Catholic Schools Week  January 27 - February 2, 2013

Catholic Schools Showcase
Evangelizing Hearts
Educating Minds
Embracing the Future

Catholic Schools
Raise the Standards

The Catholic Commentator
January 25, 2013
Characteristics define Catholic identity

The Center for Catholic School Effectiveness lists nine essential Characteristics of Catholic Schools. They are: 1) Centered in the person of Jesus; 2) Contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church; 3) Distinguished by excellence; 4) Committed to educate the whole child; 5) Steeped in a Catholic worldview; 6) Sustained by Gospel witness; 7) Shaped by communion and community; 8) Accessible to all students; 9) Established by the expressed authority of the bishop. These characteristics define the Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as the platform on which the standards and benchmarks rest.

I am so proud of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Recently a father of two children, whom his wife and he send to Catholic schools, mentioned to me how important it is to their family that their children receive their education from a school that their children receive their education from a school that.

From The Bishop

Bishop Robert W. Muench

who work tirelessly to make our schools a bright beacon of light in a world filled with darkness.

Perfection is an achievement virtu- ally impossible to humans, but the pur- suit of it is what motivates and inspires the Catholic Church to contribute to the measurable well-being of our students.

Thank you, parents and educators, for all you are and all you do for our Catholic schools. Thank you, students, for being the lifblood of our schools and hope, today and tomorrow, for our Church and our world. I congratulate you and stand in awe of your accomplish- ments.

Catholic Schools Week 2013 provides another opportunity to recognize all who make our schools such a gift to God, the Church and our community. Peace, everyone!

National norms show local Catholic students above average

The focus of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge is three-fold: to evangelize hearts, educate minds, and embrace the future. Our schools join with clergy, parents and students each day to achieve that vision in alignment with the 2013 National Catholic Educational Association’s Theme: Catholic Schools Raise the Standards.

Catholic schools are re- spected for their academic excellence and high moral standards, and this year’s theme celebrates the con- sistent attention of Catholic schools to continuous improvement in faith formation, academics and preparation of students for a future as a contributing member of the community.

Recent data gathered on faith knowledge using the Assessment for Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE) indicates that our students score above the national norm in all eight domains in all grades tested. High schools are working together to imple- ment the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Framework for Religious Instruction as they standardize the curriculum. Service performed by students in all grade levels in Catholic schools is amazing, and many students reflect on the service component of their Catholic education as a life-changing ex- perience. Our Catholic schools evangelize hearts as they raise the standards in faith formation.

The academic accomplishment of students in the diocese con- tinues to be outstanding, as evidenced in daily class- room work, performance assessment and standard- ized testing. The Class of 2012 scored above both state and national results on the ACT, and elementary and middle schools stu- dents continued to score above average in all core subjects (reading, math, language arts, science, and social studies) on the national Terra Nova Stan- dardized Test. The rigor of the instructional pro- gram ensures academic excellence in our schools, and educators across our diocese participate in professional de- velopment to better meet the needs of their students. As nationally-accredited schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, our schools identify annual goals for

From The Superintendent

Dr. Melanie B. Verges

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SJA has a nondiscriminatory admissions policy.
MORONEY: Pastor works with school, church and civic communities to achieve what is best for all

From Page 1

dimensions of education as well as the importance of academic excellence.” The pastor who grew up in Ireland, encourages input from parishioners, parents, staff and school board members on all spiritual, financial and economic decisions that will impact St. Alphonsus church and school.

Since Ryals was hired three years ago as St. Alphonsus principal, she has had the advantage of Father Moroney’s advice from his experiences as a school counselor, teacher and pastor at other schools.

Some of the schools associated with the churches where Father Moroney has been pastor have experienced financial difficulties. “He has led these schools to financial recovery,” according to Ryals, and provided assistance in the rebuilding of St. Isidore School and additions to Our Lady of Mercy and St. Thomas More schools. Since he is involved in each school’s annual operating budget, he takes an active role in managing operations with the budget. Currently, he is at the helm of the new eighth-grade room addition at St. Alphonsus.

During the school year, Father Moroney hosts a lunch each month for St. Alphonsus seventh- and eighth-graders interested in learning more about the priesthood or religious life. “He is the perfect person to talk about the priesthood and religious life,” said Stephanie de la Houssaye, St. Alphonsus school counselor.

“Father Mike provides tireless, effective leadership that led to the recent rejuvenation of our school community,” said Stephan Whitlow, a St. Alphonsus school board member.

“St. Alphonsus was experiencing a decrease in enrollment and enthusiasm arising from the opening of a local community school system and questions about the direction of (St. Alphonsus) school,” Whitlow stated. “Father Mike provided the spiritual, financial and economic leadership that resulted in renewed enthusiasm in the school and the stabilization of the school’s finances and enrollment.”

Whitlow credited Father Moroney and Ryals with stabilizing “the education staff while boosting the academic success of the students. There is no doubt that the resurgence of our school is due, in large part, to the wise and effective leadership of Father Mike.”

Through Father Moroney’s involvement in and regular attendance at various athletic events and the retreats he gives for the students, he has built trust and rapport with the youth, explained Henry Sabbagh, a St. Alphonsus School parent. He said every time his daughter, Kelsey, a former St. Alphonsus student, participated in functions with Father Moroney she came home filled with the Holy Spirit and grateful for Father Moroney’s guidance.

On a personal note, Sabbagh mentioned Father Moroney’s personal attention to him and his family when his son died on a Sunday in 2007. Despite having to celebrate three Sunday Masses, Father Moroney visited the family twice that day to make sure they had “the emotional and spiritual support we needed,” said Sabbagh. “He made the time for us as he always does with anyone in need.”

At the invitation of two Baton Rouge bishops, Father Moroney served as chair of Blue Ribbon committees to study and make long-term recommendations for Catholic schools in the Baton Rouge Diocese. He was chosen because of his interest in and commitment to Catholic education. When Bishop Alfred C. Hughes in consultation with the priests, religious and laity of the Baton Rouge Diocese, decided to look at the ministries that would be critical to the success of this diocese, he selected Father Moroney to lead the study on education, both in Catholic schools and in the church parishes.

Later, Bishop Robert W. Muench asked Father Moroney to revisit the study and make recommendations.

In addition to serving numerous terms on the Diocesan School Board, Father Moroney served as director of the Office of Religious Education for three years.

VERGES: Schools blessed to have dedicated volunteers

From Page 2B

for improvement and are working toward common core adoption. Such initiatives indicate long-term commitment to the vision of educating minds, as our schools continually raise the standards in academics.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are blessed to have dedicated volunteers serving on advisory boards. The talent provided by board members enables schools to plan for the future in areas such as facility renovation and expansion, technology implementation, and financial planning. By working with all stakeholders for the common good, Catholic schools in this diocese embrace the future as they plan for growth, raising the standards for the students we serve.

During Catholic Schools Week, we celebrate the work of our schools in raising the standards as they evangelize hearts, educate minds and embrace the future. We are grateful for the leadership of Bishop Robert W. Muench and for the support of clergy, administrators, faculty, staff, parents, students, and all who are partners in the work of the schools. Through the support of the community, Catholic education can continue to be a gift to generations in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
Distinguished Principal Gerard Toups preserving the innocence of children

By Laura Deavers
Editor

In Mark’s Gospel Jesus says the kingdom of God belongs to children. “Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it” Mark 10:15. St. Joseph School’s Dr. Gerard J. Toups, who is the 2013 NCEA Distinguished Principal in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, believes the most important role for Catholic schools is to protect and preserve the innocence of children, and the school principal is the one to set the tone for this.

