



SDNB

Salina Diocesan News Bulletin <http://salinadiocese.org/home/sdnb>

Volume 419

December 2015

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

PRIESTS ADVENT RENEWAL DAY is set for December 1, 2015 starting at 10 a.m. at the Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life in Victoria.

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patronal Feast day of the United States of America is celebrated on Tuesday December 8th and is a Holy Day of Obligation. Chancery will be closed.

NATIONAL NIGHT OF PRAYER FOR LIFE is December 8, 2015, 8 p.m. – 12 a.m.

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS depends on an annual appeal to support our aging religious women and men. The collection takes place on the weekend of December 12-13, 2015. Please see my letter dated November 2014 which was included with last month's SDNB as well as refer to the November 27th issue of *The Register* regarding this important appeal, or you may go to the web site www.usccb.org/nrro or www.retiredreligious.org for more information.

THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD on January 1st is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Chancery will be closed December 31st and January 1st, 2015,

CLERGY RENEWAL DAYS – are set for January 25-28, 2016 at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita. Please see the Continuing Education Office section for more details.

THE PERSONNEL BOARD will be meeting in January to discuss future assignments for priests in the diocese. Prior to this meeting we need input from any priest who is of retirement age and may be considering retirement next July 1st. We also welcome input from those priests whose terms are expiring in their current assignment, or priests who desire to move prior to the expiration of their term. Please notify Bishop Weisenburger in writing of your preference regarding future assignments if any of these circumstances apply to you.

The Personnel Board will be meeting on Tuesday, Jan 26th of January Renewal Days. As has been the custom in the past, any priest who wishes to visit personally with the Board is welcome to do so. Please notify Bishop Weisenburger or Fr. Barry Brinkman of your desire to do so and we will meet with you during our January gathering in Wichita.

BULLETIN INSERTS (English and Spanish)

ALERT..... Religious Sisters throughout the United States are working tirelessly against Human Trafficking and information about trafficking in general. They are currently working with all the Dioceses in the United States for their assistance in promoting an awareness of this most important concern affecting so many across the world. For December of 2015 and then each quarter for 2016 all Catholic Churches are being asked to insert monthly inserts into their bulletins. Below you will find inserts for each of the first four months – (December, January, February and March). Your assistance in promoting this important concern with your parishioners in appreciated. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. IT TAKES ALL OF US. Thank you!

ENGLISH

DECEMBER – ALERT. Ending slavery is everyone’s work. U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) is a collaborative, faith-based network that offers educational resources, information about access to survivors’ services, and engages in advocacy in an effort to eradicate modern-day slavery. Visit the web site: **sistersagainstrafficking.org**

JANUARY – ALERT. January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness month. Women, men and children in the U.S. and around the world are subjected to forced labor, domestic servitude and the sex trade at the hands of human traffickers. U.S. Catholic Sisters are working together to end this crime. Learn more about it at **sistersagainstrafficking.org**. Ending Slavery is everyone’s work.

FEBRUARY – ALERT. February 8 is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese girl who was enslaved at the age of 7 and named Bakhita, “Fortunate One”, by her captor. She experienced the physical and moral humiliations of slavery. St. Bakhita, canonized in 2000, is considered the patroness of kidnapped and trafficked children. Pray to St. Bakhita to protect children, especially those who are exploited for sex or labor. For prayer resources, visit: **sistersagainstrafficking.org**. Ending Slavery is everyone’s work.

MARCH – ALERT. Drugs, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, and arms are multi-billion dollar businesses in the world today. Human trafficking is taking persons by force, fraud, or coercion and exploiting them for sex or labor. Learn more about this crime against women, men and children at **sistersagainstrafficking.org** (FAQs) or visit our Facebook page (US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking). Ending Slavery is everyone’s work.

SPANISH

ATENCIÓN. [Agradecemos su ayuda.](#) Nos gustaría agregar esta información al mayor número de boletines parroquiales como sea posible durante todo el año para que los feligreses sepan de las *Hermanas Católicas Contra la Trata de Personas* y del tráfico en general. Los párrafos informativos que verán abajo son para ser incluidos en los boletines parroquiales para cada uno de los cuatro siguientes meses: diciembre, enero, febrero y marzo. ESTA LABOR NOS INCUMBE A TODOS.

MUCHAS GRACIAS.

