





## 2017 Annual Report



People with mental health conditions deserve just as much support and compassion as people with physical health conditions.



"Whoever suffers from mental illness 'always' bears God's image and likeness in himself, as does every human being. In addition, he 'always' has the inalienable right not only to be considered as an image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such."

- Saint Pope John Paul II

People say,

"What can one person do? What is the sense of our small effort?"

... we can lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time; we can be responsible for the one action of the present moment.

-Dorothy Day

Good Saint Dymphna great wonder-worker in every affliction of mind and body, humbly implore your powerful intercession with Jesus through Mary, the Health of the Sick, in my present need. (Mention it.)

Saint Dymphna, martyr of purity, patroness of those who suffer with nervous and mental afflictions, beloved child of Jesus and Mary, pray to Them for me and obtain my request. (Pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary and one Glory Be.)

Saint Dymphna, Virgin and Martyr, pray for us.

GOD GRANT ME THE  
**SERENITY**  
 To Accept The Things  
 I CANNOT CHANGE  
**COURAGE**  
 To Change The  
 THINGS I CAN AND  
**WISDOM**  
 TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

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Thank you for studying and sharing our annual report!

*The printing of our 2017 Annual Report was underwritten by:*

**Richard “Dick” Hogan,  
President of the Gratia Plena Board of Directors**



*The mission of Gratia Plena is to provide mental and spiritual health services to address mental illness, addiction, marriage/family problems, and the spiritual distress that often accompanies these issues...in a manner which is faithful to the teachings, values, and traditions of the Catholic Church.*



*Our vision is to have Gratia Plena be a professionally run charitable nonprofit organization which strives to overcome barriers to healing, designed to promote wellness of the whole person to fulfill our human vocation for the glory of God and for the building of His Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven.*

*We strive to overcome the following barriers to treatment and healing:*



- ❖ *Reluctance to refer/recommend someone for help*
- ❖ *High cost of professional care*
- ❖ *Stigma (a wound that marginalizes)*
- ❖ *Race, culture, or ethnicity*
- ❖ *Religious values mismatch between the therapist and client*
- ❖ *Limited office hours and phone availability*
- ❖ *Childcare challenges*
- ❖ *Shortage of professional counselors*
- ❖ *Waiting lists or calls not returned*
- ❖ *Transportation or distance to service locations*
- ❖ *The American mindset of self-sufficiency and self-focus*
- ❖ *Our culture of death and darkness*

## A Message from Fr. Wencil Pavlovsky

Dear Dr. Buckle:

Thank you. These two little words come with profound gratitude for your ministry and for the wonderful work of Gratia Plena.

I was first made aware of the work of Gratia Plena when the counselors who were ministering out of the offices established at St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church came to introduce themselves to me here at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church. I then met you at a meeting of the priests of the Bay Area Deanery during which you informed us of the work of Gratia Plena and your hopes for the new office established on Nasa Parkway, around the corner from St. Paul the Apostle Church.

Since our initial meetings, you have facilitated a very fruitful day of prayer for our parish staff (lay and clergy). You have helped us to initiate an Alcoholics Anonymous group for our Spanish-speaking parishioners and you have counseled many of our parishioners, both English- and Spanish-speaking. As the lone priest in a parish community of approximately 3000 families, you and Gratia Plena have become my right hand. I keep your business cards handy for distribution from the confessional and in my office. The professional expertise offered by Gratia Plena complements and rounds out the ministry offered here at St. Paul the Apostle.

Thank you again. Please know that I hold you and your counselors and your families in my daily prayer. May God continue to bless you with the richness of the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

Respectfully,

Rev. Wencil C. Pavlovsky  
Pastor

## A Message from Dr. Ken

Dear Friends of Gratia Plena,

It would not be possible to reflect on the year 2017 in Houston and not end up thinking about the devastating damage from Hurricane Harvey. The families of some of our very own staff members were affected, but our staff still provided crisis support services in shelters and in the local community, as well as in our office/service locations. We worked beside volunteers from Houston but also with some from as far away as Minnesota. We received donations from Houston and as far away as Connecticut to support our response. Based on the research following Hurricane Katrina, the mental health stress of this disaster may last for years.



This disaster put more pressure on a mental health system already stretched to the limits in crisis mode in Texas. We continue to have a shortage of professional counselors, especially those who are bilingual and Catholic. Being able to locate a Catholic psychiatrist is a great challenge, and there is a dangerous shortage of psychiatrists as well. The stigma of mental illness and addictions also seems to discourage young adults from pursuing these careers in college and beyond. We must present to our youth these future career opportunities as ministry work, connect it to Christ's merciful healing, as vocations and not just jobs. These careers may not pay well financially, but they can be extremely fulfilling and rewarding as ministry work often is. It is difficult work sometimes, but some are called into it.

In this year's Annual Report, we have added a section to outline many of the barriers that Gratia Plena strives to overcome. How many healthcare offices do you know that offer appointments 66 hours a week like Gratia Plena? How many medical practices answer the phone on holidays, during the night, and on weekends and return messages promptly? It is not easy to overcome those barriers in that list, but we are doing our best. We need to throw the doors open so that suffering people can get help when they need it most.

