People flock to see relics of ‘old friend’

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

It was as if an old friend had come home for the crowds of people who came to venerate a first-class relic of St. John Paul II that toured the Diocese of Baton Rouge on Nov. 2-4. People kissed, touched a rosary or bowed their head in a moment of silence as they approached the relic and presented prayers of thanksgiving, petitions or relived fond memories of seeing the pope in person.

A vial of the saint’s blood was displayed at Christ the King Church and Student Center at LSU, Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge and Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant.

At Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge, people expressed various signs of reverence when venerating the first-class relic of St. John Paul II when it came to the Diocese of Baton Rouge. The relic was displayed at Christ the King Church and Student Center at LSU, Our Lady of Mercy Church and Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant.

At the veneration at Our Lady of Mercy, Margie Melancon, of Gonzales, said she came to give thanks for all God’s blessings because she is cancer free after facing the disease twice.

Re-entry for inmates present unique challenges

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Seven days after 55-year-old Ernest Scott of Baton Rouge was released from prison, he visited the Prison Ministry Office of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge looking for help. Scott was among the 1,900 convicted men and women released Nov. 1 as part of Louisiana’s new criminal justice reform package.

Soft-spoken, tired and anxious, Scott was seeking a way to find work and a place to stay.

“(It’s) very difficult coming out of prison, knowing I have no support from the family, which causes people to do crimes to survive,” he said. “I didn’t find out that I was being released until Oct. 29. Found out through the inmate hotline.”

Scott was incarcerated in West Feliciana civil parish as part of a work release program. He served a total of 10 years in prison and was able to save enough money to buy a car when he was released. But, with no driver’s license or insurance, a traffic accident or ticket could land him back where he started: in jail.

Work has been difficult to secure, his record being his albatross. At times, he has been forced to sleep in his car, unable to stay with his either of his two adult children because of Section 8 occupancy regulations.

Unfortunately, Scott’s story is not unique, as many of the inmates recently released struggle with their own challenges. In fact, at least one of the inmates released Nov. 1 has already been arrested and is back in jail.

These are the types of scenarios that has many officials, even those working for justice reform, concerned.

“There are some services such as Joseph Homes (a program of CCDBR), but everybody is just not ready,” said Carl Taylor, shelter supervisor at The Society of St. Vincent de Paul for the Diocese of Baton Rouge and who was incarcerated 20 years ago. “They want things on their own terms. Don’t fit the bill. You can set people up to fail by putting them in a situation that is not going to work.”

Linda Fjeldsjo, coordinator of the Prison Ministry Office and Joseph Homes for CCDBR, said while the focus in recent months has been on the Nov. 1 released prisoners, this problem is not new for the state, noting that Louisiana, which traditionally is saddled with the highest incarceration rate in the country, releases 18,000 inmates annually.

“This isn’t a new phenomenon,” she said. “A lot of people want to use this as a scare tactic for the reforms.”

Fjeldsjo said those in prison ministry see a common theme among a majority of those who are behind bars.

“In all of our work, we’ve never really worked with any rich, rich clients. Poverty, lack of education, they have no true work history,” she said. “A lot of substance part 2 of a series

SEE REFORM PAGE 20

SEE RELIC PAGE 19
Catholic Charities

By Amy Jones

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge is a network of agencies which has evolved from a number of different programs, all of which stem from a shared mission: to help those in need. Catholic Charities has its roots in the Catholic Family Life Bureau (est. 1962), Catholic Social Services (est. 1964), and the Office of Social Responsibility (est. 1968).

Originally, the primary focus was on maternity and adoption counseling, emergency aid to the very poor and the preparation of engaged couples for the sacrament of marriage. In 1974, as a result of a study of the Social Apostolate of the diocesan commissioned by Bishop Robert E. Tracy, the three departments were joined together to form the Catholic Community Life Office, which was designed to coordinate the diocese’s service to people in need.

In the late 1970s, the Catholic Community Life Office became a major proponent of reform for those fleeing Vietnam. Through the years, the office has attended to the needs of those escaping persecution from a variety of countries, such as Cuba, the Balkans, Sudan, Somalia and other European and African nations. Assisting legal immigrants achieve citizenship is an ongoing commitment.

Prison ministry was started in 1977 by a volunteer, Doucette Pascal. Initially the program served the needs of elderly inmates eligible for parole, as well as addressed the literacy needs of those in parish prisons. By 1992, a full-time director was hired and service was expanded, including offering emergency assistance to those recently released from prison; coordinating services for families and loved ones of prisoners; and advocating for criminal justice reform.

The organization received a name change on Jan. 1, 1985 when the Catholic Community Life Office became Catholic Community Services of Baton Rouge. The new name symbolized new programs and staff, new agency developments and a renewed commitment to service of individuals and families in need. It was decided that a facility was needed to house those in need. In 1992, a new shelter was completed.

Prepare, wait and watch

By Dina Dow

The season of fall has finally debuted as the leaves fade into rustic hues of orange, brown, yellow and burgundy. Similarly, the colors adorning the sanctuaries around the world will shift from green to white to purple, as we enter into the last week of the Liturgical Year and begin anew with Advent. We end the old year with jubilant celebration and begin a new year with a clear resolution following three principles: prepare, wait and watch.

Prepare

The Solemnity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (aka Christ the King), celebrates the true essence of what is means to be “ruler of all.” Comparatively reflecting, the cub Simba, in the Disney movie “The Lion King,” “can’t wait to be king” because he, seeking independence from everyone, wishes to be a ruler from a selfish heart. Ironically, through a tragic loss and the threat of total destruction by evil, he grows in understanding of the true meaning of kingship: to protect and to lead with love, courage and wisdom. It’s not about him, it’s about the good of the herd.

Christ, our savior, was cognizant of his kingship very early on. His nature allowed him to know the role of a servant-king, as well as the cost of this leadership. Hence, Jesus modeled his royal kingship as a good shepherd. Being the creator of the universe, his love for us is truly commandingly so much as he expects humanity to simply be as good to one another as he is to us. The Good Shepherd “tends, looks after, rescues, give rest, seeks the lost, brings home, helps the wounded, heals and, yes, judges.”

We are subject to our king, Jesus Christ, and thus are called to be like him. Why? Because “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.” Each day, the faithful are to prepare for this moment. How? Jesus explicitly tells the apostles the role of discipleship and the forthcoming judgment that we are to live the faith (believe) and do good works. This is the basis for which ALL will be judged.

Be reminded, Jesus did not say “If the son of man comes...” Rather, Jesus said, “WHEN the son of man comes...” See GOSPEL PAGE 15

Q: What is your favorite hobby, and what do you enjoy most about it?
A: My favorite hobby is photography. I love to look at the world through the lens of the camera. It reminds me about the light and its importance in our lives. What makes the photo a perfect shot is the presence and absence of the lights and shadows. It reminds me of the ups and downs of our lives, which makes it beautiful and worth living. I love to take pictures of the beauty of nature, which is a bigger and beautiful canvas.

Q: What is an interesting fact about your home country of India?
A: Most of the people do not know many things about India. Especially in the West the media does not bring anything good about India. People are misguided by the biased report by the media. India is a land of diversity. I would call it a “smorgasbord of culture, language, religion and delicious food.” India is very rich in its culture and diversity. What media brings out is just one side view of the poverty! Yes, there are poor people in India. The developed world does not see the richness of Indian culture and heritage which takes us back to 10000 B.C. I am proud to say that I am from the most beautiful planet on the earth. I am from Kerala, which is also known as ‘God’s Own Country’ (keralatourism.org). We have 100 percent literacy in my state of Kerala and we have the most advanced health care systems in India.

Q: What would be the top item on your list of things you have not done yet, but want to do within your lifetime (i.e. “bucket list” item)?
A: I would love to visit Reykjavik, on the coast of Iceland, the country’s capital and largest city. It’s home to the National and Saga museums, tracing Iceland’s Viking history. I would love to visit the striking Hallgrimskirkja church and rotating Perlan glass dome which offer sweeping views of the sea and nearby hills. Also I would love to go to the geothermal Blue Lagoon spa, near the village of Grindavik. That is on my bucket list.

Behind the Collar

… With Father Johnson Kuriappilly, chaplain, Our Lady of the Lake Hospital

Q: What is your favorite book you have read?
A: That is a hard question to answer. I love authors like Richard Rohr, Nikos Kazantzakis, Ronald Rolheiser, Gerhard Lohfink, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen...

Q: Of all the places you have visited, which place is your favorite and what makes it your favorite?
A: I love to travel internationally and there are lots of places which come to my mind. I have visited Austria many times, so I think that is one of the favorite countries I have visited. The people, culture, beauty and food play an important role to consider it as my favorite place!

Q: What is an interesting fact about your home country of India that most people may not know about?
A: In the village of Grindavik. That is on my bucket list.
Celebrating Black Catholics

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Many attending Mass at a predominantly African-American church in the Diocese of Baton Rouge say it is a worship experience that is alive and vibrant. They receive a warm welcome, hear jubilant voices of a Gospel choir and “Amens” ringing out from the congregation as a priest or deacon delivers a passionate message, watch the rhythmic, graceful performances of liturgical dancers and pick up on a sense of community.

During Black Catholic History Month in November, people of all races have had opportunities to look at the contributions of Black Catholics to the church.

On July 24, 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus of the United States designated November as Black Catholic History Month to celebrate the long and proud history of Black Catholics, according to NBCCC. Black history month is not only a time to pray to all saints and for souls, but also a time to recall the saints and souls of Africa and the African Diaspora.

According to Deacon Alfred Adams, director of the Office of Black Catholics of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, there are many saints of predominately African heritage to celebrate. Many are familiar with St. Augustine, whose birthday is November 13 and St. Martin de Porres, whose feast day is November 3. Deacon Adams also noted the important role of Daniel Rudd, a journalist and civil rights leader who called for the inclusion of Black Catholics in the church and founded the National Black Catholic Congress.

“He went to Washington, D.C. doing what he thought was right, and people started to recognize the gifts of Black Catholics,” said Deacon Adams.

He also recognized the gentle, holy, smiling witness of St. Josephine Bakhita. Born in 1869 in Sudan, she was kidnapped at the age of seven and underwent immense suffering throughout her adolescence before discovering the faith in her early 20s. She was baptized and entered the Canossian Sisters in Italy. She is not only the patron saint of her home country, but for human trafficking victims.

Deacon Adams and Father Tom Clark, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Baton Rouge, also noted that the Catholic faith was enriched by the witness of Black Catholics such as Sister Thea Bowman, who spoke before the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“She was the Franciscan sister, was a very gifted woman who manifested a joyous and exuberant faith. If we all had more joy and enthusiasm to talk about Jesus and show his love to others, we would have a greater impact as Catholics in our city and region,” said Father Clark.

Another Black Catholic who should be emulated by all Catholics is Julia Greeley, according to Father Clark.

“At an enslaved woman, (Greeley) became known as the ‘Angel of Denver’ after Emancipation. Working as a domestic, she used all her extra money to buy food, clothes and supplies for people in need,” said Father Clark. “What I love most about her is that she would only deliver these supplies to people at night so that nobody would know and they could preserve their pride and dignity.”

Thomas Wyatt Turner was another Black Catholic who enriched the faith, said Father Clark.

“Thomas Wyatt Turner was a church community activist in the 1910s and 20s,” said Father Clark. “He organized an organization called the Federated Colored Catholics and strove relentlessly for Black Catholics to be accorded their rightful place in the church. He fought for the ordination of black men to the priesthood, the integration of Catholic colleges and universities, and he documented cases of discrimination and racism in the church. He was a forerunner of empowered lay leadership.”

