In Response to Love

By Cherise Klekar

When I was a little girl, I had many dreams about my future. I don’t know, however, that I would have ever been able to imagine that I’d one day be living in Rome, Italy preparing to take my vows as a consecrated woman in the community of the Apostles of the Interior Life.

I grew up in the country outside the small town of Hallettsville. From my family, I learned many things, the most important being that I am immensely loved by them and by God. We never missed a Sunday Mass, prayed before every meal, and at night all four of us knelt around my brother’s bed to say our prayers.

A very important opportunity in high school for me was that I participated in several Teen A.C.T.S. Retreats that helped me live my faith with other young people. It was at this time that I began to recognize a growing desire to know more about my faith and to have a more consistent prayer life.

It wouldn’t be until I was a student at Texas A&M that I would begin to discover different ways of prayer to quench this new hunger and thirst inside of me. But even before that, the Lord gave me what I consider to be one of the biggest graces of my life: the desire to attend Mass every day. And so, the summer before my senior year of high school, I began to attend Mass daily at Sacred Heart Church in Hallettsville. Some mornings I was tired and dozed off at different points of the Mass but since that initial decision to start going, I never doubted my decision. It was as if someone was always inviting me, waiting to encounter me there, and inside of me, I began to ask him: Who are you?

Once at A&M, I immediately got involved at St. Mary’s Catholic Student Center. To say that faith is alive and thriving in college students might be an understatement. No longer was I the only one my age at daily Mass: I was now

See In Response to Love, pg. 16

Hallettsville native, Cherise Klekar, returns to Texas from Italian community to take the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. The Mass of her vows will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2019, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Mary’s Catholic Center in College Station. A Mass of Thanksgiving at Sacred Heart Church in Hallettsville will be Sunday, December 8, at 10:30 a.m. where she will be with her community and family. It’s open to all.
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In September a group of American bishops and Catholic leaders visited the border area of El Paso, Ciudad Juarez and Hatch, New Mexico. One of the days we visited a temporary shelter and a Catholic Church in Ciudad Juarez. I remember standing under a shade tree at the shelter as Bishop Seitz of El Paso, a couple of other people and I talked with a group of men from Central America. At one point Bishop Seitz asked the men how many had family with them. Every one raised his hand. On that same day we prayed with some people who were getting on buses with their families to return to their country of origin.

Another memory of the day came from an encounter with a woman from Nicaragua who was a parishioner at a Catholic Church within sight of the Border Wall. She said that she had left Nicaragua with her family because she and some other Catholics had opposed certain actions of their government. As she shared her story of becoming part of the community in that neighborhood of Ciudad Juarez she challenged us with the words - “we are not all rapists and murderers.”

The pastoral visit made present to me some of the realities we experience as members of the universal Church. The Catechism teaches us:

1267 Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: “Therefore . . . we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:25). Baptism incorporates us into the Church. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13).

I don’t think it really is anything new today, but people can easily slip into generalizations and stereotypes when they don’t know the situation. The situation along the border is very complicated and people can come to seemingly clear and simple answers. As the political discussions continue I’ve begun to realize that almost all the people along the border are our baptized brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. While we pray for and offer advice for our politicians who are working on an extremely difficult situation we must never lose sight of the humanity of the people involved.

During the Catholic Conference in Victoria this year several speakers shared their stories of pastoral visits to the border. Men and women from the diocese have taken turns assisting Catholic Charities in the Rio Grande Valley – sharing human compassion with people in difficult situations. The Knights of Columbus Supreme Council recently offered a very large charitable donation to the Border Refugee Assistance Fund. Bishop Seitz initiated this fund to help the Diocese of Ciudad Juarez in its efforts to care for men and women as they wait for the opportunity for an interview in the United States. In a beautiful act of solidarity brother Knights from both sides of the border are helping care for migrant families.

As we prepare to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday across our nation, let our hearts always remain sensitive and compassionate for the most vulnerable. I give thanks to God for your witness to me every day – your whole-hearted love and faithful witness are truly inspirational. May the Lord bless you and your families with the gifts of faith and peace, let’s keep each other in prayer.

+Brendan

Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas,

En septiembre, un grupo de obispos estadounidenses y líderes católicos visitaron la zona fronteriza de El Paso, Ciudad Juárez y Hatch, Nuevo México. Uno de los días visitamos un refugio temporal y una Iglesia Católica en Ciudad Juárez. Recuerdo estar parado debajo de un árbol de sombra en el refugio como el obispo Seitz de El Paso, un par de otras personas y hablé con un grupo de hombres de Centro América. En un momento, el obispo Seitz le preguntó a los hombres cuántos tenían familia con ellos. Todos levantaron la mano. Ese mismo día oramos con algunas personas que se subían a los autobuses con sus familias para regresar a su país de origen.

Otro recuerdo del día vino de un encuentro con una mujer de Nicaragua que era feligrés de una iglesia católica a la vista del Muro Fronterizo. Ella dijo que había dejado Nicaragua con su familia porque ella y algunos otros católicos se habían opuesto a ciertas acciones de su gobierno. Mientras compartía su historia de convertirse en parte de la comunidad en ese barrio de Ciudad Juárez, nos desafió con las palabras: “no todos somos violadores y asesinos”.

La visita pastoral me presentó algunas de las realidades que experimentamos como miembros de la Iglesia universal. El Catecismo nos enseña:

1267 El bautismo nos hace miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo: “Por lo tanto ... somos miembros de otros”. (Efesios 4:25). El bautismo nos incorpora a la Iglesia. De las fuentes bautismales nace el único Pueblo de Dios del Nuevo Pacto, que trasciende todos los límites naturales o humanos de las naciones, culturas, razas ysexos: “Porque por un Espíritu todos fuimos bautizados en un solo cuerpo” (1 Co. 12:13).

No creo que realmente sea algo nuevo hoy, pero las personas pueden caer fácilmente en generalizaciones y estereotipos cuando no conocen la situación. La situación a lo largo de la frontera es muy complicada y la gente puede llegar a respuestas aparentemente claras y simples. A medida que continúan las discusiones políticas, comencé a darme cuenta de que casi todas las personas a lo largo de la frontera son nuestros hermanos y hermanas bautizados en el Cuerpo de Cristo. Mientras oramos y ofrecemos consejos a nuestros políticos que trabajan en una situación extremadamente difícil, nunca debemos perder de vista la humanidad de las personas involucradas.