You may also notice on the back page of this year's report that the number of our service locations is continuing to grow. This is not something that we have tried to make happen, but through God's providence and the generosity of our supporters it has been allowed to happen, and we are thankful. We don't post job openings very often, because it seems people show up and ask to work at Gratia Plena just at the right time.

In 2017, we celebrated our 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. We give thanks to God and to you for this opportunity to serve. If you are studying this Annual Report, we hope that your interest and the Holy Spirit will lead you to be a supporter of our work through prayer, financial involvement, or by volunteer work including board membership. It takes a village to address mental and spiritual health issues. Please join us. May the Lord's grace and peace be with you always.

*Dr. Ken*



## Our Programs and Services

### *Assessments and Evaluation...*

...are professional interviews sometimes using formal psychological tests, either to determine need for treatment, for legal purposes, or to gain entrance into programs, employment, and fields of study. Results of an evaluation are discussed in a language understandable to the client and/or the requesting party. When formal testing is performed, a report is also generated. Many people come to Gratia Plena for assessment and evaluation services only.

### *Psychotherapy...*

...is the most frequently used service at Gratia Plena. We offer therapeutic services to children, adolescents, young adults, adults, and older adults. We see many engaged and married couples. We work with individuals but also offer group therapy. Some clients receive a brief course of just a few therapy sessions, while others choose to work on their issues long-term. As therapy begins, an individualized change plan is developed with the input of the client. These plans are reviewed periodically to assess progress and make adjustments as needed. Like assessments and evaluations, we charge a fee for these clinical services.

### *Spiritual Direction...*

...is offered by trained and experienced lay staff or religious for individuals seeking to improve their relationship with God. Many clients are involved in both psychotherapy and spiritual direction, and some may transition from psychotherapy to spiritual direction...and vice versa. Some receive this service by itself. We accept donations for this service as opposed to fees.

### *Training...*

...is offered for new Catholic counselors. The atmosphere in our office is one of continual growth and development, as well as quality improvement. We have established a training relationship with the master's level counseling program at the University of St. Thomas and with Our Lady of the Lake University. We accept only the top candidates for our training positions and provide them with appropriate supervision and learning experiences. These special individuals are the future of the organization and are important for the community.

### *Community Outreach...*

...helps by bringing the concepts of psychological and spiritual health and well-being out to the parishes or schools where the community gathers. By presenting these ideas to a wide audience, we may help prevent problems before they occur, which is of great importance to us. Prevention programs are few in number today, as government mental health resources are focused mainly on severe mental illness and crisis management. Talking with adult and youth faith formation groups can sometimes encourage people to seek treatment when problems are in their early stages, which is when the prognosis is better before these difficulties become more serious. Some of these services are offered free of charge by Gratia Plena staff, but usually we are happy to accept a donation or stipend like other speakers.



# Our Impact in the Community

## *Community Outreach in 2017*

- We opened three new services locations, to make it easier for people to reach us.
- Assisted several Archdiocesan offices (Catholic schools, Pro-Life, Clergy Formation, etc...)
- We made visits to schools for student advocacy, and home visits for shut-ins.
- We provided “mental health first aid” at several large Catholic conferences and retreats.
- Our staff made numerous presentations at churches, schools, & other Catholic organizations.
- Many staff during Harvey recovery worked in shelters, gave talks, etc...to help minimize the traumatic effects of this widespread natural disaster.

## *Assessments and Evaluations Completed in 2017*

598 individuals, couples, and families were seen for evaluation, some in crisis

## *Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction Services Provided in 2017*

427 marriage/family counseling sessions

2,663 individual counseling sessions for mental illness or addictions

283 group counseling services for mental illness or addictions

208 spiritual direction sessions

58 hours of babysitting provided so that parents could attend counseling/spiritual direction

4,266 total outpatient services were provided to individuals, couples, and families

## *Demographics of Those Served (all years combined):*

97% described themselves as Christians

88% said that they were church-going

91% said they were Catholic

4% were older adults (65 years old and up)

65% were adults (26-64 years old)

13% were young adults (18-25 years old)

18% were adolescents/children (17 years old and under)

55% were engaged, married, or remarried

5% were divorced and 1% widowed

38% were single (never married)

2% were clergy, religious, or consecrated

53% of clients were multi-cultural ethnic, 47% were Euro-ethnic

Over 1750 clients have been seen from over 150 Catholic parishes in 6 dioceses

# Funding

Our income was from two sources:

- \$257,899..... from Fees for Services
- \$104,109..... from Individual and Parish Donations; Private Grants\*

\*Includes a truck donated to help with our Harvey disaster response

Our expenses were as follows:

- \$42,869 ..... for Rent and Utilities
- \$260,831 ..... for Payroll\*\*
- \$4,762 ..... for Bank Charges (largely related to credit card processing)
- \$2,279..... for Advertising and Promotion
- \$15,169.....for Office Supplies and other Operational Costs
- \$4,784..... for Information Technology (mainly EMR)

