

THE REGISTER

salinadiocese.org

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALINA

December 18, 2020

Merry Christmas, from Bishop Vincke

By Bishop Jerry Vincke

2020. What a year! We won't soon forget it. It's been a difficult and challenging year for many.

In the midst of this comes the greatest of news as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Jesus is saving us from something much more dangerous and harmful than COVID-19 — sin and death. God has provided the remedy, the medicine, the vaccine — in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Why does God do this? Why does God come to us? Why does God desire to save us? Because he loves us. It's as simple as that.

Jesus can and wills to redeem every situation in our life. God has entered our humanity. He was born in a smelly, messy manger to show us that there is no place in our life that God is afraid to go. Jesus entered our humanity to restore the struggles and setbacks in our life.

If we are afraid of the future, Jesus tells us, "I am with you always." If we are filled with sadness over what is happening in the world, Jesus tells us, "I have overcome the world. I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly." If we are worn down from COVID, Jesus tells us, "Come to me, you who are weary and labored, and I will give you rest." If we fear death, Jesus proclaims, "I am the resurrection and the life. If we are angry over things happening in our world, Jesus says, "Peace be with you." If we are concerned about the divisions in our country, we can hear Jesus say to us, "Join me in praying that they all may be one."

Who knows what 2021 will bring? The most important and the only certainty that we have is that God is with us and for us. May we surrender and trust in his love for us. Merry Christmas, everyone!

+ Gerald J. Vincke

The "Adoration of the Shepherds" is pictured in this painting by Italian artist Guido Reni.

CNS via Bridgeman Images



#iGive Catholic

Two organizations from the Salina Diocese place in the top 25 during campaign.

Page 2



Ministry amid pandemic

Priests, parishes, principals adjust.

Pages 5-8



Church Christmas pictures

Parishes across the Salina Diocese are invited to submit photos of the church decorated for Christmas.

The photos will be

shared on the diocese's Facebook page throughout the Octave of Christmas.

Email photos to matea.gregg@salinadiocese.org by Dec. 30.

More than \$492,500 raised during #iGiveCatholic

By Karen Bonar
The Register

SALINA — For the third consecutive year, donations throughout the Salina Diocese continued to increase on #GivingTuesday during the #iGiveCatholic campaign.

This year, 826 donors gave more than \$492,500 to 32 ministries across the diocese.

"The 2020 #iGive Catholic campaign was blessed to receive the generosity of so many faithful," said Katie Greenwood, the annual gifts and event coordinator for the diocese. "It is the continued kindness and support of our donors that helps our Catholic faith continue to grow and flourish in every part of our diocese."

As in 2019, the Salina Diocese had several organizations atop the national leaderboard. Two Manhattan organizations were in the top 25 — Manhattan Catholic Schools (No. 8) and St. Thomas More Parish (No. 23).

"It wasn't a surprise to us at #iGiveCatholic that the Salina Diocese did so well, as we know the hard work, dedication and amazing people behind the local effort," said Julie Kenny, the national program director at #iGiveCatholic, which is based in New Orleans.

The #iGiveCatholic campaign was founded in 2015 in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Nationally this year, more than \$12.6 million was raised in 40 (arch)dioceses and the National Catholic Education Association across the country.

This year, Manhattan Catholic Schools ranked No. 8 nationally with funds raised, netting nearly \$129,000. Comparatively, in 2019, it raised \$92,000 on #GivingTuesday.

"I'm absolutely humbled that our school here in Manhattan, Kan. is number eight out of 1,667 organizations," said Ashley O'Haver, the advancement director for MCS. "To be No. 1 in the diocese ... it's mind-blowing."

Contributing to the money raised were three pools of matching money. Phil Howe set up a \$60,000 match for organizations in Manhattan, matching \$1 for \$1 up to \$1,000 per donor. 24/7 Travel stores offered a \$1 for \$1 for Catholic education, with a \$1,000 per donor and \$5,000 per school cap. The final matching pool was a \$30,000, 50 cents to \$1 pool exclusive to MCS. The matching pools were stacked concurrently for donations.

"(The matching money) drove a lot of our donors to give and maximize the donation for the school,"



Courtesy photo

Students at Sacred Heart Grade School in Colby share gratitude after the #iGiveCatholic campaign, which was Dec. 1. More than \$9,100 was raised to assist the school during the annual campaign. Pictured (from left) are Nicholas Mead, Remington Romer, Dallis Stieben, Emma Mead, Jackson Denny, Frantiska Horinek, Bailey Wolf, Aubree Dean and Blaidynn Carman.

O'Haver said. "The chance to take your donation and almost triple your donation — I think the donors really saw the impact."

This year's campaign was essential, O'Haver said, especially when many of the school's traditional fundraising events were canceled because of COVID-19, including the annual golf tournament, auction, and Buttons and Bows event.

"I did a mailing to our donors and appealed to them, telling them we're still in school five days a week providing faith-based education," she said. "We still have a need but are not having events. It was a plea to keep us in their thoughts, prayers and donations and our donors all stepped up."

"All funds raised go toward our annual fund dri-

ve to help with our operating costs."

Utilizing the giving day to help in this way was a new trend this year, Kenny said.

"Many of the projects were much more about fulfilling basic needs such as covering unbudgeted expenses incurred due to COVID restrictions and keeping everyone safe, purchasing groceries for a local food pantry, and donations for tuition assistance in our schools," she said.

One highlight is at least 40 of the 181 donors to the school were new this year, O'Haver said.

"Everybody sees the impact of everything going on," she said of COVID-19. "Everybody is seeing the impact that is happening to small businesses and schools and restaurants. People want everyone to

keep going, to see their community thrive. It gives them the opportunity to give back."

ALSO IN THE TOP 25 nationally for #iGive Catholic was St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan. This is the first year it participated in the campaign. "As many have experienced during COVID, there have been ups and downs, a

Local organizations that placed in the top 100 (nationwide) for donations with #iGiveCatholic

- 8 — Manhattan Catholic Schools / Manhattan
- 23 — St. Thomas More Parish / Manhattan
- 44 — St. Andrew Grade School / Abilene
- 55 — St. Mary Church and School / Ellis
- 57 — St. John's Catholic Schools / Beloit
- 66 — St. Andrew Parish / Abilene

lot of instability in collection sizes in the last few months," said Mika Bolton, the bookkeeper for the parish. "So we decided to participate, partially so we could participate in the Phil Howe match. We were hopeful the motivation of the match money would help people feel their dollar was going farther, that they could doubly provide for their parish."

She said that for the first quarter of the parish's financial year, which started in July, Sunday collections were down about \$30,000. Educating parishioners

Please see DIOCESE / Page 11

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BISHOP’S CALENDAR

January 2021

- 5-10 Region IX Bishops Annual Retreat
- 11-14 Priest Renewal Days
- 18 Teacher In-Service, St. Thomas More Prep-Marian/Jr.-Sr. High School, Hays
- 20 Red Mass, noon, Topeka
- 21 IGNITE Pro-life Event: Kansas March and Rally for Life, Topeka
- 28-30 National March for Life, Washington, D.C.

