Diocese gains 2 priests during 2023 ordination

JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

VICTORIA — They were proclaimed worthy, then came Bishop Brendan Cahill’s public announcement: “Relying on the help of God and of our Savior Jesus Christ, we choose these men, our brothers, for the order of priesthood.”

With those words, tears of joy flowed, and the hundreds who gathered May 13 for the ordination of Father Luke Prihoda and Father Ryan Kapavik, showed their approval with an extended round of applause.

The ordination took place on Mother’s Day weekend and the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, so the celebration seemed extra special. “I’m already starting to cry,” Bishop Cahill said as he began his homily.

The bishop first referred to the message of Our Lady of Fatima that, “My Immaculate Heart will prevail.”

He quoted Cardinal Ratzinger, who would later become Pope Benedict XVI, saying “The heart, purified by contemplation of God,

See Diocese gains 2 priests, pg. 10

Bishop Brendan Cahill celebrated Mass at the Infant of Prague church in McFaddin, the only privately owned Catholic church in the diocese. The McFaddin Ranch family built it for the ranch hands and families in the area in the early 1900s. Those attending the May 6 service shared memories of growing up on the ranch or visiting family members who worked on the ranch. (Janet Jones/The Catholic Lighthouse)

McFaddin Ranch families reunite at Infant of Prague church

JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

McFADDIN — The small wood-framed Infant of Prague church was filled with chatter before and after Mass on May 6. People were catching up with loved ones or reminiscing about the days when Mass was celebrated regularly at the church. This was the first Mass in several years at the only privately owned church in the Diocese of Victoria.

“Remember when we used to sit up there?” one woman, speaking to another, as they made their way out of the church said while pointing above her head at the choir loft, “Yes. And we’d get ‘the look,’” the other said, referring to the expression of an adult wordlessly warning children to behave.

A group of men of different ages, expressing their joy to have served as altar boys at one time or another at Infant of Prague gathered for a photo after Mass.

The church was started in 1915 and completed in January of 1916 thanks to the generosity of ranch owners James A. and A.M. McFaddin who wanted to serve the needs of the Catholics on the ranch and in the surrounding community. The first Mass was in February of 1916 for the Catholics of Marianna (now McFaddin) the name of the town when the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway went through the area. It was once a town with a mercantile and a school as well as

See McFaddin Ranch families, pg. 20
We all need mercy, and mercy is offered to us

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Before the final blessing after the priestly ordinations of Father Ryan Kapavik and Father Luke Prihoda, I spoke to all those in attendance about a couple of our Catholic traditions. One tradition is receiving special graces through the “first blessing” of a newly ordained priest. As a sign of respect for the priesthood and the special graces God has abundantly given to this priest, I usually kiss the palms of the hands that I had just anointed with the sacred oil.

Another tradition is the plenary indulgence that can be granted to “a priest celebrating his first Mass before the people on a chosen day; [and] the faithful who devoutly assist at such a Mass,” according to the Manual of Indulgences of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006.

The gift of the plenary indulgence is special, and the requirements for receiving them can seem complicated. In fact, I misspoke during my homily at the ordination indicating that receiving a blessing from a newly ordained priest was to receive an indulgence. That is not so. But there are many other ways to receive that gift.

Last year, I wrote about the plenary indulgence that could be obtained through a group pilgrimage to the diocesan shrine of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Dubina.

The Manual of Indulgences, updated and revised by St. John Paul II in 1999, lists a number of holy actions and prayers that may be effective instruments of God’s mercy. In establishing Divine Mercy Sunday, St. John Paul II granted a plenary indulgence for those who “take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy.” As early as 1965, the future Pope John Paul II clearly said in the presence of all the bishops in the world that “the preaching of Divine Mercy” is the most important message of the priest.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church 1471 quotes from the teaching of St. Paul VI: “An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven…. An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin…. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.”

St. Paul VI, in his teachings, explains that those who endeavor to follow Christ, being one body in Christ, have always worked to move their brothers and sisters closer to Heaven.

All of this teaching can remind us that we are all sinners in need of God’s mercy, and that there will be a final judgment of each person according to his or her sins. As members of the One Body of Christ, we can offer our prayers and acts of charity for all people, especially those in most need of God’s mercy.

May our hearts be open to help one another on the journey to eternal life, and may our hearts be found rich in mercy when we approach the gates of final judgment. May God bless you and your families with mercy, love and peace in this season.

Let’s keep each other in prayer.
+Brendan

St. Paul VI wrote in his teaching on indulgences:

“Following in the footsteps of Christ, the Christian faithful have always endeavored to help one another on the path leading to the Heavenly Father through prayer, the exchange of spiritual goods and penitential expiation. The more they have been immersed in the fervor of charity, the more they have imitated Christ in His sufferings, carrying their crosses in expiation for their own sins and those of others, certain that they could help their brothers and sisters to attain salvation from God the Father of mercies. This is the very ancient dogma of the Communion of the Saints, whereby the life of each individual son and daughter of God in Christ and through Christ is joined by a wonderful link to the life of all his Christian brothers and sisters in the supernatural unity of the Mystical Body of Christ till, as it were, a single mystical person is formed.” (Indulgentiarum Doctrina 5)
Emmaus Center gets two new counselors

Lauren Mozisek and Cindy Chamberlain joined the Emmaus Counseling Center staff on May 15. Chamberlain holds a bachelor of liberal studies degree from St. Edwards’ University in Austin, and is a 2023 graduate of the University of Houston-Victoria where she earned a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling. She is in the process of obtaining licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor-Associate and will be working under the supervision of Lane Johnson, M.Div., LPC-S. She spent the last 12 months interning at the Emmaus Center, providing individual and couple’s counseling.

Chamberlain and her husband, Monty, have been married for nearly 35 years. They have two grown children and a 6-year-old granddaughter. They reside in Louise near her parents and two sisters, attend St. Robert’s Catholic Church in El Campo, and actively participate in the Continuing to Love group.

Mozisek earned her bachelor of business administration degree at the University of Houston-Victoria. She subsequently graduated from UHV in 2023 with a master of science in clinical mental health counseling. She has been a counseling intern at the Emmaus Center since June of 2022, and is currently obtaining licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor-Associate under the supervision of Lane Johnson, M.Div., LPC-S. Her clinical area of interest is working with trauma victims, and she has continued to further her training throughout her internship.

Mozisek was one of the founding members of the Morning Glory Helpers ministry at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral and was an active volunteer with the Gabriel Project until she began her internship. She is married with two daughters, and she and her family are active members of Holy Family Catholic Church in Victoria.

Chamberlain’s email is cchamberlain@victoriadiocese.org, and Mozisek’s email is lmozisek@victoriadiocese.org. The phone number for the counseling center is 361-212-0830.

Astros fans can join KJZT bus trip

The KJZT Family Life organization is organizing a bus trip to see the Astros versus Tampa Rays in Houston on July 30.

The seats for the game are on the field level 15-25 rows up in the left field section.

The trips costs $119 per person and is limited to 50 people. The bus will pick up people in Corpus Christi, Portland, Victoria and Hillje. Snacks and drinks (non-alcoholic) will be provided on the bus.

Anyone interested should contact Betty Vacek at bvacek@kjzt.org or 361-222-1025 no later than June 26.

