For years, “Jane Doe” (her real name has been changed to protect her identity) heard she wasn’t good enough, she wasn’t smart enough and no one else would want her.

The constant barrage of negative comments happened so much that she began to believe everything was true. But as her self-confidence diminished and the screaming and cursing increased, something else was also happening to her.

“I would come back (to New Orleans to visit family) with bruises and black eyes. I would try to hide it,” the 26-year-old said.

Her family, however, knew better, and soon Doe’s aunt, the woman who raised her after her mother died, wanted to know the truth, and in the course of that conversation, Doe admitted the verbal and physical abuse she suffered was coming from the man she loved and shared a home with, the man who was the father of her children.

Doe was a victim of domestic violence.

And she is not alone.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, on average, nearly 20 people every minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. For women, statistics show that one in five will be a victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in her lifetime.

For Doe, leaving the father of her children was not easy. Since she stayed home caring for their young children, childcare was her top priority. Yet, in the midst of the abuse, she did leave several times, going back to New Orleans to live with family.

“I always felt like such a burden,” she said. Eventually, Doe always returned to Baton Rouge, but things began to change for her intrinsically after noticing the number of times each move forced her oldest son, 6, to change schools.

“He was doing fine, but as soon as he made friends and was settling in, we came back,” she said. Then something happened when Doe was pregnant with the couple’s sixth child, and she knew she had no other choice.

Michael Acaldo, chief executive officer of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, right, and Laura Martinez Wright, director of shelter and residential services with St. Vincent de Paul Homeless Shelter, review plans for the renovations and addition to the Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter for Women and Children. Photo by Rachele Smith | The Catholic Commentator

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Plans by the Diocese of Baton Rouge to construct a new archives building behind the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center has met with resistance from neighbors, but Joe Ingraham, chief financial officer for the diocese, says he believes a compromise will soon be reached.

“I am optimistic the minor differences can be worked out,” Ingraham said two days after the second of two contentious meetings involving diocesan officials and neighbors, some of whom are protesting anything being constructed on the 1.7-acre site the diocese has owned since 1966.

Neighbors’ objections to the planned 8,000-square foot archives building that will sport a residential façade include a complex zoning issue that surfaced because of the architect for the sisters made a clerical mistake when submitting the final zoning plan for the Sisters of St. Joseph residence to the city, setbacks to adjacent properties, traffic and drainage concerns, the size of the building and even asking for a voice into which landscaping would be planted to serve as buffers.

“(The land) should not be used for anything else,” one neighbor said during the meeting, which drew about 50 people. “We don’t want this,” another neighbor added. “This is an encroachment on our neighborhood.”

MEDJUGORJE ANNIVERSARY – June 24, 2016 is the 35th anniversary of an event that forever changed the small village of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina. On that date in 1981, six children said they saw an apparition of the Blessed Mother. Since that time, millions of pilgrims have flocked to this community. In this 1986 photo, the old and new Medjugorje appear starkly juxtaposed as pilgrims walk on a dirt road leading to an area of bustling new construction. See story on pages 10-11. Photo provided by Tommy Cassisa.
Sacred Heart Church in Cornerview grew from humble beginnings. In the late 1840s a chapel about 10 square feet was built in Cornerview to serve people who had settled along a little stream called “Riviere Nueve” or New River, which it remains today. The chapel was called the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The burgeoning community continued to grow and despite the ravages of the Civil War a new church, shown above, was completed in 1863. At that time, Cornerview, which was located close to what is now Interstate 10 and Dutchtown, was the parish seat for Ascension Civil Parish and for 50 years priests from Sacred Heart served Catholics in Gonzales. During the year Gonzales began to grow and prosper, and eventually the new railroad line from Baton Rouge to New Orleans bypassed Cornerview and ran straight through Gonzales. In 1918 the Ascension Parish set was moved to Gonzales and a new church that be-

St. John the Baptist is one of the church’s most revered saints, and the sto-

ries of this great prophet baptizing Christ as well as being beheaded are certainly well known.

Born of a Jewish priest, Zechariah, and St. Elizabeth, the cousin of the Virgin Mary, St. John was a fiery preacher of the word of God and is generally regarded as the voice that prepared the world for the coming of Jesus Christ.

During his time, followers often won-

dered if St. John was the messiah, but he quickly squelched that notion, telling his followers that he was not the Christ but was sent ahead of (Jesus).

In fact, it was St. John who baptized Jesus, shortly after humiliating himself be-

fore Christ, setting a timeless example of humility for Christians to emulate.

St. John was eventually beheaded by Herod Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great, after being manipulated by his wife, Antipas, and her daughter Salome.

St. John’s birthday, celebrated June 24, offers an opportunity for reflection on this great saint’s life and lessons to be learned.

Although never losing his humility and remaining steadfast in his mission to serve God, St. John, as we all do, had a number of quirks, including his own distinct taste in food. Long before the days of chips and ubiquitous vending ma-

Chapel about 10 square feet was built in Cornerview to serve people who had settled along a little stream called “Riviere Nueve” or New River, which it remains today. The chapel was called the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The burgeoning community continued to grow and despite the ravages of the Civil War a new church, shown above, was completed in 1863. At that time, Cornerview, which was located close to what is now Interstate 10 and Dutchtown, was the parish seat for Ascension Civil Parish and for 50 years priests from Sacred Heart served Catholics in Gonzales. During the year Gonzales began to grow and prosper, and eventually the new railroad line from Baton Rouge to New Orleans bypassed Cornerview and ran straight through Gonzales. In 1918 the Ascension Parish set was moved to Gonzales and a new church that became St. Theresa of Avila was built. Photos provide by the Archives Department, Diocese of Baton Rouge

Employees should take heed to those words especially if one might work for an employer or corporation that might be engaging in immoral actions.

St. John’s life is a template as to how to be a serious witnesses for Christ, how to approach the Christian life and our call to ministry, whatever that ministry might entail.

How do we do that? First, by a sincere self-examination to determine if indeed we truly are living a life of faith,

Second, by understanding and believing that in Christ we can be fearless in the face of persecution and death, as he was in his final days. And third, St. John’s life shows Christians how to stand firm in their faith, even in the most dire of circumstances.

St. John is the only person other than Christ to have two feast days recognized by the church. Besides June 24, on Aug.

29 the Passion of St. John the Baptist commemorates his death. On both of those days, it is recommended to eat something with honey to honor this beloved saint. Just don’t make it locust.

A marble bas relief of the Last Supper stands guard over the Msgr. Borders Dining Room in the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center. The sculpture was previously in St. Joseph Cathedral, facing the altar at an angle. The sculpture was moved when the church was reno-

vated. Although the exact date of the installation of the sculpture at the cathedral is unknown, it was in place by 1939. The old wooden altar, which was originally built in 1896, was still in use in 1924 but by 1939 had been replaced by the marble altar. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

Lessons of St. John the Baptist

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29 the Passion of St. John the Baptist commemorates his death. On both of those days, it is recommended to eat something with honey to honor this beloved saint. Just don’t make it locust.
Catholic Charities cuts not as severe as feared

By Richard Meck
The Catholic Commentator

A senior citizen program spanning at least three decades has been terminated in the wake of budget cuts at Catholic Charities Diocese of Baton Rouge. Also being affected are mental health services offered in Pointe Coupée Parish by CCDBG executive director David Aguillard.

Aguillard said the agency has been cutting federal funds for the past several years, forcing CCD- BR to increase its subsidy to sustain the program.

“Since the program’s funding formula is formula-limited for the closure of the Senior Employment Program, which helps workers over the age of 55 with some type of obstacle reenter the workforce,” he said.

The state has been changing its funding methodology for the past several years, forcing CCDBR to increase its subsidy to sustain the program.

Aguillard said the agency has been having to put up anywhere from $45,000 to $75,000 annually and the total was projected to top $100,000 mark for the upcoming budget year.

“The dollars have remained the same but the funding formula has changed to the point where it is too expensive to operate the program, staff the program, do data entry, file keeping, the documentation,” he said. “And the fact is that there are other agencies in our area that could do it.”

Aguillard said his office is working with the governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs and the Capital Area Agency on Aging to ensure a smooth transition and that there will be no gaps in service.

The Title 5 program places and helps train about 75 to 80 senior workers per year at approximately 40 nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies. According to Aguillard, the program is aimed at helping senior citizens who face obstacles such as transportation issues, medical conditions or a lengthy absence from the workforce to secure a part-time job, with the goal of eventually landing a job full-time in the community.

The jobs are part-time and workers are eligible for 36 months. Individuals were also trained in searching for jobs, interviewing skills and writing an effective resume.

“Title 5 has been here about 30 to 40 years,” Aguillard said. “It was a difficult decision. It’s very rewarding to help people who have no place else to go. We help them find jobs, we help them be productive, we help them to contribute.”

“It’s a rewarding program for agency workers, participants, and host agencies.”

In Pointe Coupée Parish, the agency is cutting back on mental health services offered parish-wide but said mental health services will remain available at St. Mary Church in New Roads in the afternoons and evenings. He said funding would be shifted to an in-home parent education program, adding more funding is available for that program and the agency has developed a new partnership with the Pointe Coupée School Board.

