**Final Steps**

**Transitional deacons ordained**

*By Debbie Shelley*

The Catholic Commentator

St. Joseph Cathedral was dark and quiet, yet packed early with family and friends who prayed for Deacon Danny Roussel and Deacon Mathew Dunn before Bishop Michael G. Duca ordained them transitional deacons to the Diocese of Baton Rouge during a Mass June 8. Once the lights came on and the processional hymn “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” signaled the start of Mass, the congregation’s internal prayers combusted into robust expressions of joy as the deacons started their final year of preparation before being ordained priests next year.

Joining Deacon Roussel and Deacon Dunn and Bishop Duca at the altar were Bishop Emeritus Robert W. Muench, priests and deacons and seminarians.

After the introductory rites and liturgy of the word, Deacon David Dawson called the candidates, who were seated with their families, forward. Father Andrew Merrick, director of vocations, and Lisette Borné, associate director of vocations and seminarians, testified to their readiness for ordination. As Bishop Duca chose the candidates for the order of the diaconate, those present expressed their assent.

**Faith ebbs anxiety during flood threat**

*By Richard Meek*

The Catholic Commentator

Unusually violent spring thunderstorms have pushed water into homes and even some churches in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, as well as rekindling memories of the August 2016 flooding. But as many residents gazed up to the sky hoping to find clearing skies, eyes in the northwest corner of the diocese were focused on the water level in the Morganza Spillway, knowing that an entire crop could be washed away with the opening of the spillway’s flood gates. Confronted with the unknown, even as seepage from the river saturated lawns to the point where lawn mowers are unable to navigate the soaked grass, residents have turned to their Catholic faith for relief, understanding prayer is far more powerful than any sandbag.

“This is when you really become a Catholic,” said George Lecour, sitting in St. Vincent de Paul Chapel in Innis after a recent Sunday morning Mass. “You pray. You have to resolve yourself of all of the work you have done, everything you depend on could be taken away from you if they open the gates.”

“Thank God you have faith,” added Lecour, who has already lost 3,000 acres of bean and cotton crops to the floodwaters and another 3,000 could be threatened. “You have to remember the real things in life, what’s life all about?”

Mike Dunham, who has already lost more than 300 acres of farmland, says “there really is nothing else to do” but to pray.

“You still have your life,” he said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has scheduled and postponed the opening of the spillway, which has only been opened twice in its history, three times in the past month. In early June, the Corps announced that the Morganza Spillway could be opened to prevent damages caused by higher water levels in the Mississippi River.
A vintage photo of St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge shows doors on the church pews. This photo was taken before 1920. Photo provided by Archives Department of the Diocese of Baton Rouge

Have a seat!

If you’re running a little late for Sunday Mass, you might also run the risk of not finding a seat, especially if it’s Easter Mass or Christmas Eve Vigil Mass. But, we’re the fortunate ones because seats, or church pews, are available to sit while worshipers in the past stood during the entire celebration of Mass.

In the Middle Ages, the pulpit in Catholic churches was constructed in the middle of the church and there was quite a bit of movement during the Mass. People had to walk over to the pulpit in order to hear the priest’s short homily. The entire Mass lasted a mere quarter of an hour.

So what changed? The Protestant Reformation and longer sermons, according to the website aletheia.org, which states, “The interpretation of the Bible by the local pastor was a chief focus of Protestant liturgies and led to long discourses at the pulpit.”

Thus, people needed a place to sit and church pews began to show up in worship services; however, because they were expensive, individuals or families would “purchase pews and guard them with their lives,” according to aletheia.org. In order to keep others from using their personal pews, people built pew boxes, designed with doors that could be locked up. Eventually, churches began to pay for the pews but did depend on the additional income from parishioners renting them.

The practice continued from England to the United States and was adopted by the Catholic Church as a type of fundraiser. In some of the oldest Catholic churches in Louisiana, you can still find the small doors that once protected the pews for their renters or the old metal hasps to hold locks still attached to the sides of ancient pews.

God’s shining light

By Dina Dow

This the truth each Christian learns, Bread into his flesh he turns, To his precious blood the wine ... (Excerpt Sequence Lauda Sion)

As the sun shines brightly in these summer months, so too does the son of man shine his love upon our lives. We liturgically conclude the month of June celebrating the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (aka Corpus Christi) and the return to Ordinary Time, the 13th Sunday. These weeks draw us nearer to God as we recall unity, transformation and freedom in Christ.

Unity with Jesus

The final accent of the Easter season is the source and summit of faith: the Eucharist. The reading from Genesis 14:18-20 explains a sacrifice of bread and wine offered by a king, who is also a priest of “God Most High” in gratitude to Abram and glory to God for victory over enemies. During the Last Supper Jesus “gave the Twelve the priestly talk of celebrating, in the bread and the wine, the sacrament of His Body and Blood until He comes again. The paschal lamb and all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant are replaced by the gift of his body and his blood, the gift of himself. The new worship was based on the fact that, in the first place, God makes a gift to us, and filled with this gift, we become his” (Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at Chrism Mass, April 12, 2006).

St. Paul quotes Jesus’ words, “This is my body for you. This is my blood for you. DO THIS in remembrance of me” (1 Cor 11:23-26). Jesus knew the cross would soon follow. Each time we participate in the Eucharist, we proclaim Jesus’ death and resurrection. Why is this so important? Because by his holy cross, he has redeemed the world. Jesus took the entirety of our sins and made a sacrificial offering of himself to God the father, laying down his life, to rescue us from the captivity of sin. He gave us freedom by his mercy and love. He left us the Eucharist, the real presence, body, blood, soul and divinity to unite us with the father. “All Jesus did on earth, from conception to the cross, was a single act of love” (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, September 25, 2005). The sacrifice of the Eucharist is the same sacrifice made on the cross. The crucifixion scene in the movie “The Passion of the Christ” makes this clear. Thus, as we participate in the Eucharist, we are not only united to Jesus, we are united to one another.

We are changed

The Eucharist changes us. Grace flows from the Eucharist, and thus, increases our love of God and neighbor. We receive spiritual strengthening which helps prevent future sins. We become more aware of others who are suffering. We receive a foretaste of eternal life in heaven since nothing can keep us alive forever except God. Pope Benedict writes, “Let us ask that we never fall away from communion with his body, with Christ himself, that we do not fall away from the Eucharistic mystery. Let us ask that he never let go of our hands” (Holy Chrism Mass, April 13, 2006).

Follow me

Jesus directly tells each of us, as his disciples, to follow him. Remember the childhood game “Follow the Leader,” where one player is the “leader” and the other players literally walk the same steps of said “leader.” It could get interesting depending on the leader. Which leads to two questions, “Who am I following?” “Who is my leader?” If it is someone other than Jesus, then watch your step. Our mission is to follow Jesus, who reveals himself superabundantly in sacred Scripture (Bible), sacred tradition (Magisterium) and by the grace of the sacraments, most substantially in the Eucharist. This is our first priority, to follow Jesus. All else is secondary.

Let freedom ring

As we follow Jesus, remember the freedom in discipleship. St. Paul reminds us, “For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters. But, do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one commandment, to love your neighbor as yourself. But if you go on biting and devouring one another, beware that you become servants of evil.” (Gal 5:13-15). “Christian liberty is not a license to indulge in sin and selfishness. Rather, we are free to mature in grace and become the saints..."
A gift inspired by the Spirit

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Renovations on the home of Anthony Mumphrey completed by volunteers from St. George Church in Baton Rouge unpacked like a gift exchange.

Mumphrey received the gift of being touched by the church community as its members and ministries pulled together to complete the renovation, and St. George received the spiritual gift of learning that “life is good” no matter one’s circumstances.

“The most people living in St. George Parish recovered from the 2016 flood, Anthony’s home still needed work in the bathroom, kitchen and on his central heat and air conditioning system,” said Kristel Neupert, social responsibility coordinator at St. George.

“After the flood, contractors were paid to help with his cabinets and install his new AC unit but they never finished the job and left Anthony with jobs half done,” said Neupert.

“Thankfully Wanda (Mumphrey’s caregiver and 15-year friend) called St. George asking if there were any resources to help him.”

Neupert and Bryan Theriot, St. George’s Haiti link for Humanity organizer, met with Anthony and Wanda and assessed the home’s needs.

Theriot and Neupert were impressed with Mumphrey’s positive outlook.

“I think he’s taken what life and health have dealt him and he’s adapted very well,” said Theriot. “We should all adopt his attitude.”

While determining how much assistance the church would be able to provide Mumphrey, Neupert talked to St. George parishioner J.P. Accardo that same week about the Lion’s Club eye glass and hearing aide recycling program and other service projects.

As the two talked, Accardo, also a member of the St. George’s Knights of Columbus Council #4030, said that the council wanted to help with more of the parish’s needs.

After hearing Mumphrey’s story, the KCs donated $10,000 to help repair the home. The council also donated another $1,000 to buy an oven and stove with the controls at a level where Mumphrey can operate them.

“I found out (as a youth) Mumphrey had participated in a Lion’s Club camp near Leesville for children with special needs when he was young,” said Accardo. “And now we had a privilege to help him through St. George and its Knights of Columbus.”

St. George parishioner and general contractor John Blake said the work on the home included modifications. There are wheelchair accessible cabinets, countertop and table.

