HUMBLE AND HUMAN

Youth learn life lessons at WYD

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Hundreds of youth from around the Diocese of Baton Rouge learned about humility from the Blessed Mother, then walked with her to the foot of the cross during Diocesan World Youth Day on Oct. 29 at St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge.

This year’s pilgrimage, themed “Humble and Human,” was based on Luke 1:48: “He who is mighty has done great things for me,” also known as part of Mary’s “Magnificat.”

The event began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert W. Muench, who told the youth they were continuing a tradition started by St. John Paul II with the institution of International World Youth Day in 1985.

“The church has been to different places around the world to honor you (youth) and to let you know you have a place here and now, not in some distant future,” said the bishop. “You are important to God, you are important to the future of the church.”

Bishop Muench noted when the religious authorities asked Jesus what the greatest commandment of the law is in order to “trip him up,” he used it as a teaching moment. He told them the greatest commandments are to “Love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your mind,” and “to love your neighbor as yourself.”

The bishop said if the youth strive to do this, they will be following the law of love.

Asking the youth how many of them play sports, he said athletes understand that “if you don’t give up, you get better.”

He said the same principles apply to living out the faith.

“God wants you to participate, individually and collectively,” the bishop said.

After Mass, the pilgrims heard from speaker Kathleen Lee, who looked at “What does humility mean?”

Paying dividends – Although Catholic school education might stretch the family budget, the sacrifice is well worth the investment, superintendent of Catholic Schools Dr. Melanie Verges said. For the story, please turn to page 9. A chart listing the tuition for all of the Catholic schools is on page 19.

Reform package may help state lower incarceration rate

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

A new criminal justice reform package that allowed for the release of more than 1,900 inmates Nov. 1 may help Louisiana shed its title as the incarceration capital of the world. The Justice Reinvestment Package, which was adopted by the Legislature during its spring session and signed by Gov. John Bel Edwards in June, is aimed at reducing Louisiana’s prison population by 10 percent and saving $252 million during the next 10 years. Seventy percent of the savings would be reinvested into programs and policies to reduce recidivism and support victims of crime as well as bring sentences and rehabilitation programs in line with other southern states.

According to the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force, the state has 816 people in prison for every 100,000 residents, which is nearly double the U.S. national average. Also, the state sends people to prison for drug, property and other offenses.

See related story page 11

Part 1 of a series

See justice page 23
St. Teresa of Calcutta

By Ann Boltin

Baton Rouge was visited by Mother Teresa several times from 1985-1987 when she sought to establish her order, the Missionaries of Charity, in our city. Bishop Stanley J. Ott had written to Mother Teresa to request she open a House of Ministry to serve unwed mothers and their babies in Baton Rouge. She responded by sending four of her sisters to live in the convent at St. Agnes Church and minister to the “poorest of the poor with the greatest of love.”

Mother Teresa arrived in Baton Rouge to much fanfare on June 26, 1985. She was greeted by Bishop Ott at the airport and then escorted to North Baton Rouge where she was in attendance for the dedication of the Hospanna House, a home for unwed mothers and their children where she declared that much good work was being done by the directors there. She then announced that her sisters would establish their ministry at St. Agnes where the facilities would best accommodate their mission. While in town she set to work getting her sisters settled in their new convent. Her last stop was an impromptu visit to the Louisiana Legislature where she addressed the state leaders and received a standing ovation.

Her second visit to Baton Rouge began with a trip to Cuba where she had received permission from Fidel Castro to open a home for the poor there. She arrived in Baton Rouge to check in on her sisters and visit with Bishop Ott and discuss the possibility of opening a shelter for the homeless. Word quickly spread that she was in town and people flocked to St. Agnes to catch a glimpse of the holy woman. Attendance at the 6 a.m. Mass the following day was filled to capacity by those who wished to pray with her and hear her speak. She left Baton Rouge and traveled to Lafayette where she was greeted by 12,000 people in the Cajun Dome. She announced her intention to establish another House in North Baton Rouge where she was greeted by 12,000 people filled to capacity by those who wished to pray for the opening of the shelter.

Awake for Christ

By Dina Dow

“Stay awake and be ready! For you do not know on what day your Lord will come.” – Mt. 24:42

The final weeks in Ordinary Time are upon us. The readings for the 32nd and 33rd Sundays indicate two very important aspects of Christianity: wisdom and watchfulness.

Wisdom

True wisdom is from God. Simply put, it guides the faithful into determining whether something is good or evil. The ability to make wise decisions stems from a consistent prayer life, a complete trust in God and an openness to the truth. The Book of Wisdom explains that Wisdom is “resplendent (magnificent) and unfading” indicating a level of truth so prevailing that it never goes away. This is God’s truth.

What is this “resplendent” truth for Christians? The truth lies in the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. St. Paul explains in his Letter to the Thessalonians that we are called to have faith in Jesus Christ, who lived, suffered, died and rose for us, thus destroying the power of death for the restoration of the body and soul. We are called to hope in the promise of the resurrection through Jesus that we, indeed, will rise again because of our faithfulness. Fortifying these is love, which extends from the sacred heart of Jesus into the missionary activity of the church.

Watchfulness

The Gospel builds upon the realities of wisdom. Those who are wise are also watchful. St. Matthew stresses the faithful to “stay awake, for you do not know what day the Lord will come.” What does this mean? It means what few think about…mortality. It is a reality that we will all come to know. Our lifespan is uncertain. Are we spiritually prepared for the moment when we are called from this life into eternity? Are we ready to meet Jesus today?

As we pray during Mass, “we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ...” we express the happiness in anticipation of this moment, as we live fully each day in service and sacrifice for others. The “light of our lamp” is our faith shining brightly. The “oil” which fuels the light is the good work we do for others. Thus, we participate in the work of ministry, same as the “worthy wife” who uses her hands to bring goodness to the poor and needy.

Talents

The result of wisdom and readiness is the ability to use what God has given to each. The parable of the talents explains the pure gifts in which we are entrusted with by God for his glory to love and serve others. Through this, we prepare for his coming, when he will ask, “What have you done for me?” We must be prepared to answer this from the heart. Ask yourself, “What have I done for Jesus, today? Is what I am doing leading others to him? Is what I am doing leading me to life-giving?” May God ready our hearts to remain steadfast for our king is drawing near.

Dow is the director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
St. Vincent takes reins for dinner

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

A long standing Thanksgiving tradition that has spanned three decades will be flying under the banner of the St. Vincent de Paul Society beginning this year.

The organization is taking the reins from Holiday Helpers, which has been serving nearly 1,000 Thanksgiving meals annually for 30 years. Regina Brown and a small band of volunteers who have established and nurtured the tradition as it hoppedscotch its way across three different hotels in Baton Rouge before settling in at the Raising Cane's River Center are aging, and Brown admitted they all realized the time had come for a change.

But he only knew he had to look to his good friend and one time protégé Michael Acaldo, executive director at St. Vincent de Paul, for assistance.

“We reached a point where our members decided it would be best to pass the torch on to an interested service agency,” said Brown, a parishioner at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge. “The only person that came to mind was (Acaldo) because we wanted to make sure (the dinner) would continue. When we talked to Michael, he gratefully said, ‘We will accept that task.’

Acaldo, whose own St. Vincent de Paul Thanksgiving dinner serves more than 600 homeless or downtrodden men and women annually, said his organization is privileged to take on such an important responsibility.

“To be entrusted with this is an honor for St. Vincent de Paul,” said Acaldo, who calls Brown his hero and mentor. “We will continue to do what we are doing, but I think for St. Vincent de Paul it gives us another opportunity to fulfill our mission by reaching people we cannot right now.”

So instead of 600 meals, St. Vincent will now be responsible for serving close to 1,600 dinners with all of the trimmings.

Acaldo said there is always a need for more canned yams and green beans. Financial donations help fill in the void to complete the dinners.

“Brown said ‘don’t’ worry about anything. I am going to take care of it,’” Acaldo said. “What he has done is getting people who have contributed to Holiday Helpers to support St. Vincent de Paul. In addition to continuing having people support what we do, we need the community as a whole to continue. He has done a wonderful job helping us to establish those relationships.”

As an added touch, Acaldo said the 13 surviving members of Brown’s original 16 volunteers are being invited to the River Center where, rather than serving, they will be served. He said it is a way to pay tribute to those individuals who sacrificed 30 years of their own Thanksgiving celebrations so that others, including the elderly, the lonely, the needy and the homeless may have a memorable holiday.

“We are keeping Holiday Helpers alive,” he said. “And the reason we are is that (Brown) and the members of his community came together to do something very remarkable.

“Holiday Helpers will be remembered as revered community members who put their faith into action and made a difference. This is something that is really right, something that should be celebrated.”

The traditional 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. hours will be maintained at St. Vincent de Paul, with Bishop Robert W. Muench scheduled to offer the blessing.

November 10, 2017

The Catholic Commentator

CCF

From page 2

of Ministry for her sisters in Lafayette.

Born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhia in Albania in 1910, Mother Teresa made her vows in 1929 as a Sister of Loreto and took the name Teresa after St. Teresa of Lisieux. While on a train from Calcutta to Darjeeling in 1946 she heard an order from God to leave her convent and go and live and work among the poor. She received permission two years later from the Vatican and became the first Roman Catholic nun to live and work outside a convent in 300 years. She established her order, the Missionaries of Charity, in 1950.

Her work for and among the poor earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Mother Teresa died in 1997 and was canonized by Pope Francis on Sept. 4, 2016.

The Missionaries of Charity continue the work started by St. Teresa in Baton Rouge at St. Agnes with a soup kitchen, a shelter for women and children and ministry to the women’s prison at St. Gabriel. The sisters seek to honor her mission to “Do ordinary things with extraordinary love.”

Boltin is the director of the Archives Department for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

1101160.2

State Farm, Home Office, Bloomington, IL
Youth should exercise caution when joining organization

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

For young people, finding a group or community of peers to accept them and celebrate with them a new chapter in their life is important. This is particularly true on college campuses, where a myriad of social and cultural opportunities can be exciting for teenagers transitioning into adulthood. Many search for a community to belong to, and their choices can enhance the experience, or in some cases, present risks that can have lifelong consequences. In extreme cases, such as in the case of Maxwell Gruver, a freshman student at LSU who recently died in a fraternity hazing incident in which 10 people were arrested, the consequences are deadly.

At other times, it can lead to psychological scars caused by the person’s dignity being stripped away.

Olivia Gulino, associate director for youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, and Joe Bass, youth ministry project coordinator, emphasized the importance for youth to find a community, fraternity or sorority that respects and supports their values and saying “no” when they don’t.

“I think that fitting in and belonging is something that anyone craves, but especially young people in a new environment such as college,” said Gulino.

Bass said, “There’s a culture that values the college experience. Unfortunately, sometimes the college experience includes things that don’t value the growth of the human person.”

Reflecting on his own personal experiences at LSU, Bass said with the college experience comes some behaviors that involve elements of risk, and that is considered a cultural norm.

College presents many options, which may meet the student’s perceived sense of freedom that “you have all these choices, you can pick what you want to do, pick who you want to be and pick whom you want to be with,” according to Gulino. The main consideration is how are the students being helped by the decisions they make?

Bass remembers his first year of college and the tensions between communities with opposing views of what college life is supposed to look like. He said he had friends who had grown up with faith-based values and other friends, who were good people, gathered around activity and “the next exciting thing.”

“Sometimes the next exciting thing has risks in it,” said Bass.

When it came to deciding which fraternity to join, Bass said he understood that if he was going to live out his faith, he was not going to join an organization that did not support him because he was “somebody new.”

“You find there are communities that have a very specific understanding of the human person and are life-giving communities,” said Bass.

He and Gulino said many colleges have Catholic churches, chapels, student centers and ministries that enhance that period of life.

Gulino urged people to do an examination of environment and decide whether a community, fraternity or sorority is life giving or not.

“If they are life-giving, then I can ask myself, ‘What can I do to continue to give life to this community?’” said Gulino.

