

 **Catholic Charities**
Archdiocese of New Orleans

1924
2024
100

A
CENTURY
OF SERVICE



Catholic Charities Centennial Issue
CLARION HERALD | JANUARY 6, 2024

Congratulations

to Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of New Orleans

on 100 years of service

in our community.

Jayle Benson

TEAM OF DEALERSHIPS

Where Dreams Drive Home



Extending the love of 'Matthew 25' for 100 years

January 6, 2024

Inspired by the idea that the love and teachings of Jesus Christ can span all faiths and people, Catholic Charities has worked tirelessly over the last century to provide hope to people in need just when they think all might be lost. With more than 73,000 people assisted last year alone, I can't even begin to fathom the effect Catholic Charities has had on the community over the past 100 years.

The challenge of summarizing Catholic Charities' centennial has been, to say the least, a daunting task. To paraphrase part of our mission statement, Catholic Charities has been at the forefront of helping our neighbors meet crucial needs and face long-term challenges. And, in my time at the helm, there has been no shortage of challenges – disaster response, COVID-19, the mental health crisis, immigration, caring for the growing senior population, just to name a few.

It's not lost on me that I wouldn't be here in this position writing about the storied history of Catholic Charities in this issue without giving credit to its founders, who, with their incredible foresight, helped lay the foundation for what we have become today, an advocate



Photo by Chris Granger | COURTESY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Marianite Sister Marjorie Hebert, who has served since 2013 as president and chief executive officer of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans, finds spiritual comfort in providing for the needs of the most vulnerable in society.

for the voiceless. But I would be remiss if I did not also mention the thousands of staff members, volunteers and donors who, over the years, have been instrumental in leading this agency to become such a formidable force for good in the archdiocese.

As I think about the next 100 years, I'm confident that Catholic Charities will always be an open door for those

On the Web:
www.ccano.org

in need. I also find solace knowing that our programs will continue to create real change that will inspire others to be as generous as their predecessors.

When thinking about the work of Catholic Charities back to its inception when the Ursuline sisters arrived

in Louisiana, which many consider the beginning of Catholic Charities in the U.S., I remember this verse from Matthew 25:40:

"And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

I can't think of a better way to encapsulate how the work of Catholic Charities

inspires me each day to live a life well lived in service of others.

I'm proud of the work of Catholic Charities over the past century, and I'm overcome with joy thinking about its place in history for the needy and vulnerable for centuries to come.

Sister Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.

SISTER MARJORIE HEBERT, M.S.C.
PRESIDENT/
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CATHOLIC CHARITIES
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

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Charitable work of the Church before 1924

1727




The Ursuline Sisters arrive in New Orleans, considered the beginning of Catholic Charities in the U.S. They join the French Capuchin missionaries, who aid the sick, the poor and the afflicted.

1728




The French government petitions the Church to care for New Orleans children. Marie Madeleine Hachard, a 23-year-old Ursuline novice, writes that the nuns are following, all at the same time, the functions of teaching, nursing services, care for orphans and for pregnant girls.

1736




The first hospital under Catholic auspices for the poor, St. John the Baptist, is opened.

1830s-1860s



Sisters of the Holy Family take in elderly residents, establishing the St. Bernard Home. The sisters go door-to-door to collect alms. A donation from Thomy Lafon allows erection of a three-story brick residence to include care for men.

1848



Epidemics prompt Catholic religious to establish orphanages. Archbishop Antoine Blanc extends Catholic charity work by establishing homes for dependent children, delinquent girls and widows.



Sister Marjorie reflects on Catholic Charities' mission

Clarion Herald associate editor Christine Bordelon spoke with Marianite Sister Marjorie Hebert, president and CEO, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (CCANO), about the nonprofit's 100 years of serving people of all faiths.

Congratulations on Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans' 100 years of "faith in action." Can you tell me a little about the history of the organization?

The national Catholic Charities USA gives recognition to the start of the work of charity with the arrival of the Ursulines in New Orleans in 1727. From 1727 on, all the works of charities were begun by the religious organizations in the various orphanages and schools. It was in March 1924 that Archbishop John Shaw created Catholic Charities. It was established and organized to be a service agency. He appointed the executive committee of Hope Haven, a home started by Msgr. Peter Wynhoven in Marrero on the West Bank, as the new board of Catholic Charities. Msgr. Wynhoven was the first director, and the board hired its first case worker – Camille Guenard. Civilly, a Community Chest drive was founded in 1925 to help raise money for organizations that helped



Photo by Chris Granger | COURTESY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Marianite Sister Marjorie Hebert, CCANO president and CEO, visits with a resident of Padua House, a Catholic Charities program that offers comprehensive and specialized care for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

the poor. The first drive raised \$924,000, and several Catholic organizations were beneficiaries of the donations. By the 1950s, the Community Chest was called the United Fund and eventually became the United Way. In 1938, the numerous Catholic agencies helping the poor and vulnerable were put under one umbrella – Associated Catholic Charities (ACC). It was a clearing house for

the Catholic children's institutions that were in the archdiocese. By 1996, it was renamed Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (CCANO).

How many programs does CCANO have?

Presently, there are nearly two dozen programs and services that we offer, encompassing abuse and violence, adoption and maternity services, Padua House helping those with disabilities,

Foster Grandparents, disaster response (counseling, case management, food, grants to provide temporary housing and utility bills, etc.), citizenship and English-as-a-second-language classes and Head Start programs for toddlers, homeless services, immigration and refugee services, health services, Food for Seniors and a myriad of social justice programs. These programs help people of all races and religious af-

filiations.

How has Catholic Charities changed from its origins?

The work of Catholic Charities is much the same today as it was 100 years ago when we were responding to the needs of the people of that time. A big thrust of that time was the number of homeless children in the orphanages started by the religious congregations of sisters, brothers and priests in the New Orleans communities. Today, we are taking care of those individuals, but not in the same volumes in orphanages. We are helping to take care of children who are living with their families, but their family may be one of their parents, a grandparent or another relative. We are still doing the work, but in many houses – the family home. After we find that home, we are able to take care of them. We continue to help many women, married and single, find work that coordinates with their talents and abilities.

With multiple hurricanes and other natural and man-made disasters such as oil spills, how has Catholic Charities adapted to the needs of the community over the years?

The number of programs comes out of what's develop-

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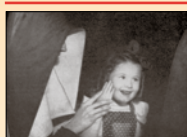
Charitable work of the Church before 1924

1858



After outbreaks of yellow fever, cholera and smallpox, St. Vincent Infant and Maternity Home opens at Race and Magazine, staffed by three Daughters of Charity, to care for 30 infants. Margaret Haughey, "the Friend of the Orphans," is a major benefactor.

1890



Chinchuba Institute for the Deaf begins under the auspices of Canon Mignot of St. Louis Cathedral. It moves to the campus of Madonna Manor in Marrero in 1940.

1912

Archbishop James Blenk appoints a Diocesan Commission of Charities to study conditions for serving the needy. An office is set up at Poydras and Camp, but the effort is vexed by lack of funding.



Archbishop John Shaw continues the charities board and names Father Raymond Carra, pastor of St. Patrick Church, as superintendent.

1918

An energetic priest, Father Peter M.H. Wynhoven, joins the board and immediately makes his influence felt. He earlier had opened St. Vincent's Hotel for transients and organized the Catholic School Athletic League for youth.

1921



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SR. MARJORIE

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ing every day. Right now, it is disaster relief. During COVID, it was COVID. When a crisis develops, Catholic Charities steps in. It depends on the cause that's happening and what's needed. One was the oil spill.

Recently, there was a crisis of people not being able to pay utilities. ... We pride ourselves in – and one of our strongest forces is – case management. We've assisted women in situations of abuse (trafficking, homelessness, domestic violence).

The everyday crises create another opportunity for us to serve another group of people. We educate young children in Head Start and have group homes (Padua House).

The Archdiocese of New Orleans has been involved in assisting immigrants and refugees through our Immigration Services since the 1960s, first with an influx of people fleeing Cuba. It is needed more now than ever.

Right now, one of our popular programs is English as a Second Language, working with refugees and immigrants. ... The needs of everyday issues cause us to respond. We want to respond to situations instead of react to situations. That's where we engage and collaborate with government and private organizations.



Catholic Charities' Food for Seniors ministry helps thousands with monthly boxes filled with nutritious food that help supplement the groceries of these low-income seniors who are age 60 and older.

As we enter our centennial year, we take up more of the needs of every day. How are we going to work? Who are our partners out there? We better respond when we don't duplicate efforts.