OCS welcomes new executive assistant

Briana Carrera joined the diocese on May 22, as the executive assistant to superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Victoria (DOV). She will report directly to Dr. John Quary, superintendent, and will be responsible for assisting with the administration of the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS).

Carrera is a creative marketing expert who received her bachelor’s degree in management and marketing from Texas A&M University-Corpus.

When not working, Carrera loves to spend time with family and traveling. Her constant inspiration is her 2-year-old daughter, she said.

Her email address is bcarrera@victoriadiocese.org. Her contact number will be 361-573-0828, Ext. 2213.
May 22, 2023

- **Rev. Msgr. John C. Bily Seminary Burse #3**  
  Acolyte  
  In honor of Rev. Msgr. John C. Bily’s 90th birthday and 65 years of priesthood by:  
  Jesse & Nancy Lednicky

- **Rev. Wayne Flagg and Rev. Philip Brune Seminary Burse**  
  Lector  
  In memory of Ellen Vasek by:  
  Lambert and Carol Brune

- **Josephat R. Janak Seminary Burse #2**  
  Lector  
  In honor of Auxiliary Bishop Gary Janak’s 2nd year anniversary and 35th anniversary to the priesthood May 14, 1988 by:  
  Rose Marie Janak and Family

- **Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #8**  
  Candidate  
  Donation by Catholic Daughters of America State Convention Youth Mass

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

Rev. Ty J. Bazar  06/01/2002  Immaculate Conception, Goliad
Rev. Matthew H. Huehlefeld  06/01/1996  St. Joseph, Yoakum
Rev. Roger R. Hawes  06/02/2001  Holy Cross, Yorktown
Rev. Peter Oscar Kofi-Amo  06/04/2016  St. Patrick’s, Bloomington
Rev. Kristopher L. Fuchs  06/06/2015  St. Mary, Victoria
Rev. Jacob A. Koether  06/06/2015  Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria
Rev. Francis T. Nguyen III  06/06/2015  Holy Cross, Yorktown
Rev. Michael J. Lyons  06/08/1996  Retired
Rev. George Henninger  06/08/1985  St. Joseph, Yoakum
Rev. Michael J. Rother  06/09/2007  Sacred Heart, Hallettsville
Rev. Gabriel D. Espinosa  06/16/2007  Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bay City
Rev. Tommy Chen  06/21/2008  Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca
Most Rev. Brendan J. Cahill  06/29/2015  Bishop Diocese of Victoria

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, Amen.
The Rev. Dalton Ervin shakes up some favorite cocktails for the 2023 Roast and Toast. Attendees bid on his table-side cocktail service to raise money for The Emmaus Center.

Father Tommy Chen gets the last word after being roasted by his sister, Katie Chong, the Rev. Tom Lam of Houston, and Deacon Joseph Blackburn, DOV seminarian. The event raised more than the previous three galas. The Very Rev. Bob Knippenberg will be in the “hot seat” for the 2024 gala.

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Roast and Toast hits the spot

JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

VICTORIA – The fourth annual Roast and Toast, held May 5, was the first one to sell out nearly a month before the event. More than $180,000 was raised to support The Emmaus Counseling Center, which has served clients from every parish in the diocese and is open to anyone seeking counseling in the Catholic tradition or spiritual direction.

The Rev. Tommy Chen, pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf in Port Lavaca, was the 2023 honoree. He was roasted by Katie Chong his sister, the Rev. Tom Lam, a fellow priest from Houston with whom he attended seminary, and Deacon Joseph Blackburn, a seminarian who has lived at the Port Lavaca church during part of his ongoing training.

“Many made the event possible -- too many to thank. But, I would be remiss if I did not offer my gratitude to Father Tommy Chen, who allowed us to roast him. He was such a good sport,” the Very Rev. Kirby Hlavaty, executive director of the Emmaus Center, said.

The support that the fundraiser brings in could not have come at a better time, according to Father Hlavaty. The center is fully staffed for the first time since he has been director, which means the need for affordable Catholic-based counseling is strong in the Diocese of Victoria, he added.

Clients at the Emmaus Center are charged only $50 per session, which is about a third of the average cost of counseling. Those who are unable to pay for services can be considered for financial help to ensure their needs are met as well. Thanks to a grant from the Kenedy Foundation and other funds raised through the Roast and Toast, the center is expanding its physical space to provide more offices for counselors.

The money raised will keep fees low, Father Hlavaty said. “The people of our Diocese continue to amaze me. Once again, they have made our annual Roast and Toast a huge success,” he said. “Bishop Cahill always reminds me that the people in the Diocese of Victoria are generous and will always support the center. He is right.”

Next year the event will put the Rev. Bob Knippenberg in the “hot seat.” With the number of people attending in 2023, those who want to attend in 2024 might do well to purchase a table early.

St. Mary’s Picnic
June 11, 2023

Mass 9:15 am  Auction 1:00 pm  St. Mary’s Catholic Church
Meal 10:30 am  Bingo 12-4 pm  1648 FM 340
Music 10:30-9 pm  Cake Walk  Hallettsville, Texas

Meals Plates $12
Dine in or Drive thru
Stew, Sausage, German Potatoes, Green Beans, Pickles, Sauerkraut, Bread & Dessert

Ice Cold Beer
Burgers
Kolaches
Popcorn
Snow Cones
Nachos
Ice Cream
Cotton Candy

Live Auction
Selling Livestock
Country Store
Bingo 12-4 pm
Crafts, Arts
Plant Walk
Cake Walk
Train Rides
Ball Throw
Ring Toss
Fish Pond
Bounce House

Live Music
Texas Sound Check 10:30 am
Czech Wine Stampers 2:00 pm
The Red Ravens 5:30 pm

Rates are on the rise!

3mo. 4.35% APY
6mo. 4.80% APY
Money Market Fund 4.5%

Michele Rohde, AAMS
Financial Advisor
361-575-2600
6606 N Navarro St. Ste. 207
Victoria, TX 77904
michele.rohde@ampf.com

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Top Grads for Catholic High Schools

Congratulations to the 2023 top graduates of our Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Victoria.

20 Graduates
Sacred Heart High School
Hallettsville

23 Graduates
St. Paul High School
Shiner

63 Graduates
St. Joseph High School
Victoria

Brett Sestak, Valedictorian, son of Kenneth & Rhonda Sestak
He plans to attend
The University of Texas, Austin

Bailey Haas, Salutatorian, daughter of Rodney & Kelly Haas
She plans to attend
University of Dallas, Dallas

Arianna Henke, Historian, daughter of Paul & Veronica Henke
She plans to attend
The University of Texas, Austin

Joseph Twyford, Salutatorian, son of Kevin and Wendi Twyford
He plans to attend
Christendom College, Front Royal, Virginia

Jacob Twyford, Historian, son of Kevin and Wendi Twyford
He plans to attend
Christendom College, Front Royal, Virginia

Lisa Du, Valedictorian, daughter of Dr Yong Du and Lily Mo
She plans to attend
University of Texas, Austin

Emily Dickinson, Salutatorian, daughter of Nigel and Kara Dickinson
She plans to attend
Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey

Jacqueline Nguyen, Historian, daughter of Viet and Ha Nguyen
She plans to attend
University of Texas, Austin

Jacob Wachsmuth, Valedictorian, son of Jake and Christine Wachsmuth
He plans to attend
Texas A&M, College Station

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Summer tennis camps offered for diocese schools

Tennis anyone?

