

## Gratia Plena May 2022 Newsletter

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To: Dr. Ken Buckle <drken@gratiaplenacounseling.org>

**"Go and teach all nations, says the Lord; I am with you always, until the end of the world."**

**Matthew 28:19a, 20b**



## The Monthly News

## **OUR MISSION**

is to provide mental and spiritual health services for mental illnesses, addictions, and marriage/family problems and the spiritual distress that usually accompanies them...in a manner that is faithful to the teachings, values, and traditions of the Catholic Church.

## **OUR PRIMARY SERVICES**

are evaluation and intervention for people of all ages, ethnic groups, and religions, in several modalities (individual, couples, families, groups). Our all-Catholic workers are also available for presentations in the community and other special projects when requested.



## May 2022 Edition

### NEWS FROM GRATIA PLENA

#### **Mental Health Month Winds Down: Soothe the Stigma**

Ever since the great stress that came from the COVID pandemic, it has become common knowledge that our mental health in the United States is in poor shape. It has been hard to deny it. Tens of millions of people in the United States have some depression, and tens of millions more anxiety. Tens of millions more have addictions. Many have addictions and mental illness together. Families are in disarray, and marriages unstable. There is violence in communities close to home.

Anger, resentment, and division have us against each other, instead of working together. We are thinking of ourselves instead of considering others and their needs. Evil has become bold and less hidden. People are forgetting God and His great mercy and His commandment to love each other.

But all is not lost. Many good people are working selflessly for healing in the community, in marriages, in families, and in individuals. There are many who are committed to following Christ even in these most difficult times. The Church is standing strong in the face of attack. Random acts of kindness do quietly occur.

Since 1949, the United States has celebrated Mental Health Month every May. The purpose is to raise awareness about mental illness and encourage people to receive consultations and screenings to see if treatment may be helpful. There are many reasons and barriers, but the feeling of stigma is a significant one. Gratia Plena's campaign for this year is called "Soothe the Stigma." Stigma is a feeling of being wounded or afflicted that might cause one to want to hide or stay apart from the community out of shame. We are focusing on this theme this year to encourage people to understand that mental illness is common and not necessarily due to something you might have done or not done, and that reaching for help is not at all a sign of weakness. Let's "Sooth the Stigma" together so that nobody is left hurting in hiding. Use the red button below to donate to our campaign. All proceeds go toward our work of mercy in providing mental and spiritual health services to the community regardless of ability to pay. We thank all of those who have contributed this month!

[Donate](#)

#### **Tragedy in Uvalde**

The recent deadly attack on innocent school children just before summer break has caused such a landslide of emotions in the community, from anger to confusion to sadness to guilt to fear. We hear about mass shootings so often now unfortunately that we can easily become numb to it or just want to turn away and hide from the horror. Imagining the pain of the affected families and all the surviving teachers and children at the school may leave us physically ill. It is our human nature, with the good rational mind that God gave us, that commonly leads us to ask "Why?" Why harm children? Why do these painful events continue to occur? Why do people do such a thing? Why are people fighting with each other about a tragedy like this? Why doesn't God step in and prevent these horrible events from happening?

Detectives and psychologists will investigate the mind post-mortem of the young man that pulled the trigger. They may be able to identify the mentality and emotionality that contributed to the act, as they are often able to do in the post-analysis. There will be lots of speculation in the news and many experts interviewed. Various groups will point fingers at each other. The blame and asking questions are logical outcomes in the aftermath, but they likely will not get us to the healing we need as a community and as individuals. Anger cannot heal anger. Doing nothing cannot lead to change. A much better question is: "What do we do now?" We can ask this question of God and invite the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to speak to us to guide us. Here are three things we can do now. There are certainly more than just these three.

First, we always need to draw closer to God. Many of the difficulties we experience in our culture today are because we have collectively moved away from God. We think we know better. We think leaving God out of our lives will give us more freedom. We don't want to be tied down to morality. We don't have time for God. We think God doesn't care about us. Most of the reasons for our distance from God have to do with our stubborn pride. We desperately need to return to God with sincere remorse and repentance if we want peace and healing in our culture and communities and in our own hearts.

Second, we need to learn how to be kind, compassionate, and considerate of each other. The aspect of building character, and the focus on character in children (and adults) has been missing from our vocabulary and human formation. Children can be very loving to each other at times, in a most beautiful and miraculous way, but they can also be quite cruel to each other. This bullying and harassment can leave deep wounds at an early age. Where do they learn to be mean to each other? Largely by what they see from us adults, especially those closest to them in the family. They will hurt each other if adults don't intervene and teach them what results from being mean and instead how to be loving and compassionate and have empathy. If we want children to be good to each other, we need to relearn how to do this as adults, and then we can better teach children the kindness they thrive upon. Jesus made His instruction to us very clear: love each other. This wasn't an afterthought. He was serious. We need to listen and follow through today starting with ourselves in everything we do.

