Students perform missionary work at home

Assumption celebrates anniversary

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

As menacing, dark clouds gathered on the horizon, Baron LeBrun scanned the grounds at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Plattenville.

Through the prism of his 55-year-old memory vault, LeBrun could still hear the laughs, see the sights and relive his boyhood years spent on those very grounds.

For all of his life, Assumption has been LeBrun’s spiritual buoy, his beacon of faith in a challenging society. “I have never left,” said LeBrun, who was raised in a house one lot removed from the church and who now resides in the house next door to his childhood residence and the church. “This church is the focal point of the community.”

LeBrun was one of an estimated 200 current and former parishioners as well as residents from throughout the area who gathered on June 10 to celebrate the church’s 225th anniversary. The large turnout came as little surprise to pastor Father Joseph Vu, who said it was reflective of the deep spirituality of the people along Bayou Lafourche.

“They are very attached to their church,” Father Vu said during the Family Day celebration that followed Mass. “Put it beyond the sacramental (offerings), even the maintenance stuff, our parishioners are ready for manual labor or support us financially if we have to hire contractors.”

“Not only is it an investment spiritually but also an investment financially.”

A good way to understand the Beatitudes is to read St. John Paul II’s 1993 encyclical, “Veritatis Splendor” or “The Splendor of Truth,” according to Father Walsh.

“There he examines the dialogue (in the Gospel of Mark) of Jesus and the rich young man who asked, ‘What must I do to be good?’ The answer, ultimately, is to come to know Jesus himself and then to make the decision to follow him. Only in this way can we be reborn in the Spirit and become holy,” said Father Walsh.

“Once we encounter Christ, the journey to discipleship begins with a very simple choice, namely, to avoid evil and to do good.”

“Therefore the negative prescriptions of the Law – the Commandments of God – are absolutely necessary for us to keep, i.e., the ‘thou shalt nots.’ You shall not kill, commit adultery, lie, steal, covet, etc. We must learn to avoid the sins that offend God in order to follow his son, just as a small child must learn to keep the rules set down by a loving parent in order to avoid hurting himself or others. Only then can the child begin to internalize the values of the parent.”

And so while these negative commands set us on the road to holiness, Christian perfection demands the imitation of Christ, that we be conformed to him.”

Beatitudes offers journey for life

Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of articles focusing on the eight Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Keeping the “dos” and “don’ts” of the Ten Commandments is a good way to stay clear of the sins that can keep one from entering heaven. But to better understand God’s divine purpose behind these biblical laws and achieve the communion with him that they ultimately desire, Catholics should also reflect on the Beatitudes, according to Father Miles Walsh, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Baton Rouge.

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Prepare the way

By Dina Dow

To prepare means to get ready. Most prepare for something every day, including dinner, celebrations, school, projects, vacations, presentations, budgets, construction, conversations, meetings, competitions, assignments, to read a book, to pray, etc. The upcoming Sunday Mass Readings offer inspirations revealing those whom God sent to prepare the way and the call to arise and follow the way.

Prepared to be a witness

The Solemnity of the Nativity of John the Baptist is a Sunday celebration this year. His role prefigured by the prophets, including Isaiah (another voice crying out in the desert), long before John was born. Isaiah’s message is destined for those near and far: present day and days to come. He explains how God called him from the beginning of his life to proclaim salvation. Recognizing this, Isaiah is empowered to prepare the way despite the instances in which he experiences rejection, mockery and complacency. He knows, in faith, God who formed him, prepared him. Isaiah witnesses in the name of God, who provides strength for the journey resulting in his role as being a “light to the nations.”

Fast-forward through the covenant made between God and King David, “a man after God’s own heart,” to the birth of another great prophet, St. John the Baptist. He is the one who is to prepare the way for the promised descendent of David, the savior Jesus Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14:6). The pregnancy of St. John’s mother, St. Elizabeth, was miraculous. She and her husband, Zechariah, both advanced in age, never anticipated what God had prepared for them, including the name of the child as given by the angel. Zechariah’s faith wanes to the point of doubt, wherein God renders him mute for nine months, creating a time of watchfulness and silence for this soon-to-be father.

St. John’s first opportunity to witness the coming of the savior is so special. He shares the good news with his mom and Mary during the visitation, while still in the womb.

The second opportunity came when he was a mere eight-days-old. His father, fortified by a renewed faith, names his son John. In that instant Zechariah’s speech was restored and he wonderfully praised God though his canticle. Hence, St. John grew strong in the Spirit and continually prepared to be a light to the nations.

Ask yourself, “How has God prepared me to be a light of his way to others? When have I hesitated to step out in faith and trust in God? Have my doubts interrupted my calling? Who can I turn to restore my faith?”

Arise and walk

The Book of Wisdom explains that God creates life. In fact, God creates humanity in the “image of his own nature,” which is made to be imperishable. You may ask, “What about the times in our lives when we experience life-threatening illnesses and situations beyond our control?” Recall during these times, God does not abandon his creation. Rather, he invites us in faith to “arise” in Jesus Christ, who destroyed death and restored life. We also petition and ask God to rescue us.

Jesus’ healing ministry is something to behold. Two miracles placed before us this cycle manifest the power of faith and trust. The father of this 12-year-old child is pleading Jesus to heal her. He truly believes Jesus can do this. In this instance, the child has seemingly died, according to other relatives. They laugh at Jesus as he explains she is “sleeping.” He sends the “naysayers” away in order to restore the hope of the one petitioning, namely her father. He turns to her with the love of a father and says, “Little girl, I say to you arise.” She stood up in front of Jesus. He immediately asked for food to be given to her, a sign pointing to the spiritual and physically heavenly food from Jesus, the Eucharist.

For as we are healed, so too are we able to eat. Have you experienced the “naysayers” who scoff at your petitions to God? Turn away from them, as Jesus did. They cause doubt and despair whereas Jesus gives faith and hope. Instead, turn to Jesus. Talk with God about the times in your life when you have felt like a “naysayer” and seek forgiveness.

Nativity of St. John

The fact that the Nativity of St. John the Baptist is celebrated only days after the summer solstice is no coincidence.

From his birthday on June 24, three days after what is traditionally considered the longest day of the year, the sun will gradually begin to ascend and the days become shorter.

Three days after the winter solstice is Christmas Day, when days start to become longer and when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. The timing of these days is significant because St. John is considered as the lamp, but Christ is the true light of the world, thus fulfilling “I must decrease,” as the lamp, but Christ is the true light of the world, thus fulfilling “I must decrease.”

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The day was also considered one of several “charmed festivals” throughout the year. Tradition held that hidden treasures were to lie open in unlikely places. Legend also has it that herbs were given unusual healing powers which they would retain if picked that night. People would later bring these herbs to church for a special blessing.

In medieval times, the customs of St. John’s Day even took on a romantic twist. In Sardinia, by the end of March, young men would present themselves to the young women of the village to make a pact to be sweethearts. At the end of May, the young ladies would make pots from tree bark and fill them with earth, sowing wheat and barley.

On St. John’s Day, the couples would dress in their fanciest attire, proceed to the local church and throw the pot against the church door. Following that odd ritual, the couple would sit and eat eggs. Perhaps not surprisingly, wine was involved in this ceremony.

Romance also played a role in Sicily, where couples became sweethearts on St. John’s feast day. The couples presented each other with plates of corn, lentils and canary seed.

In Rome, the celebration continues to include the eating of snails.

Traditions have also developed in the United States, especially in New York where Americans, traditionally of Puerto Rican descent, hold fiestas in the name of St. John. The fiestas include Mass, processions, piñatas and picnics.
Dameans are pitch perfect for 50th reunion concert

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Armed with snacks and bottles of water, more than 50 people lined up to board a chartered bus headed to a music concert in New Orleans on Sunday, June 3.

