Written in ink

By JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

Emily Benavides watches as Bishop Cahill signs the Book of the Elect for her parish. There are some 45 people in the Diocese of Victoria who will join the Church during the Easter Vigil Mass this year. Another 60 will receive the sacrament of confirmation. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

Confession more about God’s mercy than human sinfulness

By CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- The sacrament of reconciliation “is not so much about our sins” as it is about God’s forgiveness, the pope said.

“Think about it: If our sins were at the heart of the sacrament, almost everything would depend on us, on our repentance, our efforts, our resolve,” but it is about God’s power, mercy and grace.

Pope Francis said March 25 during a Lenten penance service in St. Peter’s Basilica.

The service, with individual confessions, preceded the pope’s formal act of consecrating the world, particularly Russia and Ukraine, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Pope Francis went to one of the confessional in the basilica and confessed his sins before joining more than 100 other priests in hearing confessions.

Pope Francis began the service praying that God would “open our eyes, that we may see the evil we have committed, and touch our hearts, that we may be converted to you.”

The booklet given to people participating in the service contained a 25-point “examination of conscience” designed to prepare them for confession and absolution by looking at their faith and prayer lives, the way they treat family members and others, whether they go to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation, how they practice charity, follow church moral teachings and how they use the time and talents God has given them.

“All too often,” he said, “we think that confession is about going to God with dejected looks. Yet it is not so much that we go to the Lord, but that he comes to us, to fill us with his grace, to fill us with his joy.”

To those who find it hard to accept the forgiveness of a sin in their past or are upset by their inability to mend their ways, Pope Francis said: “Do not be afraid. God knows your weaknesses and is greater than your mistakes.”

Rite of Election an exciting step for candidates and the elect

By JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

The expression on the face of Miranda Fikes during the Rite of Election on March 6 left no doubt that something important and joyful was happening for her. She leaned forward and seemed to hang on every word as Bishop Brendan Cahill spoke.

“Your names are written in ink on the heart of God,” Cahill said. “Today we celebrate rituals that are ancient within our Catholic Church; that go back to our foundation in the early centuries after Jesus Christ. And the First Sunday in Lent, the church would gather around with the bishop, and those who were going to be baptized and confirmed and receive Communion for the first time would be presented before the bishop and their names would be written in ink. And from the very

See WRITTEN IN INK, Page 16
A question is probably just a question

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I remember attending a workshop given by Father John Kemper in the early 2000s focused on the theme of teaching Gen X-ers. At the time I was teaching in a seminary, and it seemed that often we teachers would enter into conversations about the “young seminarians” and how hard it was for us to understand them. I still have my notes from the talk that day, and the memory I want to share with you is that he told us, “When a student asks a question, it probably is just a question.”

That observation wouldn’t appear to be so enlightening to many people, but for someone who often perceived a question as a challenge to authority, it changed my way of looking at questions. For example, I realized that if a seminarian asked me why I celebrated the Mass in a certain way, I simply needed to respond to the question. Why I celebrated the Mass in a certain way, as a challenge to authority, it changed my memory I want to share with you is that he opened their mouths to ask a question. Using the story mentioned above, we could ask ourselves, “How do I listen to those in my ‘classroom’?” and then follow with “What are the labels or judgments I have placed on them?” and, “Who do I keep out of the ‘classroom’?”

The most basic attempt at the first question might reveal that there is a tendency to listen more closely to those who agree with me. A tendency to shut down an alternate view or even a simple question, maybe without even realizing it, also could develop. Henri Nouwen wrote about this spiritual problem years ago in his book Reaching Out, observing how often a teacher spends time answering questions that aren’t being asked.

Nouwen called for a spiritual movement in the classroom towards hospitality, in which students can be heard and appreciated for the questions they present. This image of the classroom can serve as an image for the different levels of relationships in my life. It could be at work or at home, in the larger community of schools and civic involvements, even in the Church.

The process of synodality has been challenging each of us to not immediately shut down any voice, and to listen to the questions that are being asked. In the process, I am becoming aware of my preconceptions and judgments. I’m learning to listen without immediately responding. The process challenges each of us to come to a greater appreciation of whom we have been cutting off or whom we may be talking about in a dismissive way. The process reminds each of us that often we don’t need to give an answer; we can simply sit and acknowledge another person’s humanity.

Beyond the people I may have been dismissing in my environment are those I don’t even know. It could be different cultures, languages, political views, ages, experiences or other categories. The process of synodality outlines a path for each of us to go beyond stereotypes and what we hear about another group of people. Hopefully, there will be a moment in which each of us can listen to someone from a “new” group. A beauty of the process can be in the realization that, whatever groups we belong to, many of us have similar questions, hopes and dreams.

Recently, Pope Francis consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in communion with the bishops throughout the world. A part of the prayer of consecration acknowledged our own sins before God, including when “we grew indifferent and caught up in our own selfish needs and concerns.” May we develop listening hearts whose only concern is the salvation of all souls, especially those in most need of God’s mercy.

Let’s keep each other in prayer.

+Brendan

Catholics worldwide join consecration of Russia, Ukraine

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- As Russia’s violent monthlong invasion continued to devastate Ukraine, Pope Francis laid the fates of both countries at the feet of Mary in the hopes that peace would finally reign.

“Mother of God and our mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine,” the pope said March 25, pronouncing the Act of Consecration after leading a Lenten penance service in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Praying before a statue of Mary that was loaned by the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at San Vittoriano on the outskirts of Rome, the pope pleaded with Mary to “accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end, and peace spread throughout the world.”

In the Diocese of Victoria, Bishop Brendan Cahill, kneeling in front of the Blessed Mother’s statue at the chapel at Incarnate World and Blessed Sacrament convent, joined the prayers at the same hour as Pope Francis and read the prayer in Spanish.

The Rev. Richard Barfield read the consecration in English and the Rev. Tran Dinh read it again, but in Vietnamese.

Pope Francis kneels at the feet of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Peter’s Basilica andentrusts Russia, Ukraine and all of humanity to her Immaculate Heart. At the same time in the Diocese of Victoria, Bishop Cahill, and other churches joined in the prayers.

