

I'm a little pencil in the hands of a writing God,  
who is sending a love letter to the world." -  
Blessed Mother Teresa

# The Little Pencil

Issue No. 8 January 2016

## Human Rights Office Newsletter

Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

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DIocese OF KANSAS CITY - ST. JOSEPH  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**

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.

How can we make the most of this Holy Year of Mercy? I keep a "Divine Mercy" holy card posted by my computer; every time I stop typing and look up, I see Jesus looking at me with love and grace pouring from his heart. This Holy Year of Mercy, let

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**St. Josephine Bahkita**  
**Patroness of the**  
**Enslaved or Trafficked**

Jesus' gaze of mercy penetrate your heart and help change the way you look at others and yourself.

The Gospels tell us about the many people whom Jesus encountered throughout Palestine; we even learn some of their names. Something we have in common with all these people is that they are in similar circumstances such as suffering from sickness, filled with sadness, others are going through a painful situation. Even worse, they are sinners. The amazing part is that Jesus welcomes all those political and religious outcasts and actually wants to spend time with them!

When you make a big mistake, it is easy to decide everything is over in your life. That's not true. If we open our hearts and minds to God, he has a rescue plan for each of us; God can work through our mistakes and even bring goodness out of them. I'm thankful Psalms are included at each and every Mass as singing Psalms keep me focused on the Lord. Those who spend time around me will attest to my humming of a Psalm throughout the day.

Several years ago I read an article that mentioned a bumper sticker with the slogan "What You Are is God's Gift to You - What You Become is Your Gift to God". The more we realize the importance of our gift from God, the closer we will want to be to God and give him a fantastic gift in return. I encourage you to visit our website or contact our office to learn more about how you can live out the Gospels in a social context through pastoral care, education, prayer & worship, and public policy advocacy.

In the peace of Christ,  
Laurie Jo Holmes



On February 8th we celebrate the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, the patroness of those who are enslaved or trafficked. Today, 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. Pope Francis and other faith leaders have condemned human trafficking, calling it a crime against humanity, a scourge and an open wound in contemporary society.

Who was Josephine Bakhita?  
How did she become a saint and patroness for those enslaved?

[Read more...](#)

## European Christian Refugee Crisis



[Click here](#)

to learn what you can do

For four years a bloody civil war has wracked Syria. The estimated death toll has exceeded 220,000. Over four million Syrians have fled their country. Imagine a population almost the size of Missouri trying to escape beheadings and shootings to find a new home.

[Read more about the origins of  
the Syrian Refugee Crisis](#)

## Presenting... Raiza Guevara



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*.

A parishioner of Sacred Heart Guadalupe Parish, Raiza began volunteering in Jail Ministry as a member of the "God Squad" led by Fr. Ernie Gauthier back in 2012. Raiza volunteers at the Jackson County Detention Center each week to minister to the incarcerated and their families. Raiza is a compassionate, forward thinker and always on the lookout to help someone in need – especially someone new to our country who has a difficult time understanding and speaking English. Raiza served as Emcee at our Hispanic Jail/Prison Ministry Orientation in January and shared how visiting someone in jail changed her life. Raiza's heartfelt testimonies about helping others were inspiring.

For the past 11 years, Raiza has worked with Hospice/Palliative Care patients for the St. Luke's Health System. She also volunteers at Sacred Heart Guadalupe, with MIRA (Missouri Immigrant & Refugee Advocates, CCO (Communities Creating Opportunity) and El Centro. Raiza, thank you for your dedication to many in our Diocese!



## TurnAround Community Re-entry

### BE A MENTOR

For former offenders, some of the toughest times they face occur after their sentence is served.

Thousands of men and women are released from Missouri prisons each year without jobs, homes or a support system. Without help, many will end up back behind bars.

When you volunteer as a mentor with Catholic Charities' TurnAround program, you provide vital support that helps clients stay positive and productive. When they succeed, lives and communities are transformed.

For more information send an [email](#) or call (816) 659-8234.

## Holy Rosary Credit Union Needs Your Help!

Since 1943, 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. 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 and control their finances and they only extend credit when appropriate, helping to create financial stability and to break the cycle of poverty.

Although the mission of Holy Rosary Credit Union is to assist those who are in need, it is through the financial resources of all of our faithful that this is made possible. If lower administrative fees, a competitive rate on loans, and knowing your financial resources are invested only in faith-filled organizations are important to you, please prayerfully consider joining Holy Rosary Credit Union and join the fight to end poverty in our diocese!



## Prison/Jail Ministry Retreat

The Human Rights Office is sponsoring a Retreat for members of the MAX Diocesan Prison/Jail Ministry. We look forward to gathering together in prayer and fellowship to reflect on the spirituality of prison and jail ministry. Lunch is included. Mass to follow at 4:00pm.

Saturday, October 8

11:00am - 4:00pm

St. Francis Xavier

2618 Seneca, St. Joseph MO

RSVP: Laurie Jo Holmes, Human Rights Office

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# USCCB

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH MOBILE APP

Free to download. Find it in your app store or at [www.usacatholic.church](http://www.usacatholic.church). For the first time, the USA Catholic Church app from USCCB brings together parishes and (arch)dioceses across the United States-as well as the Vatican-into one, single mobile solution.

