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The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration

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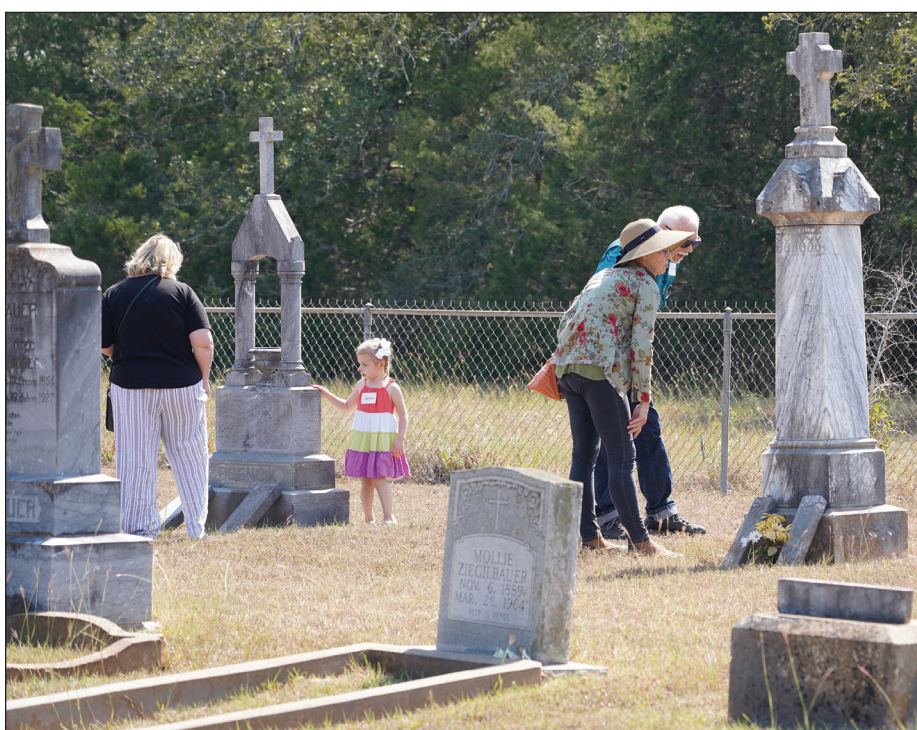
Cemetery a tribute to Catholic Czech settlers who handed down the faith

JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

CISTERN — The Psencik Cemetery also known as the "old Catholic cemetery" a few miles down the road from Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in an unincorporated area is a small one, with 82 graves. If you drove fast enough down Rosanky Road in Fayette County and blinked you might miss it.

See Cemetery a tribute, pg. 20



Members of the Psencik Family read headstones in the small cemetery that bears their family name just minutes after an historical marker was unveiled at the site. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

Many say Church can be more welcoming, inclusive

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the final part of a four-part series looking more deeply into the themes that emerged from the diocesan phase of the Synod on Synodality. This part gives more detail on the desire to have a more welcoming and inclusive church.

JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

A lot of people won't come to a gathering without a personal invitation. And, if they show up, but don't feel welcomed, it's unlikely they will stay for long.

A major theme discussed in the current 2021-23 Synod is how to make the Church more inviting and welcoming. Synod reports – from the parish level in the Diocese of Victoria to the final report compiled by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops – discuss the need to be a more inclusive Church and find ways to meet people where they are in their own faith journeys. In fact the USCCB report calls this "the most common desire" of all the topics discussed nationwide.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' synod report to the Vatican states, "The most common desire

named in the synodal consultations was to be a more welcoming Church where all members of the People of God can find accompaniment on the journey. The synodal consultations mentioned several areas where there existed a tension between how to walk with people while remaining faithful to the teachings of the Church, "for many, the perception is that the blanket application of rules and policies is used as a means of wielding power or acting as a gatekeeper." As one synodal consultation described, "People noted that the Church seems to prioritize doctrine over people, rules, and regulations over lived reality. People want the Church to be a home for the wounded and broken, not an institution for the perfect. They want the Church to meet people where they are, wherever they are, and walk with them rather than judging them; to build real relationships through care and authenticity, not superiority."23

Inclusivity can be a challenge, Bishop Brendan Cahill said. "We do have teachings. We are disciples See Many say Church can be more welcoming, pg. 5

Parish catechetical leaders reflect on the good things in CCD classes

JANET JONES

The Catholic Lighthouse

Those who teach the faith in parish faith formation classes are emerging from a challenging two years of working around the pandemic. So during a synodal listening session on Oct. 8 with Bishop Brendan Cahill, 25 of them from all areas of the diocese gathered to share the good things that are happening.

The questions posed for reflection

See Parish catechetical leaders, pg. 5



Bishop Brendan Cahill speaks to parish catechetical leaders during a synodal listening session on Oct. 8 (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

Vatican II liturgy reforms emphasized dignity of human person

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I remember visiting with a World War II Veteran a few years ago and he spoke of some of his experiences upon returning home from the war. He felt honored and proud to have defended the nation and join together with other citizens in the struggle and effort. If my memory serves me correctly, he shared with a group of us that he went to the Catholic National Cathedral in full uniform and wanted to attend Mass. He was not allowed to sit in the front section and was escorted to seating in the back of the church. He was African-American.

A Shepherd's Message

By Bishop Brendan Cahill



The past couple of months, I've been sharing about the start of the Second Vatican Council 60 years ago and my understanding of the significance of the Council for today.

work being done for its moderate and truly pastoral language and also for displaying the spirit of Sacred Scripture and the Church fathers.

The speaker was Cardinal Frings and one of his main theological advisors was a young priest named Father Joseph Ratzinger – the future Pope Benedict XVI!

Other bishops followed and missionary bishops offered strong support for this renewal. Bishop Rugambwa (Rutabo, Tanzania) spoke on behalf of the African bishops and praised it for responding to the expectation of the Christian peoples of our regions. Archbishop Gracias (Bombay), saying that for years the bishops in the mission territories had been calling for a liturgical reform, exclaimed that now their voice crying in the desert had been heard.

One of the results of the renewal of the Liturgy was a simple teaching that there is not to be “special seating” like American segregation in Catholic Churches. Every child of God has an opportunity to sit in the front or the back.

This month, we honor our Veterans and we celebrate Thanksgiving Day in the United States. May we be thankful for all the blessings we've received, generous with those in need and respectful that every child of God live in peace and have the chance to grow up in love. May God bless you and your families. Let's keep each other in prayer.

+Brendan

On Oct. 20, 1962, Pope John XXIII delivered a message to humanity on behalf of all the bishops gathered at the Council. The situation in the world was extremely tense – this was the third day of the Cuban Missile Crisis, China had tensions with both India and Vietnam, and there were struggles with change in governments all around the world. The Pope delivered a message in which he said:

“We carry in our hearts the hardships, the bodily and mental distress, the sorrows, longings and hopes of all the peoples entrusted to us. We urgently turn our thoughts to all the anxieties by which modern humanity is afflicted ...;” and later he said:

“As we undertake our work, therefore we would emphasize whatever concerns the dignity of the human person, whatever contributes to a genuine community of peoples. ‘Christ's love impels us,’ (2 Cor. 5:14) for ‘he who sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?’ (1 John 3:17)”

Two days later, the bishops began debating about a possible renewal of the Liturgy. The first speaker on the floor of St. Peter's delivered his talk in Latin and praised the



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Bishop Cahill’s Schedule

November		21	4:30 p.m. Meal with IWBS Healthcare Sisters at IWBS Convent; Victoria
1	School Mass and Visit at St. Joseph High School; Victoria		
3	5 p.m. St. Mary’s Seminary Alumni Day Mass and dinner; Houston	22	9 a.m. Legion of Mary Praesidium meeting; Cathedral Center
4	8 a.m. Mass for the Anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria	23-25	Chancery office Closed for Thanksgiving Holidays
	5 p.m. Diocesan Liturgical Commission meeting; Chancery	27	9 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria
5	10 a.m. Certification Mass for Hispanic Ministry Leaders at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria	28	Noon Mass with Missionary Catechists
			6 p.m. Diocesan School Advisory Council meeting; Chancery
6	9:30 a.m. Veteran’s Day Mass and Ceremony; Praha	29	9 a.m. Legion of Mary Praesidium meeting; Cathedral Center
7	12:30 p.m. Mass at UHV; Victoria		6 p.m. Deacon Council meeting; Hallettsville
	5:30 p.m. Red Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory; Victoria	December	
		1	University of St. Thomas Board meeting; Houston
8	Kenedy Memorial Foundation Board Meeting; Corpus Christi	2	8:15 a.m. School Mass and Visit with St. Anthony Catholic School; Columbus
9	10 a.m. Presbyteral Council; Chancery	3	2 p.m. Sons of the Republic of Texas Presidio La Bahia Awards Program at Presidio Nuestra Señora de Loreto Chapel; Goliad
	St. Mary’s Seminary Board Meeting; Virtual		
11	God’s Embrace Annual Benefit Dinner; Schulenburg	4	3 p.m. Open House for Our Lady’s Healing Center at Stella Maris Ranch
12-18	U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishop’s General Meeting; Baltimore, MD	5	11:30 a.m. Confessions and Mass at UHV; Victoria
15	6:30 a.m. Morning Air Radio Interview		7 p.m. Mass with Spanish prayer group at St. Rose of Lima; Schulenburg

Exposition of saints’
relics coming to
East Bernard

EAST BERNARD — Father Carlos Martins, a Vatican-appointed expert on relics, brings Treasures of the Church, a Vatican collection of over 150 relics, some as old as 2,000 years, to Holy Cross Catholic Church in East Bernard at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 5.

Among the relics are those of St. Joseph, St. Maria Goretti, St. Therese of Lisieux (the “Little Flower”), St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Faustina Kowalska.

There will also be a portion of the Veil of Our Lady and one of the largest remaining pieces of the True Cross in the world.

Those in attendance will be able to examine and venerate each relic. Throughout history, many healings have been worked in the presence of relics; and thousands have occurred through this ministry, according to information from Treasures of the Church. Attendees are encouraged to bring articles of devotion such as rosaries or holy cards and pictures of ill friends/family members, to touch to the reliquaries as a means of intercession.