She said meeting new people and having new experiences is an exciting time. But when those “under layers” start revealing themselves and a person worries about losing friends, mistakes can be made.

“You have to be aware that things can change rapidly and be able to make decisions,” said Gulino.

Haste is the enemy of making sound decisions, especially when there’s potential risk involved, she said.

Much like shopping for any item that may come with a high price, young people should look at their options, Gulino said. If an organization is not life giving, they have to determine their values are opposite of what they believe.

“There’s no harm in saying ‘This is not for me’ and walk away and be okay with it,” said Gulino.

People can avoid getting into harmful situations by knowing what an organization or fraternity stands for before getting into them, said Gulino and Bass.

Being able to make good decisions and standing firm in one’s convictions comes from being grounded, according to Bass.

“It’s easier to branch out when you are first rooted somewhere. To branch out, flowers have to first be rooted in a very definite place. Branching out means you have the integration and you have the integrity to be able to do that without having (to) change who you are depending on the places where you go,” said Bass.

“We see that throughout Scripture,” said Bass. “Christ was constantly with people who were outside of the social means that he was brought up with. However, he was so rooted in his identity as one who is loved by the father that he was able to bring out that sense of new life into those ‘other branches.’”

He said when he was in college he had friends who were Christians, some who weren’t and some who did not believe in a higher power and he benefitted from those relationships.

“However, I knew the faith that I was rooted in, and that way I didn’t enter those friendships with the understanding that I was going to have to compromise something about myself in order to be in this friendship, nor did the other person expect that,” Bass said. “But if I am going to branch out, first I had to be rooted. Otherwise, I’m just a chameleon adapting to each place I’m going.”

College and other transitions into adulthood can be looked fondly back on as a time of growth, said Gulino and Bass.

“The expansion of the mind of truth, the expansion of the heart in charity, both of these things are something which grow in the sense of community. I know for a fact that my college community experience ultimately led me to meeting Jesus Christ as a living person. College led me deeper into this community and experience the fruits of it. Those friendships are still there to this day. Ultimately my decision to discern a vocation to the priesthood and job opportunities stemmed from that community that were rooted in Christ the King at LSU,” said Bass.

“Learning to take ownership of my life and realizing that my faith was mine was a gift that was given to be cherished and treasured.”

Olivia Gulino
Diocese of Baton Rouge
Progress made in establishing Catholic-Lutheran unity

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

During the past 50 years, Catholic and Lutheran leaders have worked hard to achieve unity and healing among the two religious denominations, according to presenters at the “Reformation: 500 Years Later – Lessons Learned” program sponsored by the Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Oct. 24 at St. George Church in Baton Rouge.

The dialogue session was held one week before the observance of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg Castle Church in Germany on Oct. 31, 1517. Posting the theses, formally called the “Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences,” sparked the Protestant Reformation.

Archbishop Albert C. Hughes, former archbishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and former bishop of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, and Bishop Michael Rinehart, of the evangelical Lutheran Church in America, TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, following a dialogue “Reformation: 500 Years Later – Lessons Learned,” Oct. 24 at St. George Church in Baton Rouge. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes, former archbishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and former bishop of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, left, talks with Bishop Michael Rinehart of the evangelical Lutheran Church in America, TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, following a dialogue “Reformation: 500 Years Later – Lessons Learned,” Oct. 24 at St. George Church in Baton Rouge. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

During the past 50 years, Catholic and Lutheran leaders have worked hard to achieve unity and healing among the two religious denominations, according to presenters at the “Reformation: 500 Years Later – Lessons Learned” program sponsored by the Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Oct. 24 at St. George Church in Baton Rouge.

The dialogue session was held one week before the observance of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg Castle Church in Germany on Oct. 31, 1517. Posting the theses, formally called the “Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences,” sparked the Protestant Reformation.

Archbishop Albert C. Hughes, former archbishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and former bishop of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, and Bishop Michael Rinehart, of the evangelical Lutheran Church in America, TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, talked about the hope inspired by their common beliefs, what it means and looks like for Catholics and Lutherans to be transformed by an encounter with each other and barriers to moving forward. They specifically discussed five ecumenical imperatives from “Conflict to Communion.”

After extensive ecumenical dialogue and to prepare for the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Lutheran and Catholic leaders created “From Conflict to Communion.” The document encourages Catholics and Lutherans to take a discerning, self-critical look at themselves, not only in their history, but today.

Archbishop Hughes began by thanking Bishop Rinehart for his and his fellow Lutheran’s witness and service to the people of the Gulf South during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He said he found that to be inspiring to people.

One of the lessons from the Reformation Archbishop Hughes talked about was its emphasis in having faith in the word of God.

“We want to make sure we continue to appreciate sacred Scripture as the living word of God,” said Archbishop Hughes, adding that people should approach it with their “hearts, minds and souls.”

He further emphasized this by pointing to St. Jerome’s saying, “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of God.”

The Council of Trent invited the Catholic Church into a reformation of its own, by insisting that priests understood and were able to preach from Scripture and making sure the laity became more involved with Scripture, according to Archbishop Hughes.

He said, unfortunately, the emphasis of the council did not become fully realized until the Second Vatican Council.

“It was the Second Vatican Council that confirmed the centrality of the word of God in sacred Scripture,” said Archbishop Hughes. “To pray over, read and live with the word of sacred Scripture.”

He said Catholics recognize the importance of oral translations of the word of God and the traditions handed down by the Catholic Church.

The archbishop said another lesson to be learned from the Reformation, which was also affirmed by the Second Vatican Council, is God’s call for sincere repentance.

One of the most vital factors to be addressed for unity between Catholics and Lutherans is “love as a means of reconciliation,” said the archbishop.

Bishop Rinehart presented Archbishop Hughes with a copy of the book “Martin Luther: An Ecumenical Perspective,” written by Cardinal Walter Kasper. The book looks at the life and works of Luther in an ecumenical perspective and is realistic about the fallout from the Reformation, according to the bishop.

He said when he thinks about the Reformation, he concurred with the archbishop that the emphasis of God in Scripture is absolute and that Jesus became flesh.

SEE REFORMATION PAGE 17
Ending of Our Father/ Write off church donations?

Q
Protestants have their own form of the Lord’s Prayer, ending with, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Amen.” I read in a book by a Catholic author, first published in 1911, that “such an addition was not uttered by Our Lord. Catholics consequently do not use it.” Please comment. (Columbus, Ohio)

A
The answer is not quite as simple as the 1911 author suggests. True, most biblical scholars agree that the “Protestant ending” (“For thine is the kingdom ... etc.”) is not included in the earliest Greek manuscripts of the Gospels. So “Catholic” versions of the Bible (the New American Bible, for example, which is the one read at Mass) have never included those words as coming from Jesus (neither in Mt 6:9-13 nor in Lk 11:2-4).

But certain manuscripts written less than a century later do include this additional phrase, and early Christians in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire began to use it to complete the Lord’s Prayer when it was offered at Mass. The Didache, a first-century teaching document and manual of worship, likewise indicates the use of this prayer-ending at Christian worship.

So, while the phrase was most likely not uttered by Jesus, it is both theologically sound and historically rooted.

In St. Matthew’s Chapter 6 (v. 3-4), Jesus says, “When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”

I have always considered donating to the church (or to any charity) something that is between me and God. However, many churches now track what you give to allow you to take advantage for tax purposes.

So, my question is this: If I were to write off the contributions I give to the church, wouldn’t that be contradicting the teachings of Jesus? For a long time, I’ve just assumed the answer was “Yes” and never considered doing this. What is the church’s opinion? (Fayetteville, Arkansas)

Q
I’m confused about something and would be grateful for your help. Does prayer change God’s mind? Can someone be moved to the head of the line if we pray hard enough? (Cuba, Missouri)

A
To answer this question, we first need to admit our limitations. I cannot pretend to know the mind of God. No one can, so long as we are still on this side of heaven.

But what I do know is that Jesus told us to pray. He said that whatever we ask for in prayer will be granted (Mt 21:22; Jn 15:7), and he even said that we should pray for those who persecute us (Mt 5:44).

Throughout the Scriptures, which we believe to be inspired by God, we are instructed to pray for the sick (Jas 5:14), for leaders of government (1 Tm 2:2) and for ministers of the Gospel (Eph 6:19). I do not think that prayer changes God’s mind. In his infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, God already knows what’s going to happen.

But that divine plan, I believe, takes into account the fact that we will pray for certain things and is guided in advance by the prayers that we will offer. So people, in my view, don’t “jump the line” because we pray for them; they are already standing at the front because God knew from all eternity that we would do exactly that.

As I said, I don’t purport to know exactly how it all works, and I look forward to grasping it better when, hopefully, I arrive in God’s presence. Meanwhile I will continue to pray for others, especially those in particular need, because Jesus told me to – and I trust that they will continue to pray for me.

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

Look for THE CATHOLIC COMMENTATOR at your local outlets including:

- Affinity Nursing Home, Baton Rouge
- Anthony’s Deli, Baton Rouge
- Albertsons, Baton Rouge
- Alexander’s Highland Market, Baton Rouge
- Ascension Books & Gifts, Gonzales
- Baton Rouge General Hospital, Baton Rouge
- Baton Rouge Healthcare, Baker
- Benedetto’s Market, Addis
- Bohning Supermarket, Ponchatoula
- Calandro’s Supermarkets, Baton Rouge
- Catholic Art and Gifts, Baton Rouge
- Daigle’s Supermarket, White Castle
- Grace Healthcare, Slidell
- Hi Nabor Supermarkets, Baton Rouge
- Hubbings Grocery, Port Allen
- Lane Regional Hospital, Zachary
- LeBlanc’s Food Stores, Baton Rouge, Gonzales, Donaldsonville, Hammond, Plaquemine, Prairieville and Zachary
- Louisiana Vet Home, Jackson
- Mathemer’s Supermarkets, Baton Rouge
- Magnuson Hotel, St. Francisville
- North Ridgely Healthcare, Baker
- Oak Point Supermarket, Central
- Oak Wood Nursing Home, Zachary
- Old Jefferson Community Care, Baton Rouge
- Our Lady of the Lake College, Baton Rouge
- Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge and Walker
- Our Lady of the Lake Physician Group, offices with locations throughout the Diocese
- Reeves’s Supermarket, Baton Rouge
- St. Elizabeth Hospital, Gonzales
- St. Mary’s Books & Gifts, Baton Rouge
- St. Vincent dePaul Stores throughout the diocese
- Schexnayder Supermarket, Vacherie
- Southside Produce, Baton Rouge
- Tony’s Seafood, Baton Rouge
- UPS Store, Coursey Blvd., Baton Rouge
- Whole Foods Market, Baton Rouge
- Winn Dixie in Hammond, New Roads and Ponchatoula

as well as your local church parish
Vocations Awareness Week a time of encouragement

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

St. Margaret Queen of Scotland Church, sits cradled among the towering pine trees of Albany, its roots deeply planted in its Hungarian culture.

Not considered a large parish, although the quaint church which oozes charm of yesteryear is beginning to stretch the seams a bit, St. Margaret has developed a reputation as being the torch-bearer in the Diocese of Baton Rouge for supporting and encouraging seminarians.

“When I got here (six years ago) I noticed (St. Margaret) was a place ripe for vocations,” pastor Father Jamin David said. “People don’t actively discourage vocations, which I think is very important, but at the same time the community is able to propagate vocations.

“It’s in a subtle way, just being in the community that is close knit where the church is at the center of the community. There is that natural encouragement to serve the church in extraordinary ways.”

Currently, three young men are in various stages of religious formation, including seminarian Nick Lyons. Through the years several others have chosen the religious life from the parish Father David calls “seminary friendly.”

St. Margaret was also one of the first parishes in the diocese to form a vocations committee, developing a matrix that others are now beginning to emulate. The vocations committee, along with the Knights of Columbus and the Ladies Auxiliary, put on a number of events throughout the year benefitting seminarians. Perhaps the largest is a school supply drive at the beginning of the school year. Supplies include the standard school supplies as well as gift cards and other items that may be required during the year. Those supplies are then delivered to St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict and Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans for the seminarians from the diocese.