Lori Spencer, a Victoria native, who recently returned to her hometown from Wichita Falls, started her New Leaf business because she wanted to give students a chance to learn tennis fundamentals.

The program, she said, has been successful in Nazareth Academy, the first school it served, as well as Our Lady of Victory School that started the program in the last nine weeks of school.

She said the program is only being offered in Diocese of Victoria schools. Several others will offer the program this coming school year, she said.

This summer, New Leaf is offering tennis camps with Brent Smiga as the coach. The first one is June 5-8 at The Victoria College for ninth through 12th grades. Cost is $195. Others are June 12-15 for grades six through eight ($175); and July 31-Aug. 3 at Victoria College for NA, OLV and Trinity Episcopal School junior high students; July 10-13 for grades six through eight ($175) in Victoria; June 19-22 (grades nine-12, $195) in Shiner; June 26-29 at Victoria College for ninth through 12th grades. Cost is $195. Others are June 12-15.

Several others will offer the program this coming school year, she said.

Environment and social justice intersect

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself. … Who is my neighbor? …The one who treated him with compassion.” (Luke 10:27, 29, 37)

EDITOR’S NOTE: Sister Marian Sturm, IWBS, guest columnist to The Catholic Lighthouse, has written a series of articles about seeing climate change through a faith lens. This is the fifth in the series that will appear monthly.

“Today, …we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” (#49 “Laudato Si’,” Pope Francis)

Food, water and energy are central to our existence and are not infinite. However, in the U.S., we have one of the largest ecological footprints in the world. Estimates suggest that if everyone lived like average U.S. citizens, approximately four planets would be needed to sustain our lifestyle.

Creation belongs to God, not us. As human beings created in the image of God, living in the community of the wider world, we all have a responsibility to save creation/our ecosystems so that all may have their needs met. Therefore, when our ecological footprint places a burden on Earth and on some people in particular, environmental justice is necessary. This justice attempts to overcome those structures that are instrumental in creating climate change and depriving especially certain groups of their needs.

In June 2015, Pope Francis released a ground-breaking and challenging letter, “Laudato Si’,” linking the cries of Earth with the cries of her people. In it, he addresses the whole human family, drawing upon the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who “shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, commitment to society, justice for the poor, and interior peace.”

Many other Christian traditions express the same vision.

For decades, the United Church of Christ has been speaking of “environmental racism” with regard to what is happening to poor neighborhoods, often communities of Black, Latino, Asian and Native Americans, in the form of pollution and lack of environmental protections.

Anthony “Van” Jones states, “the root of the problem is the idea of disposability.” As a consumer society, which promotes buying and selling for profit, we get caught in the trap of buying and disposing of things to buy more things, becoming a “disposable society.” Consequently, we “trash” the planet, putting trash and recyclables in places we perceive as having no value -- places which belong to people of color and of different cultures. Their neighborhoods are often burdened with pollution from industries, garbage, and chemical dumps. They ingest toxic chemicals derived from oil refineries and the production and recycling of plastic products, resulting in higher rates of respiratory illness and cancer. “Redlining” keeps them in these areas, compromising their health, while climate gentrification slowly displaces poor populations with a more affluent (usually white) population. These are injustices.

Because disposability corrupts our society, we are morally challenged to reach out beyond our comfort zones. Pope Francis says, “In the face of so much pain and suffering, our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan. Any other decision would make us either one of the robbers or one of those who walked by without showing compassion for the sufferings of the man on the roadside.” (#67, “Fratelli Tuti”)

An essential, and often forgotten, aspect of our common humanity is that God created us all with dignity, out of love to love. There is no love without justice. Justice with love is the foundation of all religions. Justice underlies our call to love our neighbor. So if there is injustice in the way we engage the environment in the face of certain groups of people, then there is a need to engage in environmental justice.

Contact Sister Marian at maristurm@yahoo.com.
Jesus makes our load easy with a well-fitted yoke

EDITOR’S NOTE: The following sermon was written for the 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time. Father Kram titled it “Jesus and His Yoke.”

The Jews, whom Jesus invited to come to Him with their burdens and weariness, were people living under endless rules and restrictions of Jewish law that put heavy burdens on them and made their efforts to serve God difficult and exhausting.

They were truly under a yoke of submission, largely as a result of the pickiness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus also puts His followers under a yoke, but He promises that His yoke will be easy. The Greek word that we translate to “easy” has the meaning of “well fitting.”

“My yoke is well fitting, and my burden is light,” He says.

In Jesus’ day, ox yokes were hand made to fit the individual ox. The ox would first come to be measured, just as you might be measured for tailor-made clothes.

After measuring the ox, the yoke maker would carve out a rough version of the yoke from a piece of wood. When it was ready, the ox would have to come back for alterations. A well-fitted yoke would make it possible for the slow and bulky animal to pull a plow or ox cart comfortably.

Jesus and his yoke were especially impressed on me by a young mother I once visited in the hospital. She told me that she had a little boy who was severely retarded and that she would never be able to have another child.

Far from being bitter, she felt that God had specially chosen her for the challenge of loving and caring for her special child. In fact, she felt enriched by her special calling. She felt that it was as though God were saying to her, “I know you can handle it.” She did it out of love.

And once there was a man who became frustrated with his job, because whenever he tried to do his work, he met with constant delays and interruptions and complications. But he had a great love for those who needed him.

He finally came to the conclusion that his special yoke CONSISTED of the patient endurance of frustration, and this brought him peace. His love-inspired faithfulness to his commitment made all the difference.

Another example: I often marvel at the cheerful way the girls in the front office here do their work. When they are trying to finish up stacks of urgent paperwork, they are constantly interrupted by callers at the desk and on the phone. It is hard to believe that they ever get their work done and that they can keep it up for years on end without going stark raving mad. They don’t do it just for the pay.

Examples such as these show how important a part of our attitude can play in our lives. Attitude is more important than whether we succeed or we fail; than what others say or think of us; than whether we are rewarded or ignored. It would seem that accomplishment consists of 10 percent facts and 90 percent what we do with them.

“Come to me and I will refresh you … my yoke is easy and my burden is light,” Jesus said.

The thought of putting yokes around OUR necks has its humorous side, but at the same time, it is rich in meaning.

Consider that when Jesus places a yoke on our shoulders, it will fit well, because, when He asks anything of us, it will never be too much for us to bear. If it is, He will also give us the strength we need.

The thing that makes the burden light is love. A heavy burden given and carried with love is not so burdensome anymore.

We first took Jesus’s yoke on our shoulders in infancy, when we were baptized into union with Him and washed clean of Adam’s sin. We became adopted children of our Heavenly Father and living temples of the Holy Spirit. Now, as Jesus’s followers, we must put into practice His great commandment of love: “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Thoughts such as these in the midst of struggle can be a source of refreshment and encouragement, because they remind us that our burdens are a privileged sharing in the burdens that the Lord Jesus chose to bear for us. His cross led to His glorification, and so will ours.

So what if our life is so short and so uncertain? What if we exist on a speck of a planet spinning in a vast universe? What if our best efforts so often fail?

Our great purpose this side of Heaven is to strive to make love always our first and finest motivation – to wear Jesus’ yoke with gratitude and appreciation – to be the most dependable of all people.

Many a time in the hospital, the mother of a newborn baby has summed up her feelings by saying, “It was hard, but it was worth it.” Whenever you feel weary and find life burdensome, quickly say, “Jesus, I love you.”

