Music adds blessing at adoration

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

“The atmosphere is changing now, for the spirit of the Lord is here,” sang the adoration band of Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Baton Rouge in rich harmony as lights softly fell on the Blessed Sacrament. “The congregation’s reverent response conveyed during the night of praise, worship and eucharistic adoration that the people understood they were in a holy time of prayer and contemplation.

On the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., seven gifted musicians offer their talents in a ministry that “compliments what is happening on the altar” during eucharistic adoration.

According to bandleader and vocalist Sarah Averette, the praise and worship style of adoration comes from a desire to “bring out” the time of devotion and place an emphasis on it. A lot of Catholics don’t actually realize what adoration is. Adoration can include a band. We wanted to bring people (worship) music they hear on the radio that they hear normally. We wanted them to come here to talk to God, praise him and sing to him,” she said.

The Oct. 17 eucharistic adoration opened with the band performing “O Come to the Altar.” Deacon Don Musso, deacon assistant at Most Blessed Sacrament, brought the monstrance containing the Eucharist to the altar for exposition, knelt and waved a thurible raised up. “You see people singing along with the strains, some people kneeling, some people standing with their hands raised up. “With adoration, every night is an incredible experience.”

Drummer Ryan Landry is considered by the other musicians as “the heartbeat of the songs.” It’s a role he humbly plays. “I try to be the glue keeping things together,” said Landry, who sits and plays on a box-style drum. “My goal is not so much to be the musician in the foreground, but to keep things together,” he said.

Guitarists Emma Hymel, a student at Denham Springs High School, and Mary Johnston, said they enjoy the fun.

Pastoral direction next for task force

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

With the announcement of the closing of three church parishes during the past several months, the diocesan Planning Task Force is now turning its attention to pastoral direction from diocesan priests, chairman Father Trey Nelson said.

Father Nelson, pastor at St. Jude the Apostle Church in Baton Rouge, said the task force is meeting with priests during strategy input sessions. He said the meetings, which have already started and should wrap up by the end of the month, are focused not on concept, but structure and configuration.

Topics to be addressed include, but are not limited to, possible reconfigurations of deanery boundaries, the role of parochial vicars, Mass schedules and perhaps even more churches that might need to be merged, Father Nelson said.

“We are at the point where we need to be more strategic and proactive and less reactive,” he added.

SSA Consultants, who have been working with the task force for the past four years, will gather and compile the information. Existing and new task force members will analyze the data and make a proposal to Bishop Robert W. Muench.

Earlier this year, the Diocese of Baton Rouge announced the amalgamation of St. Pius X Church in Baton Rouge with St. Isidore the Farmer Church in Baker, effective at the end of May.

See related article on page 9

SACRED SOUNDS

The adoration band of Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Baton Rouge performs inspiring music during an evening of praise, worship and eucharistic adoration.

By Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

The adoration band of Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Baton Rouge performs inspiring music during an evening of praise, worship and eucharistic adoration.

The band members said Deacon Musso is involved with adoration. “He even locks up afterwards,” smiled Averette.

In selecting the music for adoration, Averette said, “It’s all about the words and the soulfulness of the song, that it sets up a tone where people can hear God speaking to them.”

Adam Fields, pianist and vocalist, said there’s various signs of worship the congregation shows during adoration.

“You see many things,” said Fields. “You see people singing along with the songs, people looking at the monstrance, some people kneeling, some people standing with their hands raised up.

“With adoration, every night is an incredible experience.”

Drummer Ryan Landry is considered by the other musicians as “the heartbeat of the songs.” It’s a role he humbly plays.

“I try to be the glue keeping things together,” said Landry, who sits and plays on a box-style drum. “My goal is not so much to be the musician in the foreground, but to keep things together,” he said.

Guitarists Emma Hymel, a student at Denham Springs High School, and Mary Johnston, said they enjoy the fun.

See MBS Page 19

CHRISTMAS CARD CONTEST – Anna Claire Campbell, a seventh-grader at St. John Interparochial School in Plaquemine, makes the final touches on her artwork for the Catholic Schools Office Christmas card contest. See article on page 11. Photo by Bonny Van | The Catholic Commentator
The Catholic Life Center

By Renee Richard

The Catholic Life Center is the official headquarters of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Bishop Robert E. Tracy attended all of the sessions of the Second Vatican Council which convened shortly after his installation. One of the many innovative ideas he brought back was the construction of a building created in the spirit of Vatican II.

His vision for the building was to become the focal point of the diocese. The architect for the Catholic Life Center was Desmond Miremont & Associates, with John A. Bani and J. Roy Haase, associate architects. The Life Center opened on Jan. 4, 1967 and received an Honor Award at the Gulf States Regional Conference of the American Institute of Architects that same year.

Vatican II emphasized the social and community aspect of living a truly Christian life. The Catholic Life Center was designed with not only administrative offices but with various facilities for community functions and programs. Bishop Tracy envisioned a place where all members of the diocese and the community could gather for a multitude of events. There are meeting areas for groups of all sizes, a large dining hall, smaller dining rooms, a well-equipped kitchen, theater-style auditorium, two chapels and the bishop’s residence. At the heart of the complex is Christ Court, a large covered outdoor pavilion that can handle as many as 3,000 people.

Originally, the complex included St. Joseph Cathedral Prep School, a four-year high school for boys interested in pursuing a vocation to the priesthood. When the school closed, the facility was renovated to serve the ongoing spiritual formation and educational needs of the diocese and renamed the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center. It is also available to secular organizations in the community.

In 2000, a new Catholic Community Services office building, the Westerfield Conference Center and an overnight retreat center were completed on the campus. Since then, Catholic Life TV, a full-time TV station owned by the diocese, has been added to the Catholic Life Center complex. Early in 2018, a new archives building and priests’ residence are scheduled to be completed.

The Catholic Life Center is located in the heart of Baton Rouge at 4800 South Acadian Thruway. It can be reached in about an hour from the farthest areas of the diocese, making it truly centrally located. It remains 50 years later, just as it was envisioned by our first bishop, as the focal point of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Richard is the assistant archivist for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Living in the Spirit

By Barry Schoedel

Disciples of Jesus are a people who allow the Holy Spirit to penetrate their heart, calling them out from the idolatry that is the root of all sin. Sin is that which leads us away from the communion with God and one another, that we were created for. It isolates us from the love of God. Isolated from the love of God, we lack an experience of the depths of love we are called to for one another.

In the readings from the 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time we are reminded from St. Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians that those who follow Jesus are a people who have “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” They have become imitators of the Lord and received the word amidst great suffering, but with a joy that corresponds to its saving power. In our time, too, we live amidst great suffering. We may distract ourselves from it or refuse to look at it, particularly in the stranger, but if we open our eyes we will see it.

Concurrently, we may find that we are obsessed with it, hardly able to focus on anything else as almost every form of media seems to communicate a constant stream of news of unthinkably, arbitrary and even absurd manifestations of the destructive potential of fallen humanity. If we are called to a joyful and loving communion with God, and one another, what is wrong? What is missing?

Of every possible response to that inquiry, many of which may analyze the situation well and offer helpful, but partial, principles and remedies, there is one response that is the greatest, i.e., the most complete. Our reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew reminds us of it: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

A disciple of Jesus listens to his words and imitates him as Lord. Here we have a teaching where he reveals to us through his dialogue with the Pharisees and Sadducees the most foundational and fundamental law or principle by which we are to live. It is as if Jesus is saying: apart from loving communion with my father, and fatherly care for your neighbor, all other works are in vain.

Do we see complete and loving communion with God, a communion that encompasses neighbor, and even enemy, as the most fundamental project of our life? Do we see it as the source of joy and peace that we desire to experience even amidst the suffering of this world? What do our actions demonstrate about our priorities?

SEE GOSPEL PAGE 19
Behavior patterns fuel pornography addiction

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

You reach for your electronic device late at night to unwind and take in some entertainment. You know this leads you to watch pornography, which gratifies you at first, but then locks you in a cell of self-hatred. With temptation purring, “a little won’t hurt” and “you have control” in order to muffle the cries of the conscience, what can you do?

Dr. Mario Sacasa, director of counseling services at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, gave a message of hope that the battle of pornography can be won during a recent program on the topic at Christ the King Church and Student Center at LSU.

Sacasa said the earlier people start their battle against pornography, the better their chances will be to succeed.

“It’s easier to stop a boulder at the top of the hill rather than the bottom,” said Sacasa.

A beginning step is to “know your rituals” when it comes to viewing pornography, then break them, according toSacasa. If viewing pornography becomes routine, much like eating and sleeping, it conveys that it’s an expected activity at certain times and under certain circumstances. Changing schedules and habits, particularly refraining from mindless surfing of the internet and staying off it at “high peak” times of temptation helps people overcome addiction.

Sacasa also advised those battling pornography to ask themselves why they are attracted to the images or videos they access online.

“There’s a reason for it,” Sacasa said.

He urged pornography viewers to ask themselves, “Why am I feeling this way?” before watching illicit material.

He said some prefer watching pornography because it doesn’t require them to deal with real relationships.

“You’re not good at dealing with life, so you go to the images because they’re easy to go to,” said Sacasa.

He noted that behaviors shape what’s happening in the brain. He said because pornography releases a flood of hormones one has to “retract from the flood.” He said addictive behaviors work like a drop of water making psychological grooves in the brain.

“It’s going to take time for that drop of water to be redirected,” said Sacasa.

He said quitting pornography viewing is similar to the process of losing weight or getting physically in shape—it takes determination. If people want to lose weight, but never get off the couch, they won’t lose weight.

“You’ve got to get it off,” said Sacasa, adding, “You can say, ‘I don’t want to be a zombie. I don’t want to be a slave. I don’t want this, I want to be free.’”

For men this can include “getting down and doing pushups and putting that testosterone to use,” Sacasa said.

The process is not fun, but after a while it bears fruit, according to Sacasa.

He urged pornography viewers to call on others for help and accountability is another way to kick the pornography habit, said Sacasa.

Calling on others for help and accountability is another way to kick the pornography habit, said Sacasa.

Parents must communicate with children

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Many parents wish they had an “electronic guardian angel” to put their hands over the eyes and ears of their children to keep them from seeing or hearing anything offensive. But the best Wi-Fi limitations, web filters and other parental controls do not guarantee children will not encounter pornography on the internet sometime during their young life because of technology’s pervasiveness, said Dr. Mario Sacasa, director of counseling services at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans.

Sacasa recently gave a presentation concerning battling pornography at Christ the King Church and Center at LSU.

He said there are ways for parents to talk to their children so that if they come across it, they can maturely say, “No.”

Parents should start the conversation with their children at a young age, Sacasa advised. Children can be introduced to illicit materials from a variety of sources, from smart phones and tablets to older siblings or friends. Reports indicate children come across pornography online as young as 8–9 years old. A nationally representative survey found that 64 percent of young people ages 13–24 actively seek out pornography weekly or more often.

“If you wait until adolescence, I think you’ve waited too long,” said Sacasa.

The conversations can begin with discussing what are “good pictures” and “bad pictures” and how to appropriately respond when coming across pictures of naked people, according to Sacasa.

“It’s all interconnected. It’s teaching opportunities and moments,” said Sacasa.

Parents should cultivate a safe, loving atmosphere in their home, openly speak to their children about the issue and calmly talk to them when they report seeing something “that isn’t right,” according to Sacasa.

“They don’t have the shame and baggage that adults do,” said Sacasa.

He said such conversations can be positive discussions about love, marriage, healthy relationships and respecting other people.