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WEDDINGS

Jacob Eastes and **Kayle Campbell** were married Oct. 3, 2020, at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Hoxie. Father Vincent Thu Laing witnessed their vows. Parents of the bridegroom are Edward and Dana (Stech) Eastes. Parents of the bride are Ronald and Jackie (Harbit) Campbell. Witnesses were Joel Eastes and Jessica Campbell.

Ryan Rudzik and **Madelynn Gnad** were married Nov. 14, 2020, at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays. Father Damian Richards witnessed their vows. Parents of the bridegroom are Lloyd and Amy (Jacobs) Rudzik. Parents of the bride are John and Sandy (Robinson) Gnad. Witnesses were Andrew Hess and Nicole Gabel.

DEATHS

Emanuel F. “Manny” Befort, 90, of Ellis, died Nov. 11, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 14 by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary Church in Ellis. Burial was in the parish cemetery.

Kelly Vaughn Beisner, 66, of Ellis, died Nov. 19, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 25 by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary Church in Ellis.

Grady Michael Best, 8 days, of Hoxie, died Oct. 10, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Oct. 15 by Father Vincent Thu Laing at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Hoxie. Burial was in St. Frances Cabrini Cemetery, Hoxie.

Cecilia Edwards, 71, of Ellis, died Nov. 4, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 12 by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary Church in Ellis. Burial was in the parish cemetery.

LeEnora L. Heina, 99, of Cuba, died Nov. 9, 2020. A private funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 16 by her son, Father Steven Heina, at St. Edward Church in Belleville. Burial was in St. Isidore Catholic Cemetery, Cuba.

Loran J. Jayne, 74, of Ellis, died Oct. 12, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Oct. 24 by Father

Dana Clark at St. Mary Church in Ellis. Burial with military honors was in the parish cemetery.

JoLinn (Railsback) Kaus, 52, of Hoxie, died Nov. 7, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 11 by Father Vincent Thu Laing at St. Martin of Tours Church, Seguin. Burial was in St. Martin of Tours Cemetery, Seguin.

Thomas Kinderknecht, 77, of Hays, died Oct. 6, 2020. Funeral services were held Oct. 14 by Father Dana Clark at Brock’s-Keithley Funeral Chapel and Crematory in Hays. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery, Ellis.

Ethan Travis “E.T.” Mai, 56, of Hays, died Nov. 6, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 11 by Father Damian Richards at St. Nicholas of Myra Church in Hays.

Dennis Matthew Rome, 58, of St. Peter, died Nov. 16, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 21 by Father Charles Steier at Christ the King Church in WaKeeney. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Ellis.

MaryRose A. Santrock, 85, formerly of Concordia, died Nov. 23, 2020. Funeral services officiated by Father David Metz

were held on Nov. 30 at Chaput-Buoy Funeral Home in Concordia. Burial was in Olive Branch Cemetery, Kensington.

Lawrence Dean “Larry” Steckline, 63, of Hays, died Nov. 5, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 10 by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary Church in Ellis. Burial was in the parish cemetery.

Alice (Gassman) Wagoner, 93, of Hoxie, died Sept. 16, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated Sept. 21, 2020 by Father Vincent Thu Laing at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Hoxie. Burial was in Kansas Veteran’s Cemetery, WaKeeney.

Joseph Francis Weber, 95, of Ellis, died Nov. 18, 2020. Private family services were held, because of concerns about COVID-19.

Sister Germaine Werth, SSSF, 96, of Milwaukee, formerly of Schoenchen and Park, died Nov. 7, 2020. A private funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 13. She entered the Postulancy of the School Sisters of St. Francis in Milwaukee at age 15 and was a member of the community for 79 years. She served in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Montana.

THE REGISTER

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Publisher: Most Rev. Gerald L. Vincke, Bishop of Salina
Editor: Karen Bonar, newspaper1@salinadiocese.org
Advertising/Circulation: Brenda Streit, newspaper@salinadiocese.org
Business Manager: Jennifer Hood, finance@salinadiocese.org

P.O. Box 1038, Salina, KS 67402-1038
(785) 827-8746, Fax (785) 827-6133
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DIY this Christmas!

CHRISTMAS IS GOING TO be different this year.

It will be a somber and perhaps mournful season for those suffering from the multiple effects of the pandemic.

For many of us, however, this could be our best Christmas ever. We have every reason to skip the frantic shopping and awkward gatherings that cause us stress during the Christmas season.

As we hunker down at home, we have an unprecedented opportunity to focus on the true meaning of Christmas. We can establish new holiday traditions for ourselves and our families.

I suggest that we make it a do-it-yourself, family and Christ-centered Christmas!

Suggesting “DIY” may evoke memories of childhood disasters involving burned cookies or spilled paint, but I encourage you



Sister Constance Veit

Little Sisters of the Poor

to give it a try this Advent. Don’t worry about perfect results — instead, enjoy the calming effects of a familiar, repetitive craft or the challenge of learning a new skill.

Choose a collaborative project that can unite everyone in your household or an activity that can provide you with some much-needed quiet and solitude!

Numerous studies show that hands-on activities — even something as basic as coloring — provide important mental health benefits. These include a sense of relaxation, reduced anxiety, improved mood and concentration, enhanced self-confidence, a sense of pur-

pose and accomplishment and when efforts are made in collaboration with others, an enhanced sense of community.

With hundreds of cooking shows and craft magazines, online tutorials, idea boards such as Pinterest and marketplaces like *Etsy.com*, creative possibilities are limitless, and they need not be expensive.

COLLABORATIVE DIY activities can be a great way of involving young and old alike in Christmas preparations.

After spending months cooped up with our closest loved ones, and with public health authorities recommending that the safest way to celebrate the holidays is in a “bubble” with our immediate household, patience may be wearing thin.

The key to making this Christmas a positive experi-

ence is to see value in little gestures, rather than the end result of our efforts.

I suggest that DIY efforts this Christmas focus on a family crèche or Nativity scene.

Pope Francis penned a pastoral letter last December on the meaning of the Nativity scene, in which he encouraged this “beautiful family tradition. Great imagination and creativity is always shown in employing the most diverse materials to create small masterpieces of beauty.”

The pope wrote, “As children, we learn from our parents and grandparents to carry on this joyful tradition, which encapsulates a wealth of popular piety. It is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it can be rediscovered and revived.”

Setting up the Christmas crèche in our homes helps

us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem.

Pope Francis tells us. “Naturally, the Gospels remain our source for understanding and reflecting on that event. At the same time, its portrayal in the crèche helps us to imagine the scene. It touches our hearts and makes us enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real.”

This Christmas is the perfect time to rediscover and revive the tradition of the crèche, giving it a prominent place in our homes.

With COVID-19 again on the rise, many of us might not even make it to Mass on Dec. 25, so let’s make our homes like little churches with our DIY Nativity scenes the focal point of our celebration of Christ’s birth!

Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

This year, Christmas is both different, the same as always

“THE KIDS IN ROOM 207 were misbehaving again. Spitballs stuck to the ceiling. Paper planes whizzing through the air. They were the worst-behaved class in the whole school.”

That’s the beginning of one of my favorite childhood books, “Miss Nelson is Missing” by Harry Allard. I stumbled upon the book recently in the children’s section of a bookstore when shopping for a Christmas book for my godchild.

I distinctly remember the plot. Miss Nelson was a mild-mannered and kind-natured teacher, and her disrespectful students misbehaved and refused to learn.