“We’ve been doing it for about a year now,” he said, adding that mental health services will remain available at St. Mary Church in the afternoons and evenings.

Despite the termination of Title 5 and the changes in Pointe Coupée Parish, Aguillard said overall the cuts were not as severe as earlier feared. He said a three-year, immediate disaster case management contract in April helped preserve programs and jobs.

He said the contract is FEMA funded with the funds running through the state’s Office of Community Development.

The program will assist individuals and families of Tangipahoa, Ascension, St. Helena and Livingston parishes who were affected by the record floods earlier this year.

Aguillard said the four employees impacted by the elimination of the Title 5 program were offered and accepted positions in disaster case management. In addition, six new case managers were hired.

“Without the disaster case management program, we would have had to look at alternatives for those four individuals who are good workers, valuable members of our organization and our team who have contributed a lot,” he said. “It would have been hard to have lost them.”

Aguillard said he believes the remainder of the CCDBG programs are safe from the state’s budget scalpel, but admits that if so-called safety net programs are reduced, as some are calling for, then the agency could potentially see an uptick in requests for fundamental services.

Christians, Muslims are called to imitate God’s mercy, says cardinal

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – God asks Christians and Muslims to be forgiving, merciful and compassionate toward others, especially those in need, said Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran.

“We are saddened to see so many victims of conflicts and violence,” in particular the elderly, children and women, as well as people who suffer from human trafficking, poverty, illness, natural disasters and unemployment, said the cardinal, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

“We cannot close our eyes to these realities, or turn away from these sufferings,” making it vital that “all work together in assisting those in need,” he said.

Cardinal Tauran’s annual message to Muslims for Eid al-Fitr, the feast marking the end of the monthlong Ramadan fast, was published by the Vatican June 17. Ramadan will end on or around July 5 this year.

The message was titled, “Christians and Muslims: Beneficiaries and Instruments of Divine Mercy,” and it focused on the common belief in a merciful God.

“We, Christians and Muslims, are called to do our best to imitate God,” the message said.

God, who is merciful, “asks us to be merciful and compassionate toward others, especially those who are in any kind of need. So, too, he calls us to be forgiving of one another.”

The cardinal said it was “a source of great hope when we experience or hear of Muslims and Christians joining hands to help the needy.”

Not only are people heeding God’s command, he said, they are showing God’s mercy and “thus offering a more credible witness, individually and communally, to our beliefs.”

May God “help us to walk always along the path of goodness and compassion,” he said.

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REMENBERING THE ORLANDO VICTIMS – Our Lady of the Lake College director of campus ministry Tammy Vidrine leads a prayer on the campus on behalf of those impacted by the shootings that happened in Orlando, Florida on June 12. Forty-nine balloons were released, one for each of the victims who died. Photo provided by Elaine Crowe | Our Lady of the Lake College
‘Laudato Si’ at one year: Catholics inspired to act on climate change

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Thinking green is not easy. Nor is it always cheap.

But for St. Michael Parish in Poway, California, north of San Diego, parishioners are already seeing the benefits spiritual, financial and environmental of a $1.3 million investment in a solar panel system.

In the year since the panels were installed on several buildings across the 26-acre church property, the parish has seen its electricity costs fall by more than 75 percent to about $5,000 a month from $20,000 to $22,000 monthly, said Father John Dolan, pastor. At the current rate, the system will pay for itself within six years, he said.

“What’s better, Father Dolan told Catholic News Service, is that parishioners know that their church is part of a planet-wide movement in response to Pope Francis’ year-old encyclical, “Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home,” that calls upon everyone to better care for God’s creation and one another.

“People are buying into this,” Father Dolan said, explaining how topics on the environment and sustainability come up in parish conversations, even during coffee-and-doughnut gatherings after Sunday Mass. “We have to think on a global level. This is no longer just a regional thing. We have to reach into this call to stewardship. We have dominion over the world and not domination.”

The publication of the encyclical on June 18, 2015 helped boost the Diocese of San Diego’s recommendation that all parishes install solar power systems. With 98 parishes and 89 schools, the effort is more than symbolic. The diocese reported that more than 50 entities are seeking bids on solar projects or solar power purchase agreements.

San Diego is not alone in embracing the pope’s call to dialogue and action cited in the encyclical. Catholic organizations around the world have formed study groups, planted gardens, written broad action plans to reduce energy and water consumption, developed curricula and produced webinars to bring the principles Pope Francis expresses to life.

The Atlanta plan has caught the eye of Jacqui Remond, national director of Catholic Earthcare Australia. She has submitted it to the country’s bishops and archbishops, encouraging them to adopt a similar plan for the country’s 28 dioceses and archdioceses.

Such a plan can be the basis for formation of people in how they see their role on the planet, Remond told CNS.

“It’s a whole agenda of work that’s been handed to us in ‘Laudato Si’. We have clarity of purpose, a sense of direction and guiding principles and charisms in terms to take this forward,” she said.

During the past year, Australian parishes and schools have integrated “green” practices into everyday life to reduce energy consumption and parishioners are talking with each other about how to respond to the pope’s document.

In Ireland, the Catholic aid agency Trocaire has taken the encyclical to parish justice and peace groups and schools in an attempt to build awareness and action in response to it. In a commentary on the document available to parishes, Trocaire explains how people of faith have a responsibility to minimize their contribution to climate change and understand how the phenomenon affects the world’s poorest people.

“We’re seeing, I think, a very positive effort to make sure that ‘Laudato Si’ is not a one-day wonder or even a one-year wonder, but that it is something that is sustained within the church and promoted as part of the work of the church,” said Eamonn Meehan, executive director.

Likewise in the U.S., Catholics are experiencing a growing awareness of climate change. A Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate poll conducted in May 16-26 found that Catholic adults are more likely to be concerned about climate change than other Christians.

The poll discovered that 68 percent of Catholics felt they have a moral responsibility to act to mitigate climate change. In contrast, 65 percent of other Christians and 59 percent of evangelicals held a similar view. The margin of error among the 1,010 Catholic respondents is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Dan Misleh, executive director of the Catholic Climate Covenant, told CNS that people want to act on climate change and he credits “Laudato Si” for that willingness to step up because of their faith.

**Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools Office Position Opening Director of Special Education**

The Diocese of Baton Rouge supports educational programs in eight civil parishes. As a district, schools are nationally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Advanced). Since 1962, the Diocese of Baton Rouge has served families through the Special Education Department, which has expanded programming across the diocese to provide specific courses for autism and intellectual/other exceptionalities as well as resource and dyslexia lab services.

The Director of Special Education is responsible for leadership in all aspects of service provided by the department. The Director works with families, teachers, staff, host school personnel, community stakeholders, and the Catholic Schools Office in administration of the program. Various specific responsibilities include the areas of personnel hiring and development, office management, communication with stakeholders, advancement initiatives, curriculum and program implementation, financial budgeting and reporting, and all aspects of enrollment and student services. The Special Education Director leads within the vision of Evangelizing Hearts, Educating Minds, Encouraging Talent, and Embracing the Future!

Applicants must meet the following criteria:
- Support of Catholic Educational Ministry (Required)
- Practicing Catholic (Required)
- Master’s Degree, Preferably in Special Education (Required)
- Minimum of Five Years of Experience in Special Education (Preferred)
- Demonstrated Leadership Skills (Required)

**Availability on or before July 1, 2016**

Submit letter of interest, resume with references, and copies of transcripts to Special Education Department Director Search Catholic Schools Office P.O. Box 2028 Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028

**APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED UPON RECEIPT**

The schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.
Role reversal as Lisette Borne serves as lector at Mass in Rome

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Lisette Borne felt an odd sense of peace as she approached the ambo.

Borne, who serves as lector at St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge, is often escorted by a twinge of nervousness shortly before reading at Sunday Mass.

And one could have hardly blamed her if her nerves were in overdrive on this Corpus Christi Sunday. After all, Pope Francis was only steps away and she was reading in front of several thousand of her new best friends.

Yet, there was only calm and inner peace as she read at an outdoor Mass in St. Peter’s Square at the Jubilee for Deacons held May 27-29 at the Vatican.

“In that minute or so it took to walk down (to the ambo) I felt so strongly that I was not alone,” said Borne, who is a spiritual director as well as associate director of vocations for the Diocese of Baton Rouge. “I really felt the prayers of all the people back home who were praying for me.

“I felt covered in God’s embrace of love and protection.”

Pope Francis, as part of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, extended an invitation to deacons worldwide to come to Rome that weekend.

Included in the visit were a pilgrimage to the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica, a meeting with deacons and their families, eucharistic adoration, reconciliation and, of course, the outdoor Mass.

Borne first learned she would be a lector several months ago when her husband, Deacon Dan Borne, greeted her with the news early one morning.

Borne said her husband “greeted me at the foot of our bed with his iPad in his hand looking like a kid on Christmas morning.”

