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9 Seafarers
blessed with
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12 Holy Land
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in Fort Worth

17 Catholic Rural
Life gives thanks
for the harvest



The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



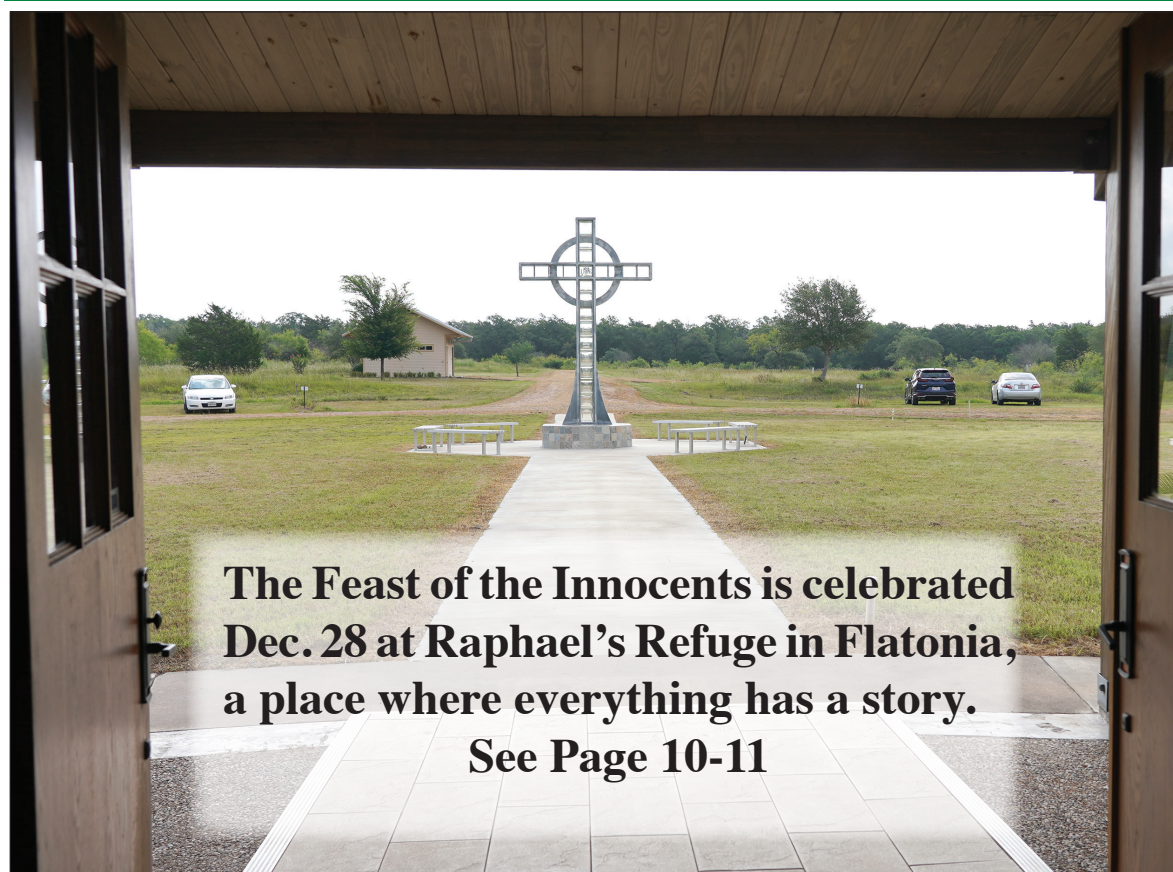
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December 2021



**The Feast of the Innocents is celebrated
Dec. 28 at Raphael's Refuge in Flatonia,
a place where everything has a story.**

See Page 10-11

Harvest Mass a time to thank God, seek His mercy

BY JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

WEIMAR – People from different areas of the diocese gathered for a Harvest Mass at the Whistling Duck Vineyards and Winery Nov. 20. The South Texas weather provided a taste of fall with mild temperatures and overcast sky. The vines surrounding the venue for the Mass -- usually the tasting area for the business -- were bare having given up their fruit for another harvest.

And the reason for the Mass was to give thanks for those fruits

and everything produced from the world God gave his people to till and protect.

Bishop Brendan Cahill, who celebrated the Mass, began with the opening words from the Rural Life Prayer Book, written in the 1950s. The introduction, "We Choose the County," affirms the nobility of the occupation of farming and the obligation to be good stewards of God's bounty. It states, "We will strive always to appreciate and hold fast to the spiritual values of

See Harvest Mass, pg. 17

Growth in adult faith formation a silver lining in the cloud of COVID

BY JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

Something strange happened when classes for the Diocese of Victoria's Pastoral Institute were limited to allow for social distancing: Participation nearly quadrupled.

Starting in January, the opportunities for adult faith formation will continue to increase because people can take any of the most recent six courses on their own time.

Because of pandemic precau-

tions many took the class through the program GlobalMeet. Each class was recorded in two parts (allowing for a short break) and saved so participants who had to miss a class could catch up by watching the recordings through a secured class portal on the DOV website. Class handouts also were posted to the class portals.

Participants who didn't mind not being in a live class could hear the lectures any time they wanted, or "asynchronously" but during the

period of time the course was also being taught live.

And others could tune in from a distance to participate live but remotely, or "synchronously." For the most recent class, "Ecclesiology: The Church," taught by Bishop Brendan Cahill, Holy Cross in East Bernard and Holy Cross in Yorktown set up remote classrooms to

*See Growth in adult
faith formation, pg. 13*



Bishop Brendan Cahill teaches "Ecclesiology: The Church" as the last course of the three-year Pastoral Institute series. Because of pandemic protocols, the classes are more available than ever, and the last six, including "Ecclesiology," are recorded. They will be open to anyone who wants to participate, beginning in January. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)



Bringing Jesus to the world

Disciples in the diocese are reaching out to help and heal

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In September 2019 I attended a workshop at Franciscan Steubenville University. The only requirement for participation in this workshop asked that the bishop commit to evangelization as the top priority of his ministry. Towards the end of the workshop we were asked to write a long-range vision of our diocese – considering the question: “What does the ideal ‘evangelized’ diocese look like in 30 years?”

I returned to Steubenville this October and joined about 15-20 brother bishops to share with one another our experiences of the past couple of years. Here is what I wrote two years ago about long-range vision:

“10-county area is pretty stable in population, with growth coming from Latino immigrant community – anticipate 350,000 as population, 125,000 Catholic – don’t anticipate any need to build new Churches; there are 50 parishes, 17 missions in the area and they are pretty evenly distributed around the diocese; don’t have trouble with the number or quality of priests -- we can anticipate 55-60 priests, with 40 deacons to serve in the area

1. Every household who lives in the area will have met a member of the Catholic Church and been invited (in Legion of Mary

A Shepherd’s Message

By Bishop Brendan Cahill



style).

2. Priests and deacons will work in union with the bishop and be a fraternal brotherhood.

3. Catholics will be active and joyful on the “peripheries.”

4. People in their 20s and 30s will be leading the evangelization.

5. Schools will be safe places for youth to grow and develop.”

A couple of things stood out to me this year as I was sharing with my friends. First, the ones who I hope will be leading the evangelization in 2050 are the ones being baptized today or in the next 10 years. Second, we already are fulfilling some of what seemed like a long-term dream two years ago.

Each issue of the Lighthouse highlights people reaching out to bring the compassion and mercy of Jesus to people who may feel overlooked and overburdened. The model for each of these inspirational people is that

their discipleship follows the example of Jesus – who went out, listened to people, healed them and led them to walk in the light of his teaching.

As we’re preparing for the celebration of the birth of our Savior, this may be a good year to offer to listen and pray with a friend or neighbor. They may not be ready to make a commitment to join us in Church, but they may be ready to allow us to pray with them. These have been two terribly challenging years, and in the midst of our worry and concern, people continue to witness the tender love of God – a love that shines so beautifully from the stable in the little town of Bethlehem.

May you and your family be blessed with peace, comfort and joy in the upcoming Christmas season, and may we be the light of Christ for the world.

Let’s keep each other in prayer!

+Brendan

U.S. bishops focus on Eucharist

CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

BALTIMORE — The U.S. bishops spotlighted two major initiatives focused on the central role of the Eucharist Nov. 17, the second of two days of public sessions of their fall general assembly.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a 26-page statement, “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” with 222 “yes” votes, and also OK’d plans for a three-year National Eucharistic Revival that will culminate with the National Eucharistic Congress 2024 in Indianapolis.

On other matters, they were invited to take a multicultural journey with young Catholics to Chicago next June; were urged to implement a framework for marriage and family ministry that they had approved at their spring assembly in June; agreed to begin review of the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” earlier than planned; and heard how the pandemic may have slowed but not stopped a pro-life initiative called “Walking With Moms in Need.”

They approved guidelines governing the USCCB’s financial investments that include

*See U.S. bishops focus
on Eucharist, pg. 15*



Subject to change due to COVID

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Hallettsville hosts KJZT Family Life convention

HALLETTSVILLE – Bishop Brendan Cahill celebrates Mass at the Knights of Columbus Hall during the KJZT Family Life’s XXXVI Regular General Convention on Nov. 6. Archdiocese of San Antonio Auxiliary Bishop Gary Janak, left, and the Rev. Msgr. John Peters, pastor of Sacred Heart in Hallettsville, were co-celebrants. The fraternal organization holds a convention every four years to discuss and examine the state of the fraternal and to enjoy the fellowship of members from across the state. Attending were more than 120 delegates, representing 57 KJZT societies from across Texas.
(Contributed Photo)



Bishop Cahill's Schedule

December		
2	• 8:05 a.m. school Mass and visit with Our Lady of the Gulf; Port Lavaca • 6 p.m. Knights of St. Gregory Christmas party at Colony Creek; Victoria	13 2:30 p.m. Communities of Faith meeting
4	• Mass with Carmelites; Meyersville • 9 a.m. Blessing of Eagle Scout project; Promise Pointe	14 9:30 a.m. Legion of Mary Praesidium meeting; Cathedral Center
4-5	Knights of Columbus mid-year meeting; Round Rock	15-16 Catholic Relief Services board meeting; Baltimore
5	2 p.m. Legion of Mary Curia Meeting; Bay City	18 Mass with Carmelites; Meyersville
7	• 9:30 a.m. Legion of Mary Praesidium meeting; Cathedral Center • 2:30 p.m. Finance Board Meeting; Chancery • 5 p.m. Mass and Christmas Dinner with Holy Sepulchre at Victoria Country Club; Victoria	19 3 p.m. Lessons and Carols at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria
8	8 a.m. school Mass and visit with Our Lady of Victory Catholic School; Victoria	20-23 Vacation
9	7 p.m. Surviving Divorce group meeting at OLV Annex; Victoria	Chancery Office Closed 12/22/21 – 1/3/2022
11	Mass with the Carmelites; Meyersville	24 4 p.m. Christmas Mass and meal with IWBS Sisters at IWBS Convent; Victoria
12	• 6 a.m. Mass at Santisima Trinidad - Our Lady of Guadalupe; Victoria • Noon Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe; Bay City	25 Midnight Christmas Mass at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria
		26 9 a.m. Mass at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria
		27 Noon Mass with Missionary Catechists
		28 • 11 a.m. Mass for Holy Innocents at Rafael's Refuge; Flatonia • 6 p.m. Serra Club Mass and dinner at Holy Family; Victoria
		January
		1 10 a.m. New Year's Mass at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria
		3-7 Bishop's Retreat; San Antonio

Diocese welcomes new HR employees

Jeana Cates joined the chancery staff Nov. 1 as human resources coordinator, working directly with the Director of the Office of Human Resources, Melissa Salinas.

