

# Congregation of the Sacred Hearts United States Province

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**“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” (1Pt. 4:10)**

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Dear Friends,

***“These are graced and exciting times,”*** exclaims Fr. Bob Charlton, ss.cc. as he writes, ***“a few months ago after negotiations with him, Bishop Flores of Brownsville gave the Sacred Hearts serving in the Diocese a new mission.”*** The new mission corporates two parishes in Harlingen, Texas. They are Queen of Peace and Immaculate Heart of Mary. The ministry team includes Father Bob Charlton, ss.cc. who is the pastor of both parishes, Father Ajit Baliar Singh, ss.cc. from the region of India, and recently ordained SSCC Frs. John Sawchenko, Lui Voreqe and Bill Gural. The team’s ministry style incorporates the values of Pope Francis’ Synodal Process: listening, assessing and acting.



**Mass at Queen of Peace parish with Fr. John Sawchenko, ss.cc.**

Here in South Texas parish life is much the same as in other parishes across the USA: Mass and other sacraments, prayer, catechesis, adult education, care of the sick, bereaved and youth, and service to the poor. Following the Synodal Process, we have listened to the values and concerns of the parishioners at Queen of Peace and Immaculate Heart. The priorities from the listening were: a desire for better parish communications, a more intense prayer life, opportunities to gather and celebrate community, and a clear emphasis on ministry to youth and the poor. Some important changes coming out of the listening, assessing and acting process include:

- Expanding our communications and social media
- Celebrating First Fridays with Holy Hours of Adoration, Worship and Praise.
- Complimenting our Bible study with a new education course called “Apologetics”
- More opportunities for parish fellowship—Sunday breakfasts and socials after First Friday prayer
- Starting a citywide youth ministry program in collaboration with all four Catholic parishes.

**Our Mission: To contemplate, live and proclaim God’s love in the world**

The Texas southern border is often in the news, and we are deep in the middle of it. No one can minister so close to the border without a sustained commitment to the poor. One of the beauties of Immaculate Heart of Mary/Queen of Peace is the dedication we have to our poor neighbors and the migrants who have legally entered the USA.

During the recent migrant surge both parishes offered food, clothing, accommodation and transportation to our brothers and sisters from the south. The parishes continue to serve whoever comes to our door looking for food or help with utilities, medicine, and transportation. No questions asked.



Harlingen is a poor city in which:

- 46% of children live below the poverty level.
- Our Damien Center serves hundreds of hungry families per week.
- The Immaculate Heart of Mary Food Bank helps many others.
- Walking-With-Moms, which we host, is an outgrowth of our Gabriel Project.

Our Synodal Process has brought to the fore other ministries we are just beginning to develop. These include:

- The care of unaccompanied migrant youth in detention,
- Ministry to incarcerated adults, and
- Ministry to women with dependent children in need of assistance.

While many city, state and federal services are available to help our neighbors, many people don't know where to start looking for the help they need. Our volunteers are building networks with various city, state and federal agencies. They are becoming experts connecting those who need help with agencies that do what we can't. For us, helping is a way of life inspired by the sainted Father Damien.—Fr. Bob Charlton, ss.cc.

(You may read more about the mission at [www.sccc-usa.org](http://www.sccc-usa.org) "SSCC Reorganize in South Texas")

We are grateful to all of you for your prayers and financial support for the seminary education of these newly ordained and international priests. Their "real world" education and integration into the SS.CC ministry now begins. **We still need your help:**

- It costs about \$10,000 per priest through the process of obtaining a green card.
- Learning Spanish is essential in this mission, there the costs for sending our priests to Spanish language immersion courses in Mexico.
- Honing pastoral ministry skills through Clinical Pastoral Education often with associated costs.

In the words of Fr. Bob, *"Pray fervently for us as we do for you. Pray that we may delve more deeply into the well that is the Sacred Heart. Help our missionary efforts in New England, California, Hawaii, India, Tonga, Fiji, and Texas. God love and keep you for that."*

Yours in the hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Rev. Edward Popish, ss.cc.

Development Director

#### ***In Memoriam—Book of Life***

*We are grateful for your love, prayers, and financial support. In gratitude, during the upcoming month of November we would like to include the names of your deceased family and friends in our daily prayers, liturgies, and adoration. For this, the names we receive by October 15, 2022, will be compiled in a "book of life", which will be sent to our brothers and communities. You may submit names on the back of the donor return card and add additional pages as needed.*