

## The Communion of Saints and mental health

*(continued from page 4)*

other. No matter the circumstance, it is possible, especially with the help of God and His grace.

There are many gifts that can be given to the communion of saints who have preceded us in death. Remember, they are also a part of the “organic unity.” Have a Mass said, continue to intercede for the souls in purgatory, offer up other suffering, take a holy hour for the person, offer a rosary...this Christmas list can go on and on. Ask your parish priest for more suggestions that you and your family can add to your Christmas list for the departed souls.

St. Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians chapter 12, “God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it.” Use this Christmas season (and the rest of the year for that matter) to take good care of Christ’s body. Make it a priority on your Christmas list and reflect on the ways that this brings more joy to your life, your family, and your friends.

If you feel like you need any assistance with your relationships and/or with developing the best version of your self, please contact the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center. We provide services to the body of Christ to remove any psychological impediments and to allow the person to fully experience their role in Christ’s body. Thank you to all of you who support the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center. We appreciate your putting us on your Christmas list every year!

Visit our website at:  
[www.csssus.org](http://www.csssus.org)



(S.A.G.)



Lincoln, NE 68510  
2241 "O" Street  
Catholic Social Services

# Patron

The Quarterly Newsletter of Catholic Social Services Of Southern Nebraska

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.”*

*-John 1:14*



## Making the holidays brighter CSS Christmas Programs will serve thousands

The month of December is unquestionably the busiest month of the year for our social service programs. In particular, the Catholic Social Services Christmas Programs provide gifts to thousands of individuals across southern Nebraska each year. Through our Hastings and Lincoln offices, we provide gifts and food baskets for families, children and individuals who might otherwise go without at Christmas. Our ability to provide to those in need through these programs relies heavily on the generosity of our donors and volunteers. Our programs include:

◆**KFOR Operation Santa Claus.** For years we have participated in Lincoln radio station KFOR's Operation Santa Claus.

Clients fill out applications at our office requesting specific items for their children. The requests are sent to KFOR, who place them on area "Giving Trees." The donated presents are delivered to our office, where clients can pick them up.

◆**The St. Nicholas Toy Shoppe.** We work with coordinators at participating parishes to randomly select the age and gender of the child and a toy for children twelve and younger. The toys received are taken to the St. Nicholas Toy Shoppe in Lincoln. The Toy Shoppe will again

be located at the CSS offices in the St. Joseph Center at 2241 "O" Street. The Toy Shoppe will be open on Thursday, December 20th from 9am-Noon and 1-4pm. Customers may pick out one new toy and one stocking-stuffer for each of their children. Last year, the St. Nicholas Toy Shoppe provided toys for over 3,000 children.

◆**Adopt-A-Family.** Individuals, families and groups can adopt a family. Mostly gifts are purchased, but a food basket can be given. The maximum value of each gift is \$25 per person.

◆**Good Angel Trees Program.** In Hastings, St. Cecilia and St. Michael parishes and in Doniphan, St. Ann parish provide gifts and food baskets to needy families in the area. We meet with families to determine needs and wishes for Christmas. The items identified are put on an

Angel Tree at these churches for parishioners to purchase. Families applying also receive a food basket either from the Good Angel Tree Program or the CSS Food Pantry. If you, your family or organization would like to assist in one of this year's Christmas Programs, call (402) 474-1600 in Lincoln or (402) 463-2112 in Hastings.



*A volunteer loads toy donations for the Catholic Social Services St. Nicholas Toy Shoppe*

### Inside:

**Starting over not easy**

**Page 2**



**Giving light to those in darkness**

**Page 3**



### Advent/Christmas 2012

**A CSS holiday tradition continues**

**Page 5**



# Starting over is not easy

**Fr. Christopher Kubat**  
**Executive Director**  
**Catholic Social Services**



Whoever said starting over was easy has another thought coming! Starting over takes determination, the grace of God and sometimes the help of others. Every year on Christmas Eve, Curt Krueger and I are at our St. Joseph Center together from 8 am till noon for last minute stragglers who are in need of help. Two years ago as the noon hour crept closer, I had an inner feeling that I have felt from time to time to do something. I have learned over the years to listen to these promptings. That “something” was to hang around the office a wee bit after noon for a special guest. Sure enough, that special guest was a single mother with children who was in obvious distress who drove up at almost 12:30 pm. After greeting her she stated she needed a single mattress and box spring for one of her children to sleep on for she was starting over.

