BLESSED TO BE HOME

CCDBR helps thousands of flood victims

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Adam Dunn’s plans for Thanksgiving are similar to many others.

By morning, the palate-energizing aroma of a turkey in the oven would fill his north Baton Rouge home.

In addition to turkey, Dunn’s holiday feast would include cornbread dressing, made from his grandmother’s recipe.

Before that first bite, Dunn would be certain to bow his head in prayer to give thanks to God, giving thanks that a two-year nightmare beginning with stepping into four feet of water in his bedroom, passing through three evacuation centers and a rundown motel and finally ending with him reaching his dream of home ownership was over.

“I’m very happy, I’m very grateful,” said Dunn, who, through the help of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, now owns the manufactured housing unit where he has been living for the past 18 months. “I’ve been through hell.”

Dunn, who is disabled after suffering a stroke six years ago, was one of hundreds of thousands of area residents whose lives would change forever on Aug. 13, 2016. Shortly after midnight on that fateful morning, police and fire rescue units knocked on the door of his ground floor apartment, evacuating Dunn as the water continued to rise.

“I thought ‘get your butt out of there,’” he recalled. “I walked out in shorts, a t-shirt and a hat. I lost everything.”

Dunn would spend a combined one week at two different evacuation centers, five weeks in the River Center and seven months at the Alamo Plaza before CCDBR was able to relocate him to the FEMA trailer he now calls home.

“I am so grateful, grateful to all of the good people at Catholic Charities,” he added. “I thank God every second.”

Dunn is one of the nearly thousands of flood victims helped by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge (CCDBR) after Hurricane Ida.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Advent founded on Mary’s faith

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator
(First of a series)

Imagine: You stop to pray in the middle of your day. There’s a stirring in the air ... a glow ... a powerful presence. What’s happening? Who is this?! Your heart pounds, you tremble as an angel stands before you...

“Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God,” the angel tells you.

As we venture through Advent and anticipate God’s salvation gift by coming to earth as a babe, many Catholics would love to ask Mary, “Tell us what it was like” to encounter the Angel Gabriel and play the most unique role in history of preparing the way of the Lord.

Scriptures say Mary was “troubled” at the angel’s appearance and when told she would bear the “son of God” she asked, “How can this be?”

“I’m sure she was taken aback because she knew she would be pregnant and Joseph would not be the father,” said Judy Zelden, an original member of the central service team of Magnificat women’s ministry in Baton Rouge. “I’m sure she was completely overwhelmed and thinking, ‘Oh my goodness. Why me? Who am I?’ ”

Gabriel reassures Mary her cousin Elizabeth is pregnant, “and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.”

“She knows her cousin Elizabeth is pregnant and would understand these things,” said Zelden.

She believes it was a “special scene” as Mary walked through the door and Elizabeth says, “And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” as John the Baptist leaps in her womb. Mary responds with her Magnificat and how the Lord lifts up the lowly and future generations...
Advent wreath

Advent is approaching, and in many households and all Catholic churches the traditional wreath celebrating the season will be prominently displayed.

The Advent wreath, which is a European tradition, can be an evangelization tool to teach children about the real meaning of the Christmas season. Advent is not only a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus but also a time to prepare our hearts to receive him.

The wreath, which holds four candles, symbolizes the bringing of the light of Christ into the world. The church uses the four candles to spiritually mark the progression of Advent, with each Sunday offering its own promise.

Progressively lighting the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding Christ’s birth, as well as anticipating his second coming.

The purple candles, of which there are three, portray the contrast between darkness and light. Christ, often referred to as the “Light of the World,” blocks out the darkness of sin, and with each passing week, as additional candles are lit, the light incrementally overshadows the darkness.

Prayer, penance, preparatory sacrifices and good works are symbolized by the purple candles.

The rose candle is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent, otherwise known as Gaudete Sunday. On that Sunday, the priest will wear rose vestments rather than purple vestments worn throughout Advent, symbolizing the joy of Gaudete Sunday, which is the halfway point of Advent. For the faithful, that means their time of preparation has reached the halfway point and Christmas is getting closer.

The wreath’s circle of evergreen, where the candles are placed, symbolizes everlasting life. Other decorations, including nuts and cones, represent the nourishing fruitfulness of Christian/Catholic life.

On the First Sunday of Advent, a common practice is to bless the wreath with holy water before the first candle is lit.

Each of the four candles represents 1,000 years, totaling a combined 4,000 years, believed to be the number of years from the time of Adam and Eve to the birth of Jesus.

The First Sunday of Advent offers the promise of hope. Faith is symbolized during the second Sunday, also known as the “Bethlehem Candle,” reminding Christians of the Holy Family’s journey to Bethlehem, where Jesus would be born.

Joy, of course, comes with the third Sunday and the fourth Sunday, commonly referred to as “Angel’s Candle,” peace.

Advent prayers, including those to be prayed weekly as each candle is lit, are available.

A servant’s crown

By Dina Dow

We celebrate the end of the liturgical year rejoicing in Christ, our true king, followed by the First Sunday of Advent, reminding us of the last judgment and preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

“...you say I am a king” (Lk 18:39)

Pilate is seeking truth in a trial; he is forced into hearing. Instead of being swayed by Jesus’ accusers Pilate privately takes him aside and pointedly asks about his kingship. Jesus knows this is hearsay for Pilate, who questions him still further. Jesus gives him the eternal truth. Pilate listens, finding no guilt, but compromises to avoid a rebellion. Hence begins the “coronation” of Jesus, king of the universe.

We know the rest of the story of his suffering, death and resurrection of our king and redeemer. Jesus’ first crown was not bejeweled in gold, but twisted thorns. His cloak was a burial cloth. Yet, his resurrection won the battle of all battles: victory over sin and death. His battle was not for land, but for souls. This king reigns over hearts, where he establishes his kingdom.

We are in the midst of royalty. Jesus is the king of the universe. His reign is rooted in love and manifested in self-sacrifice for the salvation of his people. He also stands in final judgment based on truth: the truth which is himself. Justice will cover those who dwell in his kingdom. Those who fight against truth will ultimately lose. Those who strive to live in the truth will prevail.

Jesus’ kingship is greater than one of earthly royalty, which may be limited and perfunctory. The streets of his kingdom are paved with stones of indelible truth carefully placed by the creator. This is the footpath for us as disciples. Jesus’ footprints are impressed on the stones enabling us to know exactly where to place our own feet. This is how closely we follow our king; so close that we inhale his exhale. We walk humbly with our servant king, in loving sacrifice and intentional awareness of others. Where exactly is the locale of this kingdom? It is in our hearts.

What earthly king allows such close proximity? Whose footsteps am I following? Am I sacrificing for the sake of others? Am I giving Jesus “all glory, laud and honor to the “Redeemer King” whom I owe everything?

Be vigilant

The First Sunday of Advent readings are unexpected. The liturgical year begins with a whole-hearted reminder of the promise made through King David, with the coming of the one who will establish justice, as well as a calling to be prepared for the end times, Christ’s second coming. This is not meant to instill fear, but rather to help us be prepared and accept his mercy and love. The Catholicism of the Church tells us, “The word became flesh in order to save us by reconciling us with God; so that we might know God’s love; to be our model of holiness; and to make us partakers of the divine nature (CCC #454-460).”

This is how we prepare for the birth of Jesus and the second coming. We examine our lives, partake in the sacrament of reconciliation and accept the mercy of God. Freedom from the sin allows us to walk in the light of Christ. We love like God and accept God’s promise of everlasting love. We respond to our call to holiness in leading lives rich in virtue, the beatitudes and mercy, thus sharing in the divine nature of God. He desires us to be with him eternally. The end of our life on earth is the beginning of our life in heaven. Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6). Why would we choose to walk a different path from the one set by Jesus?

So as we light our way to Christmas by way of the Advent wreath let us expand our prayer, in quiet moments, of our days ahead. “Come into my life. I trust you, Lord. I believe you love me. I need your love. You know the way to my heart. Come Lord, Jesus. Come into this house, into my family, into our struggles. Come fill me with peace and the love that only you can give. Come and heal us, and give us joy. Come and unite us and let us experience, each in our own way, the joy you are offering us now.”

Prepare the way of the Lord.

Dow is the director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
JP2 Project inspirational for CTK students

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Sipping on a cup of coffee from the Corner Stone Café at Christ the King Church and Catholic Center Baton Rouge, Rachel Haydel savored a favorite, familiar routine for many students to settle into the fall semester, chatting over a cup of java. But it was evident from the way her conversation lifted away from “the home of the Tigers” and plunged into the heart of Europe and the stomping grounds of one of the most beloved saints of this century that her life had changed during the summer with a mission of “building a civilization of love and truth.”

Haydel and fellow LSU student Claire Lavastida spent six weeks living and learning in St. John Paul II’s “beloved Krakow,” hiking in his footsteps and visiting places he loved as part of the JP2 Project. They attended classes at the Pontifical University of John Paul II and went on excursions that connected them with the culture and history of Poland and the saint.

Haydel had read “Theology of the Body” and was moved by St. John Paul II’s upholding of the dignity of humans as images of God and insisting the mind, soul and body cannot be separated.

She relished the opportunity to learn about St. John Paul II as the “human person” and person of spirit.

“He was an outdoorsy person and close to young people,” said Haydel.

The JP2 Project is dedicated to helping young people become builders of a civilization of love and truth through programs that enable them to live in the example of Pope St. John Paul II.

The programs not only teach students about St. John Paul II in his city, but in his style. From intellectual discussions to outdoor trips, youth are offered the challenge, adventure and responsibility that lead to a life of greatness.

Lavastida and Haydel’s group hiked the Tatra mountain range, where St. John Paul II hiked as a young priest and took young adults on retreats there.

“It was an awesome hike, very rocky, very strenuous. The whole time we were holding up the cross,” Haydel said.

She and Lavastida also relished spending time in JP II’s “hot spots” in Italy, including Turin, Pollone, Milan and Florence.

At Turin, they visited Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati’s home.

Blessed Frassati inspired St. John Paul II’s love for combining faith and the outdoors. Blessed Frassati had a passion for sports, hiking and social justice. He died from contracting polio during one of his visits to serve the poor in Turin. St. John Paul II beatified him in May 1990.

Learning about the lives of St. John Paul II and other saints she encountered in Poland and Italy, Haydel said she discovered it was “not so much about the extraordinary things they did, but the ordinary things they did.”

Haydel said St. John Paul II encountered the culture and brought out its beauty.

“He loved food, the culture and had friends and laughed,” said Haydel. “It’s good for young people like me to see he lived and loved life to the fullest.”