DICIEMBRE – ATENCIÓN. El fin de la esclavitud es trabajo de todos. Las *Hermanas Católicas Contra la Trata de Personas* (USCSAHT) es una red de colaboración, basada en la fe, que ofrece recursos educativos e información sobre el acceso a los servicios de supervivencia y defensa para erradicar la esclavitud moderna. Visite el sitio web: **sistersagainstrafficking.org**

ENERO – ATENCIÓN. Enero es el mes nacional de la esclavitud y de la trata de personas. Mujeres,³ hombres y niños en los Estados Unidos y en todo el mundo están sometidos a trabajos forzados, servidumbre doméstica y al comercio sexual a manos de los traficantes de personas. Las *Hermanas Católicas* están trabajando unidas para poner fin a este crimen. Aprenda más al respecto visitando: sistersagainstrafficking.org. *Poner fin a la esclavitud es un trabajo de todos.*

FEBRERO – ATENCIÓN. El 8 de febrero es el día de San Josefina Bakhita, una niña sudanesa que fue esclavizada a la edad de 7 y fue llamada por su captor: *Bakhita*, "Afortunada". Ella experimentó las humillaciones físicas y morales de la esclavitud. Santa Bakhita, fue canonizada en el 2000 y es considerada la patrona de los niños secuestrados y de las víctimas de la trata. Oremos a Santa Bakhita para que proteja a los niños, especialmente aquellos que son explotados sexualmente o como mano de obra. Para recursos de oración, visite: sistersagainstrafficking.org. *Poner fin a la esclavitud es un trabajo de todos.*

MARZO – ATENCIÓN. Las drogas, la TRATA DE PERSONAS y las armas son por hoy una industria de miles de millones de dólares. La trata de personas está tomando personas a la fuerza, por el fraude o por coerción para explotarlos sexualmente o como mano de obra. Para recibir más información sobre este crimen contra las mujeres, hombres y niños, visite: sistersagainstrafficking.org (FAQs) o visite nuestra página de Facebook (*US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking*). *Poner fin a la esclavitud es un trabajo de todos.*

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

SACRAMENTAL RECORDS: The information contained in the Sacramental registers relating to individuals is highly privileged. Sharing it with third parties is a violation of their privacy in both canon and civil law. For this reason, intentionally or negligently turning over Sacramental records could result in substantial trouble in civil (State) law.

Pastors and parish secretaries may only issue copies of baptismal certificates, marriage certificates, and other Sacramental records for the individuals involved (named in the records) and at their own request. Of course, parents and legal guardians may request the records on behalf of under-age minors. Sacramental records may never be released to third parties (such as genealogy researchers, etc.). The *only* exception is to turn them over to authorized Diocesan personnel periodically for copying. There are absolutely no other exceptions.

Any request for viewing Sacramental records outside these parameters must be brought to the prior attention of Pamela Sullivan, Chancellor and Diocesan Attorney. Her email address is pam.sullivan@salinadiocese.org

MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL

The new procedural law issued by Pope Francis (the Motu Proprio *Mitis Inudex Dominus Iesus*) on the declaration of nullity of marriage becomes effective on December 8, 2015. This does not change or alter the initial stages for a person petitioning the Bishop to investigate the possible invalidity of his or her marriage. For priests, parish minister and others assisting a person, this means a person will still need to complete the formal petition as well as compose a narrative following the outline provided by the tribunal. The documents required in the past also need to be collected (i.e. proof of baptism - if baptized, marriage license, civil divorce decree) as well as potential witness names who can provide testimony. Once all the information is collected, only then can the particular petition or case be evaluated with regards to whether it follows the ordinary process or qualifies for the briefer process that Pope Francis created. Several conditions must be met before a case can qualify for the briefer process as outlined by the Pope. One condition is that both parties (petitioner and respondent) must consent to the nullity process. A non-

communicative respondent precludes this option entirely. More information will be forth coming as we⁴ educate ourselves about the changes in the procedures. -- Fr. Barry Brinkman JCL

PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

Missionary Childhood Association: Parishes are again invited to publicize this appeal, related to the parish church nativity scene. If your parish wishes to participate in the MCA appeal this year but doesn't have materials (a placard explaining the collection, a bulletin blurb, and/or a master copy of a prayer card) please contact Renee at the chancery. Contributions should be forwarded to the chancery shortly after the close of the Christmas season on Sunday, January 10, 2016.

OFFICE OF NEW EVANGELIZATION

The Jubilee Year of Mercy begins on Tuesday, December 8, 2015. The Liturgy Office is providing parishes with General Intercessions to be used at Immaculate Conception Masses (see attachment, included). These intercessions will offer a connection of the jubilee's universal observance with the parishes.

Diocesan jubilee pilgrimage doors are being dedicated/opened to begin the jubilee year at Sacred Heart Cathedral and St. Fidelis Basilica. More details are coming about the steps required to gain the associated indulgence for pilgrims to these sacred locations. Also included with this information will be a simplified explanation of indulgences and their benefit.

Lenten parish education and spirituality resources

For small group faith-sharing:

- Disciples on the Journey (for small group faith-sharing) with excerpts from The Joy of the Gospel by Pope Francis. <http://disciplesonthejourney.org/> ; call toll free: 1-866-590-3688 email: dj@disciplesonthejourney.org. Available in English and Spanish.