Lord Jesus, thank you for offering the weary and the burdened rest. Help us to be always willing to learn from you, meek and humble of heart. Grant that the yoke you have fitted on us may make our burdens light. Amen.

Father
Charles Kram
Corner

1929-2000

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Next Victoria Area Weekend
July 28 - 30, 2023

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John or Jennifer Vincent
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email: jbvjov@sbcglobal.net
or visit the web site listed above

Crisis Pregnancy Ministry
24 Hour Hotline: 361-576-1156

Celebrating over 20 Years of Service to the Crossroads!

We Provide Hope, Help, & Healing!
Bethlehem Maternity Home Celebrated a 2 year Anniversary April 9th!
March Stats: Mother Baby Services Served 28 Moms & Babies
Bethlehem Maternity Home Served 2 Moms & Babies.

VictoriaGabrielProject.org
June is the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. June 2023 is also the beginning of the second phase of the Eucharistic Revival, which will foster Eucharistic devotion at the parish level. It will be a time of strengthening our liturgical life through Eucharistic adoration, missions, resources, preaching and organic movements of the Holy Spirit. These local efforts will help convert hearts and minds, so they will fall more deeply in love with Jesus Christ, truly present in the Holy Eucharist.

I sense a connection between the two. Don’t you?

The Diocese of Victoria has posters for parishes to borrow that tell about Eucharistic miracles throughout the world. These are miracles that Blessed Carlo Acutis cataloged for us on the internet. It’s a wonderful source of material, and it’s amazing to read about these miracles.

For this article, since I implied that there is a connection between the Eucharistic Revival and the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I want to focus a little on the third Eucharistic Revival and the Feast of the Sacred Heart. June 2023 is the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart given to us in the Eucharist.

J

Finding Beauty in Mystery

By Sister Rosario Resendez, IWBS

The priest, following the directives of the Church, put the host in a bowl of water so that it may dissolve. When the priest returned, he was surprised to see that not only had the host not dissolved but it had reddish stains.

After investigations and scientific tests it was determined that the host became literal flesh and flesh from a living heart! Of course I’m only giving you a little summary of the miracle, but if you are interested in reading more go to our website: https://www.victoriadiocese.org/eucharistic-miracles where you can read about several Eucharistic miracles in English and Spanish.

I have a small event with the Eucharist that I like to talk about. Most of us will never forget the freeze of 2021 – how we lost electricity and were probably the coldest day of our lives. Though peace lilies are hardy and fight to live, this one seemed to be losing the battle.

We usually have Mass once a week at the Chancery, but we had to have a Communion service. After the deacon (who is now a priest) finished handing out Communion, he dipped his fingers in a bowl of water and finished the service. After the Communion service I was putting everything away and I poured the bowl of water in my practically dead peace lily. The next day the lily had noticeably improved. At the next week’s Mass, it was probably the healthiest plant in the chapel. Talking about that event always makes me smile.

Still, at times when we read about these occurrences, we may unintentionally get caught up in looking for tangible miracles and miss the blessings we receive each time we visit Jesus in the Eucharist. Maybe we can think of a time when we were going through a difficult moment and felt like all was hopeless. Then we sat in front of the Blessed Sacrament and suddenly felt comforted. We suddenly felt like all was going to be OK, even if it wasn’t going the way we wanted. Even though we couldn’t see it, what we experienced was a comforting hug from our Lord.

We, as Catholics, believe that the Eucharist is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We should hold that belief so tightly that we need not see these Eucharistic miracles to know and understand what we believe is real.

It’s amazing these miracles happen, and I love to read about them, but I also know that, at every Mass, Jesus comes to us. He comes to us to show us the true meaning of love. He comes to nourish us and to sit a while with us.

This month can we take a few extra moments to sit with Jesus in the tabernacle? Can we take a few moments to talk to our children, family and friends about Jesus in the Eucharist? During Lent, my then 6-year-old nephew told me that Jesus was on the cross “because He loves us.” Children are not too young to comprehend the love Jesus has for us. They may understand it better than some adults. This month, talk to others about His Sacred Heart. Talk to others about His Love. We may not have seen a physical Eucharistic miracle, but I can guarantee we have all experienced the love of Jesus.

Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” -- John 20:29

* Contact Sister Maria del Rosario Resendez by e-mailing her at bishopsecretary.dov@gmail.com.

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DIOCESE

Diocese gains 2 priests during 2023 ordination

Continued from pg. 1

One other thing he asked them to focus on is the Eucharist. “Whenever you are privileged to celebrate the Eucharist, you know the victory has been won. Mary’s Immaculate Heart will prevail.”

Father Kapavik will begin his ministry at Holy Family Catholic Church in Victoria as parochial vicar, serving with Father Gabriel Bentil, pastor. Bishop Cahill also named him as the new police department chaplain.

Father Prihoda is the new parochial vicar at St. Rose of Lima parish in Schulenburg, serving with Father Jasper Liggio, pastor. Both men began their assignments on June 1.

is more powerful than guns and weapons of every kind.”

One of the visions of the children of Fatima, he said, was “a frightful one.” “They said many souls are going to hell, because there’s no one to pray for them.”

The priests, he indicated, will join their brother priests to save people from hell through their daily work and daily penances.

“They offer all that they do for the salvation of souls. Very particular, as a diocesan priest, they offer their lives for the salvation of the 300,000 souls that live in the territory of the Diocese of Victoria. Not just for the good ones, not just for the ones who agree with us and probably are here today; we offer it for the salvation of every soul, and most especially the ones most in need of God’s mercy today,” said Bishop Cahill. “These two young men have dedicated their hearts to Mary, our Mother. They contemplate her son, Jesus Christ with her, and they come to teach us about the power we have in our daily life, in our daily prayer.”

Bishop asked Father Prihoda and Father Kapavik to “contemplate the face of God in the face of every person you meet each day. You have the privilege like I do today to look on hundreds of people. Every person reflects the glory of God. In a way, you get to see the love and beauty of God in the diversity of peoples.”

He advised them to spend time with older priests and reflect with them on their ministries and their lives to learn from them and understand the rewards of living a life of service. Reflecting on his own experience as a priest, he told them to always reflect on the Word of God with an open heart. He said his reflection on the scriptures has at times taken on new life during reflection, even after years of reading it many times.
PORT LAVACA – On the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker, May 1, seminarian Joseph Blackburn became a transitional deacon for the Diocese of Victoria.

Before the ordination ritual, Bishop Brendan Cahill delivered a homily telling Blackburn, and all those gathered, to remember that, even after he is ordained a priest, he and all the clergy are called to be deacons first.

He recalled his own ordination as a transitional deacon 34 years ago.

“I’ve been ordained a priest, I’ve been ordained a bishop, moved to Victoria, had many assignments. But at every assignment, I’m called to be a deacon,” Bishop Cahill said. “The wisdom of our church begins with a sacrament of service. You never cease to be a deacon. What a beautiful day to do this on the feast of St. Joseph the Worker.”

Cahill described the chapel at St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston, where Blackburn is a student, and said under the choir loft there is one word, “serviam,” the Latin word meaning, “I will serve.”

“In a way, that sacred chapel, that sacred space, is a reminder for all the men preparing for the priesthood, the diaconate, that the mission of the man who is called is always to serve and not to be served, in the fashion of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who provides for us a model of our ministry, the model of our service,” Bishop Cahill said.