“The document ‘To Teach as Jesus Did’ gives us the road map to this end,” stated Toups. “The message is salvation through the one great commandment of love of God and love of your fellow man.” He added that the school community must not only preach the message but reflect it in its care and concern for every person, especially the children.

“I believe the academic subjects themselves reveal the mystery and complexity of the Lord and he is revealed in all our lives,” Toups said. “The staff must integrate this into the every day academic program of the school.”

Toups has been principal at St. Joseph since 2006. Prior to accepting the position at St. Joseph he was principal of St. Robert Bellarmine in Arabi, La., St. Agnes in Jefferson, each for seven years, and of Our Lady of the Lake in Mandeville for four years. He taught at Archbishop Chapelle High School in Metairie for seven years and at St. Joseph Benedictine School in Chauvin for a year.

He earned his BA at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, and his master’s and doctorate at University of Louisiana Lafayette.

Prayer punctuates St. Joseph’s school life, with prayer at each morning’s assembly, at the beginning of each class, before meals and at the end of the day. At the end of each week, Mass is celebrated on Friday, what Toups described as the “ultimate celebration of community and thanksgiving.”

Since academics are emphasized in this community of faith, “I believe the academic subjects reveal the mystery and complexity of the Lord and he is revealed in all our studies,” said Toups.

St. Joseph students set the stage for what they want to do to help those outside of the school family, said Toups. Students collect money for epilepsy because a student’s younger brother has the disease; for EB, a rare genetic disorder, because a child in Ponchatoula was born with it; for the St. Jude Math-a-Thon because they identify with others their age.

Explaining his understanding of reliance of other’s experience so he does not have to “reinvent the wheel”, Toups said he spent hours on the phone with the assistant superintendent of schools and much time in his office with the experienced teachers on his staff. “I learned much and have had the philosophy from the beginning that there is someone on staff who can do just about any job better than me, and I just needed to find those individuals,” explained Toups. “Teachers know they have my support. They enjoy working with me. Supported and engaged teachers bring out the best from students who achieve.”

In 1979, Toups started the Summer Reading and Math Clinic where for five weeks students who were recommended by their teachers for remediation and others who wanted to review material attended 50-minute classes each day. The programs, that were started in St. Bernard and Jefferson civil parishes, served 150 to 180 students. For 30 years Toups supervised the program and in 2008, when he left the area, turned it over to three teachers who still operate it.

Increased enrollment has been one of Toups’ accomplishments at every school where he has been principal. St. Joseph has grown from 301 to 429 in the six years he has been principal, and he foresees enrollment reaching 500 in the next four years. While principal at St. Robert the student population went from the small- est in St. Bernard Civil Parish, 367, to the largest when he left at 510.

“Staffing the school with qualified and passionate educators that shape the faith and academic foundation for young students has been a top priority” for Toups, stated former St. Joseph Advisory Board members Denise West and May Ransom.

West and her husband Carl have two sons who graduated from St. Joseph and are now in high school. Ransom and her husband James have an eighth-grader at St. Joseph and a son who graduated from there and is a high school senior. The two women expressed their satisfaction that St. Joseph School offers the opportunity for students to earn high school credit while in eighth grade, giving them an academic advantage in their freshman year.

Toups analyzed and evaluated the costs associated with educating a child to propose a balanced budget based on a steady rate of growth at St. Joseph. He has also attracted quality educators and successfully operates the school with a profit. He has been able to raise salary scales 92 to 100 percent of the diocesan scale.

“I still work because what I missed most for the nine months after Hurricane Katrina was the children – their innocence, their wide-eyed view of life, their goodness. Jesus said it all in the Gospel,” said Toups about his many years in education.

“I thank parents regularly for entrusting us with their children. It is a great responsibility to ensure that trust is earned,” said Toups.

Catholic education is the mission of the Toups family. Along with his career as a Catholic educator, his wife taught English and was head of the English department at Archbishop Chapelle High School for 42 years, and his son, who is currently employed at Catholic High School, has taught English and coached basketball at boys’ schools for 15 years.

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NOLA VISITS – St. Jude School alum Austin Nola visited Katie Romig’s kindergarten class recently, where he read to the students and had a question and answer session. Nola is a former member of the LSU baseball team and was a part of the team in 2009 when LSU won the College World Series. He is now a member of the Miami Marlins, but still finds time to visit St. Jude School when he is in town. Photo provided by St. Jude School
Sinanan named 2013 distinguished teacher

By Laura Deavers
Editor

Beth Sinanan is a fourth-grade teacher at St. Theresa of Avila Middle School and the Diocese of Baton Rouge 2013 NCEA Distinguished Teacher. Before joining the St. Theresa faculty in 2009, she taught at St. Peter Chanel for four years.

Catholic educators have the privilege to nurture and guide students on their Catholic faith journey while enlightening and challenging their minds in all academic areas, said Sinanan about her philosophy of Catholic education. “Teaching in a Catholic school is not one’s occupation but one’s ministry, a calling, which prompts us to join with parents, the primary educators of our students, in educating God’s children in matters both spiritual and temporal.”

Whether in a science or religion class, Sinanan brings God into all of her lessons. In her students’ vegetable garden she uses the story of the mustard seed to help them understand how the tiny okra seed will grow into a tall plant. And in another lesson they “witness God’s gift of new life as they watch their chicks hatch from the eggs they have taken care of,” Sinanan commented.

Prayer provides Sinanan what she needs to fulfill her calling as an educator. “Teaching my students to pray, and praying with them, brings them closer to Christ and their roles as their child’s primary relationship,” Sinanan said. “Prayer with my students in class, school-wide prayer with our school community, prayer with fellow teachers and staff, personal prayer and journaling and prayer with my family, all strengthen me to continue my teaching ministry.”

She believes planning meaningful learning experiences and connecting them to real world situations are vital to building a strong foundation for her children. At all times she is thinking, preparing and working on tasks to help her students understand and grow, both spiritually and academically.

“Collaborating with fellow educators, communicating with parents and researching new student activities are just a few tasks that usually fall outside of regular school hours,” said Sinanan.

At St. Theresa, Sinanan has served as a leader of the school’s 4-H Club and has been a member of St. Theresa’s principal’s advisory committee, the fair committee, individual needs committee, crisis team and discipline committee, and helped design a new discipline program for the school. She also served as one of St. Theresa’s accreditation coordinators during the 2009-10 school year.

A member of St. Mark Church in Gonzales, Sinanan teaches religion and serves on the second-grade retreat team, preparing these students for first reconciliation and first Eucharist. She presents baptismal seminars, helping new parents understand the importance of their roles as their child’s primary educator.

Hanks chosen for NCEA education award

By Laura Deavers
Editor

Dr. Jason Hanks, Catholic High School assistant principal for instruction, has set new standards locally as well as nationally for developing a multi-faceted plan for using data to enhance education and transform curriculum and instruction, student outcomes and teacher effectiveness. This has led to CHS adopting a different process for creating and grading exams and its students to experience positive measurable results in improved college readiness scores in ACT series of tests.

Hanks is the Diocese of Baton Rouge NCEA Catholic Secondary Education Award recipient for 2013. He has taught English for 10 years and has held various administrative positions at CHS during his tenure.