However, the draw of this musical group and the generation of these fans goes back 50 years to 1968 when The Dameans, a group of seminarians from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, were formed. The group wrote contemporary Catholic liturgical music to be played at Mass, following reforms of the Second Vatican Council, launching the Catholic folk Mass movement of the 1960s and 70s. The five members of The Dameans, Gary Daigle, Darryl Ducote, Mike Balhoff, Paul Ceasar and Gary Ault, were holding a 50th Year Reunion Concert at Ursuline Academy Auditorium to benefit the Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Centre. Ducote is the director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“My kids memorized those songs easy,” said Mary Porche, a parishioner of St. Patrick Church in Baton Rouge. “We lived in Metairie so we walked to Mass, so the girls, I had 3 little girls, and they’d be singing as we walked to church.”

“The kids could identify with it, they liked the upbeat pace of it,” said Mary Lynn Segalla, a fellow St. Patrick parishioner. “My children loved to go to LSU (for Mass) because, of course, they were playing the guitar music, they were into the new scene.

We often would go to the Sunday evening Mass at Christ the King in order to hear the music – the ‘new’ music.”

The excitement was palpable on the bus.

“This reminds me of going to a high school football game except the language is a lot cleaner,” said someone, generating laughter, chatter and lots of smiles.

Melanie Williams, a travel company owner and a cantor and member of the choir at St. Patrick, said she decided to organize the bus trip after learning about the concert.

“I love the Dameans,” she said. “As a cantor, as a choir member, I grew up listening to the Dameans music, so the trip down here I was really very passionate about, you know there’s so many in Baton Rouge that have listened to the Dameans and I thought what a wonderful way for us to experience it.

“I grew up with the music. (And) one of the things, I used to sing for weddings, is the song, “Beginning Today,” which was very popular back then. But, their music has always been so timeless in our Catholic faith and so many people, when you mention the Dameans, are like, ‘Wow! You’re going to go see the Dameans’ – yeah, it’s exciting because they have such wonderful music that they have given to our Catholic faith that it’s just amazing.”

Father Eric Gyan, pastor at St. Theresa of Avila Church in Gonzales, said he used the excursion as a “little staff appreciation.”

“I love the Dameans, I’ve always loved their music. I still wish we could get it into the hymnals that we use,” said Father Gyan. “When I go walking I’ll hear myself still humming some of their songs. They apparently did a lot of their work there (at St. Theresa) because Gary Daigle, his family grew up there. Mike Balhoff was there (as a priest). They used to talk about practicing there and composing there and previewing their songs. So, now we know we have a rich connection to them.

“There’s still a timelessness to a number of the pieces. They don’t sound dated like they’re just 60s music. They’re just beautiful, beautiful pieces and very scriptural. Some of the texts are straight out of the liturgy of the hours that priests pray; it’s the translation of the psalms in the liturgy of the hours. Some of the texts are word for word.”

“The thing I really like is (the songs) are scripture centered in so many ways, said Deacon Bill Blair, also a member of St. Theresa.

Nearly two hours before the concert began, crowds gathered outside of the Ursuline Academy Auditorium, which had general seating for the 805 ticket holders. It was a sold out performance. When the concert began, the audience lit up, cheering and applauding for the five men who walked up to the microphones on stage. Fifty years after beginning their journey into the music industry, their voices were still on pitch, on cue and strong, lifting up fans, hearts and souls of all ages.

With a bit of comedy and storytelling sprinkled in with the songs, The Dameans hit the right note with their loyal fans. It was a solid two hours of hand-clapping, toe-tapping, sing-along fun with audience members swooning every time the group launched into another favorite tune which included “Without Clouds,” “Sing Alleluia, Sing” and “Beattitudes.”

“We launched into “Let Your Light Shine,” several people in the audience held up their cell phone flashlights and waved them to the beat of the music, in perfect harmony between the past and the present. In the end, The Dameans brought the house down, or on their feet, for not one, but two lengthy standing ovations, with the second one after their encore performance of “Song of Thanksgiving.”

“I didn’t want it to end,” said Gail Harris, a member of St. Jude the Apostle Church in Baton Rouge.

“I felt like I was in my living room because it was so comfortable,” said Patricia Martina, another St. Jude parishioner.

“It brought back a lot of memories,” said Alice Blair, wife of Deacon Blair and a member of St. Theresa of Avila Church.

“It brought back so many memories,” said Leah Sadden, a parishioner of Holy Ghost Church in Hammond.

“To me, it was very warm,” said Anita Harper, a parishioner at St. Jude the Apostle Church.

“I mean they were so cordial, and the songs are beautiful, but they made it light, with a little bit of comedy in it. It was just perfect. I just thought it was wonderful. Everybody sang along and clapped and cried.”

DVDS of the performance will be available at retreats.arch-no.org.
### Scholarships Fund Contributions February – May

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**Who do I contact to establish or contribute to a fund?**  
To create a fund or to make a contribution to an existing fund, please send it to the Vocations and Seminarians Department, P. O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028. For information call 225-336-8778. This is only a partial list of all Seminary Scholarship Funds.

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

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

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

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**Business of Baton Rouge Seminary Scholarship Funds**

**Scholarship Fund Contributions February – May**

**St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland**  
In Honor of: Fr. Jamin David’s 10th Anniversary of Priesthood  
By: CDA St. Margaret #2678 $250.00

Staff, St. Margaret $250.00

Caroline Girdwood $100.00

Chuck/Sandy Raborn $100.00

Joseph/Lucie Hanewinkel $50.00

St. Margaret Seminarian Appreciation Crawfish Boil $2,264.00 $13,125.85

**Father Clarence Waguespack Jr.**  
Repose of the Soul of: Gloria P. Dupre, Olga F. Dufresne, Father Clarence Waguespack Jr.

By: James/Mary Robert $20.00

In Honor of: Seminarian Mathew Dunn  
By: Dr./Mrs. Carl J. Poche $2,000.00 $35,552.43

**NEW**

Father Michael “Mike” John Collins  
In Memory of: Fr. Michael “Mike” Collins

By: Court Regina Coeli #2063/CDA $500.00

By: Pam Fontenot $10,000

Father Maynard E “Tippy” Hurst  
In Memory of: Evelyn Norsworthy

Adelé Brouillette

Ruby Casemore

Marjorie Acosta

Alexander Dunlak

Patricia Scanlan

Theresa Robbins

Al Aucin

Agnes Saizan

Phyllis Moore

Jim McClin

John Ryan

Kerry Bedell

Christian McNabb

Linda Haws

Howard Baumann

Loryn Whittington

Lugger Cedotal

June Olivier

Vivian Huber

By: Cl. St. Francis of Assisi #1915, Barbara Schmitt, Patricia Ryan, Roberta Farrell, Margaret Blackwell, Rose Marie Cronin, Lucy Curry, Lyn Deville, Pat Pavlovich $285.00 $15,345.00

**Bishop Stanley J. Ott**  
In Memory of: Olga Dufresne

By: Emily Mitchell $25.00

Sylvia and Judy Faucheux $20.00 $28,444.50

Monsignor Leonard Robin  
By: Court St. John #1214 CDA $100.00 $21,774.16
Legislature allocates $13 million to OLOL

Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital received a nearly $13 million boost from the Louisiana Legislature in the recently completed regular session.

House Bill 2, also known as the Capital Outlay bill, included $5 million of priority one funding and $7,763,900 priority two funding. Gov. John Bel Edwards signed the bill into law June 7.

“On behalf of our entire ministry and Louisiana’s children, we want to thank those Baton Rouge area legislators who worked so diligently to secure critical funding for the freestanding Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital,” said K. Scott Wester, president and CEO of Our Lady of the Lake. “Without their extraordinary efforts this funding would not have been possible.

“We’d also like to thank Gov. Edwards for his continued support. The health of countless children from throughout Louisiana will be improved because of their efforts.”

Wester said the hospital is a collaborative effort among the OLOL health system, the state of Louisiana, individual philanthropic donations and communities at large. He emphasized the funding is an investment that will play a significant role in the purchase of life-saving equipment.

He noted that children are not just small adults and that they require 40 percent more care that is specialized in practice, precision and materials.


“If we’re going to positively impact health improvement overall then we must invest in healthier children.”

He added that the state’s funding will help advance that vision.