In addition to the saints, there are many Black Catholic parishioners in the local community who are strong models of living the faith, according to Father Clark. Deacon Adams and Father Ed Chiffriller SSJ, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church in Baton Rouge, St. Francis Xavier will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2018.

The founding members attended St. Agnes Church in Baton Rouge under segregated circumstances before pooling their resources together to build St. Francis Xavier. The church has parishioners throughout Baton Rouge and beyond, according to Father Chiffriller.

St. Francis Xavier School was built two years later and will celebrate its 100 year anniversary in 2020.

Father Chiffriller noted that even during a time of Jim Crow laws and segregation, Black Catholics remained loyal to the church and their faith.

He noted the theme of St. Francis Xavier’s centennial celebration will be “Through Trials and Tribulations, by God’s Grace We Triumph.”

In light of the celebration, a committee of young people has also been formed to help encourage their peers to learn about the history of the church.

“They learn about their history, what their great-grandparents, grandparents and elderly parishioners went through yet remained faithful to the church,” said Father Chiffriller.

He added, “There has been a lot of adversity, but the their (Black Catholics’) love of God and family allowed them to persevere and be a model of faith to the people.”

Deacon Adams said while progress has been made concerning racial relations in the Catholic Church and the diocese, more still needs to be done. He said this comes from admitting that there is a problem with racial relations.

“Most people are afraid to talk about it,” said Deacon Adams. “You try to be patient.”

He said in understanding Black Catholics, it’s important to talk about Jesus and show his love to others.

“We need to become brothers and sisters in the family of Christ,” said Deacon Adams. “It may not come during our time, but the seeds have been planted.”

Leaders within the Diocese of Baton Rouge have been tilling the soil.

“The church mirrors the society it serves. Just as we make it personal, we should be making it personal.”
Puerto Rico archbishop sees spiritual rebirth after storm’s wrath

BALTIMORE (CNS) – Almost two months after the devastating winds and rains of Hurricane Maria pummeled the island of Puerto Rico, there is still no clear path to recovery. Although some power and phone service have been restored and relief supplies are slowly filtering in, the cleanup and rebuilding is only just beginning.

“You go day by day, but it’s overwhelming and traumatic,” said Archbishop Roberto González Nieves of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The archbishop, who attended the U.S. bishops’ fall assembly in Baltimore, is acutely aware of the storm’s initial and ongoing impact. Since Maria, he has visited 57 parishes in his archdiocese and has 100 more to go. Every parish in this archdiocese in the northeast corner of the island was impacted by the hurricane from minimal to extensive damage.

And as Puerto Rico’s Catholics find their way through the wreckage and mud-soaked parish buildings and roofless homes while coping with minimal electricity, food and water, he said they have not lost their faith. For many, their faith has only deepened.

“Tragedies and adversities have a way of reinforcing our faith and our sense of spirituality, our dependency on God,” which also goes hand in hand with an “intensified spirit of sharing, generosity and solidarity,” he said.

Archbishop Gonzalez, who lived in Puerto Rico as a child and has led the San Juan Archdiocese for 18 years, said he has noticed at some recent Masses that “the choirs continue to sing the hymns they were singing before but with much more vigor and joy.”

“We are in a sense being rejuvenated,” he told Catholic News Service Nov. 13.

He isn’t surprised by the way people are taking care of each other, or as he put it, “the enormous amount of sharing that took place and is still taking place” as people make meals for neighbors, for example, on gas-powered stoves.

He also has experienced this care firsthand in the calls and emails, once they could come through, from other bishops, along with donations and offers of rebuilding help. At the Baltimore meeting, he said a number of bishops told him: “We’re with you and we’ll be sending help.”

Archbishop González and Bishop Herbert A. Bevard of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, another region hard hit by Hurricane Maria, were both invited as observers to the bishops’ fall meeting and were introduced by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth, has its own Catholic bishops’ conference and participates in the Latin American bishops’ council, known as CELAM.

During the Baltimore gathering, Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president of Catholic Charities USA, told the bishops that the relief agency had given $2 million in early November to Father Enrique Camacho, director of Caritas Puerto Rico, the Catholic Charities affiliate on the island, and she had just presented Bishop Bevard with $1 million for recovery needs.

• More than $6 million still needed
• Not only renovating buildings from the 2016 flood but also rebuilding for the next 125 years
• The monks of Saint Joseph Abbey remain true to their mission of educating young men to serve the Church as priests and community leaders
• $8.6 million raised

“As we rebuild toward the future, our faith remains resolute.”
–Abbot Justin Brown, O.S.B.
#1GiveCatholic giving day scheduled Nov. 28

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

An innovative Catholic fundraising program that debuted in the Diocese of Baton Rouge a year ago is expanding with the hope of surpassing what was a rousing success.

Stewardship director Tammy Abshire said the #1GiveCatholic program, which was originally launched by the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 2015, is scheduled Nov. 28 from midnight to 11:59 p.m. She said the day is an opportunity whereby individuals are able to make donations in a 24-hour period to charities of their choice.

“In our case, a Catholic charity,” Abshire said.

In 2016, the program raised a combined $1.36 million nationally, with a total of seven dioceses and archdioceses participating. This year, that number has grown to 17 dioceses and archdioceses, coinciding with the partnership of the International Catholic Stewardship Council.

Nationally, an ambitious $3.5 million goal has been established.

In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, #1GiveCatholic raised $89,000 a year ago, which Abshire said was overwhelming.

“The generosity of the people in the diocese was heartwarming,” she said, adding that the goal is to surpass last year's total. “It really shows how faith-filled our people are and the commitment they have to their churches.

“This is money the organizations did not previously have.”

A year ago, participation in the diocese was limited to church parishes, schools and a small number of organizations but this year has been expanded to include any ministry included in the National Catholic Directory. A total of 22 organizations and ministries are participating, including the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Hispanic Apostolate, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge and Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady of the Lake University.

Abshire said each ministry has its own profile page on the #1GiveCatholic website, listing its mission statement, logo, a description of its funding need and what the project is supporting.

“Generally, (an organization or ministry) could give for unrestricted support,” Abshire said. “But most donors like to give to a specific project. It is more successful.”

Women's New Life Center raised the most money a year ago, checking in with $41,500. St. Jean Vianney Parish and School in Baton Rouge was highest among the church parishes with $6,405 from 47 donors.

St. Louis King of France Church in Baton Rouge led all organizations with a total number of 63 donors, who donated $5,670.

“This is really an excellent opportunity for people around the diocese to make a commitment to helping their church or perhaps their favored organization,” Abshire said. “To have this event at the beginning of the holiday season makes it that much more meaningful.”

“Each gift, no matter how large or small, really does make an impact to every organization, church, school or ministry.”

To donate, visit 1GiveCatholic.org, which is an online platform with searchable profiles. Donors can give early through Nov. 26.

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HISTORY ↓

From page 3

as we have a racial divide in Baton Rouge and the surrounding region so we have a racial divide in our diocese,” said Father Clark, who is co-chair of the Racial Harmony Commission of the Diocese of Baton Rouge along with Father Josh Johnson, pastor of Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant. “The events of the summer of 2016 present us with a graced opportunity to take action to bridge that divide. The Racial Harmony Commission will be calling a meeting in January of all persons in the diocese who want to work together to bridge the racial divide.”

Father Clark said, “One of the ways in which we will do this is to invite parishes and individuals into dialogue. By dialogue, we mean active listening to one another that leads to action. This dialogue will fundamentally be a learning process to understand that racism is systemic and that it functions in the policies and practices of institutions to deprive some of their rights because of the color of their skin. Once we see how policies and practices discriminate, intentionally or unintentionally, we can then take action to change them. We also plan to collaborate with others in the city and region for a Day of Racial Healing in January.”

COMING HOME – Bishop Robert W. Muench, left, installed Father Eliseus Ibeh MSP as pastor at St. Benedict the Moor Church in Bertrandville on Nov. 12. Father Ibeh previously served as pastor at St. Benedict from July 1, 2012–June 30, 2013. Father Ibeh was greeted with a warm welcome by parishioner. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator
Agoraphobia and Mass attendance/ Is sign of peace required?

Q

Togetherness seems to have become such an integral part of Catholicism, and extroverts tend to look disdainfully at those who prefer to sit at the end of the pew, are shy about grabbing hands, shudder at the thought of being hugged or have difficulty with extemporaneous small talk. For me, being squashed in the center of a pew is agonizing, and there is no way I can focus on the Mass in that situation.

About once every two or three months, I feel compelled to go into our parish’s adoration chapel during Mass and follow the prayers and readings from there or I find it necessary to stay at home and follow the Sunday Mass on television from my den. If that counts as missing Mass, there’s just nothing that I can do about it.

Agoraphobia is no joke, and even those of us with milder forms suffer greatly. But I believe that we are also loved by God. (Nokesville, Virginia)

No, your behavior does not count as missing Mass. And yes, you are surely loved by God. Agoraphobia is a very real disease, affecting as many as 1.9 million U.S. adults at some level in a 12-month period. It is characterized by significant anxiety in places where crowds gather, especially in situations where one might feel trapped and unable to escape.

This disease can justify one’s absence from Mass as certainly as would a high fever or a contagious cold. If it is more comfortable for you to pray in a side chapel, by all means do that. (Perhaps you might want to mention your situation to your pastor to help him to understand, and you might benefit by his words of approval.)

Or, if sometimes you find it necessary simply to stay at home and pray, do that. I credit you for your desire to share in the Eucharist to the extent you are able.

Your letter serves, too, as a reminder to us all to forgo judging the behavior of others, those, for example, who insist on sitting at the end of a nearly vacant pew or those who choose to stand in the back of the church. They could well be suffering from the same sensibilities you have described.

Q

I have been attending one Catholic church parish in my hometown for several years now. As far as I know, this is the only Catholic church where parishioners do not shake hands at the sign of peace. I can understand churchgoers declining to shake hands if they have a cold or other ailment or at times of widespread sickness.

However, at this particular parish, the congregation will not even turn around and greet others’ alone, shake hands. It is not really a big deal for me, but I do find it a little odd. Is there an explanation for this, or are church parishes simply not required to follow the practice of shaking hands? (Portland, Oregon)

A

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal in section No. 82 indicates that the rite of peace should be a regular part of the liturgy in which “the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity” before receiving the Eucharist. As to the actual gesture to be used, the general instruction leaves that up to the national bishops’ conference, to be determined in accord with local culture and customs.

For the United States, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has noted that this would typically be done by shaking hands. So while this ritual can be eliminated in particular circumstances – a flu epidemic, for example – it should not be skipped regularly.

In 2014, the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments reminded Catholics that a certain restraint should mark the ritual so as not to distract from receiving Communion, that the gesture of peace should be extended by the faithful to those nearest them and that such abuses as “the movement of the faithful from their places” should be avoided.

FATHER DOYLE is a priest in the Diocese of Albany, New York. Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and to the National Catholic Reporter, 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.
Advent opportunity to hit reset button on spiritual life

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Given the natural and manmade chaos that appears to be running rampant in the world, like the people of Jesus’ time, Catholics may be looking for “the big wrap up” when God cleans out evil and brings his faithful to heaven. But as the new liturgical year begins with Advent on Dec. 3, the church teaches Catholics that their long awaited savior entered the world in a manger in a small town in Bethlehem and still looks for people to make a place for him “in the inn” of their souls, according to leaders in the diocese.