Addressing Blackburn, the bishop said, “Joseph, the church is filled with great joy today, for God has called you to be a servant, that you give your will freely over to God with obedience, celibacy for the sake of the kingdom, the promise of praying the Liturgy of the Hours for the people of God; that, in a way, in each of those actions you offer yourself to God completely.”

Deacon Blackburn, originally from the Texas City area, began studying for the priesthood as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. But several years into his studies, he felt called to a more rural area. He said he wanted to be where he could get to know the people and all the priests. And, he said, he has now gotten to know all of the Diocese of Victoria priests.

He spent months discerning for the Diocese of Victoria – partly because he had family in the Wharton County area – while living and working at Our Lady of the Gulf church and felt it was right. He sought to join the diocese and was accepted by Bishop Cahill.

Deacon Blackburn said Our Lady of the Gulf has become his home parish in the DOV after spending time there considering his future.
Some views of freedom are just a pathway to slavery

“God in the beginning created human beings and made them subject to their own free choice.

If you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you; if you trust in God, you, too, shall live; he has set before you fire and water; to whichever you choose, stretch forth your hand.

Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given him.” Sirach 15:14-17

Upon arriving home from work, a father eyed his 8-year-old son sitting on the front porch with a suitcase at his feet. When the father questioned his son, the boy replied, “Dad, I can’t take it anymore. I go to school and the teachers tell me what I can do and what I can’t. I get home and Mom makes me clean my room, take out the trash, and do my homework before I can play. So I’m running away to where I can do what I want, when I want. I’m running to freedom!”

When the father asked the boy to wait while he goes inside to speak to the mother, the young lad said, “It won’t do no good, Dad. You can’t make me stay.”

“Make you stay?” said the father. “No, I’m just going in to tell your mother goodbye, because I want to go where you are going?”

In the 1970s, Burger King launched its commercial tagline “Have it your way!” It successfully tapped into the growing focus on personal freedom by pitting its model of giving you what you want against the competitors who gave you what they had. The message of, “Have it your way,” is appealing and appropriate when choosing designer clothing or car preference or hamburger toppings. When applied to matters of the soul, however, it can be disastrous.

Unfortunately, the notion that personal choice is the measure of authentic freedom has become a guiding principle in our modern economic, political, cultural and religious lives. Certainly, the commercial slogan did not introduce this principle. Rather, it echoed what was already being spoken. Attributes once held in high regard – teamwork, obedience and discipline – have given way to individualism, personal will and experimentation.

For those in this latter camp, freedom is the condition in which one can choose from among any possibility. Free choice and freedom have become interchangeable words and therefore, the more choices one has, the more freedom one has. Freedom is often seen as the “freedom to” and where there are rules and teachings that limit choice, there will be a limited freedom. It should be no surprise that Christ’s Church, with its “thou shalt nots” and its moral teachings, is viewed by many as a major impediment to personal freedom. The reality, however, is that what is being offered by the Church does not hinder the flow of freedom, but rather is the source and protector of freedom – a “freedom from” those conditions that keep us from being fully alive and genuinely free.

Long before Burger King existed, the theme of “having it our own way” was adopted by the original couple, Adam and Eve. “In the beginning,” there was but a single rule:

Do not eat the fruit of that one tree. But soon the serpent would serenade the pair with the sweet sound that they could have freedom as God to determine for themselves what is right and wrong. While the fruit offered was “pleasing to the eyes,” it delivered the ugly. They bit into the shiny appearance of freedom, but tasted only the substance of slavery.

As it was “in the beginning,” so it is in the present. Many have carelessly adopted the notion that freedom flowers from the soil of individual determinism, unattached to the guidelines of faith. For them, free will IS freedom. To be sure, all of us (as noted in Sirach) have been gifted by God with free will; that is, the ability to make our own choices on the basis of personal preference.

But, free choices do not necessarily result in freedom. Visit any prison or rehab center and listen to those who made free choices that led to their own forms of slavery. Visit your own hearts (as I do mine), and I suspect that we can recall times that we expressed ourselves in anger or jealousy, greed or envy, or an ego-driven hunger for attention or control -- expressions that were freely chosen but hardly resulted in a sense of freedom. The reality is that genuine freedom is realized only when we choose the good; or rather, in choosing He who is the Good. Authentic liberty will not derive from doing whatever we will, but in doing what He wills.

Imagine a special kite as it dips and dives, and then quickly climbs to hover high aloft the admiring onlookers below. As it goes through a series of aerial acrobatics, it begins to think: “There are so many things that I can do now, just imagine what more I could do if that string wasn’t attached. If only I wasn’t held back by that string, then I could realize the full expression of my freedom as a kite.” One day while in flight, the string did break and for a few seconds the kite was excited about its newly found liberation: “Now I can be truly free.” But quickly the kite was shocked to discover that while it was freed from the string, it was now a prisoner to the wind. And, instead of finding freedom of being a kite, it became a crumpled ornament trapped in a tree. Too late, the kite realized that the string had never kept the kite from its fullness; rather, it was the string that had allowed it.

My friends, you and I have been created in the image of God. We have received the Holy Spirit in baptism and confirmation and Christ in Communion. We have been graced through reconciliation and the teachings of Christ Jesus and His Church. These are the strings that connect us to the Good – not the ropes of bondage. These are the guiding strings of a well-formed conscience that make true freedom possible, strong enough to keep us flying safely even in the mightiest winds of troubles; yet, gentle enough to draw us to the right choices.

It is by these attachments, our connections to the Good, that we can soar to the highest truths and realize the greatest freedom. We can opt for the false promises of the serpent’s fruit, or reach for the truth that is the Bread of Life. While both are free choices, only the Truth can set us free.
The Catholic Church says that the “source and summit of the Christian life” is the Eucharist. This basically means that there shouldn’t be anything more important.

In the Eucharist we encounter God in a unique way and are given the renewing power to take God to the world. But for many Catholics, this is not their experience of the Eucharist. Recognizing this reality, the bishops of the United States last year decided to invite us into a multi-year process of revival and mission to rediscover the beautiful mystery of the Eucharist and the incredible treasures it contains for transformation.

This month, with the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi, which in Latin, means the Body of Christ, the Eucharistic Revival moves into its second year, continuing to encourage everyone to spread the Good News about this great gift of Jesus and to approach it with fresh eyes and open hearts.

How can you embrace the Eucharistic Revival for yourself? It will look different for all of us. Maybe it will mean going to an extra Mass during the week or spending more time in quiet prayer in front of the tabernacle. But something that might help is to consider the scope of the Eucharist and what exactly it is that we believe about it.

First, the Eucharist is not just the consecrated host in the tabernacle, but also the liturgical re-presentation of the entire action of God’s work to sanctify us and reconcile us to Himself. When we are called to the Eucharist by grace, or when we attend Mass, we enter again and again into the dynamism of the Trinity’s saving and healing love.

Has the Mass become an empty ritual for you? Are you only passively engaged? How can you let God open your eyes to the movement of His grace in the Eucharistic sacrifice? How central is the Mass to your understanding of Eucharistic renewal? What could you do to make your worship more active and conscious? Could confession help?