The exposition begins with a presentation and teaching on relics to provide the catechetical and spiritual basis for the “Walk with the Saints” that follows the presentation.

To see the list of relics, visit www.treasuresofthechurch.com.

Holy Cross is located at 839 Church St. For directions, visit www.eastbernardcatholic.org/contact-us-form.



Debbie Escalante



Dennis Fairbank

DOV hires
manager
of Victoria
cemeteries

Debbie Escalante joined the Diocese of Victoria as the manager of Victoria Catholic Cemeteries on Sept. 19.

Escalante was born and raised in Victoria and attended Nazareth Academy, St Joseph High School, Victoria College and Texas A&M University where she earned her degree in management. She is a lifelong member of Our Lady of Sorrows parish. She comes from a large family and she is the youngest of six. She married her high school sweetheart, Ernie, and they have one son, Patrick.

Debbie has spent the last 40 years working in the financial industry. She enjoys working with people, and said she is looking forward to her new role. She plans to bring joy, compassion and understanding to each family she meets. She is also in a partnership with two of her brothers, Tali and James Villafranca as partners/owners of the Club Westerner Dance Hall.

She said she is excited about working with the Diocese of Victoria and believes this is where God wants her.

Contact Escalante at cemeteries@victoriadiocese.org, or call 361-573-0828, Ext. 2233. Her office will be located in the Chancery Offices.

Dennis Fairbank of Spokane, Wash., has been filling in as the cemetery director since the January retirement of Gary Rangnow, who managed the Victoria Catholic cemeteries for many years. Fairbank, who is a retired Catholic cemetery director, has helped other offices in similar transitional periods.

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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 Morales

In memory of Father Dan Morales

Nancy Kutach

In memory of Bernice Krueger

Bernadette Merta

*In memory of Frank Bubela, Alan Bubela,
Daniel Priesmeyer and Jerry Faultine*

Patrick & Virginia Wagner

Edwin C. Marik

In memory of Father Don Ruppert

Guadalupe & Mary Alice Mata

In Memory of Santos Sanchez, Suaste



Acolyte

Catholic Life Insurance Branch 11

KJT St. Wenceslaus Society #40

CDA Our Lady Queen of the
Clergy Court #1990

In memory of Father Don Ruppert

Candidate

Transitional Deacon

Priest

Vincent & Barbara Warzecha

To contribute to the Education of
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Education of Seminarian Fund
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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 >.**

October 27, 2022

• Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters Seminary
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Acolyte

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In Memory of: John, Jr. and Tillie Peters

In Honor of: Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters’

74th Birthday

In Memory of: James Stock

• St. John Seminary Burse (Rev. Brian
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Lector

In Memory of: Bernice Jurika

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

Prayer from St. Augustine

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

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

Rev. Msgr. Benton Thurmond	11/07/2009
Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko	11/18/1983
Rev. John Kollannur	11/19/2017
Rev. Peter Higgins	11/20/2012
Rev. Msgr. Joseph Hybner	11/23/2019
Rev. Msgr. Anthony Matula	11/26/1994
Rev. Gregory O’Connor	11/26/1986
Rev. Raphael Baidoo, O.Ss.T.	11/30/2016



“May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace”

Happy birthday to our seminarians

Deacon Ryan Kapavik is in Theology IV this year at St. Mary’s Seminary, in Houston. His birthday is Nov. 14. Ryan’s home parish is Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Shiner. Write to Deacon Ryan at: St. Mary’s Seminary, 9845 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77024.



Aaron Padilla is in Theology III this year at St. Mary’s Seminary, in Houston. His birthday is Nov. 15. Aaron’s home parish is Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria. Write to Aaron at: St. Mary’s Seminary, 9845 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77024.



Serra Prayer for Vocations



O God, Who wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech You through the intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, St.

Joseph, her spouse, St. Junipero Serra, and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your Church, fellow laborers with Christ to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

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Parish catechetical leaders reflect on the good things in CCD classes

Continued from pg. 1

were framed in a way as to avoid dwelling on anything disheartening. They were asked what their visions are and what is working to foster closer relationships with God, with families and with other catechists.

What most said they hoped for was more participation in the Mass, the Eucharistic Revival and the children's faith formation, more understanding of the Mass and sacraments and having people feel welcome and joyful when they come to Mass.

One catechist said their vision was to show the children that their participation is important. "If you feel needed somewhere then you're more likely to be there," she said.

Others said they want more parents to connect on a deeper level than simply dropping their children off for an hour each week. In fact one story told was of a family who missed Mass one Sunday and, on the next Sunday, their daughter got up to receive Communion. Her mother told her she could not because they had missed Mass the week before. The child told her, "That's your sin."

Each catechist was invited to share what activities seem to be working for them, and most, if not all, said that having families together for Mass, Adoration or to pray the rosary at least monthly was part of their program that seemed to be well received.

Another key element to nurturing relationships with families as well as catechists revolved around having meals together.

Stephanie Charbula, who was the parish catechetical leader for St. Joseph in Inez until this year, said during a follow up review that food is more important than many realize, because a lot of families might be struggling financially, and having a good meal means a lot to them. Those same ones, she said, are usually the ones who won't ask for help.

Some of the PCLs said their churches partner with their local Knights of Columbus councils to help provide food on special occasions.

Having dinners and gatherings for the catechists and their families also was an important activity to make sure they feel appreciated and supported.

Supporting their fellow catechists was another important aspect of the discussion. Most groups said they hold a social gathering either at the beginning or end of the school year for the catechists and invite spouses and families. Some said they make team shirts to show their unity in the mission.

Good and frequent communication was listed by many as a top priority among the catechist community as well as between

catechists and parents. Parish catechetical leaders also said being available to their catechists and families was critical for building and maintaining relationships.

To foster deeper relationships with God, the catechists say they are trying different things. One parish is assigning prayer warriors with each grade level taking a turn to pray while the others are in class. Most mentioned having scheduled Adoration,

rosaries and Masses during the school year. One catechist said they are trying to teach children to pray more than the rote prayers they learn and talk to God

"like he's your father." Another said they are trying to slow down gestures and prayers like the Sign of the Cross and the Our Father to allow the catechists to explain what the words and gestures mean. Still another said the students are writing journals of gratitude and prayer.

Only a few catechists mentioned their pastors in the conversation and Christella Alvarez, director of the Office of Catechetical Ministry, told the group that it was very important to keep the priests involved in their

planning and carrying out of the catechetical program. "Keep that line of communication open because it's extremely important," she said.

At the beginning of the session, the group recited the Synod Prayer together, and bishop addressed the group, stressing the importance of the faith community while "living in a world that makes us fearful" at times. "Not that we're going to solve the world's problems today," he said. But he encouraged the group to listen and pray together and then wait for the Holy Spirit to move in God's time.

Jenny Vincent, who served as committee leader for the diocesan phase of the current Synod on Synodality, served as facilitator. She told those gathered that the point of the synod is to foster "mindful worship and living the faith."

"Listening implies a mutual exchange," Vincent said, explaining that the Church also has a lot of wisdom and truth to impart to its faithful. "As catechetical leaders, you serve both roles," she said, "the voice of the faithful and the face of the church."

Bishop Cahill said it was a "beautiful time together" and reinforced in his mind just how dedicated and faithful the catechists are. He said he hopes to start visiting the CCD programs again now that the pandemic interruptions are in the past.

"As catechetical leaders, you serve both roles, the voice of the faithful and the face of the church."

Jenny Vincent

Many say Church can be more welcoming, inclusive

Continued from pg. 1

of Jesus Christ following his teachings. We have to be who we are, too, and not compare ourselves to somebody else."

Bishop Cahill also said being "less judgmental" is also something to work on, especially in a time when people are so polarized that their views seem to be informed more by politics than by faith.

Not everyone is going to follow the Church's teachings and the revealed truths of the Church will not change because of the synod, but it can lead to a better understanding of Catholic teaching. The whole reason for the Synod on Synodality has been to open up conversations about "journeying together."

Examples given of people who do not feel connected to the Church were:

- Young families with small children
- Immigrants
- Newcomers in the community
- The divorced and those not married in the church
- Young people
- People from the LGBT+ community
- Those who have felt harmed or slighted by the Church
- The homebound

And after the closing of churches during the beginning of the pandemic, many have not returned.

One of the synod's diocesan phase listening sessions with Bishop Brendan Cahill included 44 women from the three religious communities serving in the diocese. The final report from that gathering stated, "... the emerging focus was on being more inviting, welcoming, accepting of differences, and active in outreach efforts to the following groups: Catholic families in the parish and schools, fallen-away Catholics, unchurched and uncatechized Catholics, the homeless, immigrants, divorced and remarried civilly, LGBTQ members. While some social media and online opportunities are utilized, the importance of one-on-one interactions was repeated, with the added emphasis of cheerful and joyful attitudes that witness harmony within the community."

Some of the comments on local parish reports expressed the need to have more gatherings -- beyond fundraising efforts -- to help people become a closer community.

Others suggested that the churches should do more to welcome new members to parishes and get them acquainted with their fellow parishioners.

There was an emphasis on the need for personal interaction, from acknowledging new families in the bulletin, to opening heavy church doors for the elderly and anticipating the needs of people with disabilities.

One parish report noted, "We fall short in the area of evangelization -- inviting personally the people we know from work or in social circles to the Mass or parish functions."

Bishop Cahill agrees and says, "We have to get out of the church" to bring people to the Church.

Bishop Cahill, during a recent listening session with catechists in the diocese, said his vision for the Church is to make all people aware that God loves them. Part of that vision includes his desire that, by 2050, each home in the diocese will have been visited by the faithful who are willing to share the message of God's love and pray with and for people.

After sharing their hopes and dreams for the Church, Bishop Cahill ended the listening session with the parish catechetical leaders with this challenge: "Every Sunday, each of us should think, 'Is there someone in the church who doesn't feel prayed for? Does everyone feel prayed for?'"



At left, Bishop Brendan Cahill blesses the new Family Life Center at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nada, shown above. (Photos: Regina Janak/The Catholic Lighthouse)

Parish of the Nativity in Nada celebrates new building

NADA – The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish celebrated the completion of its new Family Life Center building on Oct. 16 with a Mass and blessing and dedication by Bishop Brendan Cahill.

