SPREADING JOY

Seniors delight in St. Joseph altar

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Missy Marchand is proof that if you want something done, all you have to do is ask.

Back in 2001, Marchand was serving as the activities director for what is now Gonzales Healthcare Center. Always searching for new activities for the residents, Marchand said she thought a St. Joseph altar would be “something nice they could enjoy.”

However, there was just one problem. She knew she couldn’t do it alone. She would need help and lots of it.

So, she turned to Nell Bercegeay and Bercegeay’s sister, Jane Rouyes, two of her best volunteers.

“When Missy asked me to help, I really didn’t know the first thing about doing a St. Joseph altar,” said Bercegeay, a parish volunteer. See ALTAR PAGE 20

Father Jason Palermo, pastor of St. Joseph Church in French Settlement, blesses a St. Joseph altar at Azalea Estates of Gonzales, an assisted living center. In anticipation of St. Joseph’s Day, many altars will be on display throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge. For a complete list of local St. Joseph’s altars, see page 9. Photo by Rachele Smith | The Catholic Commentator

Secular Franciscans satisfy spiritual hunger

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Secular Franciscan Patsy Burgess’ hunger for a closer relationship with God intensified as she continued her education and training in ministering to youth as a catechist and youth minister.

“When it came to youth ministry, I wanted to be able to give them more, to see their relationship with God grow and flourish,” said Burgess, who has worked with youth at Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs and St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge.

Burgess said God urged her to continue on the path of holiness by telling her, “I want you to do more ... and I am going to give you the saint who is going to get you there.”

That saint is St. Francis of Assisi.

The saint whom many place a statue of, complete with adoring animals and a bird perched on his shoulder, in their gardens. The one people often think of when singing “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace,” at Mass. “He is sweet and peaceful,” many may say then put him on a shelf and not think about him as a model for living the Gospel. But according to Burgess, minister of the St. Joseph Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in Baton Rouge, he is a servant leader who challenges the notion that prosperity and comfort are the keys to happiness.

“He is so much more. I never knew Francis came from a wealthy family,” Burgess said. “I never knew how harshly he treated his body. I never really knew how much he gave up for the love of God and for others to experience the love of God.

“Francis loved the Scriptures so much that he immersed himself in them. He lived them. When he spoke you had no idea where his words stopped and Scripture began. There is something about Francis that draws others toward him. For me it was his prayer life, his love for others, his way of bringing others to Jesus.”

St. Francis himself started the secular Franciscan movement more than 800 years ago, said Burgess. There was a group of lay people who wanted to live in the same spirit as St. Francis, and he wrote a rule of life for them. See SECULAR PAGE 7
Celebrating St. Joseph

St. Joseph was a man of few words in the Bible, in fact no one, but he certainly played a powerful role in the life of Christ and continues to do so for fathers everywhere. To no one’s surprise, southeast Louisiana celebrates his feast day like no other place, complete with traditional altars and staying true to our heritage, parades. St. Joseph’s life is an example of trusting in the Lord, humility and a spiritual matrix of how to be a faithful husband and father. Although certainly not a man of wealth, St. Joseph did come from royal lineage, being a descendant of David. His faith was severely tested when he learned Mary was pregnant after they were betrothed. He knew the child was not his and planned on quietly divorcing her so as to not cause her shame or even cruelty. In those times a woman accused of adultery faced the possibility of being stoned to death. St. Joseph’s trust in the Lord was exemplified when an angel came to him and said the baby was the son of God. He also trusted in God when an angel came to St. Joseph when Jesus was an infant warning him his family was in danger and they should travel to Egypt until the angel said it was safe to come back. St. Joseph is mentioned only briefly in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke and once in St. John but not at all in St. Mark or anywhere else in the New Testament. A St. Joseph altar, which represents the Holy Trinity, is divided into three sections with a statue of the saint at the head. Candles, figurines, flowers, medals and many other items are placed around the altar. An altar’s signature is its food, appropriate since they began as a way of thanking St. Joseph for providing Sicilians food during a famine in the Middle Ages. Each altar features a number of delicacies, with one of the staples being Italian cookies. Traditional foods include cookies, cakes, breads and shellfish. The food from the altar is normally donated to the less needy in the community typical through a local agency. See SAINT PAGE 4

Thirsting for God’s word

Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world; give me living water, that I may never thirst again (Jn 4:15).

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life (Jn 8:12).

As we enter the heart of Lent, the Sunday Mass readings provide impeccable insight into the riches of the healing power of Jesus. A message of hope is mediated by two powerful Gospel accounts: the woman at the well and the healing of the blind man. Two prominent themes come forth during these personal encounters with Jesus: thirst and vision.

Give Me a Drink

The words used by the Israelites as they grumbled to Moses are similar to those used by Jesus in the account of the Samaritan woman. The Israelites longed for the immediate “comforts” imposed upon them despite their enslavement in Egypt. Although set free by their merciful God and led by Moses, their faith evaporated as their physical thirst increased in the desert. It took the miraculous “strike of the rock” using the staff of Moses to fill the immediate, physical need for water and inspire them to once again return their hearts to God.

Ironically, Jesus also thirsts. But his thirst is not for water. Rather, Jesus thirsts for souls. He speaks similar words as he is hanging crucified on the cross, “I thirst.” (Jn 19:28) Jesus wants to quench our unbelief. He desires for us to thrive in the waters of his grace, turning away from sin and trusting in him. The Samaritan woman’s testimony of the coming of the Messiah proves that her faith exists despite her lifestyle. With this hint of faith Jesus tells her who he is. The miracle is she believes. She believes! Not only did she leave behind the vessel (jar) which would carry the earthly water, she left behind her old self. Her encounter with Jesus quenched her parched spiritual journey. She was so transformed she, without hesitation, told all the people of her town Jesus quenched her soul with the living waters teeming with mercy and love.

What are you thirsting for? How are you quenched?

See FAITH PAGE 4

Behind the Collar

… with FATHER MILES WALSH, pastor, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Baton Rouge

Q: You grew up in a small town, Port Allen, on the west side of the Mississippi River. What was that like? Any favorite memories?

A: Yes, many. When I was growing up, Port Allen was a small Catholic community. Everybody knew everybody. My grandfather, L.L. Lefeaux, ran a furniture and appliances store which catered to workers on nearby sugar-cane plantations. It was a world that no longer exists. I attended Holy Family School (still thriving), a school run by six heavily habited nuns, the Marianites of the Holy Cross. When the sisters took their walk through the streets of our town in the afternoon, children and adults alike used to gather in their front yards just to see them pass by. It was like an adult and a child used to gather in their front yards just to see them pass by. It was like an

Q: During your seminary years, you studied abroad in Belgium and Rome, and later you spent some time as a faculty member at the North American College in Rome. Any interesting travels?

A: Yes, certainly. In all, I spent seven-and-a-half years in Europe, an experience for which I am very grateful. To be sure, I made many trips during those years and since then as well. Three times the Lord gave me the opportunity to visit the Holy Land, the land where he lived and walked, and that was life-changing for me; it made Scripture come alive. I visited Lourdes and Medjugorje twice, and those pilgrimages profoundly deepened my devotion to Our Lady, another tremendous source of grace. About a dozen years ago I made my first and only trip to Sicily with friends, and I found Sicily to be a jewel in the Mediterranean, full of art, natural beauty and history. I was moved by the Cathedral in Cefalu, which, in 1941, inspired the construction of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, where I now serve. One of my favorite trips was to South America, to Colombia, where two other priests and I spent three weeks crisscrossing the Andes by plane. Colombia is a magical country, a paradise of rain forests, mountains, tropical lakes, and lovely cities. The most reverent liturgy I ever celebrated took place high in the Andes at a remote mission church. To signal that Mass would be celebrated -- a rare occurrence -- the sacrament rang the church bell for two hours while hundreds of native Americans came streaming in from nearby mountain villages. They stood in total silence in the courtyard of the church until Mass was ready to begin. It couldn’t have happened here, and I've never seen such reverence before or since.

Q: Who were your priestly role models?

A: From my mother, I learned to believe and to pray, especially the rosary. My father taught me what true fatherhood is and what it means to sac--

SEE COLLAR PAGE 4

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Father Collins remembered as ‘peoples’ priest during memorial Mass

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Remembered as a “peoples’ priest,” Father Michael Collins’ life was celebrated during a memorial Mass on March 13 at Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Baton Rouge.

Several hundred people gathered to remember a priest known for his humor, wit, love of priesthood and affable nature. And fitting to his Irish roots, the ceremony began with “Amazing Grace” being played on bagpipes.

“We are already missing him,” said Bishop Robert W. Muench, who celebrated the Mass.