Durante la Conferencia Católica en Victoria este año, varios oradores compartieron sus historias de visitas pastorales a la frontera. Hombres y mujeres de la diócesis se han turnado para ayudar a Caridades Católicas en el valle del Río Grande, compartiendo la compasión humana con personas en situaciones difíciles. El Consejo Supremo de Caballeros de Colón recientemente ofreció una donación caritativa muy grande al Fondo de Asistencia para Refugiados de la Frontera. El obispo Seitz inició este fondo para ayudar a la diócesis de Ciudad Juárez en sus esfuerzos por cuidar a hombres y mujeres mientras esperan la oportunidad de una entrevista en los Estados Unidos. En un hermoso acto de solidaridad, los hermanos Caballeros de ambos lados de la frontera están ayudando a cuidar a las familias migrantes.

Mientras nos preparamos para celebrar las vacaciones de Acción de Gracias en toda nuestra nación, dejemos que nuestros corazones permanezcan siempre sensibles y compasivos con los más vulnerables. Le doy gracias a Dios por tu testimonio a mí todos los días: tu amor sincero y tu testimonio fiel son realmente inspiradores. Que el Señor los bendiga a ustedes y a sus familias con los dones de la fe y la paz, manténganlos en oración.

+Brendan

Obispo Brendan Cahill
Mensaje del Pastor

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+Brendan

Bishop Peter Baldacchino of Las Cruces, N.M., holds a chili after celebrating Mass in Hatch September 26, 2019. Also pictured are Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Jose, Calif., Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, and Bishop Brendan J. Cahill of Victoria. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)
**Bishop Cahill’s Schedule**

**November**

- **1-10** Holy Sepulchre Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
- **11-14** USCCB General Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland
- **18** Noon Mass with the Missionary Catechists, Victoria
- **19** 6:30 a.m. Relevant Radio Morning Air Show
- **20** 10:00 a.m. Kenedy Foundation Board Meeting, Corpus Christi
- **21** Noon meal with Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters at Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria
- **23** 10:00 a.m. CRL Harvest Mass of Thanksgiving at Whistling Duck Winery, Weimar
- **24** 9:30 a.m. Ministry of Acolyte Mass at St. Mary’s Seminary, Houston

**December**

- **3** 6:00 p.m. Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre Christmas party at Victoria Country Club, Victoria
- **4** 8:05 a.m. School Mass and Visit at St. Joseph, Yoakum
- **5** 8:15 a.m. School Mass and Visit at St. Phillip, El Campo
- **6** 6:00 p.m. Mass at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, Victoria
- **25** 7:00 p.m. Mass at St. Rose of Lima, Schulenburg
- **27-29** Thanksgiving Break - Happy Thanksgiving!
- **30** Mass with the Carmelites, Meyersville

**December**

- **20** 10:00 a.m. Presbyteral Council at the Chancery, Victoria
- **21** 1:30 p.m. Pension Board Meeting at the Chancery, Victoria
- **23** 5:30 p.m. CCD visit at Holy Family Church, Wharton
- **24** 5:30 p.m. CCD visit at Holy Family Church, Port O’Connor

**December**

- **27-29** Thanksgiving Break - Happy Thanksgiving!
- **30** Mass with the Carmelites, Meyersville

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**FEAST OF THE HOLY ROSARY** — The opening Mass of the Rosary Congress was held at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory on the eve of the feast of the Holy Rosary, also known as Our Lady of Victory, on Sunday, October 6. Bishop Brendan Cahill celebrated the Mass to a standing room only crowd. Bishop Cahill was assisted by seminarian, Deacon James Dvorak and other seminarians of the Diocese of Victoria. Mass was concelebrated by Father Bryan Heyer, Father Gary Janak, and Father Gabriel J. Mensah. Throughout the week in the Diocese of Victoria people gathered in their parish to pray the rosary, have adoration in front of the blessed sacrament, along with other events.

**POUR OUT YOUR HEARTS BEFORE HIM** — On October 4, 2019, at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria, Bishop Brendan Cahill installed the Deacon Candidates as acolytes. They will be ordained as Permanent Deacons in November 2020. Continue to pray for these men.

Please remember in prayer the priests of the Diocese of Victoria,

*Prayer from St. Augustine*

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Please remember in prayer the priests who served in the Diocese of Victoria, who died during the month of November:

- Rev. John Kollannur 11/19/2017
- Rev. Peter Higgins 11/20/2012
- Rev. Gregory O’Connor 11/26/1986

“May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace”
Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Wendy Eggert, Director
Shannon Thomas, Associate Director
ym@victoriadiocese.org
(361) 573-0828
www.victoriadiocese.org/youth-young-adult-ministry

Upcoming Events

Victoria College Campus Ministry Events:

• Every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m.
  - Rosary or Divine Mercy
  Chaplet at the Student Center
  • November 19, at 12:15 p.m.
  - Mass and Thanksgiving Meal in the Student Center
  • December 3, from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
  - Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Student Center

Happy Birthday to Our Seminarians

Shane Goertz is in Pre-Theology II this year at St. Mary’s Seminary, in Houston. His birthday was October 28. Shane’s home parish is St. Mary in Spring Prairie. Write to Shane at: St. Mary’s Seminary, 9845 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77024.

“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

Matthew 4:18-22

How to Support DSA

The Diocesan Services Appeal (DSA) is committed to fund administration offices and programs that help bring the light of Christ to each of the priorities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in the Crossroads, Evangelization, Marriage and Family, and Human Life and Dignity are a few that Bishop Cahill has chosen to focus on. To support the DSA contact Rene Garcia at (361) 573-0828.

 Heavenly Helpers

Christian Store
(979) 543-2850
1603 N Mechanic
El Campo, TX 77437
M-F 9:30 - 5:30  Sat. 9:30 - 3:00

First Communion, Confirmation, Bibles, Books, Rosaries, Medals, Statues, Baptism & Wedding Items
Inspirational Gifts

The Emmaus Center

The Emmaus Center provides individual, couple, family, adolescent and children’s counseling as well as specialized support groups from a Catholic perspective. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (361) 212-0830.