In addition to his responsibilities at CHS, Hanks is an educational consultant working with other schools on data-informed decision making.

Taking his research to the next level, Hanks engages parents and students by educating both groups on the meaning of the data, thereby creating significant buy-in from both groups.

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Health/physical education program enhances student learning

Through St. Joseph’s Academy health and physical education curriculum, students enhance their academic knowledge of important health issues as well as enjoy meaningful opportunities to experience the benefits of physical fitness and grow in appreciation of individual, lifetime and team sports. Academy students are required to take four years of health and physical education in which they are exposed to a wide variety of health topics and physical activities.

Health topics covered in ninth and 10th grades include nutrition and diet, drugs, alcohol, eating disorders and CPR. Juniors and seniors study heart disease, cancer, communicable diseases, CPR, safety and the aging process.

On a daily basis, students are responsible for summarizing current news articles pertaining to women’s health issues. To enhance learning, guest speakers are invited to share their expertise. Teachers also utilize lectures, internet research, class presentations, projects and videos.

The physical education component of the curriculum enables students to develop better health and physical fitness; learn and increase movement skills; develop good sportsmanship and teamwork; and increase knowledge and appreciation of the sports in which they participate. Students also learn the history of sports, safety procedures and rules.

Department chair Brenda LeBlanc said the program’s goal is to offer a range of activities and learning opportunities to appeal to all students. “It is our goal that during her four years, each young woman finds an activity or a few activities she enjoys,” she said. “Whether that be ballroom dancing, bowling, basketball or badminton, we want our students to be ‘movers’ for life.”

The academy now employs a full-time athletic trainer, a cutting-edge enhancement on the high school level. In addition to caring for SJA’s student-athletes, she also teaches the school’s sports medicine elective. Year one of the course provides an overview of the field of sports medicine and exposes students to the fundamentals involved in a sports medicine healthcare setting. Year two offers an overview of the pathology of sports injuries and basic injury-management skills. Students learn about the body’s response to injury and how to apply basic emergency action principles and skills. Emphasis is placed on an athlete’s psychological and sociological responses to injury and the strategies utilized by healthcare professionals to assist in their recovery.

Faculty member Elizabeth Fontenot developed a six-week, 2013 DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE
Holy Family School cheerleaders perform in Capital One Bowl

A trip to Orlando to appear in the pregame show at the Capital One Bowl was the way Holy Family School’s fifth- and sixth-grade cheerleaders spent their Christmas holiday.

The squad was selected for the Jan. 1 bowl game because of the Superior Blue Ribbon ratings they received every day at the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) summer camp in 2012. Only cheering squads with consistent superior performances received an invitation to the bowl game, which saw Georgia defeat Nebraska 45-31.

The Holy Family cheering squad had the youngest girls on the field with more than 700 performers from all over the United States.

The cheerleaders traveled to Orlando after Christmas for a week of rehearsals to prepare them for their Capital One Bowl pregame performance. They practiced at several area football fields, as well as at Disney World Resort. The hours of rehearsals proved to be quite valuable when they performed in front of the tens of thousands of fans in the Florida Citrus Bowl Stadium and the ABC television audience.

OLOM strives for academic excellence

This year, Our Lady of Mercy School is focusing its efforts on enhancing academics through differentiated instruction and curriculum development.

Eleven OLOM pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first-grade teachers attended an Orton-Gillingham training program from Jan. 14 – 18. In this comprehensive 30-hour program, teachers learned how to incorporate into their daily lessons the components essential to an effective reading program, including phonics, vocabulary development and comprehension strategies. The training will enable teachers to help every child achieve his or her reading potential.

OLOM has recently developed an Alternative Enrichment Program as a way to provide individualized challenges and self-directed learning projects for the school’s highest student achievers. Students meet with a faculty moderator an average of three times per week for these sessions, during which students may prepare for advanced mathematics competitions, such as MATHCOUNTS, or explore curricular interests such as space, mythology and creative writing.

The school has also designed a study-skills program for students who need additional assistance in developing the organizational and test-taking skills so important for academic success. Kristy Monsour, former OLOM fourth-grade teacher, has returned to direct this program, which is currently offered daily as an enrichment course.

In order to assist OLOM faculty in curriculum development, Valerie Comeaux, who will complete her PhD in curriculum theory at LSU in the spring, joined the OLOM faculty in January to serve as the school’s curriculum specialist. She is working to align the curriculum to meet the rigorous standards of Common Core.

Resources from the school’s very successful annual appeal are being used for teacher professional development and technology acquisition to support OLOM’s focus on curriculum development and enhanced instruction for all learners.
St. Michael High named Today’s Catholic Teacher school of the month

St. Michael High School was chosen as the Today’s Catholic Teacher magazine’s National School of the Month for January because of the school’s Catholic identity and student service program.

“Catholic identity is evident at St. Michael High School, not just with the presence of our chapel or our religious statues and classes, but also through our faculty and students who know exactly who we are and what we stand for,” said St. Michael Principal Ellen Lee.

Today’s Catholic Teacher is a national publication that is distributed six times during the school year. The magazine shares insights and best practices with Catholic teachers on topics such as technology in the classroom, best practices, continuing education for teachers, fund raising ideas as well as prayer and reflection to share with students.

Each edition also includes a parent partnership section for teachers and administrators to use as a guide to Catholic parenting as well as the school-of-the-month feature.

The author of the feature on St. Michael High School, Ruth Matheny, believes that the way St. Michael has taken its school charisms to further the school’s Catholic identity and enhance a strong student service program is what defines this national school of the month as a model for others to emulate.

In her article, Matheny wrote: “St. Michael High School has taken its school charisms – faith/faith, veritas/truth and ministerium/service, and integrated them so its students are learning about and living out these founding principles. The charisms are the forefront for teacher and student planning. Each charism is being taught to the students and referred to at every opportunity. They each express a part of the mission and purpose of St. Michael High School with a school code recently developed to further highlight the three charisms. The code now serves as a constant reminder of what it means to be a St. Michael Warrior.”

Religion teacher, Kim Anson, said, “I have seen our school focus on the charisms and have personally witnessed the focus of faith (faith) literally change some students’ lives.”

In addition to changing lives internally, the St. Michael High School charisms also touch those outside of the school walls.

“Just as faith without works is dead, so too will faith and truth always be incomplete if they do not enable and motivate us to minister to others, to serve the poor, and to bring joy and love to the lonely,” said Assistant Principal Peter Fletcher. “We celebrate our charisms by facilitating a year-round service program to encourage students to give back and celebrate all for which they have to be thankful.”

Each St. Michael student is required to serve others through community service and volunteerism while they are in school. Each year, students give back through their clubs and sports teams, as well as complete a designated number of service hours on their own. Freshmen must complete 10 hours; sophomores at least 15; juniors, 20 hours; and seniors, 25 hours.

“Everyone knows that high school changes you, but St. Michael gives you the opportunities to change for the better – both in your faith and in the way you serve others,” said junior Sarah Major.

Local student community service includes visits to nursing homes; the organization of food, clothing and toy drives; weekly prayers at the local abortion clinic among other community programs.

Students also take trips to participate in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., and to a mission in Nicaragua to serve an area referred to as the garbage dump community. In all, students give back more than 23,000 hours collectively every year.