At far left, the Rev. Tran Dinh is shown reading the consecration prayers given by Pope Francis in Vietnamese while kneeling in the chapel at the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Convent where Bishop Cahill led the consecration. Prayers were also said in English and Spanish.
### Bishop Cahill’s Schedule

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**It’s a BINGO**

The Rev. Dalton Ervin helps out with the first annual bingo fundraiser -- “Taco ‘Bout Babies” -- of the Gabriel Project of the Crossroads. The organization reported that it was the most successful fundraiser to date and will help provide services at the Bethlehem Maternity Home and other Mother-Baby Services in the 10-county area that it serves. The committee included Michele Rohde, Robbie Lauger, Toni Schaar, Glenn Villafranca, Barbara Williams, Cheryl Thompson-Draper, Diana Galvan and Clara Crutchfield. They gave special thanks to Katie Greer of Atzenhof-fer’s Velocity Powersports for emceeing the event; Sam Navarro for being the deejay; Ventura’s for catering the taco bar; and Glenn Villafranca and family for the hospitality at Club Westerner, where the event took place. They also want to thank everyone who gave additional monetary support or in-kind donations and especially the VIP table sponsors.

(Contributed Photo)
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.

March 21, 2022

• Josephat R. Janak Seminary Burse
  Lector
  In honor of Auxiliary Bishop Gary Janak on the 1st anniversary of ordination as Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio April 20, 2021 by Rose Marie Janak and Family

• Rev. Scott Hill Seminary Burse
  Lector
  In memory of Rick Vandel by Daryl and Joan Hill
  Acolyte
  In memory of Brother Knight Wilbert J. Klesel by KC Council #2902, Schulenburg

• Rev. Wayne Flagg Seminary Burse
  Acolyte
  In memory of Sir Knight James G.

Zabrasky by KC Fourth Degree St. Michael Assembly #1527 of Flatonia, Schulenburg and Weimar, TX

• Rev. Wayne Flagg and Rev. Philip Brune Seminary Burse
  Lector
  In honor of Rev. James Dvorak’s birthday by Mark and Sharon Kubicek

• Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #8
  Lector
  Donation in memory of Rev. Henry Rolf

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

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

March 21, 2022

DIOCESE

Education of Seminarian Fund

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

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

Lector
Paz & Andrea Morales
in memory of Father Dan Morales

Acolyte
Monroe & Mary Margaret Rieger
in memory of William “Bill” Riechert

Knights of Columbus, #1329
in memory of Kasper Chester Lyssy,
Knights of Columbus, #1329
in memory of Herbert Mueller

Knights of Columbus, #1329
in memory of Herbert Mueller

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


"Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you! Do not be afraid to dream of great things!" — Pope Francis

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

Rev. Peter Kaplinski   4/7/2003
Rev. Michael Malloy, O.Ss.T.   4/12/1986
Rev. Henry Pscencik   4/14/1989
Rev. Charles Sonnier   4/22/2016

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.”

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

Contact:
Father Tommy Chen
Director of Vocations
361-552-6140
tchenvictoriadiocese.org

OR
Father Kristopher Fuchs
Associate Director of Vocations
361-573-4328
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Inspirational Gifts
EDITOR’S NOTE: Father Charles Kram wrote this sermon for Palm Sunday, which is April 10 this year.

During this Holy Week, we commemorate the saddest events of all history — for this is the week during which we recall how He, who is the Greatest and the Best, endured his ordeal of suffering and shame.

These are the saddest events that ever happened since the foundation of the world, yet they have brought us the greatest blessings that have ever befallen the human race since the fall of Adam.

According to God’s plan of redemption, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness, for blood means life and the shedding of blood means sacrifice. It is through the sacrificial shedding of blood that we have been reconciled with God.

It was not the innocent blood of Abel, slain by his brother Cain. It was not the blood of the sheep and bullocks shed on the ancient altars of sacrifice. Nor was it the heroic blood of martyrs shed for their faith. But it was the blood of the innocent Lamb of God, the Father’s own dearly beloved Son, who takes away the sins of the world; the blood of which a single drop could cleanse the world of all its guilt.

If the crowds who had shouted their “Hosannas” and waved their palm branches during Jesus’ triumphal ride through the city had been told that very soon they would be clamoring for his crucifixion, they would never have believed it.

If the apostles, who had been with Jesus for three years and who had seen his miracles, had been told they would all abandon him in his greatest need and that one of their number would sell their Master for 30 pieces of silver and then hang himself in despair, they would have been utterly horrified.

It was a tragic testimony to the fickleness of human nature, a stark evidence of the harm our sins can do, and the ultimate proof of our great need for God’s mercy.

Jesus paid a debt he did not owe so that we might be freed from a debt we could not pay. What clearer manifestation could there be of the unconditional love that our Heavenly Father has for us, his children?

Just as without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness, so, too, without REPENTANCE, there is no forgiveness. Repentance was at the center of the preaching of John the Baptist; so, too, it belongs to the essence of the Christian faith.

We can spend a fortune dodging our responsibilities and shifting the blame and explaining our guilt away, yet to be forgiven, we must repent.

So often we hear, “My addiction did it; it wasn’t me,” “I was temporarily insane, so send me for treatment,” “I did it because my parents mistreated me as a child.”

It is so easy to play make believe, to substitute sickness for sin, to lay the blame on others, but where do the Scriptures ever say, “Blessed are the crybabies, for they shall escape their responsibilities?”

Just recently, a girl told me, “I once broke my neck, and, boy, did it change my life.”

We must not wait for some tragedy to open our eyes. We must not despair like Judas did and perish. We had better weep and explaining our guilt away, yet to be forgiven.

I often think how blest we are in having that much-needed, much-neglected sacrament, the sacrament of reconciliation — for me the surest way to pardon and peace and to a deep assurance of forgiveness.

The most consoling words I know are the words of absolution spoken over me by a fellow priest: “I absolve you from your sins.”

I could never say, as one lady once said to me, “There are some things I did that I wouldn’t admit to nobody.” And another: “I’m still a Catholic, but I haven’t been to confession for so long. I don’t believe in it any more.” And a third: “It’s too late for me to start over now.”

But now is the time of grace — the time to learn from our mistakes — the time to make definite plans for improvement.

So, today, as we wave our palm branches and sing “Hosannas” to the Son of David, we grieve for our sins and make final preparations for the celebration of the Resurrection — Christ’s greatest miracle and his Father’s final seal of approval on his mission as our Messiah, our promise of eternal life.

Lord Jesus, thank you for this blessed season of reform and reconciliation. Help us to begin life all over again while there is still time. Grant that the blood you once shed for our redemption may wash us clean of every stain so that we can belong to you completely. Amen.