Education of Seminarian Fund

The Education of Seminarian Fund is a fund in which all of the monies donated to this fund, as well as the earnings, are available to cover the cost of educating seminarians. The proceeds of the special collection on Holy Thursday are deposited into the Education of Seminarian Fund. Publication of this fund will appear when new contributions are received.

Donation categories:  Lector – $0.01 - $99.99; Acolyte – $100 - $499.99; Candidate – $500 - $1,499.99; Transitional Deacon – $1,500 - $2,499.99; Priest – $2,500 >.

Lector
Paz and Andrea Morales
in Memory of Fr. Dan Morales

Acolyte
Wayne & Jeanette Krenek
in Memory of Georgene Chumcal

Candidate
Robert & Kathryn Kennedy

Transitional Deacon

Priest

To contribute to the Education of Seminarian Fund, send contributions to:

Diocese Of Victoria
Education of Seminarian Fund
P. O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903

Vocation Posters Available

The Diocese of Victoria Vocation Posters are now available. Call the Chancery Office at (361) 573-0828 to place an order for your school, parish, organization or any individual that would like to have a poster.

Seminary Endowment Fund

Seminary Endowment Fund (formerly known as Seminary Burses) is a permanent fund used for the education of future priests for the Diocese of Victoria. The goal of each burse is $15,000. The interest from this amount is applied yearly to the education of seminarians. The burses are in memory of or in honor of an individual priest or layperson, living or deceased. Publication of the burses will appear periodically when new contributions are received.

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October 17, 2019
• Rev. Wayne Flagg and Rev. Philip Brune Seminary Burse

Lector
In honor of Joe and Waldine Skutca’s 50th Wedding Anniversary by Darryl and Barbara Meyer

Rev. Timothy Kosler Seminary Burse

Lector
In memory of Alice Jochen by Henrietta Veselka

Rev. Michael Rother Seminary Burse

Lector
In memory of Madison Danielle Hunter by Helen Dolezal

• Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #8

Candidate
In honor of Rev. Msgr. John Peters’ 71st birthday celebration by Allan and Evelyn Lanik

Lector
In honor of Rev. Msgr. John Peters’ 71st birthday celebration by Deacon Joey and Mary Targac

To contribute to an existing Seminary Endowment Fund, send contributions with the appropriate fund designation to:

Diocese Of Victoria
Seminary Endowment Fund
P. O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903
Sisterly Thoughts

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS

Giving Thanksgiving Its Due

I often feel that Thanksgiving somehow gets slighted. Sounds and sights of Halloween abound until the end of October; then our eyes and ears are bombarded with the trappings of Christmas, precluding sufficient time to appreciate Thanksgiving and Advent. So I’d like to spend some time considering Thanksgiving and its expression in many U.S. homes today.

For most of us, Thanksgiving is time for the family to gather and share time and a meal together. This is very good. However, sometimes I’ve seen the meal gathering and the giving of thanks take second place to the televised football games that some of us must watch, even if it means that we have to juggle the time of our meal to fit during half-time or between games. Now, nothing I, or anyone else, could say would influence Thanksgiving Day scheduling, so to emphasize the spirit of Thanksgiving, we could play our own game by comparing the football game to the game of life.

In our game, let’s look at the football itself as the gift of faith and at ourselves as the receiver. There are several things that can happen. If we are not ready or in position we can fail to catch the ball. Or if we do catch it, we can fumble it and lose it. Or we can run with it, and with the help of teammates, we can gain yardage toward our goal.

Now, we have to look at the most important game rule: we must continually move forward. Early in my Sisterly training, I learned that not going forward, or standing still, is to slide backward spiritually. So, every time we see a referee’s flag dropped to signal a violation, we can be reminded of our call to continue toward God as our goal. In football, we are allowed four downs, or attempts, to move the ball the specified ten yards. In our spiritual life, we have a loving God, who forgives us and gives us another chance as long as we keep working.

This Thanksgiving, then, we may want to begin looking at football on two levels: the first level is the way we generally watch football; the second is to look at it as symbolic of the successes and defeats in our own spiritual development.

Now that we’re attuned to the understanding of spiritually “running with the ball,” let us give thanks for some of the “great players” who ran extremely well. We have all the canonized saints from which we can choose our heroes. Close behind are our ancestors and all those who have been part of our faith traditions. Each of us can recall “great players” in our personal and family stories. If, instead of being hooked by the catchy commercials that so often accompany game coverage, we can share memories of our “greats” at our meal as well as during any football viewing that we might do, then we’ll end the day with heart-felt gratitude for our faith, our faith-filled fellow players, and the abundance that we have received.

Not a football fan? Okay, then directly reflecting on our blessings can be the center of our focus as we express our gratitude to God on this holiday. May God grant all of us the awareness of and grateful hearts for God’s bountiful love as we give Thanksgiving its due.

Thanksgiving Day Prayer

Father all-powerful, Your gifts of love are countless and Your goodness infinite. On Thanksgiving Day we come before You with gratitude for Your kindness: open our hearts to concern for our fellow men and women, so that we may share Your gifts in loving service.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

From Catholic Online
Into the Future Together

Sister Rosario Resendez, IWBS

As I began my third year of temporary vows with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Victoria, Texas the question I get the most from people is what is the future of consecrated life and what is it like today?

In July I went to Gomez Palacio in Durango, Mexico, where we (IWBS sisters) were holding a generational meeting to better get to know one another. Before we were to return we went on an outing to a town about two hours from Gomez, there was like a hundred of us there. Since there were so many of us, this took two buses.

On the way back a vehicle hit our bus and forced us off the road. When I felt the impact I grabbed onto Sister Digna Vela, IWBS, who had the aisle seat next to me to keep her from falling into the aisle, and I looked out the windows on the other side and saw the ground rising up. Feeling the momentum, I saw it happening and said those are the little sisters who carry my name. Their work isn't done yet.

able to hold onto Sister Digna anymore and that scared me the most. However, the bus didn’t flip.

Reflecting back on the accident for me it was very symbolic. This bus was full of the oldest sisters and the youngest ones. At the moment of impact, every young sister grabbed onto an older one, and held her until the bus finally stopped. We didn’t think twice about ourselves, we only thought about keeping them safe.