Cates grew up in Uvalde and attended Southwest State University in San Marcos where she earned a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in sociology. She has had a wide range of job experience, most recently as a pre-K Sylvan Learning Center tutor.

Cates and her husband have been in Victoria for four years and have two daughters, one in elementary and one in middle school. They are members of Holy Family Catholic Church.

Cates said her priorities in order are God, family and work and she tries to serve each the best she can each day.

Sherry Smalley also joined the chancery staff Nov. 1 as the new front desk coordinator. She has extensive knowledge and experience with administrative support and duties with her most recent position as a career counselor for the past three years with Workforce Solutions of the Golden Crescent.

Smalley graduated from Calhoun High School in Port Lavaca and moved to Victoria in 1991. She is a member of Holy Family Catholic Church in Victoria, and has been active in the ACTS (Adoration, Communion, Theology and Service) community. She has



Jeana Cates



Sherry Smalley

two adult children, a daughter and a son, and six grandchildren, of which the youngest is a kindergarten student at Our Lady of Victory Catholic School.

"I am so pleased to join the Diocese of Victoria as the front desk coordinator and am looking forward to starting this new chapter in my life," she said.

**Chancery Offices will be closed for the Christmas and New Year Holiday,
Dec. 22 at noon-Jan. 4 at 8:30 a.m.
Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year!**

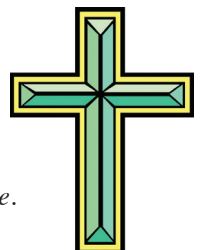
Please remember in prayer the priests of the Diocese of Victoria, who were ordained during the month of December:

Rev. Eliecer Patiño Hurtado	12/01/07	St. Anthony Church, Palacios
Rev. Parmenio Florez	12/05/98	Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Victoria
Rev. Gabriel Oduro Tawiah	12/06/97	St. John Nepomucene Church, New Taiton

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

Rev. Msgr. C.J. Martin	12/01/89
Rev. Msgr. Henry S. Herbst	12/07/94
Rev. Joseph A. KoebeL	12/12/05
Rev. Msgr. Alex Kraus	12/19/92
Rev. Msgr. Eustace A. Hermes	12/23/16
Rev. Msgr. Lawrence Matula	12/25/17
Rev. Joseph Leyva	12/31/83

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life;
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.
Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)*



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DEADLINE IS THE 15th OF THE PRECEDING MONTH
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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 – \$.01 - \$99.99; Acolyte – \$100 - \$499.99; Candidate – \$500 - \$1,499.99; Transitional Deacon – \$1,500 - \$2,499.99; Priest – \$2,500 >.

Lector

Paz & Andrea Morales
in Memory of Father Dan Morales

Georgia Cerny
*in Honor of Charlie & Mary Bartos
50th Wedding Anniversary*

Acolyte

Georgia Cerny
in Memory of Bennie Beale

Candidate

Barbara Hartwell
*in Honor of Father Tommy Chen's
Birthday*

Deacons of the Diocese of Victoria

Transitional Deacon

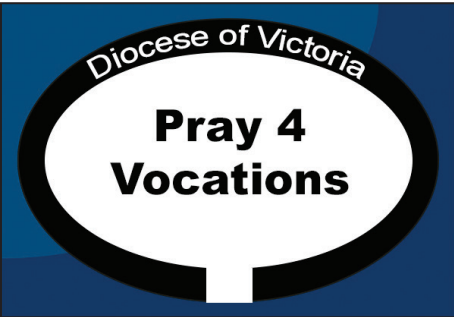
~

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



Holy Day of Obligation

*The
Chancery
Office will
be closed
Wednesday,
Dec. 8 for
Immaculate
Conception*



The Chancery will reopen on
Thursday, Dec. 9, at 8:30 a.m.

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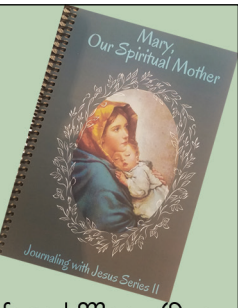
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for the
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or also purchase at IWBS Gift Shop,
and Texian Books in Victoria; Heavenly
Helpers in El Campo; or
at cynthialovebrewer.com

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. **Donation Categories: Lector - \$.01 - \$99.99; Acolyte – \$100 - \$499.99; Candidate – \$500 - \$1,499.99; Transitional Deacon – \$1,500 - \$2,499.99; Priest – \$2,500 >.**

November 17, 2021

• **General Seminary Burse**
Lector

In memory of Norma L. Rodriguez by:
Patrick and Bernadette Matussek
Tommy and Connie Hermes

Transitional Deacon
Donation by David and Sherry Heyer

• **Rev. Msgr. Gerard “Gerry” Cernoch**
Seminary Burse

Lector
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Gerard “Gerry”
Cernoch by Helen and Billie Dolezal

• **CDA Court of St. Ann #369 Seminary**
Burse #2

Lector
In memory of Eddie Amador by
CDA Court St. Ann #369

• **Rev. Wayne Flagg Seminary Burse**
Lector

In honor of Rev. Wayne Flagg's ordination
anniversary by Henrietta Cernosek
In memory of James Heger by
Henrietta Cernosek
In memory of Dennis Cernosek by
Henrietta Cernosek

• **Rev. Kristopher L. Fuchs Seminary**
Burse

Lector
In memory of Joe Mozisek by:
Leon and Hattie Kristynik
In thanksgiving for Paul and Helen Flessner
on their 60th wedding anniversary on
Dec. 2

• **Rev. Msgr. Michael Harrold Seminary**
Burse

Lector
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Michael Harrold
by Helen and Billie Dolezal

• **Josephat R. Janak Seminary Burse #2**
Lector

In memory of Josephat R. Janak on the 23rd
anniversary of his death by Rose Marie
Janak and Family

• **K of C #1527 – Weimar Seminary Burse**
Acolyte

In memory of Sir Knight Johnnie E.
Kasper by K of C 4th Degree, Flatonia,
Schulenburg and Weimar

• **Rev. Joseph Koebel Seminary Burse**
Acolyte

Donation by CDA Court Our Lady of the
Rosary #1595, Nada

• **Rev. Charles Kolek, OSB & Parents,
John and Marie Kolek Seminary**
Burse

Acolyte
In memory of Rev. Charles Kolek, OSB by
the Charles and Mary Kozel Family

• **Rev. Msgr. Lawrence J. Matula**
Seminary Burse #2

Lector
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Lawrence Matula
by Helen and Billie Dolezal

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

Lector
In memory of Wilson Huffer by Padre Pio
Vocation Club
In memory of Kathleen Chovanetz by
Laurence and Carol Bludau
In honor of Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters'
birthday celebration by:
Dorothy Rother
Friends

• **Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Seminary Burse**
#2

Lector
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru by
Helen and Billie Dolezal

• **Rev. Michael Rother Seminary Burse**
Lector

In thanksgiving for Rev. Michael Rother's
birthday by Helen and Billie Dolezal
In memory of John Rother, Jr. by
Helen and Billie Dolezal

• **St. John the Baptist Church, St. John**
In Memory of Rev. Brian Crookes
Seminary Burse #2

Lector
In memory of Allen Roeder by:
Helmer and Margaret Appelt
Elsie Farek
Andi Besetzny
Gary and Ann McBride

• **Rev. Joe Vrana Seminary Burse, in**
Honor of his Golden Jubilee Year
Acolyte

Donation by CDA Court Our Lady of the
Rosary #1595, Nada

In Memoriam

Bishop Grahmann's
brother passes away

Brother James N. "Br. Nick" Grahmann, FSC, died in Santa Fe, NM on Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021. He spent his last retirement years with the Christian Brothers in El Paso and Santa Fe.

Born on June 4, 1926, to Nicholas Grahmann and Annie Grafe in Hallettsville, James was the first of 11 children.

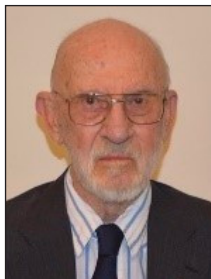
Brother Nick made his final vows in 1951 and was sent to Lafayette to teach in the junior novitiate and at Cathedral High School.

Brother Nick was preceded in death by his parents, three sisters, Sister Anastasia Grahmann, Sister Sylvia Grahmann, Rita Zaruba, and his brother Bishop Charles Grahmann.

He is survived by brothers and sisters, Marcus, Jerome, Fred, Nicholas Jr., Mary Ann Michalke and Anita Spangler.

Funeral services at Sacred Heart took place Nov. 27, with burial followed in the Sacred Heart Cemetery, Hallettsville.

Memorials may be made to Sacred Heart Catholic School Alumni Endowment Fund; Bishop Charles Grahmann Memorial Scholarship; Nicholas and Annie Grahmann Seminary Bursary; Brother James N. Grahmann Endowment St. Michael's Foundation Santa Fe, NM.



Br. Nick Grahmann

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following was written for the third Sunday of Advent, Cycle A. Father Kram titled it, "Joyful Hope."

In the Mass, after the Lord's Prayer, we always pray that God may "keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ."

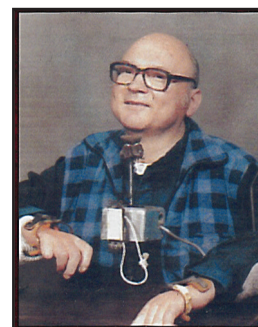
We might say that joyful hope is the theme of a Christian. Some people who have no hope just give up and don't care about anyone or anything. Others escape through drugs or alcohol or pleasure. One man whom I knew went to the cemetery and shot himself to death at his mother and father's grave.

One minister who was engaged in the pastoral care of the sick, advised a depressed patient to pray and read the Bible. Presumably, it was good advice, but the patient committed suicide, and the minister was sued for malpractice.

Christian hope does not make our troubles go away, but basically the virtue of hope gives us the firm assurance that God will give us everything we need for salvation and in the end, salvation itself. That kind of hope sustains us.

The chosen people of God who lived in Old Testament times were highly favored by Him and were taught by the prophets. John the Baptist was, by the testimony of the ancient scriptures, the prophet who was the forerunner of the Messiah.