“With somebody in his circumstances it’s really hard for them to get things done – the everyday stuff. So we were taking the worry off his back,” said Blake. “It was gratifying seeing him comfortable.”

Neupert and those involved said even as they served Mumphrey in a physical way, he served them in spiritual ways.

“He (Mumphrey) said ‘Life is good.’ And that’s what really made me think you know how happy he was about his life … having cerebral palsy, being in a wheelchair his entire life and how he enjoys his life and that life is good,” said Neupert.

This past January she attended March for Life in Washington D.C., which was themed, “Life is Good.” With details being worked out for the repairs on Mumphrey’s home at that time, it inspired her and others to celebrate every life.

“A disability can bring challenges, and difficult days, but it can also give some of the gifts. The gifts of patience, humility, determination and strength; learning how to appreciate the small things in life,” said Neupert.

“With one in five people in the United States having a disability, it’s important to remember that every life is valuable, every life is created in the image of God, and every life has a right to life.”

Neupert and others working on the project said they were gratified to see the various people and ministries of St. George coming together.

“Our call for service from the Lord is very clear when he bent down to wash the feet of his disciples and asked us to do the same,” said Father Paul Gros, parochial vicar at St. George, who joined the staff in painting and other tasks. “And as he said in Matthew 25: ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ It’s serving him and others as Mother Teresa would say, ‘quenching the thirst of others with our love and service.’”

HOSPICE IS NOT ABOUT GIVING UP ... IT’S ABOUT TAKING CONTROL

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

NOTRE DAME HOSPICE
A Catholic Healthcare Ministry
SERVING PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS

www.NotreDameHospice-NO.org • (225) 243-7358

Notre Dame Hospice does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability or age in admission, treatment, ability to pay, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.

J & W Roofing

• Residential and Commercial
• New Shingle Roof,
  Medal Roof, Flat Roof
• Free Estimate
• All Roofs and Leak Repair
• Emergency Repairs
• Military & Senior Citizen Discounts
• Licensed & Insured
(225) 205-9537
U.S. bishops take action to respond to church abuse crisis

BALTIMORE (CNS) – During the June 11-13 spring assembly of the U.S. bishops in Baltimore, it was clear the bishops had to respond to the sexual abuse crisis in the church and on the last day of their gathering they approved a series of procedures to begin this process.

On June 13, they voted to implement the document “Vos Estis Lux Mundi” (“You are the light of the world”), issued by Pope Francis in May to help the Catholic Church safeguard its members from abuse and hold its leaders accountable.

The bishops also approved the document “Acknowledging Our Episcopal Commitments” and promised to hold themselves accountable to the commitments of the charter, including a zero-tolerance policy for abuse. The document says any codes of conduct in their respective dioceses regarding clergy apply to bishops as well.

They voted in favor of the item “protocol regarding available nonpenal restrictions on bishops,” which outlines what canonical options are available to bishops when a retired bishop resigns or is removed “due to sexual misconduct with adults or grave negligence of office, or where subsequent to his resignation he was found to have so acted or failed to act.”

Their first action was a vote June 12 to authorize the implementation of a third-party system that would allow people to make confidential reports of abuse complaints against bishops through a toll-free telephone number and online. The system, which would be operated by an outside vendor contracted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, should be in place no later than May 31, 2020.

During the first day of the assembly, several speakers discussed the challenge ahead and the need for the bishops to be both transparent and reliant upon lay leadership. The bishops also examined their plans to vote on procedures and policies in response to the abuse crisis, including some they had put aside during their fall general assembly in November at the Vatican’s request.

The bishops’ postponement of voting on these procedures was addressed from the meeting’s onset June 11 in a message from Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican’s nuncio to the United States.

He noted that there were “some expressions of ‘dissent’” by some U.S. bishops at the previous assembly about postponing votes on items related to the reemergent clergy sexual abuse crisis, but he also stressed that “unity prevails over conflict.”

“Working together provides us with the opportunity to speak and to listen,” said the message from Archbishop Pierre, read by Msgr. Walter Erbì, charge d’affaires at the Vatican’s nunciature in Washington. Archbishop Pierre was at the Vatican for a nuncio meeting.

Archbishop Pierre’s message said that despite the desire among U.S. bishops in November to act quickly to address new crises on clergy sex abuse, the postponement of the votes on the issue allowed the U.S. church to participate more fully at the Vatican’s February summit on the protection of minors.

“One of the reasons the Holy Father asked for a delay was that the whole church needed to walk together, to work in a synodal way,” Archbishop Pierre said, “with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to make the path forward clearer.”

Moving forward was certainly a theme of the assembly, echoed by National Review Board chairman Francesco Cesareo June 11, who called for a greater role for laity in investigating allegations of abuse or reaction to reports of abuse against bishops.

Cesareo also said National Review Board members recommend a thorough review of the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” and a revision in the audit process regarding diocesan implementation of the charter, which governs the church’s response to clergy abuse allegations.

“A strengthened audit would provide a means for improving your dioceses’ existing methods to protect and heal,” Cesareo said, “virtually all your dioceses, including those where problems came to light under the microscope of the media and attorney generals, have easily passed the audit for years, since the bar currently is so low. Now is the time to raise the bar on compliance to ensure the mistakes of the past are not repeated.”

Cesareo also recommended that the charter “should be revised immediately to explicitly include bishops and demand for greater accountability.”

“You have a great opportunity,” he said, “to lead by example and help show dioceses and episcopal conferences around the world not only how important it is for lay involvement to ensure greater accountability and transparency, but also how laity and the episcopacy can be co-responsible for the church’s well-being.”

Both the National Review Board and the National Advisory Council pressed the bishops to encourage Vatican officials to release documents regarding the investigation of misconduct by Theodore E. McCarrick, the former cardinal who was laicized earlier this year. The allegations against him were made public nearly a year ago on June 20, 2018.

The bishops also discussed the upcoming election, the crisis at the border and the issue of young adults leaving the church.

They were urged to do more to support the suffering of immigrant families, to be with them spiritually as pastors and to voice support for legal measures to help them.

“It’s so important that our words match our actions on this issue,” said Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, California, June 11 after a presentation by the working group on immigration issues for the USCCB.

Two bishop members of the group, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles and Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, gave an update of what the U.S. church is doing at the national level and in certain regions of the country on immigration issues.

Bishop Vasquez urged the group to “redouble our efforts to offer spiritual support and access to legal and social services to affected families,” saying it is “vital that they feel supported by the church during this time of uncertainty.”

Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, spoke about an upcoming presentation at the fall meeting on how to respond to the growing number of young people leaving the church.

He said getting the religiously unaffiliated, or “nones,” particularly young people, back to the Catholic Church, should be a top priority for the church, noting that 50% of Catholics age 30 and younger have left the church.

“Half the kids that we baptized and confirmed in the last 30 years are now ex-Catholics or unaffiliated,” he said, and “one out of six millennials in the U.S. is now a former Catholic.”

In anticipation of the 2020 presidential election, the U.S. bishops’ quadrennial document that provides guidance to voters on Catholic social teaching won’t change, but it will be supplemented by a brief letter and four 90-second videos that reflect the teaching of Pope Francis, the bishops were told.

A small group of no more than 10 protestors stood in largely silent protest June 11 outside the hotel where the meeting was taking place. One of the group’s demands was that the bishops report abuse claims first to law enforcement.

“We don’t think the church can police themselves,” said Becky Ianni, director of Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests for the Washington area.

On the meeting’s final day, the bishops also approved wording to keep treatment of the death penalty in the U.S. Catechism for Adults in line with the revised universal catechism.
Spirituality center ‘concluding but ministry continues’

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

After more than three decades, the St. Joseph Spirituality Center located on the campus of St. Joseph’s Academy is shuttering its Baton Rouge location June 30, or as outgoing executive director Dianne Hanley said, the center “is concluding but the ministry is continuing.”

Spiritual direction, which has become the greater focus of the center during the past several years, will be administered through churches and will include not only the four remaining lay spiritual directors from St. Joseph but spiritual directors scattered throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

“The St. Joseph spiritual directors will also do retreats, so all of the work of (the spiritual center) continues just without the administrative work,” Hanley said.

She said the sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph initially began succession plans for the center, which opened in 1984, five years ago when Sister Cynthia Sabatier CSJ elected to step down as executive director. Hanley said different models were discussed, one of which was closing the center, but a decision was made to hire an executive director, albeit on a part-time basis.

“So they took me on and it’s been wonderful,” said Hanley.

She explained the focus of the spirituality center has more recently evolved into spiritual direction because day retreats and Bible study groups, which formed the foundation of the center’s origin, are increasingly being held at the parish levels.

In June 2018 Hanley informed the sisters of her decision to leave the center, and shortly after the sisters made the decision to effectively close down the center. The sisters asked Hanley to remain another year to direct the transition.

“One of the charisms (of the Congregation of St. Joseph) is train people to do what they need to do and then (move on) to another ministry,” Hanley said. “As (the sisters) looked around, the spiritual directors were lay, and their hope was the parishes, like they did with Bible study groups and retreats, would start recognizing this as something they want in their parishes.”

The center arose from a desire of several women who were looking for a place to deepen their spirituality and attend Bible studies and retreats. Sister Lydia Champagne CSJ agreed and the small group began meeting in Sister Lydia’s house.

But when a cottage became available on the SJA campus, a decision was made to move the center to its current location.