Third, we need to root out anger/resentment and division and chase away any desire for revenge. These are toxins to our mental, physical, spiritual, and social health. Any time we spot these in ourselves or in our groups, we need to put a spotlight on what's happening and resolve it as quickly as possible. When we have wounds that are unaddressed, we will likely harm others and experience more harm ourselves. Forgiveness is very misunderstood, but it is key to our Christian faith. Gratitude is also key to our Christian faith. We have much more in common than not. We are one body, and we can be stronger together than apart. We are expected to forgive because God has first shown great mercy toward us. It is not optional. Letting go of the need to control helps us stay in our serenity.

In conclusion, let us be clear about one thing. Blaming mental illness for violence is incorrect. The research clearly and easily proves that most people with mental illness do not harm others. They are far more likely to be harmed by others in their vulnerable state. To blame mental illness for mass shootings increases the stigma of having a mental illness. Is it possible that a mass shooter was mentally disturbed? Yes, it is in fact likely, but you cannot say that the mental illness caused the act because in most cases it does not. We must work urgently improve our mental health care system and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and treatment.

Here are some articles from the US Department of Veteran Affairs regarding trauma:

- [Resources for Survivors and the Public Following Disaster and Mass Violence](#)
- [What to Expect in the Wake of Mass Violence](#)
- [Racial Trauma](#)
- [Media Coverage of Traumatic Events](#)
- [Trauma Reminders: Anniversaries](#)

Counseling is available for anyone affected by this tragedy.

## **Changing Abortion Laws**

There is a good chance that the federal law allowing abortion since the 1970s will be taken down this summer. The truth is that the Supreme Court is shifting the decision about abortion to the state level. Each state will pass their own laws. Some states will allow the killing of babies before and at birth, which is certainly a sign of evil at work. Other states will outlaw abortion completely.

Those caught up in promoting the evil of abortion will protest the Supreme Court decision with great anger, attempting to spread many lies about abortion. One lie is that abortion is a necessary health care service. [Abortion is not health care](#) and has no place in health care. It harms, and a doctor's oath is to "first do no harm." A doctor's responsibility is to the mother and to her developing child. Research has found that abortion dramatically increases the mental health problems of women and creates trauma. It also may negatively impact fathers and other family members.

A large number of abortions now occur at home or in hotels. Women are given chemicals that cause the abortion to happen later. The trauma and medical/physical problems from these pills may occur when the woman is completely alone, which is very dangerous. Women who take the pills and begin to quickly have regret about it and change their minds, can contact an OB/GYN. OB/GYNs have a good rate of success reversing the effects of these toxic chemicals. [Read more here](#). Let us pray for a complete end to abortion and capital punishment and suicide. Let us honor human life with dignity.

For women (and men) who have had experienced pain from abortions, there is hope for healing through Catholic counseling and through programs like [Rachel's Vineyard retreats](#). Address the grief and shame and be free. No one will condemn you. It is not our place to do so.

## **King David's Men Group**

After a successful run during the six Saturdays of Lent this year, we are offering another six-session series during the summer for men who desire improvement in their sexual integrity (pornography, masturbation, fidelity to marriage, et cetera). We will have three meetings in June (15, 22, 29) and three meetings in July (6, 13, 20). The cost is \$150 total for all sessions paid at registration. The group will meet on Wednesdays starting at our Cecilia Office on Bunker Hill Road in west Houston. Meetings are from 7-8pm. [[info@gratiaplenacounseling.org](mailto:info@gratiaplenacounseling.org)]Contact the office using this link to reserve a spot. Men, don't allow these issues to continue hang over you like a dark cloud. There is hope for healing, taking you from shame to grace. This is likely a change that you cannot accomplish on your own. You will need God's help and the support and encouragement of other men. Give it a try.

## **St. Joan's Girls Group**

Once again, this summer, Gratia Plena is offering a six-session support group for teenage girls in the spirit of St. Joan of Arc. Our theme is "Coping Skills 101" which teaches how to manage emotions, stress, and relationships. This summer program led by our young adult female counselors was started years ago when we saw the research evidence that the rate of depression was high and increasing annually for teenage girls, much more so than for adolescent boys. The cost is \$150 total for all sessions paid at registration, but we have some scholarship money available due to a kind donor. [[info@gratiaplenacounseling.org](mailto:info@gratiaplenacounseling.org)]Contact the office using this link to reserve a spot. The six Saturday sessions are: June 18 and 25, then July 9, 16, 23, and 30. [See the flyer here to share at your parish or through social media](#). [See also this promotional video which you can share](#).

## THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

### **Come Holy Spirit**

Are you ready for Pentecost? This is one of the great feast days of the Church, celebrating the occasion of the Holy Spirit falling down upon the apostles and disciples of Jesus following His Ascension into heaven after the Resurrection. Do you know the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit? One way to grow in the Spirit is to make a novena of prayers leading up to Pentecost. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit is a religious order of 3000 priests working throughout the world. They offer a [novena resource on their website](#) in multiple languages: English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Start the novena on May 27th this year. Gratia Plena's chaplain Fr. Michael Gray, C.S.Sp. is from this religious order.

### **RCIA is now OCIA**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) will with Vatican approval, soon be called the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA). The US Bishops recently approved the name change and a revised English edition. Also, the terminology of "candidate" used previously will be replaced with "inquirer," "catechumen" and "elect" depending on where the adult is in the OCIA process. [Read more here](#). If you are interested in becoming a member of the Catholic Church or need to catch up on some missed sacraments such as Confirmation, contact your local parish this summer.

### **St. Michael's Center for Spiritual Renewal**

The Center is a nonprofit Catholic organization in Washington DC that prays with people who are spiritually suffering and in need of healing and deliverance. The Center conducts spiritual education workshops and trains clergy, religious, and laity. [On their website](#) are prayer resources to be used by specific groups (such as prayers only for clergy, or prayers only for exorcists, or prayers that the laity can use). They also [post video recordings](#) of prayer and education sessions. The next live prayer session is Monday, June 27th, which requires free registration in advance. Msgr. Stephen Rossetti is the chief exorcist and is a psychologist. The healing of our wounds by Jesus often involves a combination of psychological and spiritual interventions.

## RAISING AWARENESS

### **On Being Healed**

A testimony about having mental illness personally and in the family. [See the article here](#).

### **Collaboration with Law Enforcement**

It is common for law enforcement officers to respond to mental health emergencies. [This article](#) contains an interview with some of the peace officers who respond to these calls.

### **Trouble with TikTok**

The app showing brief video clips is very popular among young people, but there are dangers that parents need to know. The app is currently under federal investigation for child sexual abuse material. [Learn more here](#).

## RESEARCH

### Complete Sequence

In a huge international collaborative effort, scientists have compiled the most complete map yet of more than a million human cells. Since the initial release in 2000, mapping the human genome was nearly finished, however the most difficult pieces remained a puzzle due to technical limitations at that time. Scientists have now a complete human haplotype, but even it does not capture the full diversity of human genetic variation. This more complete map will help us better understand human health, diseases, and treatments. This accomplishment is a testimony to what can happen when nations and scientists work together while putting their politics aside. The human body is a beautiful, miraculous, and mysterious creation.

