CHAO IN HAITI

Nuns return to view devastation

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

“I still have it in my heart,” said Sister Martha Ann Abshire FMOL of her love of Haiti and its people. After Hurricane Matthew hit southwestern Haiti on Oct. 4, killing hundreds of people and leaving a path of devastation, Sister Martha Ann went back to the island where she served several years in missionary work.

Sister Martha Ann and Sister Althea Johnis OFM moved to Haiti in 1988 looking into the possibility of starting a medical mission.

“It didn’t take long to see that the poor didn’t have access to healthcare. Nothing is free,” said Sister Martha Ann.

Shining Advent’s light into our darkness

Editor’s note: This is the first of a series of three articles exploring the Advent journey from darkness to light and how Advent is a good time to evangelize.

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Waiting in the dark can make people feel like they are in a horror flick fearing “What happens next?” Or their heart is broken in the final scene of a melancholy drama when their love interest is “gone.” Or, as is the case with power outages in recent flooding in south Louisiana, that “normal” life is disrupted.

By patiently allowing Advent to unfold from darkness to light, one will develop a deep faith that will evangelize others, according to Dina DePaula, director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Even the time of year lends itself to the concept of waiting in darkness as the days are shorter, said DePaula.

There are different kinds of darkness – the closing of the eyes to the truth, and the even deeper spiritual darkness of walking away from God’s will.

DePaula pointed out that St. Paul, once again, admonishes people, “Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as la. “It can be like wandering in the desert (that the Israelites did in the Old Testament).”

She added, “We are sleeping. St. Paul says, ‘Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light’” (Eph 5:14).

There are different kinds of darkness – the closing of the eyes to the truth, and the even deeper spiritual darkness of walking away from God’s will.

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Saintly cure

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Feeling a bit feverish? Or the stone you are trying to shape into something artistic is not cooperating?

Perhaps a prayer to St. Castorius, who is the patron saint of sculptors, fever and cattle, might be in order.

Legend plays a large role in the life and even death of St. Castorius, who is known as one of the “four crowned martyrs” that include Caludius, Nicostratus and Symphorian. All four were carvers in Sirmium, which later became Mitrovia. Their works were apparently good enough to impress Diocletian, a Roman emperor during the third century and the early years of the fourth century.

Diocletian commissioned the four artists for several carvings, and apparently the works met with his approval. But trouble began to set in when he asked them to carve a statue of Aesculapius, a son of Apollo and a doctor of medicine in ancient Greek mythology. Based on their own Christian beliefs, the four carvers refused and ultimately they were imprisoned.

Lampadius, one of Diocletian’s officers, attempted to convince the artists to carve the desired statue but they continued to refuse. When Lampadius suddenly died, his relatives blamed the sculptors for his death and to appease the family, Diocletian had St. Castorius, Claudius, Nicostratus and Symphorian executed.

However, according to a different legend, the four were beaten to death in Rome with leaden whips, buried and later given their names by Pope Militiades. It is believed they are buried in the Four Crowns basilica.

To this day, however, confusion continues to reign regarding the “four crowned martyrs.” St. Castorius’ feast day is Nov. 8.

A season of preparation

By Dina DePaula

House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD! (Is 2:5)

Our liturgical year begins with a mindset of awakening, harmonizing and preparing. The readings from Isaiah, St. Paul and the Gospel of Matthew open our minds and hearts as we journey through Advent with our sights fixed on the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Awakening

Despite the fact that our eyes are open, are we truly “awake”? The days are filled with details, data and duties. These can lead to productive moments and times of growth but can also be distractions from what is truly important: being conscious to our calling as followers of Jesus. St. Paul reminds us to put on the “armor of light.” This light is the radiance of our God, shining forth for the entire world to see. It begins with the star over Bethlehem which acts as a beacon calling pilgrims to encounter the Word made flesh.

DID YOU KNOW

‘Roped’ into marriage

“Tying the knot” has become a familiar part of our wedding parlance but in some cultures a rope, or cord, is an important part of the marriage ceremony.

Known as the wedding lazo, or yugal, the cord is often made in the shape of a rope, or cord, is an important part of the marriage ceremony.

Before the nuptial blessing, friends or family form the lazo into a figure-eight shape and place it around the neck, wrist or shoulder areas of the bride and groom, who remain kneeling. Traditionally, the groom is the first to be lassoed, and the cord is held in place by pins.

The lazo is removed before Confirmation by the same individuals who initially placed it around the couple. According to specific cultures, the cord represents the unification of the bride and groom in the sacrament of matrimony for the rest of their lives.

There is also a ritual with three strands of cord used by the bride and groom. One end of the cord has a metal ring which is held by the groom, while the bride braids the strands. During this time, the significance of the braiding may be read or a wedding song sung.

The braid, which symbolizes the “yoke of marriage,” is held in place by a rubber band, then a gold thread.

The practice is found most common in Mexico, the Philippines and Spain.

Originally approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2010, the practice was approved in the bishops’ English translation in the Order of Celebrating Matrimony released in September.

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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

Nov. 30 Rev. Thomas P. Duhe Dcn. James A. Little Br. Xavier Werneth
Dec. 1 Rev. Matthew C. Dupre Dcn. Falon Lorenz Sr. Janet Franklin CSJ
Dec. 3 Rev. Denis O. Ekwugha Dcn. Robert McDonner Sr. Carol Gonsoulin CSJ
Dec. 5 Rev. Michael A. Galea Dcn. Larry J. Melancon Sr. Mary Joel Gubler OP
Dec. 9 Rev. Paul A. Gros Dcn. Leon Roy Murphy Jr. Sr. Joan Hartlaub CSJ
Dec. 11 Rev. Robert Halter Dcn. Roger A. Navarra Sr. Mary Anne Hebert CSJ
Dec. 13 Rev. Ray Hebert SC Dcn. Ricky P. Oubre Sr. Anna Hoang ICM

DID YOU KNOW

‘Roped’ into marriage

“Tying the knot” has become a familiar part of our wedding parlance but in some cultures a rope, or cord, is an important part of the marriage ceremony.

Known as the wedding lazo, or yugal, the cord is often made in the shape of a loop of rosary beads and traditionally made out of white stain or perhaps silk.

There is also a ritual with three strands of cord used by the bride and groom. One end of the cord has a metal ring which is held by the groom, while the bride braids the strands. During this time, the significance of the braiding may be read or a wedding song sung.

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Bishop Robert W. Muench Publisher
Father Tom Ranzino Associate Publisher
Richard Meek Editor
Debbie Shelley Assistant Editor

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Year of Mercy helped Catholics focus on the Gospel message

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Catholics were offered an opportunity to deepen their own faith as well as extend invitations to those who may feel isolated from the church to return to their spiritual roots during the recently concluded Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, according to Darryl Ducote, director of the Marriage and Family Life Department for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Admittedly difficult to accurately quantify, Ducote said he believes the year fulfilled the mission as envisioned by Pope Francis.

“I think it did raise consciousness across the diocese about the importance of mercy and the centrality of mercy, meaning that (mercy) is really at the heart of the Gospel message,” Ducote said. “That God offers us mercy and forgiveness because he wants a relationship with us.”

The Year of Mercy, which was called by Pope Francis, opened Dec. 8 on the feast of the Immaculate Conception with the opening of the Holy Door at the Vatican and various Holy Doors throughout dioceses worldwide. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge Holy Doors were opened at St. Joseph Cathedral and St. Michael the Archangel Church in Convent, both of which were closed Nov. 13.

Catholics were invited to make pilgrimages to either church and enter through the Holy Door, earning a plenary indulgence. Pope Francis closed the Vatican Holy Door Nov. 20.

In announcing the Year of Mercy, the pontiff invited Catholics to a deeper conversation but also a return to the sacrament of confession and to look at themselves through a merciful lens.

“My opinion is that this is a beautiful reflection of the whole tone of Pope Francis’ papacy,” Ducote said. “It seems to me that after Vatican II there was a bit of backlash by some elements within the church that Vatican II had taken the church too far.”

“In order to kind of counter balance that, there was an emphasis on orthodoxy and doctrine. And I think what Pope Francis has done is re-emphasize the heart of the Gospel message. It’s not about dogma as much as it is about people and extending God’s mercy in a pastoral to the people of the church and to those outside of the church who are also looking for healing.”

Launching the Lenten Series
One Book, One Church

The One Book, One Church series was so popular that Ducote said another is planned for Lent 2017, with the discussion centered on a book written by The Catholic Commentator columnist Father Ron Rolheiser.

Other Year of Mercy activities included The Catholic Commentator publishing a series of stories on the corporal works of mercy and columnist Father John Carville writing a series on the spiritual works of mercy. Additionally, CatholicLife TV aired a monthly series focused on the different aspects of mercy.

“The goal of the videos was to redirect Catholics toward mercy by accepting of people where they were in their faith without judging them and attempting to invite them back into the church,” Ducote said. “Hopefully it’s had enough of an impact that it makes people more aware of the need to extend mercy both to ourselves in accepting God’s mercy and extending mercy to others as a part of our ordinary Catholic spirituality.

The diocesan youth conference held in the spring also focused on mercy.

In the wake of a contentious election cycle, one that ended with the election of President-elect Donald Trump, Ducote admitted that mercy is important at this point in history because the country is so deeply divided. He said he is not sure how the country will be able to heal without an emphasis on mercy, and “trying to understand the other person’s hurt and trying to address that hurt in a compassionate way.”

“That was the overall theme: Be merciful like the father.”

Time of mercy: Holy doors close, but mission of mercy continues

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Year of Mercy brought more than 20 million pilgrims to Rome, but for Pope Francis, the idea always was that the celebration of God’s mercy would be local: have people experience God’s love in their parishes and send them out into the world to commit random acts of mercy.

While concrete works of mercy have a social impact, Pope Francis’ idea was deeply connected to evangelization, which is why Rome jubilee events were organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. The pope had said he wanted the Holy Year to be “a new step on the church’s journey in her mission to bring the Gospel of mercy to each person.”

The pope’s constant refrain during the Year of Mercy, which began Dec. 8, 2015, was that no one is excluded from the mercy of God, who has shown his love for each person by sacrificing his son for the salvation of all. All can be forgiven, the pope taught over and over again. And once a person experiences just how loving and merciful God has been, the obligation is to reach out to others with that same love and mercy.

Pope Francis made no claim to having invented a church focus on divine mercy. The evangelical trend was already clearly present when St. John Paul II wrote an encyclical letter on mercy in 1980 and when he beatified and then canonized Sister Faustina Kowalska, known as the “Apostle of Divine Mercy.”

“I believe this is the time of mercy,” Pope Francis told reporters traveling with him to Brazil in 2013 on his first foreign trip as pope. “The church is mother. She must go out and heal wounds with mercy.”

For Pope Francis personally and for all Catholics that healing is expressed most powerfully in the confessionals where one is honest about one’s sins and where God’s forgiveness and mercy are expressed through sacramental absolution.

The pope formally commissioned more than 1,100 priests from around the world as “missionaries of mercy” on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10, giving them special faculties to grant absolution even in cases that usually must be referred to the local bishop or even the Vatican.

