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Spring 2021 Newsletter



"He has made everything beautiful in its time." -Ecclesiastes 3:11

Laura Reyes Shares Her Story Of Redemption

By: Stacey Ontai

On a cold, still night under a full moon, on the steps of Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Victoria, Texas, Laura Reyes shared her story of abortion and God's redeeming power.

Born in Bogota, Colombia, she was raised in a "Catholic" family. Her parents were married in the church and her mother made sure they attended Mass regularly. Laura received the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. She attended Catholic school where she did very well. Her parents saw her as an independent, responsible child.

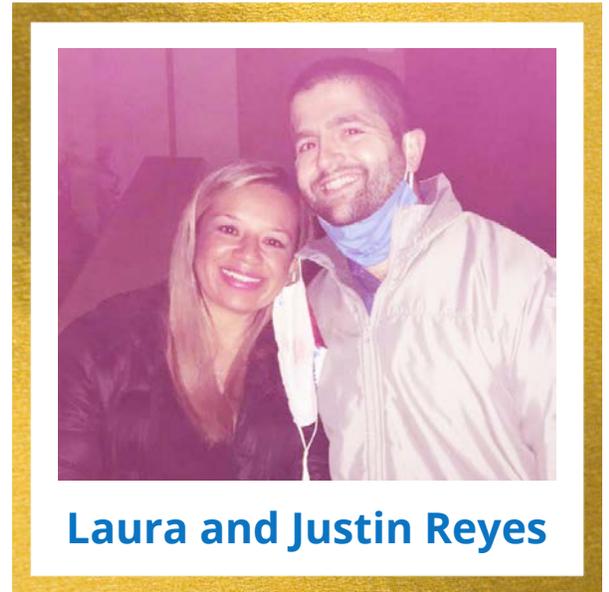
Family life was happy. Her parents worked a lot, but then would take weekend trips to small towns outside of the city. In one of these towns Laura, at age 16, met a man eight years older than her.

Her parents did not realize that Laura's friendship with this man was leading her into a "dumpster" lifestyle. "I consciously rejected all the goodness God and my parents had to offer and chose a life of lies, deceit and temporary pleasure. Little by little the devil convinced me that somehow the dumpster of sin was a much better place than His Kingdom." stated Laura. At the same time, this man was pressuring her to be more than friends. Although Laura had wanted to remain a virgin until her wedding night, she was deeply "in love" with him and rationalized that it was okay because he told her that he had never loved someone as much as her and that they would eventually marry. "At 17, I gave him the precious gift of my virginity, and I just remember the look in his eyes as if he had just earned a trophy."

Laura's father eventually guessed that she was pregnant and confronted her. A pregnancy test at a local clinic confirmed that she was pregnant. Her parents were upset and told Laura they were not prepared to raise another baby at this time in their lives; her future would be ruined if she had this child, and her boyfriend was irresponsible and would not be able to support her and the baby. Her best option was to have an abortion.

At that time abortions were illegal in Colombia and the local clinic was not up to code. As she lay on the operating table, cold, trembling and in fear of the procedure, she told the nurse that she did not want to do this and wanted to keep the baby. She was told it was too late and to relax.

The procedure was done with no anesthesia and she felt immense pain as they "scraped" the baby from her. "But what hurt the most of all was hearing when the nurse took the remains of my baby and flushed them down the toilet. That is an image and sound that stuck with me for life," Laura recounted. She felt numb and empty afterwards as if her "heart and feelings were suddenly taken away." To read the full story please visit: victoriagabrielproject.org/lauras-story



Laura and Justin Reyes



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Bethlehem Maternity Home: Comprehensive Support for Women in Crisis

By: Laura Reyes

"Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me." (MK 9: 36-37) These beautiful words from Jesus in the Gospel of Mark provide us with a shortcut on how to not only receive our Lord Jesus Christ but also the One who sent Him, our Father in heaven. How much must God love babies that He promises to give himself to those who love, protect, and nurture these innocent souls.

Any woman who has experienced a crisis pregnancy knows the fear, doubts, shame, rejection, and many difficulties that come with finding the courage to preserve the life of her baby. Such struggles would be much easier to overcome if these expecting mothers had the support, guidance, and love of someone willing to walk with them through their pregnancy journey by taking care of their needs and those of their babies. Such will be the mission of the Bethlehem Maternity Home.

The Bethlehem Maternity Home, which should open its doors in March, will "offer support to women eighteen or older who are in a crisis pregnancy by providing safe housing and life-affirming services in a Christian environment" according to its Director, Lisa Howard. Founders Barbara Williams and Emily Yeary saw the need of expecting mothers in crisis, with many mothers requiring more help than just monetary items and covering the basic needs of the babies. They recognized there was a need for housing so that these moms could live in a safe home instead of on the streets or in abusive environments.

Howard hopes that these women will be able to become independent and learn to develop healthy and safe relationships. During their stay at the home, women will take life skill classes including parenting, prenatal care, and budgeting so that when they are ready to transition out of the home, they will be able to implement all of those skills into their new homes with love and God's guidance.

The ongoing needs of the Bethlehem Maternity Home are all household items including paper towels, toilet paper, hand soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, as well as all toiletry items. Baby items such as zero to three month baby diapers, diaper bags, shampoo, baby oil, baby wash, and nursery safety kits are always needed at the home. If you have not decided on your almsgiving commitment this Lent, consider donating some of these items; this would be a wonderful way to help.

