Words of Wisdom

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ. I want to use this quarter to write about something very vital and central to our Faith, The EUCHARIST. The Real Presence.

We use the word Eucharist to describe our most important Catholic liturgy—the Mass. The word is also used to refer to the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word eucharistein, which means "thanksgiving" or "to give thanks" (to this day, if you want to say "thank you" in Greek you say efharisto!). The Mass is a great prayer of thanksgiving that the Church offers to God. We give thanks to God for all the blessings of our lives, but especially for the gift of Christ in his precious Body and Blood, the Real Presence of our Lord.

When we come together to celebrate the Mass, Christ is present to us in so many ways—in the proclamation of the Word, in the people assembled, in the presider, and most especially, in the Eucharist. The Mass is our primary act of worship as Catholics for it is the "source and summit of the Christian life." When we participate in Mass and receive Holy Communion, we come closer and closer to Christ and to one another. The Church's greatest liturgy, the Mass, gathers us around the table of the Lord to give thanks to God and to receive God's gift of the Body and Blood of Christ. This very sacrament is meant to transform us more and more in the very Body of Christ. For this reason, the Mass end with words of mission: "Ite, missa est" or "Go, you are sent." We are sent as Christ's disciples, to do the work of the Gospel in this chaotic world.

Ite, missa est.
Deacon Robert G. Stevens
Spiritual Adviser, Central Senate

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Constant Joy, Persevering Prayer and Constant Thanksgiving

Saint Paul invites us to prepare the coming of the Lord by assuming three attitudes: first, constant joy; second, persevering prayer and third, constant thanksgiving.

The first attitude, constant joy: “Rejoice always”, says the Apostle. It means to remain always in joy, even when things don’t go according to our desires; there is that profound joy, which is peace. And peace is a joy “at the ground level.” Anxieties, difficulties and sufferings run through the life of each one, we all know them; and so often the reality that surrounds us seems to be inhospitable and arid, like the desert in which John the Baptist’s voice resounds. The Baptist’s words reveal that our joy rests on a certainty that this desert is inhabited: “among you stands one whom you do not know”. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those that are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”.

The second attitude Saint Paul says is “pray constantly”. Through prayer, we can enter a stable relationship with God, who is the source of true joy. A Christian’s joy comes from faith and from the encounter with Jesus Christ. The more we are rooted in Christ, the closer we are to Jesus, the more we rediscover interior serenity. Having encountered Jesus, a Christian can’t be a prophet of misfortune, but a witness and a herald of joy—a joy to be shared with others, a contagious joy that renders less exhausting the path of life.

The third attitude pointed out by Paul is constant thanksgiving, namely, grateful love in our relationship with God. In fact, He is very generous with us, and we are invited to be grateful always for His benefits, His merciful love, His patience and kindness, thus living in incessant gratitude.

Joy, prayer and gratitude are three attitudes that prepare us to live Christmas genuinely throughout the year.

zenit.org/articles/angelus-address-on-gaudete-sunday/

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AROUND the ARCHDIOCESE

January 26

Veterans Benefits Seminar

Veterans’ Benefits seminar for persons (spouses) 50+ years old, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

at St. Laurence Parish (Ave Maria Parish Life Center), 3103 Sweetwater Blvd., Sugar Land.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will address benefits for health care, spouse/survivors, disabilities, and cemetery/pre-need.

Lunch included. Free.

Information or registration by Thursday, January 18.

Contact Mark Ciesielski, Associate Director:

713-741-8712 or mciesielski@archgh.org

Event offered through the Archdiocesan Office of Aging Ministry.
SENIOR SENATES
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

CENTRAL SENIOR SENATE
President - Delois Semien

NORTHERN SENIOR SENATE
President - Pete Palasota

SOUTHWEST SENIOR SENATE
President - Gayle Naar

SENIOR SENATE MEETING DATES
Dates subject to change on holidays.

CENTRAL: 1st Monday of each month
St. Dominic Auditorium - 10 a.m.
2403 Holcombe Blvd. - Houston, TX 77021

NORTHERN: 2nd Monday of each month
St. Monica Church - 10 a.m.
8421 W. Montgomery Rd. - Houston, TX 77088

SOUTHWEST: Quarterly meetings: 10 a.m.
St. Cyril of Alexandria Church
10503 Westheimer Rd. - Houston, TX 77042

OFFICE of AGING MINISTRY STAFF
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OFFICE of AGING
2403 Holcombe Boulevard - Houston, Texas 77021
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 713-741-8712 - Fax: 713-741-8775

NEXT CHATTER DEADLINE:
MARCH 15, 2018

Send Chatter articles to: Chatter @archgh.org

Please limit articles to 125-150 words.
All submissions are subject to editing based on space available.
Be sure to visit the Office of Aging on the web at: www.archgh.org/aging

A special thanks to Cigna HealthSpring for helping support the production of the Chatter Newsletter.

