By Sarita Villafranca Richmond, Editor

Rain or shine, every Monday morning you will find Marvin Huse, a volunteer from The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victoria’s (OLV) St. Vincent de Paul Society, backing his flatbed trailer up to the St. Vincent de Paul pantry. He delivers over 2000 pounds of food from the Food Bank to fill the pantry. Waiting for him are a group of retired volunteers who unload the truck and prepare food boxes for the families that will line up the next day. Robert Easterling, one of the volunteers shares, “It’s a way of giving back; faith without works is dead.”

St. Vincent de Paul Society is an international Catholic organization of lay-persons who seek to help the poor, who are in need of food and financial assistance. Families must qualify to receive assistance. Face-to-face discussions are held with the clients, in order to determine assistance needs. Food is distributed weekly, but families can come once a month and twice a year for financial assistance, that may include utility bills, rent, medical care, or gas for cars.

A city can have multiple St. Vincent de Paul Society groups called conferences; each share the same goal. The Diocese of Victoria has eight St. Vincent de Paul Conferences:
- Bay City - Holy Cross Conference and Our Lady of Guadalupe Conference
- El Campo - St. Robert Conference
- Edna - St. Agnes Conference
- Wharton - Holy Trinity Conference
- Victoria - The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory (OLV) Conference, St. Mary Conference, and Our Lady of Lourdes Conference

The group from OLV has been serving the people north of Red River Street for over 20 years. Once a month the “black bag” collection at the Cathedral provides enough resources to serve the OLV St. Vincent de Paul Society, purchasing over 8,000 lbs. of food! This hands on group oversees

See The Good Works, pg. 16
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The change of the calendar seems to bring about the opportunity to set new goals, look ahead to new challenges and plan for the future. Someone once gave me a practical advice to not try too many new things at once – maybe set two or three major themes to work on each year. Looking ahead to 2017, I’ve been interested in the Strategic Plan approved by the US Bishops for 2017-2020. A committee chaired by Archbishop Gregory Aymond, of New Orleans, drafted the Strategic Plan around five strategic priorities. As I’ve been reflecting on these, I think they can serve as a great guide for me and for all of us in the diocese to use in the coming year. Here are the first three:

- The first priority is Evangelization – to open wide the doors to Christ through missionary discipleship.
- The second priority is Marriage and Family – to encourage and heal all families.
- The third priority is Human Life and Dignity – to uphold the sanctity of life from conception to natural death with a special concern for the poor and vulnerable.

I can think of many examples of people in the diocese already responding to these priorities. For example, Fr. David Berger invited me to celebrate Mass at the Stephenson Unit Prison, in Cuero, on December 13. With the Kolbe Ministry and other volunteers, he ministers regularly to the men in this prison. During the Mass, I baptized two new Christians and confirmed 16 men with the power of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of Evangelization is alive in that prison, as men witness their faith daily and bring new members into the fullness of the Body of Christ. Later on that day, our diocesan team for V Encuentro met at the Chancery. The V Encuentro is a three-year process which has the goal of training and sending out 120-150 missionary disciples in the diocese by 2018. Acknowledging the rich tradition and presence of the Latino/Hispanic community in our area, my hope is that this process can embolden leaders to proclaim the truth and beauty of our Catholic faith even more.

In this issue of the Lighthouse, we will have a special focus on the St. Vincent de Paul Society. This Society seeks to be a Catholic hand to reach out to those who are particularly poor and vulnerable in our society. We also will have pictures that highlight the work of many of our strong Catholic organizations – Catholic Daughters, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Family Fraternal, Legion of Mary, etc. In many ways, we are addressing these priorities already; yet, we also know there is so much more to be done.

May the coming year of 2017 be filled with a renewed commitment to evangelize, to encourage and heal families, and to uphold the sanctity of every human life. I want to particularly thank each of you who has committed to pray the Rosary for the gift of peace in the world and for the family. As St. John Paul II invited us to pray this faithfully, I believe we can maintain our confidence in the power of this prayer – more than we ever know! May God bless you and your families; let’s keep each other in prayer.

+Brendan
Effective January 1, 2017, Father John Kollannur, who has been serving as parochial vicar of Holy Family Church, Wharton, its mission of St. Joseph Church, Boling, and sacramental minister for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Wharton, will begin a six-month medical leave of absence from the Diocese of Victoria and will be returning to India for chemotherapy. Please keep Father John in prayer.

Effective January 1, 2017, Father George Kunnath, MCBS is relieved of his duties as parochial vicar of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Bay City, and is appointed parochial vicar of Holy Family Church, Wharton, and its mission of St. Joseph Church, Boling, and sacramental minister for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Wharton.

Effective January 4, 2017, Father Patrick Knippenberg is appointed parochial vicar of Holy Family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus Church, Victoria.

Effective January 20, 2017, Father Charles Otsiwah is relieved of his duties as parochial administrator of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Meyersville, and its mission of St. Aloysius Church, Westhoff, and is appointed parochial administrator of Immaculate Conception Church, Goliad, and its mission of Our Lady of Loreto Chapel at La Bahia.

Effective January 20, 2017, Father David Berger, in addition to his assignment as pastor of the Catholic communities of St. Michael Church and Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Cuero, is appointed temporary administrator of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Meyersville, and its mission of St. Aloysius, Westhoff.

In Memory of Msgr. Eustace Hermes

Monsignor Eustace A. Hermes, age 99, passed away December 23, 2016. The 4th of 9 children of Steve and Mary Huehlefeld Hermes, he was born January 21, 1917, in Koerth, Texas. He entered St. John’s Seminary, San Antonio, in September 1930, and was ordained a priest June 12, 1941, at San Fernando Cathedral, San Antonio. Parishes he served include: St. Rose of Lima, Schulenburg; Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ganado; and St. Mary’s, Our Lady of Lourdes, and Our Lady of Victory, all in Victoria.

After medical retirement from full-time parish service, he remained involved in non-parish priestly ministry for many years. He was especially active in the Knights of Columbus, the Serra Club of Victoria, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, and the Victoria Catholic Cemeteries, of which he was a long-time director. He was named a Prelate of Honor (Monsignor) by Pope John Paul II on May 16, 2001.

Monsignor’s survivors include his beloved cousin Elizabeth Hoffer and 6 nephews, 4 nieces and their families. The funeral Mass was celebrated Thursday, December 29, 2016, at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, followed by entombment in Resurrection Mausoleum. The principal celebrant of the funeral Mass was Bishop Brendan J. Cahill, assisted by Bishop David Fellhauer, and priests of the Diocese of Victoria.

