



I am a little pencil in the hands of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world. St. Teresa of Calcutta

# The Little Pencil

Issue No. 14 February 2017

## Human Rights Office Newsletter

Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Welcome to the February issue of The Little Pencil. The aim of this publication is to keep supporters, prayer group members, and volunteers informed of new initiatives and updates concerning Human Rights matters in our diocese. This month we've focused on spreading awareness of Human Trafficking through presentations and social media. Thank you to all our volunteers who help spread the word to put an end to Human Trafficking.

Our Catholic community in the United States does something amazing each Lent. We come together to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving; and by doing so we help lift families and communities out of poverty and put them on a path toward resilience, prosperity and stability. That's the CRS Rice Bowl effect. Please contact our office if you'd like to participate but haven't received your rice bowl yet.

I attended a "Prison Poetry" event last week at the Johnson County Public Library. The students from the poetry class at Lansing Prison led by former navy pilot, Arlin Buyert read their poetry to a full house. Mr. Buyert says his class is a place where men build self-esteem, support one another and listen. A few offenders were selected to read their poetry in a public setting, giving a voice to people who aren't always heard. It was a delightful experience.

Peace, Laurie Jo

### Immigration - Migration - Refugee Ministry

#### Roundtable on Immigration Ministry

In December, the Human Rights Office and Hispanic Ministry Office hosted a set of town hall meetings with clergy, parish staff, and members of the broader faith community to discuss the following topics:

1. Immigration/Refugee Ministry: What does it mean?
2. In your community, what are the biggest

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[Journey to New Life](#)

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[The Catholic Key](#)

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[USCCB](#)

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Lent begins  
Wednesday, March 1.

Did you know that CRS Rice Bowl will offer daily reflections for every day of lent,

Immigration/Refugee Ministry concerns?

3. How can the local Church walk together in this issue?

[Click here](#) to view the results of these discussions and the recommended next steps. We value your ideas and support in strengthening our diocesan role. Your genuineness and dedication to the faithful immigrant members of our parish communities is truly appreciated.

Stay tuned for information on your new diocesan VIA Immigration/Refugee Task Force!

Presenting...

June VanBuskirk



Volunteers play a vital role in the Human Rights Ministry, working alongside staff members, other volunteers and the community to jointly achieve our goal to uphold the dignity of human life. Each newsletter, we select a volunteer who makes the world a better place. Please contact us if you'd like to nominate someone to be featured in a future edition of The Little Pencil.

This month's featured volunteer, June VanBuskirk, is a new volunteer in the Human Rights Office with a focus in Human Trafficking. Currently a member of St. Therese parish, June says she is blessed being a member of a big family and spent her childhood at Visitation parish. She travels with her Chiropractor business and when June learned of the horrors of human trafficking last year she felt moved to help. Eliminating human trafficking is now close to her heart and she gives presentations to spread awareness on the seriousness of the topic.

June, way to go glorifying God through your actions as a way of life; you are an example for others to follow. Thank you!

## MAX Diocesan Prison & Jail Ministry

### Lenten Friday Event: Catholic Thinking on the Death Penalty



Interested in considering the issues raised in ***Dead Man Walking*** from a Catholic perspective? Join us for a traditional fish fry followed by a talk and discussion led by the Rev. Thomas B. Curran, S.J., President of Rockhurst University. Doors open at the Lyric Opera (712 E 18th Street, KCMO 64108) at 5:00pm for the buffet supper served in the rehearsal hall; Fr. Curran will begin speaking at 6:00pm. If you enjoy opera, complete the evening by attending this thought-provoking performance. Guests will then depart at 6:45pm to go to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts for a 7:30pm curtain.

[Click here](#) to order tickets for this special event - The tickets

from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday? Beginning Ash Wednesday [click here](#) to begin your Lenten Journey.

## Sisters of Mercy Against Human Trafficking

U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor services, and engages in advocacy in an effort to eradicate modern-day slavery.



## Holy Rosary Credit Union Needs Your Help!

Based on Christ's example of love for the poor, Holy Rosary Credit Union has proudly shared in the Church's efforts to abolish poverty in our diocese by extending developmental and financial education services to low-income and vulnerable populations since 1943.

The credit union encourages thrift, savings, and the prudent use of credit for individuals and small businesses. Holy Rosary teaches its members how to manage

include the fish fry, discussion and the opera *Dead Man Walking* - and are available for \$75. To purchase: add "Adult + Fish Fry" tickets, available in either the Parterre, Mezzanine or Grand Tier sections for this performance.