President's Message

CENTRAL SENATE
The Recognition Dinner was well attended November 3, 2017 @ the Doubletree Hotel. Thank you. Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving, and a wonderful Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Delois Semien

NORTHERN SENATE
As we come to the end of one year and move into a new beginning, take time to be grateful for our many blessings. Look forward with hope as we make a fresh start. Happy New Year!

Pete Palasota

SOUTHWEST SENATE
We had a wonderful successful Recognition Banquet, our theme was The Trinity. Enjoyable day to celebrate special people in our clubs for their volunteering in our parishes and community, we thank them for their efforts. I would like to thank those who worked hard to make our banquet a success, your work makes a wonderful event possible. In October we enjoyed a pot luck dinner and a presentation from Senior Rides.

Gayle Naar

Greetings from the Staff

Wishing you all the best in the New Year.

We pray for your health and happiness; take time for friends and family. Keep us in your prayers.

Office of Aging

CHRIST the REDEEMER, The Classics

In September, we lost a dear member, Julius Reid, who entered into eternal life. We pray that God will grant his family comfort and peace. On November 5, Linda Ford was among the Northern Senior Senate’s “Seniors of the Year” who were honored at Shirley Acres. Trips and events in November and December included “A Christmas Carol Radio Show” at Lone Star College, annual Thanksgiving and Christmas parties, the Houston Choral Society’s “Home for the Holidays” concert at the Foundry, and “A Christmas Story The Musical” at Stage Works Theatre.

Cathy Holecek
OUR LADY of MT. CARMEL, New Generation Seniors
Hope everyone had a very thankful and happy Thanksgiving. Our seniors have been collecting canned goods for the Knights of Columbus Christmas baskets. We are approaching the 2017 Christmas season. We are preparing the season of Advent (awaiting the birth of Jesus). I hope everyone had a Merry, Merry Christmas and a very Happy and safe 2018. Everyone continue to pray the Rosary and stay healthy.

Alice Rincon

ST. DOMINIC VILLAGERS
We continue to see new faces at our monthly meetings. Our membership and interest in our group is growing. In November, 12 Villagers attended and enjoyed immensely the Central Senate Recognition Luncheon where yours truly, Mary Earline Jubert Williams, was recognized from our senior group. The Central Senate Christmas Luncheon was enjoyed by five of our Villagers. Both luncheons were A+ Affairs. The food was to die for!! We are all enjoying the Christmas Season and looking forward to our first Big Celebration on January 12, 2018 with Bingo at 6pm followed with a Happy Hour of dancing, DJ providing the music, drinks and snacks. Happy New Year 2018 to all…Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father….will be with us in truth and LOVE!

Mary Earline Jubert Williams

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA, 55 Plus
Our Fourth Quarter was a very busy but fun time. Hurricane Harvey disrupted our September agenda but we did have our monthly luncheon. Our luncheon guest speaker was Mark Cieselski from the Office of Aging, who gave a great talk about senior and veteran benefits. In November we had our regular monthly meeting, had a luncheon at Olive Garden, and took a bus trip to the new Lone Star Flight Museum. We ended our year with a bus trip to Christmas Lights at La Marque and did something new: We had a catered Christmas luncheon at Church, with The Kings’ Men Singers there to entertain. It was a big success, with more than 60 attendees, a first for us. A wish for a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

Bob Mitchell

ST. EDITH STEIN, O.W.L.S., (Older, Wiser, Livelier, Seniors)
This fourth quarter of 2017 has been the most active in recent memory.
SEPTEMBER – Our Pastor, Fr. Kulma, dedicated the entire proceeds of our annual Founders Day Festival to the parish Harvey relief efforts. The Owls group began collecting vintage items for their booth to support the fundraiser. We also traveled to Haak Winery in Santa Fe.
OCTOBER – We visited the Liendo Plantation in Hempstead and dined at the Thirsty Parrot. October Fest featured foods in Halloween colors, a costume contest and bingo.
NOVEMBER – We hosted the 1st Friday breakfast after Mass. Our trip was to the Czech Cultural Museum. At our Thanksgiving celebration when asked what they were thankful for most put Owls near top of their list. We collected items for the Katy Christian Ministries Food Bank.
DECEMBER – Our bus trip takes us to the Lone Star Flight Museum. Owls celebrated Christmas with food, gifts, games and Christmas Carols.