For individual reading or discussion groups:

- Rediscover Jesus by Matthew Kelly, from Beacon Publishing, 2015; <http://cart.dynamiccatholic.com/Free-Rediscover-Jesus-by-Matthew-Kelly-p/1rj-sc.htm>
- Doorway to Mercy by Ann Naffziger, ACTA Publications, 2015; also available from The Pastoral Center <http://products.pastoral.center/a/a1125/1/preview/preview.pd>
-

Still coming:

- Year of Mercy Examination of Conscience to be made available to penitents (perhaps at church entrances or in weekend bulletins) to aid in preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the jubilee year.
- An example of how parishes could highlight the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy in a jubilee year-long "time-release" format of Thank-Act-Reflect.
- Information about the Jubilee Year vicariate Masses (2016 Sunday afternoons, March 13 (Victoria), August 21 (Cathedral), August 28 (Colby), and September 11 (St. Thomas More, Manhattan).
- Information about The Institute (formerly known as "The Summer Institute") addressing the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy at Wichita's Spiritual Life Center, April 29-30, 2016.
- Information about the Day of Mercy (Sunday, October 9, 2016) when the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available simultaneously all across our diocese.

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TOTUS TUUS: If you would like to reserve a week for this program in summer 2016 for your parish please call Karen Taylor. All weeks except June 6-10 and June 20-24 have openings.

VIRTUS: Please make sure all your teachers, Religious Education Coordinators, and Youth Ministers are up to date on the VIRTUS and Background Check requirements. A Background Check is good for five years. Records need to be kept up to date in the local parish. For questions contact Sr. Carolyn Juenemann or Wendy, 785-827-8746, in the Office of Safety and Security.

OFFICE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

DIOCESAN CYO CONVENTION: April 9 and 10, 2016, St. Mary Grade School Gym, Salina.

JR. CYO CAMP: May 28-31, 2106, Rock Springs Ranch, Junction City. Youth able to attend are 6th, 7th, and 8th graders this current school year.

PRAYER AND ACTION: Host parishes are needed (one in the east and one in the west) for summer 2016. Please encourage your church community to consider this program for your youth. If you have questions contact Ellsworth and Stockton parishes for their feedback. Call Karen Taylor if you would like to host Prayer and Action in your parish.

OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE

SINGLE PARENT NETWORKER is usually relevant for all parents, not just Single Parents. Many of the articles pertain to all parents. Please distribute to your Family Life Coordinator.

FOCCUS INVENTORY TRAINING: There has been interest shown in having another FOCCUS inventory training. We will conduct another training in the near future. Please contact us at 785-827-8746, Ext. 40 or familylife@salinadiocese.org if you are interested in being included in the FOCCUS training.

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER DATES FOR 2015-2016

Feb. 19-21, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria
 Mar. 11-13, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria
 Apr. 22-24, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria
 June 10-12, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria

GOD'S PLAN FOR A JOY FILLED MARRIAGE SEMINAR DATES FOR 2015-2016

Dec. 5, 2015 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia
 Feb. 20, 2016 - St. Nicholas Parish-Hays
 Feb. 20, 2016 – St. Thomas More-Manhattan
 Mar. 5, 2016 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia
 Apr. 9, 2016 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia
 June 18, 2016 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia

CALENDAR & CONTACTS: Please find enclosed your updated copy showing Engaged Encounter, God's Plan For A Joy-Filled Marriage, Marriage Encounter, Retrouvaille, Beginning Experience and Young Adult Beginning Experience Dates and Contacts for the Salina, Dodge City, Wichita, and Kansas City Dioceses (revised Nov. 17, 2015 blue). Since Retrouvaille is no longer available in the Wichita Diocese, Dates and Contacts for Retrouvaille in the Omaha and Denver Arch Diocese have been included.

BULLETIN INSERTS OR HANDOUTS: Christmas Blessings and a Family Prayer is enclosed.

OFFICE OF RESPECT LIFE

Kansans for Life has developed a church bulletin project entitled “**In the beginning**”. It follows the development of a child named “Chris” in the womb. The bulletin messages begin on March 15th to prepare for Feast of the Annunciation on March 25th and ends near Christmas on December 20th. It mirrors the fetal development of Jesus Christ. This is a great way to spread the pro-life message while honoring the child Jesus. The bulletin announcements can be found at <http://www.kfl.org>

Bulletin Announcements

The Diocese of Salina Respect Life Office will sponsor a bus trip to the **March for Life in Topeka, KS** Jan. 22nd, 2016. The trip includes bus fare, breakfast, Rally, Mass, and March for Life in Topeka. Registration is \$75. Registration deadline is December 11th! Register at www.salinadiocese.org/respect-life. (Bulletin Insert provided)

On Tuesday, December 8th from 8:00 pm to December 9th 12:00 am, our parish will participate in the **National Night of Prayer for Life**. The purpose is to unite our prayers with Catholics throughout the country in an effort to help bring back the world to Christ and to bring about an end to abortion. The hours are chosen to coincide with Our Lady of Guadalupe’s appearance to Juan Diego. (For prayer material and more go to <https://sites.google.com/site/nationalnightofprayerforlife/>.)