Lavastida said St. John Paul II had a forward-looking vision that makes him timeless.

“He was a person in-tune to a changing world, not just the world he was in,” said Lavastida. “He didn’t just speak to the correct times he was in, but to where he thought the culture was going … He was seeing not only the place where he was, but the human heart, which is hurting.”

Lavastida said she walked over and prayed at the shrine of St. Faustina, another saint who powerfully impacted St. John Paul II’s life.

“Every moment I felt we were surrounded by saints. ‘Wow! JP II’s house where he lived … here’s where he celebrated Mass,’ ” said Lavastida.

She and Haydel observed you could walk down the street and encounter a eucharistic procession with thousands of people.

Lavastida said the people of Poland have a “quieter state of mind” and are “happy with their simple lives.”

“They have a simple peace about them,” said Lavastida.

She enjoyed the community and often met people at a coffee shop. She made lifelong friends in Poland and within her traveling group, especially Haydel.

She also observed people were never alone.

“Although there were a lot of people with disabilities, they were always with someone,” Lavastida said. “There were never any homeless or people asking for money because everyone was like family.”

A history major, the trip was valuable for Lavastida in her plans to teach history. She was impacted by a visit to Auschwitz, a Nazi concentration and extermination camp.

“It’s a hard place to go to,” she said. “To see all the terrible things that happened there.”

Despite its tumultuous history, Polish people are passionate about their homeland, strong-willed and stand up for values, which explains the molding of St. John Paul II’s outlook and approach to life, said Lavastida and Haydel.

“You can see how much they love their country and Catholicism,” said Lavastida.

Joseph and Corrine MacDonald founded the non-profit project in 2016 in Florida. Corrine had been working in study-abroad programs for five years, and seeing the impact the program can have on college students, she took them on pilgrimages of Poland.

The couple, who met in Rome, took a group of college students to World Youth Day in Poland in 2016.

“We realized there were no American university programs in Krakow and definitely no Catholic programs,” Joseph MacDonald said.

As doors opened, the MacDonalds realized God was calling them to establish a study program where people can learn about the pope who left an “indelible mark” not only on the city but the world, said Joseph, who was at LSU on Oct. 24-26 with Corrine and their children, Marysia, 3, and Chiara, 1, as part of a U.S. tour to spread the message about the project.

Although many JP2 Project participants were young people when St. John Paul II died, he has left a strong impression on them.

“I was excited to see how JP II has inspired young people, especially after they read ‘Theology of the Body,’” said MacDonald.

Participants in the JP2 Project held a retreat at Zakopane, Poland in the Tatras Mountain range, where St. John Paul II hiked as a young priest and took young adults on retreats there. Photo provided by Claire Lavastida and Rachel Haydel

“Psalm 95:7

“For He is our God, we are the people He shepherds, the sheep in His hands.”

Give online: www.baabr.org
By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Entering its third year, #iGiveCatholic has proven to be a financial boon in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, raising nearly a combined $100,000.

A year ago, diocesan agencies raised $49,675, compared to $47,500 in 2016, the diocese’s first year of participation in the program, which was initially launched in 2015 by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Additionally, the number of donors increased from 470 in 2016 to 476.

Stewardship director Tammy Abshire is optimistic the upward trend continues Nov. 27, when #iGiveCatholic is scheduled from midnight until 11:59 p.m. “We’re looking forward to another record year,” said Abshire, noting that historic flooding of 2016 might have had impacted the 2017 campaign, as many residents were still in recovery mode and trying to move back into their homes.

“One thing of which we are certain is that the people in our diocese are incredibly generous, and for that we are thankful,” she added. “They embrace their Catholic faith, and they are eager to help out in all ways, including financially.”

More than 100 Catholic agencies in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are participating, representing a variety of causes and projects, ranging from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which provides assistance to the homeless and the most needy of the area, to helping build a new Porte-cochere at St. Joseph Church in Paulina.

Some of the other ministries include the Office of Black Catholics, the Hispanic Apostolate, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, The Catholic Commentator, Catholic Life TV, Catholic Community Radio, Catholic Charismatic Renewal and a number of church parishes.

#iGiveCatholic is held annually in conjunction with GivingTuesday, celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, as well as Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

#iGiveCatholic is a wonderful stepping off point to the holiday season,” Abshire said. “Christmas represents a time of giving, a season of generosity, and what better way to celebrate this beautiful time of year than to provide financial assistance to your church, school or beloved ministry.

Throughout the day on Nov. 27, those wishing to donate can visit iGiveCatholic.org and click on a specific ministry listed.

St. Vincent to serve Thanksgiving meals

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Holiday Helpers are partnering for a second consecutive year to host the annual Thanksgiving dinner at the Raising Cane’s River Center in Baton Rouge.

A year ago, St. Vincent de Paul and Holiday Helpers joined together to continue a holiday tradition that has spanned three decades. Diners will be served from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The annual Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless and needy will be served in St. Vincent de Paul’s dining room, with meals being served from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. “Thanksgiving is special in Baton Rouge because of all of the caring volunteers throughout our community,” St. Vincent de Paul president and CEO Michael Acaldo said. “Bringing Holiday Helpers and St. Vincent de Paul together last year was a great success. We will continue this tradition and ensure that no one in need has to go hungry on Thanksgiving Day.”

Additionally, the annual St. Vincent de Paul Thanksgiving Store will set up in the dining room parking lot. “Our dining room guests depend on us for their very survival and can’t afford to purchase items that most of us take for granted,” Acaldo said. “So this Thanksgiving we will provide each guest with a gift certificate they can redeem at the store.”

Guests will be able to select from a variety of items, including clothing, socks blankets, caps, shoes and other necessities.

Also, LSU gymnastics coach D.D. Breaux will seek to defend her title in the annual Community Turkey Carving Contest, which is staged annually on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving in the St. Vincent de Paul dining room.
Cardinal says he leaves USCCB assembly more hopeful than when it started

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said he was leaving the bishops’ fall general assembly Nov. 14 more hopeful than when the meeting began two days earlier.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston said in remarks closing the assembly that his hope was primarily grounded in Christ as well as realizing that the body of bishops was on the road to implementing protocols to boost the accountability of bishops to laypeople and survivors of clergy sex abuse.

As the meeting started, Cardinal DiNardo expressed disappointment because the Vatican had asked that no vote be taken on several protocols governing bishops that he had hoped would be accepted during the three-day meeting. The instruction came from the Congregation for Bishops, citing the upcoming February meeting of the presidents of the bishops’ conferences around the world to address clerical sex abuse.

“We will do so in communion with the universal church. Moving forward in concert with the church around the world will make the church in the United States stronger and will make the global church stronger.”

As the USCCB developed a plan to respond to difficult news regarding clergy abuse over the summer, Cardinal DiNardo said conference leadership set three goals, among them fully investigating the circumstances surrounding reports that Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick had allegedly abused minors and seminarians.

Other goals, he said, included making it easier to report abuse and misconduct by bishops and developing means whereby bishops could be held more accountable for their actions and ensuring any plan was independent of the bishops, duly authorized by the church and had substantial lay involvement.

He said the assembly showed that the USCCB was on “course to accomplish these goals.”

Progress also was made to establish a way for people to report complaints against bishops through a third-party hotline and that proposals for a national lay commission and a national network involving existing diocesan review boards would be developed, he said.

The cardinal also expressed hope that standards of accountability for bishops and a protocol for bishops removed from ministry also would be completed.

“We leave this place committed to taking the strongest possible actions at the earliest possible moment,” Cardinal DiNardo said. “We will do so in communion with the universal church. Moving forward in concert with the church around the world will make the church in the United States stronger and will make the global church stronger.”

OLOL releases statement on firing

Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center released a statement on the Nov. 6 firing of John Paul Funes, president and chief executive officer of Our Lady of the Lake Foundation.

“John Paul Funes, president of Our Lady of the Lake Foundation, has been terminated,” the statement said. “This termination is the result of a third-party investigation that found a pattern of forgery and embezzlement of funds by Mr. Funes. We have notified law enforcement.”

“We are shocked and appalled at what we have learned,” the statement added. “Our Lady of the Lake Foundation is integral to our healing ministry and helped us reach so many important goals that would have been unattainable otherwise. We have engaged Deloitte, a leading third-party financial audit firm, to review our process and procedures to evaluate the safeguards we have in place to protect our ministry.

“Mr. Funes’ actions in no way represent the values and mission of Our Lady of the Lake and the Foundation, and the hundreds of volunteers and donors who have given so much over the years.

“Because this matter is the subject of a criminal investigation, we cannot disclose any further detail about Mr. Funes’ actions.”
Is annual confession mandated?/ Can’t understand priest

Could a person go to daily Mass and receive Communion without having gone to confession in four years? (Batesville, Indiana)

The answer, technically, is yes. If the person had committed no serious (mortal) sins over that four-year period, he or she could go to Mass and receive Communion every day. Strictly speaking, the obligation of annual confession applies only to those in serious sin.

The church’s Code of Canon Law reads this way: “After having reached the age of discretion, each member of the faithful is obliged to confess faithfully his or her sins at least once a year” (Canon 988.1). (Canon 986 explains that anyone who is conscious of grave sin may not receive the Eucharist without first having gone to confession.)

But is it a good idea for Catholics to stay away from confession for four years, even if they have no mortal sins to confess? Of course not. Over and over, spiritual writers encourage the faithful to confess. Of course not. Over and over, spiritual writers encourage the faithful to confess. Of course not. Over and over, spiritual writers encourage the faithful to confess. Of course not. Over and over, spiritual writers encourage the faithful to confess. Of course not. Over and over, spiritual writers encourage the faithful to confess. Of course not. Over and over, spiritual writers encourage the faithful to confess. Of course not. Over and over, spiritual writers encourage the faithful to confess.

So the answer is, technically, yes, but in actual practice, no. The church’s Code of Canon Law says it should be done annually, and spiritual writers encourage the faithful to do it more frequently.

Canon 988.2 says, “It is recommended to the Christian faithful that they also confess venial sins,” and the introduction to the church’s rite of penance says, “Frequent and careful celebration of this sacrament is also very useful as a remedy for venial sins. This is not a mere ritual repetition or psychological exercise, but a serious striving to perfect the grace of baptism so that ... his (Christ’s) life may be seen in us ever more clearly” (No. 7b).

Shortly after he was elected pope, at a weekly audience in November 2013, Pope Francis revealed that he himself receives the sacrament of penance every two weeks and considers it to be the best path to spiritual healing and health. “We all need this,” the pope said.