Ed Cabiro

ST. MONICA, Silver Steppers
Schwartz Law Firm, who specialize in senior financial planning and trust account issues, made a very informative presentation to our group in September. Silver Stepper members agreed that we were indeed blessed to have received useful, pertinent and timely information about Medicare, taxes and other points of interest.
The Smithsonian Institute's Museum of African American History and Culture was a truly awesome place to visit. In October, our group sponsored a tour that filled two tour buses and in addition to the museum, included touring Vulcan Park in Alabama, and Woodrow Wilson's Presidential Library and Museum and (naturally) a stop at the casinos in Louisiana.

Gwen Peet-Wilson

ST. HELEN, Super Seniors
Especially in the stores. I love Christmas. Hopefully everyone is prepared for the Holidays; it is such a wonderful time of the year. We elected club officers in October, all but one were re-elected. In November, our members went to Golden Corral for our yearly delicious luncheon. And, of course December brings out the best of us…our Christmas luncheon at Monument Inn. We are eagerly looking forward to the New Year and all of the wonderful things that Pauline Roark/Trip Coordinator has planned for our club. Until then, hope everyone had a Blessed Merry Christmas and an amazing New Year. Stay safe

Ginger Shea

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Ginger Shea
ST. CYRIL of ALEXANDRIA, Savvies
In October we had Tom Cotton giving us tips on Medicare Fraud and Abuse. There is always new ways of committing fraud and it is our responsibility to see abuse is not occurring if possible. In November we had representatives from Houston Police Department giving tips on personal safety, shopping trip awareness and general awareness around us as we go about our daily lives. We also celebrated Thanksgiving with a pot luck dinner. We celebrated a Christmas Pot Luck dinner and enjoyed singing Christmas Carole with Fred Clay, it made for a joy day. Gayle Naar

ST. IGNATIUS of LOYOLA, Senior Friends
In early November, we traveled to Branson to see the Holiday Show Extravaganza. In December, we went to see the lights at the Hermann Park Zoo, followed by dinner at the restored Cleburne Cafeteria. Due to the flooding by hurricane Harvey, we are still without a meeting place on the church property. Thanks to the members of Christ the Good Shepherd, we were able to have our Christmas potluck party in their social hall. The Heart Lites entertained us with their joyful singing of many of our Christmas favorites to put us in a holiday mood! We wish you a happy and Blessed New Year! Jeanne Walter

ST. JUDE THADDEUS, St. Jude's Dudes
The Dudes helped with the parish celebration of our namesake, St. Jude Thaddeus. We enjoyed a catered BBQ dinner and other festivities. We also helped with the CDA bake sale which benefits the food pantry for the needy in our area and the white Ribbons against Pornography campaign. In December we assisted the K.C.’s with a Parish Christmas breakfast. Hope everyone had a joy-filled Christmas and a blessed and Happy New Year. Irene Goedrich

ST. ALPHONSUS Golden Agers
How is everyone? We Golden Agers of St. Alphonsus have been keeping pretty busy! We had our church Bazaar and the Recognition Luncheon. Our Bazaar was moved from the hottest day of the year in August to October, but as you all know so did Hurricane Harvey! We did have a successful Bazaar in spite of the hurricane. The Recognition luncheon was held at the Doubletree Hotel and this year Mrs. Virginia Cortez was recognized for her work at St. Alphonsus and with the Golden Agers. She has been a member of St. Alphonsus for many years, in fact she is one of our longest living parishioners. Mrs. Cortez is always willing to help in whatever way she can. She us a truly blessing to the Golden Agers. On another note, we attended a Christmas Party at the Pasadena Convention Center. Fun was had by all. From our group to yours, Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year! God Bless, until next time! Mary Lou Gonzalez

ST. JOHN VIANNEY Westside Senior Singles
Hello Everyone,
First I want to pay tribute to Sister Dorothy and Sister Teresita, who made the Office of Aging Ministries and parish senior groups possible. We would not be enjoying all of this without their efforts and hard work. Merry Christmas, Sisters, enjoy your Christmas with the Lord. We had our Christmas Brunch at Carmelo’s, which will be closing soon. It was a nice occasion with almost thirty in attendance. Everyone received favors and four gift certificates to local restaurants were the door prizes. Many are still struggling after Harvey. Please keep them in your prayers and pray that 2018 will be a better year for those affected. See you next year,

