By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

On a recent Saturday morning, as Bishop-designate Michael G. Duca pulled into the garage at his Shreveport home following an ordination ceremony his cell phone rang.

A quick glance at the number told him the next few minutes would be life changing. On the other end was Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Christophe Pierre in Washington, D.C telling him he has been appointed the sixth bishop for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“(Archbishop Pierre) had no reason to call me for other than one reason,” said Bishop-designate Duca. “He only calls you to give you a message from the Holy Father. It was something I didn’t expect but I accepted immediately.

“How could I say no?”

“I accepted that day in the garage, not very ceremonially,” he added with a chuckle.

Two weeks later, Bishop-designate Duca, sporting a wide grin and to a hearty round of applause, was introduced to his future during a press conference at the Westerfield Center on the campus of the Catholic Life Center in Baton Rouge.

“I didn’t understand why; it’s something I didn’t expect,” he said. “This was a surprise that threw me for a loop.”

Bishop-designate Michael G. Duca, pictured with students in Shreveport after a Red Mass in 2016, said he is excited about his move to the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Photo by Jessica Rinaudo | The Catholic Connection

In a wide-ranging, exclusive interview with The Catholic Commentator and Catholic Life TV that offered a brief but insightful glimpse into the new shepherd of the diocese, Bishop-designate Duca discussed his mixture of emotions upon learning of the appointment, his love of cooking, how he sees his role of bishop and the Dallas native even answered the pressing question of Saints-Cowboys (Fleur de Lis fans will be pleased).

He admitted to a twinge of sadness when learning he would be leaving the Diocese of Shreveport, a place he has been shepherding for the past 10 years. During the past decade, the 66-year-old has formed strong bonds throughout the diocese and has become a beloved spiritual leader.

“Well, I was sad, sad to leave Shreveport because of things I had begun and not finished, things I wanted to get done but not get done,” he said. “There’s a lot of regret that comes from that.

“But also (many) good things happened.”

Mixed in with the momentary sadness was an immediate excitement to embrace his new challenge. He said he had learned a long time ago to yield control of his life, that God would send him where he was needed. He recalled that with each assignment through the early years of his ministry, whether it was chaplain at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, vocations director for the Diocese of Dallas or even when he was sent to Rome to study canon law, he would be sent back to a parish.

But his watershed moment came when he was appointed rector of Holy Trinity Seminary in Irvine, Texas, where he served from 1996-2008, when he was appointed bishop of Shreveport.

“At some point, I said ‘I give up Lord, ’” he said.

Fifty years after the release of “Humanae Vitae,” Blessed Paul VI’s encyclical remains relevant today, even in a society that has witnessed formative shifts in sexual behavior and morality, according to Danielle Van Haute, associate director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Van Haute said the document expresses the truth of human sexuality and married love, and that “truth is always relevant.”

“In it, we can also find great encouragement and wisdom, not only on church doctrine but also on how to accompany others in living out this teaching,” she said.

“Humanae Vitae” (“Of Human Life”), affirmed a longstanding teaching of the Catholic Church yet it became one of the most controversial encyclicals in recent church history. Subtitled “On the Regulation of Birth,” the document reaffirmed the church’s moral teaching on the sanctity of life, married love, the procreative and unitive nature of conjugal relations, responsible parenthood and its rejection of artificial contraception.

The document was greeted with controversy but has been reaffirmed as a timeless teaching of the church.

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Shepherds to lead and feed abundantly

By Dina Dow

The Sunday Mass readings for the next two weeks place us directly in the middle of the season of Ordinary Time as we celebrate the 16th and 17th weeks. Recently we explored extraordinary passages about miracles, healings, mercy and discipleship, as well as amazement, suspicion and outright rejection. These next six weeks will call upon the deep faith of Jesus’ followers and belief in the presence of Jesus. In other words, it is about to get very Real, with a capital “R.” The reality begins through the familiar analogy of a shepherd. The 16th Sunday readings tell the promise of, the need for and the purpose of a shepherd in regards to faith. The 17th Sunday readings begin a series of what and how the shepherd will lead and feed.

“The Lord is my shepherd”

There are distinct words in sacred Scripture which merit a “holy pause,” one of which is “woe.” We hear this word from the prophet Jeremiah, who had the difficult role of warning the then-king of Israel “to listen to God, lead the people back to God or face God’s justice.” After falling upon deaf ears Jeremiah proclaimed, “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the flock of my pasture … You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil deeds” (Jer 23:1).

With the promise of just punishment comes the promise of better shepherds and a righteous king to lead them. We know this promised king to be Jesus, the Shepherd.

A shepherd leads

Sheep without a shepherd are like hikers without a map, everyone is going in circles, if moving at all. We are led by our shepherd’s “staff and rod” to gently keep us close to the fold and on the path of holiness. If led astray we are vulnerable to evil and darkness. If we are within the fold we are safe-guarded. As David writes in Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The living word of God, Jesus, together with the faith handed-on by the apostles to their successors feed us. These modes of transmission are called “sacred Scripture and tradition.” We read in The Catechism of the Catholic Church, “sacred Scripture is the living word of God, Jesus, togeth-

Turn to St. Anne when seeking a spouse

By Richard Meek

Navigating the shark-filled waters of the modern dating pool might make for a ton of dating sequels, but could it be singles really are looking for love in all of the wrong places?

As internet dating sites and their lofty fees become the standard, tradition says single men and women need only look to the mother of Mary to answer their prayers.

A catchphrase that is even more evolved through the years, one prayed by many women and occasionally the mothers of daughters: “St. Anne, bring me a man as fast as you can.”

“St. Anne, bring me a man as fast as you can.”

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A mother of thirteen, when asked how she was going to do it, said, “St. Anne, bring me a man as fast as you can.”

A shepherd leads

Sheep without a shepherd are like hikers without a map, everyone is going in circles, if moving at all. We are led by our shepherd’s “staff and rod” to gently keep us close to the fold and on the path of holiness. If led astray we are vulnerable to evil and darkness. If we are within the fold we are safe-guarded. As David writes in Psalm 23, our Lord, as our shepherd, gives peace, refreshes, guides, empowers trust, gives courage, feeds and heals with abundant “goodness and kindness.” Jesus is the epitome of a shepherd, for he is the revelation of God in word and deed, as promised through the prophets.

It is during all times, but most especially times of hardship and pain where we are called to a complete trust in the guidance of our shepherd. Jesus experienced many hardships as he walked the earth, eventually laying down his life for us, his flock, as the supreme act of redemption. St. Paul affirms, “In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13). Christ’s blood gathers the scattered “for through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father” (Eph 2:18).

A shepherd feeds

Nutrition 101 for sheep is extensive and complex. Simply stated sheep need good, solid food and it takes a long time to digest. Any sudden change can lead to illness and death, therefore consistency is of the utmost importance. How does Jesus, our shepherd, feed us in perfect portion to ensure life? God “feeds” his flock in word and sacrament.

Word of God

We hear in the Gospel of St. Mark, chapter 6 of the crowds pressing as they continuously seek Jesus and the apostles to experience more of what he was saying and doing. Instead of getting a much-needed respite, Jesus took pity on them “... for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things” (Mk 6:34).

The living word of God, Jesus, together with the faith handed-on by the apostles to their successors feed us. These modes of transmission are called “sacred Scripture and sacred tradition.” We read in The Catechism of the Catholic Church, “sacred Scripture is the living word of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And (holy) tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the Church.”

SEE GOSPEL PAGE 20
Making a difference, one job at a time

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Wearing dress shirts and slacks, Kerry Myers and Harold Grier anxiously waited for staff members of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Community and Social Responsibility department to arrive in a small dining room at the Catholic Life Center. Special guest Tristi Charpentier of the Wilson Foundation was also there for this “lunch and learn” session. It was a chance for Myers and Grier to exhibit their presentation explaining why employers should consider hiring returning citizens from Joseph Homes of CCDBR.

With a computer and large screen set up at one end of the room, Myers kicked off the meeting with a history of Joseph Homes and its mission – to help homeless formerly incarcerated men transition back into society. He also spoke about the screening process of the men who are selected to live at Joseph Homes and the requirements for staying there, including attending support group meetings, drug screens and maintaining stable employment. Next, Grier took the floor and explained tax incentives available to businesses that hire formerly incarcerated men.

It was a mock presentation for a very important goal – finding good jobs for men who desperately want a chance. Myers and Grier, who worked together on volunteer projects while serving time at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, were both hired with a $62,000 grant from the Prison Reentry Initiative from the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation to develop job opportunities.

“This was a trial run,” said Linda Fjeldsjo, coordinator of Prison Ministry and Joseph Homes. “I know they have plans as they develop new relationships with potential employers; we’ll be setting up some future dates, future employer luncheons.” Input from the audience included integrating both presentations into one and explaining why employers should hire resident of Joseph Homes.

“I needed the input,” said Myers. “This was a friendly audience and I felt like I hit the essentials and just needed to know where we need to focus.”

With 18,000 men released from Louisiana prisons every year, transitioning back into society presents a laundry list of difficulties from education and new technology advances to a new world altogether, even adjusting to what is acceptable as a livable wage compared to the nine cents an hour at a prison job. According to Grier, Joseph Homes provides a great transition for those formerly incarcerated.

“A man serving 42 years in incarceration, you can’t just leave him outside the gates and just say, ‘Go!’ 42 years without technology, 42 years without even understanding just the traffic,” said Grier. “Baton Rouge 42 years ago was not this Baton Rouge, but for the expectation for him to succeed, it takes a community effort.”

Grier said he and Myers are working to help employers understand that “these men are human beings who made a mistake” but they will not be easy hires because there is a huge learning curve and that there needs to be a sort of “grace” period to help the men acclimate to the job requirements.

According to Charpentier, one of the biggest challenges of returning citizens is “the general stigma in the community at large.” She said that leads to discrimination in affordable housing, noting that many landlords will not allow the formerly incarcerated to live in their properties. Transportation is also a huge obstacle, she said.

“The bus system is unreliable for them,” said Charpentier. “I’ve heard about people who have to leave their homes three hours before their shift starts in order to make it to work on time. Part of it is routing plus the traffic issues in the city.”

Right now, though, the goal is to find an opportunity for someone to get a job. According to Fjeldsjo, the goal is to develop relationships with three or four employers and hopefully continue job development through next year if the funding is there.

“The idea is to have the employers here and I think that when I give that presentation, I’ll be able to convey, not only from a practical point of view but I hope that they would see the passion for it, that we know what we’re talking about, that we understand the individuals that we’re dealing with, that we understand the problems and that, like us, we want them to be a part of the solution,” said Myers.

“It’s an uphill battle,” said Grier, who understands both sides of the issue. “These people are coming home ... whether (others) like it not, and they want to be better citizens. People are basically do-gooders, they want to do something good. So (we) just need to help them realize an opportunity where they can change a person’s life. We’re not talking about employing 18,000 people, just one person ... (they) can make a different in just one person’s life.

“Somebody gave me a chance and it made a world of difference in my life and look how I’m able to impact other people because that somebody gave me a chance.”
By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Now that Bishop-designate Michael G. Duca has been appointed to succeed retired Bishop Robert W. Muench, what’s the next step?

Specifically, does Bishop Muench remain in charge of the Diocese of Baton Rouge until Aug. 24, when Bishop-designate Duca is scheduled to be installed at St. Joseph Cathedral? Or does Bishop-Designate Duca take charge from afar?

Practically, not much changes for Bishop Muench, according to Father Jamin David, author of “Something Old or Something New?” which was his Canon Law thesis examining the administrative processes in place when a bishop leaves a diocese.

Canonically, Father David noted several changes were triggered when Pope Francis accepted Bishop Muench’s resignation letter at noon Rome time on June 26. Bishop Muench has most of the same powers given to a diocesan bishop for operations and for the benefit of the faithful of a diocese.

However, those powers are not limitless. According to the Code of Canon Law, the outgoing bishop can implement no action that would “hurt the new bishop’s decision making ability in the future,” Father David said. “There can be no innovations.

“I think an administrator would be wise not to appoint new pastors, not to close parishes, not to harm any future decision making for the new bishop.”

However, he did say Bishop Muench will have to make decisions to keep the diocese operating as normal, and those decisions might include appointing administrators at church parishes where a pastor is either retiring or in the case of death.

He added that one option might even be transferring priests to attend to the sacramental needs of the people of God.

“Really, (Bishop Muench’s) job is to keep the ship afloat for the next two months,” Father David said.

He added that in the event of a natural disaster, such as a hurricane or a flood similar to what happened in 2016, Bishop Muench has the full power to enable all of the organs of organization of the diocese, including Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, to function in recovery efforts.

Regarding the transition in the Diocese of Shreveport, Father David said that diocese has “lost a bishop.” Similar to Bishop Muench, Bishop-designate Duca also has some limitations, but Father David is uncertain if the incoming bishop has been appointed Apostolic Administrator, which has some canonical meaning.

On Aug. 24, the see (in Shreveport) will no longer have Bishop-designate Duca as an administrator and another administrator will have to be elected, likely by their College of Consultants, until the Holy See appoints a new bishop.

“What’s also interesting is because the see (in Baton Rouge) was vacant for a millennium,” said Father David.

He explained the diocese technically no longer has a vicar general but Father Tom Ranzino will remain the moderator of the curia, which is a title he has had in addition to vicar general.

“That makes some difference canonically because the vicar general typically takes the place of the bishop or fulfills certain administrative functions of the bishop in his stead,” Father David said.

He added that there is no longer a presbyteral council because that council advises the bishop, and since, canonically speaking, Bishop Muench is no longer the bishop and Bishop-designate Duca has not taken canonical possession, there is no bishop for the council to advise.

However, Father David stressed that typically an incoming bishop reappoints those people to their former jobs, at least temporarily.

“I think that’s wise because it venerates the prior administration but at the same time these are the people most familiar with operations,” he said. “Once the new bishop gets to see personalities and how the diocese functions, he can make the decisions he needs to about any future changes.”

Practically little changes for Bishop Muench, who can continue to install pastors in their new parishes, address issues of marriage dispensations, support pastors who might be changing Mass times, and even perform confirming the faithful.

“He still has the powers of a consecrated bishop but canonically does not have the administrative prerogatives afforded to a diocesan bishop,” Father David said.

He added Bishop Muench will continue to address many of the same issues he has been dealing with for quite some time, including a “stewardship of priestly resources and providing for pastoral needs in parishes.”

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PASTORAL INSTALLATION – Bishop Robert W. Muench, right, installs Father Joseph Vu as pastor at St. Philomena Church in Labadieville on July 15. Earlier in the day, Bishop Muench had installed Father Vu as pastor at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Plattenville. A day earlier, on July 14, the bishop installed Father Vu pastor at St. Anne Church in Napoleonville. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator
Teen to plant seeds of her future in Irish soil

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant was the soil where the seeds of service were sewn for Rachael Duchmann. She will soon travel on foreign soil to deliver Christ’s universal message of love to youth in Ireland this fall.

“I think I’ve always had a servant’s heart, but it really didn’t come until I started becoming involved in my church,” said Duchmann, 18, who will leave at the end of August to spend 11 months as a missionary in Ireland through the National Evangelization Teams (NET) Ministries.

A parishioner of Holy Rosary for the past 12 years, Duchmann said she did not plan to go to college for a while. When the flood of 2016 filled her home, which is in the vicinity of Holy Rosary, with waist-high water, she didn’t know if she was mentally prepared to go to college.

“I originally thought I would work and save money and go to college later,” said Duchmann.