Other activities include a crawfish boil in the spring, the baking of cookies in early December as the seminarians prepare for their final exams and the adoption of a seminarian to provide support in various ways throughout the year. During Vocations Awareness Week, which this year began Nov. 5 and concludes Nov. 12, parishioners are active in distributing literature and prayer cards. Also during that week, either a seminarian or a deacon candidate are invited to speak at the Sunday Masses to discuss their vocation stories.

Vocations Awareness Week is increasingly important as the church grapples with the priest shortage. Currently, there are 51 active priests serving the diocese’s 64 church parishes. Of those 51, seven are above the age of retirement.

In the next three to five years, eight additional priests will be eligible to retire and that number grows to 11 in 10 years. The diocese is also served by 24 priests from religious orders.

“There is a vocation shortage, not because there is a shortage of men being called but a shortage of people responding to the call,” said vocations director Father Andrew Merrick. “God created his people. It’s a matter of people responding.”

Father Merrick cited dwindling Mass attendance as part of the challenge facing the church in attracting not only priests but also a lay person to the diaconate.

“My wife Jill and I recently celebrated our 33-year anniversary. We have two children that joined our family by adoption through Catholic Community Services in Baton Rouge,” said Paul Soileau.

What is your profession?
I am a chemical engineer and have worked in the chemical industry for the past 29 years. Specifically for the past 15 years I have been a plant manager in both Plaquemine and Scad- rift, Texas. I have recently taken on a new role for my company that requires me to travel to many of our manufacturing sites and evaluate the opportunities for energy reduction and reliability improvement.

What would people be surprised to learn about you?
I was offered a relocation to Texas, but I couldn’t imagine not living in southeast Louisiana. In the yearlong severance package I received, I met with my pastor and started spiritual direction and one thing led to another and here I am in my fourth year of formation at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and I couldn’t be happier!

People may be surprised to learn this about me:
We had a Catholic Leadership Institute session earlier this semester and my personality was rated as an “extroverted acceptor.” Basically what you see is what you get, so no surprises.

Other interests:
Playing acoustic guitar, reading and hanging out with friends.

What is your vocation goal?
I was lead to the diaconate earlier this semester and received, I met with my pastor and he encouraged me to pursue my vocation goal of serving the church. Without hesitation, I joined the seminary and here I am with the desire to serve the church.

In the next three to five years, eight additional priests will be eligible to retire and that number grows to 11 in 10 years. The diocese is also served by 24 priests from religious orders.

“There is a vocation shortage, not because there is a shortage of men being called but a shortage of people responding to the call,” said vocations director Father Andrew Merrick. “God created his people. It’s a matter of people responding.”

Father Merrick cited dwindling Mass attendance as part of the challenge facing the church in attracting not only priests but also a lay person to the diaconate.

Tell us about your family?
My wife Jill and I recently celebrated our 33-year anniversary. We have two children that joined our family by adoption through Catholic Community Services in Baton Rouge.

What parts of the diocese attract you?
I was lead to the diaconate for the main purpose of being of service to our diocesan priests. As we have seen lately in the Diocesan Task Force Report, the diocese is growing in numbers of parishioners but the numbers of priests are shrinking. Many of us who interact with our priests see that they just have too much on their plate, and so what draws me to the diaconate is the desire to help our priests in whatever way is needed to free them up to become the holy priests that Jesus called them to be.

What would people be surprised to learn about you?
I was born and raised in New Orleans in a family with four brothers and one sister. My oldest brother, Brian, was ordained to the diaconate in 2015 in the Archdiocese of New Orleans and my youngest brother, Stephen, was elected deacon in his Baptist church in Covington.

AmaWaterways RIVER CRUISE SHOW

Come and Learn about River Cruises

Special Presentation by Sheila Bielich, BDM with AmaWaterways

Monday, November 13
2:30 p.m.

Call and reserve your space 225-926-3752
CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

WORKING ON THE MARGINS

Support the Catholic Campaign for Human Development
Please give generously in the collection on the weekend of November 18th & 19th.

www.usccb.org/cchd/collection

Copyright © 2016, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved. Photo: © Matthew Busch/CCHD.
By Richard Meek  
The Catholic Commentator

Tuition for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge covers a broad spectrum, but superintendent Dr. Melanie Verges says the sacrifice is well worth the investment.

Figures recently released by the Catholic Schools Office reveal that tuition can range from $4,000 to $5,000 annually for elementary schools and close to $12,000 for high schools. It should be noted that the tuition does not cover additional fees, such as registration, technology and building and maintenance.

Also, those costs may vary depending on in-parish and out-of-parish fees.

See chart on page 19

“The cost of tuition for the quality of program parents receive through Catholic schools is extremely value added for the expense,” said Verges, a long time Catholic educator.

“The money that you spend now to put your child in a Catholic school is money well spent,” she added. “It is an investment in your child’s life, an investment in your child’s formation.”

Despite tuition costs that may stretch the family budget, Verges was emphatic when discussing how a Catholic education can actually pay dividends via college scholarships. She recalls her own personal experience as a parent as well as many other families whose children earned college scholarships, thereby dramatically reducing the cost of a college education.

“You can pay now or pay later,” she said, paraphrasing a once popular automotive parts advertising jingle.

The proof is in the numbers. Ninety-nine percent of students in the Class of 2017 have gone on to college. Additionally, the senior class combined earned more than $51 million in college scholarships.

Additionally, more than $12 million of TOPS money was awarded to graduating seniors. Graduates also earned $2,937 in advanced credits.

“It’s a huge sacrifice to bring our kids to Catholic schools,” admitted Carolyn Landry, who attended Our Lady of Mercy School and St. Joseph’s Academy, both in Baton Rouge, and who also sent her kids to Catholic schools. “It’s worth it because to me it’s the morals, the values and bringing our children up in an atmosphere of love.”

Landry, a member of the Diocesan School Board, said enrolling her children in a school where they pray daily and receive the sacraments also played a role in shaping their lives.

“Gospel values are important to us,” Landry said. “The most important thing in life is getting to heaven. Spending money to have your kids in an environment that shows that way is worth it.”

Verges noted there is a maturity and a wisdom woven into the fabric of a Catholic school environment that is not found elsewhere. She also said the service hours are part of the culture in the Diocese of Baton Rouge that is positive and reinforces faith formation, and the faithful development of children.

Verges said that each diocesan school sets its own tuition in collaboration with the pastor in church parishes. Private Catholic schools set their tuition through their boards.

Enrollment can play a critical role in determining tuition, but Verges emphasized that all principals work diligently to keep their tuition reasonable while still trying to balance a budget.

“(Principals) are extremely sensitive to raising tuition,” she said.

Many schools also offer partial tuition assistance and can often be funded through the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, which traditionally donates $75,000 to a tuition assistance fund. Additionally, some schools build partial scholarship assistance into their annual budgets.

“I think sometimes Catholics take for granted Catholic schooling,” Verges said. “It’s always been good. These schools were built and staffed by (religious) brothers and sisters who literally lived their job, their profession. This is the legacy we are continuing as lay Catholics. We see it very much as a ministry.”

HUNGER WALK – Many people put on their tennis shoes and visited with friends while helping feed those in need during Hunger Walk on Nov. 5. The two-mile walk began at the Catholic Center Life and went to Catholic High School and back. St. Michael High School in Baton Rouge has consistently had the largest group turnout at the yearly event. Proceeds from the walk benefited the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and Holy Grill.

Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator
Confusion and fear appear to be intensifying for thousands of Hispanics in the Diocese of Baton Rouge who could potentially be affected by President Donald Trump’s decision to scale back the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), according to one leading Hispanic official.

Julia Scarnato, director of the Hispanic Apostolate for the diocese, said she believes Trump’s decision will have a profound and lasting effect on the Hispanic community, which is one of the fastest growing in the region.

“The impact will be immediate and will have future consequences regarding the lives and activities of the individuals within the community,” Scarnato said.

She said if plans to cut back on DACA move forward, the size of the Hispanic community will begin to shrink, which will affect programs that provide basic needs for many immigrants. She added that the diocese will have to evaluate those changes and reach some decisions that could “affect the lives and activities of each and every member of the community.”

Scarnato estimated the changes could potentially affect thousands of Hispanic children, teenagers and young adults in the area.

“The Hispanic community is confused and scared about the decision,” Scarnato said. “The family unit within the Latin culture is fundamental to their everyday existence.

“The possibility that this decision will harm the integrity of the family unit has placed an enormous amount of stress upon members of the community.”

Young Hispanics immigrate to the United States in search of a better life, Scarnato said, and believe that they are in their adopted country. She said they wish nothing more than to be able to live in peace and happiness, and become contributing members of the community.

Depending on what type of compromise is ultimately reached with the Trump administration, thousands of those dreams may be dashed with the stroke of a pen.

Trump’s decision, however, has met bi-partisan opposition, and some Republicans have been floating various security and enforcement proposals that could potentially be pared with legislation that would establish a pathway allowing for DACA recipients and other young undocumented immigrants who came to the country as minors to remain.

Opponents claim that many of the so-called Dreamers, some of whom are now young adults in their 20s, were brought to the United States at an early age by their parents. Those same opponents point out that the U.S. is the only country these young people have known in their short lives and to force them back would not only be inhumane but also place their lives in jeopardy.

Scarnato has plans to communicate with elected officials to explore the possibility of developing a solution that would be amicable to all concerned. She is already a member of an advocating organization that is in direct opposition to the president’s plan.

“I believe in the intelligence of our congressmen to seek a remedy that will help the thousands of families that are at risk, and at the same time that more flexible laws are created where legal entry into the United States of people who want to work honestly in this beautiful country,” Scarnato said. “I am very proud to be a citizen of a country where the principles of our Constitution are based on ‘the people.’

“We are asking God and our founders to touch the heart of all those who have to decide the future of thousands of families.”

Scarnato admitted it’s painful to witness “innocent people’ being held in the various detention centers suffering what she said were “all kinds of injustice.” During the deportation process, of which she is quite familiar, she said individuals are often mistreated while they wait for months or years for the decision of a judge to determine their future.

She has witnessed many travesties of justice, even among the immigrants’ own attorneys, who take their cases lightly without any sense of urgency. She said when a person is deported to his or her original country of origin, that life is “completely destroyed.”

DACA uncertainty creating fear among immigrants

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Yesterday, I met with a nice couple about their estate plan because the wife attended one of my seminars and thought they needed a plan. It was immediately apparent that the husband took care of all of the finances and the wife never engaged in the process. The husband did all the talking for the two of them and thought that by simply having a hand-written will, everything was covered. WRONG! Once the husband realized that he was unintentionally exposing his wife to significant court costs, unnecessary delays, protracted litigation, nursing home poverty and more, he gladly acted with her in setting up their estate plan to avoid the “7 Stupid Mistakes” people make when they don’t take the time to plan:

1. No tax protection
2. No protection from children and their spouses
3. No protection from the court system
4. No periodic review of estate plan
5. No protection from long term care costs
6. No interdiction protection
7. No ongoing relationship established with a trusted estate attorney

If you pass away before you put certain types of Trusts into place to protect your hard earned assets and take care of your loved ones, here are some of the unintended consequences that are likely to occur.

IMPORTANT: This event is only intended for people who seriously intend to put a legal estate plan in place in the near future for their family. If married, both spouses must attend the event unless there are physical limitations.
Symposium addresses social justice reforms

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Less than two weeks before 1,900 prisoners convicted for non-violent crimes were released as part of Louisiana’s new criminal justice reform package, those who support and work for social justice reform gathered at the Catholic Life Center to discuss issues, plans and actions.

The Symposium for Systemic Change, held Oct. 20 at the Catholic Life Center, was sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The event included breakout sessions on human trafficking, immigration and re-entry to society for those released from prison. Organizer Ronnie Moore said the event was held in Baton Rouge for the first time as part of an effort to recruit more people to get involved in social justice issues. Past locations include Luling, Robert and St. Joseph Abbey in Convington.

