

Leo Stec

Answering the Lord's Call to Prison Ministry in Naples, Florida, Area

At first, Leo Stec, a long-time member of the Order of Malta, didn't think prison ministry was for him. His father had been a corrections officer for 35 years, and Leo had visited prisons, but he was afraid he would have trouble in the confined space. However, when Dick Copeland, former Naples Area Chair, said Leo was needed, he stepped up. Leo now knows he is meant to serve in this way. "Prison ministry is a calling," he said. "I'm glad that the Lord called me to do it."

The Naples Area Prison Ministry has been in place since 2013. Leo visits the Collier County Jail in Naples. Components of the program include Communion distribution, one-on-one prayers, prayer services, distribution of Order of Malta Bibles and prayer books and the coordination of bringing a local parish priest to the prison once a month for confession.

Leo's ministry takes him to some of the most challenging populations of the prison, including the behavioral health units, solitary confinement, and the high security blocks. He said he sees God in each prisoner's face. "In many cases these are lost souls," he said. "I pray for the lost souls every day."

Whether the inmates are Catholic or not, all are welcome to pray with Leo and David Joyce who is the current Area Chair for the Naples Area, and also serves in prison ministry. "I welcome everybody to come out and pray with us," Leo said. "It's part of reawakening their faith." He strives to give the inmates encouraging words, to let them know that the Lord is with them every day."

Leo said he wouldn't be able to do this ministry without the Holy Spirit. He said one of the prayers he says every day on the way to the jail is: "Holy Spirit, load my lips. Do the talking for me." And he can tell from the feedback he gets from the inmates, the appreciation they have, the Holy Spirit is talking through him. "We are all just vessels for the movement of the Holy Spirit," he said.



"I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison."
-Isaiah 42:6-7

First Friday Mass & Dinner April 9, 2021

Mass was at St. Ann's catholic Church at 5:30. First Friday was well attended. We had 52 people attend Mass and Dinner. It was wonderful to see everyone!

David and Maria welcomed first time attendees Sandra and Lynn Davis, Jeanne Murtaugh's sister Lucia Erwin and Anne and Ronnie Petera joining us from the Federal Association. The also welcomed back Sue and Jim Dillon and Don and Kathy Tendick.



We had several birthdays to celebrated in April: Jean Brunel, Sue Dillon and Kathy Tendick.

Lastly David and Maria present anniversary pins to 3 members. Tom O'Connor received his 10 year pin, Sue Dillion received her 30 year pin and Jim Dillion received his 35 year pin.

10, 30 & 35 Year Anniversary Pins



Sue Dillion, Jim Dillon, Presenter David Joyce and Tom O'Connor

2021 VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE

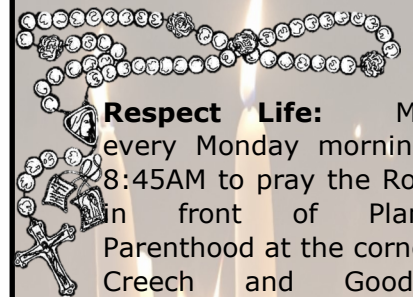
Thursday, April 29th - Monday, May 3rd

7:00 PM ET Each Night

Materials and programs will be provided to you closer to the Pilgrimage

Ministries

Power Pack: Is packing 200 weekend bags for elementary school children in Naples. We meet at 8:00AM every Wednesday morning at Catholic Charities, 3174 Tamiami Trail, East Naples. Contact Tom O'Reilly at (toriinap@aol.com) to volunteer.



Respect Life: Meets every Monday morning at 8:45AM to pray the Rosary in front of Planned Parenthood at the corner of Creech and Goodlette Frank Roads. Contact BJ Barone at (BJB@BJBarone.com) for more information.

Recruiting: If you know of someone who is interested in learning about membership in the Order of Malta. Please contact Gerrie Musicco at (gerriemusicco@gmail.com) if you have someone you would like to recommend.

Human Trafficking Back

Pack Program: Packing Backpacks for Human Trafficking happened on December 16, 2020. New date for March coming soon. If you would like to help out, please contact Steve or Sharon Niehaus at (sgniehaus61@gmail.com)



Grants Program:

- Regular area Grants Program
- COVID-19 Emergency Food-Related Assistance Program
- Local Area Project Support Grants Program

If you have questions about the 2021 program, or ideas for new ministries, please contact Michael Rothmeier, Chairman of the Grants Committee at: (rothmeiermj@gmail.com)

Eucharistic Procession Opportunity

Courtney Price has alerted us to a potential Defense of the Faith project. It involves organizing a public Eucharistic procession. See (uniteournation.net) for more information or contact Maria and David Joyce (Joycema@collierschools.com)



Announcements

May 1st Friday Mass and Dinner: May 7, 2021

June 1st Friday Mass and Dinner: June 5, 2021

Break for Summer: July-September 2021

- Please remember , Mass begins at 5:30
- We will employ the same safety protocol that we used each month.





Human Trafficking Backpack Program

The insidious scourge of human trafficking is widespread, and especially in the U.S. In 2019, there were over 22,000 victims identified through the National Human Trafficking Hotline, which was a 20% increase from prior year. Human trafficking is very complex and dynamic. While exact numbers are difficult to come by, it is clear that this horrible crime greatly impacts the individual victims, their families and our society. The majority of reported crimes are sex trafficking and female; however, labor trafficking and males are also prevalent.

