

Features Editor: Kathy Troher | (262) 656-6363 after 9 a.m. | ktroher@kenoshanews.com

# Learning to navigate The Journey of Grief and Faith

BY DIANE GILES

dgiles@kenoshanews.com

PLEASANT PRAIRIE — Autumn often brings melancholy feelings of loss. In the Catholic Church, the feasts of All Saints Day on Nov. 1 and All Souls Day on Nov. 2 give the faithful pause to remember those who have passed on.

For some people who have lost loved ones — whether recently or long ago — the pain can be almost unbearable. Sometimes they need help learning how to walk the journey of grief and bereavement with faith and hope.

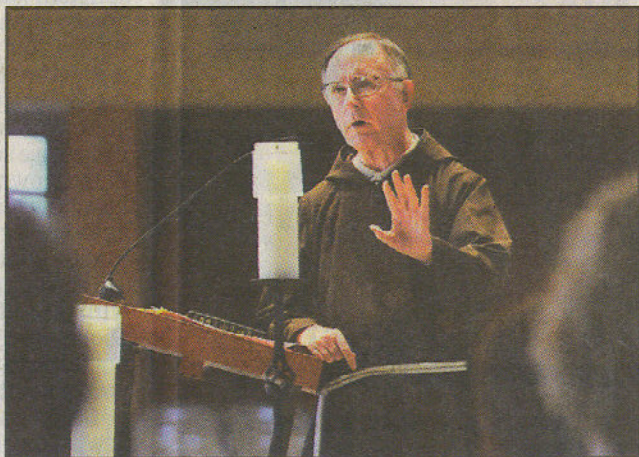
For people in need of such support, St. Anne Catholic Church is presenting a series of workshops titled The Journey of Grief and Faith. The first session took place earlier this week. One is planned for each of the next three consecutive Tuesday evenings.

“The reality of grief is so common, so significant,” St. Anne pastor the Rev. Donald Thimm said in explaining why the workshop was organized.

The series is facilitated by the Rev. Martin Pable of Milwaukee. Pable is a Capuchin friar who holds a doctorate in counseling psychology and currently teaches at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee.

Pable also conducted a workshop on Sept. 9 for Catholic bereavement ministries across Kenosha.

Starting on the path to healing, Pable said,



KENOSHA NEWS PHOTO BY BILL SIEL

**The Rev. Martin Pable presents the first of four sessions on bereavement and faith at St. Anne Catholic Church in Pleasant Prairie on Sept. 22.**

people need to give themselves permission to grieve and to use the resources available to them — spiritual resources and human ones. And they need to understand that time plays an important part in the process.

“Time is a great healer,” Pable said, adding that faith can help people get through their grief. Most importantly, those with faith can find solace in believing that they are not alone in their grieving. God is there.

Praying for guidance is helpful, but Pable

## If you go

**What:** The Journey of Grief and Faith, a series of workshops on bereavement, healing and hope presented by the Rev. Martin Pable

**When:** Three remaining sessions are Sept. 29, Oct. 6 and Oct. 13, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

**Where:** St. Anne Catholic Church, 9091 Prairie Ridge Blvd., Pleasant Prairie

**Other:** There is no cost to attend any or all of the remaining sessions but registration is encouraged.

**To register or for more information:** Call 262-942-8300 or e-mail [jcunningham@saint-anne.org](mailto:jcunningham@saint-anne.org)

said those who are grieving shouldn't be afraid to complain to God.

“‘Why’ questions are often there, especially if it's a sudden death or the death of a young person,” Pable said. “They can't be answered, but we turn to God and say, ‘Help me with this.’”

Pable suggested talking to the deceased loved one or writing them a letter when feelings of sadness and loneliness emerge. Being able to name those feelings as one grieves is

an important step in healing, he said.

Guilt is one of the hardest hitting emotions, one that often surfaces after tragic deaths and suicides. In those cases, people often blame themselves.

Pable said people need to forgive themselves and forgive the deceased person, too.

Guilt also can arise when a family has endured a lingering death. In those cases, death can be a relief, Pable said, but then loved ones often feel guilty for experiencing a sense of relief.

“Let go of the guilt,” he said. “People often just need to hear someone say that out loud. Sometimes that's all it takes.”

He cautions those in the grieving process not to separate themselves from their church community. Staying connected is vital.

Congregation members can play an important role in helping those on their journey of grief, Pable said. He encourages them to be there to listen.

“People often don't know how to respond to someone's grief,” Pable said, adding that others feel awkward and can end up trying to avoid the person. “That's why people in grief sometimes feel abandoned.”

Listen to the person, more than talk to them, and don't compare the person's grief with your own because everyone grieves in their own way.

“If you don't know what to say, say nothing. Just listen,” Pable advised.