Born July 25, 1942, Father Collins, a native of Bandon County Cork, Ireland, died on March 8 at the age of 75.

He donated his body to Tulane University School of Medicine Willed Body Program.

Father Trey Nelson, pastor of St. Jude the Apostle Church in Baton Rouge, delivered a moving homily during the memorial Mass, saying Father Collins “was like a real brother to me and for this I love him. And I will always be thankful.”

“He made me laugh, often. He brought me to a better place,” Father Nelson said. “He made me stronger.

“In my 28 years as a priest I have been blessed along the way with three great priest mentors: Father Jerry Young (retired), Father Tom Ranzino (vicar general) for the Diocese of Baton Rouge and pastor at St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge and Mike.”

But Father Collins was not only a mentor to Father Nelson but also a roommate, as the two shared the rectory at St. Jude after Father Collins retired in 2011. Father Nelson said he has to remind himself how lucky he is to have known and served with his mentor and close friend.

“We must give thanks to Mike for his love of Jesus, his love of Eucharist,” said Father Nelson, who as a young boy served as an altar server to Father Collins (at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge) and “took every opportunity to remind him of that.”

He added that Father Collins through his exemplary life showed how Christ lives in everyone and how individuals need to trust in Jesus.

“Truly the good shepherd lived in this good man,” Father Nelson said. “Mike showed us (how) to find the good shepherd when you’re hurting the most. In his last days, he really showed us how to do that.”

Father Nelson would have celebrated 50 years of ordination to the priesthood on June 17, 2017. He was ordained June 17, 1967 at All Hallows College in Dublin, Ireland by Bishop John J. Scanlan of the Diocese of Honolulu, Hawaii.

Bishop Muench noted how the priesthood and priestly ministry identified the life of Father Collins.

“Clearly he was not only called to be a priest, he embraced that priesthood. He marinated in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd, because that is how he saw his life.”

“He oozed priesthood,” the bishop added. “That was his identity; that was his mission; that was his purpose; that was his calling; and he answered it with complete gift of self.

“He loved being a priest; he loved people. He was a people’s priest, a priest’s priest, a church’s priest of God. Aren’t we glad as am I that we walked together with him.”

Father Collins’ first assignment in the diocese was as associate pastor at St. Louis King of France Church in Baton Rouge in 1973. He also served as parochial vicar at St. John the Baptist Church in Zachary and Our Lady of Mercy.

His pastorships included St. Mark Church in Gonzales, St. Charles Borromeo Church, Most Blessed Sacrament and St. Jude, all in Baton Rouge.

Father Collins also served as administrator at St. Anne Church in Sorrento and as moderator and director of the Office of Community Life.

He also served as the bishop’s designee to the Louisiana Interchurch Conference.

He retired from active ministry in 2011 when he moved into the rectory at St. Jude.

“We miss you, Mike; we thank you for being like the good shepherd to us. Please pray for us in the God’s perfect presence. We will always pray for you,” said Fr. Nelson.

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1. Lots of love and prayers.
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6. Drop your gift off at our St. Vincent de Paul Main Charitable Campus, located at 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Paying homage to his Irish roots, “Amazing Grace” was performed on bagpipes before the memorial Mass celebrating the life of Father Michael Collins. Father Collins died March 8. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Greater Baton Rouge
**Refugee ban draws mixed reactions**

**WASHINGTON (CNS) –** Within hours of President Donald Trump’s new executive order March 6 banning arrivals from six majority-Muslim nations, Catholic and other religious groups joined secular leaders in questioning the wisdom of such a move, with others vowing to oppose it outright.

Bill O’Keefe, vice president for advocacy and government relations at Catholic Relief Services, said in a statement, “As the world’s most blessed nation, we should be doing more to provide assistance overseas and resettle the most vulnerable, not less. How can you bring the Light of Christ to them? ‘Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’” (Ephesians 5:14)

**Dow is the director of Evangelization & Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.**

**SAINT ▼**

From page 2

And don’t forget to pick up a “lucky bean,” which is a fava bean and associated with St. Joseph because of his assistance during the famine.

The tradition of creating St. Joseph altars in southern Louisiana dates to the 19th century when New Orleans was a major port for Sicilian immigrants. They were established as quarters for Catholic followers of St. Joseph who arrived from Sicily. A St. Joseph altar is often set up in the home of someone in need, to cut humanitarian assistance, and Christ will give you light.”

**Collar ▼**

From page 2

Franks Uter and Msgr. Andrew Frey, who influenced me greatly. In the course of my ministry, I got to know saints like Father Harold Cohen SJ; Father Slavko Barbaric of OPM; and Bishop Stanley Ott. When I became a pastor I had the opportunity to work with young-er priests who constantly lift my spirits still: Father Todd Lloyd; Father Paul Yi; Father Al Davidson; Father Brent Maher; and Father Reuben Dykes. And then there wonderful young friends like Father Josh Johnson, Father Matthew Graham, Father Chris Reck, and Father Andrew Mers. We have great young priests in our diocese and seasoned veterans too, not to mention wonder-ful deacons like my pastoral associate, Deacon David Dawson.

**Q** Parting thoughts?

**A** Only that as Catholics, we must be “in the world but not of it.” No one is attracted to a watered-down Catholicism. Our mission is to evangelize, and to do that, we have to offer the world something distinct. We can’t afford to be insipid or settle for the secular world’s acceptance and respect. In our present culture, which is so antithetical to faith, we must be willing to embrace the cross. When I read The New York Times I’m struck by how utterly foreign its worldview is and how vapid and devoid of faith. Faith, real faith, is what makes a difference: reverent worship of God in the sacred liturgy; fidelity to the Commandments; regular use of the sacraments; authentic and ongoing intellectual and spiritual formation; and the willingness to sacrifice for others. Growing up, our parish had three wonderful priests who inspired and guided me: Msgr. John Naughton; Father Clarence Waguespack; and Father Herculan DeMaria; so I was blessed. In high school I was taught for three years running by a holy priest who became a lifelong friend and mentor, Msgr. Robert Berggren. I was so privi-leged to spend five years in Rome at the very beginning of St. John Paul II’s pontificate and then in his latter years; in fact, I was a young priest studying in Rome on the day he was shot, May 13, 1981. John Paul is definitely my model and hero, and I do not ex-pect to see the likes of him again in my lifetime. Archbishop Alfred Hughes has been a spiritual fa-ther to me and a model of holiness; Father Vic Messina a good friend and counselor. When I was a parochial vicar I served under true priestly apostles like Father

**Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools Office Principal Opening 2017-18 School Year St. Jude the Apostle School Baton Rouge, LA**

The Diocese of Baton Rouge has thirty schools in eight civil parishes, with strong Catholic identity the focus in all schools. The district is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and standardized test scores are above state and national averages.

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Redemptorist’s demolition makes way for Cristo Rey’s future

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Where the exuberant voices of teenagers once echoed, silence reigns.

During the past several weeks a construction crew has been painstakingly demolishing the gym and classroom buildings at the former Redemptorist High School. But from the ashes a new tradition of education might soon be rising, perhaps as early as August, and one that is committed to honor and preserve the venerable RHS legacy.

Officials from Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School said they are cautiously optimistic about the possibility of opening the 2017-18 school year in portable buildings at the site. Cristo Rey opened Aug. 5 after spending months refurbishing some of the former Redemptorist buildings, only to be flooded out one week into its inaugural year.

“It’s the message we want north Baton Rouge to receive that we are coming back,” said Vic Howell, chairman of the Cristo Rey board. “We are coming back stronger than ever and we want to embrace the community and hopefully they will embrace us in doing so.”

Initially, the Diocese of Baton Rouge was leasing the school, with Cristo Rey having an option to buy the buildings. But the August floods deposited up to four feet of water in the school, dramatically altering plans.

Chief financial officer Joe Ingraham said the diocese is footing the demolition bill using insurance money as well as monies donated in the aftermath of the flood. He said the initial estimate was $200,000, which insurance money would have covered, but asbestos was discovered in the process, increasing the total to nearly $500,000 because of abatement cost.

Once demolition is completed, Ingraham said the property will be turned over to Cristo Rey.

“We are working hand in glove with Cristo Rey because both of us would like very much for them to go back in that neighborhood,” he said. “We are open to working with them in whatever way is needed.”

Ingraham emphasized that the diocese will not be putting forward any additional money toward the construction of a new school. He added that the diocese has been sensitive to the Redemptorist alumni in tearing down the building, including leaving the memorial bricks and preserving the logo from the old gym floor.

“The diocese has been extremely generous,” Howell said. “I can’t tell you how much we appreciate their generosity.