As Jesus described him, John was not unstable like the reed grass growing along the banks of the Jordan, swaying every which

Well-founded hope
is our reason for joy

1929-2000

Father
Charles Kram
Corner

way in the wind. He was not like the luxuriously dressed flatterers who hung around the royal court staying in the favor of the kind by telling him what he wanted to hear.

John was, by the testimony of Jesus Himself, the greatest man born in Old Testament times. But not that, likewise, by the testimony of Jesus, the least one born in Christian times is greater than he.

This indicates how superior are the times in which we live, to the ages past, when Jesus the Messiah was only a promise.

So our hope is well founded. We belong to Jesus the Messiah.

Christmas is almost here. It would be most fitting for all of us who call ourselves Christians, especially to consider this year who we are and how truly privileged we are to live in our day and age ... and then to do something truly Christian this Christmas.

For instance, when you receive a Christmas card or see a decorated tree or unwrap a gift, you might pause to say, "Thanks, Lord, for coming into the world."

Or when you and your family open your Christmas presents, why don't you first pause for a moment to sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and to invite Him to be your special guest.

Or try spreading a bit of joy and hope by visiting someone in the nursing home. Ask the nurse in charge to recommend someone who seldom has visitors. The old grandmas and grandpas would be thrilled.

We are indeed a joyful and hopeful people.

Lord Jesus, thank you for being our reason for living always in joyful hope. Help us keep up our hope in all our struggles. Grant that many more souls may come to share the joy and hope with which we are blessed. Amen.

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Clean up and hang some lights: the King is coming

Early November, I was having a discussion with a few coworkers about when it is appropriate to decorate for Christmas. This was a friendly conversation and not a liturgical one, as we know we should have Advent decorations up first.

I am one that argues that we should not ignore Thanksgiving and if we are to decorate we should decorate for Thanksgiving, too. It is the one day of the year designated to come together as a family and share in a meal thanking God for what we have in our lives. That is why I boycotted the stores that opened on Thanksgiving Day for Black Friday sales. Not only is it not Friday, but we just finished thanking God for what we already have to just run and fight the crowd to buy more stuff. That never made any sense to me.

After our staff Thanksgiving luncheon, again my coworker lightheartedly asked me if he could now decorate for Christmas since in the office we already celebrated Thanksgiving. After rolling my eyes I told him that he could decorate whenever he wanted; ultimately, I'm not the decoration police. Obviously I'm joking with him and giving him a hard time just for fun. I'm not a decorator. I

Finding Beauty in Mystery

By Sister Rosario Resendez, IWBS



don't like the fuss of putting everything up and then having to take it all down again, but I delight in seeing it. I love Christmas decorations. I love to admire the creativity of others, so I'm actually looking forward to seeing how he will decorate his office.

Christmas lights remind us that Christ, the Light of the World, is coming. That one beautiful moment when our God pierced through time to become one of us. A time so magnificent that it marked how we tell time. Yes, the acronym has changed from BC (Before Christ) to BCE (Before Common Era) and from AD (Anno Domini) to CE (Common Era), but that what marked time has stayed the same.

The people in Bethlehem did not know that Mary was carrying our God and Savior. If they did, I believe they would have reacted differently.

I actually don't think putting up Christmas lights during Advent is a problem. In seeing the lights that remind us that Christ is coming it also gives us time to prepare ourselves for His arrival, which is what Advent is all about. The question is: Do we take as much time preparing our hearts for Christmas as we do in preparing our homes?

We all know the story: Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem trying to find a place for Mary to give birth to our Savior. The Mexican people even have special ceremonies called Las Posadas to reenact this event. I always thought it was sad that no one could make room for the Holy Family in their homes so our Savior had to be born in a stable. Imagine that. God knew He would not be welcomed, but He loved us so much He came anyway.

Now can we imagine, as we approach Christmas, Mary and Joseph coming to each one of us asking if they can bring Jesus into

our heart. Can we find a place for Him there? Can He shine as bright in our hearts as the lights outside our home are shining?

The people in Bethlehem did not know that Mary was carrying our God and Savior. If they did, I believe they would have reacted differently. They would have made room. They would have cleaned up the whole house. It would have been immaculate, and they would have been honored to have such a treasured guest.

Can we do that today? Can we make room in our hearts for Him by removing anger, hate, fear, un-forgiveness, pride or anything else that may be weighing us down? Can we clean up our "home" by going to the sacrament of reconciliation? Because unlike the people so many years ago in Bethlehem, we do know He's coming. We are given a whole season to prepare for His arrival. Are we taking advantage of it?

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*“Jesus has made Himself the Bread of Life to give us life. Night and day, He is there.
If you really want to grow in love, come back to the Eucharist;
come back to that adoration.” – St. Teresa of Calcutta*

Youth Spectacular coming back in 2022

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry is celebrating “The REAL Presence” as the theme of the Youth Spectacular, which returns on Feb. 20, 2022.

Ennie Hickman of Houston will be the main speaker for the day. Hickman and his wife, Cana, have ministered for decades and founded the Del Rey Collective, a ministry that encourages a “community of communities” by showing people how to love their neighbors by opening their homes or their front porches for fellowship.

The event will take place at the Cathedral Center of Our Lady of Victory parish, 3102 N. Laurent St. in Victoria.

All schools are welcome to attend the daylong event. Doors will open at 10 a.m. and Bishop Brendan Cahill will celebrate Mass at 10:30 a.m. Events continue until 4:30 p.m. Lunch is included.

The event is for groups that are prepared with the appropriate adult to student ratio, according to the Diocese of Victoria’s Code of Pastoral Conduct.

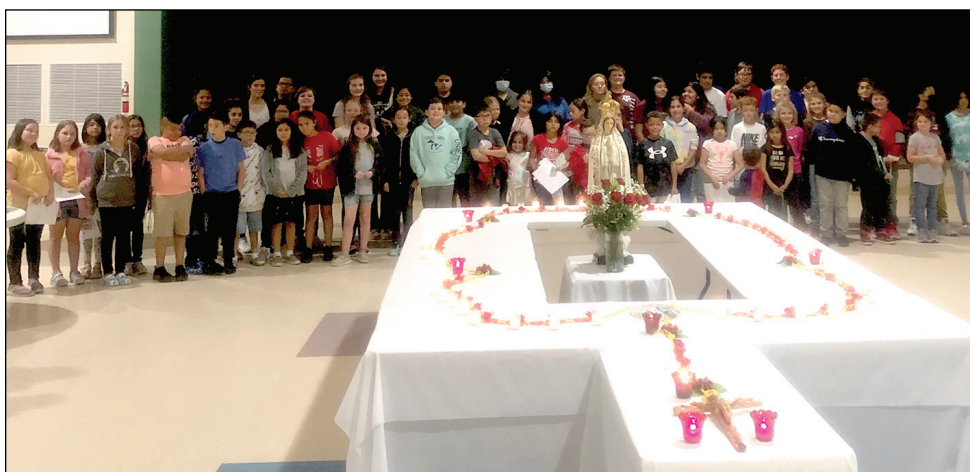
Registration already has open and the deadline for early registration is Feb. 11. Cost is \$20 per youth, or \$17 as a special rate for groups of eight or more. Adult participants pay only \$10. Late registration is \$25 a person. Those who want an event T-shirt must pay their registration and give shirt size by Feb. 1.

Registration forms and T-shirt design can be found at www.victoriadiocese.org/youth-spectacular-. If you have questions, contact Wendy Eggert, director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, or Shannon Thomas, associate director, at 361-573-0828. You can e-mail them at weggert@victoriadiocese.org or stthomas@victoriadiocese.org.



Youth leaders

Members of the Diocese of Victoria’s Youth Leadership Team met at the Presidio La Bahia for their monthly meeting on Nov. 14. As a part of the meeting, members cleaned the Our Lady of Loreto Chapel. Bishop Emeritus David Fellhauer began the day by celebrating Mass. The DOV’s Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry is now preparing for its Youth Spectacular 2022, to take place on Feb. 20. The theme is “The REAL Presence” and the Youth Leadership Team will help with the day-long event. More information is available by contacting Wendy Eggert or Shannon Thomas, directors of the office, at weggert@victoriadiocese.org or stthomas@victoriadiocese.org. Also, information and registration is available on the DOV website at www.victoriadiocese.org/youth-spectacular-. (Photo by Shannon Thomas/Associate Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry)



Wharton youth lead living rosary

WHARTON -- CCD students at Holy Family Catholic Church, on Nov. 3, prayed a living Rosary with parishioners. “Students read the intentions, led the prayers, and lit the candles to offer up a beautiful prayer to Our Blessed Mother,” according to Vicki Simper, parish catechetical leader for the parish. (Contributed Photo)



From KJZT to IWBS

PRAHA — From left, Nancy Jasek and Georgia Cerny, with KJZT Society No. 4 in Praha, present to Sister Colette Kouba, IWBS, a donation to the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters. The funds were presented Nov. 12 and raised through a “no bake” sale that took place Sept. 5 combined with matching funds from the state KJZT Office in Austin. (Contributed Photo)

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Giving to those in need

Our Lady of Victory, Victoria, students collect can goods to donate to St. Vincent de Paul Society as one of their service project. The collection will help the society to distribute food for those in need during Thanksgiving. (Regina Janak / The Catholic Lighthouse)



Honoring those who served

Our Lady of Victory Students, in Victoria, honor Veterans with their Annual Veterans Day program on Nov. 10. Students wore red, white and blue to honor veterans during the program. OLV veteran family members and friends attended to be honored for their service to the country. Many of the parents and even eighth-grade teacher Cassie Olive were among those honored. But they especially wanted to thank 102-year-old Cpl. George Hyak, 8th Corps of the US Army for attending. OLV parent Sgt. Broulliette was the guest speaker. The students sang “God Bless the USA” to the music of Lee Greenwood to conclude the program. (Regina Janak / The Catholic Lighthouse)



DA brings online safety tips to school

SCHULENBURG — Peggy Supak, Fayette County District Attorney, visited grades three through eight at St. Rose of Lima Catholic School recently. She addressed issues students face as they navigate the online world. She shared multiple examples of how to stay safe online when using all types of social media platforms. She also discussed the consequences when students fail to make good choices. School officials expressed their gratitude to Supak for sharing information that will help students make better use of their time spent online. (Contributed Photo)

Pope encourages young people to be critical conscience of society

BY CAROL GLATZ
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis told young people that, with Jesus, people can find the courage to swim against the current, to be free and authentic, and to stand up for their dreams and ideals of truth, love, justice and peace.

“Be the critical conscience of society. Don’t be afraid to criticize. We need your criticism,” he said, citing for example, the disapproval coming from many young people about environmental destruction. “Be passionate about truth, so that, with your dreams, you can say, ‘My life is not captive to the mindset of the world. I am free, because I reign with Jesus for justice, love and peace!’”