“We’re going statewide,” said Moore, a well-known civil rights leader from New Orleans who looks younger and more energetic than his age of nearly 77 years old. “We can’t address this whole problem of systemic change from one diocese. Has to be throughout the state.”

In his opening remarks, Bishop Robert W. Meunch talked about the lessons from St. Matthew 25 regarding our responsibility to this urgency. Do it the best way we can, individually and collectively, but, to work as part of a mosaic of cooperation, each doing our part to make a beautiful picture whose face is Jesus Christ.”

Bishop Robert W. Meunch

“Our responsibility is to bring others with us to respond to this urgency. Do it the best way we can, individually and collectively, but, to work as part of a mosaic of cooperation, each doing our part to make a beautiful picture whose face is Jesus Christ.”

Bishop Robert W. Meunch

“Obviously, from the grace of God and our faith, but also with the help of human beings, beginning with family, that helped form us, that helped correct us when we needed correction, that modeled for us what it means to be a responsible person and citizen,” he said. “And when we failed, they did not abandon us but they supported us. Those are all essential elements for a healthy human being and human life.”

Moore is coordinator of Cornerstone Builders of CCANO, a re-entry program for formerly incarcerated men and women. The group provides services that include housing, employment and other programs. It also offers annual free bus rides for family members to visit loved ones in 13 correctional centers around the state.

With Louisiana’s efforts to reform its criminal justice system in order to reduce its staggering prison population of 35,000, Moore hoped people would come together and make plans to help former prisoners. That includes volunteers, returning citizens, church groups, the Departments of Public Safety and Corrections and politicians.

“When we all get together, all these diverse partners, taking a look at the same problem, we come up with the solutions,” he said. “The purpose is to get us all together thinking through it, like 1,900 people coming out of prison and they’re going to turn them loose. We got a problem and that’s a collaborative problem. What are we going to do with them? Are we going to meet them at the gate? What resources are we going to provide for them?”

“That’s the purpose of this symposium. It’s the only way. We’re thinking through those things as they develop. We can’t control the developments, but, to work as part of a mosaic of cooperation, each doing our part to make a beautiful picture whose face is Jesus Christ.”

Support the Catholic Life Center on Oct. 20.

Support the Catholic Life Center on Oct. 20.

“The love of Jesus Christ is extensive,” said Meunch. “It doesn’t go to those who we consider deserve it, but it goes to every fellow human being.”

Bishop Muench said in order for restorative justice to work, “people have to overcome prejudices” and stressed the importance of a support system that offers support even when mistakes are made.

“Obviously, from the grace of God and our faith, but also with the help of human beings, beginning with family, that helped form us, that helped correct us when we needed correction, that modeled for us what it means to be a responsible person and citizen,” he said. “And when we failed, they did not abandon us but they supported us. Those are all essential elements for a healthy human being and human life.”

Moore is coordinator of Cornerstone Builders of CCANO, a re-entry program for formerly incarcerated men and women. The group provides services that include housing, employment and other programs. It also offers annual free bus rides for family members to visit loved ones in 13 correctional centers around the state.

With Louisiana’s efforts to reform its criminal justice system in order to reduce its staggering prison population of 35,000, Moore hoped people would come together and make plans to help former prisoners. That includes volunteers, returning citizens, church groups, the Departments of Public Safety and Corrections and politicians.

“When we all get together, all these diverse partners, taking a look at the same problem, we come up with the solutions,” he said. “The purpose is to get us all together thinking through it, like 1,900 people coming out of prison and they’re going to turn them loose. We got a problem and that’s a collaborative problem. What are we going to do with them? Are we going to meet them at the gate? What resources are we going to provide for them?”

“That’s the purpose of this symposium. It’s the only way. We’re thinking through those things as they develop. We can’t control the developments, but we can control what we’re going to do in relation to them.”

More than 100 people from throughout southeast Louisiana and the Baton Rouge area attended the event which is in its 10th year, including Bruce Kennedy, an officer with the Louisiana Office of Probation and Parole in Amite. Kennedy was there to learn about community resources and “to get a larger picture of what’s going on with criminal justice reforms that are about to hit.” He said the biggest problem on the streets right now is the opioid epidemic.

“We’re seeing a new record (number) of overdoses because of opioids and synthetic opioids,” he said. “Opioids can be expensive, even heroin can get expensive after a while, and in order to pay for that, you end up stealing from your family, your neighbors, your children and that also leads to neglect because of children and people that you have to care for because, unfortunately with addiction, you don’t love anything more than that addiction.”

Those problems and others will continue to be discussed at future symposiums sponsored by CCANO. Moore said the group might alternate the meetings between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. But, as Louisiana tries to rehab its rehabilitation system, there will be lots more work for volunteers and those who work for social justice reform.

Bishop Muench said the work is a “necessary thing,” even if others didn’t understand or agree.

“If we’re waiting for everyone to be on the same page, it’ll never get there,” he said. “Our responsibility is to bring others with us to respond to this urgency. Do it the best way we can, individually and collectively, but, to work as part of a mosaic of cooperation, each doing our part to make a beautiful picture whose face is Jesus Christ.”

Support the Catholic Life Center on Oct. 20.

Support the Catholic Life Center on Oct. 20.

To discover the impact of your gift or to donate, visit www.baabr.org.
The word humble comes from the Latin word “humilitas”, which can be translated as “grounded” or “from the earth”. Lee noted, Mary expresses humility as she shows people how to love the Lord, said Lee. Mary, just like other people, was created by God, according to Lee. “But she was queen and she used very few words and all of them pointed to God,” said Lee.

She noted that Mary was around the same age as the youth there when she accepted the responsibility of carrying the Savior of the World. Given the outward circumstances, she could have faced death. Yet, without hesitation, she said “Yes” when God invited her to carry his only son.

Mary’s name Elizabeth, discovering Mary’s humbleness and holiness, granted her in their visitation by saying, “And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”

Mary responded to the greeting by proclaiming her “Magnificat”, in which she talked about the Lord’s mercy and strength.

“Mary’s Magnificat is her rejoicing at what God has done for her,” said Lee.

Stating, “We are the ‘selfie’ generation,” Lee said people long to “stand out” and to be “somebody.” She encouraged the youth to emulate Mary’s humility to be a standout in the kingdom of God.

After Lee’s talk, pilgrims processed with the 12-foot long WYD cross to the St. Jean Vianney football field, stopping to pray the Stations of the Cross along the way.

The band Refuge played the song “Meet Me at the Cross” as the pilgrims entered the football field. There the youth heard a conversion story from Olivia Hurst, a member of the Diocesan Youth Board and senior at Zachary High School.

Hurst said she was devastated when a childhood friend moved away.

“When she left, I lost the one person who connected me with Christ,” said Hurst.

From there, she started hanging out with strangers, but by the end I had a family,” said Hurst.

And most importantly, her relationship with Christ was rekindled.

Hurst encouraged the pilgrims to bare their souls to Christ and to love him and let him love them.

“I know some of you have fallen and don’t know how to pick yourselves up,” said Hurst.

“I can tell you from experience it’s possible to get back up.”

Youth knelt, bowed with head to prayer and laid prostrate as WYD concluded with reconciliation offered by priests of the diocese.

“I learned to be humble and not above everyone else.”

Craig Jones
St. Isidore Church in Baker

Mary responded to the greeting by proclaiming her “Magnificat”, in which she talked about the Lord’s mercy and strength.

“Mary’s Magnificat is her rejoicing at what God has done for her,” said Lee.

Stating, “We are the ‘selfie’ generation,” Lee said people long to “stand out” and to be “somebody.” She encouraged the youth to emulate Mary’s humility to be a standout in the kingdom of God.

After Lee’s talk, pilgrims processed with the 12-foot long WYD cross to the St. Jean Vianney football field, stepping to pray the Stations of the Cross along the way.

The band Refuge played the song “Meet Me at the Cross” as the pilgrims entered the football field. There the youth heard a conversion story from Olivia Hurst, a member of the Diocesan Youth Board and senior at Zachary High School.

Hurst said she was devastated when a childhood friend moved away.

“When she left, I lost the one person who connected me with Christ,” said Hurst.

From there, she started hanging out with strangers, but by the end I had a family,” said Hurst.

And most importantly, her relationship with Christ was rekindled.

Hurst encouraged the pilgrims to bare their souls to Christ and to love him and let him love them.

“I know some of you have fallen and don’t know how to pick yourselves up,” said Hurst.

“I can tell you from experience it’s possible to get back up.”

Youth knelt, bowed with head to prayer and laid prostrate as WYD concluded with reconciliation offered by priests of the diocese.

“I learned to be humble and not above everyone else.”

Craig Jones
St. Isidore Church in Baker

Mary responded to the greeting by proclaiming her “Magnificat”, in which she talked about the Lord’s mercy and strength.

“Mary’s Magnificat is her rejoicing at what God has done for her,” said Lee.

Stating, “We are the ‘selfie’ generation,” Lee said people long to “stand out” and to be “somebody.” She encouraged the youth to emulate Mary’s humility to be a standout in the kingdom of God.

After Lee’s talk, pilgrims processed with the 12-foot long WYD cross to the St. Jean Vianney football field, stepping to pray the Stations of the Cross along the way.

The band Refuge played the song “Meet Me at the Cross” as the pilgrims entered the football field. There the youth heard a conversion story from Olivia Hurst, a member of the Diocesan Youth Board and senior at Zachary High School.

Hurst said she was devastated when a childhood friend moved away.

“When she left, I lost the one person who connected me with Christ,” said Hurst.

From there, she started hanging out with strangers, but by the end I had a family,” said Hurst.

And most importantly, her relationship with Christ was rekindled.

Hurst encouraged the pilgrims to bare their souls to Christ and to love him and let him love them.

“I know some of you have fallen and don’t know how to pick yourselves up,” said Hurst.

“I can tell you from experience it’s possible to get back up.”

Youth knelt, bowed with head to prayer and laid prostrate as WYD concluded with reconciliation offered by priests of the diocese.

“I learned to be humble and not above everyone else.”

Craig Jones
St. Isidore Church in Baker

Mary responded to the greeting by proclaiming her “Magnificat”, in which she talked about the Lord’s mercy and strength.

“Mary’s Magnificat is her rejoicing at what God has done for her,” said Lee.

Stating, “We are the ‘selfie’ generation,” Lee said people long to “stand out” and to be “somebody.” She encouraged the youth to emulate Mary’s humility to be a standout in the kingdom of God.

After Lee’s talk, pilgrims processed with the 12-foot long WYD cross to the St. Jean Vianney football field, stepping to pray the Stations of the Cross along the way.

The band Refuge played the song “Meet Me at the Cross” as the pilgrims entered the football field. There the youth heard a conversion story from Olivia Hurst, a member of the Diocesan Youth Board and senior at Zachary High School.

Hurst said she was devastated when a childhood friend moved away.

“When she left, I lost the one person who connected me with Christ,” said Hurst.

From there, she started hanging out with strangers, but by the end I had a family,” said Hurst.

And most importantly, her relationship with Christ was rekindled.

Hurst encouraged the pilgrims to bare their souls to Christ and to love him and let him love them.

“I know some of you have fallen and don’t know how to pick yourselves up,” said Hurst.

“I can tell you from experience it’s possible to get back up.”

Youth knelt, bowed with head to prayer and laid prostrate as WYD concluded with reconciliation offered by priests of the diocese.

“I learned to be humble and not above everyone else.”

Craig Jones
St. Isidore Church in Baker

Mary responded to the greeting by proclaiming her “Magnificat”, in which she talked about the Lord’s mercy and strength.

“Mary’s Magnificat is her rejoicing at what God has done for her,” said Lee.

Stating, “We are the ‘selfie’ generation,” Lee said people long to “stand out” and to be “somebody.” She encouraged the youth to emulate Mary’s humility to be a standout in the kingdom of God.