I believe this embodies the now of consecrated life and probably that of the Church. Every young and/or new sister grabbed onto an older one and we held each other. They needed our youth, our strength, and our vitality so that they could be okay. The young ones held onto them because we love them and value the wisdom they have and the traditions that they have set for us. To flourish, what we need is what happened on that bus, we need to embrace one another so we can get through the hard times.

The other bus soon arrived and those sisters immediately got off their bus to check on us. There were tears, consoling hugs, and care going around. Sisters even went to the vehicle that hit us to make sure they were okay. No one was seriously hurt.

Every sister who was on that bus will tell you that they saw the ground rising up and they felt the bus begin to flip. So I give all the credit to God on why that bus didn’t flip, because it really should have. I believe God saw it happening and said those are the little sisters who carry my name. Their work isn’t done yet.

Sister Rosario Resendez, IWBS (left) and Sister Socorro Soto, IWBS, from Gomez Palacio, Mexico take a selfie at the Generational Meeting.

IWBS Sisters gathered for morning prayer in the chapel in Gomez Palacio, Mexico. Pictured above from Victoria include Sisters Rosario Resendez and Digna Vela.

PET BLESSING—At the parishes and schools on October 4, pets were blessed in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. Pictured (l-r) are Father Matthew Huehlefeld, Father Kristopher Fuchs, and Bishop Brendan Cahill blessing pets.

FUTURE FIREFIGHTER—St. Rose of Lima School appreciates the Schulenburg Volunteer Fire Department for visiting on Monday, October 7, and presenting a program to all the students grades 3K-8. Firefighters spoke about fire safety, accident treatment, and explained how they use different types of gear and equipment as first responders. Students were able to try on fire fighting uniforms and also spray water! Keeping with tradition, the 8th grade class enjoyed a ride on the ladder truck. They thank the volunteer firemen Gary Eudy, Ryan Wotipka, Jared Willbanks, Michael Czimskey, Paul Zapalac, and Drew Brossmann for taking time from work to spend the morning with St. Rose students.
Gifts for Visiting Seafarers

The Apostleship of the Sea Ministry of the Diocese of Victoria reaches out to seafarers, fishers, their families, all who work or travel on the high seas and port personnel. Seafarers are often away from their home parishes, and some seafarers have no parish setting to help them maintain lasting ties with their faith and families.

During December, the Chaplains and ship visitors will take 20 to 25 gifts (depending on the size of the crew) to every vessel that enters the Port in Point Comfort. Some ship Captains distribute the gifts to their crews right away. Some put them under the ship’s Christmas Tree, if there is one. Some hold them and place one outside each seafarer’s cabin door on Christmas morning.

For seafarers working this Christmas it can be a lonely time, as they are hundreds of miles from home. For many of them the shoebox they receive while in Point Comfort will be their only gift during the holidays. More important than the contents of this gift is the welcome gesture of caring from people they have never met.

Want to help?

Start saving shoeboxes and collecting toiletries, playing cards, hotel soaps, postcards, new socks, pens and pencils, small games, hard candies, and other items that you might appreciate on a long trip at sea. These items can be placed in a standard shoe box, approximately 11” by 7” (no boot or children sizes) and gift wrapped. Or place items in a drawstring ditty bag that is approximately 12” by 15”. Most gifts are filled with an average of 10-12 different items taking care to ensure that gifts are of similar value.

Wrapping paper, tape, empty shoe boxes, ditty bags and/or individual items can also be donated for packaging by others. Monetary donations are also welcome. Collection points are at the Diocesan Chancery Office in Victoria or at Our Lady of the Gulf Church in Port Lavaca.

Suggestions of what to donate/include in Seafarer gift:
- Small Size Shampoo/Soap/Shower Gel
- Deodorant
- Kleenex/Q-tips
- Lip Balm
- Lotion/Powder
- Small Shaving Cream/Disposable Razors
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste/Dental Floss
- Nail Clippers/Fingernail File
- Small Texas souvenir
- Hand Towel/Wash Cloth
- Pair of White Athletic Socks
- T-shirts (size Medium or Large)
- Small Games/Playing Cards
- Microwave Popcorn
- Pencil Sharpener/Envelopes/Note Cards
- Hard Candy/Chewing Gum
- Toothpaste/Toothbrush/Dental Floss

A card with a personal note, although optional, is always most appreciated by the seafarers. Please avoid including items that will melt or break, and pack any batteries separately from the items they will power.

If you have any questions please contact Rhonda Cummins, Maritime Associate, at (361) 552-6140 and leave message, or email her at stellamaris@olgulf.org which is the better option.

The Invisible men

They are the ones who bring the ships across the seas to deliver their goods at the Port of Point Comfort-Port Lavaca and other ports of call.

It is those men and women that Rhonda Cummins, Father Tommy Chen and Bishop Brendan Cahill are working to help with the creation of a Seafarers Center at the port.

“Our past couple of months I’ve been working with Bishop Cahill and Father Tommy to start an ecumenical seafarer center at the port,” Rhonda told members of the Calhoun Port Authority during its meeting October 9.

There are Seamen Centers all over the world. It allows them to get away, get off the ship, getting help if they want, religious treatment from a nondenominational center there to help anybody, postcards, stamps, telephone cards and staying on a computer somewhere. (Excerpt from the Port Lavaca Wave Newspaper.)

Classroom Visitor—On October 1, Bishop Brendan Cahill had Mass at Holy Cross Church in Bay City and then visited Holy Cross School. He spent time in each classroom and talked with the students about their prayer life. He reminded the students to always pray for one another. Bishop Cahill is pictured above with the pre-k students answering their questions.

Staying healthy—St. Rose of Lima School, Schulenburg, students in grades 1-8 participated in Healthy High/Healthy Choices on Tuesday, October 8. The program strives to educate students in making good decisions about what they eat, how much physical activity they need, and how to behave respectfully and positively. The Healthy High/Healthy Choices program is sponsored by the Stanzel Family Foundation. Students had their weight, height, and blood pressure measured and participated in interactive presentations by local health professionals. Annually, the HH/HC serves over 1,000 students and engages over 100 volunteers and partnering organizations. Students have experienced a significant increase in understanding and change in behavior regarding healthy eating, exercise, hygiene, making and keeping friends, respect, safety, literacy, and other topics.
Gabriel Project Embarking on Journey

The Gabriel Project of the Crossroads is embarking on a journey to expand their services. For the past 17 years, the Gabriel Project has supported women in an unexpected or crisis pregnancy. These women are given support through a volunteer called an Angel. They help them with baby supply needs and they’re given emotional and spiritual support throughout their pregnancy and after their child’s birth.