Hanley said that during her interview process after Sister Cynthia retired, she mentioned her involvement in justice work and admitted she did not want to do anything that would “scandalize” the church or the sisters. She said the sisters responded that it was because of her justice work that she was being hired.

“When you think of (the Congregation of St. Joseph), they really are justice minded. That’s part of their charism is to change unjust systems, and work on ecology and the earth.”

Dianne Hanley
St. Joseph Spirituality Center outgoing executive director

“...that’s what this is,” she said. “It’s a place for people to join in that kind of reflection.”

Hanley said that although the spirituality center is closing the website will be available with information on how those seeking spiritual direction are able to contact the center’s four lay spiritual directors.

Hanley said his spirituality center’s website will be up for a period of time after June 30 with information on how to get in touch with the center’s spiritual director. For more information, visit stjocenter.org.

GOSPEL ▼
From page 2

we are called to be” (Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, NSV, 2nd Edition. Ignatius Press, 2010).

Freedom, as truth, comes with responsibility. We are to live our freedom responsibly within the truths given by God, revealed by Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit. Paragraph 1733 of the Catechism explains, “The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to “the slavery of sin.” Which brings us full circle back to the necessity of faith in Christ nourished by the Eucharist.

May we, firmly rooted in the Eucharist, freely follow Jesus on our joyful path to eternity as we courageously witness the truth of the Gospel to all. Amen.

Don and Carl of Mr. D’s say don’t wait for disaster to strike. Tree removal is a highly technical, yet a delicate task that requires qualified professionals. Call on us BEFORE the HURRICANE SEASON and we will give you a FREE quote on any tree removal or trimming.
Mr. D’s also offers DEEP ROOT FERTILIZATION.

Call Today!
225-292-6756

Mr. D’s Tree Service
Don and Carl say THANKS to their customers in the Baton Rouge area for over 40 years of service! Licensed and fully insured.

NOW IS THE TIME
Divorce as grave injustice/ More on crying babies

Q I read your recent answer concerning divorced Catholics and their standing in the church. You and others fail to remind Catholics that the Catechism (No. 2384-85) calls divorce a grave injustice to the abandoned spouse and the children and also introduces disorder into society.

How can you (and, it seems, most spokesmen) say that someone who inflicted this can still receive Communion? In order to be forgiven in the church clearly taught as Christ did 2,000 years ago when speaking to the Pharisees (suburban Cleveland) “What God has joined, no man may sever.”

A In the column to which the reader refers, I was asked whether a divorced person, never remarried, may serve as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion in the Catholic Church. I responded that he or she can, and is encouraged to, participate in all aspects of parish life, including as a minister of holy Communion.

I mentioned that sometimes it can happen that a person winds up in a divorce through “little or no fault of their own.” I stand by that answer because it is the solid and consistent teaching of the church. But I run the reader’s question because it makes the valid point that divorce can bring considerable pain to families and should be avoided, using every opportunity for counseling, if at all possible.

Truly, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church points out, children can be “traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them” (No. 2385). The view of the Catholic Church on the permanence of marriage, besides having been taught by Christ, represents wise social policy.

Q A follow-up question on the “crying babies” issue: I have ruined Sundays for many of my fellow parishioners. My children were very fussy during Mass and always at their worst. They would scream and wail, and there is not a “cry room” in our church.

I would go to the gathering area and stand there (there’s no place to sit) feeling more alone than ever for the entire Mass. I felt like such a failure as a parent and as a Catholic. I had postpartum depression, and this Sunday experience only served to deepen it.

I desperately searched the internet looking for permission to skip Mass and recover some semblance of mental health, but the only opinions I could find said that I should be able to make Mass work even with a struggling child.

I spent my Masses wondering why I should even continue to be Catholic. So my question is this: When is it acceptable for a parent to miss Mass to care for children who are healthy but who create turmoil in church? (Missouri)

A It seems to be that while you were going through postpartum depression, you could well have been excused from Mass while recovering especially if your attendance needed to be compromised by bringing very active young children.

Generally, though, I would counsel a mother to seek out ways to be faithful to Sunday Mass not only because it is a serious obligation for Catholics, but also because it provides important moments of respite and peace in the difficult job of raising children.

I know parents who attend separate weekend Masses while the other stays home with little ones; others seek out a parish with a “cry room” or even better with volunteers who offer babysitting during Mass. The Eucharist, after all, is a serious obligation for Catholics, but also a mother refers, I was asked whether a divorced person, never remarried, may serve as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion in the Catholic Church. I responded that he or she can, and is encouraged to, participate in all aspects of parish life, including as a minister of holy Communion.

I mentioned that sometimes it can happen that a person winds up in a divorce through “little or no fault of their own.” I stand by that answer because it is the solid and consistent teaching of the church. But I run the reader’s question because it makes the valid point that divorce can bring considerable pain to families and should be avoided, using every opportunity for counseling, if at all possible.

Truly, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church points out, children can be “traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them” (No. 2385). The view of the Catholic Church on the permanence of marriage, besides having been taught by Christ, represents wise social policy.

Q A follow-up question on the “crying babies” issue: I have ruined Sundays for many of my fellow parishioners. My children were very fussy during Mass and always at their worst. They would scream and wail, and there is not a “cry room” in our church.

I would go to the gathering area and stand there (there’s no place to sit) feeling more alone than ever for the entire Mass. I felt like such a failure as a parent and as a Catholic. I had postpartum depression, and this Sunday experience only served to deepen it.

I desperately searched the internet looking for permission to skip Mass and recover some semblance of mental health, but the only opinions I could find said that I should be able to make Mass work even with a struggling child.

I spent my Masses wondering why I should even continue to be Catholic. So my question is this: When is it acceptable for a parent to miss Mass to care for children who are healthy but who create turmoil in church? (Missouri)

A It seems to be that while you were going through postpartum depression, you could well have been excused from Mass while recovering especially if your attendance needed to be compromised by bringing very active young children.

Generally, though, I would counsel a mother to seek out ways to be faithful to Sunday Mass not only because it is a serious obligation for Catholics, but also since it provides important moments of respite and peace in the difficult job of raising children.

I know parents who attend separate weekend Masses while the other stays home with little ones; others seek out a parish with a “cry room” or even better with volunteers who offer babysitting during Mass. The Eucharist, after all, is the one way that Jesus said he wanted us to keep his memory alive, so I don’t think we should feel lightly dispensed.
Special to
The Catholic Commentator

“You have been called to a vocation beyond your own understanding, both as husbands and wives, and as deacons and deacons’ wives,” said Bishop Michael G. Duca as he shared his vision for the permanent diaconate with those participating in the recent diocesan diaconate convocation.

“The vision begins with offering yourselves and then accompanying people with the heart of Christ, the heart of a deacon. Be the first to love,” Bishop Duca urged, reminding the deacons they are public persons and must act as such. “Always be a deacon everywhere you go.”

The entire diaconate community, active and retired deacons, men currently in formation and their wives gathered at the St. Joseph Cathedral parish hall on June 1 for the inaugural assembly. The convocation opened with Mass in the cathedral celebrated by Bishop Duca and Father Jamin David, pastor of St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland Church in Albany and diocesan director of formation for the diaconate.

Following the bishop’s remarks, Father David provided an update on the diaconate formation program developed in cooperation with Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University and implemented in 2015. He revealed that 21 men currently in formation and their wives are participating in the program, with the first class of six scheduled for ordination in June 2020. Current deacons had completed their ordination in a program previously provided in partnership with Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College.

Deacon John Veron, diocesan director of ministry and life for the diaconate, together with associate directors Deacon Tommy Benoit and Deacon Tim Messenger, addressed practical implications and expectations related to the vision presented by the bishop. Standards for ministry were established to help deacons in their relationships with their pastors as well as their spiritual growth and continuing education.

Dr. David Whidden, associate professor of theology at Fran II, concluded the conversation with a discussion of the ongoing development of the diaconate post Vatican II. He recalled that deacons, appointed by the apostles to a ministry of service, were understood to occupy a special place in the Christian community from the very earliest days of the church. After the fifth century, however, there was a steady decline in the permanent diaconate, only as a transitional order that men received in preparation for ordination to priesthood.

The Council of Trent in the 16th century directed that the permanent diaconate should be restored, that directive was not carried into effect. When the Second Vatican Council again called for the reestablishment of the ministry of the permanent diaconate in 1963, St. Paul VI issued the Apostolic Letter “Sacrum diaconatus ordinem” in 1967 restoring and renewing the permanent diaconate.

Quoting St. John Paul II in his 1987 address to permanent deacons in Detroit, Whidden said, “The service of the deacon is the church’s service sacramentalized. By your ordination you are configured to Christ in his servant role. You are also meant to be living signs of the servant-hood of his church.”

Father David said 21 men are currently in the diaconate program, with the first class of six scheduled to be ordained in June 2020. The current program has been developed in coordination with Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University and was implemented in 2015.
Hurricane Mass celebrated

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

The 2018 hurricane season might have been a quiet one for Louisiana, and the faithful are once again offering their prayers for another quiet six months.

Even while preparing for the season that kicked off June 1, emergency responders took time out to prepare spiritually for what’s ahead to attend the annual Hurricane Mass, which was celebrated by Bishop Michael G. Duca on June 8 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge. The Mass was celebrated one day after a deadly flooding event in Baton Rouge.