According to information provided by the parish, part of the center building was constructed in 1966 and is in a line of classroom buildings associated with St. Mary's dating back to 1889.

In 1904, the school building that was there was a mile west of Nada, and Sister Anna, who was in charge, would have children in church in the morning for Mass then walk or ride to the school. After a year, the building was moved closer to Nada. In 1908, two additional classrooms were added.

In 1924, the school building was moved to the property across Old Nada Road. Here the buildings were enlarged. And in 1937, there was an enrollment of 130 students and the school was operated as the Nada Independent School District.

The Garwood Independent School District took over the Nada district in 1948 and the buildings across from the tennis court were sold to the St. Mary Parish and became a parochial grammar school until 1955 when the round school building and convent were

built. In 1966, the school expanded with a building next to the round school to include additional classrooms, a library and a science lab.

By 1999, with the requirements of federal government regarding facilities and teachers, it became cost prohibitive for a small parish like Nada to meet all the requirements to support a parochial school, so its doors were closed.

After that, the buildings were used for the church's CCD program as well as other gatherings. By 2020, the round school building from 1955 needed to be demolished. Afterward, the parish began remodeling and enlarging the 1966 building to the modern facility it is now.

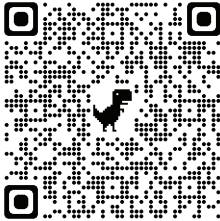
A lot of former Nada students still call it "the school."

The parish produced two bishops, 10 priests, three deacons, one acolyte and 23 sisters – all products of the Nada parochial school system.

Today there are about 90 children in their CCD program and its new building can also serve many other purposes to revolve around parish family life.



Start off the new year with plans to encounter Christ while connecting with other young women from the Diocese of Victoria through fellowship and fun! The retreat will be held Jan. 13-15, 2023, at Camp Kubena in Ledbetter, Texas with limited space of 30 high school age young women. If transportation poses a challenge, please contact the Youth Office. Cost is \$85 per person (includes a \$25 nonrefundable deposit). Registration deadline is Dec. 16, 2022. To register go to www.victoriadiocese.org and click on ministries, Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Retreat For Girls - In His Image or scan the qr code.



Vocation Posters Available

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

Do you have a vocation to the priesthood or religious life?

Contact:
Father Kristopher Fuchs
Director of Vocations
361-573-4328
vocations@victoriadiocese.org






Eagle Scout project gives flagpole a lift

VICTORIA — Victor Neisser, an Our Lady of Victory School alumnus, and member of Boy Scout Troop 364, completed his Eagle Scout project in September. He remodeled the area around the school's flagpole with brickwork and landscaping to bring more attention to it. He stated that he wasn't even aware of the flagpole until fifth grade when he saw two students take the flags down. During the COVID quarantine in sixth grade, he took a merit badge class that required him to make up an Eagle Scout Project design and he chose the flag pole design. Major donors for the \$4,360 needed to complete this project were the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory and the OLV school, the Marine Corps League, Victoria County Veterans Council and Victory Vehicles. Other donors include Catholic War Veterans, Renken's Nursery, Dr. Leslie Frels, Victoria Monuments, Neisser's neighbors and his grandparents in Chicago. Of the 419 hours spent on this project, he spent 126 in planning, fundraising, getting materials and doing manual work. The other 292 hours were labor performed by family members, fellow Scouts, Scout leaders, Scout parents and the Very Rev. Kirby Hlavaty, pastor/rector of the cathedral. Pictured from left are Mickey Muniz, Victor Neisser, Henry Neisser, the Very Rev. Kirby Hlavaty, and James Starnes. (Contributed Photos by Taylor Janak)



Youth Spectacular registration open

Hundreds of high school students around the diocese attended the Youth Spectacular at the Cathedral Center in Victoria this past February. Registration is now open for the next Youth Spectacular set for Feb. 19, at the KC Hall in Hallettsville. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry is now accepting registrations from school/church groups for the event. Bishop Brendan Cahill will celebrate Mass for the gathering. The speaker for the event is Father David Michael Moses, a young Houston-area priest who loves making music and videos. His bio and a look at his ministry is available at www.fatherdavidmichael.com. Theme for the event is "The Source and Summit." To register, visit www.victoriadiocese.org/youth-spectacular. (Lighthouse File Photo by Janet Jones)



The Catholic Diocese of Victoria in Texas
Presents

Youth Spectacular

"The Eucharist is the highway to heaven."
Blessed Carlo Acutis

The Source & Summit

2.19.23

KC Hall 321 US-77 South, Hallettsville, TX 77964

All High School Students are welcome to attend!

10:00AM – Doors open
10:30AM – Opening Mass
4:30PM – Event Concludes

Contact: Wendy @ weggart@victoriadiocese.org or Shannon @ stomas@victoriadiocese.org or 361-573-0828
For more information please see the back of this flyer.

Early registration deadline: **02.10.23**

\$20.00 – Youth Fee
\$17.00 – Youth Fee with Group of 8+
\$10.00 – Adult Fee
\$25.00 – Late Registration Fee
Registration with parish only.
Fees must be received by the office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry by **2.10.23**

Event T-Shirts available!
See website for more information.



The Chancery will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holidays, starting Nov. 23 at noon - Nov. 25.

The Chancery Offices will reopen Nov. 28 at 8:30 a.m.



Not thinking about death won't keep it from coming

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following sermon was written for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A.

"We know not the day nor the hour."

The most unavoidable, and usually the most unwelcome, fact of life is death. We do not even want to think about it. Sometimes, to feel more at ease, we joke about it, like: "They put fences around cemeteries because too many people are dying to get in."

Sometimes adults try to shield little children from the reality of death. For example, a child is told that a grandparent who has died has merely gone away on a long trip. One mother told her little boy that God loved Grandma so much that he took her away to be with him. This frightened the little boy, and he replied, "Boy, I hope God doesn't love ME."

When I was a little boy, my mom and dad and my brother and sister all attended funerals together. It taught me at an early age that death is real and final.

We must all one day die.

No one is too young or too strong or too healthy to die. I know of a teenager who had nothing but scorn for a priest who gave the teenager a talk about death. Very shortly thereafter, he electrocuted himself by foolishly using a hair dryer in the shower.

A high school classmate of mine drowned in a river shortly after graduation. Just recently, a man whose clothes had been soaked with a flammable substance burned to death when he lit a cigarette. In cities, people are shot to death in their beds by blasts of gunfire from passing cars.

Even doctors can't guarantee anyone a long life. They also die.

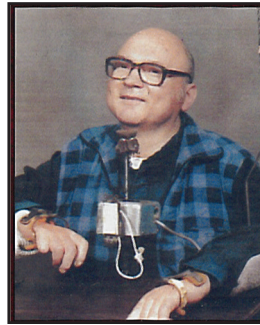
Every time I tell my doctor how well I feel, he says, "That's what my grandfather said just before he died."

Yes, every generation in history has died out completely, and so will ours. A hundred years from now we will all be gone and so will everything that we now struggle for and cling to.

Some call death the "Great Equalizer," others call it the "Grim Reaper." MacArthur, in his old age, called it "That scoundrel."

How true. As one poet said, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

From the natural viewpoint, death makes



1929-2000

Father Charles Kram Corner

no sense. It ends all our plans, it destroys all our accomplishments, it goes so far as to tear our nature apart.

The book Gulliver's Travels describes a land where the inhabitants could not die. They could only get older and older. That's no fun either.

Is it wrong to want to die? Sometimes people who are in unbearable misery or pain beg God to take them. Charity to self does not allow us to take our own lives, but we may desire death as a release from unbearable burdens. St. Paul said that he longed to be dissolved, to be with Christ. He desired death as a means to union with God.

Jesus, the perfect man, chose to die. He was the only man ever born to die. He did it to free us from death. At the Resurrection, we will all come back to life, and there will be a judgment of all mankind, after which there will be only eternal reward or eternal punishment.

We need to think about death sometimes and let the thought of our own end influence our lives for the better.

Visit a cemetery sometime. Take a friend and stroll among the graves. Read the inscriptions on the stones and speculate on who the individuals were and how they lived and died and where their souls are now.

Read the obituaries every now and then. Often the elderly, reading the newspaper, first look for the obituaries. One senior citizen jokingly remarked, "I always check the obituary column first to see whether my name is there."

In one Catholic paper, the obituary column was entitled "Awaiting the Resurrection."

When we die, a mortician prepares our bodies for viewing. At our funeral service, a sermon praises our good deeds. Then our remains are transported to the burial site and lowered into the ground and covered with dirt.

A polished stone marks our final resting place.

Then our body returns to the dust from which it came and our soul lives on forever in heaven or in hell.

If you were to wake up in the middle of the night with chest pains, what would your thoughts be?

Is there something that you are doing that you know is seriously wrong?

Is there someone with whom you have had a falling out; with whom you need to make up?

Is there an important obligation that you need to fulfill?

Do you have a will?

Questions like these need to be resolved while there is still time. How do you stand with God?

Now a final question: Should we fear death? Billy Graham, when asked whether he was afraid of death, replied that he was not afraid to be dead but that he did feel a bit of apprehension about how it would happen. That seems to be about as good an answer as any for the faithful Christian.