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## Mark Your Calendar

### MAX Prison & Jail Ministry Leadership Meeting

Friday, March 24, 2017 @ 4:00pm

RSVP: [holmes@diocesekcsj.org](mailto:holmes@diocesekcsj.org) or (816) 714-2364

This event is open to all *Volunteers in Corrections* who bring Jesus into prisons and jails in our diocese. Light meal provided afterwards. Please RSVP by March 22.

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## Volunteer in Prayer Ministry



People who volunteer in this ministry lift up prayers wherever they are.

James 5:16 says it best: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." That's why I'm asking you to consider becoming a prayer warrior for prisoners and their families.

Our VIP Program can do nothing outside of God's power. But when you lift the needs of lost and broken souls to our Father in heaven, miracles start to happen. Families are reconciled... communities begin to heal. And hardened prisoners become passionate Christ followers.

### For more information: Contact VIP Coordinator,

Jeannine Arens ([kjadm@att.net](mailto:kjadjm@att.net))

Laurie Jo Holmes ([holmes@diocesekcsj.org](mailto:holmes@diocesekcsj.org))

Human Rights Office (816) 714-2364

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## Prison Pen Pal Ministry

This ministry is to provide encouragement and good-will towards those individuals in local correctional institutions by developing a friendly relationship through routine letter correspondence.



We currently have two prisoners looking for Catholic Pen Pals. Please consider signing up to be a prisoner pen pal. We also have an opening for a volunteer who would like to assist in processing Pen Pal letters.

and control their finances and they only extend credit when appropriate, helping to create financial stability and to break the cycle of poverty.

Visit their [website](#) or contact Carole Wight, 816-221-2734 [cwight@holyroarycu.org](mailto:cwight@holyroarycu.org)



## MO Department of Corrections VIC Training

Saturday  
March 18

9:00am - 3:00pm  
Word of Life Church  
3902 Riverside Road  
St. Joseph MO



## Religious Freedom European Christian Refugee Crisis

In addition to its humanitarian and resettlement efforts in Europe and the Middle East, the Church is actively involved in advocating on behalf of Syrian refugees here in the United States.

[Click here](#)

To learn what you can do



## Missouri Catholic Conference

For more information, contact the Human Rights Office  
Laurie Jo Holmes (holmes@diocesekcsj.org)  
Program Coordinator (816) 714-2364

## Training Opportunity

Mentoring Released Prisoners

Saturday, March 11, 2017 @ 8:00am - 2:00pm

RSVP: [matt@westsidefamilychurch.com](mailto:matt@westsidefamilychurch.com)

You can help men coming out of prison achieve their full potential in life by becoming a mentor!

KDOC Mentor Training: Westside is partnering with "Working Men of Christ" and a larger coalition of organizations to launch a new church inside and outside of Lansing Prison. Part of this effort is to match men coming out of Lansing with mentors who will walk with them as they transition out of prison life. Mentors greatly increase the probability of a successful re-entry!

## A LETTER FROM AN ANGEL TREE DAD

"Thank you so much for the gifts you gave my daughter ...

Not only did you fulfill a Christmas wish for her, but also for me, too. I received the cards and picture of Lexi at the Christmas party and when I did I cried. I have never received any mail from Lexi. Obviously Lexi is just learning to write, being in Kindergarten, and when I saw her handwriting on the card I was overwhelmed with joy. I have been attempting to make contact with Lexi for more than a year now, and as I said before, your church has helped me to get closer with her. Again, thank you for everything and thank you for bringing joy to my daughter's life. Happy New Year and Joy to you all. I appreciate everything very much."



- Daniel, prisoner-parent

The Public Policy  
Advocacy Agency for the  
Catholic Church in  
Missouri

For more information, visit  
their website:  
[mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org)



## Way of the Cross

The Communion &  
Liberation KC Group  
invites you to follow the  
Passion of Christ in the  
streets of Kansas City on  
Friday, April 14. For more  
details, visit their page on  
Facebook



## Next Newsletter...

Look for the next issue  
of The Little  
Pencil newsletter  
in April. If you have  
questions, comments,  
or items to add,  
please [contact us](#).

THANK YOU for all  
you do to uphold  
the dignity of each  
human life.



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