Along with processions to the Holy Door in St. Peter’s Basilica and a meeting with Pope Francis, all of the major jubilee events in Rome included extended hours for confession. It was part of all the large jubilee events, including those for children, for people in mourning, for deacons, priests, the sick, youths, catechists, prisoners and for papal nuncios – the pope’s ambassadors around the world.

As he has done before, ignoring the cameras, Pope Francis himself went to confession during a special Lenten penance service in St. Peter’s Basilica and again in August in Assisi when he celebrated the traditional “Pardon of Assisi.”

Setting an example did not stop at the church doors, though. One Friday each month throughout the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis quietly left the Vatican – without informing the media – and spent the late afternoon and early evening making visits reflecting the traditional corporal works of mercy.

The visits took him, among other places, to a community for persons recovering from addiction, a hospice, a hospital neonatal care unit and to an apartment on the outskirts of Rome where he met with men and women who have left the priesthood to marry and have children.

A highlight of the year was the canonization of Mother Teresa of Kolkata, an event that brought some 120,000 people to St. Peter’s Square in September.

In his homily, Pope Francis said, “God is pleased by every act of mercy because in the brother or sister that we assist, we recognize the face of God which no one can see.”

“Each time we bend down to the needs of our brothers and sisters,” he said, “we give Jesus something to eat and drink; we clothe, we help and we visit the Son of God.”

Preaching God’s mercy has been a central focus of Pope Francis’ ministry since his election in March 2013, and the closing of the Holy Door in St. Peter’s Basilica Nov. 20 will not end that focus.

Celebrating a jubilee Mass Nov. 13 with the homeless and other people in precarious situations, Pope Francis prayed that as the Holy Doors in some 10,000 cathedrals, shrines and churches around the world were closed, God would open people’s eyes and hearts to the needs of others.
Catholics’ postelection to-do list: work for unity, healing

WASHINGTON (CNS) — All the distrust, vitriol and rancor stirred up during the 2016 presidential election campaign did not go away when votes were tallied. The Nov. 8 election’s outcome prompting dozens of protests across the country.

Political leaders, including Hillary Clinton, President-elect Donald Trump and President Barack Obama, acknowledged the disunity and urged people after the election to try to work together.

Catholic leaders have been making similar pleas, not only for the nation, but also recognizing the division that exists among the church’s own members who split their vote 45 percent for Clinton and 52 percent for Trump.

Four days before the election, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, told a Catholic group in Arlington, Virginia, that regardless of the election’s outcome, “our country will remain deeply divided and those divisions are, to a very real extent, also reflected within our own Catholic faith community.”

The question before Catholics, he said, is whether we will be “a source of unity and reconciliation, or whether we will be a cause of further division.”

Putting it even more succinctly was an Election Day tweet by Cardinal-designate Joseph W. Tobin of Indianapolis: “Whatever happens at the polls, God will reign. Our work begins tomorrow, building bridges and healing wounds.”

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said: “Every election brings a new beginning. Some may wonder whether the country can reconcile, work together and fulfill the promise of a more perfect union. Through the hope Christ offers, I believe God will give us the strength to heal and unite.”

And Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of the Catholic social justice lobbying organization Network, said her faith dictates that “now, more than ever, we need to mend our differences of opinion revealed in this election ‘should never be allowed to become occasions of separation and rupture. Disagreement is an invitation to encounter, dialogue and to witness to the faith we presumably share.’”

“Postelection, at the parish level, how wonderful it would be if we could engage each other dispassionately in calm rational dialogue about our differences with regard to the candidates,” said the priest, who is currently writing a book, “Hurting in the Church: A Way Forward for Wounded Catholics.”

Zach Flanagan, a professor of theology and religious studies at St. Mary’s College of California in Moraga, similarly suggested old-fashioned dialogue saying Catholics should take their cue from Pope Francis who has spent a good part of his pontificate accompanying people and listening to them.

“It’s incumbent at a time like this when there is so much division that we sit down and listen to people,” he told CNS on Election Day.

One way for this to happen in parishes which he said “can be as divided as communities” would be in for parishes to host dinners where parishioners have the chance to talk to each other about what matters to them. They might not agree with each other, he said, but they will likely come away respecting the other person.

Sherry Weddell, co-founder of the Catherine of Siena Institute, a group of students not to give up.

“Getting students from anger, where I still am, to thinking about the future, is something we’re striving to do,” she said.

Our Lady of the Lake Hospital has been recognized as one of the best in the nation by U.S. News and World Report in its 2016-17 “Best Hospitals” rankings.

Ben Harder, chief of analysis at U.S. News & World Report, said the publication evaluates 5,000 hospitals nationwide.

Out of 210 hospitals in Louisiana, OLOL ranked best in Baton Rouge and second in the state. The hospital earned a “high performing” designation in a state-high seven adult procedures and conditions, including abdominal aortic aneurysm repair, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), colon cancer surgery, heart bypass surgery, heart failure, hip replacement and knee replacement.

“Getting students from an -

Feast of St. Lucy: Patron Saint of Diseases of the Eye

In honor of the Feast of St. Lucy, patron saint of diseases of the eye, Father Cleo Milano will celebrate a special Mass at Our Lady of Mercy Church, 445 Marquette Avenue, Baton Rouge Tuesday, December 13 at 6 p.m.

The novena prayer to St. Lucy will be prayed. All eye care professionals are invited to attend as is anyone experiencing illnesses or diseases of the eye. A special blessing will be given and the traditional Italian St. Lucy bread will be distributed.
Archbishop calls for bishops’ racism statement given election tension

Baltimore (CNS) – Earlier this year, as communities faced tensions, protests and violence, following a spate of shootings and killings of black men by police, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, asked dioceses across the country to observe a day of prayer for peace.

He also wanted the bishops to look for ways they could help the suffering communities, as well as police affected by the incidents.

To that end, he appointed a special task force to explore ways of promoting peace and healing around the country and named Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta to head it.

On Nov. 14, Archbishop Gregory urged bishops gathered in Baltimore at the USCCB’s fall general assembly to issue, sooner rather than later, a document on racism.

“A statement from the full body of bishops on racism is increasingly important at this time,” said Archbishop Gregory.

He urged that the Administrative Committee of the country’s bishops, “in collaboration with relevant standing committees, do all it can to expedite the drafting and approval of the statement on racism currently contemplated in the 2017-2020 strategic plan, given the urgency of the present moment.”

He said the president of the bishops’ conference and relevant committees need to “identify opportunities for a shorter-term statement on these issues, particularly in the context of the postelection uncertainty and disaffection.”

He also urged prayer, ecumenical and interfaith collaboration, dialogue, parish-based and diocesan conversations and training, as well as opportunities for encounter.

In a news conference that followed his afternoon presentation and ended the first day of the bishops’ assembly, Archbishop Gregory said he was concerned about the communities that were disrupted by violence and riots after the police shootings earlier this summer. Some of these communities are experiencing reactions and tensions brought about by the election results, he said.

“It’s the hope of the task force, of people of goodwill, that the demonstrations don’t turn violent,” he said.

American society has the ability to give opinions on social matters through various forms of expression, including protests, but “what we pray for is that those expressions of frustrations don’t provide another vehicle for violence.”

Tensions had been high enough in July, when Archbishop Kurtz had said the Catholic Church needed to “walk with and help these suffering communities” that had been affected by the shootings and the riots protesting them that followed.

“I have stressed the need to look toward additional ways of nurturing an open, honest and civil dialogue on issues of race relations, restorative justice, mental health, economic opportunity, and addressing the question of pervasive gun violence,” Archbishop Kurtz said at the time. He said he wanted the work of the task force to help embrace the suffering of the communities, to nurture peace and build bridges of communication and mutual aid in local communities.

The recommendations, said Archbishop Gregory, were examined before the recent elections and all the tensions and protests that have followed. The recommendations were related to race and violence issues that resulted from the summer shootings and riots.

Archbishop Gregory expressed hope that the church could help foster dialogue and bring healing by working with communities for a lasting peace.

“The disruptions (to the) communities that sparked the establishment of the task force have been going on for at least two years,” he said. “Violence against people of color is a lot longer than two years. ... The reaction to the election, it’s added to that tension.”

He said he was praying and hoping that “expressions of frustration, of anger, of disapproval” don’t continue to disrupt the social fabric of those communities.

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The Catholic Commentator

November 25, 2016

PROMOTING RACIAL HARMONY – The Diocesan Racial Harmony Commission met Nov. 12 at the Catholic Life Center for a workshop on Racial Sobriety. Father Clarence E. Williams Jr. CPPS, PhD, is founder of the popular program that is designed to educate leaders in race relations. He has produced national satellite teleconferences and has trained people throughout the world on how to recover from cultures that avoid the conversation of race due to fear, ignorance and guilt. The Racial Sobriety program is one of several the commission is exploring as it continues its work. Bishop Robert W. Muench appointed the commission after the tragic events of the past summer. Pictured are, from left, Father Williams; Bishop Muench; Father Josh Johnson, parochial vicar at St. Aloysius; Deacon Alfred Adams, director of the Diocesan Office of Black Catholics; Father Tom Clark SJ, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Baton Rouge and Sister Adele Lambert CSJ. Father Johnson and Father Clark are co-chairs of the commission, which has 11 members. Photo provided by Deacon Dan Borné

Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools Office

Principal Opening

St. Elizabeth Catholic School

Paincourtville, LA

St. Elizabeth Catholic School was founded in 1876 and currently serves 233 students in Grades PK3 – 8. With 15 professional staff members, the school operates as a Catholic Christian family devoted to spiritual growth and academic excellence in a caring and safe environment. The school recently completed the self-study process for district reaccreditation.

St. Elizabeth Catholic School is part of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, which has thirty schools in eight civil parishes. There is a strong Catholic identity focus in all schools. The district is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (AdvancED). All schools work together to Evangelize Hearts, Educate Minds, Encourage Talent and Embrace the Future

Applicants who meet the following criteria will be considered for an Interim Principal Position for 2016-17 or a Principal Position for 2017-18:

1. Practicing Catholic
2. Minimum of 5 years of experience in education, preferably in Catholic schools
3. Demonstrated Leadership Ability
4. Qualifications to meet the Non Public certification requirements for Louisiana

Mail resume, copies of all college transcript(s) showing degrees and three letters of recommendation to:
St. Elizabeth Catholic School Principal Search
Catholic Schools Office
P.O. Box 2028
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028

Deadline: Applications will be considered as received for Interim Principal (2016-17) Applications for Principal (2017-18) must be received by March 15, 2017

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.
John the Baptist and original sin/Morality in warfare

Q My husband was an officer in Vietnam, and he gave an order that probably killed several of the enemy. He says that, if he had to do it over, he would do it again in order to save his men. But he doesn’t expect to ever go to heaven. Is he right? (Greensboro, North Carolina)

A At the time of the Vietnam conflict, opinions varied as to its moral propriety, although Pope Paul VI argued strongly for the cessation of the conflict by negotiation and consistently tried to bring the warring parties to the table. In 1968, the U.S. Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter calling upon Congress to allow selective conscientious objection. But at the same time, Catholics were never prohibited from participating in the hostilities. So it could well be that your husband was involved in any such atrocity; he sought only to protect the men in his charge who were under attack.