Latin Mass Celebrated in Diocese

The Traditional Latin Mass is being celebrated every Sunday at 12:30 p.m. at Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Frelsburg.
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 lay person, living or deceased. Publication of the burses will appear periodically when new contributions are received.

Donation Categories: Lector - $0.01 - $99.99; Acolyte – $100.00 - $499.99; Candidate – $500 - $1,499.99; Transitional Deacon – $1,500 - $2,499; Priest – $2,500 >.

• Rev. Msgr. Edward C. Bartsch Seminary Burse
  – LECTOR
  In memory of Louis Stryk by Allan and Cyndi Stryk, Amber, Matt, Gwen and Sam Skillern

• Rev. Daniel P. Kahlich Seminary Burse
  – LECTOR
  In memory of Rev. Msgr. John C. Bily for Christmas by Knights of Columbus Barnabas Heldt Council #3371, Nada

• Rev. Msgr. John C. Bily Seminary Burse #2
  – LECTOR
  In honor of Rev. Msgr. John C. Bily for Christmas by Knights of Columbus Barnabas Heldt Council #66, Weimar

• Rev. Joseph Koebel Seminary Burse
  – ACOLYTE
  In memory of Rev. Joseph “Joe” Koebel by Knights of Columbus Barnabas Heldt Council #3371, Nada

• Rev. Mr. Michael O’Shaughnessy Seminary Burse
  – ACOLYTE
  Donation by L. Charles and Sally Scholz

• Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #7
  – LECTOR
  In memory of Leon Steffek, Henry Konvicka and Alvin Polasek by Richard and Wilma Schaefer

• Rev. Msgr. Victor Schmidtzinsky Seminary Burse
  – ACOLYTE
  Donation in memory of Rev. Msgr. Victor Schmidtzinsky by Knights of Columbus Barnabas Heldt Council #3371, Nada

• Rev. Wayne Flagg Seminary Burse
  – LECTOR
  In memory of Rev. Wayne Flagg by Knights of Columbus Barnabas Heldt Council #3371, Nada

• Cora Wostarek Seminary Burse
  – ACOLYTE
  Donation by Ronald and Mary Luedke and Family

In appreciation of Rev. Michael Rother, Bernard and Madeline Rother by Susan Taylor

• Rev. Msgr. Victor Schmidtzinsky Seminary Burse
  – ACOLYTE
  In memory of Rev. Msgr. Victor Schmidtzinsky by Knights of Columbus Barnabas Heldt Council #3371, Nada

In appreciation of Rev. Michael Rother, Bernard and Madeline Rother by Susan Taylor

• Rev. Wayne Flagg Seminary Burse
  – LECTOR
  In memory of Rev. Wayne Flagg by Knights of Columbus Barnabas Heldt Council #3371, Nada

In appreciation of Rev. Michael Rother, Bernard and Madeline Rother by Susan Taylor

Those, wanting to contribute to an existing Seminary Endowment Fund, may do so by sending their contributions, with the appropriate fund designation to:

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

~ Candlelight March for Life ~
The 2017 Candlelight March will be on Thursday, January 26, 2017

March For Life is a pro-life rally that takes place each year in observance of the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to legalize abortion following Roe v. Wade.

Participants will gather at 7:00 p.m. in DeLeon Plaza downtown Victoria to march to Our Lady of Sorrows, where the featured speaker will be State Representative Geanie Morrison.

Please encourage your family and anyone who is pro-life to come and walk with them to show support that all life is valued and should be protected. All are invited; please bring a flashlight.

More information available: www.victoriadiocese.org/pro-life.

St. Mary’s Annual Parish Festival
Sunday – February 12, 2017
Victoria Community Center

ROAST BEEF MEAL
Roast Beef, Gravy, Country Potatoes, Green Beans, Squash Casserole, Roll, Dessert & Drink
Served 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. • $9.00 PER PLATE
Plates to Go @ 10:30 a.m.

LIVE AUCTION at 12:30 p.m.
Games, Booths, Silent Auction – Family Entertainment

Families Participating:

2016 Diocesan Services Appeal
Diocesan Goal: $1,936,221.00
Parish Pledge Totals: $1,019,795.96
Parish Contribution Totals: $981,468.84

The Catholic Lighthouse
Page 4 — January 2017
BISHOP VISITS SCHOOL AND PARISH—St. Joseph School and Parish, Yoakum, had the honor of hosting Bishop Brendan Cahill, Wednesday, November 30. Bishop Cahill celebrated Mass at the weekly Children’s Liturgy. He also visited each classroom and experienced lunch in the cafeteria with the 8th grade students, the principal, Sean Mooney, Father Matthew Huehlefeld, and Father Jacob Koether. Faculty and staff at SJS agree that it is always a blessing to see Bishop Cahill and witness his joyful heart and enthusiastic sincerity.

ST.J. TRADITION—It’s always fun to read a Christmas story to the children from Our Lady of Victory (left) and Nazareth Academy (right) schools. St. Joseph High School Student Ambassadors visit each December to read and spread some Flyer cheer.

SONGS FOR JESUS—St. Philip School, El Campo, Pk3, Pk4, and kindergarten students presented their Christmas program titled “Beneath A Shining Star”. Pictured are kindergarten students presenting Sing to the Newborn King.

ST. NICHOLAS VISITS OLG—St. Nicholas came to visit Our Lady of the Gulf School children, in Port Lavaca, on December 6, the feast day of St. Nicholas. He shared the story of his life and how he became a saint. He also stayed for photos and to hand out little treats. Thank you St. Nicholas!

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS—The sweet 4th graders from St. Rose School, in Schulenburg, decorated the tree planted in memory of their classmate, Caleb Heger. Their prayers this Christmas were with the Heger family. Caleb, you are so missed. Merry Christmas with Jesus! We love you!

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS—The sweet 4th graders from St. Rose School, in Schulenburg, decorated the tree planted in memory of their classmate, Caleb Heger. Their prayers this Christmas were with the Heger family. Caleb, you are so missed. Merry Christmas with Jesus! We love you!
Time of Quiet Spiritual Growth

We are entering a time in which we can experience some quiet time for interior spiritual growth. The holiday festivities are over, and we have not yet begun the penitential season of Lent. Even nature has seemed to shut down. Days are short; weather is gloomy, and we see little growth in vegetation about us. Wild animals are hibernating or spending more time in sheltered surroundings; even we humans are spending more time indoors. Now, we all know that nature is quietly regenerating itself, absorbing the life-giving rain, and getting ready for a burst of activity as soon as the temperature rises, the days lengthen, and spring arrives.