Celebrating Mass on the feast of Christ the King in St. Peter’s Basilica Nov. 21, the pope directed much of his homily to the world’s young people. This was the first year that the world’s dioceses were celebrating World Youth Day on the local level on the feast of Christ the King rather than on Palm Sunday. Pope Francis had announced the change last year.

As the church begins its journey toward the next intercontinental celebration of World Youth Day in Lisbon in 2023, the pope

asked that young people to reflect on the image in the day’s Gospel reading of Jesus standing before Pontius Pilate and declaring, “I am a king.”

“We are struck by Jesus’ determination, his courage, his supreme freedom,” the pope said, because he could have tried to defend himself or compromise to avoid being condemned to death.

Instead, Jesus did not hide his identity and he took responsibility for his own life and for his mission to testify to the truth, he said.

Jesus came without duplicity to show his kingdom is different from the kingdoms of the world,” the pope said. “God does not reign to increase his power and to crush others; he does not reign by force of arms. His is the kingdom of love,” a kingdom of people who give their lives for the salvation of others.

Pope Francis encouraged young people to let Jesus’ freedom “resonate within us, to challenge us, to awaken in us the courage born of truth.” He encouraged everyone to look for and face the truth about themselves: what they are ashamed of, the ways they may be deceitful or duplicitous and the ways they displease God.



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Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
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make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.
Amen.



Prayer for the synod

“Every session of the Second Vatican Council began with the prayer Adsumus Sancte Spiritus, the first word of the Latin original meaning, ‘We stand before You, Holy Spirit,’ which has been historically used at Councils, Synods and other Church gatherings for hundreds of years, being attributed to Saint Isidore of Seville (c. 560 - 4 April 636). As we are called to embrace this synodal path of the Synod 2021-2023, this prayer invites the Holy Spirit to operate within us so that we may be a community and a people of grace. For the Synod 2021-2023, we propose to use this simplified version, so that any group or liturgical assembly can pray more easily.” (from the website www.synod.va)

The first phase of the Synod on Synodality is still in the planning stages. Information will be distributed as meetings or events are scheduled.



Bishop Brendan Cahill celebrates Mass aboard the Bow Star for a crew of Filipino seafarers. He is assisted by Deacon Eddie Huse of Holy Family Parish in Victoria and Sister Rosario Resendez. It is the first time he has had the opportunity to celebrate Mass on a ship. (Contributed Photo)

Mass aboard ship a source of joy

BY JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

POINT COMFORT — Timing is everything when trying to minister to seafarers. Nov. 3 was the first time Bishop Brendan Cahill, episcopal promoter for Stella Maris in the U.S., had the chance to celebrate a Mass aboard a ship. That he happened to be available when the ship was in port was a source of joy for many.

The ship, the Bow Star, had a 28-person crew from the Philippines, with about 13 able to attend the Mass. Originally the Mass was set for a Monday, then changed to Tuesday and again to Wednesday. It's the nature of the business. And the pandemic and cargo delays haven't helped.

The Rev. Tommy Chen, pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf in nearby Port Lavaca, who is the chaplain for the local Stella Maris ministry, had toured the port in Point Comfort just a month earlier to be prepared if he was called on to celebrate Mass. He said he realized it would probably be call with short notice and a small window of opportunity.

When the call came from the Bow Star, Father Tommy was not available and asked Bishop Cahill, who said yes right away.

Deacon Eddie Huse of Holy Family Catholic Church in Victoria and Sister Rosario Resendez, Bishop Cahill's administrative assistant, went along to help set up for and serve during the Mass.

Deacon Huse said he was more than surprised to get the call from Bishop Cahill the morning of Nov. 3 to assist with the Mass. But he agreed right away and was amazed by the experience.

Sister Rosario said it was like entering another city. She was touched by the crew's gratitude and hospitality as well. The captain had them stay for supper before they went back home.

Rhonda Cummins, the maritime associate with the Point Comfort Seafarers Center, helped coordinate the visit. Bishop Cahill praised Cummins for being the main minister at the port, visiting every ship that comes in, helping the seafarers get what they need — including vaccines — and coordinating the Christmas at Sea program that provides gifts to each member of the crew.

Bishop Cahill said no other port can claim that each ship gets a personal visit. He also said the captain of the Bow Star asked if there were Christmas gifts this time. “Those seafarers remembered that,” he said. “It means a lot to them.”

Cummins is again rounding up Christmas

packages for the maritime workers. The needs are listed on the Diocese of Victoria's web site and include mostly personal items such as body wash, lotion, shaving cream, gloves, socks, T-shirts, nonperishable snacks, cards or games and more. The items should be placed in a standard-sized shoebox and wrapped as one unit, or placed in 12-by-15 inch ditty bags.

Completed packages can be dropped off at:

Diocese of Victoria Chancery, 1505 E. Mesquite Lane, Victoria;

Holy Family Catholic Church, 704 Mallette Dr., Victoria;

Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, 415 W. Austin St., Port Lavaca;

Russell Cain Real Estate, 2025 State Highway 35, Port Lavaca

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Raphael's Refuge



The Archangel Raphael holding an infant and crossing over water is the centerpiece of a wall mural behind the altar in the chapel at Raphael's Rescue, a memorial to deceased babies.

Memorial to departed babies is refreshment and light to many

BY JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

FLATONIA — On Dec. 28, the Feast of the Innocents, Bishop Brendan Cahill will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m. at Raphael's Refuge, a regional a monument to babies who have died.

The birth of Raphael's Refuge is a supernatural story that parallels the Blessed Mother's fiat. It exists because Mildred "Midge" Elam said yes to God.

Elam said she had been active in pro-life ministry since the time of Roe v. Wade. When she lived in Austin, she was part of a group called Austin Rescue and would go to pray at abortion clinics. A trip was planned to pray at an abortion provider clinic in Corpus Christi and she was going with a group. But one by one the others canceled and she drove there alone.

It was on the way home, she said, that, out of the blue, she heard Jesus ask her, "Will you build the monument?" The voice was internal as was the image of the monument placed on her heart. "I was very afraid it was my imagination," she said.

After the seed was planted, not much happened for a while. She prayed and sketched and wondered how and where and when all this might happen. One might look at it as a gestational period.

Eventually she moved to Flatonia, a town of about 1,300. She had inherited property

there from her mother and it was the place where the monument could be built. "I figured I had to live there if I was going to do this," she said. The property is just outside the town and kind of out of the way, but it is at the center of the region it was built to serve, a halfway point between Waco and Corpus from north to south, and halfway between Houston and San Antonio.

But then there was work. A teacher and counselor, she kept busy and had no extra time. She said she had been separated from her husband for 19 years and felt she had to work to make ends meet. But there came a point when she decided to file for divorce and discovered that she was entitled to half of the retirement accrued during the years they were married. After that, she was able to focus on building the monument. And God provided help through the gifts and talents of friends who were in the right place when she needed them.

The monument is designed in the shape of a monstrance, which is a receptacle where the Eucharist is placed for adoration. The path leading to the front door and the roads leading to the walkway form the base of the monstrance. She said one day when she was discouraged about the progress she looked up as three airplanes flew over, bathed in golden sunlight. She knew then that the monument would be done in three phases and she realized it was beneath a flight path from San Antonio

to Houston. Looking down from above you can see the monstrance. "Anybody in the world can Google it and they can see the monstrance," Elam said.

Everything inside the chapel has its own story. Behind the altar is a mural with the

Archangel Rafael in the center holding a tiny infant. The archangel is found in the Book of Tobit. Coming to Tobit in the form of a human, he agrees to help the blinded man

See Memorial to departed babies, pg. 11



Within the Immaculate Heart of Mary, painted by Midge Elam, founder and director of Raphael's Refuge, a baby in utero is depicted.



Memorial to departed babies is refreshment and light to many

Continued from pg. 10

by accompanying his son, Tobiah to retrieve some inheritance in another city. When Tobiah bathes in the Tigris River, a fish attacks him, and the angel tells him to seize the fish and bring it with them. The fish's organs, at the direction of Raphael, are used to repel a demon and heal blindness.

Elam chose to make the image of Raphael carrying an infant across the water and decided to include the fish. She said she couldn't imagine what type of river fish could or would attack a human, so she did a little research and learned that one of the fish in the estuary was the bull shark. That made sense and she included that image, using an image she found online as a model. The fish is not very predominant and many don't notice it unless it's pointed out to them, she said. She wanted it that way so it would not frighten children who visited. "It isn't scary at all. It looks like it's smiling," she said.

Raphael's prayer shawl was not what she intended, but it happened. She said she marked off part of the garment with blue painter's tape and had planned to strip the tape and paint the vacant section gold to match the robe of Raphael. A visiting friend mistook it for a Jewish prayer shawl. Curious, she contacted a Messianic Jew and learned more about the prayer shawl, a "tallit," then completed it with the braided tassels that, in Jewish tradition, are tied a certain way to represent the commandments of the Old Testament.

Light plays a big part in the monument. The cross in the front of the building is called the Cross of Light. The names of babies who have died are etched in glass blocks that form the walls so that they are sort of floating in the light. "I see those blocks as representing their souls," Elam said.

And at some point Elam realized that on the summer solstice, when the light of day lasts longer than any other day of the year, something phenomenal happens. Through one of the glass panes in the cupola a beam of light comes through at 10:10 and shines directly on the face of the Archangel Raphael and slowly descends until it rests on the face of the infant in his arms. Other times of the year the light with highlight scriptures written on scrolls painted on either side of the archangel. None of that was intentional during the building of the monument, but people gather on that day to witness the event.



The Pool of Mercy is shown in the center of the chapel. It is a place where anyone seeking healing and forgiveness following participation in an abortion can have a tangible reminder of God's mercy. (All photos by Janet Jones / The Catholic Lighthouse)

In the center of the chapel is a small pool, the pool of mercy, designed for people to walk through as a cleansing of guilt and shame for those who have been involved in abortion and need a more tangible sense of God's mercy.

It also is inspired by a Jewish tradition for purification ritual call a "mikvot."

There are so many stories surrounding the details of the monu-

ment it seems obvious that the Holy Spirit is at work and that these things are not simply happy accidents. Some people feel it more than others. Elam said one "deeply spiritual" woman who visited could see a cloud of babies.

"She said, 'Can't you hear them laughing?' We could hear nothing, but she could hear them laughing," Elam said.

Father Greg Korenek, director of pro-life concerns for the Diocese of Victoria, said, "The first time I visited Raphael's Refuge, I was struck with a sense of awe. Raphael's Refuge is a beautiful testament to the sacredness and dignity of human life, even from its

very beginning in the womb of the mother. The entire Refuge, along with the beautiful chapel, the glass blocks on which the names of the babies are inscribed, the religious art, and the peaceful surroundings gives one the distinct awareness that God is present in this place. For those who come specifically in search of healing and comfort as they mourn the death of a baby, this is the perfect place. The very name of the place derives from the Archangel Raphael who is known as one who heals through the power of God. For that matter, anyone who comes to Raphael's Refuge will invariably be touched spiritually

and emotionally."