The U.S. bishops’ annual novena **9 Days for Life** takes place Saturday, January 16 – Sunday, January 24, 2016. Pray for the respect and protection of all human life with new intentions, brief reflections, and more each day. Download the novena online, or participate through Facebook, email, text message or an app. Join at www.9daysforlife.com!

Pro-Life Intercessions for Mass

For those approaching the end of their lives: **May they receive loving care that protects and respects their dignity; *We pray to the Lord:***

For all Catholics: **May our hearts be open to God's call to bring comfort to those who are vulnerable and oppressed; *We pray to the Lord:***

For infants not expected to live long after birth: **May each child's life, no matter how brief, be welcomed, protected, and cherished by all; *We pray to the Lord:***

For all expectant families at Mass today: that we might rejoice with them in the gift God brings us through their love; **We pray to the Lord:**

CONTINUING EDUCATION OF PRIESTS

ADVENT DAY OF PRAYER: December 1 in Victoria. The schedule for the day will be as follows

11:00 a.m. Mass in the small chapel behind the main church.

12:00 noon: Lunch, dining room

1:00 p.m. Communal Reconciliation Service with individual Penance, in the Basilica

JANUARY RENEWAL DAYS: will be January 25-28, 2016. We will begin with supper at 5:30 on Monday evening. Fr. Frank Coady will lead us in a discussion of the recent document from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments called *Homiletic Directory*. We will concentrate primarily on the first part: "The Homily and its Liturgical Setting." Fr. James Telthorst, S.J., will be with us on Wednesday and Thursday to give us direction in offering some spiritual direction to parishioners. Our days together will conclude with the Thursday noon meal.

ANNUAL RETREAT 2016: September 19-22, 2016.

PRIESTS COUNCIL

PRIEST COUNCIL DUES: Dues are \$25.00 again this year. Please make checks payable to Priests' Council and send to the address below.

Fr. Joseph Kieffer
P.O. Box 148
Norton, KS 67654-0148

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Fr. Andrew Rockers email on pg. 26 is wrong. Correct email: associate@shcathedral.com
2. Receptionist at Sacred Heart Cathedral – pg. 26: Wendy De Leon – receptionist@shcathedral.com.
3. Office Manager at Sacred Heart Cathedral – pg. 26: Janie Garcia – officemanager@shcathedral.com
4. Fr. David Micheal, HGN - frdavid@sacredheartcolby.com cell phone number [785-465-7111](tel:785-465-7111)

January 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Year's Day Chancery Closed	2
3	4 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11	5 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11	6 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11	7 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11	8 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11	9 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11
10 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11	11 Region IX Retreat Jan 4-11	12	13 KCC Meeting	14 KCC Meeting	15	16
17	18 Christian Unity Week 18-25	19 Christian Unity Week 18-25	20 Christian Unity Week 18-25	21 Christian Unity Week 18-25 March for Life in D.C.	22 Christian Unity Week 18-25 March for Life in D.C.	23 Christian Unity Week 18-25 March for Life in D.C.
24 Christian Unity Week 18-25	25 Christian Unity Week 18-25 Annual Priests' renewal week - 25-28th	26 Annual Priests' renewal week - 25-28th	27 Annual Priests' renewal week - 25-28th	28 Catholic Charities Board Mtg Annual Priests' renewal week - 25-28th	29	30
31 Catholic Schools Week 1/31-2/6/16						

Jubilee Year of Mercy Opening Mass

General Intercessions

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

December 8, 2015

(composed by Salina Diocese Office of Liturgy)

1. For the grace to acknowledge God's mercy we pray to the Lord.
2. For the gift of forgiveness for one another we pray to the Lord.
3. For the protection of Mary, patroness of the Americas we pray to the Lord.
4. For the sick we pray to the Lord.
5. For our Holy Father, Pope Francis we pray to the Lord.
6. For our loved ones who have died we pray to the Lord.

March For Life

Topeka, Kansas

Blessed are they who hunger
and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.
Matthew 5:6

Cost of Trip
Early Registration Due November 20:
\$70 per person
After November 20, Cost Increases:
\$75 per person
Final Deadline December 11!!
Reserve online at:
salinadiocese.org/respect-life

January 22, 2016

Trip Includes:

- Bus Fare
- Mass
- March For Life to the KS State Capital
- Continental Bagged Breakfast in Salina
- Tour Capital/Sightseeing

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____ City _____

Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell # _____

Parish _____ Interested in tour of Capital? Yes No

Select Pick-up location and departure time:

- Colby-3 am
- Hays-5am
- Salina-6:30am
- Junction City-7:30am

School Group (if applicable) _____ (Must complete

Forms B, C, D, and HIPPA, salinadiocese.org/youth-ministry, and return to school sponsor).