Belva Landry

ST. LEO the GREAT, Guys + Dolls
Please pray for all who were affected by Hurricane Harvey. We had a casino trip to Coushatta in October, and as usual everybody had a great time. Congratulations to our outstanding couple Margaret and Charles Bukowski they have been members for many years. Margaret works very hard to find places for us to visit and Charles helps with food pantry. St. Leo the Great is truly blessed to have them as parishioner’s thank you Margaret and Charles. We enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving lunch at Doss Park in November, and entertainment by Keven Weishaar who sang Christmas Carols. We enjoyed our N.S.S Christmas party held at Shirley Acres. Prayers for all men and women who are defending our country here or abroad and for all our deceased friends and family. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year be safe God Bless you

Carolyn Montes
**ST. LAURENCE, Joy Club**
The “Just Older Youth” Club of St. Laurence had a fun filled fall. In October we had an exercise session—“Stand or Sit- Just be Active” followed by a day trip to Dickinson and the National Weather service. We then lunched at the Burger Barn in Manvel. November brought the wonderful Triumperant of St. Laurence for a “What do you want to know- from those in the know at St. Laurence” and pot luck lunch. December we again celebrated us, the Joy Club, with a pot luck lunch and gift exchange, just before Christmas we met to wish each other a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for noon mass and lunch. We ask all of your prayers for the continued recovery of our beloved pastor, Fr. Drew Wood.

Anne Higgins

**ST. JUSTIN MARTYR Mavericks**
The Mavericks took a bus trip to Victoria in October. A step-on guide showed us historic sites and told us about the history of Victoria and the surrounding area. In November we traveled to Brenham and visited the Antique Rose Emporium and took a tour of Independence, a small town founded in 1835. We ended the day with a dish of ice cream at the Blue Bell Creamery. In December, thirty-one members participated in our annual three-day trip to Waco, Cleburne and Glen Rose. We also took a bus trip to Conroe to see the play “A Charlie Brown Christmas” at the Crighton Theater. After dinner at Vernon’s Kunry Katfish restaurant we enjoyed seeing outdoor Christmas lights and decorations. Our Christmas party included a potluck dinner followed by a “white elephant” gift exchange.

Marilyn Tovsen

**ST. BENEDICT the ABBOT Go-Getters**
As we go forward, we are still holding up to our name “Go-Getters”. We participated in our Annual Fall Festival which was held in October. We hosted Fellowship after Mass in October. Our 2nd Annual Memorial Mass for our deceased members was held in November, with a majority of members participating. We donated 2 Thanksgiving baskets. We also prepared two Christmas Baskets which were donated at Christmas. Our Annual Christmas Luncheon which was held in our parish hall. We are hoping to sing Christmas carols, fellowship, play Bingo, and everyone going home with gifts. We are busy working on our 2018 agenda. We close this year with our hearts heavy but happy, for our deceased members, who have gone to their heavenly home. We look forward to a year filled with prayers, good health, and welcoming new friends. Until we meet again, may you and your family stay safe, warm and happy during this holiday season, as we welcome our Newborn King and the New Year 2018! Stay Blessed!

Anna Bell

**ALL SAINTS, Third Age Learning Center (TALC)**
All Saints Third Age Learning Center (TALC) senior program celebrated the success of its Fall semester with a Thanksgiving themed Closing Party and everyone enjoyed a pot luck lunch with TALC furnishing the turkey and dressing. TALC seniors returned December 8 for a Christmas Party which included singing Christmas carols, refreshments and gifts for all.

TALC will hold its 2018 Spring Semester Registration on Thursday, January 25 from 9 am to 1 pm in the All Saints Parish Hall. Classes begin on Monday, February 5 and late registration will be available during the mornings of the first week, February 5-9. The Spring Semester will conclude on May 4. On the Spring Semester agenda is day trips, a variety of classes, parties and seminars. A special seminar will feature Frank Billingsley of Channel 2 on March 2, speaking on his book, “Swabbed and Found.” Also available Monday through Friday during the semester is a hot lunch, cooked on-site, at 12 noon for the nominal fee of $2.00. For information on the TALC program, call 713-248-1277.

Carolyn Kares

**HOLY FAMILY - Missouri City, Golden Friendship Group**
Our October meeting was opened with an Our Father and Hail Mary for our sick members and our deceased member, Howard Newfield. Members also prayed for the Las Vegas shootings and the California Fires.

In November Father Sunny said the blessing before lunch. Members enjoyed our traditional catered lunch of turkey and all the trimmings. Members brought desserts. As of this December meeting, Robert and Carolyn Moeckel have retired as chair and co-chair of our Golden Friendship. John and Gwen Johnson have been voted in as our new chair and co-chair for the coming New Year. Clara Lyons and Joann Bowman will remain as secretary and treasurer respectively.