Deacon Borne had received an email from Father Geno Sylva, a priest the couple met on previous visits to Rome, asking if she would be willing to serve as one of the lectors at the Mass.

Borne was not even planning to attend the Mass. She was not even planning to attend the Jubilee for Deacons, asking if she would be willing to serve as one of the lectors for the Mass, which was celebrated by Pope Francis.

Photos provided by Deacon Dan Borne

“Did I practice a few times that day?” she said. “Of course!”

During practice she was also instructed by Msgr. Vincenzo Peroni, who served as master of ceremonies, not to look up during the reading, which she admitted was challenging.

“I failed and did look up,” Borne said. “Blessedly, (Msgr. Peroni) smiled later when I apologized for being disobedient.”

Although Borne and her husband were unable to meet the pope, both agree the experience helped them grow not only in their individual faith but also as a couple.

“How could sharing this faith experience not bless our relationship?” she said. “And how could we not grow in gratitude to the one who made such a gift for Dan and me possible? And the gift truly was for Dan just as much as it was for me.”

Deacon Borne, who is the long-time announcer at Tiger Stadium during LSU football games, said the experience was a “sterling example of how the Holy Spirit is full of surprises.”

“I’ve spent so much of my adult life behind a microphone. What a supreme example of divine irony to have (his wife) at the mic and me in the stands.”

Some people say Saturday night in Death Valley has an aura of worship attached to it but nothing compares to being close to the Holy Father in St. Peter’s Square,” he added. “I think even (former LSU coach and current Alabama coach) Coach Saban, who is a devout Catholic, would be like I was, awestruck.”

Deacon said he was moved by seeing a procession of 3,000 fellow deacons and noted the genuine affection they have for the Holy Father. He said having Pope Francis recognize the deacons “energized us even more to be what deacons are called to be: missionaries of mercy in our homes, in our (church) parishes, in our workplaces and in the public square.”

Lisette Borne reads the second reading during an outdoor Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica on May 29. Borne was selected to be one of the two lectors for the Mass, which was celebrated by Pope Francis. Photos provided by Deacon Dan Borne

Lisette and Deacon Dan Borne are pictured together in St. Peter’s Basilica. The couple attended a worldwide celebration of deacons May 27-29 at the invitation of Pope Francis as part of the jubilee Year of Mercy.
Communion more than once?/Baptize my granddaughter?

Q I know that people can receive holy Communion twice in one day if they are present at those Masses for particular circumstances. But how about a lector or church musician who might be on duty for three or four Masses on the same day? Can they take Communion at each of those Masses? (York, South Carolina)

A You are correct in saying that a person may receive Communion more than once a day. However, No. 917 of the church’s Code of Canon Law specifies that one may do so only when present for, and participating in, the Mass itself. (The church does not want troubled people popping in for a couple of minutes solely for the Eucharist at several different Masses in a single day.)

This canon is really meant for someone who might be at two Masses in one day for different reasons, such as a funeral Mass on a Saturday morning and a Sunday vigil Mass that same afternoon. With regard to lectors or church musicians: In 1984, the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts told several bishops that twice a day is the limit for Communion (except in danger of death). I would counsel your organist or lector to make just one of the Masses their “special” Mass, and receive Communion at that Mass only. This way, I would think, the gift of the Eucharist is not taken for granted and recognized for its uniqueness.

Q My children were baptized as Catholics, but none of them is now a practicing Catholic. My middle daughter, through the influence of her husband, has opted to believe that organized religion is more problematic than helpful, and her children do not practice the faith except when I take them to Mass.

Soon I will be traveling with their daughter (my granddaughter) to South America, and I have asked her mother whether I might be able to baptize Sophia before the trip. (I wouldn’t do it without her mother’s permission.) If her mother consents, may I do that baptism at home, and are there any special prayers that need to be said except: “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?” I love my Catholic faith; I believe that baptism offers a spiritual protection that I want for my granddaughter when we travel together. Please advise. (Jersey City, New Jersey)

A You acted properly in first asking Sophia’s mother for permission to have the girl baptized. The church’s Code of Canon Law (in No. 868) provides that, in normal circumstances, the consent of at least one parent is necessary — danger of death being the exception. Another requirement, however, is the reasonable expectation that the child will be raised as a Catholic.

I’m not sure how old Sophia is right now, but for her to be baptized, some plan should be in place for you or another responsible adult to see to it that she receive the other sacraments of the church, including first penance, first Communion and confirmation — and, of course, that she be brought to Mass regularly.

As to whether you should administer the sacrament yourself, you should not. Canon No. 861 provides that the ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, priest or deacon. Yours is not an emergency situation, so you should talk to a local parish to arrange to have Sophia baptized by the parish priest.

FATHER DOYLE is chancellor for public information and a pastor in the Diocese of Albany, New York. Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St. Albany, NY 12208.
Seeds of vocation blossom in Father Marcell

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Father Robert G. Marcell, 85, was 14-years-old when he entered St. Joseph Seminary. He could only see his family during Christmas and summer breaks, and two of his three siblings were born while he was at seminary. Homesickness sometimes set in, but the seeds of a vocation planted by the priests who inspired him as he assisted them at the altar were firmly planted.

“I got over it. I stuck with it. I knew deep in my heart that’s what I wanted to do,” said Father Marcell.

He said his commitment has yielded many blessings as he celebrated his 60th jubilee anniversary on June 9.

Father Marcell grew up in Amelia. He was the first born of a family that was deeply rooted in their Catholic faith. His father owned a gas station and bar.

“I had experience (working) around the bar when I was a kid. I pumped gas, I did it all,” said Father Marcell.

His parents kept him grounded in his faith. He quipped that his mother was the disciplinarian, and sometimes when she would correct him, his father would say, “You’re being hard on him, he’s just a kid, he didn’t do anything wrong.”

Priests would drop by for dinner after Mass in nearby Morgan City, which brought that early presence of the clergy in his life.

Today, the family meal is treated by some as a pit stop. Youngsters have more important things on their minds than family unity.

I argue that there should be a rule in every home: no cellphones for one hour during the family meal. Family comes first and courtesy should be extended to all its members. Courtesy is politeness. It is having an attitude of respect toward others. This implies good manners, civility and respect.

But there are also other reasons to put the phone down. One of the more serious repercussions of cellphone obsession involves automobile accidents. Some throw caution out when driving and decide to text while on the road.

Texting while driving is taking a needless risk, and we are not just risking our lives when we do it, but the life of others. In this sense, it is a sin. We have always been taught not to put ourselves in the occasion of sin. To do so makes us vulnerable to possible disaster.

Some may question my use of the word sin in this context, but all sin involves actions that are displeasing to God. However, God loves you, and sin is doing something that hurts the one God loves. But there are things we can do to stop this. To start, parents who have allowed their children to have cellphones need to assert their authority. They have to insist upon courtesy in all things, which means the following: No cellphones during the dinner hour.

The rest of us have to pay attention to our own behavior. We don’t want to become like the type of people we sometimes encounter at the doctor’s office — focused more on record keeping than on the patient.

I’ve had the experience (several times) of having a medical professional open up a laptop, or click a few times on a computer mouse, type in some statistics, and while still looking at the screen, ask a few questions without looking up. Eventually they say a few words, but before you know it, the visit is over. I wonder how we’ve gotten to this point? We are diminishing our sensitivity to the feelings of others. We may not be able to control the behavior of others in the world but we can begin to change the behavior of those at home. And we can also examine our past actions in this matter and then begin to change ourselves.

FATHER CATOIR writes on issues of spirituality for today’s Catholic News Service.

Putting down the phone and opening the door to civility

Cellphone obsession has become a serious epidemic and one that threatens our spiritual well-being.

Please give me a minute to explain. A neighbor gave her 14-year-old daughter a birthday party, and noticed how quiet the girl’s friends were, until she went into the room and found them all on their cellphones.

She was shocked and immediately reacted, “Put down those phones right now, this is supposed to be a party. Have some fun.” Later, after her daughter’s initial embarrassment, they all became normally boisterous and had a happy time.

Then there’s the recent practice some of us have witnessed, of zoning out during family meals. Focusing on the cellphone instead of on people in the room is discourteous and unacceptable.

Dinner is family time. It should be a loving exchange of ideas, and a sharing of feelings.

Today, the family meal is treated by some as a pit stop. Youngsters have more important things on their minds than family unity.

I argue that there should be a rule in every home: no cellphones for one hour during the family meal. Family comes first and courtesy should be extended to all its members. Courtesy is politeness. It is having an attitude of respect toward others. This implies good manners, civility and respect.

But there are also other reasons to put the phone down. One of the more serious repercussions of cellphone obsession involves automobile accidents. Some throw caution out when driving and decide to text while on the road.

Texting while driving is taking a needless risk, and we are not just risking our lives when we do it, but the life of others. In this sense, it is a sin. We have always been taught not to put ourselves in the occasion of sin. To do so makes us vulnerable to possible disaster.