It saddens me that he feels he has forfeited any chance of eternal salvation; I can’t even imagine what a heavy burden that must be. Why not suggest that he talk to a priest, be assured of God’s mercy and perhaps confess any moral misjudgments he may have made, if there were any.

Q Recently, while watching EWTN, I heard a priest say that some theologians now believe that John the Baptist was born without original sin. This was new information for me, but then I looked at the Gospel of Luke (1:15) where the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah that his son John will be “filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb.” I asked my local priest and he said that many people are great and holy but only Mary was born without original sin. What is the current thinking of the church? Is there something new that I missed? (Clinton, New Jersey)

A Other than Jesus, only the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin. That is the defined doctrine of the church, which is celebrated on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. With regard to John the Baptist, there has never been any definitive declaration by the church (by way of a conciliar statement or infallible papal pronouncement) that he was born free of original sin. However and it may not be generally known by Catholics there is a common and long-held belief within the church that this is so. That belief is based on the scriptural passage that you cite (Gabriel’s words to Zechariah) and also on Luke 1:41 where, upon Mary’s visiting Elizabeth, the baby (John) recognized Jesus and “leaped” in Elizabeth’s womb. The Catholic Encyclopedia says: “As the presence of any sin whatever is incompatible with the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul, it follows that at this moment John was cleansed from the stain of original sin.”

Nearly every saint’s feast day is celebrated on the day of the person’s death, the day presumed to mark that saint’s entrance into heaven. The only two exceptions are Our Lady and John the Baptist, who both have feast days marking their births; long ago, St. Augustine noted that the reason for this is the church’s common belief that John entered the world freed (in the womb) from original sin.

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 30 Columbia Circle Dr. Albany, New York 12203.
Come Lord Jesus helps people of all ages strengthen their faith

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Youth and adults in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are pulled away from the worldly culture and exposed to the truths of who Jesus is and his teachings in the Come Lord Jesus program, developed by Father Conley Bertrand of the Diocese of Lafayette.

As a newly ordained priest in 1959, Father Bertrand sought to convey his love for prayer and Scripture. He worked until 1969 with various programs that eventually fell apart.

“After ten years of that I got the inspiration to set the most beautiful inspirational texts I could find into a program,” said Father Bertrand.

While meeting with a youth group as pastor at Our Lady of the Lake Church in Delcambre, Father Bertrand added a song, spontaneous prayer and spiritual readings to complete the 12 steps of his program. The program blossomed and is now presented in several states and other countries. Some schools and groups have been meeting for more than 40 years. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, there are six school groups and 12 adult groups, with a combined 121 members.

The program includes the readings for the upcoming Sunday Mass, which helps people prepare for the sacred celebration, and creates a tie between Scripture study and the liturgy, said Father Bertrand.

The program also emphasizes prayer and community through the sharing of stories and the Eucharist.

“There are many good programs that teach about the Bible, which is excellent, but we urge people to study the word, to wrestle with the words of Jesus,” Father Bertrand said.

Participants are encouraged to think about what specific steps they will take to implement the lessons they learn.

At St. Aloysius School in Baton Rouge, where parent volunteers teach the program to eighth-graders on Wednesdays, students said they are learning about the different outlook of the group members. An activity is also included to emphasize the message of the readings, and they participate in an offsite retreat in the spring.

“It encourages you to hang out with people you wouldn’t hang out with,” said Jack Schielow.


“It’s fun to see everyone’s perspective about the Gospel reading,” said Mary Margaret Nettine.

The meetings mean so much to the students. They were kinder to each other and more eager to pray.

She smiled and said, “You think you are doing this for the kids.” She realized after she no longer led the group she missed that time. Lisette Borne, who was instrumental in bringing Come Lord Jesus to the diocese, approached her about joining an adult group.

Ristoph said she always attended church, but as a young adult felt herself drifting in her faith. She said Come Lord Jesus awakened her spiritually.

“How can I have been so sleepy for so long?” asked Ristoph, who exudes a vibrant faith.

The program focuses on the virtues of witnessing the faith; loving one another; and giving glory to God.

Dr. Mary-Nell Anderson, who converted to Catholicism, was also a leader of a SAS Come Lord Jesus group.

“It was a very enriching experience with the young people. I felt like we were all blessed, but I felt more blessed because they taught me,” Anderson said.

She added, “I was Southern Baptist and learned the Bible, but I discovered through Come Lord Jesus it doesn’t matter how much Bible you know, it’s where you are spiritually.”

Carey Kearny, another former parent volunteer and adult group facilitator, said she likes hearing women of various backgrounds laughing during the meeting.

“It’s beautiful to see women who have different experiences in everyday life,” said Kearny. Patience Moreno said she likes the program’s emphasis on discipline and staying focused.

“You get a glimpse into the whole picture by using the several resources (provided),” said Moreno.

Mary Carlin, a member of the program for one year, glowed as she talked about how Come Lord Jesus sparks an excitement in her faith that she had envied in others.

“I didn’t know praying could be like that,” said Carlin. The meetings are one of her highest priorities.

The meetings mean so much that the August floodwaters could not drown the fire of faith of members of a Come Lord Jesus group in North Baton Rouge.

Nancy Watts, a member of St. Isidore Church in Baton Rouge, said even through members lost everything in the flood, they started meeting again only a few weeks after the waters receded.

“When you are able to get back to God’s word it strengthens you, it raises your spirits. He is looking at us and saying, ‘You are going to get through this. You are going to be okay,’” Watts said.

For more information about Come Lord Jesus, email cindy.ristroph@outlook.com or call 225-235-6283.
BLUE RIBBON HONORS – Four Baton Rouge schools, three from the Diocese of Baton Rouge, were selected National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2016: St. Joseph’s Academy, St. George School, St. Thomas More School and Madison Preparatory Academy, Representatives of the four schools traveled to Washington, D.C. to be recognized on Nov. 8 by the U.S. Department of Education. Pictured left to right, are, Mindy Brodhead Averitt, St. Joseph’s Academy communications director; Jack Nelson, St. George School principal; Angele Fontenot, St. George assistant principal; Ashley McDaniel, St. Thomas More School assistant principal; Dr. Judy Armstrong, St. Thomas More principal; Evelyn Pazdera, Madison Preparatory Academy founding teacher; Alisa Welsh, Madison Prep principal; Dr. Michele Lambert, SJA principal; Jan Rhorer Breen, SJA president; and Dujan Johnson, Madison Prep CEO.

Program brings joy to the elderly

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

It’s easy to like Cleo Milton.

A self-described “hugger,” the 57-year-old radiates kindness, offering an affable smile that quickly turns strangers into friends and friends into family.

But Milton is more than just a warm-hearted person you might meet on the streets of Baton Rouge.

She’s also more than just a caring and affectionate wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother.

Milton is a senior companion with the Senior Companion Program, and it’s a role some families in the Baton Rouge area may even call a hero.

"Sometimes our senior companions are the only people our clients might see all week," said Joyce Tippy, director of the Senior Companion Program, which is a community service of The Corporation for National and Community Service and Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.

Tippy explained that senior companions are volunteers 55-years-old and older who make a difference in the lives of so many by providing assistance and friendship to adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks.

“They help these adults live independently in their homes and they can also give family members or other caregivers some much needed time off so they take care of themselves, too,” she said, adding that volunteers can also qualify for a stipend from the program’s grant.

According to research provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, 88 percent of those who use the program report the service provided by senior companions helped them considerably or moderately to improve their quality of life.

For Milton, making the decision to become a senior companion was easy because she had seen how much her aunt, who was also a senior companion, was enjoying the program.

“As soon as I turned 55-years-old, I immediately called Tippy, and I told her, ‘I’m 55 today, Tippy. Sign me up,’” Milton said, laughing.

Soon, following required training and background checks, Milton was matched with “Mrs. Sherrell” who was suffering from the effects of Alzheimer’s. At first, Milton was only scheduled to visit two times a week, but as their friendship progressed, Milton, who was described by the woman’s family as “a blessing to the entire family,” was asked to help more, something she happily agreed to do.

“We would talk, read books and play cards,” said Milton, who laughed out loud when she remembered the occasional “new rules” her friend would try to incorporate into their card games.

“And she danced, too!” she added. “I was told she had some balance problems at first, but we had the music playing while I was making lunch for her one day, and the next thing I know, I look over and she is dancing. She was something else!”

In the beginning, Milton wanted to be a senior companion because it was a way to help others and it was something different from her former career as a security guard.

However, as her friendship grew with Mrs. Sherrell’s family, it was evident Milton was right where God needed her, even if it wasn’t as long as she would have liked.

“My girl, she got sick and was put in hospice,” said Milton, reaching for more tissue as her tears told the story of a friendship missed.

Milton attended the funeral of her friend at the family’s request and continues to keep in touch with them.

“Those kids, they’re my kids, too. And the same with the grandchildren. One (a 13-year-old granddaughter) texts me in the morning and says, ‘Good Morning, Miss Cleo,’ and I text her back and say, ‘Have a good day,’” she said, smiling.

Milton said this special family also made sure she was okay following the August floodwaters, even offering to “come get me out with a boat.”

While she didn’t need their assistance, Milton and her husband, who are also Hurricane Katrina evacuees, are taking some time now to rebuild their home, something that Milton is glad to finally do so she can resume her work with senior companions.

The Senior Companion Program, as part of the Senior Corps group, is just one opportunity for volunteers, age 55-years-old and older, looking for a way to help or give back to others in the community.

The Senior Corps helps showcase all of the opportunities and agencies available, which include the Foster Grandparent Program and RSVP, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service and sponsored by the AARP.

For more information, call 225-747-0689.
Pastoral agents trained in evangelizing Hispanic community at meeting

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

History was made when nearly 40 people from throughout the state of Louisiana gathered at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Retreat Center for the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry.

The meeting, held in Baton Rouge for the first time, was a training session of pastoral agents to work in the process of the V Encuentro of Hispanic Pastoral, according to Jenny Moore, who works at Christ the King Church and Catholic Center in Baton Rouge and is a member of the Southeast Regional Team for Regions V and XIV.

The meeting focused on a number of themes all focused on evangelization, including what does it mean to be a Hispanic Catholic in the United States in the 21st century, what does it means to be a Catholic in the culturally diverse church, why this is the most appropriate moment to engage in the process of the V Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry recently held in Baton Rouge. Father Capo and Olga Villar, director of the V Region of SEPI and the executive director of Hispanic Ministry of the Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama, conducted the meeting. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

Roughly 95 percent of donations aid senior religious.

