Blessing of Seed and Soil

Rural Life Ministry gets new energy to grow in DOV

By Janet Jones, Editor
The Catholic Lighthouse

Catholic Rural Life ministry is nothing new, but it had gained a new energy in the last few years as new chapters emerge and more intentional outreach is provided to nurture the faith in rural vocations.

That outreach was exemplified as Bishop Bendon Cahill celebrated the Diocese of Victoria’s first Blessing of Seed and Soil Mass on Feb. 1 at BH Genetics in Ganado. The Mass was a seasonal compliment to the first Harvest Mass celebrated this past fall.

Not only was the outdoor Mass blessed with sunshine and mild temperatures, the business of rural life was evident all around – in the sights of the tilled up rows of dirt and tractors parked nearby and the sound of nearby crop dusters at work.

Bishop Cahill, the current board president of the national Catholic Rural Life organization, said during his homily that Catholic Rural Life was centered around, faith, community and care of creation.

“What a particular joy for me to celebrate this Mass today,” he said as he prayed for families, farms and parishes. He also stressed the importance being a blessing to others and blessing God with a grateful heart for providing what we need each day.

As part of the celebration, the bishop extended his hands over the bags of seeds brought by Catholics across the Diocese of Victoria who wanted to participate in the Blessing of the Seed and Soil Mass on Feb. 1. The Mass is an effort of the local Catholic Rural Life chapter, formed in 2018 to help Catholics practice their faith in the vocations.

More about Catholic Rural Life is available at www.catholicrurallife.org. Information about the DOV chapter is available on the diocese website, www.victoriadiocese.org.
Apostles to the Slavs’ work an inspiration today

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

St. John Paul II proposed that Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the great missionaries and catechists of the Slavic peoples in the 800s, present a path for the current time of evangelization and catechesis. In the state of Texas there are seven Catholic Churches dedicated to Sts. Cyril and Methodius. These of them are in our diocese of Victoria! Among the points St. John Paul II emphasized in his teaching were the great respect for culture and need for communion that guided the “Apostles to the Slavs.”

The word “culture” traces its roots to the concept of “cultivating” the land. Acknowledging that God created humanity with the ability to be stewards of the earth, men and women from the beginning of time developed customs and rituals to help the community sustain and develop itself. Different cultures blossomed according to the ingenuity and needs of different peoples. Sts. Cyril and Methodius were invited to bring the one true Faith to a culture distinct from the one they had formed them as young men.

St. John Paul II wrote:

“The event which was to determine the whole of the rest of their lives was the request made by Prince Rastislav of Greater Moravia to the Emperor Michael III, to send to his peoples ‘a Bishop and teacher ... able to explain to them the true Christian faith in their own language ...’ Their profoundly Christian response to the invitation in this circumstance and on all similar occasions is admirably expressed by the words of Constantine (Cyril) to the Emperor: ‘However tired and physically worn out I am, I will go with joy to that land; with joy I depart for the sake of the Christian faith.’” (Apostles of the Slavs 5, 9)

The culture to which they were called presented great challenges. In the midst of these challenges they acknowledged the need to stay in communion with the Bishop of Rome in order to stand grounded in the true apostolic faith. As St. John Paul II commented:

“In this stormy period, which was also marked by armed conflicts between neighboring Christian peoples, the holy Brothers from Salonika preserved a resolute and vigilant fidelity to right doctrine and to the tradition of the perfectly united Church, and in particular to the “divine teachings” and “ecclesiastical teachings” on which, in accordance with the Canons of the ancient Councils, her structure and organization was founded. This fidelity enabled them to complete their great missionary tasks and to remain in full spiritual and canonical unity with the Church of Rome, with the Church of Constantinople and with the new Churches which they had founded among the Slav peoples.” (Apostles of the Slavs 14)

In our diocese we are blessed with a richness and appreciation of culture, and we daily celebrate the Mass in communion with Francis our Pope. In so doing, we carry on the tradition of the great Apostles to the Slavs.

A Shepherd’s Message

By Bishop Brendan Cahill

In our diocese we are blessed with a richness and appreciation of culture, and we daily celebrate the Mass in communion with Francis our Pope. In so doing, we carry on the tradition of the great Apostles to the Slavs.

La obra de los Apóstoles de los Eslavos debería guiar la evangelización moderna

Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas,

San Juan Pablo II propuso que los Santos Cirilo y Metodio, los grandes misioneros y catequistas de los pueblos Eslavos en los años 800, presenten un camino para el tiempo actual de evangelización y catequesis. En el estado de Texas hay siete iglesias dedicadas a los Santos Cirilo y Metodio. ¡Tres de ellos están en nuestra Diócesis de Victoria! Entre los puntos que San Juan Pablo II enfatizó en su enseñanza fue el gran respeto por la cultura y la necesidad de comunión que guió a los “Apóstoles a los Eslavos.

La palabra “cultura” tiene sus raíces en el concepto de “cultivar” la tierra. Reconociendo que Dios creó a la humanidad con la capacidad de ser administradores de la tierra, los hombres y las mujeres desde el principio de los tiempos desarrollaron costumbres y rituales para ayudar a la comunidad a mantenerse y desarrollarse. Las diferentes culturas florecieron de acuerdo con el ingenio y las necesidades de los diferentes pueblos. Sts. Cirilo y Metodio fueron invitados a traer la única Fe verdadera a una cultura distinta de la que los formó cuando eran jóvenes.

San Juan Pablo II escribió: “El evento que determinaría el resto de sus vidas fue la solicitud hecha por el Príncipe Rastislav de la Gran Moravia al Emperador Miguel III, para enviar a un obispo y maestro de su pueblo ... capaz de explicarles el verdadero fe Cristiana en su propio idoma ...”. Su respuesta profundamente Cristiana a la invitación en esta circunstancia y en todas las ocasiones similares se expresa admirablemente por las palabras de Constantino (Cyril) al Emperador: ‘Por cansado y agotado que esté, estoy iré con alegría a esa tierra; con alegría partir por el bien de la fe cristiana.’” (Apóstoles de los Eslavos 5, 9)

La cultura a la que fueron llamados presentaba grandes desafíos. En medio de estos desafíos, reconocieron la necesidad de permanecer en comunión con el Obispo de Roma para mantenerse enraizados en la verdadera fe apostólica. Como San Juan Pablo II comentó:

“En este período tormentoso, que también estuvo marcado por conflictos armados entre los pueblos Cristianos vecinos, los Santos Hermanos de Salónica preservaron una fidelidad resuelta y vigilante a la doctrina correcta y a la tradición de la Iglesia perfectamente unida, y en particular a las ‘enseñanzas divinas’ y ‘enseñanzas eclesiásticas’ sobre las cuales, de acuerdo con los cánones de los antiguos consejos, se fundó su estructura y organización. Esta fidelidad les permitió completar sus grandes tareas misioneras y permanecer en plena unidad espiritual y canónica con la Iglesia de Roma, con la Iglesia de Constantinopla y con las nuevas Iglesias que habían fundado entre los pueblos Eslavos.” (Apóstoles de los Eslavos 14)

En nuestra diócesis somos bendecidos con la riqueza y el aprecio de la cultura, y diariamente celebramos la Misa en comunión con Francisco nuestro Papa. Al hacerlo, continuamos la tradición de los grandes apóstoles a los Eslavos.

Una vez más, pido que sigamos comprometidos a rezar, especialmente el Rosario, por el regalo de la paz en el mundo y por la familia. Como San Juan Pablo II nos invitó a orar esto fielmente, creo que podemos mantener nuestra confianza en el poder de esta oración, ¡más de lo que sabemos! Que Dios los bendiga a ustedes y a sus familias durante 2020; mantengamos el uno al otro en oración.

+Brendan
**Bishop Cahill’s Schedule**

**March**
- 7: Mass with Carmelite Sisters, Meyersville
- 8-9: USCCB Pro Life Committee meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 10: Catholic Rural Life Board meeting, St. Paul, Minn.
- 11: Noon meal with IWBS Sisters, Victoria
- 14: * Mass with Carmelite Sisters, Meyersville
  * 9 a.m. Catholic Daughters Retreat, “Gladly will I Glory,” at St. Michael’s Catholic Church, Cuero
  * 5:30 p.m. Mass & Girl Scout awards at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, Victoria
- 15: * 10 a.m. Confirmation Mass at Sts. Peter and Paul’s parish, Plum
  * 2 p.m. Curia meeting, with Legion of Mary Acies following, Palacios
- 16: Noon Mass with the Missionary Catechists Sisters
- 17: * 6:30 p.m. Relevant Radio interview
  * 6 p.m. St. Patrick’s Mass at St. Patrick’s, Seadrift
- 18: * 2:30 p.m. Finance Board meeting at the Chancery, Victoria
  * 6 p.m. CCD Visit at St. John Nepomucene Church, New Taiton
- 21: * 8:30 am Mass for Men’s Conference at Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, Victoria
  * 5:30 p.m. Confirmation Mass for St. Michael’s Church, Weimar
- 22: 9 a.m. Mass at OLVCathedral
- 22-23: Texas Bishops Meetings and General Assembly at Mexican American Catholic College

**April**
- 2: 6:30 p.m. Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton Award Dinner at KC Hall, Shiner
- 3: 6 p.m. Penance Service at St. Roberts, El Campo
- 4: Mass with Carmelite Sisters, Meyersville
- 5: 5 p.m. Confirmation Mass at Nativity of the BVM, Nada
- 6: 6 p.m. Palm Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, Victoria

**Confirmation Schedule**

- March
  - 8: 10 a.m. Confirmation Mass at St. Andrew Church, Hilje
  - 22: 5 p.m. Confirmation Mass for St. Rose, Schulenburg

**Official Announcements**

**Father Daniel Kahlich plans July retirement**

**Effective July 1, 2020,** Father Daniel Kahlich, 79, pastor of Queen of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Hostyn and Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Plum, will retire.

We join together in celebrating Father Dan’s 54 years of priesthood (05/28/66) and offer our prayers for him, as he begins his transition into retirement over the next several months. Thank you, Father Dan, for your faithful service. We pray God’s blessings upon you.

**Happy Birthday to Our Seminarians**

**Deacon Chase Goodman** is in Theology IV this year at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. Chase’s hometown is Victoria. His birthday is March 22. Write to Chase at: Pontifical College Josephinum, 7625 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43235.

- **Deacon James Dvorak** is in Theology IV this year at St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston. James’ home town is Frelsburg. His birthday is March 24. Write to James at: St. Mary’s Seminary, 9845 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77024.

“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

Matthew 4:18-22

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

- Rev. Msgr. Michael O’Shaughnessy 03/02/2013
- Rev. Gabriel Franks 03/19/2018
- Rev. Daniel Giorgi 03/22/2007

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

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**DIOCESE**

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DEADLINE IS THE 15TH OF THE PRECEDING MONTH

Periodical postage paid at Victoria, TX and additional Entry Offices
Seminary Endowment Fund

Seminary Endowment Fund (formerly known as Seminary Burses) is a permanent fund used for the education of future priests for the Diocese of Victoria. The goal of each burse is $15,000. The interest from this amount is applied yearly to the education of seminarians. The burses are in memory of or in honor of an individual priest or layperson, living or deceased. Publication of the burses will appear periodically when new contributions are received. Donation Categories: Lector - $.01 - $99.99; Acolyte – $100 - $499.99; Candidate – $500 - $1,499.99; Transitional Deacon – $1,500 - $2,499.99; Priest – $2,500 >.

February 19, 2020

• General Seminary Burse

Lector
In memory of Johnny Prihoda by:
  Joan Prihoda and Family
  Joanna Prihoda-Rogers
  Johnnie and Elaine Hoffman
  John and Sharon Kana
  Michael Kelsey Family
  Lillian Kelsey
  Henrietta Cernosek
  Chris and Linda Srbaur
  Janice Smajstrla
  Bryce and Joann Lebeda
  Anton and Maggie Becka
  Francis H. Ripper
  Daniel, Nancy and Bernice Kollaja
  Julius and Clara Bartek
  James and Janet Purdy
  Tim and Debbie Michalksi
  Herb and Pat Ulbrich
  William and Elizabeth Treptow
  Tim and Linda Shimek
  Ray and Carolyn Palla
  Mary Ann Srbaur
  Donnie and Debbie Charanza
  Anne and Rex Mahy

Acolyte
In memory of Johnny Prihoda by:
  Andrew Srbaur Family
  Karl and Sharon Hutchins
  M/M Richard C. Cernosek
  Kenneth J. and Louise Berger
  Leslie and Dorothy Bacak
  Deacon John and Eileen McCourt
  Dennis and Lorriee Lebeda

Candidate
In memory of Johnny Prihoda by:
  Deacon Joey and Mary Targac
  EJ and Peggy Kusy
  Mary Ann Henneke
  Loretta Brugger
  Deacon Paul and Adrienne Hunsucker
  Hank and Maxine Holub
  Robert and Kay Heger
  Maurice and Connie Kasper
  Patricia Divin
  K of C Council #2153, Weimar
  Al and Martha Shimek
  Harvey and Sandra Michna
  Frank and Mary Ann Brenner
  Edward and Margaret Matocha
  Harry and Jo Ann McCullough
  Bob and Rita Srbaur
  Elsie Vasek
  James Wostarek Family

Priest
In memory of Johnny Prihoda by:
  Leonard and Barbara Zbranek
  Walter and Sandra Stoever
  James and Carolynn Prihoda, Michele
  Prihoda, Theresa & Bradly Janak Family
  Andrea & Tim Pepe Family, Vivien &
  Greg Mendel Family, Greg & Shelly
  Prihoda Family, Joanna & Paul Rogers
  Family, Juliana Prihoda & David Deen,
  Matt & Shantelle Prihoda Family, Patrick
  Prihoda Family, Samuel & Allison
  Prihoda Family, Joseph & Lisa Prihoda
  Family, Marianna & Russell Meason
  Family, Carmela & Sean Trible Family,
  Anthony & Veronica Prihoda Family
  James and Carolyn Prihoda
  M/M Franklin Addicks
  Engle Farmers Mutual

• Rev. Msgr. John C. Bily Seminary Burse #2

Lector
In memory of Johnny B. Prihoda by
  Daniel C. Bernice Ulbricht

Acolyte
In memory of Lucy Lednicky, sister of Rev.
  Msgr. John Bily, on her birthday by
  Jesse and Nancy Lednicky

Candidate
In memory of Joshua Michael Flessner, our
  grandson, and cousin to Rev. Kristopher
  Fuchs by Paul and Helen Flessner

• Rev. Wayne Flagg and Rev. Philip Brune Seminary Burse

Lector
In honor of Rev. Philip Brune by:
  Robert and Carol Schertz
  Sts. Peter and Paul Parish Altar Society,
  Freulsburg

Acolyte
In memory of Joshua Michael Flessner, our
  grandson, and cousin to Rev. Kristopher
  Fuchs by Paul and Helen Flessner

• Rev. Kristopher L. Fuchs Seminary Burse

Acolyte
In memory of Joshua Michael Flessner, our
  grandson, and cousin to Rev. Kristopher
  Fuchs by Paul and Helen Flessner

• Rev. Wayne Flagg and Rev. Philip Brune Seminary Burse #8

• Rev. Dan Morales Seminary Burse in Honor of his Work for Vocations

Lector
In memory of Ralph Mendoza, father of
  Rev. Jacob Mendoza by
  Daryl and Joan Hill

Candidate
In memory of Joshua Michael Flessner, our
  grandson, and cousin to Rev. Kristopher
  Fuchs by Paul and Helen Flessner

• Rev. Rev. Wayne Flagg and Rev. Philip Brune Seminary Burse #2

Lector
In memory of Rev. Philip Brune by:
  Sts. Peter and Paul Parish Altar Society,
  Freulsburg

Acolyte
In memory of Joshua Michael Flessner, our
  grandson, and cousin to Rev. Kristopher
  Fuchs by Paul and Helen Flessner

• Rev. Msgr. Joseph Hybner KC #3204 Seminary Burse

Lector
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Joseph Hybner by
  the Family of Rev. Msgr. Joseph Hybner

Candidate
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Joseph Hybner by
  K of C Council #3204, Ganado

Education of Seminarian Fund

The Education of Seminarian Fund is a fund in which all of the monies donated to this fund, as well as the earnings, are available to cover the cost of educating seminarians. The proceeds of the special collection on Holy Thursday are deposited into the Education of Seminarian Fund. Publication of this fund will appear when new contributions are received. Donation categories: Lector - $.01 - $99.99; Acolyte – $100 - $499.99; Candidate – $500 - $1,499.99; Transitional Deacon – $1,500 - $2,499.99; Priest – $2,500 >.

Lector
Paz and Andrea Morales
in Memory of Father Dan Morales

Catholic Daughters of the Americas -
Court St. Michael #559, Weimar

Victor and Gail Dvorak
in Memory of Johnny Prihoda

Dan and Barbara Respondek
in Memory of Don Hall

Acolyte
James and Barbara Janak
Dr. Jorge and Juanita Duchicela
in Memory of Johnny Prihoda

Catholic Daughters of the Americas -
Our Lady of the Blessing #2546, Blessing

Candidate
Knights of Columbus #1329, Victoria
in Memory of Chris Janak

Priest
Catholic Union of Texas - KJT

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
Lent is time to get closer to God and humanity

Editor’s note: Sister Mildred is out this week, so we are reprinting her Lenten message from March 2017.

Headlines of natural disasters, political unrest, violent crimes and other calamities bombard us every day. Closer to home, even in our own homes and 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 we give to those around us.

Fortunately, the Church in its wisdom provides us with liturgical seasons that help us pause and reflect upon our relationship with God and our neighbor. Lent is such a season; it calls us to conversion 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 adverse conditions. Pope Francis tells 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 shown that hospital patients who have been prayed for have quicker recovery rates and have fewer complications than patients who have not.

Along with prayer, we are called to fast during this season. Pope Francis suggests that we fast from indifference towards others. He wrote, “Indifference is one of the most serious forms of violence of select few against the many.” Through fasting, we can be attentive to the needs of our neighbor and remember, “Whatsoever you do …”

Therefore, may this penitential season be a time of continuing conversion as we embrace prayer, fasting and almsgiving as a means of strengthening our relationship with God and with one another.

— Pope Francis’ quotes were taken from www.Vatican.va “Messages of Pope Francis for Lent.”

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. “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 this were someone else’s responsibility and not our own.”

Regarding almsgiving, 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. Let us give in a spirit of charity and remember, “Whatsoever you do …”

SUPPORTING SEMINARIANS
Joyce Kurtz, state director of KJZT Family Life, presented a $1,789.29 check to Bishop Brendan Cahill from the organization’s Clerical Endowment Fund. The funds were collected to support the education of seminarians in the Diocese of Victoria.

SEMINARIANS TAKE STEP FORWARD TO PRIESTHOOD — Joseph Blackburn and Aaron Padilla received the Ministry of Lector from Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso on Feb. 16. Lector is a Ministry of the Word of God and is the first ministry a seminarian receives on his way to the priesthood. Acolyte is the next step, then transitional deacon, before being ordained to the priesthood.

INZ — Catholic Daughters of America Court Holy Cross No. 1598 said they had loads of fun making 62 Valentine bags for the residents of their local nursing home and shut-ins during their Feb. 2 meeting.
Sacred Heart School Holds Catholic Knowledge Bowl

HALLETTSVILLE — Sacred Heart Catholic School wrapped up Catholic Schools Week with its annual Catholic Knowledge Bowl. Twenty-eight teams participated.

Students had to answer three rounds with 20 questions in each round. Msgr. John Peters opened the activities with a prayer, and he and Father Scott Hill took turns reading questions.

The first-place team in the High School division, with 50 points, was “Quade’s Crusaders,” consisting of Quade Henneke, Garrett Ridgeway, Brett Sestak and John Luke Wysocki. Second place, with 47 points, was “Help Wanted” team with Ethan Jacobs, Trenton Kraatz, Trey Ridgeway and Adam Steffek. Third place, with 46 points, was the “Jesus” team of Bailey Haas, Arianna Henke, Jules Janak and Katherine Pavliska.

In the Junior High division, “Camo Kitties Catholic Crusade” came in first with 44 correct answers. Team members were James Cesarz, Klayton Chance, Peyton Cull, and Wade Shimek. “Julie’s Angels,” with Maryn Machac, Anneliese Noska, Haley Noska, and Braxtyn Sitka came in second with 42 points. Third place went to “The Philippians,” with Lance Barton, Caleb Brooks, Brianna Clark and Kaycee Schindler compiling a score of 41.

There was a new award this year, for the most creative and clever name with a religious twist. First place in high school went to Erin Fawbush, Victoria Kraatz, Dallas Layton and Bailey Schindler, with the name “Mountain Lifting Mustard Seeds,” recalling Jesus’ words that faith as small as a mustard seed could move mountains. “CCC - Christ’s Christian Crew,” with Rania Bustmante, Ella Demel, Alaina Halata and Madelyn Kurtz, won the junior high division.

Some of the teams will participate in the Diocesan Catholic Knowledge Bowl in Victoria, where they hope to bring home more bragging rights.

— Submitted by Ana Henke, Sacred Heart School Counselor.

WEIMAR — Eighth-grade students from St. Michael Catholic School essays on “The meaning of Virtue and how you live and embody the virtue of Charity” for the Knights of Columbus Council #2153 annual Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest. Winners included Kelly M., first place; Brooke W., second; and Rayleigh H., third. The council also sponsored its annual Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Winners were Lillie H. (K-second), Chloe B. (third-fifth), and Wyatt W. (sixth-eighth). From left, are Grand Knight Jack Mugglie with essay winners Kelly M., Brooke W. and Rayleigh H., and KC Youth Activities Director Mike Koeth. Mugglie and Koeth also posed with poster winners, from left, Lillie H., Chloe B. and Wyatt W.
OLV Eagles Basketball Champions

FREE THROW CONTEST IN HALLETTSVILLE — The Knights of Columbus Council #2433 held its annual Free Throw Contest on Feb. 2 at the Sacred Heart gym, with 32 participants in ages 9 to 14. Winners in their age divisions advanced to the district contest held Feb. 9 at the Flatonia High School gym, and winners of the district contest advanced to the diocesan contest on Feb. 16 at the Sacred Heart Hallettsville gym. Those advancing past the diocesan contest will participate in the state contest on March 7 in San Antonio. Winners from the local contest are, from left, Brinlee G., 9; Bryce C., 9; Allison C., 10; Jayden S., 10; Kasen P., 11; Alaina H., 11; Adalyn P., 12; Wyatt K., 12; Brianna C., 13; Hudson K., 13; Elana G., 13; and, Klayton C., 14.

HALLETTSVILLE — The Sacred Heart Junior High Student Council made a donation to the Pokot Mission in Kenya recently from funds raised through a bake sale and other projects. The money was designated to support a herd of dairy camels. Sister Rebecca Janacek, who has founded the homeless housing program Promise Pointe, was stationed at the Kenya mission for 30 years.

SCHULENBERG — The following St. Rose of Lima students were recently named winners in the Fayette Soil & Water Conservation District coloring, poster and essay contests:
- 5K coloring: Andrew B., first; Raven D., second; and Jack S., third
- first-grade coloring: Gage S., first; Kynslee Z., second; and Annastone K., third
- third-grade poster: Reese D., first; Bo Brossmann, second; and Weston H., third
- fourth-grade poster: Maximo H. and Miranda B., tied for first place; and Brenly B., second place
- fourth-grade essay: Charlie S., first; Brock S., second; and Brenly B., third
- fifth- and sixth-grade poster: Clara M., first; Lilly W., second; and Ava B., third.

Moving on in district competition are Ian R., fifth-grade poster; Ty L., sixth-grade poster; and Mary Beth K., seventh-grade essay. Those three students also will be recognized at the upcoming FSWCD Banquet.

St. Rose students winners in contest

KJZT #101, represented by Irene Brosch, left, presented Our Lady of Victory School in Victoria pencils and kolaches during Catholic Schools Week. Accepting the gift for the school is Dorothy Gehrke, school secretary.
Catholic Rural Life - Victoria

Continued from pg. 1

rural vocations in the diocese, including row crops of corn, milo, soybeans and cotton, cattle and cheese production, grapes and wineries, catfish farms and shrimping along the coast. “So we are a very rural community.”

The Diocese of Victoria, in June 2018, began the work of the first Texas chapter of Catholic Rural Life. According to the CRL website, “Chapters of CRL are part of the national network of CRL members. Often using our resources, they work to promote, edify and celebrate the rich rural traditions of our faith in their local diocese and/or parishes.”

Bishop Cahill appointed the Rev. Stephen Vacek as director and Deacon Larry Hoelscher as chairman of the local chapter.

“The bishop desired a young, energetic priest who was from a rural town with some experience of rural life. As a newly ordained priest whose parents own a hardware store in East Bernard, I fit the description,” Father Stephen Vacek. “I remember saying I wanted to join the diocese of Victoria because ‘I could see a combine drive down Main Street during the day.’”

Vacek and Hoelscher attended a national conference to prepare to serve the rural communities.

“It is an honor to serve the people and priests of the diocese in my role as director,” Vacek said. “The goal of our chapter is to help our diocese realize that being Catholic is more than going to Mass. We bring our faith into the workplace.”

But Catholic Rural Life is not simply for farmers. As Vacek pointed out, “from seed to plate,” all humankind has a stake in what the workers and their land provide.

Clergy and other participants in the Seed and Soil Mass celebrated outdoors where the work of rural Catholics is evident.

So God Made A Farmer

The following was a speech delivered at a 1978 FFA convention by the late radio personality and newsman, Paul Harvey.

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, “I need a caretaker.” So God made a farmer.

God said, “I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper and then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board.” So God made a farmer.

“I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild. Somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait for lunch until his wife’s done feeding visiting ladies and tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon – and mean it.” So God made a farmer.

God said, “I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt. And watch it die. Then dry his eyes and say, ‘Maybe next year.’ I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make harness out of haywire, feed sacks and shoe scraps. And who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, then, pain’n from ‘tractor back,’ put in another seventy-two hours.” So God made a farmer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor’s place. So God made a farmer.

God said, “I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark. It had to be somebody who’d plow deep and straight and not cut corners. Somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant the self-feeder and finish a hard week’s work with a five-mile drive to church.

Somebody who’d bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says he wants to spend his life ‘doing what dad does.’” So God made a farmer.
Living Together Before Marriage: What’s the Big Deal?

Welcome to “On the Table,” where we will discuss topics that are clearly on the table in our culture. The topics won’t always be easy to digest, but I assure you they will be important to our faith, our families and our society at large.

Let’s jump into the first one, which is clearly a biggie nowadays, living together before marriage.

Cohabitation by unmarried couples has certainly increased in recent years. The National Center for Family and Marriage Research stated that two out of every three couples getting married today have lived together before marriage.

So what’s the big deal anyway? Why should we care whether people live together or separately before they get married?

One thing to clarify is that living together isn’t actually a sin. But it leads to sin. The odds of a couple committing the marital act while living together goes up astronomically. Remember the old adage, “Don’t play with fire or you’re going to get burned.” It can apply here. Resisting temptation is hard enough, so couples really shouldn’t put themselves in a situation where avoiding that sin is going to be even harder.

Another reason to not live together is the importance of having space while dating or being engaged. When a couple first meets and is dating, they should simply be getting to know each other, creating memories and seeing what their relationship could eventually be. When things get more serious, they move to engagement, when a couple really starts to envision a life together.

It’s important to realize in both of these phases that a formal commitment hasn’t happened yet. There is still time to walk away if one party decides this isn’t the right relationship for them. That decision to leave gets harder when barriers such as finances, leases and common property get in the way.

So what should a couple do if they’re living together and decide they want a covenant marriage in the Catholic Church? Ideally, someone needs to move out! If this is not possible, a very last resort is to live as brother and sister in separate rooms until the day of their wedding or until the apartment lease ends. (If the lease ends, don’t renew!) Above all, run toward the sacraments, especially penance. Jesus can forgive us of anything if we are ready to repent.

For more reading on this topic, visit https://www.foryourmarriage.org/cohabitation/. It will lead you to other resources for even deeper conversations.

Until next time, I hope you can discuss this topic at your own table with family and friends. And if you ever want to chat with me about what I’ve written, or anything else, please call me at 361-573-0828, Ext. 2265. God bless!

— Justin Reyes is the director of the Office of Family Evangelization for the Diocese of Victoria. Contact him at 361-573-0828, Ext. 2265, or jreyes@victoriadiocese.org.

How to Support Programs in Your Parish

The Diocesan Services Appeal (DSA) is committed to funding administration offices and programs that help us bring the light of Christ to the priorities of the Crossroads area. The DSA for 2020 has just been mailed. If you did not receive yours, you may download one at www.victoriadiocese.org/diocesan-services-appeal or call 361-573-0828.

COLUMBUS – Knights of Columbus members marched Jan. 25 in a Pro-Life demonstration, organized by Deacon Charlie Novosad. Knight Johnathan Dooley was the speaker. There were more than 75 marchers. Pictured, from left, are, kneeling, Derek Bonner, Paul Michalsky, Paul Michalsky, John Glueck, Novosad and Dooley, and, in back, Michael Fuller, Charles Fuller, Ken Berger, Kevin Fishbeck, Albert Brune, Larry “Bear” Kana, Ernie Richter, Kenneth Warstach, Charles Barrett, Rusty Thuet, and James Simons.

Office of Family Evangelization

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website: www.victoriadiocese.org/office-of-family-evangelization

Cuero Knights of Columbus
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Pre-sale & at the Door
March 22 • 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
For more information or Pre-sale tickets available contact a KC Members, St. Michael Parish Office or call 361-243-0136 or 361-564-8989
Proceeds benefit KC’s Scholarship program, the parish and school
**St. Robert welcomes music director**

EL CAMPO — St. Robert Bellarmine Parish welcomed Joseph Holik as their new director of music ministry.

Holik was born and raised in Wharton County and started playing drums when he was 6. He spent most of his free time at his father’s drum set, and his passion for music led him to study piano and guitar.

He spent several years as a percussionist at St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in El Campo and many years performing with his sister at public venues in Wharton County. These opportunities allowed Holik to develop his skills as a successful accompanist with drums, piano, guitar and voice. After graduating high school in Louise, he developed his skills as a musician under the direction of Professor Joe Waldrop at Wharton County Junior College.

Holik holds a bachelor of arts in music with a concentration in percussion performance from the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He had the honor of studying percussion with Professor Lovie Smith, principal percussionist with Theatre Under the Stars in Houston and president of the Houston Professional Musicians Association. He also studied with other notable professors at the University of St. Thomas, including Dr. Malcolm Solomon, Dr. Glenn Garrido, Dr. Brady Knapp and others.

Holik spent the last two years as the director of music ministry at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Richmond and has performed with various ensembles in the Houston area, including the Houston Symphonic Band and the Fort Bend Symphony.

His new assignment at St. Robert Bellarmine also puts him closer to his parents, James and Sandra Holik of Louise.

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**Knights of Columbus Council #4307**

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**Save the Date**

**Sunday, April 26**

**St. Michael Weimar**

**Spring Festival**

Fried Chicken & Sausage Dinner  
Polka Mass / Auction / Games  
Music: Czechaholics & Black Cat Choir
Mission in Antigua carries on work of 2 beloved priests

By The Rev. Philip Brune, Pastor of St. Robert Bellarmine, El Campo

Special to The Catholic Lighthouse

“God robbed me of martyrdom.”

Not many of us can or would want to say those words, but those were the words of Father Jose Contran, a Franciscan missionary who served as the director of Las Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro in Antigua, Guatemala, for more than 20 years.

He had lived through great suffering, which, instead of hardening his heart, made him more compassionate. He was born in the middle of World War II in Padua, Italy, and his mother often skipped meals so that he could eat. Their poverty did not push him to escape poverty, but to enter into it more profoundly, so he became a Franciscan priest at the age of 26. He served under the archbishop and martyr Saint Oscar Romero in El Salvador and also served remote villages during the Guatemalan Revolution in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Like Blessed Stanley Rother, he lived through the atrocities of that war and lost many brother Franciscans and priests. It was during this time that he was moved from one assignment to another, and the following week all the Franciscans at his previous church were martyred for caring for the poor and burying the dead.

He would relate, “God robbed me of martyrdom.”

Yet, instead of becoming crippled by these horrors it only spurred him on to more fully serve and trust in God.

During the revolution, another Franciscan, Fray Guillermo Bonilla was bringing the sick and homeless to an old government hospital in Antigua that had been destroyed by an earthquake. This was the start of Las Obras. From this humble beginning, Las Obras has grown to be the largest healthcare provider in Guatemala and provides not only for the sick, but also for malnourished babies, those with serious disabilities, and provides a home for the elderly, and recovery for alcoholics and drug addicts.

In 1994, Father Jose was assigned as director of Las Obras and continued the miraculous growth and service first begun by Fray Guillermo. Under his supervision Las Obras grew dramatically through the support of Guatemalan benefactors and international support.

Meeting him you found a soft-spoken – almost frail – man whose words, faith and conviction were quite the opposite. It was on one of his trips asking for support that he encountered the late Father Dan Morales in Port O’Connor. Father Dan accepted his invitation to come and visit Las Obras in the beautiful colonial city of Antigua. There, Father Dan fell in love with the Franciscans, the babies, the workers, the sick, and the poor of Las Obras. He so easily saw the face of God in them, and it renewed his ministry as a diocesan priest.

After his trip, Father Dan started to invite seminarians and parishioners to join him on his trips to Las Obras. Those who went also encountered the face of God in a profound. Every year they would visit the Franciscans to pray with them and the orphans and to serve in whatever capacity was needed, from washing clothes to painting the sacristy, to feeding the disabled. It was a catchall group that became a non-profit called Coram Deo “Before the face of God” whose only mission was to serve as needed and to encounter the face of God in every person they met.

This past Dec. 27, Father Jose Contran passed from this life to eternal life. He was buried in the city cemetery called St. Lazarus beside the other residents who had died at Las Obras – the poor, the sick, the Lazaruses of Antigua whom he had spent his life serving. On Jan. 18, the members of Coram Deo came together to offer a memorial Mass for Father Jose. They recalled how Father Jose and Father Dan had been the face of God and how we are called to carry on their beautiful ministry by helping to provide for the physical, spiritual and financial needs of Las Obras, a healthcare ministry that provides for needy in Antigua, Guatemala.

Their work continues this year through the mission trip that will be Aug. 2-9 with registration beginning March 7. This mission trip is open to all individuals 18 years and older and is capped at 40 people. You can register for the trip or find out more information by going to www.hfcccvc.org/coram-deo.

You can also donate to Las Obras on-line by visiting https://www.hermanopefoundationusa.org/get-involved/. One-hundred percent of donations go directly to Las Obras. You can also find out more about Las Obras by visiting their Facebook page at Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro.
F I A T

Priest’s pro-life, spiritual Lenten campaign aimed at Latino Catholics

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As a new Lenten season begins, Father Jorge Obregon from Houston is encouraging young Latino Catholics to participate in a new spiritual campaign titled Life Savers.

“I hope this can get to as many Spanish-speaking people starting in Spain and all the way from Canada to Argentina,” Father Obregon told Catholic News Service in a recent phone interview.

According to Obregon, the campaign’s inspiration evolved from the 2019 film “Unplanned,” which tells the true story of Abby Johnson from Bryan, Texas. Johnson became the youngest clinic director in Planned Parenthood’s history. After she was asked to assist in an abortion — which was not her role as director but the clinic was short-handed that day -- she quit and became an outspoken pro-life activist.

Sponsored by New Fire, a project for young people and adults who want to discover the Catholic faith, the 40-day Life Savers campaign has five focus areas.

Two areas that will vary from week to week are leaving behind one’s vices and a little sacrifice. These commitments include refraining from social media and hot showers. Another area is getting close to Mary, and committing to praying the rosary daily.

The campaign also challenges participants to complete 30 minutes of daily prayer to Jesus and to cultivate one’s interior life by exercising additional prayer, generosity and perseverance. Father Obregon said each week, there will be a theme along with detailed videos.

Father Obregon explained why he chose Lent as the time for this spiritual campaign.

“I’ve seen the good practice of Lenten campaigns all over where Christians and Catholics are inspired to give a lot more or just to come closer to the heart of Jesus through that penitential moment,” said Father Obregon.

As a priest, Father Obregon said he has seen a trend of individuals returning to confession, to the sacraments overall and especially to their prayer life during Lent, which he refers to as a “period of grace” in the liturgical year.

“Since we know that people are already going to be praying, why not give them a guideline that can help them have a clear intention?” said Father Obregon.

He told CNS that promoting the spiritual campaign to Latinos, the target population, on Instagram and Facebook has increased overall awareness of the campaign. Father Obregon said the texting and calling application WhatsApp has helped to reach Latinos worldwide because many of them utilize the app to connect and communicate.

Additionally, Father Obregon and New Fire team members have been able to spread knowledge of the campaign by sending information materials to various influencers, including priests and women religious.

Father Obregon acknowledged that it can be challenging to carve out time for personal prayer and reflection due to the busyness of life. He said that one of the purposes of the Lenten campaign’s introductory video, however, is to offer concrete guidance to help participants find that time for prayer and spiritual commitments.

“Young people are the spiritual truth we are God’s beloved. Claiming this truth, we are set free and sent on mission to make choices for truth, love and justice, supporting the life of the Spirit in us. In this way, we can be transformed into Christ. Registration is at 9:30 pm with the retreat beginning at 10 and concluding at 3:30 pm. Since we no longer purchase lunches, please bring your own. A love offering will be collected.

Sunday Readings from March 8 - April 7

March 8 ~ 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 15 ~ 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

March 22 ~ Fourth Sunday of Lent
1 Samuel 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A
Psalms 23:1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

March 29 ~ 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 5 ~ Palm Sunday
of the Lord’s Passion
Isaiah 50:4-7
Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Matthew 26:14-27:66

April 7 ~ Chrism Mass
Isaiah 61:1-3A, 6A, 8B-9
Psalms 89:21-22, 25, 27
Revelations 1:5-8
Luke 4:16-21

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

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The following sermon was written by Father Kram for the Third Sunday of Lent, Cycle A.

St. Augustine said that God has made us for himself alone and that our hearts will be restless until they rest in him. Like the woman at the well, we are all thirsting and searching.

If there is any one thing for which everyone is searching, it is happiness. Although different people have different notions as to what happiness is, we all want our share.

Although it would seem that the more we have of what we enjoy, the happier we will be, but the fact is that excess so quickly turns to pain. Overeating makes your stomach miserable and makes you fat. When King Henry VIII died at the age of 49, he had a waistline of 52 inches. Or take the case of the alcoholic or the drug abuser. Their lives eventually revolve around a drink or a fix. The rich and the famous have all the money and power and influence they could want, but, in reality, they are a pitiful bunch.

To put it simply, in our search for happiness, there is no rest for either the good or the wicked. Yet no one can deny that God, in whom our true happiness lies, is very much with us every day.

He made us, he conserves us in existence, he provides for us. The evidence of his loving presence surrounds us. Once I said to a patient that nothing exciting had happened that day. He corrected me and pointed out the birds and the trees and flowers and how they were all exciting evidence of God’s nearness. How true!

In fact, from all corners of creation, there rises up to a God a continuous chorus of praise from all such silent creatures, which have no mind to think with and no heart to love with, but which by their order and their beauty and their very existence cry out to God night and day, “How great thou art.” How bleak and sad the world would be without the glories of nature.

Besides merely having God near us in his works, we also have him dwelling within us by sanctifying grace. We are living temples of the Holy Spirit.

As if this were not enough, God has made himself visible and touchable in the person of Jesus Christ. In the divine person of Jesus are forever united the eternal nature of God and a human nature just like ours, except for sin.

Jesus is gone now, ascended to heaven in his risen and glorified body, elusive and hard to find in the flesh. But his word to us is, “Love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus is all around us in the men, women and children we meet, waiting to be treated with love. Just recently one of the nurses was giving me breakfast, and the nurse who was assigned to me came in and smiled and hugged the other nurse and said, “Thank you, thank you.” And then they said, “I like to take care of Father.” We can think of many ways in which to express our love for others. Try ending your conversation sometime by saying, “Oh, by the way, I love you.”

Another test of Christian discipleship is to help heal the hurt in those who endlessly complain or those who are afraid or depressed. A simple word of encouragement can go a long way.

Now one more example: Just recently I heard of a “pass it on” group. The members made a pledge that every time they have a favor done for them, they will pass it on by doing a favor for someone else.

See how much the Lord is in our midst. We might well say, “Gosh, I never saw so many Christs in my life.”

As I have mentioned before in the chapel, some years ago, when the “God is dead” fad swept the country, someone scribbled a graffiti on the wall that read, “God is dead,” and signed it, “Nitzsche.” Nitzsche was the German philosopher who supposedly started the “God is dead” idea. Someone else wrote underneath the first graffiti, “Nitzsche is dead,” and signed it, “God.”

And he was right. Nitzsche IS dead, and God IS very much alive. He is very much with us and he is the end of our search for happiness.
CCFT Preserving the past for the future

By Janet Jones, Editor
The Catholic Lighthouse

DUBINA – Culture is not about the past, it is about the future, the Most Rev. Brendan Cahill said during Mass at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church – the first church in Texas named for the saints – on Feb. 14. The Mass was on the saints’ feast day in thanksgiving for the Czech Catholic culture brought to Texas from the Moravia and Bohemia areas in the mid-1800s. But the Mass was just the beginning of the newly formed Czech Catholic Foundation of Texas, as the bishop inaugurated its founding officers and directors.

There already are several Czech fraternal organizations in Texas, such as KJZT, KJT and the SPJST. But this organization is uniquely focused on the faith. Its stated mission is, “To document, study, preserve, celebrate and perpetuate all elements of the Czech Catholic faith transplanted to Texas by immigrants from the Czech lands; and to strengthen ties with Czech Catholics of the ancestral homeland evangelized by Sts. Cyril and Methodius.”

Bishop Cahill wore a liturgical vestment with the likeness of the two saints, brothers who evangelized the area that is now the Czech Republic.

“They understood culture,” Bishop Cahill said of the saints. They are credited with creating a liturgical language for the people they evangelized and helped form several Czech dialects. “Culture develops to help us cultivate what God has given us,” Cahill said. And celebrating culture keeps our lives meaningful, he added.

The Rev. Stephen Nesrsta, pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Corn Hill and one of the founding officers of CCFT brought with him three priests from the Czech Republic to help celebrate the Mass. Those priests, the Rev. Ales Pisatrovic, the Rev. Pavel Marek and the Rev. Vaclav Tomicek, came to know Father Nesrsta through a program bringing transitional deacons from the Czech Republic to Texas to learn, among other things, how the culture was transplanted here well over a century ago. After Mass the visiting priests sang the Czech hymn “Svaty Vaclave” for the congregation.

The newly organized CCFT set a goal to support the continuation of Nesrsta’s program. Marvin Marek, founder and president of CCFT, said he has a very emotional attachment to his “Czech-ness,” nurtured by his immigrant grandfather and other family members who loved the Church. He grew up in Shiner and said about 75 percent of his parish family were Czech.

“It had a great impact on my life,” he said. “The ethnic mosaic that has formed the Church – that’s what makes the Church so beautiful. When we have a love for our own ethnicity, we can better respect other ethnicities. That’s my motivation for doing this.”

Mary Jo Rebecek, whose maiden name is Cernoch, grew up in the area said she spoke mostly Czech up to about second grade. It was her great-great-grandparents who immigrated from the Czech Republic and settled in Texas. She attended the recent Mass and the reception to learn more about the organization, visit www.czechcatholicfoundation.org.

1. Promote the celebration of the liturgical feasts of the Czech Saints honored in the Roman Missal, especially in parishes founded by Czech immigrants;
2. Promote the celebration of the religious customs practiced by Czech immigrants to Texas and their early descendants;
3. Promote the designation, by the bishops of Texas, of a place of pilgrimage in Texas which honors Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the “Apostles to the Slavs”;
4. Provide grants to Texas Catholic youth leaders to visit their counterparts in the Czech Republic and in Texas;
5. Provide grants, if needed, to continue the annual visits of the newly ordained transitional Czech deacons to Texas in the program established by the Rev. Stephen Nesrsta;
6. Provide grants for the translation of Czech religious writings into English and publishing them;
7. Provide scholarships for Texas college students who commit to studying Czech Catholicism's sacred music, liturgy, history and literature and their use by the Czech immigrants and their descendants, and to sharing their knowledge with Texas Czech Catholics.
Consecrated life celebrated here, everywhere

By Janet Jones, Editor
The Catholic Lighthouse

VICTORIA — Our Lady of Sorrows hosted a World Day for Consecrated Life celebration and Mass on Feb. 2. Bishop Brendan Cahill and the Rev. Eliceer Patino of Our Lady of Sorrows consecrated the 8:30 Mass, which was followed by a reception at Trinity Hall.

There are six religious congregations in The Diocese of Victoria:
• Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
• Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word
• Sisters of the Incarnate World and Blessed Sacrament
• Vietnamese Dominican Sisters
• Vietnamese Sisters of the Incarnation, Consecration and Mission, and
• Carmelites of the Ever Virgin Mary

The congregation gave thanks to God for the religious Sisters and prayed that many more men and women would answer to the call to consecrated life.

Pope John Paul II instituted the celebration in 1997. It is celebrated on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas Day, celebrating the coming of Christ, the Light of the World.

According to a statement by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “… consecrated men and women bring the presence of Jesus to all they encounter throughout their day, allowing his spirit to live and move with them so that the truth of the Gospel can be proclaimed to all.”

Each year, the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations requests a survey on members of religious communities, which is done by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

The USCCB reported the following results of the most recent survey:
• The average age of the profession class of 2019 is 39. Half of those are 34 or younger, with the youngest being 24. The oldest is 71.
• Two-thirds of those surveyed reported their primary ethnicity is white. Ten percent identify Hispanic, and 9 percent as Asian.
• One-fourth of those surveyed earned a graduate degree before entering a congregation. The other three-fourths had earned at least a bachelor’s degree.
• Nine out of 10 of those responding to the survey served in one or more church ministries before entering religious life. The most common ministries were lector, altar server, or Extraordinary Minister of Communion.
• On average, the religious reported they were 19 when they first considered a vocation to religious life, but half were 18 or younger when they first did.

More than 90 percent participated in some type of private prayer activity before entering their religious institute. More than 60 percent participated in Eucharistic Adoration or prayed the rosary before entering. And almost 60 percent participated in spiritual direction or retreats before entering.

The full survey and resources for parishes are available at http://cms.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/consecrated-life/world-day-for-consecrated-life.cfm.
DOV schools honor those who tirelessly support them

By Janet Jones, Editor
The Catholic Lighthouse

VICTORIA -- When the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria introduced their chosen Distinguished Alumni for 2020 there was no mention of what kind of report cards they took home. What they took with them were the values that formed them into adults that have earned the right to be called, “loyal,” “reliable,” “dedicated,” “caring,” “faithful,” and even “amazing.”

Each person honored has a long list of accomplishments to their credit that show they have a strong sense of community and a love of their faith and Catholic education. Among them were teachers, attorneys, businessmen and women, healthcare professionals, civic leaders, religious men and women, homemakers, parents and volunteers.

Bishop Brendan Cahill presented the 2020 awards during a dinner at the Diocese of Victoria Chancery on Monday, Feb. 24. It was the 9th annual dinner and the first time it was hosted at the Chancery.

Dr. John Quary, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the diocese, welcomed the honorees and attendees, saying, “The Office of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Victoria is happy to sponsor this annual event to highlight the contributions of our esteemed alumni who have walked the halls of our schools over the past years and have enjoyed many accomplishments in their own rights.”

Quary said the 2020 honorees joined the ranks of more than 100 named alumni. “Thank you for your contribution to the legacy of Catholic education,” he said.

The honorees are:

Amy Connell Lehmann, alumnus of Holy Cross Catholic School in Bay City. A dental hygienist, she has been a missionary to Guatemala providing dental treatment to those in need as part of the organization Faith in Practice. She is a vocal advocate for her school and currently serves on the school’s advisory council. Her son is now a fifth-grader at Holy Cross.

T. Michael O’Connor, an alumnus of Nazareth Academy has served many years as the sheriff of Victoria County and was recently sworn in as U.S. Marshal of the Southern District of Texas. He and his wife, LuAnn have served the school for many years, and he has said that all he learned in school was from the nuns.

Charla Ybarra attended Our Lady of Victory from kindergarten through the eighth grade. All of her children attended OLV. She has devoted many hours to the school in the past 13 years as a parent. She served seven years on the OLV Gala committee, coached track, served as a room mother, and helped with numerous PTC fundraisers. She is a registered dental hygienist at Gulf Coast Periodontics in Victoria.

John Hemmi graduated from Sacred Heart in Hallettsville in 1961 and went on to St. Mary’s University where he received his doctor of jurisprudence in 1968. He has served in many educational and practical capacities as a family law attorney. He remains a staunch supporter of Sacred Heart school and parish and has provided tuition assistance to many families for Catholic education.

Sandy Glueck received her primary education at St. Anthony Catholic School in Columbus and went on to Bishop Forest High School, then attended Southwest Texas State University on a track scholarship. She is a medical assistant at the family practice clinic in Columbus. She has given numerous hours of her time as a volunteer in her church and for the school. She co-chairs the church festival in the fall and helps with youth groups, and ministers to the elderly and homebound.

Mark Westerman graduated as salutatorian of the St. Joseph High School Class of 1972. He went on to study finance at Texas A&M University and returned to Victoria where he had a successful 20-year career at Victoria Bank & Trust. He later became a CPA. He currently works in his own consulting business focusing on investment, tax preparation and business accounting. Giving back to the community is one of his cornerstones and he has served on several Catholic school boards and in many capacities in the Diocese of Victoria.

Rita Arlitt was honored by St. Joseph Catholic School in Yoakum for the many years she served as a teacher and principal in the Yoakum school system and at St. Joseph. She graduated from the school in 1965 and became the first person in her family to go to college. Her passion for education is still appreciated by students she had decades ago. All three of her daughters became teachers.

See 2020 Distinguished Alumni, pg. 20
By Barbara J. Fraser
Catholic News Service
LIMA, Peru (CNS) — Saying the world has much to learn from Amazonian indigenous peoples, Pope Francis declared the Catholic Church their ally in their struggle to protect the region’s forests and rivers.

In “Querida Amazonia” (Beloved Amazonia), the apostolic exhortation issued Feb. 12, the pope called on Catholics to respond to environmental destruction in the Amazon region with outrage and indignation while building networks of solidarity with its traditional inhabitants.

The document is Pope Francis’ response to recommendations made by participants in the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, held in October 2019 at the Vatican.

With its often lyrical language, the exhortation takes another step toward a closer relationship with native peoples, which the pope launched in Peru in January 2017. At an encounter there with several thousand Amazonian indigenous people, Pope Francis asked his listeners to help church leaders understand their culture and their lives.

With the exhortation, the pope has made it clear that the church – and the world – must listen to them and recognize them as equals, said Moema Maria Marques de Miranda, a lay Franciscan who was an observer at the synod.

“After 500 years, indigenous peoples are recognized in their wisdom and their abilities. That is a paradigm change,” Miranda told Catholic News Service.

A leader of the Celia Xakriaba peoples walks along the banks of the Xingu River in Brazil’s Xingu Indigenous Park Jan. 15, 2020. (CNS photo/Ricardo Moraes, Reuters)
Obispos estadounidenses interrogan al papa sobre Amazonia y otros temas

Por Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) – Al conversar sobre debates, diferencias y discernimiento, el papa Francisco le dijo a un grupo de obispos de EE.UU. que las personas encaminadas en la posibilidad de ordenar a algunos hombres casados y diáconas para servir en la Amazonia, estarían decepcionados con su exhortación apostólica.

El Vaticano difundirá “Querida Amazonia” (Beloved Amazonia), el documento post-sinodal del papa, el 12 de febrero.

El documento fue mencionado el 10 de febrero durante una conversación de dos horas y media que el papa Francisco tuvo con obispos de Nuevo México, Arizona, Colorado, Utah y Wyoming –según dijeron dos de los prelados. Los obispos estaban realizando su visita “ad limina” en Roma para informar sobre la situación de sus diócesis.

Como es su práctica habitual, el papa Francisco les dijo a los obispos que ellos podían conversar sobre cualquier tema que quisieran plantear, ofrecerle información, hacerle preguntas o incluso plantearle sus críticas, siempre y cuando las críticas sean confidenciales.

El arzobispo John C. Wester de Santa Fe, Nuevo México, le dijo a Catholic News Service que el papa les dijo a los obispos lo siguiente: “Quiero escuchar lo que tengan que decir. Las críticas, quejas y preguntas son bienvenidas. Así es como actúa el Espíritu Santo. El Espíritu Santo no puede actuar si es privado de la Eucaristía”, dijo el obispo. Hay comunidades donde un sacerdote llega solamente una vez al año para oficiar Misa.

El papa Francisco sí alertó a los obispos que muchos en los medios de comunicación y el público en general pondrán atención a esos dos asuntos --hombres casados y diáconas-- en tanto él quería enfocarse en los retos sociales, pastorales, ecológicos y culturales que encara la región de la Amazonia.

El arzobispo Wester dijo: “Muchos de los medios algunas veces se apegan a algo porque se ajusta a una agenda en particular o provoca una controversia específica que ellos saben que va a generar un montón de futuros negocios”.

El arzobispo le dijo a CNS que al papa Francisco se le pidió “una clarificación” en cuanto al sínodo.

Contó que el papa, muy gentil y calmadamente dijo “ya saben, este asunto no fue realmente un gran punto”, aunque el tema sí surgió; pero sin decir si el tema era sobre los sacerdotes casados, diáconas algo así. Según el arzobispo, la esencia de la respuesta del papa fue: “Nisiquiera he pensado en este punto, avancemos porque no he sentido que el Espíritu Santo esté actuando al respecto en este momento”.

Resumiendo su postura en el debate sobre el documento referente al Sínodo de la Amazonia, el arzobispo Wester le dijo a CNS: “Lo que no se va a decir, es lo que la gente notará”.

El obispo retirado Gerald F. Kicanas de Tucson, Arizona, dijo que habiéndose reunido casi todos los obispos de EE.UU. para las conversaciones “ad limina”, lo que no hacían desde noviembre, estaba seguro de que el papa Francisco sí alertó a los obispos que muchos en los medios de comunicación y el público en general pondrán atención a esos dos asuntos (hombres casados y diáconas) en tanto él quería enfocarse en los retos sociales, pastorales, ecológicos y culturales que encara la región de la Amazonia.

“Ya saben, este asunto no fue realmente un gran punto”, aunque el tema sí surgió; pero sin decir si el tema era sobre los sacerdotes casados, diáconas algo así. Según el arzobispo, la esencia de la respuesta del papa fue: “Nisiquiera he pensado en este punto, avancemos porque no he sentido que el Espíritu Santo esté actuando al respecto en este momento”.

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“Dijo que en este momento no creía en la ordenación de hombres casados, pero qué va a hacer con todas esas personas que están privadas de la Eucaristía”, dijo el obispo. Hay comunidades donde un sacerdote llega solamente una vez al año para oficiar Misa.

Además, la gente no debe mostrar generosidad solamente por sus donativos caritativos, sino que también deben trabajar por un cambio estructural, dijo el papa Francisco.

El texto del mensaje del papa fue publicado por el Vaticano el 24 de febrero.

Retiro en español para hombres

BAY CITY – Retiro de hombres en español de ACTS, organizado por la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, se llevará a cabo del 19 al 22 de marzo. Comienza con el registro el 18 de marzo a las 5 p.m., y el retiro finaliza el 21 de marzo. Para más información, llame a Martin Mendoza Villafuerte, director, 979-479-0428.

Por Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — La Cuaresma es un momento para un diálogo más profundo con Dios por medio de la oración, una gratitud renovada a la misericordia de Dios y una mayor compasión hacia las personas cuyas vidas están siendo atacadas, dijo el papa Francisco.

Además, la gente no debe mostrar generosidad solamente por sus donativos caritativos, sino que también deben trabajar por un cambio estructural real de la “vida económica” de hoy día, dijo el papa en su mensaje anual para la Cuaresma que comenzaba el 26 de febrero para los católicos de rito latino.

El arzobispo Wester dijo: “Muchos de los medios algunas veces se apegan a algo porque se ajusta a una agenda en particular o provoca una controversia específica que ellos saben que va a generar un montón de futuros negocios”.

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Contemplar el gran misterio de la muerte y resurrección de Jesús y ponerlo en el centro de la propia vida “significa tener compasión por las heridas del Cristo crucificado presente en muchas víctimas inocentes de guerras, en ataques a la vida, desde la de los no nacidos a la de los ancianos, y diversas formas de violencia”, dijo el papa en su mensaje.

Estas heridas “también están presentes en desastres del medio ambiente, la distribución desigual de los bienes de la tierra, el tráfico humano en todas sus formas y el incontrolado afán de lucro, que es una forma de idolatría”, dijo.

Los cristianos no sólo están llamados a compartir generosamente la riqueza del Evangelio y los dones de Dios, “hoy, también, hay necesidad de apelar a los hombres y mujeres de buena voluntad a compartir, en limosna, sus bienes con los más necesitados, como medio de participar personalmente en la construcción de un mundo mejor”, dijo.

“La entrega caritativa nos hace más humanos, mientras que el acumular es un riesgo de hacernos menos humanos, cautivos de nuestro propio egoísmo”, dijo.

“Podemos y debemos ir aún más allá, y considerar los aspectos estructurales de nuestra vida económica”, dijo.

Procedimientos de Reportaje para Abuso Sexual Suspechado o Conocido de un Menor (personas menor de 18 años de edad) o Adulto Vulnerable por un Miembro del Clero

Contactar:

• El Departamento de Servicios para la Familia y de Protección de (DFPS) Texas, de lunes a viernes, de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m. (800) 252-5400. Para conocer más detalles, visite www.txabusehotline.org o Departamento de Policía local. Si la persona está en peligro inmediato llame 911.

• Vicki Pyatt, LMSW, la Coordinadora de Cuidado Pastoral Social, de la Diócesis de Victoria, (361) 827-7186, pastoralcare-victoriadiocese.org.

• Obispo o Canciller de la Diócesis de Victoria, (361) 573-0828. Alegaciones escritas se pueden enviar a la Oficina del Obispo, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903 marcada como “personal y confidencial”.

Si el abuso sexual de un miembro del clero ha ocurrido en otra diócesis, la Diócesis de Victoria ayudará a trazar sus preocupaciones a los funcionarios de la iglesia. Para asistencia de contacto a Vicki Pyatt al (361) 827-7186 o pastoralcare-victoriadiocese.org.
**Meals • Picnics and More**

**March**

Nada–Knights of Columbus Fish Frys all Fridays during Lent through April 10, at the Nada Community Center. Dine-in for all you can eat ($13 p/p for adults and $6 p/p for ages 6-11) and plates-to-go for $10 p/p from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Catholic Daughters will sell homemade desserts.

Wharton–Holy Family Lenten Fish Frys through April 3, at the Family Life Center. Dine-in for all you can eat or plates-to-go available at $10 p/p (adult), child’s plate 6-10 at $5 p/p. For more information, call (979) 532-3593.

Port Lavaca–Our Lady of the Gulf Altar Society hosting a Women’s Lenten Retreat March 7 at St. Jude Hall, starting with 9 a.m. Mass at the church. Father Max Landman will give the retreat on “The music of Lent and the purification of our hearts.” Lunch included for $10 per person. For information, call Rosy Weaver, 361-482-8030.

Blessing–Knights of Columbus Council #4307 shrimp etouffe and gumbo meal on March 8. For more information see ad on page 10.

Victoria–“Get in the Game” Men’s Gathering sponsored by the Diocese of Victoria, March 21 from 8 a.m. to noon, at the Our Lady of Victory Cathedral Center, 109 E. Mesquite. Featuring Mass with Bishop Brendan Cahill and guest speaker Damon West. Breakfast is included. Tickets are $10. Funds raised above covering the cost of the event will be donated to a local charity. Register at www.victoriadiocese.org/get-in-the-game. Walk-ins also welcome. For information, call Justin Reyes, Director of Family Evangelization at 361-573-0828, Ext. 2265 or e-mail jreyes@victoriadiocese.org.


Cuero–Knights of Columbus Council #1682 Annual Shrimp Dinner (rice, cole slaw, and hush puppies) March 22, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at St. Michael’s Church Hall. Plates-to-go only. Advance tickets for $10 are available at the St. Michael Church office, or any KC member. Cost at the door is also $10. Benefits Cuero KC scholarship program and special projects for St. Michael Church and school. For more information call Bill at 361-243-0136 or Anthony at (361) 564-8989. See ad on pg. 9.

Victoria–Our Lady of Lourdes Holy Name Society Annual Chicken/Sausage Dinner, March 29, at the church (105 N. William St.) from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. The plates are $10 p/p (all plates are to-go only). See ad on pg. 11.

**April**

Bloomingon–St. Patrick’s Spring Festival will be April 26, featuring barbecue brisket plates for $10 each. To-go plates will be ready at 9 a.m., and dine in begins at 11 a.m. Live auction begins at 11:30. There also will be a silent auction, raffle, country store, cakewalk and games for children.

Weimar–St. Michael Spring Picnic will be April 26. A fried chicken and sausage dinner for $10 p/p. Polka Mass at 10:30 a.m. Music by Czechaholics and Black Cat Choir.

Yorktown–San Luis Church, 502 E. 2nd St., will host its annual Jamaica on April 26. Mass begins at 8 a.m. at the church. At 11 a.m. a carne guisada dinner with rice and beans will be served for $10 a plate, dine in or take out. There will be live music all day, children’s bounce houses opening at noon, horseshoe and washer tournaments beginning at 1 registration at noon), and food booths and cakewalk will begin at 2 p.m. The live auction will begin at 3. Those interested in the auction are encouraged to sign up early. There will be a raffle drawing at 7 p.m. Tickets are $5 each or five for $20.

ACTS Retreats–Anyone needing any information regarding ACTS Retreats in the diocese should email dovachts@victoriadiocese.org.

**Catholic Family Services**–To find Catholic organizations that focus on family, visit the Catholic Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers at http://www.nacflm.org.

**Courage**–Ministers to persons with same-sex attractions and their loved ones. The ministry also has an outreach, EnCourage, which ministers to relatives, spouses, and friends of persons with same-sex attractions. It is a Roman Catholic Apostolate endorsed by the Pontifical Council for the Family. For information, visit http://www.courageac.net.

**Crisis Pregnancy Center of Victoria**–A sister organization to the Gabriel Project staffed by volunteers that offers help to girls and women who find themselves in a difficult situation due to an unplanned pregnancy. Office located at 1501 E. Red River, is open 1-4 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Free pregnancy tests offered and medical referrals are made for prenatal care.New volunteers are welcome. For information call 361-575-6171.

**Emmaus Center**–Offers individual, couple, family, adolescent and children’s counseling, as well as specialized support groups. Spiritual direction is also available if requested. To make an appointment, call 361-212-0830.

**For information, see Page 15.**

**Engaged Encounter** 2020 Dates – April 17-19, June 5-7, Sept. 18-20, and Nov. 13-15. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Fee must accompany registration form. For information, call 361-573-0828 or visit www.victoriadiocese.org.

**Gabriel Project**–Helps women experiencing a crisis pregnancy as an alternative to abortion. Victoria: Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 101 W. Convent. Light supper included. For angel workshop/training dates, contact Lisa Kainer 361-676-3264 or lisa__beysquierdo@yahoo.com; DeWitt County: Meetings are the third Monday of each month during the school year at 5:30 p.m. at the Yorktown Public Library, 103 W. Main St. Coordinators for DeWitt Chapter are Wayne and Margie Smith 361-491-0067; Lavaca County: Meets 6 p.m. (during the school year), contact Julie Kubena Lavaca County Coordinator at 361-798-3579 for dates and location. See ad, Page 10.

**Grief Ministry** – An ongoing Grief Group meets at the Holy Family Church conference room in Victoria at 7 p.m., on the first and third Thursdays each month. Adults who have experienced the death of a loved one may attend (after three months have passed). Call Sharon at 361-578-7572 before attending.

**i.d.9:16 Ministry** – For adults in their 20s and 30s, single or married. Held at Holy Family in Victoria every first Thursday of the month. Starts with 6 p.m. Mass followed by dinner and a talk live streamed from the headquarters in Michigan and fellowship. Childcare available to those who RSVP. It is open to all young adults of the diocese. For information, or to RSVP for events, e-mail id916victoria@gmail.com.

**Incaruncate Word Prayer Group** – Praise and worship 7:30-9 p.m. Mondays in the auditorium at Incarnate Word Convent, 1101 N.E. Water St. For information, contact 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. For information, contact Jennifer Ruiz at book.leslie@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Mothersofgraceolv/.

**Natural Family Planning** – NFP is the only church-approved form of family planning. For the CREIGTON MODEL Fertility Care System (CrMS) featuring NaPro TECHNOLOGY™ contact Susanne Koch in Wharton at 505-710-0903 or susannekoch614@gmail.com. Also in the Cuero area contact, Ashley Rodriguez at 361-293-0700 or ashleyfay99@gmail.com.

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

**Retrouvaille** – Retrouvaille, meaning “rediscovery,” is a marriage-healing ministry offered in the diocese to couples in difficult marriages. Contact John and Jennifer Vincent at jbvjov@sbcglobal.net or 361-580-2770; or call 800-470-2230; or visit www.helpourmarriage.org or www.retrouvaille.org.

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**Amor Meus**

Contact: Sr. Digna Vela or Sr. Emilee Eilers (361) 575-7111 / e-mail: amormeus@yahoo.com
Web site: www.amormeusspiritualitycenter.org
IWBS Convention • 1101 NE Water St. • Victoria

See page 12 for Amor Meus Events for March.

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**God’s Embrace**

For more information call (979) 561-8883 / e-mail: info@godsembrace.org
Website: www.godsembrace.com

Upcoming Events: Weekly Prayer: Mondays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Adoration in GEM Chapel, Tuesdays, noon-3:00 p.m.

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**Pilgrimages**

For more pilgrimages, see Journeys of Faith with Ceci on pg. 15.

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Do you have any calendar of events for the Lighthouse?

Submit to lighthouse@victoriadiocese.org
following her example.

Laura Sprinkle, a graduate of St. Michael Catholic School in Cuero, is currently pursuing a master’s degree in education technology leadership. She is currently a digital learning specialist for Region III Education Service Center in Victoria, coaching teachers in ways to effectively and thoughtfully incorporate technology into classrooms. She is a St. Michael parent now serving the school’s advisory committee and helping with fundraisers.

Daria Emmel was chosen by St. Michael Catholic School in Weimar for her selfless service in her community, her church, and the school. Though she describes herself as “an ordinary person who tries to help wherever help is needed” her community has called her “extraordinary” for the various talents she has shared to better the lives of the people around her.

Marie Rod graduated in 1962 from St. Philip the Apostle Catholic School in El Campo. After graduating from the University of Houston-Victoria she went on to teach for 38 years in El Campo schools, including eight years at St. Philip. As a parent, she served on the school’s PTC, Booster Club, advisory council and in many other ways. Now retired, she continues to offer her time and talent as an on-demand substitute at the school.

Carolyn Osina has been a long-time benefactor of St. Rose of Lima Catholic School in Schulenburg as a parent, parishioner, board member and employee. For the last 15 years she has worked at St. Rose as cafeteria business manager and bus driver. She has implemented cafeteria improvements while there. She is a charter member of the Friends for Catholic Education.

Henry Pesek, a retired businessman, was called “one of the greatest gifts Shiner Catholic School has.” A product of a Catholic education, he made sure his children also with through the Catholic school system and enjoys seeing them be loyal to Catholic education as well. He has been a recipient of the Mother Seton award for volunteerism for schools. Like the other honorees of 2020, he is one of the people who does not know the meaning of “no” or “I don’t have time,” when asked for help.

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