WALL OF CHAMPIONS

Holy Rosary celebrates lives of saints

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Gazing upon the Wall of Saints at Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant, one sees champions of the faith spurring on its viewers to strive for lives of holiness with the message “you can too.”

“I certainly believe God created each and every single one of us, and the reason is God desires us to be saints. We were created for heaven. Not all of us are going to become canonized saints, but we are called to live lives that are ‘canonizable,’” said Holy Rosary pastor Father Joshua Johnson.

Unfortunately, sometimes people don’t realize they are called to be saints, according to Father Johnson. Depending on their state in life, they may say “I’ll try to be holy or a saint, ‘when ...’”

“We always put off holiness,” said Father Johnson. “The reason we put off holiness and the idea of being a saint is because we misunderstand what it means to be a saint.

“To be a saint is to struggle. It’s a struggle for heaven in our own unique way. But we’re all called to holiness.”

Father Johnson noted that when people come to church, they face the altar and the Mass is focused toward Jesus.

“As they are gazing toward Jesus during Mass, Jesus is speaking to them and informing them on how they are called to go out and be a saint,” he said. “So I wanted them to see (as they walk out of the church) a diversity of saints. They didn’t look alike, they didn’t have the same prayer life, they didn’t have the same state of life vocation, they didn’t have the same work place, they were different ages, different genders, different races, they were of different backgrounds. So you might see someone who looks like you that inspires you to say, ‘I can be a saint.’”

The wall highlights canonized saints, those who have the title “blessed or...”

SEE SAINTS PAGE 12

CSO says safety on campus is a priority

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

The Feb. 14 deadly shooting that resulted in the loss of 17 lives at a Florida high school has many students, parents and school administrators across the country, including those in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, on edge.

Even before the shootings that have shocked the nation, however, school superintendent Dr. Melanie Verges said diocesan principals had already developed their own safety protocols. Those protocols, she said, are based on the size and layout of a school’s campus and schedule.

“One size doesn’t fit all,” she said. “So, we’re very grateful that our principals are keenly aware about safety and they’ve taken proactive steps to make sure they have safe campuses.”

SEE SAFETY PAGE 24

Diocese wins lawsuit

The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge has been embroiled in an eight-and-one-half-year-long very contentious legal battle to defend the Seal of Confession. The diocese and Father Jeff Bayhi have prevailed in protecting the Seal of Confession. The case went from the district court in Baton Rouge, then

SEE LAWSUIT PAGE 20
**Diocesan Prayer for the Selection of a New Bishop**

Lord Jesus,

you are the Good Shepherd who laid down your life for your sheep.

As the Good Shepherd, you call other leaders to guide and care for your flock.

We pray that you send forth your Holy Spirit to inspire your Church in selecting a new Bishop for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

May he be a shepherd, after your own heart, who will lead us to deepen our love for you and for each other.

May he guide us to create the unity you intend for our entire human family as one flock with one shepherd.

We pray this in your name, Jesus Christ, our Shepherd and Lord.

Amen.

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**Christ will give you light**

*By Dina Dow*

“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Eph 5:14).

(Note: There are two choices of readings in the Liturgy of the Word for Lent Week Three and Lent Week Four. This reflection will focus on Year A Readings, which are those selected for the Scrutiny of Catechumens, those seeking the sacrament of baptism this Easter.)

Lent offers an opportunity for the faithful, together with the Elect (those seeking full communion in the Catholic Church) to experience a deep interior conversion. We are invited to a renewal of faith, hope and love through an imitation of Christ and an openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The Mass readings bring to mind the hope of the living waters of baptism, the faith in the light of Jesus and the love to become Christ to others by his merciful embrace.

**Faith**

As the Diocese of Baton Rouge prepares for the retirement of Bishop Robert W. Muench, The Catholic Commentator will for the next few months publish photos of the bishop from the past 16 years. Above, he is pictured talking to group of freshman students in religion class at St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School in Hammond in 2003. Catholic Commentator file photo

**Hope**

The Diocese of Baton Rouge will for the next few months publish photos of the bishop as he prepares to retire. The Diocese of Baton Rouge plans to publish photos of Bishop Robert W. Muench from the past 16 years. Above, he is pictured talking to group of freshman students in religion class at St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School in Hammond in 2003. Catholic Commentator file photo

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**See GOSPEL PAGE 24**
Cristo Rey enters new phase

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Modular buildings have been secured, desks arranged, chalkboards cleaned, the broad smiles on young faces expressing relief as well as a renewed enthusiasm for learning.

Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School has completed its arduous odyssey that saw students spend 17 months at Bon Carre Business Park in Baton Rouge before finally resettling in modular buildings at the site of the old Redemptorist High School.

Now the heavy lifting begins, as school officials strategize for a future that includes a major fund-raising campaign that could top out at close to $10 million.

Cristo Rey president Brian Moscona acknowledged that for the past 17 months, after being displaced by the August 2016 flood, school officials have been in survival mode. Now, they are shifting gears to raise funds and effectively plan for a new school building that will eventually house 400-500 students.

‘It’s going to take the Baton Rouge community coming together to make this happen,” Moscona said. “The key to Cristo Rey is a unifying concept; all about giving young people a chance.”

Currently, the school administration is awaiting final word from FEMA as to what damages Cristo Rey will be awarded arising from the flood, which drove students to Bon Carre only two weeks after they had moved into the former Redemptorist quarters. Once FEMA arrives at that number, which will likely be in the range of $1.5 million to $2 million, officials will be able to determine how much will need to be raised for a new school, which will come with a price tag of an estimated $8 million to $10 million, according to Moscona.

“(The FEMA money) certainly would be a substantial start to a new building,” Moscona said. “We'll be looking for individuals, corporations, foundations who really want to make an impact for students in north Baton Rouge.”

Noting that everything is contingent on FEMA, Moscona said he is hopeful that process will be completed by the summer, which will trigger the design phase. Once that is completed, with the cost of the new building in hand, the fundraising campaign can begin “as soon as possible,” according to Moscona.

Although a timetable has yet to be established, he said extensions on the modular buildings are an option through FEMA after three years. Another option is to purchase the buildings, which would allow officials more time to develop a long-term solution.

“The buildings are very nice, very sturdy with ample space,” he said.

Outgoing Cristo Rey board chairman Vic Howell reiterated Cristo Rey’s commitment to remain in north Baton Rouge, an area that has witnessed a rise in crime. Moscona and Howell agree that Cristo Rey can serve as a catalyst for economic development in the area, especially when a new school is constructed.

Howell said he realized how important having a school in the area was to the neighborhood immediately after it originally opened. He said he was overwhelmed and gratified by the support from neighboring families and businesses, making the decision to return to the site after the flood that much easier.

“We know there are large plans for development in north Baton Rouge,” Howell said. “(City officials) see us as an anchor. With all of that, it was not a hard decision to say we have to go back to north Baton Rouge. Everyone is delighted that we are here.”

Moscona agreed that new construction should help attract families and businesses into the area.

“We hope to be a catalyst for economic development, for life and for activity in north Baton Rouge,” he said. “We have the potential to make a significant impact by having a joy-filled presence in that space.

“You have the sound of young people learning, of playing, I think that's just great for the neighborhood and environment and (hopefully) lead others to be apart of it.

“There’s a feeling (among board members) that's where God wanted Cristo Rey.”
Father Lorrain assigned to familiar role

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Father Matt Lorrain said he is looking forward to returning to a role he once held for seven years.

Bishop Robert W. Muench recently appointed Father Lorrain director of seminarians, a position he previously held from 2005-12. Father Lorrain, who is pastor at St. John the Baptist Church in Brusly, is replacing Father Matt Dupré, who is pastor at St. Patrick Church in Baton Rouge.

“I enjoy working with the guys but also want to be able to give it the proper time it deserves without neglecting my parish, my parishioners,” said Father Lorrain, who previously served in a fulltime capacity as director of vocations. “I am not planning any major changes. (Father Dupré) was doing a good job and I want to continue that.”

His responsibilities will include working alongside director of vocations Father Andrew Merrick and Lisette Borné, who is associate director of vocations and seminarians. Father Lorrain said Father Merrick, who also serves as pastor at Christ the King Church and Student Center at LSU in Baton Rouge, is in charge of promoting and encouraging vocations. Father Lorrain is entrusted to overseeing formation of seminarians.

Father Lorrain said part of his responsibilities will include summer assignments, pastoral assignments and hospital assignments for seminarians.

“There is a lot of overlap,” he added. “We always feel that two sets of eyes is better than one set when it comes to looking at the application process and helping a man discern. I think Father Andrew and I will work together on a lot of that.”

He noted that part of his job, as well as that of Father Merrick and Borné, is to help seminarians serve the church where God is calling them. His hope, of course, is that service would be in the priesthood but if not, the next step is identifying where that individual would serve best.

“That’s what benefits the church,” he said. “We know we are not going to have 100 percent (retention) rate but if we can help someone be formed into the faith, have spiritual growth, have pastoral growth, then we know the church is going to benefit if that man becomes a priest, or a husband or a father.”

Father Lorrain’s appointment is effective until Aug. 31, at which time he said his intention is to give Bishop Muench, or the bishop’s replacement if he is in place by then, recommendations of three fellow clergy members he believes would serve well in the position.

But he added that if necessary he would be open to serving past Aug. 31.

“I kind of see myself as a placeholder and I think Bishop Muench kind of sees that too,” Father Lorrain said.

Congress gets calls to save DACA

WASHINGTON (CNS) – As Congress reconvened after a 10-day recess, members of both chambers received calls from Catholics around the country Feb. 26 urging them to find a legislative solution to save the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA.

The U.S. Catholic bishops asked people to call their senators and representatives and urge them to protect “Dreamers” from deportation; provide them a path to citizenship; and to avoid “any damage to existing protections for families and unaccompanied minors in the process.”

On the heels of the “National Catholic Call-In Day to Protect Dreamers,” hundreds of Catholic leaders declared Feb. 27 as a “Catholic Day of Action” in Washington. They planned a news conference, followed by praying and singing by some in the group inside the Russell Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill.