During his homily, the bishop noted the difference in south Louisiana weather versus other areas of the country because of the proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. He also pointed out that because of regular weather reports, people can become comfortable in knowing what’s coming.

“I realized over the years that we get this kind of false sense of control when we have weathermen or weatherwomen telling us exactly what’s going to happen the next day. What’s going to happen tomorrow? We look and say, ‘OK, I know what’s going to happen tomorrow,’ as though we actually do know what’s going to happen,” stated Bishop Duca. “Of course sometimes like yesterday (June 7) they don’t quite get it exactly right. It was raining but I don’t think anyone predicted four or six or seven inches of rain coming down in a few hours. And you suddenly realize in these little moments that we’re not in control at all.

“We are good at observing but we are not really controlling things. We get a feeling of being in control but in the blink of an eye things can spin terribly out of control. When we feel like we’re in control we do not need God. God is far away. ‘Lord, I got this. Go take care of something else more important. I can handle this today.’ But when we’re faced with disaster, that blink of an eye when everything changes, we are brought down to our knees because quite frankly we are frozen. We’re in kind of a panic. We can’t move into the future. We can’t go back. We say, ‘Lord what am I going to do? Save me. Save me.’”

The bishop noted that “God does hear our prayers” but that Catholic theology holds two things in opposition: miracles and laws of creation.

“We believe he steps in at times and gives us another chance, gives us a turn at faith. We believe that and we pray for that,” said Bishop Duca. “At the same time we know that God has set in motion certain laws of creation and he seems to respect quite a lot. He’s kind of proud of his creation and he kind of respects it. And so sometimes things happen that we can honestly say maybe God does not intend in an evil sense, they just happen. And in those moments we have to realize that the miracle is not going to come from God, if we’re asking for restoration and salvation. It’s going to come from people’s hearts that have been turned to compassion, to action, to stand together - to pray for God’s help in times of storm and hurricane and tragedy. It’s a testimony that we come together with a kind of a first response within our hearts. We have a community of faith that will stand against difficulties not as one
Serra Club announces essay winners

Cassandra Boudreaux, a student of the Holy Family Homeschoolers Association, was announced as the Serra Club of Baton Rouge’s grand prize winner of its annual essay contest. Boudreaux was presented with a check for $250 and an inscribed plaque. The assigned topic was “Whispers From God.” Her essay was selected from essays sent in from Catholic diocesan schools and the Holy Family Homeschoolers Association.

Each school selected its top three essays to submit to the judging committee who then awarded first place plaques for the best essay from each school.

The best essays from each school were Malorie Denham, Ascension Catholic Elementary School in Donaldsonville; Anna LaGrone, Catholic Elementary School of Pointe Coupee in New Roads; Kendyl Edwards, Most Blessed Sacrament School in Baton Rouge; Elena Kelly, Our Lady of Mercy School in Baton Rouge; Katherine Winchester, St. Aloysius School in Baton Rouge; Jackson Whitlow, St. Alphonsus Liguori School in Greenwell Springs; Camille Coco, St. George School in Baton Rouge; Syndie Williams, St. Jean Vianney School in Baton Rouge; Amalie Dupont, St. John Elementary/Middle School in Plaquemine; Morgan Watkins, St. Joseph School in Ponchatoula; and, Audrey Soulier, St. Theresa School in Gonzales.

The Serra Club Essay Contest is held annually and is open to all Catholic schools and Catholic home schooled middle school students.
Deacon Roussel’s excitement shines through

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Deacon Danny Roussel settled into his new office at St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge barely able to contain his excitement.

For an hour, his smile lit up the room, his words gleefully anticipating his future, his effervescent personality shining through.

Away from the drudgery of academia at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Deacon Roussel was in the first days of learning how he will spend the rest of his life as a priest. He, along with Deacon Mathew Dunn, were ordained transitional deacons June 8 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge, and both are serving five months internships.

Deacon Roussel and Deacon Dunn are scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in May 2020.

“I’m very excited,” said Deacon Roussel, who will be shadowing St. Jean Vianney pastor Father Tom Ranzino. “This is a long time coming; it’s what we go to seminary for,” he added. “Formation seems very long but at other times it feels like it flew by.”

The final year of seminary life is split between spending time in a parish before returning to Notre Dame in October for what amounts to a compressed mini-semester. The spring semester is more traditional leading up to ordination.

But Deacon Roussel, who will have spent all six years of seminary formation at Notre Dame, acknowledged the next few months are important in his own vocational development.

“I hated school, and I still hate school,” he admitted with a sheepish grin. “That’s why I love being here and I’m looking so forward to being here because this is the ministry.”

And (Father Ranzino) has been an amazing mentor already. I really, really desired and prayed to have an experience with a (wonderful) mentor, another prayer God totally answered.”

Deacon Roussel, a native of Vacherie, began his internship sitting in on three days of planning meetings at St. Jean. He said those meetings, which set the calendars for the church and school from July 1 through June 30, 2020, offered a brief glimpse into what lies ahead.

“I had no clue that a church parish with an elementary school and a pre-school like this has all of this action going on,” said Deacon Roussel, a Vacherie native who spent 17 years working for a major soft drink producer before entering the seminary. “It’s awesome.

“When (Father Ranzino) invited me to these days I was like a little kid on the first day of school. I couldn’t wait to get here.”

His responsibilities will include preaching at assigned daily and weekend Masses, assisting with duties at the school and church and attending meetings. He has already accompanied Father Ranzino, who is also vicar general for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, on a visit to a parishioner who is ill and a couple of diocesan board meetings.

“But mostly I will be mirroring Father Ranzino in his role at St. Jean, in the church and school side and not so much the vicar general part,” he said.

Deacon Roussel, who is staying with Father Ranzino in the rectory, said serving in the parish is what is giving him the courage and determination to complete his academics. For he knows, once he has written his last paper, taken his final exam and been ordained, the reward will be starting his life as a priest. And for that day, when his longtime dream becomes reality, his excitement is contagious.

“You look at it and think this is going to be me one day,” he said of the next few months. “It’s that total excitement and joy that makes the drudgery of the classroom seem worth it.”

Deacon Roussel admitted he wants to spend his transitional deacon year being open to what the fall brings and to follow through on the formation program. Perhaps most importantly he wants to be open and to trust in God.

“This is real work, this is the good stuff,” Deacon Roussel said. “That’s what speaks to my heart.”
Deacon Dunn ‘nervous but ready’ for next step

By Bonny Van  
The Catholic Commentator

Deacon Mathew Dunn remembers vividly attending Saturday vigil Mass at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Gramercy with his grandparents and his grandmother making sure he could stand on the pew or the kneeler in order to see the priest. He was five-years-old at the time but Deacon Dunn connected with what was taking place at the altar.

“I didn’t know what a priest was back then but I could always kind of see myself in his shoes and doing what he was doing,” said Deacon Dunn, now a 24-year-old seminarian who was ordained a transitional deacon for the Diocese of Baton Rouge June 8 at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge.

As the years passed, Deacon Dunn, who grew up in French Settlement, admitted he “kind of fell away” from the idea of priesthood, until he became more active in his church during his teen years. At St. Joseph Church in French Settlement, Deacon Dunn was a member of the youth group, a lector and an extraordinary minister of holy Communion. Then, his path became a little clearer when he attended his first diocesan youth conference at the Catholic Life Center in Baton Rouge at the age of 14.

“There was a workshop for guys my age to go and meet seminarians of the diocese and they gave us a look into the day in the life of seminary,” recalled Deacon Dunn. “It was really the moment for me to see that seminarians were real people that they weren’t just, you know, you think of a monk in a dark hallway with candles praying all the time wearing robes and that type of thing. But it wasn’t that. It was seminarians, who were real people, who cut up and had a good time and made friends. And you know it was the first time the priesthood really appealed to me.”

After graduating from French Settlement High School, Deacon Dunn entered St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict. He graduated from St. Joseph in 2016 and is about to begin his fourth year at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans. His first assignment will be at St. Patrick Church in Baton Rouge where he will serve until October with pastor Father Michael Miceli and Deacon Peter Walsh.

“I think that these next five months are going to give me a gigantic window into my own strengths and weaknesses, and it’s really going to be a time of me developing my own identity as a member of the church as an ordained man, as Deacon Mathew,” he said. “And, I think that it’s just going to be a time for me to get used to that role and that title in my identity of being a deacon.”

Having prepared for this moment for the past seven years, Deacon Dunn said now that it’s here, “it’s surreal – I’m very excited.” Text messages of support and love from family and friends leading up to June 8 also contributed to the exhilarating atmosphere.

“I am a little nervous just because it’s such a big step in my life,” said Deacon Dunn. “I mean this is one of the most important milestones that will ever happen for me. And that’s kind of daunting in some sense when you realize the weight of what’s about to happen. But at the same time, this is something I was prepared for, in a sense, my whole life but especially that past seven years. I couldn’t be happier and really, I’m ready.”

Deacon James Little, left, embraces Deacon Mathew Dunn after assisting Deacon Dunn in being vested with a stole and dalmatic. Bishop Michael G. Duca ordained Deacon Dunn and Deacon Danny Roussel as transitional deacons for the Diocese of Baton Rouge on June 8. Photos by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator
Ponchatoula student earns Woman of Excellence award

By Bonny Van
The Catholic Commentator

What do you get when you cross a chef with an animal lover along with an actress, a singer, a gardener, a humanitarian, an artist, a crafter, an award-winning public speaker and an honor roll student? You get Gabriella Cieutat, the 2019 Young Woman of Excellence winner in Tangipahoa Civil Parish.