“Ever since we got flooded out, (Ingraham) through (Bishop Robert W. Muench) has really been just terrific in terms of their care about our concern and wanting to make sure we are made whole.”

Howell said he and Cristo Rey staff members have been in discussions with FEMA representatives, attempting to clarify two potential funding opportunities. The first is what he called the “interim status,” where FEMA will help fund temporary facilities.

According to school president Brian Moscona, the federal agency could potentially fund up to 90 percent of the cost of bringing in temporary buildings, raising the possibility of opening in August.

Also on the agenda is how much funding FEMA will provide for construction of a new school. Moscona said unofficial estimates for a new school have been from $8 to $10 million.

“That is the big unknown,” Howell said. “How much can we get from FEMA to pay for (part of) the building and how big is the gap to pay?”

Two weeks after the flood, Cristo Rey moved to its temporary location at the Bon Marche Business Park, working with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to secure affordable rates. Although Howell said the school is “extremely fortunate” to be at the business park, he said the facility is not an effective recruiting tool.

“I think the sooner that we can get into other facilities and have an architectural rendering of what the new facility will look like and show students this is what we are going to look like, the better off we are going to be from a recruiting standpoint,” he said.

The diocese is also turning over the old Redemptorist baseball stadium and football field to Cristo Rey. Although there are no future plans for the facilities, director of development Kendall Hebert said the football field had become a gathering place in the community and before the flood talks were progressing as to how it would continue in that role.

“It is a major resource for that community in terms of property,” she said, adding that school officials want it to be a place for the community because that type of involvement fulfills the Cristo Rey mission.

School officials are equally as adamant about preserving the Redemptorist tradition. Moscona said he is hoping to engage Redemptorist alumni to solicit their ideas as to how to continue the school’s legacy.

“We are very much aware of the sacredness of that site and the rich history of that site. We want to make sure that we preserve that and honor that,” he said. “I have a lot of friends who graduated from that school and is committed to returning to north Baton Rouge and is hopeful the return of Cristo Rey, even in temporary buildings, will help spark an economic renaissance in an area that has experienced spikes in violent crimes and the continued abandonment of businesses.
The Catholic Commentator  March 17, 2017

Thanking high donors/Meaning of ‘world without end’/Free to marry?

Q In my parish, there is an appreciation dinner every year for high-end donors, by invitation only. (I would estimate that anywhere from 5 to 7 percent of parishioners attend.) But among the invitees I have not seen are people who devote a lot of time working for the parish community but can’t afford to contribute enough money to be eligible for the ‘dinner club.’ It strikes me that such fundraising techniques might be appropriate for some other charitable organizations but not for the Catholic Church. As Christians, we are taught to place spiritual values over material ones. It calls to mind two small coins into the temple treasury and whom Jesus called more worthy than all the rest. Any thoughts? (Georgia)

A On occasion, I choose a letter for this column not so much to answer the question posed, but to present what I think is a writer’s very valid concern – hoping that it will prompt some reflection among readers. So it is with today’s query.

The situation presented gives a glimpse into the difficult but perennial balancing act between the practicalities of life and what might constitute the ideal. One of a pastor’s responsibilities is to keep a parish afloat financially. The parish provides spiritual enlightenment, pastoral support, educational opportunities and social services to the poor and vulnerable.

To do all of that requires staff and takes money. Fundraisers have long recognized that, while most people are genuinely unselfish in wanting to help, purse strings can be loosen a bit when a donor is recognized and thanked. But the letter writer points out correctly that there are many ways to serve a parish. We priests are forever reminding our congregations that their generosity can be expressed by sharing “time, talent or treasure.” So why not recognize all three ways of giving?

In the parish from which I recently retired, we scheduled an annual “Volunteers’ Dinner” to which dozens of people were invited who had offered their help in a wide range of parish programs and projects – catechists; lectors, ushers and eucharistic ministers; parish council and school board members; home visitors; food pantry workers, etc.

My husband was previously married and divorced. Back when we were engaged, we wanted to be married in the Catholic Church, but when we called my parish, the priest said he doubted that he could marry us. So we got married by a justice of the peace, have now been married for 38 years and have raised our children as Catholic.

We still consider ourselves Catholic, have practiced the faith all these years and continue to be bothered by the fact that our marriage is not blessed by the Catholic Church. Recently, we found out that my husband’s ex-wife passed away, and we are wondering how that affects our situation and our relationship with the church. (Baton Rouge)

Q I enjoy reading your column in our archdiocesan newspaper, The Criterion, and I am hoping that you can help with something. I have always wondered about: Why, at the end of the “Glory be to the Father,” do we say “world without end”? (Indianapolis)

A Assuming that this is your own first and only marriage (and I am sure that you would have told me otherwise), the solution is quite simple. You and your husband should arrange an appointment with a local priest, your husband bringing with him verification of his first wife’s death.

(The surest way is a death certificate, although in many jurisdictions your husband would not be able to obtain that from a government agency since he was not her husband at the time of her death. In that case, a newspaper obituary or a letter from the funeral home would almost certainly suffice.)

The priest will speak with you as to what preparation might be needed for him to bless (technically, “convalidate”) your marriage in the Catholic Church. This preparation would include you and your husband receiving the sacrament of penance with a priest of your own choosing.

The marriage ceremony would likely be a very simple one, with some appropriate scriptural readings; you and your husband, in the presence of two witnesses, would then repeat your marriage vows in front of the priest and the priest would pronounce a prayer of blessing over the marriage.

Some dioceses might require that the priest submit paperwork in advance to the diocesan office for a quick approval.

Father Kenneth Doyle

Question Corner

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 askfher Doyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.

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✓ UPS Store, Coursey Blvd., Baton Rouge
✓ Whole Foods Market, Baton Rouge
✓ Winn Dixie in Hammond, New Roads and Ponchatoula

as well as your local church parish

T H E C A T H O L I C

C O M M E N T A R Y
secular

From page 1

St. Francis and his followers embraced the concept of being “fools for Christ,” as contained in the writings of St. Paul, according to Burgess. They joyfully endured abuse from others as they divested their lives of material things and served the marginalized.

Living according to the Gospel requires people today to be a fool for Christ, said Burgess. She wryly pointed out she was a “fool for Christ” to enter into the Catholic youths’ world of lock-ins, youth conferences, service projects and “hang-out” time to help them resist the pull of a highly secularized culture and live in a counter cultural way.

“We’re a foolish people. What do I mean to that? We’re crazy about people. We are crazy about Jesus,” Burgess said.

When people complete their formation, they make a public profession with promises of poverty, obedience and chastity.

Poverty, Burgess said, means, “We’re not greedy. If we have more than we should, we give to others. If someone gives us something, we give something back.”

Obedience means staying obedient to the teachings of the church and respecting the authority of the pope, said Burgess.

Chastity, for married couples, means living according to the will of God in their marriage and respecting each other. For the single person, chastity means respecting their sexuality and living according to God’s will for their lives.

These promises help secular Franciscans bring the living Gospel to people in their own environment, “going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel,” said Burgess.

The spiritual emphasis of the Franciscan life is daily conversion, penance and living in community, Burgess said.

Living in community for Secular Franciscans means coming together monthly for formation and prayer as a fraternity, said Burgess. People of different backgrounds come together to pray together, support each other, share stories and identify as brothers and sisters in Christ.

“We are certainly lay people. We’re doctors, lawyers, teachers, nuns, dads and grandmothers. We are everywhere, growing in love, getting more intimate in our lives with Jesus,” Burgess said.

The Franciscan family extends to the regional and international levels.

The yearly regional retreat, Burgess noted, is a gathering where Franciscan Fraternities from Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi receive formation. Evenings are a joyful time of dancing, singing and sharing stories.

Burgess serves as Councilor East for the St. Joan of Arc OFS Region, which includes the St. Joseph Fraternity.

Burgess said the local fraternity donates to other secular fraternities in other parts of the world who are facing persecution, poverty and other problems. She is humbled how members of Franciscan fraternities will make donations to other brothers and sisters around the country and world even though they themselves are in need.

Community service is part of the Franciscan life, said Burgess, noting the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is one of the many favorite charitable organizations her fraternity strives to support.

Formation is not something taken lightly because during that period one is determining if God is calling one to the vocation of a Secular Franciscan, Burgess said. It is a joyful process because learning about St. Francis and St. Clare gives the person insight into the lives of saints that should be emulated, said Burgess.

“I think someone going through formation will come to see a Francis that builds up their spirituality to do for others, to care for others, to live the Gospel and bring it to life by all we say and do,” said Burgess. “Their thoughts of this fluff and stuff about Francis is put aside. They come to know that his lifestyle does imitate Jesus and through formation their relationship with Jesus is stronger and deeper. It is through Francis’ imitation that we can too imitate Jesus in his mercy and his love.”