Catholic Charities partners, in times of need, with other organizations that do similar work: Volunteers of America, Salvation Army, United Way, Red Cross, UNITY of Greater New Orleans (for the homeless).

We also help parishes start a social concerns committee in their parish – to address parishioners' social needs. A lot of this came out of the recent synod of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. We

want to be a ready response to the pastors, the clergy to help their parishioners.

If someone were to ask about how efficient CCANO is, what would you say?

We are proud of the fact that 94 cents of every dollar goes to direct assistance provided by Catholic Charities. That is far above the national average.

Our services are supported by private and public sources that include grants, bequests and generous donations from supporters in the community. Another vital annual fundraising campaign is the Archbishop Hannan Community Ap-



Photos by Chris Granger | CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Sister Marjorie makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of a client of the Pregnancy Services program.

peal which has been raising funds for the needy since 1966. Archbishop Hannan started the appeal one year after Hurricane Betsy, and Archbishop Aymond named the campaign in his honor in 2012.

The Catholic Community Foundation of the archdiocese and women's and men's groups have assisted Catholic Charities and other parish services in times of need. St. Elizabeth's Guild and St. Vincent's Guild, which started in the orphanages, still exist, too.

How big is the staff at CCANO?

We have over 400 employees who work tirelessly

to help those in need. They come from all backgrounds and serve as nurses, attorneys, case managers, counselors and more.

How well does CCANO work with other Catholic Charities statewide?


We conference with one another and, in working with each other, our unanimity comes in. We work with the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops in legislation that impacts and helps each other. We often come together and share in response to disasters.

At times, disasters have impacted more than one parish at a time. Oftentimes, we join with Catholic Charities USA in helping dioceses in times of crisis and disasters. The national organization offers ready-response in providing grants, especially when responding to disasters.

Are there any misconceptions people might have about CCANO?


We serve and have served the people in the community of all faiths. We employ people of diverse faiths. Our name is "charity," and we seek to fulfill that to greatly assist where we are needed. ... There is no limit to what we do. ... We seek to be as helpful and positive as we can. That's why we work with the partners in the community and an ecumenical series of churches.

– **Christine Bordelon**




Founding of Catholic Charities (1924)

1924



On March 21, Catholic Charities is founded by Archbishop John W. Shaw with a board consisting of Msgr. J. Francis Prim, chairman; Father Wynhoven, superintendent; John X. Wegmann, treasurer; and W.J. Leppert, secretary. Rabbi Leipziger urges the board to join the Community Chest for stable funding.

1925



Father Wynhoven establishes Hope Haven in Marrero as an agricultural, carpentry and trade school. Its printing presses produce archdiocesan books and The Catholic Action of the South newspaper, predecessor to the Clarion Herald.

1925

Community Chest funds for 1925 – which were 80% more than collected previously by the separate religious communities – aid more than a dozen Catholic organizations.

1926

In July, the board approves an official name change to Associated Catholic Charities of New Orleans (ACC). The organization is formally incorporated on July 13, 1938, before C. Ellis Henican.

1929

At the urging of Father Wynhoven, Msgr. John O'Grady, executive secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, agrees to hold its national convention in New Orleans. Father Wynhoven is elected vice president.

1924-1929

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Catholic Charities programs serve a myriad of needs

1 **ADOPTION SERVICES** is a full-service, non-profit, child-placing program that seeks to link children to their forever families.

2 **BETHLEHEM HOUSING** is a rapid rehousing program designed to help families quickly exit homelessness, return to housing in the community and not become homeless again.

3 **BRIDGES TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY** works with single-parent families. It assists families in finding transitional housing for three to six months until they can get back on their feet.

4 The **CIARA INDEPENDENT LIVING** program provides stable, safe and stigma-free housing to the chronically homeless and mentally ill by giving them a sense of community and a path to self-sufficiency.

5 **CORNERSTONE BUILDERS** provides services to individuals who have been impacted by incarceration.

6 **COUNSELING SOLUTIONS** is a professional counseling program available to individuals, children and their families of all faiths.

7 The mission of our **SPIRIT OF HOPE DISASTER RESPONSE SERVICES** is to give hope through concrete corporal and spiritual works of mercy to those who become vulnerable after disasters.

8 **(ESL), CITIZENSHIP AND FAMILY LITERACY** classes serve hundreds of learners from more than 40 countries each year at sites in Orleans and Jefferson civil parishes. The classes are a valuable resource for immigrants and refugees who have recently arrived and those who have been in this country for years.



Photo by Chris Granger | COURTESY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Food for Seniors is a monthly nutritional lifeline for low-income seniors.

9 **FOOD FOR SENIORS** provides monthly nutritional food boxes to seniors who are 60 years old or older and meet federal income guidelines.

Head Start) and preschoolers 3 to 5 years of age (Head Start), including children with disabilities. These programs promote the social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth and development of each child.

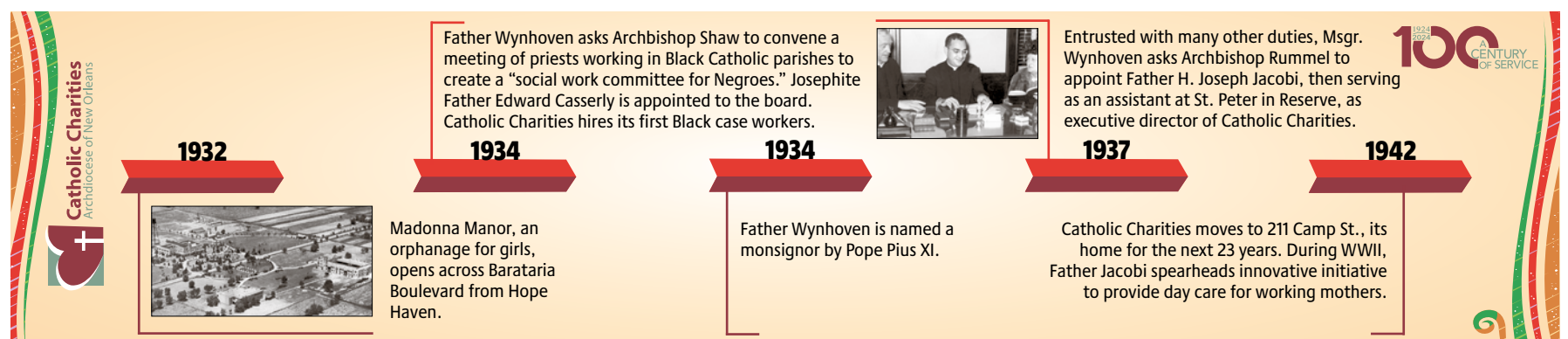
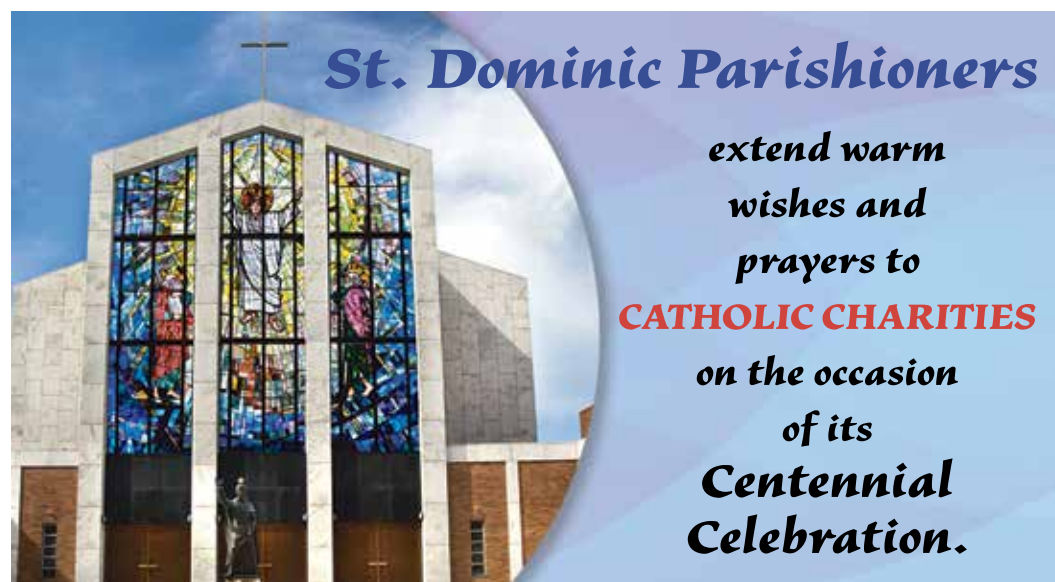
10 **FOSTER GRANDPARENTS** are role models, mentors and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for low-income seniors age 55 and over to stay active through volunteer service with children and youth in their communities.