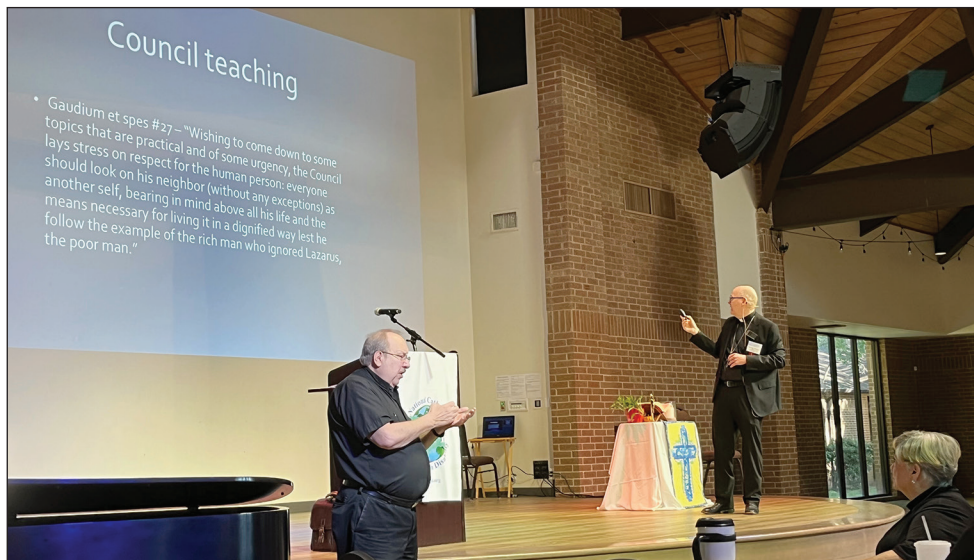
"We know not the day nor the hour," but if we are prepared, our death will be a happy fate.

Lord Jesus, thank you for giving our life and our death true meaning. Help us to use the thought of death as a precious reminder to prepare for our inevitable departure. Grant that when our lives are over, we may all find a secure refuge in you. Amen.



Mass in Loyola, Spain

The Rev. Wayne Flagg, pastor of St. Michael the Archangel in Weimar, left, and Deacon Andy Nunmaker from St. Roch Parish in Mentz, right, are shown with a guest celebrant from Colorado at the Chapel of Conversion of St. Ignatius during a Marian pilgrimage coordinated by God's Embrace Ministries of Schulenburg. The group on the pilgrimage Sept. 26-Oct. 5 went from Fatima to Lourdes with many holy stops in between. Especially significant to God's Embrace Ministries, which is rooted in Ignatian Spirituality was the time spent in Loyola, Spain. The group explored the birthplace and home of St. Ignatius. They also celebrated Mass in the room where he spent his time recovering from injuries and had his powerful conversion. Then he founded the Jesuit order that has contributed in many ways to the spiritual and educational growth of the Church throughout the world. (Photo contributed by God's Embrace Ministries)



Ministry to the disabled discussed

SPRING — Bishop Brendan Cahill delivers the keynote address at the National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities conference Oct. 21-22 at St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Church. At left, Rev. Len Broniak, C.Ss.R., is an interpreter for the deaf. Christella Alvarez and Alicia Olive of the Diocese of Victoria's Office of Catechetical Ministry were among those who attended. Bishop Cahill's talk, titled "Christ's Love Impels Us," focused on Pope John XXIII's message delivered before the start of the Second Vatican Council. Cahill believes that this teaching still serves as a guide to understanding more deeply the teaching at the end of the Council in Gaudium et Spes 27: "The Council lays stress on respect for the human person." This teaching can still inspire and motivate the Church to welcome all God's people. Theme for the recent conference was "One Lord, One Faith, One Family: Disability Ministry in a Synodal Church." (Contributed Photo by Christella Alvarez)



Blue Mass

Peace officers representing various offices in the Diocese of Victoria were blessed during a special Blue Mass on Sept. 29, the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, who is their patron. (Contributed Photo)

Christmas at Sea on the horizon

POINT COMFORT — Starting the week after Thanksgiving, volunteers will deliver gifts to all the ships and many of the tow-boats that visit the port. On average, a ship will have a crew of 23 and the inland vessels have four crewmembers.

Rhonda Cummins, who organizes the ministry at the port in Point Comfort, says she is hoping for 700 gifts this year that will be shared with some 22 nationalities.

Gifts should be packed inside a standard shoe-box (no boot or children's sizes) or a drawstring ditty bag (about 12 by 15 inches). They want the packages to be the same size so the gifts will be of equal value.

Things to include are: personal items such as shampoo, toothpaste, powder, deodorant; snacks that will keep, like hard candies, M&Ms, crackers, microwave popcorn and trail mix; fun things such as small games or playing cards; and mementos such as Texas souvenirs or picture postcards. To see the full list, visit www.victoriadiocese.org.

Gift containers should be packed full and shoeboxes should be wrapped securely

with Christmas paper. Gifts should be for male seafarers as there are very few women aboard.



Completed packages can be dropped off between Nov. 1 and Dec. 16 at these locations:

- Diocese of Victoria Chancery, 1505 E. Mesquite Lane, Victoria
- Holy Family Catholic Church, 704 Mallette Drive, Victoria
- Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, 415 W. Austin Street, Port Lavaca
- Russell Cain Real Estate, 2025 TX – 35,

Port Lavaca

- Mikes on Main Café, 458 Main Street, Palacios
- Packard Law Center, 523 N. Main Street, Schulenburg
- St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church, 512 Tegner Street, El Campo

For information, contact Cummins at stellamaris@olgulf.org for other arrangements.

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‘Stand and pray’

WHARTON — Holy Family Catholic Church in Wharton participated in this year’s Life Chain on Oct 2. The Knights of Columbus Council 3262 helped support the event. The Life Chain takes in various places across the nation each year. People are asked to “stand and pray” for an end to abortion. *(Contributed Photo)*

October blessings

SHINER — The Rev. Bryan Heyer, pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church, begins the month of October by leading a living rosary with Shiner Catholic School Students. He also presided over the Blessing of the Pets to celebrate the feast of St. Francis. *(Contributed Photo)*



Annual Public Square Rosary

MOULTON — The Moulton Christian Mothers held their annual Public Square Rosary on Oct. 15 at the downtown gazebo. With beautiful fall weather, approximately 40 Moulton residents and out-of-town people of all ages came to pray. Bryan’s Daily Treat provided coffee for the crowd. Deacon Kenneth Fishbeck gave a talk about an Irish rosary called the “Irish Penal Rosary.” It’s a single decade rosary that was easily hidden in the hand or sleeve and used in Ireland when Catholics were persecuted by the English crown. He told those present that we are in a battle between good and evil today, and the rosary is our greatest weapon in that battle. Bernadette Fikac welcomed the group and introduced Deacon Fishbeck. Annie Wenske led the Patriotic Rosary and asked for intentions. *(Contributed Photo)*



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Bless them all

Catholic schools in the diocese celebrated the feast of St. Francis of Assisi on Oct. 4 by hosting the annual Blessing of the Pets. Priests blessed a wide variety of pets including ponies, a hedgehog, lots of dogs and cats, and even a bearded dragon. *(Contributed Photos)*

The offertory at Mass is a hidden gem, not 'half-time'

On a short-answer quiz I gave to my freshmen theology students, I posed this prompt:

"In our Holy Mass, the ritual of the Preparation of Gifts for offertory is like _____."

I found two responses to be particularly interesting. One: "It's like half-time when and you wait for the game to restart." And the other: "It's like the intermission at a play. The actors move to different spots, new props are set up for the next scene."

While those answers do not accurately describe the purpose and meaning of the offertory preparation, I suspect that they do reflect the way this part of liturgy is often regarded. This is understandable in part because, except for the gift bearers and a couple of "Blessed be God forever," responses, there is little that calls for the attention of the laity.

Additionally, even if you tried to feed from the words of the priest or deacon, you would be unsatisfied because five of the prayers are to be said quietly or in a low voice, and so will be unheard by most. (Note: for two of the five, if the offertory chant is not sung, the priest may speak these words aloud.)

Since June, I have been offering commentaries stressing that the liturgy provides a template for our whole life – how what we

At Your Service

By Deacon Michael Tankersley



say and do and how we grow as disciples of Christ Jesus can be found in and developed through a close study of and appreciation for our Sacred Liturgy. This month, I offer a brief look into the hidden gem of our Sacred Liturgy: the preparation of gifts for offertory.

Accept first that there is no "half-time" or "intermission" built into our Sacred Liturgy. Our words and movements, our symbols and gestures all inform us about our faith. Even liturgical "pauses" are not intended for the absence of sound but the presence of a sacred silence – the offering of space and time to think of what has been presented and anticipate what is to come.

On the surface, the preparation for offertory might appear to be a lesser part of our Mass, but within it are elements of grace and communion, and it carries His invitation to participate in His divine life.

Consider that the bringing forth of our gifts is not a token act so that laity can be involved in the action. Rather, it is the act of modern-day disciples following in the steps of the apostles at the feeding of the 5,000.

When the disciples informed Jesus, "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," he tells them, "Bring them here to me," (Matthew 14). The present-day offertory gifts of simple white wheat wafers and grape wine are our five loaves and two fish -- insufficient in themselves, but, in His hands, they become Him – body, blood, soul and divinity. This call to "Bring me what you have," is not just about wafers, water and wine; it is a call to bring ourselves, and to offer our hearts to be placed on the altar so that we are transformed into Christ-ness.

Consider that these gifts are not just handed over to someone; they are surrendered to and received by Christ in the person of the priest. This act of offering our gifts (ourselves) over to Christ should remind us that everything in our lives – our successes and failures, our joys and suffering -- will only be properly ordered when we bring ourselves to Christ. His willingness to accept our gifts



The bread and wine to be consecrated are brought to the celebrant of the Mass, because Jesus calls his disciples to bring to Him what they have.

is His willingness to draw our lives into His.

Consider the prayer of the deacon as he pours water and wine into the chalice: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity." Embedded in the lyrical beauty of the words is a concise statement of what Jesus did (became human) and why he did it (so that we can become divine)

Revisit the feeding of the 5,000, and ask yourself why it is that the Jesus, who could heal lepers and restore sight to the blind, who could raise the dead and resurrect, is the same Jesus who would need the five loaves and two fish in order to accomplish the miracle back then. Within it is the answer to why Jesus asks us to today to bring him our fish and loaves. Not because He needs anything from us, but because He loves us and desires that we engage in His life. This is the heart of His invitation to us – an invitation to participate in our salvation and the salvation of others.

Consider the prayer of the priest when he is handed the host(s): "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you; fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become the bread of life."

Afterwards, he is handed the chalice and repeats the prayer substituting the words "... we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink." These words

begin most properly with our gratitude to God ("Blessed are you...") as our acknowledgement that all is a gift from God, never an entitlement.