Seniors culminate their four years of service with a multi-media presentation to their peers on the cause that has meant the most to them from their service experience while at St. Michael High School.
Sacred Heart embraces the Year of Faith

When Pope Benedict XVI declared a Year of Faith beginning on Oct. 11, 2012 and ending Nov. 24, 2013, Sacred Heart of Jesus School embraced the concept to renew and strengthen the students and faculty in their practice of faith.

To renew and strengthen Catholics in their practice of faith, SHS embraced the unique history of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church Parish, which includes a wealth of religious art, sculptures, carvings and architectural elements. All students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade toured Sacred Heart Church and through various projects in art and computer classes, learned more about Sacred Heart Church.

The students were inspired by the beauty of the church,” said SHS art teacher Dorothy Calandro. While all grade levels have produced various types of art based on the church’s art and architecture, the fifth- through seventh-grade students are currently capturing the church art and architecture through photography.

“There are a lot of things in the church that I’d seen a million times, but never thought of what they mean,” said seventh-grader Claudia Pickell. “Everything in there (the church), even the smallest thing, has a meaning.”

The church tours were so successful that plans are underway for a Spring/Lenten event, “The Sacred Vessels,” according to SHS religion coordinator Marylyn Dietz. “Through ‘The Sacred Vessels’ students and faculty will hear the unique history of some of Sacred Heart’s treasures and understand the purpose of each,” said Dietz.

Students will also examine the art, history and symbolism of the paschal candle. Sacred Heart parishioner and archivist Mary Lee Eggart creates one-of-a-kind paschal candles each year that are designed to reflect the symbols in the church.

To inspire the world with their example, SHS had only to turn to the Sisters of St. Joseph, who have taught at the school since its founding in 1929. SHS initiated a program reflecting the vision of Father Jean Pierre Medaille, who in 1650 founded the order of religious women, “to serve our neighbors with the same loving concern St. Joseph had shown in caring for Jesus and Mary.”

SHS’s “Dear Neighbor” Program now serves as an umbrella for the school’s philanthropic efforts and is based on the concept that neighbors include those physically in our neighborhood as well as those who are neighbors in a broader sense. Food items are collected weekly for the church’s food pantry and are distributed to those in need who live within the parish boundaries. Each October, the P.E. Department organizes the “Dear Neighbor” Walk for Diabetes, with collections going to the local chapter of JDRF to assist with research for Type 1 diabetes.

Another of the many projects operating under the “Dear Neighbor” umbrella began in November, the “Dear Neighbor” Veteran’s Day project. Items were collected for Raven Outreach Center for Homeless Veterans, which is located a few blocks from the school.

Sacred Heart School also inspires by its academic legacy and its long history and presence in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. In October the school held a generation celebration to recognize 32 current students who are second, third or fourth generation SHS Tigers.

“I thought it was amazing that some of our current students have great-grandparents who graduated from SHS back in the 30s and 40s,” said development director Michelle Schroeder. “That really says something about a school.”

First-grader Caroline Campbell is one of the school’s fourth generation students. Her mother Kecla King Campbell, class of 1991, said, “It gives me an overwhelming sense of pride and gratitude to know that four generations of my family have walked through the doors of Sacred Heart, and I was one of them.”

“We are proud to adopt and truly live the Year of Faith at Sacred Heart School,” said Principal Joan Hutson. “We don’t expect it to end in November 2013, as we will continue to embrace the concept and the many gifts of our school and church to move forward.”

OLOL COLLEGE: It is never too late to learn

FROM PAGE 88

found gift from God for me and I plan to share the skills and information that I have learned if it continues to be his will.”

Perron’s commitment to God and to serving her patients is a testament to the kind of nursing cultivated at Our Lady of the Lake College, the only Catholic college in Louisiana outside of New Orleans. “If nurses are to be effective, they must come from the standpoint of a ‘wounded healer’ as explained by Henri Nouwen,” Perron stated. “This means that in order to give quality care for an individual, nurses must be willing to go beyond their professional role and allow themselves to be open – vulnerable human beings with the same wounds and suffering – in the same way that Christ did in his suffering.”

Perron first thought about becoming a nurse when she was 8 years old. She rode with her grandmother on a bus to Charity Hospital in New Orleans where her grandmother received her (at that time experimental) radiation and chemotherapy treatments for cancer. Her grandmother also allowed her young granddaughter to give her insulin injections for type I diabetes and take care of her after her treatments.

Perron earned a diploma in nursing in 1988 at Our Lady of the Lake College, then went on to work with different healthcare organizations including Lane Memorial and Woman’s Hospital, mostly specializing in pediatrics. While working on her bachelor’s degree, Perron became the primary caregiver for her mother, who suffered from emphysema and was eventually diagnosed with brain and bone cancer. Perron’s mother rode with her when she turned in her “intent to graduate” form. According to Perron her mother “. . . was as proud as if I had already graduated!” Her mother had hoped to live to see her finish, but that was not meant to be. She died one week before her daughter’s last semester began.
Hands-on and hats off to science

Actively engaging students to help them develop a love for science is a passion for fourth-grade teacher Beth Sinanan at St. Theresa of Avila Middle School. Her motivation is to get students more involved in projects that capture their interest, moving the students away from sitting in a desk listening to a lecture. St. Theresa’s other science teachers share her desire.

Problem solving abilities, creative thinking and developing a love for the scientific world are the skills promoted in science classes throughout the campus.

One of the challenges that Sinanan puts forth to her students is to seek out their own science experiments to perform for their classmates so they can teach other students what they themselves have learned. This ownership in their own research and experimentation has created a new level of interest in science in Sinanan’s class.

Another yearly tradition among the fourth graders is the planting and maintenance of a garden outside the fourth-grade classrooms. Measurements of height, leaf structure, and differences in plant growth are all written down in a scientific structure, and differences in plant growth classes throughout the campus.

In the upper grades, sixth graders learn about chemical properties by studying a mystery powder. Using deductive reasoning and analysis, students determine properties such as pH, color change and solubility of the mystery powders, then use the process of elimination to narrow down and confirm what the mystery powders are, based on the results they achieve.

Use of the science laboratory’s collection of microscopes, instruments and tools, along with the Internet for research, brings science alive for the students.

Every other year, all STAM school seventh- and eighth-grade students participate in a science fair where purpose, hypothesis, experiment, procedure, analysis and conclusion are used to learn more in-depth information about a subject in one of multiple fields of science. Students present what they learned to their classmates so they can teach other students.

Fifth graders sometimes combine science experiments to perform for their classmates. The students have learned to face the challenges of their increasingly complex yet fascinating world.

STM revolutionizes classroom learning

As more students grow up in a digital world, schools must adapt to technological changes. Teachers at St. Thomas More School are staying abreast of new techniques in technology to provide the education their students need for the digital age.

STM teachers are participating in a series of mini-technology sessions to enhance their educational skills. The educators are learning about the array of technology available for their classrooms, such as digital whiteboards, interactive software, digital imaging, audio and video creation tools, on-demand video libraries, computers, laptops and LCD projectors.

During the first mini-technology session held on Jan. 8, teachers shared insights, ideas, methods and expertise with their peers on how to use the ActivBoards and StarBoards in the classroom. They explored the basic “how to” of using the boards and the best way to incorporate the technology into different subjects.

“Using these exciting interactive whiteboards, you can create multimedia lessons that engage learners and address their diverse needs,” stated Sara Wisdom, third-grade teacher. “We demonstrated to the teachers how to plot ordered pairs, play games, find websites to enrich the lesson, create space figures, and homophone and high frequency word games”.