“Given our heritage as an immigrant community, I urge the faithful across the archdiocese to stand together in solidarity with our Dreamers and to join the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for a National Call-in Day for Dreamers,” Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich said in a statement in advance of the national effort.

Congress must protect our young immigrant neighbors who want nothing more than to continue to contribute to the nation they call home,” he said. He called his own and other senators and representatives midday of the call-in event.

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network estimates that 122 Dreamers with DACA status “are losing their ability to work every day that Congress doesn’t provide a legislative solution. That number will increase rapidly when the program officially ends on March 5.”

The same day as the call-in took place, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear and rule on whether the administration has the right to shut down DACA.

In September, President Donald Trump announced his administration was ending the program, giving lawmakers until March 5 to find a legislative solution to protect the young adults benefiting from DACA.

Two federal judges blocked the Trump administration’s efforts to end the program, ruling the government must continue to accept renewal applications for DACA.

In turn, the administration asked the Supreme Court to hear and rule on one of those decisions, from a judge in California, in an effort to bypass the process of an appeal going through the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals based in San Francisco.

The case will now be heard on appeal by the 9th Circuit. But regardless of that setback for the Trump administration, “it does not change anything,” said Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles.

“Congress has the responsibility to make immigration policy. It is long past time for members of Congress to take their responsibilities seriously – seriously enough that they are willing to act with courage to negotiate and seek compromises and resist the temptation to keep using this issue for their political advantage,” he said in a statement.

Immigration advocates have long urged Congress to pass a “clean” bill to preserve DACA, without amendments providing for various immigration reforms. In his Feb. 26 statement, Archbishop Gomez said: “People’s lives and families’ futures hang in the balance. Now is the time to pass legislation that enables the Dreamers to become citizens and full contributing members of our society.”
Mideast Christian leaders shut Church of Holy Sepulcher

JERUSALEM (CNS) — Protesting several recent actions they described as a “systematic campaign against the churches and the Christian community in the Holy Land,” the heads of Christian churches announced Feb. 25 they were closing of the doors of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for an undisclosed period of time.

Bewildered pilgrims milled around the square in front of the church as Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III flanked by Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, custos of the Holy Land, and Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian read a short statement to the press. At the same time, the only two people allowed to close the doors, the Muslim custodian of the key, Adeeb Nuseibeh, and Muslim door keeper Wajeeh Jawad, were quoted as saying it was not very pleasant.

“This was a bad decision. Faith and religious feelings are something very personal,” said Flavia Falcone, an Italian Catholic living in Poland, who had come to Israel for four days. “This was a bad decision. Faith and politics are two different things. I came here all this way to see the church and I find it closed. It is not very pleasant.”

It is only the second time the doors to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher have been closed in the middle of the day, other than for traditional religious ceremonies. The other time was 20 years ago, when a visitor to the church began taking down crosses and candles, said Nuseibeh.

As media gathered to hear the church leaders, pilgrims wandered around the church square, some kneeling in front of the massive wooden doors, the closest they would come to entering the church.

“We had one shot,” said Flavia Falcone, 25, an Italian Catholic living in Poland, who had come to Israel for four days. “This was a bad decision. Faith and politics are two different things. I came here all this way to see the church and I find it closed. It is not very pleasant.”

The church leaders were protesting the Jerusalem municipality’s intention to impose property taxes on church property, such as hotels and convention centers, not used for worship purposes. The proposal to levy taxes on some properties would run contrary to the unofficial historical tax-exempt status the churches have enjoyed for centuries.

Meanwhile, the Advisory Council of the Catholic Center for Studies and Media declared its categorical rejection of Israel’s moves, saying they are “incompatible with the historical position of the churches in the Holy City and with their relations with the civil authorities.

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CIVIL WAR ARTIFACT – During the ongoing renovation of Sacred Heart of Jesus Ball Field (corner of Florida Blvd. and N. 22nd Street) in Baton Rouge, a Civil War Minie Ball (bullet) was unearthed. The Battle of Baton Rouge was fought in that area of town on Aug. 5, 1862. Confederate troops marched over the future site of the ball field to push back the Union forces advancing through Magnolia Cemetery. Photo provided by David Dawson | Sacred Heart Church
Scattering ashes/ Feeling close to God

When I die, I would like to be cremated and have my ashes scattered in a place of peace and beauty that I have already chosen. However, when I have asked a couple of priests, they say that I can be cremated but that my ashes must be in an urn and either buried or interred in an above-ground mausoleum.

The reason they have given is that my body/ashes must be together at the end of the world. So does that mean that people who have died in explosions and have had their bodies completely incinerated cannot be reunited with Christ? (Even if embalmed, our bodies will still rot away; will bodies actually be in heaven, or only our spirits/souls?)

(Minneapolis)

It is true, as you learned, that in the view of the Catholic Church, cremains should be buried or interred in a sacred, church-approved place. But the reason is not so much, as you suggest, that “the ashes must be together at the end of the world.”

Instead, it results from the church’s belief that the human body is an essential part of a person’s identity and that cremains should therefore be treated with the same respect as a human corpse. Additionally, the church prefers that the cremains be accessible to the public so that the Christian community can come and remember the dead in prayer. And so, in 2016 when the Vatican issued guidelines for cremation, it clarified that the cremains should not be scattered, divided up, placed in lockets or kept at home.

And yes, it is an essential Catholic doctrine (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1017) that in heaven our bodies will be reunited with our souls although transformed into a glorified state, freed from any suffering or pain. Exactly how that will happen we do not know, although transformed into a glorified state, freed from any suffering or pain. Exactly how that will happen we do not know, although I feel confident that God can figure it out even for those whose bodies have been “completely incinerated” at death. I am 80 years old and would like to feel like a real and responsible Catholic again, but here is my problem. In the Bible, it says that we should love God with all our hearts and minds. I believe in God and know that he is there, but I just do not experience that “loving,” “feel good” emotion.

I have a huge guilt complex about this, because it suggests that I just take God for granted. I can talk and pray to God, but it seems so one-sided. When I was a boy, I used to stop in church for a visit and just sit and marvel that I was in God’s house. But now I leave Mass feeling empty, except for knowing that I have met my Sunday obligation.

Over the years, I have spoken with four different Catholic priests to discuss this, and it was a complete waste of time. All I came away with was that I needed to have blind faith. I do have faith, but that does not remove my guilt for not properly loving God. (Terre Haute, Indiana)

Relax! The fact that you do not feel God’s closeness does not mean that you don’t love him. I refer you to a book called “Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light,” the record of Mother Teresa’s correspondence with her spiritual director.

Mother Teresa, who devoted her life to caring for the poor in the streets of Kolkata, was canonized a saint in 2016. Yet this book reveals that she endured many years of an intense spiritual dryness, feeling abandoned by God. It is a story told by many saints.

“My own soul remains in deep darkness and desolation,” noted an anguished Mother Teresa. Nevertheless, she said, “I don’t complain—I do him with me whatever he wants.”

I’m sure that you appreciate that the Lord has given you the gift of life, along with many blessings over your 80 years. Your presence at Mass—the great act of Christian thanksgiving—demonstrates that gratitude.

I will pray that God will grant you the gift of inner peace, as well as a sense of his nearness. But meanwhile, don’t worry about how you feel; it’s much more important how you think and act.

FATHER DOYLE is a retired priest in the Diocese of Albany, New York. Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherd Doyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.
By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

During the “springtime of the soul” of Lent, daily Mass can plant seeds that yield good results as Catholics cultivate their “garden” of spiritual growth, according to several priests in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“In my own experience of the Lenten journey, I have always found that taking on the Lenten practice of daily Mass is one of the best spiritual exercises that one can do,” said Father Cleo Milano, pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge. “While many people like to give up something, taking on the commitment to do something extra such as daily Mass is a marvelous opportunity for spiritual growth.”

Father Milano pointed out that daily Mass “places one in the quiet presence of the Lord to hear the powerful Scriptures that calls Catholics to deepen their own conversion.”

“Hearing God’s Word proclaimed in the daily Mass Scriptures and meditating on the call to return to the Lord with all of our heart is a great way to evaluate our present spiritual condition and reorient those things that need to be shifted in our life,” said Father Milano.

Following the homily, listening to God’s word with Eucharist and receiving Jesus (body, blood, soul and divinity) people are strengthened to make those changes that they know they need, according to Father Milano. While doing so, they can form a community with other attendees who are doing the same thing.

“One of the beautiful things about daily Mass during Lent is the support that one feels from the many other parishioners and faithful who share the same journey and desire for conversion,” said Father Milano. “It is assuring and comforting to know that we do not make this journey on our own, but rather we are united spiritually to many others as well. As a priest, it is so edifying to see God’s faithful people gather in a spirit of repentance to open their hearts for God.”

Father Philip Spano, pastor of Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Baton Rouge, said, “The various Lenten practices of many include increased prayer, acts of self-denial, works of charity and penance.

“When I was a child my father (Victor) would attend daily Mass and give up drinking for Lent. I’m not sure what made him happier when Easter finally arrived, but he liked daily Mass.”

Father Spano said in his experience as a priest, and most likely other priests, daily Mass attendance increases during Lent as a way of adding prayer for an individual.

“There is not the personal and communal obligation to attend (daily) Mass with our Catholic family, so there is choice and intentionality in a different way,” he said. “It becomes a personal act of piety, a personal prayer from among many Catholic prayer forms (and/or devotions) for individuals.”

For some to be fed by God’s word and sacrament more often than on the weekend is a personal call and/or choice.

Father Spano said most ways of praying involve some dimension of intentionality and going to daily Mass has to be intentional.

“All prayer nourishes us in some way, and daily Mass is being nourished by God’s word and sacrament in a devotional way more often,” said Father Spano.

Many are drawn to different ways of praying in their personal prayer time, said Father Spano. He stressed it is “good to stay away from commentaries on what’s better or not” and be respectful of differences in how others pray privately, adding that daily Mass is good.