As I glanced at the cover, a line from the book flashed into my mind.

“Something must be done,” Miss Nelson said, as the students repeatedly



Patti Lamb

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

talked over her and made poor choices.

The next day, Miss Nelson didn’t show up. Instead, a substitute who looked like a witch took her place as teacher. Miss Viola Swamp was strict and mean and gave the children loads of homework. Miss Swamp showed up day after day. The kids greatly missed Miss Nelson and regretted their wicked behavior. At the end of the book, Miss Nelson returns and the students rejoice and treat her with the respect and dignity they failed to give before.

That afternoon in the bookstore, my jaw dropped

as I stared at the cover illustration.

A thought occurred to me.

“Are we the kids in Room 207?” I asked myself.

Is the current state of affairs in this world the way it is because “something must be done?”

WE’RE LIVING IN A pandemic, forced to social distance, and even isolate in some instances, making this Christmas one like never before. Most of us can’t spend it with those we love most. No Christmas parties; Nativity plays and choir performances have been canceled; hugs are prohibited; masks are mandated to cover our faces, preventing us from the simplest kind gesture of sharing a smile. Warm hugs and handshakes feel like things of the past.

I thought back to this

time a year ago. Apparently, those were the good old days and how I regret taking them for granted. Last Christmas Eve, the church was packed so full that many were standing and those lucky enough to be in a pew were packed in like sardines. The choir sang, the children put on a lovely Nativity pageant and we hugged at the sign of peace. All those things that enriched the celebration of the Eucharist are now simply not allowed.

This December, it feels like Christmas is missing, but it’s not. And seeing one of my favorite books in the bookstore that day reminded me precisely why it’s not.

Over 2000 years ago, God looked down at his troubled world and said, “Something must be done,” so he sent his only son to teach us about love, service

and mercy. He allowed his son’s blood to be used to seal a new covenant.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

By his life, death and resurrection, Jesus opened the gates of heaven for us. Each December, we celebrate the birth of our redeemer, who won the victory for us. That’s why we proclaim “joy to the world!”

While this year’s celebration may look different from years past, it’s every bit as meaningful and worthy of celebration in our hearts. Even without turkey and tinsel, Christmas is not missing. It’s alive in the hearts of all who believe.

Patti Lamb is a freelance writer from Plainfield, Ind. Her columns appear in The Criterion, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Cultivating an attitude of ‘just enough’

IN THE HIGHLY acclaimed and Oscar-awarded silent film “The Artist,” we are introduced to George, a very proud man quite comfortable with his luxurious life and very much in love with the persona and popularity he has achieved pursuing his silent-movie craft. We see an accomplished and polished man fully in mastery of his shallow environment, a life defined by possessions and public image. His familiar and programmed life comes to a halt when sound is introduced to film. George stubbornly refuses to change and becomes stuck in the persona he worked very hard to create. Afraid to navigate in a new world that now speaks, George is left behind in the industry that revered him not so long ago and becomes a forgotten man. The viewer



Sister Gilla Dubé

Register columnist

accompanies George as his life crumbles because of his unwillingness to yield to a new way. We now see a man defeated and depressed by life, a man who has nothing to live for and nothing to believe in. However, Peppy, a rising young actress whom George had mentored earlier, refuses to abandon him, refuses to allow his life to remain in ashes, refuses that he remain forgotten.

In a poignant part of the story, Peppy secretly purchases all the belongings and treasures that have been so significant to him, items now

for sale at a public auction. It is her intention to return his prized possessions, realizing how much George is rooted in them. Following many failed yet persistent and loving attempts by Peppy to reach out to George, love eventually seizes him and he is finally able to respond, to go deeper! At that point where his heart is touched just enough, George is able to leave his fear and the familiar and venture into the unknown — just enough to go toward the love that never let him go, never abandoned him!

“THE ARTIST” IS A LOVE story — the love of Peppy who believes in George and refuses to accept his self-inflicted inner and outer destruction. She realizes that despite the shambles of his

life, George is a man of integrity and helps him respond to the changes in a way that safeguards that integrity and acknowledges the life story he has lived. Through love, by love, and in love, George is made whole!

Only two words are spoken in the entire film — Thank You — yet the story of love and transformation comes alive before us through an incredible array of visual effects and silent communication. The film reminds us of the important life lesson that if one believes enough and loves enough, transformation can and will happen. We need only be open to the possibilities. The poet Salvatore Quasimodo speaks of this kind of transformative love when he writes, “Remember that you can be ... only if love should

pierce you deep inside.”

As we move more deeply into this new year that promises new life, perhaps we might want to adopt a mantra: just enough, just enough, just enough. Cultivating the attitude of just enough can allow us the ability to wrap our hearts around the significance of a just enough love. Just enough for transformation to take seed. Just enough to be uprooted for the sake of the Gospel. Just enough to reach out and encourage the neighbor. Just enough to honor the integrity of all persons and creation. Just enough to hold another’s story. Just enough for love to pierce us deep inside. Just enough to make whole again! Just enough ... and then more!

Sister Gilla Dubé is a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia. As a staff member at Man-na House of Prayer, she participates in programs and program planning.

AROUND THE DIOCESE


Call to Share helps bring sacraments to faithful across the diocese

By The Register

SALINA — Even during a pandemic, the faithful from across the Salina Diocese contributed to the 2020 Bishop’s Annual Appeal — Call to Share.

Gifts surpassed the \$1.6 million goal, with more than \$1.8 million pledged to date.

“The year 2020 has been full of unexpected challenges and extraordinary generosity. COVID-19 has



affected many individual and family situations,” said Beth Shearer, director of stewardship and development for the Salina Diocese. “Through all of this, the Church endured. Even when Masses were closed to the public, the Catholics of our diocese maintained their

strong faith and continued to care for their parishes and the diocese.”

The Call to Share appeal provides money to support retired clergy, youth faith formation, seminarian education and sacramental preparation. Nearly 90 percent of the funds raised is spent on programs that directly benefit individuals and parishes in every corner of the diocese.

Because of this generosity,

Catholics were able to join the Church and deepen their faith through the sacraments, such as Baptism and Confirmation (*see sidebar*).

“Thank you for your gift. Thank you for supporting our Catholic faith by your generosity and kindness,” Shearer said. “Your ongoing support is a tremendous blessing and allows our many ministries to grow and flourish, keeping our faith very much alive.”

2020 by the numbers

Baptisms:	603
Infant/youth:	576
Adult:	27
First Communions:	520
Minor:	439
Adult:	81
Confirmations:	475
Marriages:	190
Diaconate Ordination:	1
Consecrated Virgin:	1
Funerals:	523

Schools adjust, adapt to remain in-person during pandemic

By Karen Bonar
The Register

SALINA — Adapt and carry on.

This is the mantra of Geoff Andrews, the superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Salina Diocese, as the diocese’s 15 Catholic schools continue to operate amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The hard part is staying current with what’s going on in each community,” he said. “The data changes every day. Guidelines change every day. The only thing we’ve learned is the only constant is change.”

With 15 schools sprinkled across the diocese, many opened with in-person learning five days a week in

late August.

“The challenge for a large, rural diocese is that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach that works for all of our schools as a whole,” Andrews said. “We’ve been able to manage change and adapt to what will fit each building because every community is extremely different.”