In the reality of a fallen world, however, Sacasa further warned that having a “happy home” is a good first step, but it’s not a good enough place to stop. He pointed out the National Center on Sexual Exploitation has done detailed studies on pornography as a public health issue.

“I’ve worked with many men who have come from stable homes,” said Sacasa. “They were in Catholic schools or homeschooled.

“Be ready to have a good battle plan against it.”

He said there are many good local resources available to people or their family members struggling with pornography, including educateempowerkids.org

“Don’t isolate yourself, get out, keep yourself engaged,” said Sacasa.

Finding something good and beautiful to look at reminds people of the beauty of God’s creation and to look for beauty in natural ways. This can include keeping pictures of family members and loved ones close to remind individuals of the important relationships in their lives that are being damaged by the destructive habit.

Freeing oneself of pornography addiction is a process that can take a few years, said Sacasa.

“When you are on this journey, don’t lose (sight) the forest for the trees,” said Sacasa, who added that every victory counts in the overall battle.

“Keep fighting,” said Sacasa three times. “Never give up hope.”

While the person may feel like they are treading on ice, eventually they will gain traction and begin making marked progress. But he cautioned, “There’s no magic bullets. You’ve got to keep fighting and working at it.”

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Liturgical leaders discuss pastoral care to the sick

Special to The Catholic Commentator

Nearly 150 leaders from 85 dioceses gathered in Bloomington, Minnesota from Oct. 3-5 for the 48th annual national meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), of which vicar general Father Tom Ranzino is a past president and the current Region 5 director.

The meeting focused on “Touching the Hem of His Garment: The Pastoral Care of the Sick.” Specifically, members examined the rites of the Pastoral Care of the Sick, their proper celebration and the pastoral activities which surround them.

The members of the FDLC were greeted by Archbishop Bernard Hebda of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

FDLC’s executive director Rita Thiron, brought the meeting’s theme into focus: “When illness strikes, life as we know it, stops. Doctor appointments become more important than our usual daily schedules. The care of a loved one becomes our only concern. We realize our helplessness in the face of something we cannot control. So we rely on our faith to make sense of suffering. We rely on the power of Christ and his sacramental grace. We rely on the power of our communal prayer. And we become more acutely aware of those who cannot be with us as we gather around our eucharistic table,” she said.

Perhaps the most powerful reminder of the helplessness caused by illness came during the opening prayer when Minneapolis native Father J. Michael Joncas recalled his own near-death experience with Guillain-Barre syndrome, a fast-moving virus which attacks the body’s muscles and neurological systems. Within days, only his eyelids could blink answers, but he still recalled the power of a priest’s anointing and the symbol of the cross on his forehead. His captivating reflections were interspersed with Scripture and song.

An impressive group of presenters aided the discussions. Bishop John M. Quinn of the Diocese of Winona spoke of the power of presence to those who are ailing and how visits to the sick have been part of his priestly and episcopal ministry for decades.

“The sick are an integral part of the parish community,” he said. “They are visible signs of the Paschal Mystery. Let them evangelize the community for they have much to teach us.”

Msgr. John Kasza of the Archdiocese of Detroit spoke on the richness of the rites found in the liturgical text. Sister Esther Mary Nickels RSM spoke of her experiences with patients in her work as an emergency-room respiratory therapist. Both related their work to the healing work of Jesus Christ, the Great Physician.

The “Study Day” was opened to local participants. Healthcare professionals, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion and pastoral care staffs were present to hear the plenary sessions as well as six workshops sessions.

Since its founding, the FDLC National Meeting has been co-sponsored annually by the FDLC and the Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship.

Diocesan leaders heard updates on the progress of the translation of liturgical texts, on the status of liturgical books currently under review at the Vatican and on other liturgical initiatives. They were especially interested in next year’s implementation of the third edition of the Misal Romano and the Federation’s plans for liturgical catechesis.

The celebrations of daily Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours were integral to the meeting. The attendees also participated in a eucharistic liturgy at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis where Archbishop Hebda served as principal celebrant. Twenty-eight people received the anointing of sick during the Mass.

Father Leon Strieder of the Diocese of Austin was honored with the fourth annual Alleluia Award which recognizes a member for distinguished service to the mission of the Federation.

The FDLCs highest honor, the prestigious Frederick R. McManus Award was presented to the Liturgical Press of Collegeville in recognition of its 90 years of outstanding contributions to liturgical scholarship and ministerial formation. Publisher Peter Dwyer accepted the award on behalf of the staff and monks of the abbey.

The FDLC was founded in 1969 by the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy.
**CCDBR prepped for Hurricane Harvey relief effort**

By Richard Meek  
The Catholic Commentator

Long before Hurricane Harvey made what would be a catastrophic landfall along the Texas coast, members of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge disaster response team had been mobilized and preparing for what was expected to be a large influx of evacuees.

Team leaders had been appointed and workers identified to be deployed to area hotels to perform temporary shelter case management. Additional gift cards from a local supermarket had also been purchased and gas cards were at the ready for families fleeing from Harvey’s wrath.

“The challenge is that our very best and most experienced disaster workers are currently engaged in our flood recovery (from 2016),” CCDBR executive director David Aguillard said. “And by virtue of a (federal) contract they cannot do anything but that. We cannot pull them off of that disaster and put them on another disaster. So we were limited in the number of people we had.”

Fortunately, the need was minimal, which was surprising to CCDBR officials. Aguillard noted that people did indeed evacuate from Texas and southwest Louisiana but said they seemed to have stopped at the Atchafalaya Basin, creating more of a hardship in the Diocese of Lafayette.

Reportedly, thousands of evacuees filled hotels in the Lafayette area while less than 200 came as far as Baton Rouge.

“It was extremely surprising,” Aguillard said. “I think probably what was happening people were just going to the next exit (off of Interstate 10).

“Our strategy was going to be for people who came into our office to help them find safety and residence outside of our area and provide them with gas money to get there. I don’t think we gave out $500 in gas assistance.

“CCDBR did send Deacon Samuel Martino, who Aguillard calls one of the best disaster case managers in Louisiana, to Lafayette for a week, where he was able to help residents work through the labyrinth of bureaucracy associated with FEMA. Aguillard said Deacon Sammartino helped Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Lafayette and other non-profits in southwest Louisiana prioritize cases, find solutions, apply for FEMA assistance and provide residents a better understanding of their benefits.

“It’s a highly technical and specialized area of case management,” he said. “You need to know all of the lingo abbreviations and forms in order to qualify for the benefits.”

Aguillard also praised University High for holding a special drive at one of the Cubs football games that resulted in a trailer full of household goods that were donated to CCDBR and sent to Texas.

“We are thankful (that the local need was not greater) because the resources in our community are stretched right now,” Aguillard said, adding that at least 4,000 families remain in mobile homes from the 2016 flood.

“We still have a housing shortage in our diocese,” he added. “We are probably not progressing as rapidly as other recoveries have because the flood did not receive the media attention or the national spotlight that hurricanes do.

“Resources have not been adequate.”

According to Aguillard, CCDBR case managers continue to help people, especially the handicapped, disabled, elderly and those on limited income obtain assistance that is available through public sources first. He said case managers are helping people with FEMA appeals, ensuring they are placed in the correct needs category and advocating for residents when the process has bogged down.

“The FEMA process and Restore Louisiana are complicated, government-driven bureaucratic programs that are difficult to figure out,” he said.

The agency also presents cases before a long-term recovery committee that has been established in each civil parish in the diocese. Those committees are disbursing available Red Cross and United Way funds.

Aguillard said all nonprofit agencies that are active in a particular civil parish, including CCDBR, come together at committee meetings to advocate for families who are some of the most desperate in the area.

“The committee decides how the community help those individuals, how to use extraordinarily limited resources. There is not enough money to go around.”

David Aguillard  
Director of Catholic Charities

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**Deacon Brady dies**

Deacon Eugene Brady died Sunday, Oct. 22. He was 90 years old.

Deacon Brady was ordained July 13, 2002 at St. Joseph Cathedral by Bishop Robert W. Muench. He served as coordinator for nursing home ministry for the Diocese of Baton Rouge until his retirement in July 2013.

Visitation is scheduled Friday, Oct. 27 from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at St. George Church in Baton Rouge. Burial will be in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Leaving right after Communion/Responsibility to inform

Q I am surprised by the number of people who regularly leave church immediately after receiving the Eucharist. In the diary of St. Faustina, Jesus says how sad he is that people treat him as a dead object and busy themselves with other things. It is distracting and disruptive of my own personal prayer when I see these people head directly to the exits. This is the closest and most holy time we have to spend with the Lord. Am I being overly sensitive about the actions of others?

A St. Philip Neri, the saintly parish priest in 16th-century Italy, once noticed that a member of his congregation would regularly leave Mass immediately after receiving Communion, and he decided that the man needed to be taught a lesson. So the following Sunday, St. Philip assigned two Mass servers to accompany the man with lighted candles out of the church and down the street. The man, of course, returned demanding an explanation, which gave St. Philip a chance to explain the importance of taking time to thank God for the gift of the Eucharist.

It bothers me, as it does you, to see people rush out to their cars right after taking the host — although I’ve never had the courage to use the same pedagogical technique as St. Philip Neri! Your question makes me think of what Elizabeth said at Mary’s visitation; in shocked surprise, Elizabeth asked her cousin, “And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” Even more, each of us should be struck with awe that God himself in the person of Jesus has deemed us worthy of a visit. In “Inaestimable Donum,” his 1980 instruction on the Eucharist, St. John Paul II reminded us that we should not “omit to make a proper thanksgiving after Communion” — perhaps with some moments of silence “or also after the celebration, if possible, by staying behind to pray for a suitable time.”

Q Is there anything that can be done at a local Catholic school about the parent of a student who has a violent and criminal background? My own child was just beginning her Catholic school education when I crossed paths with this dangerous individual.

A Knowing his history, I informed the school principal. I was assured that this man would not be allowed to assist in any of the school children’s activities but that his children were welcome to remain as students at the school. While I understand that his own actions should not reflect on his children, I wonder whether his violent potential should be at the expense of others.

I felt strongly enough that I withdrew my own daughter from this school and enrolled her in a different Catholic school, but my heart still goes out to the other innocent children and uninformed parents. While I know that this man is not a registered sex offender and I am not really sure what legal convictions he has had, I believe that he has been arrested for things that he has done from 15 years ago until the present day.

My moral compass is telling me that it is my duty to do more than I have done; am I right in this conviction, or should I drop the issue? (City of origin withheld)

A I believe that you have done all that you needed to do by putting the school on notice. Certainly, the principal is as concerned for the students’ welfare as you are and would take all necessary precautions to keep the children out of harm’s way. And if the man’s arrest record is as extensive as you describe, I would think that the other school parents have surely been forewarned. You were right to share your apprehensions with the school principal and, in so doing, have discharged your moral duty.

FATHER DOYLE is a pastor in the Diocese of Albany, New York. Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatberdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.

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New program in Brusly offers relief for moms

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Shouts of glee come from a classroom in the activity center of St. John the Baptist Church in Brusly as young children paint like little Picassos. Later, they glue paper cut outs of a crown, cross and dove to popsicle sticks through a craft project reinforcing a lesson on the Trinity. Meanwhile, their moms run errands, focus on the work they do from home, or pamper themselves during a break from mom duty provided by a new ministry at St. John called Mothers Day Out (MDO).

MDO is a faith-based, part-time childcare program for children 1-3 years old that takes place Tuesdays and Thursdays at St. John in Brusly.

Katie Roettger, director of the program, said after the flood of 2016 it took her 90 minutes to get to her job in Baton Rouge from her home in Addis.