Some may question my use of the word sin in this context, but all sin involves actions that are displeasing to God. However, God loves you, and sin is doing something that hurts the one God loves. But there are things we can do to stop this. To start, parents who have allowed their children to have cellphones need to assert their authority. They have to insist upon courtesy in all things, which means the following: No cellphones during the dinner hour.

The rest of us have to pay attention to our own behavior. We don’t want to become like the type of people we sometimes encounter at the doctor’s office — focused more on record keeping than on the patient.

I’ve had the experience (several times) of having a medical professional open up a laptop, or click a few times on a computer mouse, type in some statistics, and while still looking at the screen, ask a few questions without looking up. Eventually they say a few words, but before you know it, the visit is over. I wonder how we’ve gotten to this point? We are diminishing our sensitivity to the feelings of others. We may not be able to control the behavior of others in the world but we can begin to change the behavior of those at home. And we can also examine our past actions in this matter and then begin to change ourselves.

FATHER CATOIR writes on issues of spirituality for today’s Catholic News Service.
Eads proud of the growth of the Hispanic Apostolate

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

When Maria Eads moved to Louisiana from Mexico City in 1979, she found life difficult because it was hard to find people who spoke Spanish.

Even within the church parishes of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, she found the people warm and welcoming, but they did not speak Spanish and she was unaware of any Spanish Masses.

That changed in the 1990s when she had the “good fortune” of her washing machine breaking down. That’s when a neighbor from San Antonio, Texas who spoke Spanish told her about a laundromat that Hispanic people used. While at the laundromat, a couple told her about a Hispanic prayer group that met at St. Louis King of France Church in Baton Rouge.

“It was very nice and I was very grateful because I felt, ‘I have come to the right place.’ There’s nothing like having people to speak to you in your own language,” said Eads, who learned to speak English.

Participants in the St. Louis prayer group told her about the Spanish Masses at St. George Church in Baton Rouge. As she attended the Masses, she learned about the Hispanic Apostolate. She volunteered her time beginning in 1992 before being hired as a secretary in 2000 and named executive director in 2011. She will be retiring this summer.

The needs of the Hispanic Apostolate have grown over the years, but so has God’s grace, Eads noted.

To help keep up with demands, the apostolate has moved three different times. It is currently located at an office building at St. Pius X Church in Baton Rouge.

“We’re very proud of the building. That was one of the biggest changes we have experienced,” said Eads. “We are able to better serve the people there.”

With the added space, the apostolate expanded its services.

Community service-wise, the apostolate offers: document translation; accompaniment of non-English speakers to government offices, doctor appointments, schools, etc., when requested; economic assistance to persons in need; health prevention programs; Christmas baskets to needy people; assistance in completing applications for Medicaid, unemployment benefits and for the Department of education; and contacts and referrals to AA and Al-Anon meetings.

It also helps provide immigration services.

Eads also gloved as she talked about the pastoral and faith formation services the apostolate offers. Daily Masses are offered at St. Pius Tuesday – Friday at 9 a.m.; Saturday Vigil Masses at St. George at 6 p.m. and at St. Theresa of Avila Church in Gonzales at 7:30 p.m.; and Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at St. Pius.

The religious education program has also received a boost. Now parents and children can come at the same time on Sunday and receive religious education together. It has a youth ministry program, charismatic groups, choir and evangelization ministry. There is also eucharistic adoration.

Eads is happy to see people within the Hispanic community become friends with each other, hosting baby and wedding showers, etc., as well as consoling each other on the death of a loved one.

“They are able to express their faith the way they are accustomed to do it,” Eads said.

As Eads begins the next chapter in her life she said, “For a long time I had envisioned the Hispanic center as a welcoming place that would have enough space to hold the different activities, with updated technology that would ease the workload of the staff and more people working here to meet the needs of the community that is expanding.

“I can say that most of it has become a reality. We had the welcoming place that was getting very cramped because the community has been growing for the past 10 years. We have the space now thanks to the support from the diocese, the financial support from the community and hard work from each one of us at the Hispanic Apostolate.”

Eads said there is still an administrative shortage, because even as the Hispanic community and programs grow they have financial limitations. But she believes the new director will be able to resolve those challenges favorably.

She is particularly happy when people whom the apostolate served years ago call her to update her on what is happening in their lives.

“That makes my day,” said Eads, who added she has grown through her service with the Hispanic Apostolate.

“It showed me a faithful God by seeing the people smiling and being grateful,” Eads said.

“She plans to continue serving the community.

More than any personal accomplishments, Eads is proud to see the Hispanic Apostolate be a place not just where services are provided, but where a faith family is formed.

“I saw it from being just a few people to being a big community,” Eads said.

Maria Eads, left, is thankful for the contribution volunteers have made to the Hispanic Apostolate, as seen by this picture of her at a thank you dinner for volunteers in Oct. 2005 with volunteer Margarita Wetzel, center, and Marcos Campoblanco, right, Hispanic festival coordinator. Photo provided by the Hispanic Apostolate of the Diocese of Baton Rouge

Sexual abuse policy in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

Churches, schools and youth organizations have an obligation to provide children and youth with a safe place to worship, study or participate in activities sponsored by the Catholic Church.

In its ongoing effort to ensure that this is being accomplished, the Diocese of Baton Rouge has established an Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Anyone victimized as a child or young person is urged to report this first to secular authorities (Louisiana State Police or State of Louisiana Department of Social Services) as well as to the special diocesan “Sexual Abuse Victim Response Contact Line” (telephone 225-242-0250) or to the diocesan counselors at Catholic Charities (telephone 225-336-8708).

Issues relating to the Protection of Children and Young People

Mrs. Amy Cordon serves as Child and Youth Protection Officer of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Her offices are at the Catholic Life Center, 1800 South Acadian Thruway, Baton Rouge. Her mailing address is P.O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028; telephone 225-242-0202; fax 225-242-0233.

A special confidential “Sexual Abuse Victim Response Contact Line” to be used in reporting any instance of child sexual abuse by an employee of the church or a volunteer in one of the church’s programs has been set up: 225-242-0250.

Anyone victimized as a child or young person is urged to report this first to secular authorities (Louisiana State Police or State of Louisiana Department of Social Services) as well as to the special diocesan “Sexual Abuse Victim Response Contact Line” (telephone 225-242-0250) or to the diocesan counselors at Catholic Charities (telephone 225-336-8708).

En Relación a la Protección de Niños y Gente Jóven

La Sra. Amy Cordón se desempeña como la Oficial Protectora de Niños y Jóvenes para la Diocesis de Baton Rouge. Su oficina se encuentra en el Catholic Life Center, 1800 South Acadian Thruway, en Baton Rouge. Su dirección es P. O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028; teléfono 225-242-0202; fax 225-242-0233.

Uno de los programas que la Iglesia ha establecido es la línea telefónica especial y confidencial de “Contacto para Respondere a la Victimía del Abuso Sexual” cometido por empleados de la Iglesia o voluntarios: 225-242-0250.

Cualquier persona como un niño o un joven victimizado debe reportar el incidente primero a las autoridades como la Policía Estatal o al Departamento Estatal (Ministerio) de Servicios Sociales así como también a la línea de “Contacto para Responderle a la Victimía del Abuso Sexual” (teléfono 225-242-0250) o a los consejeros de la Diocesis en las Caridades Católicas (teléfono 225-336-8708).
Too many couples do not understand marriage is for life, pope says

ROME (CNS) – Because most people today do not understand that sacramental marriage really is a bond that binds them to each other for life, many marriages today can be considered invalid, Pope Francis said.

Raising a point he has raised before, and one also raised by now-retired Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis insisted June 16 that the validity of a marriage implies that a couple understands that sacramental marriage is a bond that truly binds them to another for their entire lives.

“We are living in a culture of the provisional,” he told participants in the Diocese of Rome’s annual pastoral conference.

Answering questions after giving a prepared talk, Pope Francis told the story of a bishop who said a university graduate came to him saying he wanted to be a priest, but only for 10 years.

The idea of commitments being temporary “occurs everywhere, even in priestly and religious life. And for this reason a large majority of sacramental marriages are null. They say ‘yes, for my whole life,’ but they do not know what they are saying because they have a different culture,” he said.

The Vatican press office, publishing a transcript of the pope’s words to read, “A part of our sacramental marriages are null because they (the spouses) say, ‘Yes, for my whole life,’ but they do not know what they are saying because they have a different culture.”

Father Federico Lombardi SJ, Vatican spokesman, said transcripts of the pope’s off-the-cuff remarks always are reviewed for precision and clarity prior to publication. “When dealing with particularly important topics, the revised text always is given to the pope himself. That happened in this case, therefore the published text was approved expressly by the pope,” he said.

Attitudes toward marriage are influenced strongly by social expectations, the pope said, telling the story of a young man who told the pope he and his fiancée had not celebrated their wedding yet because they were looking for a church with decor that would go well with her dress. “These are people’s concerns,” the pope said. “How can we change this? I don’t know.”

Pope Francis told participants that when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, he banned “shotgun weddings” from Catholic parishes because the strong social pressure to marry placed on a couple expecting a baby could mean they were not fully free to pledge themselves to each other for life through the sacrament.