After further questioning, she was also in need of presents for her children but didn't presume to ask. Fortunately, we had some gifts left over. After seeing them she wept. After receiving a mattress, a box spring, gifts, a turkey and some needed warm clothes for her children she wept even more. It was then she explained she was a single mother because the father of her children had abused them. Before leaving we said a prayer in the chapel. I was amazed because this woman who is not

Catholic walked right up to the tabernacle and prayed. She experienced tremendous peace, the peace that only Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament can give.

Over the last two years, this same woman has returned to the office for help but also to pray in our chapel because it is there that she continues to experience the peace of Christ. There was a brief time during a period of unemployment we were able to help her with utilities. Only a few weeks ago, I noticed her in our chapel dedicated to St. Joseph with her two smallest children. As they exited the chapel I noticed that mom had already taught them to genuflect and to make the sign of the cross. I was amazed. It was the first time I have met her children. Before leaving, her daughter made sure to thank me and to say how much she loves our chapel. “It's God's house!” she said.

I am grateful we have the privilege of having the Blessed Sacrament in each of our sites across the diocese: St. Frances Center in Auburn, St. Joseph Center in Lincoln and St. John Vianney Center in Hastings. I am excited to announce that there will be a small Eucharistic adoration chapel with our new St. Isidore Center in Imperial when it is remodeled. Because of this, clients will all have access to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in all of our locations.

Please consider helping us spiritually with your prayers and penances, materially with items around your house or farm not needed, and a cash donation according to your means so we can continue to help needy individuals and families all across southern Nebraska who come to us in crisis. May the peace of Christ which is beyond understanding, be with you and your loved ones this most holy time of year when the Son of Man came to us as a baby. Please know we at Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska will keep you, your family and intentions in our prayers!!



# Giving light to those in darkness

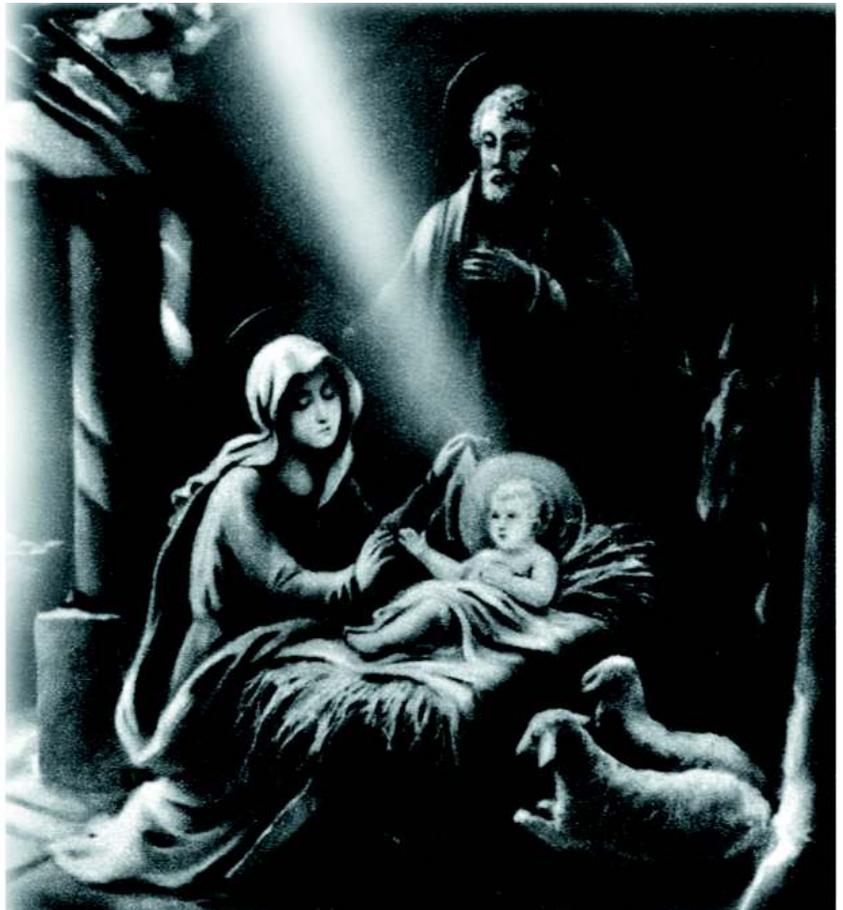
Curt Krueger- Director of Social Services  
Eastern Sector of the Diocese

*“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (LK1:78-79).*

Have you ever really thought about darkness? It’s an amazing phenomenon, it’s not really a thing; it is the absence of something. Yet, even though it isn’t a thing in and of itself, it can take root and grow until it consumes whatever it touches. You can do things that help push the darkness back, but only one thing will dispel the darkness completely.