The monument is still not complete, walls radiating from the chapel are being constructed and will include more glass bricks to memorialize babies who have died. Elam plans a chaplains quarters and a visitor center as well. "God will provide," she said.

The center has started having a Holy Hour every month for different intentions near to the heart of the ministry. For more information about the monument or scheduled events, call 361-258-1514 or visit www.raphaelsrefuge.org.

"Will you build the monument?"



Mildred "Midge" Elam shows a visitor a sketch of her artwork and explains some of the story behind what is painted.



Holy Land Heroes

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem holds annual ceremonies

BY MATTHEW SMITH

North Texas Catholic

FORT WORTH — Dozens of tour buses unloaded in Fort Worth more than 800 Catholics from Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas and Oklahoma to participate in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem's annual Rite of Solemn Investiture and Conferring of Promotions ceremonies Oct. 15-17.

Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson, who concelebrated both days' Masses, called it an honor to host the Order's annual meeting.

"It connects us not only to other dioceses within our region and province but also to the Universal Church and particularly the Holy Land," Bishop Olson said. "It also gives us an opportunity to be hospitable."

The Order dates from 1096 and the First Crusade when knights fought to guard the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Order has since spread throughout the world with knights and dames now supporting the Holy Land — which has experienced substantial decline in Christian population — through prayer, presence, and financial support. That support has led to construction of numerous churches, schools, seminaries, community centers, and other outreach efforts.

Members of the Order during both days' Masses arrived in full regalia of white capes bearing the red Jerusalem cross of the Order for knights and black capes and veils for dames.

Bishop Brendan Cahill of the Diocese of Victoria, a member of the order, was one of about a dozen bishops in attendance who are members of the Order. "The Sunday morning of the meeting always stands out for me because that's the morning we report on all the charitable activities we've done in the Holy Land the past year," he said.

The Order, according to Bishop Cahill, has created and supported Catholic schools, seminaries, hospitals and other institutions. "The Order keeps the Catholic Church alive in the Holy Land and serves the entire community."

Bishop Olson, during the homily of the Oct. 16 Memorial Mass and Conferring of Promotions, spoke of the importance of new and existing members of the Order.

"It can never be simply a matter of joining a club in which we try to fit in," Bishop Olson said. "Our membership requires the belonging afforded us by Jesus Christ. The good news is that God has designed us for



Bishop Brendan Cahill, with about a dozen bishops and archbishops who are members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem concelebrated Mass at Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Church in Arlington on Oct. 16, 2021.

(Ben Torres/North Texas Catholic)



A group from the Diocese of Victoria are shown during the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre's annual ceremonies. Pictured from left are, back row, Sir. Joseph J. Morris, Sr.; Dame Janet L. Holub, the Rev. Jasper Liggio; Dame Karen E. Evans; and, front row, Dame Irene Nohavitzka; the Most Rev. Brendan J. Cahill; Dame Joyce B. Morris; and Deacon Richard A. Evans. Father Liggio was invested during the ceremonies and the Rev. Patrick Knippenberg, along with Deacon Evans and Dame Evans, were promoted in the order.

belonging and through Christ has called us to that mission and in the spirit has enabled us to fulfill it through service."

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-

Houston delivered the homily during Oct. 17's Rite of Solemn Investiture.

Cardinal DiNardo reminded the newly invested that Christ came not to be served

but to serve and to give His life in ransom for the many.

"Jesus' procession opens a way we can walk through and be with Jesus on the cross," Cardinal DiNardo said. "As knights of the Holy Sepulchre, you take this cross seriously. You wear it on your clothing.

"Just follow Jesus to the cross is the message, pure and simple, in prayer and in action that may sometimes get you into trouble but that's only because you're being a servant."

Cardinal DiNardo challenged members of the Order to bring others into the Church.

"Keep in your thoughts always our Blessed Lady," Cardinal DiNardo said. "She's an unraveler of all kinds of knots. Ask her to please be with you and to let you always walk toward her Son."

Daniel Ali, a convert from Islam who grew up as a Kurdish Iraqi freedom fighter, delivered the keynote address Oct. 17 at Fort Worth's Omni Hotel.

Ali spoke of the Order's positive impact in the Holy Land.

"You go to the Holy Land and come out an entirely different person," Ali said. "Everything speaks of the Lord."

Ali talked of schools, churches, and other facilities made possible in the Holy Land thanks to the Order; the 19,000 students receiving educations; and the difference the Order's presence and support makes for Christian residents of the Holy Land.

Though Christians are now in the minority, Ali urged perseverance and faith.

"Never underestimate prayer," Ali said. "It's the most precise weapon of mass destruction against the forces of darkness you will ever encounter. I've been to [the Holy Land] and seen the difference the Order's presence makes. You are like stars shining in heaven, ladies and gentlemen. Be proud of what you're doing and keep doing it."

Rick and Kathy Claegeer of Houston's St. Michael the Archangel Church were promoted to the rank of commander during the Oct. 16 ceremony.

Both spoke of their desire to defend and protect the faith in the Holy Land and of the life-altering effects of their visit to the same.

"I can honestly say it changed our life from the standpoint that we can't read Scripture without envisioning the beauty of the Holy Land," Rick Claegeer said. "Having been there brings it alive."

• Janet Jones, editor of *The Catholic Lighthouse* contributed to this story.

Growth in adult faith formation a silver lining in the cloud of COVID

Continued from pg. 1

participate during the class time.

Something else happened since all this happened. “I think only two people dropped (out),” said Christella Alvarez, Director of the Office of Catechetical Ministry. “That tells me that they really appreciate it.” In the past, she said, a 10 to 15 percent drop rate was normal.

The Pastoral Institute is on a three-year cycle of classes. Those who finish all of them receive a certificate showing they have completed the entire Pastoral Institute. Some may go through the institute for themselves and some to be well-formed catechists in their parishes.

Recently, Alvarez began going through 10 years of records of Pastoral Institute participants, who might need one, maybe two, courses to receive their certificates and told them about the recorded classes that will be available. “They were just so excited,” she said. “What I got out of it was that they all shared their personal stories. I can see how it’s going to be used by a lot of people for a lot of reasons.”

Alvarez said some come home and log on after the children go to bed to get their classes done. “They’re tired, but they still want to learn. I guess that’s what drives me,”

she said. “My passion comes from those who want to learn.”

“I really, really like the fact that you can do it at home,” said Janet Adamak, a parishioner at St. Joseph parish in Yoakum.

About the new offering of the previous classes she said, “I think it’s really a good idea.” She added that it would take the better part of a day once a week for someone living outside of Victoria to attend a class counting class and travel time. When she has used the asynchronous, she said she took the class by completing one hour one day and the second hour the next day, which worked out well for her.

Adamak has taken classes for a long time and many of them twice. She does it more for personal enrichment, she said, although it has helped her as a teacher at St. Joseph Catholic School in Yoakum.

David Rohan of Schulenburg just completed Bishop Cahill’s “Ecclesiology” class live by logging on remotely. He stated in an email to the Lighthouse, “I thought it was great. I am with God’s Embrace ministries for eight years; I have experienced a lot with Ignatius spiritual exercises, but now, to have Bishop answer my questions was fantastic. I enjoy his inspiration.”

Suzy Ryan of Victoria is one who has taken all of the courses offered through the Pastoral Institute and said it is a big help when teaching confirmation classes at Our Lady of Lourdes. She said she could get more in-depth. “We have such a beautiful faith.”

Her motivation for taking the classes was simply to learn more about the faith. “It just makes me hungry for more,” she said. She said the option to back and do the prerecorded classes should open them up to

many more people and help equip them to share the faith with others.

“I have heard people say, ‘Oh, we don’t have any place where we can learn anything,’ Adamak said. “And I keep telling them that, ‘Yes, we do.’ Unless somebody tells you, you don’t really know that this is offered.”

The Pastoral Institute begins its new three-year program in the fall of 2022 with a course on Scriptures, focusing on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible.

List of recorded classes

The following are pre-recorded Pastoral Institute courses that will be available to take beginning in January. The courses will have a “shelf life” and will be gradually replaced by new courses as they are offered live and recorded for the online portal. To see the web page, visit www.victoriadiocese.org/pastoral-institute-1.

Catholic Morality

Instructor: The Rev. Greg Korenek

Participants will study the Church’s teaching on the moral life based on scripture and its covenant concept and with Catholic tradition. The course will guide the adult participant to becoming familiar with the many concepts included in a comprehensive analysis of moral theology, along with specific issues. The participants will also examine the effectiveness of their own moral decision-making process and gain insights into human development.

Ecclesiology: The Church

Instructor: Bishop Brendan Cahill

Ecclesiology is the study of the nature and mission of the Church. As part of our faith we profess with the early Church, “I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.” These four characteristics are called the four marks of the Church and represent a brief summary of the early Church’s experience. In this course, we will be able to study and reflect on the nature of the Church as a communion of the faithful called together by God. By our very nature we are called to proclaim the Good News and invite new members into the Church every day.

Liturgy

Instructor: Linda Krehemeier

The “liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #10). This course will benefit all adult Catholics, but it is highly recommended for catechists and liturgical ministers, such as lectors and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Sacraments of Initiation

Instructor: The Rev. Bob Knippenberg

The sacraments are the source of our life in Christ or, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it, “The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (n. 1131).

Sacraments of Healing and Vocation

Instructor: The Rev. Bob Knippenberg

This course will examine the sacraments of healing (reconciliation and anointing of the sick) and the sacraments of vocation (matrimony and holy orders). The theology of the sacrament, the origins of the sacrament, and the way in which each sacrament is practiced in the Catholic Church will be examined to lead the participant into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, who is “the key, the center and the purpose of the whole of human history” (Gaudium et spes, n. 10) by helping them more intimately encounter the Christ of the sacraments of healing and vocation and the liturgical life of the Church.

The Trinity

Instructor: The Rev. Jacob Koether

This course will cover the following topics of discussion: proofs for the existence of God; properties of the essence of God; Scripture’s revelation and the magisterium’s explanation; what God is not; what God is like; and, our relationship with the Holy Trinity.

Sunday Readings from Dec. 5 - Jan. 9

December 5 ~ Second Sunday of Advent
Baruch 5:1-9
Psalms 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6
Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11
Luke 3:1-6

December 12 ~ Third Sunday of Advent
Zephaniah 3:14-18a
Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:10-18

December 19 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent
Micah 5:1-4a
Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

December 25 ~ The Nativity of the Lord
(Christmas)
Mass at Dawn
Isaiah 62:11-12
Psalms 97:1, 6, 11-12
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:15-20

December 26 ~ Feast of the Holy Family
of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Sirah 3:2-6, 12-14
Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:41-52

January 1 ~ Solemnity of the Blessed
Virgin Mary, the Mother of God
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

January 2 ~ The Epiphany of the Lord
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12

January 9 ~ The Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalms 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10
Acts 10:34-38
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

For daily and Sunday readings, as well as a daily reflection video, visit
www.usccb.org/bible/readings.





