By Dr. Gloria Gonzalez

As we embarked on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a pilgrimage of a lifetime, we prayed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to guide us and allow us to act on faith, have an open mind, and a loving heart as we traveled in Jesus’ sacred land. After a 14 hour flight, we (63 pilgrims) arrived in Tel Aviv weary and tired. Our travel was not over however; we then boarded a bus and traveled 2 hours more to our hotel in Tiberias. Amazingly, as soon as we started seeing the countryside and hearing the guide speak about the events during Jesus’ time on this earth, everyone was suddenly rejuvenated. As we journeyed to the hotel, Bishop Brendan Cahill led us in reciting the rosary in the land where it all began.

We awoke early the following morning with a view of the amazing Sea of Galilee from our hotel. Looking at the sea, we could only imagine the occurrences thousands of years ago when Jesus performed miracles in and around the Sea of Galilee. Much to our surprise, a fishing boat appeared in the distance as if Jesus was saying, “Welcome, here I am reaching out to you.” The Sea of Galilee and Capernaum is where many of Jesus’ miracles, including Calming the Storm and The Miraculous Catch of Fish, took place; so it was an honor and a privilege to spend four nights next to the Sea of Galilee and the city of Tiberias.

Our next destination was Cana. While on the way, our eyes enjoyed the beautiful terrain of Tiberias. Looking at the mountains and the different levels of the city, one could not help but wonder how Jesus and the people of that period walked everywhere regardless of the seasons, and in sandals nonetheless. The sacrifices that they made were incredible. When we arrived at Cana, the feeling was like a sense of stepping back in time. We were led into the Cana Catholic Wedding Church, where Bishop Cahill renewed the marriage vows of the couples on the trip. It was a jubilant morning, for the couples appeared to embrace the ceremony and share their love for each other. A blessing indeed, as Cana is the place where Jesus performed the first miracle.

The following morning was amazing as we boarded what is called the “Jesus boat”, and embarked on a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. Bishop Cahill read (John 21), “So he said to them, ‘Cast the net over the right side of the boat, and you will find something. So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish.’” The reading of the Gospel was followed by the group sweetly singing Amazing Grace. Suddenly, there was a feeling of time stopping and nothing or anything mattering; we were completely oblivious to the world around us and felt a total consumption of peace. Even the water was serene and crystal clear, which was truly serendipitous.

As if the experience in Galilee was not enough blessing, the next day, God blessed us with a beautiful rainbow as we traveled to Nazareth. Nazareth is the town where Jesus spent most of his life. Upon arrival in Nazareth, we were directed to the Chapel of Our Blessed Mother where the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and informed her that she would give birth to our Lord and Savior. After leaving the Chapel, we went to the Ascen-

A Journey of Faith - Following Jesus’ Steps

See A Journey of Faith, pg. 16
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last year on March 24, the Archbishop of San Salvador, José Luis Escobar Alas released a pastoral letter for the people of El Salvador. The date marked the anniversary of the murder of St. Oscar Romero and the Archbishop titled his letter “I See Violence and Strife in the City” (Psalm 55:10). As he wrote, he challenged the reader to consider not just the reality of violence in the world, but seriously to look to the roots of violence. Ultimately he invited the faithful of his diocese to unite against violence and for peace in the family, community, and country. Some of his thoughtful and prayerful reflections seem very appropriate for this Lenten season.

Specifically the Archbishop mentioned social exclusion and the idolatry of money as two of the roots of the violence that continue to challenge his culture. In the context of El Salvador he stated that this has led to the exclusion of certain people from basic rights and the acceptance of a high level of violence. At one point in considering the roots of social exclusion he turned to the thought of St. Ignatius of Loyola – “wealth, honor, and pride … the three steps which in the view of the Saint of Loyola, lead to the commission of all other vices.”

While reading about someone’s experience in a different part of the world, the prophetic writing of the Archbishop led me to reflect on these idolatries in my own life and my own culture. I think it may be a good reflection for each of us to consider what are the things or ideas that seem to have become more important than God. Lent is an annual time of renewal for each of us to look deep into our hearts and ask for God’s help in following His will each day. One thing I hope to do in this season is to look for ways to identify with and support those who may feel excluded. Sometimes I think this will include being open to listen to different voices and opinions.

In our local community I see each day many ways in which men and women are reaching out to listen and to support one another. For example the Gulf Bend Community Collaborative has been a working group which includes sheriffs, police chiefs, hospital administrators, Gulf Bend and citizens. This group has acknowledged the need for better mental health services for our neighbors who are in crisis. They have recognized the need for better training of police, administrators of hospitals, and social workers. They have recognized the need to include families who are feeling excluded.

I am reminded of what is many of the things or ideas that are important to us each day. One of the first things I think about is what are the things or ideas that seem to have become more important than God. Lent is an annual time of renewal for each of us to look deep into our hearts and ask for God’s help in following His will each day. One thing I hope to do in this season is to look for ways to identify with and support those who may feel excluded. Sometimes I think this will include being open to listen to different voices and opinions.

In our local community I see each day many ways in which men and women are reaching out to listen and to support one another. For example the Gulf Bend Community Collaborative has been a working group which includes sheriffs, police chiefs, hospital administrators, Gulf Bend and citizens. This group has acknowledged the need for better mental health services for our neighbors who are in crisis. They have recognized the need for better training of police, administrators of hospitals, and social workers. They have recognized the need to include families who are feeling excluded.

Una segunda área en la que veo este reconocimiento y la compasión es con el actual preocupación por la situación de la inmigración. Quiero escuchar y apoyar tanto a la comunidad inmigrante y las fuerzas del orden en un tiempo de incertidumbre y temor. Los hombres y las mujeres están respondiendo de forma positiva en la área para nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Por favor, mantenga uno al otro en el amor y la oración.

Una vez más, quiero dar las gracias a la comunidad collaborativa por sus esfuerzos en apoyar el uno al otro. Por ejemplo el Gulf Bend Community Collaborative ha sido un grupo que ha trabajado en el campo de la salud mental para nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Este grupo ha reconocido la necesidad para mejorar la atención para nuestros hermanos y hermanas que están en crisis. Por favor, mantenga uno al otro en el amor y la oración.

... los tres pasos que, a la vista del santo de Loyola, conducen a la comisión de todos los otros vicios .”

Al leer acerca de la experiencia de una persona en una parte diferente del mundo, la escritura profética del Arzobispo me llevó a reflexionar sobre estas idolatrías en mi propia vida y mi propia cultura. Creo que puede ser una buena reflexión para cada uno de nosotros para tener en cuenta cuáles son las cosas o ideas que parecen haberse vuelto más importantes que Dios. La Cuaresma es un tiempo de renovación anual para cada uno de nosotros para mirar profundamente en nuestros corazones y pedir la ayuda de Dios en el seguimiento de su voluntad cada día. Una cosa que espero hacer en esta temporada es buscar maneras de identificar y apoyar a aquellas personas que se pueden sentir excluidas. A veces pienso que esto incluiría estar abierto a escuchar diferentes voces y opiniones.