ST. JOHN’S CATHOLIC School in Hanover has 96 students in grades 1-8.

An early adaptation the school made was its starting time. Principal Amanda Cook said the bus schedule shifted a bit earlier this year, which prompted a discussion among the staff: Would they be willing to start the academic day a few

minutes early?

“It worked really well,” she said. “It saved us from having kids sitting around our building for 30 minutes before the school day started. My teachers were more than happy to accommodate. I know it made their lives a little crazier in the mornings, and they stepped up to the challenge.”

Instead of an 8:20 a.m. start time, the school day begins at 8 a.m.

“This gives us a little bit of built-in COVID time,” Cook said. “That gave us the benefit of, hopefully, not having to go remote learning if we had to take a day or two off.”

The planning paid off when Cook, Father Joseph Kieffer and the school council decided to extend Thanksgiving break a few days.

“We gave kids an extra four days off,” she said. “We thought it would be the most likely days to exhibit symptoms from COVID.”

THIS FLEXIBILITY IS ONE reason Andrews attributes to schools being mostly in-person.

“There has been great collaboration between the Catholic school leaders and their respective school



Courtesy photo

Melissa Pinkney (top, center) instructs third hour of Spanish I at Thomas More Prep-Marian Jr./Sr. High School in Hays. The school is in a hybrid model, with half of the students in class and the other half connecting virtually.

councils, along with the local public school in the communities,” Andrews said. “It is refreshing to see everyone’s end goal the same: Let’s do everything we can to keep our students learning on-site.”

In Manhattan, he said the public schools have been in a hybrid model since August.

“Manhattan Catholic Schools have been on-site five days a week, with one little hiccup,” Andrews said. “I think it’s a huge success story.”

He said he is inspired by

the dedication of administrators and pastors.

“One priest went to Home Depot or Amazon to purchase necessary supplies for the kids to be on-site in his school,” Andrews said. “Under his direction, he got PVC pipe and screens. Parishioners came in and helped them build screens for the school. I think it’s really awesome when someone says, ‘We know it’s important for our kids to be on-site, and this is what I can do to help make it happen for our students.’”

IN OAKLEY, A TOWN with about 2,100 residents, St. Joseph Grade School operates preschool through fifth grades.

Principal Michelle Selzer

Please see **SCHOOLS** / Page 11

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Ministering, administering through pandemic

By Karen Bonar
The Register

CONCORDIA — When the Kansas bishops closed Mass to the public on March 17, Father David Metz followed the lead of many clergy members around the country, moving to streaming Mass online.

In addition to celebrating two Masses online, he took the advice of a fellow priest and celebrated one weekend Mass privately.

"I found the private Mass was probably the best Mass I celebrated," he said. "I could take my time, do the readings and listen to them, have a lot more silence than I normally would."

A priest for 23 years, he said it's possible for presiding at Mass to feel like one more item on his daily "to do" list.

"But during this time, especially the private Mass, I found myself falling in love again with the Mass. It affirmed why I say Mass," Father Metz said. "The aspect of it, being part of the job, faded away. I think it helped me spiritually to get back to the main focus of the Mass."

ACCESS TO THE SACRAMENTS has changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Mass in the state of Kansas was closed for 48 days. Bishop Jerry Vincke permitted a gradual re-opening of Mass with a congregation on May 5.

"Just as Jesus desires to be one with us sacramentally, I know many parishioners desire to be united with Christ sacramentally, too," Bishop Vincke said. "Our goal is to make all the sacraments as available as possible, while still being prudent. Since our diocese is so large territorially, I have asked my priests to work with the local county health commissions and to adhere to local guidelines for their community."

As of Dec. 11, there have been

more than 179,800 cases of COVID-19 in the state of Kansas in 2020, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's website. The Salina Diocese comprises 31 counties, with more than 26,000 square miles, in the northwest quadrant of the state.

Father Metz was quarantined twice this year, prompting a reversion to online-only Mass for the pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Concordia and St. Peter in Aurora. Both experiences were because he was in proximity to someone who was being tested for COVID-19.

His first quarantine was short-lived when the test result was negative. He entered quarantine for a few days, and public Mass — specifically distribution of Communion — was not permitted by the local health department.

In November, Father Metz was around someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

"I had been in there with my mask on and was distanced, but I had to quarantine," he said. "There had been 125 new cases in the last two days."

Once again, public Mass was canceled.

"I still did a Facebook live and got the Mass out that way," he said.

The second quarantine involved no public Mass for nine days.

"It's hard to shut down my schedule and the church," Father Metz said. "I watch myself and keep distance and have my mask on. With the county mask mandate, thankfully, everyone has been wearing a mask in church."

Before the pandemic, a common practice when a priest was unable to preside at Mass was to have a retired priest cover the sacraments for the weekend.

"I want to keep our retired priests safe," Father Metz said. "That's why I've chosen to cele-



Photo by Karen Bonar / The Register

Priests gather at the memorial Mass for LeEnora Louise Heina, mother of Father Steve Heina, on Nov. 23 at St. John Church in Clyde. Because of concerns surrounding COVID-19, the funeral Mass was private, with a public memorial offered at a later date. Father Joseph Kieffer (center) said funerals have changed significantly during the pandemic. Often, the funeral of a priest's parents is attended by dozens of priests, he said. However, because of COVID-19, his mother's funeral in October was attended by the bishop and about a half a dozen priests. "I understood, but it's hard that we don't have that priestly fraternity like we had in times when we're going through our own grief of loss of parents," he said. The priests attending the Heina memorial are (from left) Father Jerome Morgan, Msgr. James Hake, Father Kieffer, Father Larry Letourneau and Father Don Zimmerman.

brate Mass online."

The Salina Diocese has 37 active diocesan priests (including two extern priests) to cover its 86 parishes. In addition to active diocesan priests, 11 international priests and three religious order priests actively serve within the diocese, bringing the total number of actively serving priests to 51 to cover the 86 parishes. Additionally, there are 16 retired diocesan priests who serve when needed.

Bishop Vincke said a struggle in his rural diocese is the availability of priests to offer the sacraments.

"The problem that we faced in our diocese is that while a few priests contracted COVID, many others had to be quarantined because they were in contact with someone who had COVID," he said. "On one weekend, we had seven priests unavailable to cover the Masses. We were able to get coverage for many of the parishes, but not all of them."

ACTIVITIES AT A PARISH ARE not limited to daily or weekend Masses, though. Many provide ongoing religious education and

formation, which has also adjusted during the pandemic.

Father Metz said the local school district transitioned to remote learning for grades 7-12 for a few weeks.

"We ended up canceling religious education for all of the grades because there had been quite a few grade school students quarantined, as well," he said.

Enrollment in the program is down to about 112 students, compared with last year's 194.

"Some parents who made that decision out of an abundance of caution have decided to do something at home with them," Father Metz said.

For those who attend on-site religious education, temperatures are taken upon arrival, and students are masked and given plenty of space.

AT ST. ISIDORE CATHOLIC Student Center in Manhattan, campus minister Rachel Francis said sacramental preparation is different this year.

