GOOD SHEPHERDS

Bishop celebrates ordination Mass

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

For the second consecutive year, a dual Mass of Ordination was celebrated May 27 at St. Joseph Cathedral.

Bishop Robert W. Muench ordained Father Pat Broussard and Father Ryan Hallford to the priesthood before an overflow crowd at the cathedral. Deacon Tim Grimes was ordained as a transitional deacon and is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in May 2018.

A year ago, Bishop Muench ordained Father Edwin Martin to the priesthood and Father Ryan Hallford as a transitional deacon.

Clergy understand their own personal unworthiness to minister,” Bishop Muench said during his homily. “Even more challenging is to sufficiently fathom on a daily basis the power and effect of what we do.

Those of us especially privileged from sacred ordination need to be awe-struck by and deeply contemplate the mysteries we celebrate as deacons, proclaiming and preaching God’s Holy Word, baptizing and exercising service of the altar and charity; as priests, additionally to confect the Eucharist, absolve sinners, anoint the sick and by delegation to confirm; and all the more humbling as bishop by office to ordain and to confirm.”

Bishop Muench said that in the liturgy eternity coalesces with time. He added that the role and function of the ordained are to sacramentally minister the timeless in time.

“This ordination intersects and impacts both time and eternity, making the transcendent immanent,” the bishop added. “When the ordained celebrate a sacrament, a dimension beyond the earthly and the physical senses of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell takes place.”

Also for the second time in as many years, a widower who was previously ordained a permanent deacon was ordained to the priesthood. Father Broussard’s wife, Aminthe, died suddenly in January 2014. After going through the grieving process, Father Broussard decided to join the seminary and become a priest, and follow the same path as Father Martin, who was ordained after losing his wife following a long illness.

A reception followed at the Cathedral Parish Hall.

(See pages 8 – 11 for more highlights of the ordination Mass.)

Homelessness helps women bond unique friendship

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Survival and friendship were what Shaleta Jones and Cynthia Causin needed most when they met at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter for Women and Children in September.

Jones, who is African-American and originally from New Orleans, was living in the Baton Rouge area when the flood of summer 2016 forced her to scuttle around Baton Rouge, then Alexandria, looking for a shelter to take in herself and her sons, Israel, 16, Donte, 14, and Marvin, 13. When she was unable to receive assistance in Alexandria she returned to Baton Rouge and she, Donte and Marvin were accepted at Sweet Dreams and Israel and her fiancé, Christopher Burnett, were accepted at the Bishop Ott Men’s Shelter.

Causin, who is white, came to the shelter from the Lafayette area in September because of family difficulties.

The women’s friendship inspired them to pool together their financial resources and information gained from people helping them to find a new place.

Jones, her sons and Cynthia transitioned to new housing on June 1. Sweet Dreams assisted them with their deposit and first three months rent.

While at the shelter, Jones answered the phone and Causin worked in the kitchen.

“When Cynthia started working in the kitchen, one day I asked her if she wanted something from the store,” said Jones. “She also reads a lot, so I asked her, ‘What are you reading, girl?’” said Jones.

Their conversations and friendship deepened.

“We both needed a friend. I felt like I was cracking

See FRIENDSHIP PAGE 19
Bishop announces changes

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Bishop Robert W. Muench has appoint-ed Father Michael Miceli as sacramental minister at Our Lady of Pompeii Church in Tickfaw, effective July 1. Father Miceli will continue to serve as chaplain at St. Albert the Great Chapel and Student Center Center at Southeastern Louisiana University.

Prior to his appointment at St. Albert, Father Miceli was pastor at Our Lady of Peace Church in Vacherie and served as dean of the Southwest Deanery.

Father Miceli will replace Father Sanjay Kunnasseril IMS, who is returning to India for a new assignment within his order.

Also, Father Eleicer Montanez-Grimaldos MCM, currently the chaplain for the Hispanic Apostolate, will complete his assignment June 30 and returning to his religious community for a new assignment.

Father Montanez-Grimaldos, a native of Colombia, has been in Baton Rouge for the past seven years.

In a statement, the Diocese of Baton Rouge said a new chaplain for the Hispanic Apostolate will soon be announced.

Faith’s powerful lessons

By Dina Dow

Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: to God who is, who was, and who is to come.

The liturgical celebration moves from Pentecost into two powerful solemnities: The Most Holy Trinity and The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). In these are revealed three powerful lessons in life-giving faith: source, revelation and participation.

Source

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them.” (CCC #234) The Mass readings support the reality of the source and light of our faith: that being Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

FROM THE EDITOR

We have received several critical letters and phone calls over the past two weeks after we published a front-page image of a sculpture referred to as Our Lady of The Gulf by survivors of those who have been lost at sea in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, be they from drowning or from offshore accidents that have taken the lives of their loved ones. We can only imagine how difficult it is for these families and friends to deal with these tragic, untimely deaths. We pray for all of them.

We apologize for offending anyone who was disturbed by the photo and what some consider its explicit nature. We newspaper folks are not perfect, and when we do make mistakes they often end up in print, even on the front page of the paper. We promise we’ll work to get better at what we do to make sure these types of mistakes don’t happen again. We’re sorry many of you found the photo to be in poor taste.

We heard that you are quite a technology guy. Can you tell us about that?

I always had an involvement with technology, especially with my dad who used to work as a computer tech in the early 90s. He brought home a laptop running on Windows 3.1, and you have to keep in mind this time frame, almost no one had a computer during this time. But that little laptop got me hooked on technology. I am just amazed at the endless amount of possibilities that it can also create. The involvement for technology really grew when I started my high school career at the former Bishop Sullivan High School, now St. Michael. There was a teacher there, Mr. Drew Hart, who incidentally also had a passion for technology. He was the person who inspired me to pursue a passion for that area of science.
By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

On a rather nondescript morning in Sierra Leone, Dauda Sesay, shortly before his 17th birthday, was sent off to school along with his little sister. As was her daily ritual, their mother accompanied her children to the school bus stop. Who could have known that morning would be the last time Sesay would see his sister, and since that fateful day in 1998, for 15 years without knowing the fate of his mother.

It was a violence-laden day, filled with unspeakable horror and tragedy, the first step of an unexpected and arduous journey that would take Sesay from his native country situated along the West Africa coast to Gambia and eventually to Baton Rouge.

Along the way, hopelessness became an all-too familiar albatross, unwelcome companion, and the will to live ebbed and flowed with the day and circumstances. But he endured, to the point where today he is considered a community leader and a tireless advocate for those stepping onto American soil for the first time. Sesay, who is a co-founder and vice-president of Louisiana African Solidarity Response, an organization responding to the needs of immigrants in the Baton Rouge area, is now a national leader.

Sesay, who came to the United States under a United Nations immigration program and was sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, was recently appointed as the Louisiana Delegate at the Refugee Congress, a national independent advocacy and advisory organization. He is the first representative Louisiana will have on the board.

“Basically we reach out to the communities, and to the state representatives and lawmakers and discuss with them laws that will affect immigrants and refugees,” said Sesay with a smile betraying his sense of peace that has been so long on coming.

Even though it now seems like a lifetime ago, the carnage of that horrific afternoon remains fresh in Sesay’s mind. After all, can one ever forget the day when your father is murdered before your very eyes and you are likewise shot?

After school that day, Sesay followed his regular routine and went to the office of his dad who was mayor of Kathoma. Not long after arriving, however, something went terribly wrong when terrorists invaded the offices and yelled at several students who were present, “You guys are the students that write about us.”

Sesay explained that as the civil war in Sierra Leone was raging, he was among many students who demonstrated for peace.

“Being against (the war) we became a target for the terrorist group,” Sesay said, adding the terrorists shouted “You are against us, the reason being you guys have hands to write. So we’re going to cut your hands off.”

He was horrified as he watched the hands of his fellow students being severed, then continuing to move around as they dropped to the floor. Shortly before it was his turn, Sesay’s dad, who had become aware of what was unfolding, pleaded with the terrorists to let the students go.

Rather than listen, however, Sesay said the terrorists “shot him right in front of me.”

“I always said it was a terrible thing but it has made me be a better man, be strong for my kids and a better father,” he added. “Because that is a thing a person can give is his life, for me and other students, pleading on our behalf and he got shot.”

“He is my hero, he is my role model.”

With terror, Sesay stepped up and turned his head, awaiting the coldness of a steel blade to strip him of one of his hands.

But in what he called a miracle, the machete the terrorists were using only cut off a portion of his hand. He said as soon as the terrorists realized what happened they shot him in the leg, and from there, his world went dark, succumbing to unconsciousness.

He remembers waking up at a medical camp inside of a military facility screaming, “Daddy, daddy!” A lady told him that he was lucky because one of the soldiers who had come to rescue those in the office noticed movement from Sesay and rescued him.