We, then, are challenged to use this time of decreased external activity to regenerate spiritually so that we can burst into the season of Lent and Easter with renewed faith and fervor. To aid us in this quest, we are blessed, at this time, with the celebration of the feast of the baptism of the Lord. We all remember the Gospel story of how Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by his cousin John. As Jesus was coming out of the water, an awesome event occurred! We all know that the Father looks down upon each of us as a beloved son or daughter. How awesome that thought is; like Jesus, we are the Father’s beloved sons and daughters! That thought needs some getting used to! If we truly let it permeate our whole being, it will regenerate us! Like Jesus, we will be inspired and strengthened to go out and seek the Father’s will.

Now God won’t be making any public announcement about God’s will for us, but God will speak to us through our Sacraments and our prayers, through our gifts and talents, through our reading and reflection, through those around us, and through the inspirations derived from reflection on the wonders of creation about us. So let us be alert, and let us remember that we are “Beloved Sons and Daughters” of God, as we enter this time of preparation for the penitential season of Lent and the joy of the Resurrection which lies ahead.

Venerable Jeanne de Matel who founded the Incarnate Word Order in France 420 years ago, believed that people can encounter the Word of God, the Incarnate Word by pondering and praying with Scripture, God’s love letter to us. This is the desire of the sisters in producing this Lenten lectionary resource, to help persons in the 21st century to meet Christ in the Scripture and in sharing faith with one another.

The Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament invite you to help them celebrate 150 years in Victoria, by joining a faith-sharing group using Disciples on the Journey, Lent 2017 (begins Wednesday, March 1). This is the 5th year the sisters have taken on this ministry from the diocese.

An Evening of Celebration

SCHULENBURG—On Monday night November 28, 2016, Bishop Brendan J. Cahill of the Diocese of Victoria, assisted by Rev. Timothy Kosler, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church, Schulenburg, Rev. Augustine N. Asante, pastor of St. Anthony Church, Columbus, and Rev. Robert F. Guerra, pastor of The Parish of the Nativity, Eagle Lake, celebrated Mass in Spanish at St. Rose of Lima with the Spanish community of the area. A crowd of about 400 attended (mostly Spanish speaking) for an evening of prayer and worship with the Spanish prayer group (Ministro Conquistando Los Nociones Para Cristo) from the surrounding area.

The evening began with a rosary followed with singing and Mass. The congregation then sang the traditional Spanish birthday song, Las Mañanitas to Bishop Cahill.

Many cards and gifts were presented to the bishop as all celebrated his birthday on the front lawn of the church.
Completion of Current Three-Year Pastoral Institute Extended Program Approaching

The three-year cycle of courses offered through the Pastoral Institute is nearing completion with two six-week courses: The Trinity and The Church. For those who have taken the three-year program courses and are in need of upcoming courses, here is your chance. All adult Catholics are invited to register.

Parish Catechetical Leaders, catechists, Catholic school religion teachers, and those in parish ministries are highly encouraged to attend.

The course on The Trinity will be broadcast on Tuesdays beginning January 10 - February 14, 2017, from the Chancery Office in Victoria, in the morning (9:15 – 11:30 a.m.) and evening (7:00 – 9:15 p.m.) to 5 other sites in the diocese:
- Eagle Lake (p.m.)
- Hallettsville (a.m. and p.m.)
- Mentz (p.m.)
- Shiner (p.m.)
- Wharton (p.m.)

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. We will consider how it is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. We will consider how it is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. We will consider how it is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. We will consider how it is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life.

Following the course on The Trinity, the Most Reverend Brendan J. Cahill, S.T.D., will offer a six-week course on The Church (Ecclesiology) beginning Tuesdays, February 21 - March 28, 2017. It, too, will be broadcast from the Chancery Office in Victoria to the 5 sites listed above. Those participating will have the privilege of having Bishop Cahill as their instructor. During his advanced degrees, he specialized in the Catholic doctrine on the interpretation of Scripture as developed in the Second Vatican Council, and his studies specialized in the history and the theologians that were influential at the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Those participating in this class will be in for a real treat!

For more information, call (361) 573-0828 or email calvarez@victoriadiocese.org

Chancery Library & Media Center

Children will learn better from a catechist who uses several mediums while teaching, no matter what the age level. The Library and Media Center has many resources, which will enhance lessons and help make religious education fun while learning.

— Must Have Books for Catechetical Ministry:
  - Catechism of the Catholic Church (USCCB)
  - The Catechist’s Toolbox (Paprocki)
  - 30 Ten-minute Prayer Celebrations for Young Children (Repp)

— Must Have DVDs for Catechetical Ministry:
  - The Angel’s First Communion Lesson
  - Catechists: God’s Call to Speak About Our Faith
  - The Eggplant Lady/La Señora Berenjena

Go to www.victoriadiocese.org to search the library catalog, call (361)573-0828, or email: dlibrary@victoriadiocese.org.

Catechetical Office

Save the Date:  Ministry with Gen Z – There’s an App for That! Workshop by Center for Ministry Development

Organization of Catechetical Leadership (OCL)
Thursday, February 16, 2017 • 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Holy Rosary Church • 936 FM 2436 • La Grange, TX 78945

The Ministry with Gen Z workshop is designed for all parish leaders whose ministries touch the lives of adolescents— including pastors, deacons, pastoral associates, parish catechetical leaders, catechists, Confirmation preparation leaders, coordinators of youth ministry, and service/social concerns leaders.

Online registration at www.victoriadiocese.org/ocl-organization-of-catechetical-leadership: With funds from the Capital Campaign, the registration fee will be paid for all clergy, parish catechetical leaders (PCLs), their assistants, and catechists. Youth Ministers’ registration fees will be paid in full with funds from the diocesan golf tournament.

Call Christella Alvarez at (361) 573-0828 or email calvarez@victoriadiocese.org for more information.