En nuestra comunidad local veo cada día muchas formas en que los hombres y las mujeres están llegando a escuchar y apoyar el uno al otro. Por ejemplo el Gulf Bend Community Collaborative ha sido un grupo que ha trabajado en el campo de la salud mental para nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Este grupo ha reconocido la necesidad para mejorar la atención para nuestros hermanos y hermanas que están en crisis. Por favor, mantenga uno al otro en el amor y la oración.

+ Brendan

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**Un Tiempo Para Renovación**

Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas,

El año pasado el 24 de marzo, el arzobispo de San Salvador, José Luis Escobar Alas publicó una carta pastoral para el pueblo de El Salvador. La fecha marcó el aniversario del asesinato del Arzobispo Oscar Romero y el arzobispo tituló su letra “Veo la violencia y rencilla en la ciudad” (Salmo 55:10). Mientras él escribía se atendía al lector a considerar no sólo la realidad de la violencia en el mundo, pero en serio mirar a las raíces de la violencia. Algunos de sus profundas reflexiones y oraciones parecen muy apropiadas para este tiempo de Cuaresma.

Especificamente, el arzobispo menciona la exclusión social y la idolatría del dinero como dos de las raíces de la violencia que continúan siendo un reto a su cultura. En el contexto de El Salvador afirmó que esto ha dado lugar a la exclusión de ciertas personas de los derechos básicos y la aceptación de un alto nivel de violencia. En un momento en el examen de las raíces de la exclusión social se vuelve hacia el pensamiento de San Ignacio de Loyola - “la riqueza, el honor y el orgullo ... los tres pasos que, a la vista del santo de Loyola, conducen a la comisión de todos los otros vicios .”

Al leer acerca de la experiencia de una persona en una parte diferente del mundo, la escritura profética del Arzobispo me llevó a reflexionar sobre estas idolatrías en mi propia vida y mi propia cultura. Creo que puede ser una buena reflexión para cada uno de nosotros para tener en cuenta cuáles son las cosas o ideas que parecen haberse vuelto más importantes que Dios. La Cuaresma es un tiempo de renovación anual para cada uno de nosotros para mirar profundamente en nuestros corazones y pedir la ayuda de Dios en el seguimiento de su voluntad cada día. Una cosa que espero hacer en esta temporada es buscar maneras de identificar y apoyar a aquellas personas que se pueden sentir excluidas. A veces pienso que esto incluiría estar abierto a escuchar diferentes voces y opiniones.

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-- Brendan

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**Church Regulations Regarding Fasting and Abstinence**

**Abstinence** from meat (beast or fowl) is to be observed by all Catholics fourteen years old and older on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and on all the Fridays of Lent. This obligation prohibits the eating of meat, but not eggs, milk products or condiments of any kind, even those made from animal fat. **Fasting** means limiting oneself to one full meal, on a given fast day. Catholics who are eighteen years of age, but not yet fifty-nine, are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On fast days, two additional smaller meals are permitted, if necessary, to maintain strength. However, the two smaller meals together may not equal one full meal. Moreover, eating solid foods between meals on fast days is not permitted.

**Reglas de la Iglesia Sobre Ayuno y Abstinencia**

Se les obliga **ayunar** el Miércoles de Ceniza y el Viernes Santo a personas de diez y ocho años que no han celebrado sus sesenta años. Ayunar es comer solamente el almuerzo regular con el desayuno y cena con porciones más pequeños. Se les obliga **abstenerse** de comer carne en los Miércoles de Ceniza y todos los Viernes de Cuaresma, de los catorce años y más. (Puerco, Chorizo/Salchicha, Tocino, Rez, Venado, Pavo y Pollo son carne). Por esas personas de sesenta años y más, no tienen la obligación de ayunar; pero todavía son obligados de no comer carne en el Miércoles de Ceniza y todos los Viernes de Cuaresma.
need for greater services for our brothers and sisters with mental health emergencies. Not only have they listened and acknowledged the problem, they also have presented a plan to our state leaders for a Mental Health Deputy program that could greatly serve our community. Please pray for and support this initiative to be able to serve some of our families that may feel excluded. A second area in which I see this acknowledgement and compassion is with the current worry over the immigration situation. I want to listen to and support both the immigrant community and the law enforcement community in a time of uncertainty and fear. Men and women are responding in a positive way in the area to our brothers and sisters. Please keep each other in love and prayer.

Again, 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 knew! May God bless you and your families, let's keep each other in prayer.

+Brendan
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 - $499.99
- Candidate - $500 - $1,499.99
- Transitional Deacon - $1,500 - $2,499
- Priest - $2,500

February 22, 2017

• General Seminary Burse
  Lector
  In memory of Deacon Paul Patek by Mrs. A.R. “Dick” Wearden and James Wearden

• Rev. Msgr. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #7
  Lector
  In appreciation by Peter’s Place
  Donation by Soila Sanchez
  In memory of Eugene Gillar by Robert and Florence Sciba
  Willie E. Barborak
  In memory of Dennis Palmquist by Richard and Wilma Schaefer
  In memory of Evelyn Barta by Patricia Berger
  In memory of Robert Siegel by Willie Barborak

Acolyte
  In memory of Sciba and Bolech Families by Robert and Florence Sciba

• Henry A. Schoenfeld Seminary Burse
  Lector
  In honor of Katelyn Vincent’s birthday
  celebration by Bernice Schoenfeld
  In memory of Evelyn Barta by Bernice Schoenfeld
  In memory of Georgia Seifert by Bernice Schoenfeld

• CDA #1374 Queen of Peace Seminary Burse
  Acolyte
  In memory of Vlasta Boehm and Lillie Mae Pall by CDA Court Our Lady Queen of Peace #1374

• CDA Court of St. Ann #369 Seminary Burse #2
  Lector
  In memory of Armando Aguilar, Husband of Mickey Aguilar by CDA Court #369

• Knights of Columbus Victoria Council #1329 Seminary Burse #4
  Acolyte
  In memory of Charlie Tater, Jr. by K of C Victoria Council #1329

• Rev. Dan Morales Seminary Burse in Honor of his Work for Vocations
  Lector
  In memory of Rev. Dan Morales by Paz and Andrea Morales

• St. John the Baptist Church, St. John In Memory of Rev. Brian Crookes Seminary Burse #2
  Lector
  In memory of Eugene Barta by:
  Alphonse Besetzny
  Albert and Dorothy Olsovsky
  Forrest and Ann Dittrich
  Bob and Bea Welfl
  Leo and Joyce Janda
  Elsie Farek
  Harvey and Sandra Michna
  Lillian Besetzny
  Stuart and Joanie Krischke and Family

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

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

Education of Seminarian Fund

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

Donation categories:
- Lector - $0.01 - $99.99
- Acolyte - $100 - $499.99
- Candidate - $500 - $1,499.99
- Transitional Deacon - $1,500 - $2,499
- Priest - $2,500

Acolyte
Imogene A. Klare in memory of Msgr. Eustace Hermes
Knights of Columbus Our Lady of The Gulf #3253, Port Lavaca
In memory of Father Dan Morales

To contribute to the Education of Seminarian Fund, send contributions to:

Diocese Of Victoria
Education of Seminarian Fund
P. O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903

Save the Date: 2017 Bishop David Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament ~ Friday April 21

The Office of Vocations, under the direction of Father Tommy Chen, and the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, under the direction of Wendy Eggert, use the funds from the golf tournament for youth and vocation programs that have enriched the spiritual lives of many young people of our diocese. This outreach to our young people has sparked renewed enthusiasm in their faith and has given them a new opportunity to put that faith into action. The average cost to educate one seminarian for a year is $35,000.