After Lee’s talk, pilgrims processed with the 12-foot long WYD cross to the St. Jean Vianney football field, stepping to pray the Stations of the Cross along the way.

The band Refuge played the song “Meet Me at the Cross” as the pilgrims entered the football field. There the youth heard a conversion story from Olivia Hurst, a member of the Diocesan Youth Board and senior at Zachary High School.

Hurst said she was devastated when a childhood friend moved away.

“When she left, I lost the one person who connected me with Christ,” said Hurst.

From there, she started hanging out with strangers, but by the end I had a family,” said Hurst.

And most importantly, her relationship with Christ was rekindled.

Hurst encouraged the pilgrims to bare their souls to Christ and to love him and let him love them.

“I know some of you have fallen and don’t know how to pick yourselves up,” said Hurst.

“I can tell you from experience it’s possible to get back up.”

Youth knelt, bowed with head to prayer and laid prostrate as WYD concluded with reconciliation offered by priests of the diocese.

“I learned to be humble and not above everyone else.”

Craig Jones
St. Isidore Church in Baker

Mary responded to the greeting by proclaiming her “Magnificat”, in which she talked about the Lord’s mercy and strength.

“Mary’s Magnificat is her rejoicing at what God has done for her,” said Lee.

Stating, “We are the ‘selfie’ generation,” Lee said people long to “stand out” and to be “somebody.” She encouraged the youth to emulate Mary’s humility to be a standout in the kingdom of God.

After Lee’s talk, pilgrims processed with the 12-foot long WYD cross to the St. Jean Vianney football field, stepping to pray the Stations of the Cross along the way.

The band Refuge played the song “Meet Me at the Cross” as the pilgrims entered the football field. There the youth heard a conversion story from Olivia Hurst, a member of the Diocesan Youth Board and senior at Zachary High School.

Hurst said she was devastated when a childhood friend moved away.

“When she left, I lost the one person who connected me with Christ,” said Hurst.

From there, she started hanging out with strangers, but by the end I had a family,” said Hurst.

And most importantly, her relationship with Christ was rekindled.

Hurst encouraged the pilgrims to bare their souls to Christ and to love him and let him love them.

“I know some of you have fallen and don’t know how to pick yourselves up,” said Hurst.

“I can tell you from experience it’s possible to get back up.”

Youth knelt, bowed with head to prayer and laid prostrate as WYD concluded with reconciliation offered by priests of the diocese.
Competition helps students to tackle hunger

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Posters, cheers, skits and rap songs; it’s the typical lead up to a sports event between schools, but this was a competition with a cause. Students at Most Blessed Sacrament and St. Jean Vianney schools, both in Baton Rouge, were getting classmates fired up to participate in the Tuna Tackle, a competition created to tackle hunger.

“It’s basically a contest between our school and MBS to see who can collect the most tuna for the food bank,” said SJV student Allie Waguespack.

For one week, Oct. 10-17, students at the two schools were encouraged, reminded and pepped up to donate.

“Everyday, a different group of people go up on the stage (before school) and perform a skit, a song or a rap,” said Lily Dumas, a student at SJV. “Like my religion class did a rap yesterday. We basically just get the whole school fired up and they clap along and they have fun, and that makes them want to bring tuna.”

Similar activities were held at MBS. The idea for the Tuna Tackle sprung from a field trip last year by MBS seventh-grade students to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. The service project for seventh-graders at MBS is to donate to the food bank for Lent, alternating peanut butter and jelly and soup and crackers each year. But, last year was the first time a field trip was incorporated into the project.

MBS student Mason Dolan remembered being overwhelmed by the amount of food the food bank handles. The GBR Food Bank serves 11 civil parishes. It distributed almost 11 million meals last year.

“When we came for a visit, one of the gentlemen said one of the things we run the lowest on is tuna fish. And, we thought, ‘We can do a tuna collection.’ And, he said that maybe one of the other schools could get involved. And, we thought, ‘Hey, that’s terrific!’” said Dolan, now in eighth-grade. “I knew there were a lot of hungry people, but not that much.”

“When we came for a visit, one of the gentlemen said one of the things we run the lowest on is tuna fish. And, we thought, ‘We can do a tuna collection.’ And, he said that maybe one of the other schools could get involved. And, we thought, ‘Hey, that’s terrific!’” said David Planche, director of Christian formation at MBS. “One of the things that’s real important to us is we all won because we collected 1.25 tons of tuna fish altogether,” Planche said. “There’s no winner or loser in this because everyone can win when we all can do this.”

Rabalais said she hoped the competition would turn into a teaching tool about taking care of those less fortunate.

“Bragging rights are great, but I told my sixth-graders, when they brought in their cans, ‘Don’t think about, oh, we got these cans, we’re going to win. Think about the people I am going to feed by bringing in this tuna.’”

Dolan, who donned a tuna costume to motivate students at a school pep rally and later to accept the Tuna Tackle trophy, agreed.

“We should recognize it’s not just about winning, it’s about feeding people,” he said. “But, it’s also a competition which will make people bring in more stuff.”

Manning said the competition does encourage more donations.

“It’s kind of a situation where you’re getting them to do good with the goal of feeding more people because they’re competing against another school. It’s not really the competition between the schools, it’s the competition of who can feed more people,” he said.

The trophy for the Tuna Tackle will be housed at MBS, until next year.

“The first thing SJV said to us is, ‘We’ll get you next year,’” said Planche. “We’re real excited about it and it seemed like everyone had a great time with it.”

Mason Dolan high-fives students at Most Blessed Sacrament School in Baton Rouge at a pep rally to get students excited about participating in the Tuna Tackle competition with St. Jean Vianney School in Baton Rouge. Photo by Bonny Van | The Catholic Commentator
40 DAYS – St. Jude the Apostle Church in Baton Rouge adopted Oct. 16 for the Baton Rouge 40 Days for Life Campaign. St. Jude School signed up to observe an hour in prayer. Representatives from school service organizations are pictured, from left, Ann Marie Benoit and Ava Kathryn Nesbit were chosen to be present for the vigil, carrying with them the intentions of the student body for respect life initiatives. Photo provided by Starr Driesse | St. Jude School

SOCK IT TO DRUGS – Students at Holy Ghost School in Hammond ‘Sock it to Drugs!’ during Red Ribbon Week. Pictured, from left are, Kaylee Sedberry, Brennan Bankston, Caroline Beard, Paisley Collett, Eliza Foster, Ashlynn Forrest and Katherine Amos. Photo provided by Cindy Wagner | Holy Ghost School

VOCABULARY PARADE – Left, Third-grader Jalia Baptiste participated in the vocabulary parade at St. Francis Xavier School in Baton Rouge. Students wore costumes depicting their vocabulary word. Baptiste’s word was ‘telescope.’

Right, pictured, from left are, Kindergarteners Christopher Whitlock, Zadariah Johnson and Princeton Criss show their word skills in the vocabulary parade at St. Francis Xavier School in Baton Rouge on Nov. 3. Photos by Bonny Van | The Catholic Commentator

WARRIORS – Student at St. Michael High School in Baton Rouge participated in “Warriors for Life Week,” which focused on ending racism, human trafficking, suicide and abortion. After praying a living multicultural rosary for life, students watched the pro-life documentary, “I Lived on Parker Avenue,” the true story of David Scotton who was almost aborted but given up for adoption. Scotton spoke to students after the film. Photo provided by Emily Froeba | St. Michael High School

ST. THOMAS MORE Catholic School

Open House
November 15th
5:00pm Registration
OH Starts at 5:30pm in the STM Gymnasium

St. Thomas More Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability.

National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

11400 Sherbrook Drive – Baton Rouge, LA 70816
www.stmb.org 225-275-2820
Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School is coming home.

The school’s Board of Directors announced Oct. 30 the school will return to its north Baton Rouge site Jan. 17, months after the school took on four feet of water during the August 2016 flood.

The 116 freshmen and sophomores will move into the modular campus when they return from the Christmas break.

A total of 45 units make up seven buildings, enough for a full four-year high school: two classroom buildings (20 classrooms), an administrative building, a Corporate Work Study Program building, a cafetorium (cafeteria space also used as an auditorium for larger assemblies and events), a teacher’s work room/supply room and a Student Services Center.

“We look forward to returning to our home location in north Baton Rouge,” board chairman Vic Howell said. “We extend our thanks to so many: to our students and their families for working with us through this period of dislocation; to our terrific faculty and staff for their great flexibility in adapting a business facility to become a school; to our Corporate Work Study Program partners for supporting the work-study component of our educational model; and special thanks to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation for making the space available that allowed us to operate over this past year.”

Principal Brian Moscona said the students, faculty and staff are all excited about returning to its original site, which opened Aug. 5, 2016 only to see it flood two weeks later.

“We are eager to get our students back into a normal school setting with appropriate classroom facilities and outdoor space for student activities that the campus provides. This new campus is the foundation for our future growth to an anticipated 400-student high school and how it will prepare Cristo Rey students to make an impact in our community,” he said.

All of the construction and permitting should be completed by mid-November. The time between now and the end of December will be used to adequately prepare the campus for the students to begin the second semester back home in north Baton Rouge following Christmas break.

Since the flood, the school has been holding classes in the Bon Carre Business Center in Baton Rouge.

The school is the newest and smallest in the Cristo Rey Network of schools, opening its doors just four days before the flood. Currently, there are 34 Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP) job partners from healthcare and law firms to technology and non-profit partners.

OLOL to open ER

Our Lady of the Lake North Emergency Room, the first emergency room in north Baton Rouge in more than five years, will officially open to patients at 1 p.m. on Nov. 15.

A grand opening ceremony will be held prior to the official opening of the ER on Nov. 15.

“This project would not have been possible without the unwavering support of Governor Edwards, our legislative delegation, our local officials and the north Baton Rouge community,” said K. Scott Wester, president and CEO of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.

The Our Lady of the Lake North Emergency Room will be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by emergency physicians who specialize in providing comprehensive emergency care for patients with acute illnesses or injuries. The facility has eight treatment spaces and is able to provide patients with on-site CT and X-ray imaging, a full-service lab and pharmacy.

The ER is an 8,800-square foot addition built adjacent to the existing LSU Health Baton Rouge North Clinic at 5439 Airline Highway. That clinic is currently home to an urgent care center, infusion clinic and services for primary care and oncology. Altogether, the medical complex offers patients a full spectrum of care in one convenient location, making it easier for patients to access the right level of care at the right time.
DACA ▼
From page 10

Scarnato said she has not been contacted by immigration officials regarding immigrants, but praised Baton Rouge law enforcement officials for being respectful of the civic right of the Hispanic community.

“They have had to visit my brothers detained in other parishes and we have much negligence, slowness in processing cases and corruption,” she said. “The charity of Christ calls us to work for the most vulnerable and forgotten and to make alive the call of Pope Francis to leave our comfort zone, not only in the church but in all the institutions that work with people.”

REFORMATION ▼
From page 5

Luther was passionate about humanism, but not in the fundamental way people today understand it to be, said Bishop Rinehart.

“Today’s fundamentalists don’t understand what we pray and believe,” said Bishop Rinehart. He said Lutherans have written hymns centered on the Lord’s Prayer and creed.

“It’s certainly the language of the people,” said Bishop Rinehart.

He said Luther was a professor of theology and a priest who drew from a long history of Catholic theology. He said the church is created by the Spirit, but can be subject to greed, a loving father waiting for his prodigal son to return but not in the slightest fraction to occur, he said God is focused on the physical union due to differences of belief and a minor noble, and therefore, Luther’s language was stilted.

But as misunderstandings have developed, pointed language does not get dialogue moving in the right way, said Bishop Rinehart.

“We have to ask the question because none of us were around then — how do we as carriers of our tradition carry the word of Jesus Christ together,” said Bishop Rinehart.

He and Archbishop Hughes agreed that the Reformation is not something to celebrate, but observe.

There are many signs of hope for unity among Lutherans and Catholics that Archbishop Hughes and Bishop Rinehart pointed out.