10th Annual Catholic Knowledge Bowl Coming February 2017

The 10th Annual Catholic Knowledge Bowl (CKB) will be held on Sunday, February 12, 2017, from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., at a new venue – Our Lady of Sorrows Trinity Hall, in Victoria. All past teams are invited to participate in this event, and new teams are encouraged to sign up. There are three categories in which to participate. Teams of four (4) members can form either adult (over 18 years), family (at least 1 child), or teen (13–18 years, still in high school) teams to participate. There will be 3 rounds of competition:

Additional Grand Prize will be given to the first place winners in each category. For those who want to participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist before the competition, please join us at Our Lady of Sorrows at 10:30 a.m. for Sunday Mass. Food will be available, for purchase, at Trinity Hall afterwards, with entertainment by the Ballet Folklorico dancers of Our Lady of Sorrows from 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in learning more about the Catholic faith through the CKB competition. For further information, call the Catechetical Office at (361) 573-0828, extensions 2224, 2225, or 2227.

Pathways with Patti

2017 Brochures have been mailed. If you did not receive one please call or e-mail. You may also check out the web site.

Next travel meeting is January 19, 2017

334 Jurek Road
Port Lavaca, TX 77979
(361) 552.2095 or (361) 920.3216
email: zkmnt@tisd.net
www.pathwayswithpatthi.com
YOUTH

Abbey Youth Fest 2017

The Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry will be attending this year’s Abbey Youth Fest in Covington, Louisiana, at St. Joseph Seminary College, March 24-26, 2017. This is an event for young men and women to come together and share their faith. Speakers and bands will be performing throughout the festival. If you have any questions, please give the Youth and Young Adult office a call at (361) 573-0828. To register: victoriadiocese.org/abbey-youth-fest.

Patriot Days—The students, faculty, and family members from Our Lady of Victory School, Victoria, celebrated colonial times with patriots’ day in December. They experienced games and activities before modern technology as well as dance, school master training, military training, candles, edible butter, duck duck goose, jacks, and many more activities!

Youth Group Plays Dominoes—The Hallettsville/Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Group visited the Stevens Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and played dominoes with residents.

Christmas Visit—Deacon Stephen Vasek visited PreK-3 students at Sacred Heart, in Hallettsville. Deacon Stephen is serving the parish during his winter break from the seminary. Look at those beautiful smiles!

Chancery Tour—Third grade students from St. Michael School, in Cuero, visited the Chancery and The Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory for a tour. The students enjoyed the tour. Book your tour today!

Spelling Bee Winners—Nazareth Academy, Victoria, Campus Spelling Bee champ was Katherine Fairly (7th Grade) and the runner-up was Kyle Lemke (8th Grade).

Winners—Congratulations to St. Philip, El Campo, 4th grade class for placing 2nd in this year’s Ag In The Classroom Diorama contest, sponsored by Wharton County Farm Bureau! They received a cash prize which will be used to purchase an educational item for their classroom.
St. Joseph High School Family Says Goodbye to McArdles

The St. Joseph High School Board of Directors held a Retirement Reception honoring Bill McArdle and his wife, Lori McArdle, on Wednesday, December 7, at the Tom O’Connor, Jr. Athletic Center. McArdle recently retired from STJ after serving as President and Principal for nearly 20 years. The couple moved to Victoria, Texas in 1997 when he was hired by the STJ Board of Directors as President. For the first five years of his tenure he worked alongside Sister Emilee Eilers, IWBS, and pictured right, with Bishop Brendan Cahill.

McArdle was named President/Principal. McArdle’s wife, Lori, was a teacher at St. Joseph High for 15 years, and a part-time library assistant for three years. The McArdles have made Catholic education their life’s work and positively impacted hundreds of students throughout their years at STJ. They are known for their dedication and compassion to the school and the community in which they live, as well as ensuring that St. Joseph High School was providing a challenging and loving academic environment.

STATE CHAMPIONS—The Shiner St. Paul Cardinals defeated the Arlington Grace Prep Lions to win the 2016 TAPPS Division IV state championship game on Friday, December 2, 2016 at Waco Midway Panther Stadium. Photo by Lori Raabe.

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Victoria
Eugene Rehak, FIC
(361) 575-4982

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(979) 335-4473
East Bernard
Albert Smaistrla, FIC
(979) 335-4473

El Campo
Mike Scardino, FIC
(979) 743-5245
El Campo
Mike Scardino, FIC
(979) 743-5245

Victoria
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(361) 293-9657
Schulenburg
Wendy Janak, FIC
(361) 293-9657

Victoria
Robert Melnar, FIC
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*Interest rates are subject to change. Minimum guaranteed rate is 1.50%. Home Office: San Antonio, Texas. #ASU 1.17
DIOCESE

“Jackie” (Fox Searchlight)

A mesmerizing performance by Natalie Portman as Jackie Kennedy, reflecting on loss while building the Camelot myth in the weeks following President John Kennedy’s (Caspar Phillipson) 1963 assassination, is mixed in with overwrought monologues and not-quite-accurate history. Director Pablo Larraín and screenwriter Noah Oppenheim focus on how Jackie created her own legend by virtually dictating a story about her husband’s last days to Life magazine reporter Theodore H. White (Billy Crudup). They strengthen their drama with an expertly created mix of archival footage into which Portman is inserted. Catholic viewers will find Jackie’s conversations with an unnamed priest (John Hurt) -- a composite of at least two real-life clergymen who are known to have counseled the first lady -- of particular interest while the filmmakers’ attention to detail and willingness to show grief honestly will appeal to adults more generally. An explicit, gory portrayal of assassination, at least one use of rough language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R -- restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

“Sing” (Universal)

Generally amiable but flawed musical cartoon, populated mostly by animals, in which the koala bear owner (voice of Matthew McConaughey) of a failing theater aims to revive his business by staging a singing contest. The quintet of finalists in the competition comprises a conceited mouse (voice of Seth MacFarlane) who croons in a Sinatra-like style, a gifted teenage elephant (voice of Tori Kelly) afflicted with stage fright, a harried pig housewife (voice of Reese Witherspoon) run ragged by her 25 children, a gorilla gangster’s son (voice of Taron Egerton) who would rather belt out Elton John tunes than help his dad steal and a porcupine punk rocker (voice of Scarlett Johansson) coping with the selfishness of her live-in boyfriend. Friendship and loyalty are triumphant amid plot complications that include a typo escalating the winner’s prize a hundredfold. But writer-director Garth Jennings, who also provides the voice of the good-hearted but dimwitted lizzard secretary responsible for that error, incorporates into his film not only a living arrangement that has no place in a movie aimed at children but a German-accented male stage partner (voice of Nick Kroll) for Witherspoon’s character who exudes swishy enthusiasm and favors glitzy leotards. Probably acceptable for mature teens. Cohabitation, some scatological humor, scenes of peril. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

“Rogue One: A Star Wars Story” (Disney)