"We've met every week, but we live stream it," she said. Many participants physically attend, but "if someone has symptoms or



Courtesy photo

Father David Metz (far right) baptizes Brooks Gilliland on Nov. 1. Pictured (from left) are godfather Ryan Gilliland, brother Jack Gilliland and parents Ambria and Eric Gilliland.

had to travel, they can still tune in, no matter where they are. There's no reason for them not to be there in some way, shape or form."

The Catholic student center typically has several dozen individuals who are welcomed into the Church at Easter, at the conclusion of the Rite of Christian

Initiation of Adults classes. The number of participants decreased slightly but not significantly this year.

"(Returning to school) was bumpy for people at first, but our staff has been very flexible in doing what we need to do for our parishioners," Francis said. "It's a cool time to work here. The

leadership of our priests is wonderful. They've been so gentle with everyone. It's such a hard time. They know that now, more than ever, people need the sacraments. We need to do whatever we can do to get people the sacraments."

Sacraments such as Baptism are still ongoing but look a little different. Previously, Francis said, a few Masses per weekend were designated for baptisms.

"Now, people come in with their family," she said. "Because of the nature of the sacrament, the priest will still have to anoint the infant. But if people have had symptoms, we postpone the baptism. We simply follow the CDC guidelines."

Even while the dispensation from attending Sunday Mass exists, Francis said students are still accessing the sacraments.

"Students are still coming and lining up outside the confessional and coming to adoration and still coming to daily Mass," she said. "They have had a lot taken away from them, but it's been cool to see how they've come

Please see PRIESTS / Page 8

Sisters reach out with virtual spiritual direction and retreats

By Cathy Doud
For The Register

CONCORDIA — The Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia have long offered one-on-one spiritual direction, with the sisters and staff of Manna House of Prayer also offering directed retreats on a variety of topics.

However, the threat of COVID-19 has made most in-person meetings impossible or impractical. The sisters at Manna House quickly assessed the situation and began offering both spiritual direction and many of their retreats virtually.

Virtual spiritual direction was not new to Manna House. Several of the spiritual directors had previously used Facetime, Instant Messenger video conferencing and Skype to reach out across long distances to offer their services. This year they used that experience, and the addition of other technology tools like Zoom, to increase their reach.

"In these times of COVID-19 and all of the uncertainty and suffering it has caused, the heartbreak of losing loved ones, jobs, markets, businesses and the future that we'd dreamed of or banked on, it is sometimes helpful to have a 'spiritual companion' or 'soul friend' to visit with about the deepest concerns and questions that haunt us," said Sister Marcia Allen, a spiritual director at Manna House.

"The sisters who staff Manna House have experience and training in journeying with others in difficult times. If you are wondering where God is in all of this chaos and loss of meaning you might welcome a companion or friend for deeper conversations from time to time."

SISTER JANET LANDER, a spiritual director at Manna House, said she had been using technology to companion with her directees for years, particularly those who lived in other countries. However, with the increase of COVID, the use of technology has become even more important.

"In this day and age, even before COVID, it was important to be able to connect with people who couldn't take time off from work to travel to Concordia," Sister Janet said. "Thanks to advances in technology, we're able to connect, not just by voice, but visually. This is so important because it allows you to read your directee's body language and connect."

"It is amazing how talking with one of the Sisters and getting their ideas can help,

whether it be on how to read passages out of the Bible differently, how to learn to do different type of prayers, how to figure out what contemplation is all about or maybe even a great book to help you through something you are struggling with," said Agrégée Denise Schmitz, a staff member at Manna House and a member of the Western Kansas Women committee. "A phone call, Zoom, Facetime — all of it can work, whatever makes you feel most comfortable. What a blessing that we can offer this to people especially during this year of COVID."

In addition to virtual spiritual direction, Manna House has found success taking many of their retreats online. The retreat center is offering a full calendar of retreats for 2021 ranging from book studies, music therapy, dealing with memory loss, Lenten week studies to day retreats.

"The day retreats on Zoom are a wonderful opportunity for people to schedule a day to add some self-care time to boost your spiritual life," Schmitz said. "You can meet new folks via Zoom and come out with ways to help keep positive in day-to-day living in this time of COVID, flu or yucky weather. Self-care and your spirituality are important. The benefits help you and those with whom you live and work."

RESPONSE FROM THOSE WHO have participated in the online retreats has been positive said Sister Betty Suther, director of Manna House.

"Comments I heard from participants in the online retreat included: 'Almost as good as being there,' 'A bright spot in my day,' 'I was able to concentrate better on what was being said,' and 'So glad there's another way to continue my spiritual direction ... thank you for being available,'" Sister Betty said.

"The staff of Manna House welcomes you into their circle of faith and companionship," Sister Marcia said.

To inquire about spiritual direction, contact Manna House at (785) 243-4428 or email retreatcenter@manna-house.org. To view the schedule of upcoming retreats, visit mannahouse.org and click on the retreats and workshops link. Upcoming retreats can also be found on the Manna House of Prayer facebook page at [facebook.com/MannaHouseOfPrayer](https://www.facebook.com/MannaHouseOfPrayer). If the internet is not convenient or available, you can call Manna House and request a printed copy of their 2021 brochure.

Family navigates death, mourning amid COVID-19 pandemic

By Karen Bonar
The Register

HAYS — In Ellis County, 91-year-old Ronald Thyfault was the first person to die from COVID-19, on July 15.

His daughter, Amy Normandin, said the funeral home was instructed COVID deaths were to be cremated. If the deceased wasn't cremated, Virginia Thyfault said the body would not be permitted into the church during the funeral.

"I thought of the hearse outside of church with him in the casket while we were at Mass," she said. "It didn't seem right. As much as I didn't want to, we had him cremated."

Several family members also contracted COVID-19, so the funeral was delayed for three weeks.

While the Thyfaults primarily lived in Hays, they have deep roots in Rooks County, and the Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph Church in Damar.

With nine children, 31 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren, family gatherings

often draw 100 members of immediate families.

"A hard part was so many people were afraid to come," Normandin said. "My dad came from a large family. We have family all over the place who would normally travel, but so many people were afraid to travel. We had family from out of state who decided it wasn't wise to travel. So many people missed the opportunity out of fear."

Funerals often offer an element of closure, she said.

"When you have the gathering, you support each other and say your goodbyes and share the memories," Normandin said.

THE RULES SURROUNDING COVID patients and funerals continue to evolve, and Normandin said it's positive for families. When her father was hospitalized early in July, family was not permitted to visit him.

"I am ecstatic they have changed the rules and allow family to be with them in the last moments," she said. "I cannot imagine that we could have left Dad at the hospital with nobody."

Thyfault said her husband often repeated, "Thy will be done" throughout his life. The last weeks during her husband's illness were difficult.

"He was in the hospital for two days," she said. "We had not been apart for more than two hours in the last five years. He was there two days, and I couldn't go be with him or see him."

Shortly before her husband fell ill, the couple celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary. One of the mainstays of their marriage was prayer.

"We said the rosary probably three times a day, every day," Thyfault said. "We would say it in the morning, when the noon bell rang, and most times at 3 o'clock, we would say it again. We both have a very strong faith."

With the family in quarantine during Ron's final days, Catholic traditions were important to the family. Yet because of their positive COVID-19 status, it was difficult to maneuver.