Unbeknownst to Sesay at the time, terrorists had also conspired with a rival of Sesay’s family to kill his mother and younger brother by setting fire to their home. He presumed both were killed in the fire and it would not be until 2013 he would learn that his mother and brother survived by using an escape route through the basement. Later this year, he hopes to finally reunite with his mother.

His sister would later be killed during the 11-year war that ended in 2002. Because of his family’s status in the town, Sesay was well known and word soon filtered back to his stepbrother that he was in the camp. With the help of his stepbrother, Sesay made it safely through neighboring Guinea and eventually to Gambia, another African coastal country, where he landed in a refugee camp. Depression and despair began to embrace him like the poverty in which he was surrounded.

“It was tough being in the camp; I thought it would be a better life and a better opportunity for me,” he said, adding that they were forced to live in make-shift houses and sleep on rugs.

“I was hopeless; I was in a different part of the world,” Sesay said. “Imagine a young boy growing up and then you are just separated from your whole family. I didn’t know who else to turn to and thought what am I living for?”

His answer arrived in the form of a mother and her daughter who...
Medical advances must be made with compassion of the heart

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Advancements in modern society must be made with the compassion of the heart as well as sharpness of mind if they are to serve humanity, according to theologian George Weigel, who spoke at the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University’s Spring Commencement on May 22.

Weigel, who was interviewed by The Catholic Commentator in connection with his visit, is the Distinguished Senior Fellow of Washington’s Ethics and Public Policy Center, where he holds the William E. Simon Chair in Catholic studies.

“The remarkable advances in the life sciences, especially genetics and related technologies deriving from the mapping of the human genome, have to be complemented by a deepening of wisdom so that the net result of this dynamic, but also dangerous, knowledge, is true human flourishing. It’s a good time to re-read the myth of Prometheus, or Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story, ‘The Birthmark,’ to remind ourselves of the dangers of succumbing to the perennial human temptation to remake the human condition,” said Weigel.

Such temptations today include claims that to achieve a “greater good” a smaller evil must be done, including abortion, physician assisted suicide, cloning and embryonic research. “This harms the conscience of a society, according to Weigel. “There is a very dangerous, slippery slope in this kind of sloppy argument, which becomes a kind of all-purpose excuse for doing what people of light conscience want to do anyway,” said Weigel.

“No ‘greater good’ can come from the willful taking of an innocent human life. None.”

In his commencement address, Weigel told the FMOLU graduates, “Here, you have been taught and formed in the convictions that we are not just congealed, crammed with the products of human genius, but formed with the compassion of the heart as well as the sharpness of mind. Your education here, and the heart and soul that we have been taught, have prepared you to be men and women who demonstrate to others the greatest satisfaction in life comes from making our lives into a gift for others.”

Weigel noted the Catholic faith, from which people can study the lives of saints, such as St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, pairs wisdom with revelation concerning modern advancements. It is not an “ancient, rigid” faith pitted against science that has lost its relevance in a more “complex” and “sophisticated world,” but one that can form the conscientiousness of a culture as it leads with new ideas.

“In the decades ahead, you will bring the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare to an American health care system that is in danger of dehumanization, even as its technical wonders multiply exponentially. In the decades ahead, you must, in the Franciscan spirit, help form the conscience, as well as the soul, of the profession of healing in the United States. “The life of faith and professional life cannot be siloed, as if they were two aspects of our lives that never intersect,” said Weigel. “A genuinely Catholic and Franciscan faith will shape every facet of your lives your souls, your minds, your families, your professional work.”

“Weigel noted the Catholic faith, from which people can study the lives of saints, such as St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, pairs wisdom with revelation concerning modern advancements. It is not an “ancient, rigid” faith pitted against science that has lost its relevance in a more “complex” and “sophisticated world,” but one that can form the conscientiousness of a culture as it leads with new ideas. “Catholics believe that all truths, from whatever source, point to the one truth who is God. So Catholics aren't threatened by the truths of science, or the truths that come to us from literature, or the truths that come to us from music and the arts. As for the alleged science vs. religion clichés, it’s worth remembering that modern genetics was invented by a monk, Gregor Mendel, and that the Big Bang theory that dominates modern astrophysics and cosmology was first developed by a Catholic priest, Georges Lemaitre,” Weigel said.

“Most importantly, the church uses its wisdom and knowledge to serve people and promote their dignity, according to Weigel. “The Catholic Church is the greatest educator of the poor and dispossessed in the world. The Catholic Church is the greatest provider of health care to poor people throughout the world,” said Weigel. “These are empirical facts. Catholics should know them, and learn how to speak about these forms of service as expressions of the church’s basic convictions – which will help demonstrate that those convictions are not ‘rigid’ but in fact life-giving and life-affirming,” said Weigel.

When speaking to the FMOLU students, Weigel urged them to boldly shape the conscientiousness of society.

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“America is too full of siloes today. The education you have received here, the hard work you have done here, the sacrifices you and your families have made so that you could be here and learn here and be formed here – all of these have prepared you to be men and women who break out of the siloes that divide us, men and women who demonstrate to others that the greatest satisfaction in life comes from making our lives into a gift for others.”
New archives building will preserve rich history of the diocese

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Officials from the Diocese of Baton Rouge recently broke ground for the future so as to be able to preserve the past.

Under skies that briefly shut off a nearly constant spigot of rain, Bishop Robert W. Muench, surrounded by diocesan employees and others, blessed the ground and then shoveled some dirt for the new archives building that will total nearly 8,000 square feet, including a whopping 5,500 square of storage space.

“The groundbreaking ceremony symbolically ritualized the initiation of the long overdue construction of a new diocesan archives facility,” Bishop Muench said. “It officially marked the process of much prayer consideration, consultation, design and funding.”

Diocesan archivist Ann Boltin stressed the importance of such a facility to the diocese cannot be overstated.

“By breaking ground and beginning the process, we are moving forward to building a facility that will better care for the heritage of the church in this area,” Boltin said shortly after the brief ceremony on June 1.

Chief financial officer Joe Ingraham said the cost of the building checks in at approximately $2.1 million, with the majority being paid for with the sale of diocesan property through the past several years. He said money raised from the Bishop’s Annual Appeal is also being used.

The planning dates back at least 10 years but was derailed by the stock market crash. Ingraham, who said all of the money has been raised to complete the project, called it “very gratifying” seeing the shovels finally go into the ground.

Boltin said the building will include 3,500 square feet of office space, a reference room and a conference room, but her exuberance was obvious as she discussed the storage space that will feature a huge inner vault located in the center of the structure. She said when designing an archives building, the area where collections will be kept cannot be near water or even natural light, which can damage historic records.

“There will be no water pipes anywhere near it, no bathrooms, no kitchen and no window,” she said. “It will house all of the historical material. That will be all of our sacramental records. Anything of a certain age, anything that is fragile that needs special care will live in that space.”

She said a second, albeit smaller, vault will house what she called inactive records, explaining that those are records that will be retained on an average of four to 10 years but in some cases much longer. They include records with fiscal, administrative or legal value but are not meant to be kept permanently.

“This facility will enhance the proper recording and maintaining records and artifacts that document our treasured history and heritage,” Bishop Muench said. “This holds true for the local Catholic Church as well as the community. It will enable continuing research and study about where we have been, where we are and where we are headed.”

Boltin said the building will allow her staff to care for historic church records that require special care that is not available at the parish level, such as temperature controlled or humidity controlled environments.

“With this new facility we are going to be able to offer that kind of environment to the historic records and artifacts of the diocese,” she said, adding that because of the current space crunch in the Catholic Life Center her office is unable to accept anything new.

She said the records tell the collective story of the church in the area as well as offering an opportunity to learn from the people, the culture, the bishops and clergy of those early years.

“It’s the collective memory of this area,” Boltin said.

She added that the current policy of requiring visitors to make appointments will carry over to the new facility.

“It’s very exciting and encouraging. We’ve been waiting a really long time,” Boltin said.

Contractors are waiting on final permits, and once started, construction is expected to take about 10 months.

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By Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

Bishop Robert W. Muench helped break ground on the new archives building, which is being constructed behind the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Retreat Center. Participating in the groundbreaking ceremonies were, from left, architect Henry Carville, contractor Bobby Sheets, archivist Ann Boltin, Bishop Muench, diocesan chief financial officer Joe Ingraham, chancellor Father Paul Yi and associate archivist Amy Jones. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

DON AND CARL SAY THANKS TO THEIR CUSTOMERS IN THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOR OVER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE!