“It was in the quiet of the night, it wasn’t a giant rebellious event; the people who knew him were shepherds,” said Dina Dow, director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge. She notes that Jesus is proclaimed as the “Good Shepherd.”

Through a good preparation for Advent, people come to understand that the child whose birth they wait for will carry them as the paschal lamb through his passion, death and resurrection to new life, according to Dow.

There are many good ways for families to embrace the fullness of Advent, according to Dow. Parents can bring their children to live nativity scenes, have their children keep an Advent calendar and earn straw to put in baby Jesus’ manger in a Nativity scene through good deeds.

To further make the point to her children that Christ is the true gift given by God to the world at Christmas, one year Dow decided to not put the baby Jesus in the Nativity scene during Advent.

“I remember the girls asking, ‘Where is Jesus?’” Dow said.

On Christmas morning, the baby Jesus was under the tree wrapped in a shiny, gold box.

“They are in their 20s, but it’s still the first gift they open,” smiled Dow.

As one prepares for this special gift of God becoming man and begins a new liturgical year, it’s a good time to reflect and spend time with Scripture.

James Vu, seminarian for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, said he spends time reflecting on the daily readings, which show the events leading up to the birth of Christ, in the adoration chapel at St. Joseph Seminary in St. Benedict. He also likes to reflect on Advent’s emphasis on looking forward to the second coming of Christ.

“I get a sense of clarity. Sometimes I’ll leave adoration and get the urgent sense that I can’t wait for the Christmas season to start,” said Vu, noting that the celebration is just beginning with the birth of Christ.

Making time to be with the Lord is also important, Vu noted. He said this doesn’t have to necessarily be done with a big chunk of time, but through the practice of mindfulness or “living in the present moment.”

“You still have that empty period when you are walking or driving somewhere. You can reflect in that small fraction of a time you have,” said Vu.

Thinking of Advent as a “fresh start” is also a good way to prepare for Christ’s coming, said Father Eddie Martin, parochial vicar at St. Aloysius Church in Baton Rouge.

“I reset my spiritual clock at the beginning of the liturgical year,” said Father Martin. “I like to think about things that I may want to change.”

He added, “If you’ve had a bad year and you felt like you tested God and God tested you, it’s time to restart.”

Participating in the sacrament of reconciliation is a good way to re-establish a relationship with God, according to Father Martin.

He said he had a memorable experience during one of the first sacraments of reconciliation he received.

“I don’t remember what I had done, but after the priest said, ‘It’s time to start fresh’ I was flying out of there (the confessional),” said Father Martin.

He said the feeling of freshness and being forgiven brings joy that should be shared with the world.

“There’s a lot of brokenness in the world – it needs a lot of joy,” said Father Martin. “It’s a great time to bring Christ into the world, shine the light.”

Remembering that Advent is more than four weeks but a spiritual journey and way of life looking for Christ coming into one’s life is also important, said Father Charlie Landry, pastor of St. Gabriel Church in St. Gabriel and Sacred Heart Chapel in Carville.

“For me, Advent is the continual getting ready for the Lord and serving the Lord,” said Father Landry.

An Advent well spent results being ready not only for Christ as the child, but him as the redeemer of their lives.

“You are growing in faith and developing a personal relationship with Christ,” said Vu. “Some Catholics don’t understand that you can develop a personal relationship with God and follow his will.”

Dow remembers when the message of Advent hit her powerfully when she served as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist at a Christmas Mass distributing the precious blood of Christ.

She went back to the sacristy with the cup containing the remaining precious blood and the choir sang “Away in a Manger.” She made the connection that the Christ child whose birthday was being celebrated would become the man who went to his death on the cross to redeem man.

“It was a beautiful song and I’m looking at the blood of Christ. It was very powerful. I was thinking, ‘That’s his blood, he’s given his blood to save us.’ I was crying,” said Dow, with gratitude in her voice.

Father Landry’s said a secular song which also sum ups Advent well comes from the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young song, “Carry On, Love is Coming”:

“The sky is clearing and the night has cried enough
The sun, he comes, the world to soften up
Rejoice, rejoice, we have no choice but to carry on
The fortunes of fables are able to sing the song
Now witness the quickness with which we get along
To sing the blues you’ve got to live the dues and carry on
Carry on, love is coming, love is coming to us all”

Lighting of an Advent wreath is a popular way to celebrate the season. CNS photo
40 Days for Life ends successful campaign

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

When 40 Days for Life wrapped up its fall campaign in Baton Rouge, the numbers told the story. More than 1,400 people stood outside the Delta Women’s Clinic and prayed for an end to abortion. More than 35 different churches and church groups signed up to adopt a time to pray. And, there were 14 saves.

“(These were) women that specifically said, ‘I have changed my mind. I am not going to have an abortion,’ ” said Danielle Van Haute, Respect Life Coordinator for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Van Haute said that knowing these women changed their minds about ending a life is encouraging, but it’s much more than that. Those decisions will extend beyond these 40 Days, into the years to come and across generations.

“So, yes, these 14 women changed their minds, but how that will touch the lives of other people. We can’t calculate that and there are so many others that we know were moved in ways that we will never know on this side of heaven, because we can’t always see the affects of our prayer,” said Van Haute.

Hunter Hardin, 45, a parishioner at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in St. Francisville, was among those who stood in prayer outside the clinic, usually during his lunch break from work. He went as often as possible during the campaign, which stretched from Sept. 27 – Nov. 5.

“I was adopted in 1972 and Roe v. Wade happened in January 1973, the very next year,” said Hardin. “I was born a ward of the state at charity hospital to a 16-year-old girl. I could have easily been aborted. So this is very near to my heart. And it’s a neat thing for me. I pray for the mothers, the babies, for my birth mother, for my parents that adopted me. It’s a multi-faceted and dynamic experience for me.”

Co-campaign directors were Van Haute along with Charles and Clelie Carpenter of Bethany Church of Baton Rouge. According to Van Haute, there was an increase in participation from other church denominations thanks to the involvement of Bethany Church, which has several campuses in the Baton Rouge area. Hardin sometimes brought his family, wife Michelle, and children, Katelyn, 20, John Paul, 18, and Mary Grace, 16.

“I even prayed with my father who is a member of Bethany Church, so that was really special,” said Hardin.

Besides the powerful unity of prayer, the presence of those praying can be a powerful force. Van Haute said that one day during the campaign, a woman with a 4-year-old child in the back seat of her car stopped to talk to those praying outside the clinic.

“She mentioned to the sidewalk counselors and the folks that were there that when she was pregnant, she was on her way to Delta and it was that presence that stopped her from choosing abortion, so she just wanted to show them her baby,” said Van Haute. “She wanted to express her gratitude.”

Van Haute said that even though the campaign is over, people can continue to pray outside of the clinic, located on Colonial Drive. She said people are there only to pray and not talk to the women or the workers.

Hardin said he understands how difficult it can be to be a part of the groups publicly praying to end abortion. He said the experience can be “polarizing and uncomfortable.” And, even though he invited about 60 people to go pray at the clinic, only about a dozen showed up.

“I get that it’s intense and not everybody’s prepared for that,” he said. “My mind races when I think about what an incredible opportunity that is to just quietly and obediently be present to a real struggle between good and evil. It’s unbelievable.”
OLOL returns emergency care to north Baton Rouge

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Emergency health care has returned to north Baton Rouge.

Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center on Nov. 15 dedicated an 8,800-square foot emergency room at its Airline Highway location that also houses OLOL urgent, primary and pediatric care centers, making it one of the more innovative health care models across the country.

OLOL chief executive officer Scott Wester said full and quality medical care is now available in an area that has been void of an emergency facility since Baton Rouge General Hospital closed its midcity facility in the spring of 2015.

“The emergency room” is the right care at the right time at the right place,” Wester said. “This is a model that is being replicated (in other parts of the country).”

Gov. John Bel Edwards joined fellow elected officials and community leaders as well as several Franciscan Sisters in dedicating the new building, which is modeled after OLOL’s ER in Livingston Civil Parish. The facility features eight bays, 11 beds, state-of-the-art medical equipment including a CT scan and x-ray machine, pharmacy and various labs.

“I made a promise during my campaign that health care in north Baton Rouge would be improved,” said Edwards. “Today we are delivering on that promise.

“This is not about improving lives, this is about saving lives,” saying the facility would be “ministering health care that is most affordable (and appropriate).”

Financing for the $9 million project was made possible through a unique partnership involving the state and OLOL. Under the agreement, the state contributed $5.5 million, with OLOL footing the rest.

Our Lady of the Lake chief operating officer Terrie Sterling, in an interview with The Catholic Commentator the day before the dedication, said it was the state that originally approached the Franciscan Sisters about adding an emergency room at its Airline Highway center.

She said she believes “the rather abrupt closing of the midcity room, was certainly a contributing factor” in the state coming to OLOL. According to Sterling, the emergency room has been in the planning stage for the past 18 months.

See OLOL page 19

Gov. John Bel Edwards, left, shares a light moment with Sister Barbara Arceneaux FMOL, regional minister for Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady North American Region, center, and Our Lady of the Lake president and chief executive officer Scott Wester following the grand opening of the OLOL emergency room in north Baton Rouge. The ER is the first in north Baton Rouge since Baton Rouge General Hospital closed its midcity facility more than two years ago. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

By Laura Poché

Author & Estate Planning & Administration Attorney

“Tis the Season of family gatherings and an opportunity to spend more time with family and friends, near and far. We may learn that “Aunt Sadie really needs more day to day assistance than she did just 6 months ago!” or “My sister is debating marrying a second time because her fiancée’s 3 children from his previous marriage are extremely influenced by his ex-wife.” Or “My parents have heard that if my special needs brother receives an inheritance in his name, it will make him ineligible to receive very valuable governmental benefits forever, and who will care for my brother when they are gone?” Or Old sibling rivalry rears its ugly head and the family dinner tends to cause…indigestion! Let’s face it: Holidays are fun and exciting, but can be stressful, too, because we are surrounded by people who we care about and the issues they are concerned about. If you’ve ever wanted to eliminate worry because you don’t have a program in place to protect your hard earned assets and your family, without a slew of stress, unnecessary expense, and untimely legal delays, Medicaid recovery liens, nursing home poverty, and nasty litigation. The BEST GIFT EVER to give is to plan ahead to protect yourself and your family!

Spouses should attend.

IMPORTANT: This event is suited for people who intend to put an estate legal plan in place in the near future for their family. If married, both spouses should attend.
The Port Vincent Chapel

Dedication

In February 1837, Scivicque donated the land and the chapel to the Archdiocese of New Orleans for the mission of St. Vincent. On Aug. 21, 1839, Father Amat, assisted by Bishop Antoine Blanc, blessed the chapel. A second church was built in the early 1900s and renamed St. Agnes, which remained until St. William was constructed.

After St. William closed, the building was leased to a Baptist church for several years before that congregation relocated. St. William was sitting idle and in danger of becoming an eyesore, which is what Father Palermo wanted to avoid.

“It was important to build a new chapel because this is where the Catholic Church in Livingston Parish has its roots,” Father Palermo said during the week following the ceremony. “We committed to St. William parishioners when announcing the old church would be torn down there would be a chapel there.

“It did not feel right to tear down St. William without building a chapel there. That was part of the promise.”

The Catholic Church’s roots in tiny Port Vincent, which throughout much of its history has been a hunting and fishing community, date to 1839 when Father Thaddeus Amat CM became the first priest to minister in the area.

Three different churches have stood on the land originally donated by Vincent Scivicque, which was an Italian merchant and generally regarded as the founder of Port Vincent. Scivicque had built a small chapel on the site in honor of St. Vincent for his mother who was planning to move from Italy but died before coming to the country.