In 1999, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification was created and agreed to by the Catholic Church’s Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation as a result of extensive ecumenical dialogue.

The document states that the churches now share “a common understanding of justification through Jesus Christ.”

In 2015 Catholic and Lutheran leaders released on Oct. 31, the eve of Martin Luther’s posting of 95 theses, the “Declaration of the Way,” which listed 32 agreements between Catholics and Lutheran beliefs.

But there are barriers that remain to full unity, according to the presenters, including physical union due to differences of belief concerning Communion, the ordination of priests and central authority of the Church. But they had much hope for the future between the faith denominations.

“Lutherans are as unhappy about the division as anyone. I really appreciate the fact that we can come together and have these conversations,” said Bishop Rinehart.

“We need to overcome all challenges and be intentional in the desire of reconciliation and love for one another so we can draw the best from one another,” said Archbishop Hughes.
MOVIE REVIEWS

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

Geostorm
Warn Bros.
After a network of weather-controlling satellites designed to overcome the effects of global warming is sabotaged and begins causing a series of overwhelming natural disasters, its designer (Gerard Butler), a Secret Service agent team to uncover and defeat the conspiracy. Armchair apocalypse fanatics may relish the ravaging of cities around the globe and the threat of the titanic civilization-destroying phenomenon. But anyone looking for more than mere spectacle in director and co-writer Dean Devlin’s by-the-numbers action flick will come away disappointed. Though the dodgy domestic arrangement eventually moves toward marriage and the armed confrontations are mostly blood-free, this is still best suited to easily satisfied grownups. Much gunfire, cohabitation, about a half-dozen uses of profanity, a couple of milder oaths, several crude and crass terms. A-III; PG-13

Same Kind of Different as Me
Paramount
Uneven recounting of the real-life events through which a wealthy art dealer (Greg Kinnear) formed a seemingly unlikely friendship with a volatile but fundamentally decent homeless man (Djimon Hounsou). Anxious to repair the damage a recent affair has done to his marriage, the salesman reluctantly agrees to accompany his spiritually attuned wife (Renee Zellweger) on her visits to a local soup kitchen. There he gradually overcomes the initial hostility of his future pal and learns the moving details of the latter’s personal history. So long as Hounsou dominates the scene, as he does while lyrically recalling his character’s childhood, his redoubtable talent carries the film along. Though the other headliners of the cast including Jon Voight as the protagonist’s booze-sodden estranged father bring their own formidable resumes to the project, they are less successful in overcoming the limitations of the script, adapted from the book penned by the actual amigos, Ron Hall and Denver Moore, by director Michael Carney, Alexander Foard and Hall. A nondenominational religious subtext and Gospel-congruent values help to hide the aesthetic blemishes and make this probably acceptable for older teens. Some nonlethal violence, a scene of marital intimacy, mature themes, including adultery and racial hatred, sexual references, and nude scenes. A-III; PG-13

Suburbicon
Paramount
Failed black comedy, set in the Levittown-like suburb of the title during the early 1950s, in which a young boy (Noah Jupe) witnesses the murder of his mother (Julianne Moore) at the hands of a pair of brutish intruders (Glenn Flesher and Alex Hassell) during an unexplained home invasion. The father’s (Matt Damon) subsequent behavior as well as that of his mom’s twin sister (also Moore), who moves in with the widower, only make the situation more confusing for the lad and more suspicious for the police officer (Jack Conley) and insurance investigator (Oscar Isaac) assigned to the case. Awkwardly intertwined with the main story is a cautionary tale about intolerance that sees the community’s first black couple (Karin Westbrook and Leith M. Burke) and their son (Tony Espinosa) besieged by angry white mobs intent on driving them out of the neighborhood. Director George Clooney who co-wrote the script with brothers Joel and Ethan Coen and Grant Heslov paints a perversely dark picture of human nature from which, in the case of Damon’s character, even the most basic positive instincts are absent. A skewed outlook, occasionally shocking violence with considerable gore, some gruesome images, brief aberrant sexual behavior, a few uses of profanity, several rough and a handful of crude terms. L; R

Sunday Mass
from St. Joseph Cathedral
LIVE at 10am

Thank You for Your Service
Universal
Powerful drama about the devastating impact of post-traumatic stress disorder on soldiers returning from war, directed by Jason Hall and based on David Finkel’s eponymous nonfiction book. An Army sergeant (Miles Teller) returns to Kansas with his squad after a tour of duty in Iraq, haunted by the death of one unit member (Bradley Cooper) and the near-fatal wounding of another (Scott Haze). As he bottles up his emotions, his wife (Haley Bennett) tries to break down the barrier between them while the widow (Amy Schumer) of his fallen comrade demands to know how her husband died. Meanwhile, another veteran of the regiment (Beulah Koale), coping with a brain injury, drifts into crime and drugs. The film offers a brutally honest portrayal that evokes sympathy for veterans and their plight as well as outrage at a bloated bureaucracy seemingly unable to cope with the crisis at hand. Graphic wartime violence and bloodshed, a suicide, drug use, a glimpse of full female nudity, a couple of uses of profanity, pervasive rough and crude language. A-III; R

Victoria and Abdul
Focus
Endearing historical drama in which, on the sole basis of being tall and handsome, a 24-year-old prison clerk (Ali Fazal) in Agra, India, is chosen to present a ceremonial coin to Queen Victoria (Judi Dench) during her 1887 golden jubilee. After a four-month journey in the company of a ghoulish fellow countryman (Adeel Akhtar), he flouts protocol by making eye contact with the sovereign. Victoria is sufficiently charmed to make him first her servant, then her secretary and finally her instructor in Urdu. But the closer their relationship grows, the more antagonism the royal household, led by the queen’s eldest son and heir apparent (Eddie Izzard), unleashes on the newcomer. Director Stephen Frears’ adaptation of Shrabani Basu’s book celebrates friendship, openness, tolerance and respect for those from different backgrounds. A couple of uses of profanity, at least one milder oath, about a half-dozen crude and a pair of crass terms. A-III; PG-13

Only the Brave
Columbia
Heartbreaking true story of the “Granite Mountain Hotshots,” the elite Arizona firefighting team which raced into a raging inferno in 2013 to save a neighboring town from destruction. Their leader (Josh Brolin) has honed his 20-member crew into a well-oiled machine with the assistance of his right-hand man (James Badge Dale). During a recruitment drive, an unlikely candidate (Miles Teller) appears, intent on turning away from a dissolve life to join the group. In adapting a magazine article by Sean Flynn, director Joseph Kosinski deftly juggles the intimate stories of the men’s personal lives (Jennifer Connelly plays Brolin’s wife) with grand set pieces which evoke the sheer terror and destructive force of the flames they battle. Although the ending is well known, the impact is no less profound on screen, and the striking real-life examples of heroism, brotherhood and self-sacrifice are both timely and inspiring. Scenes of extreme peril, mature themes, drug use, brief rear male nudity, an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, several uses of profanity, pervasive crude language, some sexual banter, obscene gestures. A-III; PG-13
### 2017–2018 SCHOOL TUITION & REGISTRATION FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>TUITION*</th>
<th>FEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ascension Catholic Diocesan Regional School</td>
<td>PK–3</td>
<td>$5,400</td>
<td>Fee $150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donaldsonville</td>
<td>(225) 473-9227</td>
<td><a href="http://www.acbulldogs.org">www.acbulldogs.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Elementary of Pointe Coupee</td>
<td>PK3–6</td>
<td>$4,445</td>
<td>Fee $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Roads</td>
<td>225/638-9313</td>
<td><a href="http://www.catholicpc.com">www.catholicpc.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic High of Pointe Coupee</td>
<td>7–12</td>
<td>$5,415</td>
<td>Fee $300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Roads</td>
<td>225/638-9313</td>
<td><a href="http://www.catholicpc.com">www.catholicpc.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic High School Baton Rouge</td>
<td>8–12</td>
<td>$10,590</td>
<td>Fee $550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/383-0397</td>
<td><a href="http://www.catholichigh.org">www.catholichigh.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristo Rey Franciscaan High School</td>
<td>9–10</td>
<td>$13,300</td>
<td>Fee $40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/615-7479</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cristoreybr.org">www.cristoreybr.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart of Jesus School</td>
<td>PK4–8</td>
<td>$4,300</td>
<td>Fee $190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redemptorist St. Gerard School</td>
<td>PK3–8</td>
<td>$4,760</td>
<td>Fee $225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/355-1437</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rsgbr.org">www.rsgbr.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mater Dolorosa School</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>985/878-4295</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mdeagles.org">www.mdeagles.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart of Jesus School</td>
<td>K–8</td>
<td>$4,655</td>
<td>Fee $335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/751-0273</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mbsbr.org">www.mbsbr.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Mercy School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/924-1054</td>
<td><a href="http://www.olomsschool.org">www.olomsschool.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Ghost Catholic School</td>
<td>Hammond</td>
<td>985/345-0977</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hgschool.org">www.hgschool.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redemptorist St. Gerard School</td>
<td>PK4–8</td>
<td>$5,800</td>
<td>Fee $400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/355-1437</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rsgbr.org">www.rsgbr.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart of Jesus School</td>
<td>PK4–8</td>
<td>$5,300</td>
<td>Fee $420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/383-7481</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sacredheartbr.com">www.sacredheartbr.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Blessed Sacrament School</td>
<td>K–8</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>Fee $360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/751-0273</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mbsbr.org">www.mbsbr.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Aloysius School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/383-3871</td>
<td><a href="http://www.school.aloysius.org">www.school.aloysius.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Alphonsus Liguori School</td>
<td>Greenwell Springs</td>
<td>225/261-5299</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stalphonsusbr.org">www.stalphonsusbr.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart of Jesus School</td>
<td>K–8</td>
<td>$4,580</td>
<td>Annual Fee $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/336-8735</td>
<td><a href="http://www.csobr.org">www.csobr.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Francis Xavier School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/387-6639</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stfrancisxavierbr.org">www.stfrancisxavierbr.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. George School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/293-1298</td>
<td><a href="http://www.st-georgeschool.com">www.st-georgeschool.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John Primary School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/751-1831</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stjeanvianneyeschool.org">www.stjeanvianneyeschool.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paincourtville</td>
<td>985/369-7402</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sescubs.com">www.sescubs.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Jean Vianney School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/293-1298</td>
<td><a href="http://www.st-georgeschool.com">www.st-georgeschool.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Jude the Apostle School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/769-2344</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stjudebr.org">www.stjudebr.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaquemine</td>
<td>225/687-3056</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stjohnschool.org">www.stjohnschool.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John Interparochial School</td>
<td>PK–12</td>
<td>$5,031</td>
<td>Fee $250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaquemine</td>
<td>225/687-3056</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stjohnschool.org">www.stjohnschool.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph School</td>
<td>Ponchatoula</td>
<td>985/386-6421</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sjscrusaders.org">www.sjscrusaders.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph's Academy</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/388-2243</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sjabr.org">www.sjabr.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairieville</td>
<td>225/678-2803</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sjp-sta.org">www.sjp-sta.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Jude the Apostle School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/769-2344</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stjudebr.org">www.stjudebr.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Michael the Archangel High School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/753-9782</td>
<td><a href="http://www.smhsbr.org">www.smhsbr.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peter Chanel School</td>
<td>Paulina</td>
<td>225/869-5778</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stpchanel.org">www.stpchanel.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Theresa of Avila School</td>
<td>Gonzales</td>
<td>225/647-2803</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sjp-sta.org">www.sjp-sta.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas Aquinas High School</td>
<td>Hammond</td>
<td>985/542-7662</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stafalcons.org">www.stafalcons.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas More School</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>225/275-2820</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sttmsbr.org">www.sttmsbr.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Tuition figures may vary depending on in-parish or out-of-parish residents or Catholic or non-Catholics.
Hope for unity after 500 years of separation

Except for various Halloween observances, Oct. 31 passed quietly in this more Catholic southern half of Louisiana. In other parts of our nation, like Garrison Keillor’s fictional Lake Wobegon, Minnesota, the Lutheran pastor and his congregation were having a big celebration. Oct. 31 marked the traditional date on which, 500 years ago (Oct. 31, 1517) the Augustinian friar, Martin Luther, fixed his 95 theses on the selling of indulgences and other abuses of the Catholic Church to the doors of the castle church of Wittenberg, Germany. Luther was at that time a professor of Scripture at the University of Wittenberg.