Often, the Pro-Life movement is accused of only being Pro-Birth. How inspiring it is to see this ministry come to fruition that not only helps women carry their baby to term, but also transition to life with their new bundle of joy.

May each of us have the courage to support women and their children from conception until they are ready for life on their own.



**Bishop Brendan Cahill
blesses the
Bethlehem Maternity Home.**

**PRAISE
the Lord!**

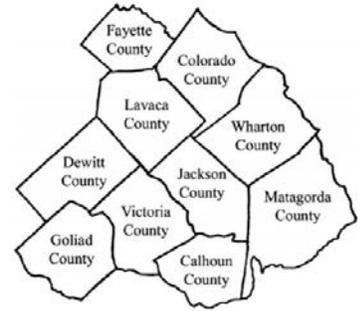
**In 2020, we served 127 mothers
and their babies in Victoria and
the surrounding counties.
43 babies were born in Victoria.**

Around the Crossroads

By: Stacey Ontai

Did you know that we have chapters in Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Wharton, Matagorda and Lavaca County? We are adding a new column to our newsletter sharing the activities going on around the Crossroads.

The folks in DeWitt County have been busy distributing more than 200 yard signs to churches and individuals. "This has been a great way to spread awareness of the Gabriel Project to other churches/individuals who are interested in our mission. Another benefit is that we now have signs with our hotline number spread all over the county to reach out to women in need!" noted Lori Kneese, treasurer for the DeWitt County chapter. Look for those signs when you drive through DeWitt County!



Nancy Thompson, our Calhoun County coordinator, plans to make a presentation to the youth group at Our Lady of the Gulf church in Port Lavaca. She will encourage the youth to gather baby items for the Gabriel Project.

In Lavaca County, postcards containing Gabriel Project information were handed out to local businesses by Brian Poth. Colette Burroughs spearheaded a fundraiser with the GP yard signs and collected monetary donations. Also, a local 4-H group had a baby supply inventory drive and donated their collections to the Lavaca County chapter.



In addition to these yard signs, a newly created Poster Sign was developed to update those placed on church campuses. A version of this sign will also be displayed on billboards in Victoria.

Thank you everyone for spreading the word about the Gabriel Project of the Crossroads and our mission of protecting the unborn by providing emotional, spiritual and physical support to women in a crisis pregnancy.



Parenting Classes to Begin in March

By: Stacey Ontai

The Gabriel Project of the Crossroads will offer online parenting classes in March. Our mothers will be able to watch videos on their phones or computers and take online tests. Each lesson will be assigned points which can be redeemed for needed mother and baby items. This is often called the Earn While You Learn (EWYL) program.

Many pregnancy resource centers offer EWYL through the BrightCourse curriculum. The mother learns about baby care while earning points which can be redeemed for items such as: a portable crib, a car seat, clothes, diapers, blankets, a baby monitor, breastfeeding supplies as well as many other baby items.

It is a user friendly program and the classes are based on scientific studies. A pre- and post test is administered to gauge what they have learned from the classes viewed. Some of the topics covered are: Prenatal Care, Your First Trimester, Breastfeeding: Starting Right, Infant Hygiene, Postpartum Depression, and Smoking/Drinking/Drugs. BrightCourse is continually adding new classes.

We will start a pilot program with a few mothers in March. Once we have firmed up the procedure, we will add more mothers. This program will also be offered at the Bethlehem Maternity Home and to the outer counties.

We estimate the cost of this program for the first year will be \$24,000. Funding will come from grants, fundraisers, and donations.

EARN WHILE YOU LEARN



The Evangelium Vitae Prayer

Oh Mary, bright dawn of the world,
 Mother of the living,
 To you we entrust the cause of life:
 Look down, O Mother, upon the vast number of babies not allowed to be born,
 Of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
 Of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
 Of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy.

Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life
 with honesty and love to the people of our time.

Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new,
 The joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives
 and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely,
 in order to build together with all people of good will,
 the civilization of truth and love,
 to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.

AMEN

Thank You

to our 2021

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**CHRISTMAS PROJECT
2020**

Thank you all for the wonderful gifts and taking the time out of y'all's day for our family. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Lopez family



I wanna say thank you for the gifts. I am very grateful that I heard about y'all and for what you gave my son and me for Christmas.
Thank you, Martinez family



Thank you everyone who made our Helping Hands Christmas Project 2020 a great success!

Your generosity allowed us to provide 23 families with a basket full of household items and gifts for each family member. A handmade stocking was made by Michelle Babo, our coordinator, for the babies born in 2020!

I would like to thank you for helping me and my girls. You have been such a blessing to us. This year has been one of the hardest and scariest of my life so far and y'all brought a peace to me and my babies. Thank you guys so much. I pray you guys will continue to bless others in time of need.
Love the Gorgales Family



Thank you so much for all the gifts. We love them all and really needed the dishes. God bless you and Merry Christmas from my family to yours.
From, Ariel



Please help us save postage, send us your email address to: reply@jiavic.com



I support the ministries of The Gabriel Project of the Crossroads

Name:

E-mail/ Mailing Address:

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My Donation (circle one): \$25 \$50 \$75 Other:

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