Men’s conference a success

VICTORIA — The Rev. Kirby Hlavaty carries the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament during a Eucharistic procession at the start of the 2022 Catholic Men’s Conference on March 5. Men of all ages took part in learning more about the topic of the conference: “Your Role as a Catholic Man.”

Recordings of the speakers have been shared on the Diocese of Victoria’s website: www.victoriadiocese.org/men.

The Office of Family Evangelization, which sponsors the men’s conference is now focusing on plans for the 2022 Women’s Conference: “Meet Your Mother,” which takes place April 23. Details and registration are at www.victoriadiocese.org/2022womensconference.

Speakers are well-known theologian, author and speaker Dr. Edward Sri, Katherine Whitaker, a mother of six and explaining our guilt away, yet to be forgiven.

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Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse
Sister M. Alberta Novosad, IWBS, passes away at 99

Sister M. Alberta Novosad, 99, died on March 7, 2022. She was born March 1, 1923, in Fayetteville, Texas, to the late Paul and Mary Novosad. She was the fifth of 11 children, nine girls and two boys.

Sister Alberta received her grade-school education at St. John’s in Fayetteville and Sts. Peter and Paul in Plum. She felt called to serve God in a religious vocation and became an Aspirant of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Victoria, graduating from Nazareth Academy High School.

She became a Postulant on Dec. 8, 1941, a Novice on July 27, 1942, and was professed on July 28, 1943. She received a bachelor’s degree in English with a minor in Latin from Incarnate Word College, San Antonio; a master’s in counseling from St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, and a master’s in administration from the University of Houston-Victoria.

During her 79 years as a professed Sister, she ministered as teacher at Sacred Heart School (Floresville), Nazareth Academy (Victoria), Sacred Heart School (La Grange), and St. Joseph High School in Victoria as the first woman principal of the all-boys high school at the time. She also served as principal at Mary Immaculate (Dallas), Blessed Sacrament Academy (San Antonio), Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and Queen of Peace (Houston). In the early years she also taught piano and was as principal at Incarnate Word Convent, Nazareth Academy and Saint Joseph High School in Victoria, Hospice of South Texas, or donor’s choice. Share memories and condolences with the family at www.colonialfuneralhomevictoria.com.

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DIOCESE
In Memoriam

Sister Evelyn Korenek’s brother passes away

Kenneth Michael Korenek of El Campo passed away on March 19, 2022, at the age of 64. He was born Aug. 24, 1957, to Leonard Sr. and Evelyn Canik Korenek. He was a farmer and rancher. He was a member of the Nada Knights of Columbus #3371, board member of Rice Farmers Coop, and an officer of Wharton-Colorado County Farmers Union.

Kenny is survived by his wife of 41 years, Donna Pavlik Korenek; sons Kevin (Emily) Korenek of Louise, Travis (Courtney) Korenek of Louise, and Blake (Rachel) Korenek of Katy; grandchildren Cameron Korenek, Westlyn Korenek, Paxtyn Korenek and Anna Korenek; siblings Sister Evelyn Korenek, IWBS, of Victoria, Leonar (Judy) Korenek of Wharton, Angeline (Gary) Wendel of Louise, Allen (Arlene) Korenek of Bay City, Stephen (Pat) Korenek of El Campo, Patrick Korenek and Tammy of Louise, brother-in-law Keith Fruge of Beaumont and numerous nieces and nephews. He is predeceased in death by his parents; and sisters, Barbara Korenek and Madeline Fruge.

Visitations and rosaries were March 22 at Triska Funeral Home. The Funeral Mass took place March 23, 2022, at St. John Catholic Church in New Tafton with the Rev. Gabriel Taiwhi officiating. Interment followed at St. John Cemetery.

Kenny served as a member of the Nada Knights of Columbus #3371, board member of Rice Farmers Coop, and an officer of Wharton-Colorado County Farmers Union.

Memorial donations may be made to Houston Hospice-El Campo, P. O. Box 1417, El Campo, TX 77437.
Lenten labors of love should not make you less lovable

When Lent first began my younger sister texted me to let me know that she was giving up coffee for Lent. She is a brave soul. I mean, maybe I was just projecting myself onto her, but I drink coffee for the safety of others and, therefore, would not give it up. I told her that if whatever one gives up for Lent makes them be uncharitable to others, maybe it shouldn’t be given up. She told me that she thinks she could do it, and I secretly feared for her husband’s life.

I am happy to report no lives have been lost or hurt so far during this Lenten season. I’m pretty proud of her. I did mean what I said to her though: If whatever we fast from during Lent makes us grumpy and rude, then we shouldn’t be doing that. Pope Francis wrote, “Christians are called to sow goodness their entire lives, but even more so during Lent,” in his Lenten letter this year.

I believe it is common knowledge that one need not give up something for Lent if instead one will add a practice. Good examples of this would be going to daily Mass more often, making a commitment to spend more time in prayer, and reading the Bible daily.

Many times when we have been fasting from something and Easter comes and we find ourselves celebrating the resurrection of Our Lord, we overindulge ourselves with whatever we have been fasting from which is really not the point of Lent but seems to be common practice. Many times too, we stop doing whatever practice we added on during Lent, but why is that?

When I read Pope Francis’ Lenten message I really took it to heart. What could I do to change myself for the good? After all, I am always trying to improve myself and become closer to the Lord. So after praying about it, I decided that one of the practices I would pick up during this season would be to compliment people the moment the compliment pops in my head. If I see someone wearing a pretty dress I will now tell them, “That is a really pretty dress. You look nice,” whereas before I may have just admired the dress in my mind. Maybe a coworker has a good idea, I will now say, “That’s an excellent idea, we should try that,” whereas before I would have just nodded.

Giving people verbal compliments may not seem like a hard thing to do for some, but I’m an introvert who lives in her head about 95 percent of the time. Being verbal does not come easy to me. It is even more difficult when it’s someone that I don’t know. (I know some of you that know me may find that hard to believe, but trust me, it’s true.) Still, I think it’s more than just giving verbal compliments; it’s showing an act of kindness to others.

There have been many times that I have noticed a visible change in the person receiving the compliment. The smile that comes to their face that they may not have had before, but will now walk away with, is beautiful to witness.