“We had a lot of prayer I had the realization that there were a lot of moms in West Baton Rouge Parish crossing the bridge and fighting traffic every morning to get their children to Mother’s Day Out programs in Baton Rouge because there wasn’t anything like that here,” said Roettger.

She pitched the idea for MDO to St. John pastor Father Matt Lorrain and the parish council, who gave their support. Everything then fell into place, according to Roettger.

“We got an overwhelming amount of toy donations and people willing to help,” said Roettger.

When the children arrive, they go to a learning station, which is followed by “circle time” where they are taught different words, nursery rhymes and other lessons.

The most important aspect of the program is socialization, according to Roettger.

“I found that a lot of children are isolated in their homes and don’t get to interact with other kids, so when they go to school they are having more difficulties,” said Roettger.

The mothers said they appreciate the time off the ministry gives them.

Amber Cavaness works from home as a social worker and is on the phone a lot, so keeping her son, Jackson, 1 1/2 years old, is difficult. She squeezed as much work in as she could during his naptime.

“Since he became ‘busy’ my production declined,” said Cavaness. “And he needs more stimulation than I can provide while working.”

Cavaness said Jackson is happier at home and is sleeping and eating better and is more independent.

“He comes home with art work, it’s so cute,” said Cavaness, noting the teachers taught the children a “Jesus rap.”

As for herself, Cavaness wryly smiled, “I’m not in trouble with my boss anymore.”

Marlies, who prefers to use only her first name, said MDO positively impacts her son, Ty’s, life.

“I left work as an engineer to stay home with my child (15 months old). But the first year I suffered from major post partum depression. I discovered that I still wanted to be at home with my child, but I needed a break,” said Marlies.

She said she feels secure about leaving her son at MDO.

“It’s a Christ-centered environment. I love each day when he brings home a piece of paper telling me what they’ve been doing, and they’ve been coloring and dancing to Jesus music,” said Marlies.

She said of the teachers, “They are not doing it for the money, they are doing it because they love kids, which is fantastic. I feel like I’m bringing my kid to my sister or mother.”

Marlies notices the benefits Ty receives from MDO.

“When we go to the park he will go up to other kids and play with them, whereas before he would just play with me,” said Marlies.

She said she is happier and more energized as well.

“The first day I took a nap and got some things together. It was the rest I needed. Last week I went shopping. It’s the first time I’ve done things for myself in a year and a half,” said Marlies.

Melissa Barbato, whose daughter, Giulia, attends MDO, said they make more connections within the St. John community through the ministry.

“We had her in a program across the river, but when this came open we jumped on it,” said Barbato. “It gives us an opportunity to interact with some of the families of our church parish and for Giulia to socialize with other kids.” Barbato mused, “She barely said goodbye this morning when her teacher asked, ‘Do you want to come paint Giulia?’ I think she said goodbye.”

After she leaves, Barbato said she gets things accomplished.

“I’m able to schedule appointments and commitments and not feel like I’m taking time away from Giulia. I’m able to handle the administrative things as a mom.”

She added, “It recharges my mom batteries.”

MDO enriches her family’s time together and faith lives, said Barbato.

“We talked about Jesus before, but now Giulia has a sense that Jesus is her friend, which is wonderful,” said Barbato.

She believes MDO is a great start for Giulia’s future involvement at St. John, noting Father Lorrain reminds people at children’s baptisms that Jesus told his disciples to “let the children come to me.”

The Mother’s Day Out program has been successful so far, said Father Lorrain.

“We already had the facilities in place to support a program and it provides a needed service to our young families,” he said. “The sights and sounds of young children on Tuesday and Thursday mornings also add a touch of joy to our church campus. I am grateful to the teachers and parents for taking the initiative to start this new ministry.”
Pro-life leaders praise ACA settlement

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commissioner

A Baton Rouge pro-life leader, along with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, are relieved that a settlement has been reached with the U.S. Justice Department regarding the contraceptive mandate of the Affordable Care Act.

The case was commonly regarded as pitting the Little Sisters of the Poor against the federal government but involved dozens of groups challenging the mandate.

"This ruling is so important because it extends conscience protection to everyone with an authentic moral or religious objection, thereby reversing an attempt by the federal government to restrict the definition of freedom of religion," said Danielle Van Haute, Respect Life coordinator for the Diocese of Baton Rouge. "It is important also to remember that this ruling is not a new relationship between church and state, but rather, as the USCCB points out, a "return to common sense, long-standing federal practice, and peaceful coexistence between church and state."

Among the groups challenging the mandate were the Archdiocese of Washington and the Pennsylvania dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh and Erie. Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl wrote an Oct. 16 letter to archdiocesan priests saying the "binding agreement" ends the litigation challenging the Health and Human Services' mandate and provides a "level of assurance as we move into the future."

The lawsuit went to the Supreme Court last year in the consolidated case of Zubik v. Burwell. Although it was most often described as the Little Sisters of the Poor fighting against the federal government, the case before the court involved seven plaintiffs and each of these combined cases represented a group of schools, churches or church-sponsored organizations.

Pittsburgh Bishop David A. Zubik, whom the case is named for, said he was grateful for the settlement, which he described as an "agreement with the government that secures and reafirms the constitutional right of religious freedom."

In an Oct. 17 statement, the bishop said the diocese's five-year-long challenge to the mandate "has been resolved successfully" allowing Catholic Charities in the diocese and other religious organizations of different denominations to be exempt from "insurance coverage or practices that are morally unacceptable."

He said the settlement follows the recent release of new federal regulations that provide religious organizations with a full exemption from covering items that violate their core beliefs.

On Oct. 6, the Trump administration issued interim rules expanding the exemption to the contraceptive mandate to include religious employers who object on moral grounds to covering contraceptive and abortion-inducing drugs and devices in their employee health insurance. The same day, the U.S. Department of Justice issued guidance to all administrative agencies and executive departments regarding religious liberty protections in federal law.

Van Haute expects support for the ruling to continue to grow during a 60-day comment period for the interim final ruling.

"The USCCB will submit comments in support of the new rules and soon, grassroots efforts encouraging other to do so as well, will begin," she said.

(Catholic News Service contributed to this story.)

Honored to Be Nationally Recognized in Six Areas of Care

Colon Cancer Surgery
Heart Failure

COPD
Hip Replacement

Heart Bypass Surgery
Knee Replacement

BEST REGIONAL HOSPITALS
U.S. News & WORLD REPORT
BATON ROUGE, LA
RECOGNIZED IN 6 TYPES OF CARE
2017–18

PRO-LIFE BREAKFAST – Knights of Columbus Council 9247 of St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge hosted a pro-life breakfast, "Living a pro-life life in a secular world," Oct. 7 at the SJV parish hall. Speakers included Anna Starns, Clelie Carpenter, co-chair for 40 Days for Life Baton Rouge, and State Representative Katrina Jackson, who talked about the importance of standing for the truth. Proceeds from the event go to fund the Knights of Columbus pro-life activities. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator.
SLKF parishioners embracing move to St. Thomas

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Amy Moran was among the more than 200 people who gathered on the back lawn of St. Louis King of France in Baton Rouge for an outdoor Mass and family picnic Oct. 14. It is among the last events being held at the church as the Diocese of Baton Rouge prepares to merge the church with St. Thomas More Church, located 1.7 miles south, just off of Sherwood Forest Boulevard on Goodwood Boulevard.

Moran has been a member of SLKF Church her entire life, all 28 years. And, while it has also been a huge part of her life, she is looking forward to what is to come. She plans to attend different Mass times to see which one fits her and her schedule the best.

“This has been my school, my church parish – this is all I really know,” she said. “It’s going to be a big change and we’re really excited about it. I’ve been to one or two (Masses), but I haven’t decided which is going to be my regular. I’m an 8 o’clock person at St. Louis, but I’m excited because there’s an evening Mass at the end of Sunday (at St. Thomas More) so that’s probably going to be my ‘go to’. But, I’m excited to try all of them to determine which is going to be the one I prefer.”

Father Michael Alello gave his homily to more than 200 people at an outdoor Mass and family fall event on the back lawn of St. Louis King of France Church in Baton Rouge on Oct. 15. Members of the Knights of Columbus served plates of barbecue chicken, jambalaya, hamburgers and hotdogs for the event. Photo by Bonny Van | The Catholic Commentator

Such optimism is the goal of Father Michael Alello, pastor at SLKF and administrator of STM. In his homily, Father Alello talked about how people sometimes have a tough time saying “yes” when it comes to making commitments, especially making the commitment to go to church and saying, “Yes, Lord.”

“We’ve been talking for a while about saying yes to God and saying yes to what God has invited us to in this journey as he’s inviting us to merge with St. Thomas More,” he said. “And, so we’ve been focused on that a bit – so what is God asking of us? God is asking us to trust him and to trust where he is leading us and to know that it is God leading us, the Spirit leading us and if we can be open to that, the good Lord is going to make something beautiful out of it.”

Geralyne Thibodeaux, a member of SLKF, for 30 years, said she attended all of the meetings that discussed the closing of her church. She said it was the right thing to do.

“I love it here. There are great people here,” she said. “But, we lost a lot of people after the flood. They need to close it. It’s a good business decision. There aren’t enough priests. So, I’m embracing it (the change).”

While many people are trying to absorb the change emotionally, they remain strong in their faith and to their faith community. Teenie Bajon, president of the altar society, has been involved in the church with her husband. For years, the couple has arrived early on Sunday mornings to open the church and set up for 8 a.m. Mass. While she is sad about the church closing, Bajon plans to get involved in her new church community.

“My husband has a medical condition so he can’t drive. So, I don’t think I’ll be driving too far to go to another church since St. Thomas More is just five minutes away,” she said.

Other active parishioners are also making plans to move on and carry on. Thad
Blessing first step to building shrine to St. Sharbel

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Perhaps never has a small patch of grass had such a special meaning.

Much more than just a sliver of Mother Earth, the scraggly square of grass represented the initial step of fulfilling a dream for Father Charbel Jamhoury and many families of the Lebanese community of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“We have all dreamed for this day,” said Father Jamhoury, his voice defenseless against the emotion he expressed when more than 120 people gathered Oct. 8 at St. Agnes Church in Baton Rouge for the ceremonial blessing of undeveloped land that will one day house a shrine to St. Sharbel Makhlouf.

The shrine, which will be the first dedicated to St. Sharbel in the United States, was announced on the 40th anniversary of his canonization.

The threat of Hurricane Nate forced the event indoors, but that did little to temper the spirit as Bishop Robert W. Muench blessed the small patch of land brought to the church from the site, which is located off of Brightside Lane in Baton Rouge.

“I am talking about ‘day-dreaming’ and not about ‘night dreaming,’” added Father Jamhoury, pastor at St. Agnes. “You cannot do much about dreaming at night but you can during the day. A dream is the first cornerstone to achieve a goal, and to achieve a goal one must have vision.

“If we cannot dream it, we cannot achieve it.”

The shrine has been a dream of Father Jamhoury since he arrived at St. Agnes in 2014. A member of the Lebanese Maronite Order, he had previously served as co-chaplain at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in 2010 before being called back to his native Lebanon.

He returned to Baton Rouge in 2014 and was appointed administrator at St. Agnes by Bishop Muench in 2015. Earlier this year, Father Jamhoury was appointed pastor.

Since his return, he and members of the St. Sharbel Makhlouf Foundation have been working to secure funding for the shrine, beginning with identifying a site. It’s been a time of hope and frustration, at one point causing Father Jamhoury to question why he even returned to Baton Rouge.