12 The mission of **PACE (PROGRAM OF ALL-INCLUSIVE CARE FOR THE ELDERLY)** is to enable frail older adults to live in their homes and in the community as long as medically and socially feasible.

11 **HEAD START** is a child and family development program for families with children from birth to 3 years (Early

13 **PADUA COMMUNITY SERVICES** offers comprehensive and specialized care for children and adults with intellectual dis-

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PROGRAMS

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abilities through Padua House Residential Program and Padua Community Homes. Padua Community Homes provides housing and services for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults who are ages 18 and up in the Greater New Orleans area.

14 Our **PARISH AND COMMUNITY MINISTRY AND PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY** provides resources, assistance and development for our parishes to better care for the people in need in their communities.

15 **PREGNANCY SERVICES** provides a wide variety of free, confidential and caring pregnancy assistance services.

16 **PROJECT SAVE** assists survivors of domestic violence residing in Orleans Parish to obtain free emergency legal representation.

17 **REFUGEE SERVICES** assists immigrants with the essentials for beginning a life in their new home – securing housing, employment and mentoring.

18 **SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELING** contracts with the St.



Charles Parish School Board Special Education Department to provide school counseling to students determined to be in the special education system and exhibiting a need for counseling services.

19 **THERAPEUTIC FAMILY SERVICES (TFS)** contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services to provide therapeutic foster homes for children in foster care.

On the Web:
www.ccano.org



Photos by Chris Granger | COURTESY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Padua Community Services, left, offers help for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Above, Pregnancy Services provides caring assistance during pregnancy.

CONGRATULATIONS

Catholic Charities on 100 years of service!

Affordable Housing for Seniors
Since 1966

Thank you for your support and collaboration in ministry for the residents of Christopher Homes.

www.christopherhomes.org

1944

Msgr. Wynhoven dies Sept. 14.

1947

The National Conference of Catholic Charities holds its convention in New Orleans. New York Cardinal Francis J. Spellman attends.

1948

Now-Msgr. Jacobi is elected president of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, the first priest from the South to hold that office.

1961

Archdiocesan Resettlement Bureau is established to assist refugees.

1962

ACC has a total budget of \$1.022 million. Programs include child care, family casework, adoptions and services to the elderly and unmarried mothers.

Sister Anthony: Offering services in Jesus' name

Daughter of Charity Sister Anthony Barczykowski served as executive director of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans from 1980 through 2002. Now living in her congregation's retirement home in Evansville, Illinois, north of her hometown of St. Louis, she reflects on the importance of Catholic Charities' ministry to the poor and marginalized. At 93, she misses the people of New Orleans more than anything else.

Is it fair to say that before Catholic Charities was formally established in New Orleans in 1924, most of the charitable work of the church was done by individual religious communities?

Pretty much so. My memory's not too good, but Msgr. Peter Wynhoven was instrumental in starting the Hope Haven program, and the Notre Dame Sisters took over St. Elizabeth's and St. Vincent's. I went to New Orleans around 1971 to be the administrator at St. Elizabeth's, which was staffed by the Daughters of Charity. I had spent the previous 14 years working at two child-care facilities in California that were similar to St. Elizabeth's, which cared for about 60 girls. St. Vincent's was the maternity home, and they took care of pregnant girls.



Photo | COURTESY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Daughter of Charity Sister Anthony Barczykowski's faith and bubbly personality carried her throughout her 22-year tenure as CCANO director.

The girls could either keep their babies or give them up for adoption. When I got to New Orleans, the state, United Way, the Daughters of Charity and Catholic Charities were all independent, and Archbishop Hannan authorized a study to come up with a plan to better serve people. The end result was that all the Catholic programs, including St. Elizabeth's, would become part of Catholic Charities. I served as an associate direc-

tor of Catholic Charities under Father Mike Haddad and then became director in 1980. Mike was a wonderful person, and I enjoyed working with him.

Speaking of funding, how did Archbishop Hannan get some of Hollywood's biggest entertainers like Bing Crosby and Bob Hope to come to New Orleans and do benefit performances that raised millions of dollars for Catholic Charities?

Well, because he was Archbishop Hannan! He knew all those people. I don't really know a lot about that except that he had personal contacts with all of those people, and when he would reach out and ask them to do something, they would always say, "Yes!" He would meet them at the airport and wine and dine them. He was certainly well known in political circles. I didn't have that personal relationship with people in Hollywood.

The '60s and '70s were a time of political turmoil and revolutionary changes in society, and then there was the oil bust in south Louisiana in the mid-'80s. How were things back then for you as a leader of Catholic Charities?

All those major factors increase poverty and make the needs of the people so

much more visible. But the other thing was in the mid-'70s, Title XX funds became available from the federal government as block grants for social services, and we applied for those dollars, and that's when Catholic Charities grew.

How important was the individual charitable work of religious communities before the establishment of Catholic Charities?

Originally, there were a lot of children who were left orphans in the 1800s, and a lot of those programs served orphans in the beginning. Then, as time went on, the word "orphanage" became unpopular and group homes became the norm. It was better if children were in smaller groups. The large institutions were not looked upon as the best way to raise children.

What was it like for you as an "outsider" coming in to lobby for state funding from politicians so your programs could help more people?

When I first went down there, there was a boycott among all the child-care agencies in the state because it was felt – and it was true – that they were not being paid adequately for the services they provided.

Archbishop Hannan started the Social Aposto-

late in the neighborhoods as a separate organization to provide direct help to the poor. How did that fit in with Catholic Charities?

Catholic Charities at that time was generally considered the larger institutions: Hope Haven, Madonna Manor, St. Elizabeth's, St. Vincent's. Even before Catholic Charities, these were operated by religious communities. The Social Apostolate did start as neighborhood-based. But there was some sense that there was a duplication of services.

You were often quoted as saying Catholic Charities was one of the best-kept secrets of the church in New Orleans.

That was always a frustration, because very, very loyal people would say, "You do so much, but nobody knows what you do. You don't tell your story." But what more can we do to tell our story more effectively? The needs are so great. We did make a practice of going out to speak in parishes.

In your line of ministry, you've had a lot of swings and misses and a lot of strikeouts. But when you hit a home run, how does that make you feel?

You experience so many stories like that, and you know that in many ways,

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1963

Father Ray Hebert, ACC director, and Mrs. Katherine Ervin appeal for more foster parents. "It is not good for these children to be thrown into institutional living," Ervin says. Father Hebert says ACC is the largest, private social agency "probably in the South."

1965

A \$56,361 federal grant allows ACC to expand the Florida Family Center with extra programs for counseling, day care, recreation, homework, homemaker classes and courses for teens and adults and activities for seniors. Ten young adult residents are hired to serve as tutors.

1966

Archbishop Philip Hannan establishes the Archbishop's Community Appeal in response to Hurricane Betsy (1965). He also opens the Notre Dame Seminary swimming pool for the Summer Witness program so that African Americans locked out of public pools in New Orleans have a place to swim.

1967

Eugene C. Buchert Jr. is named associate director of ACC, in charge of casework services such as adoption and maternity. He serves with Msgr. Ray Hebert, director.

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SR. ANTHONY

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you helped so many people who were desperate. By the same token, you always knew you couldn't help everybody, and that was the saddest thing, when you weren't able to help somebody – mainly, maybe, because they weren't ready to be helped or we just didn't have the resources to meet their particular needs. Catholic Charities is a wonderful program that reached many, many people, and regardless of what people said, you knew that whatever you did, you were doing it because God called you to do it. God gave us the grace to do what we needed to do with the resources we had. On the other hand, there were a lot of needs that we could not meet. We weren't miracle workers. We just did the best we could.

Do you still hear from some of the people you helped?

Maybe about five years ago, there were a couple of former St. Elizabeth's girls who were in front of the building that had been converted to condos. They were looking up at this building, and this man came out and said, "Can I help you with something?" And they said, "Well, we lived here, and we were just looking around." He invited them to come in and see the renovations.

So, he asked these two girls if they were still in touch with any of the other girls who lived there. And he said, "Why don't we set up a time, a Sunday afternoon, when we can invite any girl who had been here to come visit?" We went all through the condos. It was wonderful. The St. Elizabeth's girls stayed there through high school.

What about the non-denominational aspect of Catholic Charities?