The 10-year-old, who attends St. Joseph School in Ponchatoula, was the standout nominee among a crowded field of 16 candidates ranging in age from 10 to 18.

“I was so excited because like whenever they finally got results ... I remember it,” recalled a grinning Cieutat. “We were at Wendy’s drive-through called a grinning Cieutat. “We results … I remember it,” re-

The Tangipahoa Civil Parish Library sponsors the annual contest during National Women’s History Month in March and recognizes young women who have made a difference in bettering the community. Cieutat was nominated by longtime family friend Tangipahoa Civil Parish Clerk of Court Gary Stanga. Stanga, a former member of the Ponchatoula City Council, served many years in public service alongside Cieutat’s maternal grandfather Julian Dufreche, when Dufreche was the mayor of Ponchatoula and again when Dufreche was the clerk of court. Dufreche passed away two years ago.

“Cieutat is a unique child,” laughed Stanga. “I’ve never seen a youngster that would get up in front of a crowd, whether it be at church or some kind of function or whatever, and she would talk or sing or whatever. And, she’s always been very outgoing. I know her grandfather’s heart would have been jumping out of his chest with pride.”

Through her involvement in the 4-H Club at St. Joseph, Cieutat has racked up a number of awards and ribbons. For the past two years, she won the state title for public speaking. This year, her presentation on food safety when cooking a turkey earned her the 2019 State 4-H Commodity Turkey Ambassador Division 1. And that’s no small potatoes considering she doesn’t really know how to cook a turkey.

No matter, she gets plenty of help in the kitchen thanks to her grandmothers. “I like to cook a lot of things but it depends on the (4-H) division,” explained Cieutat, who has won numerous ribbons for cookery. “I do all the categories but I really like the sugar and egg divisions because I can find everything in the sugar and egg (divisions) because baking is sugar.”

She put those skills to work on a special project for the 4-H Club service project that combined charity, schoolmates and her love for animals. The project, “Cause for Paws,” collected items and money for the Tangipahoa Civil Parish Animal Shelter and Summer’s Animal Rescue. SAR is a program set up by Denise Allen in honor of her daughter Summer Ranae Allen, an animal control officer who died in 2015. Allen is a co-worker of Cieutat’s mother, Strader.

“I want to get Ariel so bad so I’ve been practicing with my sister who’s also a very good singer, who likes to play on her piano,” said Cieutat.

Gabriella Cieutat, a student at St. Joseph School in Poncha-
toula, checks on the progress of the herbs she planted re-
cently. Gabriella was selected as the 2019 Young Woman of Excellence in a contest sponsored by the Tangipahoa Civil Parish Library. Photo by Bonny Van | The Catholic Commentator

So they set up a little fund where they get money for people who can’t afford all the adoption fees and the food,” said Cieutat. “They give them that stuff.”

With permission from the school, Cieutat distributed flyers announcing the fundraiser and offered cupcakes to the class that donated the most items or money.

“Well, we ended up having four winners,” said an enthusiastic Cieutat. “We got a lot of stuff, and we also gave $75 to SAR.”

With a wide variety of interests and energy, it’s easy to see how she can stand out in a crowd. Her fast-paced speech can take you from one interesting topic to a completely different one in one sentence. Fittingly, she has a pet Roborovski hamster, or robo hamster, which is considered the smallest and fastest of any hamster.

His name is Basil. “And the next one, if it’s a boy, I’m going to name it Oregano and the next one, if it’s girl, I’m going to name it Parsley,” she said quickly when asked about her pet.

Cieutat and her family, which includes her father Johnny, Strader and 15-year-old sister Helena, attend St. Joseph Church in Ponchatoula. According to her mother, Cieutat recognized St. Teresa of Calcutta and Anne Frank as being two women she respects and admires during her acceptance speech for her award.

“I’m very, very proud of her,” said Strader. “She’s following in my father’s footsteps. We’re like, ‘She’s the next politician in the family.’ She is so much like my dad. She loves to meet new people. She loves being in front of a crowd. She has a very good heart. Someone once told me, ‘You know, Gabriella always makes you feel so good.’"

For now Cieutat is very busy. She just planted oregano and basil seeds and hopes to use the herbs for cooking. She also creates tiny dollhouses out of used cardboard boxes and she is reading her assigned summer reading book for school. As for the future, the rising sixth-grader has her sights on the lead part in the school play, “The Little Mermaid.”

“I want to get Ariel so bad so I’ve been practicing with my sister who’s also a very good singer, who likes to play on her piano,” said Cieutat.

Whether you need a question answered, a problem solved, or a claim reported, my job is to make it happen. Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.

CALL ME TODAY.

State Farm, Home Office, Bloomington, IL

PO97193.1

Joe Skibinski, Agent
1953 Perkins Rd
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
Bus: 225-387-0201
www.joeskibinski.org

Sal’s Electric, Inc.
Licensed - Bonded - Insured
Commercial - Residential

Fax: 225.664.1701
Phone: 225.664.1787

Being there is why I’m here.

The Catholic Commentator

WORDS WITH CHRIST
June 21, 2019

Joe Skibinski, Agent
1953 Perkins Rd
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
Bus: 225-387-0201
www.joeskibinski.org

Sal’s Electric, Inc.
Licensed - Bonded - Insured
Commercial - Residential

Fax: 225.664.1701
Phone: 225.664.1787

Being there is why I’m here.

Whether you need a question answered, a problem solved, or a claim reported, my job is to make it happen. Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.

CALL ME TODAY.

State Farm, Home Office, Bloomington, IL

PO97193.1
The Back to School special section will be in the July 19 issue of The Catholic Commentator. Find out what will be happening in the Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools for the 2018-2019 school year.

Deadline is June 28!

To inquire about advertising your products and services to this specialized market or space reservation contact Wanda Koch at 225-387-0983 or email wkoch@diobr.org.
The high school romance film gets a radical makeover by director Olivia Wilde who upends the traditional boy-meets-girl love story, emptying a veritable Pandora’s box of teenage unmentionables onto the big screen. On the night before their high school graduation, two best friends (Beanie Feldstein and Kaitlyn Dever) decide to discover what they have missed out by being serious overachieving students. They go on an all-night bender, missing out by being serious overachieving students. They go on an all-night bender, and present a warning to their parents.

The messy plot of this grating sequel to 2014’s “Godzilla” centers on a divorced couple (Kyle Chandler and Vera Farmiga) and their teen daughter (Millie Bobby Brown) who get caught up in a worldwide rampage by out-sized monsters known as Titans. Human interest gets trampled underfoot as the lumbering creatures screech with rage and do battle with one another, courtesy of the special effects unit. While director and co-writer Michael Dougherty’s film is acceptable for most grown-ups, its weird attempt at an environmentalist theme comes across as added and the repeated assertion in its dialogue that the Titans were “the first gods” will irk believers. Pervasive stylized violence, some of it harsh, numerous uses of profanity and mild oaths, at least one rough and several crude terms, an obscene gesture. A-III; PG-13

Brightburn
Screen Gems
Messy, gory and numbing laughter that tries to meld the creation myth of the “Superman” saga with the demon-spawn story of “The Omen.” A boy (Jackson A. Dunn) on the cusp of adolescence, who has arrived in his Kansas town from somewhere in outer space, slowly discovers he has immense strength and a desire to kill, quickly terrorizing his neighbors, classmates and parents. Director David Yarovesky and screenwriters Brian Gunn and Mark Gunn have not provided an underlying psychological message, or an allegory about troubled adolescence. A warped sense of moral values, pervasive moral values, underage drinking, drug use, and pervasive profane and crude language. O; R

Godzilla: King of the Monsters
Warner Bros.
Though polished and generally appealing, this musical fantasy recounting the early life of rock star Elton John (Taron Egerton) deals with his homosexuality in a way that puts it at odds with scriptural values. Born to self-centered, perpetually quarreling parents (Bryce Dallas Howard and Steven Mackintosh), young Reginald Dwight (Matthew Illesley, later Kit Connor) has an unhappy childhood relieved only by the kindness of his grandmother (Gemma Jones) and his gift as a musical prodigy. Partnering with lyricist Bernie Taupin (Jamie Bell) and adopting his stage name, he gains fame with a smash debut at a Los Angeles nightclub. But bad professional and personal choices, principally involving his combined romantic and business ties to manager John Reid (Richard Madden), lead to a downward spiral of addiction. Upbeat renditions of John’s hits give director Dexter Fletcher’s film something of the feel of old Hollywood. Other scenes, by contrast, are all too contemporary in their portrayal and celebration of the singer-songwriter’s lifestyle. A romanticized view of homosexual relationships, strong sexual content, including semi-graphic aberrant activity, partially glimpsed full nudity and decadent sensuality, drug use, a scene of urination, much rough and crude language. O; R

Ma
Universal
There are more laughs than chills to be garnered from this horror tale in which the new girl in a small Ohio town (Diana Silvers) is befriended by a group of her fellow high school students (most prominently McKaley Miller and Corey Fogelmann) and together they begin partying at the home of an adult veterinary assistant (Octavia Spencer) who turns out to be a whack job. The campy fun of watching Spencer’s character come unhinged might compensate for the wild improbabilities by which director Tate Taylor’s overhyped film, penned by Scotty Landes, is beset. But the enjoyment is undercut by exploitative bloodletting and other problematic elements. Much gory violence, multiple gruesome images, strong sexual content, including aberrant behavior, full nudity and teen sensuality, benignly viewed drug use and underage drinking, about a half-dozen profanities, several milder oaths, pervasive rough and crude language, an obscene gesture. O; R

Dark Phoenix
Fox
Marvel Comics-based sci-fi adventure, set mostly in 1992, in which a member (Sophie Turner) of the X-Men team of mutants comes close to dying during a mission to save the crew of the space shuttle but instead emerges from the experience endowed with cosmic powers she cannot control. As she goes rogue, endangering the lives of her comrades (in particular Jennifer Lawrence), her plot causes tension within the group (led by James McAvoy). With a more relationship-driven story than many similar films, writer-director Simon Kinberg’s somber ensemble action picture, which also features Michael Fassbender, Nicholas Hoult and Jessica Chastain, elevates forgiveness and solidarity over the desire for revenge.