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“Be faithful to your prayer life and have a sense of humor,” says Sister Rita Polchin, 87, a member of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius. This philosophy has served her well during nearly 70 years of religious life, especially as a teacher and principal in Catholic schools. Like Sister Rita, the senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests shown here—and nearly 33,000 more across the nation—have offered their lives in service and prayer. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps provide nursing care, medications, and other necessities. Please be generous.
CELEBRATING STUDENTS

EVERYDAY HEROES – Marie Claire Horozes, left, an eighth-grade student at Holy Ghost School in Hammond, recently received first place in the “Oscar Veterans” essay contest and was invited to share her winning essay with veterans from all branches of the United States military at the City of Hammond Veterans Day Lunch. Horozes, who is pictured with Sgt. Lamont, a veteran of the Korean War, wrote in her essay, “True heroes do not wear a cape, they wear a uniform. This November 11th (Veterans Day), we remember all veterans, those living and deceased, for the great service they provided us, our families and our nation.” Photo provided by Cindy Wagner | Holy Ghost School

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED – Fourth-grade students at St. Jean Vianney School in Baton Rouge, from left, Briar Lott, Blaine Rodrigue and Ashlyn Peters, use their imaginations and best candy building skills to create a structure using only candy corn and toothpicks. SJV fourth graders were challenged in science classes recently to build the tallest free-standing design they could using leftover Halloween candy. Photo provided by Bridgette DiGerolamo | St. Jean Vianney School

TOPS IN TIP – Twenty-one Sacred Heart of Jesus School students qualified to participate in the Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP). To be eligible for the program, the students in fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh grades had to score at or above 95th percentile on one or more of the ACT Aspire subtests of math, science, reading or social studies. Seventh-grade students qualifying are, front row, from left, Blake Hester, Barnabas Grandt and Jenna Wood; and back row, from left, Gabrielle Barbin, Ceci Werth, Sophia Galliery, Blake Hoffman and Hayne Cooper. Photo provided by Lisa Black Coss | Sacred Heart of Jesus School

CELEBRATING STUDENTS

CELEBRATE LIFE – Students at St. Michael the Archangel High School in Baton Rouge pray a candlelight rosary in the school’s gym during Respect Life Month in October. Organized by the school’s Warriors for Life Club, Pro-life Week is an opportunity for students to celebrate and defend life and human dignity in all forms from conception to natural death. In addition to praying the rosary and hearing from abortion survivor Sarah Zagorski of Colorado, some of the other activities hosted by the more than 100-member Warriors for Life Club included discussion opportunities on key topics, such as capital punishment, physician assisted suicide, human trafficking, bullying, depression and suicide. Photo provided by Kristi Watts | St. Michael High School

HELPING MISSIONS – Students at St. Thomas More School in Baton Rouge, from left, Macy Wascom, Harper Anne Miller, Hannah Mai, Sophia Taranto, Sophia Fugro and Mackenzie Bower smile and pose for a photo while enjoying the school’s Mission Day. Held since 1962, Mission Day is an annual fall event at STM and was started when the school’s founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph, wanted an activity that not only taught about missions, but one that provided financial assistance to them. This year, students enjoyed games and other fundraising activities to support missions in China, India and Nicaragua as well as many local organizations, including St. Agnes Missions of Charity, Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. Photo provided by Tootie Lee | St. Thomas More School

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New administrative team at Redemptorist hopes to ‘polish the jewel’

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Fulfilling a long-held desire to serve in the ministry of Catholic school administration, C.J. Laird has been tapped as the interim administrator principal at Redemptorist St. Gerard School in Baton Rouge. He will work alongside Phyllis Crawford, who was appointed associate principal of instruction, as they fill the top administrative vacancy at the school.

Laird is a graduate of Florida State University and has more than a decade of experience in education, including a multi-year stint as a public high school teacher in Houston.

After converting to Catholicism in 2009, Laird said he felt “pulled” to teach in Catholic schools. Moving to Baton Rouge (his wife’s hometown) several years ago, Laird most recently served as an assistant campus minister and civics and history teacher at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge.

“I can’t give the Catholic High administration enough credit for allowing me and encouraging me with this opportunity,” said Laird, explaining that while the move only a couple of months into the new school year was difficult, he was drawn to the “real sense of mission” at Redemptorist St. Gerard and knew it was exactly what he was ready to do.

“There is a rich tradition here. We want to tap into it and make it the jewel of the neighborhood,” he said.

Like Laird, Crawford also sees Redemptorist St. Gerard as a jewel that simply “needs some polishing.”

“Think about what this finished product will look like,” said Crawford, who, in addition to her regular administrative duties, has found herself immersed in beautifying the school. However Crawford’s effort doesn’t just mean securing help and finding donations to fix projects around the school, such as volunteers who will soon begin sprucing up a garden area. It also means helping the entire neighborhood deal with remnants of the August floodwaters.

“I have called and called and called to get the (storm) trash removed,” said Crawford, explaining that she recently had to drive down neighboring streets and write down house address numbers so garbage trucks can pick up the debris still not collected.

“Some people might think it’s all gone. But there’s so much out here. It’s just not fair,” she said.

A long-time teacher and administrator with 51 years of experience, Crawford retired from the East Baton Rouge Public School System in 2015.

“Yes, I’m retired, and I’m not here for another job. I’m not interested in a job,” she said.

Instead, her work at Redemptorist St. Gerard is a mission, she said; it’s an opportunity to give back and also an opportunity to receive.

“Everyday, I receive positive inputs from these precious children, from the parents, the teachers. It’s wonderful to see,” she said.

In the classroom, Crawford taught “the little ones” (kindergarten and first grade) for 19 years before moving into administration, serving as a principal for 32 years.

“This is why C.J. and I make a good team; he has experience with the older students, and I have experience with the young ones,” said Crawford, who, as Louisiana’s Teacher of the Year in 1983, has one accolade not many can boast about: she attended a White House luncheon with President Ronald Reagan and sat at a table with then Vice President and future President of the United States, George H. Bush.

As the leadership team at Redemptorist St. Gerard, Laird and Crawford plan to honor the school’s rich past while pushing forward and growing with their faculty, students and parents.

Moving ahead, the administration has professional development programs planned for the faculty, who Crawford commends as “talented, committed and loving.” They also will continue to look for ways to stretch their dollars and make repairs to a school which has been in the North Baton Rouge area since 1945. (A current wish list includes having the school pressure washed and finishing construction projects sparked by the heavy rains in August.)

In an area hard hit by the flooding, and one where many school families and faculty members are still recovering and starting to rebuild their own homes, it can be easy to idle, yet the new administrative team is energized.

Getting everything completed, they know, takes time, but Laird is optimistic the best is yet to come.

“I hope to be here for a long time,” he said.
By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Students at St. Jean Vianney School in Baton Rouge recently filled the parish’s newly refurbished gym, cheering and shouting to show their appreciation for a generous donation of new sports equipment and uniforms. Valued at $11,000, the items, which range from basketballs and jump ropes to lacrosse equipment and anything in between, were donated by UnitedHealthcare in partnership with Dream Builders Foundation, a non-profit that works with professional athletes in helping kids do their best. The items will replace sports equipment and uniforms the school lost in the recent floodwaters.

“Our goal is to help kids live healthy lives, and this equipment will help them stay on the path to being healthy,” said Joseph Ochipinti, president and CEO of UnitedHealthcare Gulf States Region. “We’re humbled and fortunate to be a part of this recovery,” he added.

Ochipinti was joined by UHC mascot, Dr. Health E. Hound, who was a big hit with the students, as well as other business professionals, including former Pittsburgh Steelers and LSU Tigers MVP Justin Vincent, in unveiling the donated sports equipment and uniforms to the student body on Nov. 16.

Vincent, who volunteers with Dream Builders, was excited to talk to the students and share his knowledge about living a healthy lifestyle. He said during his career as a college and professional athlete he learned a great deal about eating right and why it’s important to make good choices about diet and exercise.

“I grew up eating rice and gravy, and today I’m all about eating vegetables. I’m not saying rice and gravy and that kind of food is bad for you, but it’s important to eat it in moderation. That’s the key,” Vincent said.

During the presentation, several students participated in relay races, which not only incorporated some of the new equipment, but also allowed them to show off their skills and have fun at the same time.

Wendy Gilmore, principal of SJV, said the donation has been a tremendous help, bringing more than just new sports items to the school.

“Like many people who have experienced the flood and the sadness that comes along with it, when someone you don’t even know comes to you and wants to help your community, it just lifts your spirits,” she said.

Braylen Snerling, a kindergarten student at St. Jean Vianney School in Baton Rouge, finishes a forward roll during the start of relay races in the school’s gym. Snerling and other students were having fun and enjoying a variety of sports equipment recently donated to the school. Photo by Rachele Smith | The Catholic Commentator

SAINTLY STORIES – Students at St. Francis Xavier Interparochial School shared information about various saints during the school’s Mass on All Saints Day. Pictured from left, Lonnie Brand as St. Francis Xavier, Joseph Murphy as St. Joseph, Stori Woodruff as St. Katherine Drexel and Trishten Ashford as Saint Teresa of Calcutta and Sister Rosalind Barbeneaux, a religion teacher at the school who sponsored the event. All students are in the fifth grade. Photo provided by Paula Fabre | St. Francis Xavier School

BOTTLING UP THE SAINTS – Students at St. John Interparochial School in Plaquemine displayed their creativity in the celebration of All Saints Day. Upbeat music was performed as students processed in for the celebration of Mass at St. Clement Chapel. Sixth-grade students took on the persona of their chosen saint as if the saint was visiting the classroom. The seventh graders brought supplies from home and constructed bottled saints, above. Eighth-graders presented a lesson on the Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead and made remembrance boxes to celebrate their saint’s life. During his homily, St. John pastor Father Greg Daigle did a special homily related to saints and used the bottle saints that were on display. Photo provided by Beth Burcher | St. John Interparochial School

MASS SCHEDULES 2017

Coming in the December 23 issue of The Catholic Commentator

The Mass Schedules has

- The most current schedules for the churches in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
- The most current clergy, phone numbers, mailing and email addresses, directions to the churches and website names.
- Index Masses both alphabetically by towns and by time of day.
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November 25, 2016
Boo! A Madea Halloween
Lionsgate

The language-fracturing violence-threatening moral force in a muumuu (played, of course, by writer-director Tyler Perry) still gives out with the buckering and the lightning-fast asides. But Perry’s script gives her little to do other than to mingle with college students and trash-talk with her elderly friends. The hammer-wielding harried quaint, unsuccessfully, to prevent the 17-year-old niece (Diamond White) she’s minding from attending a raucous fraternity party. Once defied, she turns up at the shindig herself, a product line of plastic dolls, directors Mike Mitchell and Walt Dohrn’s infectious fun 3-D fable feels more like a party than a commercial. As the titular creatures sing, dance and group hug their way through the story, screenwriters Jonathan Abel and Glenn Berger promote loyalty and teamwork as well as the transformative power of romance. Only the looming threat of one set of characters consuming another, along with touches of slightly naughty humor, indicate that this is not a good choice for the smallest moviegoers. A flash of rear nudity, brief scatological humor and wordplay, a few very mild oaths. A-II; PG-13