St. Thomas More School plans to hold more in-depth technology sessions on the interactive whiteboards on Feb. 4 and 5. These sessions will allow the teachers more hands-on experience and show them other resources available to use with their whiteboards in their daily lessons.

“With these technologies, plus the passion and inspiration of our teachers, STM is committed to continuing our legacy of excellence academically and spiritually,” said STM Principal Dr. Judy Armstrong.
John Gerbrecht and Jan Dupre, who have been St. George School’s band directors for 10 years, have developed the school’s band program into the cornerstone of the St. George performing arts department.

Gerbrecht, a St. George parishioner for 46 years, retired as the director of one of the St. George choirs after 33 years and returned to the classroom in 2003 to teach at St. George. In 1972 he started the first after-school St. George Band while still teaching full-time in the East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System.

“When I was approached about becoming band director at St. George, I was enthusiastic about being able to give to my (church) parish and to work with my two grandsons, who were both St. George students at the time,” said Gerbrecht. “It also allowed me to work along with my daughter, Jan, doing what we both love – teaching young people how to develop and appreciate their musical talent while learning to play an instrument.”

Being a member of a St. George band takes commitment since classes are after school. “Our band students are multi-talented – many participate in dance, choir, swim team, baseball, track, etc.,” said Dupre. “We are always delighted to hear of their many accomplishments in school and the community.”

The St. George music department offers instruction to students in grades four through eight at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Students receive instruction on individual instruments, in music theory, scales and fundamentals, and acquire a diverse repertoire. As they advance, they have numerous performance opportunities and may audition for the All-Parish Honor Bands or take part in the spring Jazz Program. Students receive the training and skills necessary to participate in high school music programs.

“We do our best to send (high school bands directors) the student who has it all — the ability to read music, a solid foundation on the instrument and the technique to begin performing high school-level music,” commented Gerbrecht.

Former students Melanie Holeman, who made first alto saxophone in the St. Michael High School Jazz Ensemble as a freshman, Bryson Lejeune, who is Catholic High School’s drum major, Therese Arceneaux, who became first chair trumpet in the St. Michael Jazz Band and was selected for All-Parish Jazz and Concert bands, and Lindsay Marquette, who as an LUS freshman was selected for the drumline, give credit for their success to what they learned at St. George School.

“The incomparable St. George band program helped me grow both musically and mentally,” said Arceneaux. “It always made my day to see Mr. Gerbrecht’s and Mrs. Dupre’s smiling faces bright and early on band mornings to teach me about music and critical life lessons. High school band is fun and enjoyable, and you meet lots of new friends. However, it is also a rewarding challenge that the St. George band definitely prepared me for. The St. George band program taught me that hard work pays off and practice really does make perfect.”

As the instrumental music director, Gerbrecht stressed the importance of the bands being present in the school, church and city. Performances include the annual Christmas and spring concerts, the annual Grandparent’s Day Program, the St. George Fair, SGS Open House, SGS Talent Show, the feast of the Epiphany, Loyola Jazz Invitational, interfaith celebrations and the Catholic Schools Showcase, to name a few.

“Preparing and performing for an audience is part of their music education experience, and it is always a proud moment and a stellar representation of the outstanding talent we have in our school,” said Gerbrecht.

In 2005, a Spring Jazz Program was started and the first SGS Jazz Combo attended the Loyola Jazz Festival. The next year, in addition to returning to the Loyola Jazz Festival, the SGS Combo was the first middle-school combo to be invited to perform in the University of North Texas Jazz Festival. This year will mark the ninth year St. George students participate in the Loyola Jazz Festival.

Seven years ago, two St. George band students, Stephen Arceneaux and Jacob Dupre, took their duo to the Beta Talent Competition and won first place in district, state and national competition.

St. George band students also continue to make a fine impression on the community when they participate in All-Parish Ensembles. Top middle school instrumentalists throughout the civil parish are chosen by audition to perform in these groups. This year, three Advanced Band II students were chosen to participate in the All-Parish Band – Paige Bourg and Sarah Johnson, flute; and Jessie Penouilh, clarinet.

A vital aspect of the St. George band is sharing the beauty of God’s graces with students. “Your musical talent is God’s gift to you; what you do with that talent is your gift back to him,” said Dupre.

The band directors’ philosophy remains steadfast – they give their students the opportunity to study music, develop their talent, learn to play an instrument and value the amazing beauty of music. “They will not all become professional musicians or music educators, but if we can teach them to love and appreciate music, then we have given them a priceless gift that will last their lifetime.”

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Distinguished graduates named for 2013 Catholic Schools Week

By Laura Deavers
Editor

By Barbara Chenevert
Staff Writer

Every year each Catholic school in the Baton Rouge Diocese selects one of its alumni as its distinguished graduate. This year these people will be honored at a dinner on Monday, Jan. 28, at the Renaissance Hotel in Baton Rouge.

The 2013 Distinguished Graduates are:

Father Matt Dupré frequently returns to his alma mater, Ascension Catholic High School, to reach out to the young people. As vocations director for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, he encourages young people to answer God’s call to service.

A 1989 graduate of Ascension Catholic, Father Dupré attended Loyola University for two years, entered St. Joseph Seminary College in 1991 and received a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy in 1994. He received a master’s of divinity from Notre Dame Seminary and was ordained a priest for this diocese in 1998.

“Fundamentally, Catholic education is about forming persons into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ himself,” Father Dupré said. “This is done only through discipleship. The Catholic school must teach children the importance of learning from Jesus Christ, himself, so that Jesus, who is the embodiment of love, becomes the model for the young person. And as children grow, they begin to take on more and more of those characteristics, such as compassion, that make them uniquely Christian. Christ is the leader. We are his followers. He is forever the teacher, we his students,” Father Dupré said.

Father Dupré serves God and his people as a leader in the Church. His duties as Director of Vocations and Seminarians is to reach out to young people and encourage and teach them to answer the call to God, Ascension school officials said.

Catholic High School’s distinguished graduate, Dr. Keith Comeaux, has made an impact on “the entire world, not just the CHS community,” the school said.

“His use of his education combined with hard work and determination made his dreams a reality,” and that is what Catholic High wishes of all its graduates.

Comeaux was thrust into the limelight recently when the Curiosity rover successfully landed on Mars and began sending pictures back to Earth. As flight director and chief engineer for the Mars Science Laboratory, Comeaux oversees the rover’s cruising, engineering operations, flight and landing.

“Catholic education is tantamount to exceptional schooling, an instilled sense of personal integrity and community service, and a tradition and faith shared around the globe,” said Comeaux, a 1985 CHS graduate.

Comeaux has distinguished himself in the community through his most recent work with the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. His work with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory has made history, Catholic High officials said.

Comeaux attended St. Thomas More School and Catholic High, where he recently returned to speak with students about the Mars mission.

He earned a degree in mechanical engineering and physics from LSU and master and doctoral degrees in aeronautics and astronautics from Stanford University.

He and his wife, Cecilia, have 3-year-old twins.

“If my memory serves me correctly, this is my first” honor or award, said Samuel Paul Lorio when named the 2013 Distinguished Graduate from Catholic High School of Pointe Coupee.