Interstellar derring-do is the order of the day in this rousing prequel to the 1977 kickoff of the “Star Wars” saga. With the evil Empire -- served, most prominently, by a computer-generated projection of the late Peter Cushing and Ben Mendelsohn -- on the verge of deploying a weapon so powerful that it would doom the gallant Rebel Alliance (headed by Genevieve O’Reilly), the daughter (Felicity Jones) of the brilliant scientist (Mads Mikkelsen) who unwillingly developed the technology while being held captive joins forces with an Alliance officer (Diego Luna) and an amusingly straight-talking android (Alan Tudyk) in an effort to sabotage the armament. In crafting an exciting epic, director Gareth Edwards keeps the mayhem inherent in his story of armed conflict virtually bloodless. And the script, penned by Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy, celebrates altruism while also briefly tackling the morality of obeying some military orders. But the ambiguous nature of the spiritual “Force” cultivated principally, in this installment of the franchise, by a blind, Buddhist-style monk (Donnie Yen), may be a source of concern for the parents of some teens. Frequent but thoroughly stylized combat violence, religious elements requiring mature discernment, some frightening images including a scene leading up to mental torture. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

LADIES PLAY DOMINOES WITH PRIEST—Father Max Landman plays dominoes with residents at the Stevens Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, in Hallettsville. Father Max is the parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Parish, in Hallettsville.

KC DONATE TO SCHOOL—In Schulenburg, Knights of Columbus Father Roman Janak Council, presented a check for $4,600 to the St. Rose Catholic School. Shown accepting the check from Grand Knight Kenneth J. Berger are Father Tim Kosler, Pastor of St. Rose of Lima in Schulenburg, and Rosanne Gallia, Principal of St. Rose Catholic School.

Journeys of Faith with Ceci

All Things Are possible pilgrimage to the Holy Land with John Michael Talbot & Fr. Gary Janak
March 9-18, 2017
Pre-pilgrimage retreat at Mt. of Beatitudes - March 6
8-Day Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi with Fr. Kristopher Fuchs
April 23-30, 2017
All prices include flights, hotels, guides and meals as per itinerary.

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Texas bishops, cemeteries developing burial options for aborted children

AUSTIN — Catholic cemeteries are stepping forward, working with the Catholic bishops in Texas, in response to ongoing efforts to provide a proper burial for children lost to abortion.

New state regulations issued by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) require the interment of the remains of all children who are lost through abortion or miscarriage at a healthcare or abortion facility. These regulations will be effective December 19.

Many hospitals already cooperate with families, funeral homes, and cemeteries to provide a proper burial for children who die in utero. Catholic cemeteries in many (arch)dioceses, such as the Archdiocese of San Antonio, have provided these burials for years.

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops (TCCB) will continue to work with Catholic cemeteries and funeral homes to further develop this ministry to provide the same service throughout the state to children who die by abortion. The service will be provided at no charge.

“To bury the dead is a work of mercy,” TCCB Executive Director Jennifer Carr Allmon explained. “As Pope Francis reminds us, the victims of our ‘throwaway culture’ are ‘the weakest and most fragile human beings.’ It is right and just for us to be assisting the victims of abortion.”

Catholic cemeteries estimate that their costs will range from $1,500 to $13,000 annually to inter children who die from abortions. There are more than 50 Catholic cemeteries in the state; the TCCB also provides a proper burial for children who die in utero. Catholic cemeteries estimate that their costs range from $1,500 to $13,000 annually to inter children who die from abortions. There are more than 50 Catholic cemeteries in the state; the TCCB also provides a proper burial for children who die in utero.

The burial of the dead is praised in canon law (Code of Canon Law, c. 1176), the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and Scripture. In Scripture, Tobias was lauded by the angel Raphael for burying the dead without hesitation (Tobit, 1:17-20, 2:1-7, 12:11-13). The Catechism states, “The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy; it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit” (no. 2300). By this corporal work of mercy, we perform charitable actions “by which we come to the aid of our neighbor” (Catechism, no. 2447).

DSHS reports that in 2014, the latest year for which data is available, 54,902 abortions were performed in Texas. In the same year, there were 2,200 fetal deaths statewide.

The new law modifies Texas Administrative Code §1.136, which already included interment as one of three possible ways to dispose of children lost through abortion or miscarriage. The revision only removes the other two options: “deposition in a sanitary landfill;” and “grinding and discharging to a sanitary sewer system.”

Patients are not required to participate in deposition; the law specifically applies only to healthcare or abortion facilities, and does not apply to women who lose a child outside of a healthcare or abortion facility, such as at their own home. Burial records will be maintained by hospitals and cemeteries.

The Catholic ministry is available to all, regardless of their situation. “This is an important service for the most vulnerable children in our state,” Allmon said. “We must treat the remains of all human beings, no matter how long they lived or how they died, with dignity, charity and respect. In addition, this ministry offers a place to pray for those who regret their abortion, or for abortion workers who leave the industry.”
Las Hermanas del Verbo Encarnado y el Santísimo Sacramento les invita a celebrar sus 150 años en Victoria reuniéndote con un grupo para compartir la fe usando Discípulos En La Jornada Cuaresma 2017.

El Obispo Brendan Cahill es un escritor comentarista en el libro de este año. Comentando en la lectura del primer domingo, el Obispo Cahill dice, “Nuestra tarea importante en esta tiempo de Cuaresma es identificar las voces falsas y claramente decir “no” a ellas, corregir nuestras vidas y al hacerlo decir “sí” aún más fuertemente a la verdad de Jesús.” En las preguntas para compartir la fe el Obispo escribe: “¿Estoy listo para la Cuaresma? ¿Estoy preparado para ir al desierto y enfrentar cada tentación y prueba que me puede llevar a alejarme de Jesús? ¿Qué necesito corregir antes de la Semana Santa?”

Llama a tu parroquia hoy para ver con qué grupo de Discípulos En La Jornada puedes reunirte o formar tu propio grupo invitando a tu familia o vecinos para compartir la fe durante esta Cuaresma. El recurso es publicado en español e inglés. Visita la página del web: www.disciplesonthjourney.org, email dj@disciplesonthjourney.org o llamar (361) 485-0866 para ordenarlo. Los libros son vendidos en paquetes de 10 por $30 más el envío.