These kind of academic discussions, which could easily turn into debates, were common at the time. Although genuinely scandalized by the preaching of this indulgence sale by a Dominican friar named Johann Tetzel, Luther had no idea of the trouble he would cause himself and of the Europe-wide revolt he would begin. The Catholic Church’s practice of granting indulgences to cancel punishment in purgatory for sins committed in this life had become commercial. Actually, indulgence-selling had been banned in Germany, and ban was not enforced, and the practice continued. Father Tetzel was raising funds for the building of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. His sales pitch was something like, “As soon as the coin in the cup clings, into heaven another soul...”

Word of Luther got back to Rome. A Cardinal named Cajetan was sent to Germany to determine whether Luther’s teaching was orthodox. Luther belonged to a religious order devoted to the great saint and theologian of the early church, Augustine (340 a.d. - 430 a.d.). In his struggle with a priest named Pelagius, Augustine emphasized that salvation was a gift from God and could not be earned simply by good works. Man could not, as it were, pull himself up by his own bootstraps. Relying on Augustine’s emphasis on the necessity of God’s grace and St. Paul’s teaching of the importance of faith in passages like Galatians 5:6, Luther argued that faith and faith only could save man... To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be ‘working through charity,’ abounding in hope and rooted in the faith of the Church” (no. 2086). The “working through charity” of the Catholic Church I would take to mean the same as St. Paul’s saying that what counts is “faith working through love.” Good works of love are important, but they too must be the result of our faith in Jesus, our desire to imitate him. If our only motive is to win a Golden Dollars award and praise by our peers, that might not get us to heaven.

I have never seen a copy of Cardinal Cajetan’s report to Pope Leo X. The outcome, however, was that the pope excommunicated Martin Luther. One of the questions reportedly contained in Luther’s 95 theses was why did not the pope, who was rich, build the basilica with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers. Luther was not known for being very diplomatic. He soon found that he needed the protection of the leader of his area of Germany. The Elector Frederick of Saxony provided that protection, and Luther spent the next year translating the New Testament into common German and publishing pamphlets defending his ideas for the reform of the church. He was the most prolific writer of the Reformation period. Gutenberg’s printing press had started a communication revolution akin to the invention of computers and smart phones today. European society became excited by the possibility of change.

Luther’s efforts as a reformer found an audience because there was evidence of corruption in the Catholic Church of Europe at that time. Wealth was in land and property, and a lot of it was owned by bishops and religious orders. There was a great deal of inequality of wealth. Also discontent was expressed by many with Church organization and leadership. However, for almost 20 years no one dreamed of destroying church unity or doctrine. The Reformation progressed in what one historian called a confused movement. But around the years 1536 to 1540 the movement changed into a determined effort by two men in two different countries to create a counter church to the Roman Catholic Church and its pope. The first was John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland, and the second was Thomas Cromwell, who managed the English King Henry VIII’s break with Roman Catholicism and his pope. Clement VII would not grant him a divorce from Caterina of Aragon, King Philip of Spain’s sister.

John Calvin was a French lawyer who set out to create an alternative Reformed Church in Geneva, then a city-state on the edge of the Swiss Confederation. In 1536 he published the first edition of his “Insti- tutes of the Christian Religion” in Latin. He has been called the clearest and most liked of the reformers. His texts were widely translated into other European languages, some by himself into his native French. By the end of his life, Calvin was the dominant international voice for Reformed theology.

Cromwell became Henry VIII’s chief minister. He not only led England into creating its own national church, subject to the king and not to the pope, but he created the incentive for this separation remaining by seizing for the crown more than 800 monasteries, friaries, convents and other pieces of church property. Many of these ended up in the hands of the nobility who became enormously wealthy and disinclined to return allegiance to the Roman Church. Other countries in northern Europe quickly followed suit in the confiscation of church property.

By the end of the Reformation, Lutheran- ism had become the religion of much of Northern Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Calvinism, or some off-shoot of it, was practiced in Switzerland, Hol- land, France and Scotland. England went through periods of Anglicanism and Puritanism, and there were other denomina- tions or splinter-groups like Baptists.

The Reformation hurt the Catholic Church and broke the unity of Christian Europe. However, it helped bring reform to the Catholic Church as Luther had wanted. The Catholic Church was forced to face its weaknesses, drag itself out of the Middle Ages and deal with the modern age that was soon to begin with the Enlightenment. A counter-reformation, a reform of the Catholic Church within itself, produced The Council of Trent, new religious orders like the Jesuits, the establishment of more schools throughout Europe, and the first translations of the Bible into English, German, French and many other languages so that common people could read it.

A year ago, Pope Francis visited southern Sweden to begin a year of prepara- tion for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. It was the first papal visit to Sweden in 25 years. Over the past 20 years, Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now Francis, have dialoged with heads of the Lutheran Church. In 1999, Catholic and Lutheran churches agreed on a joint declaration that resolved many of the theological issues at the heart of the split. As the Second Vatican Council proclaimed, “There is truth in our sister Christian Churches.” We must work for unity. Jesus prayed that we all may be one so that the world could see the truth of his message.

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

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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


Nov. 15 Rev. Samuel C. Maranto CSSR Dcn. Donald J. Musso Sr. Betty Lyons FMOL


Nov. 17 Rev. Edwin J. Martin Dcn. Angelo S. Nola Sr. Vemola Lyons FMOL

Nov. 18 Rev. Gerard R. Martin Dcn. Ricky P. Oubre Br. Eldon King SC


Nov. 20 Rev. Matthew E. McCaughhey Dcn. Ricky A. Patterson Br. Noel Lemmon SC

Nov. 21 Rev. Paul A. McDuffie Dcn. Minos J. Ponvylle Jr. Sr. Alphonse Maria CMC


Nov. 24 Rev. Michael A. Miceli Dcn. Mauricio Salazar OP Sr. Carmen Medina HMS


Nov. 26 Rev. Nutan S. Mini JIM Dcn. Mario (Sam) Sammartino Sr. Evelyn Mee CSJ


Nov. 28 Rev. Angel A. Guevara Dcn. Myron D. Rehling Sr. John Lampron CND
It’s hard to find your soulmate in someone who doesn’t believe you have a soul.

Recently on The Moth Radio Hour a young woman shared the story of her breakup with her boyfriend, a young man for whom she had deep feelings. The problem was that she, a person with a deep faith, a Mormon, struggled with the radical materialism of her boyfriend. For him, there were no souls; the physical world was real, and nothing else. She kept asking him if he believed he had a soul. He couldn’t make himself believe that. Eventually, not without a lot of heartache, they broke up. Why? In her words: “It’s hard to find your soulmate in someone who doesn’t believe you have a soul.

Her frustration is becoming more universal. More and more our world is ignoring and denying the existence of soul, becoming soulless. It wasn’t always like this. Up until modern times, often it was the physical and the body that weren’t properly honored. But things have changed, radically.

It began with Darwin, who rooted our origins more in the history of our bodies than in the origins of our souls; it took more shape in the mechanistic philosophies of the last century, which understood both our universe and ourselves as physical machines; it became more firm as modern medicine and experimental psychology began more and more to explain the brain primarily in terms of carbohydrate complexification and biochemical interactions; it seeped into our higher educational systems as we produced more and more technical schools rather than universities in the deeper sense; and it culminated in popular culture where love and sex are spoken of more in terms of chemistry than in terms of soul. It is not surprising that for most pop singers today the mantra is: “I want your body! I want your body!” We’re a long way from Shakespeare’s marriage of true minds and Yeats’ love of the pilgrim soul in you.

Religion of course has always lodged its protests against this but often its understanding of the soul was itself too narrow to have much power to hire a materialistic culture back into wanting to rediscover and listen to the soul. Ironically, it took a non-religious figure, Carl Jung, to speak of soul again in a way that is intellectually intriguing. And it was in the sick, the insane, the suicidal and others whose lives were broken that Jung began to hear the cry of the soul (whose demands are sometimes very different from those of the body and whose needs are for much more than simple comfort and the prolonging of life).

Much of Jung’s teaching and that of his followers can be seen as a protest for the soul. We see this, for example, in the writing of James Hillman. It’s ironic that as an agnostic he was able to speak about the soul in ways that we, who are religious, might envy and emulate. Like Jung, he also drew many of his insights from listening to the soul cry out its meaning and pain through the voices of the sick, the insane, the broken and the suicidal. Religion, medicine and psychology, he believes, are not hearing the soul’s cry. They’re forever trying to fix the soul, cure the soul or save the soul, rather than listening to the soul, which wants and needs neither to be fixed nor saved. It’s already eternal. The soul needs to be heard, and heard in all its godly goodness and earthly complexities. And sometimes what it tells us goes against all common sense, medical practice and the over-simplistic spiritualities we often present as religion.

To be more in touch with our souls we might examine an older language, the language that religion, poets, mythologists and lovers used before today’s dominant materialism turned our language about the soul into the language of chemistry and mechanism. We cannot understand the soul through any scientific description but only by looking at its behavior, its insatiable, its dissatisfaction and its protests. A soul isn’t explained, it’s experienced, and the soul experience always comes soaked in depth, in longing, in eros, in limit, in the feeling of being pilgrim in need of a soulmate.

Happily, even today, we still do spontaneously connect the soul to things beyond chemistry and mechanism. As Hillman points out: “We associate the word ‘soul’ with: mind, spirit, heart, life, warmth, humanness, personality, individuality, intentionality, essence, innermost, purpose, emotion, quality, virtue, morality, sin, wisdom, death, God. As well, we speak of a soul as ‘troubled,’ ‘old,’ ‘disembodied,’ ‘immortal,’ ‘lost,’ ‘innocent,’ ‘inspired.’ Eyes are said to be ‘soulful’, for the eyes are ‘the mirror of the soul,’ and one can be ‘soulless’ by showing no mercy.”

Soullessness: We understand the make-up of something best when we see it broken. So perhaps today we can best understand our soullessness in the growing acceptance of pornography and hook-up sex, where the soul is intentionally and necessarily excluded from what is meant to be the epitome of all soulful experience.

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

Be thou my vision, but what do I see?

The hymn sings both ways. This is God’s dream for every child: to be seen, to be cherished, to be beloved. This is love’s endless exchange: to keep seeing each other, back and forth as we grow. Nurturing faith in a family tries to sink this truth into our stubborn bones. In every moment, we are beholding God – if only we keep our eyes open. Vision is this ordinary and this extraordinary. “Heart of my own heart,” we sing again that night, and I start to see how true it is. “Whatsoever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.”

ENJOY A FREE COPY OF THE CATHOLIC COMMENTATOR, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EDITION, DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME EACH WEEK! SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

November 10, 2017

VIEWPOINT  The Catholic Commentator   21

Be thou my vision, but what do I see?

W e cuddle together in the dark after the last book has been read. His 5-year-old limbs squirm as I whisper that it’s time for sleep.

“Can you sing me one more song?” he pleads.

I can’t resist. I’m a middle child, too. I know that in a family of many, you need to guard a few treasures for yourself. So we start to sing his lullaby, the one I sing only to him.

“Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart. Naught be all else to me, save thou art. Thou my best thought and I start to see how true it is. “Whatever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.”

Be thou my vision. Saints saw apparitions. Mystics were enraptured by encounters with the divine. What would it mean to see such a vision? Could you ever return to regular life?

My life is not mystical. Work, kids, home, errands. The visions of my days are ordinary: I see my spouse, my children, my office, my kitchen. I glimpse God here and there, on the edges and in the corners. But how would it feel to have full senses flooded with a blinding vision of God?