LICENSED AND FULLY INSURED

June 9, 2017 The Catholic Commentator 5
Why penance is necessary/Which knee for genuflection?/Baptism by nurse in hospital

Q I am a Roman Catholic and, at present, live in a retirement community. The non-Catholics here have said in discussions that we do not need to do penance, that Jesus did it all for us. They have gone so far as to claim that our doing penance is an insult to Christ, as if to say that all he did for us was not enough. (Toledo, Ohio)

A The Catholic Church has always recognized the fact that Christ’s life, death and resurrection was more than enough to cover the debt of our sins. Penitential practices, far from necessary, help us grow in our faith and strengthen us to resist temptation, according to the Church’s teaching. For example, the Sacrament of Confession, links us to Christ in his suffering, to recognize the fact that Christ’s life, death and resurrection was more than enough to cover the debt of our sins. Penitential practices, far from being a burden, are given to us as a sign of our deep reverence. (Johnstown, Pennsylvania)

Q Right is right. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, “a genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore it is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament” (No. 274).

A The custom was formally approved by the Roman Catholic Church in the early 16th century. (Note that it is only practiced in the Western Church; Eastern Catholics and members of the Orthodox Church use instead a profound bow as a sign of their deep reverence.) Genuflection on the left knee was used to pay honor to kings and emperors (and, at certain times in the church’s history, to the bishop of one’s diocese), but the right knee is reserved to God alone as a sign of divine worship. (Davenport, Iowa)

Q The other day I was told that if a baby, born to Catholic parents in a Catholic hospital, is in danger of dying, it is routine practice for a nurse or whoever is available – to baptize the baby as soon as possible. But what if the parents are members of some other Christian tradition – or no religion at all?

A Ordinarily, the sacrament of baptism is administered only by a bishop, priest or deacon. An exception is made when death is imminent. In that case, the Code of Canon Law indicates that baptism may be administered by anyone who has the proper intention (No. 861). Ordinarily, too, the permission of at least one parent is necessary for a child to be baptized (No. 868); but again here, there is an exception: In danger of death, the sacrament may be administered against the parents’ wishes. But the question is whether it should be. St. Thomas Aquinas taught in the Summa Theologica that children of Jews and unbelievers should not be baptized against their parents’ wishes and that to do so would be “contrary to natural justice.”

Certainly, in the view of the Catholic Church, baptism is the ordinary and surest way to salvation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “The church does not know of any means other than baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are ‘reborn of water and the Spirit’” (No. 1257).

However, the catechism also says: “The great mercy of God … and Jesus’ tenderness toward children … allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism” (No. 1261). The nurse you mentioned should have first tried, if possible, to determine the parents’ wishes and then proceeded accordingly.

Q But now I see more and more people using their left knee. Has there been a change that I am not aware of? Is it permissible to alternate knees? (Johnstown, Pennsylvania)

A Growing up, I was always taught to genuflect with the right knee. But now I see more and more people using their left knee. Has there been a change that I am not aware of? Is it permissible to alternate knees? (Johnstown, Pennsylvania)

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Extraordinary ministers of Eucharist allow Catholics to experience the Lord

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Since 1246, Catholics have celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi, which takes place this year on June 15, in order to make the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist known to the world in a public way.

Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist in the Diocese of Baton Rouge say the gift of their ministry is showing their love for their Catholic neighbors by distributing the Eucharist to them so they can experience an intense, intimate communion with the Lord.

Chris Christensen, an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist trainer for St. Aloysius Church in Baton Rouge, conceded that when he first thought about entering the ministry, he felt, “I’m just a sinner.”

“I didn’t want to put into the position of being a saint,” said Christensen.

God confirmed to Christensen he was calling him to the ministry when he read the Scripture passage of Jesus calling St. Matthew, who was a tax collector, to follow him.

Christensen said he grew up in the “Catholic old school,” where ordained ministers distributed the Eucharist and recipients received the host by mouth. But Vatican II brought changes in the way Communion is distributed and received, said Christensen.

Lait my involved in the distribution and people have the option of receiving Communion by hand.

Christensen said he prays the Act of Contrition before serving Communion.

“I certainly hold a high reverence for those times I serve,” said Christensen. “I try to bring that reverence into every moment of every day.”

He said it is humbling to know that following the mystical experience of bread and wine being changed into the body and blood of Christ in Mass he shares it with others.

Irene Bourque, at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge and a Secular Franciscan.

She said the ministers need “catechesis and caring” to draw people receiving the body and blood of Christ from them into a deeper awareness of his presence.

Bourque highlighted the General Instruction of the Roman Missal which states, “All ministers of holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the most holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine.”

One central question when preparing to serve the Eucharist should be, “How do you view the Eucharist?” said Bourque. This particularly applies in the way the ministers should dress, she stated.

“Dress so as not to be a distraction,” said Bourque, referring to St. John 3:30, “He must increase; I must decrease.”

One of the things extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist should wear is a smile, according to Patsy Burgess of St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge and a Secular Franciscan.

“During the Last Supper, Jesus was happy to be sharing a meal with his close friends,” said Burgess. “He was sad because he knew of his passion to come. When he asked his apostles to ‘do this in remembrance of me,’ I don’t think he wanted us to be sad and with frowning faces (when we) minister his body and blood to others. All eucharistic ministers should smile when they perform this ministry. Jesus is alive and well. He is truly present in this beautiful sacrament,” said Burgess.

She added, “One weekend, I was serving as a extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. There is a little lady that I always seem to minister to. This particular weekend, she came to Communion and after receiving (the Eucharist), she gently patted my hand and walked away. I was touched. After Mass, she thanked me for smiling at her. She noticed that I always smiled when ministering Communion. She told me it reminded her that Jesus is truly here with us. We should be happy. We should smile. It is not an unhappy event; it is a joyful one. (It’s) an event to remember and participate in every day of our lives. Amen!”

“So, yes, eucharistic ministers, smile. Our Jesus is alive in this sacrament. Let it show on our faces that this is so. Then just maybe, those that do receive will smile too and be encouraged to go out and spread the good news of this Eucharist. Smiles – they are contagious.”

Joanne Roberts, who is an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and member of the worship commission along with her husband, Cooper, at St. Aloysius, said reverence and joy are helpful in serving the Eucharist during various occasions.

“When you’ve been to one of the holiest places you’ve ever been that’s an honor,” said Roberts. “My heart was beating (fast).”

“When I look back on my life that was a highest moments,” said Roberts.
Deacon Grimes doing what God wants

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Only days before his Ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacon, Timothy Grimes was excited and filled with a great sense of peace. It was a feeling of joy, he said, of knowing that he was doing exactly what he was supposed to do.

“This is what God wants for me,” he said.

On May 27, shortly before Bishop Robert W. Muench ordained Father Patrick Broussard and Father Ryan Hallford to the Sacred Order of Priest, Deacon Grimes knelt before the bishop to receive the Prayer of Ordination to the Diaconate. Immediately after, he was vested with the stole and dalmatic, traditional garments of a deacon.

He will serve as a full-time deacon for St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland Church in Albany for the next several months. In October, Grimes will return to his graduate studies in theology at Notre Dame Seminary, and upon graduation next May he will be ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“I just know through all of my time and prayer at the seminary and working with my spiritual director and all of the other people there that this is clearly what God is calling me to do,” he said.

And Deacon Grimes is ready.

“I’m looking forward to going to Albany. I’ve heard wonderful things (about the parish), and I want to experience as much as I can,” he said.

For Deacon Grimes, the idea of being open to new experiences is nothing new. It can even be said that the peace he feels today, and the realization he is exactly where God wants him to be, is because he opened his heart and embraced a calling that began nine years ago.

Back then, he was a junior at University High School in Baton Rouge. Active in his school’s music program (he was a trombone player and selected to several honor bands in the community), Deacon Grimes was also involved with the youth group at St. Aloysius Church in Baton Rouge (he was part of the leadership team for the church’s junior high students and served on the diocesan youth board).

A regular at various youth gatherings, including Steubenville Conferences, Deacon Grimes explained that while attending the Abby Youth Festival in 2008, he was drawn in by what he described as a “dramatic movie” called “Fishers of Men,” a film that shows the many aspects of the life of a priest.

“In adoration that same night I just saw this image of me being a priest. It was heavy on my mind, and I just thought this was something I needed to consider,” he explained.

Still contemplating that visual image, Deacon Grimes said he returned home from Abby Fest and attended Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral, his family’s home parish.

“After Mass, I saw the bishop outside, and he asked me, ‘Have you ever considered the priesthood?’” Deacon Grimes said.

“So, yeah, nice timing there,” he added, smiling.

Following graduation from high school in 2009, Deacon Grimes attended LSU.

“I wanted that experience of attending LSU. It was something I just wanted to do,” he said.