A 1967 graduate, Lorio has distinguished himself through his service to his church parish, St. Mary of False River in New Roads as altar server trainer, lector and usher. At CHSPC, he teaches honors algebra II, advanced mathematics and calculus, providing his students with the knowledge and tools necessary for them to become moral, responsible and productive adult citizens.

“I want to help my students achieve their goals,” said Lorio. “If they want to be an engineer, a lawyer, a doctor, they will have to take some math in college. I don’t want that to hold them back from what they want to achieve.”

Catholic schools teach the importance of God in our daily lives and the importance of traditional Catholic values, said Lorio. “Catholic schools provide for the education of the soul of the student, supplementing and developing the foundations for strong moral development. This provides the spiritual tools necessary for students and future adults to recognize the difference between right and wrong, and to make the correct moral and responsible decisions in life, especially when faced with a choice between right and wrong.

“As an educator, I hope I have been a good example to the students I have taught,” said Lorio, who taught for 28 years in public school before joining the CHSPC faculty. “One of my goals is to provide them with at least some of the knowledge and tools necessary for them to become moral, responsible and productive adult citizens.”

He has coached high school teams and volunteered with youth athletics in football, basketball, baseball and soccer for more than 20 years.

Lorio believes his biggest personal accomplishment is that he and his wife, Lynda, have raised six children with traditional Catholic values, who as adults are now providing for and preparing for their own families.

Courtney Zito Elliott said the spiritual and academic foundation she received at Holy Family School has helped her in her daily life as a professional, a wife, a mother, a daughter and a friend.

“Catholic education develops an individual both spiritually and intellectually providing a solid foundation for best fulfilling God’s ultimate gift of life,” she said. “The lessons I learned as a child are key to who I am today.”

Elliott, a consultant in the area of tourism and hospitality, serves as chairman of the 2012-13 Holy Family Development Committee and produced the school’s alumni newsletter in 2011. She is a member of the Plaquemine Service League and chaired the Reading is Fundamental program for two years. She is a member of the Iberville Parish Image Committee that sponsors veterans’ activities including the Iberville Wall of Veterans and the annual parade.

A graduate of St. Joseph’s Academy and Southern Mississippi University, she is involved with the Southern Miss alumni association and frequently speaks to students majoring in hospitality management.

She was Miss University of Southern Mississippi, a top five Southern Living Rising Star in tourism and named volunteer of the year in Collierville, Tenn.

She and her husband, Ryan, have two children, ages 5 and 2. Their oldest daughter attends Holy Family School.

At the age of 80, Frances Cardinale Cinet feels she would not be where she is today without her Catholic faith and the foundation she received at Holy Ghost School.

“Without it, I don’t think I would be here today. It has kept me going,” she said.

Cinet credits Sister Mary Conrad OP with teaching her “what we were supposed to do.”

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GRADUATES
FROM PAGE 13B
to do. She made us walk the straight and
to narrow,” she said.

“My Catholic education was the founda-
tion that prepared me for the challenges of
life,” she said.

A 1945 graduate of Holy Ghost and a
life-long parishioner of Holy Ghost Church,
Cinet has been active in Catholic Daughters of
the Americas, the Rosary Altar Society, and
serves as a lector and
an extraordinary min-
ister of Holy Commu-
nion. Before her retire-
ment 15 years ago, she
worked in accounting
at Southeastern Louisiana University.

A single parent, she sent her now grown
children to Holy Ghost School and was ac-
tive in the school’s Mother’s Club. “I took
my lunch hour to do what I needed to do at
school,” she said.

In naming her for the award, Holy
Ghost School said Cinet believes strongly
in Catholic education and has committed
herself to strengthening the presence of
Catholic education in the Hammond area.

feels it is very important that we help those
who are in need and do so with dignity for
all people involved,” she said.

Phillips, who has been a youth min-
ister and director of religious education,
has been of service to all in continuing her
faith journey and spreading God’s word,
said Mater Dolorosa officials. Phillips at-
tended St. Thomas Aquinas High School
and Spring Hill College where she received
a bachelor of arts in theology and a mas-
ter’s in pastoral studies.

She and her husband, Kevin, have a
daughter and are expecting a second child
in April.

Most Blessed Sacrament School
nominated one of its own teachers as its
distinguished graduate because she not
only has achievements in education, but
has “brought back the skills she acquired
to share with MBS students who will be-
come our future leaders.”

Emily Zeringue, who graduated from
Most Blessed Sacrament in 2003, has re-
turned to the school as
a kindergarten teacher,
and serves as a role
model for students, the
school said.

Zeringue said Catholic
education has greatly influenced
her life. “Catholicism
is the reason for my
conscience and is the
foundation for my own
personal morals and goals in life. It is the
reason that I aim to treat others the way I
would like to be treated, and it has made
me a family-oriented individual.”

“I have learned that you can never judge
someone before you get to know them, and
also to be kind to everyone because that
will get you further in life than retaliation
or being bitter,” she added.

Zeringue is a member of the anti-bully
committee at MBS and serves as a lec-
tor and extraordinary member of Holy
Communion at Most Blessed Sacrament
Church.

After graduating from Most Blessed
Sacrament, she attended St. Michael the
Archangel High School and Southeastern
Louisiana University in Hammond where
she received a degree in elementary educa-
tion in 2012.

Sister Helen Cahill OSF often can be
found comforting inmates at the St. Ga-
briel Women’s Prison, reading to students
as a Volunteer In Public (VIP) schools or
meeting with students at Our Lake of
the Lake College.

The 1970 graduate of Our Lake of the
Lake College said she believes Catholic
education gives a foundation for future
learning and also fosters Christian values,
which helps give meaning and purpose to
one’s life.

“Sister Helen spends time each week
volunteering at St. Gabriel Women’s Pris-
on. She offers grief support, a faith sharing
SEE GRADUATES PAGE 15B

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“Throughout our lives we are constantly faced with many trials and as such, one’s education is often times considered necessary to help mitigate such hardships. However, the one indispensable tool for such times, beyond question, are the teachings of holy mother church,” stated Father Mark Beard, pastor of St. Helena Church in Amite and the 2013 Distinguished Graduate from Our Lady of Mercy School.

“Father Beard is a dynamic priest, a caring person, a zealous evangelizer and a studious apologist of the Catholic faith,” commented Father Miles Walsh, pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Church. “He has always taken seriously the goal of the New Evangelization, that is, to announce the Gospel to believers and non-believers alike ... and not take for granted that baptized members of the Church possess either a deep knowledge of the faith or a living, personal relationship with the Lord.”

“Father Mark is a real apostle of Catholic faith in an age of compromise and unbelief, and you’ve got to admire that kind of zeal,” said OLOM school officials. “He isn’t the kind of priest who is content ‘to let it rest’ when he meets with a lukewarm faith-response,” said school officials. “Personally on fire with love for the Lord and for his bride, the Church, he wants others to experience the blessings of faith he has received.”

Father Beard has a BS and MBA from LSU, a MDiv from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and a master’s in spirituality/spiritual direction from Creighton University in Omaha, Neb.

“My Catholic education reinforced the values I was taught at home and provided me with a strong spiritual and academic background,” said Tammy Sharkey Starnes, a graduate of St. Isidore School, which is now part of Redemptorist Elementary School. “Catholic schools provide an environment of acceptance and compassion. The teachers are committed to the intellectual and spiritual development of their students.”

After graduating from Redemptorist High School, Starnes went to Southeastern Louisiana University. Her first academic interest was marketing, but she decided to major in accounting because of job opportunity. She graduated magna cum laude in accounting.

