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CSS Is US!

Auction items needed for Catholic Social Services' 18th Annual Memorial Golf Classic & Auction

Do you have a collectible item or antique that is collecting dust? How about a unique vehicle that you no longer need? We could use it for our auction! We're looking for items to be donated for the 18th Annual Catholic Social Services Memorial Golf Classic & Auction, to be held on August 8, 2014!



Maybe you have some extra tickets to an event or Husker game. Or, maybe you own a business that could donate an item or a service. If you have an item or an idea for our Silent or Live Auction, just fill out the form below and place it in the enclosed remit envelope, contact John McDermott at (800) 981-8242 or (402) 430-5626, or e-mail the information to info@cssisus.org.

Thank you!

Yes, I have an item to donate for the CSS Silent & Live Auction!

Name_____

Address_____

City _____ State____ Zip_____ Phone_____ Email_____

Description of donated item:

Via Satoris
WAY OF THE SOWER

March 2014

Saint Deogratias

The evidence of our love of God

We know nothing about the birth and early life of St. Deogratias, which means, 'Thanks be to God.' He lived and died in North Africa, an area of the world that at one time was predominately Christian. He was a priest in the town of Carthage (which is now the city of Tunis) in the Islamic country of Tunisia.

In the year 439, the Vandals attacked and conquered the city. Since they were Arians who did not believe in the divinity of Christ, they expelled Bishop Quod-vult-Deus and most of his clergy by forcing them onto a damaged ship which miraculously made it to Naples.

Fourteen years later, the Vandal King Genseric allowed the ordination of Fr. Deogratias to the episcopate. Because of his exemplary and holy life, the faith grew in Carthage and the surrounding region. Because of the extent of his faith in action, he gained the respect of even the pagans living in the region.

Only two years after his installation, King Genseric sacked Rome and brought back many captives who were distributed and sold as slaves. Many families were divided as a consequence. Bishop Deogratias for his part sold many of the sacred vessels in his churches to purchase these slaves for the purposes of liberating them. Since the number of newly freed captives exceeded the available housing in the city, he turned two of his largest churches into housing. He supplied their bedding and fed them daily from his resources. His heroic charity incited jealousy and hatred from the Arians which resulted in an unsuccessful attempt on his life.

Because of the stress of being overworked by this overwhelming situation and the fact the art of medicine was not then what it is now, the saintly bishop died in the year 457, after only three years of being the bishop of Carthage. His feast day is celebrated on March 22.

Because of his heroic charity work, he is a perfect patron of Catholic Charities. In the first letter of John, we are told that God is love and the evidence of our love of God is our love of neighbor, and the evidence of our love of neighbor is the extent we give our self to them in a sacrificial manner. It is, of course, nothing short of the imitation of the sacrificial love Jesus exhibited for us on the cross at Calvary. May the meditation on this short bio of the life of this wonderful saint be a profitable Lenten exercise.

As we continue our Lenten journey, let us imitate the life of St. Deogratias which means, 'Thanks be to God,' and ask him for his prayers so we too can mirror that same self-less love he showed for his flock so many centuries ago. St. Deogratias, pray for us!!

Catholic Social Services
Of Southern Nebraska
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Agency Update- March 2014

"My prayer has been answered!"

Hello from Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska! Just days ago, we helped a homeless man (who came to Nebraska from a state with a much higher unemployment rate than we have in Nebraska) with temporary housing while he looks for a job. We were only able to do so because of the generosity of our donors.

I trust you have a brief moment to read the life of this month's saint, St. Deogratias, which means, 'Thanks be to God.' After we helped him, the man mentioned above repeated over and over, "Thanks be to God, thanks be to God … I have been praying all day and my prayer has been answered!"

I pray you will consider this Lenten season helping us spiritually with your prayers and penances, materially with items around your home and farm not needed, and financially with a cash donation according to your means so we can continue to help the many needy individuals and families that come to us on a daily basis.

Please know we at Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska will keep you, your family and intentions in our prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Fr. Christopher Kubat
Executive Director

Our Catholic Culture

The Feast of the Annunciation

One of the most important feasts in the Church calendar, the Feast of the Annunciation celebrates the fact that the God the Son became Man. Remembered each time we recite the First Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, this momentous event took place when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived Jesus Christ. The Annunciation is one of the three most ancient feasts of Our Lady. The feast dates from the Council of Ephesus in 431, when Our Lady was proclaimed the Mother of God. This proclamation was because of a heresy which denied Mary's Divine Motherhood. It was also the Council of Ephesus which added the following words to the Hail Mary: "Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, Amen." The first chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke describes Mary being told she was to become the mother of the Incarnation of God, and records Gabriel's greeting to Mary, "Hail, thou who art highly favored. The Lord is with thee." This is the origin of the repeated "Hail Mary" prayer and Mary's response to God's will, "Let it be done to me according to thy word." Her exultant hymn, the Magnificat, found in Luke 1:46-55, has been part of the Church's liturgy of the hours, at Vespers (evening prayer), and has been repeated nightly in churches, convents and monasteries for many centuries.



The feast of the Incarnation is celebrated nine months before Christmas, on March 25th. It has been celebrated on this date in the Western church since early in the 7th century. The choice of this date is, of course, directly related to the choice of December 25 for Christmas. The significance of this Christian feast on Western culture is made clear from the fact that New Years Day used to be celebrated on March 25 as late as 1752 in some countries.



CSS Is US!

Last year, our St. Gianna Women's Homes provided 17,061 nights of housing to 37 families and 73 individuals.

A Brief Look At The

Patron Saint of Slavery

As noted earlier in this issue, the featured saint for this month, St. Deogratias, was known for freeing many captives from slavery. However, the saint that is recognized as the Patron Saint of Slaver is Saint Peter Claver.



Born at Verdu, Catalonia, Spain, in 1580, Peter Claver studied at the Jesuit college of Barcelona, entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1602 and took his final vows in 1604. While studying philosophy at Majorca, he was influenced by St. Alphonsus Rodriguez to go to the Indies and save "millions of perishing souls." In 1610, he arrived in Colombia, the principle slave market of the New World, where a thousand slaves were landed every month. After his ordination in 1616, he dedicated himself by special vow to the service of the African slaves working unceasingly for the salvation of the African slaves and the abolition of slavery.

Boarding the slave ships as they entered the harbor, he would care for the sick and dying, and instruct the slaves through catechists before administering the Sacraments. Through his efforts it is believed that three hundred thousand souls entered the Church. Furthermore, he did not lose sight of his converts when they left the ships, but followed them to the plantations to which they were sent, encouraged them to live as Christians, and prevailed on their masters to treat them humanely. He died in 1654.

Social Services

Lenten Food Drive now underway

Spring is finally here! It still gets chilly out sometimes but you know it's not going to last and warm days are right around the corner. This has been a long cold winter for the poor and working poor in Nebraska. People have had to make sacrifices in order to keep their children warm at night. One place where families saved money was through the use of our food pantries. If they received free food from Catholic Social Services they would have more money to spend on gas and electricity. This has left our food pantries very low on food heading into the summer. As part of your Lenten sacrifice this year, consider donating money or food to Catholic Social Services this Lenten season. Many of the Catholic grade schools and high schools are collecting food for Catholic Social Services this Lent, or consider dropping food at one of four locations. We rely on the Lenten food drives to keep our shelves full all summer long. Please help us to continue to feed the hungry and may all have a blessed Lent.