Well-catechized older teens as well as grown-ups will likely be able to cope with the script’s celebration of the substitute family to which the most prominent characters have chosen to belong. Pervasive combat violence with some gore, a few profanities and milder oaths, at least one rough term, a single crude expression. A-III; PG-13

Rocketman
Paramount
Amusing antics and a lively pace make this follow-up to the 2016 original, helmed by returning director Chris Renaud, an entertaining cartoon for kids. The most prominent of the three storylines involves a fretful terrier (voice of Patton Oswalt) who learns to be more courageous when his owners take him and his mutt sidekick (voice of Eric Stonestreet) on a visit to a relative’s farm and they befriend the fearless alpha canine (voice of Harrison Ford) who presides there. Back home in New York City, the Pomeranian (voice of Jenny Slate) who has set her cap for the terrier loses the favorite toy he entrusted to her keeping and must brave an apartment full of fearsome felines to retrieve it while an eccentric bunny (voice of Kevin Hart) and a good-hearted Shih Tzu (voice of Tiffany Haddish) plot to free a gentle tiger from its captivity in an abusive circus. Older children and their parents will find this a congenial adventure, cruelty to animals, much cartoonish violence, scenes of peril, a few scatological jokes, a couple of crass terms. A-II; PG
Sexual abuse policy in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

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

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

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

Issues relating to the Protection of Children and Young People

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

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

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

En Relación a la Protección de Niños y Gente Joven


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

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

Printing some 40,000 copies every other week for the Diocese of Baton Rouge

THE CATHOLIC
COMMENTATOR
SERVING THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE SINCE 1963

T HE CATHOLIC
COMMENTATOR
THECATHOLICCOMMENTATOR.ORG

Tree Care By...

Free Estimates

LeBlanc’s
TREE & STUMP REMOVAL, INC.
LICENSED ARBORIST

2920 Myrtle Ave. • Baton Rouge, LA 70806
225-383-7316

Fully Insured
I n the Book of Genesis we read of God creating the sun and the stars, the oceans and the land, the plants, fishes, birds, animals, and finally man and woman, who in some way bear a resemblance to him. “God created man in his own image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them” (Gn 1:27). God is infinite and beyond our human capacity to picture him, yet a mother looking upon her newborn can feel and see a miracle. God can be imagined as the eternal father of us all.

Through the prophets God promised to send a savior, and to Mary, his mother, the angel Gabriel announced, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the son of God” (Lk 1:35). St. John proclaims, “And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14). In Jesus we see God in human form, true God and true man. But, the Holy Spirit, the “Advocate” whom Jesus promised to send on Pentecost, the feast we recently celebrated, how do we picture him/her? Is it by chance that we sometimes refer to this person of the Trinity as the Holy Ghost? Is the Holy Spirit visible? Yes, I believe we can see the Spirit, but not in itself. As Jesus told Nicodemus, we do not see where the Spirit comes from or where it goes, but we do see its effect in others who are “born of the Spirit” (Jn 3:8). If we live the truth that we see in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, then the spirit of Jesus will be our light, and our works will be “clearly seen as done in God” (Jn 2:21). As one of St. Teresa of Calcutta nuns wrote, the appearance of this simple woman in the slums of Calcutta was a light shining in the darkness, a gift of hope and a proof of God’s love for the poorest of the poor in all of their suffering. It is this power within those who seek to fulfill Jesus’ command to love one another as he has loved us that we know as the Holy Spirit.

Belief in the gift of this Spirit given to all who believe in Jesus and follow him is evident in the teachings of St. Peter, St. Paul and those who first followed them as leaders of the early church. In the Office of Readings for the Tuesday of the Seventh Week of Easter we read the treatise on the Holy Spirit by St. Basil the Great (329-379), bishop in the same area of modern day Turkey to which St. Paul addressed his letters to the Colossians and Galatians. St. Basil wrote: “The titles given to the Holy Spirit must surely stir the soul of anyone who hears them, and make him realize that they speak of nothing less than the Supreme Being. Is he not called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, the steadfast Spirit, the guiding Spirit? But his principal and most personal title is the Holy Spirit … The Spirit is the source of holiness, a spiritual light and he offers his own light to every mind to help it in its search for truth. By nature the Spirit is beyond the reach of our mind, but we know him by his goodness … The Spirit raises our hearts to heaven, guides the steps of the weak, and brings to perfection those who are making progress.”

We have recently celebrated the feast of Pentecost when the “Advocate,” the Spirit of God promised by Jesus, descended on the apostles and all in Jerusalem who heard their message and believed it. The power of that Spirit was evident in the way that all affected by it became disciples and spread the message of Jesus Christ throughout the Roman Empire. This communication of the Spirit has continued and spread throughout our entire world. It continues today through Catholic missionaries, many of whom are laity, single, married, whole families who dedicate their lives to being living embodiments of that Spirit. It continues by parents’ decisions to give their children Catholic educations or at least religious instruction in parish schools of religion (formerly called CCD classes). We Catholics celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit in a sacramental way that involves our families. We baptize our children as infants, promising to introduce them to the same faith with which we were raised. At a critical time in their lives, when they become young men and women of high school age, we give them the opportunity to confirm that faith in the sacrament of confirmation. They have already made their First Communion and received the sacrament of reconciliation, all celebrations of the Spirit of God in their lives. It works, it is real, particularly if our children can see that Spirit’s influence in the lives of their parents. In the April 29 issue of America Magazine, there was an article entitled Prayer and the Press: A conversation with John Dickerson. Father James Martin SJ, one of America’s editors, interviewed Dickerson, a life long Catholic and the host of the TV show “CBS This Morning.” One of Father Martin’s questions was, “What have your children taught you about your faith?” I think that John Dickerson’s answer is a perfect example of how the Holy Spirit works in our lives.

“First of all,” Dickerson began, “I am glad they are asking questions about faith because it means they want to know. That is basically what my kids have done for me in a whole host of things. Why do you believe what you believe? Why do you treat people the way you do? Why should a person do the right thing when nobody is watching?”

“And I have tried to come at their questions in various ways. I have told them something like: "Even if you decided not to be religious, it turns out this is a great way to live your life. Even if you don’t sign up for the whole Catholicism thing, live gracefully, humbly, caring about other people. Just read the Beatitudes, kids, and then we’ll talk.”

“My faith orders my life. It helps me a lot. And I want to show my kids that because I want to give that gift to them. It was a gift that my parents, that my mother, in particular, gave me though God. So I want to give them that same gift.”

(God, in this instance, is what we call the Holy Spirit. He is our Advocate. Let us share that Spirit).

**FATHER CARVILLE is a retired priest in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and writes on current topics for The Catholic Commentator. He can be reached at johnnyecarville@gmail.com.**

---

**Letters to the Editor**

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

**Mission Statement**

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

---

**PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US**

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

**June 27**
- Rev. Thomas F. Clark SJ
- Dcn. Micheal J. (Shelley) Joseph
- Br. Dwight Kenney SC

**June 28**
- Rev. Paul D. Counce
- Sr. Therese Dinh ICM

**June 29**
- Rev. Randy M. Cuevas
- Dcn. Robert J. Kusch
- Br. Clifford King SC

**June 30**
- Rev. Gregory J. Daigle
- Dcn. Ronald D. LeGrange
- Sr. M. Dominique MC

**July 1**
- Rev. Peter Ai Dang
- Dcn. Albert Levy II
- Br. Noel Lemmon SC

**July 2**
- Rev. Jamin S. David
- Dcn. James A. Little
- Sr. M. Donald MC

**July 3**
- Rev. Al M. Davidson
- Dcn. Robert McDonner
- Br. Roger Le Moyne SC

**July 4**
- Rev. Christopher J. Decker
- Sr. June Engelbrecht OP

**July 5**
- Rev. Bradley A. Doyle
- Dcn. Larry J. Melanson
- Br. Malcolm Melcher SC

**July 6**
- Rev. Vincent J. Dufresne
- Dcn. Timothy Messenger Sr.
- Sr. Dianne Fanjuy CSJ

**July 7**
- Rev. Thomas P. Duhe
- Dcn. Francis M. Minor
- Br. Paul Montero SC

**July 8**
- Rev. Matthew C. Dupre
- Dcn. Gary Mooney
- Sr. Ileana Fernandez CSJ

**July 9**
- Rev. Reuben C. Dykes
- Dcn. James J. Morrissey
- Br. Marcus Turcotte SC

**July 10**
- Rev. Denis O. Bikwuga
- Dcn. Jodi A. Moscana
- Sr. Dulce Maris Flores HMSS
A common soldier dies without fear; Jesus died afraid. Iris Murdoch wrote those words which, I believe, help expose an over-simplistic notion we have of how faith reacts in the face of death. There’s a popular notion that believes that if we have strong faith we should not suffer any undue fear in the face of death, but rather face it with calm, peace, and even gratitude because we have nothing to fear from God or the afterlife. Christ has overcome death. Death sends us to heaven. So why be afraid?