“Praying the rosary and other devotional prayers, novenas, etc., are good as well. Contemplation and meditation in one’s own private space is good (inside or outside of church),” said Father Spano. He emphasized, “One thing that participating in Sunday Mass and/or daily Mass should do is guarantee some dimension of ‘thanksgiving’ because the word Eucharist literally means ‘thanksgiving.’ There needs to be an intentionality to gratitude in all ways of praying, but in the celebration of the Eucharist the first movement is: ‘I/We are going to do thanksgiving.’

“The first movement is not what I get out of it or not (that helps), but the need personally and as a community is to give our gratitude to God. Then God says (I think), ‘I’m grateful for your gratitude so I’m going to give you more of me.’ I’m pretty sure the movement of Lent is subtracting ‘too much me’ in order to let God in at Mass, in various ways of praying, and in God’s presence within us.”

The two greatest aids in the spiritual life are prayer and the sacraments, according to Father Brent Maher, pastor of St. Ann Church in Morganza.

“The Mass is a perfect place to put ourselves if we are hoping to deepen our faith in the Lord. The journey into the desert is a time of self-reflection when we can get down to the most important things, stripping away the extras that often cling to us. The experience of daily Mass is somewhat comparable,” he said.

Father Maher talked about how daily Mass helps people better understand the Sunday Mass.

“The Sunday experience has all the bells and whistles, so to speak, but the daily Mass is the quiet humble encounter with Jesus. The readings at Mass on Sundays are helpful in hitting the high points of the Lenten season, but the daily Mass readings also help us to dig a bit deeper into the meaning of the season. Additionally, the personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is a time in which we can really allow Christ to become a greater part of our day, purifying us little by little and helping us to become the best we can be each day.

“I have noticed that parishioners who come to daily Mass soon develop a love for it. I have often heard from parishioners how they enjoy the quietness of it, how the liturgical feasts of saints gives them great insight and encouragement in their own faith, and how they understand the Mass much more on Sundays. Whether it’s in knowledge or in prayer, a greater richness is always a blessing to the individual and to the larger community.”

The priest noted that the offertory procession, music, intercessions, sign of peace and even the homily, are sometimes absent from the daily Mass, which helps people see what is most important: worship.

“The reading of the word of God in Scripture and the offering of the holy sacrifice in the Eucharist constitute the two main parts of the Mass, and daily Mass highlights this in a profound way by showing that when all else is stripped away, this is the essence of why we are there: to meet Jesus Christ in word and flesh,” Father Maher said.

“This understanding, rather than devaluing the Sunday Mass, has a way of making the procession, music, intercession, etc., even more special and celebratory when we experience them. It shows the great solemnity that Sunday is truly supposed to have for us as Christians.”
FranU unveils new name, new degrees

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

With a new name, new logo and new degrees, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, or FranU, is ready to step into a new class and join the ranks of other universities in the state that offer a top tier education in medical science.

Meeting community needs in a number of specialized areas prompted the school to rebrand and refocus. Among the new degrees offered are Doctor of Physical Therapy, Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences, Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Bachelor of Business Administration.

“FranU continues to respond to the needs of the community through our new programs and innovative learning opportunities,” said Dr. Tina Holland, president of FranU during a news conference Feb. 21. “Our programs not only deliver the necessary content and skills, but are also tightly wrapped in our Franciscan values and traditions.”

As part of a $1.4 million capital project, the school has a new physical therapy gym and classrooms featuring advanced audio/visual equipment and two Anatomage tables, a virtual human anatomy system that is projected onto a screen.

The new physical therapy suite will aid students in the new DPT program.

“It’s very exciting to have a wonderful facility for our students to learn in and practice in and potentially have patients come in to work with our students down the road,” said Dr. Kirk Nelson, director of physical therapy.

The DPT program starts in the fall and applications are already enrolling in the 40 available spots. According to Nelson, the doctoral program will give students another option for physical therapy education. Currently, the state only has two programs, Shreveport and New Orleans.

Joshlyn Shelby, a biology major at FranU and a member of the student government association, said the new branding campaign will attract attention to the school’s programs.

“I’m very excited to see our school expand,” she said. “I’m in love with the new facility. I think it’s really going to help future physical therapists.”

While the name is new, the school is not, dating to 1923 when Our Lady of the Lake School of Nursing was established by the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady (FMOL) to support a new sanitarium in downtown Baton Rouge. The school and the hospital moved to the Essen Lane location in the 1970s, and in the 1990s the school changed its name to Our Lady of the Lake College.

“Under the name Our Lady of the Lake College, a lot of the people in the community associated that with the hospital and didn’t really realize that we had a real university,” said Rebecca Cannon, vice president of enrollment and student affairs. “Anytime you do a rebrand, it brings recognition into the community, so that’s what we’re really looking forward to is honoring the legacy of our sisters and really promoting that status of a university.”

Next up for the university is a campus master plan for a “more unified campus,” Cannon said.

“Of the things that’s really important to a student is that physical campus,” she added. “(This would) allow us to create more co-curricular activities for students.”

ABBEDY DONATION – The Ladies Altar Society from St. Louis King of France Church in Baton Rouge who, learning that their church would close, decided to donate $2,300 to flood recovery efforts at Saint Joseph Abbey in St. Benedict. They presented the check to Abbot Justin Brown OSB on Feb. 7. From left are Barbara Schmitt, Abbot Brown, Teenie Bajon and Linda Musso. Photo provided by James Shields | St. Joseph Abbey
By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

“You are gods.”

This may sound blasphemous for some, but according to the book “Hope, Healing and the Seven Longings of the Human Heart” by Dr. Gregory K. Popcak, just as Jesus indicated “as written in the law” (Psalm 8:26) that “You are gods,” Catholics are intended to be holy, immortal and sharing in the life of the omnipotent God. Church parish and home-based small faith-sharing groups throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge are studying this book as part of the “One Book, One Church” reading project for Lent.

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis of the Diocese of Baton Rouge has sponsored “One Book, One Church” for the past three years. The book looks at the seven deadly sins and provides hope for overcoming them, according to Darryl Ducote, director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life, who composed the study guide for the program, which can be accessed by visiting evangcatbr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/One-BookOneChurch2018.pdf.

“We’re inviting the whole diocese to read and reflect on the same book at the same time. It offers a positive view of who we are in the sense we are intended to share in God’s life – which is where the title comes from. We are intended to become gods by sharing in God’s life,” Ducote said. “But because of broken humanity, we are sinful gods.

“In the majority of the book (Popcak) does something clever. He takes what is traditionally known as the seven deadly sins and looks beneath those sins and looks at the desires (divine longings) those sins represent,” Ducote noted that Popcak has degrees in psychology and theology and is a recognized expert in pastoral counseling.

“He blends both of those disciplines (in this book),” said Ducote.

The book advises that the way to conquer the seven deadly sins is by understanding the divine desires, or longings that only God fulfill, beneath them and re-orientate one’s life to pursue those desires rather than the sin, according to Ducote.

“God created the desires to direct our hearts toward him,” said Ducote. “And we’re broken in the sense that we misunderstand those desires and redirect our energies towards things that cannot fulfill those desires ultimately.

“So I think the value of the book, besides giving us a positive view of humans as open to divine life, its that it also helps us to direct our energies in a more positive way and recognize the desires we all have in common. In other words, it offers hope.”

The basic meaning of Lent is that it is a time to re-evaluate one’s life and make changes, according to Ducote.

“In religious language, it’s an ongoing conversion in preparation for the celebration of new life at Easter,” he said.

The study guide is meant to be used in a group setting, Ducote noted.

“The real intent is to have groups of faithful read the same materials, reflect on the questions in the study guide and share their thoughts so they can support each other in that ongoing conversion process,” said Ducote.

“The advantage of doing this kind of reflection in the small group setting is the fact that the Holy Spirit speaks to each person. So by sharing in a group, we have a more complete understanding of how the Holy Spirit is speaking to us. It helps create a sense of community in each parish (or home).”

For more information about the project, contact your church parish office or the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis at 225-336-8760.

Lenten book offers hope to overcoming sins

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225-769-4200

-Peter J. Losavio, Jr.- the only Louisiana Certified Elder Law Attorney through the National Elder Law Foundation accredited by the ABA.

-Kent DeJean- Attorney at Law.
CEF has helped advance Catholic education for 50 years

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

As a professional educator who has spent her entire career as a teaching, school administrator and district leader for Catholic schools, Dr. Melanie Verges has a unique appreciation for Citizens for Educational Choice.

CEF, originally founded by Archbishop Philip M. Hannan of New Orleans as Citizens for Educational Freedom, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year as a lobbying arm to the legislature. “The organization has been on the frontline on a number of issues that have directly impacted our schools and our students. CEC was instrumental in setting a firm foundation for the state scholarship program when it grew into a statewide initiative in 2012 and continues to serve non-public education by advocating for legislation that serves the common good of our state.”

Along with the scholarship program, which provides the opportunity for lower income students to attend Catholic schools, CEC has also been instrumental in a number of other issues, including school textbooks for Catholic students, busing and child nutrition.

“(CEC) has touched the lives of every Catholic student for the past 50 years and continues to do so today,” said Verges, who will often consult with CEC executive director Rob Tasman and occasionally meet with legislators. “As educators, as parents of Catholic school students, we are so grateful for their contributions. They provide an extremely valuable service.”

CEC’s origins date to November 1967 with Archbishop Hannan’s initiative to convince the Louisiana Legislature of the importance of supporting Catholic and non-public schools with “a fair share” of taxpayer dollars. Since its founding, CEF and now CEC have educated lawmakers on a fundamental financial reality: If Catholic schools did not exist, the state would have to assume the full economic burden of educating all of its students, a fiscal impossibility.

“It was Archbishop Hannan’s vision,” said Tasman, also the executive director of Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops. “He knew that since so many people had a voice in the public forum, why shouldn’t the voice of the church – and non-public schools – be heard as well?”

During the past 50 years, at the urging of CEF and CEC, legislators have approved approximately $500 million in state appropriations for non-public schools in areas such as required services (reimbursements for reports required by the state), bus transportation and salary supplements for school food service workers.