I guess we just never even considered race or religion. The Vietnamese came. We were there for whoever needed us.

So, you're 93 – seven years younger than Catholic Charities! How are you feeling? What are some of your regular activities?

I live at what we call Seton Residence in Evansville for our retired sisters. There are about 50 of us here. We have health care, assisted living and independent living. We're at different stages. I've had a number of surgeries after a fall this past year, and all of us are in our 70s, 80s and 90s. We just had a sister celebrate her 104th birthday! I'm doing fine but I'm not in a condition where I want to do any traveling.

Now that you hear that Catholic Charities is 100 years old, how does it feel having been such a big part of that during so much of your life and

ministry?

I think there have been some very good leaders within Catholic Charities, but I believe what made it work was that we had so many supporters. There's nothing any one person could do to offer all the services that Catholic Charities offers. It takes a network of Catholic people working together to provide services. I was talking to a couple about the Charities Ball and what it meant to them, and they said it wasn't the money that it pulled in, even though the money was important. They told me, "When you went to a Charities ball, it made you feel like you were part of something bigger than yourself." I think that's true. We are church. We are offering services in the name of Jesus. That's not only held us together, but it's pushed forward when things got really tough. I marvel at what Sister Marjorie (Hebert) has done during these difficult times. She's been an outstanding leader.

What's the biggest thing you miss about New Orleans?

The people. The people. And, the culture. People are so friendly. Even when somebody doesn't have a lot of money and is really struggling to make ends meet, those are some of the most generous people you've ever met in your life. They care for each other, you know?

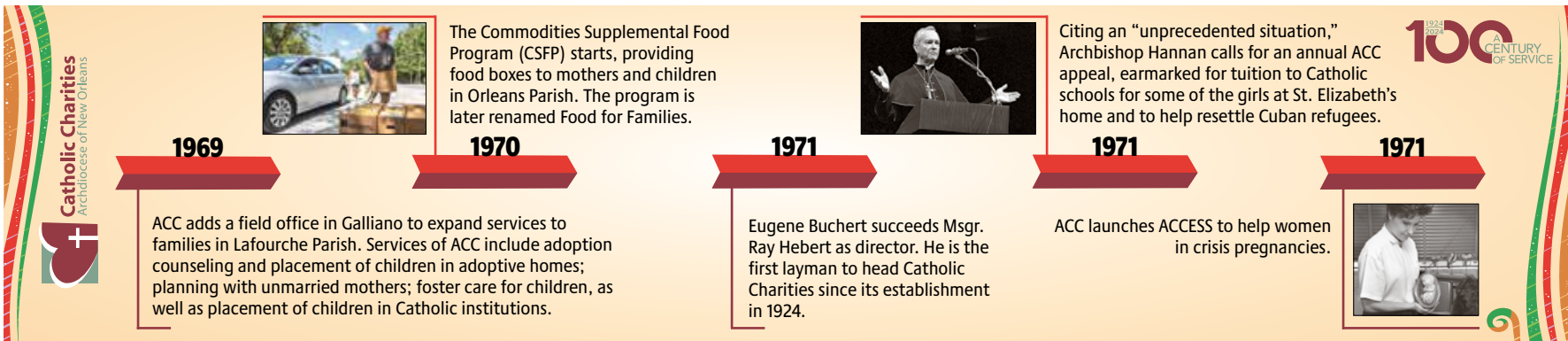
– **Peter Finney Jr.**



36,500 days
876,000 hours
52,560,000 minutes
of making the words of
Matthew 25 become flesh
throughout Greater New Orleans.

Congratulations,
Sr. Marjorie Hebert, MSC
and the entire
Catholic Charities' Staff.

 **Marianites of Holy Cross**
www.marianites.org



Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans

1969
ACC adds a field office in Galliano to expand services to families in Lafourche Parish. Services of ACC include adoption counseling and placement of children in adoptive homes; planning with unmarried mothers; foster care for children, as well as placement of children in Catholic institutions.

1970
The Commodities Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) starts, providing food boxes to mothers and children in Orleans Parish. The program is later renamed Food for Families.

1971
Eugene Buchert succeeds Msgr. Ray Hebert as director. He is the first layman to head Catholic Charities since its establishment in 1924.

1971
Citing an "unprecedented situation," Archbishop Hannan calls for an annual ACC appeal, earmarked for tuition to Catholic schools for some of the girls at St. Elizabeth's home and to help resettle Cuban refugees.

1971
ACC launches ACCESS to help women in crisis pregnancies.

100
CENTURY OF SERVICE



Mark your 2024 calendars!

Join Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans throughout 2024 as it celebrates a Century of Service!

► **March 21:** Official date of Catholic Charities' founding. A private Mass will be celebrated for those served by Catholic Charities and all the volunteers, staff and supporters who share in this mission.

► **April:** Volunteer Peace Prayer Walk (more details to come at www.CCANO.org).

► **June:** Catholic Charities Staff Day (more details will be shared with CCANO employees).

► **September:** Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal kickoff.



Photo by Chris Granger | COURTESY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Food for Seniors packs and transports supplemental food boxes for distribution to low-income seniors at more than 150 donation sites throughout the state.

► **October:** Special 100th Anniversary Annual Report.

► **Nov. 17:** Anniversary Mass at St. Louis Cathedral for all staff, donors, volun-

teers and supporters. Stay tuned!

More details and information will be shared on www.CCANO.org.

Congratulations
Catholic Charities
On 100 Years of Service



Most Holy Trinity
Catholic Parish
Covington, LA

List of Catholic Charities directors, name changes

Directors/Chief Executive Officers

► **MONSIGNOR PETER M.H. WYNHOVEN** (1924-1937)

Associated Catholic Charities of New Orleans, Inc. (incorporated in 1938)

► **MONSIGNOR JOSEPH JACOBI** (1937-1949)

► **FATHER FRED DIGBY** (1949-1958)

► **MONSIGNOR RAY P. HEBERT** (1958-1971)

► **EUGENE BUCHERT**, first lay director (1971-1975) *

► **FATHER MICHAEL HADDAD** (1973-1980)

* When Father Haddad assumed the director's position, Buchert continued as Catholic Charities' administrator during the restructuring period.

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (legal name changed in 1996)

► **SISTER ANTHONY BARCZYKOWSKI, D.C.** (1980-December 2001)

► **L. ORVILLE DUGGAN**, interim director (January

2002-May 2002)

► **JAMES R. KELLY** (May 2002-July 2003)

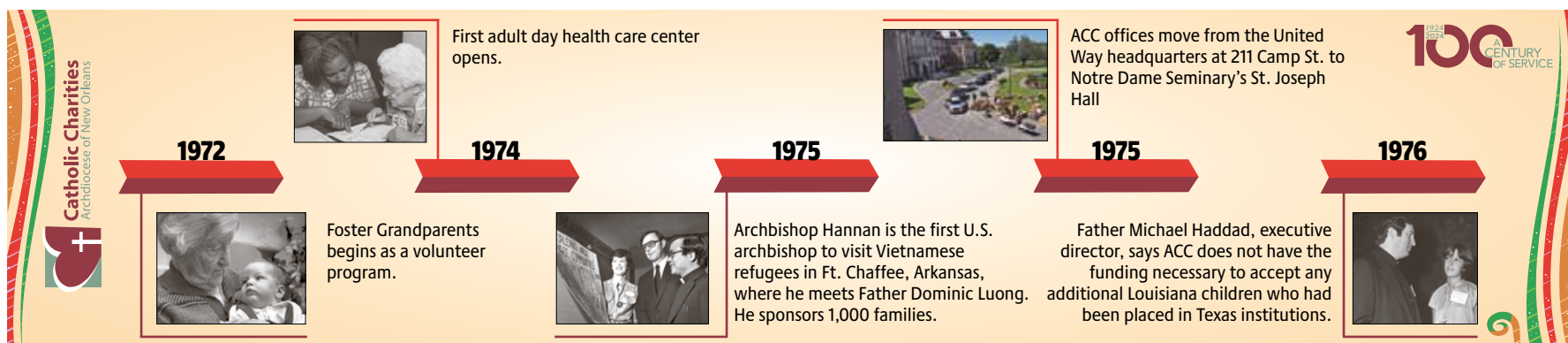
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

(merged with the Office of Social Apostolate in 2003)

► **JAMES R. KELLY** and **GORDON R. WADGE**, merger (July 2003-March 2011)

► **GORDON R. WADGE** (March 2011-January 2013)

► **SISTER MARJORIE A. HEBERT, M.S.C.** (January 2013-present)



Non-Catholic CCANO employee shares vocation

By Christine Bordelon
Clarion Herald

One of the misconceptions people have about Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans is that it serves only Catholics and that only Catholics are employed.