Many of these women who are helped come with unstable housing situations that are subpar for having a peaceful pregnancy. The Gabriel Project of the Crossroads is now in the fundraising phase of opening the Bethlehem Maternity Home for women 18-30 years of age who are in a crisis pregnancy and need housing.

Help the Maternity Home reach its goal of acquiring $160,000 for operating expenses per year so that safe housing for these women becomes a stepping stone to a new life with their new baby. Regular monthly donations are what we call Circle of Life benefactors. These dependable contributions will ultimately keep the house running consistently smooth. You can go to the Gabriel Project of the Crossroads website https://victoriagabrielproject.org/maternity-home to find the donate button at the bottom of the page. Select the box that says, “Make this a monthly donation.” Then in the “Use Donation for” drop-down window, select Bethlehem Maternity Home.

The Bethlehem Maternity Home Fundraising Committee is putting together a raffle to help make someone’s Christmas season even brighter. Tickets will go on sale on November 2, at Victoria Downtown DeLeon Plaza. If your church’s youth group would like to set up a table after the weekend Masses to help them sell, again please call Stephanie Spears at (361) 648-4229.

SPECIAL MASS—The Knights of Columbus Council #3253 from Port Lavaca, sponsored their first Special Needs Families Mass and reception at St. Ann’s in Point Comfort. Father Tommy Chen, pastor, celebrated the Mass. It was a huge success.
The following sermon was written by Father Kram from the Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C.

I once heard a radio preacher foretell that within eleven months Europe would be reunited under the Catholic Church and then Christ would return. That was years ago and the preacher is now long resting in his grave.

One year I saw a man on TV predicting that the world would come to an end that year on September 23. Christian bookstores could not supply enough copies of his book to meet the demand. One of our doctors even made an entry in his notebook, “Do not go to clinic September 23 – end of world.” The man who made the prediction later stated that it took him a long time to get used to the fact that he had miscalculated the time.

I once observed a TV evangelist proclaiming that most Catholics, most Protestants and most religious people are going to hell.

Europe is still not Catholic and the world is still going strong, and since none of us have been to hell and back we have no first-hand information as to who is there.

So many predictions turn out to be unrealistic or downright embarrassing. Yet we find ourselves fascinated by pollsters and forecasters and prophets of all kinds.

The Old Testament is full of Prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, to name a few.

The greatest of the Old Testament Prophets was John the Baptist. His message was basically a plea for repentance and preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

In the New Testament Paul tells the Corinthians that God has set up in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, etc and that the prophet speaks to men for their up building their encouragement, their consolation and that he who prophesies builds up the church.

From the missions and accounts of the Bible prophets it soon becomes clear that a prophet is basically one who speaks in God’s name. In other words, not all the messages of the prophets concern the future.

After his death and resurrection Jesus commissioned the apostles to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that he had commanded them, and he promised to be with them until the end of the world.

So, is prophecy still alive among us? Very much so. The Church herself is a living teaching voice – a prophetic institution with the mission of speaking in God’s name. In fact, the scriptures teach that the Christian Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. We are its living stones, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

We regard the Pope as the Chief Overseer, the Elder of Elders, our shepherd under Christ, our leader in fulfilling the prophetic purpose of the Church. But united with Jesus, we all have a part in spreading God’s message to all mankind.

So it can be said that as members of Christ’s church we are all prophets of one kind or another.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a prophet – one who speaks in God’s name?

If so, think of yourself as a prophet.

If you are married and are striving to build strong marriage bonds and a strong and happy family life and are working hard to bring up your children in virtue and obedience – that is a prophet’s work as well.

If you behave well and study diligently in school or if in your old age you spend a lot of time praying and offering moral support to those who need it, you too are a messenger of God.

The Church is full of prophets of every status and age and vocation. What message are you proclaiming? What kind of prophet are you? Think about it.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of prophecy in the Church. Help us to be diligent in fulfilling our prophetic role whatever it may be. Grant that our efforts may go as far as possible in spreading the Faith to the ends of the earth. Amen.
A Story of Light and Hope

A Life-giving Electric System Saving Lives

Ten years ago, after fourteen years of civil war, Liberia was ravaged and poverty-stricken. One casualty of the war was the Ganta Hospital, which was struggling without electricity while trying to rebuild. The dedicated hospital staff worked hard to serve 24,000 patients a year, but surgeons were typically forced to finish operations with flashlights in their mouths, often without anesthesia equipment.

Steve Vincent was a successful Texas businessman with decades of experience working with U.S. electric power systems. When the United Methodist Committee on Relief asked him to help bring electricity to Ganta Hospital, he said “yes”...beginning a journey that would start him on his true God-ordained career that made this unique contribution to mankind possible.

As Steve says, “Why us? Why now? All the Power From The SON team were given talents. Had we been in school all our lives, until the Teacher decided our training was complete? When we were properly prepared, did he call us to step out of our boats to serve him by helping to provide the gift of electricity? Is that the way all of us should live our lives, experiencing and educating ourselves in preparing to do the impossible when God says, ‘It is time, I will be with you?’”

Steve Vincent was a successful businessman whose first career spanned thirty-four years in the electric utility industry. In his second career, his efforts have been redirected to provide state of the art electric systems to the neediest people in the world to improve their health and education through his organization Power From the SON. But it was his first career that made this unique contribution to mankind possible.

Pray the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet every day with Priests for Life

TITUSVILLE, FL—Catholics around the world can now pray the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet every day with Father Frank Pavone, National Director of Priests for Life.

On EndAbortion.TV, and about 20 social media video platforms simultaneously, a beautifully edited program will feature Father Pavone leading the rosary and chaplet at 3 p.m. ET, seven days per week.

The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary will be recited on Mondays and Saturdays; the Sorrowful Mysteries, on Tuesdays and Fridays; the Glorious Mysteries, on Wednesdays and Sundays, and the Luminous Mysteries, on Thursdays.

On each day, the Rosary will be followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Each broadcast lasts about 28 minutes.