It was important, he said, that the couples were not abandoned, but were assisted by the church. Many of them, he said, “after two or three years would marry. I would watch them enter the church, dad, mom and the child holding their hands. They knew well what they were doing.”

“The crisis of marriage is because people do not know what the sacrament is, the beauty of the sacrament; they do not know that it is indissoluble, that it is for one’s entire life,” he said. “It’s difficult.”

Meeting in July 2005 with priests in northern Italy, Pope Benedict also raised the question of the validity of marriages that, while performed in church, bound together two baptized Catholics who had little understanding of the faith, the meaning of the sacraments and the indissolubility of marriage.

Asked about Communion for a divorced and civilly remarried person, Pope Benedict had responded, “I would say that a particularly painful situation is that of those who were married in the church, but were not really believers and did so just for tradition, and then finding themselves in a new, nonvalid marriage, convert, find the faith and feel excluded from the sacrament.”

Bishop announces appointments

Bishop Robert W. Muench has appointed Father Sanjay Kunnasseril IMS parochial vicar at Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant.

Father Kunnasseril has previously served as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Peace Church in Vacherie. His appointment is effective July 1.

Bishop Muench has also appointed co-chaplains for the seven high schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Father Andrew Merrick, Father Joshua Johnson and Brother Ray Hebert SC have been appointed co-chaplains at Catholic High School; Father Miles Walsh and Father Charbel Jamhoury co-chaplains at St. Joseph’s Academy; Father Bradley Doyle and Father Edwin Martin co-chaplains at St. Michael the Archangel Diocesan Regional High School; Father Paul Yi, Father Paul Gros and Father Reuben Dykes co-chaplains at Ascension Catholic Diocesan Regional High School; Father Michael Misci and Father Robert Bergegren OP co-chaplains at St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School; Msgr. Robert Berggreen and Father Brent Mahler co-chaplains at Catholic High of Pointe Coupee; and Father Gregory Dagle and Father Matthew Lorrain co-chaplains at St. John Interparochial School.

The chaplain appointments are effective for the 2016-17 school year.

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Early DEADLINE NOTICE

The July 8 issue will have an early deadline of June 24th due to the July 4th holiday. If you are planning to send an item to be published in the July 8th issue – article, picture, announcement including an advertisement – it must be in The Catholic Commentator office by Friday, June 24 at 4:30 p.m.

If you have any questions, please call us at 225-387-0983.
Medjugorje celebrates 35 years of peace

By Rachelle Smith
The Catholic Commentator

When the summit started in 1981, Medjugorje was a simple farming community. Controlled by communists, the small village was part of the former Yugoslavia, and day-to-day existence required taking care of land and livestock. Farmers often hunted their animals in the same city streets where children played.

But soon, things would change.

On June 24, 1981, the feast day of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, six children in this sleepy village reported seeing an apparition of Mary, the Mother of God.

Since that time, 35 years ago, the children, now all adults, say they have continued to see the Blessed Mother and Our Lady of Mercy parishioners enjoy the daily and weekly appearance of Our Lady of Medjugorje to the people.

The visionaries say Our Lady wants all people to continue to see her on that trip.

“During that work, there was something about the other people I was seeing. They had this life of peace, this life of prayer. I saw that I was missing that in my life, and I wanted it,” said Shayne Bourque.

Bourque’s explanation for the messages Our Lady sends is simple: “I think every person who visits Medjugorje is going to come away with something that you need,” she said.

“Terry Bellon, a parishioner of St. Thomas More Church in Baton Rouge, has returned to Medjugorje many times since his first visit in 1997. "I would go back tomorrow," she said, recalling that incredible feeling of peace she experienced each time, even during the Bosnian War in the 1990s.

“We would have heard the bombs fall on Medjugorje when we were there, but all I could feel was peace. That peace would remain with me every time I would come back," she said.

While he admits he has not experi-enced any of those things, Bellon said he does witness something “more extraordinary” during his visit in 2015, which was “a true conversion of a young man in our group.”

That group, which was smaller than in other years, went very close on the trip.

“We went to church praying Mass every day, and I just wanted to know if I was praying enough and if I was being a good sister,” she said.

“Terry Bellon, a parishioner of St. Thomas More Church in Baton Rouge, has returned to Medjugorje many times since his first visit in 2009. Acting on a promise he made during that visit, Bellon has led groups back to the area every year since then, with the exception of one year in 2015. This November, he, along with Father Black Beard of St. Helena Church in Amite, will bring a group of about 40 pilgrims to the village.

“There are so many people going now in November than there were in 2009," said Bellon, who added that some people going to Medjugorje have seen miracles with the rain stopping or having their mountains turn gold.

While he admits he has not experi-enced any of those things, Bellon said he did witness something “more ex-traordinary” during his visit in 2015, which was “a true conversion of a young man in our group.”

That group, which was smaller than in other years, went very close on the trip.

“Terry Bellon climbs the top of Cross Mountain with other members of his tour group last year. The raiding, seen in this November 2015 photo, were not available to pilgrims in the early years. Photo by Rachelle Smith/The Catholic Commentator

In this 1986 photo, Margaret Cassisa, right, and her sister, Yvonne Villar, via stop for a photo near one of Medjugorje’s many farms. The spires of St. James Church can be seen in the background. Photo provided by Tommy Cassisa

Since pilgrims first began visiting Medjugorje, crossing Cross Mountain or Mt. Krivonac has been a spiritual and, for some, a physical journey as this 1986 photo illustrates. Photo provided by Tommy Cassisa

In this 1986 photo, Margaret Cassisa, right, and her sister, Yvonne Villar, via stop for a photo near one of Medjugorje’s many farms. The spires of St. James Church can be seen in the background. Photo provided by Tommy Cassisa

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Youth develop leadership skills

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Talking about leadership while on top of a mountain, before whisking off to somewhere else or while networking with government and business leaders over dinner may seem “heady stuff” to youth, but teens from the Diocese of Baton Rouge doing so this summer say they are more grounded in their beliefs and their goals have expanded beyond themselves.

Grace Heath, 17, a senior at St. Joseph’s Academy, said she would like to pursue a career in politics, because “I think I can be the change that is needed.”

Her experiences at the Louisiana Girls Leadership Academy, “Light the Torch and Lead,” at Nicholls State University showed her the need for inclusiveness in leadership roles.

“There’s not a lot of representation of women in business and government,” said Heath.

While at the conference, Heath learned about communication, situational leadership, public service, responsible citizenship and current issues in Louisiana public policy. She also listened to Shiza Shahid, who co-founded the Malala Fund with Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, and led the organization as founding CEO. Shahid focuses on supporting startups, innovators and entrepreneurs, particularly women.

The attendees also spent time with the women of the Louisiana Legislative Women’s Caucus Foundation.

Heath believes leaders teach others how to lead and succeed.

“Whether you are a teacher, leader of a nation or a wife or mom at home, you play an important role in shaping others’ lives,” Heath said.

She added public service is a key way of leading at the individual or school level, as schools inspire each other to take on community service projects.

Other students at SJA and Catholic High headed to the Colorado Rockies for an immersion in the charism of their school’s founders, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and the Sisters of St. Joseph at the Catholic Leadership Encounter, May 28–June 6.

The youth explored the beauty of the mountains as they hiked, went into the water, gathered around a campfire and did other outdoor activities.

Shahid focuses on supporting startups, innovators and entrepreneurs, particularly women.

Talks during the week included: servant leadership, social justice, moral decision making, managing conflicts, “Who am I?” and what it means to be men and women of God. There were also small group discussions.

To succeed in the activities during the week, attendees were required to develop their skills in active listening.

To inquire about advertising your products and services to this specialized market or space reservation contact Wanda Koch at 225-387-0983 or email wkoch@diobr.org.

Deadline is June 24!
BUDDY BENCH – As their final Brownie service project, St. Jude the Apostle School students, from left, Mariana Cuadra, Kylie Balkum, Camryn Cass, Gracie Populus, Gigi Nelson and Molly Donahue created a “Buddy Bench” for their school. The rising fourth graders, part of Girl Scout Troop 10896, decorated and donated the bench to their school before “bridging” or moving to Junior Girl Scouts, the next level in girl scouting. A buddy bench offers children who are feeling lonely the opportunity to make a friend. When a child sits on the bench, it is a signal to others to be a friend and invite him or her to play. Photo provided by Jasmine Hunter | Girl Scouts

GIVING THANKS – Holy Ghost School students, from left front, Rei Leto, Samantha Labat, Layla Hooks, back, Max Harris, Ella Hornbuckle, Zoey Jackson and Olivia Krause sing “Give Thanks” during their kindergarten closing ceremony, “HGCS Kindergarten: The Most Colorful Place on Earth.” Students entertained the crowd with many songs and skits and were also awarded with special certificates recognizing their accomplishments throughout the year. Photo provided by Cindy Wagner | Holy Ghost School

YOUTH ▼

From page 12

consensus building, understanding leadership styles, delegating responsibility, managing conflict and empowering and motivating others.