The answer came when Phil Witter donated 10 acres of land for the shrine, which Father Jamhoury said would include a church and retreat house. Witter’s donation was recent, just about the time panic was starting to settle in among supporters who were working to have the site secured by the anniversary of St. Sharbel’s canonization.

“Before I received this land, I never stopped wondering and questioning God,” Father Jamhoury said days after the blessing. “I’m happy at St. Agnes but was not sure why I was here. When I received this land, I stopped wondering and questioning God.”

“God has a plan and he showed us in a mysterious way,” he added. “He amazed us by the way we have received this land. This is a wonderful message to tell everybody it’s not me, it’s not them. It was God’s will.”

During the blessing, Mary Kadaire Crump, son of George Kadaire, acknowledged the day was special for her and her family. She remembers her father’s special devotion to St. Sharbel, hearing stories about the saint’s numerous miracles of healing.

“St. Sharbel has been in our family’s heart for so very long,” Crump, one of eight children, said. “I have so many memories of my dad and his unique dedication to St. Sharbel. He was proud of his Lebanese heritage.”

She said that her father always carried a special St. Sharbel prayer card in his pocket that he would eagerly share with others who were hurting and in need of healing. With tears filling her eyes, she recalled how in his final hours, he continued to pray to St. Sharbel and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“We consider St. Sharbel a blessing sent to us,” she said.

“Father Charbel is one more blessing sent to us.”

Father Jamhoury said his goal is to have one place where St. Sharbel will be for everyone and to spread his physical and spiritual healing. Father Jamhoury’s
Christmas in October tests students’ creativity

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

In early October, on a sunny day with temperatures in south Louisiana regularly hitting 90 degrees and higher, seventh-grade students in Jane Boudreaux’s art class were working on Christmas cards. The design behind each piece of art was aimed at one thing, the annual Christmas card contest of the Catholic Schools Office.

“If you need to add to the first one, you can add,” she said as students walked into class and gathered paper and markers to sit down to work. “Art is never completely done.”

Boudreaux, a teacher at St. John Interparochial School in Plaquemine, said her eighth-grade students had finished their entries. But, her seventh-grade students were putting the final touches on their work, some of which took cues from the warm weather and holiday decor dotting lawns near the school.

“Okay, ‘wow me,’ guys! I want to see something fantastic!” Boudreaux instructed the students. “Remember, think outside the box. We’re trying not to be so commercial. Remember the reason for the season but when you do the commercial. Remember the reason for the season but when you do the commercial. Remember the reason for the season but when you do the commercial. Remember the reason for the season but when you do the commercial. Remember the reason for the season but when you do the commercial. Remember the reason for the season but when you do the commercial. Remember the reason for the season but when you do the commercial.

Anna Claire Campbell said she wanted to draw a tree and present around it and she kind of wanted to draw this, like, looking outside a window and I have Santa and the reindeer up here and some Christmas lights,” said Welday.

“My drawing is a bunch of Christmas ornaments on the branches showing different memories I have like unwrapping presents,” said Markins.

“I drew a house with Santa on the roof with his reindeer and I put windows on it, and in the window is the Christmas tree with the presents and a fireplace with stockings,” said Hanks.

Some students focused on Christmas goodives, like Carson Patin who drew a gingerbread house with candy drops on the road while Emily Burleigh depicted Santa holding a plate of cookies with hot chocolate on it.

A couple of students were influenced by the current holiday season and incorporated that into their drawings.

“I decided that since Christmas is near Halloween I was going to mix them, so I did a skeleton as Santa,” said Wyatt Taylor. 

“Mine is ‘It’s Starting to Look Like Christmas’ and one side is all spring with the sun out and the tree has all its leaves and butterflies flying around and on the other part, it’s Santa on the roof with the smoke coming out of the chimney and the tree lost all its leaves,” said Emma Perry.

Boudreaux said she makes an effort to get her students involved in art contests as much as possible.

“I try to do every opportunity when one comes around, depending on what we’re working on,” she said. “Sometimes we’re working on a project and we can’t get to it, but I do try to make it happen. I feel like some of the students probably wouldn’t do it on their own so this is art (class), so they should be doing it in art (class), especially the older grades for scholarships.”

She also said the rewards for art contests are less important than the accomplishment.

“It’s about recognition. Some of them get their pictures framed and put in businesses. Some of them may win a certificate to a restaurant or a ribbon. Collect those ribbons! That’s your self-satisfaction. You don’t have to have the almighty dollar,” she said. “This is to make sure that you do your best and what can happen if you do your best, because there is always something else coming around.”

A presentation for the winner will be the first week of December.
Workshops enlighten teachers through sharing of ideas

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Catholic school teachers from throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge became students for a few hours Oct. 6 as they shared ideas and challenges about their profession at an in-service training workshop sponsored by the Catholic Schools Office.

More than 125 teachers in math, science and technology gathered at St. Michael High School in Baton Rouge to attend sessions involving virtual labs, earth science activities, high school readiness, robotics, standardized test prep and “how to do a lot with a little.”

“Besides sharing ideas, the workshops provided a place for networking and communicating. “It’s a chance for us to come together and meet teachers from another school,” Lee said. “We don’t always have that opportunity so it’s important to be able to make that connection and exchange ideas just beyond today.”

Eleven schools served as host sites for the meetings, which were broken down by grade level and subject matter. St. Aloysius School, for example, hosted counselors and librarians, while Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge hosted music and art teachers and St. Jean Vianney School in Baton Rouge hosted athletics.

Wilbert Wilson, who teaches math and science at St. Francis Xavier School in Baton Rouge, said teaching math can be challenging some times, but it can be fun and entertaining when you “find activities that engage children in class.”

“It’s important to get teachers together to exchange ideas for curriculum purposes and to make sure we’re all on the same page across the diocese,” said Wilson of the workshops.

Lee said the topics covered in math, science and technology were submitted by the people who would be attending.

“We arranged to get volunteers to be facilitators, so they’re going to keep the conversation going and keep the teachers sharing, talking about their creative ideas, their best practices, how to get students to use higher-order thinking skills, those types of things,” she said.

Colby LeBlanc, a math teacher at Pointe Coupee Catholic High School in New Roads, lead the workshop discussion on math clubs. Those that attended agreed that it was tough to generate interest in something that competed with more popular activities such as sports and dance. LeBlanc said one approach would be to include activities where kids don’t even realize they are doing math.

“They can get into heavy depth research where they don’t even realize math is being used,” said LeBlanc. “I know for example, when I was younger I enjoyed the TV show Numbers” and in that show they were using math to solve crimes and it was loosely based off techniques the FBI uses today. So even if you’re doing a STEM fair or a math fair, that’s something they can use to broaden their horizons.”

The half-day workshops were a first for CSO. Assistant superintendent Michael Miller said the host site schools were chosen because of their central locations. The diocese employs 1100 teachers in grades pre-K through 12.

“It seemed to be something that went very well,” said Miller. “The faculty enjoyed getting together with colleagues from other schools and sharing ideas.”

“This event gets teachers together who teach the same subject and grade levels so they can have a conversation and share best practices, and just really networking and get the benefit of all the teachers in the Diocese of Baton Rouge,” said Lee.
LIVING ROSARY – Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge held its annual Living Rosary on Oct. 4 at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church. Sixth- and seventh-grade students formed the rosary while eighth-grade students led the student body, faculty and parents in praying the rosary. Photo provided by Lisa Cossé

PET BLESSING – Students in pre-K 3 and pre-K 4 at Mater Dolorosa School in Independence bring pets to school for a blessing by Deacon Roger Navarra. Photo provided by Erin Mendez

SWEET SERVICE – Students and faculty from Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School recently spent part of their weekend cleaning up the Sweet Olive Cemetery in Baton Rouge. Those involved in the community service project were: Anthony Martinez, his father, Antonio Martinez; Orlin Alvarez; Jadarion Davis; Jamone Williams; Johnathan Williams; Joshua Ramirez; principal Claire Willis and her kids; and teachers Stephen Weibacher, Missy Durham and Mark Becker. Photo provided by Kendall Hebert

Diocese of Baton Rouge
High School Open Houses
Information: www.csobr.org

St. John High
Plaquemine
225-687-3056
sjohnschool.org
Thursday, October 26, 2017
6:00 p.m., begins in St. Clement Chapel
Open to 7th – 12th graders and their parents

St. Michael High
Baton Rouge
225-753-9782
smhsbr.org
Thursday, October 26, 2017
4:30 – 7:00 p.m. (last tour)
Open to 6th – 8th graders and their parents

Catholic High
Baton Rouge
225-383-0397
catholichigh.org
Thursday, November 9, 2017
4:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Open to 6th – 8th grade boys and their parents

St. Thomas Aquinas High
Hammond
985-542-7662
stafalcons.org
Thursday, November 9, 2017
Beginning 6:00 p.m.
Open to 7th – 8th graders and their parents

Ascension Catholic High
Donaldsonville
225-473-9227
ascensioncatholicschools.com

Catholic of Pointe Coupee
New Roads
225-638-9313
catholicpc.com
Fall campus tours by appointment; Spring open house to be announced
Open to 8th and 9th graders and their parents

Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High
225-615-7479
cristoreybr.org
Admissions
225-388-2243
hoffmannm@sjabr.org

Send your school news and story ideas to Bonnie Van at bvan@diobr.org
Although the ending is well known, the pieces which evoke the sheer terror and nelly plays Brolin’s wife) with grand set of the men’s personal lives (Jennifer Coninski deftly juggles the intimate stories to join the group. In adapting a magazine town from destruction. Their leader (Josh exclusive Mountain Hotshots,” the elite Arizona choking cigarette smoke is the setting of scene, two profane oaths. A-III; PG-13 crash, moments of peril, a nongraphic sex ble romantic sparks fly. A scary airplane - along with the pilot’s dog, struggle to sur Denver, where a flight connection awaits. at an Idaho airport, anxious after their re - by Hany Abu-Assad. Two strangers meet - Charles Martin's 2011 novel and directed - wild wilderness survival drama, based on - the eponymous 1990 film, has a basically - The popular candy-colored Hasbro toy line - Twilight Sparkle (voice of Tara Strong) is one of the princesses who rule - The wicked intentions of Tempest Shad - (both voice of Andrea Libman), and Rari - King than the past-his-prime Riggs, but - and some profanities. L; PG-13
**ADDITION ▼**

From page 3

wrestle with it.”

He encouraged those struggling with pornography addiction to “pick up their cross” and to see it as part of their growth in holiness: “If you’re drowning, reach out for the cross,”

**MASS ▼**

From page 9

Lalonde, a member of the Knights of Columbus 9016 with SLKF will join the Knights of Columbus at STM. While fellow KC member Ted Lalonde has found another group.

“I’m joining the KC group in Slaughter, where I live,” he said.

Tron and Jennifer Levy, along with their sons Tim and Trace, attended the outdoor Mass. They have not decided on their next move but say the community of SLKF will always hold a special place for them. Their daughter, Jolie Dawn, was born at 25 weeks Dec. 26, 2015 and died June 5, 2016.

“The whole staff just supported us totally and losing a child at such a young age and to have the support of the church really helped us get through a very difficult time,” said Tron. “When we were putting our funeral together, the staff were so supportive and they understood and that’s why we care so much about this place.”

“We actually travel by LSU to come here so we don’t really know if we’re going to travel all the way over here to go to St. Thomas More or not,” said Jennifer.

The church will cease to operate as a parish on Sunday, Nov. 26, the Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time and all of its boundaries, registered parishioners, properties, assets and liabilities will be transferred to STM Church for the beginning of the season of Advent. Father Abello said he plans to use the entire Advent Season to help both communities come together as one through spiritual events and, of course, the breaking of bread.