As a student she went to work for the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, became a certified public accountant, and now works for the Louisiana Secretary of State in the Department of Elections. In her area of state work, Starnes said she uses the values of compassion, dedication and commitment that she learned in school and at home so she can make the best decision and do the right thing.

“Tammy has chosen a career as a public servant where the beliefs and values she learned in Catholic school help guide her in her daily decision making,” said Redemptorist school personnel.

She has been married for 20 years to Jason Starnes, who is a Louisiana State Police captain. They have a son, Justin, who is a student at Southeastern.

Howard Carter’s basketball career started at Redemptorist High School in 1975 when his mother, Beverly Carter, decided to take him out of public school and enroll him in the Catholic high school where he graduated in 1979. He went on to LSU where he was a standout basketball player from 1980-83 and was a member of the NCAA national basketball championship team in 1982.

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GRADUATES
FROM PAGE 15B

The 1969 grad-
uates are a living example of my faith because she is “committed to maintaining a stable home for her family, a nurtur- ing environment within the school and a supportive framework for parishioners within the church,” school officials said. The 1982 graduate of St. Aloysius School who is in her first year as assis-
tant principal believes Catholic education has had a profound impact on her life. “It provided me with an excellent education in a nurturing and joyful environment with a consistent focus on faith. The continued reinforcement of Catho-
ic ideals established a ‘lens of faith’ through which I view the world and make decisions,” she said.

“The most impor-
tant thing that I learned from my time in Catho-
ic schools is that we are all responsible to be living examples of our faith. Our actions are a mirror of our be-

liefs, values and morals. We are all called to be servants to others and to demon-
strate our faith on a daily basis,” she said. Keaton has been active as a sponsor for engaged couples at St. Aloysius Church, a confirmation small group leader and a committee member for Boys Hope/Girls Hope. She has also volunteered at Catholic Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. After graduating from St. Aloysius School, she attended St. Joseph’s Academy and LSU, where she received a bachelor of science in psychology and a master’s in social work. She worked as the SAS middle school counselor for 17 years before be-

coming assistant principal.

She and her husband, Danny, have four children.

“My years at St. Alphonsus taught me what it means to live a Catholic life – to be honest and trustworthy in my dealings with others,” said Keith Gulino, an elec-

trician who graduated from St. Alphon-
sus Liguori School in 1970.

“The foundation of faith that I learned in those early years has stayed with me throughout my life, and in my work I have always tried to remember that we must live with integrity to be with God some day in heaven,” he added.

Gulino said he knew that when he and his wife, Marianne, had children, they would send them to St. Alphonsus because “I knew that a strong grounding in faith and academics would serve them well throughout their lives.”

In nominating him as its distinguished graduate, St. Alphonsus school officials cited Gulino’s dedication to the church. “Whenever called, he is there,” they said. “He has a smile for everyone.”

Gulino is a member of the St. Alphon-
sus Maintenance Committee and a past member of the Baton Rouge Electrical Ex-
aming Board. After graduating from St. Alphonsus School, he attended Glen Oaks

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Charles Jarreau said he leaned on his Catholic education that taught him to put others first and care for the ill. As I reflect on my faith, it brings great pride to keep me from turning my back. Jarreau said his faith would have faded easily. He continued to turn to God for guidance, and he now looks back on his career as one of the most challenging times of his life and knows how strong faith can be. Jarreau is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, the American Nurses Association, Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses.

Jarreau and his wife have two children. Lester Pourciau said the discipline instilled in him at St. Francis Xavier School has helped him through life. “The school taught me that I have to be a responsible individual. There are rules, and rules have to be followed. All you have to do is follow the rules and do the right thing,” said the 1963 SFX graduate.

On the academic side, the school gave me all the basic elements. It taught me a process of education that has followed me in business and everything else in my life,” added Pourciau, who is the vice president of human resources for the Southern University System.

Pourciau now works to continue that type of education as a member of the Friends of St. Francis Xavier, a group working to ensure the school’s preservation. The school chose to honor Pourciau because he is “a man of his word. He follows through on all projects. His attention to detail and his tenacity set him apart from others,” school officials said. “He is a humble, faithful servant to our church and school.”

He is hands-on. He not only spearheads projects, but he can be seen, numerous times, doing the actual work.” One such time was the renovation of the school bathrooms. Pourciau, who is also a licensed contractor, coordinated the renovation personally and did a lot of the work. Pourciau attended Southern University Laboratory High School and Xavier University where he received a degree in business administration. He received a master’s from Troy State University.

He and his wife, Venessa, have three children and four grandchildren.

The first lesson St. George School graduate Rick Bayhi learned in Catholic School was to never hide cafeteria food you don’t like in a milk carton and throw it away – especially when a nun is on duty.

Bayhi, who was in St. George’s first graduating class, said he learned that lesson in first grade at Sacred Heart of Jesus School. “That became one of the greatest lessons I learned through my Catholic education and through my parents. Catholic schools teach the lesson of right from wrong,” he said.

“In addition to all academic subjects taught, my Catholic education did an excellent job of teaching human values, caring for one another and understanding there are consequences for making wrong decisions. In today’s society, this is a lesson that is greatly needed,” said Bayhi.

“My 12 years of Catholic education ... instilled in me a commitment to want to be involved with my church parish and live my Catholic faith. Also as an adult one realizes that a Catholic education is truly a gift given through sacrifices by parents.”

Bayhi has a long history with St. George as his aunt, Sister Ann Marie, was the founding principal, and his mother worked as a secretary for the school.

Now an active member of St. Gabriel Church in St. Gabriel, Bayhi has been chairman of and served on many committees. He has served as a lector for liturgies, and for the past nine years, chaired the St. Vincent de Paul golf tournament fund raiser.

He graduated from Catholic High School and Southeastern Louisiana University.

In 2004 he retired and started a private chemical consulting business, Louisiana Vegetation Management Association, an organization of chemical applicators.

He and his wife, Frieda, have two children and three grandchildren with a fourth due in April.

Eliska Addison Dumas said she not only learned valuable lessons from Catholic school, she learned to repeat them by sending her own children to Catholic school.

“I really appreciate Catholic education more as an adult when I see how happy and thriving my own children are in Catholic school,” she said.

A 1994 graduate, Dumas was among the first graduating class to go from kindergarten through eighth grade at St. SFX.

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Grades: Kindergarten through eighth grade.

Academic Excellence: Carrying out the Catholic faith is essential at Bayhi. Catholic education did an excellent job of teaching human values, caring for one another and understanding there are consequences for making wrong decisions.

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GRADUATES
FROM PAGE 178
Jean Vianney. She continued her education at Bishop Sullivan High School (now St. Michael the Archangel) and attended LSU. “I love these kids,” said Dum, who is a Girl Scout leader, Bible school volunteer and frequent substitute teacher. “I’m around the school a lot. I think I have gotten to be in every class as a sub,” she said. “I feel like Catholic school has made me the person I am today. It taught me to have a kind word for someone. I try to say out loud what I am thinking when it is good. And I try to always have a smile,” she said.

The mother of two, Dumas also credits her Catholic education with teaching her patience as a mom and giving her a moral foundation to answer the questions her children ask.
She and her husband, Will, are parishioners of St. Jean Vianney where they send their children to school.