Aunque hayas estado en un grupo pequeño por muchos años usando Discípulos En La Jornada, la palabra de Dios es siempre actual y nueva. Cada vez que leas la Escritura en un diferente lugar en tu jornada de fe, y la palabra de Dios puede tener un impacto transformador en tu vida espiritual ahora mismo. ¿Haz esta la mejor Cuaresma posible al reunirte con otros parroquianos para compartir la fe usando las Escrituras?

Peregrinos caminan hacia una Misa en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 10 de diciembre en la Basílica del Santuario Nacional de la Inmaculada Concepción en Washington después de procesar por las calles con imágenes de la patrona de las Américas. Los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos declararon su fiesta del 12 de diciembre como un día de oración y solidaridad con las familias de inmigrantes. (Foto CNS-Jacelyn Lippelmann, Catholic Standard)

**Child and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Reporting Procedures**

**If you witness, suspect, or know of child and/or vulnerable adult abuse, you must file a report within 48 hours** by contacting the Civil Authorities: Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org. **If the person is in immediate danger, call 911.**

**If Church Personnel Is Involved In Alleged Abuse:**

**Step One:** Contact Civil Authorities, if individual is a minor.

**Step Two:** Contact one of the following:

- Call Bishop or Chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at (361) 573-0828.
  **Written Allegations Should Be Sent To: Office of the Bishop, P. O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Mark as “Personal and Confidential”**
- Call Vicki L. Pyatt, LMSW, Pastoral Care and Outreach, at (361) 827-7186 or email: pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org

We will also help you bring your concerns to Church officials outside the diocese if the abuse occurred elsewhere and you now reside in the Diocese or Victoria.

For further assistance please contact Vicki L. Pyatt.
Pope remembers Opus Dei head as ‘paternal and generous’ witness

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis expressed condolences to the members of Opus Dei following the death of Bishop Javier Echevarria, who led the prelature for over 20 years.

The 84-year-old bishop, who once served as secretary to the personal prelate’s founder, St. Josemaria Escriva, died Dec. 12.

Expressing his condolences, Pope Francis said Bishop Echevarria, like his predecessors, “gave his life in a constant service of love to the church and to souls.”

“I join you in your prayers of thanksgiving to God for his paternal and generous witness of priestly and episcopal life,” the pope told Opus Dei members.

The Spanish bishop’s death came one week after he was admitted to Rome’s Campus Biomedico hospital for a pulmonary infection, according to the Opus Dei website.

“Bishop Echevarria was receiving an antibiotic to fight the infection. The clinical outlook was complicated in his last hours when difficulty breathing resulted in his death,” the website said.

Calling the bishop’s death “unexpected,” Pope Francis assured the Opus Dei members of his prayers and entrusted Bishop Echevarria’s soul to Our Lady of Guadalupe, “on whose feast day he gave his soul to God.”

In an interview with Vatican Radio, Msgr. Fernando Ocariz, vicar general of Opus Dei, said he administered the last rites shortly before Bishop Echevarria’s death and that while the prelature is saddened by his death, they are also peaceful “because a good person has gone to heaven to which we know will help us from there.”

“He lived with two saints: with St. Josemaria for many years and later with Blessed Alvaro del Portillo,” the founder’s successor. “And from them he learned to be very faithful to the church, to the pope and to souls,” Msgr. Ocariz said.

Born June 14, 1932, Bishop Echevarria was appointed St. Josemaria Escriva’s personal secretary in 1953. Following his ordination in 1955, he continued assisting the founder of Opus Dei until his death in 1975.

After St. John Paul II designated Opus Dei as a personal prelature in 1982, Bishop Echevarria was named vicar general. He was elected head of the prelature after Blessed del Portillo died, and was made a bishop by St. John Paul II in 1995.

Bishop Echevarria was also a member of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes and the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature and participated in several meetings of the Synod of Bishops.

Bishop Echevarria’s body was to lie in repose at the prelature’s Church of Santa Maria della Pace in Rome until his funeral, which was scheduled for Dec. 15 in Rome’s Basilica of St. Eugenio.

After a period of mourning, members of Opus Dei will convene to elect a new prelate and await Pope Francis’ approval of the nomination.

Stop those profiting from human trafficking,
Vatican diplomat says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Eradicating the “heinous crime” of human trafficking requires cracking down on those who profit from it, said a Vatican diplomat. The Vatican urged nations “to recognize trafficking in human beings as one of the most heinous crimes” and to recognize “their moral duty to address it properly and indeed eradicate it,” said Msgr. Janusz Urbanczyk, the Vatican’s permanent representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. He made his comments Dec. 15, during a meeting of OSCE in Vienna. OSCE includes 57 countries in Europe, Central Asia and North America. In his talk, Msgr. Urbanczyk said greater attention should be given to eradicating the trafficking and enslavement of children. Children can be ensnared by traffickers when they are “enslaved and fall prey to exploitation as child laborers or soldiers, fall into the criminal network of drug trafficking or into the mire of pornography,” he said.

Key Element of Discipleship

Responsibility to the Gospel. To be a disciple means to have a mission. Every Christian disciple should have the Gospel at the core of their mission. This means every disciple needs to take on their own shoulders a part of the responsibility we have in sharing Good News.
Pope recognizes martyrdom of Oklahoma priest killed in Guatemala

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of Father Stanley Rother of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, making him the first martyr born in the United States.

The Vatican made the announcement Dec. 2. The recognition of his martyrdom clears the way for his beatification.

Father Rother, born March 27, 1935, on his family’s farm near Okarche, Oklahoma, was brutally murdered July 28, 1981, in a Guatemalan village where he ministered to the poor.

He went to Santiago Atitlan in 1968 on assignment from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. He helped the people there build a small hospital, school and its first Catholic radio station. He was beloved by the locals, who called him “Padre Francisco.”

Many priests and religious in Guatemala became targets during the country’s 1960-1996 civil war as government forces cracked down on leftist rebels supported by the rural poor.

The bodies of some of Father Rother’s deacons and parishioners were left in front of his church and soon he received numerous death threats over his opposition to the presence of the Guatemalan military in the area.

Though he returned to Oklahoma for a brief period, he returned to the Guatemalan village to remain with the people he had grown to love during the more than dozen years he lived there.

He was gunned down at the age 46 in the rectory of his church in Santiago Atitlan.

Government officials there put the blame on the Catholic Church for the unrest in the country that they said led to his death. On the day he died, troops also killed 12 townspeople and wounded 24 others in Santiago Atitlan, an isolated village 50 miles west of Guatemala City.

Many priests and religious lost their lives and thousands of civilians were kidnapped and killed during the years of state-sponsored oppression in the country.