“There’ll be opportunities for people to sit together and eat and just get to know each other,” he said. “And, the hope is as we journey through those four weeks of Advent, which are a time of preparation, that our hearts will be prepared at Christmas to birth something new, to birth that new parish together and I’m excited about that and to see people finally getting excited about it as well is really edifying.”

“I think it’s going to be a new thing that not many people have seen in the Baton Rouge area,” said Moran. “And, I think anything that we can do to bring everybody together and make a brand new church community, I think is going to be a positive change.”

**Q A**

As a person who likes to travel, what is one of the most favorite places you have visited and why is it your favorite?

As someone who does enjoy traveling, the excitement and energy of big cities like New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Houston, and Chicago are appealing. But, because I am also so very busy, the idea of crashing on the beach is equally inviting.

What type of dish do you like to cook the most?

Contrary to what many people think, I am not a cook and no one would want to eat anything I did cook. I am much better at setting the table and washing the dishes.

Tell us something most people may not know about you.

Growing up, both of my grandfathers had service stations and my cousins had a fried chicken business. I have pumped a lot of gas, checked the air pressure in a lot of tires and fried a lot of chicken in my life.
Will our lowered flag ever be lifted?

O n Oct. 2, Rand Cooper, a writer who contributes to Commonweal Magazine, one of our best lay Catholic publications, was bringing his six-year-old daughter her trumpet, which she had forgotten upon leaving for school. He noted that the school's American flag was already at half-mast to honor those killed the evening before in Las Vegas. He had a flash back to similar mass killings: 21 first-graders in nearby Sandy Hook, Connecticut, five years ago; nine classmates killed by a student at Umpqua Community College in Oregon exactly two years ago to the day; 16 college students killed and 30 wounded at the University of Texas, Austin, in 1966. He didn't recall, but could have, the Columbine High School killings in Littleton, Colorado in 1999 and the theater killings in Aurora, Colorado in 2012.

According to the Washington Post (Oct. 5), since 1965 in the U.S. the total for mass killings by gun fire is 494 victims, of whom 145 were children or teens. All seem to have been committed by deranged teenagers or adults. The only difference was the lethal possibilities of the weapons used. They have escalated from a hunting rifle in Austin in 1966 to a military model semi-automatic, modified to full-automatic, shooting nine rounds per second, used by the Las Vegas killer, Stephen Paddock.

We cannot cure all mental illness, but we could and should do something about the numbers killed and wounded by increasingly powerful, military-grade weapons. In Las Vegas the numbers killed and wounded were dreadful: 59 dead, 527 injured. The killer had 19 weapons in the hotel room from which he fired. His victims were unknown to him, ordinary people enjoying a music concert. We will never know his motives, because he ended his attack by killing himself. He left no suicide note. All a civilized nation can do is mourn the dead and take the preventive measures available to protect its citizens. In his Commonweal piece, Cooper reported a call to National Public Radio from a former army infantryman who claimed that “there’s only one reason these weapons exist, and that’s to kill masses of people.” He said that it was absurd for anyone except the military to have such weapons, adding, “There’s no way that should be allowed in a civilized country.”

I know of no other first world country that does allow civilians to have such military-grade weapons. Although fully automatic weaponry was supposed to be banned in the U.S. in the 1980s, it seems that they still can be purchased. According to Cooper, a shooting range called “Battle Field Vegas” in that city advertises itself as “offering over 400 full automatic machine guns ... Call for your free hotel shuttle pick up.”

It cannot be denied that we have a huge gun violence problem in this country. Gun control opponents are full of slogans like “Guns don’t kill people, criminals do.” Yes, but they have to get the weapons first. The gun control opponents argue back, “Most killings are done with stolen or black-market weapons.” Maybe, in one-to-one killings, of which we have had more than our share in Baton Rouge. However, the Washington Post article found that in most cases the weapons were legally purchased. The killer is crazy, but often does not have a criminal record that prevents him from getting the guns he uses.

Why can’t we, then, get the most dangerous weapons, which have no logical civilian use, out of the hands of the public? The Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to bear arms, but it was envisioning single-shot muskets. It didn’t guarantee every citizen his own canon. The government’s first duty is to protect the lives of its citizens. Why, then, has our government been so slow to do so? Apparently, only one senator, Chris Murphy (Dem.) of Vermont, dared name the cause of our elected legislators’ failure. The day after the Las Vegas Massacre he wrote, “It is absolutely infuriating that my colleagues in Congress are so afraid of the gun industry that they pretend there aren’t public policy responses to this epidemic ... It’s time for Congress to do something.”

I agree with Murphy. Selling more guns and training more citizens to use them will not prevent the crazies from killing even larger numbers of people. The least we can do is limit the weapons they must use to do so. I have owned a shotgun and used it to hunt birds. Louisiana is a sportsman’s paradise. But that isn’t what we are talking about here. As a nation and as individuals who call ourselves Christians, we are our brothers’ keepers. We have to protect the lives of the innocent, and that can only be done through those whom we send to Congress. They make the laws which our police forces enforce.

We need stricter gun control. Without it, Cooper’s prediction will come true: “As I saw that lowered flag this morning (at his daughter’s school), I had the grim and abject thought that maybe we should just keep it that way. Because one thing we can be sure of is that the next mass shooting is already locked and loaded.”

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

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. 1 | Br. Xavier Werneth SC | Rev. Leonard Kraus SJ | Dcn. James A. Little | Nov. 9 | Rev. Keun-Soo Lee |
| Nov. 2 | Dcn. Robert J. Kusch | Sr. Ann Lacour MSC | Rev. Johnson Kuriappily | Dcn. Francis M. Minor |
| Nov. 5 | Br. James Burns SC | Rev. J. Joel LaBauve | Sr. Adele Lambert CSJ | Dcn. Gary Mooney |
| Nov. 7 | Dcn. Ronald D. LeGrange | Br. Eldon Crifasi SC | Dcn. Larry J. Melancon | Nov. 11 | Rev. Matthew P. Lorrain |

FATHER CARVILLE is a retired priest in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and writes on current topics for The Catholic Commentator. He can be reached at johnnyecarville@gmail.com.
Close the distance not the gate

obel-prizing author, Toni Morrison, assessing the times, asks this question: “Why should we want to know a stranger when it is easier to estrange another? Why should we want to close the distance when we can close the gate?” Except this isn’t a question, it’s a judgment.

It’s a negative judgment on both our society and our churches. Where are our hearts really at? Are we trying more to close the distance between us and what’s foreign, or are we into closing gates to keep strangers estranged?

In fairness, it might be pointed out that this has always been a struggle. There hasn’t been a golden age within which people wholeheartedly welcomed the stranger. There have been golden individuals and even golden communities who were welcoming, but never society or church as a whole.

Much as this issue is so front and center in our politics today, as countries everywhere struggle with their immigration policies and with what to do with millions of refugees and migrants wanting to enter our country, I want to take Morrison’s challenge, to close the distance rather than close the gate, to our churches: Are we inviting in the stranger? Or, are we content to let the estranged distance rather than close the gate, to our wanting to enter their country, I want to talk to you about the immigration policies and with what to do with millions of refugees and migrants everywhere struggle with their immoral policies and the cost to offer them a home.

There has been a genuine invitation.

Sadly, I believe this is the case for so many people who are seemingly cold or indifferent to religion and our churches. Nobody has invited them in! And that was true too at the time of Jesus. Whole groups of people were seen as being indifferent and hostile to religion and were deemed simply as sinners. This included prostitutes, tax collectors, foreigners and criminals.

Jesus invited them in and many of them responded with a sincerity, contrition and devotion that shamed those who considered themselves true believers. For the so-called sinners, all that stood between them and entry into the kingdom was a genuine invitation.

Why aren’t you practicing a faith? No one has invited us!

Tell it like it is

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6:11-16)

Jesus said, “Fear is useless what you need is trust.” (Lk 8:39)

It is because I care that I present these truths to you. A good father wants to protect his children from all danger, visible and invisible. Yes, it’s scary; it’s upsetting I know, but it is the truth. I worry about all the high school kids who were taught by their science teacher never to believe anything you can’t prove scientifically. To that I say, just look at the slaughters that took place in Las Vegas.

There is evidence from all over the world, where Muslim Jihadist Terrorists have mercilessly massacred thousands, even while they are at worship. Is that evidence enough for you? Tell it like it is.

May the Lord be your strength and your joy.
COMING EVENTS

October 27, 2017

JP II Relic Tour – A first-class relic of St. John Paul II will travel through the Diocese of Baton Rouge Nov. 2 – 4. The schedule for public veneration will be Thursday, Nov. 2, 3:45 – 10 p.m.; Christ the King Church and Student Center at LSU; Friday, Nov. 3, 12:30 p.m. – 5 p.m., Our Lady of Mercy Church, 445 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge; Saturday, Nov. 4, 9:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m., Holy Rosary Church 44450 Hwy. 429, St. Amant.

RHS Reunion – A Redemptorist High School Legacy Homecoming will be held Saturday, Nov. 4, 1 – 5 p.m., at 11400 Lovett Road, Central. For more information, email rhsalumniandfriends@gmail.org.

Born to Run – Woman’s New Life Center will host Born to Run/Walk Saturday, Nov. 4 at North Boulevard Town Square. The runner sign-in begins at 7:30 a.m., with race day registration available, and the 1-mile fun run/walk starts at 8:30 a.m., and a 5K walk/run will begin at 9 a.m. There will be a post race “birth” day party with music, food and fun after the race. To register and for more information, visit borntorunbr.com or call 225-663-6470.

Chicken Dinners – Knights of Columbus Council 13632 of St. Joseph Cathedral, Fourth and Main Streets, Baton Rouge, will serve barbecue chicken dinners Sunday, Nov. 5, after all Masses. Tickets are $10 each and proceeds will help fund KC projects. For more information, email Grand Knight Brian Kimes at jwrmrimes@cox.net or call 225-324-8941.

SJV Mission – Father Cedric Pisegna CP, will present a mission, “Live With Passion,” Monday Nov. 6 – Wednesday, Nov. 8, 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., at St. Jean Vianney Church, 16166 S. Harrells Ferry Road, Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-383-2537.

Discalced Carmelites – The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites will meet Sunday, Nov. 12, 1:30 p.m., at Our Lady of Mercy Parish Activity Center in St. Gabriel’s Room, 444 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-343-3181 or 225-803-3391, or email robertwhit5e456@att.net.

SEE EVENTS PAGE 20

Classifieds

For help placing your classified ad, call 225-387-0983. All classified ads are prepaid. Credit cards are now accepted.
the band has together and the congregation gives them positive feedback.

“People come up to us in the parking lot and tell us how much they enjoyed it,” said Johnston.

The band said they rely on God to breathe life into the praise and worship time.

“We’re not full-time musicians, so you have to take it on faith that it will work out,” said Kevin Steed, guitarist and vocalist. “I don’t know that we’ve ever played the same way twice, but it works.”

“We practice in a certain way, but when you get to adoration, the Holy Spirit takes over and you can feel it,” said Averette.

Music speaks where words can’t,” said Fields.

Kae Bells, the “PowerPoint” member of the band, makes sure the song’s lyrics are displayed on screen as the band performs.

“The way the Spirit works is that the more the band goes into adoration, the more the Spirit builds,” said Bell. “There’s a crescendo on the last two songs.”

Bell, who is also a musician, said her role is one the congregation says they appreciate, because they have the words before them to help them mediate while they sing.