Van Joseph Junot is an example of what is means to be a St. John Eagle, according to St. John School officials, who nominated him as the distinguished graduate for 2013.
“He is a man of outstanding character in both his professional and personal life,” the school said.
A 1965 graduate of St. John, Junot served on the school’s finance committee for 16 years, working to provide the “best education with the least amount of burden on the family. Since we are a small school and not a large community, we are cognizant of trying not to increase tuition beyond what parents can pay,” he said.

Junot, who attended St. John from first through 12th grade, said this Catholic school has given him good values and a good education to carry him into his professional life in accounting and his personal life as a father and grandfather.
“I have always been strong in my Catholic faith. Catholic school has provided a good background for my children going into their professional lives. I appreciate it more and more as I get older,” he added.

Junot, who has been married to his wife, Louise, for 51 years, said his three children graduated from St. John, and each of his seven grandchildren have either graduated or are now attending Catholic school.
Junot is also active in the Knights of Columbus and Alhambra, an organization that supports children with disabilities.

Courtney Hotard Roth, whose incredible faith has inspired the community of Ponchatoula, is being honored by St. Joseph School.
Roth accepted God’s will when her child, Tripp, was born with epidermolysis bullosa, a genetic disorder that affects 1 in 50,000 people. Tripp was missing skin on much of his body and what skin he did have was fragile and would easily erode. He was missing a protein that binds one layer of skin to another. Roth gave up a nursing career to care for her child, who died in January 2012 at the age of 2 years and 8 months,

“To me, my Catholic education was more than just religion class. It was an environment of discipline, love and learning to respect others. My Catholic education not only taught me how to love God, but how to love myself and others as well. It has made me the person I am today. And for that, I am very grateful,” said the 2000 graduate of St. Joseph.
School officials said Roth has blessed the community, church, parish, school and the world with a visible example of how to graciously accept God’s will. Her incredible faith has united the entire community in prayer, compassion and hope to form a bond of love around one of God’s precious angels.

Roth is the author of a popular blog titled “EB”ing a Mommy. She won first place in a Reader’s Digest “Your Life” Contest and received a 2011 Moms Who Are Changing the World Award for Babble.com and was named one of ABC’s Personal Heroes of 2011.
She received the 2012 Spirit Award for Debra, a fund raising group for EB, and spoke at the annual Debra event in New York.

Pat Brignac Talbot learned her faith from the people who surrounded her in elementary and high school — her parents and the Sisters of St. Joseph.
A 1984 graduate of St. Joseph’s Academy, Talbot said she has found that you can face anything in life if you have faith.

“Those lessons don’t end when you leave school. They still influence me today,” said the president and owner of Baton Rouge Duplicating Service, a company founded by her father. She said the church and the sisters were their first customers, and her parents were always willing to help Catholic schools and the sisters.

“My Catholic education provided the foundation for my faith and instilled in me a strong sense of community, service to others and Christian values,” she added.

Talbot has served as chair of the St. Thomas More School Board for five years and on the development campaign committee for the church and school. She was active in the St. Joseph’s Academy “Always the Academy” campaign. She is active in Rotary of Baton Rouge, on the Board for Pennington YMCA and the Catholic Youth Organization.

She was the recipient of the 2006 Douglas Manship Sr. Torch Award for Ethics in Business, named the Sales and Marketing Executive International Marketer of the Year for 2006, received the 2009 Entrepreneurs Organization Marshall B. Klein Entrepreneurship of the Year Award and was named a 2011 Baton Rouge Business Report Influential Women in Business.

She and her husband, Todd, have two children who attend SAJ.

St. Jude School is honoring 1991 graduate Alexis Rogers Williams.

“She is a walking example of what it means to be, not only a servant of God, but a servant of the community, especially of St. Jude School,” where she is now employed as the administrative assistance and extended day director, school officials said.

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“Having the opportunity to attend a Catholic school greatly affected my grade school and high school education. I was taught by some wonderful teachers who showed me how to live according to the Gospel teachings,” Williams said. “It has enabled me to meet many people who share my same commitment to faith and Christian values.”

Catholic education “taught me foremost to have a genuine respect for the people with whom I share my life. Catholic education enabled me to develop my faith through daily prayer for others, which changes how I see and interact with those around me. The service aspect of the parish community taught me to reach beyond myself and look at areas where I am being called to serve God’s people,” Williams added.

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GRADUATES

FROM PAGE 19B

Community Engaged Campus.

Carnegie Foundation as a Distinguished in 2010 by the Capital Area Pharmacists Association.

J. Brooks Moore is one of those graduates who truly remembers from where he came, said St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School in honoring the associate dean at Indiana State University.

He learned much about life skills while at St. Thomas Aquinas and has incorporated them into his daily life as an adult,” the school said.

“Moore is a perfect example of our mission statement at STA: his experience was spiritual, academic and extracurricular. He embodies the idea of the development of the whole person, which is an integral part of the mission of STA.”

Moore credits the Dominican tradition of truth as an essential element that has influenced his life since graduating from St. Thomas Aquinas, a school that was staffed by Dominican sisters when it opened in 1986. His experience at STA has molded the spiritual and professional aspects of his life today and given him a strong foundation, both spiritually and academically.

“Catholic education instills a values-based approach to living, learning and community building,” said the 1994 graduate of STA. “It focuses on human development with guidance and direction from Christian principles.”

Moore is currently the associate dean for students for student engagement and leadership development at Indiana State University.

While in high school, Moore was captain of the soccer team, lettered four years and was voted by his peers “Most Likely to Succeed.” He also was student council president and a member of several service organizations.

He attended the Hugh O’Brien Leadership Conference and earned the Knights of Columbus Catholic Youth Leadership Award.

Father C. Todd Lloyd frequently returns to St. Thomas More School to give retreats, celebrate Mass and encourage vocations. It is the place where he says he started the discernment process for the priesthood.

“Catholic schools are not just interested in teaching certain facts, but they are interested in teaching the truth, particularly the truth enlightened by Jesus Christ,” he said. In science you may learn how something exists, but in religion you learn why it exists, he added.

The 1998 graduate of St. Thomas More attended Broadmoor High School and the University of New Orleans for one year before entering the seminary in 2003. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Baton Rouge in 2011 and is currently the parochial vicar at Our Lady of Mercy Church.

Officials at St. Thomas More School said Father Lloyd serves as a religious role model for students through his presence and his commitment to their faith formation. He assists the school in sacramental preparation for first reconciliation and first Eucharist, helps with retreats, in particular with the eighth-grade passion prayer day, and leads the youth group in many activities.

“He gently models the life of Christ in all that he does,” the school said. “He lives the STM mission through his legacy of excellence in faith formation in a nurturing environment as he brings the knowledge of Christ to others through his example and his prayer.”

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Bertrand is compassionate, generous, and truly cares for the people in the community... His family-run business, established by his father, continues to work with local churches to help community members in need of medications. “We chose Bertrand because of his compassionate spirit and his unswerving support of our church and school.”

Bertrand serves on the St. Theresa School Finance Committee and is involved in the annual fair. He is a member and past president of the Lions Club of Gonzales where he serves as chairman of the committee that collects eyeglasses for those in need. He is also a member of the Gonzales Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club and the Capital Area Pharmacists Association.

Bertrand graduated from Ascension Catholic High School and the University of Louisiana at Monroe Pharmacy School.

He and his wife, Jeanne, have three children, all of whom attended or are now attending Catholic schools.

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