Almost Christmas
Universal

By turns raucous and sentimental, this ensemble comedy charts the efforts of a recently widowed family patriarch (Danny Glover) to keep the peace as his composite relatives gather for the holiday. The principal challenge to his desire for harmony comes from the longstanding rivalry between his two daughters (Kimberly Elise and Gabrielle Union). But the roving eye of his son-in-law (JB Smoove) as well as the unresolved grief and consequent prescription-drug addiction of his youngest child (Jessie T. Usher) also threaten to cause yuletide disruption. So too does the sassy tongue of his goodhearted sister-in-law (MoNique). As the dysfunction-driven proceedings follow their predictable path, writer-director David E. Talbert uses flashbacks to showcase the model marriage Glover’s character enjoyed. And his script sends the whole clan to an upbeat church service and some of its members to help out at a homeless shelter. Dialogue larded with vulgarity, however, taints this otherwise crowd-pleasing — if easily forgotten — treat. Off-screen adultery, drug use, some sexual humor, a few instances of profanity, a handful of milder oaths, frequent crude and crass language. A-III; PG-13

Trolls
Fox

Loopy but charming animated comedy in which two Trolls, one (voice of Anna Kendrick) an irrepressibly sunny optimist, the other (voice of Justin Timberlake) a perpetual worrier set out to rescue a group of their friends (voiced by, among others, James Corden and Gwen Stefani) who have been kidnapped by an evil chef (voice of Christine Baranski) from a race of Troll-eating giants called Bergens. The outcome of the duo’s quest turns on the secret, seemingly hopeless love harbored by the crook’s sensitive — and much put-upon - scullery maid (voice of Zooey Deschanel) for the young king (voiced by Christopher Mintz-Plasse) of the Bergens. Though its origins with a product line of plastic dolls, directors Mike Mitchell and Walt Dohrn’s infectious fun 3-D fable feels more like a party than a commercial. As the titular creatures sing, dance and group hug their way through the story, screenwriters Jonathan Abel and Glenn Berger promote loyalty and teamwork as well as the transformative power of romance. Only the looming threat of one set of characters consuming another, along with touches of slightly naughty humor, indicate that this is not a good choice for the smallest moviegoers. A flash of rear nudity, brief scatological humor and wordplay, a few very mild oaths. A-II; PG-13

The Edge of Seventeen
STX

There’s a strong whiff of exploitation about this comedic portrait of an exceptionally foul-mouthed 17-year-old high school student (Hailee Steinfeld) who’s obsessed with sex and eventually finds herself in a situation that may make viewers wonder who the target audience for this movie really is. Still grieving the untimely death of her idolized father (Eric Christian Olsen), the protagonist faces a further shock when she finds her brother (Blake Jenner) in bed with her best friend (Haley Lu Richardson), a discovery that snaps her bonds with both. She explores the beginning of a dating relationship with a shy and equally awkward peer (Hayden Szeto) while at the same time pining for a scruffy bad boy (Alexander Calvert) who has only one thing on his mind. Writer-director Kelly Fremon Craig’s film, which also features Woody Harrelson as a sympathetic teacher, is a verbal onslaught that culminates with creepy action. A semi-graphic sexual assault, implied nonmarital sexual activity, underage drinking, pervasive rough, crude and crass language. O; R
Resilience when life capsizes

I wasn’t familiar with the Los Angeles-based duo Frenshyr, but “Capsize,” their collaboration with songwriter/vocalist Emily Warren, caught my attention. The group has an electronics sound, with an overlay of “beachy, tropical flavors.”

Frenshyr’s Brett Hite stated that the song “meant something very different to all three of us, so we each wrote about something different in the two verses; ironically, that is the version that felt most truthful and cohesive in the end.”

“Cohesive” is not exactly the word I would use to describe the song’s story, but it appears to present a perspective on a romantic breakup. The song’s character finds himself “up at night” because “it haunts me” and is swimming against the tide of “falling in love.”

As we forgive ourselves, we access the important spiritual quality of resilience, a spiritual power that God has placed in each of our souls.

Resilience also thrives in a climate of gentle, quiet optimism. We don’t give up ourselves because we know that God never gives up on us.

Indeed, there may be hurt, even grief, over the consequences of a mistake, but no mistake ever defines our lives. The power of the Holy Spirit is always given to us when we ask, and through this creative presence of God, newness can occur.

We are not bound by what happened in the past but are free to take in the power of God in the present. One step at a time, we can re-create our lives with the knowledge gained from the past and the support of God’s help in the present.

All of this adds up to lots of resilience, a power for renewal and healing dwelling in our souls. The song’s character cannot resurrect his “capsized” romance, but if his heart remains open to the newness will help him establish additional loving connections with others. He will have rediscovered the promise and potential that God originally placed in his life. It’s time to be resilient!

MARTIN is an Indiana pastoral counselor who reviews current music for Catholic News Service. Write to: cmartin@hughes.net, or: 7225 West CR, 200 South, Rockport, IN 47635, or like this column on Facebook at “Charlie Martin’s Today’s Music Columns.”

Sung by Frenshyr featuring Emily Warren | Copyright © 2016, Columbia

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**CAPSIZE**

**UP AT NIGHT I’M AWAKE CAUSE IT HAUNTS ME**

That I never got to say what I wanted

Oh, my God, oh my God

I am not the same as I was with you

I would jump out of my skin just to get you

Oh, my God, oh my God

How could you have ever known

If I never let it show

Now I just wanna know, are you?

**REFRAIN:**

How could you have ever known

If I never let it show

Now I just wanna know, are you?

**REPEAT REFRAIN:**

I think about you, love you, and I’m filled with pride

**SONG**

Here it comes with no warning

Capsized, I’m first in the water

Too close to the bottom

I’m right back where I started

I’m swimming up against the tide

Oh, my God

I’m swimming, but I’m getting tired

Oh, my God

I’m swimming up against the tide

Oh, my God

I’m swimming, but I’m getting tired

Oh, my God

**REPEAT REFRAIN:**

**WORD GAMES FOR CATHOLICS.COM**
Thanksgiving – the attitude of gratitude

More people travel at Thanksgiving than on any of our other holidays. It is a time to go home, to gather around the family table, and to invite others to join us so that no one eats alone on Thanksgiving Day. Although the feast is an American national holiday commemorating our Puritan forefathers’ expectation of gratitude to God and to their Native American neighbors for helping them survive in their new world, it certainly has Christian biblical roots.

We as Catholics celebrate thanksgiving every time we celebrate the Eucharist, which is a Greek word for “thanksgiving.” To take a quote from Christopher News Notes, “We simply need to take what we do one Thursday each year and every Sunday and bring it into our day-to-day routines.” Jesus knew what he was doing when he told his Apostles at the Last Supper to “Do this in memory of me.”

Every time we celebrate Mass together, we recall what God has done for us, and what he continues to do for us day by day. “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad” (Ps 118:24).

A wise woman and the greatest of Roman orators, Cicero, wrote: “Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.” When we give thanks for our blessings, our lives are filled with hope and joy. In 1993, shortly after the death of Bishop Stanley J. Ott, I had to administer the diocesan until (the Vatican) appoint an new bishop for the Diocese of Baton Rouge. It was Bishop Ott’s custom to serve the Thanksgiving meal at the Saint Vincent de Paul Dining Room. As his temporary replacement, I got the invitation. When I put on my apron and stood on the serving line, among the lay volunteers in the dining room, I saw several of my own siblings. I knew they had delayed our Thanksgiving meal until I could get to my mother’s house, but I didn’t know that they were going to join me in serving the homeless. There really was a special attitude of gratitude and the joy that comes with it when we finally celebrated our own family meal.

Many of our parish groups who go on mission trips to third world countries have similar experiences. They set out to serve others but return home feeling that they had received more than they gave to the poor. This is what Jesus teaches in the beatitudes he proclaims at the beginning of his Sermon on the Mount. “Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” In cultures where people have little even to eat, they learn to share and to find joy in God, each other and within themselves. In contrast, wealth does not always make us grateful. Having material things becomes more and more important. The wife of a popular evangelist was quoted as saying that her reaction to stress was just to go shopping. “When things get hoppin’, I go shoppin.” That kind of behavior becomes addictive, and it takes more and more to satisfy us. Nothing ever is enough.

It is not only the joyful things in our lives for which we should give thanks. Sometimes we only see God’s grace saving us, teaching us, giving us strength, after we have gone through some trial. God often has to be seen through our rearview mirrors. Consider these words in a modern Christian pop song written by Laura Story (quoted again from Christopher News Notes). “What if your blessings come through rain? What if your healing comes through tears? And what if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know you’re near? What if my greatest disappointments or the aching of this life is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can’t satisfy?”

Perhaps the hardship and loss of this terrible past summer of 2016 with its killings, protests and then a historic flood will be one of those rearview mirror experiences. Perhaps we will be able to look back and give thanks not for the evil but for the grace that God gave us to pick ourselves up, unite, help one another and become one community again.

Gratitude is a lesson that is also taught to us by God’s creation. Pope Francis wrote his exhortation, “Laudato Si’,” to urge us to care for our planet and to appreciate it with gratitude for the gift of God that it is. He wrote: “The entire material universe speaks of God’s love... His boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains; everything is, as it were, a caress of God.”

The same message comes to us from others close to God. “We need to find God and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature — trees, flowers, grass — grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls.” — St. Teresa of Calcutta.

Or this from a little Jewish girl: “The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature.” — Anne Frank.

Finally, at this Thanksgiving time of year, let us give thanks for our Catholic faith. These quotes are from another publication, “Catholic Update.”

“I think of the Catholic Church as a massive family. Some well-to-do, others not so much. We’re all welcome and we know the same recipes — the sacraments and Scriptures.”

“Becoming a member of the church was like joining a loving family. I wanted to immerse myself as completely as I could.”

“When liturgy’s done well, it’s remarkable. I can find good people in other places, but not this liturgy. Without it, I’d be hungry.”

“The best thing is the companions — Scripture, the prophets, Jesus, the desert dwellers, Benedict and monastic traditions, the saints, each other!”

Amen, and Deo gratias!

Father John 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.
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When I was a graduate student in Belgium, I was privileged one day to sit in on a conference given by Cardinal Godfried Danneels of Brussels. He was commenting on the Eucharist and our lack of understanding of its full richness when he highlighted this contrast: If you stood outside of a Roman Catholic church today as people were coming out of the church and asked them: “Was that a good Eucharist?” most everyone would answer on the basis of the homily and the music. If the homily was interesting and the music lively, most people would answer that it had been a good Eucharist. Now, he continued, if you had stood outside a Roman Catholic church 60 or 70 years ago and asked: “Was that a good Mass today?” nobody would have even understood the question. They would have answered something to the effect of: “Arent they all the same?”

Today our understanding of the Eucharist, in Roman Catholic circles and indeed in most Protestant and Anglican circles, is very much concentrated on three things: the liturgy of the word, the music, and Communion. Moreover, in Roman Catholic churches, we speak of the real presence only in reference to the last element, the presence of Christ in the bread and wine. While none of this is wrong, the liturgy of the word, the music and Communion are important, something is missing in this understanding. It misses the fact that the real presence is not just in the bread and wine, it is also in the liturgy of the word and in the salvific event that is recalled in the eucharistic prayer, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Most churchgoers already recognize that when the Scriptures are celebrated in a liturgical service God’s presence is made special, more physically tangible, than God’s normal presence everywhere or God’s presence inside our private prayer. The word of God, when celebrated in a church is, like Christ’s presence in the consecrated bread and wine, also the real presence. But there’s a further element that’s less understood: The Eucharist doesn’t just make a person present; it also makes an event present. We participate in the Eucharist not just to receive Christ in Communion, but also to participate in the major salvific event of his life, his death and resurrection.