"It was a challenge for Dad to receive the Last Rites," Normandin said. "There was a concern about a priest visiting in the home without proper PPE and putting himself at

risk of quarantine and then would limit his ability to serve the rest of the parish, which we understood.

"My sister and I made calls and called in any favor I could think of. We were able to locate all the PPE material required. We are grateful one of the priests came to the home and administered the sacrament later that evening. Dad was extremely grateful, and his receiving the anointing put him and all of us in a more peaceful state of mind as we entered that last night."

In the days and weeks since her husband's death, the faith they shared has helped anchor Thyfault.

"If it wasn't for my faith, it would be hard to cope," Thyfault said. "I miss Ron a lot. I pray the rosary many times a day, and when I do, I feel close to him."

*Check with the local funeral home for current CDC guidelines.

Ron Thyfault is embraced by his wife, Virginia, July 7 in Hays upon his return from the hospital. The couple celebrated 69 years of marriage shortly before his July 15 death. His was the first COVID-19 death in Ellis County

Courtesy photo



Priests adjust sacraments, ministry during quarantine

From page 7

together and have been so respectful of what's been asked of them because of COVID. We've been able to do what we need to do because they've been so cooperative."

The ability to continue to serve and administer to the faithful is important, especially during a pandemic.

"We need community right now, and COVID has naturally isolated people," Francis said. "Through the sacraments, it's one way we are still allowed to gather. It's encouraging to me to see students flocking to the sacraments and desiring to be there. It's beautiful that people still want to receive the sacraments."

FATHER JOSEPH KIEFFER has been a priest for 16 years. His three small

parishes are nestled in Washington County, on the Kansas-Nebraska border. His outreach and ministry schedule adjusted significantly after the March 17 closure of Mass to the public.

"Parishioners, especially those in the nursing home, have felt the loss," he said. "I couldn't go to the hospital or nursing home to visit parishioners. I've been cautious not to go to home-bound people."

In order to make Mass available, he live-streams daily and Sunday Mass on his Facebook page. Originally, the intention was to make the Mass available to those who could not attend Mass. Eventually, however, online Mass was a necessity because Father Kieffer tested positive for COVID-19 on Oct. 30.

In Washington County,

where his parishes are located, there have been fewer than 350 cases of COVID-19.

"I have no idea where I got it," he said. "Nobody I was around was showing symptoms. It could have been someone who didn't realize they had it."

Initially, he thought he had a cold, and treated it as such. It was a few days later when he could not smell the vapor rub or taste his food that he went in for a test.

Upon receiving the news, he worked with the local health department.

"They asked for names and phone numbers to contact them and let them know," Father Kieffer said.

In addition to cooperating with the health department, he informed his parishioners via social media that weekend Masses were canceled.

"I felt I needed to be public about it because I knew I had potentially exposed many of my parishioners," he said. "I did a live-stream private Mass so parishioners could watch Mass on Sunday. A lot of them are used to watching EWTN or my live stream."

Mass is only one element of ministry that has changed in 2020.

First Communion was moved from April to July, and Confirmation was pushed from April to August. Students at the local Catholic school, which includes preschool to fifth grade, completed sacramental preparations online as part of their regular classroom studies. Those who attend parish religious education, however, had to complete their work at home with their parents.

Another significant

change is funerals, Father Kieffer said.

"I think the biggest disappointment for families is that they can't have more people from the public there to support them," he said. "People are calling or sending cards, but they can't come and greet them and give them a hug. I think it's making it a little harder in the grieving process."

His own mother died Oct. 10. The funeral differed greatly from his father's eight years ago.

"When my dad died, many of my brother priests were there for that funeral," Father Kieffer said. "For Mom's, probably six or seven priests plus the bishop attended. I understood, but it's hard that we don't have that priestly fraternity like we had in times when we're going through our own grief of loss of parents."

Manhattan Rite of Acceptance



Courtesy photo

The Rite of Acceptance was celebrated Nov. 22 at St. Thomas More Parish in Manhattan. Pictured (from left) are Sarah Boxberger, Tyler Gates, Ryan Jowers, Jordan Hevel, Jhesica and Jack Conklin. Not pictured: Spencer Weiser.

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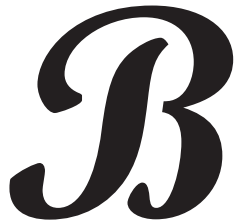
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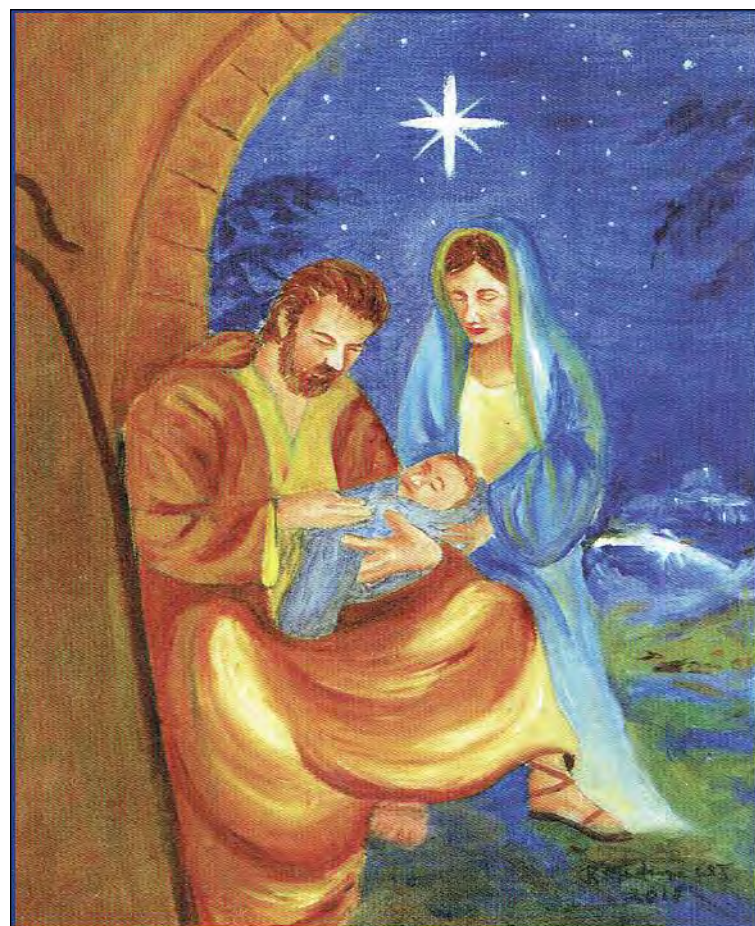
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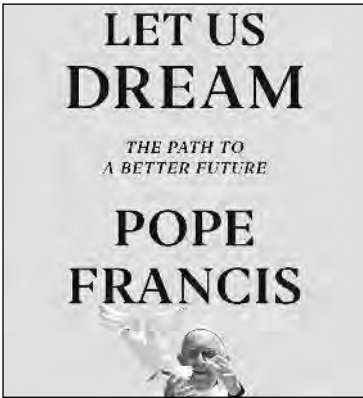
Pope in new book talks about personal ‘lockdowns’ that changed his life

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — While the coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions have interrupted people’s lives and brought suffering on a global scale, every individual — including the pope — has or will experience traumatic interruptions in their lives, Pope Francis said in a new book.