Second, the Eucharist is the sacramental fulfillment and present instantiation of the story of salvation. We don’t only abide in the presence of God the Creator when we approach the Eucharist, we also are joined to that long line of people God chose for Himself, becoming another chapter in the story. This is partly why the Bible is read at every Mass and is integral to it. The written Word of God is being fulfilled in our attendance at Mass. When was the last time you broke open a Bible? How do you think reading Scripture could renew you in Eucharistic devotion?

Third, the Eucharist is a driving force that should send us out in mission. If the Eucharistic liturgy or time spent in Eucharistic adoration is not leading us to care for others, we’re probably not doing it right. The One we meet in the Eucharist should set our priorities, determine our schedule, guide us in how we spend our time and money and open our eyes to those who need God. Too often we let our politics or preferred news sources be the leaders of our lives. But how could the Eucharist change how and who you love? How might the Eucharist change your definition of love?

These are just a few ways we can think of the Eucharist. Believing that the Eucharist is the real presence of Jesus, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, is important. It should change our behavior and lead to the transformation of our communities.

What can you do for the Eucharistic Revival? Throughout this next year, parishes, too, will be thinking of ways to enter more deeply into it. Whether it’s more time for Eucharistic adoration, celebrations with processions, or special Masses focused on healing and mission, there are many ways we can enter into this movement to make the Eucharist the “source and summit” of our lives.

The Very Rev. Jacob Koether, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria, serves as episcopal vicar for Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Victoria.
Todos necesitamos misericordia, 
y la misericordia se nos ofrece

Queridos hermanos y hermanas,

Antes de la bendición final después de las ordenaciones sacerdotales del Padre Ryan Kapavik y el Padre Luke Prihoda, les hablé a todos los asistentes sobre un par de nuestras tradiciones católicas. Una tradición es recibir gracias especiales a través de la “primera bendición” de un sacerdote recién ordenado. En señal de respeto al sacerdocio y las gracias especiales que Dios ha concedido abundantemente a este sacerdote, suelo besar las palmas de las manos que acabo de untar con el óleo sagrado.

Otra tradición es la indulgencia plenaria que se puede conceder a “un sacerdote que celebra su primera Misa ante el pueblo en un día elegido; [y] los fieles que con devoción asisten a tal Misa”. (Manual de Indulgencias, Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos, 2006, p. 97)

El regalo de la indulgencia plenaria es especial y los requisitos para recibirlos pueden parecer complicados. De hecho, hablé mal durante mi homilía en la ordenación indicando que recibir una bendición de un sacerdote recién ordenado era recibir una indulgencia. Eso no es así. Pero hay muchas otras formas de recibir ese regalo.

El año pasado escribí sobre la indulgencia plenaria que se podía obtener a través de una peregrinación en grupo al santuario diocesano de los Santos Cirilo y Metodio en Dubina. El Manual de Indulgencias, actualizado y revisado por San Juan Pablo II en 1999, enumera una serie de acciones y oraciones santas que pueden ser instrumentos eficaces de la misericordia de Dios. Al establecer el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia, San Juan Pablo II concedió una indulgencia plenaria para aquellos que “participen en las oraciones y devociones celebradas en honor de la Divina Misericordia”. Ya en 1965, el futuro Papa Juan Pablo II dijo claramente en presencia de todos los obispos del mundo que “la predicación de la Divina Misericordia” es el mensaje más importante del sacerdote.

El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica 1471 cita de esa enseñanza de San Pablo VI: “Una indulgencia es una remisión ante Dios de la pena temporal debida a los pecados cuya culpa ya ha sido perdonada…. Una indulgencia es parcial o plenaria según quite parte o todo el castigo temporal debido al pecado. … Los fieles pueden obtener indulgencias para sí mismos o aplicarlas a los muertos”.

San Pablo VI, en sus enseñanzas, explica que quien se esfuerza por seguir a Cristo, siendo un solo cuerpo en Cristo, siempre ha trabajado para acercar a sus hermanos y hermanas al Cielo.

Toda esta enseñanza puede recordarnos que todos somos pecadores necesitados de la misericordia de Dios, y que habrá un juicio final para cada persona según sus pecados. Como miembros del Cuerpo Único de Cristo, podemos ofrecer nuestras oraciones y actos de caridad a todas las personas, especialmente a las más necesitadas de la misericordia de Dios.

Que nuestros corazones estén abiertos para ayudarse unos a otros en el camino hacia la vida eterna, y que nuestros corazones sean ricos en misericordia cuando nos acerquemos a las puertas del juicio final. Que Dios los bendiga a ustedes y a sus familias con misericordia, amor y paz en esta temporada.

Mantengámonos unos a otros en oración,

+Brendan

San Pablo VI escribió en su enseñanza sobre las indulgencias:

“Siguiendo las huellas de Cristo, los fieles cristianos siempre se han esforzado por ayudarse unos a otros en el camino que conduce al Padre Celestial a través de la oración, el intercambio de bienes espirituales y la expiación penitencial. Cuanto más se han sumergido en el fervor de la caridad, más han imitado a Cristo en sus sufrimientos, llevando sus cruces en expiación de los pecados propios y ajenos, seguros de poder ayudar a sus hermanos y hermanas a alcanzar la salvación de Dios el Padre de las misericordias. Este es el dogma antiquísimo de la Comunión de los Santos, por el cual la vida de cada uno de los hijos e hijas de Dios en Cristo y por Cristo está unida por un lazo maravilloso a la vida de todos sus hermanos y hermanas cristianos en la unidad sobrenatural de el Cuerpo Místico de Cristo hasta que, por así decirlo, se forme una sola persona mística”. (Indulgentiarum Doctrina 5)
Blessing of the Land

Opening Prayer: Loving Creator, show us how to be good stewards of the land; give your blessing on every part of it - the soil, waterways and landscape. Together these contain the elements of life entrusted by You to our care.

Remind us of your constant love. Bless us with favorable weather, abundant crops and a vigorous community of life around us in all directions: East, West, North and South.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Recite the Lord’s Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven…

Reading: Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 8-9

THE PRAYER OF DIRECTIONS

Leader: Let us face the East and raise our hands in blessing: there the sun rises, the winds begin to blow, and life begins anew each day.

Reader 1: O God, we give thanks for the blessings of birth, for the gift of rain to sprout the seeds, for the dawn that brings each day, for the wisdom that guides us.

We promise to respect all living species in the east, and to care for your precious gift of the land. Bless all creatures, fields and people who live in the east.

Response: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us face the South with arms outstretched and raise our hands in blessing: see there, warm breezes come and spring time awakes.

Reader 2: O God, we give thanks for the blessings of life: the abundance of green growth and summer. We give thanks for the medicines that heal our bodies, and for mothers who bring forth the gift of new life.

We promise to respect all living species in the south, and to care for your precious gift of soil. Bless all creatures, fields and people who live in the south.

Response: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us face the West and raise our hands in blessing: there strong winds begin to sweep towards us, but the sun finds rest.

Reader 3: O God, we give thanks for our diverse cultures and common heritage, for these sustain us as much as food and water. We give thanks for death itself, when life and light leave us as does the sun at the end of each day. Death is the companion of all creatures and the door through which you lead us to new life.

Help us care for all living species and your precious gift of the land. Bless all creatures, fields and people who live in the west.

Response: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us face the north with arms outstretched and palms opened to receive the blessings of the Spirit.

Reader: Let us face the north and raise our hands in blessing: To the north, from which comes winter and trial, that leads us to courage.