What’s at issue here? At the Last Supper, Jesus invited his followers to continue to meet and celebrate the Eucharist “in memory of me.” But his use of the word “memory” and our use of that word are very different. For us “memory” is a weaker word. It simply means calling something to mind, remembering an event like the birth of your child, your wedding day or the game when your favorite sports team finally won the championship. That’s a simple remembering, a passing recollection. It can stir deep feelings but it does nothing more. Whereas in the Hebrew concept out of which Jesus was speaking, memory, making ritual remembrance of something, implied much more than simply recalling something. To remember something was not simply to nostalgically recall it. Rather it meant to recall and ritually re-enact it so as to make it present again in a real way.

For example, that’s how the Passover supper is understood within Judaism. The Passover meal recalls the Exodus from Egypt and the miraculous passing through the Red Sea into freedom. The idea is that one generation, led by Moses, did this historically, but that by re-enacting that event ritually, in the Passover meal, the event is made present again, in a real way, for those at table to experience. The Eucharist is the same, except that the saving event we re-enact so as to remake it present through ritual is the death and resurrection of Jesus, the new Exodus. Our Christian belief here is exactly the same as that of our Jewish brothers and sisters, namely, that we are not just remembering an event, we are actually making it present to participate in. The Eucharist, parallel to a Jewish Passover meal, reminds present the central saving event in Christian history, namely, Jesus’ Passover from death to life in the Paschal mystery. And just as the consecrated bread and wine give us the real presence of Christ, the Eucharist also gives us the real presence of the central saving event in our history, Jesus’ passage from death to life.

Thus at a Eucharist, there are, in effect, three real presences: Christ is really present in the word, namely, the Scriptures, the preaching and the music. Christ is really present in the consecrated bread and wine; they are his body and blood. And Christ is really present in a saving event: Jesus’ sacrificial passing from death to life.

And, so, we go to Eucharist not just to be brought into community by Jesus’ word and to receive Jesus in Communion, we go there, too, to enter into the saving event of his death and resurrection. The real presence is in both a person and in an event.

Letters to the Editor

The wrong way to make decisions

The column in the Oct. 14 issue of The Catholic Commentator titled “Pro-life advocates must understand the perspective of the parents” draws extensively from a paper by Paul Swope, published in “First Things” several years ago. Mr. Swope’s paper reports on the results of a study commissioned by the pro-life Caring Foundation on the effectiveness of pro-life outreach to women of child-bearing age who identify themselves as pro-choice. The study did that, and just that.

The Catholic Commentator article relates in detail what “research shows” about how women make unwanted pregnancy decisions. (In only one instance does the article qualify “women” as pro-choice women.) The article describes what might be taken as a norm for women making such decisions, or so it seems. The source study had no such intent. The problem is that the article goes on at length to describe the wrong way to make these decisions and ultimately to shift blame toward pro-life advocates.

Should it be surprising that, for pro-choice women, abortion is the favored means for resolving unwanted pregnancies? Indeed that likely is why the population is never the same once she is pregnant, whether the child is kept, adopted or killed.”

Mary and George Rettig
Baton Rouge

Life major issue

Your editorial of Oct. 28 was an apt description of the importance of this current presidential election. I realize that you may not be able to endorse a particular candidate but I believe as the editor of a Catholic newspaper it is appropriate to mention the major candidates’ stance on the most important Catholic issue.

One candidate (was) very vocal in her plans to “reel in” those Christian beliefs and make “abortions on demand a lifelong law.”

So many who call themselves Catholic (did) not vote according to the (USCCB) guidance. If the Catholic voice was a united voice, we could as a group every major candidate in our country

I’ll be praying that all who live and love their Catholic faith (voted) for the pro-life candidates. No other issue is as important as life.

Tara Messenger
Baton Rouge

Change is consistent

I would like to respond to the Oct. 28 Letter to the Editor in which the writer stated, “The Catholic Commentator has a serious obligation to clearly teach what the Roman Catholic religion has consistently taught for 2,000 years.”

My having taught church history for years has made me very much aware of the fact that what has been most consistent about the Catholic Church has been change.

Sister Joel Goebler OP
Rosaryville

Letters to the Editor should be typed and limited to 350 words and should contain the name and address of the writer, though the address will not be printed. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316, or to tcc@diobr.org.
While we at The Catholic Commentator do our best to bring reliable services. 30 years experience; professional, MATURE, DEPENDABLE, HOUSEKEEPER. CALL DEBBIE 225-266-7655

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St. Michael High School seeks full-time Alumni Coordinator/Advancement As- sistant with a Bachelor’s degree in a re- lated field. Experience a plus. Send letter of intent, resume and three professional references to lgraham@smhsbr.org.

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In sales employment advertisements, the advertiser must name the product or service to be sold. Ads must state how wages will be paid (salary, com- missions, etc.) if money is mentioned. The ad must also state if there is an in- vestment required.

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Reach some 40,000 readers by placing your ad in The Catholic Commentator! 225-387-0983

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Classifieds
They established a medical mission in Aquin.

Sister Martha Ann went through an extremely violent and difficult time. With the corrupt dictatorship of Jean Bertrand Aristide, angry mobs formed. When they came Sister Martha Ann’s way she emphasized her solidarity with them.

“When you are in solidarity, you don’t play politics. We knew the importance of that as an international community,” said Sister Martha Ann.

She left Haiti in 1994 when she was elected to the international team for her order. She would later serve as director of fundraising efforts for the Haitian mission. She returned to the country several times including when the catastrophic earthquake hit in 2010.

Through her time in Haiti she came to know and love the people there. After the hurricane struck, she went to assess the needs of the sisters and the people.

Southwestern Haiti is the most fertile part of the country, but the fields had been stripped of their crops and once fruit-bearing trees were bare.

Homes were collapsed and roofs were ripped off homes. Sister Martha Ann said it is a miracle that no one in this area was killed by the storm.

At the medical mission, the roof was blown off the hospital for children. The retaining wall, which prevents water coming down from the mountains from saturating the area, was destroyed. A bridge that was built so people would not have to drive through the river was damaged. Sister Martha Ann said a generous donor gave money to build a new bridge.

There are also solar panels and a wind turbine used to generate electricity in need of being replaced.

Sister Martha Ann also saw the violence in the wake of the anger over the delivery of inadequate supplies. She and other sisters were travelling to the city of Les Cayes when a mob raided a UNICEF truck carrying medical supplies. Police shot into the crowd and killed a 16-year-old boy and injured three people.

“They (the mob) had barricaded the road and were burning tires,” said Sister Martha Ann.

The man chauffeuring the women said, “Sister Martha Ann has been through this many times and worse and she knows what to do.”

The travelers pulled into a compound of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate until the violence ended hours later. “The mobs were coming with the body of the boy on the highway. I’m glad we weren’t on the highway,” said Sister Martha Ann.

She added, “Our sisters had a good baptism of what they need to do in the future.”

Inflation has also soared in Haiti.

While spirits were low on the island, Sister Martha Ann saw signs of hope. She noticed men planting rice in a field.

The people of Haiti also have a deep sense of spirituality, the sister said.

“They have proverbs of moral teachings. One proverb is ‘God is good,’ so when they see anything negative they know it is not from God,” Sister Martha Ann said. “There’s a gratefulness in them.”

She said in light of recent flooding in southern Louisiana, Haitians are not that different from the people in Louisiana in that they “take care of what needs to be done at the moment.”

Sister Martha Ann advised people wanting to help with relief efforts to donate to a reputable charitable organization they trust, one that does not send funds to the Haitian government. She said only 15-20 percent of the funds given to the government actually are used for relief efforts.

Those wishing to, may mail their donations to Haiti Project Inc., 4200 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.

Haiti ▼

From page 1

Tires burn as people riot in Haiti after police killed a 16-year-old boy and injured three when a mob raided a UNICEF truck carrying medical supplies. Photo by Sister Martha Ann Abshire FMOL.

Hospice is not about giving up... it’s about taking control

- We rely upon the intercession of our Blessed Mother to assist us in imitating the healing ministry of Jesus Christ as we care for terminally ill patients and their families.
- We call forth the compassion and kindness of our staff, who serve in this health care ministry, to respond to the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of our patients and their families.
- We believe in the sacredness of life from conception to natural death, and we devote ourselves to supporting patients and families through the dying process at the end of life’s journey on this earth and new life in eternity.

Notre Dame Hospice is not a business. It is a mission: to provide hospice services in the archdiocese of New Orleans, including the city-parishes of Orleans and St. Bernard, in the name of Jesus Christ through the intercession of the Blessed Mother.

Notre Dame Hospice is a Catholic healthcare ministry that serves patients and families in the last stage of life's journey through conferences, educational and community service activities, spiritual programs and through the works of the hands of those who are called to share the message of Jesus Christ.

Notre Dame Hospice is not about giving up... it’s about taking control.
FMOLU named to President’s Higher Education Service Honor Roll

Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, formerly Our Lady of the Lake College, has been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the eighth time and is the only institution of higher learning in Louisiana to be recognized this year. The award is given with distinction in General Community Service and Education by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). This designation is the highest honor a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service learning, and civic engagement. Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University is one of 115 colleges and universities across the United States to be recognized for a strong commitment to service.

Approximately 80 percent of the university’s almost 1,700 students participated in community service projects, logging more than 61,000 total service hours that represented an economic impact of nearly $1.4 million in-kind donations to the community.

“Service is a part of the very fabric of this Franciscan institution,” said FMOLU President Tina S. Holland. “Our service-related curricular and co-curricular programs allow our students to nurture intellectual, spiritual, social and civic development by participating in community improvement projects and service learning. Our holistic approach to learning fosters individual purpose and helps to form graduates who will become future leaders ready to serve in the community.”

CNCS manages the program in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as the American Council on Education and Campus Compact. Institutions are chosen based on their achievements in general community service or in one of two special focus areas that align with the U.S. President’s education and innovation priorities.

ADVENT ▼

From page 1

in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy” (Rom 13:12).

“God does not put us in the dark. We do because we turn away from the light,” DePaula said.

She added, “Sometimes when we run from the light we can get stuck in our sin.”

There’s also the darkness of waiting to get through a difficult time – such as waiting for a loved one to recover from an illness, a wayward child to return home, etc.

DePaula added darkness can also represent emptiness when longing for something more, which can only be satisfied in heaven.

A good way to journey through the darkness is to see it as a time of prayer and preparation for the coming of the Lord, according to DePaula.

She noted darkness can be seen as a time of quiet and reflection.

“It’s funny how Jesus’ birth was so quiet ... the manger ...” DePaula said. She pointed out that when the “spotlight” was put on Christ, it was not an extravagant show, and only the humble, lowly shepherds heard the announcement first through a star and the heavenly host. But it was a new beginning in salvation history.