But after two years on the Baton Rouge campus, he enrolled at St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, where true to his initiative and planning ability, the majority of his hours transferred. He ultimately received a bachelor’s degree from St. Joseph and is expected to receive a master’s of divinity from Notre Dame Seminary next year.

The 26-year-old deacon will start his assignment in Albany on June 10.

Jan Grimes, Deacon Grimes’ mom, said she was surprised “but then not surprised” when her son first mentioned he thought he was being called to be a priest.

“He was always such a peaceful child,” she recalled, noting how growing up, he loved attending youth group conferences and retreats.

“I know this is what God wants for him,” she said.

Musician composes special gift for son

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Music has many properties. It can connect, transport, move and define. It’s expressive, yet simple. It’s also universal while completely personal all at the same time.

It’s this power of music that William “Bill” Grimes, a composer, conductor, recording artist and E. & D. White Professor of Jazz Studies at LSU, finds incredibly enjoyable and one he tries to give to others.

“I’m the kind of musician who tries to find a way to touch people with music,” he said.

So, it’s no surprise that Grimes used his craft, composing an emotionally vibrant piece, and chose to share it with everyone attending the priestly ordination of Father Patrick Broussard and Father Ryan Hallford as well as the ordination to the diaconate for his son, Deacon Timothy Grimes.

The original composition, called “Prism,” was the postlude to the May 27 event at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge.

“(Prism)” is big and bombastic,” he said.

The piece, a father’s gift to the diocese, played immediately following the final hymn.

“It’s hopeful and inspiring,” he said, adding that he drew upon previous works he composed in creating this new work.

Grimes, who also composed a special piece for his older son Jonathan’s wedding three years ago, explained that he included several brass and cambal parts in “Prism” because he wanted to not only reflect the happy occasion of the ordination, but to also show the majestic nature of the cathedral.

During any liturgy, he said, music supports. It should be reflective and draw the faithful in, rather than distracting them from the liturgy’s real purpose.

However, during the postlude, Grimes said he wanted to “create this emotion” and celebrate the special occasion with everyone present.
Father Hallford accepts God’s invitation to priesthood

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

The question which settled Father Ryan Hallford’s discernment about pursuing a vocation to the priesthood was not whether or not to be a father, but “what kind of father do I want to be?”

Bishop Robert W. Muench at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge ordained Father Hallford on May 27.

Growing up in Slidell in a broken family, Father Hallford said he assumed the responsibility of taking care of his three younger siblings at a young age. This engrained in him the importance of family.

During his freshman and sophomore years in high school, Father Hallford said he became friends with non-Catholic students and attended their Bible studies. As they presented him with ideologies and literature that strongly opposed the Catholic faith, he stopped identifying himself as Catholic.

“I went through a period where I was anti-Catholic,” said Father Hallford.

But as he began to read about the history of the early church fathers, he said the desire to become a priest and serve the church grew in him.

After his freshman year in college at LSU, Father Hallford went to St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict in 2003.

“I didn’t know much about seminary. I thought, ‘What? We have to go to Mass everyday?’ It was definitely a time of adjustment. We had to pray together multiple times a day,” said Father Hallford.

A little more than two years later, after Hurricane Katrina, Father Hallford created mass devastation in South Louisiana, Father Hallford left the seminary.

“I thought that was it,” he said.

He said he does not regret that decision because that was “where he was at” at that time, and it allowed him to have experiences which helped him grow in faith and will help him to be a good priest.

He returned to LSU and reflected upon what it means to be a man of virtue. He had relationships with several young ladies and one was serious enough that they were talking about marriage.

After graduating from LSU with a degree in philosophy, he spent a year teaching in San Jose, California with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Some of the friends he made there attended his ordination.

Having continued his serious relationship long distance, Father Hallford was ready to return home, get married and teach, eventually at the college level. But the relationship broke up, and in the meantime he had already accepted a teaching position at St. Joseph’s Academy at Baton Rouge. He taught there a year before becoming a teacher at St. Michael High School in Baton Rouge for four years.

“That was a new experience. I discovered how important my prayer life was and to witness it in my own life of the faith to the students,” Father Hallford said.

It was at that time he became legal guardian of his younger sister.

“Overnight, I had to take on the responsibility of taking care of a teenager girl,” said Father Hallford.

He took that role seriously. His late nights hanging out with friends had to be put on hold as he cooked and did other chores of running the household. In order to pay rent and put his sister through school at St. Michael, he took on extra jobs.

“It was a good opportunity to really sacrifice in order to love someone at the cost of things,” said Father Hallford.

His life became simplified at the time, and Father Hallford began again to think about what it would be like to serve the church. During his sister’s senior year, he took a grueling Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain. He prayed about how to provide a family-like atmosphere for his sister.

“That was part of one of my prayers that summer during the pilgrimage,” said Father Hallford. “I said, ‘Lord there are some things I can’t provide. I can try to be a good man, but my sister needs to be around good women that model to her what it means to be one so that she can reflect on her own femininity and what kind of woman she wants to become.’”

That prayer was later answered when the family of Peter Fletcher, then assistant principal at St. Michael, took Father Hallford and his sister into their home.

As Father Hallford began attending daily Mass and reflecting on his pilgrimage at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge, where he celebrated his Mass of thanksgiving, God drew him closer to him.

“One of the things I experienced towards the end of the summer was an invitation that, on the one hand, I could be married and have a wife and a bunch of children and have a happy and holy life,” Father Hallford said. “…On the other hand, in the context of understanding and trusting the Lord, I felt the Lord say, ‘But I invite you once again to consider the priesthood.’

“I experienced the call to return in a different way. There was a lot of freedom. It wasn’t if I made the wrong decision I would be miserable for the rest of my life. It was more (the Lord saying), ‘I want you to be happy,’” said Father Hallford.

After assuring that his sister transitioned from high school to college, Father Hallford returned to the seminary, this time Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, and his teaching experience helped him excel on “the other side of the desk.”

Now that he is a priest, Father Hallford said his family has grown beyond what he could have ever dreamed.

“My desire to be a father didn’t magically go away because I decided to become a priest,” Father Hallford said.

“It’s wasn’t whether I wanted to be a father or not to be a father, it’s what kind of fatherhood does the Lord call me to?”

By accepting the call to priestly vocation, Father Hallford said he will be a spiritual father to many, being a part of and offering the sacraments during important and intimate moments of family’s lives from birth through death.

“I have to make myself available and vulnerable to people in an appropriate way,” said Father Hallford. “I know if I’m going to be the priest God has called me to be, I can’t do it alone. I need grace, I need the sacraments and I also need the prayers and support of God’s people, the family.”

Father Hallford said he is excited to be assigned to Holy Family Church in Port Allen, and feels he will gain a lot of wisdom from Holy Family pastor Father David Allen and the parishioners.

“The Lord is entrusting this community to me, and these are the people the Lord is inviting me to love. So there’s a great adventure there. I look forward to that adventure,” Father Hallford said.

Photos by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator
A lone in his own reflective silence, the frenzy of his ordination subdued, Father Pat Broussard was preparing to wash clothes before attending his after party when reality struck him.

“You are a priest,” Father Broussard recalled of his thoughts. “I am a priest. I focused on that just a minute.”

Father Broussard was ordained along with Father Ryan Hallford to the priesthood May 27 by Bishop Robert W. Muench at St. Joseph Cathedral. Deacon Tim Grimes was ordained as a transitional deacon and is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in May 2018.

“It was just a wonderful day, being in community with my brother priests, deacons, the bishop there welcoming us, the staff who had worked so hard to put the day together,” Father Broussard said. “Just the joy of the day.”

A joy that was also sprinkled with a pinch of sadness as Father Broussard’s journey to the priesthood was certainly non-traditional. For more than 30 years, he was a husband, a father and an executive in the oil field. But one phone call would change his life, as well as his future.

While working in Lafayette for the day, then-Deacon Broussard, who had been ordained to the permanent diaconate in 2010, received news that his wife, Aminthe, had died suddenly at her desk. As the grieving process took its natural course, he realized he had three choices: remain a deacon with the understanding he could never remarry, become relicized and marry or become a priest.

With the urging of his mother-in-law, Father Broussard was very careful in thinking leading up to the ceremony, I was alive in her spirit and in his heart. “She was on my mind a lot,” he said. “However, I have to say leading up to the ceremony, I was very careful in thinking about her. When I feel closest to her, when I really feel like she is closest to me, it tends to make me a little emotional and I tend to cry more easily. So I didn’t want the day to reflect what appeared to be sadness or my appearance of sadness to have an apprehension on the day.

“In prayer, I just asked God to help me with that, knowing that she is with me and is going to be with me somehow in your special way.”