For more information contact: Kathy Martin, 785.463.5463 or martinkathy@yahoo.com. **Reserve online or mail form and \$25 non-refundable reservation fee by November 20 DEADLINE** to: Diocese of Salina-March For Life-Topeka, 103 North Ninth Street, Salina, KS 67401.

Blessing Before or After Opening Gifts



Leader

Lord, we gather today as a family with a past history and a future hope. Be with us as we share our gifts with those we love. May this sharing bring us closer to you and each other. Let us see each other as a special and unique gift and as a sign of your love to this family.

Option 1: Remembering

Leader

Let us pause for a moment in silence to appreciate the Christmas tree and the gifts around it, and to remember a special joyful Christmas memory. If anyone wishes to share this memory, please do so.

Option 2: Appreciating

Leader

We are all gifts to each other. Each person has been given unique gifts by God. Let us call to mind the special gifts that each person here brings to our family. Let us recognize each person by name and tell what gifts they bring to us as a family. (*Allow enough time so that each person is affirmed and appreciated.*)

Blessing

Leader

Gracious God, we praise and thank You for all the many gifts and blessings which you have given us. Today, we especially praise and thank you for Your Word of Love to us, Jesus Christ. Be with our family today and every day, so that we may continue to be a family which always loves, forgives and appreciates one another.

All Amen.

Christmas Tree Blessing



When the tree has been prepared, the family gathers around it. All make the sign of the cross.

Leader

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All Now and forever.

Leader

This tree is a blessing to our home. It reminds us of all that is beautiful, all that is filled with the gentleness and the promise of God. It stands in our midst as a tree of light that we might promise such beauty to one another and to our world. It stands like that tree of paradise that God made into the tree of life, the cross of Jesus. Let us listen to the words of the apostle Paul to Titus.

Scripture Reading

Titus 3:4-7

Leader

Now let us pray for God's blessing upon all who gather around this tree.

Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

A CHRISTMAS WISH—



Will this be a Christmas season for you and your family to remember why we celebrate Christmas or will it be a season of consumerism?

Work to make Jesus the reason you are celebrating Christmas.

Beware of the messages in the media. Jesus loves us unconditionally; Santa give us things when we are good.

Make your gifts come from the heart. Think handmade and personal.

Celebrate Advent—Try not to run through December filling your calendar with too many things to do. Decide now to slow down. Spend your time and money wisely as a gift to Jesus.

If sending Christmas cards to family and friends, use cards that encourage and remind them of Jesus' love for them.

Is your child's Christmas list out of control? One way to bring limits and a reflection on the meaning of the Christmas season is to limit each child to only three gifts reflective of the three gifts brought to Jesus by the Wise Men.

With today's economy think about a way to redistribute your resources to those in need. Donate to the local food bank or give gently used coats and hats to Christian organizations collecting them for those in need.

Celebrate the entire Christmas season—all the way through Epiphany. Plan now to slow down, choose to give Jesus a birthday that will be meaningful to Him and to you and your family.

Lord Jesus, we
are making room
for you,
Come and be born in
our hearts.

Now and then it's good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy.

-Guillaume Apollinaire

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

††††††††††

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY FAMILY PRAYER

Lord God, we thank you for the gift of family. We acknowledge that our image and name as family come from You.

We believe that within our family lies a home-made holiness. We affirm that it is in this household of faith that we experience Your presence, Your forgiveness and Your love. We are family. We give thanks to You for the many joys and blessings that have come to us through our family.

As family, we sometimes feel pain. And so we offer to You our disappointments, frustrations and hurts. Help us to forgive those members of our family, including ourselves, who have caused pain.

We pray for the strength to be a light within Our family. May we open our hearts, our eyes and ears and carry our light to those in need.

God, Creator of the earth and all its people, help us to be mindful that, as members of one global family, we are equal in Your eyes. Help us to continue to appreciate the diversity of persons in our homes and in our world. As members equal in human dignity, may we build a better world and proclaim our willingness to be the holy people You call us to be.

Amen

Manger Scene Blessing



The manger scene has a special place near the Christmas tree or in another place where family members can reflect and pray during the Christmas season. It is blessed each year on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Leader

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All Who made heaven and earth.

Leader

We are at the beginning of the days of Christmas. All through the season we will look on these images of sheep and cattle, of shepherds, of Mary and of Joseph and Jesus. Let us listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:17.