Robert Moeckel

**HAVE YOU MOVED?**
**PLEASE Let us Know!**
713-741-8712
Good-Bye!

Saying good-bye has never been easy for me and this good-bye comes with much emotion and mixed feelings, but I have decided to retire from my position as Associate Director with the Office of Aging after 12 years, effective March 9, 2018.

I will forever be thankful to Kathy Bingham, Director of the Office of Aging Ministry for giving me the opportunity to work in this wonderful ministry. I have been very blessed in these 12 years-in that I have met and worked with so many wonderful persons not only in the three Senior Senates but in other venues. I will be missing so many of you.

May God continue to bless each one of you, and the Office of Aging Staff, as I say good-bye and thank you for the many, many memories I take with me.

Sincerely,
Virginia R. Eckert

Happy Retirement!

On March the 9th of 2018, we will be bidding farewell and best wishes for an amazing retirement to Virginia R. Eckert, Associate Director of the Office of Aging Ministry. Virginia started with our Office on October 31, 2005. Over these years, Virginia maintained oversight of all Senior Senate functions and volunteers; she visited senior groups and initiated unique programming and activities like the Annual Senior Craft Fair, Annual Senior Valentines dance and the Just Talking support group. Virginia will be truly missed by all.
**Getting Caregiving Help at Home**

**Part One: Steps for Creating a Caregiving Plan**

*In Consumer Reports* (December, 2017), Penelope Wang reports that the caregiving challenge in the United States will grow as the 65+ year old population increases from a 2014 figure of 46.2 million to a 2030 projection of 73 million. Based on previous surveys, while 80% of seniors want to age in place in their own homes, 70% will need some form of long term care. Because this country lacks a comprehensive national long-term care support or insurance system, those who are aging must rely on family support combined with self-pay at home and private pay options (in assisted care and nursing homes). The available pool of family members and the number of staff in various types of older adult living facilities will also decrease.

*Consumer Reports* states that the **national median cost in 2017**
- a. for 44 hours of non-medical care was $47,934/yr (Genworth)
- b. for a one-bedroom apartment in an assisted living facility ($45,000) or semi-private room in a nursing center ($85,775)

These sobering statistics call us to formulate a caregiving plan before a crisis sets it while a person is still capable of dictating some control over his or her choices and the means to pay for it.

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**Steps for Creating a Caregiving Plan**

1. **Start the Conversation**
   - Listen to, respect, and help prioritize the care receiver’s wishes for support
   - Start with small support steps (e.g., find help with laundry or cooking)
   - Make the home safer and more easily accessible (e.g., curb less showers; same floor laundry; widened doorways; lever-style doorknobs and raised electrical outlets).

2. **Tap into Support Systems**
   - identify friends, family, church community or support groups
   - understand the Family Medical and Leave Act’s impact on caregivers
   - use technology that is voice controlled (e.g., Amazon Echo)

3. **Safeguard Your Loved One’s Finances**
   - Monitor (for fraud) or misuse
   - Get help with home-care expenses
     - VA Aid & Attendance benefits may support in-home providers for veterans and spouses
     - Enlist volunteers from churches and the Senior Companions program
     - Establish home & community regular respite care for caregivers
     - Research tax breaks as caregivers
     - Examine Medicaid eligibility
     - Prepared or review estate planning documents (powers of attorney and will)

*Part Two (next Chatter): Assessing & Arranging In-Home Care*

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**Catholic Radio Program**

**FROM AGE TO AGE**

Hosted by Kathy Bingham, Virginia Eckert and Mark Ciesielski

Sundays
- 5:30 a.m. on KWWJ (1360) AM
- 6 a.m. on KPRC (950) AM
- 6:45 a.m. on KYOK (1140) AM
- 9:00 a.m. on KIKK 650 AM
- 2:30 p.m. on KKHT 100.7 FM

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**CONNECT**

It is hard to connect with a lot of friends and family now days, especially if they live in a different city. But remember we can always stay connected through social media and share also holiday wishes and pictures. Facebook gives you basic private settings to avoid your pictures being spread all over the internet. Please consider this for security.

Wishing you Happy Holidays.

Gloria Portillo
**Facts about Your NEW Medicare Card**

**NEW Medicare number:** Medicare is removing Social Security numbers from Medicare cards; you will have a new 11-digit identifier that is a mix of numbers and letters unique to you.