Significantly, the words that follow rightly place us in the cycle of a right relationship with God: receive, respond, return. We received the "fruit of the earth" (wheat) and the "fruit of the vine" (grapes), we responded with the "work of human hands" (made wine from grapes), and we returned to Him our gifts (bread and wine).

God in turn receives our offering, responds to our prayers to "Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray ...," and returns to us "... the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." This interaction between God and us, us and God continues as a loop: We receive Christ in communion, respond by distributing to others outside what we have received inside, and then return in the next Mass as when the apostles "... gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught." (Mark 6:30)

Though incomplete, perhaps you can approach this part of the Mass with a heightened appreciation and increased awareness that our discipleship is both revealed and lived out in our liturgy. In the offertory, we liturgically act out in the manner we are called to live out – to offer ourselves to Him as He offers Himself to us.

Pax tibi,
Deacon Michael



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Priest’s joyful spirit lit path to life as servant of Christ

A little girl sat with her family at Mass one Sunday listening to the priest give his homily about this strange word – vocation.

The priest was very passionate about how the Lord needed workers in His vineyard. He went on and on how Jesus needed young people to step up and help bring others to Him. The young girl felt her heart swell with love and desire to be one of those that would bring Jesus to others and bring others to Him.

The priest continued explaining how the number of workers for the vineyard was small and the world needed many more people to give their lives to the Lord. The little girl had already thought about maybe becoming a nun one day, even though she didn’t know the first thing about nuns. She already thought that there could never be anything more beautiful than living her life for Jesus, but now that she was hearing that the numbers were so small, she knew that God was calling her right then and there.

Then the priest said, “And that is why you young men need to consider the seminary. We need priests, and so we need you young men to look in your heart to see if God is calling you.”

The little girl waited. She waited to hear him say anything about the girls. She waited to hear him say that the girls should consider

Finding Beauty in Mystery

By Sister Rosario Resendez, IWBS



becoming nuns, but he didn’t say it. He left the ambo and the Mass continued as all Sunday Masses do. So what did the little girl think? She thought there must be enough nuns that God doesn’t need any more girls. She thought that she must have been mistaken, He was not calling her.

That little girl was me, and I still remember that Mass. And I still remember that homily. I still remember the feeling I got in my heart when the priest started the homily and how my heart swelled thinking for sure the Lord is calling me through this homily. I still remember the disappointment I felt when the priest did not mention the girls. Sadly, growing up, every homily about vocations was the same, the girls were never mentioned.

I write this because Nov. 6-12 is National Vocation Awareness Week, and the USCCB issues resource material for the parishes to use for their parishioners of all ages. In one

document I saw an article from a religious sister stating how important the parish priest is, not only for vocations to the priesthood, but also vocations to religious life.

Growing up I didn’t see any religious sisters. I didn’t know the first thing about starting the journey into religious life. The only servant of God I saw was our parish priest.

Many years later, my home parish was blessed with a beautiful priest who happened to have cousins who were religious sisters. When he would give his homilies about vocations he always talked about the girls, too. His homilies reawakened that feeling I had as a little girl. I was now like 18 or 19 years old, but I still felt that swell in my heart with desire to give my life to my Lord Jesus.

So yes, I agree with the sister that wrote the article, the parish priest does have a large part in helping vocations grow in both men and women. The truth is plain to see: There are not as many sisters as there were 60 years ago, but that does not mean that the Lord is no longer calling young ladies into religious life. There may be a generation of young people that may never see a nun during their elementary to high school years, but these young people will see their parish priest and he can help them see their calling.

I always say that a big reason I finally got the courage to seriously look into religious

life was because of Monsignor Gerry Cernoch (May he rest in peace.). He was the one that came to our parish as our new pastor, and, when he spoke about vocations, he did so for both boys and girls. He was the one that wanted religious sisters to come talk to the CCD classes. He was the one that made sure vocation posters for both men and women were posted in different areas around the church hall.

Still, not only was Monsignor Gerry serious about vocations for both men and women, he was like I described earlier – a beautiful and joyful priest. There are priests I know today who, when I describe them, I say are beautiful, because the beauty of their souls is such that it shines so bright one can see it. That beauty and that joy is what draws vocations. It is what makes us know – without a doubt – that there is something greater out there for us to serve and love – for it is Love itself.

“The world today is in need of this: that joy that arises from the encounter with Christ in a life of personal and community prayer, in daily listening to the Word, in the encounter with brothers and sisters, in a happy fraternal life in the community, including fragility, and in the embrace of the flesh of Christ in the poor. Prophets of a joy that is born of feeling loved and therefore forgiven.” Pope Francis, May 2017.

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1122

Office of Catholic Schools honors outstanding alumni

The annual Distinguished Alumni Awards presented to chosen graduates of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Victoria were presented Oct. 17 at The Venue in downtown Victoria.

According to a written introduction from the Office of Catholic Schools, "The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Victoria produce graduates who are more civically engaged, more committed to service as adults and have a lifelong spiritual commitment to the common good. We see these characteristics in our alumni and strive to continue the time-honored tradition of recognizing them for their positive impact on our schools and communities. We see these distinguished men and women as the fruits of our dedicated and loving teachers. Our teachers are the path to our future. Our alumni are the connection to the past."

The honorees are as follows:

Kristin Straub, 2002 graduate of Holy Cross School in Bay City

Straub has always had a heart for service. Her compassion for the lost, forgotten, and vulnerable members of society displayed itself in her various ministries. After graduating college, she served as an inner-city missionary. She has previously served as the Executive Director of the Womens Pregnancy Center in Bay City and is currently working as the Coordinator of Family Catechesis and Evangelization for Holy Cross Catholic Church.

Gail Janecka, 1974 graduate of Nazareth Academy in Victoria

Janecka is a brilliant example of what it means to be a supporter and champion for Catholic education and the passing on of the Catholic faith. She is the current owner of Janecka Insurance Agency, continuing the works of her late husband of 42 years, Russell Janecka, while striving to honor his legacy of serving and promoting the good of our Victoria community and particularly supporting initiatives that have positive impact on our families and youth.

Leslye Franz, 1993 graduate of Our Lady of Victory School in Victoria

Franz has served the OLV school and church community with her whole heart and strength for many years. She has worked hard to improve teacher compensation at the school and has been integral in many fundraisers including serving as co-chair for the OLV gala. As a stay-at-home mom, Franz helps run the family rice farm and ranch businesses

in addition to devoting her valuable time and many talents to Our Lady of Victory Catholic School.

Linda Strickland, 1963 graduate of Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville

Strickland has enjoyed a 38-year career that has spanned across industries such as banking, real estate, construction management, and energy. In 2001, she started a business called Certified Safety Specialists, a third-party safety company providing services for the refining, petrochemical, chemical and related industries. She and her late husband, Jerry, have served and supported ministries such as youth camps and a house that supports patients of organ transplants. They initiated and provided financial support and computers for a new math and technology curriculum at Sacred Heart.



Linda Strickland, distinguished alumni honoree from Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville, shares a laugh with Bishop Brendan Cahill and Sacred Heart Principal Kevin Haas while receiving her award on Oct. 17. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

Robin Garcia, 1970 graduate of St. Anthony School in Columbus

Garcia has been in the pharmaceutical industry for more than 25 years, working most of her career as a retail pharmacist and then part-time in two hospitals in Colorado County. She is currently involved with the Catholic Daughters in Columbus and started an annual garage sale which has donated more than \$15,000 to the school for new cafeteria chairs, an AED machine, computer/science equipment and other school needs.

Dr. Travis Schaar, 1977 graduate of St. Joseph High School in Victoria

Schaar along with being a successful and renowned veterinarian in Victoria -- is wholly dedicated to serving our Catholic community of schools. He has served as a member of the board of directors of STJ, and has been named



Distinguished Alumni award winners are shown here with Bishop Brendan Cahill. Shown from left are, front row, Bishop Cahill, Kathleen Ernster, Kristin Straub, Robin Garcia, Mary Ann Stock and Robert Heger; middle row, Tony Rerich, Gail Janecka, Mary Kay Price, Leslye Franz, Daniel Driskell; and, top row, Dr. Travis Schaar, Linda Strickland, and Clarence Hartensteiner, representing his late wife Carol Wagner Hartensteiner. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

a trustee emeritus. Dr. and Mrs. Schaar were the first couple in the Diocese of Victoria to receive the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award for their service to Nazareth Academy. He is an active member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church and has been chair of three annual church festivals.

Daniel Driskell, 1995 graduate of St. Joseph School in Yoakum

Driskell and his wife, Janna, support St. Joseph Catholic School through their time, treasure, and talents, determined to recruit more and more kids to experience what SJS has to offer. As a Texas A&M graduate and dedicated worker, Driskell is a successful senior sales rep with Emerson Automated Solutions. His work in his field has earned him the coveted President's Award, and his community involvement has earned him national recognition by his company.

Kathleen Ernster, 1938 graduate of St. Michael School in Cuero

Ernster is a woman of profound faith and has a deep devotion to our Lord and to the Mass. At 97 years old, Mrs. Ernster continues to drive herself to daily Mass and regularly attends adult catechesis classes. Mr. and Mrs. Ernster sent their children and grandchildren to St. Michael's School and have always been incredibly gracious to their parish. She is a wonderful example of faith and dedication to the students and staff.

Tony Rerich and Robert Heger, both 1975 graduates of St. Michael School in Weimar

Rerich is known for his incredible BBQ and generous spirit as he shows his love for his community through his cooking. He cooks for local families, benefit meals, and anyone in need. He and his wife, Theresa, have four grandchildren and Tony calls them "the loves of his life."

Heger is an usher at St. Michael Church and helps with the parish picnics both at St. Michael's and in Dubina. He donates blood to the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center on a regular basis. His two daughters graduated from St. Michael Catholic School and he supports the school in any way he can.

Mary Kary Price, 1966 graduate of St. Philip School in El Campo

Price loves the youth of her community with her whole heart and strength. She lives by the philosophy that says, "these children are the future church." She works tirelessly in many youth and church ministries, bringing Christ to our children through education, service and the Holy Eucharist.