Lent isn’t over, but I have started to notice a change in myself, too. When you give someone a compliment, it’s because you noticed something in them that you admire. So in order for me to be able to give a compliment, I must be observant of my neighbors to be able to notice something that I may have missed before when I was just living in my head. As I have allowed myself to become more observant, I have been the witness of beauty that I have apparently been ignoring for some time. I don’t mean only physical beauty, but spiritual beauty, emotional beauty and intellectual beauty as well.

There is so much negativity and violence in the world today that to be one who spreads kindness is like an act of rebellion -- a good one; one that can change the world. Like Pope Francis said, “doing good with love, justice and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day and require patience, prayer and hope.”

Will I give up this practice after Lent? No, I don’t think so. I think when Easter comes and we celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, overindulging in acts of kindness would be very acceptable.

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” (Colossians 3:12-13)
BY BOBBY HORECKA
Special to the Lighthouse

SHINER -- Much has changed at Shiner Catholic Schools these last 125 years, but one thing always remains constant, said Principal Neely Yackel, "The people of Shiner have always been so supportive of our local school programs here," she said. "It’s just amazing, and it continues today just as it did when our schools first opened. We are truly blessed here."

During an interview with the local newspaper, she showed us three prized relics she keeps of those first years.

The first came to her while she was house hunting in Shiner, not after she was named principal of the local Catholic school. That particular item—an old photo—shows the school in its earliest days, not long after the church was rebuilt right next door.

The other two items—an old brass bell and the original school attendance ledger, scribed in the most perfect penmanship one could imagine—she keeps on her shelf, close to where she does much of her work.

Of course, knowing her schedule might be rather tight, Yackel also produced a wonderful history on her campuses, which we’ll share with you now without further ado:

Shiner Catholic school started as St. Ludmilla Academy in 1897 by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word Blessed Sacrament.

St. Ludmilla Academy was officially founded on Feb. 24, 1897. The staff consisted of Sister Frances Campbell, Sister Augustine Minoque, Sister Angela Hart of Houston, and Sister Phillip Isabelle Resendez of Brownsville. They lived on the second floor of the two-story frame structure and taught classes on the first floor.

The first Catholic school in Shiner was built in 1896 by contractors Scherbohm and Mewes. The two-story French-style frame building housed two classrooms, a dining room, and a kitchen on the first floor, and the second floor was a residence for the sisters.

When the school opened it had 57 students. Language courses at the time included German and Czech, and music courses featured both piano and mandolin.

Only elementary grades were taught until 1902, when two years of high school courses were added. As time went on, the number of students increased, and it became necessary to provide more classrooms and increase teaching staff.

In 1916, a four-story building was constructed at the cost of $20,000. The construction was made possible through the generosity of the Rev. Francis Machan, pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church.

The sisters worked diligently and provided resources to attend summer school and college. The increase in faculty members was made possible when several young ladies joined the ranks of sisterhood of Nazareth Academy in Victoria. They returned to Shiner, where they began teaching large numbers of children while taking correspondence and extension courses to complete their educations.

In 1928, a four-year high school began, and the school received the state of "Academy." By 1929, St. Ludmilla Academy was fully accredited. The school has always been coeducational, and, until 1939, was a board-

Shiner Catholic School was honored with a special religious icon created in memory of St. Ludmila. The artist painted the icon showing St. Ludmila holding the Shiner school. Marvin Marek, left, with the Czech Catholic Foundation, made the presentation to Principal Neely Yackel and the Rev. Bryan Heyer. (Contributed Photo)

UIL winners

PORT LAVACA -- Our Lady of the Gulf students participated in a UIL Invitational Meet for grades 2-5, hosted by Louise Elementary in December. The following students placed: Natalie Chen, Creative Writing 1st, Spelling 1st; Hartley Lange (not pictured), Spelling 3rd; Jonathan Melendez, Storytelling 3rd; Erinn Day, Storytelling 2nd; Logan Hill, Spelling 4th; Max Lara, Spelling 2nd; Ella Sharp, Oral Reading 6th; Erianna Silvas, Spelling 4th; Paisley Brett, Maps/Charts 3rd; Landen Hill, Listening Skills 1st, Number Sense 1st, Oral Reading 1st, Spelling 1st, Ready Writing 4th, Social Studies 4th; Brooklyn Kriegel, Oral Reading 2nd, Spelling 4th, Ready Writing 2nd; Ian Liao, Social Studies 3rd; Landon Lange, Maps/Charts 1st, Listening Skills 5th, Oral Reading 6th, Spelling 6th; Ian Medrano (not pictured), Social Studies 4th; and Alina Rodriguez, Listening Skills 6th. (Contributed Photo)

Free-throw champs

COLUMBUS -- The Knights of Columbus District 190 Free Throw Championship took place at St. Anthony School on Feb. 12. First-place winners and their divisions were, from left, front, Cade Wessels, Weimar, boys age 9; Cal Schiffli, Schulenburg, boys age 10; Briley Hartenstein, Schulenburg, girls age 9; middle, Caden Herzik, Schulenburg, boys age 12; Kole Schmitt, Schulenburg, boys age 13; Chloe Brandt, Weimar, girls age 11; Mallory Bonner, Schulenburg, girls age 10; back, Jayse Janda, Schulenburg, boys age 14; Molly Rorschach, Schulenburg, girls age 13; Annabelle Norrell, Weimar, girls age 12; and Christopher Madden, Columbus, boys age 11. (Contributed Photo)
The mingling of water and wine: a brief, but powerful part of the liturgy

When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” [And] Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. (John 2:3-7)

In my recollections, I was the source of frustration to the Sunday school teachers I had during my youth as a Baptist-Pentecostal hybrid. Discussing narratives such as the wedding feast at Cana, for example, the teacher would focus on the power of Christ to change one substance into another. I, on the other hand, was drawn to question why Jesus who, according to the teacher, had the power to heal lepers, restore sight to the blind and raise the dead would need the help of the stewards to make this miracle happen. He could have snapped his fingers or winked his eye and vintage wines would be always available at the tables of the guests. Why did Christ require the heavy labor of the stewards?

In a similar vein, consider the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Why would Christ need the five loaves and two fish in order to accomplish the miracle or give the baskets to the disciples to distribute to the people? With a simple wave of his hand, a plate of the finest foods could have appeared before each person without the need of the paltry supply of fish and bread to jumpstart the miracle or the service of the apostles to deliver. Why did Jesus employ the gifts and services of humans to do that which He could have done through His own measure?