She talked to Holy Rosary pastor Father Josh Johnson, who encouraged her to look into NET Ministries. During her research and discernment process, she learned that NET provides mission opportunities and the

mission trip to Ireland piqued her interest. She discovered that one of the people who had done it before was Sarah Stoehr, the youth director at St. Joseph Church in Ponchatoula. Duchmann met Stoehr through a friend she made as a member of the Diocesan Youth Board. She said she “fell in love” with the idea of becoming a missionary after talking to Stoehr.

She didn’t think she would be accepted for NET Ireland because she was told there was an influx of 18-year old girls for that mission.

“So I really wasn’t hopeful. Then I got the call that I had been accepted,” Duchmann said. Because she had not applied for a NET USA mission, she “compared notes” with a NET USA representative.

“The more research I did, the more I felt I was called to Ireland,” Duchmann said.

“It’s been crazy since then, but it’s the best crazy it can be,” Duchmann said.

She added, “I’m processing the fact that I will be thousands of miles away from home, which is overwhelming.

“If I didn’t have such a good support system I don’t think I would be able to do it, because it’s such a leap of faith.”

The biggest challenge for Duchmann has been the fundraising process. She said she grew up in a home where you don’t ask for things. During the flood, which caused them to have to “gut the house from floor to ceiling,” it was hard for her to accept help.

“That is not my strong point. I’m a giver, more so than a receiver, so that’s been my struggle.”

Through the trip, Duchmann will invest her life in the youth of Ireland. Once she arrives in Dublin she will go through five weeks of intensive training. She will then be assigned to a team

that helps build the local youth group or part of a team that will travel over 120,000 miles in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and put on 150-200 retreats over 11 months, evangelizing youth.

Duchmann said, “I definitely think that homesickness will be one of my biggest battles because I’ve never really been away from home. Doing missionary work outside of the country is a little scary. But I know it’s God’s will, so while it’s scary, there’s peace. How scary can it be when it’s God’s will?

“I think I’m really just looking forward to experiencing something new. I think it’s easy to get stuck.”

The items which Duchmann plan to take with her include a medal of St. Padre Pio that her father brought her from Rome, “The Life of the Beloved” by Father Henri Nouwen, and a medal of St. Padre Pio that her mother gave her.

Tootie Bonacorso

KNIGHTS SERVE THE POOR – Baton Rouge area members of Knights of Peter Claver, Ladies of Grace, Constance Butler Chapter #9 recently provided and served the evening meal for 35 diners at the St. Vincent de Paul dining hall. Pictured, first row from left: Debbie Fines-James, Mary Murray, Hattie Carney, Velita Benjamin and Delores Price. Back row, from left: Carla Lewis, Janet St. Cyr Moore and Lorena Williams. Photo provided by Carla Lewis.
‘Last rites’ in a coma/ Mass attendance on holy days

Q My daughter, who was 50 years of age, became deathly ill, spent six weeks in the intensive care unit, then entered hospice to die. When death was imminent, a nurse finally found a priest to administer last rites. (It was a Jewish hospital, and they weren’t used to calling a priest.) By that time, my daughter was in a coma. She hadn’t been to church or to confession in I don’t know how long although she was baptized, made first Communion, etc. As soon as the priest gave her the sacrament, she passed away. (I was holding her hand.) My question is this: Although she was baptized, made first confession in I don’t know how long, although I am not sure), did she go to purgatory instead of hell? (I was wondering about this.)

A I would not presume to know for certain the ultimate fate of your daughter, but I am inclined to trust in the mercy of a loving God. In the 25th chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus indicates the final standard on which each of us will be judged and the key question is, “Did you help people when they needed it?” (“I was hungry and you gave me food ... ill and you cared for me.”) From what you said, it would seem that your daughter scores high on this scale of compassion.

If, in fact, she did have an abortion, it could be that she regretted it later and repented of it. (I don’t believe that any woman can be comfortable knowing that she has taken her child’s life. I have spoken to women who, years later, wondered what their child would have been like at that point and were deeply saddened in realizing what they had done.) Your reference to the “last rites” reminds me to mention that this sacrament is actually called the “anointing of the sick” – highlighting the fact that it is not reserved for the moment of death but should be received when anyone is seriously ill. That way, the person is more likely to be able to confess his or her sins, receive absolution and be assured of the mercy of the Lord. I, too, will pray for your daughter, that you will one day be with her again in the glory of God’s presence.

Q I attended Mass on the most recent holy day of obligation and noticed that only about one-sixth of our parish was in attendance. Is it a mortal sin for those who did not attend? If so, must they go to confession before receiving holy Communion? (Glens Falls, New York)

A The simplest and safest answers are “yes” and “yes,” but they require some explanation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “The faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants). Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin” (No. 2181).

Realize, though, that gravity of matter is only one of three requirements for a mortal sin, the others being full knowledge that the act or omission is seriously sinful and complete consent of the will. (From the frequency of the question, I would guess that a fair number of Catholics are unaware that Mass attendance on holy days is a grave requirement, an excuse that disappears now that you have read this column!) The catechism mentions illness and the care of infants to justify missing Mass, but there are other legitimate reasons as well, such as unavoidable work obligations.

So if a Catholic misses Mass on a holy day through his own fault – and knew that it was a serious obligation, yes, of course, he should go to confession before receiving the Eucharist. (It bears mentioning that sharing in the Eucharist was the one specific way Jesus asked the apostles to keep his memory alive.)

Q We are a Catholic family and have sent all of our children to Catholic schools. Our daughter, who is now in high school, has a friend in her class who lives with two women, one of whom is her adoptive mother. The women are in a homosexual partnership.

Recently that family was going to the beach on an overnight trip, and my daughter was invited to go with them. My husband and I refused (and said that she was busy that weekend). We do let our daughter go on play dates with this friend and hang out with her, but we draw the line on sleepovers with this family.

We were truthful with our daughter and told her that we don’t want her to start seeing that family’s way of life as natural and proper. While we are tolerant of other people’s sexual orientation, we do not approve of gay marriage. Was it wrong for us to refuse to let her go with them? (Roanoke, Virginia)

A No, what you did was not wrong. On the contrary, I think you handled the situation pretty well. I would agree that it’s OK for your daughter to “hang out” with that friend; in fact, it’s probably healthy and helpful for her to see that a heterosexual union like your own is the norm.

But I, too, would draw the line at an overnight. You were right to explain honestly to your daughter the reason for your disapproval; now a pursit, I suppose, would say that you should have been just as frank in speaking with the gay couple, but I know how awkward that might have been.

Had you wanted to do so, you might have found helpful the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Nos. 2357-59), which offers a Scriptural basis for disapproving of homosexual activity.

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

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as well as your local church parish
Mourners can find peace in the beatitudes

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

When one has a love relationship with God, even as the Lord draws him or her toward himself into the heavenly home, he encircles the person’s faith-filled survivors with arms of compassion and comfort. This is the beautiful unfolding of the beatitude “Blessed are those who mourn,” according to Father Jerry Martin, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Prairieville.

Father Martin noted that the word beatitude refers to a great state of joy. Its roots go back to the Latin word “beatus,” meaning “happy” and “joy.”

“That can mean happiness on earth or eternal happiness,” said Father Martin.

When dealing with the loss of a loved one, Father Martin said what makes a “huge difference” is the faith practice of the deceased and his or her survivors.

Father Martin said it’s not simply about the deceased person’s and survivors’ outlook on the existence of God or the acknowledgement that there is a life after death.

“When I say faith practice of the deceased or survivors I mean is there a love relationship with Almighty God?” Father Martin said.

Father Martin said there is a strong tendency for people to go to one of two extremes. One of the extremes is to pretend that the loss is “no big deal” and “everything is fine.” The other extreme is for survivors to believe their life is empty and they will never be able to be happy again.

“To allow the beatitude ‘blessed are those who mourn,’ to take place, a person has to avoid either extreme,” said Father Martin.

He added, “Those particular words (‘Blessed are those who mourn’) are a call to faith practice rather than an automatic reassurance.”

He said many people think of eternal life in terms of making an “automatic soft drink machine” purchase.

“It implies that we receive eternal life by simply hanging around, having a pleasant personality and doing something nice every now and then,” said Father Martin. “It overlooks the fact that eternal life is something that we must prepare ourselves for by living a life of love for God and neighbor.”

He emphasized that belief in eternal life is not just something people should tell themselves so that they don’t feel bad at the time of the funeral.

“Unfortunately, the vast majority of people nowadays do not practice the faith and do not have that love relationship with the Lord, so they make it impossible to truly experience the beauty of the beatitudes,” said Father Martin.

He noted that a love relationship with God is a “life-time” event that must be developed.

“We often look upon the beatitudes as a consolation, and they are that, but along with being a consolation they are a challenge and a call,” said Father Martin.

In looking at the beatitudes, Father Martin highlighted the difference when it comes to mourning in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

In St. Matthew’s account of The Sermon on the Mount, he wrote for the early Jewish Christian audience, who faced persecution, hardships and death because of their faith. The words of Jesus here would be words of comfort and consolation in the midst of their loss.

Father Martin contrasted that with St. Luke’s account of The Sermon on the Plain, which was written to convert the Gentiles, who lived a life of debauchery, to the Jewish faith. Jesus says, “Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh,” but he then goes on to say, “But woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep.”

Father Martin said it is that loving relationship with the Lord that enables believers to be comforted and “enables the attitude to occur.”

“There are also many instances in which I have seen believers put the beatitude into practice and it enables them to see death for what it really is: mainly as God’s love calling the deceased to eternal happiness.”

“To learn more about the ‘blessed are those who mourn’ beatitude, people can read Pope Francis’ “The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium),” according to Father Martin.

“In that document, the pope describes the very type of joy that brings consolation to those who mourn,” said Father Martin.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
Growing up in the city of Can Tho, Vietnam, Father Hieu Quang Nguyen, ICM did what normal kids do: play and study. But, when it came time to further his education, the comfortable world that he knew changed dramatically. At 16-years-old, Father Nguyen moved 150 miles away from Can Tho to the hustle and bustle of Ho Chi Minh City, commonly known as Saigon.

“When I moved to the big town of Saigon City, I don’t know anybody,” said Father Nguyen. “So, I just live in my room and go to school and come back. Very boring.”

At the time, Father Nguyen was boarding at the home of a great aunt who was the “benefactor of lots of priests and sisters and brothers.” Because of that connection, there were a lot of books about religious life and vocations stored in Father Nguyen’s room. So, he began to read.

“From 16-years-old, vocation was always in my heart,” said Father Nguyen. “I want to be a priest and I want to serve the poor and I want to bring the good news to the people, especially for the poor. That’s the calling, always in my heart,” said Father Nguyen. “Every time I kneel before the tabernacle, I always hear the invitation of God calling me to bring the good news to others.”

After finishing high school, he attended university and studied philosophy. He became a novitiate in 2008 and transferred to the Philippines in 2013 to study theology. In 2017, Father Nguyen was assigned to Baton Rouge to continue studying for the priesthood.

“The ways God made in my life are pretty amazing,” he said. “One thing he never forgets is the Divine Mercy Chaplet. “I pray Divine Mercy every day, every day, from 2006 to now,” said Father Nguyen. “I never forget, every day at 3 p.m. because I believe in this age, in this time, we need more of God’s mercy because I know of God’s love and mercy on me. That’s why, I want to bring the good news. I want to bring God’s love to others.”

On June 30 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Baton Rouge, Father Nguyen was ordained into the priesthood by the Bishop Manh Van Nguyen, cojutor bishop of the Diocese of Da Lat in Vietnam. His parents, along with eight of his nine siblings who all live in Houston, traveled to Baton Rouge for the ceremony. One brother still lives in Vietnam. Father Nguyen said his family has been a tremendous support in his vocation, especially his mother.

“T,hen (I’m) very tired, I’m always calling her and sharing with her what happened in my life and she always wants to help me and to support me, and my dad, he is always silent, but I know he prays for me,” said Father Nguyen.

Father Nguyen said his biggest desire is to serve the poor. His first assignment is the L.T.T. Retreat and Education Center in Waller, Texas, very close to his family but he said he will go anywhere he is assigned in order to serve the poor.

“I’m very blessed when I (go to) this retreat house because God’s blessed this house and people will come in, they will realize God loves them and I will show them God loves them, especially the poor, the poor in spirit,” said Father Nguyen. “(People) in the United States, they’re not hungry for food but they’re hungry for love. They’re hungry for understanding. They’re hungry for love for (each) other. That’s why, when they (visit) there, I’m the one to show them how God loves them.”

Before beginning that assignment in August, Father Nguyen plans to travel to Missouri for the Marian Days, a weekend-long celebration of Vietnamese Catholics from around the world, for thanksgiving to Mary because she “is the one to protect me and supports me and help me … many, many times I feel her beside me.”

“That’s my vocation,” said Father Nguyen. “When others see me or when they meet me, they feel God loves all of us. That’s what I’ll try my best (to do) every day.”

Bishop Manh Van Nguyen conducts the ordination ceremony of Father Nguyen June 30.
FMOLHS leader earns national health award

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Tara Haney, vice president of operations for Health Leaders Network (HLN) for Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System in Baton Rouge, was honored as one of Tomorrow’s Leaders by the Catholic Health Association (CHA) during an awards banquet last month in San Diego.

“I was incredibly honored,” said Haney. “I was made aware by our organization that I had been nominated which, obviously, is a huge honor. I’m the third from FMOLHS who has received this nomination and award, which is an incredible honor.”

When Haney came on board the FMOLHS in 2012, her focus was on health within the organization’s team member wellness program known as Healthy Lives. Her leadership built a program that serves more than 14,000 team members and has expanded to more than 20 clients across the country.

In 2014, Haney helped launch another successful venture at FMOLHS, Health Leaders Network. The group offers “the specific goal of controlling costs, improving quality outcomes and improving patient engagement,” according to Haney.

Four years later, HLN encompasses more than 1,000 providers and a network that covers more than 100,000 lives across Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas in value-based contracts.

“The mission of Catholic healthcare is to provide high quality healthcare to the communities where we are privileged to serve and be specifically attentive to the poor and vulnerable,” said Haney. “It’s no more challenging in Baton Rouge than it is anywhere else in the country. Obviously the state of Louisiana and the healthcare challenges have been everywhere from the budget discussions, but as far as specific challenges, it’s not unique to Baton Rouge and Catholic healthcare. There’s going to be the continual tension between running a business in today’s environment and specifically a healthcare business, while at the same time being true to our mission, which is to be able to provide care for those most in need, and those most in need live next door to me and you, they live in every zip code.”

The challenge of providing Catholic healthcare dates back a century, according to Haney, when the Franciscan sisters began serving the needy in Louisiana.

“One-hundred-and-five years ago, our sisters started this ministry in north Louisiana and the challenges may have looked a little different but they clearly showed up,” she explained. “So, it’s a matter of (challenges) won’t end and we won’t overcome the challenges’ but we will continue to get through them by being true to the mission. We are called to be stewards of the resources that we are given.”

Haney recalled a conversation with one of the sisters a couple of years ago about how “we still must make the same decisions that many healthcare organizations, regardless of if you’re Catholic, not-for-profit or for-profit, have to make.”

She said there are ways to balance that decision-making process while still holding true to the mission. As for the future of healthcare in general, Haney said she sees more healthcare providers and hospitals working together, which is a positive move for patients.

“We’re seeing the providers and facilities come together and say, ‘Hey, we do this better together,’” she said. “And, I think we’re going to continue seeing that.”

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VATICAN CITY (CNS)—All Christians are called to be missionaries, concerned more with sharing the Gospel than with earning money or even with being successful at winning converts, Pope Francis said.

“A baptized person who does not feel the need to proclaim the Gospel, to announce Christ, is not a good Christian,” the pope said July 15 before reciting the Angelus prayer with an estimated 15,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

Pope Francis was commenting on the day’s Gospel reading, which told about how Jesus sent the disciples out two-by-two to preach and to heal in his name.