The late Carol Hartensteiner, 1973 graduate of St. Rose of Lima School in Schulenburg

Carol Hartensteiner's impact is still felt as memorials and endowments (per her wishes) have been bestowed to the Catholic school in her memory following her death in Janu-

See Office of Catholic Schools, pg. 14



Eucharistic Revival a chance for renewal and conversion

When I was in high school, I had the opportunity to go to a weekend youth conference. I didn't know what to expect and didn't have any big hopes for it. I mostly went because of the friends who had already decided to go. My faith at the time was OK. I went to Mass because I had to, and I knew the answers to most of the questions in CCD.

At the conference I was met with something different – Christians who were alive. There was joy, passion, excitement, vitality. It shook me in a good way and caused me to wonder about my faith more deeply.

What stands out to me the most is a moment during the conference when we had time for Eucharistic Adoration. The consecrated Bread from Mass was brought out and placed in a beautiful vessel that allowed us time to reflect on the mystery of Communion. We sang songs of praise, glorifying the Lord Jesus who continues to make Himself present to us.

Eventually, after some time of prayer, I was surprised to see the priest take the Eucharist from the altar and begin to solemnly process through the crowd, bringing Jesus close. When he finally got near enough to our group, something changed in me. My faith was no longer an abstract idea. I had gone to Mass my whole life, went to Catholic school, had been receiving Holy Communion for years, but it was at that point that I realized – this

In Communion

By Very Rev. Jacob Koether



is Jesus. And it started me down a path that I am very grateful to God for.

I wish everyone could know Jesus in the Eucharist. I'm sure most of you reading this article have the same desire to share the mystery of Eucharistic Communion with everyone. You can probably think of similar experiences of encounter and transformation and can relate with my story.

We can also number some challenging experiences when it comes to the mystery of Jesus in the Eucharist: trying to teach our First Communion classes about the beauty of this Gift, the struggle of persuading parents to worship in Mass every Sunday, our friends and family members who have left the Catholic Church because they weren't being fed, the lack of reverence some show in church because no one introduced them to the One who abides in the tabernacle, and all the many ways we ourselves don't allow

the grace received in Communion to make us like Jesus.

COVID was a critical point, when it became clear to many in the Church that the Eucharist does not appear to be the "source and summit" of our Christian lives. Most parishes are still reporting Mass attendance numbers that have not recovered from the pandemic.

Flowing from this dissatisfaction in the difference between our faith and the lived experience of so many, the bishops decided that now is the time to launch a multi-year Eucharistic Revival, a time of reflection, formation, renewal and conversion, so everyone could grow in devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist.

The Eucharistic Revival began on Corpus

Christi Sunday this year and will continue for the next few years first with a diocesan phase, then a parish phase and, lastly, a year of missionary renewal.

To transition between the Eucharistic Revival and the launch of the year of mission, there will be a national Eucharistic Congress. Our diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis has been tasked with implementing the Eucharistic Revival in our area and assisting parishes in doing their own processes of renewal. There will be events to come and more information to follow.

As we begin, I invite you to make the Eucharistic Revival your own and to join in this important work. Spend some time reflecting on your own experience of the Eucharist. How has the Lord impacted you through Communion? How has the Mass transformed you? What if everyone could not only know about Jesus in the Eucharist but truly meet Him there?

What would our nation look like if the Eucharist were truly the source and summit of our lives?

The Very Rev. Jacob Koether is Episcopal Vicar for Evangelism and Catechesis for the Diocese of Victoria.

Office of Catholic Schools honors outstanding alumni

Continued from pg. 13

ary from ALS. St. Rose is so proud to have Hertensteiner as a distinguished alumni and inspiring model of faith and love. She would ask everyone to smile more, support their children and grandchildren in their endeavors, and spend time with family. Giving back to church, school and community by donating your time and talents will continue her noteworthy and exceptional work.

Mary Ann Stock, 1961 graduate of St. Ludmila School in Shiner

Stock has served the Shiner Catholic community with her delicious hot meals for nearly three decades. She served as the Shiner Catholic School cafeteria manager from 1991 to 2016. She actively participated on the committee that compiled the Saints

Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church centennial cookbook published in 1990. In 2002, Shiner Catholic Schools and the Office of Catholic Schools awarded her the Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton Award for exceptional volunteerism.

Awards were also presented to the three teachers chosen for the F.I.R.S.T-Class Education Awards, including Amy Alegria, elementary teacher from Nazareth Academy in Victoria, Amy Barrera, junior high teacher from St. Joseph in Yoakum, and Geralyn Klimitchek, high school teacher from Sacred Heart in Hallettsville. The recipients of these awards emulate the five pillars of Catholic education in the diocese: Faith, Integrity, Respect, Scholarship, and Tradition.

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

marked "Personal and Confidential" to
Office of the Bishop
P.O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903



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 Shannon Thomas at (361) 827-7186 or pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org.

Las reformas de la liturgia del Vaticano II enfatizan la dignidad humana

Queridos hermanos y hermanas,

Recuerdo haber visitado a un veterano de la Segunda Guerra Mundial hace unos años y habló de algunas de sus experiencias al regresar a casa de la guerra. Se sintió honrado y orgulloso de haber defendido a la nación y unirse a otros ciudadanos en la lucha y el esfuerzo. Si mi memoria no me falla, compartió con un grupo de nosotros que fue a la Catedral Nacional Católica con el uniforme completo y que quería asistir a Misa. No se le permitió sentarse en la sección delantera y fue escoltado a sentarse en la parte trasera de la Iglesia. Él era afroamericano.

En los últimos meses, he estado compartiendo sobre el inicio del Concilio Vaticano Segundo hace 60 años y mi comprensión de la importancia del Concilio para hoy. El 20 de octubre de 1962, el Papa Juan XXIII entregó un mensaje a la humanidad en nombre de

Mensaje del Pastor

By Obispo Brendan Cahill



todos los obispos reunidos en el Concilio. La situación en el mundo era extremadamente tensa: este era el tercer día de la crisis de los misiles en Cuba, China tenía tensiones tanto con India como con Vietnam, y había luchas por el cambio en los gobiernos de todo el mundo.

El Papa entregó un mensaje en el que decía: “Llevamos en el corazón las penali-

dades, las angustias físicas y psíquicas, los dolores, los anhelos y las esperanzas de todos los pueblos que nos han sido confiados. Dirijamos urgentemente nuestro pensamiento a todas las angustias que afligen a la humanidad moderna...,” y luego dijo:

“Al emprender nuestro trabajo, por lo tanto, enfatizaríamos todo lo que concierne a la dignidad de la persona humana, todo lo que contribuya a una genuina comunidad de pueblos. ‘El amor de Cristo nos apremia’ (2 Co 5, 14) porque ‘el que ve a su hermano tener necesidad y cierra contra él su corazón, ¿cómo mora el amor de Dios en él?’ (1 Jn 3, 17)”

Dos días después, los obispos comenzaron a debatir sobre una posible renovación de la Liturgia. El primer orador en el piso de San Pedro pronunció su discurso en latín y elogió el trabajo realizado por su lenguaje moderado y verdaderamente pastoral y también por mostrar el espíritu de la Sagrada Escritura y los padres de la Iglesia.

El orador fue el Cardenal Frings y uno de sus principales asesores teológicos fue un joven sacerdote llamado Padre Joseph Ratzinger – ¡el futuro Papa Benedicto XVI!

Otros obispos siguieron y los obispos misioneros ofrecieron un fuerte apoyo para esta renovación. El obispo Rugambwa (Rutabo, Tanzania) habló en nombre de los obispos africanos y los elogió por responder a la expectativa de los pueblos cristianos de nuestras regiones. El arzobispo Gracias (Bombay), diciendo que durante años los obispos en los territorios de misión habían estado pidiendo una reforma litúrgica, exclamó que ahora se había escuchado su voz que lloraba en el desierto.

Uno de los resultados de la renovación de la liturgia fue una simple enseñanza de que no debe haber “asientos especiales” como la segregación estadounidense en las iglesias católicas. Cada hijo de Dios tiene la oportunidad de sentarse en la parte delantera o trasera.

Este mes, honramos a nuestros Veteranos y celebramos el Día de Acción de Gracias en los Estados Unidos. Que seamos agradecidos por todas las bendiciones que hemos recibido, generosos con los necesitados y respetuosos de que cada hijo de Dios viva en paz y tenga la oportunidad de crecer en el amor. Que Dios los bendiga a ustedes y a sus familias. Mantengámonos unos a otros en oración.

+Brendan



America Needs Fatima

EL CAMPO — Children display cupcakes in the shape of a rosary at the America Needs Fatima rosary rally in El Campo recently. Each year, beginning in 2007, America Needs Fatima has coordinated the Public Square Rosary Crusade, which is the world’s largest network of rosary rallies. Members from St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in El Campo and people from surrounding towns including Wharton, Hallettsville, Nada and Bay City, offered prayers for the country, morality, immigration, families and protecting the lives of the unborn. This year, there were 21,455 Public Square Rosary Rallies nationwide and more than 2,000 rallies in Canada, South Africa and Australia. These Public Square Rosary Rallies take place on the closest Saturday to Oct. 13, the anniversary of the last apparition of Our Lady of Fatima and the Miracle of the Sun. Local chairmen are Terri Beltran, Ella and Charlie Merta and Teresita Mata. Joseph Holik provided the music; Nelda Vallejo, Lali Saucedo, Fortunata Gonzales, Joann Hlavaty led the mysteries of the rosary, and the children brought cupcakes and participated in praying the rosary. Beltran said special thanks goes to the Rev. Philip Brune and the Rev. Augustine Owusu-Peprah for their support, (Contributed Photo)

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Forgive me, Father ...

Vatican seminar looks at why people avoid confession

By Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- Every year, for more than three decades, the Vatican tribunal dealing with matters of conscience has offered a course to help priests in their “ministry of mercy” as confessors.

The huge number of participants, from 500 to 800 ordained and soon-to-be ordained men, who attend the course sponsored by the Apostolic Penitentiary each year attests to the importance and need for adequate formation concerning the sacrament of reconciliation, particularly when confession, as well as “the sense of sin,” is in crisis, Pope Francis told participants in 2019.

It is a crisis on both sides of the confessional screen.

Priests need better formation so that those seeking God’s forgiveness truly experience “a real encounter with salvation in which the Lord’s embrace can be perceived in all its strength, capable of changing, converting, healing and forgiving,” the pope had said.