Some insight into these questions can be found in a brief and often disregarded segment of our liturgy. At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the deacon (or the priest), is instructed to pour wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly, “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.”

There is little in the physical demonstration and nothing audible to the ears of the congregation that indicates significance to this brief ritual. However, this is a sacred and profound duty performed by the deacon at Mass, and is a hidden treasure of the Holy Mass. Within it is a whole theology of grace and communion, incarnation, redemption and divination. Within it is the answer to why Jesus asks us to be his stewards, to bring him our fish and loaves and to deliver His gifts, as did the apostles in feeding the 5,000.

Firstly, consider the matter used: water and wine.

The 104th Psalm is a praise to God for the goodness of His creation and His gift of wine “to gladden our hearts.” Later, the prophet Isaiah would comment on the dilution of these good gifts of God when he describes the sinfulness of Israel by saying, “Your wine is mixed with water.” Simply put, the goodness of God we receive is and will be watered down by the sinfulness of our humanity, unless that water is transformed.

When Christ entered into and sanctified the waters of humanity through His baptism, He transformed human waters into something greater than it was. Through Christ, the human waters have been given potency and capacity that was not there before. In the preparation of the chalice, it is not the water of our sin and concupiscence that is being poured into the chalice, but rather the Living Water, which we are being offered.

Secondly, consider the ministers: the priest and deacon.

Liturgically, the deacon is nonessential here; that is, the priest can certainly celebrate the Mass without the presence of a deacon. However, priest and deacon together at the altar offers a visual imagery of Christ as servant and as sacrifice that is less powerfully displayed when the deacon is absent from the altar. Additionally, there is a brief but moving moment as the chalice is handed from deacon to priest when both are holding the vessel as one. It is a powerful reminder that the sacrifice of Christ, through the priest in Persona Christi, IS the service (diakonia) of Christ, through the deacon as suffering servant.

Thirdly, consider the form (words) spoken:

“By the mystery of this water and wine …” are not words of consecration but of invitation. Each time these words are spoken in the preparation of the chalice, an invitation is presented: “May we come to share in the divinity of Christ,” to participate in His divine life assisting in our own salvation and the salvation of others. It is the invitation that Jesus offered to the stewards at Cana -- an offer to participate in the miracle, to share in His mystery. Likewise, the instructions to bring the fish and loaves and to deliver the food were invitations to participate in the divine life. Jesus does not need us. Far better, He wants us, loves us and seeks to share His life with us. As we continue our Lenten journey into and through the Paschal Mystery, may we come to share in His divinity by filling ourselves to the brim with the mystery of this water and wine.
ing school and a day school.

To accommodate students who lived a distance from the school, two buses were purchased by the parish in 1950. An additional bus was later added because of the steady increase in enrollment.

During the 1950-51 school year, a 17-member school band was formed under the direction of Mr. Robert Taylor. In 1951, the original two-story building was torn down, and the present one-story elementary school building was built at a cost of $36,600, which featured spacious classrooms with modern lighting and heating facilities that gave students a pleasant environment in which to learn. This building project was made possible through the sacrifices and savings of the IWBS Sisters.

The school expanded in 1952 when the parish constructed a gym and cafeteria. The facilities were dedicated on July 8, 1952, to be used by the students of St. Ludmilla and parishioners of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.

Another expansion took place in 1963, when the parish undertook the construction of a $112,000 brick building to meet the educational needs of the high school students.

St. Paul became a parochial high school, supported by the parish; St. Ludmilla remained a private school for grades one through eight, and was still supported by the Sisters.

In 1975, a kindergarten was added at the end of the elementary building. This building project included the laying of brick on the entire elementary building.

A significant change occurred in 1986 when Sisters of the Incarnate Word Blessed Sacrament left the school. St. Ludmilla Academy was no longer a private elementary school. The parish began its support of both schools, and the name was changed to Shiner Catholic School, St. Ludmilla Elementary/St. Paul High School.

A preschool program for 4-year-olds in the fall of 1987, and in the fall of 1989, the program was expanded to include 3-year-olds.

In 2002 a parish hall was completed adjacent to the parish gym. It serves as the cafeteria for the Catholic school students, with a seating capacity of approximately 200 people. It is used to accommodate the larger gatherings of various parish and social functions.

In 2012, the Janak Music Center was completed. The building is a state-of-the-art music center that has served students in grades K-12 since beginning in the 2012-13 school year. The building was made possible through the extreme generosity of the late-Rita Janak family, in memory of Rita’s late-husband, Leo Janak, and the Dickson-Allen Foundation.

In 2018, the school completed its most recent addition, the Administration Building, which houses the school’s administration offices, along with the school’s Pre-K classes.

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**Shiner schools celebrating 125 years**

Continued from Page 8

YOAKUM -- Knights of Columbus Treasurer Deacon Dennis Kutach, center, presents a $6,000 check to the Very Rev. Matthew Huehlefeld, pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church, and Bishop Brendan Cahill, who celebrated Mass on the feast of St. Joseph, March 19, at the church. The Yoakum Knights of Columbus made the donation for St. Joseph School. The KCs also furnished fish for a meal after the Mass. (Contributed Photo)
Una pregunta es probablemente solo una pregunta

Queridos hermanos y hermanas,

Recuerdo haber asistido a un taller impartido por el Padre John Kemper a principios de la década de 2000 centrado en el tema de la enseñanza de la “Generación X”. En ese momento yo estaba enseñando en un seminario y parecía que a menudo los profesores entrábamos en conversaciones sobre los “jóvenes seminaristas” y lo difícil que era para nosotros entenderlos. Todavía tengo mis notas de la charla de ese día, y el recuerdo que quiero compartir con ustedes es que nos dijo: “Cuando un estudiante hace una pregunta, probablemente sea solo una pregunta”.

Esa observación no parecería ser tan esclarecedora para muchas personas, pero para alguien que a menudo percibía una pregunta como un desafío a la autoridad, cambió la forma de ver las preguntas. Por ejemplo, me di cuenta de que si un seminarista me preguntaba por qué celebraba la Misa de cierta manera, simplemente necesitaba responder a la pregunta.