Charles Jumonville, CLE director, who built the program based on his more than 35 years of experience in youth ministry and faith formation, said the beautiful Rockies setting inspired youth to find God in nature and other people.

“It takes something special to see God in each other,” said Michael Click, a junior at CHS.

By seeing God in all people and things, however, people will see how personable God is. He’s not just “God Almighty creator, but he is also ‘Dad,’” said Crick.

“He’s not just a glass figure up there, but he’s in each of us and we can see him everyday,” he added.

Through the talks by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, he learned that with the declining number of brothers at the school, it is important to keep their charism alive there.

“It’s not just the people (the brothers), it’s the traditions, the students, everyone who keeps the Brothers of the Sacred Heart living on,” said Crick.

Paul Cassisa, a CHS junior, said CLE taught him leadership requires a change of heart.

“I saw that my attitude needed to be changed,” said Cassisa. “It changed my perspective about having more patience.”

Andrew Stassi, a sophomore at CHS, said he learned what happens when leaders aren’t open to change.

“The most memorable activity we participated in was this game where everyone had to put two fingers on the bottom of a hula hoop and lower it to the ground. It was memorable because in a group full of leaders we all tried to control everyone else rather than ourselves,” said Stassi. “This caused everyone to become frustrated to the point that we were ready to punch each other because we could not succeed in our goal.

“The most important thing I learned about what leadership is at CLE is that it’s not always about putting yourself out in front. Sometimes it’s about delegating the responsibility to others whose gifts apply to that situation. The most important thing I learned about my faith is that we are all broken but God is the glue that brings us together into full people,” Stassi said.

SJA Senior Ainsley Sonnier was “glued together” as she grieved over the death of her brother and best friend, Jacob. The second anniversary of his death was marked during CLE.

“It was a high moment,” said Sonnier. “I was in an amazing prayer group. They got together and prayed for me and after the prayer everyone was there for me. It was healing.”

Sonnier said she learned a lot about herself and that leadership is not about being “the head honcho,” but looking at people’s situations, and getting behind everyone else to find common ground in finding a way to help.

Sonnier was briefly in Baton Rouge before taking off to Arizona for a mission trip, but she kept the CLE lessons packed and will take them with her.

“It will make me a better person, a better neighbor. I will be able to share my faith with the people I meet,” Sonnier said.

I LIVE MY FAITH AWARD – Theresa Verret, left, and Arizona Mitchell, Junior Girl Scouts with Troop 10324 at St. Jean Vianney School, display the plarn mats or plastic yarn sleeping mats they created as part of their “I Live My Faith” religious award. The rising sixth graders used plastic bags to create the mats, which will serve the homeless. As an extension to this service project, the girls also lead a workshop in teaching others how to make plarn mats.

A workshop in teaching others how to make plarn mats played a role in the “I Live My Faith” service project created by Theresa Verret, left, and Arizona Mitchell, Junior Girl Scouts with Troop 10324 at St. Jean Vianney School, dis- 

I LIVE MY FAITH AWARD – Theresa Verret, left, and Arizona Mitchell, Junior Girl Scouts with Troop 10324 at St. Jean Vianney School, display the plarn mats or plastic yarn sleeping mats they created as part of their “I Live My Faith” religious award. The rising sixth graders used plastic bags to create the mats, which will serve the homeless. As an extension to this service project, the girls also lead a workshop in teaching others how to make plarn mats and gave a presentation about homelessness to everyone in attendance. The girls also decorated and packed 25 birthday boxes, which included such items as cake mix, icing and balloons. The boxes were given to the SJV food pantry and St. Vincent de Paul. The “I Live My Faith” award is given annually by the Catholic Committee on Scouting in Baton Rouge. Photo provided by Natalie Roy Mitchell | Girl Scout Troop 10324

From page 12

consensus building, understanding leadership styles, delegating responsibility, managing conflict and empowering and motivating others.

Charles Jumonville, CLE director, who built the program based on his more than 35 years of experience in youth ministry and faith formation, said the beautiful Rockies setting inspired youth to find God in nature and other people.

“It takes something special to see God in each other,” said Michael Click, a junior at CHS.

By seeing God in all people and things, however, people will see how personable God is. He’s not just “God Almighty creator, but he is also ‘Dad,’” said Crick.

“He’s not just a glass figure up there, but he’s in each of us and we can see him everyday,” he added.

Through the talks by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, he learned that with the declining number of brothers at the school, it is important to keep their charism alive there.

“It’s not just the people (the brothers), it’s the traditions, the students, everyone who keeps the Brothers of the Sacred Heart living on,” said Crick.

Paul Cassisa, a CHS junior, said CLE taught him leadership requires a change of heart.

“I saw that my attitude needed to be changed,” said Cassisa. “It changed my perspective about having more patience.”

Andrew Stassi, a sophomore at CHS, said he learned what happens when leaders aren’t open to change.

“The most memorable activity we participated in was this game where every-
Me Before You
Warner Bros.

Though it begins as a charming love story with a strong pro-life message, this grand-scale weepie, set primarily in England, veers off course toward a climactic endorsement of behavior no one committed to scriptural values can accept. A vibrant young woman (Emilia Clarke) becomes caretaker and companion to the wheelchair-bound victim (Sam Claflin) of a motorcycle accident. Her tenderness and devotion lift his embittered spirits of a fantasy version of Earth. Heading the land, veers off course toward a climactic set piece. Probably acceptable for older teens. Pervasive mayhem but with almost no blood, momentary gruesome violence, scenes of torment, a painful birth, a couple of sexual references. A-III; PG-13

The Conjuring 2
Warner Bros.

Horror franchise follow-up drawing, once again, on the exploits of demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren (Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga) has the couple traveling to London to deal with a crockery-smashing poltergeist (Bob Adri- man) who’s bedeviling a woman (Frances O’Connor) and her four children (the most prominent played by Madison Wolfe). Bas- ing his plot on a real incident known as the Enfield Poltergeist, director and co-writer James Wan does acknowledge that prank- playing children may have been responsible for at least some of the mayhem, but not before he throws a demon nun into the mix in a failed attempt to add to the fright factor. Occult themes, a skewed presenta- tion of Catholic faith practices, intense action sequences, some of them involving gun violence. A-III; R

Now You See Me 2
Summit

A trio of magicians and illusionists (Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson and James Franco) in their performing ensemble, the “Four Horsemen,” now rounded out by Lizzy Caplan in lieu of Isla Fisher returns to execute a complicated, worldwide sting involving a computer circuit that can de- encrypt any system into which it’s plugged. The tricks performed by the quartet in this follow-up to the 2013 original are decon- structed in great detail, as if director Jon M. Chu and screenwriter Ed Solomon are anxious for the audience not to miss any of their cleverness or its meaning. Though this gives an otherwise compelling, intelligent sequel the slight cast of an old Scooby-Doo cartoon, there’s no denying the bril- liant choreography of the film’s climactic set piece. Probably acceptable for older adolescents. Mild action violence, some profane and crude language, a vulgar gesture. A-III; PG-13

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows
Paramount

With a clear target audience of adoles- cent boys, Michelangelo, Donatello, Leonardo and Raphael take on an evil scient- ists on bent world domination, and sometimes discuss the importance of teamwork and what it means to be fully human. Director Dave Green and screenwriters Josh Appel- baum and Andre Nemec remain faithful to the tropes of action pictures with ramped-up CGI animation. Intense action sequenc- es, cartoonish violence and a single scato- logical reference. A-II; PG-13

Warcraft
Universal

Heavy-handed video game adaptation pitting an army of murderous orcs (includ- ing Toby Kebbell) led by an evil wizard (Daniel Wu) against the inhabitants of a fantasy version of Earth. Heading the opposition to the invasion are a wise king (Dominic Cooper), a gallant knight (Travis Fimmel) and two practitioners (Ben Foster and Ben Schnetzer) of good magic, backed up by the guidance of an orc half- breed (Paula Patton) whose mistreatment at the hands of her own kind has made her anxious to thwart them. Shifting loyalties, especially those of Kebbell’s character, whose devotion to family life makes him redeemable, keep the pot boiling. But di- rector and co-writer Duncan Jones’ film bubbles over, in the end, and steams rap- idly away. Possibly acceptable for mature teens. Pervasive mayhem but with almost no blood, momentary gruesome violence, scenes of torment, a painful birth, a couple of sexual references. A-III; PG-13

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Seeking guidance and support while following dreams

Lyrics from Ray LaMontagne’s song “Hey, No Pressure” lead us to consider how we handle pressure and stress. The lyrics describe a person who wants to support a friend facing difficulties in a way that doesn’t make the situation even more stressful.

The singer speaks about how he hates “to see you breaking down” or “watch you fall apart.” His hope is to “help you through it all ... to lift you when you fall.” He seeks to care in ways that are good and says, “Hey, no pressure.”

As he attempts to do this, he also tells her that “anything you want your life to mean, it can mean ... anything you want to be, you can be.” Even though he wants to help, such generalizations rarely help. In fact, trying to live that way could just do the opposite of what he says he wants. It could ramp up the “pressure” he says he wants to avoid.

