A CALL TO PRAYER
Finding peace in wake of abuse scandal

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Anger, pain, confusion and heartbreak over abuse and broken trust surface through tears and cries for help. These were among the feelings expressed, especially among parents, regarding the clergy sexual abuse scandal according to Becky Eldredge and Stephanie Clouatre Davis, retreat facilitators and co-founders of Women at the Well.

As parents, they struggled themselves to come to terms with last summer’s revelations of clergy abuse at the national level and most recently with the release of names of priest offenders in the Diocese of Baton Rouge on Jan. 31.

“The ripple affect of this news has been dispersed throughout the church and the world,” said Eldredge. “My heart aches over the reopening and deepening of the wounds of the abused and their families.”

After news of the scandal broke out, Davis and Eldredge were inundated with emails, phone calls and encounters with people during retreats and spiritual direction who were heartbroken and wondering “What do we do as parents?” and “How can we help?”

“I had these feelings and we found that people had the same feelings,” said Davis, an associate with the Dominican Sisters of Peace and a youth/young adult ministry expert. “With so many ‘voices’ clamoring for attention on this issue, Eldredge and Davis said they felt God calling them to create a prayerful response to help people clearly hear God’s voice during such disturbing times. They began talking individually and collectively about ways to begin the healing process.

“We both sought a response to the pain we see, to the pain of those abused, to the betrayal of some of our (former) clergy, and the ripple impact of this sin throughout our church and our world,” said Eldredge. “What stirred for us as a response was to provide a guided framework for prayer.”

And their search brought them to St. Ignatius. “With all this stuff, it was a matter of turning to the rich tradition of St. Ignatius,” said Davis.

Their four-part audio series, “Let Us Cry Together: A Response to the Sexual Abuse Scandal,” found at beckyeldredge.com/let-us-cry-together, is a way for people to pray together, cry out and discern what their response is to the abuse scandal.

Week one of the series features prayers for those who have been abused. The second week is for loved ones of those who have been abused, followed by the church, and the final session focuses on the body of Christ.

The presentations feature Ignatian meditations, prayers and readings. As a reminder of God’s faithfulness, each session ends with Psalm 136, which includes the response, “For his love endures forever.”

The psalm, which talks about God’s love in creating the world, releasing the Jewish

SEE PRAYER PAGE 16

Scouts celebrated at Mass

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

With a simple, but moving performance of the National Anthem by the St. Joseph Cathedral choir, a tradition that had been dormant for “many, many years” in the Diocese of Baton Rouge was restored.

More than 400 Scouts of America, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, American Heritage girls and their families gathered in downtown Baton Rouge for Mass and lunch with Bishop Michael G. Duca on the day designated by the Catholic Church as Scout Sunday.

“It’s good to see you all here today,” Bishop Duca told the young leaders Feb. 3. “I can’t tell you how important it is that we have this Mass today.”

According to Deacon Richard Grant, the chaplain of the Catholic Committee on Scouting for the diocese, Scout Sunday Mass was celebrated by the standing bishop “many, many years ago,” but had not been celebrated in quite some time. He said the committee decided they would reinvent the Mass and celebrate it on or around Scout Sunday, which is Feb. 8, or the Sunday closest to that date.

So the committee contacted Bishop Duca, a former scout, who enthusiastically embraced the idea.

“When (the committee) offered (celebrating the Mass) I said ‘yes, yes, yes,’ because I want you to see the connection of what you do as scouts and your Catholic faith,” Bishop Duca said in his homily. “The tenets of your faith to being a good person resonates in the scouts.”

SEE SCOUTS PAGE 7
**The sign of peace**

You know you’ve been there before, in that emotional state— with a heavy heart, mind or spirit, you attend Mass, hoping to find peace with that something or someone through prayer. As the liturgy continues, the worry or concern might be overwhelming and the last thing you want is human contact—with your spouse, your child, your parent or even your neighbor. But, that is exactly what God is calling us to do when we make the sign of peace in Mass.

In the Gospel of Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus says, “So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering.”

The act of this spiritual symbolism is even stated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal that “...the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament” (GIRM 82).

Through the centuries the exchange of peace has changed forms based on cultural trends of the time. The early church called it the “kiss of peace.” In the Mediterranean culture, the custom was and still is to greet family and friends with a kiss. The kiss of peace later developed with the priest first kissing the altar, then passing it on to his attendants and the people, symbolizing that peace comes from Christ. Other forms of the gesture included clapping the hands, then a kiss or merely bowing to a neighbor and touching his hand. By the 17th century, the kiss of peace was restricted to only those present in the sanctuary and was not passed on to the faithful; or, the clergy would use a “pax (peace) board,” a wooden paddle that each minister would kiss.

The practice was dropped until it was revived with the Second Vatican Council and the church entrusted each conference of bishops to determine the cultural sign most appropriate for their congregations. In some Catholic liturgies, the gesture occurs before the offering while the Latin rite places it after the consecration because it refers to the “Paschal kiss” of the risen Christ present on the altar.

The 2005 Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist discussed whether to move the rite to precede the presentation of the gifts but decided against the change. However, the Congregation for Divine Worship issued a circular letter in 2014 encouraging “greater restraint in the gesture, which can be exaggerated and cause a certain distraction in the assembly just before the reception of Communion.” The sign of peace is also optional and can be omitted by the priest or deacon if it does not seem appropriate.

But Pope Benedict XVI called on the protection of the rite, emphasizing its significance “as a contribution of Christians, with their prayer and witness to allay the most profound and disturbing anxieties of contemporary humanity.”

Whatever its form, the sign of peace is a sign of transformation in our hearts during the liturgy. Whether it’s a wave of a nod during cold and flu season or a hug and a kiss for a close friend, the gesture reminds us of how Jesus greeted the disciples who were filled with fear after his death. “Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you’” (Jn 20:19).

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**Our hope is the Lord**

Days and weeks have flown by as we are in mid-February and Lent is fast approaching. We prepare for the Sixth and Seventh Sundays in Ordinary Time in this issue. The Scriptures are rich with familiar content resonating with timeless themes. The golden thread of the readings is the theological virtue, hope. Hope is the virtue by which we desire and expect from God both eternal life and the greatest impact on the entire human race.

**Hope in strength**

The reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah on the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time is a commentary explaining the barrenness of trusting solely on humanity for strength. A heart turned away from God will stand alone, as if in the desert: desolate, parched, empty. Yet, those who trust in the Lord, “whose hope is the Lord” (Jer 17:7) will flourish like a well-watered tree that is so strong it even bears fruit when experiencing a drought. Is my trust in the Lord rooted in him as my hope? Do I draw strength from people or God? Is my hope placed in what the world promises or what God delivers? When the dryness of the day parches my soul, am I quenched by that which is from God or man-made placations?

**Hope in the resurrection**

The Second Readings for both Sundays are taken from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 15. The chapter is actually 58 verses in length and rich with faith. We will hear 10 of these verses. The first six illuminate hope in the resurrection. The Corinthians held a limited view of resurrection. This created doubt in those striving to believe. The hope in the resurrection is Jesus destroyed death by taking our sins (which kill our relationships with each other and God) and offers his BODY as a sacrifice for the atonement (reparation, payment) of all sins that happened before, during and those to come. As his hands and feet were pierced with nails, in unbearably painful, he accepted all of death. Yet death was defeated by Jesus, pure, divine and fully united to the will of the Father. He not only made the perfect repARATION for our sins, he conquered that which desires to destroy his creation: he conquered death and restored our life in his resurrection. We look forward to new life in him, as “we wait in joyful hope of the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ.” St. Paul, one who personally encountered the risen Lord, reiterates, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20).

The verses continue with a comparison between Adam and Jesus, “two individuals whose lives have held the greatest impact on the entire human race.” Sin began in Adam, opening the world to decay and death. Jesus Christ “brought salvation, a triumph over sin that reverses the damage done by Adam and gives us hope that even our mortal bodies will be resurrected to new life” (Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Ignatius Press, 2010).

**Hope in mercy**

The Gospel readings from St. Luke are widely known. The Eight Beatitudes and the Golden Rule sum up the way of Christian life. St. Luke’s account of the beatitudes differs from St. Matthew’s writing. St. Luke recounts four “Blessed” and four “Woes.” Blessed are those who are poor, are hungry, who weep and are hated for they will find hope in God’s kingdom, will be fulfilled, laugh and be rewarded in heaven. Our present sufferings will pass away and cause a certain distraction in the protection of the rite, emphasizing its significance “as a contribution of Christians, with their prayer and witness to allay the most profound and disturbing anxieties of contemporary humanity.”

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We will hear 10 of these verses. The first six illuminate hope in the resurrection. The Corinthians held a limited view of resurrection. This created doubt in those striving to believe. The hope in the resurrection is Jesus destroyed death by taking our sins (which kill our relationships with each other and God) and offers his BODY as a sacrifice for the atonement (reparation, payment) of all sins that happened before, during and those to come. As his hands and feet were pierced with nails, in unbearably painful, he accepted all of death. Yet death was defeated by Jesus, pure, divine and fully united to the will of the Father. He not only made the perfect repARATION for our sins, he conquered that which desires to destroy his creation: he conquered death and restored our life in his resurrection. We look forward to new life in him, as “we wait in joyful hope of the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ.” St. Paul, one who personally encountered the risen Lord, reiterates, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20).

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**Congruently, we sing Psalm 103, “The Lord is kind and merciful.” He is slow to anger and rich in kindness. We are called to show the same kindness and mercy, even toward our enemies. In the Gospel of St. Luke, we hear it is easier to love those who love us. The challenge is to love those who hate us. Jesus tells us to give without expecting anything in return; to avoid judgment, lest we are judged by the same measure we are judging; to be careful when condemning, since the same may come back to us. Rather we are to “be merciful, even as your father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). And how merciful is God? God is so merciful that he relieves us of our misery in sin by accepting death on a cross to conquer the impact of sin which is...**

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See **GOSPEL PAGE 9**
Bishop wants to listen, learn, understand

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Listening, learning and understanding — those are the main things Bishop Michael G. Duca wants to do as he begins to fully integrate himself into two organizations that began before he became bishop of the Diocese of Baton Rouge in August: the Office of Black Catholics and the Commission on Racial Harmony.

During a meet-and-greet reception at City Club of Baton Rouge on Jan. 30, Deacon Alfred Adams, Sr., director of the Office of Black Catholics, kicked off the event with a history of the office, which began in the late 1980s. After taking over as director in 2005, Deacon Adams said he formed an advisory board including representatives from each of the seven African-American church parishes in the Baton Rouge diocese: St. Francis Xavier Church in Baton Rouge; Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Baton Rouge; St. Joseph Chapel, Martin Luther King Student Center in Baton Rouge; St. Catherine of Siena Church in Donaldsonville; St. Benedict the Moor Church in Bertrandville and St. James Church in St. James.

Deacon Adams said the goal of the office is “seeking full, active participation at all levels of ministry within the Diocese of Baton Rouge.” He explained the office works to keep African-American Catholics up-to-date on materials, programs, workshops and events at regional and national levels.

“We want to assist the people of the Diocese of Baton Rouge in witnessing to the fact that all people, regardless of race, color, creed or economic background, do bring their unique gifts and talents to the body of Christ,” he said. “So, we are here for you all. We are your voice.”

Father Joshua Johnson, co-director of the Diocesan Commission on Racial Harmony, next talked about the need for understanding differences in communities and the best way to do that.

“One of the first things that we (the commission) recognized was that what we were called to do is to practice imitating God — just listen,” said Father Johnson. “Simply listen to other members in our community so that we can discern what we can do to collaborate together to cultivate racial harmony to bring about radical transformation so that the desires of Jesus Christ are fulfilled.”

Father Johnson then explained how Jesus prayed before his death, “Father, I desire that they be one.” He said that if Jesus Christ wants unity, then Satan wants to foster division.

Father Johnson talked about “disunity” through institutional racism, such as not allowing black members at country clubs, swimming pools and college fraternities; and, also through health care, education and some school policies that don’t allow hair to be worn in braids.

“So, in our Commission on Racial Harmony, we have been really trying to focus on programs through lecture series, through dialogue on race,” he said. “And, bringing awareness by inviting people to really pray with each other … to bring people together so we can all sit at the same table and discern. Examine our hearts and minds but also examine systems and institutions. So we’re here to support you but we’re also here to serve you.”

Bishop Duca then took the podium and noted that there is a lot of history in the Baton Rouge diocese that he is just starting to learn and understand.

“So, it’s really hard for me to know what direction to take other than that I know, at this time in my life, it is my time to listen,” said the bishop.

He said he plans to get to know all of the communities of the diocese and to understand how he can support them “in our move together for the kinds of goals that have already been set through because of your history here.”

The bishop talked about meeting his secretary in Shreveport for the first time and how she identified herself as Creole, something he had never experienced before. Many in the audience acknowledged there was a difference. Bishop Duca said she invited him to a family gathering and he learned about the difference in skin color, from “light skin to dark.”

“But, the other thing I noticed about being in that family was it was really like my family,” explained the bishop. “There was a cousin who was drinking too much. There was this Uncle Joe sleeping on the couch. And, this house had like three add-ons. We were sitting in the living room and the wall behind me had a window, so they didn’t want to change the window when they built on it. It was like unfamiliar but also very familiar. They were also big huggers and there was one aunt who seemed to hug for an awful long time.

“But that’s the attitude I’m bringing; to try to find the familiar; to find the things that we all yearn for and want in our lives and see if we can work together to make those real possibilities, and certainly, to root out any kind of institutional racism we may have within our church.”

The bishop said he wished to continue the dialogue and to visit all of the African-American Catholic churches. He also encouraged those attending to invite him to their special events or gatherings.

“I’m here to listen right now,” said Bishop Duca. “I’m here to gather information, to get to know you and your parishes and any kind of input at this point will be very important.”

The bishop’s comments were well received. Gwen Hamilton, a parishioner at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge, said she has been a Catholic for 67 years and she thought “it was a

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Pro-life leaders speak out on New York law

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

New York state’s recently adopted legislation allowing abortion up until the time of birth, and a similar proposal in Virginia that went even a step further has sparked outrage from pro-life leaders on the local and national levels.

On Jan. 22, the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who is Catholic, signed the state’s newly minted Reproductive Health Act. One of the law’s key components is that it permits abortions with only vague restrictions at any time of a pregnancy, including up to the time of birth.

Also included in the New York law is a provision allowing nurse practitioners and physician assistants to perform abortions.

Meanwhile, Virginia lawmakers are mulling over a similar measure, with one high-ranking state official going so far as to say if a baby is born with special needs, the parents would be provided a brief period to decide their child’s future. During that time the baby would be kept comfortable while his or her life hangs in the balance.

“It’s evil,” Danielle Van Haute, director of the Respect Life Program for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, said of the New York law. “The value of a person’s life is being determined whether or not we want it. When we don’t recognize the dignity of human life, there’s no end to the violence we can do against it.”

During his homily Feb. 3 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge, Bishop Michael G. Duca said the law completely left out the value of life, and when life begins.

“Of course, if you do that, life becomes arbitrary, the value of life becomes arbitrary,” he said.

Bishop Duca added the Bill of Rights guarantees everyone an unalienable right to life, emphasizing that right was given by God and the government’s role is to protect that life.

He said that “we as a country” have decided that when it comes to life in the womb, “we can decide when life begins.”

“We are now becoming the overlords of the value of life and believe me that is very dangerous,” he said. “Would you like the person sitting next to you to decide whether you live or die?”

Fanning the flames was the fact there was a celebration among legislators when Cuomo signed the bill into law, and the 9/11 memorial in New York City was lit in pink later that night.

“What was ironic was here you have this monument where so many deaths took place and there are a number of women’s names listed followed by the names of their unborn child (on the memorial),” Van Haute said.

She was aware New York lawmakers had been lobbying for years to have the legislation passed but that the New York Conference of Catholic Bishops and pro-life supporters has been feverishly working behind the scenes to block the law.

But with the current makeup of the state-house, abortion supporters believed the time was right to have it passed.

“I think it’s still surprising because of the extreme that it’s going to,” Van Haute said of the action. “And it makes it clear the idea of keeping abortion safe, rare and legal (as was promised in 1973 with Roe v. Wade) has completely gone out the window. That was never really the intent.

“Now we are openly celebrating the right to terminate (a pregnancy) at any point.”

The law states that aborting a late-term pregnancy must be based on the health of the mother, which actually goes back to Dolley v. Bolton, the companion case with Roe v. Wade. But Van Haute said “health of the mother” is defined so leniently that it can mean financial, emotional or physical health.

“For any reason, essentially, abortion is permissible,” she said.

Bishop Duca said the law might have a ripple affect that could ultimately endanger all lives. He said that if “we can determine the value of life (with the law) what gives the government or a nation the right to decide the value any other stage of life.”

“So when someone is getting old and older, and requires more attention, let’s be merciful to them and put them out of their suffering. And make the decision on their value of life,” Bishop Duca added. “It is a dangerous assumption and filtering into everything we do. The (law) has consequences that goes far beyond abortion.”

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, called the New York law “evil, pure and simple.”

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

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Laura Poché
Author & Estate Planning & Administration Attorney
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Lunch Provided Afterwards

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Tuesday February 19th
Drusilla Seafood
3482 Drusilla Lane
6:00pm – 8:00pm
Dinner Provided Afterwards

Baton Rouge
Wednesday February 20th
Ginos
542 Bennington Ave
11:00am – 1:00pm
Lunch Provided Afterwards

Baton Rouge
Thursday February 21st
Poche Estate Planning Office
2315 Florida St.
Bldg. 100
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Refreshments Provided Afterwards

Mandeville
Thursday February 21st
Trey Yuen
600 N Causeway Blvd
6:00pm – 8:00pm
Dinner Provided Afterwards

Baton Rouge
Friday February 22nd
Beausoleil
7731 Jefferson Hwy
11:30am - 1:30pm
Lunch Provided Afterwards

Baton Rouge
Tuesday February 26th
Poche Estate Planning Office
4900 Bluebonnet Blvd. Suite C
10:00am – 12:00pm
Lunch Provided Afterwards

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Surviving government shutdown

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Two days after FBI agent John Rothleutner and his wife welcomed their third child, the federal government shut down due to dissension over the budget.

Working without pay during the shutdown put stressors on Rothleutner’s family.

“That’s frustrating for us,” said Rothleutner, who has worked more than five years for the FBI. “We had a rainy day fund, but when you add another child, our savings didn’t last as long as you would expect.

“It’s a sobering experience that tests our faith, but it also gave us another perspective of what ‘a rainy day’ is.”

Among the moments of grace that Rothleutner has experienced is the support from their friends, family, church and agencies such as Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the Junior League of Baton Rouge.

On Jan. 27, as a “thank you” to federal employees, CCDBR and the Junior League distributed diapers and gas cards to federal workers, who are back at work, if temporarily, and are still struggling to recover financially from the shutdown.

“The stories we’ve heard about families not able to afford basic necessities are heartbreaking,” said Danielle Satawa, Diaper Bank chair for the Junior League of Baton Rouge. “Even though the furloughs have ended, we felt this was an opportunity to thank them for their service to our country and help them recover.”

“Families with young children are always hit hardest when a disaster like this happens,” said David Aguillard, Executive Director of Catholic Charities. “We’re thankful to have a partner like the Junior League to help fill gaps like this in service.”

Such support has helped people see a “brighter side” during tough circumstances, according to Rothleutner.

He noted that his oldest child recently celebrated her 6th birthday. As a father, he regretted he could not provide her more in terms of presents. But he said his daughter understood and for her birthday the family focused on the gifts of being together and the joy of celebrating her life.

“It turned out to be the best birthday,” said Rothleutner.

He also has seen a new glimpse of humanity, as people gave and did not want anything back when he offered.

“Blessings come from various people at various level,” said Rothleutner, and added, “Catholic Charities and the Junior League could not have been there at a better time.”

Looking at the likelihood that there will be another government shutdown, Rothleutner said his family was going to be “more aggressive” and save and sacrifice when budgeting and focus on the essentials.

“I think it takes grace, prayers, strategizing and discipline,” said Rothleutner.

One thing the family has “in the bank” and cannot be taken away is the many blessings that it has experienced in its trials.

“Looking forward we will continue to express love, because that is what we have experienced,” said Rothleutner. “Love is the most valuable thing one shares with another. That’s what the good Lord teaches us at the end of the day.”

Jackalyn Richmond, whose husband is an employee of the Department of Justice and worked without pay through the shutdown, also expressed gratefulness for the blessings, such as the supplies provided by Catholic Charities and the Junior League, that helped her family stretch things in their financial struggles.

“I want to thank everyone who has helped people who have been furloughed and others who have been affected by the shutdown,” said Richmond.

“I know everyone goes through difficult times and it’s encouraging to know that there are people to give you hope that things will get better.”

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Properties of the Eucharist/Do miscarried children go to heaven?

Q I firmly believe that at Mass the Eucharist becomes Christ's body and blood. But here's what I don't understand: Why then do the properties of the bread and wine still affect people for example, those with wheat allergies or alcoholics? (Danville, Indiana)

A Not surprisingly, this is a bit difficult to explain: It is, after all, a mystery of our faith, a miracle of Christ's doing and there is nothing else to which it can be compared. But it is nevertheless a core belief of the Catholic faith that the bread and wine are changed at Mass into the body and blood of Christ, something celebrated and proclaimed by hundreds of millions throughout the world since the evening of the Last Supper when Jesus said, “This is my body. . . . This is my blood.”

The Catholic faith teaches that Jesus is wholly present under either one species, and to receive under only one species, and the church does make provision for the use of low-gluten hosts and for “mustum” (grape juice in which fermentation has begun but has been suspended). Still there are those for whom even trace amounts of gluten or alcohol can be harmful. They may opt to receive under only one species, and the church teaches that Jesus is wholly present under either one.

Q I know that life begins at conception. So I want to believe that when a woman has a miscarriage, no matter how early in the pregnancy, her unborn baby goes to heaven. . . . But I am wondering what the church's view is on this. (As a woman who has experienced a miscarriage, I would find great comfort in knowing that I will be reunited someday with my baby in heaven.) (State College, Pennsylvania)

A I suppose that a theological purist might say that there is no definitive church position on the ultimate fate of a miscarried child. But from many things that the church has, in fact, taught in its official documents, it seems reasonable to assume that the child is in heaven. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament” (No. 1257).

But the miscarried child has had, of course, no chance to ask for the sacrament. A few paragraphs later, the catechism says, “Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus’ tenderness toward children which caused him to say: ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,’ allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism” (No. 1261).

When an infant is baptized, the infant makes no personal profession of faith; instead it is left to the parents and godparents to voice their desire to have the child christened. Why wouldn’t the same logic prevail in the case of a miscarriage? Had the child been carried to term, the parents would certainly have had the child baptized, so why wouldn’t a merciful God who reads hearts consider that intention sufficient?

Be comforted and at peace: I think it’s quite likely that you will meet your child in heaven.

FATHER DOYLE is a retired priest in the Diocese of Albany, New York. Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.
“Every one of these (scouting) groups here in some way we connect to God, being reverend, that God comes first in our life. And learning about the faith is important as a scout to become a strong and good Catholic.”

Bishop Duca told the scouts that as they learn about their faith, they will begin to see that the mottos and goals of scouting are connected with those same beliefs.

“It allows you to make a wonderful connection between your life as a scout and your life as a Catholic, a way in which you see your faith is bridged into the world, how you carry it with you,” added the bishop, who was a Boy Scout and Cub Scout and said scouting provided an avenue for him and his dad to connect. “The best thing we do in the scouts is to do a good deed every day, that God wants you to reach out and touch someone. That’s true in all of the scout troops to be of service to others, which is at the heart of the Gospel.

“This is inherent in everything you do as a scout.”

Deacon Grant said the Mass was important because although the scouting motto is “Duty to God,” scouting events are becoming increasingly secular. He said scouts are “getting further and further away” from God and their duty to God.

He added that the Girl Scouts have their own challenges, as reports have surfaced nationwide about the organization’s relationship with Planned Parenthood.

“At least here in the Diocese of Baton Rouge we have done what we can to keep our scouting units together, keep your families involved, and this is one of those things we feel is very important we do for our scouts and their families,” Deacon Grant said. “All of the little events that we do (is connected to) the church.

“(The Mass) was a way to get a lot of people involved in front of our shepherd and let them participate in the Eucharist.”

Admittedly, the committee was unsure of the response but was encouraged when a letter sent by the bishop to all scouting units, churches and schools result in 500 people committing to attend.

“The people enjoyed it, the Mass was beautiful and the cathedral did great in pulling out all of the bells ad whistles to make it beautiful,” Deacon Grant said. “We had a great representation.

“I did not hear anybody that was disappointed in any part of the celebration.”

At one point in his homily, Bishop Duca asked all of the scouts stand up so he could address them directly. He said his message to them was that they should not think of being a Catholic as something they have to wait until they are adults. He said being a Catholic means a person who believes in Jesus Christ and wants to live like Jesus in their lives.

Drawing from Pope Francis’ message during the recent World Youth Day in Panama, Bishop Duca said they are the NOW of God.

“You don’t have to wait to do things that Christ would want you to do,” the bishop said. “You don’t have to wait to help someone, to be a catalyst for change, to call out something that is wrong.

“Being the NOW of God means wherever you go you have the opportunity to make God present.”

He urged the youth to treat their friends fairly, do not lie to them or betray them. Bishop Duca also encouraged young people to help those in need, whether it’s family or friends, and if someone is being made fun of do not be afraid of standing with that person.

“St. Francis once said, ‘Preach the Gospel always and if necessary use words,’ ” the bishop said. “Live the Gospel with your life.”

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**SCOUTS ▼**

From page 1

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Roma
Netlix

Meditative autobiographical drama chronicling the life of a middle-class family (led by Marina de Tavira) in the titular neighborhood of Mexico City in the early 1970s focuses primarily on the breakup of the parents’ marriage and on the out-of-wedlock pregnancy of their devoted maid (Yalitza Aparicio). Grown viewers with long attention spans will find Catholicism subtly interwoven into the clan’s experience as writer-director Alfonso Cuaron muses on his childhood. But graphic content restricts the appropriate audience for his journey down memory lane. Full male nudity, a nonmarital relationship, mature references, including drug use, at least one profanity and a mild oath, a few rough terms, some crude language. L; R

Mary Queen of Scots
Focus

Highly spiced historical drama follows the doomed monarch of the title (Saorise Ronan) from her return to Scotland from France after the death of her husband, King Francis II, through her exile to England where her claim to the throne made her an unacceptable rival to Queen Elizabeth I (Margot Robbie). Taken as entertainment rather than a chronicle of real events, director Josie Rourke’s glossy adaptation of John Guy’s biography is generally diverting. But the sexual behavior on display, especially that linking Mary’s second spouse (Jack Lowden) and her court musician, is generally diverting.

Serenity
Avian

Romantic thriller in which an emotionally scarred Iraq War vet (Matthew McConaughey) working as a fishing boat captain on a tropical island finds his isolated lifestyle interrupted when his ex-wife (Anne Hathaway) unexpectedly appears and offers to pay him millions to dispose of her alcoholic and abusive second spouse (Jason Clarke) by taking him out on an excursion and feeding him to the local sharks. Concerned for the welfare of his son (Rafael Sayegh), who lives with the new couple, but distracted by his Capt. Ahab-like obsession with catching an elusive giant tuna, he wavers over whether to accept, receiving sound moral guidance from his Catholic first mate (Djimon Hounsou). Viewers’ artistic evaluation of writer-director Steven Knight’s film will largely depend on their reaction to a weird plot twist meant to updend expectations, though there can be no question that his dialogue is laughably bad at times. As for morality, the story moves through some dicey portrayals of sexuality and relentless vulgar talk toward a conclusion wholly at variance with the weightiest scriptural norms. Skewed values, strong sexual content, including graphic casual activity, rear and distant full nudity, a half-dozen uses of profanity, several mild oaths, pervasive rough and occasional crude language. O; R
U.S. Supreme Court stays Louisiana abortion law

Special to The Catholic Commentator

A U.S. Supreme Court decision granting a Shreveport abortion facility an emergency stay was disappointing for pro-life officials who remain optimistic the Louisiana law will ultimately be enacted.

On Feb. 8, the nation’s high court delayed Louisiana’s attempt to enforce a law requiring physicians to have admitting privileges at a local hospital. The law will be stayed pending a full briefing on the question of whether the Supreme Court should grant certiorari for a full review.

“When the decision is disappointing, it doesn’t signal a defeat,” said Danielle Van Haute, director of the Respect Life Program for the Diocese of Baton Rouge. “As a church, we will continue to advocate for the dignity of all human life and be present for women and men who are facing crisis pregnancies and for those who have been harmed by abortion.”

Attorneys for the Shreveport abortion facility asked the Supreme Court to issue the emergency stay in January, just days before the law was set to take effect. The stay comes after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the law last fall, then refused the abortion industry’s attempt to have the full court re-examine the case. The abortion attorneys have indicated their intention to file a petition for certiorari with the U.S. Supreme Court, seeking the Supreme Court’s full review of the law.

“As we are disappointed the Unsafe Abortion Protection Act will not go into law immediately, we do look forward to the potential of the law going into effect later this year after the court either denies the petition for certiorari, or upon a ruling in Louisiana’s favor after full briefing on the merits,” Benjamin Clapper, executive director for Louisiana Right to Life, said. “The abortion industry, over the past four decades, has fought against every common-sense health standard. This is just another example of the extreme lengths the abortion industry pursues to protect abortion-on-demand.”

Dorinda Bordlee of Bioethics Defense Fund, a consulting attorney to Louisiana Right to Life, said, “While the Texas law, like the Louisiana law, required physicians at abortion facilities to have admitting privileges at a local hospital, the Texas law also required abortion facilities to meet strict ambulatory surgical center requirements. Louisiana’s law does not include the ambulatory surgical center requirement, and the facts of Louisiana’s different geography and demographics necessitate a different result.”

Rep. Katrina Jackson (D-Monroe), a Louisiana attorney who authored the admitting privileges law, stated: “We encourage the Supreme Court to either deny the abortion industry’s petition, or, if certiorari is granted, that the Court overturn, alter, or clarify the Hellerstedt decision, allowing a state to enforce its duly enacted laws aimed at protecting the health and safety of its citizens.”

Abortion has known medical risks, and the women of this state who are often coerced into abortion deserve to have the same standard of care required for other surgical procedures.” (Richard Meek contributed to this report.)

GOSPEL ▼

from page 2

dead. Would I do the same? Hope in the Lord, Jesus, I trust in you.

Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one. Dream that the more you struggle, the more you prove the love that you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end. [St. Teresa of Avila]

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

GOLDS ▼

from page 3

fabulous event. I’m very, very excited about the number of attendees here and (the bishop’s) willingness and openness to let us know what’s going on.”

“I thought tonight was very good in the sense that he is opening himself up to the community,” said Todd Schexnayder, a parishioner at Most Blessed Sacrament in Baton Rouge, who attended the event with his wife Valerie. “That’s something that hasn’t been done in my previous years of living in the United States. He’s very welcoming … and, for a bishop, he’s also very funny.”

“It’s good that he’s putting racial harmony at the forefront — that he wants to meet all members of his flock and, with everything going on in Baton Rouge over the last few years, to encourage racial harmony,” said Valerie Schexnayder. “I think it’s a step in the right direction.”

HARMONY ▼

from page 3

ACROSS
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DOW is the director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Solution on page 14

ACROSS
1 Off historical book 5 Travels the net 10 Both 14 Donor 15 Garlic-flavored mayonnaise 16 Religious instruction for converts (abbr.) 17 Not if ___ help it 18 St. Elizabeth 19 Type of shr. 20 Drive back 22 Meeting for the election of the pope 24 Heroes 27 Narrates 28 Iows 32 Baldersdah 33 Pope of the fifth century 34 U.S. government obligation 36 Large jars for yachts 40 Diocese of Calgary is here (abbr.) 42 Sword fight 44 Noon prayer time 45 What you do not use in unleavened bread 47 He tricked Jacob 49 Spelling or quilting fest 50 NIH epistle 52 Cherished relation 54 Characteristic of God 58 Damage by regular use 59 Hamradio 61 Saint item 65 Small crop 66 “And the ___ came” 69 Car 70 Pronoun for Fifi 71 Golf clubs 72 Disagree 73 Group of two 74 Pays to play 75 Form of wrestling

1 Judge who had thirty donkeys (Judg 10:4) 2 Father of 1000 (Jer 5:23) 3 Beatnik’s approval 4 “How painful — words can be” (Job 6:23) 5 Stockholm flair 6 Turnabout, familiarly 7 Drilling gpr. 8 Stun 9 “God, be merciful to me a ___” (Lk 18:13) 10 Those who exercise the public power of the Church 11 Great achievement 12 Sft 13 Domesticates 20 One of the seven deadly sins 23 Drain problem 25 “Whatever you ___ on earth will be bound in heaven...” 26 Archbishop of Canterbury 27 Feast of ____ 29 River in Africa 30 Sacred Roman 31 To do this is forbidden by the seventh commandment 35 Arm joint 37 Peak in ancient Palestine 38 Palm refers to these animals in 1 Cor 9:9 39 Suit to ___ 40 Assigned 43 “Lord, ___ wif. We are perishing” (Mt 28:23) 46 Loads 48 ___ occasion of sin 51 Level of reverence reserved to God alone 53 Joseph interpreted these 54 Grew less 55 Reckoning 56 ____ Gay 57 Get to know 59 Public disturbance 62 Feast in the Diocese of Honolulu 63 Nt epistle 64 Catholic singer Perry ___ 67 Vane reading 68 Evidence of a leak

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What Bible did Jesus use?

Near the start of his ministry, Jesus returned to Nazareth where he had lived as a boy and a young man, and he was given a scroll of the prophet Isaiah to read to the congregation and add a homily. Apparently his home folk recognized his chosen role as a wandering rabbi. They had heard that his ministry had been quite successful elsewhere. However, when he told them that what Isaiah had prophesied was being accomplished through him in their midst, they got quite upset. Isaiah was quite safe to listen to. He was dead for 700 years. He had been a prophet of change who had challenged the Jews of his day to put their faith in God and not in the king’s military. Neither they nor the king listened to Isaiah, and he was eventually martyred. But before he died, Isaiah prophesied that God would save his people through a son born to a young virgin. Now, Jesus seemed to be claiming to be that person. And if they didn’t believe him, God would shift his blessings to others, even pagans who were not Jews, as he had done in the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. How we hear Scripture and what Scripture we listen to and make our own by obeying is important.

It may surprise you to learn that Jesus used only 15 of the 34 books in the Hebrew Bible in his preaching and teaching. That doesn’t mean that the other 19 he never quoted were not true, or that God who inspires all Scripture did not want those books in the Bible. Those other 19 were just not crucial to his mission. We are saved by Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, not by knowledge of every book in the Bible.

Scripture is important. But it all points to who Jesus was and is for us, our savior (Messiah) and our God. Jesus was the master of the show and tell. In his human life, death and resurrection he showed us who the God we cannot see really is. He is Creator and Father, Son and Redeemer, and the Spirit who gives us true life here and in eternity. If we struggle to live the kind of life Jesus showed us, the God that Jesus showed us will bless us, forgive us and bring us through life and death to an eternity with him.

It is helpful for our own spiritual lives to focus on the books of the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus seemed to favor. Genesis sets the scene for the whole story of our redemption. Jesus uses Genesis 2, 22-24, to teach about God’s intention for marriage. In the rest of the Old Testament he most often quotes Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Hosea and Psalms. The Gospel of Matthew contains more quotes from Jesus than the other three Gospels. That makes sense, because St. Matthew wrote his Gospel for a specifically Jewish audience. On the other hand, Jesus seems to ignore passages that appear to legitimize violence, imperialism, exclusion, purity codes and dietary laws.

Jesus didn’t come to teach history and remind the Jews of how chosen they were. He came to change their lives, and ours too. He challenged them and us to join him in comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable and self-satisfied. I once had a wonderful professor who said “a true Christian is a person who lives with an uneasy conscience.”

When we read the New Testament, what is really new about it is what his audiences picked up right away. “He teaches with authority.” What the people heard was that he wasn’t using too many quotes at all. St. Matthew, exaggerating a bit, says, “He would never speak to them except in parables” (Mt. 13:34). The reason why Jesus used so many parables was to speak to our consciences, to our hearts. We are to apply these parables to our own lives and be changed by them. This is grace in action. This is the “truth” God’s inspiration of Scripture intends.

If we do not see ourselves in a parable and are not stung by it, or uplifted by it, or consoled by it, then we have missed the truth that Jesus is offering us.

Father Richard Rohr OFM, in his little book “What Do We Do with the Bible?” says that we have to contemplate the Scripture we read. This scares a lot of people who link contemplation with saints like Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Therese of Liseux, or great modern thinkers like Thomas Merton or a man who taught “Centering Prayer” and recently died, Thomas Keating. Father Rohr says that contemplation isn’t so complicated. It is “any way one has of penetrating (our own) illusions and touching reality.” To me, it sounds like stop kidding ourselves and be honest in prayer with God.

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 johnncarville@gmail.com.

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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

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Ecumenism – The path forward

I was very blessed during my theological formation to have had the privilege of taking classes from two very renowned Catholic scholars, Avery Dulles and Raymond E. Brown. The former was an ecclesiologist whose books often became textbooks which were prescribed reading in seminaries and theology schools. The latter was a scripture scholar whose scholarship stands out, almost singularly, still nearly 30 years after his death. Nobody questions the scholarship, the personal integrity, or the faith-commitment of these men.

They were in different theological disciplines but what they shared, beyond the high respect of scholars and church persons everywhere, was a passion for ecumenism and a capacity to form deep friendships and invite warm dialogue across every kind of denominational and inter-religious line. Their books are studied not just in Roman Catholic circles, but in theological schools and seminaries and in Protestant, Evangelical, Mormon, and Jewish seminaries as well. Both were deeply respected for their openness, friendship and graciousness towards those who held religious views different than their own. Indeed, Raymond Brown spent his most productive years teaching Union Theological Seminary in New York, even as he, a Sulpician priest, more than anything else cherished his Roman Catholic identity and priesthood. After losing his own father and mother, he spoke of the Roman Catholic Church and his Sulpician community as “the family that still remains for me.”

And what these two shared in their vision for ecumenism was this: The path towards Christian unity, the road that will eventually bring all sincere Christians together into one community, around one altar, is not fully won by show winning the other over to our own particular denomination, of getting others to admit that they are wrong and that we are right and of them returning to the true flock, namely, our particular denomination. In their view, that’s not the route forward, practically or theologically. The path forward needs to be, as Avery Dulles puts it, the path of “progressive convergence.” What is this path?

It begins with the honest admission by each of us that none of us, no one denomination, has the full truth, incarnates the full expression of church, and is fully faithful to the Gospel. We are all deficient in some ways and each of us in some ways is selective in terms of which parts of the Gospels we value and incarnate and which parts we ignore. And so the path forward is the path of conversion, personal and ecclesial, of admitting our selectiveness, of recognizing and valuing what other churches have incarnated, of reading Scripture more deeply in search of what we have ignored and absent ourselves from, and of individually and collectively trying to live lives that are truer to Jesus Christ. By doing this, by each of us and each church living the Gospel more fully, we will “progressively converge,” that is, as we grow closer to Christ we will grow closer to each other and thus “progressively converge” around Christ and, as we do that, we will eventually find ourselves around one common altar and will see each other as part of the same community.

The path to unity then lies not in converting each other over, but in each of us living the Gospel more faithfully so as to grow closer to each other in Christ. This doesn’t mean that we do not take our divisions seriously, that we simplistically assert that all denominations are equal, or that we justify our divisions today by pointing to divisions that already existed in the New Testament churches. Rather we must all begin by each of us admitting that do not possess the full truth and that we are in fact far from being fully faithful.

Given that starting point, Raymond E. Brown then gives this challenge to all the churches: “recognition of the range of New Testament ecclesiological diversity makes the claim of any church to be absolutely faithful to the Scriptures much more complex. We are faithful but in our own specific way; and both ecumenies and biblical studies should make us aware that there are other ways of being faithful to which we do not do justice. … In short, a frank study of the New Testament ecclesiologies should convince every Christian community that it is neglecting part of the New Testament witness. … I contend that in a divided Christianity, instead of reading the Bible to assure ourselves that we are right, we would do better to read it to discover where we have not been listening.

As Christians of different churches try to give hearing to the previously muffled voices, our views of the church will grow larger; and we will come closer to sharing common views. Then the Bible will be doing for us what Jesus did in his time, namely, convincing those who have ears to hear that all is not right, for God is asking of us more than they thought.”

Indeed: God is asking more of us than we think.

In Exile

Father Ron Rolheiser

want some of that – what Jesus is doing.

My young son tugged at my elbow, pointing to our pastor who stood at the front of the church, praying with each person who came forward for the sacrament, anointing their heads and hands with the oil of the sick.

“I want some of that,” he insisted. “What Jesus is doing!”

I could have chuckled at his request, a classic "kids say the cutest things" comment during Mass. He was only 2 at the time, young enough to confuse the priest in flowing robes with pictures of Jesus in his children's Bible. But his words kept me wondering, even after I explained what he was seeing.

Could his eyes – the clearer, childlike eyes of faith – catch what mine couldn’t?

A theology professor of mine used to teach this wise maxim to his Scripture classes:

“If it happened back then, it’s happening now.” Meaning that we should keep our eyes open wide to see God at work in the world today. We need to remember that the Bible tells not ancient history but ever-present reality.

What was Jesus doing in Scripture? Healing the sick. Forgiving sinners. Teaching the crowds. Comforting the grieving. Preaching good news. Everything God continues to do in our world today.

What if we approached each Mass, each Scripture story and each moment of prayer with this same longing and eagerness? “I want some of that – what Jesus is doing.” My son’s words have remained with me over the years, a refrain for seeing the world with eyes of faith. His recognition of the holy and his desire for Jesus remind me to look from his level.

God works through our ordinary lives in moments so small we can miss them. Cooking breakfast for the ones we love. Baking bread. Washing feet. Sweeping the floor. Sitting with a sick child. Holding a baby.

Jesus did (or taught about) these ordinary actions, weaving them into his parables and preaching. The same moments that fill my days as a parent. The same tasks I’ve watched my friends do over and over, in small or heroic ways in their own homes.

Washing children’s feet at bath time after long days as a nurse and raising money to give other children access to clean water.

Cooking hot breakfasts for their family on a tight budget and baking a year’s worth of pastries as a gift for a parish fundraiser.

Sweeping floors three times a day with toddlers underfoot and launching letter-writing campaigns to sweep the church clean from abuse scandals and cover-ups.

Sitting up long nights with kids with special needs and sitting down to dinner with other mothers to help them know they aren’t alone.

Waiting to hold a baby after multiple miscarriages and welcoming foster children into an already full home.

When I look at my friends’ lives, I want some of all of this – what Jesus is doing, in and through them. Picture the friends you know who nudge me to see. They believe in the abundant presence of God. They model the Christian life in quiet, common ways.

But it took a child to lead me. To see God in the work of their hands.

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

Wanting what Jesus is doing

Laura Fanucci

Mothering Spirit
SEE CSW PAGE 13

CSW celebrates students, faculty and clergy

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

With prayers, praise and lots of recognition, Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 27 – Feb. 2, was celebrated in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Events included special Masses during the weekend with students wearing their Catholic school uniforms; donation drives to support Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge; municipal, civil parish and state proclamations recognizing Catholic Schools Week in Louisiana; and, recognition of school graduates who have been called to the priesthood or other religious vocations.

“This year’s NCEA (National Catholic Educational Association) theme for Catholic Schools Week is ‘Catholic Schools: Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.,’” said Catholic schools superintendent Dr. Melanie Verges. “In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, it closely connects to our vision of Catholic education.”

Verges noted that “examples of the great ministry of Catholic education” were evident during the annual Distinguished Graduate Banquet at the Renaissance Hotel in Baton Rouge on Monday, Jan. 28. At that event, the Catholic Schools Office and Bishop Michael G. Duca handed out awards to 31 Catholic schools distinguished graduates from all schools in the diocese.

“These individuals have used all that they learned while in Catholic schools, to live lives that exemplify moral values, academic accomplishment and community service that Catholic schools profess,” said Verges.

Among those distinguished graduates celebrated at the banquet was community activist and philanthropist Suzanne Wilbert Turner, a 1943 graduate of St. John Interparochial School in Plaquemine, who gave the bishop a lingering, inspiring and warm embrace as she accepted her award.

“I was surprised!” said Turner of the honor. “I’m a long way from Catholic school (years). I really appreciate what a Catholic education is.”

“I learn not only what a vibrant Catholic school system we have but how vibrant and active our alumni are. And that, really in the end, is the test of our Catholic education – how it helps our young people be successful in the world.”

A special Mass for Catholic Schools Week was celebrated on Wednesday, Jan. 30 at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge. The church was filled with students dressed in school uniforms. Mass began with a procession of students and principals carrying gifts of donations for Catholic Charities. The gifts depicted the larger amounts of similar items donated from each of the schools.

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“I was surprised!” said Turner of the honor. “I’m a long way from Catholic school (years). I really appreciate what a Catholic education is.”

“It seems like every place I go I learn something new,” said Bishop Duca, who was installed as bishop of the Baton Rouge diocese in August. “And now,

I learn not only what a vibrant Catholic school system we have but how vibrant and active our alumni are. And that, really in the end, is the test of our Catholic education – how it helps our young people be successful in the world.”

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In her introduction, Verges noted that Catholic Schools Office does not have to wait for students to graduate to celebrate their accomplishments “because we have excellent students in our schools right now.” She said each year, “we celebrate the good news of Catholic education” and what another incredible year this has been.

“Students, you are privileged to be in a Catholic school,
where each day you learn how to live your faith in the world,” remarked Verges. “You’re able to participate in service projects, helping others in need, which teaches them and teaches you about the great gift of charity. You have the ability to take leadership roles in the classrooms, clubs and on the playing field or court. All of these – learning, serving and leading – will help to make you successful now and in the future. You will be able to take Gospel values that you were taught today and apply them throughout your life, making this world a better place and helping you to become closer to God.”

Following Mass, Michael Miller, assistant superintendent of CSO, read a proclamation from Gov. John Bel Edwards proclaiming Catholic Schools Week in the state of Louisiana. Other proclamations came from the cities of New Roads, Baton Rouge, Gonzales, Plaquemine, Ponchatoula and Donaldsonville; along with proclamations from Ascension Civil Parish and Iberville Civil Parish.

Also, Bishop Duca, along with Verges, presented the CSO’s award for Distinguished Clergy Member to Father Cleo Milano, pastor of OLOM; the award for Distinguished Administrator to Jack Nelson, principal of St. George School in Baton Rouge; and the award for Distinguished Educator to Marilyn Smith, a teacher at St. Joseph School in Ponchatoula. Father Milano and Nelson also received national recognition for their dedication to Catholic education with the NCEA 2019 Lead. Learn. Proclaim. Award. They will receive on April 23 in Chicago. “God wants us to be the instruments of change in the world,” the bishop told the students during his homily. “This Catholic education is going to give you some of the tools you’ll need to make that change in the world. And so, your parents sacrificed for Catholic education so that you might be able to make a difference … and remember Jesus’ words, ‘I came not to be served but to serve.’”

Above: Choir students from Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge sing for the CSW Mass.

Right: Students representing all of the schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge presented gifts of donations to Catholic Charities before Mass began.

Bishop Michael G. Duca speaks at the Distinguished Graduate Banquet at the Renaissance Hotel in Baton Rouge on Jan. 28.
COMING EVENTS
February 15, 2019

Holy Spirit Presentation – Bishop Sam Jacobs, bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, will present “The Importance of the Holy Spirit: Writing, Studying and Interpreting the Scriptures” Tuesday, Feb. 19, following the 6 p.m. Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church, 15208 Hwy. 73, Prairieville. For more information, visit spiritflame.org/search/label/teachings.

Marriage Encounter Weekend – Couples who want to increase intimacy in their marriage are invited to a Marriage Encounter Weekend, Friday, Feb. 15 – Sunday, Feb. 17, at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center, 1800 S. Acadia Thwy., Baton Rouge. Register online at jams-wwme.org or by calling Matt and Gail Quinn at 1-800-586-5409.

Unbound Conference – The Marian Servants of the Eucharist will host an eight-week Bible study session, “Neal Lozano’s Unbound Conference: Finding Freedom in Christ,” Thursdays, Feb. 21 – April 4, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., at the St. Vincent de Paul Room of the St. George Church, 993-2443, email retrovibrcomcoor@gmail.com or visit helpourmarriage.com.

New Orleans Retreats – The Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, 5500 St. Mary St., Metairie, is hosting the following upcoming events: Wednesday, Feb. 27, 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., “The Story of the People of Appalachia and the Francis Impact,” presented by Father Doug Douson of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, $35 cost; Friday March 8 – Sunday, March 10, “The Road to Emmaus: God’s Loving and Merciful Desire for Encounter with Us,” presented by Father Joe Krafft, director of pastoral formation and professor of pastoral theology at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, minimum donation $250; Saturday, March 9, “Put Out into the Deep,” Day of Prayer at Our Lady of Mercy Parish Activity Center, 445 Marquette St., Baton Rouge, cost is $30 with proceeds going to the retreat center. For more information and to register, call 504-267-9604 or visit retreats.arch-no.org.

Women in Spirit Meeting – Father Jeff Bayhi, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Zachary, will have a talk, “How Did We Get Here?” at the Women in Spirit Meeting Thursday, Feb. 28, noon, at St. Joseph Cathedral, Fourth and Main streets, Baton Rouge. To RSVP, email wics@cathedralbr.org or call 225-387-5928.

Retreat on Aging – Dana Territo will present a retreat, “The Spiritual Graces of Aging,” on Saturday, March 9, 9 a.m. – noon, at the Mother Alice Hall of St. Joseph’s Academy, 3015 Broussard St., Baton Rouge. Fee is $40. To register and for more information, call 225-383-3349.

Anti-Racism Program – The St. Joseph Spirituality Center will present “Crossroads: Anti-Racism Program,” Friday, Feb. 15 – Sunday, April 17, at the St. Joseph’s Academy Mother Alice Hall, 3015 Broussard Ave., Baton Rouge. Cost is $250. Scholarships are available. For more information, visit stjocenter.org. To register, call 225-588-9936 or email Dianne@stjocenter.org.

MAT Course Registration – The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis is holding registration for its Spring 2019 Ministry and Theology Program. Cost is $15 per course. For more information and to register, visit learn.evangelization.org.

Charismatic Conference – The Regional Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, “The Spirit of Truth: Signs, Wonders and Miracles,” will be held Friday, March 29 – Sunday, March 31 at the Copelands Tower Suites and Conference Center, 2601 Severn Ave., Bldg. B, Metairie. To register and for more information, visit ccro.org, email info@ccro.org or call 504-828-1368.

Rosaryville Events – Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, 39003 Rosaryville Road, Ponchatoula, will present the following events: Friday, March 15 – Sunday, March 17, “In Your Presence is Fullness of Joy” yoga and contemplative prayer retreat with Ani Vidrine, spiritual director and social worker; and Women’s Emmaus Retreat, Friday, March 22 – Sunday, March 24, focusing on Luke 24: 13-35. To register, visit catholicretreatcenter.org or call 225-294-5039.

The Catholic Commentator
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Religious celebrate anniversaries

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

As the church grapples with many challenges, candles flickered in St. Joseph Chapel in the Catholic Life Center, testifying to the faithfulness of the present honored religious holding them, who have weathered the storms in the church's history and light the path for Catholics to “keep going.” These men and women were honored at a Jubilee and Consecrated Life Mass Feb. 1.

The Mass was celebrated in conjunction with World Day for Consecrated Life.

The 17 men and women were celebrating a combined 855 years of service included: 70 years: Brother Carl Evans SC and Sister Doris Vigneaux CSJ; 65 years: Sister Carolyn Brady CSJ; 60 years: Brother Roger Lemoine SC, Sister Betty Lyons FMOL, Sister Julie Sheatzley CSJ, Brother Marcus Turcotte SC and Sister Margarida Vasques FMOL; 50 years: Sister Barbara Arceneaux FMOL and Brother Ivy LeBlanc SC; 40 years: Brother Dwight Kenney SC, Sister Mary Christa MC, Sister M. John Janet MC, Sister Ann Maria Mathew SOM and Sister Theresina Thadathil SOM and 25 years: Sister Julie Kraemer CSJ and Sister Rita Lanie FMOL.

In welcoming the attendees, Sister Lucy Silvio CSJ, representative of the Council for the Religious, commended those present for stepping into their vocation.

“We know that each one has been called by name. Each one has a special story of generosity, dedication and service. Each one has endeavored to live a faithful vowed life witnessing to the Gospel,” said Sister Lucy.

She noted religious have been called to serve in schools, hospitals, social centers, church missions, their communities, and places “too numerous to recount,” said Sister Lucy.

And the linchpin that holds everything together is love, according to Sister Lucy.

In his homily seasoned with humorous stories, Bishop Michael G. Duca stressed that even as the religious celebrate and reflect on their life journeys through their vocations, it’s important to “keep going.”

Bishop Duca, who studied at Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), said he learned in Rome you have to “keep moving forward.”

“First, you start crossing the street. There’s a car coming at you and you stop, thinking you’re being polite, and they get all upset,” said the bishop, musing that his advice to “keep moving no matter what” and that cars will go around you is the reason he is alive today.

The principal to “keep moving” applies to the spiritual life as well, said the bishop.

Referring to the Mass’ first reading from the book of Hebrews, Bishop Duca pointed out St. Paul reminds his readers that God says to his people “My righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.”

There may be various reasons, such as conflicts in communities, institutional or other problems that may cause religious to have a jaded outlook. They know they are supposed to walk through it, but they don’t know what’s on the other side, Bishop Duca said.

When people take action and walk through to the other side, the results will be more than they had ever expected, and they will find wisdom and solutions for problems, according to the bishop.

He noted that St. Paul exhort the faithful to cross the finish line, and even in the face of strong opposition be committed to “giving everything anyway.” And resurrection is on the other side.

The bishop thanked the religious for being an inspiration during a time when faithful witnesses are especially needed in the church.

“You all set your example, the example of hope,” said Bishop Duca. “Yours is one of that faithful presence that keeps moving forward faithfully and holds true to the teachings of the Gospel.”

During the Mass, the jubilarians held candles and renewed their vows and Bishop Duca blessed them.
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PRAYER ▼
From page 1
people from captivity in Egypt, accompanying them in the wilder-
ness and restoring them, confirms that he will not aban-
don anyone and there is always "a way out."
"God is helping us and walk-
ing with us through this," said Eldredge. "We are coming to
the light and remembering that God's love and mercy is still
available."
They said experiencing the
love of the father should prompt
people to bring their burdens to
him.
"To bring all of our life, the
pain we feel, the sorrow to
him," said Eldredge.

One person told Davis and El-
dredge she learned to pray in a
way she never had before and
another said she is only one
person, but she is one person
who can make a difference.
And from that moment of
healing, people should ask God
what their response to the cri-
sis should be, the two ladies
agreed.
"Love and mercy call us to
action. Especially with both of
us as moms and ministers in
the church," said Eldredge. "It
hurts us tremendously to see the
children exploited and unpro-
tected. But by grace we brought
it back to God."
"I see the hand of God even
in the darkest moments of this
time," said Davis.

MEMORIAL OAK – On Jan. 31, in conjunction with Baton Rouge Green’s Arbor Day, St. Jean Vianney
Church in Baton Rouge hosted the planting of a memorial oak tree in honor of John Melancon, who
was actively involved in the parish and community. Deacon Brent Duplessis led a blessing ceremony,
which was attended by Melancon’s family, friends and students of St. Jean Vianney School. Photo pro-
vided by Denise Louviere | St. John Vianney Church

COMMISSION ON RACIAL HARMONY – Bishop Michael G. Duca, pictured far right, listens to discus-
sions at a meeting of the Diocesan Commission on Racial Harmony. Also attending the meeting, pic-
tured clockwise from the bishop, were Father Rick Andrus, pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Church in
Baton Rouge; Father Tom Clark, co-chair of the commission and pastor of Immaculate Conception of
the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Baton Rouge; Fr. Josh Johnson, co-chair of the commission and pas-
tor of Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant; Deacon Alfred Adams of St. Joseph Church in Paulina, Most
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Gramercy and St. Michael Church in Convent; Walter Morales, Goldie
Domingue, John Pierre, Monique Scott-Spaulding, Monette Greenup, Sister Adele Lambert CSJ and
Father Ed ChiffriRier SSJ, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church in Baton Rouge. Southern Law Center chan-
cellor John Pierre, a member of the commission, will present a lecture on Louisiana’s participation in
the Civil Rights movement Feb. 26 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Aloysius Church in Baton Rouge. Photo provided
by commission member Deacon Dan Borné

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A TIME OF HEALING

Bishop Duca: A new level of transparency

By Debbie Shelley and Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

Just days after releasing the names of all priests, a bishop and one former seminarian “against whom there are credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors and/or vulnerable adults in the Diocese of Baton Rouge,” Bishop Michael G. Duca opened the Mass Sunday, Feb. 3 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge by acknowledging the pain and suffering of victims of sexual abuse by members of the clergy and the toll it has taken on the church as a whole for the secrecy. He also noted that this could mean the start of the healing process.

“I need to say this past week has been a difficult week for our church,” said Bishop Duca. “But I also hope it is the beginning of a freeing of those who have been suffering in our church because of abuse they can be free now to talk about and reach out for help. And know that if anyone has had that experience, they should come forward and speak to us and let us know about it.”

“But also I hope it’s our way of realizing that the response to most things is going to always be a loving heart; and a loving heart at times has to be vulnerable.”

“The Sacred heart of Jesus, which is one of my favorite devotions, is Jesus with his heart exposed with a crown of thorns on it. A suffering heart, but a heart that is not pulled back, a heart that is willing to open itself up to embrace those who are suffering. One of the ways of healing is that we, as the body of Christ, share in the suffering of Christ and the suffering of Christ is that he bore the sins of the world.”

“But by sharing them together we cannot only lighten the load but we can also speak words of hope to those who have not had hope. I believe that as painful as this is, I hope that it begins a sign of us to become more the church, more the listening church, the compassionate church but also more and more the voice of hope that dwells stronger within us. Jesus brings us hope and we are to be the sign of hope as well. I hope this gives us the chance to speak with a new authority — the authority that comes from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I hope this is that beginning point.

“I am committed to this process and I hope we see it as a great moment of spiritual growth for all of us; a hard one but an important one.”

In a show of openness, transparency and a hope for healing, Bishop Duca on Thursday, Jan. 31 released the names of individuals accused of credible allegations within the territory of the Baton Rouge diocese before it was created that were later reported to the Diocese of Baton Rouge; as well as those who served the Archdiocese of New Orleans in the territory of the Baton Rouge diocese. Another name was added Feb. 3.

“When I committed myself in the diocese to this task soon after my arrival, my first concern was and has been for the persons victimized by this abuse, who have often felt betrayed and unsupported by the church,” said Bishop Duca at the press conference. “It has been my hope that this will be an important step that will help those men and women whose lives have been so deeply violated ... My prayer is that this list will be a sign of a new level of transparency.”

According to the bishop, in late 2018, the Diocese of Baton Rouge had all of its clergy personnel files, a total of 1,033, from its founding in 1961 to the present time, examined individually by the law firm of Herbert, Spencer & Fry, L.L.P., with assistance of the accounting firm of Postlethwaite & Netterville, APAC.

The list includes the year or years that the abuse took place, ranging from 1961, when the Diocese of Baton Rouge was formed, until the 1980s. The years the incidents were reported ranged widely from when they occurred, some of it being attributed to suppressed memories of the victims. In one case, the abuse occurred in the mid-1970s but the report was not made until September while another allegation of abuse took place between 1964-1965 but was not reported until December.

“This is not easy,” said Bishop Duca. “I have listened to some victims share their stories and there are no words to express the depth of sadness and shame that was experienced in our church.

“It’s hard to lay this list out for all to see but real renewal and healing cannot take place until we acknowledge the truths of the past. This list reflects the lives of real people and a path of pain and suffering that affects most deeply the persons who are victims of abuse.”

The desire for real change inspires new programs, according to Bishop Duca, who said some initiatives have been implemented to address any potential problems.

“Seminaries are continually trying to review their programs, and, especially now, make sure that they add programs and education and experiences that develop a person’s sexual maturity,” said Bishop Duca.

These programs help seminary administrators recognize “telltale signs” that a seminarian is not ready for priestly ministry. The bishop noted that Notre Dame in New Orleans has partnered with local church parishes to provide an internship in which seminarians become involved in the life of the church parish and the men and women of the parish participate in the seminarians’ evaluations.

The sexual abuse crisis has created a lot of damage to the church and the institution of the priesthood, Bishop Duca acknowledged.

“Just across the board I think it’s damaged the moral strength of the church’s teaching. But I think it can be recovered, if we can in a sense recover.

“I think what’s happened is that we got into the mode at the very beginning of throwing up a wall of protection. And we really need to look at being more vulnerable and more attentive to the pain of the victims.”

Based on the list released by the diocese, the prevalent cases of priests credibly accused of abuse occurred in the 1960s-1970s under Bishop Joseph V. Sullivan.

Bishop Duca said the reason for this is a “larger sociological question” that he did not have a definite answer for.

“Be honest, when you have a certain view of the world you’re going to see things differently,” said Bishop Duca. “I used to say in the seminary, if the seminary faculty is sane, then crazy is crazy. But if the seminary faculty is crazy, then crazy looks normal.”

Also released at the news conference were copies of letters from the bishop to be read at weekend Masses on Feb. 2-3 at St. Aloysius Church in Baton Rouge about credible allegations from the mid-1960s against a volunteer worker, now deceased, Everett Gauthier, Sr.; and, at St. Thomas More Church in Baton Rouge about an allegation of sexual abuse by a member of the clergy during the early to mid-1970s.

Bishop Duca, who was installed in August as the sixth bishop of the Diocese in Baton Rouge, said the catalyst for opening up the investigation in diocesan records came after the release of the Pennsylvania grand jury reports about Catholic clergy sex abuse and the “Cardinal (Theodore E.) McCarrick scandal.”

“Those two things together just said, ‘Wait a minute, this is not working,’” said the bishop. “And, it was a call, first of all, to great accountability of bishops and a greater accountability of the church.”

The bishop said that the list of names had been forwarded to the East Baton Rouge district attorney’s office for review, though many of the men were deceased. He also said that the list was not finished.

“One last thing I want to say,” said Bishop Duca. “We see this as a dynamic list that we will continue to update as new information comes in. We will continue to add names if they arise in the future.”
PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE:
Diocese releases names of clergy who are the subjects of credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What information are you releasing? Whose names are being listed?
A. The list (“List”) being published at this time by The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge (the “Diocese” or “Diocesan”) contains the names of priests and a bishop (collectively, “Clergy”) from the following four groups:

- Clergy who served within the Diocese of Baton Rouge and have been the subject of credible allegations (individually, a “Credible Allegation” and collectively, “Credible Allegations”) of sexual abuse of a minor (i.e., a person under the age of 18 years) or a vulnerable adult as defined in the Sexual Abuse Policy of the Diocese of Baton Rouge (the “Sexual Abuse Policy”), and which allegedly occurred within the Diocese of Baton Rouge. The List also includes the name of a seminarian against whom a Credible Allegation was reported to the Diocese of Baton Rouge and which was included among the records that were reviewed.
- Clergy who were the subject of Credible Allegations that occurred within the territory of the Diocese of Baton Rouge before its creation in 1961 and which were later reported to the Diocese of Baton Rouge after its creation as an independent diocese.
- Clergy who served in the Archdiocese of New Orleans in the territory which later became the Diocese of Baton Rouge and who the Archdiocese of New Orleans has publicly identified as either (i) alive and have been accused of sexually abusing a minor which led to their removal from ministry or (ii) deceased and who admitted or have been publicly accused of sexually abusing a minor.
- Clergy who served in the Diocese of Baton Rouge without any Credible Allegations having been made against them related to that service, but who have been publicly identified by the Archdiocese of New Orleans or the Jesuit Order (S.J.) on reports similar to the Diocesan List for reasons unrelated to the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Q. How do you define “sexual abuse”?
A. The Diocese of Baton Rouge must define sexual abuse as it is defined in the Canon Law of the Catholic Church, as follows: “an offense against the Sixth Commandment ... with a minor below the age of eighteen, or a vulnerable adult.” This definition includes not only physical sexual contact or actions, but also certain other misconduct such as words or actions which attempt to solicit a minor for sexual purposes, even if there is no subsequent sexual contact. Church law also includes under the heading of sexual abuse the acquisition, possession or distribution of child pornography, or the showing of pornographic images to minors.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge has adopted the principles and directives promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (“USCCB”) in its Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. It includes a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing accusations of sexual abuse of minors and guidelines for reconciliation with victims, healing and accountability, and is available on the USCCB website (www.usccb.org).

Q. How do you define “vulnerable adult”?
A. A “vulnerable adult” is defined in the Sexual Abuse Policy as a person over 18 years of age who habitually lacks the use of reason. Such a person is unable to look after his or her own rights and interests. Canon law considers a person who habitually lacks the use of reason as equivalent to a minor.

Q. What are the criteria for inclusion on the List?
A. Each Clergy named on the List has had a Credible Allegation made against him.

Q. What do you mean by a Credible Allegation?
A. Credible means “believable.” A Credible Allegation is one which meets the foregoing definition and the Bishop of the Diocese of Baton Rouge believes, with moral certitude, after careful investigation and consultation with professionals, that an incident of sexual abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult occurred, or probably occurred, with the possibility that it did not occur being highly unlikely. “Moral certitude” in this context means a high degree of probability but is short of absolute certainty.

Q. What is the Independent Review Board?
A. The Diocese of Baton Rouge established its Independent Review Board in 2002 in implementing the directives of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The sole purpose of the Independent Review Board is to provide consultation to the Bishop in addressing all reports of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult by current, former and deceased Clergy and others as provided in the Sexual Abuse Policy. Most of the sixteen members of the Independent Review Board are lay people who include Catholic and non-Catholic professionals in the fields of medicine, mental health, education, law and law enforcement, as well as a priest canon lawyer and a pastor. By the analyses and recommendations of these professionals, the Independent Review Board helps to determine whether an accusation is credible by its recommendation to the Bishop.

Q. Is the List of those accused complete?
A. The Diocese of Baton Rouge has made every effort to ensure that the List is complete. In late 2018, the Diocese of Baton Rouge had all its Clergy personnel files from its founding in 1961 to the present carefully examined individually. This painstaking review was conducted by the independent law firm of Hebert, Spencer & Fry, L.L.P., with the assistance of staff of the nationally-recognized accounting and consulting firm of Postlethwaite & Netterville, APAC, consisting of two attorneys, three certified fraud and forensic examiners/investigators, a human resources professional with 20 years of HR experience and a certified complex-project manager. Further, the List is dynamic as the receipt of a new allegation against Clergy will be given immediate attention and, if found credible, will be added to the List.
Q. Why is 1961 used as the cut-off date?

A. The Diocese of Baton Rouge was established in 1961 by Pope St. John XXIII from territory once comprising part of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Q. Why are you releasing this List now?

A. Those who have been victimized are vitally important to us. By providing the transparency which victims deserve regarding our Clergy, we hope to begin the process of restoring their faith and trust in God and His Church. By releasing the List, we want to embolden other victims previously unknown to us to overcome their hesitations and come forward. Finally, at this moment in time the People of God are justifiably questioning the trustworthiness of Church leadership. Many other dioceses and religious orders are, like the Diocese of Baton Rouge, expressing a sincere, repentant desire to make up for past mistakes and to demonstrate a genuine renewed commitment to do the right thing.

Q. Are any accused priests or deacons still in active ministry?

A. No priest or deacon of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, and to its knowledge no other Clergy, against whom a Credible Allegation has been made is currently serving in any ministry, even as a retired cleric.

Q. If Clergy had harmed children, why were some reassigned to new locations after they offended?

A. In many cases, the Diocese was unaware of the misconduct and did not learn of it until many years later. In the interim, Clergy were given new assignments since there was no awareness of the harm that they had already done. In a few cases, some limited ministry was permitted for those who admitted wrongdoing. The Diocese is gravely sorry for this failure. Bishops in the Church and experts in the psychological sciences handle these situations very differently now and especially since 2002 when the USCCB’s Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was adopted. Awareness of the nature and effect of abuse of minors has changed dramatically over the last 40 years.

Q. If a priest has had a Credible Allegation made against him, is he allowed to continue in priestly ministry?

A. Offenders are forbidden to present themselves as clergy and to minister or act on behalf of the Church. They are removed from public ministry and stripped of all clerical privileges and status. Law enforcement authorities are also informed in order to protect the public.

Q. What are you doing to make sure that Clergy sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults doesn’t happen now?

A. The Diocese of Baton Rouge has had in place a strict zero-tolerance policy regarding instances of inappropriate conduct between its Clergy and any minor or vulnerable adult, even prior to the 2002 issuance of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Diocese of Baton Rouge requires comprehensive training and background checks for all its Clergy and has implemented procedures to ensure to the greatest extent possible and to maintain every priest’s and deacon’s “suitability for ministry.” It has strengthened its screening processes for men interested in becoming priests or deacons. Before acceptance into a seminary or deacon formation, an aspirant undergoes in-depth screening, including psychosexual and social media screening, and a criminal background check. Our formation programs foster healthy development both in terms of the spiritual life of the priest and deacon, as well as his psychosexual health and well-being. Clergy at every stage of their formation, and throughout their ministry, receive training to promote ethical conduct in ministry and awareness and sensitivity of professional boundaries and safe environments.

Q. What should I do if I’ve been abused by a Priest or Deacon of the Diocese?

A. If you or someone you know has been abused by Clergy, or anyone else, you are strongly encouraged first to contact the appropriate law enforcement or child-protection agency in the location in which the incident took place. If the abuse involved Clergy, you are further encouraged to contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator of the Diocese, Mrs. Amy Cordon, by calling a special telephone hotline at (225) 242-0250. The Diocese wants to assist with professional counseling and pastoral care if the victim is open to them. If the victim is currently a minor, the Diocese will immediately report the incident to civil authorities in every case as required by law.

Q. What happens when a report is received? What makes it a Credible Allegation?

A. When an allegation of abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult is made against any Clergy, the Diocese of Baton Rouge immediately reports it - verbally and in writing - to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, and the Diocese of Baton Rouge fully cooperates throughout all investigations.

In addition to investigations by civil authorities, an internal Church investigation will also take place, although if state or federal criminal charges are brought, the Church investigation likely will be suspended until after the one conducted by law enforcement concludes. The Diocese of Baton Rouge will always offer pastoral and therapeutic services to all victims and affected family members. The results of the Diocese’s internal investigation are presented to the Independent Review Board, which by its discussions and recommendations helps the Bishop to make a decision regarding the credibility of an accusation if it is unclear from the outset, and regarding other steps which should be taken.

No Clergy who is the subject of a Credible Allegation is allowed to remain in public or diocesan ministry.

Q. Does the Diocese work with law enforcement authorities to investigate reports of abuse by clergy?

A. The Diocese of Baton Rouge reports all allegations of Clergy sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults to the appropriate district attorneys, child protection agencies and other law enforcement personnel, as required by applicable civil law, our Sexual Abuse Policy and Canon Law. Additionally, Diocesan officials fully cooperate with all investigations undertaken by secular authorities.

Sexual Abuse Policy and Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People can be read online at diobr.org/images/cyp-charter-2018.pdf
List of individuals who are subjects of credible allegations of sexual abuse

A. The individuals identified below have been the subject of credible allegations of sexual abuse of one or more minors or vulnerable adults which allegedly occurred within the Diocese of Baton Rouge after its formation in 1961. Also included is the name of a seminarian against whom a credible allegation was reported to the Diocese of Baton Rouge and which was included among the records that were reviewed.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Year of Ordination</th>
<th>Pastoral Assignment</th>
<th>Number of Allegations</th>
<th>Assignment at time of abuse</th>
<th>Date of Abuse</th>
<th>Date Reports Received</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
<th>Present State</th>
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<td>Present State: Deceased (1998)</td>
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<td>Present State: Deceased (1998)</td>
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</table>
9. Name: Daniel Michael Drinan
Affiliation: Claretian Missionaries (C.M.F.)
Year of Ordination: 1977
Pastoral Assignment: Christ the King, Baton Rouge, LA
Number of Allegations: One
Assignment at time of abuse: Christ the King, Baton Rouge, LA
Date of Abuse: Late 1970s
Date Report Received: 3/5/2003
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

10. Name: Bryan James Fontenot
Affiliation: Dominican Order (O.P.)
Year of Ordination: 1981
Pastoral Assignments: St. Joseph, Ponchatoula, LA, Holy Ghost, Hammond, LA
Number of Allegations: More than One
Assignment at time of abuse: St. Joseph, Ponchatoula, LA
Date of Abuse: 1983
Date Report Received: 4/26/1984
Action Taken: Removed from Diocese of Baton Rouge and transferred to the supervision of the Dominican Superior in 1984.
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

11. Name: James Funnel
Affiliation: None
Year of Ordination: Not Applicable (Seminarian)
Pastoral Assignment: Student at Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans, LA
Number of Allegations: More than One
Assignment at time of abuse: Youth Minister at St. Isidore the Farmer, Baker, LA
Dates of Abuse: Mid- to-Late 1970s
Dates Reports Received: 1/10/2012, 12/31/2013 and 4/6/2016
Action Taken: Took leave of absence from Notre Dame Seminary in 1979 and did not return.
Present State: Did not enter into priestly ministry

12. Name: George David Gensler
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge
Year of Ordination: 1970 for the Diocese of Lafayette
Incardinated into the Diocese of Baton Rouge in 1978
Pastoral Assignments: Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge, LA (In Residence) Spiritual Director - St. Joseph Cathedral Preparatory Diocesan Seminary, Baton Rouge, LA St. Anthony of Padua, Darrow, LA
Number of Allegations: More than One
Assignment at time of abuse: St. Anthony of Padua, Darrow, LA
Dates of Abuse: Late-1970s
Dates Reports Received: 2/6/1994 and 10/26/2018
Action Taken: Placed on administrative leave and permanently removed from ministry in 1994.
Present State: Deceased (2016)

13. Name: Antonio Gonzales
Affiliation: Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.)
Year of Ordination: 1957
Pastoral Assignment: St. Margaret Queen of Scotland, Albany, LA
Number of Allegations: One
Assignment at time of abuse: St. Margaret Queen of Scotland, Albany, LA

14. Name: Bryan Keith Gray
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge
Year of Ordination: 1979
Pastoral Assignments: St. Charles Borromeo, Baton Rouge, LA, Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge, LA, St. Margaret Queen of Scotland, Albany, LA
Year of Ordination: Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. (Student)
Pastoral Assignment: St. Aloysius, Baton Rouge, LA
Number of Allegations: One
Assignment at time of abuse: St. Charles Borromeo, Baton Rouge, LA
Date of Abuse: Late 1970s - 1980s
Date Report Received: 3/10/1992
Action Taken: Placed on permanent leave and priestly faculties removed in 1992.
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

15. Name: Rodrigue Alphonse Hemond
Affiliation: Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette (M.S.)
Year of Ordination: Incardinated into the Archdiocese Galveston-Houston in 1978
Pastoral Assignment: West Warwick, Rhode Island
Number of Allegations: More than One
Assignment at time of abuse: St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge, LA
Dates of Abuse: 1960s-1970s
Action Taken: Left Diocese of Baton Rouge in 1968.
Present State: Victims referred to La Salette Order. Deceased (1990)

16. Name: Gerard Joseph Howell
Affiliation: Extrem Diocesan Priest for the Archdiocese of New Orleans
Year of Ordination: 1964 for Archdiocese of New Orleans
Pastoral Assignments: St. Pius X, Baton Rouge, LA Chapter Director - St. Francis de Sales Deaf Center, Baton Rouge, LA St. Francis de Sales, Baton Rouge, LA
Number of Allegations: One
Assignment at time of abuse: St. Francis de Sales Deaf Center, Baton Rouge, LA
Date of Abuse: Late-1970s
Date Report Received: 3/14/2003
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

17. Name: Myles Joseph Kearney
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge
Year of Ordination: 1938, and served at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in St. Francisville.
Pastoral Assignment: St. Francis de Sales Deaf Center, Baton Rouge, LA
Number of Allegations: One
Assignment at time of abuse: St. Francis de Sales Deaf Center, Baton Rouge, LA
Date of Abuse: Late-1970s
Date Report Received: 3/14/2003
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry
18. Name: Clyde Bernard Landry  
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge  
Year of Ordination: 1971  
Pastoral Assignments: Ascension of Our Lord, Donaldsonville, LA  
St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales, LA  
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Baton Rouge, LA  
Our Lady of Prompt Succor, White Castle, LA  
St. Mark, Gonzales, LA  
St. Francis de Sales, Baton Rouge, LA  
Director of Deaf Apostolate, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Joseph, Grosse Tete, LA  
St. John the Evangelist, Prairieville, LA  
St. Joseph Cathedral, Baton Rouge, LA  
(In Residence) Chaplain at Woman’s Hospital, Baton Rouge, LA  
Chaplain at Columbia Medical Center, Baton Rouge, LA  
Immaculate Conception, Lakeland, LA  
St. Jude the Apostle, Baton Rouge, LA  
Most Blessed Sacrament, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Anne, Sorrento, LA  
St. Patrick, Baton Rouge, LA  

Number of Allegations: One  
Assignments at time of abuse: St. John the Evangelist, Prairieville, LA  
Date of Abuse: Late-1980s  
Date Report Received: 4/15/2002  
Action Taken: Priestly faculties removed in 2002.  
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

19. Name: Daniel Paul Lemoine  
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge  
Year of Ordination: 1979  
Pastoral Assignments: Seminarian Summer Internship at St. Philomena, Labadieville, LA  
Deacon Internship at St. Joseph the Worker, Pierre Part, LA  
St. Jean Vianney, Baton Rouge, LA  
Holy Family, Port Allen, LA (In Residence)  
Our Lady of Prompt Succor, White Castle, LA  
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Baton Rouge, LA  
Immaculate Conception, Denham Springs, LA  
St. Joseph the Worker, Pierre Part, LA  
Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge, LA (In Residence)  
Chaplain at Baton Rouge General  
Chaplain at Earl K. Long Hospital, Baton Rouge, LA  
Chaplain at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge, LA  

Number of Allegations: More than One  
Assignments at time of abuse: Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge, LA; St. Joseph the Worker, Pierre Part, LA; St. Philomena, Labadieville, LA  
Dates of Abuse: Between Late-1970s – Early-1980s  
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

20. Name: Nicholas Joseph Martrain  
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge  
Year of Ordination: 1965  
Pastoral Assignments: St. Isidore the Farmer, Baker, LA  
Ascension of Our Lord, Donaldsonville, LA  
St. Pius X, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Patrick, Baton Rouge, LA  

Number of Allegations: One  
Assignments at time of abuse: Ascension of Our Lord, Donaldsonville, LA  
Date of Abuse: Prior to 1980  
Date Report Received: 5/2/2002  
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

21. Name: Salvador Nickie (Butch) Moran  
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge  
Year of Ordination: 1972  
Pastoral Assignments: St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales, LA  
St. Joseph the Worker, Pierre Part, LA  
Ascension of Our Lord, Donaldsonville, LA  
St. Theresa, Gonzales, LA  
St. Joseph Cathedral, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Mark, Gonzales, LA  
St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales, LA  
Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge, LA  
Hospital, Baton Rouge, LA  
Chaplain at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge, LA  

Number of Allegations: More than One  
Assignments at time of abuse: Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge, LA; St. Joseph the Worker, Pierre Part, LA; St. Philomena, Labadieville, LA  
Dates of Abuse: Between Late-1970s – Early-1980s  
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

22. Name: Jesse Ray Ortego  
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge  
Year of Ordination: 1970  
Pastoral Assignments: St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Theresa, Gonzales, LA  
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, St. Amant, LA  
St. Anne, Sorrento, LA  

Number of Allegations: More than One  
Assignments at time of abuse: St. Joseph the Worker, Pierre Part, LA; St. Philip, Vacherie, LA  
Dates of Abuse: Late-1970s – Early 1980s  
Dates Reports Received: 10/1994 and 3/1/2004  
Action Taken: Placed on administrative leave and priestly faculties removed in 1994.  
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry

23. Name: Christopher Joseph F. Springer  
Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge  
Year of Ordination: 1970  
Pastoral Assignments: St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge, LA  
St. Theresa, Gonzales, LA  
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, St. Amant, LA  
St. Anne, Sorrento, LA  

Number of Allegations: One  
Assignments at time of abuse: Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, St. Amant, LA  
Date of Abuse: Early 1970s  
Date Report Received: August 2008  
Action Taken: Left Diocese of Baton Rouge in 1981.  
Present State: Removed from priestly ministry
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation: Diocese of Baton Rouge</td>
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<td>St. Gerard Magella, Baton Rouge, LA</td>
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<td>St. John the Evangelist, Plaquemine, LA</td>
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<td>Immaculate Heart of Mary, Maringouin, LA</td>
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<td>St. Mary of False River, New Roads, LA</td>
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<td>St. Pius X, Baton Rouge, LA</td>
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<td>Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Jackson, LA</td>
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<td>Our Lady of the Assumption, Clinton, LA</td>
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<td>Chaplain at East Louisiana State Hospital, Jackson, LA</td>
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<td>Chaplain at Dixon Correctional Institute, Jackson, LA Chaplain at Feliciana Forensic Unit, Jackson, LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Allegations: More than One</td>
<td>Assignments at time of abuse: St. Pius X, Baton Rouge, LA; St. Mary of False River, New Roads, LA; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Jackson, LA; Our Lady of the Assumption, Clinton, LA</td>
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B. The individuals identified below have been the subject of credible allegations of sexual abuse of one or more minors or vulnerable adults which allegedly occurred within the territory of the Diocese of Baton Rouge before its creation in 1961 and which were later reported to the Diocese of Baton Rouge after its creation as an independent diocese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Joseph LeFrois</th>
<th>Year of Ordination: 1944</th>
<th>Pastoral Assignment: Immaculate Conception, Plaquemine, LA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation: Josephite (S.S.J.)</td>
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<td>Number of Allegations: One</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment at time of abuse: Immaculate Conception, Plaquemine, LA</td>
<td>Date of Abuse: Mid-1950s</td>
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<td>Date Report Received: 9/6/1994</td>
<td>Action Taken: Diocese of Baton Rouge notified Josephite Order of allegations.</td>
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<td>Present State: Deceased (1992)</td>
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1. Name: Joseph LeFrois
2. Name: Henry Neubig
3. Name: John Anthony Weber
4. Name: Joseph Vincent Sullivan
5. Name: Pierre Celestin Cambiaire
6. Name: John Franklin
7. Name: Michael Hurley
8. Name: John Anthony Weber

C. The individuals identified below served the Archdiocese of New Orleans in the territory which later became the Diocese of Baton Rouge, and the Archdiocese of New Orleans has publicly identified them in the manner shown below as either (i) alive and have been accused of sexually abusing a minor which led to their removal from ministry or (ii) deceased and who admitted or have been publicly accused of sexually abusing a minor.

1. Name: Pierre Celestin Cambiaire
2. Name: John Franklin
3. Name: Michael Hurley
4. Name: Ralph Lawrence  
   Date of Birth: 1890  
   Ordination: 1916  
   Estimated Timeframe of Abuse: Early 1930's  
   Allegation Received: 1935  
   Leave of Absence: 1935  
   Date of Death: 1992  
   Pastoral Assignments: Mater Dolorosa, New Orleans, LA  
   Our Lady of Good Harbor, Buras, LA  
   Our Lady of Lourdes, Winnfield, LA  
   Sacred Heart Church, Rayville, LA  
   St. Anthony of Padua, Baton Rouge, LA

5. Name: Malcolm Strassel  
   Date of Birth: 1908  
   Ordination: 1934  
   Estimated Timeframe of Abuse: Late 1970s  
   Allegation Received: 2006  
   Date of Death: 1987  
   Pastoral Assignments: Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, St. Amant, LA  
   Our Lady of Lourdes, New Orleans, LA  
   Sacred Heart, LaCombe, LA  
   St. Agnes, Baton Rouge, LA  
   St. Charles Borromeo, Destrahon, LA  
   St. Joseph, Gretna, LA  
   St. Mary Pamela, Raceland, LA

6. Name: Lawrence Hecker  
   Date of Birth: 1931  
   Ordination: 1958  
   Estimated Timeframe of Abuse: Late 1960s-1970s  
   Allegation Received: 1996  
   Removed from Ministry: 2002  
   Pastoral Assignments: Christ the King, Terrytown, LA Holy Family, Luling, LA  
   Holy Rosary, New Orleans, LA  
   Our Lady of Lourdes, New Orleans, LA  
   St. Anthony, Luling, LA  
   St. Bernadette, Houma, LA  
   St. Charles Borromeo, in residence  
   St. Francis Cabrini, New Orleans, LA  
   St. Francis Xavier, Metairie, LA  
   St. Joseph, Gretna, LA  
   St. Mary of False River, New Roads, LA

D. The individuals identified below served in the Diocese of Baton Rouge without any credible allegations having been made against them related to that service, but they have been publicly identified by other dioceses or institutes of consecrated life on reports similar to this list for reasons unrelated to the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

1. Name: Jody Blanchard  
   Affiliation: Jesuit Order (S.J.)  
   Year of Ordination: 1983  
   Estimated Timeframe of Abuse: 1980s  
   Removed from Ministry: Left Society of Jesus in 1994  
   Pastoral Assignments: Eaker Air Force Base, Blytheville (1978-1979)  
   St. Michael, Convent, LA  
   St. Joseph, Paulina, LA  
   Status: Dismissed from priesthood and religious life (2005)

2. Name: Thomas J. Naughton  
   Affiliation: Jesuit Order (S.J.)  
   Birth Date: 1933  
   Ordination: 1965  

3. Name: C. Richard Nowery, C.S.C.  
   Affiliation: Congregation of Holy Cross  
   Date of Birth: 1938  
   Year of Ordination: 1968  
   Pastoral Assignment: St. Jude the Apostle, Baton Rouge, LA  
   Present State: Deceased (2018)

4. Name: Joseph Pelletieri, C.Ss.R.  
   Affiliation: Redemptorist  
   Date of Birth: 1939  
   Year of Ordination: 1965  
   Pastoral Assignment: St. Gerard Majella, Baton Rouge, LA  
   Present State: Deceased (2018)

5. Name: Timothy Sugrue, S.M.  
   Affiliation: Marist Fathers  
   Date of Birth: 1936  
   Victim Information: 1 known victim  
   Pastoral Assignments: Eaker Air Force Base, Blytheville (1978-1979)  
   St. Michael, Convent, LA  
   St. Joseph, Paulina, LA  
   Status: Dismissed from priesthood and religious life (2005)

Report known or suspected child abuse immediately to law enforcement or to the Department of Children and Family Services at 855-452-5437. Any allegation of child or vulnerable adult sexual abuse involving clergy or a representative of the church, should then be reported to Amy Cordon, the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, at 225-242-0250.