Even when it seems dark and shadowy, there ultimately has to be a light to cast that shadow, said DePaula.

She added this should remind people that even when they think they are alone, God is walking with them, guiding them back to their heavenly home.

The darkness at the beginning of Advent can be a productive time, DePaula said.

“Sometimes we need to just sit in the darkness and pray and be with God. Just don’t fall asleep,” said DePaula.

This is a time when people can recognize their need to change and seek reconciliation with God.

People can evangelize during this time by inviting other Catholics to receive the sacrament of reconciliation, possibly going together to receive the richness of God’s mercy and forgiveness, said DePaula.

Next Issue: The “incubation period” of Advent.

FAITH ▼

From page 2

Preparing

What one expects is how one prepares. Grander moments require more preparation. What is greater than preparing for Christmas? Well, Easter is the highest celebration in our church year. But without Christmas, there would be no Easter. God has prepared us for the coming of his son by inviting us into his life through the sacrament of baptism. The moment we are plunged into the waters of his graces is the moment our preparations begin. We ready ourselves each day in serving God and others by our words and actions. Our decisions determine our readiness. Are we walking the straight path? Are we showing others the way? Are we “a voice of one crying out in the desert, preparing the way of the Lord?”

DePaula is director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
Advent spiritual events in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

November 28 – December 23
Weekdays of Advent – Morning Liturgy of the Hours
Holy Ghost Church
Daily Mass Chapel
600 North Oak St., Hammond
7:30 to 7:50 a.m.
Every Monday – Friday: Morning Liturgy of the Hours following daily Mass. Booklets and assistance are provided.
Trisha Labbé 985-345-3360, ext. 28 or tlabbe@hgchurch.org

November 28, December 5, 12, 19
Advent Vespers by the Dominican Friars
Holy Ghost Catholic Church
Daily Mass Chapel
600 North Oak St., Hammond
5:50 p.m. Chaplet of Divine Mercy; 6 p.m. Vespers; 6:30 p.m. Soup Supper
The Chaplet of Divine Mercy will be recited, followed by vespers, which will be led by our Dominican Friars; a simple meal, provided by different parish ministries, will be shared in the gathering area of the church following vespers.
Trisha Labbé 985-345-3360, ext. 28 or tlabbe@hgchurch.org

Advent Wreath Lighting
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University (formerly OLOL College) Administration Bldg. – Reflection/Oratory Room
5414 Brittany Dr., Baton Rouge
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Tammy Vidrine 225-768-1773

Monday Nights of Advent Reconciliation
St. Jean Vianney Church
16166 S. Harrell’s Ferry Rd., Baton Rouge
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Church office 225-753-7650

November 29
“The Light Is On For You”
St. John the Evangelist Church
57805 Main St., Plaquemine
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Sponsor a family today. It's easy.
Visit CatholicCharitiesBR.org or call 225-336-8700.
December 6
Advent Penance Service
Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church
32615 Bowie St., White Castle
7:00 p.m.
Dianne Hebert 225-545-3532

December 7
Communal Penance Service
Most Blessed Sacrament Church
15615 Jefferson Hwy., Baton Rouge
7:00 p.m.
Several priests will be available to hear confessions after a short prayer service.
Kathy Duplessis 225-752-6230

Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Vigil Mass
St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland Church
30300 Catholic Hall Rd., I-12 at Albany Exit
6:00 p.m.
Mary E. Hebert 225-567-3573

December 8
Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass
St. John School/St. John the Evangelist Church
58645 St. Clement Ave., Plaquemine (St. Clement Chapel-St. John School Campus)
8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
Lisa Morel 225-687-6616 or lmorel@stjohnschool.org

Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass
Holy Ghost Catholic Church
600 North Oak St., Hammond
6:00 p.m.
Lea Smith 985-345-3360, ext. 21

Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass
St. Thomas Chapel
32191 Hwy. 22, Springfield
8:00 a.m.
Mary E. Hebert 225-567-3573

December 11
Remembering Our Children
Candlelight Service
St. Alphonsus Church
14040 Greenwell Springs Rd., Greenwell Springs
6:00 p.m.
We will celebrate the life, love and light of our children who have gone much too soon.
Church office 225-261-4650

December 12
Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass
Holy Ghost Catholic Church
600 North Oak St., Hammond
6:30 p.m.
All are invited to celebrate with us the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Light refreshments will be provided in the gathering area following the Mass.
Father Robert Merced OP 985-345-3360

December 13
Coffee and Prayer
Holy Family Church
474 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Advent: Waiting For The Christ Child
Jennifer LoJeune 225-536-4463 or jlejeunehfc@gmail.com

December 14
Communal Penance Service/
Light Is On For You
St. Patrick Church
12444 Brogdon Ln., Baton Rouge
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Church office 225-753-5750

Advent Penance Service
Holy Ghost Catholic Church
600 North Oak St., Hammond
6:00 p.m.
Lea Smith 985-345-3360, ext. 21

December 15
Advent Reconciliation Service
St. Mark Church
42021 Hwy. 621, Gonzales
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Multiple area priests will be available for confession.
Robin Richardson 225-647-8461

Reconciliation Service
St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland Church
30300 Catholic Hall Rd., I-12 at Albany Exit
6:00 p.m.
Mary E. Hebert 225-567-3573

December 31
New Year’s Eve Mass
Corner of Fourth and Main St., Baton Rouge
4:00 p.m.
Champagne and gumbo in the parish hall following Mass
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass
St. Thomas Chapel
32191 Hwy. 22, Springfield
8:00 a.m.
Mary E. Hebert 225-567-3573

January 1
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass
St. Thomas Chapel
32191 Hwy. 22, Springfield
8:00 a.m.
Mary E. Hebert 225-567-3573

PARTY TRAYS AVAILABLE!
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And the angel said unto them, “Fear not! For, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, Which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, Lying in a manger.” – St. Luke 10-12
Fundraising, social, musical events set for Christmas season

**November 27**

**Christmas in the Park**
Alexander’s Highland Market’s Artisan Group
1811 Highland Market, Baton Rouge
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Booths of book authors, crafts, demonstrations and activities for kids. Also Toys for Tots collection and Coca-cola’s Best Gift Ever holiday campaign
Kelly Alexander 225-936-7373

**Christmas in the Park**
Alexander’s Highland Market’s Artisan Group
1811 Highland Market, Baton Rouge
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Booths of book authors, crafts, demonstrations and activities for kids. Also Toys for Tots collection and Coca-cola’s Best Gift Ever holiday campaign
Kelly Alexander 225-936-7373

**November 28 – December 1**

**Gently Used Christmas Ornaments**
St. Aloysius School
2025 Stuart Ave., Baton Rouge
Assisting the Baton Rouge Emergency Aid Coalition (BREAC) to collect for the Mighty Moms organization of Livingston Parish to be distributed in the Fleet Feet parking lot, 6251 Perkins Rd., Baton Rouge on Sunday, December 4. mightymomsgo.org/projects/left-nav/

**December 2**

**Children’s Choir Performance: “It’s A Wonderful Life”**
St. John School/We Are the Difference

Carle F. Grant Civic Center
24700 J. Gerald Berret Blvd., Plaquemine
7:00 p.m.
$15 per person
The St. John School Children’s Choir will perform during We Are the Difference’s Production of “It’s A Wonderful Life.” We Are the Difference is a community non-profit that performs various outreach and supports the Iberville Community Theater.
Brittany Dupont 225-687-6666 or bdupont@stjohnschool.org

**December 3**

**Breakfast With Santa**
Holy Family Church, Parish Hall
368 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
Accepting donations for the WBR Food Bank. Please bring camera. Treat bags, donuts, coffee and milk while supplies last.
Jennifer LeJeune 225-336-4463 or jielejeune@stjohnschool.org

**Breakfast With Santa**
St. Stephen the Martyr Church
Msgr. Gerald Lefebvre Parish Hall
22494 LA Hwy. 22, Maurepas, LA
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.
$5.00 plate
Kids bring your Christmas list.
Office 225-695-6859

**Breakfast With Santa**
St. Elizabeth Home and School Association
St. Elizabeth Community Center
6051 Convent St., Paincourtville
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
$5 per person
Pictures with Santa, secret Santa Shop, crafts, meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. Proceeds to be used for school projects.
SES office 985-369-7402

**December 4**

**8th Annual “Winter Wonderland Food Festival”**
St. Joseph Church
Father James Kinkead Hall
15710 LA Hwy. 16, French Settlement
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (A Taste of French Settlement). Selection of local favorites, sweet shop, Father Jason’s Christmas Village, craft booths, free activities for children and visit with Santa, classic car and truck show.

*Baton Rouge Concert Band Christmas Concert*  
St. Joseph Cathedral  
Corner Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge  
7:00 p.m.  
$3 bracelet for hayride and train ride  
5:30 p.m. “Opening Act” Light Parade, prizes for top 3  
Church office 225-698-3110

*Baton Rouge High School Christmas Concert*  
St. Joseph Cathedral  
Corner Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge  
3:00 p.m.

**December 9**

**Sounds of the Season by St. George School Band**
St. George Church
7808 St. George Dr., Baton Rouge
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

info@kleinpeterphotography.com  
225.928.7596
Area charities need assistance from businesses, individuals

This time of year, people focus on giving to others. This usually takes the form of gifts that are given to family and friends, with much time spent on choosing a gift that each person will appreciate.

Because of current economic conditions, many people will not be able to give presents nor will they be in a position to receive gifts from those close to them. Many people are in desperate need of the basics of life: food, warm clothing, medication and personal hygiene items.

For those who would like to give a gift to those who are in need, here is a list of some of the charitable efforts that are taking place this holiday season.

**Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge**

The Community Comes Together for Christmas

Catholic Charities matches individuals and families in need with people who want to provide Christmas for them. Contact Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge 225-336-8700 for information or go to the website at catholiccharitiesbr.org.

**Keep Christmas Lights Shining Bright**

Catholic Charities sponsors this program to help with utility bills of struggling families or individuals during the winter months. Contact Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge 225-336-8700, or donate online at catholiccharitiesbr.org.

**Good Fellows**

**Good Samaritans**

Good Fellows-Good Samaritans is a volunteer organization that raises money to deliver clothing, gifts and books to needy children in East Baton Rouge Parish. All donations go directly to the children who are determined by their school counselors as being truly in need.

Donations can be sent to Good Fellows-Good Samaritans, P.O. Box 3766, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

**#iGiveCatholic**

Catholics in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are being offered the opportunity to support their school, church parish or favorite charitable organization.

The diocese, along with the Archdiocese of New Orleans, the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, the Diocese of Biloxi, Mississippi and the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi, is participating in a Catholic giving day on Nov. 29 titled #iGiveCatholic.

For 24 hours beginning at midnight on Nov. 29, Catholics will be able to visit the iGiveCatholic.org home page and click on a specific ministry listed to make a donation.

#iGiveCatholic is held each year in conjunction with #GivingTuesday, which is celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday. #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

**St. Vincent de Paul**

**Community Pharmacy**

Volunteer pharmacists distribute life-sustaining medications such as Advil, Motrin, Robitussin, Benadryl, Maalox, Mylanta, Tums, Rolaid, Tylenol Extra Strength, Pepcid A-C and Zantac, as well as the generics of these medications.