“The Rosary is a devotion strongly embraced by the pro-life movement,” Father Pavone said. “This is so for good reasons, because in the Hail Mary we praise a mother, and we worship the fruit of her womb. Our salvation began because a mother said yes to the life within her! In the rosary we also say, ‘Pray for us sinners.’ We don’t point the finger at others, but rather at ourselves. We know that sin is that in the world, but we start by repenting of the sin within us. That is the best way to rebuild the Culture of Life.”

The Divine Mercy Chaplet also has strong links to abortion, Father Pavone said.

“In the revelations of Divine Mercy to St. Faustina, abortion was the primary sin for which God asked us to cry out for his mercy,” he said. “Today, the devotion to Divine Mercy deserves particular emphasis for those who have had abortions and for abortionists and clinic workers.”

Priests for Life is the world’s largest Catholic pro-life organization dedicated exclusively to ending abortion. For more information, visit www.EndAbortion.US.
KC’S HONOR PUBLIC SERVANTS—Grand Knight Manuel Gonzales, III, and Knights of Columbus Council #9088 members with their spouses honored over 340 public servants. Richard Castillo, Victoria County Fire Marshall, thanked all the public servants for their service commitment to their job. All these public servants are committed to helping and assisting the community. Pictured (l-r) are Mr. and Mrs. Richard Castillo, Bishop Brendan Cahill, and Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Gonzales, III.

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CDA COURT HOSTS RETREAT—Catholic Daughters of the Americas (CDA) Court Sacred Heart of Mother Teresa #2570 of Flatonia hosted a retreat and multi-district meeting on Saturday, September 14, 2019. National CDA Chaplain, Bishop Brendan J. Cahill was the guest speaker. The theme of the retreat was “Contemplating the Face of Jesus with Mary.” Over 100 members were in attendance representing 24 courts within the state of Texas. The retreat ended with the entire group reciting the rosary together. Dignitaries present were: Carolyn Malik, National Director, past State Regent, current State Parliamentarian; Libby Ramirez, past National Regent, past State Regent; Dee Scheetz, past State Regent; Terri Vacek, State Secretary; Virginia Olsovsky, State Treasurer; State Chairmen Anne Martin, Read Across America; Mary Rose Barta, Respect Life; Cynthia Novak, Ways and Means; Mary Lou Anderle, Spiritual Enhancement, Campus Courts; Linsay Tomlinson, Public Relations and Communications; District Deputies present Patsy Marburger, DD #8; Janet Purdy, DD #11; Dorothy Zabransky, DD #12; Dela Garza, DD #20; Joan Simper, DD #30; and Imelda Tovar, DD #44.

CDA HOSTS ARTS & CRAFT SHOW—The 7th Annual Arts & Craft Show/ Bake Sale of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Daughters of Holy Family #2665, Victoria, will be held on Saturday, November 24, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 25, after all Masses in St. Peters Hall at Holy Family Church 704 Mallette Dr. They will have many handcrafted items, and homemade baked goodies. Lunch will be available from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for take-out or dine-in.

NEW OFFICERS—Holy Family Altar Society, Victoria, recently installed their new officers for 2019-2020. Pictured are (l-r) Jackie Slusher, Treasurer; Millie Chapa, Corresponding Secretary; Debbie Mickalski, Parliamentarian; Betty Frederick, President; Debbie Bartram, 2nd Vice President; Janice Hanslik, 1st Vice President; and Patsy Price, Recording Secretary.
**DIOCESE**

**Passion Play Pilgrimage**

**September 29 – October 8, 2020**

Travel to visit Germany, Poland & Czech Republic

Highlights Attending:
- Oberammergau Passion Play (performed every 10 years);
- Mass at Our Lady of Victory to view the Jesus, Infant of Prague Statue;
- Shrine of Divine Mercy;
- Mass near the Tomb of St. Faustina;
- Birthplace of St. John Paul II

For a copy of the itinerary, Contact Dora Silva (361) 550-0103 or To obtain an itinerary visit the following website www.littleflowerpilgrimages.com/tour-index

**Supporting Education**—On September 9, 2019, the grand knight of Weimar Knights of Columbus Council #2153 Jack Muggli (left) presented St. Michael School, Principal Carolanne McAfee (right) with a $5,000 donation supporting their academic needs. The Weimar KC’s wish to thank Weimar and the surrounding communities for supporting their fundraisers because without their support these donations would not be possible.

**Students Caring for Hurricane Victims**—St. Paul High School in Shiner recently held a fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Dorian. The junior and senior students in Mrs. Neely Yackel’s Leadership Course wanted to do something to help those who are struggling to rebuild. The students researched the effects that Dorian had on areas hit, but particularly the devastation in the Bahamas. The students launched a ten-day campaign intending to raise $2,550 to donate to rebuilding efforts. The students ended up collecting close to $3,500 and are so appreciative of those who prayerfully donated to this cause. The KJZT Society #5 donated $250 to the students and Mrs. Yackel to help their cause. Shown are the students of Mrs. Yackel’s Leadership Class and KJZT members Dorothy Blackman and Rita Kurtz who presented the check to St. Paul High junior, Ted M.

**Did You Know ...**

10 lbs. in a Backpack = 72 pounds of Force to a Student’s Spine

**U.S. Bishops Meet Nov. 11-13 in Baltimore, New President Election**

WASHINGTON—The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will gather for the 2019 Fall General Assembly in Baltimore, November 11-13. During the assembly, the bishops, including Bishop Brendan Cahill of the Diocese of Victoria, will elect a new president, vice president, and six committee chairs. They will also discuss and vote on seven action items.

The assembly will begin with an address by the Papal Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre. The bishops will also hear from Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston as he gives his final address as USCCB president upon completion of his three-year term.

In addition to the election of a new president and vice president for the USCCB, the bishops will vote for new chairmen of six committees: Canonical Affairs and Church Governance; Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs; Evangelization and Catechesis; International Justice and Peace; Protection of Children and Young People; and Religious Liberty.

Public sessions of general assembly discussions and votes as well as portions of the day of spiritual discernment will be available via livestream at: http://www.usccb.org/live. Those wishing to follow the meeting on social media can use the hashtag #USCCB19 and follow on Twitter (@USCCB) as well as on Facebook (www.facebook.com/usccb) and Instagram (https://instagram.com/usccb).
El obispo Brendan J. Cahill de Victoria, Texas, saluda a un feligrés antes de celebrar la Misa en el Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos en El Paso, Texas, el 25 de septiembre de 2019, que fue parte de un encuentro pastoral de obispos estadounidenses con migrantes en la frontera. La visita pastoral, del 23 al 27 de septiembre, tuvo como objetivo acompañar a los migrantes.

