

"Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured." Isaiah 53:4a



Your March Newsletter

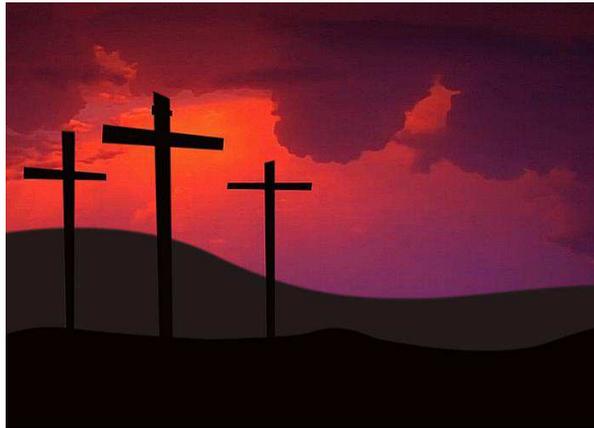
Our Mission:

to provide counseling which is 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 #35



Holy Week 2015

The Gratia Plena office will be closed for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday because this is a very sacred time of year. We hope that you will take action to make it a special time as well. There are many profound moments during Holy Week, but the crescendo is the Easter Vigil Mass which is celebrated on Saturday evening. This is the time when we bring in new members to the church in the midst of our remembrance of the Lord's Resurrection. It is a most beautiful Mass and tradition, the most important Mass of the liturgical year (yes, more than Christmas) and we encourage you to attend if you are able. Our children need to experience the Triduum as well. The stories of converts are often quite moving, and [here is a good example of a story](#) in the media that we really like. One final note on the Triduum: Tenebrae is a special service held in the early morning hours of the Triduum, as the dawn unfolds. It is a wonderful reminder for us of Christ's divine light breaking through the darkness of the

human world. Tenebrae is [celebrated at the University of St. Thomas](#), if you are curious.

Special Fund for a New Server

When you hear the word “server” some of us might think of the children who assist on the altar at Mass. However, Gratia Plena has grown enough that we need a piece of computer equipment called a “server.” In organizations with multiple workers, several computers to connect to a main computer device (the server), and even staff working outside the main office can make connections to this master computer server. For our purposes, this device must have extra security protection above those servers used by other businesses. We have consulted with Mike Campbell of A-GoGo Media, TJ Horlacher, and Neil Desai...and we really appreciate their valuable time and input. We now know the exact server that we require and just need to raise the money to purchase it. If you would like to contribute especially toward this purpose, please send in a check, use your credit card [on our website](#), or contact our Office Manager Mary Kay Hemenway. Thank you in advance for your generosity. Gratia Plena could not exist without donations from the community.

Who Today is Among the Marginalized, the Disenfranchised?

There are many groups of people who may fall into this category: the poor, ethnic minorities, the homeless, those in prison, et cetera. We don't often realize that our brothers and sisters with mental illness or addictions also fall into this group, particularly the children. Children with mental illness are often targeted for bullying. We cannot remain silent and turn our heads the other way. Saint John Paul II remarked in 1996 that “It is everyone's duty to make an active response: our actions must show that mental illness does not create insurmountable distances, nor prevent relations of true Christian charity with those who are its victims. Indeed it should inspire a particularly attentive attitude toward these people who are fully entitled to belong to the category of the poor to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs (Matthew 5:3).” Cardinal Dolan echoes this

idea in his 2012 comment that “We root for the underdog in Catholic social justice.” The starting point for inclusion is compassion and understanding, and this comes with education about mental illness and addictions, the causes and the treatment. There is always hope. Yes, for every man, every woman, every couple, and every child.



Marriage and Family

The Synod on the Family has some folks wondering if the Catholic Church will change its views on marriage and the family. Our belief is that the Church will use this opportunity to reaffirm and seek to strengthen traditional marriage and the family. We need to show others the beauty and value of marriage so that all of those in the community can better appreciate the true gift that it is. We need to put all of our best resources into marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, and marriage counseling. Building up marriage is challenging work in today’s culture, but we can do it with the amazing grace of the Holy Spirit, the giver of unity. There is hope for marriage! Read this [interesting interview](#) with Cardinal Müller.

Protecting the Family

We are receiving positive reports from families using [Pandora’s Hope router](#) for filtering the Internet to keep it safe for all those in the home. We are also hearing good feedback about [OpenDNS parental controls](#). All families need this type of protection, for the parents and for the kids.

Springtime Father/Son Program

There will be a father-son program on Saturday, April 11 from 9:00-11:30am with sign-in: 8:30am at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church, 10960 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Houston. The program is for boys ages 10-14 and their fathers or significant father-figure. The program brings fathers and sons together to look at the wonder and power of God’s plan for human

sexuality in the process of growing up and becoming a man. There is a program fee of \$35/family which includes refreshments and take-home resources. Registration is limited so please sign up soon. The programs are sponsored by the Archdiocesan Office of Adolescent-Catechesis. To register, [follow this link](#) or for more information contact Mark Ciesielski at 713-741-8792 or email him at mciesielski@archgh.org.

Upcoming Event for Couples

The annual “Together in Holiness” marriage conference for couples to be held May 2nd at St. Cecilia’s Catholic Church. [Check this link for more information.](#)

Summer Conferences for Families

“Fullness of Truth” is a nonprofit corporation that offers regional family conferences. There is an upcoming conference featuring Dr. Scott Hahn and his team, to be held down in Corpus Christi on June 27-28 and another in San Antonio September 11-13. [Follow this link for more information](#) and to register on-line.



Movie of the Month Recommendation

This month, we recommend the movie “[Stolen Summer](#).” This 2002 movie is about an Irish-American Catholic 3rd grade boy who meets up with a Jewish rabbi and then tries to convert the rabbi’s terminally ill son so that his young friend can get to heaven. This movie will likely make you laugh and cry. It is rated PG so it could be suitable for your family and it may generate a good discussion about faith and evangelization. Many good lessons here. It is on Netflix. In next month’s newsletter, watch for our “Book of the Month” recommendation.

Disclaimer: Gratia Plena and its staff do not receive any compensation or earthly benefits from recommending books, movies, music, websites, blogs, apps, et cetera...

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