My son’s kicking distracts my dreaming. I kiss his forehead in the grainy dark and tiptoe by the next morning, I keep thinking about the hymn.

“Be thou my vision.”

The ancient Irish words capture what I want for myself and my children; to keep the vision of God at the center of our lives. But how? Some days it feels helpless and hard enough to cling to my own faith, let alone foster theirs.

And if I don’t have a clear vision of God – if my focus gets distracted or my eyes get clouded – can I hope to raise my children to believe, too?

But as I keep driving with the hymn rolling through my head, I realize what I’ve forgotten. Vision has two meanings: what we see and how we see it. The image we behold and the eyes we use to see.

Suddenly everything becomes clearer. Only God is God, be the vision I hold before me. God, guide the eyes by which I see.

As I pull away from the school drop-off lane, my son turns back. He is the only one who ever waves, the child who has to lock eyes with me through the car window and smile one more time before he goes. This is the vision we share each morning. Ordinary, tender, fleeting. Only then do I realize that this is how God sees me, too. Move one comma and everything changes. “Be thou, my vision.” Be yourself. Be who I created you to be. Be the vision I have for you.

The hymn sings both ways.
COMING EVENTS

November 10, 2017

Women in Spirit – Becky Eldredge, spiritual director, retreat facilitator and author, will present a talk, “Inner Chapel: The Intimacy of Interior Life,” Thursday, Nov. 16, noon, at St. Joseph Cathedral parish hall, Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge. Women in Spirit is a women’s interfaith gathering for spiritual growth and networking. A complimentary lunch will be served. To RSVP, email wisi@cathedralbr.org or call 225-387-5928.

Pro-Life Mass – A monthly pro-life Mass will be celebrated Tuesday, Nov. 14, 5:30 p.m., at St. Agnes Church, 749 East Blvd., Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-383-4127.

Rosaryville Events – Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula, will host the following upcoming events: Icon class by Phillip Zimmerman, Monday, Nov. 13 – Saturday, Nov. 18, for more information call 724-235-9784, email icon53@verizon.net or visit philzicons.com; “Beneath the Weight” program to end emotional eating and achieve a lifestyle that will result in a permanent weight loss, Saturday, Dec. 9, 8:45 a.m. – 3 p.m. For more information, call 225-294-5039 or visit cATHOLICistelecenter.org.

Youth Suicide Forum – The Offices of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and Marriage and Family Life of the Diocese of Baton Rouge are sponsoring a forum: “13 Reasons Why Not: A Forum on Youth & Suicide,” on Tuesday, Nov. 13 – Saturday, Nov. 18, for more information, call 504-828-1368 or email info@ccrno.org. For help placing your classified ad, call 225-387-0983. All classified ads are prepaid. Credit cards are now accepted.

The Catholic Commentator
PO Box 3316
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

Garden Mausoleum at St. George Church. Double side by side. Retail $5700; asking $5500. 225-938-8061.

LEGAL NOTICES

Anyone with knowledge of the whereabouts of Allen Craig Bennett is asked to contact the Diocesan Tribunal where the Diocesan Tribunal is located in Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316.

Anyone with knowledge of the whereabouts of John Daniel Belsha is asked to contact the Diocesan Tribunal at 225-336-8755.

Anyone with knowledge of the whereabouts of David Whitlark is asked to contact the Diocesan Tribunal at 225-336-8755.

MEDICARE QUESTIONS?

For help placing your classified ad, call 225-387-0983. All classified ads are prepaid. Credit cards are now accepted.

ORGANIZATION

Print Your Ad Here

Fill in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.

Print Your Ad Here

Flow in the form below to get your ad published.

Circle Category: Announcements—Business Services—Cards of Thanks—For Rent—For Sale—Help Wanted

—Positions Wanted—Legal Notices (other)

Mail to: The Catholic Commentator, P.O. Box 3316, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3316

Enclosed is $9.50 for the first 15 words + $1.50 for each word thereafter + $25 per line for each special effect (all caps, centered line, bold lettering); for a total of $, for each issue. Call for charging on your credit card.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

CITY

DATES TO RUN:

ENCLOSED IN

Advertisements will not be published without full payment in advance.
nonviolent crimes at twice the rate of South Carolina and three times the rate of Florida, even though the states have nearly identical crime rates.

“The reform package is a way to look at some of the laws that had existed with regard to sentencing and essentially try and make it more just, so individuals who don’t pose a threat to society and have served their time can re-enter and become contributing members within general society again,” said Rob Tasman, executive director of the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Ten bills make up the Justice Reinvestment Package. Besides reinvesting in prison alternatives such as rehabilitation and programs targeted to reduce recidivism, the package includes a bill that permits most people sentenced to life as juveniles to be eligible for parole after 25 years.

“What’s important for people who don’t know our involvement in this is that even before this major package took place, (LCCB) has been addressing sentencing for at least five to six years,” said Tasman. “The very first issue we ever got involved in was to stand out against the sentencing of juveniles to life in prison without parole and that was actually then decided by the Supreme Court (of the United States). So, one of the bills that was part of this package was to finally bring Louisiana in line with that specific Supreme Court decision.”

Other components tailor criminal fines and fees to the ability to pay; temporarily suspends child support payments for those incarcerated for more than six months, unless they have an ability to pay; streamlines registration for victim notifications; simplifies the process for those with criminal convictions to receive occupational licenses; and lifts the ban on public assistance benefits for drug offenders returning home.

Tasman said the LCCB also weighed in on the latter issue because drug felons could not receive public assistance, such as food stamps, for one year after being released from prison.

“We saw that as not only an impact on the individual but also potentially on the victim’s family,” said Tasman. “We want people to re-enter society and to have a high success rate to re-entering as opposed to reverting back into whatever life of crime they may have had prior to that.”

Among the bills expected to make the biggest impact on the justice system are SB 139, SB 220 and SB 221. SB 139 improves Louisiana’s probation and parole supervision for inmates serving time for nonviolent offenses. It also includes incentives “to encourage positive behavior,” parole considerations for those sentenced to life for second-degree murder in the 1970s when it was a “parole eligible offense” and medical treatment furlough.

“We have a huge aging population at Angola,” said Natalie LaBorde, deputy assistant secretary for the Louisiana Department of Corrections. “But, the majority of people at Angola are (convicted of) first- and second-degree murder, so what’s happened is DOC has become a hospital, and we’re footing 100 percent of that bill; whereas, if they were in a nursing home, the majority of these are Medicaid eligible and you could be drawing down those dollars.”

The medical treatment furlough, according to Laborde, applies to all offenders except for those on death row. But before it is granted, she said there is a process that involves approval from the secretary and permission from the parole board.

SB 220 “focuses prison space on the most violent and serious offenders by tailoring sentences of drug offenders to the weight of the drug. It also removes less serious crimes from the violent crimes list and creates the Louisiana Felony Class System Task Force.”

SB 221 “tailors habitual offender penalties to the severity of the offense by lowering the mandatory minimum sentence for second and third offenses.”

According to Louisiana Department of Corrections spokesman Ken Pastorick, approximately 1,500 inmates, all of whom were convicted of non-violent crimes, were released from state, civil parish and privately managed prisons throughout the state on Nov. 1. That number was in addition to the average of 1,500 inmates convicted of non-violent crimes released monthly. Those that have been previously released had served 40 percent of their sentences, but those released Nov. 1 had served 35 percent of their time, under the state’s new guidelines.

Ronnie Moore, re-entry coordinator for the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the Archdiocese of New Orleans, said that of the inmates released under the new re-entry bill, a combined 70 percent of those were released from five civil parishes, including East Baton Rouge. The remaining 30 percent came from seven civil parishes.

The reform package is the culmination of two years of work, first by the Pew Trust Center which worked with the Edwards administration on problems with the state’s justice system, and a bipartisan task force, which spent one year studying the issue and holding public forums before submitting its recommendations to the legislature.

In 2012, a push to lower the incarceration rate under Gov. Bobby Jindal failed after strong opposition from district attorneys and sheriffs. Currently, local sheriffs are paid $24.39 per day to house state inmates, but LaBorde said the state is trying to move away from that model by increasing the per diem for sheriffs who are willing to provide these programs and treatments and reducing the per diem for those who don’t provide programs.

This time around, according to Tasman, there was lots of work on the bills before they were presented to lawmakers.

“What finally resulted was, in my mind, truly a compromise because I think the reforms really wanted to go farther, the opposition from the district attorneys was very, very strong,” he said.

“There were tremendous amounts of behind the doors meeting that involved the district attorneys, the advocates for reform, the governor’s office, all the major players. So when things finally passed it was only because all those meetings had taken place and the stakeholders’ voices had been heard.”

LaBorde said DOC Secretary Jimmy LeBlanc “implemented a department-wide philosophy of re-entry programming.” She credited the program with helping to reduce the inmate population, which peaked at 40,000 in 2012, by 5,000 during the past five years. The new reinvestment package continues those programs.

(LeBlanc) created something called re-entry centers at the local level; we have nine regional ones, which provide 100 hours of pre-release programming before they’re exiting,” said LaBorde. “He attributes the decrease in the population and the recidivism rates to that re-entry programming. So, the re-investment is about growing those programs at the local level.”

“It’s ironic in one way because we recognize that we’re flawed, but at the same time, it’s easy for us to judge individuals who may have committed a crime and have been found guilty and now facing a prison sentence,” said Tasman. “It’s easy for us to say, ‘Well, we would never do that.’ ‘That can’t be us.’ And, when we do that, I think, we forget about the fact that they are as human as we are. They possess the same God-given dignity that we do.”

“We want people to re-enter society and have a high success rate to re-entering as opposed to reverting back into whatever life of crime they may have had prior to that.”

Rob Tasman
Executive Director of the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Catholic Commentator
also men and women religious. Statistics show that only 25 percent of Catholics regularly attend Sunday Mass.

“You look at that alone,” he said “How many people that are going to Mass are fully giving themselves over as intentional disciples? There is the real crisis in vocation or making a decision to be religious life.

He said the church needs to educate people more about the priesthood and what a priest does, but he added that is secondary to the new evangelization of living one’s life in the Holy Spirit, developing a deep connection to the sacraments.

He said Vocations Awareness Week is an opportunity to bring to the forefront the vocation of religious life. He said it is a time to encourage young men and women to discern in a particular way to be open to the call of the consecrated or religious life.

“There is a lot going on and a lot of things that can distract you from really pursuing what God wants,” he said. “It’s sometimes too much noise that just keeps us from being quiet. The call comes from deep within the heart, and it is in the silence of the heart that we hear the call.”

Currently, the diocese has 17 seminarians, a number Father Merrick calls average for a diocese the size of Baton Rouge. He emphasized he is looking for quality over quantity when it comes to priest candidates.

“We want more men but our first thing is looking for quality men that God is calling,” Father Merrick said. “Not perfect men.”

Father David shares Father Merrick’s concern regarding the priest shortage but takes pride in watching how his parishioners remain proactive in trying to encourage seminarian formation. He said the parish has taken on the identity of a teaching parish, as noted by the fact seven seminarians have been assigned to St. Margaret during the past six years.

“Exposure is one of the big things on our vocations agenda,” Father David said. “Just by (the seminarians) being involved in parish ministry allows the young people to see these guys are normal. Young people being around the seminarians makes them consider (the religious life).”

“It is a sense of pride,” he added. “It’s nurturing and supporting seminarians, helping mold them into the type of priests we need.

(Parishioners) have taken on that role, just to acclimate men into that type of lifestyle they are desiring.”

Seminarians for the Diocese of Baton Rouge include, bottom row, left to right, Alex Ruch, Matthew Dunn, James Vu, Michael Graugnard, Joseph St. Cyr and John Vu; middle row, Tres Turner, Austin Young, Deacon Tim Grimes, Danny Roussel, Nicholas Lyons, Joseph Bergan, Jesse Barrow and Joseph Bresowar; top row, Taylor Sanford, Albert Blount and Jeremy Lopez. Photo provided by the Vocations Office of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.