was sharing with diocesan priests a document from Pope Paul VI restoring the permanent diaconate, which hadn't existed in the Catholic Church

for more than 1,000 years.

Deacon Kirlin, Deacon Knotek and a few others from the Council Bluffs area were in the first group to be ordained as permanent deacons serving the Diocese of Des Moines.

In a 2017 story in The Catholic Mirror about the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the diaconate, Deacon Kirlin recalled his ordination on June 7, 1972 at Memorial Auditorium in Harlan. The men were ordained in business suits. The stoles were designed by one of the deacon candidates, said Dennis.

After many years of serving parishioners, Deacon Kirlin said the best part was bringing the Eucharist to the homebound and nursing homes.

"The closeness that people sense, the presence of Christ, I met a few saints doing this," he had said.

The deacon's son described his father as the fuel

behind getting projects done, a purposeful man who did things with a sense of levity and humor.

Deacon Kirlin began a communion service on Mondays and led Stations of the Cross during Lent.

He supported other leaders in the church. Dennis remembered Father Chuck Kottas told him that his father always supported his ministry as a pastor. And Deacon Kirlin supported Deacon Scott Brooks, serving as a mentor.

"He was one of the most humble persons I'll ever know. My wife and I always said if we ever had to come back to be somebody else, it would be Pat and Dennis. There was so much compassion, so much love," said Deacon Brooks. "He'll be missed in my heart."

Deacon Kirlin's funeral was June 29 at St. Peter Church in Council Bluffs.

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Patriotism was added to the Order's principles in 1900, based on the idea that Knights are loyal to both God and country. It is important, particularly in this day and age, that our Councils encourage active Catholic citizenship and foster the spirit of patriotism in our members and the community at large.

The Knights of Columbus has representatives at almost every Veterans Affairs medical clinic in the United States, where they recruit and manage K of C volunteers in developing activities and programs that aid patients' most essential needs.

The Knights have also supported priests, in particular those who go on to serve as military chaplains. Through a special scholarship program, the Knights helped fund the education of seminarians preparing to become Catholic chaplains in the U.S. Armed Forces.

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