The new 35-foot by 90-foot structure has preserved much of St. William’s past while telling the history of Port Vincent. The bricks, the two pews in the chapel and the stations of the cross are all from St. William.

A stunning stained glass structure that details the history of Port Vincent through precise and captivating symbolism crafted by Stephen Wilson contains part of the old stained glass from St. William. And a cross hanging in the chapel was built from wood salvaged from the old church.

“We wanted to have a Catholic presence in Port Vincent,” Father Palermo said, who added the initial decision to tear down St. William was not particularly popular. “It does have a place in (parishioners’) hearts, I was understand that.”

“Not all planning for accessibility at any time, which, according to Father Palermo, is the chapel’s mission.

He told parishioners during his homily that the chapel is theirs and it’s their responsibility to take care of it and pass it on.

“Use it prayerfully,” he said. “Come and pray and know that God is here. Don’t be so busy in your life that you don’t feel you have the time to come and pray.”

Later while cooling off in some welcome shade, Jean Brouillette could only smile, looking back at the chapel. St. William will always hold a special place in her heart, recalling that much of her was centered around the church, including getting married there in 1956.

“It has a special memory,” she said. “But I’m looking forward to coming here.”

Here was a sentiment shared by many.

Above, right, the Stations of the Cross are also salvaged from St. William Chapel.
America Heritage teaches girls Catholic virtues

Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Members of the newly formed American Heritage Girls LA Troop 1943 served dinner to homeless mothers and their children at a shelter at St. Agnes Church in Baton Rouge. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

Members of American Heritage Girls LA Troop 1943 served dinner to homeless mothers and their children at a shelter at St. Agnes Church in Baton Rouge on Nov. 10.

Many mothers dream their daughters will grow up to be the person God created them to be, which is the focus of Troop 1943. The group’s teachings and activities center on developing the member’s faith, increasing their sense of patriotism and positively impacting society through community service, say its leaders.

Troop 1943 has been implemented in the Diocese of Baton Rouge as part of the of the American Heritage Girls, a national character development organization for girls ages five to 18 that embraces Christian values and encourages family involvement. Troop 1943 adheres to guidelines established by the American Heritage Girls National Catholic Committee, which acts as a liaison between the American Heritage Girls and the Catholic Church while providing spiritual development of its Catholic members according to the teachings of the church.

“What is there not to like about a group whose focus is God, family, country and community?” said Stephanie Aucoin, who serves as a unit leader of the Explorers, for girls ages 9-12, and Pioneers, for girls ages 12-14.

“Faith, service and fun” are three pillars for the organization, according to Danielle Laird, who helped establish the group in Baton Rouge.

Originally from Baton Rouge, Laird and her husband, C.J., moved to Houston, where her husband was a teacher. Her oldest daughter was one-year old at the time and she was already wondering what kind of organization would help her daughter have a well-rounded life that also had Christ as its center. She met a family who introduced her to American Heritage Girls, which “planted the seed in her head.”

After returning to Baton Rouge, C.J. Laird taught at Catholic High School and served as interim administrative principal of Redemptorist St. Gerard Elementary School in Baton Rouge before becoming principal at Sacred Heart School, also in Baton Rouge. The Lairds were sinking their roots deeper into Baton Rouge.

“My son Collin was involved in Cub Scouts at the time and the girls said, ‘I want to join the Scouts too,’” said Danielle Laird.

The seed planted in Laird about AHG germinated.

“I was looking for something for the kids, and I thought, ‘If I’m going to serve, I need to serve with my family (which AHG encourages),’ said Laird.

“The more I thought about it, the more excited I got because it’s Christ-centered,” said Danielle Laird.

The Lairds, who were active members of Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge, talked to the leadership at Our Lady of Mercy and the diocese. Informational and parent-interest meetings were held and leaders stepped forward who were equally excited about the core values of AHG.

Brooke Avery, troop coordinator, said, “It (AHG) gives examples of how to witness the faith and what it means to be a woman of strong moral faith.”

In addition to serving at the St. Agnes shelter, troop members celebrated National Day of Service by picking up trash during a hiking trip. Other upcoming projects include caroling and visiting with the residents at Williamsburg Senior Living Community and adopting families in need for Christmas.

As part of the faith elements, the troops studied the 10 qualities of a virtuous woman as written in the Book of Proverbs and prayed the rosary for three weeks to receive the Our Lady of Fatima 100th Anniversary patch, one of many Catholic patches members can earn.

For the parents, the biggest sign of how well AHG is serving their daughters is the changes they have noticed in them.

Stephanie Stumpf, vice coordinator of AHG, who assists with the planning of large group activities and leads the Tenderheart unit for girls ages 6-9, said of her daughter, Natalie, “I see her taking pride in her faith and she is more outspoken about her faith and putting it in action.”

In learning the AHG Creed, Natalie, 7, said the words she liked best are “honest,” “compassionate” and “faithful.”

“I don’t like to lie,” said Natalie, who added that “compassionate” to her means “knowing how someone else might feel about something.”

The troop members indicated that they are drawn to the spectrum of social, practical and faith lessons embraced by AHG.

As a 12-year-old seventh-grader in the Pioneer unit of AHG, Anna Aucoin said she has liked participating in a service project with her troop, picking up trash at a local hiking trail. “I like being in a Christian-based program, and I have just fulfilled the requirements to earn the Our Lady of Fatima 100th Anniversary patch. I hope to learn some more outdoor skills at our next meeting and camp out,” Aucoin said.

Audrey Aucoin said, “As a 10-year-old fifth-grader in the Explorer unit of AHG, I like attending meetings and learning how to participate in flag ceremonies. At the last meeting, I got to play a patriotic song on the piano and make a presentation about the flag for my troop. I like horses and want to earn the horsemanship badge one day.”

Even as troop members learn about their gifts, troop leaders said the most important lesson is to learn their strength, knowledge and skills come from Christ and to use them to serve him.

“In our world, it’s so easy to buy into our own personal power,” said Laird. “We want to draw the girls to Christ and have him working through them.”
FIRE SAFETY–Students in grades pre-K–third at St. Peter Chanel School in Paulina recently observed Fire Prevention Week with a visit by members of the St. James Fire Department. Students learned about fire prevention and what to do in case of a fire at their home or school. They were also able to see a fire truck and hear the sirens. Pictured from left, second-graders Reese Roussel, Kiptyn Luminas and Caitlyn Simon hold onto fire fighting equipment as they pose with firefighters. Photo provided by Paula Poché | St. Peter Chanel School

GAME DAY – Fourth-grade students in the accelerated resource program at Holy Ghost School in Hammond, studying inventions and inventors, had to create their own board games as part of the lesson. In their designs, students had to create their own directions on how to play the game, the game board and game pieces. Students rotated through each game so they could play all of their classmates’ games. Pictured, from bottom left, Annie Fritz, Pietro Moreira, Miley Smith and Cianna Newton try out a game called “Questiontopia.” Photo provided by Cindy Wagner | Holy Ghost School

ASCENSION AWARD–Students at Ascension Catholic High School in Donaldsonville celebrate being voted Best Private School in Ascension Parish in the Ascension Publication’s Official People’s Choice Award. Photo provided by John Beck | Ascension Catholic School

HONORING VETERANS–Seventh- and eighth-grade students at St. Joseph School in Pontchatoula hold a banner they made for the Hammond Veterans Booster Club Banner Project. The students were happily surprised to get their banner back with signatures from so many veterans. Photo provided by Melissa Thomas | St. Joseph School

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A Bad Moms Christmas
STX
Aggressive vulgarity is the incongruous hallmark of this holiday-themed sequel. As the trio of mothers (Mila Kunis, Kristen Bell and Kathryn Hahn) featured in the 2016 original deal with the wholly unrealistic problems caused when their own moms (Christine Baranski, Cheryl Hines and Susan Sarandon) show up for Christmas, with or without an invitation, the only thing more tiresome than their sex-obsessed wise-cracking is their self-important resolve to take the feast back and celebrate it in their own fashion. Since that approach includes ogling male strippers dressed as “sexy Santas,” for one of whom (Justin Hartley) Hahn’s character falls, to say they’ve lost touch with the reason for the season is an understatement. Ditto returning co-writers and directors Jon Lucas and Scott Moore. Blasphemy, cohabitation, drug use, strong sexual content including partial nudity and much obscene humor, several uses of profanity, pervasive rough and crude language.

Jigsaw
Lionsgate
With its franchise’s shock value long since played out, this eighth “Saw” outing, yet another exercise in butchery, accompanied by siren-wail screaming, quickly descends into self-parody. The five trapped victims here, as always in this series, face gross-out hacking in a series of claustrophobic enclosures. Adding to their torment, a marionette, voiced by the evil Jigsaw (Tobin Bell) on taped messages, tells them that there’s always a way out if they obey his commands. According to his own warped thinking, the killer is operating as an agent of morality, repaying the quintet for their past sins, which typically involved the death of another person. Having revived their red-eyed vigil from the dead who supposedly met his fate in 2006’s “Saw III,” directing duo Michael and Peter Spierig give him little to do in his comeback, other than evade the pursuit of the police detective (Callum Keith Rennie) and duo of coroners (Matt Passmore and Hannah Emily Anderson) tracking him. Pervasive gory violence, gruesome images, including dismembered limbs, frequent crude and crass language.

Thor: Ragnarok
Disney
A healthy dose of humor keeps this sweeping Marvel Comics adaptation of the second sequel to the 2011 original on the boil, although it still registers as overly long. The straight-shooting Norse god of thunder (Chris Hemsworth) and his ever-wily brother, Loki (Tom Hiddleston), will have to patch up their differences if they are to defeat the screeching,恃强凌弱 sister, the goddess of death, Hela (Cate Blanchett). She has been released from a long captivity by the demise of their father, Odin (Anthony Hopkins), and aims to dominate their home planet, Asgard. Along with Loki’s shifting loyalties, Thor must also contend with Hela’s destruction of his trademark hammer and with being taken prisoner by a bounty hunter (Tessa Thompson) who hands him over to the impresario (Jeff Goldblum) of a series of gladiatorial games. The mythological elements blended into director Taika Waititi’s superhero adventure, which also features Mark Ruffalo as Bruce Banner, aka the Hulk, are not for impressionable kids. But grown movie-goers will find relatively little to object to along the path of this spiffy intergalactic quest. Possibly acceptable for older teens. Constant stylized violence with little gore, brief partial nudity, a couple of mild oaths and crude terms, occasional crass language, at least one sexual reference, mature workplace.