Many of the clients who come to Catholic Social Services are in darkness. Darkness has touched their lives through domestic violence, poverty, the indignity of the welfare system, drug and alcohol abuse or through simply feeling unloved. We can provide them with gifts of food, clothing, housing, counseling and the full gambit of other services that we provide every day; and this does help push the darkness back. The way which we present these gifts to our clients also helps push the darkness back. A smile, stopping to speak to someone in the lobby while they wait for their food, helping carry the food to their car when it’s raining or snowing or even just because it is the nice thing to do; all these little actions help push the darkness back. But to completely dispel the darkness our clients must come to know Christ. He is the light of the world and only through Him can we completely dispel the darkness in people’s lives.

We believe that God will use our gifts to help open the minds and hearts of our clients to be ready to receive Christ in their lives. To bring one person to Christ because of the help they received from Catholic Social Services would be the best Christmas present of all. Please keep this in your prayers this Advent and Christmas season: that through the gifts received at Catholic Social Services families will also receive Christ as part of that gift. Then we will truly be instruments of God’s love and help Him “give light to those in darkness.”



# The Communion of Saints and mental health

**Dr. Aaron Stratman**  
**Director of Clinical Services**

Well, it is almost Christmas time again! It is time to start thinking about the most important thing about the season—gifts! I am sure that everyone has their Christmas list well in order and knows exactly what they are going to give each person. For those keeping track, last year I wrote about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Once again, I had fallen prey to the focus of Christmas being what we could receive and not focusing on what we can give. So, this year, I would like to talk more about giving...

Let us start this discussion of giving by examining the communion of saints. From [newadvent.org](http://newadvent.org), “The communion of saints is the spiritual solidarity which binds together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven in the organic unity of the same mystical body under Christ its head, and in a constant interchange of supernatural offices.” So, to place us in the proper context, we should consider ourselves part of this “organic unity” also known as Christ’s body. All of us have suffered an injury or at least aches and pains, right? When we feel these pains in our body, we take sufficient measures to stop the pain through rest, ice, elevation, ibuprofen, physical therapy, etc. There are billions of dollars spent on the industries that take care of our own bodies every year. So, how many billions of dollars do we (collectively) spend on taking care of Christ’s body? What if the price of taking care of Christ’s body cost more than money?

Now, we can return to our Christmas list...The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) was frequently quoted by John Paul II, especially paragraph 24, which reads, “Man is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, [and he] cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.” So you can see, nurturing and cultivating Christ’s

body is beyond price. It costs your self. How can this lofty task be accomplished? It is all about your Christmas list.



When things do not go exactly the way you wanted them to go, what is your reaction? Put on your Christmas list that you will give your self in those situations, you can feel frustrated but act with kindness. When you recognize that your spouse needs to do something fun and leaves you with children and a list of chores (it’s Sunday and your favorite team is playing at 12,

3, and 7), put on your Christmas list that you will give the very best of yourself to her by accomplishing it all. If the problems you are having in your relationships with others (friends, family, spouse, God, etc.) are more serious and it is their fault because they don’t give you what you want, put on your Christmas list the ways that you can give your self to them without expecting anything in return. That is the great mystery of God’s gift to us of freedom. We are able to choose in every moment whether we will be able to put aside our fallen desires, our pride, and do what’s best for the

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# The Refrigerator Reference Series

Useful Tips To Help You And Your Family Live Our Catholic Faith

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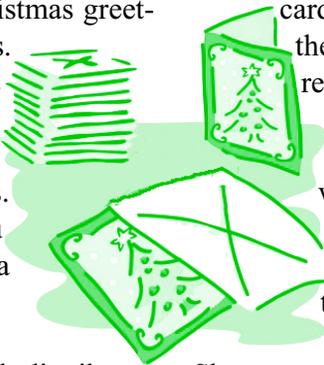
Advent/Christmas 2012

## A tradition of sending a word of encouragement for the holidays

Years ago, we began offering our readers of *The Patron* an opportunity to send a Christmas message to those we serve. Response was so positive, we have continued to offer our readers a chance to send a Christmas greeting to those we help during the holidays. And for the many families and individuals we help across southern Nebraska, this can be a very difficult time. Already struggling families feel extra stress during the holidays. Once again this year, we are offering you and your family the opportunity to send a special holiday message of hope.