And the laity need to understand better the importance and joy of confession, according to the Apostolic Penitentiary, which decided to respond by offering a special seminar specifically for laypeople. The seminar was held in Rome and online Oct. 13-14.

Of the more than half-dozen talks covering the usual biblical, theological and spiritual aspects of the sacrament, the most practical presentation was given by Msgr. Krzysztof Nykiel, regent of the Apostolic Penitentiary.

He gave a Top 10 rundown of the most common “good” reasons people give for not going to confession, followed by a faith-based response to each objection.

Highlights from the monsignor’s list of “I don’t go to confession because ...” are summarized here:

1. “... I speak directly to God.” Speaking with God is “excellent,” he said, and it should be done throughout the day with prayer to know God’s will. While “it is not impossible to obtain forgiveness” from God this way, “we would never be sure.”

Only God can forgive sins, he said. So, before the birth of Christ and a life lived without him, humanity could only “hope” to have their sins forgiven. “With Christ, this mercy has descended onto earth and is accessible” to everyone, and only through confession with a priest can one be certain of receiving that forgiveness.

2. “... I don’t like talking about my per-



A priest hears confession from a World Youth Day pilgrim in 2016 at Park Jordana in Krakow, Poland. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

sonal life” with another person. A priest is not just any other person but is one upon whom God has conferred his power to forgive on earth, Msgr. Nykiel said.

Verbalizing and owning up to one’s sins can be difficult or frightening, he said, but “we feel truly loved when everything about us is loved, not just the good or nice things we display” or when the lies and partial truths are believed. When people present their true selves completely to God, they let themselves be loved fully and completely by God.

3. “... The priest may be a worse sinner than me.” It is true that priests are not God, and it is “certainly easier and more uplifting to confess to a holy priest, like St. John Vianney and St. Padre Pio,” he said.

But “the moral condition of the priest at the moment of absolution is wholly irrel-

evant to the validity of absolution,” because the one absolving the sin is God through the priest, he said. A parallel argument, he added, would be to refuse medical care from a doctor whose own health status is unknown.

4. “... I don’t know what to say.” This excuse is “the most prevalent,” but also the easiest to overcome, Msgr. Nykiel said. Just tell the priest, “I want to confess, but I don’t know what to say. Can you help me?”

Learning how to do “a good examination of conscience is helpful,” he said, but what really counts is a sincere desire “to think about the truth of one’s life before God.”

5. “... I’ll be embarrassed.” Feeling ashamed for one’s sins “is already the first healthy sign” of a conscience that has not grown numb or blind to evil, he said. It also should be seen as part of contrition and a form of penance that can strengthen the

desire for conversion.

6. “... I always say the same things.” While it may be good there are no new sins to add to the list, confession is exactly what is needed, he said, to humbly plead with God for his mercy to fight and win the daily battle against one’s vices.

7. “... I’m not committing serious sins.” One may not be guilty of committing theft or murder, but there are still eight other commandments to keep, Msgr. Nykiel said. Believing only serious crimes count as sin can also be a kind of “self-justification” and DIY redemption.

The unworthiness one feels before God “is always directly proportional to one’s closeness to him,” which is why the greatest saints always felt like the greatest sinners. “If we don’t feel like we are sinners, then we still are not saints.”

8. “... I didn’t like it the last time I went.” Confessors might be distracted, unprepared, too “rigorous because he wanted to send me straight to hell” or too lax because “he wanted to almost canonize me despite my serious sins,” the monsignor said.

People can always seek out a different confessor, he said. But people also may be expecting more than the sacrament is meant for: to wipe away sin and experience God’s healing through forgiveness, he said. It is not meant to fix one’s problems or make feelings of guilt disappear.

Msgr. Nykiel concluded that every objection comes from the same root: “a resistance to love.”

“The sacrament of reconciliation is too important and too essential to give up for any reason,” he said. “Divine mercy is always waiting for us. Let us not run away like capricious children, making up excuses not even we believe.”

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.



The Season of Advent A Time to Prepare



Advent Begins Sunday, November 27

A Prayer in a Country Cemetery (All Souls Day, November 2)

DEAR Lord, here lie in their last rest, the boys and girls, the men and women that worked on the land. They knew the meaning of hard work. They knew the joy and peace that is the product of labor. Now we trust they know the peace and happiness of everlasting life with You.

They watched the sun rise often, winter and summer, over these hills and fields. They worked hard by its light, and turned willingly to their rest at its setting. Now they walk in the light of a Sun that knows no setting. Lord, if they are still in the waiting room of heaven—in purgatory—bring them speedily to the light of Your peace and the happiness of Your presence.



These men and women all their lives long labored to supply the food and drink necessary to sustain human life. Now, or soon, they enjoy in all its fullness the life that You, Lord, came down to earth to give men, and to give more abundantly.

Dear Lord, bless us who labor now in the fields and hills where these dear dead have worked. Grant that we may remember them with charity and kindness, walking reverently in the ways that they have left behind them. Grant, too, that we may finally meet these men and women, these boys and girls, in the eternal mansions that You are even now preparing for us. Amen.

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Sunday Readings from Nov. 6 - Dec. 11

November 6 ~ Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14

Psalms 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15

2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

Luke 20:27-38

November 13 ~ Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Malachi 3:19-20a

Psalms 98:5-6, 7-8, 9

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

Luke 21:5-19

November 20 ~ The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

2 Samuel 5:1-3

Psalms 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-43

ADVENT

November 27 ~ First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalms 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:37-44

December 4 ~ Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17

Romans 15:4-9

Matthew 3:1-12

December 11 ~ Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

Psalms 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

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

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OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH DINNER



Sunday, December 4
105 N. William St. • Victoria

Pork Steak Plates
served with mashed potato and green beans

Serving Begins at 10:30 a.m.
Plates-To-Go Only at \$12 each

All proceeds benefit the parish
Sponsored by OLL Holy Name Society





'Ecological disaster': Religious leaders want end to Ghana's illegal mines

By **Damian Avevor**
Catholic News Service

ACCRA, Ghana (CNS) — Religious leaders called for a week of fasting and prayer for the environment because of the devastation that illegal mining, or "galamsey," is causing, including adversely affecting people's health and the economy.

"We are calling for a week of fasting and prayers to pray for change of hearts and for God's mercy upon our nation for the destruction we have caused the environment," said Archbishop Philip Naameh, president of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, Oct. 17. He spoke on behalf of the Christian ecumenical bodies, which include Christian and Muslim leaders, among others.

"With immediate effect, we call on religious leaders to wear red armbands to show our deep concern for the destruction of our environment through galamsey," he said. "For

many years now, our sovereign country Ghana has been witnessing, under our very naked eyes, the saddest environmental coup d'état ever unleashed upon our nation, heralding a programmed and complete ecological disaster or destruction."

Archbishop Naameh said that in pastoral and social visits around the country, "we see, denounce and cry over the wicked and greedy destruction of our forest resources."

He decried the cutting down of cash crops on a massive scale, degrading of the land and polluting the rivers with mining chemicals like mercury, chlorine and cyanide, which kill aquatic life.

"Our ecosystems are being destroyed irreversibly; our soils are contaminated with poisonous chemicals, which are very difficult if not impossible to clean them up," he said, adding, "Our people are drinking dangerously polluted water; some of our mission hospitals

are recording increased strange diseases."

He said an increasing number of women were being treated for cervical and uterine cancer, and other people -- including children -- were being diagnosed with kidney disease. He said the number of stillbirths was increasing.

The effects on crops were "so bad that some countries, like Japan, require extra testing of our cocoa products before they can be accepted on their markets," he said.

"Marine life, our livestock, birds, insects and game reserves all depend on, drink and use these highly polluted waters also. Their meat and edible vegetation all end upon our dining tables."

"We have become 'living-dead-polluted-walking Ghanaians.' We need to rise up and confront the situation to save our nation," he said.

The U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration says gold accounts for about accounting for about 95% of Ghana's mineral revenue.

About 35% of the gold in Ghana is extract-

ed through illegal small-scale and artisanal gold mining, or galamsey. Environmentalists say their effects outweigh those of the larger mines. For instance, the mercury and heavy metals can contaminate drinking water and lead to kidney and neurological problems.

On Oct. 14, the religious leaders toured some galamsey sites in Ghana's Eastern Region. Father Dieu-Donne Davor, communications director of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, who was part of the team, told Catholic News Service: "The devastation is terrible. Forests and water bodies have been destroyed. It is very disheartening."

The leadership of the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious is calling on priests to educate people on the situation.

In addition, the conference plans "to train some youth in the affected areas in the country to acquire various skills and give them start-up kits for sustainable employment," said Sister Theodora Adzayawo, a member of the Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church and executive secretary of the conference.

Journeys of Faith with Ceci



**Join us on a journey to Italy
with Father Gabriel Bentil
September 1 - 10, 2023**

Join Father Gabriel Bentil on an Italy Pilgrimage that starts in Assisi, home of St. Francis and

St. Claire, Cascia and view the incorrupt body of St. Rita, Saint of Impossible Causes, the Holy House of Blessed Mother in Loreto, the beautiful town of Siena where we see the relics of St. Catherine, Orvieto to see the Eucharistic Miracle of Bolsena in the beautiful Cathedral, and ROME, where we attend the Papal Audience, tour the four Basilicas, the Colosseum and have a free day to explore on your own!



**Holy Land Pilgrimage
with Father Oscar Amos
November 10-20, 2023**

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is an experience of a lifetime! Can you imagine walking in the footsteps of Our Lord...to see and touch the places of His birth, life and death? How will you feel as you walk the road of His passion to the place of His resurrection? Join us and see the Gospels come to life!

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



Wreaths will be laid on graves Dec. 17 in the Diocese of Victoria as part of Wreaths Across America. There will be a 4 p.m. Mass at St. John's Catholic Church in Hungerford to remember veterans. (Contributed Photo)

Wreath ceremonies honor veterans

The 2022 National Wreaths Across America ceremonies will be held on Saturday, Dec. 17, at more than 2,500 locations across the United States, at sea and abroad.