Those interested in learning more about the Secular Franciscans are invited to attend their fraternity meetings, which take place on the fourth Sunday of each month at the Corcoran Center in the Maryville Convent, 4200 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge. The gathering begins at 1:10 p.m. with praying of the Franciscan Crown rosary in the Chapel of St. Francis and then proceeds to the Corcoran Center for fellowship and the meeting.
St. Aloysius Church to celebrate 24 Hours for the Lord

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

When St. Aloysius Church in Baton Rouge hosted the first “24 Hours for the Lord” in the Diocese of Baton Rouge last year, event organizers said they received an overwhelming response from people who came to experience God’s love and mercy through the sacrament of reconciliation and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

“We received countless testimonies from men and women who recounted how they came to the church with many burdens but left the church with an extraordinary peace that came from their experience in the confession,” said Father Joshua Johnson, parochial vicar at St. Aloysius.

This year’s event will begin with a school Mass at 8 a.m. on Friday, March 31 and continue until 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 1. The Parish Council of Ministries will offer prayer opportuni-
ties throughout the event, including the recitation of the rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, the Liturgy of the Hours and the stations of the cross during eucharistic ad- oration. Confession will be available throughout the event.

Father Johnson noted that in his letter on mercy, “Misericordia Vultus,” Pope Francis proclaimed, “... the season of Lent is to be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God’s mercy.”

St. Aloysius parishioner Jennifer Monette said she committed to stay from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. last year. She was armed with a Bible and prayer book thinking she may need to fall back on them if she were to complete her commitment. But through her experiences throughout the evening, she found she could not tear herself away.

“In (St.) Matthew 11:28 Jesus says, ‘Come to Me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest,’” said Monette. “My family has been struggling through a difficult time, and I have turned to the eucharistic Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament to find balance, peace and rest.”

“Those who enter into time spent with Jesus in adoration at the 24 hours for the Lord are sure to come away with more peace than they had going in ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you.’ (Jn 14:27).”

I have turned to the eucharistic Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament to find balance, peace and rest.

Jennifer Monette

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Diocese of Baton Rouge
Catholic Schools Office
Principal Opening
2017-18 School Year
Sacred Heart of Jesus School
Baton Rouge

Sacred Heart of Jesus School, founded in 1929 and currently serving 340 students in Grades PK – 8, seeks a principal with strong sense of Catholic identity, strategic vision, creative management, and focused leadership. With approximately thirty professional staff members, Sacred Heart School is a diverse community, dedicated to educating the mind, body, and spirit. As a community of faith, the school’s primary purpose is to create an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom, providing a holistic approach to the development of each child’s potential.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge has thirty schools in eight civil parishes, with strong Catholic identity the focus in all schools. The district is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and standardized test scores are above state and national averages.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

Evangelize Hearts, Educate Minds, Encourage Talent
and Embrace the Future

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Practicing Catholic
2. Master’s Degree, Meeting Louisiana Requirements as NonPublic Administrator
3. Five Years Minimum Experience in Education, Catholic Schools Preferred
4. Demonstrated Leadership Ability, Catholic Education Preferred
5. Must be Available on or before July 1, 2017

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

Deadline for application: March 30, 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 school.

They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.
St. Joseph Altars scheduled throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge

MARCH 16 – 19
Ladies of Mater Dolorosa Church Community
Mater Dolorosa Church – KC Hall
232 Dileo Lane, Independence
Thursday: Food donations
Friday: Dressing of the altar
Saturday: Blessing of the altar following 4 p.m. Mass
Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Feeding of the saints; Noon, Feeding of the public; 4 p.m. St. Joseph Parade
Cheryl Santangelo

MARCH 17 & 18
Immaculate Conception Church
865 Hatchell Lane, Denham Springs
Main Hall, enter administration building near flag poles
Friday: 7 p.m. Mass following blessing of altar in hall
Saturday: 11 a.m. Feeding of the saints and viewing; Noon, meal open to public
Church office: 225-665-5359

MARCH 17 & 19
St. Joseph Altar Society
Our Lady of Pompeii Church
Pompeii Hall directly behind the church
14450 Hwy. 442, Tickfaw
Saturday: Blessing of the altar following 4 p.m. Mass at the church
Cheryl Santangelo

MARCH 18
St. Joseph Church
5719 LA Hwy., 16, French Settlement
3:30 p.m. Blessing and breaking of bread with Mass

Holy Family Church
Parish Hall
368 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
3 p.m. Feeding the saints followed by praying the rosary. Public serving at approximately 4:30 p.m.
Jo Ann Dodd 225-334-4316 or 225-955-5815

MARCH 18 & 19
Grandsons of Italy
Sacred Heart Church
2450 Main Street, Baton Rouge
Saturday: 4 p.m. Mass, procession to Sacred Heart School gym followed by the blessing of the altar. Italian cookies and wine will be served
Sunday: viewing 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
12:30 p.m.; The Holy Family Tableau (ceremonial breaking of bread) followed by an Italian Feast will be served to public
Anthony Musso 225-769-3781, 225-936-1644

St. John the Evangelist Church
KC Hall, 58915 Price Street, Plaquemine
Saturday: 4 p.m. Mass at the church followed by blessing of altar
Sunday: Noon at KC Hall
Betty Aucoin 225-687-2111

St. Joseph Society
St. Francis Church – Parish Hall
818 W. 10th Street, Donaldsonville
10 a.m. Blessing of altar; 10:30 a.m. Ritual of the saints; 11:30 a.m. Feeding of the public from the altar and spaghetti with Italian gravy and Italian salad
Marvin Gros 225-717-3280

Holy Ghost St. Joseph Altar Society
Holy Ghost Church – Parish Hall
601 N. Oak Street, Hammond
(Novena to St. Joseph begins March 10)
11 a.m. Feeding of the saints; Noon, Feeding of the public
Chickie Gennero 985-345-1888

San Giuseppe Ladies
St. Ann Church – Parish Hall
182 Church Street, Morganza
11 a.m. Mass; Noon Blessing of the altar and meal
Bonnie Francois 225-694-2149

Home of Jamie and Bill Gomillion
12009 Graham Rd., St. Francisville
Deacon Zeke will bless the altar about noon; the traditional meal will be served
Jamie Mable 225-978-3159

Who is Inheriting More Money From Your Estate: The Government or Your Family?

Discover REAL Secrets Most People Will Never Know About Protecting Their Estate From the Government

About Your Speaker- Hi, I’m Laura Poché, an attorney with Rabalais Estate Planning, certified in Estate Planning and Administration by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization. I have spent my entire lifetime in Louisiana, where my husband, Jay, and I have raised our three sons. I’ll be sharing my newest facts about how to protect your life savings at my upcoming estate planning events.

Who is Inheriting More Money From Your Estate: The Government or Your Family?

Attend A FREE Event And Discover How To:
- Avoid the costs and delays of probate
- Avoid losing your life savings to nursing home costs
- Create a fast, simple estate legal plan for your family
- Determine whether you need a Will or Trust (or both)
- Keep the government out of your estate
- Start the five-year look back period for nursing homes
- Enrich your family relationships
- Avoid tax.

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St. Agnes celebrates 100 years as a church family

By Rachelle Smith

A hearty round of applause might seem an unusual way to begin Mass, but for anyone wanting to celebrate morning Mass at St. Agnes Church in Baton Rouge on Feb. 26, it was a fitting and welcome way to commemorate the downtown church’s founding 100 years ago as an independent parish.

“Applaud yourself, and let us applaud the Lord for this day,” Bishop Robert W. Muench said as he greeted the hundreds of parishioners and friends who filled the church for its centennial Mass.

“Our celebration is to recognize what has been, to renew within us what is and to anticipate God’s fidelity for the next 100 years,” Bishop Muench said.

Mark Berggreen, pastor of St. Mary of False River Church in New Roads, had a nine-passenger station wagon. “The bus was me,” she said, smiling. “We got you pretty good,” he said.

In delivering the homily, Msgr. Robert Berggreen, pastor of St. John the Evangelist in Zachary, who lived as choir director for 40 years. “I wouldn’t have missed it,” he said, adding it took a lot of work, which included moving up the gym, organizing an army of food to serve and hauling the tables from the cafeteria. But in the end, even the weather cooperated.

“I guess we were able to hold the event in the gym because I knew they (the former students) had a lot of memories there,” Annette said.

Doug Samaha is one of those former students. “I was glad we were able to hold the Mass,” he said.