St. Vincent de Paul is a volunteer organization that raises money to deliver clothing, gifts and books to needy children in East Baton Rouge Parish. All donations go directly to the children who are determined by their school counselors as being truly in need.

Donations can be sent to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 or online at svdpbr.org.

**St. Vincent de Paul Annual Bishop’s Gift Distribution**

Children who won’t have the opportunity to sit on Santa’s lap and receive a visit from Santa on Christmas Eve will be able to visit with Bishop Robert W. Muench Saturday, Dec. 17 and receive a gift from him. Many of these children live at the Bishop Ott Homeless Shelter or eat at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room and depend on St. Vincent de Paul for their well-being.

Churches are urged to have parents bring their children to the event, and to provide the opportunity to sit on Santa’s lap and receive an additional gift. The church has the opportunity to support their school, church parish or favorite charitable organization.

Donations can be sent to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 or online at svdpbr.org.

**St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal**

Financial support given to St. Vincent de Paul allows the agency to provide food, shelter and health care to thousands of people in need each year.

Contributions can be sent to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 or online at svdpbr.org.

**Sacred Concert**

Presented by the Our Lady of Mercy Music Ministry

Sunday, December 11, 2016

4:00 pm • Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church • Free Admission

olomchurch.com
Blessings of the Advent Christmas Season!

Advent Evening Prayer
November 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Monday Nights of Advent Reconciliation
Nov. 28, Dec. 5, 12, 19 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Vigil Masses
4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., Midnight

Christmas Day Masses
8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.

Parish Mission Statement
Our mission as the Body of Christ in the parish of St. Jean Vianney is to model the love of Jesus by discerning and doing God’s will, consciously sharing the Word and Eucharist at worship, educating in faith all ages, evangelizing our parishioners for Christ’s mission, and serving justly God’s people, our sisters and brothers within our parish boundaries, our larger Baton Rouge community, and into the world.

Baton Rouge Symphony Office
Christmas Concert
St. Joseph Cathedral
Corner of Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge

December 11
Downtown Choral Pilgrimage
St. Joseph Cathedral
Corner of Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge

Sheila Juneau 225-387-5928

Portraits of the Nativity: A Festival of Choirs
Our Lady of Mercy Church
445 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Bring the family for a candle-lit musical event of glad tiding and good cheer
Mary Kannenberg 225-926-1883

Child of Light: A Celebration of Our Savior’s Birth
St. Patrick Church Choirs
12424 Brogdon Ln., Baton Rouge
4:00 – 5:30 p.m. followed by a gumbo dinner in the family center
St. Patrick Church 225-753-5750

December 13
St. Mark Christmas Concert
St. Mark Church
42021 Hwy. 621, Gonzales
7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
A reception will follow in the Father Demaria Activity Center
Robin Richardson 225-647-8461

Pre-K and Kindergarten Christmas Program
St. John School
St. John the Evangelist Church
57805 Main St., Plaquemine
6:00 p.m.

Trees of Light
Hospice of Baton Rouge
City Club of Baton Rouge
355 North Blvd., Baton Rouge
7:00 p.m.
$75 per person/$125 per couple
Music and Dancing with the Issue, songs by Father Greg Daigle, auction and food
Hospice of Baton Rouge
225-767-4673 or hospicebr.org

December 15
The Christmas Story
St. George Catholic School
St. George Church
7808 St. George Drive, Baton Rouge
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
First graders perform the Christmas Story.
Lynn Blanchard 225-293-1298

St. John Christmas Concert
St. John School
St. John the Evangelist Church
57805 Main St., Plaquemine
6:00 p.m.

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas to all

Café Américain
Restaurant and Catering

Come taste some of our award winning soups and fresh fish
Order your homemade cheesecakes, 40 varieties to choose from, and pies, – Pecan, Lemon Icebox, Mississippi Mud and Sweet Potato

ALLOW US TO CATER
your next special event in one of our Banquet Rooms or off site at your home or office

7521 Jefferson Hwy. (Jefferson Plaza), Baton Rouge
Mon. – Thurs. 11 am – 9:30 pm; Fri. – Sat. 11 am – till; Sunday 11 am – 4 pm
225-924-9841 / cafeamrest@yahoo.com / www.cafeamericainrestcom
**Christmas Lunchen for Senior Citizens/Handicapped**

Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church
32615 Bowie St., White Castle
11:00 a.m. Mass, Noon Luncheon
Dianne Hebert 225-545-3332

**Dec. 17 – Jan. 16**

**Nativity Scene**
St. John the Evangelist Church
57805 Main St., Plaquemine

**CHARITIES ▼**

From page 5B

Donations can be made at the Community Pharmacy, 1647 Convention St., Baton Rouge.

St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room
With the meal count going up at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room, donated food items are critical to provide a hot meal 365 days of the year. The Dining Room is in urgent need of rice, sugar, dry beans, spaghetti, canned vegetables and fruits. During the holiday season, there is also a need for ham, turkey and the trimmings that go with these.

Donations can be made at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room, 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place, Baton Rouge.

Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank
Donating Food
While purchasing food for a Christmas dinner at a local grocer, pick up a few additional items and place them in the Food Bank Barrel after checking out.

BackPack Program
BackPacks are filled with 10-12 nutritious food items and then distributed to at-risk children enrolled in the program in select elementary schools. These children are at risk of missing meals over the weekend or during holidays when they are not in school. The backpacks are discreetly sent home with children as young as pre-K and as old as fifth grade on Friday and returned empty on Monday morning. Donations can be made to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, P.O. Box 45930 Baton Rouge, LA 70895 or call (225) 359-9940.

Financial Contributions
A $4 donation to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank provides four meals to a family or individual in need. Donations can be made any time of year through the website brfoodbank.org or by sending a donation to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, P.O. Box 45930 Baton Rouge, LA 70895.

The Food Bank serves people in 11 civil parishes in this area.

“Taste and See: Food for the Body and Soul” Cookbook

Proceeds from the sale of each cookbook are distributed to the services that are needed at the time. Cookbooks can be purchased at any St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store in Baton Rouge, Hammond, New Roads and Brusly or at the St. Vincent de Paul office, 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place, Baton Rouge, or online at svdpbr.org.

Bishop Ott Shelter Collection Campaign

Men’s and women’s toiletry items; bed linens for cribs and twin beds; pillows, towels and washcloths; all sizes of underwear, clothing and shoes; paper napkins, towels and plates; plastic knives, forks, spoons, cups and sandwich bags and drink mixes are needed year round at the homeless shelters operated by St. Vincent de Paul. Donations can be delivered to the Bishop Ott Shelter, 1623 Convention St., Baton Rouge.

CHRISTMAS 2 016

8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Mon. – Thurs.
8:30 a.m. – noon – Friday
Beautiful life-size Fontanini Creche spans the entire right aisle of the church. Magnificent display of Christ’s nativity and representative figures of the era.

Marsha A. Dupont 225-687-2402

December 22

Living Nativity
St. Elizabeth School
St. Elizabeth Church
119 LA Hwy. 403, Paincourtville
Immediately following 7:40 a.m. Mass
Eight-grade class performs the living nativity.
Student body serves as choir.
SES office 985-369-7402

December 24

Choir Concert
St. John the Evangelist Church
SEE EVENTS PAGE 88

The Catholic Commentator
Locals share some favorite recipes

**Pumpkin Bread**

**Eleanor Mitchel**  
St. Margaret Church, Albany

- 1 pkg. taco seasoning  
- 1 pkg. ranch dressing  

Cook and drain ground meat. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Double for large group.

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**Taco soup**

**Eleanor Mitchel**  
St. Margaret Church, Albany

- 1/2 lb. ground meat  
- 1 can Rotel tomatoes, do not drain  
- 1 can corn, do not drain  
- 1 can red beans  
- 1 can tomato sauce  
- 1 tsp. Old Bay Seasoning  
- 1/4 c. diced bell pepper, diced fine  

Sauté onions, celery and bell pepper in very lightly oiled skillet, butter or olive oil. Add crawfish and sauté for approx. 6-8 minutes. Stir in soup, add spice, liquid crab boil and floured water. Slowly add heavy cream, and then green onion. Simmer for 20 minutes. Serve over rice.

*You can fry extra crawfish tails or shrimp, and then green onion. Simmer for 20 minutes. Double for large group.*

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**Heads and Tails Seafood**

- 2 lbs. crawfish tails, lightly chopped  
- 4 stalks celery, diced fine  
- 1 large onion, diced fine  
- 1/4 c. diced bell pepper, diced fine  
- 2/3 c. cold water  
- 1 egg  
- 1/2 c. sugar  

**Sugar Cookies**

- 2¼ c. all-purpose flour  
- 1 tsp. baking powder  
- 1 c. butter, softened  
- 1/2 c. sugar  
- 1 egg  

**EVENTS**

From page 78

$25 General Admission  

Father Greg Daigle, classically trained vocalist and pastor of St. John, performs songs of the season with the accompaniment of the Bill Grimes Orchestra and special guest vocalists. All proceeds directly benefit music programs at St. John School.

Cherie Schlatre 225-687-6606 or cschlatre@stjohnschool.org

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**Epiphany Concert – Songs of the Christmas Season**

St. John School/St. John the Evangelist Church

57805 Main St., Plaquemine  

5:00 p.m.

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**TRADITION**

From page 78  

Served this soup as a side dish or main course.

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**A Christmas to Remember**

For thousands of people in our community, this will be a Christmas they will always remember. Home may be a trailer, a friend’s guest room, or a damaged residence that is still unfinished. For some, like Ella – the little girl in the photo – home is our Sweet Dreams Shelter. Even though they may have little else in common, they all share one emotion this Christmas: heartfelt gratitude for home, no matter how humble or temporary it may be. At our Bishop Ott Shelters, we provide a home to thousands of men, women, and children each year (over 26,000 guest nights of shelter in 2016). Through your support, you are reaching out to strangers in need, and we are so grateful that people like you enable us to provide this service. We never forget that it was through the kindness of others that Mary and Joseph were given shelter when they had nowhere else to turn.

As our community continues its long journey toward recovery from the floods, we know that there will be a growing need to provide shelter to the most vulnerable. We are seeing more men, single women, families, and elderly who need basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter and medicine. The lines have been long at our St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room, and we expect to serve over 240,000 meals this year. Almost as critical as food is the medicine provided by our St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy. We are on pace to fill well over 20,000 prescriptions in 2016. Many of the patients we serve are older individuals suffering from chronic illnesses, but we serve people of all ages, including children like Ella, the little girl in the photo. For many people, Christmas wish lists will include necessities, not luxuries. They all need a helping hand-up.

People are fighting a daily battle to survive in a complicated world, and they need your help. We have included our Christmas Prayer, and that’s our first request to you – to use this prayer and join us in praying for the poor and homeless during this holy season. If you are able to help financially, we also ask you to consider making a gift. Use the enclosed envelope to make a difference or give online at: www.svdpbr.org

Mail your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0127 or give online at: www.svdpbr.org.