We are blessed to have 12 seminarians studying for our diocese. With this blessing also comes great responsibility; as we are reminded by Pope Francis, “We must always walk in the presence of the Lord, in the light of the Lord, always trying to live in an irreprehensible way.”

To sponsor a hole, visit victoriadiocese.org/bishop-david-fellhauer-invitational-golf-tournament. For more information, please contact the Youth Office at (361) 573-0828 or by email at weggert@victoriadiocese.org or rleos@victoriadiocese.org.

Happy Birthday to Our Seminarians

Chase Goodman is in Theology II at Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. His birthday is March 22. Write to Chase at: 7625 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43235.

James Dvorak is in Theology II at St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston. His birthday is March 24. Write to James at: 9845 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77024.

Lenten Rice Bowl Collection

Did you know that 25 percent of the money collected from the weekly Lenten Rice Bowl collections comes back to the diocese to be used to alleviate hunger in the local community? Grant opportunities are now available for organizations that help fight hunger on the local level. Go to http://www.missionsdov.org/crs for the application and criteria. Deadline for the application is May 15, 2017. For resources and more information visit www.missionsdov.org. Questions, please contact Debbie Vanelli, Director of CRS and CCHD at missionsdov@gmail.com.

Preserving History

The Presidio La Bahia Foundation works to preserve the history of the Presidio and to make that history available to visitors from across the great state of Texas, our neighboring states and for visitors from abroad. Each year Texas history students are able to visit the Presidio with the help of a grant from the Presidio La Bahia Foundation.

The Presidio La Bahia Foundation in conjunction with Presidio La Bahia is delighted to announce the return of our “Instant Rancher” fundraising program. The funds raised by the Instant Rancher drawing will go towards the preservation and upkeep of Presidio La Bahia! If you’ve ever dreamed of becoming a rancher, this is your chance.

See Preserving History, pg. 7

2017 DSA

How to Support Programs in Your Parish

The Diocesan Services Appeal (DSA) is committed to fund administration offices and programs that help us bring the light of Christ to the priorities of the Crossroads. The Diocesan Services Appeal has been mailed. If you did not receive yours you may download one at https://www.victoriadiocese.org/diocesan-services-appeal.
SCHOLARSHIPS PRESENTED—STJ President, Tom Maj, presented the President’s Partnership Initiative Leadership Scholarships to students at Nazareth Academy: Students receiving the STJ scholarships are Tanner C., Ava C., Emma M., Austin T. and Kyle L.

SACRED HEART REPRESENTED AT MEET—Congratulations to all of the participants and winners from the Sacred Heart Academic Meet, which was held on Thursday, February 9, 2017.

CONGRATULATIONS—Students at Our Lady of the Gulf School, in Port Lavaca, received their First Holy Communion from Father Tommy Chen. May you always know the peace of Jesus, the light of his love, and the joy of his life within you.

The Weimar Knights of Columbus, left, Francis Janacek, Treasurer, and right, Martin Luchak, Grand Knight, present a check to Carolanne McAfee, St. Michael School Principal. Martin and Francis said these donations can only be accomplished through the hard work of its KC members, the people of Weimar, and surrounding communities for supporting their fundraisers; without their support, these donations would not be possible.

**St. Michael School Recognizes KC Council as “SMCS Special Donor of the Year”**

WEIMAR—The members of the Knights of Columbus Council #2153 continues to be one of the greatest supporters of St. Michael School, contributing their time, talent, and treasure to the success of the school. Several KC members assist them in maintaining the facilities and help with playground cleanup prior to the start of each school year; others help by working fundraising events, and several serve on the St. Michael School Advisory Council. The SMCS Home & School Association receives $4,500 yearly from the KC’s, which helps purchase tournament and track-meet medals and trophies, assists in paying the monthly water bill, and helps to purchase new sports equipment and uniforms.

In addition, several years ago, under the leadership of past Grand Knight, Tim Lehardt, the KC’s recognized the dedication of the school’s faculty and staff and their commitment to education. The KC’s decided to do something special for the St. Michael faculty and staff to honor them for answering the call to serve. The KC’s chose to provide a monetary Christmas gift to each faculty and staff member.

Finally, the KC’s help promote excellence in the classroom through the sponsorship of student essays and art contests. St. Michael Catholic School continues to be blessed by this wonderful organization!

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**Cruise from Galveston to Jamaica ~ Aug. 13-20**

Make deposit now.

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**June 2-5**

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**March 23**

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email: zkmnt@tisd.net

www.pathwayswithpatti.com
Lent, Time to Reflect and Act

Headlines of natural disasters, political unrest, violent crimes, and other calamities bombard us every day. Closer to home, even in our own homes and local communities, we see the heart-breaking situations caused by deaths, accidents, illnesses, unemployment, consequences of poor judgment, crimes, or other misfortunes. Sometimes we feel so overwhelmed with these woes that we give up. Consequently, we may end up doing nothing which only makes the situation worse because of the non-caring example that we give to those about us.

Fortunately, the Church in its wisdom, provides us with liturgical seasons which help us pause and reflect upon our relationship with God and our neighbor. Lent is such a season; it calls us to conversation through prayer, fasting, and giving alms.

Let us explore how these activities address the woes that have been mentioned above. For example, we can pray for peace of mind and soul for the victims of those about us.

...we can pray in communion with the Church on earth and in heaven. Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer!” Through praying, we can strengthen our relationship with God, by repeatedly giving praise, asking for favors, and then giving thanks for blessings that we have received. Let us appreciate the power of prayer; even scientific research has showed that hospital patients who have been prayed for have quicker recovery rates and have fewer complications than patients who have not been the beneficiaries of such prayer.

Along with prayer, we are called to fast during this penitential season. Pope Francis suggests that we fast from indifference towards others. He wrote, “Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians. Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience.”

The Pope continues his comments on the results of giving in to the temptation of indifference, “We end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people’s pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else’s responsibility and not our own.”

Regarding alms-giving, Pope Francis writes, “we can help by acts of charity, reaching out to both those near and far through the Church’s many charitable organizations. Lent is a favorable time for showing this concern for others by small yet concrete signs of our belonging to the one human family.” Therefore, let us give in a spirit of charity and remember, “Whoever you do ... .”

Therefore, may this penitential season be a time of continuing conversion as we embrace prayer, fasting, and alms-giving as a means of strengthening our relationship with God and with one another. (Pope Francis quotes are taken from Vatican.va “Messages of Pope Francis for Lent.”)

NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED—Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court St. Michael #347, in Cuero, welcomed six new members to their court at the February 9, 2017, meeting. Doris Koliba, Regent, (left standing) administered the membership oath to new members, left to right, Mary Linda Arguellez, Petra Owen, Margaret Solis, Rosalinda Gardner, Linda Nemeck, and Marian Baumann. Nancy Stefek, Vice Regent is seated looking on as the ladies take their oath. Congratulations to the new members of Catholic Daughters Court St. Michael.

KC’S SUPPORT PROJECT—Following Mass with Father Charles Otsiwa, Goliad Knights of Columbus member Adam Lumbrezer, left, presents a check from funds raised to the Gabriel Project of the Victoria Crossroads area representatives, Myra Schulze, Coordinator-Goliad; Barbara McCain Williams, Director of Public Relations; Fred Williams, Treasurer; and Jo Ann Ybarbo, Volunteer in Goliad and Secretary for the Gabriel Project.

VOLUNTEERS WORKING HARD—The DSA (Diocesan Services Appeal) “stuffing party” was held February 23 at the Chancery. Thank you to the 40 volunteers who came to help with this yearly mail out.

Celebration of Life Program Held

EDNA—Saint Agnes Church, of Edna, sponsored a “Celebration of Life” program on Wednesday evening, January 18, 2017, at the Jackson County Services Building Auditorium in Edna, Texas. The ecumenical program, presented for all of Jackson and surrounding counties, explained the importance of life and the need for respect, dignity, and justice for all of human life.

Midge Elam, Director of Raphael’s Refuge in Flatonia, spoke about the organization, the construction, and the glass block walls of the chapel with names engraved into the blocks as a memorial for the born and unborn.

Captain Laura Martin, from Victoria, Texas, spoke about the Salvation Army and the special work the organization does to meet the needs of those who need help each day.

Randy Faulk, from Victoria, provided the music for the evening and sang and played several selections along with the audience sing-a-long.
Abbey Youth Fest Returns for 2017

COVINGTON, LA — Following last year’s severe weather-related cancellation, Abbey Youth Fest, the largest youth event within the Archdiocese of New Orleans, returns to the beautiful grounds of Saint Joseph Abbey next month. Abbey Youth Fest (AYF) takes place Saturday, March 25 with the theme “Be It Done Unto Me” in honor of that day’s feast, the Feast of the Annunciation. AYF is open to teens and young adults ages 13 or older.

AYF provides young people with an opportunity to experience a day of prayer and faith formation with an exposure to the Benedictine tradition. Its focus is evangelization and vocational discernment by means of liturgy, prayer, worship, music and education.

For the first time in its 16-year history, last spring’s AYF, scheduled a day after the March 11th flood, was cancelled. Even as crews were still assessing the damage, many of the 5,000-plus registered attendees asked how they could lend a hand.

“Amidst the flood that wreaked so much havoc across the state, I can’t help but smile when I think about how everyone stepped up and made a commitment to ensuring your chance. Just like last time tickets will be $50 each but this year we’ve added an extra 10 head to the herd, which brings it to a total of 40 heifers!

Tickets will be limited to a printing of 2,000 and are available now. Tickets can be purchased at Presidio La Bahia or at one of many locations throughout Goliad and Victoria, just look for the Instant Rancher posters. One lucky winner will be chosen on May 6, 2017 at Presidio La Bahia. The winner can rest easy as their heifers are delivered. For those who wish to participate but already have their hands full with other things, we offer the option of having the heifers taken to the sale barn. Once the sale is completed the winner will receive a check for the market value of the heifers. Either way you look at it, it’s a winning proposition that you just can’t afford to pass on!

For more information call us at (361) 645-3752 or, email us at smcmahon.presidiolabahia@gmail.com. Presidio La Bahia, PO Box 57, Goliad, TX 77963

PRO-LIFE MARCH — The Faith Formation Confirmation class of St. Michael Church, Weimar, attended the Pro-Life March and Rally on January 28, 2017, at the Colorado County House in Columbus, to show their support for the unborn child. Pictured standing left-right, Bernice Lehardt, Julio Jiminez, Lily Cernosek, Emily Haase, Dylan Varley, Darrian Smith, Garrison Koehn, Odie Adams, Casey Menis, Emily Purdy, Eric Arvizu, Mary Luchak, Monica Stock, Braylee Houston in the stroller with her mother Andria Houston, Betty Berger kneeling, in the back is Charlen Kocian, and Connie Kasper.

Church Teachings on Confirmation

Confirmation is a true sacrament instituted by Christ and different from baptism. It is administered by laying-on of hands and anointing with chrism accompanied by prayer. The chrism is blessed by the bishop and the bishop administers the sacrament. All baptized persons can and should be confirmed. The effect of the sacrament of confirmation is to give strength in faith, for the confession of faith, and to impress an indelible character.
The Knights of Columbus Council 2490 Ladies Night and Awards banquet was held in El Campo recently. (top left photo) Grand Knight Timmy Drapela (right) presents the Merchant of the Year Award to Kenny Hynes of McCoy’s Lumber and Supply. (above photo) Frank Kacal (left) is presented Knight of The Year award by Grand Knight Timmy Drapela, for Frank’s service to the council, church, and community. (left photo) John and Cathy Hrncir (left) were presented the Family of The Year award by Michael Bolcik, Council Family Director. The Hrncir family will be entered into the Texas State Family of the Year award, which will be announced at the K of C State Convention, in Dallas, in late April.

CDA HOSTS VALENTINE PARTY— Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court of St. Joseph Protector of Mary #2475, Inez, hosted their Annual Valentine’s celebration and meal. Members served a meal, celebrated, and honored the St. Joseph’s Over 60 and Single Group. Merlyn Bitterly, left, and Willie Rios, right were crowned Queen and King. Father Barnabas Kyeah, center, led the group in prayer. Catholic Daughter members made Valentine bookmarks and Milton Carroll sang for entertainment. A good time and meal was had by all!

BISHOP TEACHING—Bishop Brendan Cahill is pictured with a Victoria group attending his six-week course. He is teaching a Pastoral Institute course on Church/Ecclesiology.

BUILDING BLESSED—Longtime STJ faculty member and alumni, Mr. David Pozzi ’61 was honored by The O’Connor & Hewitt Foundation by having the new St. Joseph High School Fine Arts Center named after him. The new facility was officially dedicated with a blessing by Bishop Emeritus David Fellhauer and a ribbon cutting by Robby Burdge, STJ Chairman of the Board; Tom Maj, STJ President/Principal; Robert Hewitt, Jr.; Ellen Hewitt Sanders; David Pozzi; and Bishop David Fellhauer.

WE STAND UNITED—St. Joseph High School students participated in an interfaith “Walk of Love” to the Islamic Center. A prayer service was held Wednesday, February 1, 2017, to show support to the Muslim community, after the tragic loss of their mosque.

CKB ENJOYED BY MANY—The 10th Annual Catholic Knowledge Bowl was held Sunday, February 12, at Trinity Hall of Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria. Thirty teams competed in three rounds of competition for first, second, and third places. First place teams are as follows: Adult division, from Sacred Heart, Hallettsville, The Chestertons: Troy Spring, Christa Spring, Frances Spring, and Alyson Klimitchek; Teen division, from Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca, The Mariner: Arianna Silvas, Kyler Sanders, Gabriel Medina, and Steven Spears; Family division, from St. Joseph, Moulton, The Wenske Family: Mary Ann Wenske, James Wenske, Catherine Wenske, and Scott Wenske. Pictured above, left, is the Walsh Family who participated. Part of the entertainment included Our Lady of Sorrows Ballet Folklorico dance group, pictured at right.
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The three traditional pillars of Lenten observance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The key to renewed appropriation of these practices is to see their link to baptismal renewal.

Prayer: More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord. We might pray especially for the grace to live out our baptismal promises more fully. We might pray for the elect who will be baptized at Easter and support their conversion journey by our prayer. We might pray for all those who will celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation with us during Lent that they will be truly renewed in their baptismal commitment.

Fasting: Fasting is one of the most ancient practices linked to Lent. In fact, the paschal fast predates Lent as we know it. The early Church fasted intensely for two days before the celebration of the Easter Vigil. This fast was later extended and became a 40-day period of fasting leading up to Easter. Vatican II called us to renew the observance of the ancient paschal fast: "...let the paschal fast be kept sacred. Let it be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the Resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind" (Liturgy, #110).

Fasting is more than a means of developing self-control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. The first reading on the Friday after Ash Wednesday points out another important dimension of fasting. The prophet Isaiah insists that fasting without changing our behavior is not pleasing to God. "This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, uniting the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke: sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own" (Is 58:6-7). Fasting should be linked to our concern for those who are forced to fast by their poverty, those who suffer from the injustices of our economic and political structures, those who are in need for any reason. Thus fasting, too, is linked to living out our baptismal promises. By our baptism, we are charged with the responsibility of showing Christ’s love to the world, especially to those in need. Fasting can help us realize the suffering that so many people in our world experience every day, and it should lead us to greater efforts to alleviate that suffering.

Abstaining from meat traditionally also linked us to the poor, who could seldom afford meat for their meals. It can do the same today if we remember the purpose of abstinence and embrace it as a spiritual link to those whose diets are sparse and simple. That should be the goal we set for ourselves—a sparse and simple meal. Avoiding meat while eating lobster misses the whole point!

Almsgiving: It should be obvious at this point that almsgiving, the third traditional pillar, is linked to our baptismal commitment in the same way. It is a sign of our care for those in need and an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given to us. Works of charity and the promotion of justice are integral elements of the Christian way of life we began when we were baptized.

What is Ash Wednesday all about?
Ash Wednesday is so named because this first day of Lent is where we are marked with ashes to show the repentance of our sins and mourning. This is also a biblical sign that we live today. We can see this in several verses. “I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes” (Dan 9:3) Other verses include: 1 Sam 4:12, Jon 3:6, Esther 4:1 and Matt 11:20-21.

Today, ashes are still this same sign of repentance and mourning for our sins. They also represent our mortality. “I am nothing but dust and ashes” (Gen. 18:27). We started as nothing, and our bodies will become dust and ashes after our death. Reminding ourselves that nobody escapes physical death, we look forward to eternal life.

So, why are the ashes made into a cross on the forehead?
Because it is the ancient sign of being marked by Christ in our baptism. We are no longer our own, but Jesus Christ owns us. The book of Revelation tells us that all the elect will be marked by the sign of Christ – “On Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.” (Rev 14:1)

Where do we get the ashes?
They come from burning the palms from last year’s Palm Sunday Masses.

Who can receive ashes?
Anyone can receive ashes on Ash Wednesday. While we have communion only for Catholics who are in good standing with the Church, all may receive ashes.

Is Ash Wednesday a holy day of Obligation?
No. But all Catholics are strongly urged to attend, because it is the start of the Lenten season.

Do we have to fast and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday?
Yes. This means that all Catholics from 14 and up are required to abstain from meat, and Catholics 18-60 are required to eat only one average meal and two snacks without anything else. Children, the elderly, and those who are sick are not obligated to do this.

So, what are the other days of fast and abstinence?
Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence. All Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence from meat, because Christ died on a Friday.
Es una lástima que no se siga practicando la ascensión en nuestra iglesia.

La ascensión es un momento importante en la fe católica, y es una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre nuestra propia ascensión al reino de Dios.

La ascensión es un momento de alegría y de victoria, y es un recordatorio de que la misericordia y la caridad son frutos del Espíritu Santo.

Por eso, es importante que la iglesia siga practicando la ascensión y que se dé más importancia a esta celebración.

Espero que pronto se reparen los daños causados por el incendio y que la iglesia pueda llevar a cabo esta importante celebración.

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Where Study and Prayer Meet

By Dalton Ervin
Seminarian, Theology II

The beginning of March marks the half way point of semester in my second year of theology at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Ohio. Mid-term exams and papers are in progress and final plans for the summer as a chaplain at Children’s Health in Dallas are being made. I am grateful to the priests, who through their homilies made us aware of the consequences of sin, and my teachers, who taught me to respect all people. Even though we lived in a country where there was discrimination against Catholics, I was taught not to be bigoted.

The times were very troubled in Northern Ireland when I was growing up as it was under British Rule. It was common to be questioned at the point of a gun, as I would travel from place to place. This, however, was not about religion; Protestants supported English Rule and Catholics supported a United Ireland. One example I remember was how at one point in the Belfast Shipyard, where the Titanic was built, all the Catholics were fired. This type of discrimination continued as I was growing up in Ireland.

I look back and have wonderful memories of my teachers and the priests in my life. I am grateful to the priests, who through their homilies made us aware of the consequences of sin, and my teachers, who taught me a good understanding of my Catholic faith in daily religion.

Enduring Confirmation Message

When I was confirmed, I remember his Eminence, Cardinal John D’Alton, tapped me on the cheek and told me that I was now a “soldier for Christ.” That phrase has stayed with me throughout my life, especially when I think of the lay and consecrated men and women who have given their lives, so that we have our Catholic faith today.

My wife, Eileen, and I have been married for 52 years. I met Eileen in 1960 and it was love at first sight. We started dating and four years later we were married. We started our life and our family in Ireland. Because of the lack of work, opportunities, and housing, a Civil Rights Organization was formed to bring to the attention of the world the plight of the working people. I was a part of this first Civil Rights March on March 24, 1968.

Many times the security forces would come to our home and question Eileen as to what I was doing. I remember attending many tragic funerals while living in Ireland. It got to a point that I felt my family was in danger with the bombings and killings happening around us, so we decided to move to the United States in 1974. The night before we boarded a plane with our five sons and Eileen five months pregnant, gunmen went into our local post office and pub and murdered several men.

We arrived in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in November of 1974, with the clothes we carried in our suitcases and $1,500. The most important article we had in our suitcase was the Sacred Heart picture, which had been blessed by our parish priest when we consecrated our family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was customary in Ireland at that time. That picture still hangs in our home today.

We moved into a third-floor apartment and were fortunate that the manager of the apartment, Christine, who was from Ireland, came and welcomed us. She was wonderful and helped Eileen adjust to the community. Christine and her husband, John gave us details about the Catholic churches in the area and we immediately joined a church. We felt good that we now had a Catholic Church to go to.

I had read about the United States many times while living in Ireland. I never dreamt that one day I would be living there. I had the ambition to become a millionaire and I began working very hard at achieving that goal as soon as I arrived. Within two years we had purchased a house and I was on my way. Eileen was a full-time homemaker.

My wife, Eileen, and I have been married for 52 years. I met Eileen in 1960 and it was love at first sight. We started dating and four years later we were married. We started

Sunday Readings from March 5 - April 9

March 5 –
*First Sunday of Lent*
Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
Psalms 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

March 12 –
*Second Sunday of Lent*
Genesis 12:1-4A
Psalms 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22
2 Timothy 1:8B-10
Matthew 17:1-9

March 19 –
*Third Sunday of Lent*
Exodus 17:3-7
Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42

April 2 –
*Fifth Sunday of Lent*
Ezekiel 37:12-14
Psalms 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45

April 9 –
*Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion*
Matthew 21:1-11
Isaiah 50:4-7
Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Matthew 26:14—27:66

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

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Meet a Deacon
Deacon John McCourt
La Grange, Texas
Permanent Deacon for Queen of the Holy Rosary, Hostyn and Sts. Peter and Paul, Plum, Parishes
Meet a Deacon
Continued from pg. 12
which has been a blessing for our family.

Business Travel Became Burdensome
It was an exciting time for all of us and I was making good money; however, I was now travelling all over the United States and could only come home on weekends. These weekends I would take Eileen out to a dance or a meal, spend Saturday taking the boys ice skating or sledding and on Sunday morning we all went to Mass and out to eat. As time moved on, I was not enjoying being away from home so much and I spoke to Eileen about going back to Ireland. She was not willing as the violence was still bad. I told her that if we were going to stay then we would move to Texas. We bought a house seven miles outside of La Grange, Texas, in 1979.

Over time, I became very involved in work and community organizations, but Eileen was having difficulty adjusting to the new area and to neighbors who were not friendly to foreigners. We lived there for one year before we found a house in La Grange. We joined Sacred Heart Church and enrolled our sons at Sacred Heart School. In February of 1983, Eileen and I made the decision to attend a Marriage Encounter (ME) offered by our parish.

This event resulted in an amazing transformation in our lives. Jesus was moving us in the direction he wanted us to go. We had been married for nineteen years and we fell in love all over again. That weekend I came to realize that there were a lot more important things in my life other than making money. After that retreat, we wanted every couple to experience what we had experienced; we decided to be a part of the team for Marriage Encounter and continued for ten years. It was a wonderful ministry! We will be forever grateful to Stanley and Judy Sulak, Pat and Henry Pesek, and John (John has since passed on to be with the Lord) and Ann Arnold, who were presenting couples for the weekend. I also want to thank Joseph (Joe is now a Deacon as well) and Mary Machaeck, who offered to babysit our seven sons so we could attend the retreat. We have so much gratitude for the inspiration of the priests at that time, including Monsignor John Peters and Father Casey Jarzombek and all who were a part of the ME ministry.

In 1987, when our youngest son was eleven, our daughter, Annmarie, was born. I had given up hope of having a daughter and was ecstatic. Three years later, our second daughter, Sinead Elizabeth, was born. We are now blessed with seven sons and two daughters, twenty grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and more on the way. They have been a joy in my life.

Finally, God called me to the diaconate fifteen years ago. It started with a letter from Father Gabriel Maison, pastor of St Joseph’s Catholic Church Moulton, Texas. He invited Eileen and me to a day of Spirituality at his parish. Michael Fonseca was the spiritual director on that day. He asked us to commit to the habit of morning and evening prayer for twelve months and to come to a meeting each weekend. We had always been a praying couple; however, this was more intense, as we developed a deeper relationship with Jesus. Over those twelve months, I came to a deeper understanding of God’s call in my life, the diaconate.

God’s Call Changed My Life
I had never thought that I would become a deacon or felt capable and here I was studying for that. Honestly, when I first started the classes to become a deacon I was concerned about how much I would have to give up. I had been in business for most of my life, running my own companies. I was at a stage then that I was beginning to see a possibility of retiring and enjoying the rewards of my labor. Eileen had been a stay at home mother most of her life and was thinking of the day when our children would all have moved on and she would be free to do some fun activities. She, too, was unsure that she might find herself unable to fully enjoy the freedom that would come from that because of my involvement in my ministry. We both thought we would have to give up so much.

We continued in the diaconate program for five years. The diaconate program is designed with classes for a husband and a wife to take together. I was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate by Bishop David Fellhauer on July 29, 2006. At the beginning of that year, Eileen was diagnosed with breast cancer. I told her that I would drop out of the diaconate, but Eileen would not hear of that. She was there at my Ordination, still taking chemotherapy. I am happy to say that almost eleven years later she is completely free of cancer.

We have been members of Hostyn since 1983, and I have been blessed to serve the parishes of Hostyn and Plum as a deacon for the past 10 years and 7 months. Monsignor Stanley Petru, who went to the Lord on July 30, 2013, was my pastor when I was first ordained; he loved the people and was willing to support anything that would benefit the parishes. I learned so much from him. We now are blessed to have Father Daniel Kahlich as our pastor.

Now, almost 11 years later, we are enjoying our life more than we could ever have imagined. We both love people and have had the privilege to interact and get to know so many wonderful people over the years. We have also been free to travel back to Ireland every couple of years, to Rome, Medjugorje, Jamaica, and Florida, to name a few. Eileen and I have been able to work together as a couple in many areas of my ministry. Some ministries include working with engaged couples, religion classes, visiting the nursing home and the sick, RCIA and many other ministries within our parishes. We have also been involved with the ACTS retreats as well as God’s Embrace Ministries, for which Michael Fonseca continues to use his God-given gifts. There is so much joy that comes from serving God’s people.

Instead of having to give up any of our dreams, we have received more than we could have ever imagined. People will tell us we are so busy and ask us how we find time for ourselves. That is just their perception, as we very rarely feel tired or burdened. When I receive a call for a funeral service, a baptism, or to bring the Eucharist to someone I am ready, willing, and able. God supplies all the energy that I need and then some! God cannot be outdone in generosity. Should there be anyone considering a call to the Permanent Diaconate, know that instead of having to sacrifice, you will receive much more than you could ever give!
Norma McCorvey, plaintiff in Roe ruling who later became pro-life, dies

KATY, Texas (CNS) — Norma McCorvey, the plaintiff “Jane Roe” in the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion virtually on demand, died Feb. 18 at an assisted-living facility in Katy. She was 69.

The New York Times said a New York journalist named Joshua Prager, who interviewed her many times for a book he is writing about the Roe decision, confirmed that she had died. The cause of death was heart failure. Her funeral will be private, family members said.

McCorvey became a pro-life supporter in 1995 after spending years as a proponent of legal abortion. She also became a born-again Christian. A couple of years later, she said she felt called to join the Catholic Church of her youth. Her mother was Catholic and her father was a Jehovah’s Witness. After instruction in the faith, she was accepted into the church in 1998.

“Losing a loved one is always a difficult time for a family. Losing a loved one who was also a public figure at the center of a national controversy brings additional challenges. It also brings additional consolations,” said a Feb. 19 statement from McCorvey’s family released by Priests for Life.

“Losing a loved one is always a difficult time for a family. Losing a loved one who was also a public figure at the center of a national controversy brings additional challenges. It also brings additional consolations,” said a Feb. 19 statement from McCorvey’s family released by Priests for Life.

The family thanked the “many people across America and around the world who, in these days, are expressing their condolences, their prayers, and their gratitude for the example Mom gave them in standing up for life and truth. Though she was the Jane Roe of Roe v. Wade, she worked hard for the day when that decision would be reversed.”

Greed, selfishness corrupt beauty of God’s creation, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Humanity’s greed and selfishness can turn creation into a sad and desolate world instead of the sign of God’s love that it was meant to be, Pope Francis said. Human beings are often tempted to view creation as “a possession we can exploit as we please and for which we do not have to answer to anyone,” the pope said Feb. 22 at his weekly general audience. “When carried away by selfishness, human beings end up ruining even the most beautiful things that have been entrusted to them,” the pope said. As an early sign of spring, the audience was held in St. Peter’s Square for the first time since November. Despite the chilly morning temperatures, the pope made the rounds in his popemobile, greeting pilgrims and kissing bundled-up infants.

Continuing his series of talks on Christian hope, the pope reflected on St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, which expresses the hope “that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption.”

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

COURAGE—Ministers to persons with same-sex attractions and their loved ones. The ministry also has an outreach, EnCourage, which ministers to relatives, spouses, and friends of persons with same-sex attractions. It is a Roman Catholic Apostolate endorsed by the Pontifical Council for the Family. For 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. For more information, Call (979) 532-3593, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.


Gabriel Project—Helps women experiencing a crisis pregnancy- an 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 barbarumcain85@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 on-going 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 before attending.

id:9:16 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 the diocese. For more information or to RSVP for events email id916victoria@gmail.com.

Incarnate Word Prayer Group—Praise and worship on Mondays 7:30-9:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Incarnate Word Convent, 1101 N.E. Water Street. For more information, contact Sr. Louise Marie Jones at (361) 575-7111 or amormeus@yahoo.com.

Mothers of Grace—A new mothers’ group at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory. They meet every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Early Childhood Center. For more information contact Jennifer Ruiz at jenniferschobey.ruiz@yahoo.com.

Natural Family Planning—NFP is the only church-approved form of family planning. To learn about the NFP class schedules in the Victoria area, contact David and Annie Coffey at victorianfpteachers@yahoo.com. For the CREIGHTON MODEL Fertility Care System (CrMS) featuring NaPro TECHNOLOGY™ contact Susanne Koch at (505) 710-0903 or susannekoch614@gmail.com.

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 Faltatia. 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.raphaelsrefuge.org.
**Events**

**March**

**Victoria**—St. Joseph High School campus tour available Monday–Friday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. for prospective students. Open enrollment for grades 9-12, space is limited. For more information or schedule a tour contact Jen Korenek at (361) 573-2446 ext. 217 or jkorenек@stjvictoria.com. Visit STJVictoria.com/admissions.

**Hillje**—St. Procopius Spring Festival March 5, at the parish hall. Beginning at 11:00 a.m. fried chicken dinner with plates-to-go or dine-in at $9 p/p. There will also be a bake sale in the hall.

**Port Lavaca**—Catholic Daughters Court #2267 to host a baby shower to benefit the area Gabriel Project on March 9 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude’s Hall (415 W. Austin). Guests are asked to bring an unwrapped gift. Guest speaker will be Stacy Ontal, vice-president of Victoria Gabriel Project. A light supper will be provided. For more information call Nancy at (361) 212-5838.

**Solemn Lenten Vespers**—Sundays during Lent (March 12, 19, 26, April 2, and 9), 5:00-6:00 p.m. Solemn Vespers is the Liturgical Evening Prayer of the Church. This prayer focuses on praying the psalms, giving thanks for the day and offering praise to God. Solemn Evening Praise closes with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament held at Incarnate Word Convent Chapel.

**March 12**

**Director:** Father Philip Brune

**Lenten Retreat:** Saturday, March 25 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**Private or Directed Overnight Retreats:** March 24-26

**Directed or Private / Arranged for 1, 2, or 3 nights**

**Private: A Retreat to Quiet the Mind**

**directed by:**

**Oscar Amo, Director**

**March 23**

**Lenten Retreat for men and women March 25, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Incarnate Word Auditorium**

**Director:** Father Kenneth O’Malley, CP

**An Easter Walk with Jesus**

**March 25**

**On-going opportunities for guidance and discussion on one’s spiritual journey are available with experienced spiritual directors. Call for appointment.**

**Amor Meus**

**Spiritual Director:** Fr. Kristopher Fuchs

**12 day pilgrimage to Portugal, Spain and France visiting Lisbon, Aljucjestr, Valinhos, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela, Burgos, Leon, Lourdes, Zaragoza and Madrid on June 14-27, 2017.**

**For a copy of the itinerary or questions, contact Dora Silva at dsilva4415@gmail.com or call (361) 550-0103 or Dr. Gloria Gonzales at (361) 549-1947. Deposit and payments must be submitted to Little Flower Tours & Travel, Susan at (888)-843-7373.**

**Port Lavaca**—Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Daughters Court #2267 will host an evening of “Paint the Town”. The event will take place April 27 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Jude’s Hall, 415 W. Austin, Port Lavaca. Participants will have an opportunity to paint an outlined drawing on canvas, with a choice of one of 4 drawings. The fee is $35, all supplies (canvas, paint, brushes) will be provided. Pre-registration is required in order to receive the canvas of your choice. Snacks will also be provided by the court. For detailed information please contact Nancy Thompson, (361) 212-5838.

**Yorktown**—San Luis annual Jamaica April 30, on church grounds.

**Amor Meus**

**Spiritual Director:** Fr. Kristopher Fuchs

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**Submit Calendar Events to lighthouse@victoriadiocese.org**

**Conferences • Masses • Retreats and more**

**Nada**—David Kauffman Lenten Mission, March 23, at St. Mary Church. Starting at 6:30 p.m. with praying/singing the Chaplet of Divine Mercy followed by mission, testimony and music at 7:00 p.m. Free admission.

**Cuero**—Lenten Retreat for men and women March 25, 9:00 a.m.-noon at St. Michael Parish Hall (309 E. Church St.). Topic “Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life” presented by Father David Berger, Father Oscar Amo and Deacon Leo Sharron. No charge, refreshments served. RSVP by text or call Kathy (361) 649-7607 or Doris at (361) 212-0969 / email: dmkoliba@hotmail.com; Cindy by calling (361) 277-8877; or text Lucille at (361) 275-4339.

**Victoria**—Single Catholic women 18 to 50 years of age are invited to come meet nuns (sisters) and examine their own baptismal call (through marriage, single life or religious life) on March 25-26, at Incarnate Word Convent. Call (361) 575-7111 or email iwbsvoc@yahoo.com. See www.iwbsvictoria.org for more information.

**Hallettsville**—Parish Mission: God’s Embrace Ministries will present a mission March 27-30 at 6:00 p.m., Sacred Heart Church. For more information go to www.godembrace.org.

**Victoria**—Spirit Wind Ministry, weekend retreat led by lecturer, columnist, and author Father Roland Rolheiser April 21-23, at Spiritual Renewal Center. Theme: Sacred Fire: A Spirituality of Sexuality. The retreat cost is $220 p/p. Space is limited and will be reserved in the order deposits are received ($50/non-refundable). Partial grants are available should finances be a problem. This retreat is open to men, women and couples. For more information contact Susan Oakley at (361) 649-6391 or email: smoak53@msn.com.


**El Campo**—St. Philip Parish presents Sondra Abrams May 21, at 1:00 p.m. She is from Lake Charles, Louisiana. During a near death experience on the operating table years ago, after being given a drug that stopped her heart, she was given visions of the future. Following her recovery, she shares her experiences with people all over the world. She has been called a mystic and a visionary by priests, and bishops, but the only title she claims is “Warrior for Christ”. For more information, contact St. Philip Church at (979) 543-3770.

**Texas City**—Catholic Men’s Conference Saturday, May 13, at the Doyle Center. Bishop Brendan Cahill and Father Larry Richards will be guest speakers. Cost is $40. Information at www.gc-cmc.org.

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

**Tivoli**—Our Lady of Guadalupe Church celebrates the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament the 1st Friday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Mass begins at 7:00 p.m. at 501B William St. with Father Paulson Panakal. For more information, call (361) 237-3634.

**Victoria**—Our Lady of Lourdes holds Healing Mass and Prayer the 1st Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at 105 N. William St. with Father Phi Nguyen, chaplain of IWBS Convent. For more information, contact St. Louise Marie Jones at iwbsvoc2@yahoo.com.

**Spiritual Director:** Fr. Kristopher Fuchs

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The last stop that day was Mount Tabor where the transfiguration occurred. In the Old Testament, Mount Tabor is described as a sacred mountain and a place for worship. It sits at the eastern end of the Jezreel Valley, west of the Sea of Galilee. By the time we reached the top of the mountain, it was cold and raining, which left us wondering what an adventure it must have been for Jesus and his disciples to climb the mountain. A beautiful chapel has now been built at the top of Mount Tabor. Once we entered the beautiful chapel, Deacon Joe A. Machacek read (Matthew 17:1-1), “After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves, and he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.”

Deacon Fred Soto then led the group in a decade of the rosary.

On day three of our pilgrimage, rain and cold weather descended upon us, but we did not allow it to deter us from our schedule. The following morning we traveled an hour and a half to Jericho. On the way, God blessed and guided us again with yet another beautiful rainbow. Jericho is said to be the oldest city in the world. It is situated in the plain of the Jordan at 800 feet below sea level. Jericho is where Jesus encountered Zacchaeus. We were able to see the 2,000 year-old sycamore tree climbed by Zacchaeus to see Jesus. (Luke 19:1-10) “He came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way.”

We left Jericho and headed 15 miles down the mountainous road to Jerusalem. Our arrival in Jerusalem was in the evening; therefore we could not see much of the city. The next morning, Jerusalem greeted us with a beautiful sunny day. We boarded the bus and headed five miles down the road to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. On the way, we crossed the wall that separates Jerusalem from Bethlehem. Upon our arrival in Bethlehem, a Christian gentle-man presented Bishop Cahill with a beautiful frame of the Last Supper and Father Francis was presented with a Crucifix.

While in Bethlehem, we had the opportunity to celebrate the birth of Christ, when we visited the Grotto of the Nativity. The Grotto is a dimly-lit rock cave. We were all filled with emotion as we stooped to enter the low “Door of Humility” to view the Grotto of the Nativity. We were teary-eyed, as we imagined the circumstances in which Jesus was born. Beneath the altar, a 14-point silver star on the marble floor marks the exact spot of Jesus’ birth. It bears the words “Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est” (Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary).

We then traveled to Shepherds’ Field and Cave, which is located to the southeast of Bethlehem. The cave is a low natural cave with a soot-blackened roof that has been partly enclosed to make a modern chapel. While in the Shepherds’ Cave, Father Francis shared his life experience in Vietnam and his journey to the United States, as he pursued his lifelong dream of becoming a priest; this was a very heartfelt story.

The next day, we walked along the Palm Sunday road. The Palm Sunday road is the walk down the Mt. of Olives, the site of The Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of Betrayal. While on this sacred ground, one could feel the sorrow, pain, and the anticipation Jesus must have felt of what was to come. It was not difficult to imagine Jesus praying on the rock in the Garden of Gethsemane and shedding his tears of blood. The image of his arrest and the entire event became very clear. Early the next morning, we experienced the saddest and most memorable event of the whole trip, while walking and carrying the cross at the Via Dolorosa, following every step Jesus gave in agony. The Via Dolorosa is the walk that follows the passion of Jesus. Each one of us had the opportunity to carry a wooden cross half the size of which Jesus carried, and it took four of us at one time to move the cross. Just imagine the weight of the cross that Jesus carried while beaten and humiliated.

Our spiritual leaders, Bishop Brendan Cahill, Father Francis Nguyen, Deacon Joe Machacek, Deacon Fred Soto, and Deacon Eddy Huse read the Stations of the Cross as they led us to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where Mass was celebrated. We had an opportunity to kneel at the area where Jesus was anointed after He was brought down from the cross and prayed in front of His tomb.

This was a fantastic and memorable experience indeed. We thank God for blessing us during the pilgrimage and allowing us to act on faith, an open mind, and a loving heart as we walked the sacred Holy Land. Besides the sacred ground which we walked and loved, we had an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful cities, the delicious food, and gracious people of the Holy Land. With humility and gratitude, we thank the guides and drivers who educated and enlightened us about their beautiful country. We will always remember the Holy Land.