“Illness, the failure of a marriage or a business, some great disappointment or betrayal,” he said, are moments that “generate a tension, a crisis that reveals what is in our hearts.”

In “Let Us Dream: The Path to A Better Future,” a book written with author Austen Ivereigh, Pope Francis said he had experienced three “COVID moments” in his lifetime: lung problems



“Let Us Dream” by Pope Francis

that threatened his life when he was 21; his “displacement” in Germany in 1986 for studies; and when he was sent away to Cordoba, Argentina, for almost two years in the early 1990s.

“Let Us Dream” was published Dec. 1 by Simon & Schuster. The section on what the pope called his

“personal COVIDs” was excerpted in Italian newspapers Nov. 23.

In those major moments of challenge and pain, Pope Francis wrote, “what I learned was that you suffer a lot, but if you allow it to change you, you come out better. But if you dig in, you come out worse.”

WRITING ABOUT HIS diseased lung, the pope said, “I remember the date: Aug. 13, 1957. I got taken to hospital by a (seminary) prefect who realized mine was not the kind of flu you treat with aspirin. Straightaway they took a liter and a half of water out of the lung, and I remained there fighting for my life.”

He was in his second year at the diocesan seminary and it was his “first experience of limit, of pain and

loneliness,” he said. “It changed the way I saw life.”

“For months, I didn’t know who I was and whether I would live or die. The doctors had no idea whether I’d make it either,” the pope wrote. “I remember hugging my mother and saying: ‘Just tell me if I’m going to die.’”

After three months in the hospital, “they operated to take out the upper right lobe of one of the lungs,” he said. “I have some sense of how people with coronavirus feel as they struggle to breathe on ventilators.”

One of the nurses, Sister Cornelia Caraglio, saved his life by doubling his antibiotics, he said. “Because of her regular contact with sick people, she understood better than the doctor what they needed, and she had the courage to act on her

knowledge.”

Pope Francis said he also learned the meaning of “cheap consolations.”

“People came in to tell me I was going to be fine, how with all that pain I’d never have to suffer again — really dumb things, empty words,” he said.

Instead, he learned from a nun who had prepared him for his First Communion and would come and hold his hand, how important it was to sit with people, touch them and keep words to a minimum.

The time in the hospital recovering, he said, gave him the time and space he needed to “rethink my vocation” and explore his longing to enter a religious order rather than the diocesan priesthood. It was then that he decided to join the Jesuits.

Vatican urges young people to ask for ‘words of wisdom’ for Christmas

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — One present young people should ask for this Christmas is words of wisdom from older people they know, a Vatican dicastery said.

“Today, in the difficult circumstances of a Christmas still overshadowed by the pandemic, we are proposing that young people post on social media a memory, a piece of advice or a ‘gift of wisdom’ they have received from one of the elderly people with whom they have formed a bond in recent months,” said the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life.

The invitation was part of a new campaign launched Nov. 27 aimed at encouraging young people to reach out to their grandparents and other older people, not only to help alleviate the isolation and loneliness

caused by pandemic restrictions, but also to create new and creative bonds.

The unusual circumstances caused by the pandemic means “there is an opportunity for young people to receive a special gift” for Christmas this year, the dicastery said in a news release.

“Because of the pandemic, there are more elderly people who live alone. We can create bonds with each of them — this is a treasure waiting to be discovered!”

The Vatican office asked that people reach out to older people and ask for “the gift of their wisdom.” People can then take the advice, memories and nuggets of wisdom they collect and post them on social media using the hashtag #aGiftOfWisdom.

“Some of the best posts will be shared” on the dicastery’s social media accounts @laityfamilylife, it said.

“Unfortunately, in many

cases, because of the health regulations in force, visiting can only take place remotely, via telephone, video calls and messaging. But it is possible to participate in this campaign” by sharing “the wise words of grandparents and the elderly on social media,” it added.

THE LATEST CAMPAIGN follows a similar effort the dicastery launched in July in which it “collected virtual hugs sent by many young people to both their own grandparents and to ‘adopted grandparents,’” it said.

The effort was meant to encourage young people to show kindness and affection to older people who may be feeling lonely.

For other ideas and guidance, the dicastery has posted on its website, laityfamilylife.va, a free e-book, “The Richness of Many Years of Life,” which offers a tool kit in multiple languages “for the development of a true



The Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life at the Vatican, is encouraging #aGiftOfWisdom campaign to connect youths with grandparents.

pastoral ministry that reaches out” and involves the elderly as active participants in the church.

The e-book includes the proceedings of the first international conference on the pastoral care of the elderly the dicastery held in January 2020 to promote a “renewed concern for the pastoral care of the elderly in every ecclesial community.”

BAPTISMS

Karsyn Annabeth Day, daughter of Dustin and Skylin (Moeder) Day, was baptized Nov. 29, 2020, by Father Dana Clark at St. Mary Church in Ellis.

Luke Joseph Ellenz, son of Brad and Lyn Ellenz, was baptized Nov. 15, 2020, by Father Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Dominic Jude Knappert, son of David and Molly Knappert, was baptized Nov. 8, 2020, by Father Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

Jacinta Therese Lueger, daughter of Rusty and Gina Lueger, was baptized Nov. 8, 2020, by Father Jarett Konrade at St. John the Baptist Church in Beloit.

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FAITH AND REASONS

2020: Learning lessons of docility, humility and courage

Q How do we react when things just do not go as planned?

A Last week I received a call from a young woman, who was to be married in eight days, telling me she had tested positive for the coronavirus. She was in tears because she knew she would have to delay her wedding. I am sure you can imagine the sadness and confusion that would be involved with such a call. Welcome to 2020.

Our reality has forever been shaken this year and the question of how to react when things do not go as planned is in the front of all of our minds. Aside from the Chiefs winning the Super Bowl, 2020 did not go as planned. So what do we do? We pray, we adapt and we carry on.

While we recognize that the COVID-19 is not a product of God's desire for us to suffer, we also know that God has permitted this virus to exist. So what do we do? We pray, we adapt and we carry on. Here in Manhattan at St. Isidore's, we have been speaking a great deal about holy adaptability. Holy adaptability includes a docility to the way things are and a renewed commitment to the will of God.

Many of the great saints have demonstrated this flexibility and adaptability in their own lives as they have shown us the way to God. St. Paul, for example, in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16, was "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia," so he adapted and traveled to Macedonia instead. He bent



Father Gale Hammerschmidt
Diocese of Salina

his will to the will of God. We must do the same.

Pope St. Gregory the Great had no desire to become pope. He wanted to live the life of a prayerful monk, yet when God's plans seemed different than his own, he was docile to the work of the Holy Spirit and said yes. Pope St. Gregory the Great stepped out of his comfort zone, and because of that, the world was forever changed. We, too, must be brave like Gregory.

St. Francis Xavier Cabrini desired to go to minister in China but was told by the pope to head West (to America) and not East. She was called to serve immigrants in the United States and we are very grateful for her adaptability. She bent her will to the will of God. We must do the same.