This is, in fact, the case for many women and men, some with faith and some without it. Many people face death with very little fear. The biographies of the saints give ample testimony to this and many of us have stood at the deathbed of people who will never be canonized but who faced their death calm and unafraid.

So why was Jesus afraid? And it appears he was. Three of the Gospels describe Jesus as particularly distressed as he is dying: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

And Jesus, how much to the contrary: In the hours leading up to his death he felt deeply the betrayal of his disciples, sweat blood in agony, and just minutes before dying cried out in anguish as he felt himself abandoned. We know, of course, that his cry of abandonment wasn’t his final moment. After that moment of anguish and fear, he was able to hand his spirit over to his Father. In the end, there was calm; but, in the moments before, there was a time of awful anguish within which he felt himself abandoned by God.

If one does not consider the inner complexities of faith, the paradoxes it contains, it makes no sense that Jesus, sinless and faithful, should sweat blood and cry out in inner anguish as he faced his death. But real faith isn’t always what it looks like from the outside. Many persons, and often times particularly those who are the most faithful, have to undergo a trial that the mysteries call a dark night of the soul.

What’s a dark night of soul? It’s a God-given trial in life wherein we, much to our own surprise and anguish, can no longer imagine God’s existence or feel God in any affective way in our lives. In terms of inner feeling, this is felt as doubt, atheism. Try as we might, we can no longer imagine that God exists, much less that God loves us. However, as the mystics point out and as Jesus’ himself gives witness to, this isn’t a loss of faith but actually a deeper modality of faith itself.

Up to this point in our faith, we have been relating to God mainly through images and feelings. But our images and feelings about God are not God. So, at some point, for some people, though not for everybody, God takes away the images and the feelings and leaves us conceptually empty and affectively dry, stripped of all the images we have created about God. While in reality this is actually an overpowering light, it is felt as darkness, anguish, fear, and doubt.

And so we might expect that our journey towards death and our face-to-face encounter with God might also involve the breaking down of many of the ways we have always thought about and felt about God. And that will bring doubt, darkness, and fear in our lives.

Henri Nouwen gives a powerful testimony to this in speaking about his mother’s death. His mother had been a woman of deep faith and had each day prayed to Jesus: Let me live like you, and let me die like you. Knowing his mother’s radical faith, Nouwen expected that the scene around his deathbed would be serene and a paradigm of how faith meets death without fear. But his mother suffered deep anguish and fear before she died and that left Nouwen perplexed, until he came to see that his mother’s lifelong prayer had indeed been answered. She had prayed to die like Jesus — and she did.

A common soldier dies without fear; Jesus died afraid.

And so, paradoxically, do many women and men of faith.

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

**Faith, fear and death**

In Exile

Father Ron Rolheiser

---

Serra Club winning essay: Listening for Whispers from God

**By Cassandra Boudreaux, Eighth Grade**

Holy Family Homeschoolers

Whispers most often come as intimate messages from a friend. When we listen to a friend whispering, we stop our activity and are sure to keep still and quiet. We lean our ear toward the friend and might even close our eyes in order to hear better. In this same way, we must prepare ourselves to hear the voice of God. A person cannot hear a friend whispering if they are, for example, dribbling a basketball while wearing earbuds.

In the modern world, there are many distractions from God’s voice. We wake up to the sound of beeping. The dryer buzzes when the wash is done. The coffee maker beeps when it is ready. The television chatters in the next room and the radio offers traffic reports while we are on the road. Phones ring and bing to alert us that messages need our attention. In today’s technological world, it seems there is no place where we can retreat and be fully still and quiet.

With all the busyness of today’s world, it is very important to take time to listen to God. In order to hear God’s voice, we must cut ourselves off from the word of the world. We must go to a place where we can be free from distraction. A good way to hear God’s quiet whispers is by going to adoration, where we can pray silently before Jesus in the Eucharist. When we are able to kneel in silent adoration, we quiet our body and our mind. We listen.

What are we listening for? Scripture mentions that after Elijah faced an earthquake and a fire, he heard “a light silent sound” which was the voice of God (1 Kings 19:12-13). Earthquakes shake (and) rattle things and fires loudly consume everything around, but it is in the light, silent sound that we hear God’s calling.

God told Moses to call him “I AM.” In a similar way, God calls us to simply be. Be still. Be quiet. Be in his presence.

Listen...

When God whispers to his children, it is very faint. In the quiet stillness, God offers assurance and guidance. He gently steers us in the right direction. God loves us so much he gave us his only son, and he wants to guide us and talk to us.
Come and See Weekend – Single women age 16-35 wanting to learn more about religious life are invited to attend a free “Come and See the Beauty of Carmel” weekend Saturday, July 20, 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at the Carmelite Monastery, 73530 River Road, Covington. For more information visit covingtoncarmel.org.

World Refugee Day – World Refugee Day will be held Sunday, June 23, 3:30 – 7:30 p.m., at the Goodwood Library, 7711 Goodwood Blvd., Baton Rouge.

St. Charbel Healing Mass – St. Agnes Church, 749 East Blvd., Baton Rouge, will host a St. Charbel Healing Mass Sunday, June 23, 6 p.m. For more information, call 225-393-4127.

New Orleans Retreats – The Archbishop of New Orleans Retreat Center, 5500 St. Mary St., Metairie, will host the following retreats: Friday, June 28 – Sunday, June 30, preached silent retreat, “Holiness is Next Door,” with Father Simeon Gallagher, OFMCap; and Friday, July 12 – Sunday, July 14, “Finding God in the Now! Everyday Experiences,” preached silent retreat. For more information, call 1-800-937-9479 or visit neworleansretreat.org.

Meeting on Race – The Office of Black Catholics of the Diocese of Baton Rouge will host a “Listening Session on the Pastoral Letter Against Racism” at the Catholic Life Center, led by Bishop Michael G. Duca and Bishop on the Pastoral Letter Against Racism” at the Catholic Life Center, 1800 S. Acadian Thwy., Baton Rouge. For more information, call 225-294-5039, email scallahis@opppeace.org or visit catholiclifecenter.org.

Called To Love Weekend – A “Called to Love” engaged couples retreat, sponsored by the Office of Marriage and Family Life of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, will be held Friday, July 12 – Sunday, July 14 at the Catholic Life Center, 1800 S. Acadian Thwy., Baton Rouge. For more information and to register, visit mdiblor.org or call 225-242-0323.

Third Order of Mary – The St. Agnes Confraternity of the Third Order of Mary will have its July social Sunday, July 14, 2–4 p.m., in the conference center of St. Agnes Church, 749 East Blvd., Baton Rouge. For more information, call Karen Mollere at 225-272-5915.

Byzantine Icon Workshop – Registration is being accepted for a Byzantine icon workshop on St. Michael the Archangel at the Ione E. Burden that will be held Monday, July 22 – Friday, July 26, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., at the Ione E. Conference Center, 4500 Essen Lane Baton Rouge. For more information about cost and to register, call 225-284-7440 or 225-927-8846.

WINE Conference – Registration is being taken for the Diocese of Baton Rouge’s first Women in the New Evangelization (WINE) Conference Saturday, July 27 at Holy Rosary Church, 44450 Hwy. 429, St. Amant. For more information, visit CatholicVineyard.com and to register visit beautifullyunitedmedia.eventbrite.com.

Adoration Chapel Anniversary – St. Philomena Church, 108 Brule Road, Labadieville, will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its adoration chapel Tuesday, July 30, 6:30 p.m. The celebration will begin with Mass at 6 p.m. For more information, call 985-526-4247.

African American Sainthood Day of Reflection – A day of reflection, “African-Americans on the Path to Sainthood” will be held Saturday, Aug. 17, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., at Holy Rosary Church, 44450 Hwy. 429, St. Amant. For more information and to register online at learn.evangelcatbr.org/African-american-sainthood.

Magnificat Breakfast – Bishop Michael G. Duca will speak at a breakfast meeting of Magnificat, a ministry to the Catholic Women, Saturday, Aug. 17, 9 a.m. – noon, at the Oak Lodge Reception Center, 2834 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd., Baton Rouge. Tickets are $22 each and can be purchased online by visiting bit.ly/MagBRAugust2019. You may also call a check or money order payable to Magnificat to Kathy Simonues, 9950 Victory Lane, Denham Springs, LA 70726-5859.
WEATHER

From page 1

it was postponing the opening indefinitely but with the caveat that gates could still be opened at a later date.

If that scenario plays out, up to 25,000 acres of farm-land that are in the floodway would be flooded but houses spared.

