



REFLECTIONS

FALL 2016

...recognizing our gifts of time, talent and treasure



STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Diocese of Austin

6225 Highway 290 E.
Austin, TX 78723
(512) 949-2400

Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez
BISHOP OF AUSTIN

Most Rev. Daniel E. Garcia
AUXILIARY BISHOP OF AUSTIN

Scott Whitaker
DIRECTOR
STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Lisa Rosenberger
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
ANNUAL APPEAL

Andrea Bizzanelli
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
CATHOLIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Margaret Kappel
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
STEWARDSHIP

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUSTIN



@AustinDiocese

CSA Commitment Weekend
November 5-6, 2016

2016-2017



Living Water

Drink and you will never thirst

But whoever drinks the water I shall give
will never thirst; the water I shall give
will become in him a spring of water
welling up to eternal life.

Jn 4:14



Our Catholic faith in the Diocese of Austin is vibrant and flourishing. Each November, parishes across the diocese participate in the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA). Through the CSA, Catholics are able to join together to support diocesan ministries. Your gift to the CSA allows us to provide:

- quality formation for 44 seminarians and 226 active priests;
- an education for thousands of students at our 22 Catholic school campuses;
- formation for our deacons, catechists and lay ministers;
- housing and care for our 33 retired priests; and
- direct assistance to countless families in need through Catholic Charities of Central Texas.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >>>



Upcoming DIOCESAN EVENTS

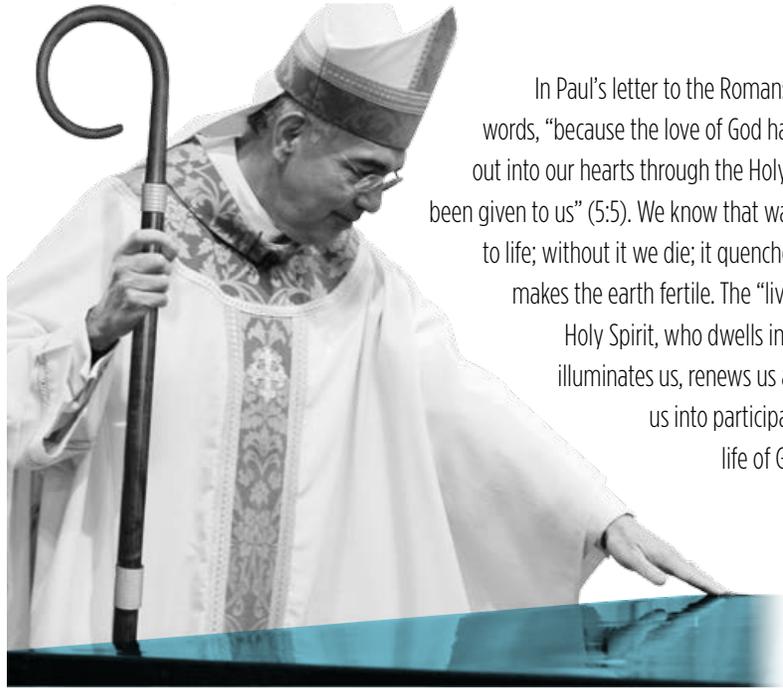
OCTOBER 13
25th Annual Red Mass
St. Mary Cathedral, Austin

OCTOBER 11
Pastoral Plan Gathering
Ascension Parish, Bastrop

NOVEMBER 5-6
**Catholic Service Appeal
Commitment Weekend**

DECEMBER 14
**Assembly of Catholic
Professionals Luncheon**
Hyatt Regency, Town Lake

For event information,
visit www.austindiocese.org



In Paul's letter to the Romans we find these words, "because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (5:5). We know that water is essential to life; without it we die; it quenches, washes and makes the earth fertile. The "living water," the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, purifies us, illuminates us, renews us and transforms us into participants in the very life of God that is love.

The CSA provides us with a chance to open our hearts and be involved in diverse ministries that affect our entire Catholic community. The sacrificial act of giving helps those in need, promotes a culture of life, supports religious vocations, educates our youth and helps our personal faith grow. This commitment to stewardship allows the diocesan church to provide the necessary resources that one parish could not provide alone. Your donation to the CSA is a powerful witness of God's love.

At the heart of it all, the ministry needs are opportunities to deepen our faith by encountering Jesus Christ and becoming an instrument of Christ's love not only to our communities in central Texas, but to building a community of faith that will last for generations.

Each of us is called to do our part to build the community of faith, but some are particularly called to be a part of Bishop Joe Vásquez' leadership team that sets the tone for the CSA and helps to build momentum through leadership gifts. When you pledge a gift of \$2,500 or more to the CSA, you will become a member of the Good Shepherd Society. As a member of the Good Shepherd Society, you provide much needed support to Bishop Vásquez as he leads his flock on a journey of faith. Look for more details in your CSA mailings.

As faithful stewards of God's gifts, please prayerfully consider how you are able to give to the Catholic Services Appeal in support of our diocesan ministries and how you can continue to advance the gospel message.