St. Luke’s Gospel begins, “Several biographies of Christ have already been written.” Why, then, are there only four Gospels in the New Testament, and how were they chosen? (Charlottesville, Virginia)

First, just a comment on your quote from the opening verse of St. Luke. The text you offer comes from an edition called the Living Bible. I prefer instead the New American Bible (used by the Catholic Church at liturgies), which translates that same line as follows: “Many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us.”

The difficulty I have with the version you are quoting is that the four canonical Gospels are not really “biographies” in the contemporary sense of that word. They mention very little, for example, about the early life of Jesus and have varying views on the exact sequence of events during Christ’s public life.

St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John can more properly be seen as statements of faith narratives of some of the actions and sayings of Jesus to convey the writers’ conviction that Christ was indeed the Messiah.

While it is true that many accounts regarding Jesus were circulated in the early church and became the subject of discussion and debate, by about the year 180, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul, noted that there were four and only four authoritative Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This reflected a growing consensus among Christian scholars, and only those four versions were commonly considered as proper for liturgical use. Following the Protestant Reformation that same Catholic canon of the Gospels was reaffirmed at the Council of Trent in 1546.

Some of the common characteristics of the four Gospels declared to be canonical were a central focus on Jesus as savior and divine Son of God (not just an enlightened teacher, as some of the apocryphal versions had it) and the inclusion of the Passion narrative.

Father Kenneth Doyle is a retired priest in the Diocese of Albany, New York. Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherkdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.
When the Tide rolls, extra prayers needed

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Three hours before good was to take on its knavish, crimson-sheathed ghost of the past, several hundred faithful gathered for Mass, perhaps sneaking in one last prayer, one final rosary.

After all, this was no ordinary fall Saturday in Baton Rouge. Nick Saban, also referred to as a number of monikers in the Capital City, most unprintable, was in town.

This was Alabama-LSU, the game of the year for Tiger fans, especially since it was pitting the top-ranked Crimson Tide, also considered Public Enemy No. 1 since Saban ditched LSU more than a decade ago and two years later decided to play house in Tuscaloosa, against the Tigers, who were ranked third in the country at the time with dreams of a national championship.

“Tigers are at the top of the list,” said Corso, perhaps rubbing a bit of salve on the wound he may have opened only hours earlier when he donned the head of a red elephant when predicting who would emerge from Death Valley victorious.

“This is nice and informal,” he added. “Everybody seems to like everybody here.”

If the Mass ended, Father Merrick offered some final words of encouragement, noting that “thinking of the animal kingdom” the “Tigers are at the top of the list,” ranking well above elephants.

Unfortunately for LSU fans, an elephant’s tusk speared the heart of the Tigers.

“God is not an LSU fan, he’s everybody’s fan,” he added, proving to be a sage and as evidenced by the 29-0 beat down the Tide exacted on the local heroes. “You might have Alabama fans praying for the same thing.”

For Mengis, LeBlanc and many others, however, attending the pregame Mass is more about tradition than rallying against a specific opponent. LeBlanc, a season ticket holder for the past 37 years, said he and his wife have been attending the Mass for the past 10 years, regardless who was lining up on the opposing sidelines.

“We come early, say a rosary and read our prayer books,” he said. “The Blessed Mother said to pray the rosary, so we pray the rosary.

“It’s good to get away from the zaniness of tailgating,”

Mengis, who attended LSU and graduated from LSU Law School, and his wife, Jennifer Mengis, were married at Christ the King and have made it a tradition for the past 30 years to attend the pregame Mass, depending on the time of the Mass. The couple attends four to five games a year, and Mengis called attending the vigil Mass and their “gameday tradition.”

“We will say an extra prayer,” Jennifer said of the Alabama game, adding that they have a pew in their Houston home from the original church. “I told (Michael) when I first met I always wanted to have a church pew.”

Even ESPN GameDay host Lee Corso was in the act. Corso, who is Catholic, said he always attends a pregame Mass at the church on whatever campus GameDay is visiting because Sunday is a travel day.

“(Christ the King) is terrific; it’s a great place,” said Corso, perhaps rubbing a bit of salve on the wound he may have opened only hours earlier when he donned the head of a red elephant when predicting who would emerge from Death Valley victorious.

“Everything is nice and informal,” he added. “Everybody seems to like everybody here.”

As the Mass ended, Father Merrick offered some final words of encouragement, noting that “thinking of the animal kingdom” the “Tigers are at the top of the list,” ranking well above elephants.

Unfortunately for LSU fans, an elephant’s tusk speared the heart of the Tigers.

Christ the King Church and Catholic Center pastor Father Andrew Merrick prays at the beginning of the vigil Mass only hours before the LSU-Alabama game on Nov. 3. The pregame Mass is celebrated during the fall and only on days when LSU is at home. The Mass begins three hours before the scheduled kickoff. Photos by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

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OLOL’s 95-year history a family affair

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

In an era of constant change in medical and technological protocol in the health care industry, it is amazing to realize that in Baton Rouge, Catholic health care through Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center has been going strong for 95 years and continues moving and growing for future generations.

“I was born at The Lake,” said Phyllis Simmons RN, BSN, who has worked at the hospital for almost 50 years. “My family being Catholic, they always looked to The Lake, so the sisters have always provided health care for my family.”

In 1911, sisters with the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady arrived in the United States from France and ministered in health care. The first foundation was established in Monroe, then the sisters moved south to Baton Rouge to continue the ministry. By 1923, the sisters opened Our Lady of the Lake Sanitarium, a four-story complex with 100 beds and a School of Nursing to educate and train nurses.

“We’ve gone from having the dear sisters … when we first started, they literally learned on the floors how to be nurses, all students, not just the sisters, that’s just how you did,” said Sister Martha Ann Abshire, vice president for Mission Identity at Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University.

Simmons recalled visiting the hospital as a young child because her sister suffered from rheumatic heart fever. During that era, children stayed in wards under the care of the sisters and nurses.

“I remember Sister Philomena – every time I would (visit), she would bring a silver goblet of ice-cold peaches and vanilla wafers and I would sit up in my sister’s bed and I would eat those,” said Simmons. “And, I disconnected from that goblet until I went into nursing school and we had silver goblets on our tray service for our patients. But those goblets, when I first saw them, brought back that first memory.”

Simmons and Sister Martha Ann recall the rigors of studying to be a nurse, including taking care of patients even as they continued to go to classes and study for exams, often working past midnight to prepare for patient care early the next morning. They both refered to nursing as a “calling,” and noted that not all of the students who started the program were able to complete it.

According to Sister Martha Ann, students were required to “understand treatments and why a patient was receiving that treatment and all the details of that treatment.”

She said they also had to understand each drug and the side effects, including multi-vitamins and the individual side effect of each vitamin, a memory that elicited groans from both Sister Martha Ann and Simmons.

“People don’t realize how very, very, very hard nursing education is,” said Sister Martha Ann. “Two weeks after I graduated, they put me in a different unit and made me a charge nurse on 3 – 11 (3 p.m. – 11 p.m. shift). My knees were knocking, but I knew what to do.”

The hospital and school remained at the Capitol Lake site from 1923 to 1978, when it moved to its current location on Essen Lane. Today, the facility has a bed capacity of 800. Simmons works in regulatory infection control and health safety while Sister Martha Ann has transitioned into an educational role with FranU. However, their memories of their early days in the medical field remain strong. Those memories include being on the front lines of patient care, when they had to crush and dilute pills and clean glass syringes and sharpen their own needles, to the front lines of deadly bacteria, such as H. flu meningitis which claimed the lives of young children before the Hib vaccine, and deadly diseases, including AIDS.

“I come from a long line of nurses that were educated at The Lake,” said Simmons. “I have three aunts that graduated from the nursing school.

“The sisters have been a part of my whole life, basically.”

In the 1950s, the number of patient beds at OLOL was increased to 400 at the Capitol Lake site. A seven-story wing was added to the main building.

The State of Louisiana purchased the old site on Capitol Lake. By 1982, the old facility was demolished. Today, a major government facility is located on the property. Photos provided by OLORCMC

A vintage photo shows nurses at work at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital.
FranU honors community leaders

Special to The Catholic Commentator

Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University (FranU) recognized the service contributions of three alumni and one community leader during the 2018 Fête des Fidèles Annual Fundraiser and 95-year anniversary celebration on Nov. 10 at L’Auberge Baton Rouge.

In addition to the annual awards, FranU celebrated “95 Years of Franciscan Servant Leadership” by honoring individuals who have helped build its educational legacy that has been making a difference since 1923.

Fête des Fidèles, a French phrase meaning “Feast of the Faithful,” benefits student scholarships and new program development.

The 2018 honorees were Steven R. Nathanson (Franciscan Impact Award); Andrea Normand RN, Class of 1970, (Distinguished Alumni Award); Sarah Deyo MMS PA-C (Shining Star Alumni Award) and Taylor Bush RN, Class of 2017, (Rising Star Alumni Award).

Nathanson is managing partner of Nathanson Global Emergy and a member of the Board of Directors of FMOL Health System. He is credited with encouraging Our Lady of the Lake College to expand its capacity and take the steps toward becoming FranU.

Since graduation, Normand has been a leader at OLOL Regional Medical Center for more than 45 years, almost exclusively in the emergency room. She was named RN of the Year by the Louisiana Nurses Foundation in 2016 and Louisianaian of the Year by Louisiana Life Magazine in 2017.

Deyo, a former physician assistant (PA) in the pediatric emergency room at OLOLRMC, is the director of FranU’s PA program. An excellent teacher, administrator and researcher, she was named the new faculty member of the year by the Physician Assistant Education Association in 2017.

While in school, Bush was FranU’s student director for the Bonner Leaders Program where she volunteered more than 600 service hours, primarily with ARC of Baton Rouge, an agency that provides services for children and adults with autism and Down Syndrome. Bush works at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Texas in the inpatient rehab unit.

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Blindfolded youth had to maneuver and follow directions with the help of a guide during Mike Patin’s talk.

Contestants try to be the first one to wrap streamers around their arms in one of many activities during the day.

With the help of a slingshot, T-shirts flew through the air to Red Stick Catholic Fest attendees hoping to be lucky enough to catch one.

The Catholic Commentator
By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Gospel messages set to the rhythm of electric guitars, drums and intertwining voices stirred youth to dance, high-five and hug as they entered the Catholic Life Center for the first Red Stick Catholic Fest on Nov. 10. They spent the day connecting with others while blind folded and his talk with bustling activities, including the aid of others while blind folded and interactions with the help of a guide during Mike Patin’s talk.

Next, Linda Couri, a former Planned Parenthood counselor who had experienced an abortion herself and is now a pro-life activist, talked about the question, “Does being Catholic really matter?”

Jesus never promised that following him would be easy, Couri said.

“In a divided world, there is no glory in being a Christian,” said Couri.

The current crisis in faith is because people don’t believe, refuse to believe or don’t know how to believe, Couri stated.

“It took a long time for that relationship to build,” said Couri.

She assured youth they aren’t alone when they face the one that really matters and Jesus loves them — God,” Patin said.

Patin spun around and ran in different directions as he talked about youths’ struggles as they hear many “voices” clamoring for their attention, such as wealth, status and power. The culture’s messages often are “I want what I want, when I want it,” according to Patin.

Patin told the students to not become “torn” by relationships, drama, addictions and other problems; he said, “People get into trouble because they don’t listen to the voice of Jesus who can give us the one that really matters and loves them.”

“The battle for the Red Stick” was a movement, literally, as rain-saturated grounds at the Baton Rouge Multipurpose Sports Complex on Nov. 10. They spent the day connecting with others while blind folded and hugs as they entered the Catholic Life Center for the first Red Stick Catholic Fest on Nov. 10. They spent the day connecting with others while blind folded and.

Red Stick Catholic Fest

With the help of a slingshot, T-shirts flew through the air to Red Stick Catholic Fest attendees hoping to be lucky enough to catch one.

Red Stick Catholic Fest

Contestants try to be the first one to wrap streamers around their arms in one of many activities during the day.

With the help of a slingshot, T-shirts flew through the air to Red Stick Catholic Fest attendees hoping to be lucky enough to catch one.
Students help classmate secure bike

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

It was a typical sunny morning when Ainsley Hale, 10, of Greenwell Springs climbed aboard her brand new purple bike for a ride. What was not typical was Ainsley, her bike, or where she was riding.

She was pedaling on an adaptive bike through the gym and the arms of seventh- and eighth-grade students from St. Jude the Apostle School in Baton Rouge, who had formed a human tunnel for Ainsley’s first solo ride on a bike.

“It was amazing!” said Ainsley breathlessly. “I was so happy! I was nervous but I was amazingly excited.”

The bike, which is more trike than bike because of its three wheels, is outfitted with strap-on pedals, a chair seat, seat belt, hand brakes and an assistance handle on the rear. It was built to specifications based on Ainsley’s physical needs, and was presented to her during a special assembly celebrating the feast of St. Jude. It was the first time she had ever ridden a bike on her own.

“It definitely means independence,” said Jan Hale, Ainsley’s mother. “Right now we have a tandem bike, and so she rides on the back of the tandem bike.”

“Yeah, she never really gets to see past me, for the most part,” said Ainsley’s father Chris Hale.

Chris said the family, which also includes Ainsley’s twin sister Charleigh, often bikes together.

That new sense of freedom and fun for Ainsley was made possible by the efforts of members of Community Cougars of St. Jude, a community service group. Donations raised from free dress day were given to the McClindon Family Foundation of Baton Rouge, which provides adaptive bikes to children with special challenges.

Founder Andrew McClindon said the adaptive bikes range from $800 to $5,000, with the average bike costing $2,500. According to McClindon, the foundation began donating the bikes 11 years ago with the goal “to help children experience that sense of freedom and that pride of owning your own bike.”

“After we started getting feedback from the families, we realized that there was a lot more going on there,” he said. “For many children, it was helping them build strength, critical core strength. (And, it helped) with inclusion, to be able to get out and keep up and ride with the family and ride with their friends on the street.

“So those became the three kind of principles that became our passion: building strength, confidence and inclusion.”

Community Cougars sponsor Shivaun Davis said the group has donated to the McClindon Family Foundation in the past, but it’s the giving that makes the efforts so meaningful.

“Ainsley was so excited about getting her bike and the kids, I think, were so excited to see the fruits of their labor, the effort that they put forth,” said Davis. “You know they think, ‘Oh, it’s something simple, it’s a dol-

Ainsley Hale, center, smiles with her family and therapist at St. Jude School in Baton Rouge after taking a spin on her donated adaptive bike from the McClindon Family Foundation. Donations from free dress day, sponsored by St. Jude’s Community Cougars, were given to the foundation, which provides adaptive bikes. Pictured, from left, are Andrew McClindon, founder of the McClindon Foundation; George Bunch, physical therapist; Jan Hale; Charleigh Hale; and Chris Hale. Photo by Bonny Van | The Catholic Commentator

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Words with Christ
From page 12

“...it’s about taking control

- We rely upon the intercession of our Blessed Mother to assist us in imitating the healing ministry of Jesus Christ as we care for terminally ill patients and their families.
- We call forth the compassion and kindness of our staff, who serve in this health care ministry, to respond to the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of our patients and their families.
- We believe in the sacredness of life from conception to natural death, and we devote ourselves to supporting patients and families through the dying process at the end of life’s journey on this earth and new life in eternity.
Bohemian Rhapsody

Rami Malek gives himself completely to the role of Freddie Mercury in this biopic of the lead singer of the rock group Queen, with impressive artistic results. And Mercury’s musical career, including his collaboration with the other members of the band (Gwilym Lee, Ben Hardy and Joe Mazzello) as they resisted narrow categorization and took such creative risks as releasing the lengthy pop aria of the title as an apportioned fantasy in which, while searching for Christmas presents, Santa and a decorated tree, the title character (Claire Foy) reluctantly takes in an alternate lived split from a series of bestselling novels. This weird, wild but surprisingly effective blend of war story and chiller from director Julius Avery is far too gory and violent rough and crude language. O; R

The Nutcracker and the Four Realms

Disney

Visually rich but dramatically impoverished fantasy in which, while searching for the key that will open a Christmas gift left by her recently deceased mother, a teenage girl (Mackenzie Foy) from Victorian London finds herself in an alternate world divided into the territories of the title. There, she learns, mom once reigned as queen. But one of the regions (led by Helen Mirren) has since gone to war with the others (presided over by Keira Knightley, Eugenio Derbez and Richard E. Grant). So, aided by a life-sized nutcracker in the shape of a soldier (Jayden Fowora-Knight), she sets out to defeat Mirren’s appallingly villainous character and restore unity. Though suitable for most, directors Lasse Hallstrom and Joe Johnston’s riff on both E.T. Hoffman’s tale “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King” and the Tchaikovsky ballet indirectly derived from it may satisfy few. And, while its messages about believing in yourself and cooperating with others are perfectly acceptable, they are driven home ham-handedly. Occasional peril, some frightening images. A-II; PG

Dr. Seuss’ The Grinch

Universal

This adaptation of Theodor Geisel’s 1957 children’s fable “How the Grinch Stole Christmas!” is an extravagant animated adventure, directed by Scott Mosier and Yarrow Cheney and narrated by Pharrell Williams. The eponymous grump (voice of Benedict Cumberbatch) lives high above the hamlet of Whoville with his loyal dog by this side. With a heart “two sizes too small,” he wants nothing more than peace and quiet and to be left alone. Determined to put a halt to the incessant joy and good cheer the Whos are driven home ham-handedly. Occasional peril, some frightening images. A-II; PG

The Girl in the Spider’s Web

Columbia

Bitter espionage drama, set in Sweden, in which the title character (Claire Foy), a skilled computer hacker with a dark past who also dabbles in vigilantism, agrees to help a disaffected U.S. intelligence operative (Stephen Merchant) steal a program he created from the National Security Agency. Since the program enables anyone to take control of all the nuclear arsenals in the world, he’s not the only one interested in its fate and the protagonist no sooner succeeds in swiping it than it’s purloined from her. To retrieve it, she teams with a journalist (Sverrir Gudnason) and an NSA official (Lubah Shadid). In following up on David Fincher’s 2011 film “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo,” director and co-writer Fede Alvarez tones down the mayhem and restricts the do-it-yourself justice to one nonlethal incident. Still, with an abusive childhood in the background and a same-sex relationship on the margin of the story, Alvarez’s thriller, adapted, like its predecessor, from a series of bestsell-
LAS OBRAS CORPORALES DE MISERICORDIA, no 1

Pe. Donnell Kirchner, CSSR
Parroquia de San Geraldo

Quien sigue Jesús y vive bajo la inspiracion del Espíritu Santo produce frutos y resultados de su vivencia. Su vida es marcada por obras que muestran que alguna cosa diferente está sucediendo en el interior de la persona.

Una manera de saber si estamos viviendo la fe cristiana es practicar las Obras Corporales de Misericordia, pues es un señalar visible que Cristo vive en nuestros corazones.

La lista de las obras de misericordia son acciones caritativas mediante las cuales ayudamos a nuestro prójimo en sus necesidades corporales especialmente en dar de comer al hambriento, enterrar a los muertos, desnudar a los desnudos, dar techo a quien está sin techo, y atender mujeres embarazadas. (cf Mt 25,31-46). Entre estas obras, la limosna hecha a los pobres es uno de los principales testimonios de la caridad fraternal; es también una práctica de justicia que agrada a Dios, inspiradas en los trechos del Evangelio de San Mateo acerca del Juicio Final (cf. Mt 25/31-46).

Las principales del hambre

En tiempos atuales, cuando la mayor parte de la humanidad vive en cuidados y no más en el campo o en la roza, ni siempre es fácil compartir nuestra comida que compramos con el poco dinero que ganamos. Dicen que cuando una persona de alguna cosa a comer al mendigo, la noticia se espause rápidamente y de repente, una fila se forma en el frente de su casa. Cuanto más rico, generalmente menos generoso. Son los menos favorecidos que descubren una manera de repartir su pan. Vamos recordar el ejemplo de Lazaro en la puerta de Dives y lo que sucedió después de la muerte de los dos. Satisfacer las necesidades de las personas sin hogar, dar techo a quien no lo tiene, y Visitar al desvalido. Vamos ver las otras.

Visitar a los enfermos

Visitar a los enfermos. Tal vez, se trata de hacer una pasada de limpieza y no de hacer mucho por ellos. Solamente un poco de nuestro tiempo para llevar una palabra de conforto o solidaridad. Una visita puede liberar una persona de la casa para salir y resolver otros asuntos o simplemente descansar un poco mientras nosotros cuidamos una persona del enfermo. Incluimos visitas a los hospitales, buscando las personas que nunca reciben visitas de sus parientes. Esas personas son solitarias, sin compañero. Cuando fue la última vez que usted se fijo en su estado? Algunas personas necesitan de una visita, almorzar con ellas, dar un beso, o simplemente ir con ellas a hacer un pequeño favor como pasar un momento con ellas. Entonces, ¿qué es la caridad efectiva?

Visitar a los encarcelados y a los presos

No es fácil entrar en un carcel o prisión. Así como una visita a un preso es prohibida, está prohibida la visita a los encarcelados. A menudo, las visitas a los encarcelados son la única manera de comunicarse con ellos. Esas visitas son importantes para los encarcelados, quienes pueden sentirse aislados y solitarios en sus celdas. Visitar a los encarcelados puede ser una forma de mostrar compasión y solidaridad con ellos. Sin embargo, es importante recordar que la visita a los encarcelados puede ser un acto de injusticia si no se realiza de manera justa y equitativa.

Las Obras Corporales de Misericordia son acciones caritativas mediante las cuales ayudamos a nuestro prójimo en sus necesidades corporales, especialmente en dar de comer al hambriento, enterrar a los muertos, desnudar a los desnudos, dar techo a quien está sin techo, y atender mujeres embarazadas. (cf Mt 25,31-46). Entre estas obras, la limosna hecha a los pobres es uno de los principales testimonios de la caridad fraternal; es también una práctica de justicia que agrada a Dios, inspiradas en los trechos del Evangelio de San Mateo acerca del Juicio Final (cf. Mt 25/31-46).

El catecismo de la Iglesia Católica enseñan que los bienes de la creación son destinados a toda la raza humana. El derecho de propiedad particular no anula la destinación universal de los bienes (cf. 2452). Una vez que usted no puede tomar nada consigo cuando aparece delante de Cristo nuestro juez, no sería bueno tener algunas buenas obras en su equipaje?
Concern with story

My concern (with an article regarding voting your conscience) is that in lieu of addressing the real issues of the election in 2018 and beyond, the bishops continued to try to thread the needle. It is time for the church to make the voice of Jesus heard. I refer you to the corporal works of mercy. In my humble estimation this is the guide we need to form a conscience.

When this government rejects the Paris Accord, increases the use of coal and makes decisions that are leading to the destruction of the earth we live on, the church should speak out loud and clear. When the government separates parents from their children and imprisons those children, the church should speak out loud and clear. When the government denies health care to those with preconditions, it seems rather obvious that Christ would not be happy.

When we refuse refugees admittance when they are suffering oppression, the case for condemnation of these actions should not be hard to make. When the government denies votes to the right to participate in elections this should be addressed by the church without any ambivalence. When the government gives tax breaks to the very rich and refuses to increase the minimum wage, there must be an outcry from the church. When the government continues to try to thread the needle, this is the guide we need to form a conscience.

Fatima, a message of prayer for peace

On Nov. 8, I returned from a three-week trip to Portugal, Spain and Liberia, Africa. It began with plans of parishioners of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Prairieville to go to Fatima to see the shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Two couples in the group and I sponsor children in an orphanage in Liberia. We decided to tack on an extension of the trip to Africa where the rest of the group returned home. Liberia Mission Inc. includes the orphanage and a school for the orphans plus many children from the area around it. Total enrollment is around 450. The mission was celebrating its 15th anniversary on Nov. 1, All Saints Day.

Fatima, which is what I want to write about today, was a surprise to the five of us pilgrims. This was the first time there for all of us. I think that we all had seen the famous newspaper picture taken 100 years ago of thousands of people standing in a field near that city, looking up into the sky at some strange phenomenon. It is called the “Miracle of the Sun” or the “Dance of the Sun.” We were probably expecting a shrine like Lourdes in France, where the buildings look like something built about 200 years ago. When we arrived, after a 3 1/2 hour flight from Lisbon, it is a very modern shrine.

After the miracle on May 13, 1917, a small chapel was built on the site where the three children, ages 7, 9 and 10, claimed to have spoken with the “Lady of the Rosary.” It was repaired in the following years and not much of the original may be left. What remains is a small chapel, but it stands under a huge, very modern pavilion, the walls of which are all glass. There is an altar in front of the little chapel and in front of it are pews which can hold at least 1,000 people. On a small incline overlooking all of this is a large basilica in semi-gothic style, but still modern, with a single high steeple. Around the buildings and grounds is a huge parking lot that would do Disneyland proud. We arrived just before dark, so we never got to see the inside of the basilica. All the devotional services were held under the pavilion. They included a Mass, followed by hymns and prayers and exhortations in many languages, ending in a long candle-light procession behind a very modern opaque white glass cross which was lit probably by the latest and best battery pack. The rosary was recited as we followed the big lift-from-within cross.

It was all very beautiful. I was just astounded by how modern it seemed. There was great sound equipment, singing led by priests and women who must have been chosen to work there because of the high quality of their voices, and clear instructions to create the most orderly procession I have ever been a part of. At Lourdes, which I visited twice in the past, what struck me was the great faith of so many in wheel chairs who had come to pray for healing. Here at Fatima, it was a procession of prayer for peace. Everyone there seemed quite healthy.

To understand how Fatima developed as a shrine of prayer for peace, let me with the help of Wikipedia, take you through the history of the Blessed Virgin's appearances there.

Three children, ages 7, 9 and 10 on May 13, 1917 claimed to have seen and heard the Virgin Mary speak to them while returning home from tending their families’ sheep. They were Lucia dos Santos and her two younger cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Merto. The children described Mary as the “Lady of the Rosary.” They claimed she prophesied that prayer would bring about the end of the “Great War,” as World War I was then known. The “Lady” told them that she would reveal her identity, and a miracle would happen on Oct. 13 of that year “so that all may believe.”

Following news reports of the prophecy, people began visiting the area which was known as Cova da Iria. Doubt and criticism of this phenomenon came from civil and church authorities. Nevertheless, on Oct. 13, according to news reports, 30,000 to 40,000 people gathered at the site. Dark clouds brought rain, and the multitude was drenched. Then the rain stopped and the sun appeared as “an opaque, spinning disc in the sky.” The sun was said to be significantly duller than normal, and to cast multicolored lights across the area and the people. It then careened toward the earth before zig-zagging back to its normal position. Witnesses reported their previously wet clothes became suddenly and completely dry, as well as the wet, muddy ground. Not all saw exactly the same thing, and even some believers saw nothing. A photo of the sun showed nothing unusual.

The event was declared “of supernatural character” by the church in 1930. Pope Pius XII approved the Fatima apparitions in 1940 at the same time as he declared the Dogma of the Assumption of Mary into heaven. In 2017 Pope Francis approved the recognition of a miracle attributed to the intercession of Francisco and Jacinta Merto, which paved the way for their canonization. The siblings were victims of the great influenza epidemic throughout Europe, which began in 1918. Francisco died in 1919 and Jacinta in 1920. Both are buried at the Basilica of our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima. Sister Lucia became a Portuguese Carmelite nun and lived 95 years until 2005.

Dying, Jacinta told Lucia, “Tell everybody that God grants us graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that people are to ask her for them; and that the Heart of Jesus wants the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be venerated at this site. Tell them also to pray to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for peace, since God entrusted it to her.”

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.
Dual citizenship

Father Ron Rolheiser

I live on both sides of a border. Not a geographical one, but one which is often a dividing line between two groups.

I was raised a conservative Roman Catholic, and conservative in most other things as well. Although my dad worked politically for the Liberal party, most everything about my upbringing was conservative, particularly religiously. I was a staunch Roman Catholic in every way.

I grew up under the papacy of Pope Pius XII (the fact that my youngest brother is named Pius, will tell you how loyal our family was to that pope’s version of things). We believed that Roman Catholicism was the one true religion and that Protestants needed to convert and return to the true faith. I memorized the Roman Catholic catechism and defended its every word. Moreover, beyond being faithful church-goers, my family was given over to piety and devotions: we prayed the rosary together as a family every day; had statues and holy pictures everywhere in our house; wore blessed medals around our necks; prayed litanies to Mary, Joseph and the Sacred Heart; and practiced a warm devotion to the saints.

And it was wonderful. I will forever be grateful for that religious foundation.

I went from my family home to the seminary at the tender age of 17 and my early seminary years solidly reinforced what my family had given me. The academics were good and we were encouraged to read great thinkers in every discipline. But this higher learning was still solidly set within a Roman Catholic ethos that valued all the things religiously and devotionally I’d been raised on. My studies were still friends with my piety. My mind was expanding, but my piety remained intact.

But home is where we start from. Gradually though through the years my world changed. Studying at different graduate schools, teaching on different graduate faculties, being in daily contact with other expressions of the faith, reading contemporary novelists and thinkers, and having academic colleagues as cherished friends has, I confess, put some strain on the piety of my youth. It’s so secret; we don’t often pray the rosary or litanies to Mary or the Sacred Heart in graduate classrooms or at faculty gatherings.

However, academic classrooms and faculty gatherings bring something else, something vitally needed in church pews and in circles of piety, namely, wider theological vision and critical principles to keep unbridled piety, naïve fundamentalism and misguided religious fervor within proper boundaries. What I’ve learned in the academic circles is also wonderful and I am forever grateful for the privilege of higher education.

But, of course, that’s a formula for tension, albeit a healthy one. Let me use someone else’s voice to articulate this. In a recent book, “Silence and Beauty,” a Japanese-American artist, Makoto Fujimura, shares this incident from his own life. Coming out of church one Sunday, he was asked by his pastor to add his name to a list of people who had agreed to boycott the film, “The Last Temptation of Christ.” He liked his pastor and wanted to please him by signing the petition, but felt hesitant to sign for reasons that, at that time, he couldn’t articulate. But his wife could. Before he could sign, she stepped in and said: “Artists may have other roles to play than to boycott this film.” He understood what she meant. He didn’t sign the petition.

But his decision left him pondering the tension between boycotting such a movie and his role as an artist and critic. Here’s how he puts it: “An artist is often pulled in two directions. Religiously conservative people tend to see culture as suspect at best, and when cultural statements are made to transgress the normative reality they hold dear, their default reaction is to oppose and boycott. People in the more liberal artistic community see these transgressive steps as necessary for their ‘freedom of expression.’ An artist like me, who values both religion and art, will be exiled from both. I try to hold together both of these commitments, but it is a struggle.”

That’s also my struggle. The piety of my youth, of my parents and of that rich branch of Catholicism is real and life-giving; but so too is the critical (sometimes unsettling) iconoclastic, theology of the academy. The two desperately need each other; yet someone who is trying to be loyal to both can, like Fujimura, end up feeling exiled from both: Theologians also have other roles to play than boycotting movies.

The people whom I take as mentors in this area are men and women who, in my eyes, can do both: Like Dorothy Day, who could be equally comfortable, leading the rosary or the peace march; like Jim Wallis, who can advocate just as passionately for radical social engagement as he can for personal intimacy with Jesus and like St. Thomas Aquinas, whose intellect could intimidate intellectuals, even as he could pray with the piety of a child.

Circles of piety and the academy of theology are not enemies; they need to embrace.

OBLATE FATHER RON ROLHEISER, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted online.

Use your words

Laura Fanucci

Two groups ask me often what they can do to help their children grow in faith: parents of toddlers and parents of young adults.

Surprised? While their ages and stages of life may differ, the two groups are closer than you might think.

When I write about faith at home, I often hear from new parents. They want to know what prayers or books they can use to make sure their child learns the faith. Their enthusiasm and anxiety are evident: They want to get it right.

When I speak in parishes, I often hear from parents whose adult children have stopped going to church. They want to know why their children left and how they could encourage them to come back. Their faith and grief is clear: They want to know where things went wrong.

Empathy makes my heart reach out to both groups, though there are no easy answers.

I sympathize with parents of young ones. It’s the beginning of family life at home. The stakes for faith feel high.

And I ache for the parents of adults who have left the church. It’s beyond the years of family life at home. The stakes feel even higher.

I want to tell the first group: Don’t worry. You’re doing more than you realize. God is at work in ways you can’t see. It’s not all up to you.

I want to tell the second group the same.

But encouragement is not enough. We want to act, especially when our children and their faith is concerned.

So what can we do? Take our own advice.

“Use your words.”

Just as parents coach and coax toddlers to practice their language skills (rather than throw a tantrum), we can encourage each other to use our conversations, witness and prayers for the children we love.

First, use your words to share your faith.

Remember the power of example. How often do you talk about God, prayer or the church with the children or young adults in your life? Have you ever spoken about your own faith journey, struggles or questions? If you share what brings you joy, purpose, peace and truth, young people will notice. Even if they don’t always agree or understand, they are paying attention to the way you live your life and how your faith shows up in everyday conversations.

Second, use your words to bear witness to your faith.

Remember the importance of integrity. How do your children hear you talk about other people? Politicians you disagree with? Individuals or groups you don’t like?

Children are listening from their earliest days. Despite the influence of friends, media and culture, parents still have significant influence on the beliefs and morals of their children.

Think about the language and tone you use in conversation with your children. Do your words and tone reflect your values, no matter the topic?

Finally, use your words to pray for young people.

Ultimately our children’s faith—like every part of their lives—is out of our control. But prayer reminds us that each child belongs to God.

Remember the words we believe, the word that matters most: “Be not afraid. I am with you.” If we start a daily habit of entrusting the children we love to God, we can find comfort, hope and guidance in God’s care.

At the recent synod on “Young people, faith and vocational discernment,” the Vatican’s preparatory document read: “The church wants again to state her desire to encounter, accompany and care for every young person, without exception.”

We can do the same for the children in our lives. We can use our words for good.

FANUCCI is a mother, writer and director of a project on vocation at the Collegeville Institute in Collegeville, Minnesota. She is the author of several books, including “Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting,” and blogs at motheringspirit.com.
COMING EVENTS
November 23, 2018

Women in Spirit Meeting – Dima Ghawi will speak about “From Forced Silence to Loud Purpose” at the Women in Spirit Meeting on Thursday, Nov. 29, noon, at St. Joseph Cathedral, Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge. Women in Spirit is a gathering for women who want to grow in their faith and fellowship. A complimentary lunch will be included. RSVP by emailing wis@cathedrallbr.org or call the cathedral office at 225-387-5928.

Messiah Concert – A free Messiah concert, performed by Michael and Nancy Hendrick, Father Charbel Jamhoury, pastor of St. Agnes Church in Baton Rouge, and reader Marcus Ledoux will be held on Sunday, Nov. 25, 4 p.m., at St. Agnes, 749 East Blvd., Baton Rouge. Donations will be accepted and will go to the St. Agnes building fund. After the concert, the American flag will be raised in the new parking area. For more information, call the St. Agnes church office at 225-383-4127.

New Orleans Retreat Center Events – The Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, 5500 St. Mary St. Metairie, will host two upcoming events in December. Dr. Paul Cosar, executive director of the Retreat Center, and Darryl Ducote, director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, will present a day of prayer, “Living in Hope,” on Tuesday, Dec. 4, 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Cost is $35. On Tuesday, Dec. 11, Lorraine Hess will present a women’s reflection, “Don’t Just Do Something, Sit There,” from 6 – 8 p.m. To register for these events, call 504-267-9604.

Dr. Paul Ceasar, executive director of the Office of Black Catholics, will present a one-man drama “Tolton: From Slave to Priest” on Tuesday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m., at the Catholic Life Center, 1800 S. Acadian Thwy., Baton Rouge. Admission will be $25 for adults, $10 for youth, $50 for VIP and $80 for families of four or more. For more information, call Deacon Alfred Adams, director of the Office of Black Catholics, at 225-362-3255.

St. Alphonsus Mission – Mike Patin will present a mission, “We Wait in Joyful Hope,” Sunday, Dec. 2 – Tuesday Dec. 4, 7 p.m., at St. Alphonsus Church, 14040 Greenwell Springs Road, Greenwell Springs. For more information, call 225-261-4650.
ASSISTANCE ▼

18,000 area residents CCDBR has helped through its disaster assistance recovery program, originally established following the spring flood of 2016 but that quickly expanded in the wake of the historic August flooding several months later. Combined, the program has assisted 6,443 families in parishes spread throughout the diocese.

The assistance was made possible through grants obtained by CCDBR as well as funds provided to the agency and such programs as Road Home, and the Small Business Administration.

Along with those funds another $650,000 went to furniture, appliances and emergency repairs to allow families to return to their homes. There was also another $500,000 through a partnership with the Salvation Army for the furniture/appliance program.

Those types of donations helped Dunn move into a trailer that was almost completely furnished.

CCDBR executive director David Aguillard said his staff originally responded to the March 2016 floods with nine case managers. That number swelled to more than 170 six months later.

Aguillard said CCDBR was originally in the response phase, distributing more than $1 million worth of goods to families in need. Aguillard admitted that initially CCDBR “could not get to all of the affected areas because a large amount of our staff was impacted.”

He did note that several church parishes adopted affected parishes and provided much-needed assistance in terms of food and other items.

The agency quickly transitioned into long term recovery mode, providing assistance in a number of areas, including helping families navigate the often confusing matrix of bureaucratic paper work that included understanding FEMA’s rules and regulations and filling out various loan applications.

Staff members also helped victims find affordable housing and advised clients with renovation estimates, screening of contractors, helping identify experts to complete the job and making sure repairs were adequately completed. In many cases CCDBR was with a family from shortly after the flood until they were resettled or back in their original home.

Additionally, Catholic Charities provided mental health care not only to families but also to case workers and others working on the front lines in dealing with such challenges as depression and post traumatic stress syndrome.

“It’s difficult to start over,” Aguillard said. “The fact is some people will never recover; some people can’t get back into affordable housing.”

Lisa Lee, a CCDBR staff member who played a significant role in the assistance program, said at one point the agency was employing 11 disaster recovery teams, with 10-15 members on each team. Also included were bi-lingual case workers, assisting immigrants, especially those among the burgeoning Hispanic community, that were affected.

Lee said a $700,000 grant dedicated to immigrants will help continue to serve that population.

Adam Dunn visits with C.J. Roy of CCDBR in Dunn’s new home. Dunn lost everything in the Flood of 2016. He went through two evacuation centers and temporary housing at the River Center and Alamo Plaza before getting his home. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

PRIEST APPRECIATION – Father Armit Raj, parochial vicar at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Maringouin, St. Francis Xavier Cabrini Parish in Livonia and St. Joseph Parish in Grosse Tete, was honored at a reception as part of a priest appreciation ceremony on Oct. 20. The reception, which was hosted by the KPC Mary Immaculate Council #119 and St. Aubry Ladies Court #119 in Maringouin, was held at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Hall. Grand Lady Trymeka McCoy and Grand Knight Sam Watson presented Father Raj with a monetary donation on behalf KPC Knight and Ladies. Photo provided by Trymeka McCoy | Immaculate Heart of Mary
"In the first moments of holding her newborn, Blessed Mother must have been filled with the greatest joy, a joy that only a mother can experience," said Father Yi. "After she touched and kissed the face of God, she must have pondered: 'What child is this who is on my lap sleeping, for whom angels sing and shepherds gaze? This is the Messiah, Christ the King foretold by the ancient prophecies of Scriptures. What will he be? What change will he bring? Will Joseph and I be good teachers? Where will this child lead Joseph and me? Wherever we are called and sent, we will trust and follow.'"

Zelden said though Mary was free of original sin because of her role in salvation history, she allowed Joseph to lead the household.

"She said Mary also didn't seek to glorify herself. "When things happened, she kept them close to her heart, thought about them and treasured them until the proper time, which is after Jesus' death and resurrection," said Zelden.

Father Yi said Catholics can more deeply enter into the miraculous surroundings of Christ's birth through Mary's eyes by striving to give an unconditional ‘Yes’ when called upon by God to fulfill his plan, even through sacrifice when things are beyond their control, and pondering on their God's goodness through it all.

"At some point in our lives, most of us have been asked to make a move or a change without any time for preparation, without room for negotiation, or without a chance to leave our options open. If we resign to accepting the situation or commit to a situation, would we ever feel joy?" asked Father Yi.

"Often when we make a decision or commitment, we would like to have all the facts on hand, all the permutations of scenarios mapped out, and an exit strategy planned. Her miraculous pregnancy is beyond comprehension for all of us. Her response to the angel shows us that for some events in our lives, we can only understand them through faith and hopeful trust. The ‘yes’ that Blessed Mother said to God invites us to respond with our own fiat. Perhaps our response would be: ‘Lord, I trust you completely, and I trust that what you ask of me is for my good because you love me. For that reason, I will follow you. In the end, my heart will be conformed to yours, my wants and my desires will be conformed to yours,’" he said.

Reading Scriptures helps people yield their desires to God and ponder upon ‘the mystery of it all,’ said Father Yi.

"Reading Scripture to recall his promises to us, thinking about him often throughout the day – these are all ways to magnify the Lord, ways to make him bigger and bigger in our hearts and minds, just as Blessed Mother did," said Father Yi. "We glorify him when we praise him, recount his blessings to us, and thank him for them. We glory him when we testify to the work he has done in us and share about him with those around us. Just as the incarnation of Christ in her womb led Mary to magnify the Lord and rejoice, so God’s great works in our lives lead us to praise God and to delight in his goodness and mercy toward us."

"Pope Francis beautifully said, ‘We would do well to ask ourselves: With the things that happen in life, I ask myself the question: what is the Lord saying to me with his word, right now?’. "This is called keeping the word of God, because the word of God is precisely the message that the Lord gives us in every moment. Let us safeguard it with this, safeguard it with our memory, and safeguard it with our hope. We ask the Lord for the grace to receive the word of God and keep it, and also the grace to have a heart that is fatigued in this effort. So be it.”
Merry Christmas
Advent spiritual events in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

November 30
Advent Taize Prayer Service
Holy Rosary Church
44450 Hwy. 429, St. Amant
6 – 7 p.m.
Contemplative prayer in Taize style, music, Scripture reading and reflection
Parish office 225-647-5321

December 1
Family Adoration/Benediction
St. Alphonsus Church
14040 Greenwell Springs Rd.
St. Alphonsus Church, Parish Advent Mission
7  – 8:30 p.m.
Refreshments afterwards.
Olga Johnson 225-261-4644

December 2 – 4
Parish Advent Mission
St. Alphonsus Church, 14040 Greenwell Springs Road
Greenwell Springs
7  – 8:30 p.m.
Mike Patin will be speaking on the theme “As We Wait in Joyful Hope.”
Refreshments afterwards.
Olga Johnson 225-261-4644

December 3 – 5
Parish Mission
St. Jean Vianney Church
16166 S. Harrell's Ferry Rd.
Baton Rouge
9 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Adoration Mission
Holy Rosary Church
44450 Hwy. 429, St. Amant
6:30 p.m.
Dr. Brian Pedraza, Asst. professor at FranU, “Be Not Afraid: Jesus, Mary and Joseph – Total Abandonment to God”
Monday – Adoration, praise music
Tuesday – Adoration, the rosary
Wednesday – Adoration in silence
Parish office 225-647-5321

December 4
Advent Penance Service
St. Joseph Church
255 N. Eighth St., Ponchatoula
6 – 7 p.m.
Terri Albert 985-386-3749

December 5, 12, 19
The Light is On for You
Our Lady of Mereh Church
445 Marquette Ave., Baton Rouge
6 – 7:30 p.m.
Deacon Richard Grant. 225-926-1883

December 6
Advent Evening of Reconciliation
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
11485 Ferdinand St., St. Francisville
5:30 – 7 p.m.
225-635-3630

Remembering Our Children Candlelight Service
St. Alphonsus Church
14040 Greenwell Springs Rd.
Greenwell Springs
6 p.m.
Celebrate the life, love and light of our children who have gone much too soon.
We encourage those who have lost a child and those who support them to attend this candlelight service.
JoAnn Stein 225-261-4650

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
St. Ann Church
182 Church St., Morganza
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Traditional Spanish Mass followed by music, dance and food in parish hall.
Fr. Brent Maher 225-694-3781

December 10
Advent Reconciliation
St. Ann Church
182 Church St., Morganza
9 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Father Emmerich Vogt OP will help prepare our hearts for Christmas
Fr. Brent Maher 225-694-3781

Bless her Christmas and yours, too!
Sponsor a family today. It's easy.
Area charities need assistance from businesses, individuals

This time of year, people focus on giving to others. This usually takes the form of gifts that are given to family and friends, with much time spent on choosing a gift that each person will appreciate.

Because of current economic conditions, many people will not be able to give presents nor will they be in a position to receive gifts from those close to them. Many people are in desperate need of the basics of life: food, warm clothing, medication and personal hygiene items.

For those who would like to give a gift to those who are in need, here is a list of some of the charitable efforts that are taking place this holiday season.

**Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge**

**The Community Comes Together for Christmas**

Catholic Charities matches individuals and families in need with people who want to provide Christmas for them. Contact Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge 225-336-8700 for information or go to the website at catholiccharitiesbr.org.

**Keep Christmas Lights Shining Bright**

Catholic Charities sponsors this program to help with utility bills of struggling families or individuals during the winter months. Contact Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge 225-336-8700, or donate online at catholiccharitiesbr.org.

**Good Fellows – Good Samaritans**

Good Fellows – Good Samaritans is a volunteer organization that raises money to deliver clothing, gifts and books to needy children in East Baton Rouge Parish. All donations go directly to the children who are determined by their school counselors as being truly in need.

Donations can be sent to Good Fellows – Good Samarians, P.O. Box 3766, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul**

**Annual Bishop’s Gift Distribution**

Children who won’t have the opportunity to sit on Santa’s lap and receive a visit from Santa on Christmas Eve will be able to visit with Bishop Michael G. Duca Saturday, Dec. 20 and receive a gift from him. Many of these children live at the Bishop Ott Homeless Shelter or at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room and depend on St. Vincent de Paul for their well-being.

New toys can be dropped off at 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place, Baton Rouge.

**St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal**

Financial support given to St. Vincent de Paul allows the agency to provide food, shelter and health care to thousands of people in need each year.

Contributions can be sent to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 or online at svdtpbr.org.

**St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy**

Volunteer pharmacists distribute life-sustaining medication to people who cannot afford to purchase what they need. The pharmacy needs over-the-counter medications such as Advil, Motrin, Robitussin, Benadryl, Maalox, Mylanta, Tums, Rolaids, Tylenol Extra Strength, Pepcid A-C and Zantac, as well as the generics of these medications.

Donations can be made at the Community Pharmacy, 1647 Convention St., Baton Rouge.

**St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room**

With the meal count going up at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room, donated food items are critical to provide a hot meal 365 days of the year. The Dining Room is in urgent need of rice, sugar, dry beans, spaghetti, canned vegetables and fruits. During the holiday season, there is also a need for ham, turkey and the trimmings that go with these.

Donations can be made at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room, 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place, Baton Rouge.

“Taste and See: Food for the Body and Soul” Cookbook

Proceeds from the sale of each cookbook are distributed to the services that are needed.

See CHARITIES PAGE 4B
Diocese of Baton Rouge Seminary Scholarship Funds

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.

Scholarship Fund Contributions June – October

In honor of: Fr. Jamin David
By: St. Margaret’s Kaycey Auxiliary $100.00
Staff of St. Margaret $175.00
St. Margaret CDA Court #2678 $128.50 $13,594.35

By: Monsignor’s 3 sisters: Sister Mildred Guillot, CSJ,
Father Leo Guillot $50.00
In memory of: Mr. Donald Joseph Broussard
By: Robert/Georgina Little $30.00
CDA Court of St. John the Baptist #2079 $200.00 $68,002.43

In memory of: Richard Kelly Akin
By: Joseph/Linda Daigle $10.00
Father Clarence Waguespack Jr.

In memory of: Mr. Floyd Stadeker
By: James/Mary Alice Robert $20.00
M/ M Duffy Landry, Sr. $30.00
Ethel Guerd $800.00
CDA LA State Court $1350.00
In memory of: Fr. Jamin David
By: Robert/Georgina Little $30.00

In memory of: Mr. Donald Joseph Broussard
By: Merieda B. Broussard $25,000.00
St. Joseph the Worker Parishioners $3,261.00 $19,446.00

In memory of: Mr. Floyd Stadeker
By: James/Mary Alice Robert $20.00
CDA Court of St. John the Baptist #2079 $200.00 $68,002.43

In memory of: Mr. Floyd Stadeker
By: James/Mary Alice Robert $20.00
CDA Court of St. John the Baptist #2079 $200.00 $68,002.43

Additional Scholarship Funds

Father Thomas Colbert.................................$20,000.00
L. W. Collens............................................$16,013.31
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Corde .........................$3,900.68
John Thomas Coutee, Sr. Family .............$10,100.00
Paul Creswell, Jr.,..................................$20,000.00
Carol C. Daquanno, Sr..........................$22,400.00
Dietrich/Bourgeois Families ..................$21,240.00
Isaac Dye, Jr., USMA...............................$20,071.70
Father Gustave Dorval.........................$20,000.00
Archbishop Drossaert..............................$6,418.38
Stephen Dugas.......................................$3,650.90
Father Matthew Fashan.........................$5,575.52
Father Salvadore Impastato......................$20,000.00
Monsignor Andrew Frey..........................$77,800.00
Monsignor Leo Gassler..............................$20,575.52
Monsignor Paul J. Gaus..............................$20,000.00
Monsignor Patrick Gillespie.....................$20,000.00
Monsignor Cage Gordon..............................$20,000.00
Mr. & Mrs. A. X. Guillot............................$20,000.00
Kathleen Elise Heroman..........................$20,000.00
Father Maynard “Tippy” Hurst..................$15,345.00
Father Salvador Impastato......................$20,000.00
Alene Kaylor..........................................$18,518.68
Rev. Vincent Kleinpeter............................$20,000.00

Financial Contributions
A $1 donation to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank provides seven meals to a family or individual in need. Donations can be made by sending a donation to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, P.O. Box 2996, Baton Rouge, LA 7021-2996 or call (225) 339-9940 ext. 203.

Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank

Donating Food
While purchasing food for a Christmas dinner at a local grocer, pick up a few additional items and place them in the Food Bank Barrel after checking out.

BackPack Program
BackPacks are filled with 10-12 nutritious food items and then distributed to at-risk children, who are at risk of missing meals over the weekend or during holidays when they are not in school, enrolled in the program in select elementary schools. The backPacks are discreetly sent home with children as young as pre-K and as old as fifth grade on Friday and returned empty on Monday morning.

To donate, visit our website at www.diobr.org/vocations for a complete list of Seminary Scholarship Funds.

For information, call 225-336-8778.

The Catholic Commentator
CHRISTMAS 2018
November 23, 2018

CHARITIES

From page 3B
Fundraising, social, musical events set for Christmas season

**November 24**

**Pancake with Santa**
Rosaryville Spirit Life Center
39003 Rosaryville Road
Ponchatoula
9 – 11 a.m.
Child $10
Adult (over 13) $15
Digital Photo $10
Pancake, visit with Santa, bring $5 unwrapped gift valued at $5 for free
digital picture with Santa
Toys will go to Children’s Hospital
Register at catholictrecenter.org/pancakes-with-santa/
225-294-5093

**Christmas Cookies with Santa**
St. Michael High School
17521 Monitor Ave., Baton Rouge
1 – 2 p.m. in school cafeteria
Cookies and juice provided plus free pictures with Santa
Leigh Ann King 225-247-9643

**Christmas Brunch**
St. Dominic Church
55720 LA Hwy. 445, Husser
9:30 a.m. – til
Emily Gautreau 985-320-1806

**10th Annual “Winter Wonderland” Food Festival**
St. Joseph Church
15710 LA Hwy. 16
French Settlement
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
10 a.m. A Taste of French Settlement
chicken and andouille gumbo, seafood
gumbo, pistolettes, homemade candy,
cookies, cakes and soft serve ice cream
8:30 p.m. Light parade.
Father Jason’s Christmas Village, free
tour, craft booths, free activities for
children, classic car and truck show.
Jinx Berthelot. 225-963-0279

**December 1**

**Breakfast with Santa**
St. Elizabeth School Home and School Community Center
119 Hwy. 403, Painecourtville
8:30 a.m.
$6 admission; picture packages start at
$15; Secret Santa Shop items $1 – $5,
free gift wrap
Eat with Santa and Mrs. Claus,
includes story time, games, arts &
crafts; photo booth
Lisa Traigle. 985-369-7402

**Breakfast with Santa**
St. Stephen the Martyr Church
Parish Hall
22494 Hwy. 22, Maurepas
8 – 10 a.m.
$5 per plate
Francois’s pancakes, snowman’s
sausage, jingle bell juice, magical merry
Christmas milk. Bring your camera and
Christmas list
Church office 225-698-3110

**December 2 & 3**

**Gumbo Sale by Associate Missionaries of St. Paul**
St. Benedict the Moor Church
5479 Hwy. 1, Napoleonville
After 5 p.m. Mass Dec. 1
After 10 a.m. Mass Dec. 2
$6 per plate
Proceeds to help the needy.
Zegory McGalliard. 985-992-6343

**December 2**

**Christmas Pageant**
Mater Dolorosa/St. Dominic Parish
School of Religion
55720 LA Hwy. 445, Husser
4 – 5:30 p.m.
Students in PSR grades K-8 as well as
other students
Emily Gautreau 985-320-1806

**Christmas Cookies with Santa**
St. Michael High School
17521 Monitor Ave., Baton Rouge
1 – 2 p.m. in school cafeteria
Cookies and juice provided plus free pictures with Santa
Leigh Ann King 225-247-9643

**Christmas Brunch**
St. Dominic Church
55720 LA Hwy. 445, Husser
9:30 a.m. – til
Emily Gautreau 985-320-1806

**December 3**

**Christmas Band Concert**
St. Michael High School
17521 Monitor, Baton Rouge
2 – 4 p.m. School gym
Christmas tunes from the concert and
jazz bands.
Kevin Andry 225-753-9782

**December 4**

**Candlelight Concert**
Baton Rouge High School
St. Joseph Cathedral
401 Main St., Baton Rouge
7 p.m.
Lorie Weeks 225-387-5928

**December 6**

**Christmas Concert and Pictures with Santa**
St. Jude the Apostle School
9150 Highland Rd., Baton Rouge
5:30 – 8 p.m.
St. Jude choir and combined bands
perform at 6:30 p.m. The St. Jude
Boy Scout Troop 103 will be selling
gumbo dinners beginning at 5:30 p.m.
Pictures with Santa with packages to
be sold.
Starr Driesse 225-769-2344

**Blessings of the Advent Christmas Season!**

**Parish Mission**
December 3rd – 5th, 9:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

**Parish Advent Retreat Day**
December 15th from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Monday Night of Advent Reconciliation**
December 10 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**Advent Penance Service**
December 18th at 7:00 p.m.

**Christmas Eve Vigil Masses**

4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.

**Christmas Day Masses**
 bild.mindenla.com

**2018 DECEMBER CALENDAR**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
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**Candlelight Christmas Concert**
SJA/CHS
LSU Union Theater
310 LSU Student Union, Baton Rouge
7 – 8 p.m.
Featuring the St. Joseph’s Academy and
Catholic High School Wind Ensemble,
directed by Mark Messina, and Schola
Cantorum, directed by Steve Galliano
perform.
Mark Messina 225-383-0397

**Café Français**
West Baton Rouge Museum
845 North Jefferson Ave, Port Allen

**St. Jean Vianney Catholic School**

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**Christmas Band Concert**
St. Michael High School
17521 Monitor, Baton Rouge
2 – 4 p.m. School gym
Christmas tunes from the concert and
jazz bands.
Kevin Andry 225-753-9782

**December 7**

**Candlelight Christmas Concert**
SJA/CHS
LSU Union Theater
310 LSU Student Union, Baton Rouge
7 – 8 p.m.
Featuring the St. Joseph’s Academy and
Catholic High School Wind Ensemble,
directed by Mark Messina, and Schola
Cantorum, directed by Steve Galliano
perform.
Mark Messina 225-383-0397

**Mindy Averitt 225-388-2258**

**Café Français**
West Baton Rouge Museum
845 North Jefferson Ave, Port Allen

**St. Jean Vianney Catholic School**

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**Christmas Cookies with Santa**
St. Joseph Church
401 Main St., Baton Rouge
3 p.m.
Lorie Weeks 225-387-5928

**Holiday Open House**
West Baton Rouge Museum
845 North Jefferson Ave., Port Allen
2 – 5 p.m.
Complete with holiday music,
refreshments, ornament making and
more.
Free and open to public
Toni Brantley 225-336-2422 ext. 201

**Las Posadas: The Journey of the Wise Men**
Cypress Springs Mercedarian Prayer Center
3 – 5 p.m.

Afterwards visit with St. Nicholas,
Bubbles the Camel, a petting zoo, pony
rides and refreshments
Free, please reserve space by calling
225-752-8480

**Parish Mission**
December 3rd – 5th, 9:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

**Parish Advent Retreat Day**
December 15th from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Monday Night of Advent Reconciliation**
December 10 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**Advent Penance Service**
December 18th at 7:00 p.m.

**Christmas Eve Vigil Masses**
4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.

**Christmas Day Masses**
Midnight, 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.

**St. Jean Vianney Catholic School**

16166 S. Harrell’s Ferry Road • Baton Rouge • 225.753.7950
Exit I-12 South on O’Neal Lane to S. Harrell’s Ferry Road.
Take left. Church is 1 block on the right
St. Jean Vianney Preschool
St. Jean Vianney Catholic School

**Blessings of the Advent Christmas Season!**

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Favorite holiday recipes

Cabbage Casserole

Teenie Bajon  
St. Thomas More Church, Baton Rouge

1 cabbage, diced and boiled  
1 roll of pork sausage, mild  
1 lb. ground meat  
Onions, green peppers, shallots, parsley (as much as you like)  
1 c. cooked rice  
1 can Rotel tomatoes  
Velveeta cheese to mixture and also on top

Cook pork sausage and ground meat. Sauté seasoning in cooked sausage and meat.  
Add cabbage and cook for 15 minutes, mixing well. Add rice, Rotel tomatoes and cook another 15 minutes. Taste for seasoning. If needed, add some seafood seasoning.  
Put in casserole dish with cover or use aluminum foil to cover. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes at 350 degrees.

Sweet Potato Crunch

Teenie Bajon  
St. Thomas More Church, Baton Rouge

3 c. sweet potatoes, cooked, 5-7 baked or boiled  
1 c. sugar  
½ tsp. salt  
2 eggs, beaten  
½ stick margarine

Combine all ingredients. Mix until well blended.  
Sprinkle on top of sweet potato mixture. Drizzle with melted margarine over the topping. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Italian Olive Bread

Teenie Bajon  
St. Thomas More Church, Baton Rouge

8 oz. pkg. mozzarella cheese, shredded  
1 stick margarine, melted  
½ c. mayonnaise  
3 cloves, pressed garlic  
1 dozen pistolettes

Mix ingredients in bowl. When ready spread on pistolettes and put in 350 degree oven and bake until cheese has melted.  
Can be done the day before and refrigerated.

Keeping Your Loved One Home for the Holidays...

There’s no better way to spend the holidays than surrounded by family and friends! STAT Home Health and St. Joseph Hospice work with physicians to help keep you or your loved ones at home.

STAT Home Health and St. Joseph Hospice are part of The Carpenter Health Network ... an agile, seamless solution to illness and injury, no matter the prognosis or expected outcome. From the stability of senior care, home health and rehabilitation to curative, life-extending treatment and the compassion of palliative and hospice care, The Carpenter Health Network is a continuum of care for the families they serve.

For terminally ill patients with symptoms not well managed at home, The Carpenter House, St. Joseph Hospice’s inpatient facility, serves as a place of peace, offering the confidence of a hospital ... with the comforts of home. Offering private rooms with comfortable dining and relaxing areas for family members, the Carpenter House can become an extension of your home during the holidays.

If you or a family member is in need of assistance this holiday season ... call for information!
And the angel said unto them, “Fear not! For, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, Which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, Lying in a manger.”

St. Luke 10-12
**A Christmas Wish**

When we respond to a plea for help with an act of kindness, it is His hand that guides us. This year, we will serve over 270,000 meals; provide over 30,000 guest nights of shelter; and fill prescriptions worth more than a million dollars. Each of these numbers represents a wish fulfilled and a triumph of faith over adversity.

When it comes to wishes, the kids we serve here at St. Vincent de Paul in the weeks leading up to Christmas are pretty typical. Children like Liz, the little girl in the photo, want bikes and dolls and video games; but there are also some things they don't want. They don't want to go to bed hungry; they don't want to live in homes without heat; and they don't want to worry about adult problems like lay-offs and eviction notices. The adults we serve - people like Liz’s mother - want things like steady jobs and enough income to buy food for themselves and their families, to pay rent and utilities, with a little left over for Christmas gifts. When a homeless mother has nothing to give her child but love and a kiss, they must rely on others for everything else. Liz and her mother represent the thousands who have benefited from the kindness and generosity of our community.

We'll do our best to make this Christmas Season a good one for as many people as possible. Our dining room will serve thousands of meals. Our shelters will provide warm beds to homeless men, women and children. Our community pharmacy will fill life-sustaining prescriptions. We hope you will add one more person to your Christmas list and ask you to consider making a gift using this envelope enclosed in this issue of the Catholic Commentator. If you can’t afford to give at this time, please pray for the poor and hold onto this envelope until a time when you can afford to give.

At St. Vincent de Paul, $1 will provide a hot meal; $10 will provide a night of shelter for a homeless family; and $28 will fill a life-sustaining prescription; so you can imagine what a difference a larger gift can make. Any gift, no matter how small, will make a Christmas wish come true.

Use the enclosed envelope to help the poor and homeless, or give online at svdpbr.org.