“The state also offers non-public schools grants for educational programs through the Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund (8g), established through a major offshore oil and gas revenue settlement. Last year, the state appropriated to non-public schools about $8 million for required services and $7 million for the school lunch salary supplements. But Tasman said that outlay was down from just a few years ago when the state provided $15 million for required services alone.

“We need to keep a keen eye on programs like required services and the school lunch salary supplements,” Tasman said. “This is money given to non-public schools that helps those schools operate at a very high level, and that transcends into how it impacts the student, whether it’s in student life or in the administration of school programs.

“There’s no doubt non-public schools have done that very well and usually with far less red tape and resources than are required by public schools.”

The first president of CEF was T.M. Barker of Lockport. Emile Comar, then managing editor of the Clarion Herald in New Orleans, served as executive director and acting vice president. In January 1968, Kirby Ducote made a transition from the public relations office of the Archdiocese of New Orleans to serve with Comar as associate director and later executive director of CEF.

At the time CEF was founded, approximately 150,000 children attended non-public elementary and secondary schools in Louisiana, and the vast majority – 130,000 – were enrolled in Catholic schools. If the state had to educate all those children, it would have had to spend an additional $62.5 million in operating costs alone, not counting the millions of dollars the non-public schools had invested in school buildings, land and movable property.

Comar said at the time: “On the one hand, with students in private schools are being asked to pay higher tuition, and on the other they are being taxed at higher levels to pay for public schools, which their children do not attend but which are nonetheless essential to the preservation of America’s cherished public educational system.”

Comar called it “a practical impasse.”

Tasman said Citizens for Educational Freedom was transformed into Citizens for Educational Choice in 2007 to reflect the growing national sentiment for using “tax justice” to give parents more options for the education of their children.

“We were trying to mirror the national organizations that were committed to the notion of school choice,” Tasman said, adding that many non-Catholic organizations across the state have an interest in school choice. Tasman said the Catholic conferences of most states have an educational arm to promote issues concerning Catholic schools. Louisiana is different – the CEC is a distinct entity – because it pre-dated the LCCB.

He said it is easy to make the case to legislators that Catholic schools are working because the lawmakers can see the end results.

“Private schools are providing an incredible service to the state in terms of educating its children at a very high capacity, not only just forming them academically but also forming them to be very successful human beings and active citizens who participate in the economy of the state and the culture of the state as well,” Tasman recently said in an interview with The Catholic Commentator. (Peter Finney of the Clarion Herald contributed to this report.)
Black Panther

Disney

Sprawling, energetic but ultimately overwhelming Marvel Comics adaptation from director and co-writer Ryan Coogler. The young sovereign (Chadwick Boseman) of an imaginary and secret African kingdom where the use of a super-powerful mineral has enabled the population to achieve both prosperity and a range of technological wonders unknown to the outside world must cope with two principal threats to his realm. The first involves a South African arms dealer (Andy Serkis) who has managed to infiltrate the nation and make off with a stock of the mineral which he aims to sell to the highest bidder. The second concerns the ongoing consequences of a long-ago family conflict (involving Michael B. Jordan). The king is aided by his tech-savvy sister (Letitia Wright), the woman (Lupita Nyong’o) he would like to make his queen, the leader (Danai Gurira) of his army’s band of fierce female warriors and, eventually, by a CIA agent (Martin Freeman). Real-world political preoccupations are incorporated into this sci-fi tinged action adventure while plot developments weigh vengeance against justice tinged action adventure while plot developments are incorporated into this sci-fi

Samson

Pure Flix

Spirited biblically based drama in which the super-strong champion (Taylor James) of the oppressed Israelites skylarks with his younger brother (Greg Krie), romances a Philistine gal (Francois Skoloto-Douglas) but also tangles with the wicked prince (Jackson Rathbone) who embodies that people’s tyrannical and exploitative rule over the occupied Promised Land. As Samson mows down his foes, with female fatale Delilah (Caitlin Leahy) waiting in the wings, director Bruce Macdonald follows the formula of golden-age Hollywood adaptations of the Good Book with large-scale battles, a love angle and an effete villain. Though some of the necessary expansion on the Old Testament account fails to convince, this is generally an enjoyable riff on the Hebrew he-man story. While not suitable for the youngest viewers, it can provide a fine introduction to the story for teens. Much combat violence with little gore, a restrictive classification. Nothing about this element of the movie is intended to appear prurient or shocking. But del Toro likes to underline his points in this mix of “Beauty and the Beast” and “Creature from the Black Lagoon” in the case of sexuality, with the cinematic equivalent of a bright, thick Magic Marker. Strong sexual content, including graphic marital lovemaking, bizarre activity and several glimpses of male and female nudity, fleeting gore, frequent rough language. L; R

Fifty Shades Freed

Universal

Absurdities alternate with exploitative sex scenes in this screen version of the third novel in E.L. James’ tawdry trilogy. With their sadomasochistic relationship now solemnized by marriage, a fabulously wealthy, controlling tycoon (Jamie Dornan) and his mousy book editor of a bride (Dakota Johnson) look forward to a life of private jets, sleek yachts and kinky carriages-on in their penthouse’s well-equipped dungeon. But one of her former colleagues (Eric Johnson) is stalking the happy couple, and his aim is not to throw rice on them. Patrons unwise enough to shell out good money for this campy nonsense will get a facial work out as they roll their eyes, drop their jaws and gurgle derisively at the ineptness of it all. While some late plot developments arguably introduce a pro-life tone to the proceedings, this can hardly make up for the twisted view of human sexuality that pervades director James Foley’s piece of soft-corn porn tricked out as mainstream entertainment. Excessive sexual content, including benignly viewed perversion activity, graphic marital intercourse and much upper female and rear nudity, some gunplay and nonlethal violence, several uses of profanity, at least one milder oath, about a half-dozen rough and numerous crude terms, an obscene gesture. O; R

Peter Rabbit

Columbia

The anthropomorphic characters in Beatrix Potter’s beloved children’s books are showcased but also transformed in this manic comedy, a mix of live action and CGI animation directed and co-written by Will Gluck. The eponymous bunny (voice of James Cordon), here a fast-talking juvenile delinquent, a hipster dude with a nasty murderous streak, is elated when the mean gardener (Sam Neill) next door kicks the bucket, allowing him and his furry friends access to his vegetables and cottage. When the deceased’s grandson (Domhnall Gleeson) moves in and falls for his comely neighbor (Rose Byrne), the rabbits once more declare war. The film does impart some of the lessons of Potter’s books, ingcluding the importance of family, honesty and forgiveness. But Gluck and script collaborator Ron Lieber cannot resist the ill-mannered behavior, low-brow jokes, and noisy eruptions that seem to be staples in children’s films today, setting a discordant tone contrary to Potter’s elegant style. A vengeance theme, a glimpse of partial rear nudity, some rude humor and action sequences. A-II; PG

The Shape of Water

For Searchlight

Equal parts romantic fantasy, classic horror film and musical nostalgia piece, writer-director Guillermo del Toro’s story of a cleaning lady (Sally Hawkins) in 1962 Baltimore who falls in love with a fish-man (Doug Jones) from the Amazon who is being kept in the secret lab where she works has such strong and pervasive sexual content as to make it unsuitable for the casual moviegoer and to require a restrictive classification. Nothing about this element of the movie is intended to appear prurient or shocking. But del Toro likes to underline his points in this mix of “Beauty and the Beast” and “Creature from the Black Lagoon” in the case of sexuality, with the cinematic equivalent of a bright, thick Magic Marker. Strong sexual content, including graphic marital lovemaking, bizarre activity and several glimpses of male and female nudity, fleeting gore, frequent rough language. L; R

The 15:17 to Paris

Warner Bros.

Uneven drama recounting the circumstances that led up to the thwarting, in August 2015, of a terrorist attack and potential massacre on the train of the title. Traveling from Amsterdam to the French capital as tourists, a trio of Americans (Anthony Sadler, Alek Skarlatos and Spencer Stone all portraying themselves), two of them with military backgrounds, courageously stop a heavily armed jihadist bent on a shooting spree among the captive passengers. The portion of director Clint Eastwood’s film devoted to this headline grabbing incident is taut and compelling. But, in adapting the three friends’ book about their exploit and their lives before it, written with Jeffrey E. Stern, screenwriter Dorothy Blyskal fails to evoke much interest in the lads’ humdrum childhoods and fitful careers. More honorable than entertaining, their faith-friendly story does emphasize self-sacrificing heroism and the potential of ordinary people to achieve great things. Gunplay and nonlethal violence, a sequence involving gory wounds, a bit of sexual humor, a couple of uses of profanity and a pair of milder oaths, numerous crude and crass terms. A-II; PG-13
SAINTS

Bukia was identified as a "half-breed" because he was the son of a freed worker of a plantation, most likely Bish and of Indian origin, and a Spanish outcast of Lima. St. Martin’s father never acknowledged his son and abandoned his family after a sister was born.

St. Josephine Bakhita was kidnapped at 7 years old and sold into slavery several times. She was on a joyful journey to eternity, said Father Johnson. "We have so many people now that don’t have a (structured) family or a father. St. Martin is an example of how to experience the fatherhood of God," Father Johnson said.

Father Johnson pointed to St. Martin de Porres, who was considered a "half-breed" because he was the son of a freed worker of a plantation, most likely Bish and of Indian origin, and a Spanish outcast of Lima. St. Martin’s father never acknowledged his son and abandoned his family after a sister was born.