Mary L. Smith, MPH, a benefits enrollment center coordinator for Parish and Community Ministries at Catholic Charities, is proof that isn't true. She is a Baptist and has been a CCANO employee since a 2017 tornado hit New Orleans East, and she began handling disaster relief from an office at Resurrection of Our Lord Parish.

Smith is now a case manager supervisor over the outreach team and benefits enrollment for Orleans and Jefferson parishes. Her office is in the former Incarnate Word Catholic School in New Orleans.

Serving many faiths

"Before working at Catholic Charities, I thought that anyone who received assistance from Catholic Charities had to be a Catholic," Smith said. "I found out they provided rental assistance, energy assistance, food stamps application assistance and many other direct-assistance programs. And, you don't have to be Catholic. When I looked at the data and the clients we served, I found out that many



Photo | COURTESY MARY SMITH

Mary L. Smith helps client Aviance Honor complete an application for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), a service Catholic Charities offers through its Parish and Community Ministries program. Smith is a benefits coordinator at Catholic Charities' enrollment center, located inside the former Incarnate Word Catholic School in New Orleans.

clients I serve weren't Catholic. Other Protestants in the community knew that they could call Catholic Charities and get help."

Smith, a mother of two and grandmother of three, currently works with anyone age 18 and older who needs help, often the elderly. Her program is funded by a grant from Catholic Charities USA and Walmart for SNAP benefits (food stamps), and from the National Council on Aging to help clients with core benefits such as Low-Income Subsidy (LIS)/Extra Help, Medicare Savings Program (MSP), SNAP (Food Stamps) and the Low-Income Home Energy

Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

"I am also proud that I was able to get Entergy to assist clients with high summer utility bills. As a result, Entergy provided \$400,000 Sept. 14 to assist Orleans Parish residents. We were also granted permanent, ongoing funds for Entergy's Power to Care Program, in Orleans and the other Catholic Charities civil parishes."

Doing God's work

Smith, who is from New Orleans, graduated from George Washington Carver Senior High School in the 9th Ward, but moved to California and worked at Dun

and Bradstreet as the area/district data supervisor for 10 years, attending college while working full-time.

She graduated from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, majoring in business management with a minor in criminal justice in 1974. In 1977, she returned to New Orleans and began working management jobs such as a McDonald's store manager, then advancing to regional personnel director in the corporate office. She also served as Pizza Hut's director of personnel in the corporate office and in human resources at Rhodes Funeral Home.

She became human resources director at Cox Cable and then was associate vice president and affirmative action representative in Tulane University's Office of Equal Opportunity. While working at Tulane University, in 1978 she graduated from Tulane School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine with a MPH in Health Systems Management.

Right before Hurricane Katrina, she ventured on her own to open Mary's Little Lambs Day Care Center. Katrina destroyed her business and home in 2005, and she lived in Lafayette until completing renovations to her home in May 2006.

Looking for a job, she found Lindy's Place, a homeless program for unaccompa-

nied women, started by the late Marianite Sister Clarita Bourque, and worked there from 2006-16, eventually becoming its executive director.

"It was one of the most effective homeless programs in Orleans Parish for unaccompanied women in collaboration with UNITY of Greater New Orleans," Smith said.


In 2016, HUD decided that transitional programs such as Lindy's Place that helped women become self-sufficient weren't as effective in Louisiana as permanent programs, and it eliminated funding to transitional programs without much warning. Smith worked with the late Benedictine Sister Lillian Pawlik, who volunteered at Lindy's Place, to find grants or other available funding to keep the program afloat a little longer, but to no avail.

In 2017, she contacted Marianite Sister Marjorie Hebert, a board president of Lindy's Place who was now executive director of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans, about job opportunities at Catholic Charities. The rest is history.


Why keep working here

Smith said Catholic Charities' mission statement – "Impelled by the love and teaching of Jesus Christ, we offer life-giving programs, advocate for the voiceless, and empower

See **SMITH** page 19 ►




1976




Archbishop Hannan reaches out to crooner Bing Crosby to headline the inaugural Catholic Charities Ball. Other featured stars include Pete Fountain, Al Hirt, Eddie Miller and bandleader Nelson Riddle.

1977




The second ACC ball at the New Orleans Hilton Riverside is highlighted by singer Perry Como and actor Ray Bolger, who draw a sellout crowd of 2,300. "Anytime (Archbishop Hannan) ever needs me for anything, all he has to do is call me," Como says.

1977



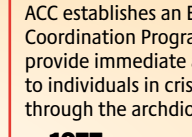
Padua House opens to meet the needs of emotionally, mentally and physically handicapped clients.

1977




Comedian Bob Hope is the guest entertainer at the third annual ball. Revenues allow Catholic Charities to open branch offices on the West Bank and two in the Slidell-Covington area.

1978



ACC establishes an Emergency Assistance Coordination Program designed to provide immediate and temporary help to individuals in crisis. The program works through the archdiocese's 165 parishes.





Ursulines pioneered local charitable outreach

It's an accomplishment that boggles the 21st-century mind.

Within just three months of arriving in New Orleans in 1727 – after an arduous, five-month journey from their native France – the Ursuline Sisters were operating a school for girls and young women that welcomed not only the city's elite, but also those who were on the lowest rungs of society at that time: girls who were enslaved, Native American, free women of color and who had been orphaned.

A letter written by Ursuline novice Marie Madeleine Hachardon on New Year's



Image | COURTESY HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

The Ursuline nuns' voyage from France to New Orleans in 1727 inspired this late 19th-century painting, "Landing of the Ursulines," by Paul Poincy.

Day 1728 gives a glimpse of the Ursulines' dedication to improving the lives of girls of every socio-economic status and forming them in faith:

"All of our community feels a contentment that one can hardly express," writes Marie Madeleine to her father back home in France. "A short time ago, we took a little orphan girl who had been serving in a house that had not been setting a very good example. We intend to take in orphan girls out of charity."

Additional ministries were asked of the Ursulines in those early years: The education and care of young

women mired in prostitution – a ministry the nuns described as "Refuge"; to serve as "hospitalieres" – operators of the Military Hospital that adjoined their French Quarter convent; and to perform the "works of St. Joseph" – acts of charity and almsgiving in the community.

Thus began the Christ-driven, pioneering work of the Ursuline Sisters, whose school at 2635 State St. will celebrate its tricentennial in 2027 as both the oldest continuously operating school for girls and the oldest Catholic school in the United States.

Contributions of religious inestimable in Archdiocese of New Orleans

Even before the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas was established on April 25, 1793, Catholic priests, sisters and brothers of religious communities were engaged in performing charitable works in our area for those in need. Here is a glimpse of religious groups who were in the trenches doing charitable outreach long before the formal establishment of Catholic Charities in 1924. For purposes of space, we have not included religious groups, such as the Jesuits or the Religious of the Sacred Heart, whose principal apostolate was education or prayer. Catholic Charities was

formally established in 1924 to aggregate the charitable work of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Ursuline Sisters (1727):

The Ursuline Sisters were the first women religious to serve in Louisiana, arriving in 1727. In addition to their celebrated ministry of educating girls, including those of African and Native American descent, Ursuline sisters ministered in military hospitals. The order claims the first woman pharmacist in North America, Sister Frances Xavier Hebert.

Congregation of the

Mission (1820): One of the founding purposes of the congregation, more commonly known as the Vincentian Fathers, was evangelization of the poor, especially in rural areas. Supplied chaplains to DePaul, Touro, Baptist, St. Charles General and University hospitals, and to the leprosarium at Carville. St. Joseph Church on Tulane Avenue in New Orleans was entrusted to the congregation by Archbishop Antoine Blanc in 1858, partly to provide chaplains for nearby Charity Hospital, a ministry they continued through


1983. They also provided chaplains for Hotel Dieu and the parish prison.

Daughters of Charity (1830):


After their initial teaching ministry, the Daughters of Charity began their first true ministry in New Orleans at the Poydras Female Orphan Asylum, later founding the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum in 1838, the first home for girls. As needs grew, two separate institutions were set up by the sisters to minister to two different age groups: St. Vincent's Infants Asylum for babies and toddlers; and St.