**April 2018:** Mailing begins April 2018 continuing through April 2019, so your card may arrive at a different time than your friend or neighbor.

**Automatic change:** You don’t have to do anything. **CMS will send your new Medicare card in the mail.** If someone calls needing to “confirm your identity, or your Medicare number,” it’s a SCAM - **hang up.**

**Same benefits:** Your coverage stays the same and you can start using your new card as soon as you receive it. Start using it immediately.

**The card is free:** No one should tell you there is a one-time fee or that you will lose benefits if you don’t pay a fee or answer their questions. **Contact the Texas Senior Medicare Patrol at 1-888-341-6187 to report Medicare Fraud, Error, or Abuse!**

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**Transitioning to a Senior Care Community**

There are few changes in an older adult’s life as frightening and impactful as moving from home to a senior living situation. Here are some tips that may help:

**Use a Referral Specialist**

A referral specialist can help you in researching and visiting various senior care communities. This professional can often assist in evaluating your needs and preferences to make the best match.

**Moving Out Before You Move On**

Once the decision has been made to move out of your home, a lot of work has to be done. Decisions about what to keep, what to give away, what to sell can be challenging. Keep precious objects for your new home.

**Before You Move In**

Most facilities allow several visits before you actually move. Visit the dining room, library, or game room. Enjoy some meals together, and get to know some of the staff by name. Some senior care communities can arrange for overnight or respite visits.

**The First Day in a Senior Care Facility**

Expect to be tired—emotionally and physically. Professional senior care movers can assist you with moving and staging your new home. Make sure you have a calendar of activities and know when and where meals are served.

**The First few weeks**

Transitioning takes time; making new friends, learning the routine of your new home can feel confusing. Step out and make the effort to get to know your surroundings. Feel free to ask questions. Invite family members to visit and look for ways to create new family traditions in your new home.

*Taken from: Society of Certified Senior Advisors Blog*
ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, Kolbe Seniors
Through all the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping, Christmas Parties, baking cookies and making tamales, Kolbe Seniors continued to enjoy monthly get-togethers. In September a trip to Navasota proved to be a very pleasant trip. We enjoyed a most memorable play “Steel Magnolias”. At our October meeting Seniors enjoyed entertainment by Rodney Rasberry. It was just great listening music. Elsa Sinclair was named “Outstanding Senior” at the Recognition Luncheon. Congratulations, Elsa! Eighteen seniors attended the NSS Christmas Party and brought home 12 prizes. The musical group “The Grateful Geezers” entertained at our Christmas Party. It is truly a wonderful time of the year! Jesus is the reason for the season!

Sharon Kurzy

ST. PETER the APOSTLE, Golden Age Seniors
The Golden Age members enjoyed the snow. The seniors really did enjoy breakfast with Santa, most of them were busy taking pictures with their grandchildren this was a very enjoyable event. The Golden Age members along with the Ladies of La Sallette, had a lovely Christmas luncheon at the Doubletree Hotel, it was a festive occasion. Some of our members visited the nursing home.

Elizabeth Pollard

ST. MATTHEW the EVANGELIST, 50 + Club
Our 50+ group booth was a big success as was our fall festival. Flor and Arnulfo Gomez were chosen as our outstanding couple in November and several members attended the N.S.S. Recognition. We also had our holiday luncheon in November at the Carriage House restaurant where we had a delicious meal, raffle gifts and prizes. We had our corporate mass and then the lunch it was well attended. We still have our card socials the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Thursday where we laugh a lot and also cast a lot! We decided to have our monthly meetings (potluck) held on the 2nd Sunday except in May, November and December. Our Magnificat House Christmas luncheon is December 10th where men and women (homeless) come to our auditorium for delicious home cooked meal, play bingo, win prizes and are given gifts much companionship and fun. Thank you Sandi Murphy and all the volunteers who do such an outstanding job of community love and fellowship. And so another fast year is coming to an end the years go faster as we get older. May you all be blessed with good health, love and joy and always put God #1 in your lives. Happy Holidays!

Helen Pidaniy

ST. EDWARD, Senior Saints
St Edwards honoree at the Northern Senior Senate Recognition event was Helen Denny. She is very active in many St Edward’s functions. This fall the Seniors went on several trips this fall. We went to Coushatta, a mead distillery, the George Bush library and Franklin Safari, the Stages theater, and the Liberty Oprey. Fun was had all who went on these trips.

