

The Food Pantry, which until the Covid pandemic provided free food to those in need. It is necessary to note here that it was through this ministry that a truck from East Texas Food Bank in Tyler began coming to our church's parking lot on the first Tuesday of each month to distribute food.

Also, St. Therese offers **RCIA** classes to Catholics to grow in their faith and to non-Catholics who desire to learn about the Catholic doctrines, traditions, and values of Holy Mother Church and to join the catholic faith. St. Therese has an excellent **Religious Education Program** for its Anglo and Hispanic youth. Of primary importance is getting each child ready to receive the sacraments.

For two years, 2002-2004, St. Therese offered a pre-school called the **Little Disciples** for 3 and 4 year old's, with the offering of an exemplary scholastic and religious program. This was available to the community as well as the youth of our parish. The **Summer Vacation Bible School and Totus Tuus** also has been offered to all children in the area. St. Therese supports the **ABC Room** which serves needy children in the county by supplying clothes, bedding, toilette articles, etc. **Other ministries** to reach out and support the members include the **Adult Bible Study; Divine Will group**; and the newest ministry, **Daughters of Mary** which had their first official meeting December 8, 2021, and the purpose of which is to minister to the spiritual needs of the widowed and divorced women.

St. Therese has a **Public Rosary Rally** every October at the Van Zandt County Court House and the members always participate in the celebration. The Spanish community celebrates its annual feast of the Our Lady of Guadalupe and provide food, music, and entertainment to the whole parish community.

It is important to recognize the donations to the church of some individuals. St. Therese parish acknowledges the God-given talents of Bob Barber and Bill Adamski and appreciates their wood-working items to the church in the beginning years. Solicited by Father Bernard Boteju, a beautiful wood-carved crucifix and a statue of St. Therese were purchased from artisan Felix Jesus Avoloe. In 2028, Ed and Ann Lucas donated a pictorial history of the Catholic Church in all ages which is hanging in the new church hall. (Paintings by Gloria Thomas).

Let's not forget to acknowledge and show appreciation to our former Deacons: Al Riha-deceased; Bill Flores, and Rick Lawrence, a former Van Zandt County Judge were re-located; Kevin Hayes-deceased. We gratefully appreciate our current Deacons: Allan Stehsel; Jim Burkel; John Fadely; and Larry Edwards.

Despite earlier doubts throughout the diocese about starting a church in Canton, St. Therese is firmly grounded in the community now and continues to grow and thrive. It is diligent in seeking out and meeting the needs of all and has earned the respect of the people of Canton. Membership has grown from the original 36 to 350 families today, December 8, 2021. We are grateful for everyone's generosity and help. We thank and praise the Lord our God for His infinite mercy and love. May He continue to bless and protect the community of Van Zandt County through the intercession of St. Therese of Child Jesus.