Even in ministry, and especially when celebrating Mass, Father Broussard said his wife will always be near. He designed his own chalice, which features six coins across the bottom. One of the coins includes the couple’s wedding rings and in the middle a diamond from his wife’s earrings.

“That is the symbol of our marriage in Christ, in our new lives; my new life and her new life,” he said. “Every time I look down at that chalice and see our rings, I know she is close and with me. She is with me now in a way through Christ that I just never could have imagined.”

Another coin features his wife’s graduation ring from Mount Carmel Academy in New Iberia.

The remaining coins represent Holy Family, which has been Father Broussard’s home parish for the past seven years; St. Peter Church in New Iberia, which was his home parish for 40 years; The Last Supper; and the crucifixion.

Inscribed under the base of the chalice is a prayer for his family, which he said “now includes all of those God puts in my life and puts me in theirs. These are now my intimate, loving family.”

“When I raise the chalice, my wife, my children, my extended family, my communal family along with the Mass intention are raised every time.”

As he embarks on his new ministry, which will begin July 1 as parochial vicar at St. Thomas More Church in Baton Rouge, Father Broussard said his vision of priesthood is to do what God calls him to do and to “love with all of my heart and soul and mind and body the people that God puts me with.”

“That’s my prayer,” he added. “I want us all to be in heaven together, I want us all to be in the communion of saints, and whatever my part is in that, whatever way God wants to use me in that, that’s what I want to be.”

Father Broussard sits with his daughter, Alissa Gaudet, at the beginning of the ordination Mass. Father Broussard said that during the ceremony he thought about his wife, Aminthe, who passed away suddenly in 2014 at the age of 52.

Father Broussard hugs Father David Allen, pastor at Holy Family Church in Port Allen, after Father Allen helped Father Broussard put on his vestments during ordination.
SHEPHERDS OF THE CHURCH

“Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep.”

Bishop Robert W. Muench prays during the Mass of Ordination Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral on May 27 while Deacon Tim Grimes, Father Pat Broussard and Father Ryan Hallford lay prostrate before the bishop. Photos by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

Above, from left, Father Pat Broussard, Father Ryan Hallford and Deacon Tim Grimes stand before Bishop Muench during ordination.

Director of the Office of Seminarians and pastor of St. Patrick Church in Baton Rouge Father Matt Dupré lays his hands on Father Ryan Hallford as part of the ordination Mass. Holy Family Church in Port Allen pastor Father David Allen, having just blessed Father Pat Broussard, is behind Father Dupré.

Father Broussard and Father Hallford were joyous throughout their ordination ceremony.

Deacon Grimes is shown spreading incense during ordination.
Sacred Heart building blends the old with the new

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

It’s easy to get wrapped up in the photos when you first enter the old CYO building behind Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Baton Rouge.

Back to 1949, when the CYO king and queen, befitted in costumes comparable to their glorious reign, made their official debut, greeting all their royal subjects with a grand gesture in the gym. Back to 1955, when Father Paul Gauci, pastor of Sacred Heart from 1948-1970, made contact with a baseball, ceremoniously opening the season of play much to the delight of every youngster near him.

Back to 1964, when hair-bowed girls wearing knee-high skirts met their loafer-wearing counterparts on the gym floor to dance to music performed by Fats Domino, the late rhythm and blues legend. And there are more.

Large black and white prints cover every inch of the newly created concession sitting area, providing a nice backdrop for conversation in a building that has six decades worth of history. Built in 1957, the CYO building served thousands of youth in the Baton Rouge area. Originally financed and constructed by the CYO on leased property from Sacred Heart, the building provided a home base for various athletic league competitions organized through the organization. It also hosted dances, plays, musical performances, arts and craft classes and art exhibitions. In 2006, faced with a changing CYO mission (ultimately the youth organization disbanded 10 years later), the building was officially turned over to Sacred Heart for renovation and use as a parish activity center.

On May 7, after years of planning and steady work, the new building was dedicated and formally opened for parish use during a family day at the church. Some 500 parishioners, families, students and friends of the parish were on hand as Father Miles Walsh, pastor of Sacred Heart, and assisted by Deacon David Dawson, blessed the parish’s new activity center and gymnasium.

Afterwards, those gathered enjoyed inflatables, food, a student choir concert, face painting and other activities. According to Tiffany Dykes, business manager at Sacred Heart, the renovated building is one of three facets of Sacred Heart’s “Growing Into the Future” campaign and features ample space for various activities and meetings.

The building is also a study in old meets new.

“We’ve maintained history here but with a modern feel,” said Lisa Black Cossé, development director at Sacred Heart School.

While the building’s space was reconfigured and technology added (such as wireless access and interactive white boards) to satisfy the parish’s needs for meeting rooms, updated bathrooms, more storage and a larger concession area, the gym, once a home away from home for many youth in the area for decades, received just a facelift.

Cossé explained how the original gym flooring, bleachers and other activities.

Back to 2010, when large black and white photos of past CYO events in Baton Rouge honor the history of the organization while a nearby wall art, created by local artists and featuring the radiant logo of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church and School, symbolizes the tradition and future of the parish’s newly renovated activity center.

Photo by Rachele Smith | The Catholic Commentator

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FAITH

From page 2

life of the Blessed Trinity, here on earth in the obscurity of faith, and after death in eternal light” (CCC #265) Jesus explicitly reveals the purpose of his mission on earth. In the Gospel of St. John (3:16) is one of the most repeated and recited Scripture verses. God gave his son to the world out of love, so people would believe and have life beyond this world. The unveiling of faith comes when Jesus is revealed. How can we personally show Jesus to others? We are called to love fully in order to be life-giving. Acts of kindness lead to moments of grace, for with every smile there follows joy. Jesus can easily be manifested beginning with a simple smile.

Participation

Finally, how are we called to intimately participate in the life of the Trinity? Since the Trinity is the “central mystery of Christian faith and life” then we also believe “the Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’” (CCC #1924). We hear in the Book of Deuteronomy Moses reminding the Israelites how God led them out of slavery, provided nourishment in the desert with miraculous manna and split the rock to provide water. He fed and kept them from harm and protected, despite their sinfulness. We, too, are offered the same nourishment and protection, but now is it through God’s own flesh and blood through Jesus Christ. The earthly manna sustained temporary life on earth. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus, creates new life. We “partake” in the real presence and “become one body, one spirit in Christ.” The chalice filled with wine and the bread broken is given by God, made holy by the Spirit, and offered by Jesus as a sacrifice to free us from the bonds of sin and give us everlasting life.

Fr. Jean Corbon OP writes of the intensity of the father’s love as we experience the “passion of his son in the emptiness of our death. The rock (which) is split at that moment is the tomb and from it living water streams out. We are more than on-lookers. We are partakers, called to live life in faith, faith in Jesus who loved me and gave himself for me” (“Wellspring of Worship,” Ignatius Press, 1988).

We are called to full and active participation at each Mass by praying, listening, singing, adoring and celebrating. The sacrifice of the Mass is the highest peak of our Catholic faith. Discover the beauty of life in Christ through the Eucharist.

St. Augustine said “Believe what you see, see what you believe and become what you are: the body of Christ.” Our “Amen,” is our affirmation of belief that this is truly the body and blood of Christ and that I will be the body of Christ to others. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever (John 6:51). Thanks be to God.

Dow is the director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

DUKE SCHOLARS – St. Thomas More School in Baton Rouge was well represented in the Talent Identification Program sponsored by Duke University. This year, 38 percent of the school’s seventh-grade students took the ACT test as part of the program with many students qualifying for state recognition and one student for national recognition. TIP students include Alex Campbell, Patrick Day, Haylee Deshotel, Seth Drouin, Alexis Harvey, Laura Labrador, Chance Pope, Makenna Quick, William Ripple, Reagan Robinson, Mia Roppolo, Kristen Slatoft, Parker Tatam and Nicholas Thai. Students qualifying for state recognition are Ella Boudreaux, Mallory Caro, Jackson Walker, Natalie Kaiser, Louis Holder, C.J. Sturiale, Harper Mathes, Claire Adams, John Hardy, Rebecca Bordelon, Isobel Ngo, Elizabeth Curry, Joseph Robin and Caroline Simoneaux. In addition to state recognition, Caroline Simoneaux also qualified for national recognition in reading, meaning her score was in the upper 10 percent of all students taking the ACT nationally, including juniors and seniors in high school. Photo provided by Judy Armstrong | St. Thomas More School

