

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." -- Ephesians 5:8a



Your October 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.

Our UST Grad Student

Pui Au, our graduate student intern from the University of St. Thomas was recently featured by her school! Check out her story [here](#). We are very proud of her and thankful that she is with us on staff.



In Memory of Timothy

Dr. Ken's godson Tim died on October 12th. Tim had fought with his addiction for a long time but his recovery was going really well in the past several years. What happened exactly on that Sunday is a mystery, but it proved fatal for him...as it does sadly for so many. Addiction is a horrible disease. Tim's parents asked for donations to be made to Gratia Plena in lieu of flowers, and many kind people have honored their request and we are so thankful. Please pray for the grieving family and friends...and for Tim's soul. We trust and believe that Tim will live on in his heavenly Father's presence. Tim's life has changed, but not ended. We hope to be with Tim again one day in a place where all tears are wiped away.

Mental Health Day

Pastor Rick Warren and his wife Kay organized an online event for the 2014 World Mental Health Day that was held on October 10th. They have a [good website](#) with interesting archived sessions from this event and other educational

resources. You may remember that the Warrens' son Matthew died from suicide last year, and they are now proponents of having churches reach out to the mental health needs of their congregation in new and more effective ways.

Annual Report

Our 2013 Annual Report is now available for inspection on [our website](#).

Quarterly Board Meeting

The Gratia Plena [Board of Directors](#) met on October 22nd over lunch. [Enchiludas Mexican Cafe](#) provided a tasty lunch for us, and we are very thankful for their generosity. Check them out over on Westheimer just east of Highway 6. Tell them that you appreciate their support of Gratia Plena.



It's Not Over...

We are certainly hearing a lot about part one of [the Synod on the Family](#) in Rome which was held earlier this month. Part two will occur in October 2015. The secular news media are having a great time posting all kinds of wild stories about this important and sacred event. It is important that we are not fooled, excited, or upset by anything the media might be saying right now. They have their own agenda, and the main goal of theirs is to make a profit by entertaining us. Instead of jumping to conclusions based on what we hear now, let's be patient and wise and wait a few months for more information and clarification directly from the Vatican and from our local

bishops and pastors. Keep calm and pray for holy mother church!

Egg Freezing

Infertility is a very sensitive and painful topic for many couples who would dearly want to conceive a child. There is a whole technology and field of medicine now devoted to infertility treatments of various types...many of which are not viewed as appropriate for faithful Catholics. However in the news we find a recent development in the corporate world that is rather surprising: the offering of egg freezing as an employment “benefit.” Two notable companies, Apple and Facebook, have gone public with this information, paying about \$20,000 per female employee to freeze eggs and store them. The “benefit” appears to be more for the corporation, who might be subtly [giving the message to women](#) to choose either career or family, and that the way to be a success is to postpone motherhood to a more convenient time (for the corporation). An [interesting article](#) appeared by a secular author highlighting this news but speaking to the negative psychological consequences of egg freezing.



Voting and Healthcare

Results have been released from a [summer 2014 survey](#) of about 6300 US physicians across 25 different medical specialties regarding their experience with third party payment plans. 2/3 of ACA-participating physicians reported having problems with health insurance exchange plans (ACA aka “Obamacare”), with 29% saying they have “lots of problems.” 1/3 of ACA-participating physicians report that their practice income has decreased. The ACA was created and passed by our elected officials. The next election voting opportunities are very soon. Democracy means that we do have a say in our

government...but we have to vote.

Voting and Religious Freedom

There has been an increased focus on religious freedom in recent years as the federal, state, and local government bodies (our elected officials) have begun to impose controversial laws that challenge and intrude upon the religious beliefs, values, and practices of religious organizations as well as commercial businesses owned by faithful religious men and women. In one dramatic example in the Houston area, the city council led by the mayor passed a so-called “Equal Rights” ordinance last year that was quickly met by protests from the religious community. A petition by citizens to challenge this “non-discrimination” law was organized and then thrown out by the city attorney so that the referendum could not appear on a public ballot for recall vote...which prompted a lawsuit. The latest in this political battle is that the mayor and city council have now [subpoenaed a number of prominent local pastors](#) to produce their worship service sermons from those occasions in which they have spoken to their congregations on this topic. It’s hard to believe that this is happening in America. Folks, let’s wake up and get to the polls...starting with the next elections happening now! Let’s get ourselves to the voting booth in November or now during early voting which is already underway. When we show up to vote in Texas, we’ll need to take our photo ID with us as it’s now Texas law to verify our identity when we vote. Your vote counts.

Voting and Marijuana

Maybe you are picking up on our voting theme here...More research is showing the harmful effects of marijuana. Despite political and celebrity claims that pot is “harmless,” the facts from the [past 20 years of research](#) show otherwise. There is a push to legalize marijuana across the country, state by state. This should be resisted by us, the voters, who care about the quality and value of human life and about the well-being of the community. The damaging impact on society from widespread marijuana use will be felt in a way similar to that of the

dangerous and addictive legal drug alcohol. We might get the opportunity to vote on this in our own state at some point. Please vote.

Calling for Volunteers

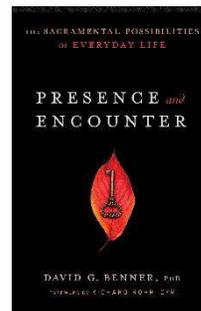
Gratia Plena is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization. As a nonprofit, donors and volunteers are critical to our mission. The involvement of the community in our work signals that the organization is valuable to the community. Foundations that may provide us with funding in the future want to know that the community believes in what we do. Right now, we could use several volunteers to help with development projects and to form a prayer committee. Contact Dr. Ken if you'd like to help Gratia Plena by volunteering.



Office Administrative Assistant

Scott has been working with us in the office providing extremely valuable administrative support to the counselors and to Dr. Ken. Scott's time will be winding down over the next couple months as he prepares to return to school in January. We are seeking someone to come aboard in his place as soon as possible, so that Scott can help with the training and transition before he leaves us. Unfortunately the pay is not great, and there are none of the usual benefits like insurance coverage. However, the team spirit at Gratia Plena is tremendous and our mission work is challenging but rewarding. This position could grow into a practice management role. Come join us! Contact Dr. Ken if you are interested.

Book of the Month Recommendation:



This month we recommend the [new book](#) by Anglican psychologist Dr. David G. Benner “Presence and Encounter: The Sacramental Possibilities of Everyday Life.” Although our current Western culture seems intent on eliminating opportunities for presence and stillness, Dr. Benner shows us how to honor the inner longing for presence and encounter as a sacred quest worth following. His study on this subject examines topics such as discerning presence, clouded presence, luminous presence, and divine presence. Chapters have suggestions for further reflection, and so the book can be useful for study by individuals or in a group discussion. In next month’s newsletter, watch for our “Movie 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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