Elizabeth's House of Industry for teenage girls. The sisters nursed thousands of patients during the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1833. As a result of their dedication to the sick, the sisters were asked to officially assume control of Charity Hospital in 1834. Because Archbishop Antoine Blanc wished to establish a Catholic hospital in the city, the sisters were asked to staff "Maison de Santé" in 1852, an entity that was incorporated under the name of "Hotel Dieu" when it moved to larger headquarters in

See [RELIGIOUS](#) page 13 ►




1978




Catholic Charities installs 160 teletype machines, donated by Western Union, allowing deaf persons to carry on telephone conversations.

1978




Christopher Homes, senior residences for the elderly, comes under the umbrella of ACC. There are 800 affordable apartments for low-income seniors.

1979




Archbishop Hannan says 25,000 people in southeast Louisiana were assisted during the year. Of ACC's \$7 million budget, \$6.255 million in funding comes from United Way.

1979




Comedian Jerry Lewis performs at the fourth-annual Catholic Charities Ball. He does a magic routine that includes burning one of Louisiana Lt. Gov. Jimmy Fitzmorris' handkerchiefs.

1979



ACC seeks foster families for more than 30 Vietnamese children between the ages of 9 and 18 who were rescued from boats in the South China Sea.

1979



RELIGIOUS

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1858. During the Civil War and the subsequent period of Reconstruction, the sisters cared for both Confederate and federal troops. The sisters remained the sponsors of Hotel Dieu for more than 140 years, ending their ministry there on Dec. 31, 1992, when the state assumed control of the hospital and renamed it University Hospital. They also helped to establish schools of nursing at Charity Hospital and Hotel Dieu – the latter of which was the first in Louisiana to offer a three-year diploma. Nine sisters died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1878 and four sisters undertook the care of leprosy (Hansen's Disease) patients gathered in isolation at the long-abandoned Indian Camp Plantation near Iberville, La., 75 miles north of New Orleans. That ministry later became the Louisiana State Leprosarium known as Carville. In 1921, the property was transferred from state to federal ownership and classified as a United States Marine Hospital, giving all Americans who suffered from the disease the right to stay at the colony and be treated without cost. It closed in 2005. Sister Hilary Ross contributed important research to the understanding of Hansen's disease, helping medical personnel to distinguish between patients with active Hansen's bacilli

and those disfigured by lingering effects of the disease.

Sisters of Mount Carmel (1833): Although its principal ministry has been education, the sisters began working in health-related ministry in the mid-1940s when some sisters began studying for their nursing diplomas. In 1952, the community assumed the administration of St. Joseph Hospital in Thibodaux. Other mentioned ministries included social services, special education, home health care, art, parish ministry, gerontology, holistic health care and retreat work.

Sisters of the Holy Family (1842): Founded in New Orleans to bring the Gospel to the poor, needy, free people of color and enslaved 20 years before the abolition of slavery and at a time it was illegal for a community of African-American women to exist. Because the law forbade Black Catholics from joining white religious communities, Venerable Henriette Delille founded the Sisters of the Holy Family. They taught religion, prepared young people for the sacraments, cared for the elderly and shared what they had with the poor and the needy. The sisters established the first incorporated nursing home in the United States, with the formal recognition of Lafon Nursing Home of the Holy Family in 1847. Other locations of the sisters' outreach to the elderly include St. John Berchmans



Image | COURTESY SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Mother Henriette Delille defied societal and legal barriers that denied the enslaved and people of color opportunities for education and catechesis.

Manor, Delille Inn, Flint Goodridge Apartments for Senior Citizens and St. Martin Manor. When children were left homeless by the yellow fever epidemic of 1853, the sisters began caring for orphans, dedicating St. John Berchmans Orphanage for Girls in 1892 and building the Lafon Home for Boys a year later. The sisters cared

for orphaned boys until 1965 and for orphaned girls until 1969, when Associated Catholic Charities of New Orleans called for the closure of orphanages and the placement of children in foster homes.


Redemptorist Fathers, Brothers (1842): The Redemptorists educated and served Catholics in the area

of New Orleans that had become known by 1858 as "Ecclesiastical Square" – a cluster of churches and schools in the Lower Garden District for Irish, French and German immigrants. The buildings of their old high school and rectory have been converted into residences for the elderly.

Marianites of Holy Cross (1848): Archbishop Antoine Blanc invited Marianites of Holy Cross brothers and sisters to the city to staff St. Mary's Orphan Boys' Asylum in downtown New Orleans. The Marianites' work at St. Mary's endured for more than 80 years and involved the care of more than 9,000 orphans before the transfer of residents to Hope Haven in Marrero in the mid-1930s. In 1851, the sisters' attention turned to the needs of girls, for whom they opened the Immaculate Conception Industrial School. The ensuing cholera and yellow fever epidemics claimed the lives of more than 30 children, five brothers and one sister at the two orphanages. In 1955, Marianite sisters also got involved in health care. Marianite administrators and nurses served at two Louisiana hospitals – Opelousas General and Lake Providence.

School Sisters of Notre Dame (1856): The sisters were given St. Joseph Orphanage in New Orleans to operate in 1860, along

See **RELIGIOUS** page 14 ►



1980

Comedian Danny Thomas headlines the fifth annual Archdiocesan Catholic Charities Ball.

With family reunification as a priority, the ACC and the Latin American Apostolate cooperate in resettling Cuban refugees in the archdiocese. ACC seeks sponsors to aid in the resettlement of Haitians, Ethiopians and other refugees.

1980

Daughter of Charity Sister Anthony Barczykowski, who had served since 1975 as associate director of ACC, is named director, succeeding Father Haddad.

1980

ACC takes applications for homebound persons to receive home dental care.

1981

Food for Seniors program opens, merging five years later with Food for Families.



RELIGIOUS

► From **PAGE 13**

with St. Joseph Cemetery as a source of income for the orphanage. It remained under their direction until 1931. At about that time, Catholic welfare leaders decided to consolidate the city's Catholic orphanages at a new facility – Madonna Manor in Marrero. The sisters continued their ministry at the new location. After Chinchuba Institute for the Deaf (in Chinchuba, La.) burned in 1931, the residents were relocated to the former St. Joseph Orphanage until a new complex was built next to Madonna Manor in 1940. The sisters worked with the hearing impaired until 1979. Although mainly engaged in education ministry, the sisters also conducted hospital ministry, social apostolate, guidance work, pastoral ministry and art ministry. One of its most famous members was Sister Lillian McCormack, who founded St. Michael Special School in 1965. The sisters also work with the elderly. Sister Eugene Gsell was the first administrator of Wynhoven Apartments, one of the first residences for senior citizens in the archdiocese. Two blood sisters – Sisters Anna Mary and Teresa Martin Caronia – worked at the Nazareth Inn, built in 1980.

Congregation of St. Joseph (1856): The Sisters of St. Joseph focused their



Photo by Beth Donze | CLARION HERALD

Religious brothers and sisters marking milestone jubilees come together each year for a Mass celebrating their vocation of service to the church.

apostolic works primarily on education and health care (the latter at Terrebonne General Hospital in Houma) before branching out in the 1960s into adult education, anti-literacy efforts in prisons, reading to the blind and visually impaired, promoting Bread for the World and serving as consultants for children with AIDS. In more recent years, their ministries have evolved into social justice initiatives, such as the anti-death penalty work of Sister Helen Prejean.

St. Mary's Dominican Sisters (1860): In 1960, the sisters responded to an appeal to help staff Seventh Ward Hospital near Hammond, serving 19 years before passing it to the laity. A Dominican sister who helped pioneer the hospice movement in the Tangipahoa area became hospice chaplain to the bereaved. In 1980, a

former administrator of the hospital founded Metairie Manor, apartments for low-income seniors.

Cabra Dominicans (1860): Sister Lillianne Flavin gave 12 years to Hope House in the St. Thomas Housing Project; Sister Miriam Quinn brought Head Start to New Orleans.

Little Sisters of the Poor (1868): With their mission focused on the needs of the needy elderly, the sisters follow the commitment of their founder, St. Jeanne Jugan, of "receiving the aged in need, caring for them until death and serving them in an evangelical atmosphere mindful of authentic respect for life." They established St. Joseph's Home, a residence for widows and the elderly, in 1869 on North Johnson Street. By 1881, St. Joseph's had expanded to serve 230 seniors. A second home – St.

Mary's – was established in 1887 on Prytania Street and housed an additional 200 elderly. St. Mary's operated until 1957, when it was closed due to maintenance costs. When St. Joseph's also became inadequate to provide modern geriatric services, the sisters dedicated the Mary-Joseph Residence for the Elderly in 1972 on Woodland Drive in Algiers. In 1988, 18 apartments for the independent elderly were added to the home. Its Sacred Heart Senior Service Center provided services seven days a week that included social interaction, Mass, hot lunch and boxed, take-home meals. Care of the dying is an important aspect of the Little Sisters' apostolate. The dying are never left without a Little Sister praying by their side.