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Everything, Everything

Director Stella Meghie’s adaptation of Nicola Yoon’s young adult novel bears more than a little resemblance to one of those fairy tales involving a princess locked up in a castle who needs a handsome prince to rescue her. In this case, a bright and literate teen (Amandla Stenberg) has long been confined by a rare illness to the hermetically sealed house specially designed for her by her protective mother (Anika Noni Rose). Then a sensitive lad (Nick Robinson) moves in next door and becomes her instant soul mate (via texting and handwritten placards held up to windows). Aware of the target audience, screenwriter J. Mills Goodloe sustains the romantic fantasy without letup. The result is a gentle, tasteful film. A bedroom scene shared by its barely-of-age main couple, however, makes it doubtful fare even for mature adolescents. Brief sensuality as part of a mostly off-screen nonmarital encounter, a single instance of rough language. A-III; PG-13

Baywatch

When a disgraced Olympic swimmer (Zac Efron) joins the lifeguarding, and amateur sleuthing, team of the title, his selfish ways bring him into conflict with its longtime leader (Dwayne Johnson). Director Seth Gordon’s action comedy, adapted from the television series that began on NBC but had a longer life in syndication, succeeds neither as a pop-culture spoof nor as a crime-solving adventure. Though the film’s self-conscious flesh peddling is mostly just tiresome, its surfeit of low-minded humor eventually registers as degrading. Some gunplay and physical violence with momentary but extreme gore, strong sexual content, including full nudity and off-screen nonmarital activity, several profanities and a few milder oaths, pervasive rough and crude language. O; R

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul

An excess of scatological humor as well as a lack of creative drive blight this family road comedy, adapted by writer-director David Bowers from the novel by Jeff Kinney. As his family sets off on a cross-country journey to attend his great-grandmother’s 90th birthday celebration, a mild-mannered middle schooler (Jason Drucker) rails against his mom’s (Alicia Silverstone) ban on the use of electronics during the trip – a prohibition his over-the-top father (Tom Everett Scott) likewise finds it difficult to obey. Recently shamed by an embarrassing video that went viral, the lad also plots with his older brother (Charlie Wright) to make a detour to a gaming convention where he hopes a taped encounter with an online celebrity (Joshua Hoover) will retrieve his reputation. A series of misadventures and indignities await the youthful protagonist as the film ambles along to little purpose. Too many of these involve excretion to allow endorsement for all. Much distasteful potty humor, brief adult wordplay. A-II; PG-13

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales

Disney

Flashy but unsatisfying fifth installment in the theme park ride-based franchise that first set sail in 2003. This time out, series stalwart Johnny Depp, once again playing eccentric buccaneer Capt. Jack Sparrow, joins forces with a young science scholar (Kaya Scodelario) whose learning has led her to be charged with witchcraft and an equally youthful sailor (Brenton Thwaites). All three are seeking the same magical artifact, each for a different reason. They’re pursued by the British navy, by the ghost of one of Sparrow’s old adversaries (Javier Bardem) and by a living but one-legged freebooter (Geoffrey Rush). Directors Joachim Ronning and Espen Sandberg’s special-effects-driven adventure is long on spectacle but short on human interest. Parents willing to overlook some adult punning may give mature teens the go-ahead to board, however. Much action violence with little blood, brief implications of adultery, a single gruesome image, occasional mature wordplay, at least one crass term. A-III; PG-13

MOVIE REVIEWS

USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classifications:
A-I – General patronage
A-II – Adults and adolescents
A-III – Adults
A-IV – Adults, with reservations
L – Limited adult audience
O – Morally offensive

Motion Picture Association of America ratings:
G – General audiences; all ages admitted
PG – Parental guidance suggested; some material may not be suitable for children
PG-13 – Parents are strongly cautioned to give special guidance for attendance of children under 13; some material may be inappropriate for young children
R – Restricted; under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian
NC-17 – No one under 17 admitted

STARTING JUNE 11

NEW SERIES

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EXPANDING CHILDREN’S FUTURES – Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge broke ground for its new early childhood center and expansion of its elementary school May 20. The project is the first phase of the master campaign for Our Lady of Mercy’s Traditions For Tomorrow Capital Campaign. Shoveling some dirt to celebrate the occasion are, from left, OLOM principal Chris Porche, campaign committee member Jeff Jenkins, pastor Father Cleo Milano, Bishop Robert W. Muench, campaign chairman Steve Nathanson, campaign committee member Roland Toups and OLOM administrator Randy Arabie. Photo by Staci Brimer

Our Lady of Mercy Church
Bishop Robert W. Muench called for prayer during the hurricane season, saying Louisiana understands the destruction storms can cause.

He called for residents to “entrust ourselves in prayer to the Lord, who assists us in our human needs as well as our spiritual needs.”

Bishop Muench’s comments came during the annual Hurricane Protection Mass on June 2 at St. Joseph Cathedral. The Catholic dioceses in Louisiana celebrate the Mass on the first Friday of June, at the beginning of the hurricane season which runs through Nov. 30.

In his homily, the bishop noted how psychologist Abraham Maslow, in his book “The Hierarchy of Human Needs,” said all humans have a basic need for water, air and food. Bishop Muench said Maslow also pointed out that the second need for humans is safety and security.

“Survival for us humans is very much built into our human nature,” the bishop said. “And anything that would threaten our society, that would threaten us individually, is something to be feared.”

Bishop Muench referred to the Gospel reading from St. Matthew that was read during the Mass, recalling how Jesus encourages his people to ask what they need.

“And sometimes it may seem counterintuitive that whatever we need God knows, God should provide,” he said. “Why do we have to ask?”

“And the only answer I have to that question is that if we had no influence over our benefit, if there was nothing we could do about anything that could happen to us, we might not pray.”

“And God wants us to pray, not only for our needs but to pray in conversation and dialogue, to speak and to listen,” he added. “And when we are in the presence of someone who knows more than us, and that doesn’t apply to anyone more than God, should we not be listening more than speaking?”

Bishop Robert W. Muench delivers his homily during the annual Hurricane Protection Mass on June 2 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge. “We ask God to protect us,” the bishop said. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

“So we entrust ourselves to the Lord, we are confident in our prayer and we ask God to protect us in this and other ways. As we express our faith in God, our trust in God, and our commitment to serve God individually and collectively.”

The bishop concluded by saying people rely on the grace of God and God’s goodness, and that God in eternity.

If you have news or events coming up in your church parish, school or organization, please let us know about it so we can spread the word! Email Richard Meek at rmeek@diobr.org; or fax to 225-336-8710

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**CYO ▼**

From page 12

Stage were restored to their former glory while a new ceiling, LED lighting, curtains, sound system and soon, a new scoreboard will help write another chapter in the gym’s history.

True to its parish identity, the new activity center and gym also features extensive artwork. Beautiful paintings celebrating the life of Jesus are displayed in the large conference room, and an original art piece, created by local artists Chad Townson and Joe Judy and designed by church staff member and archivist Mary Eggart, shows the parish’s historical roots and devotion to Jesus’ sacred heart.

The unique “Growing Into the Future” wall art shows the Sacred Heart and School radiant logo surrounded by wooden “flames” that can be engraved to honor or remember someone special.

Father Walsh said it is an “extraordinary blessing” for Sacred Heart to have a building such as the new parish activity center and gym.

Since its “soft-opening” in February by hosting a 600-member men’s conference, the space has already proved it will add to the life of the parish by offering many opportunities, such as a place for parish gatherings and soon, as a second gym for the school.

In addition to the renovation of the old CYO building, Father Walsh added the parish is also celebrating another “Growing Into the Future” milestone. A new prayer garden and courtyard is finished and will be dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on June 24 following the 4 p.m. Mass. All are invited.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Justifying death

The Catholic Commentator’s April 28 editorial continues to distort Catholic teaching on the death penalty. It does this through the gross equating of abortion with the penalty.

The church teaches that all taking of innocent life is immoral as a violation of the fifth commandment. Abortion, being the taking of innocent life, is thus in all circumstances immoral and can never be justified. However, the church also teaches that the legitimate defense of life at times may result in the death of another. This because the church teaches that “…it is legitimate to insist on respect for one’s own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow …” (The Catechism of the Catholic Church 2265-2266).

It is this latter category that the death penalty is justified: “Assuming that the guilty party’s identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.” (CCC2267)

The principles are that innocent life should never be taken but that force, even lethal force, may be used to protect others from attack.

Now, The Commentator claims that “…abortion is as equally vile as the death penalty.” Let’s rephrase this given the principles stated above. It is clear that The Commentator is arguing that “the taking of innocent life is as equally vile as defending others from attack.” Really? Well of course not. But the editors would have us believe that this makes perfect sense and it is only “…political agendas rather than human decency” that prevents us from creating a perfect society.

Actually, it is the complete corruption of reason that is evidenced in this editorial that is political ideology at work.

Steven Felix
Prairieville

What do Potus and Pontifex have in common?