He seeks to care in ways that most promote the value and dignity of his friend. His hope is to “help you through it all” or “watch you fall apart.”

Do you have the ability required to do well in those courses? Do you have what it takes to have a future in that profession? Listen carefully after you ask yourself this question. There will be an answer if you are open to hearing it. Such a question requires honest assessment. Give yourself more time if you’re unsure of the answer. A poor grade in one course does not mean that your goal is unattainable, but if you consistently struggle in your area of study, it may mean that your professional calling may be elsewhere.

Such a realization can be disappointing, but facing it also means you can open yourself up to new, and perhaps better, possibilities.

God’s guidance is always available to us. Receiving this guidance begins by looking inward. If the answer is to move away from a previous goal, we may initially feel hurt, but seeking goals that may not be in God’s plan may only increase pressure and stress.

Always remember to trust. This means trust your God, the one who called you into life. Also trust yourself because you have the ability to create a good life. Though there is no route we can take to avoid pressure and stress, guidance — divine and otherwise — is always available. Ask God to guide you and then have the courage to act in ways that most promote the value and dignity of your life.

**On The Record**

**Charlie Martin**

**Hey, No Pressure**

Sung by Ray LaMontagne | Copyright 2016, RCA Records

1. "Hey, No Pressure"
2. "Anything you want your life to mean, it can mean..."
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enjoy the Year of Mercy

The Catholics have a sacramental way of thinking about children. In Pope Francis’ words, every new life is a symbol of God’s love. From the time of its conception, the child expresses “the utterly gratuitous dimension of love ... the beauty of being loved first ... before having done anything to deserve it.” Life, for everyone of us, is a gift, ideally a gift that is graced and cherished by our parents. Even if the circumstances of its conception do not guarantee that parental desire, life is still completely a gift, a grace, to the child. And it is crucial to the child that he or she be wanted. The pope continues, “The gift of a new child, entrusted by the Lord to a father and a mother, begins with acceptance, continues with life-long protection and has as its final goal the joy of eternal life.”

We can be closer to God’s revelation. The Psalms and the prophets in the Old Testament tell us that every child in the womb is a part of God’s eternal plan for humankind. “Each child has a place in God’s heart for all eternity,” Pope Francis writes, citing Jeremiah 1:5, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.” Parents are agents of God through whom he shows his own love.

When we view procreation through the lens of divine revelation as does Pope Francis, then “every child has a right to receive love from a mother and a father; both are necessary for a child’s integral and harmonious development ... We are speaking not simply of the love of father and mother as individuals, but also of their mutual love, perceived as the source of one’s life and the solid foundation of the family.” Together they image “the maternal and the paternal face of the Lord.”

If for some inevitable reason one parent should be lacking, it is important to compensate for this loss for the sake of the child’s healthy growth to maturity. Pope Francis regrets that “we often hear that ours is ‘a society without fathers.’” In our western culture, the father figure is sometimes physically not there or said to be “symbolically absent, missing or vanished.” The problem used to be fatherly oppression. Now the pendulum has swung from such authoritarianism to the father being physically or at least psychologically absent because he is so caught up with work, communication, self-fulfillment, hobbies or entertainment that he neglects the wife and children.

Pope Francis is not arguing for a controlling father but for one whose authority comes from his children’s assurance that he is there for them, present and interested in their lives with guidance as they need it. His wife, too, needs him to share everything — joy, sorrow, hope and hardship. The pope is uncritical of mothers. In fact, he says that “Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centered individualism ... It is they who testify to the beauty of life.” Grandparents are important too, for it is often “grandparents who ensure that the most important values are passed down to their grandchildren.”

Some couples can’t have children. For them, Pope Francis says that adoption is an act of love, giving the blessing of family to those who have none. The adopting couple become “channels of God’s love,” for in God’s name they fulfill his promise: “Even if you mother forgets you, I will not forget you” (Is 49:15).

Marriage is a vocation not only to spouse and family but also to society. Every family is called to solidarity with others. They should never retreat into themselves as a refuge from society. Pope Francis quotes one of his favorite Argentine poets, Mario Benedetti, in his poem “Te Quiero” (“I love you”). “If I love you, it is because you are my love, my companion, and my all. And on the street, side by side. We are much more than just two.”

Some Pastoral Perspectives

Chapter Six

How do we implement these insights into marriage and family that we get from Scripture and church teaching? Chapter six provides some good thoughts. For every couple, marriage preparation begins at birth. What they received from their family should prepare them to understand themselves and to make a full and complete commitment to their marriage. It is far more than the ceremony. It is a sacrament for life. In joining their lives, the spouses assume an active and creative role in a lifelong project. Such a commitment can be daunting, “but young love needs to keep dancing toward the future with immense hope, for God is with them.”

The rewards of a faithful marriage are great. Pope Francis quotes Saint John of the Cross: “Old lovers are tried and true. They ‘are utterly no longer afiner with powerful emotions and happiness, but now taste the sweetness of the wine of love, well-aged and stored deep within their hearts.”

A strong marriage depends on good communication. And “Communication is an art learned in moments of peace in order to be practiced in moments of difficulty.”

It is important that the divorced who have entered a new union should be made to feel part of the church. They are not excommunicated, and they should not be treated as such, since they remain part of the ecclesial community. When one’s life companion dies, it is normal to grieve. However, “Our loved ones have no need of our suffering, nor does it flatter them that we should ruin our lives.”

FAther Carville is a retired priest in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and writes on current topics for The Catholic Commentator. He can be reached at johnnycarville@gmail.com.

Another Perspective

Father John Carville

Love made fruitful

Chapter Five of “The Joy of Love”

Margaret Lovecraft

Baton Rouge

Right the wrong

Excellent article in the May 27 paper by Debbie Shelley, Tracking History. Kudos to that great family for being true to their faith despite their findings about Catholicism and in particular the Jesuits of Georgetown. There is no excuse for what the Jesuits did. I just hope that the current administration at Georgetown does more than take stock and see what it needs to do. True positive action trumps any words.

John Schott

Tickfaw

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

Please pray for the priests, deacons and religious women and men in the Baton Rouge Diocese.

June 29
Rev. Robert F. Stine
Dcn. Jeff R. Easley
Br. Ramon Daunius † SC
July 1
Rev. Frank M. Uter
Dcn. H. John Ferguson, III
Br. Carl Evans † SC
July 2
Rev. Henry C. Vavasseur
Dcn. Natale (Nat) J. Garofalo
Sr. Mary Ann Diaz † DM
July 3
Rev. Joseph H. Vu
Dcn. Edward J. Gauthreaux
Br. Clement Furrano † CStR
July 4
Rev. Miles D. Walsh
Dcn. Steven C. Gonzales
Sr. Therese Dinh † ICCM
July 5
Rev. Ju Hyung (Paul) Yi
Dcn. Richard H. Grant
Br. Harold Harris † SC
July 6
Rev. Gerard F. Young
Dcn. Ronald J. Hebert
Sr. M. Donald † MC
July 7
Dcn. Robert B. Tracy † Dcn. Clayton A. Hollier
Br. Virgil Harris † SC
July 8
Dcn. Joseph S. Sullivan † Dcn. Ryan Halford
Sr. Dehra Elliott † CSJ
July 9
Dcn. Stanley J. Ott † Dcn. William H. Holtman
Br. Ray Hebert † SC
July 10
Dcn. Robert W. Muench
Dcn. Michael J. (Shelley) Joseph
Sr. June Engelbrecht † OP
July 11
Rev. Howard R. Adkins
Dcn. John A. Jung, Jr.
Br. Ronald Hingle, SC
July 12
Dcn. Donatus Ajoko
Dcn. Robert J. Kusch
Sr. Dianne Fanguy † CSJ
The struggle to love our neighbor

The most damaging idolatry is not the golden calf but enmity against the other.”

The renowned anthropologist, Rene Girard, wrote, and its truth is not easily admitted. Most of us like to believe that we are mature and big-hearted and that we do love our neighbors and are free of enmity towards others. But is this so?

In our more honest, more accurately perhaps, in our more humble moments, I think that all of us admit that we don’t really love others in the way that Jesus asked. We don’t turn the other cheek. We don’t really love our enemies. We don’t wish good to those who wish us harm. We don’t bless those who curse us. And we don’t genuinely forgive those who murder our loved ones. We are decent, good-hearted persons, but persons whose heaven is still too-predicated on needing an emotional vindication in the face of anyone or anything that opposes us. We can be fair, we can be just, but we don’t yet love the way Jesus asked us to, that is, so that our love goes out to both those who love us and to those who hate us. We still struggle, mightily, mostly unsuccessfully, to wish our enemies well.