The Snowman
Universal
Director Tomas Alfredson’s adaptation of Jo Nesbo’s best-selling crime novel occasionally fizzes in penny-dreadful sensationalism, then returns to plodding wearily across the frozen landscape of its unconvincing mystery story. Set primarily in Oslo, Norway, the film tracks the efforts of a gifted but alcoholism-plagued police detective (Michael Fassbender) to catch a serial killer who builds a snowman at each murder site. The officer’s search is complicated by the fact that his new partner (Rebecca Ferguson) seems to have a hidden agenda of her own and by his tangled relationships with his ex-girlfriend (Charlotte Gainsbourg), her son (Michael Yates) and her new live-in love interest (Jonas Karlsson). Needlessly shocking visuals punctuate the stilted proceedings while the killer’s motivation springs from the sordid personal lives of his victims as well as his traumatic childhood. Excessive gory violence and gruesome images, a suicide, strong sexual content, including aberrant behavior, an adulterous bedroom scene and brief upper female nudity, abortion, domestic abuse and cohabitation themes, a few uses of profanity and rough language, several crude terms.
Vietnamese children are shown experiencing Santa Claus for the first time in 1976. It was the first Christmas in the United States for these tiny members of seven different Vietnamese families who were resettled in the Baton Rouge area. File photo

Vietnamese children are shown experiencing Santa Claus for the first time in 1976. It was the first Christmas in the United States for these tiny members of seven different Vietnamese families who were resettled in the Baton Rouge area. File photo

GOSPEL v

(Mt 25:31). This will happen, sooner or later. Ask yourself, “Am I ready to meet Jesus? Am I performing good works for others (feeding, clothing, sheltering, listening, consoling, sacrificing, loving)? Do I truly believe what Jesus teaches? Do I honor Jesus, our king, in gratitude and humility by going to Mass, partaking in the Eucharist and praying (REALLY PRAYING), reading Scripture, offering fasting, living the faith? Am I prepared to see Him face to face? It will happen.

Wait & Watch

So as we prepare, we wait and watch. The Prophet Isaiah writes, “God does great deeds for us who wait.” Here it is again … patience. This world lacks the patience to wait. People are so aggravated to wait in line, wait for a call, wait for an answer, wait to grow up, wait to get to know others before asking them to change and wait on God. But we, in south Louisiana, will wait hours for a Mardi Gras parade to begin. We also prepare for that wait … food, drinks, tents, tables, chairs, music, things to keep the children busy, route to get in and out, all of this. For what? Beads, cups, coins and a ton of laughter! It’s fun. My family will drive back and forth to New Orleans for three days to “catch” the Uptown parades, but the moment the coffee order takes too long to fill, we get aggravated! It’s true!

Patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. The priest leads us in the prayer, “We wait in joyful hope for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ.” And we respond, “For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.” This is precisely what we are asked to wait for … the kingdom to come through the power of THE King, Jesus!

As we patiently wait, we WATCH for the glory of God to pass before our eyes. We see this in those we meet, greet and love. We watch the kind exchange between strangers in the grocery store. We watch a soldier come home from a tour of duty to the tearful embrace of his family. We watch our loved ones suffer with illness, only to pray even more, asking God to alleviate their suffering. We watch a family move into a new home built by the hands of volunteers. We watch the volunteer smile with a nursing home resident who rarely has visitors. We watch the sun rise and set over the land we call home, knowing this is God’s hand.

We also prepare during this time to “watch” a young couple seek a place to rest, find shelter, in order to share the experience of the birth of the King of the universe. A birth like no other: quiet, simple, impoverished, yet full of expectation, glorious angels and a star illuminating the black sky that ultimately “will lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of his mercy.” Are you ready to meet him? Are you ready to meet your king? He has come, is present and will come again in glory. Let us joyfully prepare the way of the king. Wait. Watch. Be ready. Amen. Happy Advent!

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

ACROSS

1 Easter _____
5 Sister of Judah
10 Joseph had a multi-colored one
14 Tropical tree
15 Elevens place
16 It leads to a deal
17 Soccer moms’ conveyances
18 Chapter and _____
19 3 PM prayer
20 Vane reading
21 Mrs. McKinley
22 He could speak well (Ex 4:14)
23 Online sales
26 The New Jerusalem in Revelation was made of this
28 OT prophetic book
29 Stays
33 Saint who saved France
35 Bed problems
37 “Thou shalt _____”
38 James was mending these when Jesus called him (Mt 1:19)
39 Draft choice
40 Field yield
41 __ho
42 Past tense of “will”
44 First murderer
45 Expulsion
47 Catholic cartoonist Keane of “Family Circus”
48 State in which the Diocese of Salt Lake City is found
49 They go with the flow
52 “Lord, _____ us to pray” (Lk 1:1)
55 Jonah was thrown into this
57 Scratch (out)
59 Cut ruthlessly
60 Vigorous attack
62 “Rubaiya” name
65 Wise _____
64 Island in the Bay of Naples
65 Rentals (abbott)
66 End for tip or pun
67 Ford flog
68 “Let it stand”
69 Formerly, formerly

DOWN

1 Jazz musician and Catholic convert
2 Cairo’s edict
3 Dogma
4 “For however many are the promises of God, their _____ in him” (2 Cor 1:20)
5 _____ Advocate
6 Tea or coffee, sometimes
7 Mrs. Nick Charles
8 Riker and Capone
9 Bray start
10 St. John the Baptist is the patron saint of this country
11 _____ about
12 _____ time…”
13 From attendee
14 Donation to the poor
15 Cries of discovery
16 Electrically charged atom
17 One of the seven deadly sins
18 Multi-volume reference bk.
19 Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews (abbk)
20 Angelus time
21 NASCAR sponsor
23 Biblical king who destroyed the worshipers of Baal
24 Frequent Mayweather jail occupant
25 Catholic author, Evelyn _____
26 Former measure of length
27 Sgt., for one
28 Aaron made a golden one
29 Accompanying
30 “These _____”
31 Agency headed by uncle of Cardinal Duhes
32 Exhaust
34 Country with the largest Catholic population
35 Entice one to sin
36 Glide along smoothly
37 “Give us _____ day our daily bread”
38 The Wise Men came from here
39 Peak
40 Drinks slowly
41 Raison d’ _____
42 At one time it was “at one time”
43 Alphabet string
44 Boy
45 Pan-Amer, Union

Solution on page 18

November 24, 2017

The Catholic Commentator

CCF v

From page 2

was needed to accommodate the growing services. Construction began in 1999, and the building was dedicated on March 3, 2000.

Disaster relief is also a component of the services offered. The agency responded to Hurricanes Katrina, Isaac and Gustav and the 2016 flood, and has become a leading provider for survivor families in South Louisiana. Catholic Community Services was able to develop a case management policy that has become a model for organizations across the country. Caseworkers went out into the field and were stationed in temporary trailer sites to help evacuees develop and implement their long-term recovery plans.

On March 26, 2007, it was announced that Catholic Community Services would change its name to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. By changing the name to Catholic Charities, the agency was able to join nearly 200 agencies nationwide which enables recognition among the Catholic community and local and national non-profit and faith-based agencies. On any given day, Catholic Charities serves the needs of individuals and families, working with church and community for justice, peace and compassion in society.

Jones is the associate archivist for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

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November has been a month of giving thanks. We honored those who have served us in the various branches of the United States military on Veterans’ Day. Now, as The Catholic Commentator hits the newsstands on Thanksgiving weekend, we give thanks for our personal and national blessings.

If you attended the LSU-Arkansas football game (or watched it on TV), you saw a very beautiful half-time show expressing thanks musically and visually to those who have served in the military on Veterans’ Day. Now, as The Catholic Commentator is to provide news, information and commentary to the people of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Catholics and their neighbors alike. In doing so, The Catholic Commentator strives to further the wider mission of the Church: to evangelize, to communicate, to educate and to give the Catholic viewpoint on important issues of the present day.

La Misa de Accion de Gracias

Another Perspective
Father John Carville

November 24, 2017

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be typed and limited to 350 words and should contain the name and address of the writer, though the address will not be printed. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316, or to tcc@diobr.org.

Mission Statement

The mission of The Catholic Commentator is to provide news, information and commentary to the people of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Catholics and their neighbors alike. In doing so, The Catholic Commentator strives to further the wider mission of the Church: to evangelize, to communicate, to educate and to give the Catholic viewpoint on important issues of the present day.

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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

Nov. 28
Dec. 3
Br. James Burns SC
Rev. Michael J. Moroney
Dcn. Joseph M. Scimeca
Dcn. J. Peter Walsh
Rev. Richard A. (Tracy) Nelson III
Sr. Huong Nguyen ICM
Rev. Nicholas J. (Jack) Nutter III
Dec. 2
Dec. 7
Rev. Tan Viet Nguyen ICM
Dcn. John W. Veron
Rev. Amrit Raj IMS
Dcn. Michael A. Agnello
Sr. Mary Noel OP
Dcn. Franklin B. Bains
Br. Ramon Daunis SC
Rev. Robin Reynolds
Dcn. Thomas D. Benoit
Sr. Norma Nunez SOM
Dcn. Anthony J. Russo
Dcn. Mark T. Berard
Dr. Alan Drain SC
Rev. Amal Raj Savarimuthu IMS
Dcn. Willie M. Benthelot Sr.
Sr. Ruth Nwokike SoM
Special collection set to benefit St. Joseph Abbey

St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College in Covington, have had a profound influence on the life of the Catholic Church in the Deep South. For over 125 years the monks of the abbey have been educating and forming young men as candidates for the priesthood. This has been their primary mission and their lasting legacy. Most of our own diocesan priests studied there.

The monks began this ministry in 1889 at the invitation of the newly installed Archbishop of New Orleans, Francis Janssens. Within his first year as archbishop, he recognized that, for the archdiocese to flourish, it needed to develop a native clergy. He reached out to St. Meinrad Abbey in Indiana, which sent four monks to establish and staff the abbey and seminary.

Following the Benedictine tradition of balancing prayer and work, the monks instilled in the young seminarians intentional personal formation, a prayerful spirit, a love for the liturgy, a thirst for knowledge and a respect for manual labor. As a result, the influence of the monks has been felt throughout the Dioceses of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama through the dedicated service of the 900 priests that have since been ordained after seminary formation.

Today St. Joseph Seminary College is the largest Catholic seminary college in the United States with over 140 students from 22 dioceses in seven states. Given the urgent need for priests, the continued contribution of the monks of the abbey is invaluable.

Now, however, it is the monks who are in need. In March 2016, a disastrous flood overwhelmed the abbey and seminary. The library lost many of its treasured volumes. The ground floor of the monastery sustained significant damage. The gym floor was ruined. And all the air-conditioning and plumbing systems beneath the abbey church were destroyed. In all, 30 buildings on the campus received at least two feet of water. The damage is estimated in the millions of dollars. In order for the monks of the abbey to continue their mission of forming seminarians for the priesthood, they will need the generous help of the people of the Dioceses of Louisiana.

This year, after consultation with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, I have authorized a special collection to benefit the abbey and seminary. This collection will be taken up in all churches of the diocese on the weekend of December 9th and 10th. (This special collection will take the place this year of the annual collection for retired religious, which our diocese has always been extremely generous in its response.) Please visit the following link for additional information about this important endeavor: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zaomVxYSVXHfgboW7so9XY3TPPURuPo0/view

Special envelopes are available for this collection. I strongly urge the people of the diocese to join me in expressing our gratitude to the monks of the abbey by generously helping them to continue their mission of preparing candidates for the priesthood to serve our diocese and the church of the south.

Paralysis, exasperation, and helplessness as prayer

Several years ago I received an email that literally stopped my breath. A man who had been for many years an intellectual and faith mentor to me, a man whom I thoroughly trusted, and a man with whom I had developed a life-giving friendship, had killed both his wife and himself in a murder-suicide. The news left me gasping for air, paralyzed in terms of how to understand and accept this as well as how to pray in the face of this.

I had neither words of explanation nor words for prayer. My heart and my head were like two water pumps working a dry well, useless and frustrated. Whatever consolation I had was drawn from an assurance from Rainer Marie Rilke, once gave this advice to a person who had been so paralyzed that he did not know what he could possibly do with the pain he was experiencing. Rilke's advice: "Give that heaviness back to the earth itself, the earth is heavy, mountains are heavy, the seas are heavy." In effect: Let your groaning be your prayer!