“To me, PowerPoint is the connection between the congregation and the band. If you want to individually engage in worship, this is the vehicle. This is not being done for them or to them. They are fully engaged in praise and worship. Knowing this setting provides that experience is rewarding for me,” said Bell.

Between each song, there is a moment of silence for reflection. Adoration ends with Deacon Musso blessing people with the monstrance.

“I do it in a unique way, I like to come to each aisle,” said Deacon Musso.

After leading the divine praises, Deacon Musso returned the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle, followed by the song, “Holy God, we praise thy name.”

Members of the congregation said adoration is something that elevates their spirits.

Efi Yurik said, “When I first heard about it, I was reluctant to come. I thought, ‘I don’t know about this, but I discovered how special this time is. It’s one of the only times I can talk to the Lord.’”

She used to bring her red tea cup poodle, Rusty, to adoration and he laid in her lap. Rusty became a certified pet therapy dog in 2002 through the Tiger Hats Pet Therapy Program and visited patients at Our Lady of the Lake Medical Center. He was 16½ years old when he passed away on June 17.

“Rusty enjoyed his adoration time,” said Yurik with misty eyes. She often thinks of him during adoration and feels as if he is there with her.

Lori Able said she enjoys the peace and serenity she feels after adoration.

“I love the band, they are so spiritual. The singers are ...,” and then she and Able sighed as they pondered the words to describe them together.

“It just gets to your soul,” Able said and she and Yurik nodded and smiled together in agreement.

As disciples of Jesus called to communicate the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, we are meant to be agents of the healing and unifying love of God in this world. But how do we communicate it if we ourselves don’t put love of God before all other rules and principles that guide our life (as Jesus instructs us to)? Put another way, we are agents, missionaries of the Gospel, to the extent that we respond to the great commandment: love of God with all that we are and a love of neighbor that reaches into the depths of human need. No matter what suffering and trials we are in the midst of in this life, our faith is that it all can and will work towards the good of those who love God and have been called according to his purpose.

The Gospel reading from the 31st Sunday of Ordinary Time reminds us of our posture, our position as disciples of Jesus: “the greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” We could say that while the greatest commandment is love of God and neighbor the most fundamental posture or orientation that this commandment demands is humility.

Humility is not something that can be produced or faked (which would be a form of self-exaltation) but instead comes from an honest confrontation with sin in one’s own life in contrast with the goodness and love of God. It is a recognition that all of things pride and self-reliance (instead of God-reliance) is the most harmful and destructive part of the self. To grow in loving communion with God and neighbor we must become docile to the Spirit and Lord of all, and recognize our need for the grace and power of Christ to be free from sin and death, and free from our many idols. It is from this position we become not lords of others, but loving servants of their deepest needs as missionaries of Christ.

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

vision includes uniting not only Catholics devoted to St. Sharbel in Baton Rouge but also uniting the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church with the Maronite Rite.

“God loves unity and so does St. Sharbel,” Father Jamhoury said Oct. 9 as he addressed Bishop Muench. “He will unite us under one tent, the tent of St. Sharbel church and under (the bishop’s) guidance and leadership, to pray to St. Sharbel and adore one God.

“Dear bishop, in welcoming us, my order and me, you are saying ‘yes’ to St. Sharbel, and he will never say ‘no’ to you in return.”

Father Jamhoury said as part of his mission to “unite the east and the west,” the retreat house will include small studios where people will be able to write icons, a tradition deeply rooted in the Eastern rite. He added that his hope is to have more of his brother priests come to live with him at St. Agnes and assist at St. Agnes.

A stunning statue of St. Sharbel was also unveiled during the blessing. The statue will eventually be moved to the shrine but for now has been moved to the chapel of Divine Mercy.

No timetable has been established for groundbreaking and construction of the shrine, but Father Sharbel was encouraging, acknowledging “it may take us time to reach our dream but we will never be abandoned halfway there. God is faithful to his people and children, and he will never, never walk halfway with us, but all the way.”

Also in attendance were Father Miled Tarabay, procurator of the LMO to the Vatican and Father Wissam Khoury from Lebanon.

“It was very emotional, a big step,” Father Jamhoury said. “It was beautiful, spiritual and peaceful. A really special feeling.”
EVENTS ▼
From page 18

Organ Concert – Karol Mossakowski will present an organ recital Thursday, Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m., at St. Algyius Church, 225 Stuart Ave., Baton Rouge. He will perform works of Johann Sebastian Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Cesar Frank, Louis Vierne, Maurice Durufle and an improvisation of a submitted theme. Free and open to the public. For more information, call 225-343-6657, ext. 3030.

Prayer Service – Central Pastor Area Association is hosting a Thanksgiving prayer service at St. Alphonsus Liguori Church, 14040 Greenwell Springs Road, Greenwell Springs, on Thursday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. The evening will consist of prayer, Scripture, music and song. The theme will be focused on giving thanks. Babysitting will be provided.

TASK ▼
From page 1

In the past several weeks, the diocese announced the closing of St. Louis King of France Church in Baton Rouge effective Nov. 26 and the closing of SLKF School effective June 30. Also, it was announced that St. Joan of Arc Church in Bayou Pigeon and its mission, St. Catherine Laboure in Bayou Sorrel, are closing Nov. 24.

“I think it’s gone as smoothly as it can go when it comes to closing,” Father Trey said. “Whether it was 200 people in the room or four people in the room (meeting at the churches), it’s been the same thing. It’s emotion, people are honest but no one has been mean.”

Father Paul Yi, administrator of St. Joan of Arc and St. Catherine Laboure, made the decision to close the churches “gut wrenching.”

“Just like a childhood home, a parish church such as Joan of Arc and St. Catherine Laboure, has so much meaning to us,” said Father Yi, who is also pastor at Ascension of Our Lord and St. Francis of Assisi churches in Donaldsonville. “The church is where we were spiritually reborn through baptism as we were surrounded by our parents, godparents, family and friends.

“We remember the moments of our lives when we go to this church to be healed and cleansed of regrets, guilt and sin. For such a house of God, a place of many memories, to no longer exist is so heart breaking. Hence this decision has been a gut wrenching one.”

Father Yi noted that in July task force members met with leaders of St. Joan and St. Catherine and that a pastoral need to reduce the Mass schedule was proposed. He said because of the priest shortage the diocese was not able to provide a full-time priest to serve the cluster parish.

Instead, he said neighboring churches were asked to provide Mass coverage and sacramental needs.

Parish leaders were informed the task force was going to make a recommendation to Bishop Muench after analyzing the “situation at the cluster parishes,” said Father Yi.

“While the discussions were difficult, the leaders expressed their sadness in the rapid decline in the life of the parish, both in the decreasing number of active parishioners and decline in financial support,” he said.

On Aug. 22, Father Yi said task force members informed the lay leaders of St. Joan and St. Catherine the recommendation was made to Bishop Muench, that the two churches cease existing as a parish, citing change in the demographics of the area, decline in the number of parishioners, financial hardship and shortage of priests.

“The (parish) leaders expressed their sadness and understanding regarding the future viability of (St. Joan of Arc and St. Catherine),” he said.

Father Yi added that in the coming months, Father Al Davidson, pastor at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Pierre Part whose boundaries will now include the boundaries of St. Joan of Arc, and task force members will assist in the transition.

At present no decision has been made regarding the future of Our Lady of Prompt Succor in White Castle, where Father Yi is also the administrator. Father Nelson said the auxiliary Pastoral Planning Subcommittee, which is charged with working through the mechanics of closing, merging or suppressing a parish, met four months ago. During that meeting Our Lady of Prompt Succor and other churches were addressed.

“In that conversation, it led the entire group myself included, to broaden our conversation about the entire geographical area, which we had been trying to do anyway,” Father Nelson said. “And so we hit the pause button on it because Mass coverage is now temporarily available with the once Mass we are doing (at Our Lady of Prompt Succor).”

He said Father Yi will remain temporary administrator at Our Lady of Prompt Succor.

Don't forget about Casey!

A child dreams of many things, from monsters to Mickey Mouse. But when they reach a certain age, they begin to dream of their future. Children like Casey are already dreaming of what they want to be when they grow up. We don't know what the future holds for Casey or any of the homeless children we serve, but the mission of our Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter is to give them hope and a chance to be all they can be. Their mothers want more for their children than a life of poverty. Like all moms, they have dreams of a brighter future. Over the next year, St. Vincent de Paul will serve over 400 homeless women and more than 200 homeless children. We are helping these homeless mothers to regain their self-sufficiency so they can make dreams come true, for themselves and their children.

Every year, through our annual Sweet Dreams effort, we ask people to pray for the women and children we serve. In addition, we need your financial support so we can continue to be here for people like Casey and her mother.

-------------------------------Please cut out and mail-------------------------------

Answer a Child's Prayer!

We are asking for your prayers; we can't do this work without them. Also, please consider making a gift that will help homeless women and children.

Yes, I want to provide hope!

☐ I promise to remember the homeless in my prayers.

☐ Also, my check for $_________ is enclosed.

Name: _____________________________

Address: __________________________

City: __________________ State: _____ Zip: ______

Mail your gift to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. You can also give online at www.svdpbr.org.

This Thanksgiving: Holiday Helpers Passes the Torch to St. Vincent de Paul

As most of us are planning our Thanksgiving menus, there are people who are wondering where their next meal is coming from. In our community, there are thousands of households where people are skipping meals just to make ends meet.

This year, Constable Reginald Brown and Holiday Helpers will pass the torch to St. Vincent de Paul. We will come together to serve a Thanksgiving meal at the Raising Cane’s River Center. We will also continue to serve our traditional Thanksgiving meal at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room.

St. Vincent de Paul is the only community kitchen that is open every day of the year, providing a hot lunch and a brown bag supper daily. This year, we will serve 250,000 meals. The lines at our dining room are long, and we can only meet the need with the help of generous people like you.

-------------------------------Please cut out and mail-------------------------------

Share Your Blessings This Thanksgiving!

Yes, I want to feed the hungry and homeless this Thanksgiving. My check for $_________ is enclosed.

Name: _____________________________

Address: __________________________

City: __________________ State: _____ Zip: ______

Mail your gift to: St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. You can also give online at www.svdpbr.org.
Coping as a family caregiver

Special to The Catholic Commentator

Individuals are born into the world requiring the care of their parents and other adult guardians to grow and thrive. These adult children, in turn, may end up providing care when their parents reach senior age or face an illness or disability.

Becoming a family caregiver frequently is a tough choice to make. It requires patience and time, and can be emotionally and physically taxing. An estimated 43.5 million adults in the United States have provided unpaid care to an adult or a child in the prior 12 months, according to the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP Public Policy Institute.

It’s not uncommon for caregivers of any age to feel stressed and burned out by the demands of caregiving. The Mayo Clinic says people who experience caregiver stress can be vulnerable to changes in their own health. Some signs of caregiver stress include:
- Feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried
- Feeling tired most of the time
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Becoming easily irritated or angry
- Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Having frequent headaches, bodily pain or other physical problems

Some caregivers even resort to drugs and alcohol to self-medicate, which can lead to further issues. To avoid the potential pitfalls of caregiver stress, individuals should always put their needs first and find ways to alleviate the added stress of caring for a loved one. These suggestions are just a start.

Don’t strive for perfection

It isn’t possible to maintain a patient attitude and get everything done perfectly each and every day. People are not perfect and mistakes will be made. Do not punish yourself if you lash out or simply need a break.

Eat healthy

As anyone who has dealt with a hungry toddler can attest, failure to eat well and frequently can result in an emotional meltdown. Be sure to always make time for nutritious meals. This will help keep up energy stores and enable you to better cope with caregiver stress.