“Our freestanding children’s hospital will attract more families from parishes statewide and the region who will travel to receive the most advanced care for their children. This increase in demand will yield substantial contributions to Louisiana and ensure a strong future for our state.”

The freestanding Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital is scheduled to open in 2019.

The six-story 350,000-square feet hospital will be located on a 66-acre campus adjacent to Interstate 10. One full floor will be dedicated to the St. Jude Affiliate Clinic and inpatient hematology/oncology services.

The St. Jude clinic is one of a few in the country affiliated with St. Jude Children’s Hospital in Memphis.

The hospital will also include an expanded state-of-the-art emergency room, children’s playrooms on every floor, increased surgical space and intensive care beds and a family resource center.

Additionally, a 95,000-square foot medical building is being constructed next to the hospital.

“This project is a substantial investment in our region and will be an economic driver of growth,” Wester said. “An increased depth and breadth of pediatric specialists, coupled with our exceptional pediatric residency program, will establish our hospital as a regional center of health care excellence.

“Our freestanding children’s hospital will attract more families from parishes statewide and the region who will travel to receive the most advanced care for their children. This increase in demand will yield substantial contributions to Louisiana and ensure a strong future for our state.”

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital is building a freestanding hospital that will serve children across the Gulf South. Construction is underway, and doors are expected to open in 2019.

The Catholic Commentator earns seven LPA awards

The Catholic Commentator earned seven Louisiana Press Association awards, which were announced during the annual LPA luncheon on June 16 in New Orleans.

Editor Richard Meek won the Sam Hanna Award for Best Regular Column as well as earning first and second place awards in Best Single Editorial.

Reporter Bonny Van won a third place award in Best News Category for her story on the challenges inmates face upon re-entry into society.

Graphic designer Nicole Latilais won three awards, including third place in Best Layout and Design for Giving Across the Diocese, third place in Best Ad Campaign for Anthony’s Deli, and third place in In-Paper Production for a series of promotional ads for The Catholic Commentator.

By mid-spring, construction on the new children’s hospital was 60 percent complete. Photo provided by Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center

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The Catholic Commentator

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Father Joseph Vu appointed pastor

Father Joseph Vu has been appointed pastor at the cluster parishes of St. Anne Church in Napoleonville, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Plattenville and St. Philomena Church in Labadieville by Bishop Robert W. Muench. Father Vu’s appointment is effective July 2.

Father Vu was born Sept. 2, 1987 in Baton Rouge, and graduated from Bishop Sullivan High School in 2005. He was ordained May 25, 2013 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge by Bishop Muench.

Father Vu has been serving as administrator at St. Philomena, Assumption of the Virgin Mary and St. Anne since July 1, 2017.

He also served as parochial vicar at Christ the King Church and Catholic Center in Baton Rouge from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014.

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Readings at funeral Mass/ Sunday shopping

Q Are there restrictions as to which scriptural readings may be used at a Catholic funeral Mass? My dad has told me that he wants St. Matthew 25:31-40 to be read when he dies. He has always liked that reading and has lived his life accordingly. Is it possible to use this passage at his funeral?

A The Order of Christian Funerals is the ritual book approved for Catholic funerals in the United States. It offers a selection of 45 different scriptural passages for the first and second readings of the Mass and for the Gospel.

In most parishes, it is customary for the pastor or a member of the parish staff to meet with the family of the deceased to decide which of the readings will be selected for the funeral Mass. Often, the family also has input as to what musical pieces will be played and sung. Many parishes publish a booklet containing some of the more popular scriptural passages, so that the family can read and reflect before making their selections.

The passage that your father favors, in which Jesus welcomes into heaven those who have been kind to the needy, saying, “I was hungry and you gave me food” is, in fact, one of the suggested readings.

Other scriptural passages that are frequently chosen include: Wisdom 3:1-9 ("The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God"); Romans 6:3-9 ("Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the hand of God"); Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39 ("If God is for us, who can be against us?"); and the Gospel of St. John 14:1-6 ("In my father’s house, there are many dwelling places").

I have often found that, in planning a funeral, sensitive attention to the desires of the family can go a long way to comfort people in their time of sorrow.

Q I am a sports professional and have various opportunities for endorsement deals. Can you tell me whether it’s all right to be sponsored by a brand whose stores are open on Sundays? (I know that Sunday shopping is a grave sin.)

A First, I admire the question. It shows a special sensitivity to the importance of spiritual values. The morality of Sunday shopping depends, in my mind, on what you are shopping for. I can see how you might need a carton of orange juice, a newspaper or a bottle of Advil on a Sunday; but skis or a new tennis racquet don’t seem to present an urgency, and they could well wait until Monday.

A sporting goods store (which I presume is what you’re talking about), by staying open on Sunday, could be forcing its employees to forfeit a day of worship, family time and suitable relaxation. I would be hesitant, though, to say that Sunday shopping is necessarily a grave sin. If you were to skip Mass in order to shop, that might indeed be a grave sin and I would question those who spend several hours every Sunday doing the family shopping for the week when a different day could work just as well.

In your own situation, the ideal would be to tell the company trying to recruit you that they find your policy of Sunday openings objectionable; coming from a professional athlete, that might have an impact. Alternatively, I suppose, you could take the job and work from the inside to change the company’s business practice – but I see that as being unlikely.

Q Who are the men protecting Pope Francis? Who is wearing suits and ties and what are they? Are they part of the Italian national police force, Swiss Guards or a private security firm?

A The men you see in suits and ties protecting the pope, especially on trips outside of Rome, come from a variety of security forces. The storied 500-year-old Swiss Guard, clad in colorful uniforms when they guard the entrances to the Vatican, also have armed plainclothes members who travel with the pontiff.

In addition, the Vatican has its own 130-member police force, the gendarmerie corps, who are assigned to accompany the pope. (Domenico Giani, the inspector general of this corps, is the pope’s personal bodyguard and is often seen off the front fender of the popemobile.)

Also, on foreign visits, the host nation’s own security force – as per diplomatic protocol – is heavily involved in orchestrating the pope’s protection.

The difficulty comes in trying to balance security interests with a pope’s desire to minister in a personal way to his flock. Once, shortly after the 1981 attack on St. John Paul II’s life at an audience in St. Peter’s Square, I asked a Swiss Guard if there would be stricter security protocols in place going forward. The guard said, smiling but with a touch of frustration, “You can keep people away from the pope, but you’ll never be able to keep this pope away from the people.”

I saw this exemplified in 1995 when St. John Paul visited New York City. I had been charged with managing the movements of the “tight pool,” the handful of videographers and still photographers who were given close-up access at each of the papal sites, and so I had a U.S. Secret Service agent assigned to me.

When the pope came out of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the plan had called for him to get into the popemobile and ride the one long block to the cardinal’s residence. Instead, St. John Paul decided to wade into the crowd on the sidewalk and began shaking hands. I said to the agent, “That must terrify you when he departs from the plan.” To my surprise, the agent said, “Actually, it’s the safest thing of all. If we don’t know what he’s going to do, then nobody else can know either.”

FATHER DOYLE is a retired priest in the Diocese of Albany, New York. Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.
Metanoia Manor ‘taking care of the children’

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

“Actually, before I came here, one of the girls said, ‘Sister Norma, where are you going?’ And I said I had to go do a presentation and she said, ‘Can I come?’ I said, ‘No yet, baby, not yet. Maybe one day you will,’” said Sister Norma Nunez SOM during a May meeting of the Women in Spirit at the parish hall of St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge.

The narrative was more than just an exchange between Sister Norma and the teen girl. Those few words described the deep connection between Sister Norma and her young charges, adolescent girls who have been the victims of human trafficking who are now residents at Metanoia Manor, a safe house in the Baton Rouge area.

Sister Norma is one of four Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy who live at Metanoia Manor and provide 24/7 care for victims of human trafficking. She explained how members of her congregation ended up in Louisiana for this mission.

“Our congregation was founded in Rome in 1821,” she said. “We take care of the sick and the elderly and we have schools,” she said. “We take charge, whatever the need of our time, and rightly enough, at this time, we are taking care of the children and victims of human trafficking and that is the need of our time.”

Sister Norma then launched into the horrors of human trafficking, especially sex trafficking involving young girls, who are constantly abused, forced to work both day and night, and often sold to someone else for the same purpose, causing incredible psychological damage.

“God definitely wants us to be happy and enjoy life and recognize his infinite love and goodness through each one of us,” she said. “But, in human traffickers’ minds, it’s about taking advantage of someone’s innocence and weakness.

“As Pope Francis said, (human trafficking) is a crime against humanity, against human dignity. It splinters happiness, it splinters families, distorts global markets and underlines rule and law and it’s international criminal activity.”

Sister Norma then cited “devaluation of life, treating fellow human beings as a possession for pleasure or profit” with creating the “big business” of selling human beings.

“Human traffickers make $32 billion a year,” she said.

In 2014, Pope Francis called a conference on human trafficking at the Vatican, calling on “religious men and women to take care of the children.”

“Especially in the peripheral areas,” Sister Norma said, repeating the pope’s words. “‘Take care of the children; they are being abused; they are being misused.’ Ultimately, Metanoia Manor is a mission, a response to the call of God.”

And, the mission to get more people involved continues for Father Jeff Bayhi, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Zachary and founder of Metanoia Manor. An international conference on human trafficking held in Zachary on May 7 brought together Gov. John Bel Edwards; Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), co-chair of the Congressional Victims’ Rights Caucus; Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences; Father Bayhi and many government agencies involved in combating the crime.

“More often than not, success comes from the bottom up and not the top down,” said Father Bayhi. “And, we’re hoping we laid the groundwork for that. One of our real goals is to educate (religious leaders) about what’s going on and have them get on the pulpit and talk about the horrors of this new form of slavery. Then, very possibly, their people will step forward and we think that’s where our greatest success is going to be.”

For Sister Norma, the mission is more immediate in dealing with the aftermath of the victims.

“The survival efforts of these girls is so high, so extensive, so difficult,” she said. “One day we say, ‘We got this. We got this.’ But no, the next morning, it’s different. But when we sisters talk at night and we share, ‘Yes, we are doing something.’ Little steps. Little by little at a time because these girls are suffering from trauma; trauma regardless of where you come from, Russia, Nigeria or American girls.”

Metanoia, which means change of heart, has also changed Sister Norma in ways she never expected. Now on the job for two years, she says she has grown as a person and in her relationship with God.

Faced with a problem, she said she’ll “go to the chapel and tell Jesus, ‘You have to teach me about what to do and what to say ... Okay, I'll wait.’”

Gathering at the end of the day with her sisters, she said they all begin to recognize the little miracles happening around them.

“There are many, many miracles happening everyday if you will just sit and ponder and think,” she said. “Really, Jesus is there because he walks in front of us. We are one with him.

“Being at Metanoia Manor and taking care of these children is very different from what I knew my mission before. It’s just like falling in love. It means when you fall in love with someone you do more. That’s what I do everyday for Metanoia, I do more because I’m loving the service. It’s not a job, it’s a service.

“If I can save one child at a time, and that someone can find God in her life and faith, Jesus is the one who is giving me the strength and he is the one who is guiding me every day.”

For more information on Metanoia manor, visit metanoia-mc.org.

GOSPEL ▼

From page 2

Jesus. Ask for healing and believe it will happen.

At times the healing is not physical, but a spiritual one. I have personally prayed daily for more than 10 years that a loved one be cured from a chronic illness. Despite the reality of the continued presence of the disease, I can truly see the glory of God shine from this person. It is a real miracle for their sustained health, and an even further miracle that their joy radiates as a light of Christ’s merciful love. Would we expect anything less from God than to see his love and mercy radiate in the life of a suffering soul who arises by the hands of Jesus? Let us place those we know into the trusted care of Jesus’ hands and believe He has the power to transform. This is a real miracle. This faith will, indeed, bring life.

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

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Deavers honored at CPA’s Annual Memorial Mass

Former Catholic Commentator editor Laura Deavers was honored during the annual Catholic Press Association Memorial Mass in Green Bay, Wisconsin on June 15.

Deavers, who served as editor of The Catholic Commentator for 30 years, died Sept. 13 at the age of 69. She was a native of Baton Rouge and served as editor from 1984-2013.

Deavers was a graduate of St. Joseph’s Academy and LSU.

The Memorial Mass was celebrated during the CPA’s annual convention.

RACIAL SOBERTY – An estimated 50 people attended an Introducing Racial Sobriety seminar June 9 at St. Michael Parish Hall in Convent. The seminar was sponsored by St. Michael and the St. James Parish Sheriff’s Office. Father Clarence Williams CPPS, who presents lectures and workshops on racism to civic, educational leaders throughout the United States, South American, Africa and Europe, facilitated the seminar. Father Williams, the author of “Racial Sobriety: Becoming the Change You Want to See,” also presented the seminar on June 8 at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center in Baton Rouge. Deacon Alfred Adams, director of the Office of Black Catholics which helped put on the seminars, said he hopes the seminars are a “new beginning to a problem which we are all under the influences and we all need to be racially sober.” Photo provided by Dina Dow | Office of Evangelization and Catechesis

Laura Deavers

The Back to School special section will be in the July 20 issue of The Catholic Commentator. Find out what will be happening in the Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools for the 2018-2019 school year.

Deadline is July 10!

To inquire about advertising your products and services to this specialized market or space reservation contact Wanda Koch at 225-387-0983 or email wkoch@diobr.org.
St. Theresa reaching out to Hispanic youth

St. Theresa of Avila Church in Gonzales is joining in the church’s mission of uniting faith with culture by welcoming its Hispanic population into its faith family. One of the ways is merging its Hispanic PSR and faith family. One of the ways is merging Hispanics within the Gonzales area.

“Toward being one parish.”

“moving forward and doing what we are called to do,” said Soulier.

She said St. Theresa wants to be sure that the transition is a positive experience for everyone and that it’s a period of growth.

“With changes there are bumps in the road, but I believe we can work together. We’re moving forward and doing what we are called to do,” said Soulier.

Father Eric Gyan, who is pastor at St. Theresa School of Religion and parish school of religion were both held in the same building but were operating as two separate entities. By merging the PSR classes, there will be more continuity and assurance that all of the children will receive a continuous religious formation.

Angela Tovar, a member of St. Theresa who teaches RCIA classes at the Hispanic Apostolate in Baton Rouge, said the success of the merger will be in making the Hispanic families feel welcome.

She noted that many of the children already speak English and communicate with the other children at St. Theresa School and efforts are being made to provide assistance for children who do not speak English. One or both of the parents, however, may not speak English and she is making herself available to answer their questions.

“I’ve had parents ask, ‘Are you (Hispanic Apostolate, presence) going to be there? I said, ‘We’re still going to be there. If you can’t speak English I want to help.’” said Tovar.

Blair and Tovar stressed that details have to be worked out, and interest among the Hispanic population has to be gauged before the merger is fully implemented.

“This is a work in progress,” said Blair.

St. Theresa youth coordinator Edith “Duke” Soulier expressed the excitement at St. Theresa regarding its efforts to be further include Hispanics in its community life.

“I’m scared but in a good way,” said Soulier. “I’m open-hearted and open-minded. That’s what our faith is about. We need to be inspired and engaged. We are one body.”

She continued, “Everyone is welcomed to come here for Jesus. That’s what we’re here for.”

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

St. Theresa of Avila Church in Gonzales is joining in the church’s mission of uniting faith with culture by welcoming its Hispanic population into its faith family. One of the ways is merging its Hispanic PSR and parish PSR programs and encouraging Hispanic youth to become involved in the church’s vacation Bible school and youth group.

“I’m excited,” said Father Eric Gyan, who visited with the Hispanic families during registration. “It feels so good to find that we’re moving toward being one parish.”

Father Gyan, who is pastor at St. Theresa, said there is a positive “we can do this” outlook at the parish, which currently offers a Spanish-speaking Mass. He plans to brush up on some of his own basic Spanish-speaking skills.

He said the Hispanic Apostolate of the Diocese of Baton Rouge works to meet the needs of the Hispanic population in church parishes throughout the diocese, and it is St. Theresa’s goal to assist the apostolate in that mission, particularly serving Hispanics within the Gonzales area.

“There’s a unique Catholic component that comes from the Hispanic culture which we want to work to preserve,” said Father Gyan.

We are going to do our best to get caught up to speed with the Hispanic population.”

According to Alice Blair, director of Christian Formation at St. Theresa, the Hispanic parish school of religion and parish school of religion were both held in the same building but were operating as two separate entities. By merging the PSR classes, there will be more continuity and assurance that all of the children will receive a continuous religious formation.

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Assumption was founded on April 1793, making it the oldest church along Bayou Lafourche and 11th oldest in Louisiana. The official registers were opened April 20, 1793 and the first entry, a baptism, was recorded four days later. The first church, which was diminutive in size, was erected on the side of the current church. In 1817, the wardens of the newly incorporated church voted to build a new church, which was dedicated Dec. 20, 1819. The Sisters of Loretta at the Foot of the Cross opened a school. Ten years later, the Vincentian Fathers established the first seminary for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. In 1855, the seminary burned, and three years later the Vincentian priests left. Assumption made history in November 1984 when it was clustered with St. Anne Church in Napoleonville, thus forming the first cluster parishes in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. St. Philomena Church in Labadieville is now included in the cluster. The current church was dedicated in 1856, built with bricks made in Plattenville. Since then, the church has undergone several renovations, including those to make it conform to Vatican II standards. Assumption was founded on April 1793, making it the oldest church along Bayou Lafourche and 11th oldest in Louisiana. The official registers were opened April 20, 1793 and the first entry, a baptism, was recorded four days later. The first church, which was diminutive in size, was erected on the side of the current church. In 1817, the wardens of the newly incorporated church voted to build a new church, which was dedicated Dec. 20, 1819. The Sisters of Loretta at the Foot of the Cross opened a school. Ten years later, the Vincentian Fathers established the first seminary for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. In 1855, the seminary burned, and three years later the Vincentian priests left. Assumption made history in November 1984 when it was clustered with St. Anne Church in Napoleonville, thus forming the first cluster parishes in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. St. Philomena Church in Labadieville is now included in the cluster. The current church was dedicated in 1856, built with bricks made in Plattenville. Since then, the church has undergone several renovations, including those to make it conform to Vatican II standards. Assumption made history in November 1984 when it was clustered with St. Anne Church in Napoleonville, thus forming the first cluster parishes in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. St. Philomena Church in Labadieville is now included in the cluster. The current church was dedicated in 1856, built with bricks made in Plattenville. Since then, the church has undergone several renovations, including those to make it conform to Vatican II standards. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Plattenville celebrated its 225th anniversary during 11 a.m. on June 10. A Family Day followed Mass. The upper photo shows an interior of the church during the 1920s. Left, pastor Father Joseph Vu celebrates the anniversary Mass. The church, which was dedicated in 1856, has undergone several changes during the years, including those to make the church conforms to Vatican II standards. Photos courtesy of the Archives Department of the Diocese of Baton Rouge and by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator
Students perform missionary work at home

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

"It's no vacation. It's time to get down and dirty and to serve our community," said Sherri Klemm, theology teacher and Baton Rouge Mission coordinator at St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, in describing the experiences of youth who are having their "first blush" of missionary work at home this summer.

SJIA students who want to go on a missionary trip overseas must first serve in Baton Rouge to discover the sacrifice and hard work it takes to serve overseas.

Among the places the teens worked was the St. Vincent de Paul Society, cleaning, scraping, sanding, spackling and painting walls and serving people coming into the dining hall.

The youth's interaction with those in the dining hall was life changing for them.

Corinne Carnaggio, a rising junior, said she met a man at the shelter who had been in and out of foster homes as a youth, and when he finally seemed to be on his feet, he invited some "friends" to come live with him who stole from him and left him with no money.

"I saw so much of Christ in him," Carnaggio said. "Even as he (Christ) gave everything up for us, I saw Christ in him."

She said one of the youth told the man about the "Footsteps in the Sand" poem, in which Christ reveals to a man looking back over struggles he had that there was only one set of footprints, Christ was carrying him.

"He was crying and saying, 'That's how I feel. That's the only way I'm getting through this,'" said Carnaggio.

Camille Schexnayder, a rising sophomore, said she believed she was making a difference when she visited the Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter for Women and Children.

"There was one lady who was homeless and sick," said Schexnayder. "She was so happy to see us hold her baby. She was in tears – she didn't want to be there, but she was happy we were there."

Schaexnayder said she would like to take a mission trip to Thailand or Fiji.

"They also have scuba diving. They have fun built into it," smiled Schexnayder.

Rhianna Soucie, a rising junior, felt that serving locally was a good preparation for a future trip to Peru.

"I'd like to help them with technology," said San Soucie.

Jordan Mathis, a rising junior, said, "I always wanted to serve my community, but I didn't know how."

Mathis had recently returned from a Catholic Leadership Encounter (CLE) for SJA and Catholic High School in Baton Rouge students in Colorado. "When I went to CLE I finally understood how I can do it."

The mission opened Mathis’ eyes to the fact that the meaning of poverty doesn’t exclusively mean homelessness.

"They’re (those receiving assistance from SVDP) just a few dollars above poverty," said Carnaggio.

She added, "Most of them are optimistic. They can see a future for themselves and I think that’s amazing."

Madison Henderson, a rising junior, said she met some interesting people through the mission work.

"At the shelter I met two women who were originally from New Orleans and were models and worked at an off Broadway theater there," said Henderson.

"I also talked to a man (at lunch) and he melted my heart. He said he knew some of the custodians at St. Joseph’s."

In addition to working at SVDP, the missionaries danced, sang, dabbed paint and glitter and a and cheered on exceptional children at the Capable Arts Camp at First United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge.

The camp was hosted by the church, St. Lillian Academy in Baton Rouge and McMain’s Children’s Developmental Center in Baton Rouge.

Adelle Bourg, a rising sophomore, said, "I really enjoyed seeing the smiles and the joy on their faces. I never have been with kids with special needs that much, and I learned that I really do like working with them."

She was among the proud volunteers on the sidelines as the children demonstrated to their parents what they had learned during the week during a performance and art show.

Next: Blessings Mission
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Space and time is limited.

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**Adrift**

STX

Fairly routine adventure, adapted by director Baltasar Kormakur from Tami Oldham Ashcraft’s (Shailene Woodley) memoir about surviving 41 days on a storm-wrecked yacht in the Pacific. A carefree California girl whose only ambition is to sail the world, in 1983 Tahiti she meets a handsome British yachtsman (Sam Claflin), and they’re soon inseparable and planning their wedding. A friend (Jeffrey Thomas) who has to fly to America for an emergency, asks them to accompany parent or adult guardian NC-17 – No one under 17 admitted

**Hotel Artemis**

Global Road

The hostelry of the title is, in fact, a secretive version of the future. Left a widower and a quadriplegic after a seemingly random attack by a group of thugs (led by Benedict Hardie), an auto mechanic (Logan Marshall-Green) agrees to let a wealthy inventor (Harrison Gilbertson) implant an artificial intelligence chip into his body that will cure his paralysis. But the device, which has a Siri-like voice (Simon Maiden) only he can hear, not only restores his normal abilities, it endows him with superhuman fighting prowess, enabling him to embark on a trail of investigation and revenge along which he must stay one step ahead of the police detective (Betty Gabriel) assigned to his case. Writer-director Leigh Whannell’s cautionary tale about the dangers of technology run amok eventually sees man and machine struggling for control, and only the reliance of the human host to obey the ever-more savage will of his inhuman opponent will redeem for at least some grown viewers a film others will justifiably deem offensive. Much gory, occasionally gruesome, violence, mature themes, including vengeance and suicide, a scene of marital sensuality, a handful of profanities, numerous rough and crude terms. L; R

**Won’t You Be My Neighbor?**

Focus

This chaotic, poorly crafted comedy amounts to little more than an endless succession of painful, supposedly amusing, pratfalls. Johnny Knoxville stars as the owner of a low-rent amusement park in the California of the late 1970s where the constant risk of injury allegedly adds spice to the fun. While entertaining his visiting daughter (Eleanor Worthington-Cox) for the summer, the divorced dad must also contend with a scheming businessman’s (Dan Bakkedahl) efforts to acquire his land and with competition from a more respectable establishment nearby. Besides being mind-numbingly boring, director Tim Kirkby’s film treats underage drinking as a rite of passage and furtive sex as a sight gag. Brief but graphic sexual activity, rear male nudity, sexual and scatological humor, about a dozen uses of profanity, several milder oaths, frequent rough and crude language. O; R

**Hotel Artemis**

Global Road

The hostelry of the title is, in fact, a secret, strongly secured hospital for criminals in the dystopian Los Angeles of the near future. As the riot-torn city spirals into chaos, a cross section of underworld types seeks shelter there, under the protection of the clinic’s troubled, eccentric head nurse (Jodie Foster) and the muscle-bound orderly (Dave Bautista) who enforces her strict rules. They include an assassin-for-hire (Sofia Boutella), two brothers (Sterling K. Brown and Brian Tyree Henry) wounded in a robbery attempt, a surly arms dealer (Charlie Day) and, eventually, the dreaded kingpin (Jeff Goldblum) who owns the place. Writer-director Drew Pearce gets things off to a stylish start, and Foster’s blend of toughness and vulnerability is compelling. But by the time the hyperviolent conclusion is reached, gore and bone-crunching have replaced creativity. Much bloody, sometimes grisly, violence, drug use, sexual references, about a dozen profanities, at least one milder oath, pervasive rough and crude language. L; R

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**Movie Reviews**

USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting

**Classification:**

- A-I – General patronage
- A-II – Adults and adolescents
- A-III – Adults
- A-IV – Adults, with reservations
- L – Limited adult audience
- O – Morally offensive

**Motion Picture Association of America ratings:**

- G – General audiences; all ages admitted
- PG – Parental guidance suggested; some material may not be suitable for children
- PG-13 – Parents are strongly cautioned to give special guidance for attendance of children under 13; some material may be inappropriate for young children
- R – Restricted; under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian
- NC-17 – No one under 17 admitted

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**Sunday Mass**

from St. Joseph Cathedral

LIVE at 10am

Replays:
- 12:30pm
- 4:30pm
- 6:30pm

**The Catholic Commentator**

Serving the Diocese of Baton Rouge since 1963

THECATHOLICCOMMENTATOR.ORG

Printing some 40,000 copies every other week for the Diocese of Baton Rouge
Sta. Teresa acercándose a los jóvenes hispanos

Por Debbie Shellie

La Iglesia de Sta. Teresa en Gonzales se une a la misión de unir fe y cultura, dándole la bienvenida a la población Hispánica en su familia de fe. Una de estas formas es trabajando para fusionar el PSR Hispano (Escuela de Religión de la Parroquia por sus siglas en inglés) y los programas de PSR de la parroquia, y animando a los niños hispanos a que se involucren en la escuela de la Biblia en las vacaciones y con el grupo de jóvenes.

“Esto muy emocionado” dijo el Padre Eric Gyan, radiante, quien habló con las familias Hispánicas durante la inscripción. “Se siente tan bien el darnos cuenta de que estamos caminando hacia el ser una parroquia”.

El Padre Gyan dijo que hay una perspectiva positiva de que “podemos hacer esto” en la parroquia, que actualmente ofrece una misa en español. Está planeando ponerse al día en su español básico.

Dijo que el Apostolado Hispano de la Diócesis de Baton Rouge trabaja para satisfacer las necesidades de la población hispana en las parroquias de la diócesis, y es la meta de Sta. Teresa el apoyar al apostolado en esa misión, particularmente cuando se trata de servir a los hispanos dentro del área de Gonzales.

“Hay un confidente católico que viene de la cultura hispánica, que queremos trabajar para preservar” dijo el Padre Gyan.

Vamos a poner lo mejor de nuestra parte para ponernos al día con la población hispánica. De acuerdo con Alice Blair, directora de Formación Cristiana de Sta. Teresa, la escuela de religión hispánica y la escuela de religión de la parroquia se llevaran a cabo en el mismo edificio, pero

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Sexual abuse policy in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

Churches, schools and youth organizations have an obligation to provide children and youth with a safe place to worship, study or participate in activities sponsored by the Catholic Church.

In its ongoing effort to ensure that this is being accomplished, the Diocese of Baton Rouge has established an office of Child and Youth Protection. With the establishment of this office, the diocese has also implemented a process for reporting alleged abuse of a minor.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge has trained professionals available to provide counseling and information about additional care if needed. Information about reporting an incident is printed here in the three languages that are more commonly used in this diocese: English, Vietnamese and Spanish.

Issues relating to the Protection of Children and Young People

Mrs. Amy Cordón serves as Child and Youth Protection Officer of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Her offices are at the Catholic Life Center, 1800 South Acadian Thruway, Baton Rouge. Her mailing address is P. O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028; telephone 225-242-0202; fax 225-242-0233.

A special confidential “Sexual Abuse Victim Response Contact Line” to be used in reporting any instance of child sexual abuse by an employee of the Church or a volunteer in one of the Church’s programs has been set up: 225-242-0250.

Anyone victimized as a child or young person is urged to report this first to secular authorities (Louisiana State Police or State of Louisiana Department of Social Services) as well as to the special diocesan “Sexual Abuse Victim Response Contact Line” (telephone 225-242-0250) or to the diocesan counselors at Catholic Charities (telephone 225-336-8708).

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Một đường dây liên lạc đặc biệt và uy tín dành cho việc thông báo những trường hợp lạm dụng tình dục được đề xuất là: 225-242-0250.

Những nạn nhân bị lạm dụng tình dục sẽ được dùng là: 225-242-0250.

En Relación a la Protección de Niños y Gente Joven


Uno de los programas que la Iglesia ha establecido en la línea telefónica especial y confidencial de “Contacto para Responderle a la Víctima del Abuso Sexual” cometido por empleados de la Iglesia o voluntarios: 225-242-0250.

Cualquier persona como un niño o un joven victimizado debe reportar el incidente primero a las autoridades como la Policia Estatal o al Departamento Estatal (Ministerio) de Servicios Sociales así como también a la línea de “Contacto para Responderle a la Víctima del Abuso Sexual” (teléfono 225-242-0250) o a los consejeros de la Diócesis en las Caridades Católicas (teléfono 225-336-8708).

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SOLUTION ON PAGE 18
The most important way we remember Jesus

On Memorial Day, a month ago, the Advocate carried an editorial about remembering the sacrifice of our fallen military. A note at the end of the editorial said that it was a yearly rewrite with some changes to bring it up to date. That was proper, the editors thought, because we must celebrate this important holiday every year to remind all Americans that “freedom is not free.”

The following Sunday we Catholics celebrated our yearly feast of Corpus Christi (the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ). The same could be said for the purpose of that feast, although it has several closely connected meanings for the Mass that we celebrate every day. It is no wonder that the Mass has layers of meaning, since one tradition came from St. Mark, and then St. Matthew writing 10 years later who followed St. Mark. A second tradition is that of St. Paul who wrote in the 50s, 10 years or more before St. Mark. St. Luke, St. Paul’s disciple, treats the Mass like St. Paul, but adds a eucharistic story that has deep meaning for us today.

St. Mark, St. Matthew and St. Luke all have the same words of consecration. Jesus took bread, broke it and said, “Take and eat. This (bread) is my body.” “Take and drink. This is the cup of my blood which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of my blood which will be poured out for you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as (your) fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.”

St. Paul was just as realistic when he referred to the eucharistic “cups of blessing” as “participation in the Blood of Christ” and the eucharistic bread as “participation in the Body of Christ” (1 Cor 10:16). This isn’t mere symbolism. Jesus says that he abides in us through the Eucharist and whoever communicates with him in this way will live forever. It was a hard saying for some of his own disciples to believe. But, as we say today, Jesus didn’t walk back what he said, instead he doubled down on it. “For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”

In his Emmaus story of Easter Sunday about the two disciples and their mystery guest, St. Luke teaches us something important. To the plea of the disciples to stay with them and continue explaining the Scriptures, the mystery guest responds not with a lecture but with a ritual action. He breaks bread and gives it to them. Then, at the moment they recognize him as “the risen one,” he vanishes from their sight. St. Luke is writing for future generations like us, who have not seen, but believe. He wants us to see that we encounter the risen Christ in the Eucharist. In God’s plan, the church continues through the presence of the sacramental Christ. God no longer wants animal sacrifices. He wants our lives consecrated to him through our union with Jesus. And Jesus gives us his body and blood in the bread and wine of the Mass as his real presence with us, wanting, in return, our lives offered as living sacrifices. Even more than freedom, grace is not cheap.

Lacking the Mass, at his great evangelical meetings, Billy Graham invented altar calls. We, following the oldest tradition, have always had ours. What we do in memory of Jesus is our vow, renewed in every communion, to live in him and by him and through him.

It is a mystery, as to some extent, all sacraments are. Great theologians have created words like transubstantiation to try to explain it. It remains a mystery, yet true in the faith, consolation and strength, that it gives. Perhaps the philosopher Blaise Pascal captured the best way to think of the Eucharist. He wrote: “How I hate this folly of not believing in the Eucharist! If the Gospel be true, if Jesus Christ be God, what difficulty is there?”

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.

God no longer wants animal sacrifices. He wants our lives consecrated to him through our union with Jesus.

Letters to the Editor

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

Mission Statement

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

Any one who has ever watched a fire knows that at a point the flames subside and disappear into smoldering coals which themselves eventually cool and turn into cold, grey ash. But there’s a moment in that process, before they cool off, that the coals can be stirred so as to make them burst into flame again.

That’s the image St. Paul uses to encourage us to rekindle the fires of our faith when they seem to be burning down. In short, he says that we need to stir into flame the gift of God that was once given you.” It’s a meaningful image. Our faith sometimes needs some stirring in its roots to make it alive and affective again. But how’s that to be done? How do we stir into flame again the fire of our faith?

We stir our faith back into flame by re-situating ourselves inside its roots. Despite the fact that faith is a divine gift, it can be helpful sometimes to journey back and examine what earthly forces helped the faith persist inside us.

Who and what helped give us faith? Of course, that’s a deeply personal question that each of us can only answer for himself or herself. For myself, when I try to go back and touch the roots of my faith a number of things come into focus.

First, there was the faith and witness of my parents, the critical piece. Faith was the most important thing in their lives and they did everything in their power to ensure that this was true too for us, their children. And in their lives and they did everything in their power to ensure that this was true too for us, their children. And their lives never belied their faith. That’s a strong witness and a gift of inestimable value.

Then there was the witness of my parish church, my school and its teachers, my family friends and my neighbors. My faith was nurtured by what my parish church did. My faith was nurtured by the dedication and faith witness of my parish church.

But, that being admitted, God's voice was there too, unavoidable, clear. I know that because much of my youthful fear, timidity, and superego have long since departed, and the voice of the God of my youth remains inside me still.

However, now, that sometimes voice can be quite silent, and it can feel as simply the voice of the naivety of my youth – Santa, the Easter Bunny, and Jesus - and not something that’s real anymore or indeed ever was really real. For me, as for everyone, faith-wise, sometimes my imagination and affectivity simply run dry so that my preoccupations preclude God’s presence.

It’s then that I need to stir the seemingly smoldering coals of my faith by making a journey back to reground myself in the reality of my parents’ faith, in the reality of what branded my soul in our small parish community, in the reality of the witness and catechesis of the Ursuline sisters who taught me, and, not least, in that clear, deeply moral, divine voice that spoke inside me and guided me in my youth.

This kind of journey, I believe, can be helpful for most everybody, with one cautionary flag: The seeming silence of God in our lives as adults can in fact be a deeper modality of God’s presence rather than a sign of a deteriorating faith. The voice of God often seems clear in our youth but later on that clarity gives way to what the mystics call “dark nights of the soul,” where God’s seeming absence is not a question of a loss of faith but of a new, richer, less-imaginative mode of God’s presence in our lives. Fervor is not always a sign of a deep faith, just as the seeming absence of God is not necessarily a sign of a weakening faith. God must be patiently waited for and will arrive in our lives only on God’s terms, not ours.

Even so, St. Paul’s advice remains: “I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that was once given you.”

OB late 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.

Honoring our fathers

B eer. Golf. TV. Mowing. Fishing. According to greeting cards in the store aisles, this is all that modern fathers care about.

Father’s Day is clogged with beer. Golf. TV. Mowing. Fishing. This kind of journey, I believe, can be helpful for most everybody, with one cautionary flag: The seeming silence of God in our lives as adults can in fact be a deeper modality of God’s presence rather than a sign of a deteriorating faith. The voice of God often seems clear in our youth but later on that clarity gives way to what the mystics call “dark nights of the soul,” where God’s seeming absence is not a question of a loss of faith but of a new, richer, less-imaginative mode of God’s presence in our lives. Fervor is not always a sign of a deep faith, just as the seeming absence of God is not necessarily a sign of a weakening faith. God must be patiently waited for and will arrive in our lives only on God’s terms, not ours.

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The Catholic Commentator C OMING EVENTS  June 22, 2018

COMING EVENTS

STA Cheer Camp – The Falcon cheerleaders of St. Thomas Aquinas High School, 14520 Voss Dr., Ham- mond, will host a cheer camp for children ages 4 and above at the school commons Monday, July 30, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., Tuesday, July 30, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., and Wednesday, Aug. 1, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Cost is $100 per child. For information, call 985-974-4846.

Bishop Anniversary Celebration – A Mass in celebra- tion of Bishop Robert W. Muench’s 50th anniversary of priestly ordination will be held Sunday, June 24, 3 p.m., at St. Joseph Cathedral, corner of Fourth and Main Streets, Baton Rouge. A reception will follow in the cathedral hall.

Metairie Retreats – The Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, 5500 St. Mary St., Metairie, will have two upcoming events. Sister Rochelle Perrier MSC will present a Day of Reflection, “Welcoming God Within,” Tues- day, June 26. Registration will begin at 8:45 a.m., and the program will conclude at 2:30 p.m. Father Simeon Gallagher OFMCap will present a silent retreat, “The Questions of Jesus,” Friday, June 29 – Sunday, July 1. For more information about costs and to register for these events, visit retreats.arch-no.org, email retreats@ arch-no.org, or call 1-866-937-9170.

Men’s Retreat – A men’s retreat, hosted by St. Domi- nic Church in New Orleans, will take place Friday, July 20 – Sunday, July 22, at Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula. The retreat is based on the Scripture passage, “The appearance on the road to Emmaus.” For more information, call Norman Madere at 504-481-0411, David Drude, 985-974-0657 or John Fisk at 504-427-6601.

Kid’s Fun Fest – Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Health will sponsor a Kid’s Healthy Fun Fest Saturday, June 23, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., for kids near the Mall of Louisi- ana playland, 6401 Bluebonnet Blvd., Baton Rouge. There will be games, giveaways and health information for the entire family. The first 300 children will receive a free T- shirt. Register online at olochildrens.org.

Hats Off Gala – St. Aubry Ladies’ Auxiliary will host its Hats of Gala Sunday, June 24, 3:30 p.m., at the North Iberville Community Center, 75700 Rosedale Road, Rosedale. There will be entertainment, food and door prizes. Tickets are $10 each. To purchase, call Daisy Hawkins–Thomas at 225-625-2185, Thresa Thomas at 225-776-3392 or Trymeka McCoy at 225-439-4346.

Marriage Help – A Retrouvaille 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 retrovibrcomcoor@gmail.com or visit helpourmarriage.com.

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

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

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5th Grade Teacher Position
St. George Catholic School, a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, is now accepting resumes for consideration for the position of full-time 5th Grade teacher for the 2018-19 school year.

The ideal candidate is:
• Creative
• Organized
• Flexible
• Current in latest teaching methods
• Technologically savvy
• Works well with pre-adolescent and adolescent students
• Excellent class management
• The ability to collaborate with other staff members
• Must be able to certified in Louisiana if certified in another state

Candidate must successfully complete all required fingerprinting and background checks as required by the State of Louisiana and the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Interested candidates should email a cover letter and resume to Jack.nelson@sgschoolbr.org

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HELP WANTED

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

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

From page 1

Father Walsh said that in the encyclical, St. John Paul points to the Beatitudes as a “self-portrait” of Christ, and illustrates this by referring to Jesus’ dialogue with the rich man.

The Scripture passage notes that when the rich man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus tells him to “keep what you have, and give to (the) poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

In the encyclical, St. John Paul writes, “Like the earlier part of Jesus’ answer, this part too must be read and interpreted in the context of the whole moral message of the Gospel, and in particular in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:3-12), the first of which is precisely the Beatitude of the poor, the ‘poor in spirit’ as Saint Matthew makes clear (Mt 5:3), the humble. In this sense it can be said that the Beatitudes are also relevant to the answer given by Jesus to the young man’s question: ‘What good must I do to have eternal life?’ Indeed, each of the Beatitudes promises, from a particular viewpoint, that very ‘good’ which opens man up to eternal life, and indeed is eternal life.”

The encyclical points to the importance of both the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes in understanding truth and what it means to live a good and holy life, according to Father Walsh.

When reading “Veritatis Splendor” Catholics may breathe a sigh of relief when coming upon the words, “The Beatitudes are not specifically concerned with certain particular rules of behavior. Rather, they speak of basic attitudes and dispositions in life and therefore they do not coincide exactly with the commandments.” Yet it is followed with a challenge when it says, “Yet there is no separation or opposition between the Beatitudes and the commandments: both refer to the good, to eternal life. The Sermon on the Mount begins with the proclamation of the Beatitudes, but also refers to the commandments (cf. Mt 5:20-48). At the same time, the Sermon on the Mount demonstrates the openness of the commandments and their orientation towards the horizon of the perfection proper to the Beatitudes. These latter are above all promises, from which there also indirectly flow normative indications for the moral life. In their originality and profundity they are a sort of self-portrait of Christ, and for this very reason are invitations to discipleship and to communion of life with Christ.”

In essence, the Beatitudes help Catholics see the Beatitudes as pointing to the ultimate good found by keeping the commandments, according to Father Walsh.

“In a sense, they give us the second step in advancing on the way to holiness, internalizing what might be called the ‘positive prescriptions of the Law.’ They show us, in a positive sense, what we must do to ‘be perfect, as our heavenly father is perfect’ They show us how to follow Christ,” said Father Walsh.

TERESA ▼

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operaban como dos entidades separadas y “nada era en conjunto”. Al trabajar en fusionar las clases de PSR, habría más continuidad y garantía de que todos los niños van a recibir una formación religiosa continua.

Angela Tovar, miembro de Sta. Teresa que imparte clases de RICA en el Apostolado Hispano en las instalaciones de St. Pius X en Baton Rouge, dijo que el éxito de la fusión se va a dar, haciendo que las familias hispanas se sientan bienvenidas. Ella hizo notar que muchos de los niños ya hablan inglés y se comunican con otros niños de la escuela de Sta. Teresa y se está haciendo un esfuerzo para dar asistencia a los niños que no hablan inglés. Sin embargo, uno o los dos padres quizá no hablen inglés y ella se está poniendo a la disposición para responder a sus preguntas.

“He tenido padres que preguntan ‘Ustedes (el Apostolado Hispano) van a estar ahí?’ Yo les dije que todavía vamos a estar ahí. Si ustedes no pueden hablar inglés, yo quiero ayudar” dijo Tovar.

Blair y Tovar remarcaron que los detalles se tienen que trabajar todavía y el interés entre la población hispana se tiene que medir antes que la fusión esté totalmente implementada.

“Estamos trabajando en eso” dijo Blair. La coordinadora de jóvenes de Sta. Teresa, Edith “Duke” Soulier, expresó el interés de Sta. Teresa por los esfuerzos para incluir a los hispanos en la vida de su comunidad.

“Tengo miedo pero de una buena manera”, dijo Soulier... “Soy de corazón abierto y de mente abierta. De eso se trata nuestra fe. Necesitamos ser inspirados y comprometernos. Sornos un solo cuerpo.”

Ella continuó: “Todos somos bienvenidos a venir aquí por Jesús. Para eso estamos”. Soulier se va a reunir con la gente de la comunidad hispana para hablar de qué manera pueden incluir a los adolescentes en el grupo de jóvenes de Sta. Teresa

Soulier dijo que la participación de la población hispana es “un acto de la iglesia es universal.”

“No hay barrera del idioma cuando se trata de la Eucaristía” dijo Soulier.

También dijo que Sta. Teresa quiere asegurarse de que la transición sea una experiencia positiva para todos y que éste es un periodo de crecimiento.

Con los cambios hay baches en el camino, pero creo que podemos trabajar juntos. Vamos hacia adelante y estamos haciendo lo que somos llamados a hacer dijo Soulier.

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Neighborhood friends

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

The bright, hot summer sun shone like a spotlight on the mom-and-pop neighborhood store Owens Grocery and Market on Balis Street as a large crowd of people gathered to express their gratitude to the store that helped so many of them through the most difficult times. Then broke out a neighborhood party filled with games, food, face painting and a giveaway of 10 bikes to lucky registered participants.

The event was sponsored by St. Aloysius Church in Baton Rouge, and its St. Vincent de Paul Conference and Knights of Columbus, in collaboration with Owens Grocery, the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff and District Attorney’s Offices, the Baton Rouge Police Department, House of God Ministry and New Gideon Baptist Church.

St. Aloysius has a history with Owens and the Balis Street community that goes back several years, beginning with the Daughters of Jesus, who worked together to serve the people of the community.

Sister Josephine particularly was a well-known face in the community.

“Sister Josephine was always stepping in. I would call her and she would make it happen,” Green said.

She said when Sister Josephine would visit the neighborhood store she would spend time with the child “who was raised in the store.” And when the child passed away, Sister Josephine came and provided comfort and healing for the family.

“We knew we could count on her for anything and a prayer,” said Green. “She was a dedicated nun and friend.”

Green recalled, “She (Sister Josephine) was a jokester. We could laugh about a lot of things. She was a small-framed woman with a big accent. She was a petite woman, but with a stern point (when how things should be done).”

But she had a warm heart, and Green’s heart was broken when Sister Josephine and the Daughters of Jesus left for Spain.

“She and my mother worked hand-in-hand. (My mom) should have been a nun,” chuckled Green.

Green and her family were recognized for their service to the community. For example, on the first and second Saturdays, those who have nothing to eat can stop by and get a hot meal. But she said the store is ready to help anytime.

“We were kind of the headquarters,” mused Green, who said the people in need would often ask, “Can you call St. Aloysius?”

“St. Aloysius plays a big part in our lives. They’re like nourishment. They are loving and giving.”

Father Eddie Martin, parochial Vicar at St. Aloysius, said, “It was so wonderful to meet Mrs. Green, somebody who’s lived such a saintly life. She’s such an inspiration and it’s great to honor something that’s positive – a bloom of saintly life. She’s such an inspiration.”

Green said the event, “I thought the street party of a humbling experience, because so many people came out. This is the first time I’ve been able to do it on my property. For them to show love for me and the people of St. Aloysius was a joyous occasion. It brought me to tears. To see many people celebrating and putting aside our differences. People came out who normally wouldn’t. There were people I hadn’t seen in years. We sat down, ate, played and danced together and had harmony.”

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- Help us serve the poor at the St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy.
- Become an Angel and help with Uniforms for Kids.