M any world leaders are grabbing news headlines today – (Vladimir Putin, the strong man of Russia, Kim Jong-un, the dangerous man of North Korea, (Donald) Trump, the boastful and unpredictable leader of the world’s richest and most powerful country, the USA, and Francis, the pope, sometimes called Pontifex, of the Roman Catholic Church, whose only power is spiritual. All are well known, and each is quite different from the other three. But, President Trump and Pope Francis do share a common trait; they both make strong use of social media to further their goals. President Trump likes Twitter so much that he has been dubbed “Twitterer-In-Chief.” He joined Twitter in 2009, and on becoming president now has the address of President Trump@Potus. He uses Twitter early morning, late night, and all times in between. More disciplined in his tweeting, Pope Francis joined the Twitter network in 2012 (Pope Francis@Pontifex).

Pope Francis definitely has a gift of speaking to the common man and woman in language they can understand. I did a quick survey of his 1,181 tweets to date and picked some out of a short period of time last year to try to understand how he uses Twitter. His tweets seemed to reflect what he was doing in the Vatican or on trips during a particular time span. That seems to be how most people use Twitter.

On April 10, 2016 the papal tweet said, “It is important for a child to feel wanted. He or she is not an accessory or a solution to some need.” Well, Pope Francis was probably thinking of his Apostolic Exhortation on marriage and family, “Amoris Laetitia,” (The Joy of Love), which was published in the Vatican two days before on April 8. Papal exhortations take months to write and are vetted by all kinds of theological experts before being published. One problem with tweets is that they can be impulsive reactions to bad news or good news. Not so this one.

May 21, 2016: “Each one of us can be a bridge of encounter between diverse cultures and religions, a way to rediscover our common humanity.” Like St. John Paul II, Pope Francis has made strong efforts to strengthen ecumenical cooperation between Christian denominations and between Catholicism and non-Christian faiths. This was particularly true of his Apostolic Exhortation “Laudato Si'” (Praised be mother earth and sister moon … from the hymn of St. Francis of Assisi), which made a plea for all God-lovers to agree on the need to care for our common home and to preserve its well-being.

June 19, 2016: “More than a science question, the universe is a joyful mystery that speaks of God’s boundless love for us.” Pope Francis seems to have a great respect for science and for the vocation and the work of scientists. In both his first Exhortation, “Evangelii Gaudium” (Joy of the Gospel), and “Laudato Si’”, he speaks of the complimentarity of the truths of science and the truths of religion. So much so, that he thinks that scientific consensus on topics like global warming places a moral obligation upon all humans to protect our environment. If the best scientific knowledge we have at present indicates that the pollution of our air, water and soil is reaching a dangerous tipping point, then we would be morally negligent not to take action to clean up our earth, which is a gift from God meant for our welfare and enjoyment.

July 15, 2016: “I pray for the victims of the attack in Nice and their families. I ask God to convert the hearts of the violent blinded by hate.” We live in dark times in which the Gospel message of love, tolerance and respect for the lives of people of different nations, ethnic groups and religions is being attacked by the virulent hatred of groups like ISIS. We don’t know much about the devil, but certainly the hatred and the violence that ISIS, Al-quaïda and Boko Haram inspire are evil. These movements are diabolical in the sense that they are intentional and deliberately twist Islamic belief in a kind and merciful God into hatred of all others. The vast majority of Muslims believe and live their belief, in a kind and merciful God just as members of the other great religions do. How so many young people can be won over to the side of hatred, vengeance and violence is a mystery, part of the great mystery of evil. Pope Francis sees this clearly and has the courage to speak against it.

Sep 10, 2016: “Mercy can truly contribute to the building up of a more humane world.” The Year of Mercy which Pope Francis called was drawing to a close. In the debate over whether divorced and remarried Catholics should be allowed to receive holy Communion, Pope Francis borrowed a line from his friend, Cardinal Kasper, and time and again preached mercy as the heart of the Gospel. In the pope's teaching in “Amoris Laetitiae,” mercy encompasses humility, forgiveness and kindness. These are, first of all, marks of God's mercy that we are called to imitate. It seems to be part of Pope Francis’ strategy, or simply his usual way of governing, to be transparent about what he wants, inviting his fellow bishops to follow him, but never forcing them to do so. The bishops who elected him, in the conclave held before the voting began, must have insisted that the next pope would govern more collegially, as the documents of Vatican II envisioned. I think Pope Francis took this to heart. Pontifex doesn’t demand as much absolute loyalty as his fellow twitterer Potus.

Sept. 24, 2016: “Let us walk together, taking care of each other and of creation, our common home.” Our pope is a man of consistency in thought and action. He is a good twitterer.

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

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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

June 14
Rev. William Blazek SJ
Dcn. Richard H. Grant
Br. James Burns SC
June 15
Rev. Frank Brou SJ
Dcn. Ronald J. Hebert
Sv. Veronila Lyons FMOI
June 16
Rev. Patrick J. Broussard Jr.
Dcn. Clayton A. Hollier
Br. William Cawley SC
June 17
Rev. Jules A. Brunet
Dcn. William H. Holtman
Sr. Joan Manuel CSJ
June 18
Rev. Gerald H. Burns
Dcn. Micheal J. (Shelley) Joseph
June 19
Br. Eldon Crifasi SC
Rev. John J. Callahan SJ
Sr. Ancilla Mathew CMC
Rev. Peter J. Callery SJ
Dcn. Robert J. Kusch
Br. Ramon Daunis SC
Rev. Joseph M. Camilleri
Dcn. Thomas E. Labat Sr
Sr. Evelyn Mee CSJ
June 20
June 21
June 22
June 23
Dcn. Ronald D. LeGrange
Br. Carl Evans SC
Rev. John Carville
Dcn. Albert Levy III
Sr. Anne Meridier CSJ
Rev. Edward Chiffler SSJ
Dcn. A. J. Littie
Br. Clement Furbó CSJR
June 24
June 25
June 26
June 27
Rev. Thomas F. Clark SJ
Dcn. Fallon H. Lorenz
Sr. Dolores Munez HMSS
Rev. Paul D. Counce
Dcn. Wilbur P. Martinez
Br. Harold Harris SC
Dcn. Randy M. Cuevas
Dcn. Robert McDonner
Sr. Ann Catherine Nguyen FMOL
From The Bishop

Bishop Robert W. Muench

Clergy understand their own personal unworthiness to minister. Even more challenging is to sufficiently fathom on a daily basis the power and effect of what we do. St. Charles Borromeo wrote to his brother priests: "If we could only bear in mind the exalted character of the things the Lord has placed in our hands, what unbounded influence would this have in impelling us to lead lives worthy of ecclesiastics" (quoted in Haerent Animo, 1908). Those of us especially privileged from sacred ordination need to be awe-struck by and deeply contemplate the mysteries we celebrate as deacons, proclaiming and preaching God’s holy word, baptizing and exercising service of the altar and charity; as priests, additionally to confect the Eucharist, absolve sinners, anoint the sick, and by delegation to confirm; and all the more humbling as bishop by office to ordain and to confirm. This hymn triumphantly culminates: “Jesus Christ is Lord,” proclaiming and heralding Jesus as Kyrios, the very name of God.

The Gospel account of the familiar encounter between the risen Christ and (St.) Peter is dramatic. To Jesus’ triply asked question: “Simon, do you love me?” (St.) Peter consistently responds: “You know that I love you.” At the first level of understanding it is clear Jesus provided (St.) Peter the opportunity to emphasize (St.) Peter’s role to assume the ministry of Jesus himself as the new shepherd by the command: “Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep.” At a third level I believe Jesus was telling (St.) Peter how the words “I love you” are as magical to him as they are to us. In this context we recall the poignant insight of Pope Francis: “The Lord never tires in forgiving us. We are the ones who tire of asking forgiveness” (Angelus, March 17, 2013).

The book of Ecclesiastes attests: “God has made everything appropriate to its time, but has put the timeless into (our) hearts” (3:11). In the liturgy eternity coalesces with time. The role and function of the ordained are to sacramentally minster the timeless in time. Pope Emeritus Benedict once wrote: “Because of the Incarnation in which Christ took on flesh, ‘time co-exists with eternity’... God’s eternity is not mere timelessness, the negation of time, but a power over time that is really present with time and in time” (Ratzinger, The Spirit of the Liturgy, 2000, 92). Accordingly, this ordination intersects and impacts both time and eternity, making the transcendent immanent. When the ordained celebrate a sacrament, a dimension beyond the earthly and the physical senses of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell takes place. As previously mentioned, the mystery of the Incarnation and in Haerent Animo, 1908).

Amen.