But for most of us who like to believe ourselves mature that battle remains hidden, mostly from ourselves. We tend to feel that we are loving and forgiving because, essentially, we are well-intentioned, sincere and able to believe and say all the right things; but there’s another part of us that isn’t nearly so noble. The Irish Jesuit, Michael Paul Gallagher, (who died recently and will be dearly missed) puts this well when he writes In Extra Time, “You probably don’t hate anyone, but you can be paralyzed by daily negatives. Mini-prejudices and knee-jerk judgements can produce a mood of undeclared war. Across barbed wire fences, invisible bullets fly.” Loving the other as oneself, he submits, is for most of us an impossible uphill climb.

So where does that leave us? Surviving a life-sentence of mediocrity and hypocrisy? Professing to loving our enemies but not doing it? How can we profess to be Christians when, if we are honest, we have to admit that we are not measuring up to the litmus-test of Christian discipleship, namely, loving and forgiving our enemies?

Perhaps we are not as bad as we think we are. If we are still struggling, we are still healthy. In making us, it seems, God factored in human complexity, human weakness, and how growing into deeper love is a life-long journey. What can look like hypocrisy from the outside can in fact be a pilgrimage, a Camino walk, when seen within a fuller light of patience and understanding.

Thomas Aquinas, in speaking about union and intimacy, makes this important distinction. He distinguishes between being in union with something or somebody in actuality and being in union with that someone or something through desire. This has many applications but, applied in this case; it means that sometimes the heart can only go somewhere through desire rather than in actuality. We can believe in the right things and want the right things and still not be able to bring our hearts onside. One example of this is what the old catechisms (in their unique wisdom) used to call “imperfect contription,” that is, the notion that if you have done something wrong that you know is wrong and that you know that you should feel sorry for, but you can’t, in fact, feel sorry for, then if you can wish that you could feel sorry, that’s contrition enough, not perfect, but enough.

—It’s the best you can do and it puts you at the right place at the level of desire, not a perfect place, but one better than its alternative.

And that “imperfect” place does more for us than simply providing the minimal standard of contrition needed for forgiveness. More importantly it accords rightful dignity to whom and to what we have hurt.

Reflecting on our inability to genuinely love our neighbor, Marilynne Robinson submits that, even in our failure to live up to what Jesus asks of us, if we are struggling honestly, there is some virtue. She argues this way: Freud said that we cannot love our neighbor as ourselves, and no doubt this is true. But since we accept the reality that lies behind the commandment, that our neighbor is as worthy of love as ourselves, then in our very attempt to act on Jesus’ demand we are acknowledging that our neighbor is worthy of love even if, at this point in our lives, we are too weak to provide it.

And that’s the crucial point: In continuing to struggle, despite our failures, to live up to Jesus’ great commandment of love we acknowledge the dignity inherent in our enemies, acknowledge that they are worthy of love, and acknowledge our own shortcoming. That’s “imperfect” of course, but, I suspect, Thomas Aquinas would say it’s a start!

OBLATE FATHER RON ROLHEISER, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook facebook.com/ronrolheiser
Ramadan Dinner – The Atlas Foundation will present a Ramadan dinner hosted by St. Thomas More Church, 14411 Goodwood Blvd., on Tuesday, June 28, 7:30 p.m., at the St. Thomas More Parish Activity Center. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the significance of the month of Ramadan in Islam, engage in friendly table conversations and break the fast with a dinner. For more information and to RSVP, call 225-275-3940 or email melissa@stmchurch.org.

Blessed Mother Feast – Our Lady of Pompeii Church, 14450 Hwy. 442, Tickfaw, will host its 89th annual Blessed Mother Feast Saturday, July 2 – Sunday, July 3. On Saturday, a procession with a statue of the Blessed Mother will begin from the church’s chapel at Fedele Road at 4:45 p.m., stopping at the cemetery to bless the graves, and arriving at the church in time for Mass at 5:30 p.m. Bingo and concessions will be available from 3:45-9 p.m. After Mass concessions and games will be available at Pompeii Hall until 10 p.m. On Sunday at 6 p.m. there will be a benediction and procession with the statue of the Blessed Mother back to the chapel. For more information, call 985-345-6675.

Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites – The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites welcomes all who are interested in developing their prayer life according to the Carmelite saints. The next meeting will be Sunday, July 10, 1:30 p.m., at Our Lady of Mercy Parish Activity Center in St. Gabriel’s Room, 444 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-343-2181 or 225-803-3931, or email robertwhite456@att.net.

Discipleship Reflection – Father Phillip Scott FJ will present a weekend of reflections on discipleship Saturday, July 16 – Sunday, July 17, at Our Lady of the Way Retreat Center in Tickfaw. For details and registration, visit ourladyoftheway.org.

World Wide Marriage Encounter Weekend – Married couples looking to enrich their marriage are invited to a World Wide Marriage Encounter Weekend on Friday, July 22 – Sunday, July 24, at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center, 1800 S. Acadian Thwy., Baton Rouge. For more information and to register, visit wwwme.org.

Day of Renewal – Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Diocese of Baton Rouge will host a day of renewal on Saturday, July 30, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the Our Lady of Mercy Church Parish Activity Center, 444 Marquette St., Baton Rouge. Deacon Alex Jones, who was an “on fire” Pentecostal minister in Detroit who converted to Catholicism, will be the guest speaker. Lunch will be provided. For more information, call 225-636-2464.

Healing of Families Seminar – Claude Culross will present a “Healing of Families” seminar on Saturday, July 30, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., at St. Patrick Church, 12424 Brodgon Lane, Baton Rouge. Attendees will learn how to pray for stubborn personal and family problems. For more information, email claude-ccc@cox.net.

Metairie Retreats – The Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, 5500 St. Mary St., Metairie, will host the following retreats in July: Friday, July 8 – Sunday, July 10, “Finding Afresh the God of Our Longing,” with Father Simeon Gallagher OFMCap; Thursday, July 21 – Wednesday, July 27, “Come to the Quiet – Directed Retreat with Spiritual Center.” For more information and to register, visit retreats.arch-no.org or call 504-267-9604.

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After an initial meeting with the neighbors in May where several concerns were aired, diocesan officials huddled with the architects and presented a dramatically revised drawing at the second meeting. Those plans, as revealed by Kelly Alexander, media liaison for the diocese, call for moving the archives building and parking lot onto a section of the property that would not require rezoning, the removal of a metal maintenance building that neighbors found offensive, moving the archives building to the rear of the property that would allow a 70-foot setback from the edge of the archives building to the closest neighbors’ house, additional landscaping and the preservation of nearly seven-tenths of an acre for green space.

“This type of building represents the minimal intrusion onto the neighborhood,” Ingraham said. “You only have three (staff members) working there.”

A significant portion of the meeting was focused on the zoning issue and its potential ramifications. Architect Richard Brown said the original plan submitted to the East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Commission showed the building as being on property zoned A-1, which is for residential use. The property which the Catholic Life Center and Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center are located is already zoned A-1.

However, it was then the planning commission discovered the clerical error. The architect’s error left some of the property designed as Small Planning Unit Development (SPUD), which was required for the site’s existence.

However, by moving the entire project onto the SPUD property, no rezoning is needed.

“When we met with some of the immediate neighbors, one of the main concerns was rezoning setting a precedent,” architect Henry Carville said. “If we had set a precedent to rezone this parcel, then other people along Perkins (Road) could (potentially) rezone on Parker. By doing an amended SPUD, which is perfectly appropriate, there is no rezoning the property.”

Philip Baker, who lives on Hundred Oaks Drive, and others also complained that they were never told of diocesan plans to eventually build an archives building on the site, especially during rezoning hearings when the Sisters of St. Joseph built their residence.

“The architect pointed out that if the property was sold to a developer, then up to six homes could possibly be built on the site. ‘I’m 83-years old and have lived (in the area) all of my life,’ said Harold Bahlinger, who lives on nearby Edward Street. ‘I’ve seen good changes and I’ve seen some real sad changes.’

“To me, we have bigger things to fight about (such as smaller developments) than what we have here. The diocese has been here for 50 years and has been good neighbors. The sisters have been good neighbors.”

Harold Bahlinger
Area resident

Ingraham pointed out the property sold was to be used by the nuns and the “architect would have been completely incorrect to make a statement (regarding) plans for the diocese.”

“Our need was not for many more years,” he added. “We owned the property since 1966 with the understanding it would be for future needs. ‘The nuns need was more immediate.’

Responding to another question, Ingraham said that if for whatever reason the planning commission and ultimately the Metro Council did not approve the building, the diocese likely would be forced to sell the property in order to raise the funds to buy another parcel of land to accommodate the archives.

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“I think (the architects) took our list (from the earlier meeting) and went back and addressed them and make some very good adjustments,” he added.

Ingraham and Ann Boltin, director of archives for the diocese, repeatedly stressed the importance of the new building, saying there is simply no available space left in the Catholic Life Center.

Bolton said her department is currently storing records and artifacts in one tiny vault and three small closets.

Brown said the proposed building would contain 5,000 square feet of storage space, 2,500 square for the staff and about 500 square feet for a reception/entrance area.

Boltin pointed out the building would be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and would not be open at night or on weekends. She said researchers and other visitors are seen by appointment only.

In response to a question regarding the traffic impact, she said for the past several years, her department has averaged 1.5 visitors per week.

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