Sharon Kurzy

ST. MARY OF THE PURIFICATION, Senior Adults in Action
The close of the year is upon us. St. Mary’s Seniors in Action enjoyed a fun filled year. The Junior Daughters and Junior Knights invited the Seniors in the parish to a Christmas Party on December 2, 2017 in the center. Everyone received a gift. The Seniors In Action ended their year with a short meeting followed by our Christmas Party. Tokens of Love was presented to our Pastor, Vicar and Secretary. Lunch was catered by Soiree. Music was furnished by one of our Knights. Everyone had a wonderful time. We welcome you to join one of our Bible Classes on Wednesdays at 1:00pm and/or 6:30pm. Our parish is sponsoring another pilgrimage to the Holy Land from July 29 – August 6, 2018. For more details and information call (337) 291-1933 or the parish office at (713) 528-0571. St. Mary’s Seniors In Action wish all of the parishes in the Central Senior Senate a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Johnnie Mae Roy

PRINCE of PEACE, Keenagers
Hope all is well with everyone. The Keenagers are on the move with bus trips to Galveston and Washington on the Brazos. We had a lovely Christmas Party at the Hilton Garden, adopted a family and provided them with a Christmas meal and lots of presents, We have speakers and entertainment planned for the upcoming year. We meet the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month in the Prince of Peace Community Center, so come on get out of the house and join us at 10 AM for prayer, food, fun and conversation.

God Bless,

Pat Oliver
ASSUMPTION
Harvest Years
Our Bake Sale in October was successful. A number of our members attended the NSS Recognition Dinner held on November 5th to celebrate with our most deserving Honoree, Trudy Witzkoske. The celebration of two events on November 13th began with a delicious, traditional Thanksgiving catered lunch followed by a moving Memorial Service for all our deceased members. Special emphasis was given to the four 2017 deceased members, namely Aloise Brosch, Alvin Bolloom, Evelyn Miller, and Carmen Addis. May their souls rest in peace. The catered Christmas Luncheon/Meeting was held on December 17th. The officers for 2018 were elected. As in our childhood, bags of oranges, apples and candy were handed out to each member. Ten members of the “Strings & Things” ensemble entertained us with symphonic music. Please pray for those who are ill, their caregivers, and for all the suffering, those departed, those unemployed, and for our service men and women. Please pray for our leaders for Divine guidance in these trying times. We hope you all had a joy-filled Christmas Season and we hope you have a Blessed and Happy New Year!

Trudy Witzkoske

CHRIST the GOOD SHEPHERD, 55 Plus
October was our time to "rev up our ovens" for the 55+ sponsored Bake Sale at our Fall Festival. The donated Silent Auction baskets were also a big success. Love those Astros! How lucky we were to have already scheduled a Walking Tour of Minute Maid Park in November! Who could pass up that opportunity and to be able to be down on the field! Exciting! We celebrated our tour with lunch at Cleburne’s Cafeteria. Our Advent Social at Shirley Acres brought many to enjoy and sing along with Rodney Raspberry. The final trip of 2017 was to Champions Forest Baptist Church for their Christmas Spectacular. Continued prayers for those affected by Harvey. In thanksgiving for the many Blessings of community.

Helen Moorman

ST. FRANCES CABRINI, Cabrini 50 Plus
In September we traveled to Columbus, TX. and visited the Santa Claus Museum and the Colorado County Courthouse. The courthouse has a “Tiffany style” dome that had been covered up with a false ceiling for many years. It has a stunning presence within a working courthouse. We had a great lunch at Schobels. In November we took a tour at the Houston Heritage Society Museum. They have several historic homes that can be visited and they really are well worth the time. More importantly they are right here in Houston. We enjoyed another great lunch at Treebeards; located in the Christ Church Cathedral complex. Please pray for the Peace of Christ for you and your Family and those around you.

Phillip M. Gonzales III

ST. PETER CLAVER, Golden Harvest Friendship Club
Nine of our members lost everything during the flood from Hurricane Harvey. The club gave each member $50 to let them know our heart went out to them. Sept 28 we attended the Hispanic breakfast at our parish. Sept 29 we played bingo at Northeast. Oct 3 went to the movies and had lunch. Oct 10 we attended Precinct II fun day. We played bingo and were served lunch. Oct 13 we went to the Conference. Oct 31 we went to Precinct II Halloween party. Nov 30 we went to Precinct II Fall party. We donated five $20 gift cards to The Catholic Charities for Christmas gifts to families and seniors. Merry Christmas.