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (1869): Known as the "walking nuns," Sisters of Mercy trudged two-by-two down Dublin's lanes and alleys to bring assistance to the poor and the sick. Social work, teaching and nursing. They heroically answered the call to serve those stricken by epidemics, visiting jails to instruct prisoners. The sisters nursed patients of all races in their homes and brought food to nourish the sick upon their arrival in the city, including those suffering from yellow fever. In 1922, the sisters began serving nurses at St. Rita's Infirmary because its aim was to help the poor. The following year, the Saulet home was donated

to them for purposes of establishing a hospital. The renovated property, opened in 1924, housed a school of nursing and the Mercy Hospital Soniat Memorial, graduating its first class of nurses in 1928. In 1953, Mercy Hospital more than doubled its size at a more central location in Mid-City. From the time of their arrival in the city, the sisters made weekly visits to the city jail, the Boys' House of Refuge and parish prison, where they aided and instructed the inmates. The sisters successfully encouraged the warden to ease the conditions under which the women served their time, separate quarters were arranged for them, and matrons replaced the male deputies in the women's section. They established a House of Mercy in 1869 to house young women as they acquired job skills. This home aided more than 1,000 girls over the next decade. In 1873, the Mercies opened the first free daycare nursery in the city. This Mercy Creche helped hundreds of working mothers during the next three decades. In 1871, during the yellow fever epidemic, they brought newly orphaned girls to live in their convent. Fifty girls lived with the sisters in 1876, when the St. Alphonsus Asylum opened. It remained open for another 50 years. In the Newsboys' Home, the sisters taught free evening classes for 36 years.

See **RELIGIOUS** page 15 ►

Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans

1982

Food for Seniors program opens, merging five years later with Food for Families.

1983

ACC relocates its headquarters from St. Joseph's Hall of Notre Dame Seminary to 1231 Prytania St., a few blocks from the former Lee Circle. The seminary space becomes the new home of a UHF television station, operated by the archdiocese.

1983

ACC accepts applications from seniors and disabled persons seeking assistance with their heating bills.

1984

ACC sponsors a sneak preview of the "Treasures of the Vatican" Exhibit at the Vatican Pavilion of the World's Fair.

1985

ACC launches an annual second collection, "Care with Us," to benefit its wide array of programs. The initial goal is \$300,000. Sister Anthony says, "We have people come to ACC every day who need the very basics of life just to survive."

RELIGIOUS

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Benedictine Sisters (1870): In the 1970s, the sisters began to work in archdiocesan ministries besides education, among them hospital chaplaincies, counseling, nursing, religious education, parish ministry and retreat work.

Sisters of Christian Charity (1873): While they served primarily in education and retreat ministry, their work with the poor included helping to form Hope House in the St. Thomas Housing Development in the early 1970s. One of the sisters worked for 20 years on the chaplain's staff at Orleans Parish Prison.

Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart (1892): The order, founded by St. Frances Cabrini and more commonly known as the "Cabrini Sisters," ministered to Italian-American immigrant children and families by setting up schools and orphanages on St. Philip Street in the French Quarter and on Esplanade Avenue, making home visits and teaching religion. After 54 years at their Esplanade Avenue site, the orphanage phase of the sisters' service ended, and the building eventually became the new home of Cabrini High School, which opened in 1959.

Sisters Servants of Mary (1914): The sisters serve as ministers to the sick

and dying, caring for their patients throughout the night so their daytime caretakers can rest.

Society of St. Teresa of Jesus (1915): The Teresians served primarily in retreat ministry, but in 1992 answered a call to use their unique heritage as a multicultural community of Hispanic origin to promote justice and minister to Hispanics, youth and the poor.

Communities that arrived in the Archdiocese of New Orleans after the establishment of Catholic Charities in 1924 and whose principal work extended beyond education:

Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate (1926): In addition to their primary apostolate of education of the economically poor, Holy Spirit sisters engaged in volunteer social service ministries at Charity and Hotel Dieu hospitals, Hope House and Christopher Homes.

Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic (1927): In 1968, the sisters helped spearhead the archdiocese's Social Apostolate and Witness programs. Sister Maria Emmanuel Martinez helped found the archdiocesan Latin American Apostolate (today's Hispanic Apostolate). Sister Louise Villere helped new mothers with their babies and prayed at the bedside of the dying in the bayou community of Grand Caillou. Sister Maria Canez ministered



Photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

St. Frances Cabrini ministered to the city's Italian-American orphans and families. Canonized in 1946 as the first American citizen-saint, her bedroom in the sisters' former Esplanade Avenue convent (today's Cabrini High) is preserved.

to the poor of Port Barre, Louisiana.

Salesians of Don Bosco (1933): Their work in the

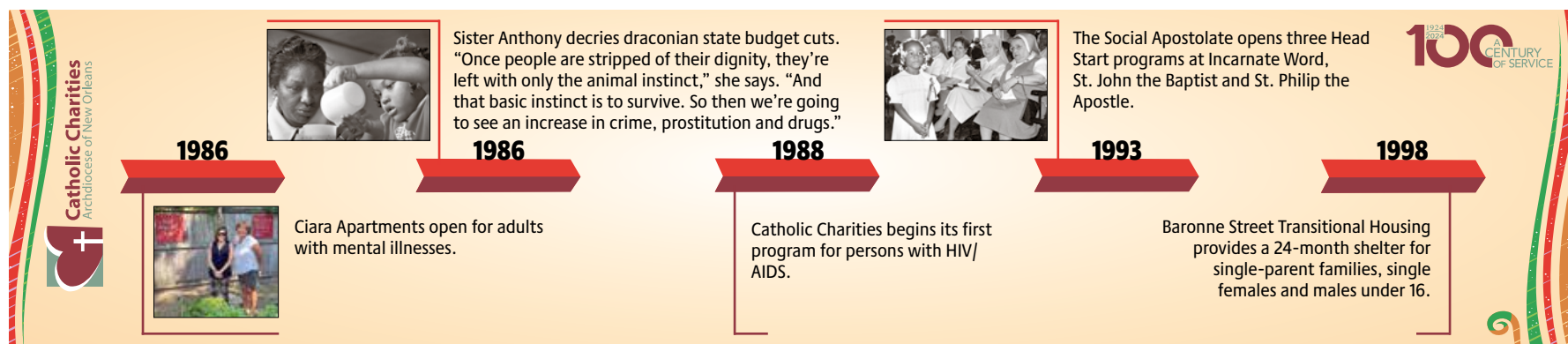
Archdiocese of New Orleans began at Hope Haven home for boys in 1933.

Daughters of Our

Lady of the Holy Rosary (1979): The New Orleans community was established after an appeal was issued by Archbishop Philip Hannan for women religious to provide charitable outreach services to the archdiocese's growing population of Vietnamese immigrants. Their ministries have included nursing, social work, counseling, catechesis and early childhood education.

Order of the Holy Trinity (1982): Archbishop Hannan invited the Trinitarians of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Province to take up pastoral duties at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church and the hospital chaplaincy at Hotel Dieu. Their outreach included assisting at Second Harvest (Brother Ronald Specht, director) and Project Lazarus.

Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (2005): The sisters' apostolic works focus on ministering to the homeless and hungry of New Orleans with a goal of helping them find permanent housing. The sisters' presence in the city, which coincided with Hurricane Katrina, formed the nucleus of what is today's "Rebuild Center" anti-homelessness collaborative at St. Joseph Church. Presentation Sisters also are part of the leadership team at Hotel Hope, which provides temporary housing, meals, job training and other services to homeless women and their children.





Katrina taught lessons of partnership, ingenuity

By Peter Finney Jr.
Clarion Herald

If Hurricane Katrina was a seminal moment in the history of New Orleans, it also left an indelible mark on Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans and, in fact, on the Catholic Church in the United States.

Two years before Katrina, Jim Kelly of Catholic Charities and Gordon Wadge of the archdiocesan Social Apostolate spearheaded a discernment process that resulted in the merger of the local church's two major social outreach organizations into Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (CCANO) in July 2003.

Kelly and Wadge were named co-executive directors of CCANO, and they felt the new entity was better prepared than ever to fulfill its now-singular mission.