“I played football, and if your grades weren’t up to what they should be, they (the coaches) would paddle you, and they would get you pretty good,” he said.

Samaha’s childhood friend, Paul Kadair, also remembered the football program. “I played football, and if your grades weren’t up to what they should be, they (the coaches) would paddle you, and they would get you pretty good,” he said.

Kadair’s mother, 95-year-old Laby Kadair, a school graduate, has been a frequent sight in her heart for St. Agnes Church and School. She said she and her husband, George Kadair, baptized all of their children at St. Agnes, and each child would go on to receive first communion, first Communion and confirmation at the church.

Kadair said since the school grounds were mostly concrete, the team had to walk “in straight lines” in a concrete gravel lot a couple of blocks away to practice. “They were also required to carry all of their equipment there and back. “In practice, we would have to run, and some people would have trouble and want to cry. Well, that was just too bad,” he said laughing.

Kadair also has good memories of the Dominican nuns who were the full-time teachers at the school. “I wasn’t religious,” he said, adding they were in the sixth and seventh grades.

Bishop Muench said that the statue was in memory of the canonization of Mother Teresa’s visit to Baton Rouge.

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Students bring black history to life

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Redemptorist St. Gerard Elementary School students brought to life black “firsts” who influenced and shaped American society during a Black History Month Program, “We Come This Far by Faith: From the Slave House to the White House” Feb. 21 at St. Gerard Majella Church in Baton Rouge.

The program opened with the singing of a medley of African American spirituals. The fourth- and fifth-grade choir entered the church singing “We Come This Far by Faith.”

Following announcements concerning the purpose of the program by eighth-grader Donye’ Netter, JahBari Dunbar welcomed the audience as he portrayed Frederick Douglass, a prominent human rights leader who influenced the United States government and black society. Douglass was also the first African-American to be nominated as vice-president.

The opening prayer was led by Kayah Woods in the role of Rev. Shirley Caesar, who was the “first lady of Gospel.”

In the persona of Colin Powell, the first African-American to serve as U.S. Secretary of State, Kinan Calhoun led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Reciting the Redemptorist St. Gerard Creed was London-Webster Butler, as Ruby Bridges, the first black child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans school desegregation crisis in 1960.

Audience members clapped their hands and sang along as the third-grade students sang the song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

Seventh-grader Cierra Ruck-er passionately talked about the way the black “firsts” paved the way for opportunities for African-Americans in her talk, “What Does Black Mean to Me in America?” She challenged her audience to use those doors opened by the sacrifice of others before them to reach their full potential by seizing opportunities to further their education and better themselves.

Following an upbeat singing of “He’s Got the Whole World” by the pre-K students, the first- and second-grade students presented a salute to black firsts.

Re-enacting the 1963 March on Washington D.C. were Chris-tian Clark, as march organizer A. Phillip Randolph; Alexander Bell, as Martin Luther King; Amber Barnes as Coretta King; Jermaine Wallace, as John Lewis; Steven Canales as Father Ahumad; and Kamlyn Thomas as Mahalia Jackson.

Abigail Barnes soulfully recited the poem, “Hey Black Child.” The liturgical dancers, sixth...

SEE HISTORY PAGE 13
St. Michael chooses new football coach

St. Michael the Archangel High School has chosen Justin Hutchinson as the Warriors new football coach.

Hutchinson is a graduate of LSU and has spent the past two years at Denham Springs High School serving as the assistant coach, strength and conditioning coordinator and special teams coordinator. Prior to his time at Denham Springs, Hutchinson spent nine years at Central High School as the assistant coach and special teams coordinator and one year as head coach at Central Middle School.

“We are happy to welcome (Hutchinson) to the Warrior family,” St. Michael athletic director Rob Smith said. “His energetic personality and experience will be a great asset to the football program and school community. I believe his dedication to the student athlete will be a great benefit in the formation of our students both on and off the field.”

“This is a great opportunity for me to work at a school like St. Michael,” Hutchinson said. “I am very appreciative of the work that previous head coaches have put into the school’s football program and look forward to continuing to build on the progress they have made. This being my first varsity head coach position, I am excited to move into this role and am committed to growing the program to be the best it can be.”

Hutchinson said he is focused on cultivating hardworking and dedicated student athletes with an emphasis on teamwork, perseverance and character building. He has experience with the day-to-day team operations, as well as building fruitful relationships with student athletes and parents.

“After speaking with (Hutchinson) and hearing his vision for the football program, I knew that he was a good fit for the mission of our school. He believes that a strong foundation in faith and academics is needed to be successful in football. We are excited to welcome him to St. Michael in this role,” said St. Michael principal Ellen Lee.

St. Michael High School in Baton Rouge has chosen Justin Hutchinson, left, as the Warriors’ new football coach. Hutchinson is pictured with athletic director Rob Smith. Photo provided by Kristi Watts | St. Michael

HISTORY ▼

from page 12

eighth-grade girls, continued the themes of progress made by black Americans during the song, “A Change Is Gonna Come.”

The sixth- through eighth-grade boys served as ushers.

The children’s final presentation was President Barack Obama’s farewell speech, featuring London Henry as President Obama; Khaya Dumas as Michelle Obama; R’Braya Martin as Sasha Obama; Mylee Lang as Malia Obama; and Noah Mueller as Vice-President Joe Biden.

Introducing Bishop Shelton Fabre of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux was Gerrick Camel, Jr., as Father Louis Oubre, now deceased, who served in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Bishop Fabre introduced the students to another first – Father Augustus Tolton, the first African-American priest in America, whose cause for sainthood is being considered by the Vatican.

“It’s not easy to be a first,” said Bishop Fabre, in telling of Father Tolton’s story of courage and perseverance.

Father Tolton was born April 1, 1854 to enslaved parents. His mother was raised Catholic.

His father joined the Union Army and his mother and siblings crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois to help the sick, said Bishop Fabre, a native of New Roads.

“(Father) Augustus’ family was very faithful,” said the bishop.

Father Tolton met Father Peter McGirr, an Irish man who gave him an opportunity to attend a parochial school, which was controversial in the priest’s parish. While attending the school, Father Tolton received God’s call to enter the priesthood.

Despite Father McGirr’s support, Father Tolton was rejected by every American seminary he applied to. Father McGirr continued to help him until Father Tolton was able to study in Rome. Father Tolton graduated from St. Francis Solanus College (now Quincy University) and attended the Pontifical Urbaniana University, where he became fluent in Italian as well as studying Latin and Greek.

Father Tolton was ordained to the priesthood in Rome in 1886 at age 31. Expecting to serve in an African mission, Father Tolton had been studying its regional cultures and languages. Instead, he was directed to return to the United States to serve the black community.

In Illinois, Father Tolton attempted a couple of times to organize a church and school, but was met with resistance.

After reassignment to Chicago, Father Tolton led a mission society, St. Augustine’s, that met in the basement of St. Mary’s Church. He led the development and administration of the “Negro National Parish” of St. Monica’s Church in Chicago.

Bishop Fabre said Father Tolton was known for his preaching ability and intellect.

“Even more so he was compassionate to both black and white people and became known for his wonderful sermons and angelic voice,” said Bishop Fabre. “He (Father Tolton) had many difficulties in his life, but he was not upset with the things people told him that were negative. He was ultimately tied to the things that had meaning to him.”

Bishop Fabre strongly urged the students to continue their education and to learn a second language, which would expand their view of the world and opportunities available to them.

“As you go forward this day, I hope you grow in your education and fortitude and you will bear much fruit,” Bishop Fabre said. “Remember to be kind and generous.”