Leader

Pray now for God's blessing as we look on these figures. God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and animals, bless us whenever we gaze on this manger scene. Through all the days of Christmas may these figures tell the story of how humans, angels, and animals found the Christ in this poor place. Fill our house with hospitality, joy, gentleness, and thanksgiving and guide our steps in the way of peace. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader

Let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

CALENDAR & CONTACTS

SALINA DIOCESE

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

WHEN: Feb. 19-21, 2016 Apr. 22-24, 2016
June 10-12, 2016
WHERE: Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life
Victoria, KS 67671
CONTACT: Chad & Angela Zimmerman
785-460-1818
coordinator@salinacee.com
REGISTER ONLINE--<http://www.salinacee.com/>

GOD'S PLAN FOR A JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE

WHEN: None scheduled at this time
WHERE: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Salina
CONTACT: Family Life Office 785-827-8746
familylife@salinadiocese.org

WHEN: Dec. 5, 2015 Mar. 5, 2016
Apr. 9, 2016 June 18, 2016
WHERE: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Concordia
COST: \$50.00
CONTACT: Tony & Lindy Meyer 785-243-1099
familylife@olphconcordia.org

WHEN: Feb. 20, 2016
WHERE: St. Thomas More Parish, Manhattan
CONTACT: Deacon Wayne Talbot 785-776-5151
pastassoc@stmmanhattan.com

WHEN: Feb. 20, 2016
WHERE: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hays
WHEN: Feb. 20, 2016
WHERE: St. Nicholas Parish, Hays
CONTACT: Deacon David & Susan Kisner 785-625-7339
deacondave@ihm-church.com
skisner@ihm-church.com
REGISTER: Deacon Steve & Nancy Urban 785-628-1446
urbs57@gmail.com

WICHITA DIOCESE

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

WHEN: Dec 4-6, 2015 Jan. 15-17, 2016
Feb. 5-7, 2016 Feb. 19-21, 2016
Mar. 11-13, 2016 Apr. 15-17, 2016
May 13-15, 2016 May 27-29, 2016
June 10-12, 2016 July 8-10, 2016
July 29-31, 2016 Aug. 19-21, 2016
Sept. 9-11, 2016 Oct. 14-16, 2016
Nov. 18-20, 2016 Dec. 2-4, 2016
WHERE: Spiritual Life Center 7100 E. 45th St.
316-744-0167 N Wichita, KS 67226
CONTACT: Randy & Denise Walker ceewichita@cox.net

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

ENGLISH:
WHEN: Feb. 19-21, 2016 Nov. 11-13, 2016
CONTACT: Leon & Loretta Brittan
719-387-9842
WHERE: Spiritual Life Center
7100 E. 45th St.
N. Wichita, KS 67226
316-744-0167
SPANISH:
WHEN: Apr. 8-10, 2016 Sept. 2-4, 2016
CONTACT: 316-925-2796 or 316-573-2940
WHERE: Spiritual Life Center
7100 E. 45th St.
N. Wichita, KS 67226
316-744-0167

RETRouvaille

NONE SCHEDULED AT THIS TIME

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE—(Divorce & Grief)

COST: \$50.00 nonrefundable registration fee
WHEN: None scheduled at this time
CONTACT: The Beginning Experience
P.O. Box 3152 866-610-8877
Wichita, KS 67201
Beverly Pieplow 316-264-4876
Judy Demuth 620-430-0339

YOUNG ADULT BEGINNING EXPERIENCE (Ages 14-25)

WHEN: None scheduled at this time
WHERE: Magnificat Center for Unity & Reconciliation
Congregation of St. Joseph Wichita
CONTACT: Karen Oller 620-896-7664

KANSAS CITY DIOCESE

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

WHEN: Jan. 22-24, 2016 Feb. 12-14, 2016
Mar. 11-13, 2016 Apr. 15-17, 2016
June 10-12, 2016 July 8-10, 2016
Sept. 16-18, 2016 Oct. 14-16, 2016
CONTACT: Frank & Cristal Moley
913-782-1603

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

WHEN: Jan. 29-31, 2016 May 13-15, 2016
Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2016 Nov. 18-20, 2016
CONTACT: Deacon Tony & Barb Zimmerman
816-741-4066

RETRouvaille

WHEN: Feb. 19-21, 2016 Aug. 12-14, 2016
CONTACT: Jerry & Kim Bronder
816-505-0510 or 800-470-2230

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE

WHEN: June 24-26, 2016 Oct. 14-16, 2016
CONTACT: Jerry
785-766-6497

DODGE CITY DIOCESE

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

WHEN: Jan. 8-10, 2016 Mar. 4-6, 2016
May 6-8, 2016 June 24-26, 2016
Nov. 4-6, 2016
WHERE: Heartland Retreat Center Great Bend, KS
CONTACT: Michael & Lindsay Mazouch
620-792-6290

ARCH DIOCESE OF OMAHA

RETRouvaille

WHEN: Feb. 26, 2016 Aug. 26, 2016
WHERE: Schuyler, NE
CONTACT: Birger & Connie Benson 308-986-2351

ARCH DIOCESE OF DENVER

RETRouvaille

WHEN: April 15-17, 2016 Sept. 9-11, 2016
WHERE: Denver, CO
CONTACT: Jason & Julie Henderson 720-257-9106
Retrouvaille.CO@gmail.com

REVISED—Nov. 17, 2015

Single Parent Networker



ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA
CENTER for
FAMILY LIFE
FORMATION

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Becoming a Stepparent

Becoming a parent by blending families or marrying someone with kids can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. If you've never had kids, you'll get the opportunity to share your life with a younger person and help to shape his or her character. If you have kids, you'll offer them more opportunities to build relationships and establish a special bond only siblings can have.