Specifically in Southwest Florida, this modern slavery is occurring too frequently. There are various organizations that are working to help the victims and combat this crime, including the Anti-Human Trafficking Assistance program within Catholic Charities Diocese of Venice, Inc.

The Catholic Charities Anti-Human Trafficking Assistance Team works closely with law enforcement and prosecutors throughout Southwest Florida to assist survivors.

The Naples Chapter of the American Association of Malta works with the Catholic Charities staff by providing some basic provisions for individual victims. Semi-annually, the Naples Chapter provides 25 backpacks (20 for girls/women, 5 for boys/men) filled with many essential everyday

products, which include clothing, hygiene products, toiletries, towels, blankets, and other miscellaneous items. Attached to each backpack is a custom made key chain tag that states, "You are loved."

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.."

- Luke 19:10

Erika Pineros, Human Trafficking Program Coordinator at Catholic Charities shared how grateful the people are to receive the backpack, and tag often evokes an emotional reaction as they know there are people that care, and that God loves them. Erika will need more backpacks for the foreseeable future and will be ready for our next supply when we do this again in a few months. Sadly, she also shared that big trafficking problem now is with even younger children.

While the Order of Malta fills a key role to help victims, it is important for all of us to educate ourselves and others to eradicate this evil plague. Please review presentation by Deborah O'Hara-Rusckowski, DM.

<https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/respect-life/cardinal-issues/>

Other resources:

<https://polarisproject.org/data-and-research/>

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/partnerships/look-beneath-surface>

<https://www.rswliving.com/2020/06/27/319359/sex-trafficking-in-southwest-florida>

<https://catholiccharitiesdov.org/charities/anti-human-trafficking-assistance-program-fort-myers/>

Meet Samah



In March 2021, Um-Samah, a first-time mother, sought prenatal care at Holy Family's Mobile Medical Clinic in the isolated village of Nahaleen. Because of road closures caused by the pandemic, she received infrequent prenatal care during her pregnancy. Immediately upon examination, determining that her unborn baby was extremely small for her gestational age, they rushed her to Holy Family Hospital. Her husband, a firefighter, joined her there. The medical team at Holy Family Hospital performed an emergency Caesarean-section. Baby Samah at one pound, was so tiny she could fit into the palm of a doctor's hand. At first vigorous and active, Samah suddenly went into respiratory distress, requiring intubation in the Hospital's NICU. Because of a congenital obstruction, she had to be fed through her tiny newborn veins. At 54 days, she still needs oxygen, but now weighs 2.2 lbs. She will remain in the care of the Hospital's NICU staff until she can breathe on her own and weighs about 4 lbs. For more information or to help, please contact Debbie & Jean Brunel at 239-495-1939.

Pray for Our Sick

Mary, spiritual Mother to those in need, we fervently request your heavenly intercession for,

- Sue Dillon
- Joe Gill
- Tom Redmond
- Jeannie Murtaugh
- Brendan Murtaugh
- Al Cinotti
- Steve Orr
- Harry Witt
- Charlie Morgan

and all those who are ill and seek God's miraculous assistance.

Backpacking Day is a Success!

The Naples Area Backpack Ministry for the Human Trafficking Victims had a very successful backpacking day on March 18th. They packed bags for 5 men and 20 women. After a fruitful morning of packing backpacks Father Stan Dombrowski said mass and then we all enjoyed lunch and nice conversation.

Picture to right: Dennis Logue, Ann Godsey, Sharon Niehaus, Tom Kroger, Chris Kroger, Leah Favia, Marilyn Miller, Steve Niehaus.



Welcome Anne & Ronnie Petera

Anne is originally from Richmond, VA and was the fourth of nine children born to Peg and Van Pappas. She holds a bachelor's degree in



Anne Petera, Fr. Bill Walsh & Ronnie Petera

Business Management and Finance from Virginia Commonwealth Univ., where she served on the Board of Visitors from 2002-06 and was Vice Rector. Anne was invested in the Fall of 2000 at St. Mathew Cathedral in Washington, DC.

Anne's career began in commercial banking, then moved into real estate. In 1996, she was appointed by Gov. George Allen of Virginia to serve as the Chairman of the Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control board, a \$400 million dollar enterprise agency operated by the state. In 1998, she was appointed Secretary of the Commonwealth, a cabinet level position in the Administration of Governor (now Ambassador) James Gilmore. From 2002-06 Anne was Chief of Staff to the Attorney General of Virginia, Jerry Kilgore.

From 2006-09, Anne served as Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, by appointment of President George W. Bush. After the President's second term ended, Anne spent seven years as a Government Affairs professional with Lockheed Martin and the Harris Corporation.

Anne and husband Ronnie, a Knight of Columbus, have been married 51 years, and are the parents of one child, Paul, who resides with his family in Parker, Colorado. The Peteras are active members of Epiphany Cathedral in Venice, FL; and made the pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2010. They have visited Rhodes and Malta and hope to visit Jerusalem and the Holy Land in 2022.

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and
peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow
with hope by the power
of the
Holy Spirit.

Do you know someone who is in the Order of Malta that is unable to leave home and would benefit from a visit from Malta. Let us know. Joanne Kuehner is heading up our newest program and Nancy Stec is assisting Joanne, visiting our own sick. Please contact them if you would like to be involved. Joanne can be contacted at joanne@hopeforhaiti.com and Nancy can be contacted at n.stec2516@gmail.com.