We give thanks for the mothers and fathers who face harsh winds and trials and provide for their families. We promise to respect all living things, and to care for your precious gift of light and life.

Bless all creatures, fields and people who live in the north.

Response: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us look up and raise our arms toward the heavens.

Reader 5: Oh Great Spirit of all that is Above, of everything that soars, of all that flies, of all high visions, all that is above the earth, we honor you and glorify you for the power that you are. Lift our minds and our hearts above the earth so that we may see it as one place, one hand, one home for all. Oh Spirit of All that is Above, put us on the your wings so that we may know this world as You know it.

Response: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us place our arms at our sides and look down at the earth.

Reader 6: Oh Great Spirit of All that is Below, of everything we stand upon, of all that pulls us to deeper places, to the depths of ourselves, we turn to you in the memory of all that returns to dust. We ask you to give us the strength and the courage to face death. When people leave us in this life to share life with You, let there not be a grief that is untrue. When we experience losses and changes in our lives, let us see them as your revelation. Oh, Spirit of All that is Below, purify us.

Response: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us pray once more, Our Father, who art in heaven…Amen.

To see other blessings, visit www.catholicrurallife.org.

Catechists should register soon for rally in July

HILLIE – A Catechist Rally is scheduled for 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Monday, July 17, at St. Andrew Catholic Church’s parish hall for PCLs, catechists, and Catholic school religion teachers.

The rally will consist of prayer, fellowship, prizes, food and more.

Bishop Cahill will offer a commissioning and blessing for all in catechetical ministry. Participants will be renewed and empowered, to go out and proclaim the Gospel to every person, according to Christella Alvarez, director of Catechetical ministry for the Diocese of Victoria.

Participants also will receive a Catechist Rally T-shirt, bag, and pen. They must be present for a chance at winning various door prizes.

A postcard was mailed to catechists in the diocese last month to inviting encouraging them to register by June 17. Anyone who did not receive the postcard should contact Alvarez at calvarez@victoriadiocese.org or Alicia Olive at Alicia@victoriadiocese.org, or call then at 361-573-0828 as soon as possible.

The Office of Catechetical Ministry is also getting prepared for the next Pastoral Institute that begins August with the “Introduction to the Bible and the Pentateuch,” taught by the Very Rev. Jacob Koether.

Father Koether will explain how the Bible came to be, and how Catholics read and interpret the Bible. The class begins Tuesday, Aug. 22, at the chancery office, 1505 E. Mesquite, and continues each Tuesday through Sept. 26.

Pax Christi

Hill Country Catechists

Catechists of Hill Country Catechists

June 4 ~ The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Exodus 34:46-6, 8-9

Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

June 11 ~ Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a

Psalms 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

John 6:51-58

June 18 ~ Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 19:2-6a

Psalms 100:1-2, 3, 5

Romans 5:6-11

Matthew 9:36—10:8

June 25 ~ Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Psalms 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

Romans 5:12-15

Matthew 10:26-33

July 2 ~ Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a

Psalms 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Matthew 10:37-42

July 9 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Zechariah 9:9-10

Psalms 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14

Romans 8:9, 11-13

Matthew 11:25-30

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

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Elie Mejia’s passion is to continue to spread God’s Word and is delighted to include a monthly puzzle from the Mass Readings. Please mail all completed June puzzle forms to arrive in The Catholic Lighthouse office, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903 by June 30 to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of the following books:


To date, Elie has published 20 books. Most of her books can be purchased at The Pearl Street Market in Goliad, www.searching-for-jesus.com and Amazon. The prices range from $4.99 and $19.99.

JUNE 16, 2023
MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS
GOSPEL ~ MATTHEW 11:25-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew: At that time Jesus exclaimed: / “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things / from the wise and the learned, / you have revealed them to little ones. / Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. / All things have been handed over to me by my Father. / No one knows the Son except the Father, / and no one knows the Father except the Son / and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him. / “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, / and I will give you rest. / Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, / for I am meek and humble of heart; / and you will find rest for yourselves. / For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

W I S E N E V A E H K W I A N D K
E A S Y S G N I H T I C O M E N E
U E Z O D E M I A L C X E A O K L
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KC's honor members for years of service
WEIMAR -- The Knights of Columbus Council 2153 at its May business meeting recognized the several members for their service to the order. From left, are new honorary members Bill Wick, 36 years, and Donald Stavinoha, 25 years; new honorary life members Larry Wick, 50 years, James Anders, 46 years; and Council 2153 Grand Knight Delphin Bartek. Honorary members have 25 years of consecutive service or more and have reached age 65. Honorary life members have been a Knight in good standing for at least 25 consecutive years and have reached the age of 70 or have reached 50 years of service. (Contributed Photo)
Community welcomes new Point Comfort Seafarers Center

Rhonda Cummins, the president of the Point Comfort Seafarers Center, along with fellow board member Tom Wise, spent months measuring, painting and doing all manner of construction work with donated materials to make the center a reality.

Doreen Badeaux Secretary General for the Apostleship of the Sea U.S.A. and part of Stella Maris in the Diocese of Beaumont said she has been a colleague of Cummins for at least 10 years in the maritime ministry where there was a structure for the seafarer ministry.

“Today is the feast day of St. Brendan. That is my patron saint, and St. Brendan is the patron saint of seafarers,” the bishop said.

“Some day I want a seafarer’s center. Every year she would come and say, ‘I want a seafarer’s center.’”

Until now, Cummins and others who run the ministry have operated out of their homes. They visit the workers on the ships, help with transportation, helped many get a COVID-19 vaccine during the pandemic, and make sure that Christmas gifts are plentiful so each ship coming in to port can be assured that people remember them and pray for them. She also calls on clergy to celebrate Mass for the Catholic crewmembers or handle other spiritual needs of the seafarers. It’s an ecumenical ministry with volunteers from many faith backgrounds.

“Very important to have that ministry to the seafarers,” Badeaux said. “You have literally thousands of seafarers coming through your diocese every year and a large percentage of them are Catholic. So if they don’t experience the universal Church while they are at sea for sometime nine months, they may not have a connection to their faith any more. And that connection to their faith – and just humanity – is very important.”

Cummins said having the building, therefore more visibility at the port, will help her gain more volunteers to visit the seafarers. Those who don’t wish to climb aboard a ship can stay at the center and welcome the crews.

The center is made of two small buildings joined together to create space for recreation, relaxation or prayer. Connecting the buildings is a covered porch.

Chris Moore, director of the seafarers ministry in Freeport, donated a saddle as a novelty for the men and women stopping at the port.

Rhonda Cummins sits on the saddle donated by Chris Moore of Freeport, right. Also pictured is Richard Meyer, the Calhoun County Judge.

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Once an Eagle, always an Eagle!
BAY CITY — Some of the Holy Cross Catholic School Eagles who are graduating high school this year returned May 24 for the traditional “Senior Walk-Through-the Halls.” They were greeted by the students, teachers, and staff lined up in the halls to clap and cheer. (Contributed Photo)

Community welcomes new Point Comfort Seafarers Center

**Continued from pg. 17**

“So the guys can sit on the saddle – the seafarers – they can have their Texas ‘Kodak moment,’” Cummins said. She also said they like to work on puzzles, so she took some of the photos of the crews and had them made into puzzles for them to work on. One of the puzzles, put together by the crew pictured, is framed and hanging on the wall of the recreation room.