When we don't know how to pray, the Spirit in groans too deep for words prays through us. So every time we are face-to-face with a tragic situation that leaves us stuttering, mute, and so without heart that all we can do is say, I can't explain this! I can't accept this! I can't deal with this! This is senseless! I am paralyzed in my emotions! I am paralyzed in my faith! I no longer have the heart to pray! It can be consoling to know that this paralyzing exasperation is our prayer -- and perhaps the deepest and most sincere prayer we have ever offered.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website ronrolheiser.com or facebook.com/ronrolheiser.
**St. Aloysius Mission** – Dr. David Whidden will present a mission, “Preparing for Advent,” Tuesday, Nov. 28 – Thursday, Nov. 30, 6:30 p.m., at St. Aloysius Church, 2025 Stuart Ave., Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-234-6657.

**Humane Vitae Lecture** – Dr. Marguerite Duane will present a lecture on the 50th anniversary of the papal encyclical Humanae Vitae on Thursday, Nov. 30, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., at the Biological Learning and Research Building of Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, 5222 Brittany Dr., Baton Rouge, with a reception following. For more information, call Dr. John Meinert at 225-768-1708 or email john.meinert@franu.edu.

**Praise and Adoration** – Musician and speaker Cooper Ray will present a night of praise and adoration for sixth-graders and above Sunday, Dec. 3, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., at the St. Theresa Middle School Gym, 212 East New River St., Gonzales. The event is sponsored by God’s Warriors of St. Theresa Middle School. For registration and information, visit sjp-sta.org.

**Magnificat** – Patti Gallagher Mansfield of the Office of Charismatic Renewal of the Archdiocese of New Orleans will speak at the meeting of Magnificat Friday, Dec. 1, 9 a.m., at the Oak Lodge Reception Center, 2854 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd., Baton Rouge. Reservations are $22 each and will be sold through Tuesday, Nov. 28 by sending a check made out to BR Magnificat with each attendee’s name to Kathy Simonpierre, 9650 Victory Lane, Denham Springs, LA 70726. No tickets will be sold at the door.

**Healing Service** – Sister Briege McKenna, who has a ministry of prayer and healing, will hold an evening of healing on Saturday, Dec. 9, 7 – 9 p.m., at St. Benilde Church, 9011 Division St., Metairie. The service will consist of prayer, praise, a talk and prayer for healing by Sister Briege, a eucharistic procession and benediction. The event is sponsored by Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans (CCRNO) and is free and open to the public. An offering will be taken. Doors open at 6 p.m. For more information, call 504-828-1368 or email info@ccrno.org.

**Married Couples Retreat** – Willwoods Newly Married Couples Retreat for couples celebrating 10 years of marriage or under will be held Saturday, Dec. 9 – Sunday, Dec. 10 at the Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, 505 St. Mary St., Metairie. Suggested donation is $275. For more information, call Jason Angelette at 504-890-3716 or visit faithandmarriage.org.

**Remember Our Children** – St. Alphonsus Church, 14040 Greenwell Springs Road, Greenwell Springs, will host a candlelight service for people who have lost a child or support them to celebrate the life of the child Sunday, Dec. 10, 6 p.m. For more information, call 225-296-0404.

**Christ Absolution** – 40 Days of Penance and Reconciliation will be observed from Wednesday, Dec. 6 to Tuesday, Dec. 19. Services will be offered during the normal weekend Mass times. Call 225-261-4650.

**Christmas Concert** – St. Mark Church, 40201 Hwy. 621 Gonzales, will host its Christmas concert, featuring NaNasha and the Easton Hollis Group Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 – 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 225-647-8461.

**Beneath the Weight** – Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula, will present “Beneath the Weight,” a program to end emotional eating and achieve a lifestyle that will result in permanent weight loss, Saturday, Dec. 9, 8:45 a.m. – 3 p.m. For more information, call 225-294-9039 or visit catholiceretreatcenter.org.

**Marian Talk** – Mike Fulmer will present a talk, “Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant” Tuesday, Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m., at the St. Francis Room of St. Alphonsus Church, 14040 Greenwell Springs Road, Greenwell Springs. For more information, call the church’s formation office at 225-251-4044.

**Catechist Certification** – Registration is being accepted for the spring session of catechist certification for the ministry and theology program for the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Class topics include Christian morality, creed, conversion and spirituality, Luke/Acts, catechism and catechesis and Catholic identity in the Catholic school. For dates and times to register, visit evangcbtr.org.

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**LEGAL NOTICES**

Anyone with knowledge of the whereabouts of Robin Michelle Nisodon is asked to contact the Diocesan Tribunal at 225-336-8755.

**HELP WANTED**

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

Need part time, well-rounded individual to help in woodshop off Segen Lane in Baton Rouge. Email resume/work experience to info@theoldemill.com or call 225-294-9039.

Dental Lab needs part time runner, shipping and receiving. Must have reliable transportation & good driving record. Hours are flexible. Call 225-201-0880.

St. Joseph’s Academy seeks a part-time math teacher. Experience using technology in the classroom beneficial to employment. Submit resume and references with current transcript to Dean of Academics, Dr. Jason Hanks at hanksj@sjabr.org.
She said the Lord picked St. John Paul II to be a leader in the church to play a critical role in history, including being a key figure in ushering in major changes in the church through Vatican II and the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. She said the Blessed Mother guided his steps.

Melancon saw the Pope in 1987 when he visited New Orleans. “Everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit,” said Melancon. “The rain came down and nobody got sick.”

A past member of the Rosary Makers group at Our Lady of Mercy, Melancon, who still makes the devotional tools, was drawn to St. John II because of his love for the devotion.

Praying the rosary helped Melancon through many difficult times, especially when her cancer returned.

“I said, ‘This disease is not going to kill me, it’s going to bring my family back to Jesus and the rosary.’ And it did,” said Melancon. She said she had the rosaries she prayed with blessed.

When asked if she had prayed many times with those beads, Melancon said, “You talk about…”

Al St. Pierre said his visit with the relic reminded him of the time he and his sister, now deceased, got a close up view of the pope when he rode in the popemobile around a New Orleans cemetery during his visit to the city. St. Pierre said the pope was smiling and waving to the gathered crowd.

“My sister touched the popemobile. She was ecstatic,” said St. Pierre, who said the trip has special meaning to him because of his sister.

Colleen Peak had seen the pope twice, at St. Peter’s Square in Rome and in New Orleans.

During the trip to Rome, Peak’s nephew and his wife had their marriage blessed by the pope in St. Peter’s Square.

“You could see it in their faces, ‘This is like being in heaven, he’s blessing our marriage,’” said Peak.

She added, “We have rosaries blessed by him. ‘We’re a JP II family.’

Noel and Pat Ricord said Saint John Paul II has special meaning to them because he had just become pope when the learned they would be able to adopt a baby. They found out that they had a son, said Pat Ricord.

Her face glowed as she said they have two grandchildren with one on the way.

The Ricords had just returned from a trip to the saint’s homeland in Poland. They visited the convent of St. Faustina, whom St. John Paul canonized, St. Mary’s Basilica and the St. John Paul Sanctuary, which has the display of the blood-stained cassock worn by the pope when an assassination attempt was made on his life.

“What got me is that all bloodstains eventually turn brown, but it was still kind of redish,” said Noel Ricord.

The Ricords said they were surprised to learn when they returned from Poland that the relics of St. John Paul were coming to the diocese.

“We got to see him twice in the last couple of weeks,” smiled Noel Ricord.

“Maybe we’ll have some prayer intentions answered,” added Pat Ricord.

Patsy and Danny Williams and daughter Ali Richard were seeking to have a prayer intention answered through the relic visit.

Danny Williams said of his visit, “I was speechless. I was numb about the experience (learning about his cancer), but I could feel his (Saint John Paul’s) presence. He was a great pope and is a great saint.”

Richard said, “My heart started beating fast. I knew I was in the presence of holiness.”

Kathleen Schexnayder also knows what it means to have quickened pulse at seeing the pope, because she saw him in the blush of youth at International in World Youth Day in 1993 in Denver.

“I remember I got separated from my youth group (from Memphis) during Mass. I remember he (Saint John Paul) said something about finding the lost, and not long after that I found the youth group,” said Schexnayder.

She also remembers the pope asking the attendees to hold up their rosaries for a blessing.

“I still have that rosary,” Schexnayder said.

She added, “I was already a believer, but it put my faith on fire.”

Shortly after WYD, the church approved girls serving as altar servers.

“I signed up immediately, and I served the church (in that capacity) for three years until I went to college,” Schexnayder said.

She said her heart broke when St. John Paul died.

“I was six months old when he became pope, so he was all I knew,” said Schexnayder. “When he died, I felt disconnected for a while.”

The visit, however, brought back good memories for Schexnayder.

“I’m excited because I touched my mother’s (St. John Paul) medal to it (the relic). She passed away in September so this is really special,” said a glowing Schexnayder.
Danielle Metz of New Orleans was 26-years-old, with a 7-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter, when she was sentenced to three life sentences plus an additional 20 years for conspiracy to distribute cocaine. It was her first offense. “I was a first-time, nonviolent offender and I hadn’t had a traffic ticket or parking ticket or anything and that’s what I was sentenced to,” she said.

Metz had served 23 years and eight months of her sentence when she was granted clemency by President Barack Obama and released Sept. 15, 2016. But, with more than two decades spent behind bars, Metz had a lot of catching up to do in order to navigate through society. She said a friend, who once spent time in prison, helped her apply for college.

“Because of my sentence, when you’re in prison and you’re serving that kind of time, you can’t take the programs that the people with less time can take,” said Metz. “So, I really just had to educate myself.”

One year after being released from federal prison in California, Metz, 50, returned to New Orleans to care for her mother, who died in May. She now works two jobs and attends Southern University at New Orleans where she is studying to become a social worker. And, she wants to tell her story.

“I came back and I just think that maybe when somebody hear(s) my voice and hear(s) my story, that I can make a change and let them know what they are up against as far as the judicial system and bad company,” Metz said.

In Louisiana, data on recidivism shows that 49 percent of ex-offenders end up back behind bars within five years. But, that number drops by half, if returning citizens can stay employed for three years.

Ronnie Moore, re-entry coordinator for St. Vincent de Paul for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, said the first 72 hours after someone is released is crucial to adjusting to newfound freedom. “With volunteers and partners and so forth, somebody has to meet them at the gate within the first 72 hours (of release).”

“He make sure they got a place to stay. (We) make sure they are navigated to resources, like where are they going to get their ID’s, very basic stuff,” he said. “We give them a temporary job as well.”

In 2016, the Louisiana Legislature adopted a “Ban the Box” bill, which removed questions about criminal history from state employment applications in an effort to help ex-offenders find jobs. Louisiana is one of 24 states in the U.S. that has adopted the policy. But the measure only covers public employers, not private businesses.

Johnny Jones, 39, of Ridgeland, Mississippi was released Nov. 1 from Elayn Hunt Correctional Center and thinks “the box” is keeping him from finding a job. Jones, who has a long criminal history, said he realized it was time to change his ways after a heart condition landed him in the medical dorm at the Hunt facility. There, he saw prisoners dealing with health issues, mental illness and dying on regular basis.

Jones, ready to start anew, had spoken with Fjeldsjo before his release and temporarily stayed at the St. Vincent de Paul Homeless Shelter until he was reunited with his girlfriend in Ridgeland. Now, Jones attends church, works on his computer skills and applies for jobs online in Mississippi, which does not have a ban the box policy. “In life, we make some decisions that’s not good for us, or whatever, but it may be necessary for us to make those bad decisions to become the person that we need to be,” he said. “A lot of people look at the bad and never understand the type of person you are.”