While his body was returned to Oklahoma, his family gave permission for his heart and some of his blood to be enshrined in the church of the people he loved and served. A memorial plaque marks the place.

Father Rother was considered a martyr by the church in Guatemala and his name was included on a list of 78 martyrs for the faith killed during Guatemala’s 36-year-long civil war. The list of names to be considered for canonization was submitted by Guatemala’s bishops to St. John Paul II during a pastoral visit to Guatemala in 1996.

Because Father Rother was killed in Guatemala, his cause should have been undertaken there. But the local church lacked the resources for such an effort. The Guatemalan bishops’ conference agreed to a transfer of jurisdiction to the Oklahoma City Archdiocese.

News of the recognition was welcomed in Oklahoma.

“This comes as a great joy to all of us here not only in Oklahoma, but I think it’s a great blessing to the church in the United States,” Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City told Catholic News Service Dec. 2.

He also called the recognition of the priest’s martyrdom a gift to the Catholic Church in Guatemala.

Archbishop Coakley recalled how both he and Father Rother are alumni of Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. He remembered a ceremony at the school a few months after the priest’s death in which a plaque was erected in his honor.

“His witness has marked me from my earliest days in priestly formation,” the archbishop said. “It’s a blessing to be the archbishop now who has the opportunity to bring to fruition the work on my predecessor Archbishop (Eusebius J.) Beltran.”

Now-retired Archbishop Beltran was head of the archdiocese when the saint's cause opened in 2007.

Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, author of a 2015 biography of the priest, “The Shepherd Who Didn’t Run: Fr. Stanley Rother, Martyr from Oklahoma,” wrote in an email that the martyrdom recognition was “an incredible gift not only to the United States, but to the universal church.”

“I am delighted and grateful that more people will come to know and be changed by his beautiful story,” Scaperlanda said. “Not only because of his death as a martyr. But even more significantly, because his life and his priestly service remain a testament to the difference that one person can, and does, make.”

Scaperlanda described Father Rother’s martyrdom as a “reminder that we are all called to holiness in our ordinary lives, and that holy men and women come from ordinary places like Okarche, Oklahoma.”

Describing the priest as a faithful man, Scaperlanda said he was called to serve in the fields of Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala, alongside his Tz’utujil Mayan parishioners.

“This is what his community remembers – that he was one of them,” she wrote. “And when their village suffered oppression and killings from a violent and brutal civil war, he remained one with them. He was truly the shepherd who didn’t run.”

Editor’s Note: A CNS review of Scaperlanda’s biography of Father Rother can be found at http://tinyurl.com/glcsso2.
Edna—St. Agnes Church will sponsor a “Celebration of Life” program for all denominations, the youth, parents, ministers, and the general public of Jackson and surrounding counties on Wednesday, January 18, 2017. The location is Jackson County Services Building, 411 N. Wells Street, Edna, Texas, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. The program will show the need to safeguard the dignity and sanctity of every human person, the need for respect and justice for the unborn and all life, and the value of faith in today’s families. Refreshments will be served, and admission is free.

East Bernard—Catholic Daughters Court St. Bernadette #1108, will hold its annual Chicken Noodle Soup and Sandwich Supper on Wednesday, Jan. 25 at the American Legion Hall (Hwy. 60). Serving begins at 5:00 p.m. until sold out. Soup, $3 per bowl and a chicken salad sandwich is $3. Variety of pastries available. Also a silent auction.

Victoria—Candlelight March will be on Thursday, Jan. 26. Gather at 7:00 p.m. in DeLeon Plaza downtown to march to Our Lady of Sorrows, where the featured speaker will be State Representative Geanie Morrison.

Yoakum—Catholic Daughters Court Our Lady of Guadalupe, #206 annual fundraiser, Jan. 29 at St. Joseph Family Center. A chicken fried steak dinner served from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., dine-in or plates-to-go. Presale tickets only are $9 p/p and can be purchased at St. Joseph Pastoral Center, First State Bank, Yoakum National Bank, Prosperity Bank, Guys & Gals Hair Salon, Gaus, Natho & Swaney Attorneys and CDA members. There will also be a country store/bake sale and homemade noodles will also be available for sale.

Schulenburg—Catholic Daughters Court St. Rose #1597 annual fried chicken dinner, Feb. 19 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, serving begins at 11:00 a.m. at $9 p/p. There will also be a silent auction, sweepstakes, and country walk.

Pilgrimages

Spiritual Director: Father Gary Janak and John Michael Talbot • All Things are Possible Pilgrimage to the Holy Land - March 9-18, 2017; contact: Ceci Triska by email at jctriska@sbcglobal.net or call (979) 543-8575. See ad on pg. 10.

Spiritual Director: Father Kristopher Fuchs – 8-Day Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi - April 23-30, 2017, contact: Ceci Triska by email at jctriska@sbcglobal.net or call (979) 543-8575. See ad on pg. 10.

Spiritual Director: Father Kristopher Fuchs (OLV) – 12 Day Pilgrimage to Portugal, Spain, & France visiting Lisbon, Aljucelre, Valinhos, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela, Burgos, Leon, Lourdes, Zaragoza & Madrid on June 14-27, 2017. For a copy of the itinerary, please e-mail Dora Silva at dsilva4415@gmail.com. Deposit and payments must be submitted to Little Flower Tours & Travel. For further payment information, please contact Susan at (888) 843-7373.

Catholic Family Services—To find Catholic organizations which focus on family, visit the Catholic Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers at www.nacflm.org.

Catholic Family Life 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 more information, visit www.couragerc.net.

Emmaus Center—Offers Individual, Couples, Family, Adolescent and children’s counseling as well as specialized Support Groups for Men, Women and those afflicted by Grief. Spiritual Direction is also available on request. The Emmaus Center is located at 1908 N. Laurent St., Suite #140 (behind the VA Clinic). Appointments may be made by calling (361) 212-0830.

Engaged Encounter—2017 dates: Jan. 20-22, April 21-23, May 26-28, Sept. 22-24, Nov. 17-19 registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee must accompany registration form. For more information, call (361) 573-0828 ext. 2230 or visit www.victoriadiocese.org.