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St. Joseph’s Day
ALTAR SCHEDULES

MARCH 7
Azalea Estates Assisted Living
2305 Purpera Ave., Gonzales
2 p.m.
Nell Bercegeay 225-715-3395

MARCH 15
Ascension Oaks Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
711 W. Comerview St., Gonzales
2 p.m.
Nell Bercegeay 225-715-3395

MARCH 16–17
Friends of St. Joseph
Immaculate Conception Church
865 Hatchell Lane, Denham Springs
Mar. 16 Blessing of altar in main hall after 7 p.m. Mass
Mar. 17 –11 a.m. Feeding of the saints followed by public feeding.
Rosie Moak 225-664-0070
Henry Pulizzano 225-664-9844

MARCH 17 – 18
Our Lady of Pompeii Church
14450 Hwy 442, Tickfaw
Mar. 17 Blessing following 5:30 p.m. Mass
Mar. 18 –9:30 a.m. Viewing, rosary, feeding of the saints, followed by public feeding
Church office 985-345-8957

St. Joseph School
Gym
175 N. 8th St. Ponchatoula
6 p.m. Blessing of the altar
Mar. 18 Viewing and lunch served after 11 a.m. Mass
Danette Ragusa 985-386-6421

Knights of Columbus
St. John the Evangelist Church
58715 Price St., Plaquemine
Mar. 17 Blessing of the altar after 4 p.m. Mass
Mar. 18 after 11 a.m. Mass
Betty Aucoin 225-687-2111

Grandsons of Italy
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church
School Gym
2251 Main St., Baton Rouge
Mar. 17 Procession from church following 4 p.m. Mass for the blessing of the altar.
Viewing continues until 6:30 p.m. Italian cookies and wine will be served.
Mar. 18 – 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. display; 12:15 p.m. Ceremonial breaking of the bread
followed by an Italian Feast served to the
public in cafeteria.
Nickie Dimaio 225-235-0699, Anthony Musso 225-769-3781

MARCH 17
Holy Family Church
319 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
4:30 p.m.
Joann Dodd 225-344-4316

St. Joseph Church
Parish Hall
15710 LA Hwy. 16, French Settlement
Following 5:30 p.m. Mass
Office 225-698-3110

MARCH 18
San Giuseppe Ladies
St. Ann Church
182 Church Street, Morganza
Bonnie Francois 225-718-1718

St. Joseph Society
Mater Dolorosa Church
609 Third St., Independence
4 p.m. Procession followed by benediction.
985-878-4592

Jamie Mabile and Bill Gomillion
12009 Graham Rd., St. Francisville
Nov
Deacon ”Zeke” Nola will bless the meal and altar followed by traditional meal served.
Jamie-mabile@bellsouth.net
225-978-3159

Cypress Springs Mercedarian Prayer Center
17560 George O’Neal Rd., Baton Rouge
12 – 4 p.m.
225-752-8480

St. Joseph Cathedral
Gonzales Healthcare Center
905 W. Comerview Rd., Gonzales
2 p.m.
Nell Bercegeay 225-715-3395

March 2, 2018
Retreat centers located in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

BISHOP ROBERT E. TRACY CENTER
BATON ROUGE

The Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center is available for spiritual renewal, professional training and adult or youth formation. As part of the Catholic Life Center, the Tracy Center can provide space for day and overnight retreats and conferences.

The three-story overnight facility has a total of 30 sleeping rooms which can accommodate up to 120 people. Twenty four of the rooms can accommodate four persons. Five of the suites provide a bedroom with two single beds and a sitting room with two sofa sleepers. One smaller suite has one bedroom with two single beds and a love seat and chair in the sitting area. All rooms have a private bath.

The Westerfield Conference Center, adjacent to the overnight facility, is a state-of-the-art meeting facility with audio/visual technology. The conference center provides space for 120 people or can be divided into three separate meeting areas for smaller groups.

The Tracy Center Education Building has eight rooms available for day retreats, workshops or breakout sessions. Also available are two chapels, a theatre with fixed-style seating for 196, a ballroom that can seat up to 500 people and three dining rooms. A full-time kitchen staff provides all meals and snacks; outside catering is not allowed.

The Tracy Center welcomes private groups, prayer groups, small Christian communities and Bible-study groups. We do not have a retreat director on staff; retreats provide their own director.

Our office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and tours of the facilities are available by appointment. Please visit tracycenter.org or on Facebook under The Tracy Center.

Phone 225-242-0222; website: tracycenter.org; email tracycenter@diobr.org; mailing address P. O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028.

Directions: I-10 to Acadian Thruway exit; go north 3/4 of a mile. The Catholic Life Center and Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center are on the left.

MANRESA HOUSE OF RETREATS
CONVENT

Manresa House of Retreats opened in 1929 as a retreat center for men. Since then, the Jesuit-run center has become a favorite retreat facility for men in the south. Manresa sits on 130 wooded acres along the Mississippi River.

Manresa offers sleeping accommodations for 111, all having private bath facilities, a main chapel and four reflection chapels, a library, gardens and shrines.

All retreats are in the manner of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

While most of the retreats are preached retreats for men, some spaces are available for individually directed retreats for men and women.

For more information, call between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.
Retreat centers located outside the diocese

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS RETREAT CENTER

METAIRIE

The Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, dedicated to Our Lady of the Cenacle, continues the tradition of the Cenacle Sisters begun in 1958 of providing a place to nurture the soul. The location on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain in Metairie offers a serene environment for spiritual contemplation.

Our vision as expressed by the advisory board is that we invite you to “Come to the Quiet, Encounter the Sacred.”

We offer a full schedule of weekend retreats and weekday days of prayer. You may view the details of our offerings at retreats.arch-no.org. Please consider attending a retreat or day of prayer that most closely fits your spiritual need.

The retreat center is also available as a venue for faith-based groups to host events including overnight retreats, days of prayer or staff reflection days.

The retreat center has a chapel, dining room offering buffet-style meals, a meeting hall, a library, a large parlor and several breakout rooms. The 11 landscaped acres offer grounds conducive to prayer and reflection.

For more information, call 504-887-1420 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

You may reach the center through email at retreats@arch-no.org or visit our website retreats.arch-no.org. Our address is 5500 St. Mary Street, Metairie, LA 70006.

We welcome you to come hear the whisper of God and experience nurturing, healing and transformation through the joy of the Good News.

Phone 504-887-1420 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; email retreats@arch-no.org; website retreats.arch-no.org; 5500 St. Mary St., Metairie, LA 70006.

Directions: From Baton Rouge, take I-10 East to Williams Blvd. exit; go north to West Esplanade Avenue, turn right; travel on West Esplanade Avenue to the U-turn before Transcontinental Blvd.; make the U-turn; travel four blocks to St. Mary St.; turn right. The center’s driveway is at the end of St. Mary Street.

CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY CENTER

LACOMBE

Cradled among 72 acres of towering pine trees, a picturesque lake and trails slicing through the property, the Carmelite Spirituality Center in Lacombe offers retreats to people of all faiths.

The center, which opened in 2005, is operated by the Sisters of Mount Carmel. The center offers monthly mornings of prayer, directed and guided retreats, private retreats, group gatherings, parish retreats, spirituality workshops and even the ability to design your own program.

Overnight facilities accommodating up to 50 people in semi-private and private rooms are available as well as two cottages. Along with the piney woods, the grounds include a swimming pool, labyrinth and provides an idyllic venue for reflection and prayer.

While enjoying a meal from the full-service kitchen, diners can bask in a beautiful view of the azalea-lined patio, which nudges up against the dining room.

The library contains numerous resources and can also serve as a meeting room. The chapel can seat up to 50 people comfortably.

Phone 985-882-7579 or 985-264-0314; website carmeltesspirituality.org; email carmelcenter@bellsouth.net; location 62092 Fish Hatchery Road, Lacombe, LA; mailing address P.O. Box 130, Lacombe, LA 70445-0130.

Directions: From I-12 east take exit 74 (LA Hwy. 434), turn toward Lacombe. Follow on LA Hwy. 434 to U.S. Hwy 190. At round-about, take first right and cross bridge over Bayou Lacombe. Take first right at Davis Avenue which becomes Fish Hatchery Road (Capital One Bank is the landmark). Proceed 1.9 miles and the center is on the right.

CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER

ST. BENEDICT

Located four miles north of Covington on the grounds of Saint Joseph Abbey, the Christian Life Center is open to individuals and groups seeking peace and recollection in a monastic setting suitable to their spirituality.

Saint Joseph Abbey is home to the Benedictine monks, who conduct Retreat League Weekends approximately 18 times per year for men, women and married couples. On the remaining weekends and during the week, the Christian Life Center is open to groups for religious, educational and charitable purposes.

The retreat center, which recently reopened following a complete renovation, now has 30 bedrooms with queen-size beds; pull out love seats and private bathrooms. The center includes a chapel, a meeting space and a dining room. The larger Saint Joseph Abbey Church is located on the grounds.

The 1,200 acres of piney woods and tranquil ponds offer retreatants the opportunity for quiet and reflective leisure. The center strives to continue the tradition set down more than 14 centuries ago by St. Benedict, who believed that the stranger or guest who comes to the monastery gate is to be received as Christ, but, it reserves the right to decide which programs meet the stated goals of the facility.

Phone: 985-892-3473; website: saintjosephabbey.com/christian-life-center; email: clc@sjasc.edu; location: Christian Life Center, Saint Joseph Abbey, 75376 River Road, St. Benedict, LA 70457.

Directions: Take I-12 to exit 63-B Covington

March 2, 2018

THE CATHOLIC COMMENTATOR

Next Issue Deadline ... MARCH 7

A quiet place for Prayer, Healing, Conversion and Mercy

- Retreats
- Men and Women
- College Students
- Confirmation
- Encounter
- Weekends

Our Lady of the Way Spiritual Life Center

50352 Antioch Rd., Tickfaw • 985-402-3095 ourladyoftheway.org

SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY

CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER

Now open following a complete renovation

offers a variety of retreat programs

men’s, women’s + married couples retreats corporate + hosted programs

985-892-3473
www.saintjosephabbey.com
75376 River Road
Saint Benedict, LA 70457
The Jesuit Spirituality Center
GRAND COTEAU

The Jesuit Spirituality Center located in the heart of Acadiana, 11 miles north of Lafayette on I-49, is open to men and women of all faiths.