Natalie LaBorde, deputy assistant secretary for Louisiana’s Department of Corrections, said part of the state’s new criminal justice reform package calls for reinvestment into local prisons, which house more than half of the state’s prison population, to offer more educational and job skills training.

“I think people need to give it time to take shape,” she said. “I’ve seen on a smaller scale where these similar reforms work in the past. We’re not reinventing the wheel.”
Advent spiritual events in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

November 27
Advent Penance Service
St. Stephen the Martyr Church
22494 LA Hwy. 22, Maurepas
6 p.m.

November 28, 29, 30
Advent: Unwrapping the Gift of Christmas
St. Aloysius Church
2025 Stuart Ave., Baton Rouge
6 – 8 p.m.

November 28, 29, 30
Advent: Unwrapping the Gift of Christmas
St. Aloysius Church
2025 Stuart Ave., Baton Rouge
6 – 8 p.m.

Light supper in parish hall, followed by presentation by Dr. David Whidden. Register online before Monday, Nov. 27
Rebecca East 225-343-6657 ext. 19

November 30
Advent Penance Service
Holy Ghost Church
Saxon Youth House
600 N. Oak St., Hammond
6 p.m.
Lea Smith 985-345-3360 ext. 21

December 4 & 5
Advent Revival:
God’s Unconditional Love!
St. Augustine Church
174 Hwy 1003, Belle Rose
6:15 p.m. Praise and workshop featuring St. Augustine Gospel Choir
6:30 p.m. Revival message
Rev. Ayo Emmanuel Efodigbue MSP, former pastor of St. Catherine of Sienna, Donaldsonville, will be the speaker for the revival. Reconciliation will be available both nights at 6 p.m.

December 4 – 6
Authentic Faith, Authentic Life
Holy Rosary Church
44450 Hwy 429, St. Amant
6 – 7 p.m.
Advent Mission with Stephanie Cloutre Davis
Childcare will be offered for children
3 years and up. A kid friendly dinner will be served each night. Parents can register for childcare on the Holy Rosary website at holyrcc.org.
Jenny Movaks 225-229-9850

December 4, 11, 18
Advent Vespers
Holy Ghost Church
600 N. Oak St., Hammond
5:30 p.m.: Chaplet of Divine Mercy
6 p.m.: Vespers and brief talk on the three Archangels: St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael
6:30 p.m.: Soup supper
Led by the Marian Servants of the Visititation
Trisha Labbe 985-345-3360 ext. 28

December 5
Advent Penance Service
St. Anne/Assumption/Immaculate Conception Chapel
St. Anne Church
417 St. Joseph Street, Napoleonville
7 p.m.
Cheryl Arboneaux 985-369-6656

December 5
Advent Penance Service
St. Joseph Church
255 N. 8th St., Ponchatoula
6 p.m.
Terri Albert 985-386-3749

December 6, 13, 20
Advent Season Reconciliation
Immaculate Conception Church
865 Hatchell Lane, Denham Springs
6 – 7:30 p.m.
225-665-5359

December 7
The Light is On For You
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
11485 Ferdinand St., St. Francisville
5:30 – 7 p.m.

December 7
Advent Confessions
St. John the Evangelist Church
57805 Main St., Plaquemine
6 – 7 p.m.

SEE EVENTS PAGE 8B

Keeping Your Loved One Home for the Holidays ...

There’s no better way to spend the holidays than surrounded by family and friends! STAT Home Health and St. Joseph Hospice work with physicians to help keep you or your loved ones at home.

STAT Home Health and St. Joseph Hospice are part of The Carpenter Health Network ... an agile, seamless solution to illness and injury, no matter the prognosis or expected outcome. From the stability of senior care, home health and rehabilitation to curative, life-extending treatment and the compassion of palliative and hospice care, The Carpenter Health Network is a continuum of care for the families they serve.

For terminally ill patients with symptoms not well managed at home, The Carpenter House, St. Joseph Hospice’s inpatient facility, serves as a place of peace, offering the confidence of a hospital ... with the comforts of home. Offering private rooms with comfortable dining and relaxing areas for family members, the Carpenter House can become an extension of your home during the holidays.

If you or a family member is in need of assistance this holiday season ... call for information!

STAT Home Health
St. Joseph Hospice: 225-769-4810 ✉ STAT Home Health: 225-769-4764
Area charities need assistance from businesses, individuals

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

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

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

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

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

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

To Volunteer
To volunteer call 225-336-8700 or go to the website at catholiccharitiesbr.org.

#iGiveCatholic
Catholics in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are being offered the opportunity to support their school, church parish or favorite charitable organization. The Diocese of Baton Rouge, along with others, is participating in a Catholic giving day on Nov. 28 titled #iGiveCatholic.

For 24 hours beginning at midnight on Nov. 28, Catholics will be able to visit the iGiveCatholic.org home page and click on a specific ministry listed to make a donation.

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

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

Donations can be sent to Good Fellows-Good Samaritans, Rotary Club of Baton Rouge, 9625 Fenway Ave, Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul**

Annual Bishop’s Gift Distribution
Children who won’t have the opportunity to sit on Santa’s lap and receive a visit from Santa on Christmas Eve will be able to visit with Bishop Robert W. Muench Saturday, Dec. 23 and receive a gift from him. Many of these children live at the Bishop Ott Homeless Shelter or eat at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room and depend on St. Vincent de Paul for their well-being.

New toys can be dropped off at 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place, Baton Rouge.

St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal
Financial support given to St. Vincent de Paul allows the agency to provide food, shelter and gifts and books to needy children in East Baton Rouge Parish. All donations go directly to the children, who are determined by their school counselors as being truly in need.

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St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal
Financial support given to St. Vincent de Paul allows the agency to provide food, shelter and gifts and books to needy children in East Baton Rouge Parish. All donations go directly to the children, who are determined by their school counselors as being truly in need.

Donations can be sent to Good Fellows-Good Samaritans, Rotary Club of Baton Rouge, 9625 Fenway Ave, Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.

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

To Volunteer
To volunteer call 225-336-8700 or go to the website at catholiccharitiesbr.org.

#iGiveCatholic
Catholics in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are being offered the opportunity to support their school, church parish or favorite charitable organization. The Diocese of Baton Rouge, along with others, is participating in a Catholic giving day on Nov. 28 titled #iGiveCatholic.

For 24 hours beginning at midnight on Nov. 28, Catholics will be able to visit the iGiveCatholic.org home page and click on a specific ministry listed to make a donation.

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

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

Donations can be sent to Good Fellows-Good Samaritans, Rotary Club of Baton Rouge, 9625 Fenway Ave, Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.

### Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Annual Bishop’s Gift Distribution
Children who won’t have the opportunity to sit on Santa’s lap and receive a visit from Santa on Christmas Eve will be able to visit with Bishop Robert W. Muench Saturday, Dec. 23 and receive a gift from him. Many of these children live at the Bishop Ott Homeless Shelter or eat at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room and depend on St. Vincent de Paul for their well-being.

New toys can be dropped off at 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place, Baton Rouge.

St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal
Financial support given to St. Vincent de Paul allows the agency to provide food, shelter and gifts and books to needy children in East Baton Rouge Parish. All donations go directly to the children, who are determined by their school counselors as being truly in need.

Donations can be sent to Good Fellows-Good Samaritans, Rotary Club of Baton Rouge, 9625 Fenway Ave, Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.
## Diocese of Baton Rouge Seminary Scholarship Funds

### What is a Seminary Scholarship fund?
A seminary scholarship fund is an invested sum of money, the interest of which is used in perpetuity to help fund the education of men studying for the priesthood.

### How does someone establish a fund?
It is simple. A fund may be established and named for anyone you choose – friend, family, bishop, priest, religious, etc. Anyone can name or establish a fund.

### Who do I contact to establish or contribute to a fund?
To create a fund or to make a contribution to an existing fund, please send it to the Vocations and Seminarians Department, P. O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028.

For information call 225-336-8778.

This is only a partial list of all Seminary Scholarship Funds.

Visit our website at www.diobr.org/vocations for a complete list of Seminary Scholarship Funds.

### Contributions from July through October 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archbishop Antoine Blanc</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memory of: Leo Marshall Honore</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph &quot;Boy&quot; Ballard</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Gail Rummfola</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Firmin</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Joseph/Linda Daigle</td>
<td>$10,071.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Joe/Lucie Hanewinkel</td>
<td>$25.00, $5,805.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memory of: Beth Anne Rodrigue</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon Francis Waguespack Jr.</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memory of: Donald Launey</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Joe/Lucie Hanewinkel</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
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### Additional Scholarship Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deceased Members of Ladies Altar Society St. Gabriel</td>
<td>$2,365.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Ladies Altar Society of St. Gabriel Church</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Wayne/Anne W. Rodrigue</td>
<td>$5,805.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Maynard &quot;Tippy&quot; Hurst</td>
<td>$563.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: James/Mary Alice Robert</td>
<td>$318.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: James/Mary Alice Robert</td>
<td>$2,365.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memory of: Cassandra Wall</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Memory of: Marge Smith</td>
<td>$630.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Patrick Miller</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: KC Archishop Antoine Blanc Assembly #2047</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: KC Archishop Antoine Blanc Assembly #2047</td>
<td>$1,675.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Mary Catherine Muench</td>
<td>$4,300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>By: Mary Anna Willis</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Deceased Members of KC Council #4030</td>
<td>$318.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Deceased Members of Pierre Part KC Council #5352</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Deceased Members of KC Council #4030</td>
<td>$15,060.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Consider a gift that will last forever honoring or memorializing your loved one: Make a contribution to the seminary scholarship fund of your choice.
**December 2**

**Breakfast with Santa**
Holy Family Parish Hall
368 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
9 – 10:30 a.m.
Accepting donations for the WBR Food Pantry. Bring camera to take pictures with Santa. Treat bags, donuts, coffee and milk while supplies last. Jennifer LeJeune 225-336-4463 or jlejeunehfc@gmail.com

**Breakfast with Santa**
Catholic Daughters of St. George
St. George Cafeteria
845 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
$5 Dine-in or carry out; includes pancakes, sausage and juice or milk. Bringing a camera and refreshments. Proceeds benefit Sacred Heart Youth Group. Kaia Dykes 225-387-6671

**December 3**

**St. Michael High School Band Christmas Concert**
St. Michael High School
Baton Rouge Magnet High School Band Christmas Concert
855 Hearthstone Drive, Baton Rouge
2 – 4 p.m.
Christmas tunes from the concert band, jazz band and percussion.
Kevin Andry 225-753-9782

**Christmas Crafts with Kringle**
St. Michael High School
School Cafeteria
17521 Monitor Ave, Baton Rouge
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Holiday shopping and more. Also Papa Noel, holiday crafts, refreshments, picture with Santa, treats for children. Additional treats include pistolettes, seafood gumbo, fried fish, jambalaya, and Christmas cards. Tour of Father Jason’s Christmas Village, craft booths, free activities for children, visit with Santa, hayride and a train ride. Classic Car and Truck Show.