Pay attention to mood changes

Anxiety or depression can sneak up on you when you least expect it. Ask for help if you feel your tasks are becoming too overwhelming. Seek the help of a doctor if changes in mood, sleeping patterns, appetite, and the like become noticeable.

Take frequent breaks

Getting a break from caregiving and setting aside time for yourself can increase patience levels and the ability to bounce back from stress. Whenever possible, have a friend or another relative step in for you so you get a break. Explore resources available for professional aides to come and take some of the responsibilities off of your shoulders.

Being a caregiver can be a rewarding, but challenging role to play. Caregivers should keep their health a priority.

Where you will enjoy the companionship of good friends, the convenience of services and the independence you desire to make your golden years truly golden.

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Assistive devices help people remain mobile

Special to The Catholic Commentator

Disabilities affect people from all walks of life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that around 53 million Americans have a disability of some kind. Of these people, 33 million have a disability that makes it difficult for them to carry out some daily activities. Statistics Canada states that, as of 2012, 13.7 percent of the population age 15 years or older reported having a disability that could impact daily life.

The National Institutes of Health state that 2.2 million people in the U.S depend on assistive technology and rehabilitative devices, which include tools, equipment or products that can help people with disabilities get around more easily. These devices may be as small as magnifying glasses for reading to as large as wheelchairs.

Dementia is a general term used to define a decline in mental ability severe enough that it can interfere with daily life. Dementia presents itself through various symptoms, and memory loss alone is not enough to both dementia sufferers and their caregivers.

People with disabilities may need assistive devices to reclaim some measure of their independence. For example, millions of people rely on wheelchairs or walking aids to get around. These are called assistive technology and rehabilitative devices available for purchase.

People with disabilities may need assistive devices to reclaim some measure of their independence. For example, millions of people rely on wheelchairs or walking aids to get around. These are called assistive technology and rehabilitative devices available for purchase.

Dementia is not a disease but a term used to describe a wide range of symptoms. The words “senility” and “dementia” often are incorrectly used interchangeably. However, serious mental decline is not a normal part of aging. Dementia presents itself through various symptoms, and memory loss alone is not enough to both dementia sufferers and their caregivers.

Dementia is a general term used to define a decline in mental ability severe enough that it can interfere with daily life, offers the Alzheimer’s Association.

Alzheimer’s disease is one of the more prominent forms of dementia, but there are many additional types of dementia that also can cause both physical and cognitive alterations. Understanding the complexity of dementia can be beneficial to both dementia sufferers and their caregivers. Dementia is a general term used to define a decline in mental ability severe enough that it can interfere with daily life, offers the Alzheimer’s Association.

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia. Dementia is not a disease but a term used to describe a wide range of symptoms. The words “senility” and “dementia” often are incorrectly used interchangeably. However, serious mental decline is not a normal part of aging. Dementia presents itself through various symptoms, and memory loss alone is not enough to both dementia sufferers and their caregivers. Dementia is a general term used to define a decline in mental ability severe enough that it can interfere with daily life, offers the Alzheimer’s Association.

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Carefully consider second career

Special to The Catholic Commentator

The days when professionals would spend their entire professional lives with a single firm are largely a thing of the past. In fact, many people not only switch companies multiple times before retirement, but some even switch professions before retiring.

As exciting as it can be to pursue a new career, men and women over 50 know that such a decision is not without risk. While younger professionals with few obligations can often handle bumps in the road on their way to a second career, older professionals making a similar move often must consider the potential effects such a pursuit might have on their families, finances and futures, including their retirements. But as difficult as it may seem to pursue a second career after your 50th birthday, there are steps men and women over 50 can take when pursuing a new career to ensure their second act is as successful as the first.

* Decide what you want, and not just what you want to do. The desire to pursue a second career no doubt stems from more than just dissatisfaction with a current profession. Many people switch jobs or even careers because they find their current careers too demanding, leaving little time for family or hobbies that have nothing to do with work. If what you really want is more time at home or more time to pursue a particular hobby, then keep this in mind when looking for a second career, and make sure that career won’t demand too much of your time. For example, if your goal in finding a new career is to get more work-life balance, then starting your own business, which can require long hours at the outset and even after the business has established itself, might not be for you. But if what you want is a more challenging career and to be your own boss, then you will likely find the cost of achieving that goal, even if that cost is more demands on your time, is worth it.

* Assess your skillset. Professionals over 50 have lots to offer, but it’s still important for such men and women to make an honest assessment of their skillset and find a career in which those skills are transferable. Some men and women might want to pursue a second career that will make little to no use of their skillset, and that’s perfectly alright. But extra schooling might be necessary in such situations, and going back to school often times requires a considerable commitment of both time and money. For those who simply want to put their existing skills to use in a different field or environment, assess those skills and look for lines of work and such skills can be a considerable asset when pursuing a second career, especially when those skills have been assessed and can be applied to a new profession.

* Make a trial run. Nowhere is it’s about taking control

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Many men and women over 50 have turned their personal passions into successful second careers.
Today’s young professionals hear about the importance of saving for retirement seemingly from the moment they are hired. In addition to discussions with human resources personnel about employer-sponsored retirement plans, young professionals are learning about the importance of saving for retirement thanks to the abundance of financial-planning advertisements on television, the radio and the internet.

Older workers may not have been so lucky, and many may find themselves trying to play catch up as retirement age draws closer. While it’s important to begin saving for retirement as early as possible, late bloomers whose retirement dates are nearing can still take steps to secure their financial futures.

- Pay down debts. Eliminating debt is good for men and women of all ages, but especially so for those nearing retirement. Substantial debt may delay your retirement and can greatly reduce your quality of life during retirement. If you still have substantial debt, eliminate that debt before you start saving additional money for retirement. Once your debt slate has been wiped clean, you can then increase your retirement contributions.

- Eliminate unnecessary expenses. If your retirement savings are low (many financial advisors now advise men and women that they will need at least 60 percent of their pre-retirement income each year they are retired), start cutting back on unnecessary expenses and re-allocate that money toward retirement saving. Cutting out luxury items, such as vacations to exotic locales or country club memberships, is one way to save money. But don’t overlook the simpler ways to save, such as canceling your cable subscription or dining at home more often.

- Downsize your home. Many empty nesters downsize their homes as retirement nears, and doing so can help you save a substantial amount of money. If the kids no longer live at home or if you simply have more space than you will need after retirement, downsize to a smaller, less expensive home. Monitor the real estate market before you decide to downsize so you can be sure to get the best deal on your current home.

- Take on some additional work. While you may have long felt you would slowly wind down in the years immediately preceding retirement, taking on some additional work outside of your current job is a great way to save more for retirement and perhaps even lay the foundation for a post-retirement career. Workers over the age of 50 can be invaluable resources to startups or other businesses looking for executives who have been there, done that. Look for part-time jobs that seek such experience. Even if the initial jobs don’t bowl you over financially, part-time consultant work in retirement can make up for lost retirement savings and may even make your retirement years more fulfilling.

Men and women on the verge of retirement can take many steps to grow their retirement savings and make their golden years that much more enjoyable.

Although many begin preparing for their retirement at an early age, others, because of circumstances, are not as fortunate. Yet, there is hope for those late bloomers that with careful planning and following proven financial steps, their financial futures will be secure.
New friendships smooth transition after major move

Special to The Catholic Commentator

Downsizing and other life changes often find seniors leaving their comfort zones to move to new neighborhoods or regions of the country. It can be difficult to leave those comfort zones behind, especially when it means saying goodbye to close friends or family members. Establishing new social circles as a senior can be challenging. But with a little effort and the right attitude, seniors can meet new people and enjoy the excitement that comes with new friendships.

• Join a club. If you have a particular hobby or interest, rekindle it in your new location. Find a local gardening club, church-sponsored organization or fitness center where you can meet like-minded men and women. Ask the real estate agent who helped you relocate to make suggestions on where to find community information and read community notices in the local newspaper.
• Get a dog. Dogs make great companions inside of the house and also serve as an ice breaker when you are outdoors. Take plenty of walks and take advantage of opportunities for conversation when people come up to you to inquire about your dog. Explain your situation and you may make some new friends along the way.
• Volunteer your time. Many people make new friends through volunteering. Volunteer and you’re likely to meet people who share the same interests as you. Sign up with a favorite charity or volunteer at nonprofit events and look for familiar faces. Start talking to those people you meet again and again.

Remember With Us

Every year, Roselawn hosts an outdoor Mass to observe All Saints Day at an open space, called Crucifix Island, weather permitting. Join us Monday, October 31st at 3 p.m., along with families and friends for a day of remembrance, fellowship and flowers.

Silk flowers available at our cemetery office.

Simple and natural ways to lower blood pressure

Special to The Catholic Commentator

High blood pressure is a big problem. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly one in three adults in the United States has high blood pressure. In Canada recently, slightly less than 18 percent of Canadians ages 12 and older reported being diagnosed with high blood pressure.

While such figures might be frightening, Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that there are some simple and natural ways for people to lower their high blood pressure.

• Opt for heart-healthy foods. Instead of foods that are high in sodium, eat a diet that is rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean proteins. Check labels before buying prepared foods at the grocery store, as many such foods are high in sodium.
• Look for foods that contain probiotics. Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that studies have linked foods that contain probiotics to healthy blood pressure. Probiotics are consumable live bacteria, and while studies regarding the relationship between probiotics and blood pressure...
How to address frequent feelings of coldness

Special to The Catholic Commentator

As people age, many report feeling chilly even when the temperature outside is warm. Studies have shown that older people are more likely to have slightly colder body temperatures than their younger counterparts. Feeling cold can be the result of the natural aging process, or it may be symptomatic of a medical condition. Understanding the reasons behind chilliness can help people take proper action.

Aging adults can feel cold for various reasons. As people age, their metabolisms slow down, leading to decreased energy. During times of low energy output, one can feel cold. The American Geriatric Society Foundation for Health suggests that individuals with slower metabolisms may not produce enough heat from their own bodies to stay warm.

Circulation issues also may be a concern. As people age, the walls of their blood vessels may lose their elasticity, negatively affecting circulation as a result. Vasoreceptors also may no longer be as quick to direct blood vessels in order to constrict to keep body temperature up.

Inadequate fat storage may also be a contributor. Older people generally have less subcutaneous fat stores and muscle mass, both of which can insulate their bodies from cold weather. As a result, they may have trouble regulating body temperature. Exercise and healthy eating may help remedy this situation.

Certain medical conditions or medications may be to blame, too. SUNY Upstate Medical University offers that some drugs, like beta blockers, can decrease heart rate, which can reduce circulation to the extremities. High cholesterol levels can impair blood flow. Hypothyroidism, or an underperforming thyroid, also can affect a person’s ability to regulate body temperature. It’s imperative that people speak with their doctors to rule out any medical conditions or medication issues that may be contributing to their feelings of being cold.

The following are some additional steps aging men and women can take to stay warm.

- Make sure you are at a healthy weight for your gender and age.
- Get the cardiovascular system pumping by exercising more.
- Layer clothing until you feel comfortable so that you are not adjusting the thermostat as frequently.
- Wear a vest to keep your chest warm.
- Invest in wool socks and blankets, as wool will help wick away moisture from the body.

Many senior citizens report that they feel chilly even when the weather is warm. There are several steps men and women can take to stay warm.

Feeling cold is usually nothing out of the ordinary when a person gets older. Fortunately, there are ways that older men and women can stay warm.

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Did you know?