The former St. Charles College became the Jesuit Novitiate in 1922 and a retreat center in 1972, providing a quiet and restful environment for those seeking to listen and respond to God with generosity and openness through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The century-old building, located on 900 acres of farmland, has undergone a complete interior and exterior renovation. It now provides 33 rooms with private baths and individual air control, as well as new furnishings. Year-round offerings of three-, five-, eight- and 30-day individually directed retreats, and a variety of weekend programs and retreats, are scheduled through the center.

An individually directed retreat differs from the more common group or preached retreat in that the retreatant meets privately each day with a spiritual director. In these sessions, the director listens to the retreatant’s description of what has happened in prayer since the day before and then selects additional exercises and Scripture passages to assist the retreatant in the journey of faith as a companion of Jesus.

The center has bicycle and walking paths and roads, several chapels, a bookstore and a large meeting room that can accommodate up to 50 people.

Phone 337-662-5251 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for more information or to request a brochure detailing upcoming events; website jesuitspiritualitycenter.org; email office@jesuitspiritualitycenter.org; mailing address St. Charles College, P.O. Box C, Grand Coteau, LA 70541-1003.

Directions: From Baton Rouge take I-10 to Lafayette; take I-49 north; go approximately 11 miles to the Sunset/Grand Coteau exit 11 (LA Hwy. 93); turn right and follow Martin Luther King Drive (LA Hwy. 93). The center is on the left, at 313 M. L. K. Dr.

Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House
GRAND COTEAU

Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House was built by the Diocese of Lafayette in 1938 and donated to the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits have administered and cared for the house since that time. For some 80 years, this oasis of prayer has been helping to form the spirituality of people in all walks of life.

Based on the teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, a 15th-century Basque saint and founder of the Jesuit order, Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House offers conference style retreats for men, women and couples. These retreats, directed by Jesuit priests and thoroughly trained lay directors, are based on St. Ignatius of Loyola’s famous Spiritual Exercises. Mass, reconciliation, stations of the cross and the rosary are also featured during the retreat experience.

The room capacity is 54 and most of the rooms have private baths. A gracious library, newly renovated chapel and colorfully landscaped grounds provide the backdrop for wonderful retreats. Also available is a private visit chapel that many enjoy. Meal service is available.

Built in Spanish mission style, the facility features an enclosed courtyard with the peaceful sounds of a flowing fountain and lots of seating area. Old oaks grace this central patio and squirrels and birds make themselves at home — to the delight of those who visit. There are many vistas to explore nearby.

For more information about the retreats and programs available, call Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Phone 337-662-5410; website ourladyoftheoaks.com; email oloaks@centurytel.net; mailing address P. O. Drawer D, Grand Coteau, LA 70541.

Directions: From Baton Rouge take I-10 to Lafayette; take I-49 north; go approximately 11 miles north of Lafayette on I-49 to Ramsay; travel to the sign for Saint Joseph Abbey and turn right onto the bridge.

The Tracy Center
Day or Overnight Retreat Center
YOUTH & ADULT FORMATION - RENEWAL

The Tracy Center
1800 South Acadian Thruway, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Phone: 225-242-0222

See Outside page 18
**CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY CENTER**

62292 Fish Hatchery Road, Lacombe, Louisiana
985-882-7579 • 985-364-0314
Email: carmelcenter@bellsouth.net
Website: carmelitespirituality.org

Open to people of all faiths who desire a serene meeting place for faith-focused gatherings and retreats.

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- Parish Retreats and Days of Renewal
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- Group Gatherings – Prayer, Study, Meetings, Luncheon Programs
- Mornings of Prayer – Speaker, Quiet Time, Sharing
- Design your Own Program – Accommodations and Meals Provided

**ST. CHARLES CENTER**

LAKE CHARLES

Open in 1996 and operated by the Diocese of Lake Charles, the St. Charles Center offers preached and directed retreats in addition to a variety of other programs. Located near the Calcasieu River, the center provides a deep woods setting with walks along the swamp leading to the river.

Accommodations include separate facilities for 72 adults and 78 youth in double-occupancy rooms. Bath facilities are private on the adult side and shared on the youth side. Other amenities include three libraries, the Chapel of the Assumption, two small conference rooms for 50 people, two large conference rooms for more than 100 people and a dining room.

The center is staffed by spiritual directors and retreat directors and is open to people of all denominations. For more information, call 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed between noon and 1 p.m.), Monday through Friday.

Phone: 337-855-1232; website: ldcioocese.org/retreats; mailing address: 2151 Sam Houston Jones Pkwy., Lake Charles, LA 70611.

Directions: I-10 to Lake Charles; exit 33 to LA Hwy. 171; travel 5 miles to LA Hwy. 378; turn left onto LA Hwy. 378; travel 2.5 miles; entrance is on the left.

**REV. WILLIAM KELLEY RETREAT CENTER**

BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI

The Rev. William Kelley Retreat Center in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi features 55 acres for peaceful reflection, located a block off the Bay St. Louis.

The center, which is operated by the Divine Word Missionaries, is available for lay people, clergy, religious, singles and married persons.

The center offers 90 rooms with two beds in each room with private bathrooms. Some additional housing is available if needed.

The center has a conference center, smaller rooms for break-out sessions, library, chapel, hanging swings and a path through the woods. Specific retreats, such as Retreatville, can be requested although the majority of groups bring their own leadership. Also, private or directed retreats are available.

A kitchen and retreat staff is available. Divine Word Missionaries can be available for Mass and/or confessions upon request.

The center opened in 2002. Available services include cooking, cleaning and a coordinator.

Phone: 228-467-2032; email svdretreatcenter@bellsouth.net; website svdsouth.com; mailing address 530 N. Second Street, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Directions: 1-12 east to Slidell; 1-10 east to Bay St. Louis; take exit 13, Hwy. 603 south to Hwy. 90 east (approximately six miles) pass seven red lights, after the seventh red light turn right on 2nd Street (a large Sacred Heart shrine is on the right shortly before reaching 2nd Street) go approximately one half of a mile, entrance to the retreat center is on the right.

**ST. CHARLES CENTER**

LAKE CHARLES

Opened in 1996 and operated by the Diocese of Lake Charles, the St. Charles Center offers preached and directed retreats in addition to a variety of other programs. Located near the Calcasieu River, the center provides a deep woods setting with walks along the swamp leading to the river.

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Directions: I-10 to Lake Charles; exit 33 to LA Hwy. 171; travel 5 miles to LA Hwy. 378; turn left onto LA Hwy. 378; travel 2.5 miles; entrance is on the left.
Our Lady of the Way
SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER
TICKFAW

Our Lady of the Way Spiritual Life Center in Tickfaw, which opened Aug. 15, 2015, offers overnight facilities.

The facility is able to accommodate 49 people in semi-private rooms, as well as two private apartments that can sleep from six to eight people.

The center also offers a chapel, library, conference room that accommodates 50-plus people, a dining area with catering and two outdoor patios.

Our Lady of the Way is situated on 10 acres that offer a pleasant retreat facility located in a tranquil setting of pine trees and manicured grounds. It offers an escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Phone 985-402-3095; website ourladyoftheway.org; mailing address 50352 An-tioch Road, Tickfaw, LA 70466.

Directions: I-12 east to Hammond; take exit 38B to I-55 north; take exit 36; proceed 0.8 miles to Antioch Road; take right and go 0.7 miles; the center is on the right.

Shalom House is a one-story, self-contained hermitage. It has sleeping capacity for six to eight people, as well as two private apartments that can sleep from six to eight people.

The center also offers a chapel, library, conference room that accommodates 50-plus people, a dining area with catering and two outdoor patios.

Our Lady of the Way is situated on 10 acres that offer a pleasant retreat facility located in a tranquil setting of pine trees and manicured grounds. It offers an escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Phone 985-402-3095; website ourladyoftheway.org; mailing address 50352 An-tioch Road, Tickfaw, LA 70466.

Directions: I-12 east to Hammond; take exit 38B to I-55 north; take exit 36; proceed 0.8 miles to Antioch Road; take right and go 0.7 miles; the center is on the right.

Rosaryville Spirit Life Center offers a new Memorial Cemetery to serve all families with both mausoleum and in ground availability.

Individual spiritual direction is offered by Sister Mary Noel OP, who is a spiritual director.

Directions: 1-12 to Pumpkin Center exit 35; turn south; at Hwy. 22 turn left; go two miles to Rosaryville Road; turn right, go one mile to the Rosaryville gate.

Mailing address: 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula, LA 70454 Website: catholicretreatcenter.org; Email: scallais@oppeace.org
Lawsuit ▼
From page 1
to the Court of Appeals of the 1st Circuit, then to the Louisiana Supreme Court (twice) and to the US Supreme Court on a writ that was denied.

The proceedings brought into question whether a civil court could decide for the Church what could be considered a confession. The religious liberties involved in the Seal of Confession are part of the fundamental teachings and doctrines of the Catholic Church.

In a decision rendered by state district Judge Michael Caldwell of the 19th JDC on September 27, 2017, the court stated definitively that a civil court has no “subject matter jurisdiction” to hear or render a judgment concerning Church teachings and doctrine. A judgment was signed by the court on Feb. 9, 2018, dismissing the diocese and Father Bayhi from the lawsuit. Therefore, the diocese and Father Bayhi rejoice that a civil court has protected the religious liberties of the Church. The decision preserves the Seal of Confession are part of the fundamental teachings and doctrines of the Catholic Church.

Another Perspective
Father John Carville

In Louisiana we know how to prepare for Lent. We call it Mardi Gras. We take all of our most grandiose ideas and dress up as our wildest fantasies of who we would like to be.

The costumes are always gaudy, but often brilliantly so. Then we climb up on floats and parade through the streets of our towns and cities pretending to be royalty while we throw beads and trinkets to our adoring subjects. It is fun to be king, queen and court for a day. It is also exhausting, and we end Mardi Gras having spent, drunk and eaten way more than we should have. Then we spend 40 days of Lent trying to understand why we are so pleased to live for even a day what is an illusion, a pretense, really a lie. Why is it so much fun to pretend, and why can we not enjoy our day-to-day life as much?