**December 5**

**Latin Prayer and Carol Service**
Catholic High School
First Baptist Church
529 Convention St., Baton Rouge
5 – 6 p.m.
Catholic High School and St. Joseph’s Academy Symphonic Band will combine with the CHS/SJA Advanced Choir for their Christmas Concert.
Kaia Lo 225-383-0397

**Baton Rouge Magnet High School Concert**
St. Joseph Cathedral
Baton Rouge Magnet High School Concert
412 North Street, Baton Rouge
7 p.m.
School office 225-383-0520

**December 6**

**Advent at Aloysius**
St. Aloysius Church, 2025 Stuart Ave., Baton Rouge
5:30 – 8 p.m.
Advent wreaths $10

**Give Something Lasting For Christmas**

“A In The Land O’ Sugar”
A book about FRENCH Louisiana circa 1896-1908
By Mary Louise Johnson
Call (225) 927-0654
Readers share their favorite holiday recipes

**Chicken Broccoli Casserole**

**Eleanor Mitchel**
St. Thomas More Church, Baton Rouge

1 1/2 c. cooked rice
1 medium onion, chopped
1 bell pepper, chopped
8 oz. jar cheese whiz
1/2 stick of margarine
1 box frozen broccoli, chopped
1/2 chicken, boiled and deboned
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1/2 c. cooked rice

Tony’s seasoning to taste


Sauté seasoning in margarine. Add frozen broccoli, sauté until defrosted.

Add soup, cheese whiz, chicken and cooked rice. Sauté and season to taste.

Pour into buttered casserole dish and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

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**French Onion Soup**

**Wendy Oubre**
St. Joseph’s Church, Paulina

3 medium to large onions, slice into rings then cut in half
1/2 block of butter or margarine
2 cans of Campbell’s Beef Consommé soup
2 cans Campbell’s Beef Broth soup
1 can of mushrooms, chopped, optional

Shredded mozzarella cheese
Croutons

In medium stock pot and on medium heat, melt butter or margarine and add onions. Sauté onions for 5 minutes. Add soups and mushrooms and bring to boil. Cook mixture on medium to high heat until onions are very tender approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. Season to taste.

Serve hot and garnish with shredded mozzarella cheese and croutons.

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**Lucky if you get a piece**

**Dessert**

**Wendy Oubre**
St. Joseph’s Church, Paulina

4 sticks butter or margarine
4 c. plain flour
2 c. pecans, chopped
2 c. Cool Whip
1 bag powdered sugar

Strawberries or your favorite fruit

Packed strawberry or other fruit flavor pie glaze

Mix together flour, margarine and pecans. Press into a long casserole dish or cake pan. Bake at 350 degrees until browned about 10-15 minutes. Cool.

Mix together Cool Whip and powdered sugar together. Spread on the baked crust. Then mix together glaze and cut up fruit and spread on top.

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**Dave’s Hogshead Cheese**

**Dave Kimball**
Our Lady of Mercy Church, Baton Rouge

10 lbs. fresh pork picnic or Boston butt
2 lrg. white onions
4 bunches green onions
1 bunch fresh flat parsley
1 Tbsp. salt
1 Tbsp. black pepper
1 Tbsp. Tony’s Seasoning
2 Tbsp. cayenne pepper
2 Tbsp. crushed red pepper

Cut up meat into 1 lb. pieces.

Put in 12 quart or bigger pot with enough water to cover meat.

Cut up onions and bottoms green onions and add to pot. Add salt, black pepper and Tony’s and stir. Bring to boil, reduce to simmer and cook for 1 hour.

Remove meat and stock from pot. Return 2 quarts stock to pot.

Let meat cool. Grind the meat up. Do NOT use food processor as it gets too mushy.

Chop or grind green onion tops and parsley and add to stock.

Cook for 10 minutes. Add cayenne and crushed red pepper.

Add meat and mix until slushy. Do not add too much stock.

Taste for salt and add if necessary.

Makes 10-12 pounds.

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**CHARITIES**

From page 4B

**To Volunteer**
To volunteer call 225-383-7837 or go online at svdpbr.org.

**Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank**

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

**Financial Contributions**
A $1 donation to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank provides seven meals to a family or individual in need. Donations can be made any time of year through the website brfoodbank.org or by sending a donation to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, P.O. Box 45930, Baton Rouge, LA 70895.

**To Volunteer**
Drop by the warehouse to volunteer at 10600 South Choctaw, Baton Rouge or call (225) 359-9940.

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

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Bless her Christmas and yours, too!

Sponsor a family today. It's easy.

Visit CatholicCharitiesBR.org or call 225-336-8700.
December 7
Christmas Symphony Concert
St. Jean Vianney School Orchestra
St. Jean Vianney School Gym
16266 S. Harrell’s Ferry Rd.
Baton Rouge
6:30 – 8 p.m.
St. Jean Vianney School is the only school in the Baton Rouge diocese that has a full orchestra. Our student band includes woodwinds, brass and strings.
Eliska Dumas 225-324-0745

December 8
A Candlelight Christmas
Catholic High School
LSU Union Theatre
A Christmas Play – PRS grades K – 5
5:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
St. George School Christmas Pageant
St. George Church
356 East Blvd, Baton Rouge
5:30 p.m.
Pilgrimage visits several different churches in the downtown Baton Rouge area and arrives at St. Joseph Cathedral at about 7:30 p.m.
Pilgrimage visits several different churches in the downtown Baton Rouge area and arrives at St. Joseph Cathedral at about 7:30 p.m.
St. Joseph Cathedral
412 North Street, Baton Rouge
7:30 p.m.
Symphony office 225-383-0500

December 9
Breakfast with Santa
8 – 10 a.m.
$5 per plate includes Prancer’s pancakes, snowman’s sausage, jingle bell juice, magical merry Christmas milk
Lucas Miles 225-695-6899 or Office 225-698-3110

A Bayou Christmas Celebration
Madewood Plantation House
4250 Hwy. 308, Napoleonville
5 – 8:30 p.m.
$50 per person plus 10% sales tax
Christmas heritage is the essence of an old-fashioned holiday celebration.
985-369-7151 or madewood.com or Madewoodpl@aol.com

December 10
The Christmas Story
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
11485 Ferdinand St., St. Francisville
5:30 p.m.
Through the Eyes of the Friendly Beasts, A Christmas Play – PKS grades K – 5

Downtown Choral Pilgrimage
Begin at Mt. Zion First Baptist Church

December 11
St. George School Christmas Band Concert
St. George Church
7880 St. George Drive, Baton Rouge
7 – 8:30 p.m.
Lynn Blanchard 225-293-1298

December 14
Holy Family School’s Extravaganza
Raising Cane’s River Center
275 S. River Rd., Baton Rouge
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
$8 per person
Christmas songs performed by students in PreK-8th grades with a live nativity performed by eighth-grade students.
Annette Fitzgerald 225-344-4100 or afitzgerald@hsfpa.com

December 18
St. George School Christmas Pageant
St. George Church
7880 St. George Drive, Baton Rouge
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
The Christmas story is performed by our first-graders with music by music students and choir.
Lynn Blanchard 225-293-1298

December 20
St. Jean Vianney School Grandparents’ Day
16266 S. Harrell’s Ferry Rd.
Baton Rouge
9:30 a.m. – noon
Children will be singing carols for their grandparents. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served after performance.
Eliska Dumas 225-324-0745

December 20 – January 7
Nativity Scene
St. John the Evangelist Church

December 24
Christmas Eve Vigil Carol Concert
St. Joseph Cathedral
412 North Street, Baton Rouge
3:30 p.m.
Office 225-387-5928

Christmas Day Masses:
Midnight, 8:00am, 10:00am

St. Jean Vianney Catholic Church
16166 S. Harrell’s Ferry Road
Baton Rouge 225-753.7950
Exit I-12 south on O’Neal Lane to S. Harrell’s Ferry Road.
Take left. Church is one block on right.

St. Jean Vianney Preschool
St. Jean Vianney Catholic School
December 7, 14, 21
Advent Awakenings: Take the Time
Holy Ghost Church
Annex of the Parish Hall
511 N. Oak St., Hammond
All are invited to join our small faith group during Advent. Sign up at church office.
Trisha Labbe 985-345-3360 ext. 26

December 8 – 10
Yoga and Contemplative Prayer
Advent Retreat
Rosaryville Spirit Life Center
390003 Rosaryville Rd., Ponchatoula
Weekend of prayer, joy and fellowship facilitated by Andrea “Ani” Vidrine, spiritual director and licensed clinical social worker and teacher of yoga.
3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

December 10
Advent Concert
Our Lady of Mercy Church
445 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge
6:30 – 8 p.m.
A sacred concert of Lessons and Carols presented by the Our Lady of Mercy Music Ministry
Mary Kannenberg 225-926-1883

December 12
Coffee and Prayer: Advent – A Time for Hope, Peace, Joy and Love
Holy Family Parish, Marian Hall
474 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Jennifer LeJeune 225-36-4463
or jlejeunehfc@gmail.com

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass
Holy Ghost Church
600 N. Oak St., Hammond
6:30 p.m.
Light refreshments will be provided in the gathering area following Mass.
Father Robert Merced OP
985-345-3360

December 13
Advent Parish Penance Service
Holy Family Church
360 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
Beginning 6:30 p.m.
225-383-1838

Reconciliation Service
St. Joseph Church
2130 Rectory St. at LA Hwy. 44 Paulina
7 p.m.
225-869-5751

December 14
Advent Penance Service
St. Mark Church
42021 Hwy. 621, Gonzales
7 p.m.
Cecile Haley 225-647-8461

December 17
Lessons and Carols
St. George Church
7808 St. George Drive, Baton Rouge
3 p.m.
The choirs of St. George present the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah and the birth of Jesus through lessons and carols.
Blake Bruchhaus 225-293-2212

December 20
Advent Reconciliation Service
St. George Church
7808 St. George Drive, Baton Rouge
6:30 – 8 p.m.
Blake Bruchhaus 225-293-2212

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we are reminded that His message of love and compassion lives on through us. When we respond to a plea for help with an act of kindness, it is His hand that guides us. This is the best Christmas present we can give: to serve on His behalf in the triumph of faith over adversity. During the holidays, most of us look forward to sharing the peace and joy of this season with family and friends. But for some people, the spirit of Christmas is slowly drowning in an ocean of worries: How will I pay the rent this month? The kids need new clothes. Will I have to tell them that Santa isn’t coming again this year? For the poor, the meaning of peace and joy is having enough money to pay the rent and buy a few gifts.

For many of those who come to St. Vincent de Paul for assistance, life has always been hard, and their Christmas memories are a source of sadness; for some, the holidays started with a job loss, an accident, illness or homelessness. The photos on this envelope represent just a few of the people whose memories now include St. Vincent de Paul – a place of second chances and new beginnings. The people who come to us for help are counting on us. This year, our dining room will serve more than 250,000 meals; our Bishop Ott Shelter will provide over 25,000 guest nights of shelter; and our pharmacy will fill life-sustaining prescriptions worth $1 million for people who have nowhere else to turn. And the expansion of our Sweet Dreams Shelter will allow us to help even more homeless mothers and children this Christmas Season.

We’ll do our best to make this Christmas Season a good one for as many people as possible. Bishop Muench will once again serve as our St. Nick, distributing gifts to needy children. Our dining room will serve thousands of meals. Our shelters will provide warm beds to homeless men, women and children. We hope that you will consider adding one more person to your Christmas list, and we ask you to consider making a gift using this envelope. If you can’t afford to give at this time, please pray for the poor and hold onto the enclosed envelope until a time when you can afford to give.

At St. Vincent de Paul, $1 will provide a hot meal; $10 will provide a night of shelter for a homeless family; and $28 will fill a life-sustaining prescription; so you can imagine what a difference a larger gift can make. Any gift, no matter how small, will bring the Christmas spirit to someone in need.

Remember the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on Giving Tuesday (November 28th)

@svdpbatonrouge

Use the enclosed envelope to help the poor and homeless, or give online at svdpbr.org.