### LAUDATO SÍ

As Pope Francis calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. This encyclical is written with both hope and resolve, looking to our common future with candor and humility.

### JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

The Jubilee Year of Mercy is Dec. 8, 2015 to Nov. 20, 2016. This two page handout offers a brief reflection on the Year, as well as ideas for prayer and action. For more materials on the Year, visit the [Year of Mercy Homepage](#).

### [Life & Justice Campaign](#)

For more information, or to sign up, visit our [website](#) or contact Carole Wight, President  
816-221-2734  
cwight@holyroarycu.org



### [Sisters of Mercy Against Human Trafficking](#)

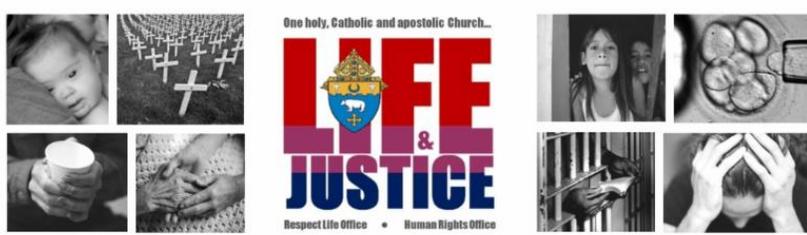
U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor services, and engages in advocacy in an effort to eradicate modern-day slavery.



### **Missouri Dept of Corrections VIC Recognition & Training 2016**

Saturday, March 19  
9:00am - 3:00pm  
Word of Life Church  
3902 Riverside Road  
St Joseph, MO

*Stay tuned for more information*



The Life & Justice campaign promotes the fight against injustice toward the dignity of the person and the sanctity of human life.

These projects target change through education, pastoral care, and advocating change in public policy. Our goal is to help people help themselves. All funds stay within the geographical region of the Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph, and all grant recipients must be in line with the moral and social teachings of the Catholic Church. Among last year's recipients were Mother's Refuge, Community Missions Corporation of St. Joseph, and the Foundation for Inclusive Religious Education.

### How does the Life & Justice Campaign work?

Donations may be made to the Life & Justice Campaign at any time. A special second collection is taken up in parishes throughout the diocese in the month of August.

- Applications for grants may also be submitted anytime. To be considered for a grant in a given year, applications must be received no later than Dec. 31 of the previous year.
- All grant decisions are made locally in the month of March by the diocesan Life & Justice Campaign Committee.
- 100% of all donations received by the Life & Justice Campaign each calendar year are distributed locally.
- Only organizations that meet all of the published criteria are eligible to receive a grant.
- Every organization that meets all of the criteria receives a grant based on a weighted rating scale.
- Grant recipients are invited to an awards reception in the month of May where they have the option to discuss and to display information about their organization for the rest of the recipients.



### Stay Informed!

MCC is the Public Policy Agency for the Catholic Church in Missouri. Visit their website [m catholic.org](http://m catholic.org).

### Maryknoll Sisters

Maryknoll Sisters give witness to God's love and devote our lives in service overseas. As nurses, doctors, teachers, theologians, social workers, environmentalists and more, they serve the needs of the people - the poor, the ailing and the marginalized.



You may already know that Lent begins on February 10, 2016. But did you know that CRS Rice Bowl will offer daily reflections for every day of Lent, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday?

Beginning Ash Wednesday, [click here](#) to begin your Lenten journey.



## Want to get Involved in Prison & Jail Ministry?

Contact the [Human Rights Office](#) if you'd like to Volunteer:

**VIP (Volunteer in Prayer)** - VIPs lift up this ministry with powerful prayer support wherever they are. Ask us about our team of Prison Ministry Prayer Warriors

**VIC (Volunteer in Corrections)** - VICs in our Diocese visit the jails and prisons on a regular basis to provide the sacraments and a listening ear to our incarcerated brothers and sisters. Ministering to the incarcerated and their families can sometimes feel like visiting a foreign culture.

**Rosary Order Processor** - Volunteers who assist the Human Rights Office with the processing, packing & mailing of rosary orders from those incarcerated in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph area.

**Become a Mentor** - with the TurnAround Community Re-entry Program to help folks get back on their feet after prison.

**Prisoner Pen Pals** - Provide much-needed encouragement and friendship to an isolated prisoner. You can establish your own Parish Pen-Pal ministry using the guide found on our website. This simple guide lays out the basic steps for finding a prisoner pen pal, provides practical suggestions on how to get started, and provides other tips for fostering a safe, appropriate relationship based on encouragement and discipleship.

## **CONTACT US**

### **Laurie Jo Holmes**

Program Coordinator  
Human Rights Office

### **Teresa Hoepfner**

Program Coordinator  
Project Rachel

### **Miguel Salazar**

Director  
Hispanic Ministry

### **Bill Francis**

Director of Respect Life &  
Human Rights Offices



[www.humanrightskcsj.org](http://www.humanrightskcsj.org)

**"And the king will say to them in reply,,  
'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one  
of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"  
~Matthew 25:40**

## **Human Rights Office**

**Diocese of Kansas City-St.**

**Joseph**



Blessed Mother  
Teresa, Pray for Us.