In some cases, your new family members may get along without a hitch (just like *The Brady Bunch*), but other times you can expect difficulties along the way. Figuring out your role as parent - aside from the day-to-day responsibilities that come with it - also may lead to confusion or even conflict between you and your partner, your partner's ex-wife or ex-husband, and their kids. While there is no foolproof formula for creating the "perfect" family (every family has its own dynamics), it's important to approach this new situation with patience and understanding for the feelings of those involved.

START SLOW

The initial role of a step parent is that of another caring adult in a child's life, similar to a loving family member or mentor. You may desire a closer bond right away, and might wonder what you're doing wrong if your new step child doesn't warm up to you or your kids as quickly as you'd like - but relationships need time to grow.

Start out slow and try not to rush into things. Let things develop naturally - kids can tell when adults are being fake or insincere. Over time, you can develop a deeper, more meaningful relationship with your stepchildren, which doesn't necessarily have to resemble the one they share with their birth parents.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Children who are mourning the loss of a deceased parent or the separation or divorce of their birth parents may need time to heal before they can fully accept you as a new parent.

For those whose birth parents are still alive, remarriage may mean the end of hope that their parents will reunite. Even if it has been several years since the separation, kids (even grown ones) often hang onto that hope for a long time. From the kid's perspective, this reality can make them feel angry, hurt, and confused.

Other factors that may affect the transition into stepparenting:

How old the kids are. When it comes to adjusting and forming new relationships, younger kids generally have an easier time than older kids.

How long you've know them.

Usually the longer you know the kids, the better the relationship. There are exceptions (for example, if you were friends with the parents before they separated and are blamed for the break-up), but in most cases having a history together makes the transition a little smoother.

How long you dated the parent before marriage.

Again, there are exceptions but typically if you don't rush into the relationship with the adult, kids have a good sense that you are in this for the long haul.

How well the parent you marry gets along with the ex-spouse.

This is a critical factor. Minimal conflict and open communication between ex-partners can make a big difference regarding how easily kids

accept you as their stepparent. It's much easier for kids to transition to new living arrangements when adults keep negative comments out of earshot.

How much time the kids spend with you?

Trying to bond with kids every other weekend - when they want quality time with a birth parent they don't see as often as they'd like - can be a difficult way to make friends with your new step kids. Remember to put their needs first: If kids want time with their birth parent, they should get it. So sometimes making your self scarce can help smooth the path to a better relationship in the long run.

Knowing ahead of time what situations may become problematic as you bring new family members together can help you prepare so that, if complications arise, you can handle them with an extra dose of patience and grace.

STEPS TO GREAT STEPPARENTING

All parents face difficulties now and then. But when you're a stepparent, those obstacles are compounded by the fact that you are not the birth parent - this can open up power struggles within the family, whether it's from the kids, your partner's ex, or even your partner.

When times get tough, however, putting kids' needs first can help you make good decisions. Here's how:

Put needs, not wants first.

Kids need love, affection, and consistent rules above all else. Giving them toys or treats, especially if they're not earned with good grades or behavior, can lead to a situation where you feel like you're trading gifts for love. Similarly, if you feel guilty for treating your biological kids differently

from your stepchildren, don't buy gifts to make up for it. Do your best to figure out how to treat them more equally.

House Rules Matter

Keep your house rules as consistent as possible for all kids, whether they're your kids from a previous relationship, your partner's kids from a previous relationship, or new children you have had together. Children and teens will have different rules, but they should be consistently applied at all times. This helps kids adjust to transitions, like moving into a new house or welcoming a new baby, and helps them feel that all kids in your home are treated equally. If kids are dealing with two very different sets of rules in each home, it may be time for an adults only family meeting.

Create new family traditions

Find special activities to do with your step kids, but be sure the get their feedback. Some new family traditions could include board games nights, bike riding together, cooking, doing crafts, or even playing word games in the car. They key is to have fun together, not try to win their love.

Respect all parents

When a partner's ex is deceased, it's important to be sensitive to and honor that person. If you and your partner share custody with the birth parent, try to be courteous and compassionate in your interactions with each other (no matter how hard that can be). Never say negative things about the birth parent in front of the kids. Doing so often backfires and kids get angry with the parent making the remarks.

Don't use kids as messengers or go-betweens

Try not to question kids about what's happening in the other household - they'll resent it when they feel that they're being asked to "spy" on another parent.