“You don’t pray for it not to flood, you pray to survive, to accept it and move on,” Lecour said.

Thousands of acres sitting in the flood plain between the Mississippi River and the flood gates have already been lost, including 145 acres still owned by St. Ann Church in Morganza. That land is the site of the original church, Our Lady of Sorrows, which was constructed in 1927.

Lecour compared the loss of a crop, whether through a flood, hurricane or even drought, to a death.

“We started the first of the year preparing the fields, you work it, you plant it, you sow the seeds, you fertilize the seeds,” he said. “As farmers, we know it’s out of our control, that all you planted, all you depend on, you wake up one day and it’s taken away from you.”

“In the blink of an eye or the opening of a gate,” Dunham quickly added. “And some people stand to lose more than others but it hurts everybody.”

Water in the Morganza area has been above flood stage since November, setting a record for duration. And that was well before the annual spring surge, when the snow melting from the north flows south toward the Gulf of Mexico.

By January, water was “bleeding,” as Lecour put it, into people’s lawns.

“It has never quit seeping,” he added, saying burials have been temporarily suspended in a nearby cemetery because of the high water.

“Even though we lost a crop, we are going to go home and our houses are going to stay dry because the same flood plain system that will (potentially) take our crops will save our house,” Lecour said.

The rising water has already doled out an economic impact in Pointe Coupee Civil Parish, affecting restaurants, gas stations and even church collections. People who have hunting and fishing camps in the area have been unable to get to them since this past fall.

“We’ve been affected even without the spillway opening,” said Father Brent Maher, pastor at St. Vincent de Paul and St. Ann Church. “We have a few hundred camps (in the area) and folks just can’t come. So many people who are usually here with us, regulars, we have not seen since last year.”

A St. Vincent chapel that is normally filled to near capacity during June was about one-third full on a mid-May Sunday morning.

“Some folks would have been out there hunting, fishing, camping,’ Father Maher said.

Despite the impact, and even the ever present threat of the flood gates opened, Father Maher has remained encouraged by the faith of his parishioners. He recently led an inspirational prayer service, that included the Litany of the Saints, following a Sunday Mass.

“It humbles you,” Father Maher said. “It makes you realize the Lord is in charge. We see it in any kind of place where church was there when times get rough. That’s when we start to see people hit their knees a lot more easily and stay just a little bit longer.”

Lecour said faith is what allows one to go through life, trusting in the belief that no matter the circumstances, everything will be alright.

“You don’t want it, you don’t like it, but you have to accept it,” he said. “There is no need to get angry, there is no need to get bitter. ‘It’s up to the good man.’

“Even though we lost a crop, we are going to go home and our houses are going to stay dry because the same flood plain system that will (potentially) take our crops will save our house,” Lecour said.

The rising water has already doled out an economic impact in Pointe Coupee Civil Parish, affecting restaurants, gas stations and even church collections. People who have hunting and fishing camps in the area have been unable to get to them since this past fall.

“We’ve been affected even without the spillway opening,” said Father Brent Maher, pastor at St. Vincent de Paul and St. Ann Church. “We have a few hundred camps (in the area) and folks just can’t come. So many people who are usually here with us, regulars, we have not seen since last year.”

A St. Vincent chapel that is normally filled to near capacity during June was about one-third full on a mid-May Sunday morning.

“Some folks would have been out there hunting, fishing, camping,’ Father Maher said.

Despite the impact, and even the ever present threat of the flood gates opened, Father Maher has remained encouraged by the faith of his parishioners. He recently led an inspirational prayer service, that included the Litany of the Saints, following a Sunday Mass.

“It humbles you,” Father Maher said. “It makes you realize the Lord is in charge. We see it in any kind of place where church was there when times get rough. That’s when we start to see people hit their knees a lot more easily and stay just a little bit longer.”

Lecour said faith is what allows one to go through life, trusting in the belief that no matter the circumstances, everything will be alright.

“You don’t want it, you don’t like it, but you have to accept it,” he said. “There is no need to get angry, there is no need to get bitter. ‘It’s up to the good man.”

CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED

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

Ascension Catholic educates the mind, body and spirit of each student to know, love and serve God, self and others in a safe and caring environment.

Ascension Catholic School
Grades PK-12
Ascension Catholic School seeks full time, certified teachers for the 2019-2020 school year for the following position:

Middle School ELA

Please send letter of interest and resume’ to:
Mrs. Sandy Pizzolato, Principal
sandy.pizzolato@acbulldogs.org
311 St. Vincent Street
Donaldsonville LA 70346

ST. MICHAEL HIGH SCHOOL

is now accepting applications for the full-time position of Registrar. Previous experience and knowledge of Administrator’s Plus/Rediker software are beneficial.

Please send resume to:
Principal
P.O. Box 86110
Baton Rouge, LA 70879-6110 or email mguarisco@smhsbr.org

ST. MICHAEL HIGH SCHOOL

is currently accepting applications for School Counselor for the 2019-20 school year. Applicant must hold a Master’s in Education in Counselor Education or a Master’s in Social Work, with licensure and school counseling experience preferred. Send resume to Mrs. Julie Lechich, Asst. Principal of Academics at jlechich@smhsbr.org.

MASS

From page 8

person but as a family.

“And so we pray together today for God to save us, God, to turn those storms away from everybody, turn them back out into the ocean. Fish know how to handle hurri-canes, let them take care of it. But, if Lord, they do come ashore we pray that our prayer for protection will be answered by whatever graces you may give us personally and by hearts that are turned to ser-vice. Our spiritual first re-sponders who are motivated not just by need but before the need even comes, motivated by a commitment to stand with our brothers and sisters in our parishes.”

The bishop noted the work of employees and volunteers of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, several of whom were in attendance, calling them “our organizing power and presence.” He also recounted a visit to the command station for the city of Baton Rouge where employees were marking the day as “a blue sky day,” which means a day dedicated for emergency planning.

“Our Catholic Charities, the extension of our inten-tion and our will, are planning all the time to be ready, working with other agencies, creating a network of care throughout the diocese,” said the bishop. “So we can be part of that team and sometimes leaders on that team. And that is all part of God’s grace and what we pray for today is that we will work with God. God works on nature and if our nature is ready he can do powerful things with us. If we’re prepared then we can be ready for that.”

“So people will in the midst of when they might say God is not good, in a moment en-counter with another, a be-liever, will say, ‘No, God is good. And he is here.’ Let us be that witness.”

Bishop Duca prayed for the blessing of Catholic Charities donors and that everyone be there to help those in need.

“If we are the ones in need, that we know where we can turn when that disaster strikes and know that God is good, he is with us with his grace, with his love and through his peo-ple,” the bishop said.
with an eruption of applause.

During his homily Bishop Duca told the candidates, who were seated before him, that as deacons for the next year, they will deepen their knowledge about and experiences in sacrifice and service to the church.

“It’s been a long journey and here now you’re on your final steps toward priesthood. But today this is not about priesthood. It is about that unique gift of holy orders to the church, the order of the diaconate,” said Bishop Duca.

He said to Deacon Roussel and Deacon Dunn that being a transitional deacon is “not a stepping stone” but is part of the orders of ordination they will carry on with them and be part of who they are even when they become priests.

“The sacrament of holy orders is founded on the firm foundation of the diaconate, the ministry of service, the ministry of charity,” said Bishop Duca. “It was the one order established by the apostles.”

“They saw a need in the community. They were not able to handle all the needs of the widows and orphans and some of the administrative work that came with gathering the people together and community ... So they needed more people to help equally distribute the goods and handle the personal needs and particular needs of widows and orphans ... They did not have a social structure of support. It had to come from the community of faith, from the family. And so these men were chosen to be ministers of service.”

The bishop emphasized that the diaconate is not a second-class ministry, pointing to the life of St. Stephen, who was a deacon and first martyr of the church when his powerful preaching upset the Jewish hierarchy. St. Stephen’s death by stoning mirrored Christ’s death on the cross when he said, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them,” noted Bishop Duca.

“My brothers, that stands as the heart of your ministry as deacon, to be a man who hears Christ call to love one another,” said the bishop. “But you always have to add the last part – love one another as I have loved you. That is the power, the strength and the burden of your ministry. That you must be men of service, men who are close to your people. To prepare your sermons that you might truly change the hearts of men and women by your words. Words that you preach not from a book but from the experience you have of living that Gospel message yourself.”

Following his homily, Bishop Duca questioned the candidates about their willingness to embrace the office of deacon. The candidates then knelt before the bishop and promised respect and obedience to him and his successors.

During the litany of supplication, Deacon Roussel and Deacon Dunn prostrated themselves before the altar as the assembly prayed through the intercession of the saints.

The two men then knelt before Bishop Duca as he laid his hands on the their heads and prayed the prayer of ordination.

Next, Deacon Roussel was vested with stoles and dalmatic with the assistance of Deacon Ricky Oubre and Deacon Dunn was vested with assistance from Deacon Leon Murphy and Deacon Jimmy Little.

Bishop Duca then gave the newly ordained deacons a fraternal kiss, after which Bishop Emeritus Muench and the deacons did the same. Deacon Roussel and Deacon Dunn then joined the celebrants at the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist.

After the conclusion of Mass well wishers streamed out of the cathedral to congratulate the newly ordained deacons.