1 Peter 4:10
As each one has received a gift,
use it to serve one another as
good stewards of God's varied grace.

REFLECT ON

Whoever believes in me,
as scripture says:
"Rivers of living water will flow from within him."
Jn 7:38



Sharing the “Balm of Mercy” in the *Jubilee* Year

By: Sharon Perkins

With these words our Holy Father revealed his heartfelt vision for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which began on Dec. 8, 2015, and will draw to a close with the liturgical Solemnity of Christ the King on Nov. 20, 2016. An immense vision, indeed, but one which has captured not only the imagination of the universal Church but the world which we inhabit.

A priest of our diocese recently expressed the wish that the Jubilee Year could be extended beyond November into another year. Not a bad idea! The closing of the Holy Doors, while symbolic of the end of the celebration, certainly doesn't mark the end of this great outpouring of mercy. Mercy—both our reception of God's compassionate love and the extension of it to others—is endless.

Being “merciful like the Father” means that the expressions of mercy are not abstract ideas, but *concrete realities*. Psalm 146 is a great reminder of just how concretely God expresses his mercy: “secures justice for the oppressed, who gives bread to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free; the Lord gives sight to the blind. The Lord raises up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord protects the resident alien, comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow. . . ,” and so on. Sounds a lot like the seven Spiritual and seven Corporal Works of Mercy, doesn't it?

“How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst!”

- Pope Francis, Misericordiae Vultus, par. 5

Whenever a disciple of Christ feeds the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty, comforts the sorrowful, instructs the ignorant, or prays for the living and the dead—to name a few—it's not only a “work” of charity, but the “mercy” of God, which is extended. Without “mercy,” one can perform many charitable activities and yet, fail to recognize the wellspring of divine compassion from which they flow. Conversely, one can claim to understand and receive God's mercy, but without allowing that mercy to overflow into practice, it's hard to see any sign of “the Kingdom of God already present.”

This is why Jesus—“the face of the Father's mercy” who announced that “the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk 1:15)—was also prompt to take *action* when he encountered human suffering, whether that was feeding the 5,000, healing the leper, consoling the widow of Nain or instructing his followers in the ways of generosity and peace. When you or I follow Jesus' example, our words and deeds bring the Father's mercy to others in

very tangible ways.

Walking through the Holy Doors of the Jubilee is merely the beginning. Let us continue to pour out the balm of God's mercy as an unmistakable sign that the Kingdom of God is near.



Jubilee of MERCY

Diocese of Austin



ENCOUNTER *that leads to* TRANSFORMATION

By: Charlene O'Connell

It's that time of year when children and young people are back in school, some eagerly, some not to engage in the educational process. Prior to the start of school, teachers prepared their classrooms and organized their lesson plans, hoping their students will learn the lesson content and grow in their abilities to think and reason.

The introduction of the Diocese of Austin's Pastoral Plan makes clear that this plan is an invitation to all the people of the diocese to "continue on their pathway of discipleship through a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ." To "all the people" includes you who are reading this reflection, attending Mass on Sunday, participating in parish life; you are called to an encounter with Jesus Christ.

Did you ever wonder how God calls us into an encounter with him?

Did you ever think about how God teaches us? The *General Directory for Catechesis* describes the way God teaches us as a process in which God initiates. He is the one who first reaches out to us to invite us into a relationship with him for which he created us. When we pay attention, when we are good students, we call this an encounter, which is also meant to continuously transform us on our journey towards discipleship. What methods does God use? Like a creative classroom teacher, just about anything that will get our attention. A breathtaking sunset, gentle rain, a child's laughter, a hug from a loved one, all these and more often evoke a sigh, a "wow," maybe even a "thank you, God" response.

What is the content of God's lesson plan?

Some may think it is the Bible and the teachings of the church. It is that and more because, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Scripture and Tradition have the same source, the person of Jesus Christ.

We grow in our knowledge of this content as we mature in our relationship with Jesus Christ and live as his followers, his disciples. The Pastoral Plan points out that this discipleship is evident when we work together, when we share in Jesus' mission and ministry collaboratively.

In every classroom setting, students must demonstrate that they have understood and learned the content of their lessons. In what ways do we witness to our learning God's lesson plan? "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34-35).

Goal 3 of the diocesan Pastoral Plan provides ideas about we can specifically demonstrate our love for one another and that we are learning the content of God's lesson plan. What can you do to be an excellent student? Pay attention to the many ways God initiates his desire to be in relationship with you. Begin now to be a better presence of Christ within your relationships and acknowledge those moments when you encounter Christ with others. You can build on this encounter and work more effectively and collaboratively with others. Finally, you have an opportunity to show that you are learning God's lessons by serving our sisters and brothers in need and by joyfully witnessing our Catholic faith with others. For more information about the Diocese of Austin's Pastoral Plan, resources and ideas, go to:

www.austindioceseplan.org

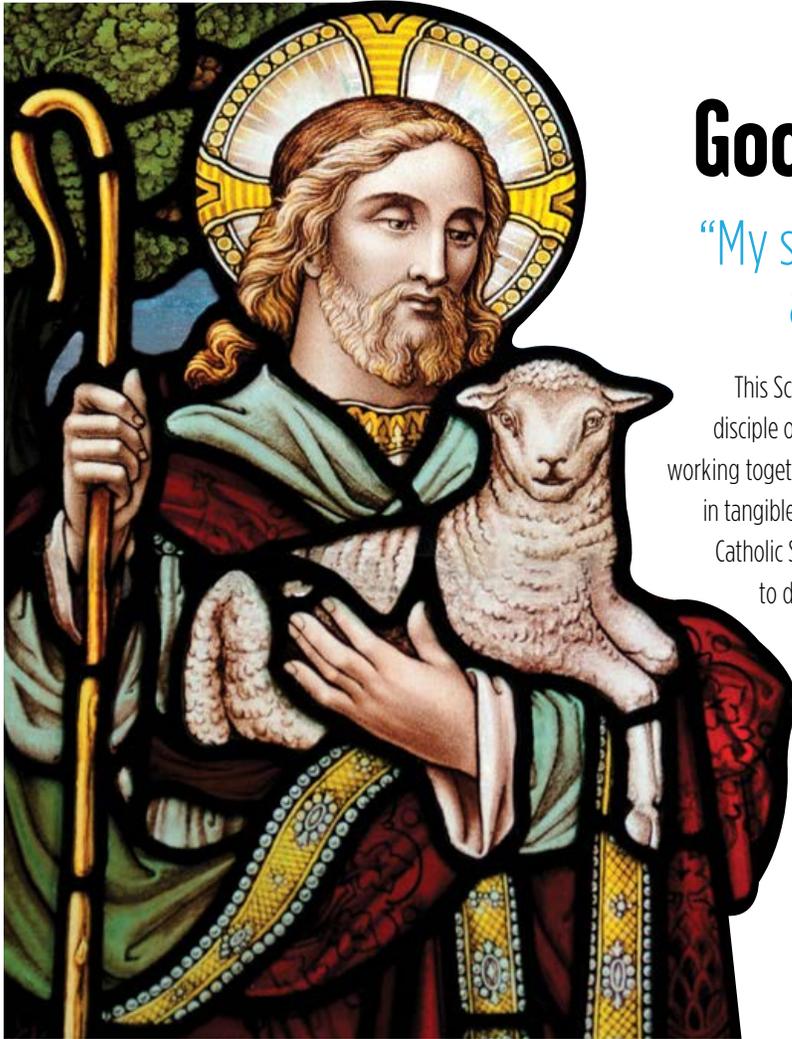


Please join us!

Good Shepherd Society

“My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (Jn 10:27)

This Scripture brings life and meaning to our discipleship in its truest sense, for to be a disciple of Christ, one needs to follow Him with a spirit of selflessness and sacrifice. By working together with a common purpose and vision, we can help bring his healing presence in tangible and meaningful ways through important diocesan programs supported by the Catholic Services Appeal. We pray that you will accept the call to a greater commitment to discipleship and aid Bishop Vásquez as he leads his flock on a journey of faith. Members of the **Good Shepherd Society** take a leadership role in advancing the mission of the Diocese of Austin, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and supporting those in need in our entire community.



Good Shepherd Society Members are those who give \$2,500 or more annually to the Catholic Services Appeal.

Levels of Participation

For more information about this new giving opportunity, please visit www.austindiocese.org/csa/goodshepherd



\$10,000+ Circle of Faith

Members receive an invitation to a private dinner with Bishop Vásquez, an invitation to a reception with Bishop Vásquez, recognition in our annual publication and a Christmas ornament.



\$5,000+ Circle of Hope

Members receive an invitation to a reception with Bishop Vásquez, recognition in our annual publication and a Christmas ornament.



\$2,500+ Circle of Charity

Members receive an invitation to a reception with Bishop Vásquez and recognition in our annual publication.



NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTIN, TEXAS
PERMIT NO. 1504

**STEWARDSHIP AND
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

Diocese of Austin

6225 Highway 290 E.
Austin, TX 78723
(512) 949-2400

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Celebrating Saints 



Theresa
of the Child Jesus

(1873-1897), VIRGIN | MEMORIAL – OCTOBER 1

The story of St. Theresa, “the Little Flower,” is well-known. Born in France in 1873, she entered a cloistered Carmelite monastery at 15, lived a simple life full of humility and trust in God, and died of tuberculosis at age 24. In her autobiography, she tells of reading the familiar passage in 1 Corinthians about the varieties of gifts and finding there her particular vocation. After listing the various gifts of the Spirit, St. Paul compares the body of Christ to the human body, noting that both are made up of many parts with various functions. Then he defines the greatest of all gifts, love. It was this charisma that St. Theresa claimed as her own. “O Jesus, my love, at last I have found my calling: my call is love.” One commentator says, “She gives witness to two outstanding virtues that are needed by all devout Christians: a radical humility that makes us aware of our weakness and our total dependence on God, and secondly, complete surrender to the infinite mercy of God in an act of perfect love.” That’s a pretty good description of total stewardship, too!

*Adapted from Sharon Hueckel, **Steward Saints for Every Day**, Copyright © 1999, the National Catholic Stewardship Council, Inc., Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.*