\*\*Payroll for 15 (full-time and part-time) staff members, including payroll taxes



## 2017 Board of Directors

**Richard “Dick” Hogan** (President)

Parishioner at St. Laurence; former President of Solvay Chemicals USA; champion of nonprofit organizations like Parks Youth Ranch

**Roger Peters** (Vice President)

Parishioner at St. Laurence; former engineering manager at Texas Instruments

**Melanie Burrhus** (Secretary)

Parishioner at St. Faustina; Business Manager at Gratia Plena

**Lloyd Waguespack, CPA** (Treasurer)

Parishioner at St. Theresa (Sugar Land); accountant/bookkeeper at St. Cecilia

**Fr. Dat Hoang**

Pastor of St. Faustina in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; former Vocations Director

**Charles, DeJohn, MD, Ph.D.**

Psychiatrist, Parishioner at St. Vincent de Paul

**Kenneth Buckle, Psy.D.** (Emeritus Board Member, nonvoting)

Psychologist; Parishioner at St. Laurence; Founder & Executive Director of Gratia Plena



**Thérèse Office: 10707 Corporate Drive, Suite 135, Stafford, TX 77477**

Started in 2012 on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, just with a small, single room on Dairy Ashford. Moved to the Atrium Building on Corporate Drive in Stafford in 2013, offering three rooms with a private waiting area. Moved next door to the Churchill Building in 2016 with five rooms, an admin area, and a waiting area including a play area for children, with our full array of mental health and spiritual direction services offered in this location. Is named for Saint Thérèse of Lisieux since the parish community of St. Theresa and St. Laurence parishes in Sugar Land have been strong supporters and a great help in getting Gratia Plena off to a good start five years ago. This office is very near major freeways and on the city line of Sugar Land. It serves as our main office where all billing and administration is managed. Multiple counselors, spiritual directors, and admin staff work in this office. It mainly serves the Western Deanery parishes.

**Cabrini Office: 1100 NASA Parkway, Suite 103, Houston, TX 77058**

Started in March of 2015 on the Feast of the Annunciation at the invitation of Fr. Frank Fabj, pastor of St. Frances Cabrini parish. He provided a temporary space in the priests' sacristy that is now part of the parish hall. This office moved off of the church campus in November of 2016 to a commercial building with two offices and a waiting area, but we elected to continue using the name of St. "Mother" Cabrini. This location is near Interstate 45 South and very close to St. Paul parish. We have four counselors working part-time in this office. It mainly serves the Bay Area Deanery parishes.

**Sacred Heart Location: 704 Old Montgomery Rd., Conroe, TX 77301**

Started in January of 2017 with one counselor and added a second counselor in May. Meeting on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 2016, Fr. Philip Wilhite of Sacred Heart (Conroe) and Dr. Ken laid out the plans to bring Gratia Plena to the northern region of the Archdiocese. Following a similar strategy as we did with the Cabrini office, we are starting by borrowing an office in the Parish Life Center temporarily until we are able to move off-campus. This location is near Interstate 45 North. We are hoping to expand services to rural areas from this location which mainly serves the Northern Deanery parishes. Praised be the Sacred Hearts!

**Thomas Aquinas Office: 3303 Louisiana St., Suite 210, Houston, TX 77006**

Opened in August of 2017 with one counselor on the Feast of the Assumption. This office is in a borrowed space of the Advance Houston suite, located near Holy Rosary parish and the University of St. Thomas and Houston Community College campuses. This office will be able to serve the downtown and midtown areas in the Central Deanery, for those who either live or work in these areas, as well as Catholic students at UST and HCC. We hope to move to a more permanent location in this area when we are able to fund it with the help of donors.

**Anthony of Padua Location: 7801 Bay Branch Drive, The Woodlands, TX 77382**

Started in October of 2017 with our two part-time counselors who are also working out of the Sacred Heart office. We are borrowing office space in the Parish Life Center at St. Anthony of Padua parish, at the invitation of the pastor Fr. Tom Rafferty and clergy there. This parish serves the San Jacinto Deanery locations.

**Cecilia Office: 911 Bunker Hill Road, Suite 117, Houston, TX 77024**

Started in March of 2018 due to the kindness of St. Cecilia parish, we have received use of an office suite in the quiet little Bishop Rizzotto Building across the street. We are currently renovating the space so it will be suitable for our needs but counselors have already started seeing clients there. Like most of our offices, we are thankful to be located near a major freeway to increase access, in this case I-10 Katy Freeway near the Beltway 8 West and the Northwest Deanery parishes. We have already been receiving referrals from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Cecilia, and Holy Name Retreat Center. We believe this location will quickly become very busy.

**John of the Cross Location: 20000 TX-494 Loop, New Caney, TX 77357**

Started in May of 2018 at the invitation of the parish. This location is very close to Highway 59 North and serves the areas of far Northeast Houston, including some parishes of the San Jacinto Deanery. We are striving with your support, to bring mental/spiritual health services to the rural, underserved areas where these services are difficult or sometimes impossible to find. Sts. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila...pray for us!