Uno de los Diez Temas enumerados en la sección 5.4 del Vademécum para el Proceso Sinodal observa que “Escuchar es el primer paso, pero requiere una mente y un corazón abiertos, sin prejuicios”. Una forma de ver este tema es considerar las áreas en las que puedo haber cerrado mi mente y mi corazón a otra persona o grupo, e incluso los he juzgado antes de que abrieran la boca para hacer una pregunta. Usando la historia mencionada anteriormente, podríamos preguntarnos: “¿Cómo escucho a los que están en mi ‘aula’?” y luego sigue con “¿Cuáles son las etiquetas o juicios que les he puesto?” y “¿A quién dejo fuera del ‘aula’?”

El intento más básico de la primera pregunta podría revelar que hay una tendencia a escuchar más de cerca a quienes están de acuerdo conmigo. También podría desarrollarse una tendencia a cerrar una vista alternativa o incluso una pregunta simple, tal vez sin siquiera darse cuenta. Henri Nouwen escribió sobre este problema espiritual hace años en su libro Reaching Out, observando con qué frecuencia un maestro dedica tiempo a responder preguntas que no se hacen.

Nouwen pidió un movimiento espiritual en el aula hacia la hospitalidad, en el que los estudiantes puedan ser escuchados y apreciados por las preguntas que presentan. Esta imagen del salón de clases puede servir como imagen para los diferentes niveles de relaciones en mi vida. Podría ser en el trabajo o en el hogar, en la comunidad más grande de escuelas y compromisos cívicos, incluso en la Iglesia.

El proceso de sinodalidad ha estado desafiándonos a cada uno de nosotros a no cerrar inmediatamente ninguna voz y a escuchar las preguntas que se hacen. En el proceso me estoy volviendo consciente de mis ideas preconcebidas y juicios. Estoy aprendiendo a escuchar sin responder inmediatamente. El proceso nos desafía a cada uno de nosotros a llegar a una mayor apreciación de a quién hemos estado cortando o de quién podemos estar hablando de manera desdeñosa. El proceso nos recuerda a cada uno de nosotros que a menudo no necesitamos dar una respuesta, simplemente podemos sentarnos y reconocer la humanidad de otra persona.

Los obispos de todo el mundo, especialmente de Rusia y Ucrania, al Inmaculado Corazón de María el 25 de marzo, Fiesta de la Anunciación. Muchas iglesias en el mundo, especialmente de Rusia y Ucrania, las oraciones de consagración del mundo fueron consagradas a la diócesis de Victoria el 6 de marzo al mismo tiempo que el Papa Francisco estaba rezando esas oraciones en Roma.

El obispo Brendan Cahill leyó las oraciones en español. El reverendo Richard Barfield los leyó en inglés y el reverendo Tran Dinh los leyó en vietnamita.

Con más allá de las personas que puedo haber estado descartando en mi entorno, están aquellas que ni siquiera conozco. Podrían ser diferentes culturas, idiomas, puntos de vista políticos, edades, experiencias o otras categorías. El proceso de sinodalidad traza un camino para que cada uno de nosotros vaya más allá de los estereotipos y de lo que escuchamos sobre otro grupo de personas. Ojalá llegue un momento en el que cada uno de nosotros pueda escuchar a alguien de un grupo “nuevo”. Una belleza del proceso puede estar en darse cuenta de que cualquiera que sea el grupo al que pertenezcamos, muchos de nosotros tenemos preguntas, esperanzas y sueños similares.

Recientemente, el Papa Francisco consagró Rusia y Ucrania al Inmaculado Corazón de María en comunión con los obispos de todo el mundo. Una parte de la oración de consagración reconoció nuestros propios pecados ante Dios, incluso cuando “nos volvimos indiferentes y atrapados en nuestras propias necesidades y preocupaciones egoístas”. Que desarrollemos corazones que escuchen, cuya única preocupación sea la salvación de todas las almas, especialmente de las más necesitadas de la misericordia de Dios.

Mantengámonos unos a otros en oración.

+Brendan

Una cálica bienvenida

El obispo Brendan Cahill dio la bienvenida a cada candidato y catecúmeno durante el Rito de los Elegidos el 6 de marzo. Hay 45 personas en la Diócesis de Victoria que se unirán a la Iglesia esta Pascua y otras 60 que recibirán el sacramento de la confirmación.

(Photos por Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)
We all know sin is wrong, but do we really take time to reflect upon it? Lent is the perfect time, as we are called to repent and allow ourselves to be purified during this season.

The catechism defines sin as, “failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods,” (CCC 1849). “Sin sets itself against God’s love for us and turns our hearts away from it,” (CCC 1850).

In other words, sin is choosing to turn from God, damaging or even severing our relationship with Him and others.

The church recognizes there are varying degrees of sin, giving us the definitions of mortal and venial. “Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God’s law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it,” (CCC 1855).

In other words, venial sin damages our relationship with God, while mortal sin destroys it. These are very serious things, as God is the source of all goodness and life.

If we cut ourselves off from Him, we leave ourselves to despair and destruction.

If you recall in Genesis 3, during the first sin and fall of man, one reason Eve commits sin is because Eve saw that the fruit was, “pleasing to the eyes,” (Genesis 3:6). Sin will often be disguised as something sweet, or even good for us. We can go on doing it, ignoring our conscience. But in the end, it will catch up to us, whether we want to admit it or not, during our time on earth or not. At the very latest, as our time of judgement before Christ Our Lord.

Sin is something we must deal with, but sin actually isn’t anything at all. Rather, sin is a lack of something. It’s like a crack in a vase. It’s choosing darkness and deceit over truth and goodness. If we continue in sin, we deteriorate and become less of who we are meant to be, rather than the people God has destined us to become. Sin breaks us down, whereas God and His Mercy build us back up.

Regarding turning from sin, there are two things to think about: How do we help ourselves, and how do we help others?

In regards to ourselves, there are plenty of opportunities this Lent to participate in the sacrament of confession. Make sure to avail yourself of at least one of these opportunities, and to make going to confession part of your spiritual habits. Bishop Cahill recommends going monthly.

In regards to helping others, we are admonished to help each other turn from sin. “He should know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save a multitude of sins,” (James 5:20 NABRE).

How do we help each other? I’d like to offer three suggestions:

First, let’s live the example of faith ourselves. Jesus tells us, “Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father,” (Matthew 5:16).

Second, have conversations with those you love about their sin. Be very prayerful, always rooted in charity. Think about their eternal destiny, and how much you want to help them reach heaven. Make sure to speak in terms they will understand, without diluting the truth of what you are telling them. The most loving thing we can do for people is help them encounter truth. God calls us to be his messengers.