“It was a kind of apprenticeship for what they would be called to do with the power of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of the Lord,” the pope explained.

Speaking only in the name of Jesus, he said, “the apostles had nothing of their own to proclaim and none of their own abilities to demonstrate, but they spoke and acted as emissaries, as messengers of Jesus.”

“This Gospel episode concerns us, too, and not only priests, but all the baptized, who are called to witness to the Gospel of Christ in all the situations of life,” the pope said.

Christians fulfill their mission, he said, when their proclamation is motivated only by love for and obedience to Christ and when the only message they share is Christ’s.

In the reading from St. Mark’s Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples “to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick -- no food, no sack, no money in their belts.”

The poverty and simplicity of lifestyle Jesus asks for, the pope said, were meant to make the disciples of yesterday and today “free and light.”

Jesus, he said, calls his disciples to set out as “messengers of the kingdom of God, not powerful managers, not unmovable functionaries (and) not stars on tour.”

Pope Francis prayed that Mary, “would help us bear the message of the Gospel.”

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Tara Haney, a leader of Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System in Baton Rouge, was recognized by the Tomorrow’s Leaders Program of the Catholic Health Association. Haney, center, receives her award from Sister Carol Keehan, DC, president of CHA, and Father J. Bryan Hehir, secretary for Social Services for the Archdiocese of Boston. Photo provided by FMOLHS.
Joshua Breaux, 15, a member of the youth group at Most Blessed Michael the Archangel High School in Baton Rouge, said he participated in March for Life. He said 30.

parts of Baton Rouge and New Orleans that the upwardly mobile

Huye was touched during a visit to a Baton Rouge nursing home

He said his first year of Real World involved a lot of manual labor in service projects. The second year involved a mix of service and spiritual exercises and this year involved more spiritual exercises and talking about Catholic social justice teachings.

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By Debbie Shelley  
The Catholic Commentator

“Leadership is a conversation,” is a mantra among those who want to be in the forefront of any career field. When it comes to the pro-life movement, the stakes are higher than profit or influence: it’s lives. Louisiana high school and college youth attending the PULSE Leadership Institute June 18–22 learned the persuasive skills to help people see the value each human life brings in terms of light, love and hope.

At PULSE, sponsored by Louisiana Right to Life, attendees learned about abortion, adoption, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, human trafficking awareness, bioethics, third-party reproduction and disability discrimination.

The youth heard from professionals who discussed the medical and psychological impact of abortion and other issues, according to Alex Seghers, Louisiana Right to Life’s Youth Programs co-director. They also heard from women who have had abortions, people who had siblings who were aborted or whose mother kept them in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, or whose parents were thinking about, but decided against, abortion.

“They can understand it, not only scientifically, but ethically,” said Alex Seghers.

Attendees spent time learning how to approach people and have effective conversations about pro-life issues. They also learned about medical procedures used to end life and went to Free Speech Alley at LSU to survey people about pro-life issues and engage in conversations about the topic.

They also testified at the State Capitol, prayed outside of abortion provider Delta Women’s Clinic and visited Woman’s New Life Center.

Taylor Gautreaux, of St. Joseph Church in Ponchatoula, said the reason she feels called to pro-life ministry is that her great-grandmother became pregnant at 15 with her grandmother and chose to give her life and gave up for adoption.

“I’m very grateful for the courage of my great-grandmother. That encourages me to be strong,” said Gautreaux.

She was nervous on her visit to LSU and conceded that she had some “ups and downs” in her conversations. The first conversation was easier to have because the student seemed to share pro-life views and the second conversation was more difficult because the person was adamantly pro-choice.

But Gautreaux was not discouraged and discovered that more people were pro-life than pro-choice.

“From a pro-life view, I was able to get a little knowledge about people’s awareness about life beginning at conception,” said Gautreaux.

She emphasized that point to one respondent who had many of her own questions, and at the end of the conversation, she had indicated she changed her view to pro-life. Gautreaux plans to become a sidewalk counselor.

Gautreaux appreciates the fact that PULSE presents its points in a way that people who don’t have faith can understand. And the emphasis on expressing love and compassion in the conversations are a way of showing the face of Jesus to others, she said.

Rose Dufrene of Abita Springs said she is following in the footsteps of her sister, who attended last year.

“I’m trying to get a pro-life club started at my school (Fountainbleau High School in Mandeville),” said Dufrene, a rising junior. “I need the knowledge and the practice to take back to my school.

“I didn’t know how much compassion it really takes to talk to people about the issue,” said Dufrene. “I was so hyped — there’s so much I wanted to do and say. I learned to tone it down and have a calm approach.”

She added, “Trying to start this club is definitely overwhelming and scary, because there’s not as many people to support me (at the school) as I would like.”

She said she is pro-life because her step-sister’s mother chose to give her life.

“She’s sweet and adorable. I can’t imagine my life without her,” said Dufrene.

Spencer Comeaux, a rising senior at Ovey Comeaux High School in Lafayette, said his best friend had started a pro-life student movement at the school, which inspired him to join and learn more about it.

Comeaux found one conversation at LSU interesting. He asked a student questions, who responded with questions. After the survey, the student went off for a while, and then came back and asked him, “Are you going to be here all day?”

“I felt like he was thinking about it more. He did come back,” smiled Comeaux.

With a worldly culture full of distractions, Comeaux said it is easy to draw attention away from the fact that, whether through abortion, euthanasia or other means, a life is being taken.

“I want to help people not to get discouraged, when they face tough situations,” said Comeaux.

Jacob Acosta, of Kenner, who graduated from Jesuit High School in New Orleans and will attend St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri this fall, served as a master of ceremonies at PULSE and has served as an intern for Louisiana Right to Life. He said his mission is to urge men to debunk the perception of “no uterus, no opinion” and become involved in making sure their unborn babies are given life.

“It takes two to tango. Men have stepped back and we need to step forward and get involved and be dependable,” said Acosta.

Some men coerce the women who are pregnant with their child to have an abortion, but Acosta said he wants to see them become more supportive and help find long-term support for the child, such as adoption.

Furthermore, he said in a “party culture,” where men may intoxicate women and take advantage of them, other men should step forward and protect the woman’s dignity. And in an unplanned pregnancy, women should not be left alone.

“I feel our society expects the mother to be the sole provider, especially in crisis situations,” said Acosta.

“Men should be taught parenting skills so they can accept the gifts of life rather than pressuring the woman to have an abortion.”
GO STICKERS! – St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge cheerleaders won the 2018 National High School Cheerleading Championship (NHSCC) in the Super Varsity Division II. The competition was held in February at Disney’s Wide World of Sports in Orlando. Photo provided by Mindy Averitt | SJA

PLAY BALL – Sacred Heart of Jesus School seventh-grader Sid Bowden coaches pre-kindergartner Mary Alice Boudreaux on third base during a biddy T-Ball game at the historic Sacred Heart ball field. Bowden is a member of the school’s seventh and eighth grade baseball team. Team members mentored the biddy athletes at games held May 2. Photo provided by Lisa Crose | Sacred Heart School

BY DEFINITION – Fourth-grade students at St. Jude the Apostle School in Baton Rouge completed their first year studying the Vocabulary Workshop curriculum with a production showcasing a word in its grammatical form by costume and, in some cases, action. Photo provided by Starr Driesse | St. Jude School

MAY DAY – Mason D’Antoni places a flower in front of a statue of Mary for a May crowning ceremony celebrated by PreK-4 students at Holy Ghost Catholic School in Hammond. Photo provided by Cindy Wagner | Holy Ghost School

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For when you get buffalo’d.
Low-budget crime saga about mobster John Gotti (John Travolta) who, director Kevin Connolly and screenwriters Lem Dobbs and Leo Rossi would have the viewer believe, was mostly a misunderstood family man, attentive according to his own lights to his wife (Kelly Preston) and two sons (Spencer Lofrano and Nico Bustamante). Other than the occasional murder, his first was in 1973, he might as well be any other striver on the corporate ladder, hoping to impress his mentor in the Gambino crime family (Stacy Keach) and earn a promotion. Impatient, he even set about family man, attentive according to his own lights to his wife (Kelly Preston) and two sons (Spencer Lofrano and Nico Bustamante). Other than the occasional murder, his first was in 1973, he might as well be any other striver on the corporate ladder, hoping to impress his mentor in the Gambino crime family (Stacy Keach) and earn a promotion. Impatient, he eventually felt the need to have the lugubrious head of the syndicate (Donald John Volkpenheim) blacked in a sordid yet theatrical rubout that set the pattern for his long career as a tabloid celebrity. What’s here is too ineptly written and performed to constitute a whitewash of the man. But a reluctance to incorporate any moral viewpoints by any of its characters makes for a weak, poorly seasoned stew. Much gun and physical violence, pervasive rough language. A-III; R

Sicario: Day of the Soldado Columbia

After evidence suggests Mexican drug cartels have aided jihadi terrorists to enter the United States, a federal agent (Josh Brolin) and a lawyer-turned-hitman (Benicio Del Toro) set out to provoke a war among the gangs by kidnapping a kingpin’s preteen daughter (Isabela Moner), an act they hope will be blamed on a rival syndicate. But the operation goes awry with consequences that test the main characters’ most fundamental human values. The artistic intent of director Stefano Sollima’s follow-up to 2015’s “Sicario” is clear, though returning screenwriter Taylor Sheridan tries to have it both ways, inviting viewers to revel in the down-and-dirty tactics and gritty tough-guy milieu, then appealing to their sense of basic decency. Yet what puts the film completely out of bounds is a climactic sequence so stomach-turningly gory and gruesome as to be unjustifiable by any dramatic context. Excessive bloody violence, at least one use of profanity, constant rough and crude language. O; R

Ant-Man and the Wasp Marvel

There’s plenty of humor and action in this fast-paced sci-fi adventure. What’s lacking is any exposition or guidance for those not already familiar with the characters and their relationships from 2015’s “Ant-Man” and 2016’s “Captain America: Civil War.” Approaching the end of a sentence of house arrest, Scott Lang aka Ant-Man (Paul Rudd, who also co-wrote the script) is anxious to focus on serving his time and raising his young daughter, Cassie (Abby Ryder Fortson). Instead his predecessor as size-shifting Ant-Man, Hank Pym (Michael Douglas), and Pym’s daughter, Hope (Evangeline Lilly), aka the Wasp, draw him into their quest to rescue Hope’s mother, Janet (Michelle Pfeiffer), the original Wasp, from her imprisonment in the Quantum Realm, a kind of subatomic limbo. To achieve this, the trio will have to do battle both with a petty gangster (Walton Goggins) out to profit from Pym’s technological breakthroughs and a victim (Hannah John-Kamen) of Pym’s past misdeeds. Altruism and family bonds are showcased in director Peyton Reed’s Marvel Comics adaptation, which also sends a clear message about ends not justifying means. But viewers of faith will be less impressed that the central romance between Scott and Hope comes in the wake of his split from Cassie’s mom (Judy Greer). Possibly appropriate for older teens. Much stylized violence, acceptability of divorce, a couple of uses each of profane, crude and crass language, several milder oaths, occasional wordplay. A-III; PG-13

The First Purge Universal

A love of violence for its own sake, a profoundly dishonest attempt to disguise itself as a political allegory and reverse racism characterize this despicable bit of slaughter porn. In presenting the origin story of its wretched franchise, this fourth film in the series, set on Staten Island, focuses on the fortunes of a community activist (Lex Scott Davis), her younger brother (Joivan Wade) and her gang leader ex-boyfriend (Y’lan Noel) during a night when all crimes are to be permitted in the borough as a social experiment. While the researcher (Marisa Tomei) who masterminded the harebrained project eventually has qualms, all the other white characters in director Gerard McMurray’s flick, scripted by returning screenwriter James DeMonaco, are unredeemable villains in the demise of many of whom the audience is invited to exult, even as the script ultimately turns Noel’s drug-dealing lowlife into a hero. But viewers will have to look past the waves of spurtting blood on screen even to notice these details. Excessive gory and gruesome violence, including a sexual assault, graphic aberrant sexual activity, drug use, brief partial nudity, several profanities, a few milder oaths, pervasive rough and crude language. O; R

Uncle Drew Summit

Mostly harmless sports comedy, based on a Pepsi ad campaign, in which a basketball coach (Lil Rel Howery) whose players have deserted him on the eve of a prestigious tournament turns for help to the title character (Kyrie Irving), an elderly and elusive legend from the Harlem hoops scene of the 1960s. Together they hit the road to recruit the various members of the old man’s former team (Shaquille O’Neal, Chris Webber, Reggie Miller and Nate Robinson) in hopes of thwarting the obnoxious rival (Nick Kroll) who enticed the trainer’s original squad away from him. Director Charles Stone III blends court heroics with riffs on everything from Howery’s physique to the quirks of the aged and even throws in a spontaneous dance competition. But the sum of his ingredients is not overly satisfying, especially given the hard-to-swallow premise. Teamwork and self-confidence are celebrated in Jay Longino’s script which also offsets the fun it pokes at Pentecostal exuberance with brief affirmations of Christian faith. A glimpse of aberrant bedroom behavior played for laughs, fleeting male rear nudity, cohabitation, references to promiscuity and pre-marital relationships, some sexual and mildly irreverent humor, at least one use of profanity and crude language, numerous milder oaths, a bleeped F-word, several crass terms. A-III; PG-13
I’m not going to try to even guess what comes next,” Bishop-designate Duca said. “Of course I could not have guessed being a bishop.”

Bishop-designate Duca said he is pastoral in his episcopacy, down home and “pretty accessible.” He admits to some difficulty with the administrative responsibilities but praised his staff in Shreveport. He added that even with his brief drive-by glance, he is eager to work with a “tremendous staff” in Baton Rouge.

“I would say in Shreveport I was very present to all of my parishes in the diocese,” he said. “I would try to be there for any event, and did all of the confirmations.”

As far as the all-important Saints-Cowboys question, Bishop Duca tossed bouquets to Drew Brees and company but confessed to being a “real Cowboys fan, which is pretty much a fair weather fan. The Cowboys are hard to love.”

While in Shreveport, he became enamored with the Saints 2010 Super Bowl championship team during that season. “I’m not a baker so much,” added Bishop-designate Duca, whose family owns an Italian grocery store in Dallas. “I like baking bread but I am the only one that eats it, when I bake bread I am the only one that eats it, and that becomes a problem. So I stopped baking bread.”

Years ago, he used to raise funds by having Italian sausage parties, going to private residences and happily putting his own touches on a popular Italian dish. He said that would likely not happen in Baton Rouge because the “time would be too demanding.”

Bishop-designate Duca also enjoys spending time in New Mexico, a venue he finds relaxing and demanding. As a Louisiana’s brutal summers. He said he has been blessed to have friends offer him a house in Red River. New Mexico, although his new assignment may force him to scale back on his time away this summer.

In Baton Rouge, the lesson is just starting. He was also hands on with the assignment of priests, but acknowledged he is forging into unfamiliar territory in Baton Rouge, which has more than five times the number of Catholics as the Diocese of Shreveport. “I don’t know how it works here in a bigger place, but acknowledged he is forging into unfamiliar territory in Baton Rouge, which has more than five times the number of Catholics as the Diocese of Shreveport.

“I don’t know how it works here in a bigger place, but appreciated the assistance of the administra- tive responsibilities but praised his staff in South Louisiana. His specialty is Italian sausage, using an old family recipe, which he calls ‘endear him to many in south Louisiana. His specialty is Italian sausage, using an old family recipe, although with his infectious smile declined to divulge out any secret recipes or ingredients.

“(Cooking) is one thing you can do as a bishop; it’s not time sensitive and if you’re home at night and you want to do something,” he said. “I am not a baker so much,” added Bishop-designate Duca, whose family owns an Italian grocery store in Dallas. “I like baking bread but when I bake bread I am the only one that eats it, and that becomes a problem. So I stopped baking bread.”

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“Tremendous staff” in Baton Rouge.

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While in Shreveport, he became enamored with the Saints 2010 Super Bowl championship team because of the way “everything came together during that season.”

Of course, he admits to being an LSU fan, although he is “still getting to understand the depth and commitment to LSU. It’s strong.”

In Baton Rouge, the lesson is just starting.
What would be dangerous enough to make you flee your home?

I am preparing to leave this Friday, July 6, on a mission trip with 20 stalwart part-time missionaries from St. John the Evangelist Church in Prairieville. We have been doing this for quite a few years, but the feeling of anticipation and excitement always returns. Of course, with the situation of so many refugees coming to the United States across our border with Mexico from the Central American countries of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador, and our government’s extreme measures to prevent their entering and staying, many people have asked, “Is it too dangerous to go down there?”

The answer is relatively, “No it is not too dangerous.” Relative to what? Well, relative to the crime rate for killings in Baton Rouge, it is certainly not that dangerous. I have been on mission trips to Guatemala long ago, Honduras every year for the past 10, Nicaragua never, although I am in contact with people who have been there. Also, some of the Nicaraguans who run the Batahola Mission in Managua visited us (board members of the Ruckstuhl Foundation) this past year. I have never been to El Salvador, but I had an El Salvadorian priest, Father Ramon Vega, as my assistant pastor at LSU in the 1980s. Father Ramon couldn’t return home because he had been secretary to the martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero. Father Ramon could testify as to who shot the archbishop while he was celebrating Mass.

Yes, Central America and Mexico can be dangerous in certain hot spots. However, that is a huge area of land, and most of it is peaceful most of the time. These past few years have been exceptions, but the violence is contained in certain areas. Honduras, where we will shortly be, suffers of late mostly from drug violence. Tegucigalpa, the capital in the middle of the country where our flight will land, would appear to most Americans as a modern, bustling metropolis. Like many countries today, Honduras is becoming urbanized. Campesinos (people on farms) are moving into cities. They are very poor and live in poorly constructed huts on the fringes of even larger cities. Tegucigalpa has a drug problem on those fringes. Another large city closer to the coast, San Pedro Sula, has an even worse one. Gang violence does occur.

Our mission group, however, will work out of Juticalpa, the Capital of the Departamento (State) of Olancho, which is three hours on a school bus east of Tegucigalpa. There it has always been quiet, except for dogs and noisy birds. In fact, the Casa de Voluntarios (volunteer house) where we will live even has its own armed security man. The Comandante at the army base just a half-mile down the road used to give us, at no charge, two of his soldiers with guns to live with us and accompany us on the bus to our work sites at schools and chapels. However, he got upset a year ago when the local pastor, Padre Alberto, was away, and our permanent Honduran missionaries, Carlos Najera and Oscar Fuentes couldn’t find someone for Mass at a big military celebration. No soldiers last year. But, the ever-resourceful Carlos hired a young soldier who had just finished his tour of duty and returned to civilian life. I never found out where he got his gun, but it looked like military issue.

Because the immigration situation on our southern border is in such chaos and so politicized, it may seem that everyone to the south of us wants to come into our country to get rich quickly. Requests for asylum to escape violence are ridiculed by politicians. Yet, just this week, Sister Dianne Fanguy CSJ, a local St. Joseph sister who returned this year from Nicaragua after 22 years of missionary work there, received a copy of the following email (we both are on the board of the Ruckstuhl Foundation which helps support the Batahola Mission in Managua; I received a copy also):

“From, ‘Perazzo, Tony’ (President of the non-profit Batahola Cultural and Educational Center Board)
Subject: Batahola update
Date: June 27, 2018
To: Julie Ruckstuhl (President, Ruckstuhl Foundation)

“Julie —

“I wanted to give you an update from Batahola. Cristina sent this yesterday. I’m just heartbroken.

“Take care, Tony”

“Yesterday at 5 p.m., four trucks with armed, hooded men showed up to the Batahola park that’s in front of the center. Sonia saw them kidnap a young man and then they opened fire on the children that were playing in the park. Two boys were shot in the legs and one girl was hit with a gun to her stomach.

“The girl ran and for a long time her mother was unable to find her.”

“The email goes on to say that the two boys and the girl were taken to a hospital and survived their wounds. There was no word about the kidnapped young man. The center will be closed while the staff decides upon emergency safety measures.

Nicaragua, which for some time seemed the safest of the Central American countries, is now in turmoil. The president, Daniel Ortega, former leader of the Sandinistas, refused to step down when his second constitutionally limited term ended. Then he recently cut social security benefits for the elderly.

Violence has erupted. For the first time since the dictator Anastasio Samoza in the 1970s, troops fired on peaceful protests backed by Catholic Church leaders. Ortega is using brute force to control his own people. Many are fleeing the country.

When youth are kidnapped and children are shot as a warning to get in line with an unconstitutional government, who would not flee to a safer haven? America needs better immigration laws and policies. Congress must act. We do not have more time for political posturing. There are many whose lives depend on their receiving asylum. This is a moral issue, not something to be used for a politician’s advantage.

**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 johnny.carville@gmail.com.

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**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.

**PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US**

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

- **July 24**,
  - Rev. Michael J. Allelo
  - Dcn. Thomas E. Labat Sr.
  - Br. Marcus Turcotte SC
- **July 25**,
  - Rev. David E. Allen
  - Dcn. Ronald D. LeGrange
  - Sr. Maria Alphonse CMC
  - Rev. Richard R. Andrus SVD
- **July 26**,
  - Dcn. Albert Levy III
  - Br. James Burns SC
  - Rev. Joey F. Angeles
  - Dcn. James A. Little
  - Sr. Barbara Arceneaux FML
- **July 27**,
  - Rev. Charles A. Atuah MSP
  - Dcn. Robert McDonner
  - Br. William Cawley SC
  - Rev. J. Cary Bani
  - Sr. Kathleen Rabin CSJ
  - Rev. Frank B. Bax
  - Dcn. Larry J. Melancon
  - Br. Eldon Cifrasi SC
  - Rev. M. Jeffery Bayhi
  - Dcn. Timothy Messenger Sr.
  - Sr. Rosalind BarbeneauxSSF
  - Rev. Mark B. Beard
  - Dcn. Francis M. Minor
  - Br. Ramon Daunis SC
  - Rev. Robert H. Berggren
  - Dcn. Gary Mooney
  - Sr. Sandra Blanchard CSJ
  - Rev. Donald V. Blanchard
  - Dcn. James J. Morrissey
  - Br. Alan Drain SC
  - Rev. Patrick Broussard
  - Dcn. Jodi A. Moscona
  - Sr. Carolyn Brady CSJ
  - Rev. Jules A. Brunet
  - Dcn. Leon Roy Murphy Jr.
  - Br. Clement Furno CSJR
  - Rev. Gerald H. Burns
  - Dcn. Donald J. Musso
  - Sr. Judith Brun CSJ
This July 25 marks the 50th year anniversary of Humanae Vitae (Of Human Life), arguably the most widely contested encyclical in the church's history. When the encyclical was promulgated, it was a time of change that included new possibilities and new concerns. Man was advancing in the areas of science and technology, the sexual revolution was in full swing, and contraception, in particular the birth control pill, offered the promise of solutions to problems ranging from women's role in society, to economic disparity and the fears of population growth. It was prudent and necessary for the church to examine the question of how married couples could respond to this context in a way that was faithful to Christ's teaching and upheld the dignity of the human person.

Many expected that when the church spoke on this issue, there would be a change in doctrine. Perhaps contraception could be incorporated into the lives of married couples for not only their betterment but also the betterment of the common good. Yet, to the surprise of many, Pope Paul VI unequivocally upheld what has been the constant teaching of the common good. Yet, to the surprise of many expected that when the church spoke on this issue, there would be a change in doctrine. Perhaps contraception could be incorporated into the lives of married couples for not only their betterment but also the betterment of the common good. Yet, to the surprise of many, Pope Paul VI unequivocally upheld what has been the constant teaching of the common good. Yet, to the surprise of many, Pope Paul VI unequivocally upheld what has been the constant teaching of the church, that contraception and direct sterilization are “absolutely excluded as lawful means to regulate birth.” (Humanae Vitae 14)

Nevertheless, we would misunderstand the encyclical if we took it simply to be a “no” to the question of contraception. Rather, this “no” is the logical consequence to the real heart of its teaching: a “yes” to the beauty and dignity of married love. For Pope Paul VI, the very nature of married love is to be an icon of God’s love, something St. John Paul II would later describe as the married couple imaging God’s Trinitarian self-giving. Simply put, married couples are called to give themselves to each other totally, faithfully, exclusively and fruitfully. This fruitfulness is most evident in the gift of children but also includes spiritual motherhood/fatherhood and is most definitely present in couples that are struggling with the cross of infertility or who are beyond childbearing age.

Pope Paul VI, in his wisdom and no doubt inspired by the Holy Spirit, foresaw that artificial contraception could easily lead to unintended results. Paragraph 17 of the document contains what have been aptly termed his “prophecies.” He writes that artificial contraceptive use could open wide the way for marital infidelity, cause a general lowering of moral standards, contribute to the reduction of women to mere objects, and pose a danger in the hands of public authorities, to the point where contraception might be imposed upon people. All of these have become fulfilled “prophecies” today. For all the promises of the sexual revolution and the birth control pill, it seems that women have been the biggest losers. How is it that we, as a society, have come to embrace the idea that it is empowering for women to suppress their normal physiology and embrace sterility? The birth control pill has brought us to a point where women are receiving less comprehensive healthcare. Rather than cure the body of disease, the pill is routinely used to mask symptoms for any number of reproductive abnormalities. It seems that justice would demand for women to receive correct diagnosis and treatment of the root causes, thus restoring a woman to health.

To say that the Catholic Church is a true champion of women’s rights has meant more than a few puzzled looks and angry responses. I understand that, especially in a culture where women have been taught to accept less than what they deserve. But, in this 50th Anniversary year, we have the chance to explore how Humanae Vitae not only remains faithful to the teaching of Christ but upholds the dignity of women as well.

For those who are unconvinced, I want to extend the chance to ask questions and engage in discussion. Visit MFLDioBR.org for more information, including information on the July 26 screening of the new film “Sexual Revolution: 50 Years Since Humanae Vitae,” upcoming NFP 101 class dates, free resources and more.

Van Haute is the associate director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

**Consecrated celibacy – an apologia**

Houston Smith, the renowned commentator on world religions, submits that you should not judge a religion by its worst expressions, but by its best, its saints. That’s also true in terms of judging the merits of vowed, consecrated celibacy. It should be judged by its best, not perverse, examples, as is true too for the institution of marriage.

I write this apologia because today consecrated celibacy is under siege from critics in almost every circle. Celibacy is no longer understood or deemed realistic by a culture which basically refuses to accept any restrictions in the area of sexuality and in effect sees all celibacy, lived for whatever reason, as frigidity, naïveté or a misfortune of circumstance. Our culture constitutes a virtual conspiracy against celibacy.

More critical still is how consecrated celibacy is being judged in the wake of the clerical sexual abuse scandal. More and more, there’s a popular conception both within society and within church circles that sexual abuse in general and pedophilia in particular is more prevalent among priests and religious than in the population at large and that there’s something inherent in consecrated celibacy itself that makes priests and vowed religious more prone to sexual misconduct and emotional ill health. How true is this? Are celibates more prone to sexual misconduct than their non-celebate contemporaries? Are celibates more likely to be less healthy and happy in general than those who are married or who are sexually active outside of marriage?

This must be adjudicated. I believe, by looking at the deepest intentions of sex itself and, from there, assessing where both married persons and celibates for the most part tend to end up. What’s the ultimate intention of sex? What is this powerful archetypal energy meant to do in us? Generically, the answer is clear: Sex is meant to lead us out of ourselves, out ofaloneness, out of selfishness, into altruism, into family, into community, into generativity, into mellowness of heart, into delight, into happiness and ultimately (perhaps not always this side of eternity) into ecstasy.

Viewed through the prism of this criterion how do marriage and vowed celibacy compare? Mostly we see parallels: Some people get married, become healthily generous and generative, remain faithful to their spouses, and age into wholesome, happy, forgiving persons. Others write a different chronicle. They get married (or are sexually active outside of marriage) but do not become more generous and generative, do not remain faithful to their commitments in love, and age instead in sullenness, bitterness and unhappiness.

The same is true for vowed celibates: Some make the vow and become healthily generous and generative, remain faithful to the vow, and age into wholesomeness, happy, forgiving persons. For some others, most everything in their lives belies the transparency and fruitfulness that should stem from their celibacy and they do not become more selfless, generative, mellow or happy. Instead, like some of their sexually active contemporaries, they also grow sullen, bitter and unhappy. Sometimes this is the result of breaking their vow and sometimes it’s the result of an unhealthy repressed sexuality. In either case, their vow isn’t fruitful and generally leads to unhealthy compensatory behaviors.

Celibacy, admittedly, comes fraught with some extra dangers because marriage and sex are the normal path that God intended for us. As Thomas Merton once put it, in celibacy we live inside a loneliness which God, himself, has condemned: It is not good for the man to be alone! Sex and marriage are the norm and celibacy deviates from that. But that doesn’t mean celibacy cannot be highly generative, meaningful and healthy and make for wholesomeness and happiness. Some of the most generative and wholesome people that I know are vowed celibates, aging into an enviable mellowness and peace. Sadly, the reverse is also true for some celibates. Of course, all of this is equally true, both ways, for the married people that I know.

“By their fruits you shall know them.” Jesus offers us this as a criterion for judgment. But in judging celibacy and marriage (just as in judging religions) we might add Houston Smith’s counsel that we should judge each by its best expressions, by its saints, and not by its unhealthy expressions. Looking at marriage and celibacy, we see in each both healthy and unhealthy manifestations; and it doesn’t seem that either side trumps the other in terms of manifesting sanctity or dysfunction. That’s not surprising since, in the end, both choices demand the same thing, namely, a willingness to sacrifice and sweat blood
Adoption Presentation — Paula Davis, international adoption social worker for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, will talk about adoption/foster care Monday, July 30, 7 p.m., at the new activity center of St. John the Evangelist Church, 15208 LA Hwy. 73, Prairieville. There will also be a showing of the film “I Lived on Parker Avenue.” For more information, call Deacon Randy Clement at 225-673-8307.

God the Father Mass — Father Ambrose Akaluw CSSp will celebrate a Mass honoring “God, the Father of all mankind” Monday, Aug. 6 at St. Agnes Church, 739 East Blvd., Baton Rouge. Confession and a rosary will begin at 5 p.m. followed by the Mass at 5:30 p.m.

Day of Renewal — Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Diocese of Baton Rouge will host a Day of Renewal, “Praise Rally,” Saturday, Aug. 4, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the Our Lady of Mercy Church Parish Activity Center, 444 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge. There will be praise and worship, personal testimony, prayers for healing and baptism of the Holy Spirit. No registration will be required. Lunch will be provided. For more information, call 225-636-2464.

Marriage Help — A Retreatvaille weekend will be held to help couples with troubled marriages Friday, Sept. 7 – Sunday, Sept. 9. For confidential information and to register, call 225-993-2443, email retreatvillcomcoor@gmail.com or visit helpourmarriage.com.

Prayer Service for New Bishop — The Diocese of Baton Rouge will host a prayer service for Bishop-designate Michael G. Duca on the evening before his installation as the sixth bishop of Baton Rouge Thursday, Aug. 23, 7 p.m., at St. George Church, 7808 St. George St., Baton Rouge. The event will also be simulcast online at facebook.com/catholiclifetv. All are welcomed.

Ignatian Retreat — Becky Eldredge and Stephanie Clouter Davis will present a preached silent Ignatian Retreat Thursday, Aug. 23 – Sunday, Aug. 26 at Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Road, Ponchatoula. The retreat will focus on the Ignatian exercises. To register and for costs information, visit retreats.arch-no.org/retreats, email retreats@arch-no.org or call 1-866-937-9770.

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ANNIVERSARY ▼

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with protests and petitions, but a half century later, its anniversary is being marked by conferences, lectures and academic discussions as theologians, clergy, family life ministers and university professors have explored what its teachings mean for the 21st century.

Not only is “Humanae Vitae” spiritual in nature, some might even consider it revolutionary, especially in terms of the pope’s ununcanny accuracy of the future. Blessed Paul VI foretold of several unintended consequences that could come from the widespread use of contraception, including opening the way of marital infidelity, a general lowering of moral standards, a disregard for women and treating them as objects and the way contraceptive may be used by public authorities.

“(Blessed) Paul VI was ahead of his time in that he foresaw the consequences and dangers of separating the unitive and procreative dimensions of the conjugal act,” Van Haute said. “(Blessed) Paul VI was wise and prudent and led by the Spirit. With this combination, it’s not surprising that he was able to perceive these unintended consequences.”

She referenced one section as being particularly insightful, where the pope, who Van Haute said was not under illusions that the teachings would be easy, issued pastoral directives to illustrate how people should live out the encyclical’s teachings and support others in doing so. She said those directives remain applicable in modern society.

“(The directives) first reminded us that we are only able to live this teaching with the help of God’s grace,” she said. “He goes on to discuss self-discipline, promoting chastity, the well-spring of grace found in the sacraments and more.

“He also has particular words addressed to public authorities, priests, scientists, married couples and physicians and nurses, among others.”

Blessed Paul VI noted the only licit means of regulating birth is natural family planning. In the document, he asked scientists to improve natural family planning methods “providing a sufficiently secure basis for a regulation of birth founded on the observance of natural rhythms.”

Blessed Paul VI issued “Humanae Vitae” as artificial contraception, particularly the birth control pill, began to become commonplace. In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration approved the use of Enovid – the pill – in May 1960.

Initially, many thought the pope might support the use of artificial contraception, especially after a majority of members on a papal commission studying the issue approved a draft document in 1966 endorsing the principle of freedom for Catholic couples to decide for themselves about the means of regulating births.

The document proposed was supported by 64 of the 69 commission members who voted on it, including nine of its 16 episcopal members.

The document was intended for the pope only, but it was leaked to the press, which heightened expectations of a major change in church teaching.

Blessed Paul VI rejected the majority’s recommendations and, instead, issued an pastoral traditional church teaching on artificial contraception. The text of the document thanked the commission experts but added that the pope thought its proposed solutions “departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the church.”

The opposition to the encyclical erupted throughout the church after the document’s release. Some clergy in the U.S. and Europe openly voiced disagreement and thousands of lifelong Catholics left the church.

For defenders of “Humanae Vitae,” however, the enduring relevance of the encyclical is a testament to the truth of Christ’s unbreakable bond with his church.

Sexuality is a reality that can be lived out in different modalities, and both marriage and celibacy are holy choices that can, sadly, go wrong.

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

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ROLHEISER▼

From page 17

for the sake of love and fidelity.

Some celibates are unfaithful, and some are pedophiles, but some become St. Teresa. It’s worth mentioning too that Jesus was a celibate.

Some married persons are unfaithful, some are abusive, and some murder their spouses, but some give tangible, embodied, holy expression to God’s unconditional love for the world and
**Saving Self-Esteem - One Child at a Time**

**Uniforms for Kids**

So many school children like Lynn, Raven, Frankie, and McKinzie need your help! For low-income families, the top priorities are food and housing, and too often, there’s nothing left to spend on school uniforms. **Education is the key that can open the door to a new way of life, and the two uniforms we give to each needy child cost only $24.00 - a small price to pay for a child’s self-esteem.** With your support they can go to school properly dressed, without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. Our Uniforms for Kids effort will help needy children in 12 parishes. This summer, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul asks you to consider how you can give hope to the most vulnerable children in our community.

Join us in helping needy children like Lynn, Raven, Frankie and McKinzie by sending a financial gift in the envelope enclosed in this issue or by giving online at svdpbr.org.
Greetings from the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge!

Unless you have an educator in the family, you may not realize that summer is a busy time for school personnel. While there may be some time to relax and reconnect with family and friends, educators have been working this summer on various tasks and initiatives on their individual campuses and in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office. Included in our “What We Did This Summer” essay would be analysis of test scores, participation in professional development and preparation for the new school year.

During the summer, data from standardized test scores are analyzed by administrators and teachers in order to assess student growth, as compared with students from across the country. Catholic identity continues to be strong in the Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic schools, as measured through the Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE), which indicated again this year that students in the diocese score above the national norm in all domains and all grades tested. During this past spring a survey of defining characteristics was conducted with parents, students and faculty. Results for the diocese indicate agreement that schools in our diocese reflect the desired characteristics for Catholic schools, and the summer has been a time that individual schools worked with their scores to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

Teachers attended the 2018 Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools Summer Institute, which consisted of professional development sessions for language arts, math, curriculum mapping and student engagement. School administrators spent part of their summer in Point Clear, Alabama, for three days of leadership development aimed at school improvement and student growth. Traveling to Orlando, Florida, more than 60 teachers and administrators from our diocese attended the 2018 Model Schools Conference to increase their knowledge of the Rigor & Relevance Framework. In addition, they enjoyed a special visit exclusively for our diocese by Dr. Bill Daggett, who is the founder of the center. What a tremendous experience that was!

The Catholic Schools Office has been busy this summer preparing for the annual gathering and board retreat. Marking the end of summer, the 2018 Catholic Educators Gathering of approximately 1,000 educators will provide a keynote speech by Dr. Tim Hogan on the cultural shifts in the family and our call to ministry. For advisory board members throughout the diocese, the Twilight Retreat on Aug. 27 will feature a workshop by Sister Carol Cimino, who is a nationally recognized author and presenter.

It is clear that all stakeholders are important in the ministry of Catholic education, and we are grateful to administrators, staff and board members for commitment to the ministry throughout the year. Likewise, we are grateful for the leadership of clergy and especially thankful for Bishop Robert W. Muench, who has actively supported and celebrated the work of the schools during his service for the past 16 years in our diocese. We extend a warm welcome to Bishop-designate Michael G. Duca as he begins his service in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. With our reliance on the Holy Spirit, great things will continue in the ministry, giving us cause to reflect and refresh as we prepare for another outstanding year for Catholic schools in focusing on the vision of evangelizing hearts, educating minds, encouraging talent and embracing the future.
Staff Report
The Catholic Commentator

Moscona to lead STM

As he begins to kickoff his 16th year in education, Brian Moscona is excited that the year includes St. Thomas More School in Baton Rouge, where he will be the new principal.

“When I was at Most Blessed Sacrament School (in Baton Rouge) and Catholic High (in Baton Rouge), I always admired St. Thomas More as a school of excellence. I consider it an honor and a privilege to be part of this community,” said Moscona, who will be working with his longtime friend Father Michael Aledo, pastor of St. Thomas More Church. “I also have numerous friends who attended St. Thomas More and they are super passionate about the school.”

Moscona continued his Catholic education in college, attending the University of Notre Dame in South Bend Indiana, where he received a degree in business administration and a master’s degree in education. He is currently finishing up work on a master’s degree in theology, also from Notre Dame.

After previous stops at Our Lady of Mercy School and Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan, Brian Moscona will be joining his children at STM this fall. His son Anthony, 4, will be in PreK and daughter Maria, 2, will be in the Early Learning Center. Wife Kayla Moscona teaches theology at St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge. The couple’s third child, Dominic, is due just weeks after the start of the new school year, in mid-September.

With such a long history in Catholic education, Moscona has a unique perspective on the importance of teaching students through a faith-based curriculum.

“As an extension of the home, a Catholic school partners with parents, the first and primary educators of their children, to form the whole person in an atmosphere of love,” he said. “Catholic education also opens students’ eyes to their neighbors, teaching them to love others, be attentive to their needs and to serve them as Christ would.”

“Catholic schools have played a major role in shaping me into the man I am today by educating me in the Catholic faith and by focusing my life on the Lord. The formation I received through Catholic schools has instilled in me a love for truth, goodness and beauty.”

When not focused on educating young minds or continuing his own education through Notre Dame, Moscona said he enjoys being with his family, reading motivational books and following football ... the Notre Dame Fighting Irish, of course. And, he is looking forward to the 2018-19 school year and beyond.

“My goal is to enrich families’ experience of this amazing school that has such an outstanding history of excellence and to welcome more wonderful families into this incredible school community,” said Moscona.

Johnson to lead St. Francis

With 30 years of experience in education, Paula Johnson knows and understands what it takes to lead a school. The former principal of St. Louis King of France School in Baton Rouge, which closed after the 2017-18, is moving across town to take over the helm of St. Francis Xavier School in Baton Rouge.

Johnson has an undergraduate degree in music from Texas Southern University.

As for her philosophy of Catholic education, Johnson says it’s all about academics and faith.

“Catholic education prepares students to embrace the world with a sense of respect, dignity, and hope while ensuring that students are strong both academically and morally,” said Johnson. “All facets of Catholicism are woven into the educational environment and build a strong sense of faith.”

Johnson has crossed paths with former students of St. Francis Xavier, giving her a unique perspective. She also plans to join St. Francis Xavier Church.

“My connections with the new school originate with the members of the parish,” she said. “I attended college with several members of St. Francis Xavier and previously worked with former graduates of St. Francis Xavier.”

When she is not busy helping to educate young minds, Johnson enjoys bike riding, reading, attending zumba classes and walking. She has one daughter, Julie Johnson, and one granddaughter.

Johnson said one of her goals for the 2018-19 school is “to create a school with committed staff that provides a learning environment that promotes faith, culture and academics.” She also plans to assist parents and caregivers with “building the virtues of faith, hope and charity.” She also wants to “embrace and support” STREAM (science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, math) education.
Chauvin off and running at Catholic of Pointe Coupee

When Jason Chauvin begins his 10th year in Catholic education, it will be as the new principal of Catholic of Pointe Coupee Elementary School in New Roads. Armed with a degree in communications from the University of New Orleans, Chauvin decided to “follow in his father’s footsteps and become an educator.” He received a teaching certificate from LRCE (Louisiana Resource Center for Educators) and then a masters in education degree from LSU.

Chauvin credits his Catholic school education at Brother Martin High School in New Orleans with giving him “the confidence and tools for any path I decided to take in life,” including life as a Catholic educator.

“I guess that it’s appropriate that one of my constant core values is adapting to change,” Chauvin said.

“Education is a continuous process that can last a lifetime. It is our duty as educators to instruct the whole student, accept changes and embrace the future.”

Chauvin has been an employee of Catholic of Pointe Coupee for nine years, serving as high school English chairman/English IV instructor, mass media instructor, head coach for cross country and track and field, and assistant principal for the elementary school.

When he’s not busy on the school campus or in the classroom, Chauvin is out running the roads – literally.

“My favorite hobby is running. I train through the year for various road races,” said Chauvin.

He serves on the board of directors of the Louisiana Track and Field Coaches Association and is the race director of two annual races in New Roads: the Donut Dash 5K and the New Roads Pecan Classic. Those two races are fundraisers for the cross country/track programs and provide a scholarship to a senior at Catholic High of Pointe Coupee.

Chauvin and his wife Ashley have three children: Amelia, Finn and Josie. And, he is looking forward to the 2018-19 school year.

“In my first year of being a principal, I hope to make a positive impact on the culture at Catholic elementary,” said Chauvin. “Our school motto is ‘One Family, One Vision in Christ.’ By involving teachers and parents in the education of our students, we will truly live out this belief.”

Staff Report
The Catholic Commentator

The sounds of construction are again filling the St. George campus in Baton Rouge as construction of the 14,000 square foot St. George School Pre-K building is nearing completion. Occupying the footprint of the former church, the new facility will be a key landmark on the beautiful campus.

The facility was funded through the proceeds of the Building Upon our Roots capital campaign final phase launched in November 2016. From the beginning, a new pre-k building was an essential component of our capital campaign. To help ensure the success of this final phase of the campaign, a St. George parishioner initiated a $1 million challenge to all parishioners, school parents and grandparents. The parishioner matched all gifts/pledges to our capital campaign that were received by the end of December 2016.

Demolition of the old church began in June 2016 as soon as the school year was completed. The official ground breaking was conducted with the

SEE CREATION PAGE 5B
Familiar faces at Ascension Catholic

Staff Report
The Catholic Commentator

The new principal for the 2018-19 school year at Ascension Catholic High School in Donaldsonville is actually a former principal. Sandy Pizzolato was principal for seven years, from 2009-2016. With the arrival of daughter number three, her personal and professional life became extremely busy. That’s when Pizzolato said she took a step back and accepted the role as assistant principal. Two years later, she is back in her old job.

“After two years of assisting, the principal position became available again and I felt I was able to manage both family and school again now that my kids are older and are all in school with me,” said Pizzolato.

Pizzolato and her husband, Brad, have been married for 18 years and have daughters Katie, 16, Sarah, 12, and Molly, 6. She enjoys watching the girls play sports and the girls are active in school extra-curricular activities.

Pizzolato received both a bachelor of arts degree and masters degree in education from Nichols State University. Though she didn’t start her career teaching in Catholic schools, Pizzolato knew that’s where she was headed once her family began to grow.

“I did not attend Catholic schools but my husband attended Ascension Catholic and his experience was so impactful that he wouldn’t send our children any other place,” she said.

“I believe that Catholic education forms the whole child,” said Pizzolato. “Catholic education gives opportunities for students to excel in many different areas, such as academics, athletics, the arts and, most importantly, their faith.”

Pizzolato said she is thankful to be a part of “this great vocations.”

“Catholic schools across our area, and beyond, form faith-filled, productive adults who make a difference in their communities from the rich experiences they receive in our schools and churches parishes,” said Pizzolato.

CREATION ▼
From page 48
help of several three-year-old future students wielding miniature shovels to the delight of the school students assembled for the ceremony.

By August, the full enrollment of 120 3-year-old students will occupy the six spacious classrooms. The architecture team thought out of the box with a truly unique design concept. A large multipurpose room will double as a cafeteria and unique educational areas outside the classrooms will provide for small group activities. The story of creation adds an engaging visual element through the use of colorful paint, suspended green leaf and blue and white cloud ceiling fixtures, lighting that resembles flowers, wall applications and other finishes throughout the building and classroom areas and serves as an introduction to our Catholic faith. The tree of life concept is first introduced in the lobby and continues into the classrooms with full scale tree houses.

The goal of the pre-k program is to provide a strong foundation for the students that will help to ensure success in kindergarten and beyond. Religion, academic and enrichment classes along with free play and rest time will be part of the day for these youngest of students.

A large red-headed green caterpillar awaits the students within the dedicated play area where the story of creation is continued. A large climbing and sliding play structure that resembles a woody, leaf covered tree house features play areas designed to encourage interaction and communication.

St. George Parish and School is fortunate to have had the support of the parishioners and community who contributed to this truly engaging new academic space.

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Diocese of Baton Rouge
2018 – 2019 Catholic School Instructional Leaders

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The Catholic Commentator 2018 BACK TO SCHOOL July 20, 2018
SJA to commemorate 150th anniversary with year-long celebration

Beginning on the first day of the 2018-19 academic year and continuing through May, 2019, St. Joseph's Academy will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its founding in 1868 by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The school year gets underway on Aug. 8 with a back-to-school prayer service and the grand opening and dedication of the new Academy Student Center. Additional plans for the year include the creation of a commemorative garden featuring the original gate from SJA's location on the corner of Fourth and Florida streets in downtown Baton Rouge; the publication of a coffee table history book; a St. Joseph's Academy 150th Anniversary Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral; a Sisters of St. Joseph Day of Service; and, a speakers' series, featuring SJA alumna, bestselling author and outspoken opponent of the death penalty Sister Helen Prejean CSJ; bestselling author Laura Schroff; Olympic gold-medal gymnast and motivational speaker Mary Lou Retton; nationally known speaker and bestselling author Dr. Allen Hunt; and the famous 'Odd Couple' of American politics, James Carville and Mary Matalin. The celebration will culminate on April 27, 2019, with a black-tie gala at Raising Cane's River Center.

The milestone anniversary will also be infused into all school activities, including Masses, prayer services, athletic events and assemblies, the Sticker Stampede 5K and Fun Runs, The Soirée, SJA Tennis Classic, Sticker Scramble golf tournament and alumnae reunions, among other events.

Suzie Toups Adler, a member of the Class of 1985, is chairing the anniversary celebration planning committee. She and her committee have been working for nearly two years to create a year's worth of activities to celebrate Baton Rouge's oldest high school and one of the largest all-girls' high schools in the United States.

"The 150th anniversary of St. Joseph's Academy is a celebration for all who have been touched by the work of the Sisters of St. Joseph, both inside and outside the magnificent halls of SJA," Adler said. "As chair of the 150th anniversary year, it is my task to properly celebrate and give thanks for all that is SJA. We can never forget the sacrifices of the past as we look back with grateful hearts. We will always celebrate the gift that is our present and strive to live each day with awareness of our blessings. And finally, we embrace the future with excitement as we continue our legacy."

The Academy Student Center will be dedicated on Aug. 8 to kick off the year-long celebration of SJA’s 150th anniversary.

Adler said she is especially excited about the coffee table book currently being written. SJA’s rich and storied history will unfold on its pages, unveiling little-known facts as well as the compelling stories of those who have made SJA a pillar of excellence in the Baton Rouge community. The book will include the names of every graduate, beginning with Josephine Bahlinger in 1877 through the graduating class of 2019. The book will be unveiled at the black-tie gala as a gift to all those purchasing a ticket.

“Every aspect of the history of SJA will be touched on: the diverse population, interesting historical facts, the ‘boys of SJA,’ children who lived in the home, students who were part of critical changes in our history, as well as alumnae, parents and community members,” Adler said.

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**Staff Report**

**The Catholic Commentator**

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- **August 8, 2018:** Senior Sunrise, Back-to-School Prayer Service, Dedication of Academy Student Center
- **August 19, 2018:** Legacy Mass and Reception
- **October 6, 2018:** Sisters’ Day of Service for all members of the SJA community
- **October 18, 2018:** Open House October 21, 2018: St. Joseph’s Academy 150th Anniversary Mass
- **October 24, 2018:** Baton Rouge Redsticker Social
- **November 1, 2018:** The Soirée
- **November 4, 2018:** The first day of school at St. Joseph’s Academy (November 4, 1868)
- **November 10, 2018:** Sticker Stampede 5K and Fun Runs
- **February 16, 2019:** SJA Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
- **March 19, 2019:** Give Day
- **March 22, 2019:** Challenge Day
- **April 1, 2019:** Sticker Scramble Golf Tournament
- **April 29, 2019:** The Gala

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**Welcome Home.**
SJV orchestra striking the right note

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

With his music stand in front of him, hands poised in the air, Dr. Kevin Andry does a music count and says, “Here we go.” Suddenly, violins to trumpets and clarinets to drums filled the small classroom at St. Jean Vianney School in Baton Rouge with the first notes of “Gypsy Dance/Minka Minka,” by Larry Newman. The orchestra, comprised of 30 students, was getting ready for its final concert of the school year. This is only the second year for the orchestra program at SJV. Music teacher and strings director Regina Cates began teaching at St. Jean in 2016. As the number of violin students began to increase, she said she came up with the idea of a “combo with the band where we do an orchestra piece every semester, and I talked to Doc and he said ‘sure let’s try it.’ However, finding the right kind of music to fit everyone’s playing levels and instruments can be challenging.

“You hardly ever have a full orchestra with strings, brass, winds, all of that for beginners, but I just came upon a guy who has a set of music, a music series that has the Gypsy piece for beginner orchestra,” Cates explained. “You can do it, you can find it, but it takes a little digging.”

Andry said creating the orchestra also helped when it came time to hold concerts, allowing school administration, teachers and parents to attend one event instead of two. But the biggest challenge is finding a place to rehearse that can accommodate the large musical group.

“We have a concert band and a jazz band and we have several that double up (on instruments), too, which is unheard of,” said Andry. “I’ve got one student who plays clarinet and alto sax and another plays clarinet and tenor sax, so that helps us with some of our instrumentation that’s needed in jazz band. You need clarinet players in concert band, and in orchestra, you need saxophone players. So, it’s really cool that we’ve got that.”

Having the opportunity to play in an orchestra is also fun for the students, who get the chance to try something new and be a part of something that is challenging. Amanda Danielson, whose two sons, Aaron and David, play the violin, says the boys enjoy being a part of the bigger group.

“The strings program is smaller and sometimes they want to be in the band because a lot of their friends are in the band,” Danielson said. “This way, with the orchestra, they can play with their friends.”

“It’s fun because it’s another thing to do and it’s interesting,” said Aaron Danielson.

“It’s a little different from playing regular violin,” said David Danielson. “It’s really fun and we play cool pieces.”

Cates says the full orchestra doesn’t get a chance to practice very often together, with her focusing on the strings while Andry works with the band until rehearsals begin for the two yearly concerts, which are held at Christmas and in the spring. Cates, whose son Peter plays the cello and her daughter Marie plays the violin in the strings program, said parents are happy their kids are getting the experience to play in an orchestra.

“When you’re looking at music, you’ve got measures where violins don’t play and winds are playing, so the (students) have to count in their heads, their amount of time to be silent, and they have to count correctly when to come back in,” Cates explained. “And, just all the orchestral terms, ‘pizzicato’ and ‘arco’ and ‘coda’ and ‘da capo’ and these things that might not come up otherwise.”

“It’s fun playing the music itself,” said violinist Cole Mogharrebi.

“I’m thrilled that our SJV School orchestra has given our musically talented students an avenue to share their gifts and talents with God and our school community,” said principal Wendy Ross. “This experience is invaluable to them as they grow as musicians and I’m so grateful to Doc Andry and Regina Cates for affording them this opportunity.”
UT Austin engineering course ready to launch at SMHS

Staff Report
The Catholic Commentator

St. Michael the Archangel High School in Baton Rouge is excited to announce the addition of the “Engineer Your World” curriculum to its class offerings. Engineering I (engineering design and analysis) will be offered during the 2018-2019 school year to interested sophomores-seniors in good academic standing and high marks in math and science.

Engineer Your World I (EYW I), is specifically centered around the engineering design process. Students enrolled in this class will be introduced to civil, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineering as well as system engineering and programming.

The program was developed by a team of University of Texas faculty, NASA engineers and secondary teachers. Toengineeryourworld.com, the course is described as “an innovative, student-centered curriculum that engages learners in authentic engineering experiences and inspires them to embrace an engineer's habits of mind.”

St. Michael’s technology expert, Zach Leger ’03, attended two weeks of professional development through the University of Texas for the Engineer Your World program. During this immersive program, Leger learned how to implement St. Michael’s new Engineering I class that will be available for fall 2018. Students who take the course will then have the option of Engineering II and III courses in the following years.

Leger said the training was extremely hands-on and involved the projects that the students will be completing in the classes.

“We went through all of the units and lessons step by step that are involved in the curriculum,” said Leger. “We also completed all the design challenges involved with each unit, learning the steps involved in the engineering design process and discovered how to successfully work through each step to complete a specified design challenge.”

Leger also holds a bachelor of science from the College of Engineering at the University of Louisiana Lafayette, as well as a masters of education from Nicholls State University. “With the addition of these courses, St. Michael is excited to expand its STEM/STEAM curriculum, as well as expanding its vast dual enrollment curriculum,” he said.

During the two weeks of professional development, teachers worked through the seven units that are featured in the curriculum including introduction in engineering, discovering design, reverse engineering and understanding data.

St. Michael the Archangel High School in Baton Rouge will offer the new STEAM course for the 2018-19 school year. Teacher and coach Zach Leger works on an “Engineer Your World” project involving data-driven redesign of a building to withstand earthquakes. Photo provided by Leighann King | SMHS

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Sacred Heart School hosts Sorting Ceremony

Sacred Heart of Jesus School added a new chapter to its rich history on April 26 when the student body was sorted into one of four Houses in the school’s new House system: Fides, Spes, Caritas and Fortitudo. For the Sorting Ceremony, each student in pre-kindergarten through seventh grade received a House invitation, addressed in calligraphy, in their home room. Sacred Heart eighth graders and faculty members were sorted earlier so they could assist in the Sorting Ceremony. Cued by an all-call announcement through the public address system, students opened their envelopes to discover their House. Hugs and high-fives ensued as they began seeking out classmates with the same color invitation. Students and faculty alike then donned House t-shirts and proceeded to the schoolyard where eighth graders and House leaders welcomed them into their new Houses.

House members moved through four separate stations. Family-themed music greeted members at the dance station in the gym where they also had a chance to pose for pictures with props in front of the school’s step-and-repeat backdrop. Music also prevailed at the learn your House station, where members tossed a beach ball. When the music stopped, members learned a fact about their House from their leader. The third stop was a get to know your station where members were paired with a fellow House member to answer “would you rather” questions. The fourth station was a play station where members enjoyed popscicles, played with bubbles and drew their House symbols on the playground.

At the end of the day, members learned their House chants from eighth graders who had written the chants with House leaders when they were sorted earlier in the week. Each House performed its chant from the steps of the school.

“One of the goals of implementing the House system is to develop a greater sense of camaraderie among our students and faculty,” said principal C.J. Laird. “The success of our initial sorting day confirms that we are well on our way to meeting that goal.”

“I was literally moved to tears on sorting day,” said head of House Spes Nicole Salassi. “The day went beyond my wildest imagination and will be a great foundation for us to build the House system here at Sacred Heart.”

“As a physical education teacher, I see every student on campus at least once a week,” said head of House Fortitudo Michelle Newman, “but I’ve never seen our students engaged like this.”

Family members, including siblings, cousins and faculty parents or relatives, are sorted into the same House. Cafeteria and maintenance staff and school security officers were also sorted, along with the church parish staff. The first phase of implementation will begin in the 2018-19 school year, when students and faculty begin earning points for their respective Houses through monthly discrete House competitions. These competitions are an extension of many programs already in place at Sacred Heart, such as canned good collections, accelerated reader and field day.

“A system of discrete contests fosters engagement because each House has a legitimate chance at winning the contest regardless of the outcome of earlier contests,” said parent Mike Henderson, school advisory board secretary and House points committee chair.

Under the point system, Houses will place first, second, third or fourth in each contest throughout the year and earn points based on that placement. The House with the highest cumulative total will earn the House Cup for the year.

Social outreach activities for each House will be added for the 2019-20 school year. Both the activities and the recipient organizations will be student-recommended.

“The outreach component of the House system is so important,” said head of House Caritas Hannah Owens. “We’re waiting a year to begin this phase to ensure that the system is in place and ready to move beyond the boundaries of the school.”

New students for the 2018-19 year will be sorted into Houses in late August, including incoming pre-kindergartner Olivia Ashworth, daughter of head of House Fides Kacey Ashworth. “I’m so excited that Olivia will not only be joining me at Sacred Heart, but also joining as a member of House Fides,” Ashworth said. “The House system will take our bonding to a different level. I can’t wait to interact with her as members of the same House.”

Student leaders will also be selected during the first year and become part of each House leadership team. The House system will be a visual part of the school as well. House banners are being installed on the front of the school. House flags will be flown to indicate which House is leading in the monthly competitions. A new display system is being installed in the main hall that will include each House logo, a portrait of original House members and a bulletin board to display information. The 2018-19 school theme reiterates the concept of the House system: four chambers, one heart. The theme logo includes the four House logos.

“Just as the four chambers make up the heart, our four Houses make up the Sacred Heart of Jesus School family,” said Laird. “We are a school that prides itself on its traditions and history in Baton Rouge.”

The 2018-19 school year marks 90th

Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in the schools of the Diocese shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity except as permitted under said Title IX.

Finally, the schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have adopted and will implement the imperatives of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as amended, and will inform parents and students of their rights under this amendment to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The above stated policy applies to the following schools and institutions of the Diocese:

Ascension Diocesan Regional School
Blessed Margaret of Castello REACH Program
Special Education Program
Catholic High School (Baton Rouge)
Catholic Elementary of Pointe Coupee
Catholic High of Pointe Coupee
Cristo Rey Baton Rouge
Franciscan High School
Holy Family School
Holy Ghost School
Mater Dolorosa School
Most Blessed Sacrament School
Our Lady of Mercy School
Redemptorist St. Gerard School
St. Aloysius School
St. Alphonsus School
St. John Primary & St. Theresa Middle
School – EA/EL Partnership
St. Elizabeth Interparochial School
St. Francis Xavier School
St. George School
St. Jean Vianney School
St. John Interparochial School
St. Joseph School
St. Joseph’s Academy
St. Jude the Apostle School
St. Michael the Archangel Diocesan Regional High School
St. Peter Chanal Interparochial School
St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School
St. Thomas More School

Signed: Dr. Melanie B. Verges, Superintendent

2018 BACK TO SCHOOL
New faces at STM

As St. Thomas More School in Baton Rouge looks forward to welcoming students back in August, the parish also welcomes a few new leaders and several noteworthy changes on campus. Since being appointed administrator at STM in July 2017 and pastor July 1, Father Michael Alello has brought new energy and vision to an already-vibrant parish family. He has taken an active role in the life of the school, and he can often be seen playing with students at recess and participating in school events. “The school is the largest and most important ministry of our parish, and I am fully committed to ensuring that it is a place where children can reach their potential, spiritually, academically and socially. A big part of that is hiring excellent leaders to guide our school and parish,” said Father Alello.

Since his arrival, Father Alello has hired two familiar faces to join him at St. Thomas More who are working with him to build upon a legacy of excellence. Brian Moscona began serving as principal June 1 and brings a wealth of experience in educational leadership and a joyful passion for emphasizing Catholic identity in schools. The leadership team also includes Ashley McDaniel, who has served as assistant principal at STM for 16 years, and Brian Quatrille, who has been teaching at STM for 20 years. Dr. Greg Brandao, who was principal at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge while Moscona and Father Alello were students, will also join the team as the parish’s director of mission integration and advancement.

“I am so excited to join this amazing community and to have the opportunity to work alongside two of my former students. St. Thomas More has such a rich history and an extremely bright future with these two guys at the helm,” said Brandao.

The vision for STM’s immediate future includes the grand opening of a new Early Learning Center (ELC) in the fall, which will serve students six-weeks to three-years-old. The addition of the ELC will allow families to choose a Catholic daycare option for their youngest children and enjoy the benefit of having all their children on one campus. Another change is the expansion of the popular STM preschool program. Additional sections of each age group were added to serve more students and families.

Father Alello and the school leadership team are working on major upgrades to school facilities, both inside and outside the classrooms. When the students return after their summer break, a renewed and refreshed campus will be waiting. A state-of-the-art playground, renovated bathrooms, beautiful landscaping, a new faculty lounge and workroom, and fresh paint throughout the campus will have STM looking its best for the 2018-19 school year.

STM was named a national Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 2016. The school continues to move forward with outstanding instructional technology, empowering students to become proficient and responsible users of technology and media. In addition to the Chromebooks added to each grade level last year, both computer labs have been updated, a class set of iPads were purchased, and kindergarten through third grade will have Smart Panels in each of the classrooms.

As STM looks ahead to these changes, the school’s rich history and family feel will remain the backbone of the STM community. “I am thrilled to be joining the STM community, and I am very excited to be working with Father Alello and Dr. Brandao. We have the opportunity to build upon a tradition of excellence at a very exciting time in the history of the school,” said Moscona. “STM has always been a warm, faith-filled, strong school and parish, and I hope that our work will only extend and enrich what has been done well here for so long.”

Cristo Rey sets Draft Day

As the annual NFL Draft Day takes place, Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School is hosting Draft Day 2018 Aug. 24 at 9:00 a.m.

What is Draft Day? This is a celebration to match students with job partners. These partners include corporations such as Lamar, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System, Vivid Ink and more. Draft day is filled with excitement as the students are able to interact with company representatives.

Why draft day? We believe in setting our students up for success. That means providing an environment where they feel special, appreciated and excited about their jobs. There is nothing better than when a young adult takes pride in their work. This is an event we cherish each year to help kick off a wonderful school and work semester.

Open House

PreK-8 Guided Tours
Wednesday, October 17, 2018 8:30 am - 1:00 pm

† Liturgy-Prayer-Service
† Dyslexia Lab
† Integrated Technology
† Athletics
† Progressive Curriculum
† Performing Arts

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Third graders from St. Aloysius School in Baton Rouge are showing planting seeds to grow bald cypress and catalpa trees to help fight coastal erosion. Pictured from left, Stacey Keaton, St. Aloysius assistant principal; Dr. Ed Bush, LSU School of Plant, Environmental, and Soil Sciences; Sheri Gillio, St. Aloysius assistant principal; and Natasha Mapp, St. Aloysius third-grade teacher help the students.

Third graders from St. Aloysius School in Baton Rouge are participating in the LSU Coastal Roots Seedling Nursery Program, which involves growing from seedlings and then planting mature bald cypress trees and catalpa trees in areas negatively impacted by coastal erosion. The students are responsible for growing the bald cypress and catalpa seedlings, which will be used in the planting. The program is a partnership with the LSU Coastal Roots Program with additional funding by the Community Coffee Cash For Schools Label programs. From this funding, the third graders were given all the supplies needed to build the nursery yard and grow trees.

The students built the nursery yard, from the ground up, under the direction of Dr. Ed Bush, LSU School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences and the school third grade teachers. Students performed all the work of digging the planting area, adding dirt and gravel and covering the ground with a tarp to prevent outside plant growth, as well as securing the area with fencing to protect their seedlings. The nursery area is designated to house native seedlings, which will grow throughout the year. The first seedling planting took place in April when students planted 2,940 seeds. The trees have started to sprout from this planting and students will be so excited to see their baby trees when they return in August.

The incoming third-grade classes will keep track of germination rate, growth rates and water and fertilization regimens. They will also take a field trip to a local restoration site and plant these developed trees during the coming school year. After, they will begin the process of preparing the nursery yard for a new planting of seedlings in the spring. The program helps students learn about teamwork and the processes involved in coastal restoration. Laying the foundation for learning, this program is an effective way of assisting students in developing an attitude of stewardship toward natural resources and to provide them with constructive and active learning in which they can explore strategies for sustaining the coastal ecosystem. The program not only fosters a natural desire to be a productive solution for problems occurring in coastal home, but it also teaches the students the fundamentals of growing trees from seedlings successfully.
Our Lady of Mercy School plans for tomorrow

It began in early 2015 with a plan, a promise and a vision to expand campus facilities to accommodate the future needs of the parish by meeting the challenges of tomorrow. In that early phase, CPEX (Center of Planning and Excellence) generated a master plan for Our Lady of Mercy’s growing needs of additional classroom space, a new gym and more parking spaces – meeting just a few of the needs of OLOM’s parish which sits in the heart of the ever popular and expanding Mid-City area of Baton Rouge.

With the recent renaissance of Mid-City drawing more families and businesses to the area, OLOM church and school have experienced a steady increase in parishioner and school registrations. The school currently accommodates 950-plus students, growing leaps and bounds since its humble beginning in 1953 with a school enrollment of 174.

With much anticipation and excitement following the early stages of planning, a capital campaign was launched to help fund the needed expansion. Fast forward two years to a typical hot and humid Louisiana day in May of 2017, children armed with shovels and hard hats were ready to assist Bishop Robert M. Muench and core leaders of the Traditions for Tomorrow capital campaign break ground on a new lower elementary school building. With an aggressive timeline set for completion of the new building to be ready for the 2018-19 school year, the goal has been met and the new 30,000 square foot building will await the arrival of the smallest Blue Jays on campus for the first day of school in early August.

The OLOM new lower school expansion was completed a few weeks ago and provides 15 additional classroom spaces for students in grades 3Y (Little Saints) through first grade, as well as other students who will share access to many of the common spaces in the new building. The original Lower School building has also received a face lift and will house half of the first grade classrooms, all of second grade and dedicated classroom space for exceptional students enrolled in the Blessed Margaret of Castello Program, special education.

There are two main entrances, which will help improve circulation and from the upper elementary school and during heavy traffic times into the building such as morning and afternoon carpool. One hundred new parking spaces were also added to accommodate the growing enrollment and visitors to campus.

The furnishing and architecture of the new building embodies the spirit of OLOM. Students and visitors are welcomed by a statue of OLOM’s patroness sitting in an alcove greeting all who visit her hallowed halls. Etched in the floor of the common area is a medallion of the Eucharist, the source and summit of our life. Illuminating this area of the building is a mobile art piece of the Sacred Heart of Jesus inspired by the designers as a nod to Mercy’s history as a mission church of Sacred Heart Church in Baton Rouge. One cannot overlook the brightly colored coding system and extra wide corridors that allow students to form lines and pass others in the hall politely. The common area provides a cheerful gathering space for students to listen to guest speakers, read books in the fun colorful nooks or participate in indoor physical education class during rainy days. This self-contained building improves safety and efficiency for teachers and students as they will encounter very little travel time to and from the upper school campus. Students in the new lower school building will have access to their own media center/library; wellness center and school counselor's office; art room; and music room where students will have the opportunity to take piano or string instrument instruction through Grace Notes during the school day or as an after school enrichment.

Grace Notes School of Music provides private and semi-private music lessons to students on campus. The program is taught by members of the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra.

The expansion will allow OLOM School to “grow a little bigger while getting a lot smaller.” It will allow the opportunity to increase the overall population by 10 percent while reducing the average class size to a maximum of 25 students per classroom.

If you are interested in experiencing the excitement of the “new nest,” visit olomchurcho.com/traditions-for-tomorrow to view a walking tour of the new building while still in its construction phase. Visitors are always welcome.

What’s next on the horizon for the Mercy Blue Jays as they continue to spread their wings? Construction of a new gymnasium/sports complex and the renovation and repurposing of the current gym to a performing arts center will begin this fall.

Our Lady of Mercy School plans for tomorrow

It began in early 2015 with a plan, a promise and a vision to expand campus facilities to accommodate the future needs of the parish by meeting the challenges of tomorrow. In that early phase, CPEX (Center of Planning and Excellence) generated a master plan for Our Lady of Mercy’s growing needs of additional classroom space, a new gym and more parking spaces – meeting just a few of the needs of OLOM’s parish which sits in the heart of the ever popular and expanding Mid-City area of Baton Rouge.

With the recent renaissance of Mid-City drawing more families and businesses to the area, OLOM church and school have experienced a steady increase in parishioner and school registrations. The school currently accommodates 950-plus students, growing leaps and bounds since its humble beginning in 1953 with a school enrollment of 174.

With much anticipation and excitement following the early stages of planning, a capital campaign was launched to help fund the needed expansion. Fast forward two years to a typical hot and humid Louisiana day in May of 2017, children armed with shovels and hard hats were ready to assist Bishop Robert M. Muench and core leaders of the Traditions for Tomorrow capital campaign break ground on a new lower elementary school building. With an aggressive timeline set for completion of the new building to be ready for the 2018-19 school year, the goal has been met and the new 30,000 square foot building will await the arrival of the smallest Blue Jays on campus for the first day of school in early August.

The OLOM new lower school expansion was completed a few weeks ago and provides 15 additional classroom spaces for students in grades 3Y (Little Saints) through first grade, as well as other students who will share access to many of the common spaces in the new building. The original Lower School building has also received a face lift and will house half of the first grade classrooms, all of second grade and dedicated classroom space for exceptional students enrolled in the Blessed Margaret of Castello Program, special education.

There are two main entrances, which will help improve circulation and from the upper elementary school and during heavy traffic times into the building such as morning and afternoon carpool. One hundred new parking spaces were also added to accommodate the growing enrollment and visitors to campus.

The furnishing and architecture of the new building embodies the spirit of OLOM. Students and visitors are welcomed by a statue of OLOM’s patroness sitting in an alcove greeting all who visit her hallowed halls. Etched in the floor of the common area is a medallion of the Eucharist, the source and summit of our life. Illuminating this area of the building is a mobile art piece of the Sacred Heart of Jesus inspired by the designers as a nod to Mercy’s history as a mission church of Sacred Heart Church in Baton Rouge. One cannot overlook the brightly colored coding system and extra wide corridors that allow students to form lines and pass others in the hall politely. The common area provides a cheerful gathering space for students to listen to guest speakers, read books in the fun colorful nooks or participate in indoor physical education class during rainy days. This self-contained building improves safety and efficiency for teachers and students as they will encounter very little travel time to and from the upper school campus. Students in the new lower school building will have access to their own media center/library; wellness center and school counselor's office; art room; and music room where students will have the opportunity to take piano or string instrument instruction through Grace Notes during the school day or as an after school enrichment.

Grace Notes School of Music provides private and semi-private music lessons to students on campus. The program is taught by members of the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra.

The expansion will allow OLOM School to “grow a little bigger while getting a lot smaller.” It will allow the opportunity to increase the overall population by 10 percent while reducing the average class size to a maximum of 25 students per classroom.

If you are interested in experiencing the excitement of the “new nest,” visit olomchurcho.com/traditions-for-tomorrow to view a walking tour of the new building while still in its construction phase. Visitors are always welcome.

What’s next on the horizon for the Mercy Blue Jays as they continue to spread their wings? Construction of a new gymnasium/sports complex and the renovation and repurposing of the current gym to a performing arts center will begin this fall.
How to help kids learn to love reading

Reading is a passion for many people. But even avid readers may not know just how far back their love of reading stretches. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children who find pleasure in reading have the potential to become lifelong readers. In addition, studies have shown that reading to children can help kids become familiar with sounds, words and language, helping them in their earliest stages of cognitive development. So adults who love books might be able to trace their passion for page-turners to those times their mothers and fathers read aloud to them as youngsters.

Parents who want to their children to learn to love reading can rely on various techniques to accomplish that goal.

- Make reading a routine. Routine is a necessity for parents, helping children learn when it’s time to eat, play and go to sleep, among other things. Parents can include reading to their children as part of their daily routines. As noted, doing so will promote language skills and cognitive development while also acclimating children to books and providing valuable time for them to bond with their parents.

- Create a distraction-free reading environment. When reading to children, parents can create an environment with little to no distractions. This allows kids to focus on their parents’ voices as well as the story they’re being told. Parents can turn off the television and the radio when reading to their kids. In addition, moms and dads should leave smartphones or tablets in another room so they aren’t distracted by alerts or temptation to check for incoming messages or emails.

- Read aloud together. Some children may shy away from reading if they struggle in their initial efforts to read. That does not mean kids won’t ultimately enjoy reading, it just means a little more effort may be required on parents’ part to help kids overcome any issues they have. Reading aloud to children can help little ones learn how to become good readers, as they will learn how to pronounce words and form sentences. Kids who know how to read can be encouraged to read to their parents, which can instill self-esteem. If kids struggle with certain words or sentences when reading aloud, parents can read those words and/or sentences aloud to them and ask them to repeat the phrases back.

- Let kids pick their own books. When reading to youngsters, whether they’re babies, toddlers or already in school, parents can let sons and daughters choose their own books. Children might be especially enthusiastic about reading if they’re allowed to choose their own books and stories.

Reading can benefit children from the earliest stages of their lives all the way through adulthood. Parents can take various steps to foster a love of reading in their children.

Tutoring benefits and how to find a tutor that fits

Children tend to learn at their own pace, and certain subjects may challenge them more than others. In many instances, students can benefit from working with tutors.

Tutors can be effective. Children who work with tutors and then see their grades improve may develop greater confidence and feel less anxious about going to school or taking tests.

Without intervention like tutoring, at-risk students (those who are not meeting academic standards) may not pass their classes, and some may face year-end retention or experience difficulty keeping up in the next grade. The National Tutoring Association says students at all grade levels participating in tutorial programs improve their reading performance and can achieve significant cognitive gains. Tutoring can be the answer for students affected by inconsistent delivery of classroom content. For example, when families move, students may be forced to catch up in a new school where teachers may have different styles than the students’ previous teachers. Students who have missed classroom time due to illness or injury may face similar difficulties.

Sometimes children struggle because they have difficulty processing or remembering their lessons. In such instances, a fresh approach through one-on-one tutoring may be necessary.

Parents and students have different tutoring options at their disposal. Some services may be offered through the

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400 Marquette Avenue Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806
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Tutoring

SEE TUTORING PAGE 15B
Calm the chaos on busy school mornings

Mornings can test the patience and stamina of busy families as adults and children hurry to get out the door on time. Starting off the morning already stressed can lead to feeling tense throughout the rest of the day.

There is no magic formula to make mornings less hectic, but the following are some ways families can streamline their morning routines.

- Make use of the night before. Morning madness may come about due to lack of preparation the previous night. The more that can be done the night before, the less there will be to do on weekday mornings. Encourage children to lay out clothes for the next day and take a shower or bath that evening. Make lunches the night before a school day, and gather all supplies from homework stations, restocking backpacks and gym bags so everything is ready to go come the morning.
- Get to bed earlier. Sleep experts say that if you need to rely on an alarm clock to get up in the morning, you may not be getting enough sleep. The National Sleep Foundation says school-aged children should get between nine and 11 hours of sleep a night. Teenagers require between eight and 10 hours of sleep per night, while adults need between seven and nine hours. A good night’s rest can reduce morning crankiness and get everyone moving more efficiently.
- Incentivize timeliness for kids. Children who are reluctant to head to school may need extra motivation to get out the door. Offer small rewards to kids when they get ready on their own or finish breakfast in a certain amount of time. Rewards can include a treat like choosing a favorite show to watch after school or a special outing on the weekend.
- Follow a schedule. Make mornings the same each day so everyone knows what to expect. Uniformity can streamline tasks and ensure everyone knows what’s expected of them.
- Stay organized. Racing around trying to find keys or jackets can be very stressful. Make it a point to return items to their proper places so that everyone knows where to look for the items they need. School mornings can be challenging, but with some ingenuity and forethought, the stress can be tamed.

School system at no extra charge. Pull-out instruction during the day or before or after school might be part of such services. Private tutors, academic coaches, peer tutors, online tutoring and home tutoring are other options. Depending on need, budget and comfort levels, families can explore these and other options at their disposal.

The NTA says families should not discount peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is a cost-effective way to improve performance. This type of tutoring also can contribute to students’ social and cognitive development. According to Care.com, which helps consumers find tutors, caretakers and babysitters, one can expect to pay an average $10 to $15 for a peer high school student tutor. Comparatively, a private tutor, whether he’s a professional teacher or a tutor hired through a service, may charge as much as $75 per hour.

Parents should contact their children’s schools for information about tutoring programs. Schools typically keep lists of tutors or tutoring programs. Examine credentials and seek recommendations prior to hiring a tutor to get a feel for the person and his or her teaching philosophy. Certified tutors also can be found by visiting statutor.com.

Tutoring has proven to be effective in helping students improve their grades, develop confidence and feel less anxious about going to school or taking tests.

Keep in mind that it isn’t enough for the tutor to know the subject matter. He or she also has to relate to your child. According to the tutoring firm Test Prep Authority, motivation plays a key role in the success or failure of a students’ work with tutors. Motivation may be compromised if the tutor and student do not connect.

Tutors also should know how to present materials in ways similar to how it is being taught in school so that lessons are in sync. Tutoring has helped many children gain confidence and succeed in school.
Students may need some time to adjust at the beginning of a new school year. Summer vacations typically lack the structure of the school year, and it might be unfair to expect kids to seamlessly slip back into their more regimented lives as students.

While some early school year sluggishness might be normal, that should wear off pretty quickly. If not, and students appear to be struggling to get motivated for their schoolwork, parents can try various strategies that should help reignite youngsters’ passions for learning.

- Make your home more school-friendly. Summer is a relaxing time of year when parents have a tendency to relax rules around the house. But come the school year, parents must make sure their homes are as conducive to studying as possible.
- Encourage participation in extracurricular activities. Various studies have examined the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance.
- Resist the urge to turn the television on each night so students are not distracted from their studies. Keep the home quiet so students are motivated to focus on their studies.
- Make meal plans. A child-friendly menu can be very simple. Other environmental lessons can be taught from their studies. Keep the home quiet so students are motivated to focus on their studies.
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### Strategies can use to motivate students

At the dawn of a new school year, opportunity awaits students and educators alike. The opportunity to make classrooms more eco-friendly is one students and their teachers can embrace together.

- Eco-friendly classrooms can help teachers instill lessons about the environment and the need to protect the planet. Transforming classrooms into places that promote sustainability and other environmental lessons can be very simple.
- Bring plants into the classroom. Plants in the classroom can prove invaluable during science lessons and instill a sense of responsibility in students tasked with watering and tending to the plants during the school year. In the late 1980s, a joint study from NASA and the Associated Landscape Contractors examined 19 common houseplants in an effort to determine their potential impact on improving indoor air quality. Each of the 19 plants studied were found to have properties that proved useful in improving indoor air quality, and that some were especially effective at treating air that contained formaldehyde, benzene and trichloroethylene.
- Recycle in the classroom. Whether it’s bottles, cans, art supplies or other items, many materials used in the classroom each day can be recycled. For example, the Santa Barbara County Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division notes that crayons are made from petroleum. That means crayons, like other oil-based products, can be recycled.
- Use eco-friendly materials. In addition to recycling materials such as crayons, educators can begin using more eco-friendly materials, explaining to children how such usage benefits the planet. While the majority of crayons on the market are made from petroleum, many non-oil-based alternatives are available. Crayons made from soy or vegetable wax are two examples. Using such products helps to preserve natural resources while reducing dependency on oil, two valuable lessons kids can take with them for the rest of their lives.
- Take steps to conserve energy. Classrooms present myriad opportunities to conserve energy. For example, modern classrooms are connected, and educators can teach students to turn computers and tablets off at the end of the day instead of putting them in sleep mode. Conventional wisdom once suggested that turning computers on after they were turned off produced an energy surge that was greater than the amount of energy consumed if the computers had simply been in sleep mode. However, the energy solutions firm IGS® notes that the energy surge from turning a computer on is so small that it cannot be measured. IGS also notes that leaving computers on will always consume more energy than turning them off at night and restarting them in the morning.

Going green in the classroom is easy and can help educators teach their students invaluable lessons about the environment and sustainability.

### Child Nutrition Program

On behalf of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Child Nutrition Program, I am excited to welcome you and your children to the 2018-2019 school year. I feel both honored and privileged to continue to be your Child Nutrition Program Director and to work with highly qualified and dedicated staff, students, and all of the supportive parents and community members that make our schools great. We are committed to serving your children the highest quality, nutritious and great-tasting meals that support their achievements in school and promote healthy lifestyles.

- Healthy for Life is our commitment to create healthier environments and communities, by providing comprehensive nutrition and wellness education. This year we will continue to expand the program with more freshly prepared meals to better serve our students and their families; and this year as part of this expansion, we have updated the program design to better reflect the sophisticated tastes of today’s students.
- For your students, we offer a variety of meal choices with one goal in mind: to provide outstand-

### FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2018-19

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<th>Household Size</th>
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Each Additional person $5,616 $468 $234 $216 $108

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Child Nutrition Program

Diocese of Baton Rouge

3300 Hundred Oaks Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Phone: 225-387-6421 • Fax: 225-387-1413

Email: cnp@diobr.org • Website: www.cnpbr.org

### Federal Eligibility Income Chart

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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Eco-friendly classrooms can help teachers instill lessons about the environment and the need to protect the planet.
Student cyber security precautions

Thanks to advancements in technology, students and educators are increasingly turning to birth, tablets and computers when working on daily assignments and classroom activities. Students rely on the internet for research and keeping in touch with teachers and other students, and work is even assigned and completed via digital platforms.

Despite the upside of technology, cybercrime is a potential pitfall of all that time spent online. The internet provides instant access, and that can put students at risk.

According to Verizon's 2016 Data Breach Investigations Report, the education sector ranked sixth in the United States for the total number of reported “security incidents.” Schools are data-rich, meaning they give hackers access to information like identification numbers, birthdates, email addresses, financial data, medical records and more.

Students must understand cyber security risks when working and sharing data online. The following are some tips students can follow.

• Protect passwords. Students are urged to keep their passwords to themselves. This prevents others from using accounts maliciously or even in seemingly harmless ways that can put you in trouble, such as searching for inappropriate content in school. Choose complicated passwords that can’t be easily guessed, and opt for two-step authentication whenever offered.

• Use secured WiFi networks. Free or open WiFi connections are not encrypted, meaning they can be accessed by anyone. Many cyber criminals gain access to information through these channels. Schools should have encrypted systems in place.

• Limit what you share on the internet. Students are urged to be aware of what they share online. According to DataManagement, a computing service, information posted to social media is permanent, and deleted items aren’t necessarily gone. Exercise caution on social media. Don’t post unless it is something you would be comfortable sharing in public.

• Watch out for phishing scams. Phishing usually occurs through fraudulent email messages that mimic the look of reputable solicitations. Scammers rely on these tactics to tempt people to click on links or download attachments that can put malware on a device and steal personal data. Exercise caution with all links and downloads.

• Schedule routine backups. Data can be lost if a device crashes, so routinely back up personal devices and home computers. Backups can be stored on external hard drives or with cloud services.

• Exercise caution when file-sharing. UC Santa Cruz’s information technology services says viruses and malware can be transmitted by file-sharing software, and files offered by others may not be what they say they are. Only used school-approved file-sharing options.

Cyber security is something students should prioritize this school year. The right security measures can protect students, their classmates and their schools.
How technology can reinforce lessons

Technology in and out of the classroom can be a polarizing subject. Proponents of tech in schools contend that students must be skilled in the ways of the world, which is increasingly being governed by technology. Detractors to tablets and smartbooks in the classroom may say it contributes to excessive time in front of a screen and can prove distracting over other means of learning.

It is hard to deny the ways that technology has helped shape and improve education. Students who may not excel with the traditional tools of learning might benefit from applications geared toward offering assistance for their particular needs. Furthermore, technology, through its globalization, can put educators and students in touch with a wealth of resources — all at their fingertips. The following are the myriad ways that technology can enhance lessons in the classroom.

Inexpensive resources
Technology can provide various online resources that go beyond the study guides and other materials offered by textbooks. These resources can be very low-cost or even free, helping educators save money. For parents who need to reinforce lessons at home, the internet can help them collaborate with other parents and teachers and find fun ways to help their children learn.

Quantifiable results
Technology can process data more quickly and efficiently than humans. Algorithms can be developed to help students learn faster. Tech can be customized in unique ways to help students learn. Not every student learns the same way. Technology provides for a multimedia approach that can combine visual and auditory tools to better teach students.

Connect more
Teachers can embrace technology, such as YouTube-powered guides to show students how to complete assignments or to go over information in the classroom. Students who missed class or need a little reinforcement can benefit from a second look at lessons in online videos available at all times on the internet.

Some teachers employ QR codes on assignments that students (and parents) can scan to access further information or support materials. This can help kids further explore topics after school hours.

Transcend location
Technology can connect people by voice, text or video, which means that learning is not limited to geographic location. Notes and materials can be shared with teachers or study groups through digital connections around the world in real time.

Get feedback
Students can go beyond their school districts or communities to discover how others learn. High school or college students can rely on internet communities to provide a second set of eyes on papers to proofread for grammar or spelling mistakes or even to assist in brainstorming sessions.

Reinforce STEM
Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says employment in occupations related to STEM — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — is projected to grow to more than nine million by 2022. Technology plays a strong role in STEM careers. Honing these skills in the classroom can prepare students for professional arenas in which technology figures to play a sizable role.

Technology has changed the education landscape in many beneficial ways.

A 2002 study published in the journal Sociology of Education found that participation in extracurricular activities is associated with improved grade point average, increased college attendance and reduced absenteeism. The link between participation in extracurricular activities and improved academic performance is still in need of study, but such participation may help children acclimate to the structure of the school year more quickly than they might if they do not participate in such activities.

• Encourage curious youngsters. Kids are curious, and fostering that curiosity can be a great way for parents to get their kids excited about learning. Whether it’s during the school year and part of their curriculum or on summer break, encourage kids to engage in subjects that interest them.

As kids learn more about the topics and subjects that interest them, they may develop a passion for learning that they can then take with them to the classroom.

• Express an interest in the subjects children are studying. Another way to motivate students at the dawn of a new school year is to express an interest in the subjects they’re studying. Ask questions about their studies and encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions. Engaging students about the subjects they’re studying can motivate them to explore those subjects more deeply than they otherwise might.

Motivating kids to be excited about their schoolwork at the dawn of a new school year can sometimes be difficult. But parents can employ various strategies that can help their children readjust to life in the classroom and motivate them to perform to the best of their abilities.
How Catholic schools foster self-discipline offers lessons, says study

WASHINGTON (CNS) – A new study conducted by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute found that children in Catholic schools are less disruptive and have more self-control than their peers in non-Catholic or public schools.

The authors of the study said they believe that examining students’ self-discipline is particularly important in light of the ongoing debate about externally imposed discipline, such as detention and suspension, and methods of punishment used in public schools.

“Clearly, an approach that fosters self-discipline is preferable to one that relies on externally imposed discipline. So if Catholic schools have succeeded in developing such an approach, we ought to pay more attention to what they are doing and how they are doing it,” said the report, released May 31.

A lack of research into this aspect of Catholic schooling also motivated the authors of the study. Many studies have been conducted to investigate the academic effects of Catholic schools – according to the report, their general conclusion is that “students in Catholic schools achieve at higher levels – but little research has been done into other aspects of student development at Catholic schools.

Since Catholic schools generally try to both educate their students on an intellectual level and try to form their students so that they will be pious, disciplined and have good character, the authors of the study believe that understanding the effects and possible benefits of a Catholic education requires understanding both the intellectual education and personal formation Catholic schools set out to provide.

The study drew three conclusions:

- Students in Catholic schools are less likely to be disruptive than those in other private schools or public schools.
- Students in Catholic schools exhibit more self-control than those in other private schools or public schools. “Specifically, they were more likely to control their temper, respect others’ property, accept their fellow students’ ideas and handle peer pressure,” it said.
- Students in Catholic schools exhibit more self-discipline than those in other public schools. “There is at least some evidence that attending Catholic school may benefit all sorts of children,” it said.

In many cases the gap between the frequencies with which students at Catholic schools and students at other schools either behaved well or avoided behaving poorly increased over time, hinting that the continued focus and value Catholic schools place on self-discipline continually reinforces its importance and helps foster it in students.

The report also concludes that, if the findings reflect a “Catholic schools effect” of some kind, non-Catholic schools would benefit from placing explicit value on self-discipline, as Catholic schools do, and implicitly trying to promote it.

The authors also speculate that Catholic schools benefit from the power of religion to affect people’s behavior, although they admit that the exact means by which this happens is unclear.

They added, “We should not underestimate the power of religion to positively influence a child’s behavior – and shouldn’t restrict families’ choices on the basis of religion.”

Michael Gottfried, associate professor at the University of California-Santa Barbara, and Jacob Kirksey, a doctoral student at the same university, analyzed the data and co-wrote the report.

They took the data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten from 1999 and 2011. These reports contain data on a nationally representative sample of children entering kindergarten in that year, and it follows them throughout their educational careers. The data comes from teachers, who record the frequency of selected behaviors among the children.

This study used data on behaviors beginning in kindergarten and continuing to fifth grade.

The institute said that as far as it knows, Gottfried and Kirksey’s is the first study “to explore the potential effects of Catholic schooling on elementary students’ self-discipline.”

“The clearest implication of our results is that Catholic schools offer an important alternative for families who may be dissatisfied with their local public schools – particularly if they are interested in cultivating a sense of self-discipline and restraint,” the authors said.
How to ease kids’ transition to a new school

Being the new kid in school can be a tall order for youngsters. Children who change schools may face a host of challenges that studies suggest can affect both their social and academic development.

In a 2010 study that followed students who entered kindergarten in 1998 through 2007, the Government Accountability Office found that 13 percent of students changed schools four or more times by the end of eighth grade. Such mobility can adversely affect students, as a study of 13,000 students in the city of Chicago found that children who had changed schools four or more times by the sixth grade were roughly a year behind their classmates.

In addition to the toll transferring schools can take on their academic performance, students also may experience difficulty assimilating into their new schools. Though there’s no formula to make such transitions easier, parents can try various strategies to help their kids successfully adjust to new schools.

• Speak with children about the transition. Pathways.org, a not-for-profit organization devoted to providing free child development information to parents and health professionals, recommends parents speak with their children about transitioning to a new school. Encourage children to share what excites and worries them about the transition. The way parents discuss transitions can go a long way toward shaping how kids view the change.

• Stay true to your routine. Pathways also recommends parents of students who are transitioning to a new school do their best to replicate first day of school routines from years past. Some familiar traditions might help calm kids’ concerns about their first day in a new school.

• Assimilate into a new community before the school year begins. The education resource Edweek.org notes that the most common causes of students changing schools are residential moves related to parents’ jobs or financial instability. Parents on the lookout for a new job or those who may need to relocate for financial reasons may want to delay moving until the current school year has ended. Moving between school years gives families time to acclimate to their new communities. That means kids will get time to make new friends. Some familiar faces on the first day at a new school can go a long way toward alleviating the fears children may have.

• Volunteer at your child’s new school. Parental involvement at school can have a profound impact on children. The National Education Association notes that children whose parents are involved at school are more likely to perform academically than students whose parents are uninvolved. In addition, such students are more likely to have good attendance and exhibit stronger social skills than children whose parents do not involve themselves in their children’s school. It stands to reason that students transferring to a new school may benefit from parental involvement even more than other students, as seeing their parents approach a new school with excitement and energy may inspire children to follow suit.

Transitioning to a new school is not easy for many students. But parents can help smooth that transition in various ways.