Martha Gardner

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS - Sugar Land, Renewed Seniors, (S.T.A.R.S.)
Returning in September from our July/August sabbatical, we honored the Back to School season by doing something we never did before—having a "Bring Your Own Brown Bag" dinner meeting. It was much fun and no one could complain about the food! Autumn/Halloween was the theme of our October meeting. But the high point of the month was our tour of the facilities at St. Dominic Village, Senior Residence, after which we were treated to lunch. We celebrated the Season of Thanksgiving during our November meeting two of our members, Jerry and Thi Kallina, provided and prepared the turkey and ham for our Pot Luck Supper. We thank them for their generosity, the STARS had much to be thankful for! STARS also collected items for the House of Amos Food Pantry and Books and Magazines for distribution by the Knights of Columbus at the Veterans Administration Hospital.

Wilfrid L. Lauze’
**Rules for Higher-Income Beneficiaries**

If you have higher income, the law requires an adjustment to your monthly Medicare Part B and Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage premiums. The standard Part B premium for 2017 was $134.00.

To determine if you’ll pay higher premiums, Social Security uses the most recent federal tax return the IRS provides. If you must pay higher premiums, a sliding scale is used to make the adjustments, based on your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI). Your MAGI is your total adjusted gross income and tax-exempt interest income. If you file your taxes as “married, filing jointly” and your MAGI is greater than $170,000, you’ll pay higher premiums for your Part B and Part D coverage. If you file your taxes using an individual status, and your MAGI is greater than $85,000, you’ll pay higher premiums. For example, if you’re single and filed an individual tax return, or married and filed a joint tax return, the following chart applies to you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI)</th>
<th>Part B monthly premium amount</th>
<th>Part D: Prescription drug coverage monthly premium amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals with a MAGI of $85,000 or less</td>
<td>2017 standard premium = $134.00</td>
<td>Your plan premium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couples with a MAGI of $170,000 or less</td>
<td>Standard premium + $53.50</td>
<td>Your plan premium + $13.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals with a MAGI above $85,000 up to $107,000</td>
<td>Standard premium + $133.90</td>
<td>Your plan premium + $34.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couples with a MAGI above $170,000 up to $214,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals with a MAGI above $107,000 up to $160,000 Married couples with a MAGI above $214,000 up to $320,000*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Additional income brackets apply. For additional information visit the social Security website: [https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10536.pdf](https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10536.pdf) or call 1-800-772-1213.

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**Attention: Southwest Senior Senate Parishes**

The Office of Aging is presenting a

**VETERANS’ BENEFITS SEMINAR**

**Date:** Friday, January 26, 2018  
**Registration:** 9:30 a.m.  
**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Lunch provided)  
**St. Laurence Catholic Church - Ave Maria Parish Life Center**  
3100 Sweetwater Blvd, Sugar Land, Texas 77479  
**For:** Veterans (spouses) 50+ yrs. old

**Seminar Topics:**  
- Health Care  
- Disability  
- Spouse/Survivor  
- Cemetery/Pre-need

Please RSVP: Mark Ciesielski at 713-741-8712 or mciesielski@archgh.org  
(Seating is limited)

* Priority registration to SW Senior Senate Parishes
Good Relationships Keep Us Healthy & Happy! Good genes are nice, but joy is better…

A Harvard study has shown that embracing community helps us live longer, and be happier. When scientists began tracking the health of 268 Harvard sophomores in 1938 during the Great Depression, they hoped the longitudinal study would reveal clues to leading healthy and happy lives. Over the years, researchers have studied the participants’ health and their broader lives, including their triumphs and failures in careers and marriage; the findings have produced startling lessons. The surprising finding is that our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health.

In his book “Aging Well,” George Vaillant wrote that key factors predicted healthy aging: physical activity, absence of alcohol abuse and smoking, having mature mechanisms to cope with life’s ups and downs, and enjoying both a healthy weight and a stable marriage. The more factors the subjects had in place, the better the odds they had for longer, happier lives. “When the study began, nobody cared about empathy or attachment,” said Vaillant. “But the key to healthy aging is relationships, relationships, relationships.”

The level of satisfaction with relationships in midlife is recognized as a good predictor of healthy aging. The research also debunked the idea that people’s personalities “set like plaster” by age 30 and cannot be changed. “Those who were clearly train wrecks when they were in their 20s or 25s turned out to be wonderful octogenarians,” he said. “On the other hand, alcoholism and major depression could take people who started life as stars and leave them at the end of their lives as train wrecks.”

Asked what lessons he has learned from the study, Waldinger said he practices meditation daily and invests time and energy in his relationships, more than before. “It’s easy to get isolated, to get caught up in work and not remembering, ‘Oh, I haven’t seen these friends in a long time, so I try to pay more attention to my relationships than I used to.”

https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/