During the month of December, we will distribute Christmas food and gifts to thousands of people across southern Nebraska. Through our Toy Shoppe and Christmas Programs, hundreds of children will receive

what may be their only Christmas gift. Please take a moment to write a Christmas note to someone who will receive our help this year. You can write your note on the card below, cut along the dotted line, fold it along the solid line and send it to us in the enclosed remit envelope.



Feel free to write whatever you would like; words of encouragement, a Christmas greeting or prayer, whatever strikes you. Some folks in past years have even made their own additional cards and sent them to us. We will distribute these cards through our CSS Toy Shoppe and other Christmas programs. This is your chance to send a holiday message to someone who might not otherwise receive one, someone who may never know that someone else cares enough to think of them.

### Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska

2241 "O" Street • Lincoln, Nebraska 68510 • (402) 474-1600 • Toll Free: (800) 962-8242 • 3700 Sheridan Blvd. • Lincoln, Nebraska 68510 • (402) 489-1834 • Toll Free: (800) 961-6277  
333 West Second Street • Hastings, Nebraska 68901 • (402) 463-2112 • Toll Free: (888) 826-9629 • Website: [www.cssisus.org](http://www.cssisus.org)



## Announcing the newly redesigned Catholic Social Services website!

Next time you visit us online, you'll see right away that "CSS Is US!" has a whole new look! We're proud to unveil a fresh new look for the Catholic Social Services website! And though our look has changed, our website address is the same- just bookmark [www.cssisus.org](http://www.cssisus.org) and you'll be taken directly to our newly redesigned website. Having a presence on the internet allows 24-hours a day, seven days a week accessibility to our agency. When you check out our new website you'll find:

- ◆ The latest news and events posted on the home page.
- ◆ Informational pages for each of our programs and services including Counseling Services and Social Services.
- ◆ The ability to make monetary donations online.
- ◆ Sign up online for volunteer opportunities.
- ◆ A calendar of events and how you can participate in events such as the CSS Memorial Golf Classic and Auction, the Celebration of Caring Banquet in Lincoln and the Bountiful Harvest Banquet in Hastings and more!

Plus you'll find a link to our Facebook page! Check out our new website today at [www.cssisus.org](http://www.cssisus.org).



*And the angel said to them,  
"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of  
a great joy which will come to all the people; for to  
you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,  
who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for  
you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling  
cloths and lying in a manger."*

*-Luke 2:10-12*

## In our own backyard

**Tom Schik**  
Director of Social Services,  
Western Sector of the Diocese

**W**e are living in tough economic times. Hard times bring their share of struggles. This is especially true for low income families that worry about feeding themselves and their family.

A recent publication issued in September of 2012 by the U.S. Census Bureau presents some startling numbers about poverty in America. The poverty rate in the U.S. rose from 15.3 % in 2010 to 15.9 % in 2011. In the United States that represents 48.5 million people living in poverty. In Nebraska the overall poverty rate increased in a ten year period from 10.3% in 2001 to 13.1% in 2011 an increase of 2.8%. Currently 234,710 families in Nebraska live in poverty.

More alarming than the overall rate for all Nebraskans is the rate of increase in child poverty (children under the age of 18). In 2001 the child poverty rate was 13%; in 2011 the child poverty rate

rose to 17.6%. That is an increase in child poverty of 4.6%. More than seventeen and a half percent of Nebraska children live in poverty. That translates into 78, 831 Nebraska children living in poverty.

We can easily make a general assumption that anyone living in poverty (despite our efforts as a government to provide food assistance through its food programs such as WIC and Food Stamps) are food insecure. They frequently do not know where their next meal is going to come from.

As we approach the holiday season every year, we work diligently at CSS to ensure that struggling families in our area have food to celebrate the holidays. Our Thanksgiving program gathered all the food needed to provide a turkey with all the trimmings for 300 or so families that came to us for a food basket. The basket also included food for several other meals on that holiday weekend. Christmas food baskets will also be distributed with the help of the Good Angel Programs in our parishes.

As you can see, the need is great. Your support of our food pantries throughout the year ensures that we can respond to those in need especially the many children living in poverty right here in Nebraska, in our own backyard. We thank you for your generosity and encourage you to continue supporting our food programs with donated food and cash donations. God will bless you abundantly for feeding His hungry children.