There is a difference between fun, joy and pleasure, happiness, contentment and inner peace. The experience of feeling breaks our boredom and/or worries, giving us momentary pleasure. We need it at times. It was chocked off by the cares of the world, we are often too busy about our own ambitions to become “poor in Spirit” because the poor realize how dependent on God they are. One of the best Catholic spiritual guides writing today, Father Richard Rohr OFM, says that we are most willing to let God into our lives when we feel most broken and inadequate.

That is why we began Lent with ashes. “Lent,” he says, “is an ideal time to remember that we, in the deepest way, must learn to depend on God.”

Jesus also challenged all of us to become “poor in Spirit” because the poor realize how dependent on God they are.”

Mar. 6
Rev. Andrew J. Merrick 
Dcn. Steven C. Gonzales 
Br. Ramon Daunis SC 

Mar. 7
Rev. Victor G. Messina 
Dcn. Richard H. Grant 
Sr. M. Colota MC 

Mar. 8
Rev. Michael A. Miceli 
Dcn. Tim Grimes 
Br. Alan Drain SC 

Mar. 9
Rev. Cleo J. Milano 
Dcn. Ronald J. Hebert 
Sr. Judith Couture CSJ 

Mar. 10
Rev. Nutan S. Minj IMS 
Dcn. Clayton A. Hollier 

Mar. 11
Br. Clement Furno CSSR 
Rev. Michael J. Moroney 
Dcn. George Hooper 
Sr. Renee Daigle MSC 

Mar. 12
Rev. Caye A. (Trey) Nelson III 
Dcn. Michael J. (Shelley) Joseph 
Br. Harold Harris SC 

Mar. 13
Rev. Hung Viet Nguyen ICM 
Dcn. Robert J. Kusch 
Sr. Mary Ann Diaz DM 

Mar. 14
Rev. Martin Thanh Van Nguyen ICM 
Dcn. Thomas E. Labat Sr. 
Br. Ronald Hingle SC 

Mar. 15
Rev. Tan Viet Nguyen ICM 
Dcn. Ronald D. LeGrange 
Sr. Therese Dinh ICM 

Mar. 16
Rev. Peter Neuman ICM 
Dcn. Albert Levy III 
Br. Eldon King SC 

Mar. 17
Rev. Nicholas J. (Jack) Nutter III 
Dcn. James A. Little 
Sr. M. Dominique MC 

Mar. 18
Rev. Desmond Ohankwere MSP 
Dcn. Robert McDonner 
Br. Noel Lemmon SC 

Mar. 19
Rev. Jason P. Palermo 
Sr. M. Donald MC

Lent, a time to get rid of our illusions

We are now two full weeks into Lent and need to seriously focus on that real life that Jesus offers us. A good way to do this would be to pray and meditate on the Mass Scriptures of Lent. God’s word speaks most effectively at the eucharistic liturgy. There it resounds from many hearts and resonates in the rich diversity and strong unity of God’s people. The word we hear and share at liturgy is a word enriched by the memorial and Communion of Jesus’ sacrifice. It is a word that comes alive in the sacrament and seeks to come alive in the service and ministry of the community. However, even if one cannot attend Mass daily during Lent, it would help greatly to take a missaleta from church and pray and meditate over the Lenten Scriptures. They can be found also in the monthly editions of small liturgical books.

Many of our diocesan church parishes have adoration chapels. What better way to pass the weeks of Lent than in the presence of our eucharistic Lord. What a perfect place to meditate on the Scripture of the Lenten Masses.

Ever since the time of the apostles there has been a practice of fasting in the church. While the Catholic Church today strictly requires this of us only on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and recommends abstinance from meat on all Lenten Fridays, Jesus in the Gospels speaks of fasting as a good spiritual practice as long as we don’t try to make a show of it. Christians throughout history have seen a spiritual value in imitating Jesus’ 40-day fast in the desert. Jesus fasted and prayed to resist temptation. We who are sinful have more reason to follow his example. Fasting clears the mind and cleanses the heart. It sharpens our moral and spiritual determinations.

Jesus also challenged all of us to become “poor in Spirit” because the poor realize how dependent on God they are. One of the best Catholic spiritual guides writing today, Father Richard Rohr OFM, says that we are most willing to let God into our lives when we feel most broken and inadequate.

That is why we began Lent with ashes. “Lent,” he says, “is an ideal time to remember that we, in the deepest way, must learn to depend on God.”

A good Lent strengthens our faith in God’s promise, through Jesus’ resurrection, of our eternal Easter.

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

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

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

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US
Please pray for the priests, deacons and religious women and men in the Baton Rouge Diocese.

Mar. 10
Rev. Nutan S. Minj IMS 
Dcn. Clayton A. Hollier

Mar. 11
Br. Clement Furno CSSR 
Rev. Michael J. Moroney 
Dcn. George Hooper 
Sr. Renee Daigle MSC

Mar. 12
Rev. Caye A. (Trey) Nelson III 
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C

lassically Christianity has listed seven sins as “deadly” sins, meaning that most everything else we do which is not virtuous somehow takes its root in one of these congenital propensities. These are the infamous seven: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth.

In spiritual literature the first three, pride, greed and lust get most of the ink and attention. Pride is presented as the root of all sin, Lucifer’s primordial defiance of God as forever echoed in our own lives: I will not serve! Greed is seen as the basis for our selfishness and our blindness towards others and lust has often been given the ultimate notoriety, as if the Sixth Commandment were the only commandment.

Not to deny the importance of these, but I suspect that the sin which most commonly afflicts us and is not much mentioned in spiritual literature is wrath, that is, anger and hatred. I venture to say that most of us operate, however unconsciously, out of anger and this shows itself in our constant criticism of others, in our cynicism, in our jealousy of others, in our bitterness, and in our inability to praise others. And unlike most of our other sins, anger is easy to camouflage and rationalize as virtue. At one level, anger often rationalizes itself as justified indignation over the foibles, stupidity, egotism, greed, and faults of others. How can I not be angry given what I see every day! Here anger shows itself in our constant irritation and in our quickness to correct, criticize and make a cynical remark. Conversely we’re very slow to praise and affirm. Perfection then becomes the enemy of the good and since nothing and no one is perfect, we’re always in critical mode and we see this as a virtue rather than for what it in fact is, namely, an inchoate anger and unhappiness inside of ourselves.

But our unholy cynicism isn’t the biggest problem here. More seriously, anger too often parades itself as Godly-virtue, as righteousness, as prophecy, as a healthy, divinely-inspired militancy for truth, for cause, for virtue, for God. And so we define ourselves as “holy warriors” and “vigilant defenders of truth,” taking justification in the popular (though false) conception that prophets are angry people, on passionate fire for God. However there’s a near infinite distance between true prophetic anger and the anger that today commonly parades itself as prophecy. Daniel Berrigan, in his criteria for prophecy, submits (and rightly) that a prophet is someone who takes a vow of love, not of alienation. Prophecy is characterized by love aching for reconnection, not anger pushing for separation.

And love isn’t generally what characterizes most so-called prophetic anger in our world today, especially as it pertains to God, religion and defense of truth. You see this in its worst form in Islamic extremism where, in the name of God, every kind of hatred, violence and random murder puts on God’s cloak. Blaise Pascal captures this well in his “Penses” where he writes: “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.” He’s wrong on one thing: mostly we aren’t doing it cheerfully but angrily. One only has to read the letters to the editor in our newspapers, listen to most talk-radio stations, or listen to any debate on politics, religion or morality to see raw hatred and anger justifying themselves on moral and divine grounds.

There is such a thing as healthy prophetic anger, a fiery response when the poor of God, the word of God, or the truth of God are being slandered, abused, or neglected. There are important causes and boundaries to be defended. But prophetic anger is an anger that emanates out of love and empathy and always, regardless of the hatred it meets, still exhibits love and empathy, like a loving mother in the face of a belligerent child. Jesus on occasion exhibits this kind of anger, but his anger is antithetical to most of what masquerades as prophetic anger today, where love and empathy are so noticeably absent.

Someone once said that we spend the first half of life struggling with the Sixth Commandment, and then spend the second-half of life struggling with the Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill! We see this illustrated in the famous parable of the Prodigal Son, his older brother and his prodigal father. The younger son is effectively out of his father’s house through wrestling with the seductive energies of youth. The older brother is just as effectively outside his father’s house, not through sin, but through wrestling with anger.

As a young boy I was catechized to confess “bad thoughts” as sinful, but bad thoughts then were defined as sexual thoughts. As we age, I suggest, we might continue to confess “bad thoughts,” but now those “bad thoughts” have to do with anger.

A cynic, it’s said, is someone who has given up, but not shut up! He’s also someone who has confused one of the seven deadly sins, wrath, with virtue.

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

How to hold doubt and grow faith

I had forgotten the story until my dad reminded me.

One Sunday after Mass when I was 13 years old, I told my dad that I wasn’t sure if I believed that Jesus was really in the Eucharist.

How could that be? It made no sense.

If memory serves, I was fresh off the confirmation retreat. Maybe I was being honest about uncertainty. Maybe I wanted to push my dad’s buttons.

But my dad didn’t judge. He heard me out. He listened to my doubt.

Decades later, I’m impressed by the way in which he tells me this story. He doesn’t trivialize it as teenage angst. He doesn’t dismiss it as weak faith.

He points to it as a sign that I’ve wanted to wrestle with big questions for my whole life.

I remember many times my dad and I have talked about faith. Connections we delighted to share. Conflicts we couldn’t resolve. Tough questions we had to leave at the kitchen table.

As a parent, I hope to hold my children’s faith and doubt with as much respect as my dad did. He and I disagree on plenty, but we still meet on what matters most: refusing to give up on life’s mysteries.

Each person has a different relationship to doubt. Some fear it. Others accept it. A few get lost in it.

But I have a hunch that most of us, if given a safe space to share our deepest questions, would admit to holding doubts alongside faith and wrestling forever between the two.