Send YOUTH NEWS and pictures to Debbie Shelley, assistant editor, to dshelley@diobr.org.
The Shack
Summit

After his young daughter (Amelie Eve) is abducted and murdered, a previously devout man (Sam Worthington) has a crisis of faith until a supernatural encounter with the Trinity (Octavia Spencer, Arvin Avil Alush and Sumire) alters his perspective. Beautiful settings and a rugged ride even for grown-ups. Some harsh and bloody violence, cohabitation, a single use each of profanity, pervasive rough and crude language. A-I; PG-13

Get Out
Universal

Clever social commentary adds heft to this thriller from writer-director Jordan Peele. During a weekend visit to the country estate of his white live-in girlfriend’s (Allison Williams) parents (Catherine Keener and Bradley Whitford), whom he has never met before, a black photographer (Daniel Kaluuya) becomes increasingly unsettled by the peculiar behavior of those on both sides of the racial divide, including his gal’s aggressive brother (Caleb Landry Jones) and the family’s strangely subdued, zombie-like maid (Betty Gabriel) and gardener (Marcus Henderson). As things turn ever more sinister, Peele adeptly uses horror tropes to comment on slavery, racism and liberal pieties. But late scenes featuring some gory encounters, together with swearing throughout, make his film a rugged ride even for grown-ups. Some crude talk, mature references, including some blood, occult themes, gross scatological imagery. A-II; PG-13

Before I Fall
Open Road

Sound values underlie this conversion story. But the path toward its positive conclusion takes twists and turns that will give the parents of targeted teens pause in considering whether their kids should travel it. A seemingly successful high school student (Zoey Deutch) dies in a car crash, only to awaken again on the morning of her last day on Earth, a period of time she is forced to relive over and over until she discerns what she needs to change about her life in order to escape the cycle. The relationships she has to reevaluate include those with her closest pals (Halston Sage, Cynthia Wu and Medalion Rahiri), her shallow boyfriend (Kian Lawley), the less glamorous but more caring lad (Logan Miller) who has loved her from afar since childhood and a troubled schoolmate (Elena Kampouris) she and her clique torment. Among the values the heroine of director Ry Russo-Young’s drama – adapted from Lauren Oliver’s 2010 novel – adjusts is her attitude toward romance and sexualit. But her starting point on this journey finds her besties celebrating the fact that she is about to lose her virginity, and presenting her with a condom for the occasion. Together with some of the language in Maria Maggenti’s script, such behavior makes this a risky proposition for any but grown-ups. Semi-graphic prurient sexual activity, partial nudity, underage drinking, a single use each of profanity and rough language, a mild oath, frequent crude talk, mature references, including to homosexuality. A-III; PG-13

Justice League Dark
Warner Home Video

A supernatural mystery rather than a traditional saga of superhero battle, this animated straight-to-video release from DC Comics contains quite a lot of material unsuitable for kids, including the sickening sight of a monster made of living human excrement. The protagonist, John Constantine (voice of British actor Matt Ryan), is an occult detective who solves problems in the spiritual world. When people around the globe start having hallucinations involving demons, the Justice League deduces that these delusions are caused by magic – one of the few things that titans like Superman (voice of Jerry O’Connell) and Wonder Woman (voice by Rosario Dawson) aren’t able to handle easily. So it’s time to call in Constantine, along with Deadman (voice of Nicholas Turturro), Batman (voice of Jason O’Mara), Jason Blood (voice of Ray Chase) and Zatanna (voice of Camilla Luddington). Director Jay Oliva’s film has a positive moral about the terrible results of denying our mortality and playing God. But parents should not mistake this cartoon for children’s fare. Possibly acceptable for older teens. Considerable stylized violence with some blood, occult themes, gross scatological imagery, a couple of crude terms. A-III; R

The Great Wall
Universal

Those seeking nothing more from a movie than sheer spectacle may be satisfied with this visually interesting but thoroughly implausible action adventure from director Zhang Yimou. Drawn by the wealth they could gain by introducing gunpowder into the West, two medi eval European mercenaries (Matt Damon and Pedro Pascal) arrive in China, after an arduous journey, only to find their unwilling hosts preoccupied with battling vicious alien monsters. It was to defend against these marauding creatures, so the script claims, that the titular structure was built. As Damon’s character becomes committed to this struggle, not least because he’s attracted to the fetching commander (Jing Tian) of one division of the local forces, his companion remains focused on the original scheme, abetted in it by another traveler (Willem Dafoe) who came to the Middle Kingdom years before for exactly the same purpose, and has been held prisoner ever since. Epic in scale, the film is shallow in emotion and characterization, though the central romance is completely chaste and the dialogue mostly free of cursing. Probably acceptable for older teens. Action violence with little gore, a mild oath, at least one crude and a couple of crass terms. A-III; PG-13

River Road
Rosary

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Before I Fall
Open Road

High in the Himalayas, a Tibetan Mastiff (voice of Luke Wilson) dreams of becoming a musician in this feelie animated comedy, directed and co-written by Ash Bannon. The eponymous canine persuades his father (voice of J.K. Simmons) and the village elder (voice of Sam Elliott) to let him seek his destiny in the big city. There he meets the cute but legendarily star (voice of Eddie Izzard), whose motives are not pure. Despite the dangers characters occasionally face and the British-accented rocker’s mildly tepidemperate language (he says things like “stupid bloody idiot!”), this is mindless fare acceptable for all except possibly the most easily frightened. A few scenes of peril. A-I; PG

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

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
This House is Not for Sale

This house is not for sale
These four walls have got a story to tell
The door is off the hinges, there's no wishing them well
Outside the sky is coal black, the streets are on fire
The picture window's cracked, and there's nowhere to run
I know, I know, this house is not for sale
Refrain: I set each stone and I hammered each nail
This house is not for sale
When memories live and my dreams all fail
This house was built on trust

Sung by Bon Jovi | Copyright © 2016, Captain Kidd Corp., Island Records

‘This house is not for sale’

T

The song’s “house” was built on trust and can never be precisely the knowledge that another needs value the whole story. What you learn today may be part of the journey of becoming more of the person that God wants us to be. If we look deeply, we will see that we were never without God’s guidance and love even when certain times were painful. When you see your life with a bigger perspective, you will also see how God has given you divine purpose. Your gifts, your abilities, your whole story is not just for you — they are part of how you make the rest of us better.

We should learn from our mistakes but also value the whole story. What you learn today may be precisely the knowledge that another needs tomorrow to avoid an even deeper hurt. The song’s “house” was built on trust and can stand as a metaphor for your whole life. Can you keep “building” your life with trust in God who never without God’s guidance and love even when unfortunate consequences, but, ultimately, they arise from recognizing how mistakes have ended up hurting one’s life.

As a pastoral counselor, I see that most individuals are much too critical on themselves and misperceive how much God values them. Some of this negative judgment rises from recognizing how mistakes have ended up hurting one’s life. If so, you will realize what is most valuable: who you are and how much God guides and loves you. Yes, some parts of life are priceless and like the song’s house, are never for sale.

MARTIN is an Indiana pastoral counselor who reviews current music for Catholic News Service. Write: cmartin@hughes.net, or: 7125 West CR, 200 South, Rockport, IN 47978.
Diffusing prejudice

Polarization fueled by hatred that is permeating modern society is perhaps the most serious threat the country is facing today.

Although it might be trendy to place the entire blame on the Trump administration for this disturbing trend, we did not arrive at a point where even the walls of school buildings are being employed as billboards to broadcast messages of hate and prejudice overnight. Rather, those seeds that are spreading their malefic pollen today were planted many years ago.

Admittedly, it is difficult to pinpoint when the dial began to turn, but removing prayer from our classrooms and public events and the continued exclusion of God from our consciousness offers an excellent start. For a society without God is a traduced society and history has proven their downfall is inevitable.

Astonishingly, even the news media, once considered the moral beacon, is now offering what one of its columnists describes as the most attention-grabbing content of any type, the endless drumbeat of hate.

The responsibility of all is to spread the word of God through our own lifestyles to douse the flames of alienation, prejudice and marginalization that are being fanned by the increasing virility of hate lacking a moral beacon.

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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


Mar. 27 †Rev. William L. Greene Dcn. Samuel C. Collura Sr. Barbara Acca FMOL


Mar. 31 Rev. Patrick Healy SSJ Dcn. W. Brent Duplessis Sr. Sandra Blanchard CSJ


Apr. 2 Rev. Clifford Hill CSSP Dcn. Albert R. Ellis Jr. Sr. Carolyn Brady CSJ

Apr. 3 Rev. Gordian O. Iwujwi MSP Dcn. H. John Ferguson SC Sr. Carolyn Branch CSJ

Apr. 4 Rev. Charbel Jamhoury Dcn. Natale (Nat) J. Gabalal Sr. Marie deMontfort Breaux SSSF

Some who need your Lenten prayers

The biblical and traditional way to “keep” Lent is through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Our Catholic Church designates Ash Wednesday and Good Friday as mandatory days of fasting. During Lent many of our parishes use “rice bowls” or take up special collections for the poor. Prayer, however, gets the most attention, and rightly so. The first reading for Lent on Ash Wednesday has the prophet Joel speaking for the Lord and saying, “Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God.” Some church parishes schedule retreats during Lent. Others have Taizé musical prayer services. Almost all of these items are asked for in the sacrament of reconciliation, for instance, “The Light is ON for You” for Wednesday night confessions.