(Foto CNS-Tyler Orsburn)

**Llamado a la esperanza emerge al visitar a rechazados**

Por Rhina Guidos

Catholic News Service

CIUDAD JUÁREZ, México (CNS) — Hasta julio, Ingrid tenía una exitosa carrera a sus 30 años como farmacéutica en su natal Nicaragua. Tenía casa propia, donde criaba a sus dos muchachos, de 8 y 12 años, y la expectativa de que sus hijos crevieran.

Pero en agosto, ese sueño se desplomó cuando una voz en el país en el cual ella pensaba que tanto amaba —le ofreció ayuda. En el grupo estaba el obispo parroquia católica en Ciudad Juárez, la cual explicó al grupo que estaba visitando una delegación de obispos de la Misión de los Obreros para la Amazonía.

En un video compartido con bloqueadores y agencias de medios católicos que se han quejado de que la estatua es un símbolo pagano, dos hombres pusieron las estatuas en la barandilla de un puente sobre el río Tiber, y las tiraron en el río, mirándolas flotar en la corriente.

Las estatuas de una mujer embarazada arrodillada “representaban la vida, la fertilidad, la Madre Tierra”, dijo el 21 de octubre a los reporteros Paolo Ruffini, prefecto del Dicasterio para la Comunicación.

El robar las estatuas y tirarlas al río, dijo, “es un gesto que va contra el espíritu del diálogo”. “No sé qué decir aparte de que fue un robo, y quizá eso habla por sí mismo”, dijo Ruffini. La policía está investigando el robo. Las estatuas se habían colocado en varios lugares de la iglesia de San Francisco de Traspontina donde se habían llevado a cabo diariamente los servicios de oración conectados con el sínodo desde que comenzara la reunión a comienzos de octubre.

Las estatuas estuvieron presentes el 4 de octubre, cuando el papa Francisco se dio un árbol en los jardines vaticanos y encendió el sínodo a San Francisco de Asís. Se utilizaron otras veces el 7 de octubre durante unas oraciones e intercesiones desde la Basílica de Santa María en Traspontina, donde había estado llevado a cabo diariamente el servicio de oración conectado con el sínodo desde que comenzara la reunión a comienzos de octubre.

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Por Cindy Wooden

**Catholic News Service**

ROMA (CNS) — Dos hombres entraron a una iglesia católica cerca del Vaticano el 21 de octubre y robaron copias de una estatua de una mujer embarazada que había sido la pieza central en varios servicios de oración conectados con el Sínodo de los Obispos para la Amazonía.

En un video compartido con bloqueadores y agencias de medios católicos que se han quejado de que la estatua es un símbolo pagano, dos hombres pusieron las estatuas en la barandilla de un puente sobre el río Tiber, y las tiraron en el río, mirándolas flotar en la corriente.

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November

**Port Lavaca**—Our Lady of the Gulf Altar Society turkey and dressing dinner catered by Werner’s, Nov. 3 at St. Jude Hall. From 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Baked goods available.

**Victoria**—Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Festival Nov. 10 at the Victoria Community Center. Turkey dinner serving begins at 11:00 a.m. at $10 p/p. Live auction starts at 12:30 p.m. with a silent auction from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. There will be games, country store, and lots of fun.

Victoria—St. Mary Harvest Bazaar Nov. 16 at Activity Center (401 S. Liberty St.) from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Handcrafted holiday items, baked goods and more. A potato and tortellini soup lunch for $8 for dine-in or take out.

Victoria—Holy Family CDA #2665 Arts & Craft Show and Bake Sale Nov. 23 (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) and Nov. 24 after all Masses in St. Peters Hall at Holy Family. Featuring a variety of homemade crafts and gift items.

December

Victoria—KJIT #101 and KJIT #115 Christmas Party Dec. 1 at the Cathedral Center (St. Gabriel Hall) starting at 2:00 p.m. Bring a covered dish, meat provided. The meal served at 3:00 p.m. RSVP by calling Irene at (361) 573-2669.

Yorktown—Holy Cross CDA Court #1598, Annual Christmas Craft Show and Santa’s Cafe Dec. 7, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Community Hall (Community Hall Rd.). For more information call Myra Yeretsky at (361) 564-9663 / (281) 794-9213 or email holycrossyortowncraftshow@gmail.com.

Victoria—Bishop’s Dinner at the Spiritual Renewal Center, Saturday, Dec. 14, at 5:00 p.m. Enjoy an evening of food, fun and fellowship including Mass. For reservations and more information call (361) 572-0836.

**Wreaths Across America**

**Seeking Donations**

The 2019 Wreaths Across America ceremonies will be held on Saturday, December 14. The ceremonies are held at more than 1,600 locations across the United States, and plans for East Bernard, Hungerford and Wharton include:

**In East Bernard:**
- 11:00 a.m., Ceremony at Holy Family Cemetery

**In Hungerford:**
- 12:00 p.m., Wreaths will be laid at St. John’s Cemetery
- 4:00 p.m., Mass at St. John’s Church will be said for veterans buried at St. John’s Cemetery and veterans from the parish buried elsewhere

**In Wharton:**
- 1:00 p.m., Ceremony at Wharton Courthouse

The wreath-laying event is made possible by volunteers who organize local ceremonies, raise funds to sponsor wreaths, and participate in the events. The cost of this program is paid by individual wreath sponsors, corporate donors and volunteer truckers. To learn more, visit wreathsacrossamerica.org.

Donations to cover the costs of the wreaths for local ceremonies are being accepted through November 25.
  - Hungerford: Dorothy Viktorin (979) 532-2146
  - Wharton: Sarah Hudgins (281) 433-3357
  - East Bernard: Lorraine Chumchal (979) 335-6150

For more information call (979) 575-7111 / e-mail: God’s Embrace

**For more information see pg. 4.**

**Engaged Encounters—2020 Dates:** Jan. 24-26, April 17-19, June 5-7, Sept. 18-20, and Nov. 13-15, registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee must accompany registration form. For more information call (361) 573-0828 or visit www.victoriadiocese.org.

