

"Fear is such a powerful emotion for humans that when we allow it to take us over, it drives compassion right out of our hearts." -- St. Thomas Aquinas



Your January Newsletter

Our Mission:

to provide counseling and spiritual direction services which are faithful to the teachings, values, and traditions of the Catholic Church.

Our Primary Services:

Evaluation and Treatment for mental illness, addictions, and spiritual distress.

Monthly Newsletter Issue #33, January 28, 2015

Mil Gracias

A thousand thanks for all of the generous end-of-the-year donations. We did not expect what we received, but it will all be put to very good use this year. Thank you letters and receipts are going out in the US mail.

Emory University Student

Here's a [good story](#) about how a college student suffering from mental illness helped to make improvements in mental health awareness on college campuses across America.



National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

NAMI offers free classes for family members of those who have mental illness. There are several NAMI chapters in the Greater Houston area. The one closest to our Stafford office is the Fort Bend Chapter. This chapter is beginning a new "[NAMI Basics](#)" class series soon for parents and caregivers which will focus on children and adolescents with mental illness. In December, NAMI released their [annual analysis](#) (this is a pdf file with graphics and links which will require time to load) of state mental health legislation. Unfortunately, many states reduced their mental health budgets last year.



Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act

This federal legislation is under construction and will be reintroduced soon by Representative Tim Murphy, who was trained as a psychologist. Read about it [here](#) and [here](#).

ACA Mental Health

The ACA was of course not designed to solve all the mental health challenges in the US healthcare system, but it is wise for us to assess the impact of the ACA on mental health care access. One problem is that there are not enough doctors and counselors accepting ACA coverage. Another potential problem has to do with insurance companies pushing back, as is suggested in [this story](#).



Hatred

Being human means that we have any number of passions and emotions which are sometimes very strong. In general these are wonderful gifts and contribute to our feeling alive and often will motivate us into action. In recent years we have observed and experienced the horrors being committed around the world in the name of the religion of Islam by extremists. This is very painful for us to see, particularly when this violence involves terrible atrocities such as murder, rape, enslavement, driving families from their homes, and the attack of and destruction of sacred religious sites. It would be easy for us today to quickly dismiss and reject the entire religion of Islam and to form a personal and collective hatred of all people of Islamic faith. We must be extremely careful here. This conflict between Muslim and Judeo-Christian believers actually has a very long history dating back many hundreds of

years...but we also have very deep common roots in our faith beliefs that can be traced back thousands of years: our shared God of Abraham. In August of 1985 St. John Paul II (then pope) said in an address to young Muslims in Morocco: “I believe that we, Christians and Muslims, must recognize with joy the religious values that we have in common, and give thanks to God for them. Both of us believe in one God, the only God, who is all justice and all mercy.” A US bishops’ committee recently [released a statement](#) about ecumenical and interreligious dialogue having to do with these current issues. When we feel hate toward something outside of our self, we must be careful that we are not unwittingly despising and rejecting something deep and hidden within our own self. Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin within our own self.



Marriage Encounter

This is a great weekend experience for couples who want to develop their relationship. Marriage Encounter began in 1952 in Spain when Fr. Gabriel Calvo started a series of conferences for married couples. There are [several dates approaching...so sign up](#) soon!

Men's A.C.T.S. Retreat

If you have not made an A.C.T.S. retreat – make a resolution to attend in 2015! St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is an active A.C.T.S. parish and has a men's retreat approaching in March. Follow [this link, for more information](#).



Save the Date for St. Teresa of Jesus

Sr. Angel of the Carmel of the Holy Trinity in New Caney is inviting the public to join in a celebration of the 500th birthday of St. Teresa of Jesus, a very special occasion for the Discalced Carmelite Order. Auxiliary Bishop Sheltz will preside at a solemn Mass at 10:00 a.m. at St. Cyril of Alexandria on Westheimer in west Houston. After Mass there will be a presentation and reception in the church hall. Events across the US are described on [this website](#).

Heart of
Worship

In You All Find
Their Home



Heart of Worship 2015

This is a powerful and highly recommended annual event hosted by and held at St. Laurence Catholic Church (Sugar Land). [Some tickets are still available](#), but don't wait too late to register because they may sell out. The 12th Annual date is Saturday, February 7th. The day begins at 11:30 a.m. and finishes with Mass and Adoration in the evening. Speakers this year are Bishop Sam Jacobs from Louisiana, Sr. Mary Guido from the Cenacle Retreat Center, and Fr. Alvaro Interiano of St. Francis de Sales parish.

Two Events of Note at the Cenacle

Author and spiritual director Tom Peery is running a men's workshop in a series of 10 meetings for men who want to improve their relationships with their spouse or other men close to them. The objective is to provide a safe place for men to practice listening and talking about themselves. Therapist Deborah Krummel is leading a retreat for women February 13-15 called "Strength for the Journey." This retreat will be a time

of sharing and renewal with other women. More information on these and other events at the Cenacle can be found [here](#).



Music of the Month Recommendation

This month, we recommend the music of St. Hildegard of Bingen. Hildegard was a Benedictine nun in Germany born at the turn of the 12th century. She was canonized long ago but recognized as a “Doctor of the Church” by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. She was a mystic, experiencing visions at an early age. She described experiencing God through all of her five senses, which is a great reminder for us of how our body can be part of our spirituality. She shared these visions with only a couple of her closest associates. We know that mystics are sometimes accused of having a mental illness. You may recall that St. Faustina of Poland was evaluated at one point by a psychiatrist who found that the devout nun was not hallucinating her encounters with Christ. St. Hildegard, like St. Faustina who is more recent, received a message from God to record these visions in writing, but St. Hildegard resisted out of humility. However, she became very ill and then finally relented. When the pope (of her time) learned that she was making record of these visions, he approved them immediately. As she wrote descriptions of these visions, her body was gradually healed. Hildegard also composed beautiful music. You can find some of it [free on YouTube](#) and probably can purchase it as well from Amazon or I-Tunes. Consider playing some St. Hildegard’s music in the background as your family enjoys Sabbath or supper together. It is quite peaceful. In next month’s newsletter, watch for our “Book of the Month” recommendation.

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