Let us pray: “Dearest God, we the ordained, the to-be-ordained and the faithful acknowledge, praise, bless, adore, glorify and thank you. As your people (Ex 6:7, etc.), the community of believers (Acts 4:32), the body of your son (1 Cor 12:27) and the temple of your Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:9), convicted of our sins, yet convinced of your call and committed to your service, we dedicate ourselves to you. Take us as we are; make of us what you will. Enable us to commune, dialogue, reflect and radiate you in heart, mind, spirit, emotion and will. Enlighten, inspire, enable, embolden and empower us to an ever deeper union with you, to the glorious honor to share you, and to the unique dignity, opportunity and direction you afford us. Sanctify, heal and strengthen us so we may be such instruments to others. Grant us an abundance of your providential presence, grace, peace and love. Entrust us to be the emblem of and instrument for you. For we offer ourselves, our lives, our ministry and our prayer to you, father almighty, beloved son and Holy Spirit, ever invoking the powerful intercession of your mother and our mother, Mary, and all the angels and saints. Amen.”
COMING EVENTS
June 9, 2017

Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites – The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites welcomes all who are interested in developing their prayer life according to the Carmelite saints. The next meeting will be Sunday, June 11, 1:30 p.m., at Our Lady of Mercy Parish Activity Center in St. Gabriel’s Room, 444 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-334-3391 or 225-803-3391, or email robertwhite456@att.net.

Centering Prayer – Vivian and Ed Michaels will present a centering prayer workshop Thursday, June 8, 6:30 – 9 p.m., at the Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula. For information, call 225-294-5039.

Pro-life Mass – A monthly pro-life Mass will be celebrated Tuesday, June 13, 5:30 p.m., at St. Agnes Church, 1803-3391, or email robertwhite456@att.net.

New Orleans Retreats – The Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, 5900 St. Mary St., Metairie, will host the following retreats: Tuesday, June 13, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at Orleans Retreat Center, 5500 St. Mary St., Metairie, will be celebrating “Blessings, Burdens and Bedlam,” with Father Joe Krafft of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and Jan Tate. For information, visit retreats.arch-no.org or call 504-267-9604.

Theology of the Body Courses – The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge will be offering two Theology of the Body training courses at room 206 of the Robert E. Tracy Center, 1800 S. Acadian Thwy., Baton Rouge. A “Theology of the Body for Teens Middle School Edition Training” will be offered Monday, June 26, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. The course is open to principals, teachers, priests, DREs, deacons, youth ministers, parents and anyone who works with pre-teens in sixth – eighth grades. The second course, “You: Life Love and Theology of the Body” will be held Tuesday, June 27, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., with a Mass at 8:30 a.m., and is open to those working with teens in ninth – 12th grades. The cost of each course is $45, which includes materials, continental breakfast and lunch. For information, call 225-336-8760 or email shaldridge@diodbr.org.

Real World Camp – A Real World Camp, a service immersion camp for teens in grade nine – 12, will be held Tuesday, June 27 – Saturday, July 1. Cost is $25. Teens will have an opportunity to see and learn about the seven principal schools about Catholic social teaching in action while living in solidarity with the poor. Teens will be housed in St. Isidore Church in Baker. For information, contact your local youth director or director of religious education.

Camp Kateri – Two sessions of Camp Kateri, a week-long and overnight camp for boys and girls ages 7 – 13, will be held at Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula. The first session will be Sunday, June 11 – Friday, June 16. The second session will be Sunday, July 9 – Sunday, July 14. For more information, call 225-294-5039, or email edkastner@spgepeace.org.

Vacation Bible School – A Vacation Bible School, “Maker Fun Factory: Created By God, Built For A Purpose,” will be held Monday, June 26 – Friday, June 30 at the Sacred Heart Center and PSR buildings of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 616 East Main Street, Gramercy. The VBS is open to children ages 4 – 10 and registration will be accepted through Friday, June 16. Registration forms can be downloaded at rivtdcat.org or by going to the pastoral center, 2130 Rectory St., Paulina.
up because it was the lowest I’ve ever been in life. We talked about things,” said Jones. “Sometimes she said she needed me, but I needed her.”

During this time Jones was also struggling with illness. She had to have her gallbladder and appendix removed. She also has stage two breast cancer but decided to wait until moving out of the shelter before having a double mastectomy.

“Sometimes I get depressed and wonder why me. But I just have the genes of my grandmother,” said Jones.

But amidst the things “going wrong” there were things going right.

Pastor Frederick Sweetweyne of Jordan United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge befriended Jones when he served dinner to her one night as part of the Manna Givers Program. She said he and members of the congregation and staff were supportive and helpful as they searched for housing.

The process was daunting for Causin and Jones because of their different races, according to Jones.

“We had people pulling us aside,” said Jones. “One lady said, ‘You know being black and white won’t help.’ We went to fill out a couple of applications for apartments and they said, ‘You come from a shelter. How long have you known each other?’ Why would you want to live together? It’s not good business,” said Jones.

But Causin and Jones were resolute and succeeded because their friendship is solid, said Jones.

“(Causin) is like a real sister,” said Jones.

Jones’ children and grandchildren love Causin, she said.

She talked about a time she and Causin visited with her grandchildren.

“When we said we were about to go he (my grandson) grabbed her (Causin’s) legs so tight and looked up at her like ‘Where are you going?’” Jones said.

“I keep thinking of her grandchildren as my own,” said Causin.

Jones said her sons had to get over the initial hurdle of “being ashamed” of living in a shelter when they first attended school, but are now thriving in them.

Donte and Israel will be attending McKinley High School this fall, and Marvin will be attending Westdale Middle School and trying out for the eighth-grade football team.

Causin, who was a caretaker for her parents, will take care of Jones as she recovers from her double mastectomy. Jones said she will strive to heal as quickly as she can because she has plans.

“The kids play sports this summer and I want to make it to the ballgames. I’m looking forward to that,” said Jones.

“Oh, of course,” replied Causin with a big smile when asked if she would be attending the ballgames as well.

Jones said she is also looking forward to running a household.

“Cooking in your own house and cleaning – I’m looking forward to doing chores,” said Jones.

Both she and Causin said they will not forget their time at Sweet Dreams and will be thinking about the women there.

“There’s a lot of people (who needed help) when I answered the phone,” said Jones. “I felt so bad for them when I heard their stories. I lived in a shelter, so I know how it is important for them to find a place to sleep and eat... I see the expansion and how important that is going to be. There will be a lot of people who come there, a lot of sincere people who really need help.”

Jones said one of the best “housewarming gifts” she and Causin received is the dignity and respect given to them by Sweet Dreams. The shelter also helped write resumes, build job skills, search for jobs and how to manage a budget.

“They give you a purpose. They make you feel like you just had a rough patch. We’ll help you get your respect back. You feel confident about yourself... There’s real, sincere care,” said Jones.
happened to be visiting a local hospital while Sesay was there receiving treatment for his injuries. The young lady heard the boy would become her future husband crying out, “Why am I here? Take my life.”

She recognized the language as she was also a Sierra Leone war refugee, and she immediately began to strike up a conversation with Sesay. She and her mother began visiting Sesay daily, which he called a psychological boost, and eventually brought him to their house to live.

Sesay and Alima married 2007, and two years later arrived in Baton Rouge, with her mother in tow.

“I was really, really excited,” Sesay said of his move to the United States. “I went from nowhere to the city of hope.”

After working a string of menial jobs he earned an associates’ degree in applied science and process technology from Baton Rouge Community College and is now an operator at Dow Chemical. In addition to his family, Sesay’s passion lies in assisting other refugees and immigrants no matter their own nationality or ethnicity, to acclimate to a new and strange culture, which is the reason he formed Louisiana African Solidarity Response in 2011.

His wife works as a nurse’s assistant at a Baton Rouge nursing home and also has a bridal business. Together, they are raising three young children.

“I am happy and my happiness I dedicate to my wife and kids,” Sesay said. “My wife, she has been the rock of the family and has been there throughout the pain and suffering.”

And because of her, those rivers of tears that have flowed from Sesay through the years are but a mere trickle. He is home; in a state and city he will never leave.

(Next: Sesay reaches out to other immigrants through his Louisiana African Solidarity Response organization.)

REFUGEE ▼

Q How many fidget spinners do you own?

A Currently, three. For those who don’t know what they are, they are basically a form of stress relieving toys/gadgets. The design is fairly straightforward: you have a ball bearing in a piece of plastic, wood, or metal, and you spin it. I bought one off of Amazon a good year ago after seeing the fad on the Internet becoming more popular. They are a great little toy for relieving stress and/or to help you focus. Apparently, these little toys are popping up in schools that students would trade and what not. So the ones that I have for those who are a bit into the geeky specifications: it’s a solid piece of titanium that is CNC machined, a ceramic ball bearing is placed in the middle, then it is capped with a solid piece of aluminum both top and bottom. Lastly, four pieces of G10 scales material is fastened to the side of spinner. It really is a piece of artwork at the same time.