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each week women who are 65 years or older, are generally fit and have no limiting health conditions should combine at least two days of muscle-strengthening exercises with at least two hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.

Women capable of more strenuous cardiovascular activity can substitute one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity with their two and a half hours per week of more moderate-intensity exercise. The CDC notes that distinguishing between moderate-intensity exercise and vigorous-intensity exercise is pretty simple.

Women can use a 10-point scale in which sitting is zero and working as hard as is physically possible is 10. Moderate-intensity aerobic activity will make women breathe harder and elevate their heart rates, but should not make them feel completely drained at the end of a workout.

These activities will register as a five or six on the 10-point scale. Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity includes those exercises that women would deem a seven or eight on the 10-point scale. Such activities should elevate the heart rate considerably and get women breathing hard enough that they will be unable to say more than a few words without pausing to catch their breath. No two women are the same and age must be considered when developing a healthy exercise regimen.

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Many people are quick to think of growing older in a negative light. Although there certainly are some side effects of aging that one may wish to avoid, people may find that the benefits of growing older outweigh the negatives.

Seniors are a rapidly growing segment of the population. In the United States, the Administration on Aging states that the older population — persons 65 years or older — numbered 46.2 million in 2014 (the latest year for which data is available). Statistics Canada reports that, in July 2015, estimates indicated that there were more persons aged 65 years and older in Canada than children aged 0 to 14 years for the first time in the country’s history. Nearly one in six Canadians (16.1 percent) was at least 65 years old.

With so many people living longer, it’s time to celebrate the perks of getting older rather than the drawbacks. Here are some great benefits to growing old.

- Higher self-esteem: The insecurities of youth give way as one ages, and older people have less negativity and higher self-esteem. A University of Basel study of people ranging in ages from 18 to 89 found that regardless of demographic and social status, the older one gets the higher self-esteem climbs. Qualities like self-control and altruism can contribute to happiness.
- Financial perks: Seniors are entitled to discounts on meals, museum entry fees, movies and other entertainment if they’re willing to disclose their ages. Discounts are available through an array of venues if one speaks up. Seniors also can enjoy travel perks, with slashed prices on resorts, plane tickets and more. The U.S. National Park Service offers citizens age 62 and older lifetime passes to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites for just $10 in person ($20 online or via mail).

Growing older can hold a stigma of negativity and doom but with the proper planning and positive attitude retirement can be the most exciting time of your life. It should be a time of celebration and not of despair.

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Proper planning allows retirees to punch their passports

Special to The Catholic Commentator

Though a transient lifestyle is something few people aspire to during much of their lives, come retirement, the idea of staying in a place for only a short time has more appeal.

According to a recent study from the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, 36 percent of baby boomers want to spend their retirements traveling. Many are succeeding in doing just that, as a study from the luxury travel network Virtuoso found that today’s seniors spent an average of just more than $11,000 per year on travel. That was more than any other generation, highlighting just how much older adults like to get out and explore the world.

Retirees who fear they cannot afford to travel can explore the various ways for seniors to cut costs and still satisfy their wanderlust during retirement.

1. Take advantage of age-related discounts.

Some adults prefer to hide their ages, but when it comes time to travel during retirement, honesty is the best policy. Many businesses that cater to travelers offer discounts to seniors. Car rental agencies, hotels, travel agencies and cruise lines may offer direct discounts to customers 65 and older, while membership in organizations such as AAA and AARP may make seniors eligible for additional discounts. Discounts on lodging and airfare might net the biggest savings, but even discounts on various smaller expenses can add up to big savings.

2. Don’t overlook travel agencies.

While many prospective travelers’ first instincts are now to visit various travel websites in an effort to find the most affordable trips, it’s important that travelers not overlook travel agencies when planning trips. Travel websites, though a valuable resource, only list the hotels and airlines that agree to be included on their sites. While many participate, some do not, and those that do may instead work independent of travel websites or partner with travel agencies. Travel agencies have access to the latest information, and many specialize in certain countries, knowing all the attractions visitors to their countries want to see. Travel agencies may offer packages that include admissions to popular attractions, which can be more affordable than planning a trip à la carte.

3. Travel as part of a group.

Group travel may not appeal to everyone, but it should appeal to older, budget-conscious travelers. Retirees who are uncomfortable driving at home will likely be even less comfortable driving in foreign countries where the rules of the road are not the same. Traveling in groups, whether it’s with a retirement community, religious organization or another program, can save travelers substantial amounts of money. Many hotels and tourist attractions offer steep discounts for group tours, which can even be arranged through travel agencies. A hidden benefit of signing up for a group tour is the chance to meet new people and develop new relationships with fellow globetrotters.

Many working professionals hope to spend the bulk of their retirement traveling the globe. While such a goal is potentially costly, there are various ways to save and still see the world.
Dementia

From page 3B

to lead to a dementia diagnosis. Dementia can affect thinking and social abilities, but the Mayo Clinic notes that some demen-
tias may be reversible. The following are some common symptoms of dementia:
• Trouble communicating or finding words.
• Difficulty completing complex tasks.
• Challenges with planning and organization.
• Episodes of confusion and disorientation.
• Memory loss, which is often noticed by a third party.
• Personality changes that can include agitation, anxiety, inappropriate behavior and even hallucinations.

Apart from Alzheimer’s disease, which is a progressive disorder most common in people age 65 and older, there are other types of dementia. The second most common is called “vascular dementia.” This results from damage to vessels that supply blood to the brain. This damage can be the result of stroke, smoking and other blood vessel conditions. Brain imaging can often detect blood vessel problems implicated in vascular dementia.

Dementia with Lewy bodies, or DLB, is another dementia that laymen may mistake for Alzheimer’s disease. The Alzhei-
mer’s Association notes that people with DLB often have not only memory loss and cognitive problems common in Alzhei-
mer’s, but they also display initial or early symptoms such as sleep disturbances, well-formed visual hallucinations, slowness, gait imbalance or other Parkinsonian movement features, which can lead to misdiagnosis.

If physicians suspect dementia was caused by various factors, a person may be diagnosed with mixed dementia.

Unfortunately, there are no cures for progressive dementias that are linked to plaque tangles in the brain and changes in the way the brain processes the protein alpha-synuclein. Patience and various medications may be needed to help those with dementia live fuller lives. Cholinesterase inhibitors are mainstays in dementia treatment. These medications prevent the breakdown of acetylcholine, a chemi-
cal messenger important for learning and memory. Acetylcholine supports communication among nerve cells by keeping acetylcholine levels high. Physical therapy and cognitive therapy may be used in con-
junction with medication to assist those with various dementias.

Helping individuals with dementia remain comfortable is a priority for caregivers, and understanding the symptoms and treatments can help caregivers make patients and loved ones as comfortable as possible. Patients and loved ones as com-
fortable as possible.
The ability to perform everyday tasks is something many people take for granted. But as men and women approach or exceed retirement age, many may start to struggle with chores and tasks they have performed for decades.

Physical limitations are a common side effect of aging. But such limitations do not have to prove too big a hurdle for seniors to clear. In fact, there are many ways for seniors to simplify everyday tasks while maintaining their independence.

- **Embrace technology.** Even the proudest Luddites cannot deny technology’s potential to make seniors’ lives easier. Seemingly simple tasks like shopping for groceries and vacuuming a home can be difficult for seniors with dwindling or limited mobility. But seniors with Internet access in their homes can order their groceries online and then pick them up in-store or have them delivered, saving them the trouble of walking around the store. With regard to vacuuming, autonomous vacuum cleaners have removed the need to use traditional vacuum cleaners. Certain autonomous vacuums employ sensors to detect dirty spots on the floor, and these vacuums can even be programmed to clean the home while residents are out of the house.

- **Upgrade bathrooms.** Tasks associated with personal hygiene also tend to be taken for granted until they become difficult. But a few simple bathroom alterations can help seniors navigate the bathrooms in their homes so they can maintain their personal hygiene without fear of injury. Grab bars can be installed on shower walls so seniors can safely get in and out of their showers and bathtubs. Such bars are both effective and inexpensive, and some do not even require any drilling to install. Specialty grab bars, tub grips and tub transfer benches are just a few additional products that can make bathing easier for seniors who have lost or are starting to lose some of their physical strength.

- **Get “smart” on the road.** Seniors who are experiencing mild difficulty driving can make getting about town that much easier by plugging their smartphones into their vehicles or making use of the various apps that have become standard in modern vehicles. For example, the maps app on a smartphone can be connected to a car and direct seniors to their destinations, saving them the trouble of remembering all the ins and outs of how to get to a particular destination. Seniors also can employ apps to help them find their vehicles should they forget exactly where they parked in crowded parking lots. Such apps can increase seniors’ comfort levels on the road while helping them maintain their independence.

- **Downsize.** Whether downsizing to a smaller home or simply downsizing a lifestyle, seniors may find that living smaller is akin to living simpler. Empty nesters may find they no longer need several bedrooms in their homes, and moving into smaller homes can reduce their daily workloads while also clearing out clutter that can make performing everyday chores more difficult. Men and women accustomed to hustle and bustle may also find that cutting back on professional and/or personal commitments gives them more energy for everyday activities while enriching the commitments they continue to maintain.

Aging men and women may find that technology helps them simplify their everyday lives. Aging men and women can employ various strategies to simplify their lives and maintain their independence well into their golden years.
Grandparent-grandchild relationships healthy for senior citizens

Special to The Catholic Commentator

In the not-so-distant past, extended families were the norm, with multiple generations residing on the same street if not in the same house.

Today the family unit is largely an amalgam of different situations. The rise of two-income families has pressured parents into finding childcare situations. Quite often grandparents once again step in to offer guidance and support for youngsters. This can be a good thing for both the grandparents and the grandchildren.

Although a bevy of psychological research focuses on parent-child relationships, new evidence points to the benefits of the grandchild-grandparent relationship as well. Close relationships between these different demographics is often a sign of strong familial ties.

A study from researchers at Boston College discovered that emotionally close ties between grandparents and adult grandchildren reduced depressive symptoms in both groups. Research at the University of Oxford among English children from ages 11 to 16 found that close grandparent-grandchild relationships were associated with benefits including fewer emotional and behavioral problems and fewer difficulties with peers.

Adult and grandchildren alike benefit from relationships with their elders. Grandparents can provide a connection and exposure to different ideas while providing a link to family history and knowledge regarding traditions and customs not readily available elsewhere.

Nurturing grandparent-grandchild experiences may be easy for families where grandparents live in the same house or close by. For others, it may take some effort. The following are some ways to facilitate time spent together.

• Schedule regular family reunions or get-togethers. Host or plan multi-generation events that bring the family together and expose children to various members of their family.

• Promote one-on-one time. Have grandchildren spend time with grandparents in intimate settings. Alone time can be good for both and offers each undivided attention. A meal at a restaurant or time spent doing a puzzle or craft can be interesting to both generations involved.

• Video chat when possible. If distance makes frequent visits challenging, use technology to bridge that gap. Send photos, letters and electronic communications. Tech-savvy grandparents can use Skype or Facetime to stay in touch and speak one-on-one with their grandchildren.

• Share skills with each other. Either generation can play teacher to the other. Grandparents may have certain skills, such as baking, sewing or wood crafts, they can impart that may not be readily taught today. Children can help grandparents navigate computers, video games or sports activities. Grandchildren can help grandparents feel younger, and grandchildren can learn new experiences from their grandparents.

• Lose weight. People with high blood pressure who are carrying a few extra pounds should know that research indicates extra weight can cause injury to the heart. Dropping those pounds, especially through physical activity that can boost heart health, can help men and women lower their blood pressure.

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