Talk to your partner or spouse

Communication between you and your partner is important so that you can make parenting decisions together. This is especially crucial if you have different notions on parenting and discipline. If you're new to parenting as a stepparent, ask your partner what would be the best way to get to know the kids.

No matter what the circumstances of your new family, chances are they'll be some bumps along the way. But don't give up trying to make things work - even if things started off a little rocky, they still can (and probably will)

improve as you and your new family members get to know each other better.

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Out of the Mouths of Babes

A grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like. "We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods."

The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this all in. At last she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"



It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you. Yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him a hand.

- Mother Teresa

Parenting Pointers

653. Dec. 4: St. Nick's Day is Dec. 6. It's a nice custom to put a treat in your child's shoe the night before. BUT...also remember there are children in our world without shoes. If your child is old enough tell him/her about [Soles4Souls](https://soles4souls.org/) <https://soles4souls.org/> . Maybe your child will offer to give an extra pair of shoes.

655. Dec. 18: These last few days before Christmas can be hectic - concerts, cooking, creating gifts... As the nights grow longer, a candle can be your friend. Light the 3rd Advent candle tonight and pause, gaze, take a deep breath. Let the pause refresh and calm you.

656. Dec. 25: It's Christmas. Relish the glee of giving and receiving a gift. After the hubbub dies down, pause as a family not only to thank each other, but to be thankful that you have the resources to give gifts and that you have a family to share this time with. Don't let the day slip slide away without this pause.

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HIS BIRTH WAS A MIRACLE, HIS LIFE IS A GIFT

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

COPING WITH THE HOLIDAYS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES



Coping with separation, divorce, grief and loss is MAGNIFIED as the holiday season approaches. Many people feel overwhelmed by the stress and strain of trying to maintain the status quo, when in fact, their entire world is collapsing around them. The holiday season serves as a constant reminder of festive, happier times and is contrasted by the stark reality of loneliness and despair. While others are eagerly anticipating the holidays, a newly separated or divorced person often approaches this time of year with panic, sadness, and dread. Although there are no magical solutions to cure the holiday blues, there are things you can do to make it easier to cope.

PLAN AHEAD

Plan to do something that is fun, relaxing and as stress free as possible with people you really care about. If the holidays are just too painful and the reminders are everywhere, consider a vacation that allows you to “escape” the painful triggers.

CREATE NEW RITUALS AND FAMILY TRADITIONS

While you may want to hold on to some of the past traditions, it’s a good idea to create some new rituals with friends and family. (Consider an alternative day, time, place, etc.)

REASSURE KIDS THAT HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS WILL CONTINUE, BUT IN A DIFFERENT WAY

Children can help create some of the new holiday rituals and traditions. Take time to brainstorm with your children about new ideas for celebrating.

ASK IF YOU ARE ACTING “IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD”?

Decide ahead of time how holidays will be divided. Reassure kids that you will be OK while they are with the other parent. Remember, tired kids will be stressed out and cranky, so plan according to their ages and ability to adjust. Keep the arrangements as simple as possible.

MAKE A SCHEDULE

Make a list of everything you need to do for the holidays and a target date to accomplish your goals. This will help you to feel more in control and less stressed. Delegate tasks appropriately.

ASK FOR HELP FROM SUPPORTIVE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Rely on a healthy support system if you are feeling isolated, lonely or depressed. Tell your support people what you need from them (companionship, understanding, compassion, listening, help with chores or shopping, etc.)

BE REALISTIC

“Picture perfect” holidays are usually just an illusion. Have realistic expectations about the holiday season, especially the first year. Your attitude will influence how well your children handle the holidays too.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Get the proper amount of sleep and exercise and eat healthy in order to maximize your ability to cope. It’s easy to overeat or party too much to medicate your pain, but in the long run, it creates more problems.

SCHEDULE TIME FOR REST, RELAXATION AND NURTURING

Give yourself a break. You deserve it! Holidays are stressful even for those not going through difficult times.

ONE DAY AT A TIME; ONE HOLIDAY AT A TIME; ONE YEAR AT A TIME

It will get easier as time passes. The first year is usually the worst, so make plans in advance to keep yourself busy and distracted. For now, just concentrate on one thing at a time!

If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, depressed, or stuck, **GET PROFESSIONAL HELP**. Therapy can provide a safe, supportive environment in which you can gain insight, learn problem solving skills and find solutions to dealing with the anger and pain of separation, divorce, grief or loss.



Prayer Before Meal

Joy to the World, you have sent your son Jesus to us on this Christmas day. We thank you for the gift of your son, we thank you for the gift of family. As we sit at this table today we are making memories with our family. Father, we thank you for the laughter and Joy we will share this day. We thank you for the food served and all who sit at our table. We pray others will be able to see Jesus in us through our Joy.

Amen