Third, prayer and sacrifice. This may be the hardest for us because it is hidden, and we don’t always see the fruits. But how can we expect to help someone if we can’t make time to pray for them? Or aren’t willing to make some kind of a sacrifice for them? These things also help change our hearts so we know how to love and serve those in need. All outreach should begin and end with prayer.

I pray this article has been helpful to you for this season of Lent. I pray that all of us can experience greater conversion this season, and help others experience it as well. God bless!

• Justin Reyes is the Director of Family Evangelization for the Diocese of Victoria in Texas. He can be reached at 361-573-0828 x 2265 or jreyes@victoriadiocese.org.
DIOCESE

Sunday Readings from April 10 - May 8

April 10 ~ Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion
Procession with Palms Gospel:
Mass Readings:
Isaiah 50:4-7
Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11

Special Days in the Catholic Church
Tuesday, April 12 ~ Chrism Mass
Isaiah 61:1-3a, 6a, 8b-9
Psalms 89:21-22, 25 and 27
Revelation 1:5-8
Luke 4:16-21

Holy Thursday, April 14 ~ Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14
Psalms 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-15

Good Friday, April 15 ~ The Lord’s Passion
Isaiah 52:13—53:12
Psalms 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1—19:42

Holy Saturday, April 16 ~ Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter
Reading 1: Genesis 1:1—2:2
Psalms 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35
Reading 2: Genesis 22:1-18
Psalms 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11

Easter Sunday, April 17 ~ The Resurrection of the Lord
Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Colossians 3:1-4
John 20:1-9

April 24 ~ Sunday of Divine Mercy
Acts 5:12-16
Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19
John 20:19-31

May 1 ~ Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 5:27-32, 40-41
Psalms 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19 or 21:1-14

May 8 ~ Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 13:14, 43-52
Psalms 100:1-2, 3, 5
Revelation 7:9, 14b-17
John 10:27-30

For daily and Sunday readings, as well as a daily reflection video, visit
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Contact:
• The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, within 48 hours, at (800) 252-5400, www.txabusehotline.org, or local police department. If person is in immediate danger call 911.

and

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

or

• Bishop or Chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria, (361) 573-0828

Written allegations can be mailed to Office of the Bishop
P.O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903
marked “Personal and Confidential”

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

A Prayer for Easter

TODAY, dear Lord, we celebrate Your rising from the dead. We are happy with You that You have been victor over death.

We look around us at the green fields, filled with new life, and are everywhere reminded of You.

The seeds we plant seem dry and dead, but with the combined wonders of rain and sun, and the powers of the earth, they rise from their death-like sleep and grow green and beautiful in our fields.

The trees, too, that stood so stark and lifeless through the winter are now bright with living green.

With these reminders of a resurrection all about us every day, help us remember that death is not the end of things for us, but the beginning.

Help us keep in mind that we shall rise again on the last day, to live with You forever.

Then there will be no weeping any more, nor any tears; no suffering, nor any pain, but joy and happiness and love with You forever.

With You, then, will we celebrate the eternal Easter.

It will be an everlasting spring for us, if we only realize now that there is no glory without suffering, no Easter without a Good Friday.

Help us, by Your grace, to live the good lives that will merit this new life in heaven forever with You.

Amen.
Diocese working on agreement with THC regarding Presidio La Bahia management

By JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

GOLIAD -- The Diocese of Victoria is working on an agreement with the Texas Historic Commission to turn management and operation of the presidio over to the state agency.

Scott McMahon, who works for the Diocese of Victoria as the director of Presidio La Bahia, said the partnership would be a win-win, bringing more resources and expertise to help preserve the fort and enhance the visitor experience.

The Diocese of Victoria would retain ownership of the presidio. Bishop Brendan J. Cahill affirmed that, “Our Lady of Loreto Chapel would remain a mission of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Goliad under the pastoral care of Father Ty Bazar.”

McMahon said the only real change visitors might notice is different merchandise -- Texas Historical Commission-branded items -- in the gift shop.

According to Tony Martinez, the diocese’s CFO, the agreement is not final as the diocese and the state agency are still working out some details of the proposed agreement.

“The potential addition of this site to the THC network of sites would assist in highlighting the significance of the revolution in Texas history and complement the stories at other THC sites,” Joseph Bell, THC deputy executive director, stated in a press release.

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The press release stated that, if the agreement were successful, the Presidio would be the 35th state historic site. The THC will position the site with other state historic sites at San Felipe de Austin, the Washington-on-the-Brazos complex, San Jacinto Museum and Battleground, Casa Navarro, and Fannin Battleground to tell the complete story of Texas’ Spanish settlement, revolution and independence. The THC’s roster of sites represents all major eras of Texas history and includes some of the most important historic places in Texas.

The THC will be looking to partner with other area governmental and cultural institutions to enhance the visitor experience to the site and surrounding heritage resources, including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Goliad County, and the surrounding community, according to the press release.

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April 9: 10 a.m. to  4 p.m.  
Fire on the Border - Living historians and reenactors gather together to bring the exciting history the Punitive Expedition to life. Join them as they bring to life the exciting but, little-known Punitive Expedition of 1916-1917.

Visit with living historians and reenactors dressed and equipped as men under the command of Gen. Blackjack Pershing and Pancho Villa and immerse yourself in this wild period of U.S.-Mexican border history.

May 7: 10 a.m. to  4 p.m. and  
May 8: 10 a.m. to  2 p.m.  
Cinco de Mayo Celebration! Living historians and reenactors gather together to commemorate the French Intervention and celebrate the Mexican victory of the Battle of Puebla.

Join them as they celebrate the victory of Gen. Zaragoza over French forces at the Battle of Puebla in 1862.

Visit with living historians and reenactors dressed and equipped as men under the command of Gen. Zaragoza and those of the French Army and learn more about the reason behind Cinco de Mayo celebrations.

For all events dress for the weather as these events takes place outdoors.

Admission is $5; under 6 are free.

All events subject to change. Please monitor their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/PresidioLaBahia for more up-to-date information or call 361-645-3752.

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.
**EVENTS**

**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.

**Emmanuel 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: Apr. 22-24; June 3-5; Sept. 16-18; Nov. 11-13. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Fee must accompany registration form. For information, call 361-573-0828 or visit http://www.victoriadiocese.org.