Llevar a Jesús al mundo

Los discípulos en la diócesis están llegando a los necesitados

Queridos hermanos y hermanas,

En septiembre de 2019 asistí a un taller en la Universidad Franciscana de Steubenville. El único requisito para participar en este taller pedía que el obispo se comprometiera con la evangelización como la máxima prioridad de su ministerio. Hacia el final del taller, se nos pidió que escribiéramos una visión a largo plazo de nuestra diócesis, considerando la pregunta: “¿Cómo se ve la diócesis ideal ‘evangelizada’ en 30 años?”

Regresé a Steubenville este octubre y me uní a unos 15-20 hermanos obispos para compartir entre nosotros nuestras experiencias de los últimos dos años. Esto es lo que escribí hace dos años sobre la visión de largo alcance:

“El área de 10 condados es bastante estable en población, con un crecimiento proveniente de la comunidad inmigrante latina – anticipa 350,000 como población, 125,000 católicos – no anticipan ninguna necesidad de construir nuevas Iglesias; hay

Mensaje del Pastor

By Obispo Brendan Cahill



50 parroquias, 17 misiones en el área y están distribuidas de manera bastante uniforme alrededor de la diócesis; no tengo problemas con el número o la calidad de los sacerdotes, podemos anticipar 55-60 sacerdotes, con 40 diáconos para servir en el área

1. Cada hogar que vive en el área habrá conocido a un miembro de la Iglesia Católica y habrá sido invitado (al estilo de la Legión de María).

2. Sacerdotes y diáconos trabajarán en unión con el obispo y serán una hermandad fraterna.

3. Los católicos serán activos y alegres en las ‘periferias’.

4. Las personas de entre 20 y 30 años

liderarán la evangelización.

5. Las escuelas serán lugares seguros para que los jóvenes crezcan y se desarrollen.”

Un par de cosas me destacaron este año mientras compartía con mis amigos. Primero, los que espero que lideren la evangelización en 2050 son los que se bautizan hoy o en los próximos 10 años. En segundo lugar, ya estamos cumpliendo parte de lo que parecía un sueño a largo plazo hace dos años.

Cada número del Lighthouse destaca a las personas que se acercan para llevar la compasión y la misericordia de Jesús a las personas que pueden sentirse ignoradas y

sobrecargadas. El modelo para cada una de estas personas inspiradoras es que su discípulo sigue el ejemplo de Jesús, quien salió, escuchó a las personas, las sanó y las llevó a caminar a la luz de su enseñanza.

Mientras nos preparamos para la celebración del nacimiento de nuestro Salvador, este puede ser un buen año para ofrecer escuchar y orar con un amigo o vecino. Puede que no estén listos para comprometerse a unirse a nosotros en la Iglesia, pero pueden estar listos para permitirnos orar con ellos. Estos han sido dos años terriblemente desafiantes, y en medio de nuestra preocupación, la gente continúa siendo testigo del tierno amor de Dios -- un amor que brilla tan bellamente desde el establo en la pequeña ciudad de Belén.

Que usted y su familia sean bendecidos con paz, consuelo y gozo en la próxima temporada navideña, y que seamos la luz de Cristo para el mundo.

¡Mantengámonos unos a otros en oración!

+Brendan

USCCB destacan programas sobre Eucaristía, jóvenes, y mamás necesitadas

Por Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — Los obispos estadounidenses destacaron dos iniciativas importantes centradas en la Eucaristía el 17 de noviembre, el segundo de dos días de sesiones públicas de su asamblea general de otoño.

La Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos aprobó un documento de 26 páginas, titulado “El misterio de la Eucaristía en la vida de la Iglesia”, con 222 votos a favor; también aprobó planes para un avivamiento eucarístico nacional de tres años, que culminará con el Congreso Eucarístico Nacional en Indianápolis en 2024.

Abarcando otros asuntos, se invitó a los obispos a emprender un viaje multicultural con jóvenes católicos a Chicago el próximo junio; se les instó implementar un marco para el matrimonio y el ministerio familiar, que se había aprobado en su asamblea de primavera en junio; acordaron comenzar la revisión de la “Carta para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes” antes de lo planeado; y escucharon sobre cómo la pandemia había frenado, pero no detenido, una iniciativa pro-vida llamada “Caminando con mamás necesitadas”.

Los obispos aprobaron las pautas que rigen las inversiones financieras de la USCCB, que ahora incluyen límites más amplios sobre dónde se invertiría el dinero. Las directri-

ces promueven una política de participación en las prácticas corporativas, que tienen un impacto en la dignidad humana.

Los prelados -- quienes se reunieron en persona para una reunión nacional por primera vez desde 2019 -- también aprobaron pautas para la exposición de la Eucaristía y la Bendición, avalaron las causas de santidad de tres laicos estadounidenses, aprobaron las revisiones de los estatutos para el catecumenado, y votaron por la revisión de las ediciones en inglés y español de la Orden de

Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos.

Ellos también asignaron una fecha de fiesta a Santa Teresa de Calcuta: el 5 de septiembre, fecha de muerte en 1997 de la fundadora de las Misioneras de la Caridad. Será una conmemoración opcional en el calendario litúrgico de Estados Unidos.

El voto de los obispos sobre el documento de la Eucaristía se produjo un día después de su discusión sobre el mismo -- una discusión que fue marcadamente diferente a su debate en junio sobre lo que

este podría contener, incluyendo un llamado para que se niegue la comunión al presidente Joe Biden y a políticos católicos que apoyan el aborto. Sin embargo, el documento final no tenía nada de eso y está dirigido a todos los católicos de Estados Unidos.

Incluso más grande que este documento es el plan para el avivamiento eucarístico de tres años, que termina con el Congreso Eucarístico Nacional en Indianápolis en 2024. Los obispos lo aprobaron 201-17, con cinco abstenciones. Esta iniciativa de avivamiento comenzará oficialmente en la fiesta de Corpus Christi, el 16 de junio de 2022.

We are the Church together

The 2021 Diocesan Services Appeal has been mailed to parishioners throughout the diocese. Each parish has a goal amount to raise for the DSA to help support various programs and resources for the Diocese of Victoria.

Visit www.victoriadiocese.org/DSA-2021-1 to learn how your dollars help others.



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.





Give yourself the gift of peace

While we've all enjoyed getting back to routines this fall, there is a danger in rmg back into old habits.

Recently, I was listening to a presentation by a Catholic counselor where hushie shared that families are tending to over-busy themselves this fall. With everything opening back up, and COVID-19 seeming to be more and more in the rearview mirror, families have dived headfirst back into activities, and some of these to their detriment. He shared that families are forgetting the good things the pandemic taught us, like making time for family and simply being together in our homes.

With that being said, I think Advent is the perfect time to re-capture some of this. The whole point of Advent is to slow down, reflect and anticipate the coming of our Savior.

On the Table

By Justin Reyes



What are some ways you and your family can slow down and keep things simple this Advent?

I know one person who, in discussions with their family, decided to donate money to a charity rather than buy gifts for one another. I also know another who plans on waiting until Christmas Day to decorate the Christmas tree, in order to build anticipation around the celebration of Jesus' birth. Simple things like

this can help us focus on what matters most this time of year, and truly be restored by it and not exhausted.

I invite us all to examine our schedules and the typical routines we'd have around this season and discern if they really benefit our family or not. Do they bring us closer to one another? Do they bring more peace to our lives? Do they help us fix our eyes on Jesus?

If the answer to any of these questions is "no" or "maybe" then we need to re-think them. It's OK to let go of those things that don't make our experience of Advent a memorable one. It's OK to have a "spring cleaning" of sorts this time of year, for that's what the season is all about, preparing not only our hearts, but also our homes and families for the gift of Jesus.

I pray that all of you will have a joyful

and peaceful Advent, not being afraid to let go of those things that distract you from the "Reason for the Season" – Christ Our Savior. He is inviting you to experience Him more deeply this Advent. He wants to draw you near. He wants to give you the peace only He can give. He wants to be king of our hearts, king of our homes, and king of our eternity. Make space for Him. Better yet, give Him the best seat in your home.

I pray this article has been helpful to you. If you'd like to discuss further, or have suggestions that I can share with other families for the Advent season, please contact me. God Bless!

• Justin Reyes is the Director of Family Evangelization for the Diocese of Victoria in Texas.



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U.S. bishops focus on Eucharist

Continued from pg. 2

wider limits on where money would be invested. The guidelines advance a policy of engagement on corporate practices that impact human dignity.

The prelates, meeting in person for a national gathering for the first time since 2019, also approved guidelines for the exposition of the Eucharist and Benediction, affirmed sainthood causes for three U.S. laypeople, approve revisions of statutes for the catechumenate and voted for revised English- and Spanish-language editions of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

The bishops assigned a feast date to St. Teresa of Kolkata – Sept. 5, the death date in 1997 for the founder of the Missionaries of Charity. It will be an optional memorial on the U.S. liturgical calendar.

Their vote on the Eucharist statement came a day after their discussion of the document – a discussion that was markedly different than their debate in June about what it could potentially contain, namely a call for President Joe Biden and Catholic politicians who support abortion to be denied Communion. But the final document had nothing like that and is addressed to all Catholics in the United States.

Even bigger than the statement is the plan for the three-year Eucharistic revival, ending with the National Eucharistic Congress 2024 in Indianapolis. The bishops approved it 201-17, with five abstentions.

with a diocesan focus that will include eucharistic processions and other events of adoration and prayer around the country. In 2023, the emphasis will be on parishes and

resources aimed at increasing Catholics' understanding of what the Eucharist really means.

As chairman of the bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, who was recently named bishop of Crookston, Minnesota, gave the bishops details about this planned revival just before they voted on it.

The revival could be a time of healing for the entire church, he said, as well as a movement of evangelization and a reawakening of understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist for Catholics across the country.

Philadelphia Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez invited fellow bishops to a national gathering in Chicago in June to participate with young Catholics in a dialogue about issues of culture, racism and inclusion through the prism of faith.

"Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit's way of telling us bishops that we really needed to take time to listen to young people, those who minister to them and, especially, those who are in the peripheries, feeling unimportant and unloved, and often alienated from the church," Archbishop Pérez said Nov. 17. He is chairman of the bishops' Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

He detailed the opportunity the coronavirus pandemic has provided in facilitating virtual gatherings between young Catholics and bishops over the last year and a half. More than 60 bishops have joined virtual gatherings as part of a process called "Journeying Together," he said.