In our own lives, this will look different than it did for St. Paul, St. Gregory and St. Francis Cabrini, yet it will inevitably require us to be courageous and adaptable. We would never have chosen this past year to take place as it has, and yet in the midst of the sadness, sorrow and suffering, we have seen the power of God at work within the hearts of many. I personally have seen a desire for the Sacraments well up within the hearts of the faithful. I have seen college students respond to this situation many times even better than people my own age.

Back to the young woman

mentioned above, a few days after our first phone call, we spoke again. We planned a new date for the wedding, a wedding that will be smaller and different than originally planned, yet a wedding that will be meaningful and sacramental. The joy I heard in the voice of this young woman inspired me as we set up this new plan. For her, things did not go as she had hoped, yet because of her saintly adaptability she recognized that in the end, God is in control and our lives are in his hands.

I will conclude by saying thank you to all of you who have been a witness of docility, humility, and courage this year. Together we will adapt, and we will

get through this. Blessing to all.

Father Gale Hammerschmidt is the pastor of St. Isidore Student Center in Manhattan. E-mail questions to him at faithandreasons7@gmail.com or write him at P.O. Box 1038, Salina, KS 67402.

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AROUND THE DIOCESE

Diocese ranks No. 7 nationally for #iGiveCatholic campaign

From page 2

about the need was the first step.

"I think their actions have spoken pretty loudly," Bolton said. "People were very generous once advanced giving began (on Nov. 16). The first week was full of donations online and offline."

The main priority is to stabilize the parish's general operations, she said.

"We hoped to use it as a catch-up campaign because of lower collections," Bolton said. "We wanted to make sure that we are prepared for this coming year with all of the uncertainty, to be sure we can provide and continue to provide support for the different groups we have."

"This year, having had lower income than normal,

Top 10 fundraisers in Salina Diocese for #iGiveCatholic

1 — Manhattan Catholic Schools	Manhattan	\$128,423.70
2 — St. Thomas More Church	Manhattan	\$72,639.38
3 — St. Andrew Grade School	Abilene	\$40,682
4 — St. Mary Church and School	Ellis	\$33,872.55
5 — St. John's Catholic Schools	Beloit	\$33,376.76
6 — St. Andrew Church	Abilene	\$29,299
7 — Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas		\$18,875
8 — St. Francis Xavier School	Junction City	\$18,470
9 — Holy Family Elementary	Hays	\$17,950
10 — Thomas More Prep-Marian Jr./Sr. High	Hays	\$15,600

expenses don't slow down even when the income does."

NATIONALLY, THE Salina Diocese ranked No. 7 among fundraising for #iGiveCatholic, Kenny said.

"I see and feel a strong sense of community, especially in our rural areas," she said. "It is a sense of coming together, as an expression of gratitude, to lift up, celebrate and support others who need it most. #iGiveCatholic on #GivingTuesday has a way of rallying the faithful, even if it is a virtual rally, in order to support our Church."

The date for #iGive Catholic in 2021 will be Nov. 30.

For more information, please visit salina.igivecatholic.org.

we continue to operate. We have maintenance and upkeep of our facility. Those

Schools expand technology, collaboration to aid students

From page 5

taught at the school for 18 years before assuming duties as principal in 2019.

"We have small classes, so we can easily social distance," she said of the 48 students in the school.

When the students are in close proximity, such as in the hallways, lunchroom or working in small groups, they mask up.

"The kids are really compliant," she said. "They want to be in school, they want to be with their friends, so they wear the masks. Not even one student has fought the system."

In Logan County, almost 250 cases of COVID-19 have been reported this year, including Selzer's husband. Once he tested positive for the virus, she quarantined at home and worked from her dining room table.

"It was an opportunity to lead by example," she said. "I showed people I could stay home and work from here. The staff worked together really well and knew I was just a phone call away. It went very smoothly."

In addition to masks and distance, the most significant difference in the school building is a lack of visitors.

"The parents not coming into the building is sad," Selzer said. "I would really like them to be back in the building. In the past we've always invited family and grandparents to a Thanksgiving meal, but we can't have them in our building this year."

An area of growth in the past 12 months has been technology. As a result of COVID-19, the state of Kansas received money from the CARES Act and developed a grant titled SPARK (Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas). Money was allotted to each school district to expand technology, making remote learning accessible to all students.

"We've jumped head first into an increase in technology that we wouldn't have had the opportunity to do if not for the pandemic," Andrews said. "We have 6-year-olds who know how to Zoom and submit assignments online. We've seen people learn about a new way to communicate."

Cook said that even when the students are on-site, the school utilizes Zoom. In years past, the student body would gather on Thursday morning to pray the rosary as a group.

"We've moved it all to Zoom," she said. "The whole school is on Zoom and praying. It's cool to walk down the hallway and hear every classroom in unison praying the rosary."

ONE ADAPTION MADE AT Hanover was adapting a modified quarantine for several classes. A student in each room tested positive for COVID-19. The county mandated those students remain home in quarantine but permitted a modified quarantine for the rest of their class.

"It was a fairly large group that had to go into

quarantine," Cook said.

The school set up the gymnasium for the students and teacher who were in the modified quarantine.

"We were able to put tables up and each child had a table. We knew if they stayed at their table, they were 6 feet apart," Cook said. "There was a designated entrance into the gym for those students. The public school worked well with us. They packed to-go lunch containers for our students and left them outside the door. Then the teacher in quarantine would retrieve them."

COLLABORATION AND communication have been essential aspects of this school year, said Cook.

"The families are great about it. They gave us the same grace we are giving them," she said. "That's the key, to remember we're all in this together."

"We've learned a lot. We've come a long way since the spring, but we have more to learn. We're trying to make the best of the situation we can. It's all anyone can do right now."

Andrews credits families for the ability to continue in-person learning.

"Our families are taking the necessary precautions to keep their families safe, which in turn keeps our school safe," he said. "This school year has added workload, planning and stress to all involved. Principals, teachers, students and families are doing their best to continue keeping schools open."



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— Is. 9:1, 5a


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As you consider your blessings at year end, you are invited to prayerfully consider a gift to the Diocese of Salina.

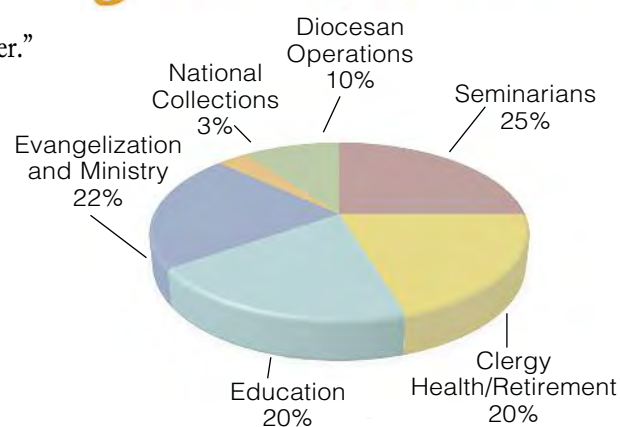
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Currently the diocese has 8 men in formation with others making inquiry.

With annual costs of more than \$525,000, the diocese relies on generous gifts from donors, endowments, the annual appeal and grants to educate our seminarians.



Photo by Karen Bonar / The Register
Deacon Brian McCaffrey assists Bishop Jerry Vincke during the Liturgy of the Eucharist April 4 at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina.



Window at St. Edward Church, Belleville

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