Gabriel Project—Helps women experiencing a crisis pregnancy— alternative to abortion. Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 101 W. Convent. Light supper included. For angel workshop/training dates, contact Barbara at (361) 649-1612 or barbarmccain85@yahoo.com. Holy Family, Wharton, meetings are the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.; Sts. Peter and Paul, Meyersville, meetings are the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. For more information, call (979) 532-3593, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Grief Ministry—An ongoing Grief Group meets at Holy Family Church, Victoria, in the Conference Room, 7:00 p.m., on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month. Every adult, who has experienced the death of a loved one, may attend (after three months has passed). Please call Sharon at (361) 578-7572 or visit id9:16 Ministry—For adults in their 20s-30s, single or married. Is held at Holy Family in Victoria every first Thursday of the month. Starts with the 6:00 p.m. daily Mass, dinner, a talk live streamed from the headquarters in Michigan followed by fellowship. Child Care is available to those who RSVP. It is open to all young adults of married. Is held at Holy Family in Victoria every first Thursday of the month. Starts with the 6:00 p.m. daily Mass, dinner, a talk live streamed from the headquarters in Michigan followed by fellowship. Child Care is available to those who RSVP. It is open to all young adults.

Mothers of Grace—Grief Ministry—For adults in their 20s-30s, single or married. Is held at Holy Family in Victoria every first Thursday of the month. Starts with the 6:00 p.m. daily Mass, dinner, a talk live streamed from the headquarters in Michigan followed by fellowship. Child Care is available to those who RSVP. It is open to all young adults.

Raphael’s Refuge—RR’s mission is to build and maintain a memorial in honor of babies, born and unborn. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Flatonia. Peer counseling and spiritual direction are available for those suffering a loss of a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth, infant death, or abortion. For more information, contact Midge Elam at (361) 865-3021, (361) 258-1514, or visit www.rralphersrefuge.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 jbjovjov@sbcglobal.net or (361) 580-2770; call (800) 470-2230; or visit www.helpournmarriage.org or www.retrouvaille.org.

St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity/Secular Franciscans—For dates, contact Mary Ann LeBlanc at (361) 575-1858 or visit www.lostcompanionos-sfo.org.

Conferences • Masses • Retreats and more

Victoria—Single Catholic women 18 to 50 years of age are invited to come meet nuns (Sisters) and examine their call to make Jesus, the Incarnate Word, known and loved. Explore your own call on January 28-29 at Incarnate Word Convent. For more information call (361) 575-7111; email iwbsovoc@yahoo.com; or see www.iwbsvictoria.org.

ACTS Retreats—For information, visit www.actsmissions.org.

Amor Meus

Taizé Prayer Service: January 17, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Amor Meus Prayer Room. Taizé prayer is a meditative Christian experience of prayer that includes sung and chanted prayers, meditation, and periods of silence, reflection and liturgical readings.

Private or Directed Overnight Retreat: January 27-29. This retreat offers an opportunity to take time away from a busy, hectic life to spend quiet time in prayer and reflection. Comfortable overnight accommodations, nutritious meals, and lovely outdoor prayer spaces help the retreatant hear “God’s still small voice” in the silence of the heart where God dwells. An opportunity to speak with a spiritual director or guide is available.

Amor Meus One-Day Retreat: January 28, from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sister Roselle Haas, RC will present a day retreat entitled, Dealing with Prickly People. This retreat provides retreatants with an opportunity to encounter God in the silence of their hearts. Two conferences on a spiritual topic are presented. The schedule provides for Eucharist liturgy or prayer service with ample time for prayer, walking, reflecting, spiritual guidance and reconciliation. All are welcomed.

Call for appointment, register or more information. All the events are held at Incarnate Word Convent/Amor Meus Spirituality Center, 1101 N.E. Water St., Victoria, TX 77901; (361) 575-7111; email: amormeus@yahoo.com; website: www.amormeusspiritualitycenter.org
EAST BERNARD CELEBRATES OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE—Holy Cross parishioners, in East Bernard, celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. A mariachi choir from Our Lady of Sorrows Church, in Victoria, led parishioners into the church where they laid flowers before the statue of Our Lady. A bare mountain came to life, as the flowers were placed one by one. The choir provided music for the liturgy and entertained the crowd gathered for refreshments in the parish hall after the Mass. The beautiful paper flowers were made by a parishioner.

BIG THANK YOU—Thank you to Pamela Brown for donating toys and learning materials to the Emmaus Center for “play therapy”. Receiving the donations is Ashley Silvas, LPC-Intern Applicant. Ashley is an intern at the Emmaus Center.

INSTALLATION AND DEDICATION—Bishop Brendan Cahill was at St. Joseph Parish, in Inez, on December 14, for the installation Mass of Father Barnabas Kyeah and the dedication of St. Joseph’s Prayer Garden. Pictured above is, left to right, Father Barnabas, Bishop Cahill, and visiting from Hallettsville, Deacon Michael Tankersley.

TRADITION—A parish family participated in Las Posadas at Our Lady Guadalupe Church, in Bay City, December 16 to December 24. Las Posadas is a traditional Mexican reenactment of the search for lodging that Mary and Joseph did nine days before Christmas. It started in the 16th century when St. Ignatius Loyola used an Aztec festival that honored their sun God to teach about the birth of Christ. Initially this celebration was a novena or nine days of prayer at church. Over time, people started Las Posadas in their homes with family and neighbors.

The Good Works of St. Vincent de Paul Society

Continued from pg. 1

The Beautiful of St. Vincent de Paul Society

The Good Works of St. Vincent de Paul Society

Continued from pg. 1

Distributions every Tuesday afternoon from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the distribution center located at 1502 E. Mesquite Lane. Bob Coffey, who currently leads the group shares, “It is a very rewarding ministry. You are not being asked for your monetary wealth, but instead for your spiritual guidance and the gift of your time. We welcome anyone; you don’t have to be Catholic, so please consider volunteering for this ministry.”

Tuesday afternoon, as the group gathered outside of the distribution center, I walked over to visit with some of the clients and to personally experience the ministry of St. Vincent de Paul. As everyone waited for 5:00 p.m. to roll around, I visited with a few people, who all spoke of their gratitude for the St. Vincent de Paul ministry. At 5:00 p.m. sharp, the group knew what to do; they quietly formed a circle as the gathering began with its usual prayer. Once the prayer was over, everyone moved back to where they had been in line. The St. Vincent de Paul women volunteers began qualifying new clients and distributing food and assistance. Yolanda, a working grandmother shares, “St. Vincent de Paul has not only helped me, but my whole family. I have a job, but it is hard to make ends meet, and they have helped me with what I need.” She also shared, “I like that they pray before; they know it is the Lord who brings us here. Without Him we wouldn’t have anything. It is helping so many people.”