

Corpus Christi Catholic Church –October 20, 2019

Good morning, my name is Dulce Hernandez-Valdez from Catholic Charities. I will be sharing with you 3 of our many programs. Programs that are connected to people we have heard of before in scripture.

- 1. This program reminds me of our Holy Family fleeing from danger. Our Refugee Resettlement Program. Here is a story.** Khagendra was just 17 when his family stole away in the middle of the night to India. The Bhutanese native still has fond memories of the beautiful, peaceful country where they grew up. But all that changed when his father, an activist for equal rights in Bhutan, was imprisoned. The family's plight did not end in India. The Indian government would not allow them to remain in the country. Khagendra and his family eventually resettled in a refugee camp in Nepal, where Khagendra spent the next 17 years of his life. In March 2008, Khagendra and wife, Ganga, whom he met in the refugee camp, were resettled in Phoenix by Catholic Charities. By fall, both had found work with local refugee resettlement agencies as case workers. Now they help other Bhutanese and other refugees resettle in the community. **Our services provided them with a furnished home with the help of volunteers, trainings to understand the culture in America yet encouraged to keep their healthy traditions, enroll them in ESL classes to learn English, connect them with community employers we partner with to provide them a job and more, as they begin a new life in the US.**
- 2. This program reminds me of St. Mary Magdalene. Our Dignity Diversion Program. Here is a story.** Aimee was kicked out of her house at age 13 and started sleeping with men so she could have a place to stay. She turned to drugs and soon met a man who seemed to be her friend, but turned out to be a pimp who prostituted her. Aimee experienced a lot of abuse while in "the life". She changed. She made the decision to join DIGNITY, to work on herself and to eventually reunify with her children. She did. She graduated the program, found a job as a manager and has custody of her oldest daughter. **This program offers women and men arrested for prostitution the opportunity to avoid jail time and regain their dignity. We provide them with 36 hours of intense self-exploration and education to develop self-esteem, rehabilitation services including support, education and treatment to escape prostitution, job placement assistance, support groups and more. Their charges are dismissed with completion of the program.**
- 3. This program reminds me of Moses. Our Foster Care and Adoption program. Here is a story.** Danielle and Corky had three children, they felt their family was not yet complete. In 2012, they became licensed foster parents through Catholic Charities with the hope of adopting. Then they met Eli. Eli, had spent the last four years in foster care and was living in a group home in southern Arizona. He officially moved in in July 2014, right after turning age 9. Eli had a lot of behaviors that they had to watch closely, and he struggled in his new

school. Part of his behaviors stemmed from the uncertainty of being taken away from another home and past trauma. Danielle and Corky explained that he was going to be with them forever and that, “He could be happy and together forever or he could be upset and together forever.” He was officially adopted on November 8. He has since settled in to his new **forever family**. He plays soccer, sings, dances, loves building with legos and does well in school. One day Eli overheard the family talking about one of the older kids moving out after he graduates from high school. Eli was confused at first and then said he never wanted to move out. For Danielle and Corky, that is just fine. **This program seeks and walks alongside families who wish to embrace a child in their home and care for them until their parents are ready and have received the help they need. While a child is in your care, staff celebrate you and provide you support during this moment. And if a child’s future with their parents is not possible, that foster family will be offered the opportunity to adopt this child and give him or her the life they need, to fulfill their mission in this life.**

4. Our Catholic Charities table will be at the expo next month. We welcome you to visit and learn more. We are looking for a **Corpus Christi Champion**. A Champion who can learn about what we do, connect parishioners to our programs and help us spread awareness about the miracles we do and **you can** do in the lives of others. Thank you!