**Gabriel Project—Helps women experiencing a crisis pregnancy- an alternative to abortion. Victoria:** Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 101 W. Convent. Light supper included. For angel workshop/training dates, contact Lisa Kainer (361) 676-3264 or lisa_heysquierdo@yahoo.com; DeWitt County: Meets the third Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. (during the school year) at the Yorktown Public Library, 103 W. Main St. (78164); the coordinators for DeWitt Chapter are Wayne and Margie Smith (361) 491-0067; Lavaca County: Meets 6:00 p.m. (during the school year), contact Julie Kubena Lavaca County Coordinator at (361) 798-3579 for dates and location. See ad on pg. 8.

**Grief Ministry—**An on-going Grief Group meets at Holy Family Church, Victoria in the Conference Room, 7:00 p.m., on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month. Adults who have experienced the death of a loved one, may attend (after three months have passed). Please call Sharon at (361) 578-7572 before attending.

**i.d.9:16 Ministry—**For adults in their 20s-30s, single or married. Held at Holy Family in Victoria every first Thursday of the month. Starts with the 6:00 p.m. daily Mass, dinner, a talk live streamed from the headquarters in Michigan followed by fellowship. Childcare is available to those who RSVP. It is open to all young adults of the diocese. For more information or to RSVP for events, email id916victoria@gmail.com.

**Natural Family Planning**—NFP is the only church-approved form of family planning. For the CREIGHTON MODEL Fertility Care System (CrMS) featuring NaPro TECHNOLOGY™ contact Susanne Koch in Wharton at (505) 710-0903 or susanmekoch614@gmail.com.

**Raphael’s Refuge**—RR’s mission is to build and maintain a memorial in honor of babies, born and unborn. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Flatonia. Peer counseling and spiritual direction are available for those suffering a loss of a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth, infant death, or abortion. For more information, contact Midge Elam at (361) 865-3021, (361) 258-1514, or visit www.raphaelsrefuge.org.

**Retrouvaille—**Retrovaille, meaning rediscovery, is a marriage-healing ministry offered in the diocese to couples in difficult marriages. Contact John and Jennifer Vincent at johnv@sbgeglobal.net or (361) 580-2770; call (800) 470-2230; or visit www.helppourmarriage.org or www.retrouvaille.org.

**Masses • Retreats and more**

**ACTS Retreats**—Anyone needing any information regarding ACTS Retreats in the diocese should email dovactsharter@victoriadiocese.org.

**Amor Meus**

Contact: Sr. Digna Vela or Sr. Emilie Eilers (361) 575-7111 / e-mail: amormeus@yahoo.com

Website: www.amormeusspiritualitycenter.org

IWBS Convent • 1101 NE Water St. • Victoria

Guided one-day retreat (9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)

Nov. 16 — “Contemplative Prayer 101: Come spend the day listening to your Beloved” presented by Jeannette Easley

Nov. 19 – Taize’ Prayer, 7:00 p.m., Amor Meus Prayer Room

Dec. 1 – Solemn Vespers All Sundays during Advent

For more information see pg. 10.

**Submit Calendar of Events to lighthouse@victoriadiocese.org**
My prayer was simple yet bold. I wanted to know who I was, hoping that this would reveal what I should do with my life. After scribbling a brief and unimpressive list of identities, I spoke the shortest, most sincere prayer of my life: God, I don’t know who I am. You tell me. In the silence that followed, a soft voice whispered into my heart, words that somehow I knew had always been there: Cherise, before all else, you are loved. This encounter led me to two questions: who are you who loves me in this way? And, how can I respond to your love? My heart was finally open to hearing God’s call.

In the following months, I slowly began integrating more prayer into my daily life. I also began spending more intentional time with the Apostles of the Interior Life attracted by their joy and knowledge of the faith. I was intimidated by their mission to evangelize and guide people on their spiritual journey but, at the same time, I began desiring to share my experience of God with others.

By my senior year at A&M, I was ready to officially apply to their community. After graduation, I spent a year living in their house at College Station before moving to Rome where I have been residing ever since. I thought college was all about self-discovery, but that was before entering into formation!

Here in Rome, my formative journey has included meetings with my formator, theological studies, and experience in our apostolate: retreats, street evangelization, parish missions. Even just living in a community is rich with insights on the consecrated life. Of course, the main formation happens in the chapel where I seek to cultivate the loving relationship with God that my parents introduced me to years ago.

Now, after four and a half years of formation, I will finally be taking my vows as a consecrated woman in the community of the Apostles of the Interior Life. On this day, I will give to the Lord all that I am (chastity), all that I have (poverty), and all that I will become (obedience). Although it will certainly be one of the most important days of my life, it is also just the beginning of a life lived as the Bride of Christ in as many new and daily “yes’s” to his call must be said. I humbly ask you to accompany me in this time of preparation with your prayers. The Holy Mass of my vows will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2019, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Mary’s Catholic Center in College Station. Bishop Brendan Cahill will be present as a concelebrant of the Mass. For more information on my community or my vows celebration, you may go to www.apostlesofili.org. For more information on my journey, you may see my blog: www.cheriseklekar.blogspot.com.

How To Discern Your Vocation

1. Pray ~ Establish a routine prayer life of attending Mass regularly, praying the rosary, meditating on Scripture, journaling, making a retreat and spending time with the Lord in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

2. Talk ~ Contact your Diocesan Vocation Director and speak to them about your discernment thus far to get their advice on next steps.

3. Spiritual Direction ~ Spiritual Direction, often by a priest or consecrated person, attunes the heart to the voice of the Lord and will help you identify how the Holy Spirit is moving in your life.

4. Come & See ~ Often coordinated by the diocesan vocation office, these “Come & See” events offer a glimpse into the life of a seminarian/religious sister and will help you identify if this is the life to which God is calling you.

5. Get Involved ~ Consider volunteering in your parish or community and finding trusted friends who can provide support and accountability for your discernment journey.

6. Rest ~ Discerning a vocation should not be considered an “accomplishment” that you check off your to do list. It’s a daily walking with God that involves the whole person. A healthy life balance of eating well, exercising, and getting the proper amount of rest will positively contribute to your spiritual well-being!

Source: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops