Volunteer creates beauty at St. Anthony

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

A typical Monday morning at Sts. Anthony of Padua and Le Van Phung Church in Baton Rouge finds a bevy of activity, as volunteers scurry about to remove elaborate floral altar arrangements that were used during the weekend Masses.

Flower pots are being reworked, and vacuum cleaners are removing the final vestiges of flower petals, stems and greenery.

The maestro of this floral symphony is Yen Tran Nguyen, the floral designer at St. Anthony, and her troupe includes a gaggle of volunteers who are family members and friends of the floral designer at St. Anthony.

For Nguyen, a beautician for 25 years and owner of her own salon in Greensburg, her unexpected detour into floral design has become a personal ministry, a way of thanking God who has blessed her with four successful children, two daughters and two sons, two of whom are doctors. Her daughters are both married and she has four grandchildren.

“I say, ‘Thank God for everything you gave to me, so I can do whatever I can, just tell me,’ ” said Nguyen, who commutes one hour to attend St. Anthony. “So I go to school for flowers.”

The seeds of Nguyen’s part-time floral career were planted when a void was created after Sister Ngoc Tuyet Pham, who previously provided the church arrangements, was called to continue her education in Houston in July 2017. After Sister’s departure, Nguyen noticed an absence of blooms and, going out on a limb, approached St. Anthony pastor Father Peter Tan Viet Nguyen ICM (no relation) about putting a single fresh flower and candle at the base of both the statue of Mary and the statue of St. Joseph.

“I told (Father Nguyen), at least one flower is alive at Mary and Joseph, one fresh flower so he’s alive and she’s alive,” recalled Nguyen. “You know, if the church doesn’t have flowers it’s...”

Challenge for young Catholics

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

In a society loaded with “options,” it may appear young Catholics are drifting from the faith looking for “something better.” But there’s hope that through listening, accompanying and challenging young Catholics to own their faith they will walk back into the welcoming arms of the church, according to priests and campus ministers in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Father Tom Clark SJ, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Baton Rouge, said exploring options is “all part of growing up.”

College-aged Catholics who consume their time with clubs, fraternities, schoolwork and other activities centered around food, coffee shops, technology, sports, etc., may find it easier to “let go” of attending Mass.

“It’s not that they intentionally say ‘I am not going to Mass,’ as much as ‘I didn’t get around to it,’” said Sister Renée Daigle, assistant director and campus minister at St. Albert the Great Chapel and Catholic Student Center at Southeastern Louisiana University.

“They (young adults) are not under their parents’ roof, so if they are going to church it’s going to be their choice not because somebody is telling them to go,” said Sister Renée. “I think for some of them it’s the first time that they know that they have to own their faith. Therefore it makes them question.

“Some of them may be taking a course and a professor is telling them all kinds of stuff. They start to question, and they might pull away and...”

HATS OFF TO GRADUATES – Graduation season for the seven Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge recently ended. On May 16, St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School celebrated its commencement at Holy Ghost Church in Hammond, after which students gathered for the traditional cap toss. For a complete list of all graduates, please refer to the Graduation special section in this issue. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator
By Dina Dow

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia, alleluia!

We continue to celebrate the joy of Easter as we draw near to summer. The sacramental life of the church is booming with extraordinary events: ordination of priests and transitional deacons, weddings, baptisms, first Communions and confirmations! The Sixth Sunday of Easter, together with the celebration of the Ascension of the Lord prepare us for the coming of “the Advocate, the Holy Spirit” (Jn 14: 26–27), who will enlighten our faith, invigorate our love and fill us with hope.

**Faith**

The Sunday Mass readings continue with the Acts of the Apostles. We actually hear the beginning of the Book of Acts, as St. Luke writes to Theophilus explaining the focus of the first book, the Gospel of Luke, which contains the account of the entire life of Jesus, his teachings, passion, resurrection and ascension. It ends with the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower the apostles to be Christ’s witnesses to all.

After Pentecost the message of Jesus Christ spread rapidly, as the apostles traveled across the land to proclaim the good news. They encounter many who believe, yet also those who are hesitant. St. Paul and St. Barnabus, while preaching to the Gentiles in Antioch, faced the question of circumcision, a practice in the Jewish faith established in the days of Moses to indicate initiation into the faith. A debate arises as to whether or not it is necessary for the Gentiles to partake in this sign of Jewish identity to become Christian.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, St. Paul and St. Barnabus, travel to Jerusalem for consultation with the leaders and elders. What takes place is the Council of Jerusalem in 49AD. “This defining historical moment in Christian history was convened to examine the status of Gentiles who were filling the church. Peter, speaking as head and spokesperson, decisively pronounces the decision that the Gentiles, salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. Hence, the council decides to break with the religion of Israel, showing the Church is a covenant community distinct from Judaism, and is a catholic community embracing all nations” (The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Revised Standard Version. Ignatius Press, 2010). Reason leads, faith guides and the Holy Spirit enlightens.

Faith is the truth. The Holy Spirit reveals truth. Recall the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Believing is possible only by grace and the interior help of the Holy Spirit” (CCC Para. 154). Our faith is a grace. The Holy Spirit calls us into faith-based action. Therefore, we are constantly seeking understanding, meaning, truth, relationship, etc. by means of reason and faith. St. John Paul II writes, “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth. God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth in a word, to know himself – so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves” (Fides et Ratio, On the Relationship Between Faith & Reason. 1998). How am I coming to know the truth about myself, my mission, my calling as a disciple of Jesus? How am I seeking to understand the faith each day through the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Is this a priority? Am I witnessing the faith in my words and actions?

**Love**

Jesus said to his disciples: “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (Jn 14:23). Love motivates, reciprocates, remains and sustains. Love informs and protects. Love is accessible, visible and central. St. John’s Gospel tells of the final hours shared between Jesus and the apostles. They gathered in the upper room for the Last Supper. Jesus has just washed their feet, given the new commandment, predicted the betrayal and denied and unveils his departure. He tells them to follow him means to love him. Because of this, God will love them and “make a home” in them (Jn 14:29). What? God is going to live within me? Yes! He already does! He dwells in us.
U.S. bishops favor new rules on sexual abuse reporting

WASHINGTON (CNS) — U.S. church leaders welcomed the norms issued by Pope Francis on May 9 giving clear direction to the global Catholic Church about reporting abuse and holding church leaders accountable, saying it confirms what they already have in place and also gives them a way forward.

The document, which among other things, requires all Catholic priests and women religious to report sexual abuse by clergy and church leaders and provides whistleblower protection for those making allegations was described as a “blessing that will empower the church everywhere to bring predators to justice,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Other bishops echoed his sentiment, issuing statements and speaking out on Twitter about their gratitude for the pope’s action.

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan described the norms as a sign of the pope’s “desire to institute reform, promote healing and insure justice” and said they were a “much-needed and tremendously important step forward for the church universal.”

The new juridical instrument is meant to help bishops and religious leaders around the world clearly understand their duties and church law, underlining how they are ultimately responsible for proper governance and protecting those entrusted to their care.

For this reason, the new document establishes a clearer set of universal procedures for reporting suspected abuse, carrying out initial investigations and protecting victims and whistleblowers.

The new document, given “motu proprio” on the pope’s own initiative, was titled “Vos estis lux mundi” (“You are the light of the world”), based on a verse from the Gospel of St. Matthew (5:14).

“The crimes of sexual abuse offend Our Lord, cause physical, psychological and spiritual damage to the victims and harm the community of the faithful,” the pope said in the document, released by the Vatican May 9. The norms go into effect June 1.

The new norms now stipulate:

– Procedures for the investigation of bishops, cardinals, patriarchs, religious superiors and all those who lead — even temporarily — a diocese or particular church, including personal prelatures and personal ordinariates.

– Leaders will be held accountable not only with suspected cases of committing abuse themselves, but also accusations of having interfered with, covered up or failed to address abuse accusations they were aware of.

– When the accused individual is a bishop, the metropolitan will receive a mandate from the Holy See to investigate or delegate a person in charge of the preliminary investigation. A status report must be sent to the Holy See every 30 days, and the investigation completed within 90 days with some exceptions. Vatican offices are also held to specific timetables and prompt action.

– By June 2020, every diocese in the world must create an office or “public, stable and easily accessible systems” for reporting suspected abuse against a minor or vulnerable person, failure of compliance of abuse guidelines by bishops or superiors, and cases of interference or cover-ups in either a civil or canonical investigation of suspected abuse.

– All priests and religious that become aware of abuse of its cover-up must alert their bishop or religious superior promptly.

– A minor is anyone under the age of 18 and a vulnerable person is “any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want to otherwise resist the offense.”

– The definition of child pornography as any representation of a minor, regardless of the media used, “involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes.”

– Bishops and religious superiors will be accountable not just for protecting minors against abuse but also for protecting seminarians, novices and members of religious orders from violence and sexual abuse stemming from an abuse of power.

The norms apply to reports of “delicts against the sixth commandment” regarding clerics or members of religious orders and “forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts.”

– Those who report abuse cannot be subjected to pressure, retaliation and discrimination or told to keep silent. The seal of confession, however, remains inviolable and is not affected by the new norms.

– Procedures for carrying out the preliminary investigation include the bishop immediately requesting from the Vatican that he or a delegate be assigned to begin the preliminary investigation. If he considers an accusation is unfounded, the papal nuncio is informed. The Vatican will have 30 days to respond to the request and the bishop sends a status report to the Vatican every 30 days.

– When the investigation is complete, the bishop sends the results to the proper Vatican office, which then follows existing canon law.

– The continued obligation to respect civil laws regarding mandatory reporting.

– Those who reported suspected abuse or cover-up will be told of the outcome of the investigation if they request to be informed.

– A fund can be set up by bishops’ conferences, synods and church provinces to cover the costs of investigations.

The document is a follow-up to Pope Francis’ 2016 document, “As a Loving Mother,” on transparency and accountability of bishops and religious superiors.

Sister Benedicta Berger SCSC

Sister Benedicta Berger SCSC, age 97, of Merrill, Wisconsin, died March 31 at Bell Tower Residence Assisted Living and Ministry Hospice. Sister Benedicta (Harriet Louise) was born Dec. 24, 1921, to Frederick and Clara (Wolf) Berger in Columbus, Ohio.

She entered Holy Cross Convent in Merrill on Nov. 9, 1947, and celebrated her first profession on July 2, 1949. She was in her 70th year of ministry at the time of her death. Sister received her early education in St. Martin and South Salem, Ohio; Fontbonne College; St. Louis University and Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans.

Sister ministered in the River Parishes from 1963-1982, teaching religious education and doing parish work at Our Lady of Peace Church and St. Phillip Church in Vacherie and St. James Church in St. James.

Her ministries also included parish work in Mercer, Wisconsin, teaching at Our Lady of the Holy Cross High School in Merrill, and several other assignments in Wisconsin and North Dakota. Prior to joining Holy Cross Convent, Sister Benedicta worked as a riveter in the Curtiss Airplane Factory in Columbus, Ohio.

Sister Benedicta is survived by her family of Holy Cross Sisters and Associates; sisters-in-law Carol Berger, Dublin, Ohio; many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Robert, Francis and Lee Berger; sisters, Mary Rita Berger, Joanne McMullen, Helen Fadley and Lenora Kuhn.

Memorials can be made to the Holy Cross Sisters, 1400 O’Day St., Merrill, WI 54452.
New Roads native Sister Bertrand Lieux dies

Sister Bertrand Lieux CSJ, a Sister of St. Joseph for 72 years, passed away at Mount St. Mary Convent in Wichita, Kansas, on Tuesday, April 9 at the age of 88. Sister Bertrand was born in New Roads, one of 11 children of the late Joseph Bertrand Lieux Sr. and Frances Azema Lorio Lieux. Baptized Rita Ann, Sister Bertrand is survived by siblings Magda Lieux Bonnette and Ralph Lorio Lieux (Ellen) and four sisters-in-law: Meredith Lieux, Laverne Lieux, Shirley Lieux and M. Alice Lieux. She was preceded in death by brothers Joseph Bertrand Jr., Charles Jerome, John Albin, J. Edward, Theodore (Ted) Richardson, and sisters M. Lucille L. Roy, Frances L. Dabadie, Sister Beth Lieux CSJ. and brothers-in-law Francis Eugene Roy, J. Levy Dabadie Jr. and Charles Bonnette. She is also survived by numerous nephews and nieces.

Sister Bertrand graduated from St. Joseph Academy in New Roads and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in New Orleans in 1947, professing perpetual vows in 1952. She attended Loyola University in New Orleans and received a B.S. in Secondary Education, a masters in Hospital Business Administration at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio and an M.A. in Spirituality at the University of San Francisco.

Sister Bertrand began teaching at St. Rose de Lima School in New Orleans in 1949, taught and was principal at Sacred Heart School in Grand Coteau and at St. Rita School in Harahan. She returned to New Orleans to teach at St. Ann School and St. Frances Cabrini where she was principal from 1958 to 1962. She was appointed principal and superior of Sacred Heart School and Convent in Norco. Sister Bertrand spent a year at Mercy Medical Center in Philadelphia for certification in hospital administration prior to being appointed assistant administrator and personnel director at Terrebonne General Hospital in Houma.

She was appointed administrator at Terrebonne General from 1968 to 1974 and social service director until 1976. In August 1976 Sister Bertrand was appointed provincial of the New Orleans Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph and served for six years. In 1982-83 she conducted directed retreats at the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Grand Coteau. The following year she worked in community development for Associated Catholic Charities in New Orleans.

Her next six years were spent as vocation development coordinator for the New Orleans Region of the Sisters of St. Joseph. After one year as Executive Director of Development for the order in the south, she moved to Cincinnati and, until 2007, was Executive Director of Development for the Sisters of St. Joseph Medaille.

She assisted on the mission advancement team at St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge until she retired in 2012, when health needs dictated her move to Mount St. Mary Convent. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated April 15 at Mount St. Mary Convent. Burial was in the convent cemetery.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at St. Mary of False River Church in New Roads at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to the Sisters of St. Joseph at 3134 Hundred Oaks Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

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Our Lady of the Lake Physician Group

CONGRATULATIONS! – Deacon John Minh Vu celebrates graduation day, May 9, with his parents Kim and Cuony Mai Vu. Deacon Vu graduated cum laude with a Master of Divinity degree from Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology in New Orleans. Deacon Vu is scheduled to be ordained a priest for the Diocese of Baton Rouge on May 25 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge. Photo provided by Notre Dame Seminary
Not ruling on apparitions, pope allows pilgrimages to Medjugorje

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Parishes and dioceses are now allowed to organize official pilgrimages to Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it must be clear that the Catholic Church has not recognized as authentic the alleged Marian apparitions there.

Polish Archbishop Henryk Hoser, the pope’s apostolic visitor to Medjugorje, and Archbishop Luigi Pezzuto, the nuncio to Bosnia-Herzegovina, announced the pope’s decision to lift the ban on official pilgrimages May 12.

Alessandro Gisotti, the interim director of the Vatican press office, confirmed the change, but said care must be taken to ensure the pilgrimages are not interpreted as an authentication of well-known events, which still require examination by the church.

Therefore, he said, church-sponsored pilgrimages must “avoid creating confusion or ambiguity from the doctrinal point of view.”

In 1981, six young people from Medjugorje claimed that Mary had appeared to them. Some of the six say Mary still appears to them and gives them messages each day, while others say they see her only once a year now.

Diocesan commissions studied the alleged apparitions from 1982 to 1984 and again from 1984 to 1986, and the then-Yugoslavian bishops’ conference studied them from 1987 to 1990. All three commissions concluded that they could not affirm that a supernatural event was occurring in the town.

In 2010, retired Pope Benedict XVI established a papal commission to study the alleged apparitions. The commission’s report has not been made public, although some of its points were revealed after Pope Francis spoke about the commission’s work.

Pope Francis acknowledged that pilgrims to the Marian site deserve spiritual care and support, but he also expressed doubts about claims that the apparitions have continued for more than 35 years.

During his flight to Rome from Fatima, Portugal, in May 2017, the pope told journalists that, regarding the Medjugorje commission’s work, “three things need to be distinguished.”

“About the first apparitions, when (the ‘seers’) were young, the report more or less says that the investigation needs to continue,” the pope said, according to the English translation posted on the Vatican website.

“Concerning the alleged current apparitions, the report expresses doubts,” he said. Furthermore, “personally, I am more mischievous. I prefer Our Lady to be a mother, our mother, and not a telegraph operator who sends out a message every day at a certain time – this is not the mother of Jesus.”

Pope Francis said his “personal opinion” is that “these alleged apparitions have no great value.”

The “real core” of the commission’s report, he said, is “the spiritual fact, the pastoral fact” that thousands of pilgrims go to Medjugorje and are converted. “For this there is no magic wand; this spiritual-pastoral fact cannot be denied.”

The decision to allow organized pilgrimages, banned by the local bishops’ in 1991 and confirmed by the Vatican in 1996, recognizes the need to provide spiritual accompaniment and care to the tens of thousands of Catholics who travel to Medjugorje each year, Gisotti said. It also is a recognition of the “abundant fruits of grace” those pilgrims have experienced.

Bishop announces appointments

Bishop Michael G. Duca announced the appointment of Father Brad Doyle as parochial vicar of St. Margaret of Scotland Church in Albany, and chaplain of St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School in Hammond.

The bishop also announced the appointments of Deacon Tim Grimes as parochial vicar of St. Joseph the Worker Church in Pierre Part and Deacon John Vu as parochial vicar of the cluster parishes of St. James Church in St. James and St. Philip Church and Our Lady of Peace Church in Vacherie.

Deacon Grimes and Deacon John Vu are scheduled to be ordained priests May 25. Their appointments are effective July 1 and are for two years.

Father Doyle is a native of Metairie and graduated from St. Michael the Archangel High School in Baton Rouge. He was ordained May 30, 2015 by Bishop-Emeritus Robert W. Muench at St. Joseph Cathedral.

He has served as parochial vicar at St. George Church in Baton Rouge and at the cluster parishes of St. James, St. Philip and Our Lady of Peace.

Father Doyle’s appointment is effective Aug. 5.
Going to Mass in pain/ Ambo for liturgical readings only?

Q In a few weeks I will turn 65 years old. I have arthritis in most of my joints; in the early spring, when it’s rainy and damp, the arthritic pain can be unbearable. Is it a sin to miss Sunday Mass, given the extreme pain?

A First, about the posture for confession because that part is easy. I have heard the confessions of people lying in a hospital bed, sitting in a quiet corner of a restaurant, even standing on a beach. Clearly there is no requirement that the penitent be even standing on a beach. Clearly there are situations of people lying in a hospital bed, sitting in a quiet corner of a restaurant, even standing on a beach. Clearly there is no requirement that the penitent be even standing on a beach.

In the parish where I served as pastor for 24 years, we had a confessional “room,” which is typical in Catholic churches today. There, the penitent could opt for anonymity by sitting or kneeling behind a screen or if he or she preferred could come around and sit and talk face-to-face with the priest.

As for the part about how sick you have to be to skip Mass, the answer is “use your head.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “The faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants)” (No. 2181). The nature and degree of the sickness is not defined, so we have to figure it out for ourselves.

The God we serve and believe in is a person of reason. How could a loving God want you to suffer excruciating pain as the price for going to Mass? And how could you even pray effectively when you’re feeling that bad? A handy rule of thumb might be this: Would I go to work if I felt this way?

Q Our pastor has just taken the step of allowing lay parishioners called “commentators” to make announcements from the ambo prior to the start of Mass. (Previously, these commentators always used the microphone of the choir to welcome parishioners and introduce visitors.)

A I was under the impression that the ambo could be used only for the scriptural readings, homily and the petitions during the prayer of the faithful. May the ambo be used for announcements before Mass begins? (Wichita, Kansas)

Q First, some definitions. The word “ambo” denotes a reading stand and is often used interchangeably with the word “lectern.” The “pulpit” is elevated and generally reserved for preaching and the Gospel reading.

And technically, you are correct: No. 309 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal notes that “from the ambo only the readings, the responsorial psalm and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) are to be proclaimed; likewise it may be used for giving the homily and for announcing the intentions of the universal prayer.”

The reality, though, is that some churches are small and sparsely furnished, with only one logical place for both the scriptural readings and the announcements.

And, as somebody who has been in the trenches for a long time, can I make an appeal? If your pastor is like most parish priests today, he’s got more work than he can handle; the last thing he needs to worry about is where the commentator stands.

Q Can a person request confession from a priest by telephone in a circumstance, for example, when someone lives in a remote village and seldom has access to a priest when a penitent has fallen into sin but is stranded in a distant land? What is the church’s teaching, can technology be applied positively in this regard? (Abuja, Nigeria)

A No, a penitent cannot confess and receive absolution by telephone. The teaching of the church is that the sacrament requires the physical presence of a priest.

Among the practical reasons for this is that the seal of confession requires and guarantees absolute and strict confidentiality. Among the “philosophical” reasons is that confession brings the penitent into personal closeness with Christ in the person of the priest.

In 2011, an Indiana company opened an app that provided an examination of conscience, together with step-by-step instructions for what to do inside the confessional. At the time, asked by reporters to comment, then-Vatican spokesman Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi said, “It is essential to understand well the sacrament of penance requires the personal dialogue between the penitent and the confessor, and the absolution by the confessor.”

“This is something that cannot,” he added, “be replaced by any application.” Father Lombardi did suggest, though, that it could be helpful, in preparation for confession, to “reflect on confession preparation using digital instruments as aids, as was done in the past with texts and questions written on paper.”

This restriction against sacramental confession by phone or online seems to me to be a matter of church discipline rather than a divine mandate that could never be changed (provided the privacy of the sacrament could be guaranteed).

But I would add that the situation your question presents the physical unavailability of a confessor already has a solution: an act of perfect contrition until the opportunity arrives for the sacrament itself.
‘Historian’ Father Uter celebrates golden jubilee

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Digging into history is more than a favorite pastime for Father Frank Uter, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs.

Each time he was assigned to a new church parish during his 50 years of priesthood, he researched the history of the area and presence of the Catholic Church to discover the community’s Catholic faith roots. In doing so, he planted roots throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge by bringing his memories and experiences from one parish to the next.

Family and friends from different milestones of Father Uter’s life will gather May 31 at Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs as he celebrates his golden jubilee.

“I think it (call to the priesthood) was always in the back of my head,” said Father Uter. “Daddy worked for Exxon. He was a chemist and worked in the lab. But he liked to do woodwork and carpentry. A lot of times he would go to the (St. Joseph Cathedral, Father Uter’s childhood parish) and build this or enlarge that. And he always brought me with him. I got to know the priests a little better. In the fourth- or fifth-grade, I became an altar server. The priests were really good and I respected them. And it was about that time, I began to wonder if I could be doing that.”

That thought came to his mind periodically during “four great years” at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge and when he attended LSU, but “I was able to fill my mind with a lot of other things too,” he chuckled.

Father Uter replied with a standard “CPA” when people asked him what he wanted to be.

One day he realized, “This is crazy. This has been going on long enough. You keep telling everybody what you’re going to be when in the back of your head you keep thinking about the possibility of being a priest.”

He wrote a letter to St. Joseph Seminary inquiring about the application process and they replied with an affirming letter asking him to show their letter to Msgr. Herman P. Lohmann, who was then pastor at St. Joseph Cathedral.

Father Uter handed the letter to Msgr. Lohmann, who read it, put it back in its envelope, smiled at Father Uter and said, “Frankie, I’ve known this for a long time. I’ve been waiting for you to find out.”

“And so the rest was history,” smiled Father Uter.

He has served as pastor of St. Mary of False River Church in New Roads, St. Joseph Cathedral, the cluster parishes of St. Michael the Archangel in Convent, St. Joseph in Paulina and Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Gramercy, as well as parochial vicar at St. Isidore Church in Baker and St. Thomas More Church in Baton Rouge.

Several of the parishes were approaching milestone anniversaries at the time of assignment.

When Father Uter was assigned to St. Mary of False River in 1976, he helped plan the 250th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Catholic Church in Pointe Coupee Civil Parish at the Post de la Pointe Coupee by French missionaries in 1728.

Likewise, when he was assigned to St. Joseph Cathedral in 1984, he helped plan the bicentennial celebration of the cathedral and the Catholic Church in Baton Rouge in 1992.

“It was fantastic,” Father Uter said of the cathedral celebration. “Cardinal (Albert) Decourtray came in from France and Bishop Mauro Rubio was here from the Diocese of Salamanca (Spain), which is where the first priests came from.”

Father Uter wrote about the history of the cathedral in his book, “A History of the Catholic Church in Baton Rouge.” Additionally he was a contributing editor to the book “Roots of most.”

“It was a challenge to have them understand and accept that I loved them all the same. And in time they realized that and started working together in beautiful ways.”

One of his favorite memories of the river parishes was the St. James Parish Christmas Eve bonfires, held annually on the levee. He celebrated Christmas Eve Mass at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and walked and visited families until he reached St. Joseph. Then he walked back to the rectory, rested and celebrated midnight Mass at St. Joseph.

“You couldn’t eat at every house because you wouldn’t be able to move,” laughed Father Uter. “But it was nice visiting with people and talking and relaxing.”

In addition to recording ecclesial history, Father Uter said his idea of a vacation is “going to do family genealogy” which has taken him throughout Europe.

“I’ve got it down to the 11th century,” he said. “I recently discovered that I had ancestors who accompanied William the Conqueror when he went from Normandy, France (to invade) England.

“I’ve (also) discovered that one of my ancestor’s brother was the Archbishop of Canterbury just two bishops after St. Thomas à Becket. I was able to see his tomb in the cathedral.”

Fond memories fill Father Uter’s head of each one of parishes he served, including his most recent assignment at Immaculate Conception, where they dedicated the church’s historical landmark “the Gate of Mercy” during the Year of Mercy, 2015-2016.

This is why his parishioners come first with Father Uter. He had originally planned to celebrate his anniversary on March 1, his ordination date. But he was approached by a woman he had baptized, as well as her siblings, and whose parents he had married and she asked if he would celebrate her wedding. He said “So, you want to get married on the date?” and she replied “March 1.”

So his own plans went on the back burner until staff members and parishioners pressed him to set a date to celebrate his anniversary.

He selected May 31, which is the date his first assignment became effective at St. Isidore, as well as the Feast of the Visitation.

“Mary went to minister to her cousin Elizabeth. And as Mary approached, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and ministered to Mary, which ended up with Mary praising God for his goodness,” said Father Uter. “And I think in much the same way over these 50 years I have been assigned and gone to parishes with the idea of going to minister only to experience how wonderfully they have been min -istering to me, and for this I also praise God for his goodness.”
quiet but when it has real flowers, it’s better.”

Mimi Tran, Nguyen’s sister and also a parishioner at St. Anthony, said her sister told Father Nguyen that she knew a little about flower arranging.

“He said, ‘Okay, you can try it,’ to let him see. And, ever since then, he said, go ahead and continue what you’re doing, so she’s been doing it ever since,” explained Tran.

“She does a great job,” said Father Peter Tan Viet Nguyen ICM. “She spends a lot of time on Saturdays decorating the church. I’m really thankful for what she does. A lot of time, families will stay after Mass to take pictures in front of the flowers, especially at Christmas and Easter.”

From there, a special ministry blossomed as Nguyen began taking classes in floral arranging. With an eye for beauty and a skill for handling the greenery, Nguyen’s arrangements are more than just pleasing to the eye. They are also purposeful.

“In Vietnam, every flower and every color has a special meaning,” stated Tran.

Nguyen has created arrangements ranging from small bouquets for first communicants to giant vases filled with towering blooming branches on the altar. She also color coordinates flowers with the vestments of the priests and consults with Father Nguyen to help set the tone for each Mass.

“On Holy Thursday, I use calm colors white and green,” explained Nguyen. “For Easter, I use white and yellow for celebration. It’s a celebration.”

Nguyen also created a floral arrangement using rich red, white and blue flowers to sit on a table below an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with each color matching perfectly those in the image.

Nguyen’s new calling has also been a family affair. Besides her sister, she’s also enlisted the help of her mother, Choi Tran, and family friend, Nhu Nguyen Nhat. The sisters’ husbands also join in the effort and Tran has asked for donations from her three college-age daughters to help pay for flowers. Other donations come from parishioners who might ask for special arrangements for significant occasions.

During Lent, when the church decorations are low key, Nguyen spends her Saturdays working at her salon, donating the money she earns on those days to the flower fund.

“When my husband and I came to Baton Rouge, we worked and didn’t have a high level of education. So we (did not) make a lot of money. I stay home and took care of the kids. We prayed, ‘God give me a good kid, eat and sleep, and so I pray,’” Nguyen said. “So when I need a job, I went to school and became a beautician. My babies, they grow up like normal. It’s beautiful, they don’t get in trouble, nothing.”

She has passed on her passion for service, encouraging others to celebrate the blessings of God by doing good works.

“I tell everybody, I tell everybody in my family, if I have a chance to do (something for friends), I say, ‘you pray, you need to (acknowledge that),’” Nguyen said. “(They ask), ‘What do I have to do?’ I say anything, volunteer, you know? Clean up the church ... anything.”

As her floral arrangements continue to invite parishioners to experience the fragrance of their faith, Nguyen’s words and examples will also help spread those seeds of faith.

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Flowers ▼

From page 1

By Richard Meek

The Catholic Commentator

What began as a quirky idea among two high school buddies reverberated from Baton Rouge to New Orleans to New York City.

Hours before the NBA Draft Lottery in Chicago on May 14, Baton Rouge sports talk show host Matt Moscona asked longtime friend Father Michael Alello to be a guest and say a prayer the Pelicans would get the No. 1 pick in the draft and the opportunity to draft Duke megastar Zion Williamson. The Pelicans’ chances appeared unlikely, as New Orleans was given a six percent chance of landing the top pick in the NBA’s new lottery process.

“(Moscona) had this crazy idea,” said Father Alello, pastor of St. Thomas More Church in Baton Rouge. “He said that if (the Pelicans) were going to win the NBA (top) draft pack, get a priest to come on and pray. It was just that.”

But Father Alello had a plan of his own, which he admitted was initially a disappointment to Moscona and others.

“He wanted me to pray for specific things and I went in and do what I do best,” Father Alello said. “We don’t pray for specific things. I said let’s pray that whatever happens is what needs to happen.

“I got ragged off the air. Everybody in the studio said that my prayer stunk. (Moscona) was disappointed. He said all I had to do was pray the Pelicans get the first pick.”

Not long after the show signed off, however, the NBA world was stunned when the ping pong balls determining the draft order bounced the Pelicans’ way, creating Gotham gloom in the Big Apple and Bourbon Street bliss in the Big Easy. New York Knicks fans were all but certain the balls would bounce their way and land Williamson in midtown Manhattan.

From his rectory, Father Alello, who was not watching when the lottery order was announced, smiled.

“Look what happened,” he said with a chuckle. “Let’s go back to my prayer that was terrible. Let’s talk about that.”

His social media account was overrun with long-suffering Pelican fans and friends offering their thanks and congratulations.

Moscona even invited Father Alello to return to the show the next day. Naturally, given a chance to serve up a serving of crow, who could refuse?

“It was great, it was hysterical,” Father Alello said. “It was 15 minutes of bantering back and forth.”

Despite the frenzy and jocularity of the moment, Father Alello also stressed the spiritual side of the zaniness.

“Here is an opportunity to get the message out in a market not used to hearing a Catholic priest,” he said. “Amid the goofiness of the interview, the fact I was able to invite people to pray, to slow down and invite them, to realize that God doesn’t always give us what we want, but if we are open to what God wants for us, God is the God of surprises,” he said. “Let’s be surprised sometimes.”

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Crazy idea? Pels land No. 1 pick on a wing and a prayer

By Richard Meek

The Catholic Commentator

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Volunteers were honored during the annual Mother Seton Award luncheon May 7, hosted by the Diocesan Home and School Association of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Twenty-five recipients from Catholic schools throughout the diocese were recognized for their hard work, support and dedication to Catholic education.

“These are the cream of the crop, these are the people that make Catholic schools what they are because where would we be without our volunteers?” said Renee Tullier, president of the Home and School Association. “Volunteerism is at an all-time low so that’s why it’s really important to honor these people and to recognize them and try to get them to encourage others to do what they do.”

Father Cleo Milano, pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Church in Baton Rouge, prayed the blessing before lunch was served at Drusilla Place Catering in Baton Rouge. He was followed by guest speaker Bishop Michael G. Duca, who talked about meeting the alumni of a closed Catholic high school in Shreveport and learning of the important influence of the neighborhood surrounding a school, filled with watchful parents and neighbors who made sure the youth behaved respectfully.

“When you talk about the neighborhood, you’re also talking about the family and it reminded me about how important, in the education of any young person today, the place of the family ... and the Home and School Association is really an extension of that presence in a school,” said Bishop Duca.

The bishop spoke about how schools have evolved into providing more than just classroom instruction, with many students receiving their only meal, or meals, of the day at school.

“So we’re picking up something that was before provided by the family and that happens in so many different ways. So the work of a teacher needs the assistance of aids in their classroom, volunteers who come to take up some of that load and be part of that educational process is what makes any school, certainly our Catholic schools, great,” said the bishop. “Any way that parents can help teachers and support them in their work, it’s just going to make them better teachers and free them up for the task at hand.”

“I commend the work of the Home and School (Association) for providing that kind of support that completes our education and takes on some of the burden that schools have to take on now in this new era that we’re in, where there are different needs of the children, which we provide, joyfully provide, which we can only do if teachers have that support.”

“Today, I want to thank the Home and School Association and all those that are a part of that for your good work, for the way in which you support the teachers, for the way you are that ‘neighborhood’ that’s surrounding the students as they enter in their learning, and continue to support them and encourage them into accomplishing that good work,” said Bishop Duca.

He also thanked the Catholic Schools Office, faculty members and pastors.

“Every pastor has a different view of taking on a church parish with a school. Some run to them and some don’t run to them, they admire them from afar, but the pastors that do have schools, I want to commend them,” said the bishop, asking pastors to stand up and be recognized.

Dr. Melanie Verges, superintendent of Catholic schools, talked about how Catholic school students had completed 200,000 student community service hours, recorded above average scores on national standardized tests and how schools had completed strategic financial planning. She also noted the expansion of special education services, with 200 students registered for the 2019-20 school year. And, she thanked members of the Home and School Association for their assistance in supporting Catholic schools.

“Volunteers are truly the heart of our schools,” Verges said. “They are invaluable in achieving the vision of evangelizing hearts, educating minds, encouraging talent and embracing the future. Students achieve more and reach higher standards because of dedicated teachers, administrators, clergy and parent volunteers.”

Also honored at the luncheon were Diocesan Students of the Year: fifth-grader Molly Kate Skupien, eighth-grader Isabella Marie Bull, and free text about the Bishop, Sister, and the Bishop's message.

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The idea of reviving an altar had been gnawing at Breaux, but with a twist. Rather than the traditional Italian flare, she wanted an altar that would showcase the area’s Cajun heritage.

And it would be held close to May 1, the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker, the parish’s patron saint.

“When (Breaux) came (about doing the altar for this year) I was excited. I tried to hold back just to see if it would evolve,” he added.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of Father Davidson, Breaux, a retired florist, was off and running, initially securing the façade of a Cajun cabin that had been used as a backdrop in a local theatre production.

“I started thinking of everything Cajun,” she said, including borrowing crab traps and crawfish traps to adorn the cabin.

“(Fishing) was a big industry and that culture still goes on today,” Breaux said. “There are no more pirogues, (boats) just a little bit more modernized.”

Along with the tantalizing array of crustaceans cooked in a variety of ways – Breaux admitted that she knew “exactly” who would contribute what and that no one turned her down – the altar featured a number of statues of the Holy Family.

One statue of Jesus in a skiff was even modified to have him holding a net as a symbol of “fisher of men.”

Make no mistake, though, the highlight was the food, which included approximately 40 pounds of boiled crawfish, 10 pounds of boiled shrimp, four dozen stuffed crabs and a dizzying selection of Cajun desserts.

“People were amazed and already talking about what they want to contribute next year,” Breaux said. “My goal was to bring the community together like we used to, get this community working on something together.”

Mission accomplished.
Seniors’ advice: Savor final year of high school

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

As seniors from Catholic high schools throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge clean out backpacks, donate used uniforms and hang up their caps and gowns from graduation, many can finally take the time to sit back and reflect on their high school days and lessons learned along the way.

“Make freshman year count,” said Clay LeBlanc, a graduate of St. John the Evangelist High School in Plaquemine. “Freshman year is very important when it comes to grades so study hard. If you start off well the first year, you’ll be set for the next year.”

“I would tell incoming freshmen that freshman year matters, even though you don’t think it does in the end with your GPA (grade point average),” agreed classmate Madison Nicolosi. “It’s your whole first experience in high school. It matters, and you need to start working hard that year.”

“Incoming freshmen should be open minded about high school,” advised Ella Barhorst, a graduate of St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge. “I wish I would have started making new friends and broadened my horizons with clubs and involvement at school starting freshman year.”

Besides all of the hard work in the classroom, seniors spent their last year enjoying the fruits of their labor with a schedule packed with activities including school dances, special homecoming events and graduation parties. Fitting it all in, along with studies and applications for college and scholarships, can prove to be a true balancing act.

“The biggest thing I learned is time management between school work and friends,” said Nicolosi.

“With so many activities and assessments to prepare for I really had to learn how to prioritize my time,” said Derquasia Spears, a graduate of St. Joseph’s Academy. “Time is everyone’s greatest asset. No matter who you are or where you come from, we all have the same amount of time each day to do incredible things together for the glory of God.”

Faith also guided the high school career of Haley Bouchereau, a graduate of Ascension Catholic High School in Donaldsonville.

“Throughout the last four years, there were many ups and downs and many challenges that I had to face, but the main lesson that I learned is no matter what we face, because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we can do anything,” said Bouchereau.

“The main lesson that I learned from my high school years is that this time in life is when you really get to learn about yourself and what it’s like to be more independent than ever before,” said fellow Ascension Catholic graduate Madison Zeringue. “I felt like I was really finding myself through every experience that I had and it pushed me to become the best version of myself possible.”

For the Class of 2020, the Class of 2019 said, “Don’t rush it.”

“Seniors, you’re going to have many ‘lasts’ this year and they will all be bittersweet,” said Bouchereau. “Enjoy those moments because they go by so quickly.”

“Incoming seniors, the year goes by quickly,” said Barhorst. “The fun never stops and before you know it, you will be saying goodbye to everything you have known for four years. Be as involved as possible, you won’t regret it.”

“Don’t try to rush senior year,” said Nicolosi. “Everybody’s all ready to graduate and stuff but I regret trying to get through it so quickly. I think I missed out trying to rush through the year.”

“Focus on school because it is an important year but make sure you are in the moment at all times and don’t rush because it goes by quick enough,” said LeBlanc. “I’m ready to start four more years of high school. I’d go back in a heartbeat! I loved it!”

And finally, this note from Spears:

“Rising seniors, congratulations for the many accomplishments you have made already. The last year of high school is a beautiful time to continue discovering yourself and the person you aspire to become. As always, stay persistent in your studies and encourage each other during your last year together. Senior year will be over before you know it, so make your time meaningful!”

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GOSPEL ▼
From page 2

The one who is love lives within us! The doors of our hearts are open to his invigorating love at baptism as sanctifying grace overflows.

Furthermore, Jesus explains to the apostle of coming of the advocate, the Holy Spirit, who will teach them and remind of what took place, reassuring them of his peace and return, and preparing them to witness his passion and death, the culminating act of love. This increased indwelling of God within us comes as his body, blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist, our COMMUNION, with God and others. Hence, the Eucharist informs, protects, motivates, reciprocates, remains and sustains; is accessible visible and central to faith.

Hope

My associate director just popped his head in my office noticing the silence (most unusual for me). He realized I was writing this article as I mentioned the Ascension. He said this is his favorite mystery of the rosary, the Ascension, since it promises hope. Yes, indeed, there is life-giving hope in the Ascension! The apostles look up to heaven “as he (Jesus) was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight” (Acts 1:9). Jesus Christ, the head of the church, precedes us into the father’s glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his body, may live in the hope of one day being with him forever. Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit (CCC# 665-667). The promise of Jesus is the foundation of hope, as “we desire and expect from God eternal life and the grace we need to attain it” (CCC# 187). We exist for eternal life with God. Every breath is one closer to this reality. We confidently believe, humbly repent and tell all what Christ has accomplished for their eternity. He commissioned us to go out, baptize and teach. This is the essence of missionary discipleship: (GO) to evangelize/witness of faith by telling your story about how much God loves us; (BAPTIZE) invite others into the community of the sacramental life of the church; (TEACH) catechize/echo all Jesus said and did.

Our response is vital for those living in a world working to silence the voice of God. Yet, his voice is ever-present. You are his voice sowing seeds of faith, rooted in love to proclaim the hope of salvation. Christ is the way with truth and life. If you grow weary, remember, he sends “upon you the promise of the father” (Lk 24:49), the promise of hope in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. Amen.

Dow is the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
EASTER LESSONS - Kindergarten students at St. Peter Chanel School in Paulina used their creative skills to make an edible tomb in which Jesus rose from the dead. The class celebrated Easter by having a “He is Risen” party the day students returned from the break, with activities to help them learn more about Jesus’ Way of the Cross and resurrection. Students used a graham cracker as the ground, half a donut to represent the tomb and a small vanilla cookie to show the movement of the rock in front of the tomb. The students rolled their cookie away from the tomb (and into their mouths), then shouted “He is Risen!” after looking inside the empty tomb. The students also gobbled up the ground and tomb as well. Photo provided by Amber Kilburn | St. Peter Chanel School

LIFE SCIENCE – Seventh-graders at Holy Ghost School in Hammond culminate science studies by dissecting frogs. Students learned about body systems and how they interact with each other. Pictured, from left, are Claire Chauvin, Maggie Elkins and Jennie Gay. Photo provided by Cindy Wagner | Holy Ghost School

FAMILY CELEBRATION – Students at Catholic Elementary of Pointe Coupee in New Roads celebrated Grandparents’ Day. The halls were filled with hundreds of grandparents, great-grandparents and special guests. Students enjoyed showing off their artwork, religion fair projects and classrooms. Photo provided by Megan Girlinghouse | CESPC

MOBILE CLASSROOM – Eighth-graders at St. Alphonsus School in Greenwell Springs took a tour of the Gulf Coast visiting sites such as the USS Alabama in Mobile, Alabama; Institute for Marine Mammal Studies in Gulfport, Mississippi; and Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunters at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. Students also participated in a service project at the Hancock County Food Pantry in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi and attended evening retreats and eucharistic adoration at St. Augustine Retreat Center in Bay St. Louis. Photo provided by Cindy Ryals | St. Alphonsus School

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The Intruder
Screen Gems
A routine thriller for most of its running time, director Deon Taylor’s film becomes increasingly trashy before ending with the justification of a profoundly immoral act in which viewers are meant to revel. A prosperous San Francisco couple (Michael Ealy and Meagan Good) plan to move to the Napa Valley and start a family. But the creepy owner (Dennis Quaid) of the charming, ivy-covered home they buy has not reconciled himself to relinquishing it and keeps turning up uninvited. In a performance that ranges from intense to over-the-top, Quaid grimmaces and smolders as screenwriter David Loughrey’s script has his character teeter between plausibly pathetic widower and outright psychopath. But the proceedings are otherwise remarkable only for the transgression with which they conclude. Benignly viewed vigilantism, attempted rape and much other violence with some gore, semi-graphic marital lovemaking, partial and obscured rear nudity, a scene of urination, at least one use of profanity and a few milder oaths, a single mild oath and several crude terms. O; PG-13

UglyDolls
STX
Based on the eponymous line of plush toys, this animated musical offers a worthy lesson for children about the need to look beyond superficial appearances for true beauty and goodness. Rejected from the toy factory live together in a harmonious society led by a cheery mayor (voice of Blake Shelton). One free-spirited doll (voice of Kelly Clarkson) persuades her friends (voices of Pitbull and Wanda Sykes) to explore the wider world where they encounter flaw-free figures preparing to be received and loved by children. The wicked leader of this community (voice of Nick Jonas) heaps disdain on the new arrivals and schemes to thwart their quest to be appreciated and cherished. Director Kelly Asbury echoes the far superior “Toy Story” and “Monsters, Inc.” films, though his feature does offer a snappy, singalong soundtrack. Brief cartoon peril. A-I; PG

Hesburgh
O’Malley Creedon
Informative, though wholly unedited, biographical documentary about Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh (1907-2015) chronicles not only his long tenure as president of the University of Notre Dame but his involvement in cold-war diplomacy, the civil rights movement and shaping the changing character of Catholic higher education. Filmmaker Patrick Creadon’s profile touches on a number of controversial incidents in the once seemingly ubiquitous cleric’s career and deals with issues that may still divide Catholic viewers. But he also emphasizes his subject’s enduring love of the priesthood. Mature themes, potentially disturbing sights, a single mild oath. A-II; Not rated by the Motion Picture Association of America.

The Hustle
MGM
This spirited, laugh-about-the-numbers comedy is a gender-swapped remake of 1988’s “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels,” which was itself based on 1964’s “Bedtime Story.” Two con artists (Anne Hathaway and Rebel Wilson) in the south of France collaborate to scam $500,000 from someone they think is a tech mogul (Alex Sharp). Working from a script by Jac Schaeffer, director Chris Addison relies on hit-or-miss sight gags instead of wit, and the story comes off as an outdated mechanical ride punctuated by occasional attempts at crass humor. An implied casual sexual encounter, some crude banter, a single profanity, fleeting rough language. A-III; PG-13

Pokemon Detective Pikachu
Warner Bros.
A 21-year-old insurance worker (Justice Smith) hundred his estranged father, a detective who may or may not have died in a car crash. He’s helped by dad’s pocket-monster partner (voice of Ryan Reynolds), a wisecracking creature he initially dislikes but eventually befriends, and by an aspiring reporter (Kathryn Newton) with whom he’s soon smitten. The first live-action feature in the franchise that began with video games in the 1990s showcases too much mayhem for little kids but is acceptable for older age groups, a lot of loose talk about transferring souls from one body to another notwithstanding. Writer-director Rob Letterman salutes teamwork and family ties while keeping the romantic behavior chaste. But viewers not yet initiated into the mysteries of the Pokemon universe may feel both left behind and unimpressed. Considerable stylized violence, a couple of mild oaths, vague sexual and drug-related jokes, a bit of scatological humor. A-II; PG

Tolkien
Fox Searchlight
Sophisticated profile of the future novelist’s youth traces his passage from impoverished schoolboy (Harry Gillby) to Oxford University scholarship student and beleaguered officer in the trenches of WWI (Nicholas Hoult). Along the way, he bonds with a trio of precociously gifted peers (Anthony Boyle, Patrick Gibson and Tom Glynn-Carney) and falls for his future wife (Lily Collins). Though the Catholic faith that would help to shape the grown writer’s vision is only represented by the caring but stern priest (Colm Meaney) who served as his guardian after the death of both his parents, director Dome Karukoski and screenwriters David Gleeson and Stephen Beresford successfully convey first the buoyant camaraderie that led the band of friends to regard themselves as brothers and, in the poignant latter part of the film, the horrors of the global conflict in which they were eventually caught up and the toll it exacted on them. Some harsh combat violence, a few gruesome images, a bit of slightly bawdy humor. A-II; PG-13

Long Shot
Lionsgate
Tasteless romantic comedy in which an out-of-work reporter (Seth Rogen) chances to reconnect with his former babysitter (Charlize Theron) who has since become the U.S. secretary of state and a presidential aspirant. She hires him as a speechwriter and the two fall for each other. Though the relationship is cheered on by his best friend (O’Shea Jackson Jr.), one of her staffers (June Diane Raphael) quickly perceives that his lack of looks and crass manner clash with her elegance in a way that could hurt her chances for the highest office. A debased portrayal of human sexuality and relentlessly vulgar dialogue make director Jonathan Levine’s shrill film unsuitable for all. Skewed values, semi-graphic premarital sexual activity, benignly viewed drug use, much sexual humor, including sight gags, a blasphemous expression, about a half-dozen uses of profanity, at least one milder oath, pervasive rough and crude language. O; R
MAY CROWNING – With May representing the month of Mary, students at Mater Dolorosa School in Independence crowned the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 13 during a May Crowning event. First Communion students led the student body toward a statue of Our Lady in front of the school, with everyone singing “Immaculate Mary.” Grace Finley and Grayson Gaudet crowned Our Lady with a crown of fresh flowers made by Finley’s grandmother, Madelene Guzzardo Pisciotta, who once crowned this very same Madonna. Photo provided by Erin Mendez | Mater Dolorosa School

MAY CROWNING AT SJA – Students from St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge participate in a May Crowning ceremony. Pictured front row, from left, are Addison Bruce, Trystan Tate, Derquisia Spears, Catherine Contini and Olivia Clark. Pictured back row, from left, are Katherine McCullen, Julianna Hill, Leanne Livingston, Kate Michel and Lacy Wendell. Photo provided by Mindy Avent | St. Joseph’s Academy

MAY CROWNING – Noah Deshotel, an eighth-grade student at St. Elizabeth School in Paincourtville, places a garland on a statue of Mary during a May Crowning ceremony. Photo provided by Kathleen Herpich | St. Elizabeth School

ACROSS
1 “Let the dead ___ their dead…” (Lk 9:60)
2 Amer. government agency
3 Attaining
4 Sweet potato
5 Meetings of bishops
6 Swellings
7 Summer drinks
8 Title for clergy (abbr.)
9 Dance slide
10 Catholic United States Supreme Court justice
11 Pope during Vatican II
12 Another name for Jacob
13 Approaches
14 “…Dei”
15 Scrap of food
16 Space
17 Sport for heavyweights
18 Cram
19 “His mercy is from ___ to…” (Lk 1:50)
20 Sourdough
21 Prefix with watt
22 Dance slide
23 Very skilled person
24 “I ___ was ere I saw ___.”
25 Sport
26 Prefix with watt
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Solution on page 18

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We seldom see the hidden hand of God at work in this world, but God is always active in human history. C.S. Lewis always stressed the fact that, “The Church will outlive the universe, and because of this, the individual person within it will outlive the universe.” I’ve been asked to repeat this column, and here it is with few improvements...

Everything that is joined to the immortal head of the Mystical Body of Christ will share his immortality. Lewis insisted, that if we do not believe this truth we might as well “relegate the Christian faith to the museums.” Neither individuals nor communities can inherit eternal life unless they belong to the Mystical Body of Christ. The secular world is blind to this truth.

Lewis debunked the un-Christian notion that each one of us starts with the treasure we call the “personality” locked up within us, and life is about becoming famous. He scoffed, “But no one who seeks fame or originality for its own sake will ever become either famous or original.”

Considering the truths of the Gospel, we know that the true goal of human life is to abide in Jesus Christ, and attain heaven. We are called to tell the truth as we see it, doing our job as well as it can be done for the work’s sake. When we succeed at this, originality and sometimes fame will come unsought. Only in Him and through Him will the goal of eternal life become possible.

The time will come when every culture, every institution, every nation and the entire human race including the biological life will become extinct. The solar system, and the billions of galaxies in outer space, will all burn themselves out and disappear. Nothing is eternal but God, and those who share his life.

Immutability, which is the gift of living beyond the limits of this world, will only come to those who belong to the inner life of God. This gift is bestowed on us by virtue of our membership in Christ’s Body. By belonging to his Mystical Body, we come to share in His eternal destiny.

Lewis maintained, “Our immortality is directly related to our union with Christ. Baptism makes us an organic part of the Body of Christ. The Mystical Body of Christ is a metaphor for the cosmic Christ, who pervades and penetrates the entire universe.” Metaphors help us to explain the unexplainable, which is the very purpose of all theology.

“Therein lies the maddening ambiguity of our faith as it appears to others. As private individuals, as mere biological entities, each with a separate existence, we all appear to be of little account, but as members of the Body of Christ, we are assured of our eternal self-identity, and shall live to remember the galaxies as an old tale.”

The Catholic Catechism defines membership in the Mystical Body of Christ as extending beyond the membership of the Roman Catholic Church. Then who are the members? All who sincerely call Jesus the Lord of their lives are certainly members, and Jesus established the Catholic Church to bring us all home. Exactly how? That is something hidden from our eyes.

Why be Catholic? Everyone must answer that for themselves.
Who goes to hell and who doesn’t?

Hell is never a nasty surprise waiting for a basically happy person. Nor is it necessarily a predictable ending for an unhappy, bitter person. Can a happy, warm-hearted person go to hell? Can an unhappy, bitter person go to heaven? And how do we understand hell and how we read the human heart.

A person who is struggling honestly to be happy cannot go to hell since hell is the antithesis of an honest struggle to be happy. Hell, in Pope Francis’ words, “is wanting to be distant from God’s love.” Anyone who sincerely wants love and happiness will never be condemned to an eternity of alienation, emptiness, bitterness, anger and hatred (which are what constitute the fires of hell) because hell is wanting not to be in heaven. Thus there’s no one in hell who's sincerely longing for another chance to mend things so as to go to heaven.

If there’s anyone in hell, it’s because that person truly wants to be distant from love. But can someone really want to be distant from God’s love and from human love? The answer is complex because we’re complex: What does it mean to want something? Can we want something and not want it all at the same time? Yes, because there are different levels to the human psyche and consequently the same desire can be in conflict with itself.

We can want something and not want it all at the same time. That’s a common experience. For instance, take a young child who has just been disciplined by his mother. At that moment, the child can bitterly hate his mother, even as at another, more inchoate, level what he most desperately wants is in fact his mother’s embrace. But until his sulk ends he wants to be distant from his mother, even as his deepest want is to be with his mother. We know the feeling.

Hatred, as we know, is not opposite of love but simply one modality of love’s grieving and so this type of dynamic perennially plays itself out in the feedback loop of paradoxical relationship that millions of us have with God, the church, with each other and with love itself. Our wounds are mostly not our own fault but the result of an abuse, a violation, a betrayal or some traumatic negligence within the circle of love. However this doesn’t preclude them doing funny things to us: When we’re wounded in love, then, like a reprimanded, sulking child who wants distance from his mother, we too can for a time, perhaps for a lifetime, not want heaven because we feel that we’ve been unfairly treated by it. It’s natural for many people to want to be distant from God. The child bullied on the playground who identifies his or her bullies with the inner circle of “the accepted ones” will understandably want to be distant from that circle or perhaps even do violence to it. However that’s at one level of soul. At a deeper level, our ultimate longing is still to be inside of that circle of love which we at that moment seemingly hate, hate because we feel that we’ve been unfairly excluded from it or violated by it and hence deem it to be something we no longer want of part of. Thus some people can be very sincere of soul and yet because of deep wounds to her soul go through life and die wanting to be distant from what she perceives as God, love and heaven. But we may not make a simplistic judgment here.

We need to distinguish between what at a given moment we explicitly want and what, at that same moment, we implicitly (really) want. They’re often not the same. The reprimanded child seemingly wants distance from his mother, even as at another level he desperately wants her.

Many people want distance from God and the churches, even as at another level they don’t. But God reads the heart, recognizes the untruth hiding inside a soul or a pout, and judges accordingly. That’s why we shouldn’t be so quick to fill up hell with everyone who appears to want distance from love, faith, church and God’s love can encompass, empathize with, melt down and heal that hatred. Our love should too.

Christian hope asks us to believe things that go against our natural instincts and emotions and one of these is that God’s love is so powerful that, just as it did at Jesus’ death, it can descend into hell itself and there breathe love and forgiveness into both the most wounded and most hardened of souls. Hope asks us to believe that the final triumph of God’s love will be when Lucifer himself converts, returns to heaven and hell is finally empty.

Fanciful? No. That’s Christian hope; it’s what many of our great saints believed. Yes, there’s a hell and, given human freedom, it’s always a radical possibility for everyone; but, given God’s love, perhaps sometime it will be completely empty.

The women who stayed

The women stayed at the foot of the cross. They did not desert Jesus. They cared for his beaten, bloody body. They went in the dark to anoint him at the tomb with oil and spices. They stayed faithful to the daily, loving work of caring for others in body and soul.

During this Easter season, the women have settled into my heart and refused to leave. Mary Magdalene and Mary his mother: bearer of good news and bearer of God. Joanna, Salome, Mary the mother of James, and all the unnamed women: the ones who stayed by the teenager who needs to talk. The women who stay up late for the student who's struggling. The women who stay at the bedside after everyone else has left the hospital room.

They are Mary and Joanna and Mary Magdalene and Salome. They are every unnamed woman in the Gospels, every friend of our Lord whose story was never told. They are the saints we know and love. They are the reason many of us have faith in the first place because our mother or grandmother or godmother or aunt or teacher or sister taught us first.

The world spins on, but the women stay. Imagine how different the story might have been if the women had not gone to the tomb while others slept, had not discovered the body gone, had not listened to the angels or had not run to tell the stunning news of Christ’s resurrection that changed everything.

From birth to death, women are called to stay faithful – then and now.

We would not be here without them.

FAUNCI is a mother, writer and director of a project on vocation at the Collegeville Institute in Collegeville, Minnesota. She is the author of several books, including “Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting,” and blogs at motheringspirit.com.
Summer MAT Courses – Registration is now being accepted for summer Ministry and Theology Courses, offered by the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Basic and intermediate certification levels are available. Register at learn.evancathbr.org.

St. Joseph Fair – St. Joseph the Worker Church, 3304 Hwy. 70 South, Pierre Part, will host its parish fair Friday, May 24 – Sunday, May 26. There will be food, live entertainment, bingo, auction and cook-off. For more information, visit sjworker.org.

Third Order of Mary – The St. Agnes Confraternity of the Third Order of Mary will meet Sunday, June 9, 3 p.m., at St. Agnes Church, 749 East Blvd., Baton Rouge. For more information, call Karen Mollere at 225-272-5915.

Willwoods Retreat – Willwoods Community will sponsor a married couples retreat Friday, June 21 – Sunday, June 23 at the St. Joseph Christian Life Center in St. Benedict. For more information and to register, visit willwoods.org or call 504-830-3700.

Marriage Enrichment Retreat – A marriage enrichment retreat, “Hold Me Tight,” will be held Friday, May 31, 3:30 p.m., and Saturday, June 1, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., in room 206 of the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center, 1800 S. Acadian Hwy., Baton Rouge. For more information and to register, email Elizabeth Schroeder at elizschro5@gmail.com.

Engaged Couples Retreat – Engaged couples are invited to a retreat, “Called to Love” Friday, June 14 – Sunday, June 16 at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center, 1800 S. Acadian Hwy., Baton Rouge. To register and for more information, visit mfdiorb.org.

Blessings Mission – St. Thomas More Church, 11441 Goodwood Blvd., Baton Rouge, will sponsor a Blessings Mission local mission trip for students entering 10th – 12th grade Tuesday, June 18 – Sunday, June 23. Participants must register by Friday, May 31 by visiting blessingsmission.org. For more information, call the St. Thomas More parish office at 225-275-3940.

Pentecost Fest – A Pentecost Fest will be held Sunday, June 9, 4 – 8 p.m., at Our Lady of Peace 13281 Hwy. 644, Vacherie. There will be food, bingo, music, a water slide for kids and cornhole tournament. For more information, visit canecatholics.com or call 225-265-3953.

Pentecost Mass – Father Anthony Odiong, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Luling, will celebrate a Pentecost Mass with healing service Sunday, June 9 at St. Joseph Church, 15710 Hwy. 16, French Settlement. Praise and Worship will begin at 1:30 p.m. and the Mass will begin at 2 p.m. Father Odiong will pray for the sick after Mass. For information, call 225-698-3110.

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

COMING EVENTS
May 24, 2019

- St. Joseph Fair at St. Joseph the Worker Church
- Third Order of Mary meeting
- Willwoods Retreat for married couples
- Marriage Enrichment Retreat
- Engaged Couples Retreat
- Blessings Mission local mission trip
- Pentecost Fest
- Pentecost Mass

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The Archdiocese of New Orleans School Food & Nutrition Services administers the Child Nutrition Program for 63 cooking kitchens and 11 satellite food operations dispersed throughout 11 civil parishes which provides nutritional support to 25,000 students. The Executive Director of School Food and Nutrition Services will be responsible to oversee all aspects of the Child Nutrition Program operations for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. School Food and Nutrition Services of New Orleans, Inc.

The ideal candidate will possess the following knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge of Child Nutrition Program and food safety regulations.
- Knowledge of staff management and labor relations.
- Ability to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences.
- Ability to assess program needs, develop long range goals, and annual objectives.
- Ability to apply the principles of financial management in the development and monitoring of annual program budget.
- Ability to utilize technology to improve program quality, service and efficiency.
- Ability to develop effective interpersonal relationships.
- Preference will be given to those who follow the tenets of our Catholic faith.

All candidates must meet the qualifications:

- At least five years’ experience in food service in a commercial or institutional setting and two years’ experience at the management or administrative level.
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- In lieu of degree, 10+ years of relevant experience required.

PLEASE REFERENCE FULL details via our Archdiocese of New Orleans JobBank Posting at nolacatholic.org/employment. Qualified applicants will submit a letter of interest along with resume to jobs@arch-no.org. Please include your name in subject line.

Diocese of Baton Rouge
Catholic Schools Office
St. Michael the Archangel High School
President Opening: 2019-20

St. Michael High School (SMHS) seeks to fill the newly established position of President to serve as the chief administrative officer of the school. Accountable for the overall operation of the high school, the President will work cooperatively with the Principal in ensuring that Catholic identity remains strong at SMHS. Directly responsible for the external affairs of the school, the President is charged with all aspects of financial vitality and management, facilities, advancement, community relations, and governance. As the chief spokesperson for the school, the President provides visible, personal leadership to the school community and articulates and promotes the high school to the school community and the external public.

Founded in 1984, SMHS is a nationally-accredited, co-educational, college preparatory diocesan high school located in Baton Rouge providing students with a traditional, comprehensive Catholic education. With a passionate, experienced faculty and a rich and challenging curriculum, SMHS provides the ideal environment for students to achieve their full potential. Students are encouraged to work hard, to dream big, and to see academic success as an exciting and worthwhile pursuit.

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Diocese of Baton Rouge
Catholic Schools Office
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Applications will be considered as received.

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

Father Clark said a young person’s commitment to their faith and Mass attendance while in college is proportionate to their parents’ commitment before they even get to college. Those things that the family found most important is most likely going to be most important to the young Catholics.

“The ‘nones’ (those who have not identified themselves with any religious affiliation) is said to be the largest denomination of young people. And the largest denomination in this country is former Catholics of all ages,” said Sister Renee.

Technology is a great tool for evangelization and catechesis, but it also poses challenges in that compared to what’s available on various social media, some young people may find Mass and silence “boring.”

“There’s something about being connected … I don’t have to be alone as long as I have this,” said Rita West, campus minister at St. Albert, holding up her cell phone. “We need that solitude with the Lord and not the pace of this.

“And we don’t understand the richness of what’s there to recognize it. Actually this experience and this pace (God’s) is what I’m created for – not this (phone). There’s this disconnect of ‘this feels boring’ but actually there’s just a misunderstanding of what’s happening here.”

Before giving into what appears to be a dismal picture, there is hope and success stories in reaching young people, according to Sister Renee, West and Father Mike O’Rourke OP, director and chaplain at St. Albert.

New chapters in young people’s lives open the possibility of looking for something deeper than what the culture offers them, Father O’Rourke noted. “A lot of people I see leave (the church) do so until they get married or start a family, and it’s a kind of life change that gets them to rethink all of that, not just ‘all right. I’m to spend my life with this other person,’ but ‘Okay, what’s this all about?’” said Father O’Rourke. “It’s just those kinds of events that make them review things.”

Sister Renee noted that the younger generation of Catholics are non-judgmental and accepting. “This generation doesn’t have boxes that they put people in. I think this is where some of the questioning comes from,” she said.

And the fact that young Catholics are seeking the truth and asking questions means they haven’t given up on their faith all together, according Father O’Rourke, Sister Renee and West.

“There are a lot of students open to having dialogue and asking questions and really listening,” said West.

She said it’s a healthy dialogue in which, rather than asking in an accusatory way, they say, “What’s your response to this?”

But the church must be open to listening to young people rather than “laying down the law,” Father O’Rourke said.

“We need to grow ears,” he added.

The campus ministers and priests said people must also not overestimate the power of invitation.

At St. Albert and the Martin Luther King Jr. Center on the campus of Southern University, there are retreats, Bible studies, food, socials, help with studies and other invitations that draw the students in.

According to Father Clark and Wilfred Johnson, campus minister at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, there is a bus that comes to pick students up for Sunday morning Mass at Immaculate Conception and sets up a booth at the student center with information and Bibles.

“We have to go out to where they are,” said Johnson, who attended Catholic schools as well as Southern and connected with MLK because someone “told him it was there,” something which applies to today’s young Catholics.

Catholics can invite the younger generations to take a fresh look at the faith by living their faith authentically alongside them, emphasized Sister Renee.

This involves humility and recognizing one doesn’t have all the answers, West said.

“It’s catechesis for ourselves and them,” she said “developing and recognizing I’m helping someone walk,” helping someone else to develop their faith, saying, “I’m not done. I’m not going to know all of it. Let’s walk together.”

Father Clark agreed.

“We have to be with them, whether they are attending Mass or not so they can develop that relationship,” he said.

The priests and campus ministers were optimistic not only about the ability of young people to “find their way home” to the church, but to guide it.

“I don’t think this is a lost generation,” said Sister Renee. “And I think that if we really do have ears to hear there can be some leadership in this generation helping the church to become more of what Jesus Christ calls it to be.”

Johnson said, “We have to help them see what they can become.”
THE CLASS of 2019
The Class of 2019 was offered admission to 114 colleges and universities. 119 seniors dedicated 50 or more hours to service during each of their four years.

Appalachian State University
Arizona State University
Arizona State University Barrett Honors College
Arkansas State University
Auburn University
Auburn University Honors College
Baton Rouge Community College
Baylor University
Belhaven University
Belmont Abbey College
Belmont University
Bellarmine University
Boston University
Bowdoin College
California State University, Long Beach
California State University, Northridge
Case Western Reserve University
Centenary College of Louisiana
Clemson University
College of Charleston
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University
Crown College
Duke University
Duke Kunshan University*
Emerson College
Florida International University
Fordham University
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University
Furman University
Georgia State University
Georgia State University Honors College
Howard University
Johns Hopkins University
Lehigh University
Long Island University, Brooklyn
Louisiana State University
Louisiana State University Opelousas Honors College
Louisiana Tech University
Louisiana Tech University Honors Program
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola University of New Orleans
Marymount Manhattan College
McNeese State University
Millapsa College
Mississippi College
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State University Shackouls Honors College
New York University
Nicholls State University
North Carolina State University
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
Ohio State University
Ohio State University Honors College
Old Dominion University
Oregon State University
Panola College
Pennsylvania State University
Pepperdine University
Providence College
Purdue University
Rhodes College
Rice University
River Parishes Community College
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rollins College
Salem College
Sanford College
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Trinity University
Tulane University
Tulane University Honors Program
United States Coast Guard Academy
United States Merchant Marine Academy
University of Alabama
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Alabama Honors College
University of Alabama Randall Research Scholars Program
University of Arizona
University of Arkansas
University of Central Florida
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University of Louisiana at Lafayette
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University of San Francisco
University of San Francisco Honors College
University of South Alabama
University of South Carolina
University of Southern California
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Tennessee
University of Tennessee Chancellor’s Honors Program
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
University of Texas at Austin
University of Vermont
University of Virginia
University of Washington
West Texas A&M University
Wichita State University

$19.8 million in scholarship money was offered to 68.46 percent of the Class of 2019 (does not include TOPS information. TOPS data is not yet available for the Class of 2019).

CONGRATULATIONS TO
the class of 2019.
St. Joseph’s Academy 2019 graduates

St. Joseph’s Academy, Baton Rouge, held its graduation, Sunday, May 19 at the Raising Cane’s River Center Arena.

Named as co-valedictorians were Madison McCall Boudreaux, Anna Claire LeJeune and Emily Anne Martin.

Also included in the Class of 2019 are Lily Ann Abadie, Cameron Elizabeth Accardo, Madeleine Grace Acosta, Julia Kelly Akin, Claire Marie Alfonso, Anna Katherine Andrishok, Lauren Diane Areeneaux, Bailey Phoebe Ardoin, Katherine Grace Ashy, Madeline Nicole Ballew, Alexis Marie Barbay, Claire Elizabeth Barbera, Ella Elizabeth Barhorst, Lauren Ashleigh Baront, Gabriella Maria Barrenechee, Anne Lewis Barton, Claire Elizabeth Bass, Phoenix Alyssa Beaureaus, Alexandra Ann Belanger, Ashian Louise Belanger, Brooke Elizabeth Bell, Logan Payton-Taylor Bell, Emma Elizabeth Benton, Kirby Elise Black, Abby Frances Blaize, Margaret Claire Blouin, Taylor Danielle Bloutin, Ella Grace Bollinger, Anna Grace Borne, Anna Elise Bowden, Karsyn McCall Bowman, Summer Marie Bowen, Adelaide Claire Bradford, Claire Elizabeth Branch, Callie Harper Braud, Tyssyn Minnis Brazier-Carter, Brooklyn Langdon Brock, Annabelle Catherine Broussard, Paige Catherine Brown, Rylie Caroline Brown, Addison Camille Bruce, Mackenzie Grace Bynog, Cecelia Katie Callicott, Sierra Nicole Campbell, Catherine Elizabeth Cangelosi, Olivia Catherine Carroll, Madison Claire Cefalu, Julia Rose Charleville, Delia Marie Chiasson, Olivia Paige Clark, Sydney Lynn Clebert, Mary Marguerite Cloutier, Rachael Noel Coates, Victoria Claire Collier, Catherine Claire Contini, Elizabeth Corinne Cook, Torrie Rayann Cook, Anna Reese Couhig, Catherine Marie Courville, Tori Ann Crockett, Cammie Marie D’Amico, Marie Claire Dalmau, Emma Catherine Daniel, Danielle Elizabeth DePierrt, Emily Marie DeSoto, Olivia Jane Devall, Kathryn Grace Devillier, Raeann Lee Didier, Amelia Atrtry Dittmar, Anne-Marie Dizor, Caroline Catharine Dolese, Claire Louise Edwards, Rachel Marie Edwards, Mary Helen Eiserloh, Emma Kathryn Englade, SEE SJA PAGE 8B

CONGRATULATIONS 2019 GRADUATES

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St. John High School graduation

On Thursday, May 9, St. John the Evangelist Church in Plaquemine hosted the 2019 graduation of St. John High School.

Named as valedictorian was Madison Frances Nicolosi and salutatorian was Shelby Angelle Cheramie.


St. John High School graduation
Catholic High School
2019 graduates

Catholic High School, Baton Rouge, held its 2019 commencement exercises Sunday, May 18 at the Raising Canes River Center Arena.

Kyle Anthony Becnel was named valedictorian and Edward Grant Alumbaugh was named salutatorian.

St. Michael the Archangel High School Class of 2019

St. Michael the Archangel High School graduated 138 students May 17 at the Raising Cane’s River Center Arena.

Named as valedictorians were Anna Sarah Crifasi and Judy Ngan Vu. Named as salutatorian was Beau William Saucier.

Others included in the Class of 2019 included Eunice Mercry Aggrey, Jacob McKenzie Akers, Maxwell James Alfred, Peyton Matthew Anderson, Gabrielle Marie Austin, Olivia Mae Barrilleaux, Presley Isabelle Theresa Beaugh, Emily Elizabeth Bergeron, Danielle Lee Blanchard, Emma Aline Blanchard, Devin Daniel Boudreaux, Leah Marie Bourg, Alysee Renee Bourgeois, Madeline Claire Breaux, Jeffrey Dale Brignac, Dylan Pax Brit, Caroline Marie Brown, Brandon Daniel Bull, Adam Ellis Callegan, Gabrielle Elizabeth Carlos, Brennen Harley Carr, David Randall Cashio, Charles Hunter Casma Jr., Paige Emily Cassano, Catherine Elizabeth Castille, Jordan Christopher Cazeaux, Antonio Cazayoux, and Steven Chronister.

The Raising Cane’s River Center University’s commencement exercises were conferred masters, bachelors or associate degrees during the university’s commencement exercises on Saturday, May 18 at the Raising Cane’s River Center Arena.

Master of Health Administration
Chelsea Fields Carter

Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies
Justin Allen, Madeline Beard, Lauren Billingsley, Alexandria Bloise, Elizabeth Brignac, Elena Carella, Kaiya Carr, Dylan Pax Brit, Caroline Marie Brown, Brandon Daniel Bull, Adam Ellis Callegan, Gabrielle Elizabeth Carlos, Brennen Harley Carr, David Randall Cashio, Charles Hunter Casma Jr., Paige Emily Cassano, Catherine Elizabeth Castille, Jordan Christopher Cazeaux, Antonio Cazayoux, and Steven Chronister.

Bachelor of Science in Biology
Jason Lowell, Magan Adams, Jozsef Bermudez, Amanda Gibson, Emily Loop, Brett Ross, Bailey Sanzicier

Bachelor of Science in Clinical Laboratory Science
Payton Mitchell

Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences
Delainy Arnold, Viktoria Leigh

Bachelor of Science in Health Service Administration
LaBrelah Hutchins, Gabrielle Albarado, Lindsey Falcon

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Erin Felton, Gvenetta Townsend, Trina Bob, Michelle Byrne, Steven Chronister, Robin Easley, Julie Everhart, Dawn Hamilton, Jenna Harris, Elizabeth Harris, Victoria Holt, Amanda Larkins, Sharon Lind, Mandy McCarrol, Yomaira Mesquita, Thay Scallions, Demeka Underwood, Leah Zermeno-Corona, Keisha Rochester, William Brignac, Alexandria Bates, Rebecca Baygents, Jordanna Bourgeois, Leíghanna Buie, Katie Cazayoux, Savannah

Approximately 170 Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University students were conferred masters, bachelors or associate degrees during the university’s commencement exercises on Saturday, May 18 at the Raising Cane’s River Center Arena.

Master of Health Administration
Chelsea Fields Carter

Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies
Justin Allen, Madeline Beard, Lauren Billingsley, Alexandria Bloise, Elizabeth Brignac, Elena Carella, Kaiya Carr, Dylan Pax Brit, Caroline Marie Brown, Brandon Daniel Bull, Adam Ellis Callegan, Gabrielle Elizabeth Carlos, Brennen Harley Carr, David Randall Cashio, Charles Hunter Casma Jr., Paige Emily Cassano, Catherine Elizabeth Castille, Jordan Christopher Cazeaux, Antonio Cazayoux, and Steven Chronister.

Bachelor of Science in Biology
Jason Lowell, Magan Adams, Jozsef Bermudez, Amanda Gibson, Emily Loop, Brett Ross, Bailey Sanzicier

Bachelor of Science in Clinical Laboratory Science
Payton Mitchell

Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences
Delainy Arnold, Viktoria Leigh

Bachelor of Science in Health Service Administration
LaBrelah Hutchins, Gabrielle Albarado, Lindsey Falcon

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Erin Felton, Gvenetta Townsend, Trina Bob, Michelle Byrne, Steven Chronister, Robin Easley, Julie Everhart, Dawn Hamilton, Jenna Harris, Elizabeth Harris, Victoria Holt, Amanda Larkins, Sharon Lind, Mandy McCarrol, Yomaira Mesquita, Thay Scallions, Demeka Underwood, Leah Zermeno-Corona, Keisha Rochester, William Brignac, Alexandria Bates, Rebecca Baygents, Jordanna Bourgeois, Leíghanna Buie, Katie Cazayoux, Savannah

The graduating Class of 2019 at Ascension Catholic Diocesan Regional School had 48 members.

27 Honor Graduates
Anticipated TOPS Scholarship Awards – 71% of class
TOPS Award total – $754,067.07
Total Scholarship Monies Awarded to the Class of 2019
$1,091,552.07

FRANU spring grads

Bachelor of Science in Biology
Jason Lowell, Magan Adams, Jozsef Bermudez, Amanda Gibson, Emily Loop, Brett Ross, Bailey Sanzicier

Bachelor of Science in Clinical Laboratory Science
Payton Mitchell

Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences
Delainy Arnold, Viktoria Leigh

Bachelor of Science in Health Service Administration
LaBrelah Hutchins, Gabrielle Albarado, Lindsey Falcon

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Erin Felton, Gvenetta Townsend, Trina Bob, Michelle Byrne, Steven Chronister, Robin Easley, Julie Everhart, Dawn Hamilton, Jenna Harris, Elizabeth Harris, Victoria Holt, Amanda Larkins, Sharon Lind, Mandy McCarrol, Yomaira Mesquita, Thay Scallions, Demeka Underwood, Leah Zermeno-Corona, Keisha Rochester, William Brignac, Alexandria Bates, Rebecca Baygents, Jordanna Bourgeois, Leíghanna Buie, Katie Cazayoux, Savannah

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The Catholic Commentator

CLASS OF 2019

May 24, 2019

The Catholic Commentator 5B
Catholic High School of Pointe Coupee Class of 2019


Ascension Catholic Class of 2019 graduates

Ascension of Our Lord Church in Donaldsonville was the location for the 2019 gradu- ation of Ascension Catholic High School on Saturday, May 11. Twins Madison Anne Ze- ringue and Mason Anthony Zeringue were named valedictori-an and salutatorian respectively. Also in the Class of 2019 were Isabelle Cecile Abadie, Ethan Jo-seph Arceneaux, Jamar Dontrell Barber, Rodney Paul Blanchard, Dakota Michelle Bonadona, Ha- ley Claire Bouchereau, Armani Malynn Braud, Stephen Mark Breaux, John Michael Brous-sard, Alex Michael Cedotal, Al-den Jude Charlet, Nydia Maude Marie Cooper, Dillion Jay Davis, Brooke Alise Delatte, Janet Diaz, William Richard Dunn, Ashlyn Nicole Falcon, SEE CPC PAGE 7B

ST. MICHAEL HIGH SCHOOL

This year, our 138 St. Michael Graduates:

- Were accepted by 51 different colleges and universities
- Received 4.3 million in scholarship money (not including TOPS)
- Recognized 55 academically honored students
- Earned 119 college credits (LSU), saving $48,000 in tuition
- Volunteered over 5,700 service hours
- Signed 8 college athletes in 6 different sports

“As I think back now to the incredible high school memories I’ve gained, I know now that St. Michael has been more than a school to me, it’s been a home.” - Beau Saucier, SMHS 2019 Salutatorian

Congratulations, Class of 2019! You make us Warrior Proud!

17521 Monitor Ave. • Baton Rouge, LA • 225• 753• 9782 • www.smhsbr.org
St. Thomas Aquinas 2019 grads

Kashish Wadhwa  
Valedictorian

Rachel Camille White  
Salutatorian

St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School, Hammond, held its annual graduation ceremony Thursday, May 16 at Holy Ghost Church also in Hammond.

Graduating as valedictorian was Kashish Wadhwa. And salutatorian was Rachel Camille White.

Also graduating with the Class of 2019 were Ashlyn Elise Alack, Katie Michelle Amos, Joshua Blaine Archote, Brock Patrick Barringer, Drake Alan Bartels, Abigail Rose Bates, Brynleigh Madalyn Berthelot, Lauren Michele Bittola, Marley Claire Bohning, Rachael Marie Breaux, Blake Daren Vandegrift Brewer, Parker Timothy Costanza, Ryan Thomas Dowsey, Andrew Keith Dawson, Justin Michael Deliberto, John Ross Donnes, Baylee Elizabeth Falcon, Brandon Thomas Falcon, Bailey Nicole Fugarino, Kyler Mikal Gagliano, Zachary Lee Gore, Caleb Matthew Governaile, Tristan Lawrence Gukotta, Peebles, Paige Pizzo, Andrea Ramirez, Brittny Ray, Bria Rivet, Emily Roth, Hala Salamah, Emily Salles, Alexis Sembera, Laurel Smith, Kylie Smith, Christina St. Pierre, Alison Torregrossa, Tori Whaley, Kalli White, Jessica Winfrey, Robert Wingert

Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy

Tammy Brown, Amber Darbome, Stanesha Dimes, Angela Jones, Hannah Kimball, Michelle Moll, LaRiene Orillon, Taylor Weaver, Rondella Winchester

Associate of Science in Physical Therapist Assistant


Associate of Science in Radiologic Technology


Graduate list is subject to change. List provided is accurate as of May 15.

CPC ▼

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$1.6 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS

84% OF GRADUATES ELIGIBLE FOR TOPS

288 DUAL ENROLLMENT COLLEGE CREDIT HOURS EARNED

College acceptances to Baton Rouge Community College, Belhaven University, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, LaGrange College, Louisiana State University, Louisiana Tech University, McNeese State University, Millsaps College, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, Queens University of Charlotte, Remington College, River Parish Community College, Samford University, Spring Hill College, University of Louisiana - Lafayette, University of Louisiana - Monroe, University of New Orleans, University of Southern Mississippi. Military enlistment in the United States Navy.

CONGRATULATIONS EAGLES!

www.stjohnschool.org
CLASS OF 2019

- Offered Admission to 114 colleges and universities across the country
- Earned $23,291,213 (excluding TOPS) in scholarship offers
- Accumulated more than 23,480 hours of community service
- Averaged 26.4 on the ACT with 100 percent of class taking the test

*Information as of May 14, 2019