I am writing today to suggest that we dedicate special time in our personal prayers this Lent, as well as in our Mass Prayers of the Faithful, to a special group of people whom Jesus mentioned often in his teaching and preaching, those incarcerated in our prisons. My Lent began at 8:30 a.m. on Ash Wednesday morning at Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana. This was not my first time to celebrate sacred rituals at Angola, and I have always been impressed with the sincerity of the inmates. A choir of about six, with organ accompaniment, pressed to the main gate and helped me through the very thorough security check. They then led me to the Catholic chapel with a large interfaith chapel, and there is also a massed community at the prison. Our diocesan lay chaplain, Jay Jackson, asked me to drive up and celebrate the Ash Wednesday Mass. He and four or five volunteer laymen who assist him met me at the main gate and helped me through the very thorough security check. They then led me to the Catholic chapel which holds a sizeable congregation, and it was full. The Catholic chapel is directly opposite an equally large interfaith chapel, and there is also the original ecumenical chapel, still in use, in another section of the many acres which make up the prison farm or plantation that is Angola State Prison.

This was not my first time to celebrate sacred rituals at Angola, and I have always been impressed with the sincere devotion of the inmates. A choir of about six, with organ accompaniment, led the singing. Convicts were our altar servers, ash distributors and eucharistic ministers. The following words are what I preached. I believe most of them simply describe what we all hope for in Lent.

When ashes are more than ashes

“Today we begin a journey back to our true home. Our hearts are restless and they will not find rest until they rest in you, O God.” It was true when St. Augustine prayed it 1600 years ago, and it will always be true. Throughout our lives we feel a constant yearning to return home. I am old enough to remember World War II and the homcoming of my father, a sailor returning from the Pacific, his two brothers in the Army who fought in Africa, and his sister, a woman Marine returning from Camp LeJuene in North Carolina. One brother had been wounded in Af- rica, but survived. They were joined by four first cousins, three Army and one Army Air Corps, who survived 35 missions over Berlin. That was a homecoming. Some of you, perhaps, had similar experiences after wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course, if part of your life experience includes being incarcerated, you long for one day when you will be home again with wife and children, relatives, and friends.

But even if you never get back to that physical place you called home, many men die here in Angola, there is a place where you can find home, and rest and acceptance and love and new life. That home is God, God who is calling us, waiting for us, in that place we call heaven, to where we do not return until we again become ashes. Our faith tells us that beyond the ashes there is new life, eternal life with God. He is our final home, our good home, our place of peace, rest and reunion with those whom we have loved in this life.

“We are all called to make this journey. Every Lent is a time of preparation for and a renewal of this journey. The journey here and the eternal destination there are connected. Jesus lived this journey first, and he invited all of us to follow him. He healed people, he consoled people, he fed people, he forgave people. He died a condemned convict – and he rose to new life. As Scripture says, “He is the first born of a new creation.” To be with him and like him is the final destination of us all.

“That is what Lent is all about: following Jesus on his journey, practicing his kindness, his forgiveness, his love with those in our communities. The ashes you will receive today are simply the sign of the cross of him you follow and of the community he came to lead and to save – all humankind. Very soon the ashes will wear off your foreheads. But the life and the actions of Christ must live on in you. You make his “kingdom of God” real in this community, in this prison. As he said at the beginning of his journey in the synagogue of his hometown, Nazareth: ‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.’

“Come now, and receive your anointing of ashes.”

(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 johnycarville@gmail.com.)
There's an axiom which says: Nothing feels better than virtue. There's a deep truth here, but it has an underside. When we do good things we feel good about ourselves. Virtue is indeed its own reward, and that's good. However, feeling righteous can soon enough turn into feeling self-righteous. Nothing feels better than virtue; but self-righteousness feels pretty good too.

This is how St. John of the Cross expressed it: “If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him. He knows what he is about.”

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in torment, my torment may serve him. My perplexity, my perplexity may serve him.

It's true that we can make virtue serve us. It's also true that virtue can serve us.

God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me, which he has not committed to another.

“I have my mission. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons... Therefore, I will trust him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what he is about.”

This prayer made me realize that we all have a God-given purpose in life. It brought me back to the church.

My experience of God can be expressed in the image of a sculptor molding his clay. We are putty in the hands of a loving God.

At first I resisted this outside spiritual force, which was mysteriously moving me in a direction I did not want to go. Then one day after six years of a prayerful agony of struggle, all of my doubts and hesitations evaporated.

I made my final decision while serving as a draftee in the Army at the end of the Korean War. I soon entered the seminary, and four years later was ordained a priest on May 28, 1960. Not long after, in 1967, I began writing a column for my home Catholic newspaper, The Beacon, of the Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey.

The inspiration for this came from the words of Jesus, “Feed my lambs” (Jn 21:15).

The whole experience of writing is like a vocation within a vocation, for which I am most humbly grateful.

My farewell column

As human beings, we're weak and lack the moral strength to always act according to what's best in us. Sometimes we just succumb to temptation, to weakness. Sin needs no explanation beyond this: We're human! Sometimes too, people are caught in sinful situations which are really not of their own making. They've been abused, made to live in sinful circumstances not of their own choosing, are victims of trafficking, are victims of unjust familial or social situations or are too deeply wounded to actualize their own moral faculties. In situations like this, wrong action is a question of survival not of free choice. As one woman described it to me: “I was simply a dog, biting in order not to be bitten.” In these cases, generally, beneath an understandably hardened, calloused surface lies a still innocent heart that clearly knows its need for God's mercy. There's such a thing as honest sin.

But there's also sin that's not honest, that's rationalized, that's forever buffered by a pride that cannot admit its own sinfulness. The result then, most often, is a hardened, bitter, judgmental soul. When sin is rationalized, bitterness will invariably follow, accompanied by a hatred towards the kind of virtue from which it has fallen. When we rationalize, our moral DNA will not let itself be fooled. It reacts and punishes us by having us hate ourselves. And, when someone hates himself, that hatred will issue forth in a hatred of others and, more particularly, in a hatred of the exact virtue from which he has fallen. For example, it's no accident that a lot of people having adulterous affairs have a particular cynicism towards chastity.

Finding ourselves as weak and sinful can soften our hearts, make us humble and open us to receive God's mercy. It can also harden our souls and make us bitter and judgmental. Not every sinner prays like the publican.

Virtue makes us grateful. Sin makes us humble.

That's true. Sometimes.

OBLATE FATHER ROLHEISER, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website ronrolheiser.com or on facebook.com/ronrolheiser.

In Exile

Father Ron Rolheiser

Spirituality For Today

Father John Catoir

My farewell column

To communicate, to educate and to give the Catholic viewpoint on important issues of the present day.
St. Louis King of France Spring Fling – St. Louis King of France Church, 2121 N. Sherwood Forest Dr., Baton Rouge, will host a spring fling Saturday, April 1, 5:30 p.m. There will be an auction, food, fun and fellowship. Tickets will also be sold at $100 each for a chance to win $10,000. For more information, call 225-275-7280.

Mass Honoring St. Katharine Drexel – The Baton Rouge Chapter of the St. Francis Xavier University Alumni Association will honor St. Katharine Drexel during the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, March 19 at Immaculate Conception Church, 1565 Curtis St., Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-357-0853.

Tri Parish Lenten Revival – Father Gregory Chisholm SJ, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Har-lem, will present a tri-parish revival Monday, March 20 at Immaculate Conception Church, 1567 Curtis St., Baton Rouge; Tuesday, March 21 at St. Francis Xavier Church, 1120 Myrle Walk St., Baton Rouge; and Wednesday, March 22 at St. Paul the Apostle Church, 3912 Gus Young Ave., Baton Rouge. Each evening will begin with praise and worship at 6 p.m. and the revival will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call 225-382-4537.

Women in Spirit Meeting – Dr. Rachel Emmanuel, retired director of communications and development support at Southern University Law Center, will speak at the meeting of Women in Spirit Thursday, March 23, noon, at the St. Joseph Cathedral Hall, Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge. A complimentary lunch will be served. Women in Spirit is an interfaith gathering where women can seek spiritual growth and network. RSVP by emailing sjwomeninspirit@aol.com or calling the cathedral office at 225-387-5928.

Pro-Life Breakfast – St. Jean Vianney Church, 16166 S. Harrells Ferry Road, Baton Rouge, will present a pro-life breakfast, “Living a Pro-Life Life in a Secular World,” sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 9247, Saturday, March 25, 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., at the St. Jean Vianney parish hall. Tickets will be $25 for singles; $40 for couples and $50 for family (12 or older). For ticket information, email Charles Barbre at charlesbarbre@cox.net.

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny – A breakfast with the Easter Bunny will be held Saturday, April 8, 9-10:30 a.m., at the Holy Family Church parish hall, 319 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen. Bring a camera to take pictures with the Easter Bunny. Treat bags will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, call 225-236-4463.