When Pope Francis spoke about doubt in 2016, he said, “I have many. ... Of course, everyone has doubts at times! Doubts that touch the faith, in a positive way, are a sign that we want to know better and more fully God, Jesus and the mystery of his love for us. ... These are doubts that bring about growth! It is good, therefore, that we ask questions about our faith, because in this way we are pushed to deepen it.”

I hope that my children will grow into a life of faith. But I know I cannot guarantee anything, despite my best efforts.

All I can do is keep trying, keep praying and keep listening to them.

My children are small, but their questions are big. Why did Jesus have to die? Why does God let there be poor people? Why do we have to go to church? How did God make the world?

I’m still deepening my faith around the same questions.

In his “Introduction to Christianity,” then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote that doubt “could become the avenue of communication” between those who believe and those who struggle.

When we yearn to reach out to family or friends, we might be inspired to see doubt not as a roadblock, but as the road we share.

We can’t force faith on anyone. We might suspect the world would be a better place if we could, but it would be quite the terrifying opposite.

Decades after that conversation with my dad, the Eucharist has become the heart of my faith, the mystery that anchors Mass as the center of my life. But this change happened slowly.

Pushing back against the darkness, a seed unfurls in its own time. We cannot hurry growth’s becoming.

My dad and I have been talking about faith for nearly 40 years now. We could not be more different, he with his worn Latin missal in hand, me with curiosity spilling over to each new question.

But we’ve never given up on each other. I pray for my children that faith and doubt will do the same.

FANUCCI is a mother, writer and director of a project on vocation at the Collegeville Institute in Collegeville, Minnesota. She is the author of several books, including “Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting,” and blogs at motheringspirit.com
St. Aloysius Events — St. Aloysius Church, 2025 Stuart Ave., Baton Rouge, will host two upcoming events. Beginning Friday, March 2, with the 8 a.m. Mass, it will host the 24 Hours of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until Benediction on Saturday, March 3, 8 a.m. There will be silent prayer and various types of devotions. Priests will also be available for private confessions. The church will also host a Gentle Hands retreat for those who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or the loss of a child of any age Saturday, March 3, 9 a.m. — noon, at the St. Aloysius Gonzaga Hall. The retreat is open to all denominations and couples are encouraged to attend. There will be a light breakfast, speakers and fellowship. For more information, call 225-343-6657.

St. Agnes Church Lenten Reflections — St. Agnes Church, 749 East Blvd., Baton Rouge, is presenting Lenten Reflections, “In the Mist of My Suffering – Salvation,” Wednesday evenings. Mass will be held at 5:30 p.m., the Divine Mercy Chapel at 6 p.m., followed by the reflection. For more information, call at St. Agnes at 225-983-4147.

St. Gerard Mission — Father John Schmidt CSsR, the director of the Co-Redemptorist Association in Denver, will do our best to bring reliable advertising to our readers, we are not responsible for any claims made by any advertiser.

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LEGAL NOTICES
Anyone with knowledge of the whereabouts of Charlotte Dian Snelson (nee Creel) is asked to contact the Diocesan Tribunal at 225-336-8755.

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Staff, wire report

Bishop Robert W. Muench expressed sadness when he learned of the death of Rev. Bill Graham and offered prayers for the beloved evangelist, his family and followers.

Rev. Graham died at his home in Montreat, North Carolina on Feb. 21 at the age of 99.

“Dr. Graham was a powerful evangelist for Jesus who touched the hearts and lives of countless people around the world,” Bishop Muench said in a statement on Feb. 21. “His message everywhere he preached was consistent and reminds us of what so many of us heard just a week ago when we received ashes: ‘Repent, and believe in the Gospel!’ We thank God for his faith, his witness, and his ministry to others.”

Catholics’ leaders throughout the country praised the work of Rev. Graham and expressed sympathy to his family. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Rev. Graham was “a preacher of God’s word not only in his sermons, but also in the very life he lived.”

“Today, we pray for the soul of the Rev. Billy Graham to the Lord he so dearly loved and offer our condolences to his family,” the cardinal said in a statement. “His faith and integrity invited countless thousands around the world into a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for the ministry of Billy Graham.”

An outpouring of statements paid tribute to the man who was easily the most famous evangelist of the 20th century. He had suffered from Parkinson’s disease for many years, although he continued to lead crusades until 2005, when he held his last one in New York. In recent years, he also suffered from cancer, pneumonia and other ailments.

He preached the Gospel in person to more people than any other evangelist in history. He reached at least 210 million not only through his personal appearances but also through his radio and television ministries.

A Catholic bishop in North Carolina— and a fellow Charlotte native — said Rev. Graham “gave us an inspiring example of a life lived in total dedication to Jesus Christ and his Gospel.”

“Through his ministry, he taught the world that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. May the father of mercies now receive Dr. Graham into his loving embrace. The condolences and prayers of the Catholic Church are with the Graham family at this time,” said Bishop Peter J. Jugis of Charlotte.

In neighboring Tennessee, Knoxville Bishop Richard F. Stika recalled meeting Rev. Graham in 1999 during his visit to St. Louis as he was preparing for one of his famous crusades to be held there. That same year, then-Msgr. Stika, a priest of the St. Louis Archdiocese, was archdiocesan coordinator for the visit of St. John Paul II to St. Louis.

“I found him to be a very authentic and humble preacher of the Gospel,” Bishop Stika said of the preacher. “During his meeting with then-Archbishop Justin Rigali (of St. Louis), Dr. Graham expressed his immense admiration and respect for Pope John Paul II. Dr. Graham is sorely missed in our nation today and as in so many ways we as a nation have lost our moral bearing. May he now rest in peace.”

Cardinal Rigali, now retired and residing in the Diocese of Knoxvile, said he remembers the Rev. Graham from that same meeting in St. Louis.

“When I heard the news this morning about the death of Dr. Billy Graham, it brought back memories of the encounter I had with him some years ago in St. Louis with Bishop Stika,” he said in a statement. “Something that stands out in the life and ministry of Dr. Graham is this wonderful admiration and love that he had for the person of Jesus Christ. He was always speaking about Christ and always speaking about who he is. He is the Son of God and we are destined to eternal life together with him.”

The cardinal remarked that it was encouraging to see how much attention the media was giving to Rev. Graham and “reflecting on his long life.” The prelate added:

“He has brought the message of Jesus to so many people and I am impressed by his personal piety, by his personal zeal and by his love for our Savior Jesus Christ.”

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan recalled that when he was growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, “it was hard not to notice and be impressed by the Rev. Billy Graham.”

“There was no question that the Dolans were a Catholic family, firm in our faith, but in our household, there was always respect and admiration for Billy Graham and the work he was doing to bring people to God,” Cardinal Dolan said. “Whether it was one of his famous crusades, radio programs, television specials, or meeting and counseling the president, Billy Graham seemed to be everywhere, always with the same message: Jesus is your Savior, and wants you to be happy with him forever.”
Verges said that even during her annual school visits she often has to be “buzzed in,” sign the visitors’ book and required to wear a name tag provided to her by the school. According to Verges, many of the schools have their own set of signals designed to alert faculty and staff in case of an emergency.

“Some schools will have different sounds for different things, like one’s a fire drill and one’s an intruder and there will be different buzzers and different beeps,” she explained.

Those signals also change over time, she said, so that former students or adults would not know of the unique protocols. While principals have developed their own safety procedures, the Catholic Schools Office has a comprehensive plan for all schools in the event of an emergency in its “Crisis Response Manual.”

Colleen Caillete, principal of Catholic High of Pointe Coupe in New Roads, along with Dr. Cindy Ryals, principal of St. Alphon- sus Ligouri School in Greenwell Springs, were part of the commit- tee that wrote the manual.

“We have procedures already in place that deal with an active shooter,” said Caillete. “And, we follow the protocol of the local LEOS (law enforcement offices).

Caillet met with local law en- forcement to go over the school’s procedures less than a week after the shooting at Majory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

Just a few weeks ago, Ryals, who wrote a dissertation entitled “School Leaders’ Perceptions of Conducting Active Shooter Drills,” was a presenter at the Na- tional School Response Confer- ence in Las Vegas, where the Oc- tober concert shooting was still fresh on the minds of many.

“There was the realization that it’s not just our schools,” said Ryals. “It’s every public venue we walk into. It can happen anywhere we are. And, so what I heard from almost every speaker there, unfortunately, the general citizen has to start thinking a little more open mindedly about their surroundings, being aware.

If I see something, I have to say something.”

It’s the new mantra, she said. After 9/11, according to Ryals, the focus was placed on physical objects like an abandoned suitcase or book bag.

“Now they’re sending these messages, ‘Hey, I’m going to do this,’ and in most cases it’s some- body letting off steam,” she said.

“But, if we don’t take it seriously, it could lead to tragedy.”

She said that in most of the cases she has studied, “the kids knew about it.”

“They had seen it on Insta- gram or a Snapchat post or in general conversation,” she said.

Technology might be the tool for threats but it can also be the tool for stopping someone from carrying out those threats, Ry- als said. The CSO implemented an anti-bullying app for iPads and cellphones in the fall called STOPit. The system provides a platform for anonymous report- ing.

According to Verges, many of the schools in the diocese have made the STOPit app available to parents and students and “have been highly successful because they can follow up” on the reports to address the issues.

“And, it doesn’t just have to be about bullying,” she said. “Some- times students are concerned about their friend being sad. We’ve had that. They could report a weapon. They could report any- thing they feel like they need the school to look at.”

“We’re meeting students where they are,” Verges added. “Because they’re good at technology and so we urge all of our schools to start using the STOPit app.”

Troubled 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz has been charged with 17 counts of first-degree premedi- tated murder after stalking the halls of Marjory Stoneman Doug- las High School with an AR-15 rifle on Valentine’s Day. Fourteen more faculty and students were injured in the tragedy. Cruz had reportedly been expelled from the school for disciplinary rea- sons.

Miami Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski urged community mem- bers to come together “to support one another in this time of grief.”

“We are going through a time of loss and mourning,” he said. “We each have our own way of dealing with grief. Some are silent, some share their pain with others. Others will return to their daily lives and responsibilities. All of us are called to walk together through this time of sorrow.”

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