**Gabriel Project of the Crossroads** – Our mission is to protect the unborn by providing spiritual and emotional support as well as supplies for the pregnant mother and her baby. 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. For more information, please contact our helpline at 361-576-1156.

**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 a 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 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 CREIGHTON 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 ashleyhay09@gmail.com.

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

**Strength for the Journey** – A grief ministry for parents who have lost their child meets monthly at Assumption Church parish hall, 108 6th St., in Ganado from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The upcoming meetings will be April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, Aug. 9, Sept. 13, Nov. 8, and Dec. 13. For more information, please call Patricia Hoelscher 979-257-9984 or e-mail phoelscher@victoriadiocese.org.

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

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**Meals • Picnics and More**

**April**

**Victoria** – A free one-day grief retreat will be held April 2 at the Cathedral Center (St. Gabriel Hall). The Strength for the Journey Ministry for parents who have lost a child of any age is hosting this retreat. For more information see pg. 16.

**Culebra** – Knights of Columbus Council #1682 Annual Shrimp Dinner April 3, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Michael’s Parish Hall. Plates are “to go” only for $12. For more information, see ad on pg. 2.

**Weimar** – St. Michael Spring Festival, April 24

**Victoria** – 25th Annual Bishop David Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament to be held April 29 at The Club at Colony Creek.

**Yorktown** – St. Louis Catholic Church annual Jamaica, April 24, 502 E. 2nd St. in Yorktown. Mass at 8 a.m., followed by Jamaica. Carne guisada dinner starts at 11 a.m. Games, auction and much more.

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**May**

**Bloomington** – St. Patrick’s barbecue, May 1, 10 am. until sold out. Raffle tickets available. See ad on Page 10.

**Victoria** – Holy Family Festival, May 1, on the parish grounds.

**Fredericksburg** – Sts. Peter and Paul Festival, May 8. Featuring fried fish, bingo, silent auction, games, raffle, live auction and more. See ad on Page 9

**Victoria** – Our Lady of Lourdes will host a Healing Mission-Monday-Wednesday, May 9-11. All sessions will begin at 7 p.m. The presenter is Paul Rymniak, who will speak at the weekend Masses prior to the event. All are welcome. For information, call 361-575-3813.

**Victoria** – Inspirational Summer Reflection, St. Mary’s Auxiliary Retreat, 9 a.m. Free. For reservations, call Virginia, 361-550-3053, or Patty, 361-894-2381. See ad on Page 12.

**Hallettsville** – Sacred Heart Picnic, May 29

**Shiner** – Sts. Cyril and Methodius Picnic, May 29

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**Do you have any calendar of events for the Lighthouse?**

Submit to lighthouse@victoriadiocese.org

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**Mission Trip Planned**

The next mission trip to Las Obras in Antigua, Guatemala, will take place July 10-17. The late Father Dan Morales led many mission trips to the orphanage and an endowment in his name was created to help support Las Obras. More information will be coming soon about how to register for the trip. For more information about the mission, visit https://frdanendowment.org.
beginning, they said, it would signify, -- it’s not a pencil, it’s not felt tip, it’s ink that’s going to stay -- that a permanent mark is placed on the heart of God with your name on it.”

Fikes, 20, of Vanderbilt is one of 45 of the elect who will join the Church on the Easter Vigil. Another 60 candidates will receive the sacrament of confirmation.

“I’ve been waiting for this for so long,” she said in a recent phone interview. Fikes said she grew up unbaptized and, though she wanted to be baptized, her parents were not practicing Catholics, so she waited until adulthood to pursue becoming Catholic. Her grandmother, she said, is “very Catholic” and “the most wonderful person I’ve ever known.” She and her grandmother attend St. John Bosco in Vanderbilt, which is in their second year of its RCIA program.

Emily Benavides, the parish catechetical leader for St. John in Vanderbilt, said it was the first time the church was able to participate in the Rite of the Election. Last year, with people avoiding large gatherings due to the pandemic, Bishop Cahill decided that parish priests would preside over the Rite of Election in their own churches.

“This was new to us, because we had never done it before,” Benavides said. “We were nervous and we were excited because we were actually getting to be around the bishop. That’s always exciting for our members – to be close to the bishop.”

In the small church, Fikes is one of two who will receive all of their sacraments. The other is Elizabeth Jones.

Benavides said that small number means a lot of one-on-one time.

Fikes said part of her excitement March 6 was coming to the Cathedral and seeing how many people were there to support her on her journey. “I can’t even put it into words. It struck me how big our community is.”

Mary Reyes, the parish catechetical leader for Our Lady of the Gulf, had a large group this year with 19 adults and seven children, of whom eight were added to the book of the elect and 18 will receive their confirmation. She said she’s been involved with RCIA for a very long time and the excitement is the same for her. “It’s very exciting to be at the cathedral and to meet the bishop. That puts the cherry on top,” she said.

Reyes said she was happy to be able to gather at the cathedral again this year. “It’s for the whole church, not just RCIA.”

Christella Alvarez, director of the Office of Catechetical Ministry for the Diocese of Victoria, greeted many of the elect and the candidates who visited the chancery after the Rite of Election. “I could feel their spirit,” she said. “I could feel they were ready.”

She was happy that many had stopped by the library and looking for books so they could explore some specific aspects of the faith they wanted to understand more fully. She said when they receive their sacraments, it is not the end of the journey. “That process is to be lived out.”

As Catholics we are called to conversion constantly. “We are a Resurrection people,” Alvarez said, “Every time we go to Communion we celebrate it.”

“The more I celebrate these sacraments, the more I realize it’s not as much about what I do as what God is doing,” Bishop Cahill said. “Each sacrament is a step in which God wants you and me to know He loves you, He hears you, He holds your hand, He always walks by your side.”

Written in ink

Continued from Page 1

‘Each sacrament is a step in which God wants you and me to know He loves you, He hears you, He holds your hand, He always walks by your side.’ - Bishop Brendan Cahill

Bishop Brendan Cahill welcomes each person whose names were called during the Rite of Election on March 6, the first Sunday of Lent.

Miranda Fikes, center, smiles as Bishop Cahill speaks during the Rite of Election. Next to her are Emily Benavides, the parish catechetical leader for St. John Bosco in Vanderbilt. Elizabeth Jones, on the far side of the pew, also leans in to listen to during the ceremony. Jones is also one of the elect.