## COLLABORATIONS

**Gratia Plena collaborates with the following fantastic organizations (in alphabetical order)**

### Adore Ministries

**The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Family Life Ministry**

**The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Office of Pro-Life Activities**

**The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Secretariat for Clergy Formation**

**The Harry S. and Isabel C. Cameron Foundation**

**Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston**

**Divine Mercy University**

**Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province**

**Foundation for Life**

**The George Foundation**

**Lamar University**

**The Merek Family Foundation**

**Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church (Rosenberg)**

**Prince of Peace Catholic Community (Houston)**

**Rachel's Vineyard of Houston**

**Sacred Heart Catholic Church (Conroe)**

**San Jose Clinic (Midtown and Rosenberg)**

**St. Cecilia Catholic Community (Houston)**

**St. Faustina Catholic Church (Fulshear)**

**St. Laurence Catholic Church (Sugar Land)**

**The Scanlan Foundation**

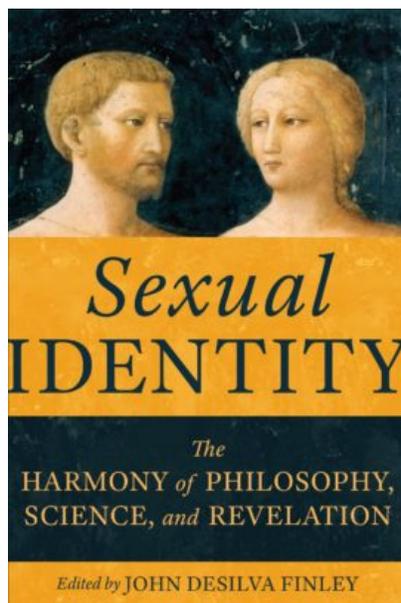
**The Stella Maris Center**

**The University of St. Thomas (Houston)**

## IN THE COMMUNITY

### Upcoming Events of Interest

- May 29: The Ascension of the Lord
- May 30: Memorial Day: Gratia Plena Offices Closed
- May 31: Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- June 1: Memorial of St. Justin, Martyr
- June 3: Memorial of St. Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs
- June 4: Pentecost Celebration Mass and Social at UST (Congregation of the Holy Spirit)  
[somasptx@gmail.com]RSVP
- June 5: Pentecost!
- June 6: Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church
- June 11: Memorial of St. Barnabas, Apostle
- June 12: Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
- June 13: Memorial of St. Anthony of Padua, Priest and Doctor
- June 17-19: [Young Adults Catholic Retreat](#) at Holy Name Passionist Retreat Center
- June 18: St. Joan's Girls Group for teenage girls starts. [Flyer here](#). [Video here](#).
- June 19: Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
- June 21: Memorial of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Religious
- June 23: Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist
- June 24: Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
- June 25: Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- June 28: Memorial of St. Irenaeus, Bishop and Martyr
- June 29: Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, Apostles
- July 4: Independence Day: Gratia Plena Offices Closed
- July 15-17: [Catholic Silent Retreat](#) at Holy Name Passionist Retreat Center
- July 15-17: [Avila Summit summer conference](#)
- July 29-30: [New Life Remarriage Retreat](#) (from Stella Maris), at St. Paul the Apostle parish (Nassau Bay)
- October 21-22: [New Life Remarriage Retreat](#) (from Stella Maris), at St. Maximilian Kolbe parish (Jersey Village)



## Book of the Month Recommendation

This month we recommend the book "Sexual Identity: The Harmony of Philosophy, Science, and Revelation." Parents take note and educate yourselves. Have "man" and "woman" become meaningless categories? Public promotion of transgender identities, same-sex marriage, and surrogate parenthood indicate that we no longer view male and female as central to human flourishing. Perhaps man and woman amount to nothing more than one's own self-expression. Many intuitively resist such a view but feel unable to respond in light of "woke" rhetoric from media-driven voices carrying the apparent blessings of science.

We need to recall who and what we are. This new book, to be released in June 2022, takes up anew the questions "What is a man?" and "What is a woman?" Taking a holistic approach, the book is co-authored by experts from different fields: philosophy, obstetrics and gynecology, endocrinology, psychology, plastic surgery, and theology. For the sake of accessibility, the style is thoughtful but not academic. Each chapter includes review points along with suggestions for further reading.

The authors include recognized practitioners in their fields who have spoken nationally and internationally to audiences concerned with today's crisis over the meaning of sexuality.

This book assembles these voices into a coherent whole. Written by experts for non-specialists, it offers a comprehensive vision of the human sexual identity, male and female. It offers much-needed wisdom to see through the deceptions that afflict our time.

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As always, if you purchase books or movies on Amazon, be sure to log in to "AmazonSmile" with your charity set to "Gratia Plena" and we will receive a portion of the sale as a donation with no extra cost to you. Thank you!

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

### **WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR MISSION!**

#### **Volunteers are Needed for the Following Work:**

- We are hiring faithful Catholic counselors and spiritual directors. These are part-time positions to start. We especially are interested in bilingual individuals (English/Spanish). Contact Dr. Ken if interested.
- We can always use full-time or part-time volunteer receptionists at our four branch offices (NASA area, The Woodlands area, Memorial area, and Upper Kirby area). We provide the training, and you can add this experience to your resume for future healthcare professions work/study. This is a great position for a Psychology undergrad student. Contact Maria if interested.

Call or email the main office. Thank you for being part of our team!

 Facebook  Instagram  Twitter  LinkedIn

## KEEP UP WITH GRATIA PLENA

### On Social Media

We don't recommend that anyone spend a whole lot of time on social media, but maybe you can briefly check our social media channels (see links above) occasionally to see what we've got going on and the messages we share with the public. Please like, subscribe, and follow Gratia Plena and share our links with your friends and family. This helps you stay connected with us and at the same time helps people in the community to locate mental and spiritual health assistance through the increased visibility of Gratia Plena on the Internet. Thank you!

#### Contact Us:

(832) 532-0129 (office land line)

info@gratiaplenacounseling.org

www.gratiaplenacounseling.org

#### Locations:

##### **St. Thérèse Office:**

10707 Corporate Drive, Suite 135, Stafford, TX 77477 (main office on the edge of Sugar Land also serving the Stafford, Missouri City, and Richmond/Rosenberg areas)

##### **St. (Mother) Cabrini Office:**

1110 NASA Parkway, Suite 111, Houston, TX 77058 (Clear Lake, Pearland, Friendswood areas)

##### **St. Thomas Aquinas Office:**

3100 Richmond Avenue, Suite 210, Houston, 77098 (Upper Kirby, Montrose areas near University of St. Thomas)

##### **St. Cecilia Office:**

911 Bunker Hill Rd, Bishop Rizzotto Building Suite G117, Houston, TX 77024 (Katy, Spring Branch, Memorial areas)

##### **St. (Padre) Pio Office:**

26410 Oak Ridge Drive, Suite 115, Spring, TX 77380 (The Woodlands, Spring, Conroe areas)

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