Easter Egg Hunt – St. Patrick Church, 12424 Brogdon Lane, Baton Rouge, will have an Easter egg hunt, Sunday, April 9, 11:30 a.m. For more information, call 225-753-5750.

Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat – Rachel’s Vineyard Ministry, New Orleans site, for healing after abortion, is hosting a retreat Friday, April 7 – Sunday, April 9, at Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula. Cost is $475; financial assistant is available. For more information, call Pam Richard at 504-460-9360 or 985-809-0773 or email richj503@bellsouth.net; or call Melanie Bagnow at 504-889-2431 or 504-710-6458 or email mkbagnow@cox.net.

Tickfaw Retreat – Father Martin Scott, of the Servants of Divine Mercy, will present a retreat, “The Road to Christ’s Heart: Humility, Humility, Humility,” Friday, March 24 – Sunday, March 26, at Our Lady of the Way Spiritual Life Center, 5052 Antioch Road, Tickfaw. For more information and to register, visit ourladyoftheway.org or call 985-402-3095.

Charismatic Conference Jubilee – The Archdio -cese of New Orleans Catholic Charismatic Renewal will celebrate its golden jubilee conference Friday, March 31 – Sunday, April 2 at the Best Western Plus Landmark Hotel, 2601 Severn Ave, Metairie. For more information and to register visit ccrno.org, email info@ccrno.org or call 504-828-1968.

Rosaryville Day of Prayers – The following days of prayer will take place at Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula: Tuesday, March 28, “The Way to Inter Freedom,” with Sister Rose Bowen OP. For information, visit rosaryvillela.com, email sda vis@oppeace.org or call 225-294-5039.

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Thousands gather to celebrate Mass at new St. George church

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

With a simple question of “What do you think?” Father Mike Schatzle ushered in a new era at St. George Church in Baton Rouge.

Although the official opening is still weeks away, Father Schatzle celebrated weekend Masses at the mammoth new structure for the first time March 4-5. Judging by early reviews and an enthusiastic confirmation to Father Schatzle’s question, the new church appears to be a hit.

Father Schatzle said the vigil Mass on March 4 doubled its normal attendance, and the 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses the following day each drew more than 1,000 people. In fact, he estimated the crowd at the 9:30 a.m. Mass to be approximately 1,200, which is capacity.

Even at the 11:30 a.m. Mass, empty spots were hard to find.

“We were overwhelmed by the attendance,” Father Schatzle said, wearing the grin of a proud papa. “We did not expect that. Now we have to keep them.”

Bishop Robert W. Muench is scheduled to dedicate the new church in a 3 p.m. ceremony on March 26, but Father Schatzle said the early opening was an opportunity to “get the kinks out.” There appeared to be none, and he added those in attendance were awestruck by the final product, which has been six years in the making.

“We had a lot of good comments,” Father Schatzle said. “The people were so happy, and they said they felt a sense of sacredness.” Perhaps most importantly, he added with a smile, “We had no snafus.”

During his homily, Father Schatzle said throughout the six years from the first planning meeting to the first Mass, “We have received some (spiritual) guidance indicating we were indeed doing something important.”

“We are very blessed at St. George because of so many of you and your wonderful stewardship of time and talent,” he added. “And that good stewardship has enabled us to build this magnificent place of worship, hopefully a place of worship for many, many generations to come. I thank you.”

Because the official dedication is still a week away, the altar and ambo from the old church were used. The statues and baptismal font have yet to arrive but all are expected to be in place by March 26.

“Our church is a work in progress,” Father Schatzle said. “We ask you to be flexible as we become accustomed to our beautiful new church.”

The statues and baptismal font have yet to arrive but all are expected to be in place by March 26.

The new church features a grand entrance, with an impressive bell tower standing sentry over the structure.

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A Catholic Healthcare Ministry
Serving People of All Faiths
Governor’s wife turns to the ‘word’ of God to find solace in trying times

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

In a time of social media frenzy, there’s a lot of “chatter” as people voice their opinions and debunk others’ and rant on traditional or social media in the hopes of 15 minutes of fame. What is often more needed is a simple, meaningful word from God that captures the essence of the virtues and qualities needed to address what the future may hold, said Donna Edwards, wife of Gov. John Bel Edwards, who spoke on “A Childlike Faith” at a recent meeting of Women in Spirit at St. Joseph Cathedral.

In thinking about the topic, Edwards, who converted from being Methodist to Catholicism, thought and researched the word “childlike” and what it means to be childlike. Contrary to what people may think of childlike as being immature, it involves innocence, trust and ingenuousness, according to Edwards.

“We are the children of God,” said Edwards. She noted that children never waver and have a “wide-eyed” faith.

Edwards said she particularly learned what it meant to be childlike after she started having her own children. This proved particularly important during the course of her pregnancy with her daughter Samantha, who was born with Spina Bifida. Doctors had advised her and her husband to terminate the pregnancy, but they refused because they are opposed to abortion.

They walked with a childlike faith and trust through their daughter’s medical procedures, which resulted in a closer relationship between the couple.

There have been other tests of faith. After the Edwards married, they moved for a period of time away from their families to Hawaii, where John Bel Edwards began eight years of active duty in the Army. There were also the rigors of the campaign trail for governor, the police shootings, racial tensions and flooding in 2016.

In the midst of trials, Donna Edwards said there is a “word from the Spirit that brings joy to your mind and gets you through it.”

“Everyone has trials and triumphs,” she said. “We get through the tough times through a good word.”

The most important word that Edwards held on to and prayed with over the past several years refers to Christ as found in John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Edwards said she will often get a “word” that is appropriate for the upcoming year, such as trust, patience, love, peace, believe and rest. She wryly said that some words, such as “obey,” take time to soak in and coming across several times, sometimes in unexpected places.

People can learn the word God has for them by spending time reading and praying with the Scriptures, Edwards said.

She encouraged the audience to focus on a word that comes to them and meditate on it. She pointed out that during her time on the campaign trail she focused on the word love.

“This was a focus that I caused it — what does it mean to love neighbor and how it is carried out,” Edwards said.

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The St. Vincent de Paul Pharmacy isn’t about numbers; it’s about people helping people, and you don’t have to be a doctor or pharmacist to help fill a prescription. For Ray, in the photo to the right, our pharmacy was the answer to his prayers.

We continue to see people at our St. Vincent de Paul Pharmacy who have never had to ask for help before. Our pharmacy is improving the quality of life for many of the needy by filling life-sustaining prescriptions for illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Learn more about Sharon and Ray’s stories in the enclosed insert in this issue. svdpbr.org

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Richard Meek, editor, at rmeek@diobr.org.

ALTAR ▼
From page 1

Bercegeay

“IT’S THE JOY; IT’S THAT LOOK OF JOY I SEE ON THEIR FACES. THAT’S WHY I DO THIS,” she said.

Bercegeay recalled that when they started their first St. Joseph altar 16 years ago, Betty Thomas, who was a dietitian at the center, helped with food preparation and set up, making sure they knew to have three steps, representing the Holy Trinity.

“Our first altar was a candle with St. Joseph’s picture on it,” she said.

Over the years, their display grew with more items added, such as a continuing variety of sweet treats and various religious articles, which this year included a traveling Our Lady of Fatima statue and a small chalice-like cup Bercegeay’s daughter found in a thrift shop.

Bercegeay said she is especially proud of a somewhat new tradition that began several years ago when one of the residents wanted to place her own religious statue on the altar.

Since then Bercegeay has encouraged all of the residents to do this. Not only does it add to the uniqueness of the display, but it helps the residents recognize the altar was made for them.

Father Jason Palermo, pastor at St. Joseph Church in French Settlement and St. Stephen the Martyr Church in Maurepas, blessed the St. Joseph’s altar at Azalea Estates. He explained how he grew up around the tradition, which dates to the Middle Ages as a way for Sicilians to thank St Joseph for relief from a famine.

Father Palermo blessed the altar with salt and water after leading all in attendance in a short prayer service, which included a reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew and the litany of St. Joseph.

A rosary followed.

Bercegeay added that she was happy to have a few additional helpers as she and her sister are starting to “slow down” a little bit.

She said they still want to help but would like to pass the tradition to younger people.

“It’s just hard doing all of the work. We work a little, then have to sit down, then we get back up and work some more,” she explained, adding this year was especially hard since they were helping family affected by the August flood.

Pam McKnight, who along with her friend Clara Biondolillo, were some of the new volunteers who came to help.

A parishioner of St. Mark, McKnight said the St. Joseph altars are a “fantastic tradition” at the community nursing and assisted living homes.

She said the altar is a blessing to all of the residents, and she, too, has received many blessings for offering to help.