Moore said, “The cool thing about this place is that it’s inside the port. These men and women have ready access. It’s unique that they can walk to the center from the vessel without having to go outside the gates.”

To watch the building come together, visit the Point Comfort Seafarers Center’s Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/ptcomfortsc.

Time to fly
BAY CITY — May 11 was Butterfly Release Day at Holy Cross Catholic School. For a month the students were learning about the growth cycle of the painted lady butterfly. Many were excited, and some were saddened, as their pollinator friends flew off into the blue sky. One butterfly hesitated for a few moments to say good-bye. (Contributed Photo)

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**FULL OLD TIME PICNIC – Celebrating 135 Years**

**ANNUAL 4TH OF JULY PICNIC**

**ST. JOHN PARISH**

7026 FM 957 - 6 MILES SW OF SCHULENBURG, TX

**MONDAY, JULY 4TH**

9:00 AM  MASS AT ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

10:00 AM  FLAG RAISING CEREMONY
*All Veterans Are Encouraged to Attend*

START SERVING LUNCH
STEW, FRIED CHICKEN, AND ALL THE TRIMMINGS
DINE-IN OR TAKE HOME ★ $12.00

10:30 AM  MUSIC BEGINS: *FREE DANCE UNDER THE PAVILION*
The Shiner Hobo Band ★ The Dujka Brothers
Red Ravens ★ Nathan Colt Young

12:30 PM  AUCTION BEGINS

8:00 PM  RAFFLE DRAWING  9:30 PM  FIREWORKS

Beer ★ Soda Water ★ Snow Cones ★ Hamburgers and more ★ Country Store ★
Cake Walk ★ Ball Throw ★ Ring Toss ★ Lil Diggers Sandpile and more Entertainment
EVERYBODY WELCOME - FUN FOR ALL - YOUNG AND OLD! ★ VISIT OUR 135 YEAR OLD CHURCH

**PICNIC**
St. John the Baptist Church
AMMANNVILLE
On FM 1383
Mass at 5:30 p.m. Saturday

**SUNDAY, JUNE 18**

(Father’s Day)

GOLDEN FRIED CHICKEN & SAUSAGE DINNER
Served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
All Plates $12.00 – Dine In or Plates To Go

Country Auction at 1:00 p.m.
Plinko ★ Cake Walk ★ Bingo ★ Ring Toss ★ Surprise Packages
Toy Walk ★ Country Store ★ Snow Cones ★ Duck Pond
Hamburgers beginning at 4 p.m.

**MUSIC DURING THE DAY & NIGHT BY**

Czechaholics & Czech Melody Masters

You are all invited to celebrate with us!
**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 Ministries at http://www.nacflm.org.

**Courage** – Ministries 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.couragec.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** – 2023 Dates: Aug. 4-6 and Nov. 10-12. 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. at Holy Family Catholic Church. Please call Sharon at 361-578-7572 before attending.

**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 James 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/MothersofGraceof/.  

**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 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, or e-mail raphelssrefugee@ate.net, or visit http://www.raphelssrefuge.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 jbjov@sbglobal.net or 361-580-2770; or call 800-470-2230; or visit http://www.helpourmarriage.org.
Catholic-Methodist partnership bringing Cathedral Oaks to new heights

JANET JONES
The Catholic Lighthouse

WEIMAR — Cathedral Oaks is getting a little more of a Catholic feel to it since a group of Catholic men from the northern area of the Diocese of Victoria partnered with Methodist directors of the retreat center. It also getting a development for retired priests to reside.

According to Deacon Andrew Nunmaker of St. Roch in Mentz, churches in his area were using Cathedral Oaks to host many of the ACTS retreats over the years. Some of them approached the board of Cathedral Oaks, which was owned and operated by the United Methodist Church, about purchasing the center. It made sense to them because the ACTS retreats and other Catholic functions were the majority of the business for the center. But the board was not interested at the time.

Wanting a more Catholic experience, they formed a nonprofit and a tract of land was donated, so they began talks of building a new retreat center that would include details such as having a Crucifix instead of a cross in the chapel. But, according to Nunmaker, the area probably could not sustain two separate centers.

Eventually, Cathedral Oaks approached them about discussing a partnership and Cathedral Oaks Worship & Retreat Center, an ecumenical center with board members from both the Catholic and Methodist traditions, was formed.

The board has launched a campaign to raise money for improvements to the facility as well as the planned Oaks of St. Francis, a community for retired priests.

“This establishment of the Cathedral Oaks Worship & Retreat Center is like a dream come true. There is such joy in our working together as Methodists and Catholics united with all Christians to promote and advance the spiritual lives and growth in discipleship of those who will use our retreat center. With this joyful ecumenical vision, our renewed retreat center is indeed a place where all are welcome,” board president Clarence Littlefield stated in a presentation to explain the case for funding.

Nunmaker said there is a lot of joy surrounding the whole project at the center, which will serve all Christian faiths. The bones of the facilities are good, but do need some updating he said.

Nunmaker is especially excited about the retirement homes that will start with two townhouse style dwellings for retired priests. Several acres were set aside for the project. A separate non-profit, Perpetual Help Ministries, will oversee the funds allocated for the retired priests' homes. He said having the retirement homes on the 101-acre retreat grounds will give retired clergy a chance to stay active in public ministry if they want to.

“The beauty of this,” Nunmaker said, “is that if they want to be included in the retreats, they can.”

The group hopes to raise a little more than $7 million to complete the retreat center projects. Anyone who wants to know more about Cathedral Oaks and plans for its future should visit https://cathedraloaksretreatcenter.org/joint-campaign.

McFadden Ranch families reunite at Infant of Prague church

Continued from pg. 1

some other businesses. Some of the buildings are still there, preserved and marked by the state as historical sites. But McFaddin is now a ghost town with maybe 30 residents in all.

The church was damaged by two hurricanes, most recently Harvey, which pushed it 15 feet off of its foundation. It has been restored several times thanks to the generosity of Sue McCann Cannon, a descendent of the McFadden Ranch family who grew up on the ranch. There was a Mariana McFaddin page dedicated to the cemetery to keep families informed. At one end there is a pecan tree that shades one end of the cemetery, and Ramon, 52, recalled planting that tree when he was 8.

It was an emotional day for him, he said. “I cried from the joy of being able to celebrate Mass out there. We’ve always talked about getting people together -- to have a reunion and not forget about the cemetery. … That little church is so beautiful, especially now that it’s been redone again.”

Louis Rodriguez has been the one to take care of the cemetery as a whole. “He’s been the middle man for the different families for the cemetery,” Ramon said.

Regarding the Mass, Rodriguez said, “I think it was very important to me and my family because we grew up in McFaddin, and that was the community church for all the surrounding areas. We still call it our church.”

Rodriguez, 67, went to grade school in McFaddin. His father and grandfather ranched and farmed in the McFadden community.

“It was a vibrant place,” he said. “We were constantly doing stuff. It was never a dull moment.”

Ramon and Rodriguez both said they want to do more work at the cemetery, particularly restoring and straightening many of the headstones that have degraded or shifted over the years.

And Rodriguez said he wants to continue with details on the church, restoring a sunburst that used to be behind the statue of the Blessed Mother and adding some gold leafing to other places that are worn from time.

“There’s a very rich history to that church,” he said. “I’m certainly pleased that the Bishop was able to celebrate with us,” Rodriguez said.