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October 3 - 14, 2022

A Marian Pilgrimage to Paris, Lourdes & Fatima with Father Michael Rother...\$3995



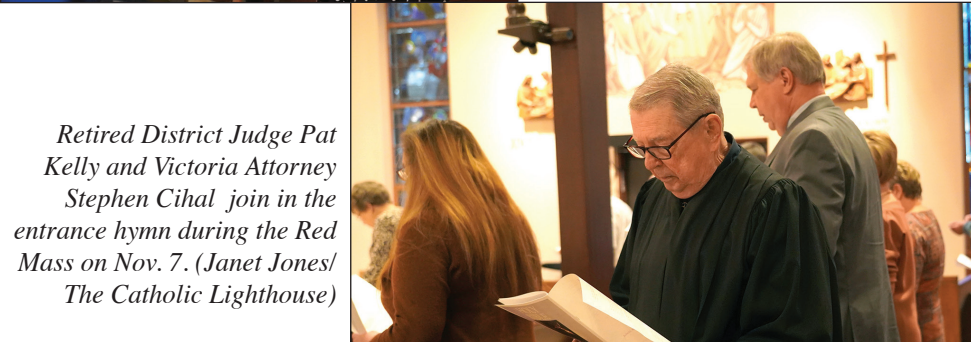
We are going to France and Portugal visiting the Marian Shrines in Paris, Lourdes and Fatima! This program will have us based in Paris for 4 nights and then off to Lourdes where we will spend three nights. We then head to Fatima for three nights with an evening stop at Avila and visit the convent of St. Theresa of Avila. For all the placed we will visit see fliers on the website.

The price of these pilgrimages will include the flights, hotels (dbl occ.), tour bus and guides, meals as indicated on the fliers. Land only pricing is available.

Information and online fliers are found at www.selectinternationaltours.com or contact me at ceci.triska@gmail.com and I will email it to you



Sister Kathleen Goike, superior general of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, offers a prayer card to District Attorney Constance Filley Johnson. (Janet Jones/ The Catholic Lighthouse)



Retired District Judge Pat Kelly and Victoria Attorney Stephen Cihal join in the entrance hymn during the Red Mass on Nov. 7. (Janet Jones/ The Catholic Lighthouse)

Red Mass celebrated Nov. 7

Bishop Brendan Cahill celebrated a Red Mass at 9 a.m. today at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory in Victoria to offer a special blessing for all who work in the legal field or as lawmakers.

He opened his homily with a 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.”

Bishop Cahill continued, “Today ... I celebrate a Mass that we call a Mass of the

Holy Spirit, in which we pray for lawyers, judges, politicians -- many women and men who are entrusted with the public good for the good of our community and our area. And we pray for the Holy Spirit to guide them each and every day.”

After the homily, Bishop Cahill blessed St. Thomas More prayer cards to be given to those who work in the legal profession. Sister Kathleen Goike and Sister Stephana Marbach of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament brought the cards and gave them out after Mass.

The Red Mass has been a tradition for centuries in Europe and was first celebrated in the U.S. in 1928.

Christian Mothers hold annual Public Square Rosary

MOULTON — The Moulton Christian Mothers held their annual Public Square Rosary on Saturday, Oct. 16, in the Family Room of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church.

Deacon Kenneth Fishbeck gave an inspiring talk on the founder of the Knights of Columbus, Blessed Father Michael McGivney, and on the Apostle of the Rosary, Blessed Bartolomeo Longo.

He reminded the forty people in attendance that they are in a battle between

good and evil, and the rosary is the greatest weapon in that battle. Annie Wenske led the Patriotic Rosary and asked for intentions, starting with the diocesan Rosary Congress intentions. Christian Mothers who also participated were Bernadette Fikac, Niki Chaloupka, Janet Raabe, Cindy Cinadr, Marian Kram, and Kathy Fishbeck. The Christian Mothers appreciated the opportunity for all to come together and pray for the community, families, and country.

Diocese welcomes new director of Safe Environment

BY JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

The Safe Environment Office in the Diocese of Victoria is completely different since Melissa Perales first stepped into the role almost 17 years ago. Then, there were some 2,000 Safe Environment-trained persons in the diocese, Now there are around 17,000.

Life changes, too, and Perales decided it was time to step down and spend more time on family matters and volunteer ministry. She has prayed that the right person would come along to carry on.

“I think it’s time to let a new person take it to the next level,” she said.

Stephanie Morales, whose professional career so far has been in the medical field, is that next person. She started training with Perales on Nov. 10.

Morales said she applied because she, too, could see it was time for a change, and was praying about her next career step.

“Basically, to make a long story short, I was being obedient to the will of God,” Morales said.

A mother of three, ages 13, 16 and 22, Morales said she was drawn to working closer with the Church and with the youth. “I’m excited to learn everything,” she said. “It’s good to look at everything through a fresh set of eyes.”



Stephanie Morales

Safe Environment

Reporting Procedures for Suspected or Known Sexual Abuse of a Minor (person under 18 years of age) or Vulnerable Adult by a Member of the Clergy

Contact:

- The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, within **48 hours**, at (800) 252-5400, www.txabusehotline.org, or local police department. **If person is in immediate danger call 911.**

and

- Shannon Thomas, LMSW, Coordinator of Pastoral Care and Outreach, Diocese of Victoria, (361) 827-7186, pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org.

or

- Bishop or Chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria, (361) 573-0828
Written allegations can be mailed to
Office of the Bishop
P.O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903
marked “Personal and Confidential”

If sexual abuse by a member of clergy has occurred in another diocese, the Diocese of Victoria will help bring your concerns to church officials. For assistance contact Vicki Pyatt at (361) 827-7186 or pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org.



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Harvest Mass a time to thank God, seek His mercy

Continued from pg. 1

our vocation and to prevent the materialism of this age from blinding us to them. We will model our homes on that of Nazareth; by working, learning, playing and especially praying together we will strengthen our faith in God and our mutual love and unity; we will fulfill our obligation to be good neighbors, faithful parishioners, loyal and active citizens. We will regard our land as God's land; as stewards of His bounty we will conserve and improve it so that it will increasingly continue to give glory to Him."

"How perfect are the words for ourselves and our lives for today," Bishop Cahill said.

He reflected on how often we get caught up in trying to keep up with changes in technology and all the changes in society. "Times like this give us the chance to focus on what's true and beautiful and eternal that God is the creator of the earth and that we have a special blessing and vocation; that we believe it's a good place and our families and that we honor God by our work each day, at appropriate times giving thanksgiving and praying for God's mercy."

Cahill said a Mass of thanksgiving is a two-fold type of prayer, on one hand thanking God for his blessings and on the other asking for God's mercy.

"I can refer to the words of Abraham Lincoln in the 1860s when he reinstituted the day of Thanksgiving. He talked to a nation in a time that was terrible – in a civil war. And he said in spite of our national sin and war, God has blessed our crops and fields. We've been able to grow and have trade. We've been able to prosper our families in the midst of all this. And so we have to take time to give thanks to God."

Cahill said Lincoln realized the need

to also ask for God's mercy as well as give thanks, and reminded the faithful that, "as we celebrate the Eucharist, we always begin with a prayer asking for God's mercy and healing."

John Cooke, one of the owners of the vineyard and winery hosting the celebration said, "We feel so honored that the diocese would come out here and use the facility and expose people to some of the agriculture that we do which is growing grapes and making wine from the grapes and working the land."

The winery hosted the first Harvest Mass in the autumn of 2019. "We had a great time doing it," Cooke said. "The people, the community, seems to embrace it."

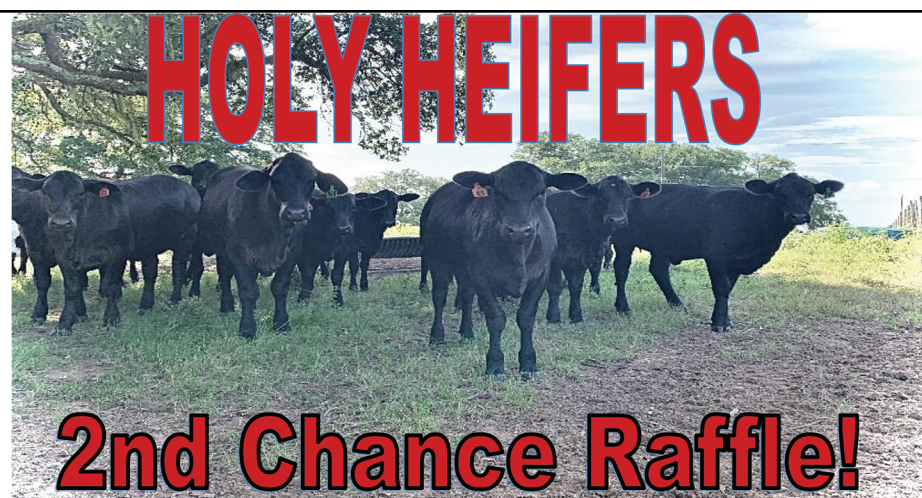
There are many agricultural vocations in the rural Diocese of Victoria – row crops, hay and grass farms, cattle ranches, fish farms, shrimpers and dairies. Catholic Rural Life reaches out to the various farmers and ranchers to help them live their faith through their work. The prayers and lessons offered through the ministry, however, are just as applicable to urban families who might have a windowsill herb garden as they are to those who farm for a living.

"A lot of the people that come to this facility live in the country and work the soil and it has become kind of a community center for them as well."

The Victoria Diocese's Catholic Rural Life chapter will host a Blessing of Seed and Soil on Jan. 15 at BH Genetics, 5933 FM 1157 in Ganado, according to CRL member Sherry Kainer, who has been instrumental in organizing all of the local Catholic Rural Life events. People are encouraged to come and bring a sampling of their crop of garden seeds and a sampling of soil to be blessed and brought back home to the field or garden.



Bishop Cahill celebrates the Harvest Mass. From left are Deacon Andrew Nunmaker of St. Roch in Mentz; the Rev. Stephen Vacek, local Catholic Rural Life president; Deacon Larry Hoelscher of El Campo, chairman of the local CRL; and the Rev. Dalton Ervin, parochial vicar at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Victoria and Weimar native. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)



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Fall décor at the Whistling Duck Vineyard and Winery in Weimar. In the background are the bare vines that will again produce grapes for winemaking. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)





Some gifts don't stop when the batteries die

BY MICHELE ROHDE

Special to the Lighthouse

It's the most wonderful time of the year!

We have so many reasons to be of good cheer. While it can be a hard time for many, there are many things that can also bring us joy this season. From the festive décor, lights, songs, gatherings to extra donations, there's a lot to appreciate. As we make our efforts to focus on the main reason for season, Jesus Christ, let us try to bring that same focus into the commercialized area of gift giving. This is an area where we might have to think a little harder about how to make it meaningful. Here are six ideas that stand the test of time:

1. Consider gifting a child with a contribution to their education fund (in addition to the toy, because you don't want to be that relative). College accounts have many advantages in addition to growing tax-deferred. They can teach several invaluable gifts when explained to the child in your life, such as the "eighth wonder of the world," better known as compounding.

2. Rather than giving only toys, you could mix it up with items that last longer, such as books and experiences. Tickets or trips to events, museums, plays and concerts can make memories and a bond that lasts a lifetime. These experiences could also be low-cost dates, such as a scheduled picnic

written on festive paper. Get creative and think about the recipient's interests. Donations made in someone's name also are beautiful and meaningful gestures.