In the Diocese of Victoria, ceremonies will be held at three locations:

- In **East Bernard** at 11 a.m. at Holy Cross Cemetery
- In **Hungerford** at 12 p.m. at St. John's Cemetery
- In **Wharton** at 1 p.m. at the Wharton courthouse

Also, a 4 p.m. Mass at St. John's will be celebrated in remembrance of veterans

The wreath-laying event is possible because of volunteers who organize local ceremonies, raise funds to sponsor wreaths and participate in the events. Individual wreath sponsors, corporate donors and volunteer truckers pay the cost.

Donations of \$15 per wreath are being accepted through Nov. 16. For Hungerford, contact Dorothy Viktorin at 979-532-2146; for Wharton, contact Sarah Hudgins at 281-433-3357; and, for East Bernard, contact First United Methodist Church at 979-335-6298.

To learn more, visit wreathsacrossamerica.org

Meals • Picnics and More

November

Port Lavaca — Our Lady of the Gulf Church's Altar Society will host its annual turkey and dressing dinner with trimmings (catered by Werner's of Shiner) on Sunday, Nov. 6 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at St. Jude Hall, 300 W. Austin St. Plates are \$12 each. Dine in or drive thru available. There will be a raffle and bake sale also.

Schulenburg — God's Embrace Ministry will have its 6th Annual Evening in High Hill on Nov. 11. Special guest is Bishop Brendan Cahill. Event includes social hour, gourmet dinner, live and silent auctions. Tickets are limited. Call 979-561-8883, or visit www.godsembrace.org/gem-benefit for tickets and information.

Victoria — Come Shop in Downtown Victoria - St. Mary's and Our Lady of Lourdes Harvest Bazaars. Both locations will sell handcrafted quilted, crocheted, and embroidered items, holiday decor; raffle tickets; breads, cinnamon rolls, cakes, cookies and so much more...

• **St. Mary's Hall** (401 S. Liberty St.) on Friday, Nov. 11 and Saturday, Nov. 12 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring Potato Soup to-go Lunch, \$9.

• **Our Lady of Lourdes Hall** (105 N. William St.) on Saturday, Nov. 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Victoria — Court Daughters of the Holy Family #2665 10th Annual Arts & Crafts Show and Bake Sale, Saturday, Nov. 12, and Sunday, Nov. 13, starting at 8 a.m. in the Activity Center of Holy Family Church.

December

Victoria — Our Lady of Lourdes Holy Names Society pork steak dinner, Dec. 4. See ad on pg. 17 for more information.

Presidio La Bahia



On the first Saturday of even numbered months, Presidio La Bahia brings Texas history to life! The next event will be Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Open daily 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4.50 for seniors, \$3.50 for military personnel, \$2 for children 6-11, and under 6 are free.

Group rates available when reservations are made in advance.

Guided tours available to large groups and schools. Please confirm in advance.

The fort is handicapped accessible.

For more information, call 361-645-3752.

Spiritual Renewal Center

Looking for a place for your **Christmas gathering** or a **family reunion**? The Spiritual Renewal Center (SRC) is located on approximately 40 acres nestled along the banks of the San Antonio River and about a 25-minute drive from Victoria.

The SRS is open for small or large group which can be a one-day or over night with a kitchen staff to provide meals. There is also an open pavilion for outdoor activities.

Handicap accessible.

For more information or to reserve the SRC contact Matthew Boyle, director, by email src@victoriadiocese.org or at 361-572-0836.

Do you have any calendar of events
for the Lighthouse?
Submit to
lighthouse@victoriadiocese.org

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 — 2022 Dates: 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. Our mission is to protect the unborn by providing spiritual and emotional support as well as supplies. We provide housing through the Bethlehem Maternity Home and have an outreach ministry that visits pregnant women in our community. Our services cover Victoria, Calhoun, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Goliad, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda and Wharton Counties. For more information, please contact our helpline at 361-576-1156.

Grief Ministry — Are you an adult, 18 years or older experiencing the death of a loved one? Grief Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday evenings from 6:45 to 8 p.m.

Amor Meus

Contact: Sr. Digna Vela, IWBS
(361) 575-7111 / e-mail: amormeus@yahoo.com
website: www.amormeusspiritualitycenter.org
IWBS Convent • 1101 NE Water St. • Victoria

Nov. 27 – Solemn Vespers All Sundays during Advent

Dec. 13 – Taize' Prayer (*Advent/Incarnation Prayer*), 7 p.m., Amor Meus Prayer Room

Workshop/Retreat (10 a.m. - 3 p.m.)

Dec. 10 – “The Healing Touch of God” presented by Sr. Louise Marie Jones, IWBS

Guided One-Day Silent Retreat

Jan. 21 – “God's Call to Relationship and Spiritual Growth” facilitated by Rosalyn Collier

at Holy Family Catholic Church. Please call Sharon at 361-578-7572 before attending.

Grief Ministry — For parents whose children have died meets on Aug. 9 at Assumption Church parish hall, 108 6th St., in Ganado from 6:30 to 8 p.m. For more information, please call Pat Hoelscher at 979-257-9984.

i.d.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.

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 — Raphael's Refuge is the home of the Monument to the Innocents which honors babies who have died (from conception to one year). We are a non-profit organization located outside of Flatonia, Texas. Peer counseling is available for those suffering the loss of a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth, infant death or abortion. For information, call Therese at 361-258-1514, e-mail raphaelsrefuge@att.net, 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 jbvjov@sbcglobal.net or 361-580-2770; or call 800-470-2230; or visit <http://www.helppourmarriage.org>



The Psencik family, who held a reunion Oct. 9, unveiled a Texas historical marker at the Psencik Cemetery on Roanky Road in Fayette County. The family's ancestors are the ones who settled the Cistern area and donated land for a school and church to carry on the faith tradition. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

Cemetery a tribute to Catholic Czech settlers who handed down the faith

Continued from pg. 1

Though small and sparse, it is a testament to the early Czech settlers that carved out a living in that part of Texas, raised families and passed down their Catholic faith.

On Oct. 9, the descendants of Josef and Josefa (Novak) Psencik and their nine children who settled the area in the late 1800s gathered for a family reunion that included the dedication of a historical marker there to help preserve and protect the cemetery and “preserve the cultural and religious influences of that early time period,” according to the application submitted to the Texas Historical Commission. “It would also serve to keep the settlers’ story ‘alive’ for current and future generations.”

Though not all Catholic cemeteries will get this special treatment, many will get extra attention this time of year as Catholics prepare for All Saints Day and All Souls Day – a time when families will gather to clean and tidy the gravesites where their loved ones rest.

According to Dennis Fairbank, who has served as the interim director of the Catholic Cemeteries Office for most of this year, this is important because “death is important.” It’s a part of life’s journey. When a body is buried and the grave is marked, he said

“There’s this tangible evidence – a tribute to those who have gone before.”

Because the human person is body and soul, both deserve to be treated with dignity. “We have to respect the dead,” said Debbie Escalante, who is taking over as the new cemetery office director. She said she and Alice Capelo, who assists the cemetery directors, start their morning with “A Daily Prayer for Cemeterians” to ask God’s help in being reverent and respectful in serving the needs of families who are burying their dead.

Fairbank said when families visit gravesites, “you can almost see the memories being pulled forward.” Those special visits are when a lot of families will share treasured stories as well.

Two of the descendants of Josef and Josefa Psencik, Suzanne Harris and Laverne Wilhelm, worked on their family’s story when applying for the historical marker.

The family started to arrive in Texas in 1873. First two of the sons, then another, then Josef and Josefa (most likely with their daughters), then the others. They settled in Industry, Texas, and earned money as tenant farmers until they could afford to buy their own land which is near where Cistern is today.

“Once their family homesteads were established, the Psenciks turned their attention to addressing their spiritual needs and providing an education for their children,” according to the written family history. It goes on to say that they deeded 7 acres of land to the Catholic Diocese of San Antonio to build a church. First the Psencik school was built on the tract and some of the family members taught there. Once a month a priest would arrive on horseback from a neighboring town to celebrate Mass. The building was the center of community life in many ways.

The school building is long gone and, though the property was originally intended for a church, according to the family history, the Rev. Francis Shea (Zak) encouraged the

Rev. Eddie Winkler, pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and Sacred Heart in Flatonia, all spoke about the significance of the event.

Afterward, family members drove a few miles down the two-lane road to the cemetery and parked along the shoulder of the road as there is no parking lot. Once the marker was unveiled and read family member entered the gates and spread out among the tombstones to find their ancestors’ final resting place or read the other tombstones that have been there for more than a century.

Josef and Josefa Psencik are buried there and share a marker. Many of their children are there, too, as well as other Catholics who worshipped at Sts. Cyril and Methodius.



Bill and Edna Mae Psencik are the only two Psencik family members living in the area settled by their family. The Czech immigrants who came to Texas and made a life there made sure a school and church were built to serve the needs of the Catholic families. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

people to build the church in Cistern. So Sts. Cyril and Methodius was erected in 1890 and was placed under the supervision of the Rev. Joseph Mack. Eventually a new cemetery was established on the church grounds and the Psencik cemetery was no longer used for burials.

As families do over generations, the Psenciks have spread out, leaving the area for opportunities in larger cities. Bill and Edna Mae Psencik, both in their 90s, are the only ones who still live in the Cistern area. Bill was the designated family member to help with the unveiling of the marker. The couple are members of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and their generosity helped cover the cost for the historical marker. Money was also collected from other family members and the church helped as well. The family also paid to have an arch at the entryway and new gates installed to add to the cemetery’s appearance. The most notable part past the gates is a large crucifix in the center of the cemetery.

At the dedication ceremony, Bobbie Nash, chair of the Fayette County Historical Commission, the Honorable Dan Mueller, Fayette County Justice of the Peace, and the

A Daily Prayer for Cemeterians

Lord, May everything we do begin with Your inspiration and continue with Your help, so that all our prayers and works having begun in You may be also happily ended with Your blessing.

May we always reverently and respectfully seek to serve the needs of all experiencing the loss and sadness of death, especially those who are surrounded by untimely or tragic circumstances. May our ministry be one of compassion combined with the hope of the Resurrection. May all our actions give You glory and praise forever and ever.

Amen.