3. If there is a charity dear to you and you are 72-plus years young, you could donate your annual retirement account distribution to your favorite charity – tax-free. Talk about the ability to make a significant difference in a local community! (Word of caution: Be sure to vet the charity, as mentioned in my previous article, by searching its ratings and reviews online.)

4. If you need to reduce the size of your taxable estate, you may also make a gift tax-free to an individual (\$15,000 per person per year). Please consult your CPA and advisor.

5. If you're crafty, you can find many affordable, fun and useful homemade gift ideas for all ages and interests on popular sites such as Pinterest.

6. If you're not feeling crafty, you can still make a great impact by shopping local.

Let me know which idea you like the best and if you plan on trying one this year. Or better yet, if you have another purposeful gift idea you'd like to share, I'd love to hear it.

Merry Christmas and New Year's blessings to you and yours.

• Michele Rohde is a licensed financial advisor and certified coach.



Emmaus Center brings Roast & Toast back and prepares to grow

BY JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

The years 2020 and 2021 were a long fund-raising dry spell.

The Very Rev. Kirby Hlavaty took over as executive director of the Emmaus Counseling Center after Bishop Gary Janak was ordained in the Diocese of San Antonio during the height of the pandemic problems.

"It was very frightening when I saw the budget for the Center. Going two years without fundraising had taken a toll on our numbers," Father Kirby said. But the office plans to get back on track and is asking supporters to mark May 6 on their calendars for the Roast & Toast that was supposed to happen in the spring of 2020.

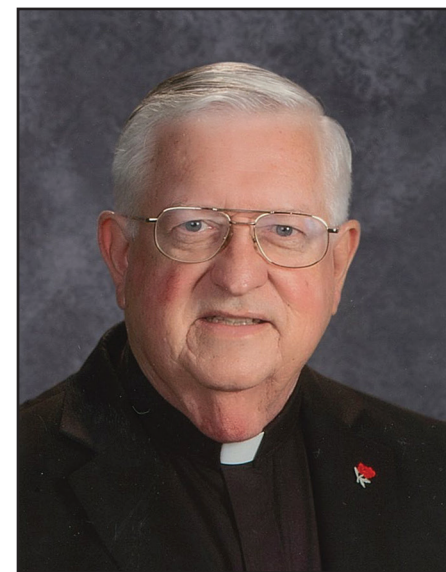
The Rev. Msgr. John Peters, vicar general for the Diocese of Victoria and pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville, is still the target/honoree for the event, as planned. More details will be coming very soon.

Despite the halting of fundraising events, people have been generous, Father Kirby said. In September, the Emmaus Center sent out a letter to people in the diocese asking for help. "I was so grateful to Bishop (Brendan) Cahill for allowing us to make this appeal directly do the diocese," he said. "He told me, 'People will support this,' and he was right."

The center hopes more people might give a little to help cover the cost of therapy sessions for clients who need help but might not have the ability to pay. Sessions cost only \$50, which is less than half the cost of other counseling centers in the area.

"The mail out campaign will not officially close until the end of the year, and we are still getting donations. In fact, some have even set up bank drafts or credit card payments monthly to help cover the cost of a therapy or spiritual directions session," Father Kirby said. "Next year, we will return to hosting a Roast and Toast. It was our only and original fundraiser for the center. It is a fun way to financially support the Emmaus Center. Good intentioned humor can be therapeutic, too."

All of the profits from the Roast & Toast will help cover general operating expenses. But the center is also working on a grant-writing strategy to seek funds to renovate more space in the Cathedral Center building where its office is housed. More restrooms,



Monsignor John C. Peters



a larger waiting area, a play therapy lab, and more counseling rooms are all in the expansion plans.

• The Emmaus Center offers counseling in the Catholic tradition and spiritual direction. For more information, visit www.emmauscounselingcenter.com or call 361-212-0830.

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Diocese of Victoria
Emmaus Center

December Event

Dec. 28 in Flatonía — The Mass for the Feast Day of the Holy Innocents, at Raphael's Refuge will be celebrated by Bishop Brendan Cahill. The Rosary is to begin at 10:15 a.m., followed by announcements and singing of Christmas carols. Mass is to begin at 11 a.m. Refreshments will be served following the Mass. All are welcome. The Monument to the Innocents is located two miles west of Flatonía at 2715 W US Hwy 90. For directions or other information contact them at 361-258-1514 or visit raphaelsrefuge.org.

Collection helps aging members of religious orders

The Diocese of Victoria will hold the Retirement Fund for Religious collection Dec. 11-12. The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, D.C., coordinates the parish-based appeal. Proceeds help religious communities across the country to care for aging members.

Last year, the Diocese of Victoria donated \$32,888.45 to the collection. In 2021, the Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary received a total of \$64,501.58 in financial support made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious.

"I am continually heartened by the generosity of U.S. Catholics," said NRRO Executive Director Sister Stephanie Still, a member of the Sisters of the Presentation of San Francisco. "Even in difficult times, they find a way to give back to those who have tirelessly served our Church and our world."

Hundreds of U.S. religious communities face a large gap between the needs of their older members and the funds available to support them. Historically, Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests—known collectively as women and men religious—served for little to no pay. As a result, many communities now lack adequate retirement savings.

At the same time, health-care expenses continue to rise, and an increasing number of older religious require specialized services. NRRO data shows that 26,330 women and men religious in the United States are older than age 70. The total cost for their care exceeds \$1 billion annually.

To help address the deficit in retirement funding among U.S. religious orders, Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the Retirement Fund for Religious collection in 1988. Distributions are sent to each eligible order's central house and provide supplemental funding for necessities, such as medications and nursing care. Donations also underwrite resources that help religious communities improve eldercare and plan for long-term retirement needs.

Religious orders typically do not receive diocesan funding but rather are financially autonomous and thus responsible for the support and care of all members. While many dioceses hold separate appeals for their retired priests' fund, the once-yearly Retirement Fund for Religious collection is for members of U.S. religious orders and benefits both men and women religious.

The 2020 appeal raised \$20.7 million, and funding was distributed to 321 U.S. religious communities.

Visit www.retiredreligious.org to learn more.

Ministries • Ongoing Activities

ACTS Retreats — Anyone needing any information regarding ACTS retreats in the diocese should e-mail dovactschapter@victoriadiocese.org.

Catholic Family Services — To find Catholic organizations that focus on family, visit the Catholic Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers at <http://www.nacflm.org>.

Courage — Ministers to persons with same-sex attractions and their loved ones. The ministry also has an outreach, EnCourage, which ministers to relatives, spouses, and friends of persons with same-sex attractions. It is a Roman Catholic Apostolate endorsed by the Pontifical Council for the Family. For information, visit <http://www.couragerc.net>.

Crisis Pregnancy Center of Victoria — A sister organization to the Gabriel Project staffed by volunteers that offers help to girls and women who find themselves in a difficult situation due to an unplanned pregnancy. Office located at 1501 E. Red River, is open 1-4 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Free pregnancy tests offered and medical referrals are made for prenatal care. New volunteers are welcome. For information call 361-575-6171.

Emmaus Center — Offers individual, couple, family, adolescent and children's counseling, as well as specialized support groups. Spiritual direction is also available if requested. To make an appointment, call 361-212-0830.

Engaged Encounter — 2021 Dates: Nov. 12-14. 2022 Dates: Jan. 28-30; Apr. 22-24; June 3-5; Sept. 16-18; Nov. 11-13. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Fee must accompany registration form. For information, call 361-573-0828 or visit <http://www.victoriadiocese.org>.

Gabriel Project of the Crossroads — Helps women experiencing a crisis pregnancy as an alternative to abortion. Victoria: Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 101 W. Convent. Light supper included. For angel workshop/training dates, contact Lisa Kainer at 361-676-3264 or lisa_heysquierdo@yahoo.com; DeWitt County meetings have changed: For meetings, call or text the coordinator for the Dewitt chapter, Wayne Smith, at 361-491-0339.

Grief Ministry — An ongoing Grief Group meets at the Holy Family Church conference room in Victoria at 7 p.m., on the first and third Thursdays each month. Adults who have experienced the death of a loved one may attend (after three months have passed). Call Sharon at 361-578-7572 before attending.

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

Incarnate Word Prayer Group — Praise and worship 7:30-9 p.m. Mondays in the auditorium at Incarnate Word Convent, 1101 N.E. Water St. For information, contact Sister Louise Marie Jones at 361-575-7111 or e-mail amormeus@yahoo.com.

Do you have any calendar of events
for the Lighthouse?

Submit to
lighthouse@victoriadiocese.org

Mothers of Grace — A mothers' group at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory. For information, contact Leslie Book at book.leslie@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Mothersofgraceolv/.

Natural Family Planning — NFP is the only church-approved form of family planning. For the CREIGTON MODEL Fertility Care System (CrMS) featuring NaPro TECHNOLOGY™ contact Susanne Koch in Wharton at 505-710-0903 or mailto:susannekoch614@gmail.com. Also in the Cuero area contact, Ashley Rodriguez at 361-293-0700 or e-mail ashleyfay09@gmail.com.

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

Retrouvaille — Retrouvaille, meaning "rediscovery," is a marriage-healing ministry offered in the diocese to couples in difficult marriages. Contact John and Jennifer Vincent at jbjvov@sbcglobal.net or 361-580-2770; or call 800-470-2230; or visit <http://www.helpourmarriage.org>

Strength for the Journey — A grief ministry for parents who have lost their child meets monthly at Assumption Church parish hall, 108 6th St., in Ganado from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The upcoming meetings will be Nov. 9 and Dec. 14. For more information, please call Patricia Hoelscher 979-257-9984 or email phoelscher@victoriadiocese.org.

Surviving Divorce — Surviving Divorce will help you work through the emotional upheaval of separation and divorce; find personal healing and hope; discover a deeper understanding of God's love for you; gain wisdom and comfort from experts and others who share your experience; navigate new concerns like custody, court hearings, and finances. We have a group currently meeting and registration is closed for this season. We plan to host another group in fall 2021. If you have any questions or need support, please contact the Office of Family Evangelization at 361-573-0828 x 2265 or jreyes@victoriadiocese.org

Guided one-day silent Advent retreat
Dec. 11, 9:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

*"Our Lady of Guadalupe: Waiting With the
Mother of the Word Incarnate"*

Father Gabriel Espinoza, pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Bay City, will facilitate this retreat.

Two presentations, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, will be given with time in between for reflection and prayer. Prayer can be in the chapel, on the breezeway, in the prayer garden or while walking on the convent grounds.

During this time, spiritual guidance from a spiritual director, and/or confessions will be available.

To register, email amormeuscenter@gmail.com or call 361-575-7111.



Merry Christmas from all of us



Chancery and Cemetery Office Staff



Spiritual Renewal Center



Presidio La Bahia