"It just didn't make any sense to continue these two separate but parallel ministries," said Wadge, now the executive director of YMCA New Orleans. "Bishop (Roger) Morin had to warm up to the idea, because the Social Apostolate was his baby. But, we knew we could be more effective as one ministry organization."

"We knew we could be more efficient and more effective," recalled Kelly, now living in Birmingham,

Alabama, after completing more than a decade of executive service with Covenant House, which runs residential facilities for homeless youth and young adults in New Orleans and across the country. "It wasn't a matter of simply being satisfied with merging. It was about what talents and resources would be coming together. If you think about it, it was God's providence. We were prepared for being efficient and effective and open to new ideas and new partners."

"And, then," Kelly said, "came Katrina."

Katrina's watershed

To say Kelly and Wadge were joined at the hip during



Photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

Gordon Wadge, left, and Jim Kelly became co-presidents of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans in August 2003, two years before the devastation of Katrina tested Catholic Charities' ability to respond in innovative ways.

the biggest natural disaster in U.S. history is not an understatement. From the time Katrina hit New Orleans on Aug. 29, 2005, the two lead executives were side-by-side at the Superdome – a five-minute walk from the CCANO office at 1000 Howard Ave. – helping local evacuees stay calm, charting plans for the hours ahead and then looking beyond, into the fog of war, to bring the big picture into focus.

Wadge said his wife Mary has urged him to write a book about his experiences in the aftermath of Katrina. He has rehashed the memories for the last 18 years.

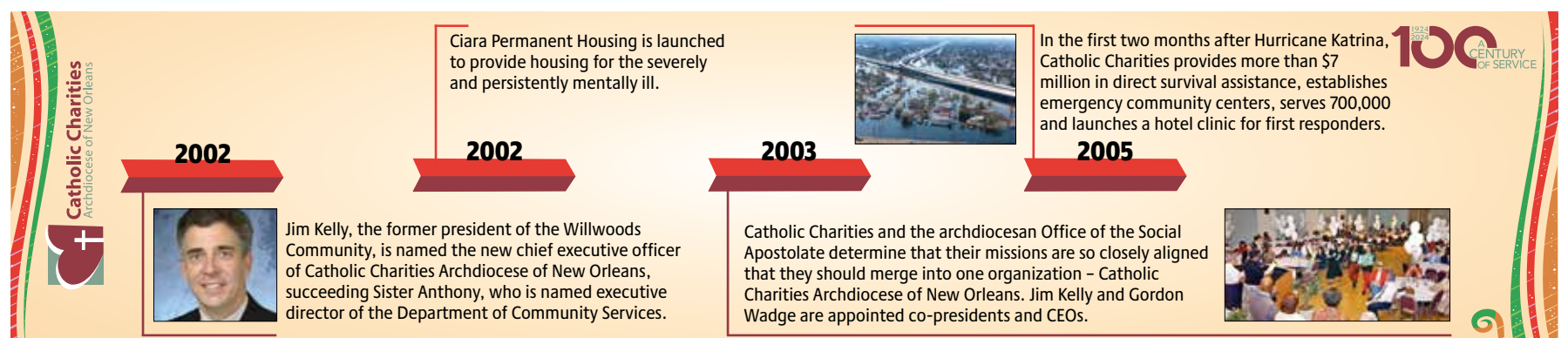
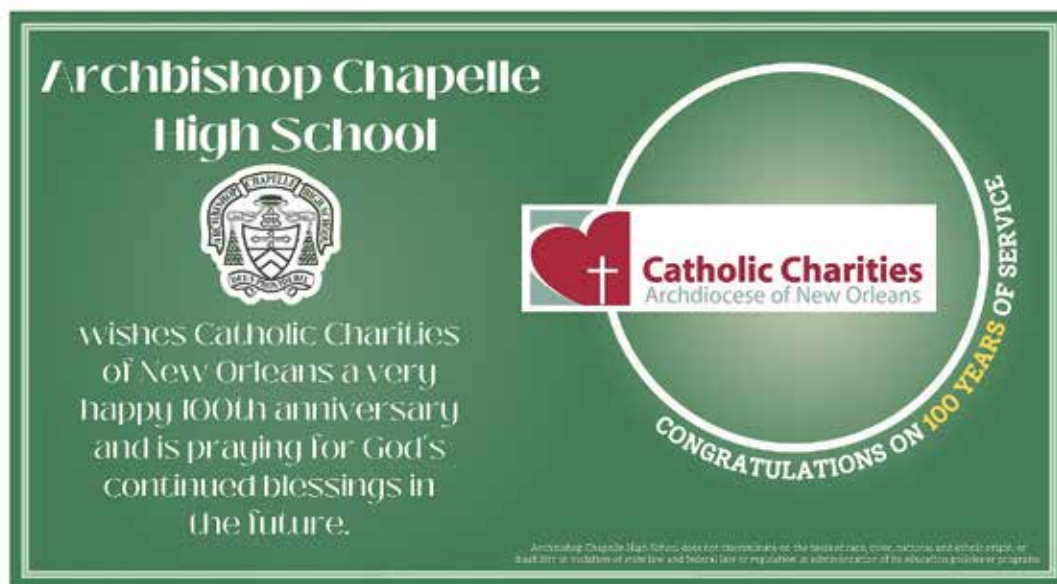
"When we walked into

the Superdome, I remember it was freezing cold because they had cranked the air conditioning way down knowing that the utilities were probably going to go out," Wadge said. "That first night, we thought we had dodged a bullet."

Wadge said he and Kelly walked to the Superdome on the off chance they could help Jesuit Father Jim Deshottels, who is a nurse practitioner, in his work.

"We were helping in the medically frail section, mostly seniors who needed more care," Wadge said. "As Jim and I were there, this endless line of wheelchairs started

See **KATRINA** page 17 ►



KATRINA

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to come in before the storm. And I was like, 'What in the world?' The head nurse from one of the nursing homes told me they had been waiting for their evacuation bus, and it never showed up.

"We were just trying to keep people comfortable,

talk to them and calm them down. There was one lady with a wonderful British accent – she obviously had Alzheimer's and dementia – and she was talking and talking. Then she said, 'Well, thank you so much. I've had a wonderful visit, and now I'm ready to go.'

Some of the toughest moments were when frail seniors began to die because

of the trauma. Wadge said rather than place the seniors in body bags in the middle of the room and cause more alarm, Father Deshotels rolled their wheelchairs to another area, where authorities had set up a makeshift morgue.

On the second night – with no news of the levees having been breached – Wadge and Kelly walked to the Loews

Hotel, where Deacon Steve Ferran was the general manager, thinking they might find a room for the night. When they got there, they saw Deacon Ferran siphoning gas from a car into "a brand new SUV."

Wadge asked Deacon Ferran what he was doing siphoning gas.

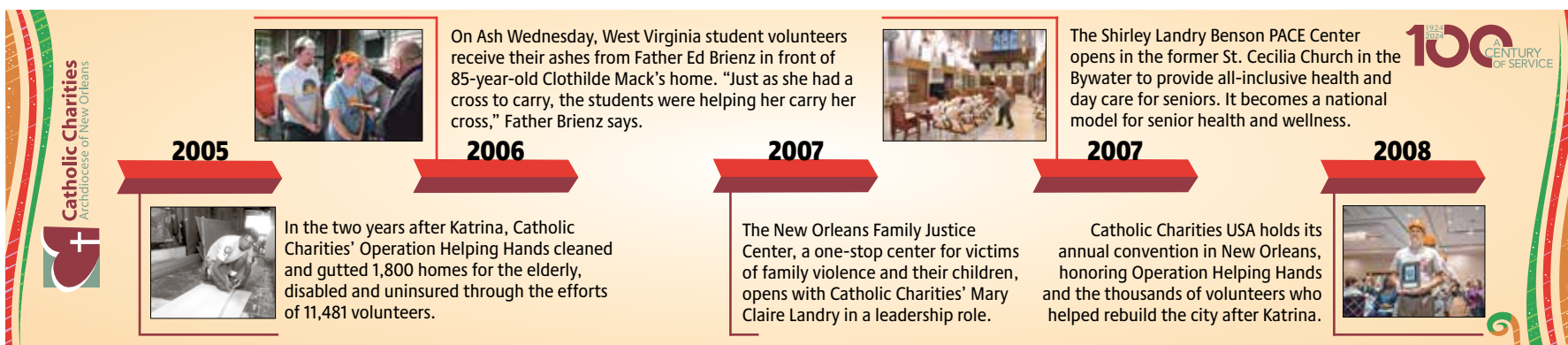
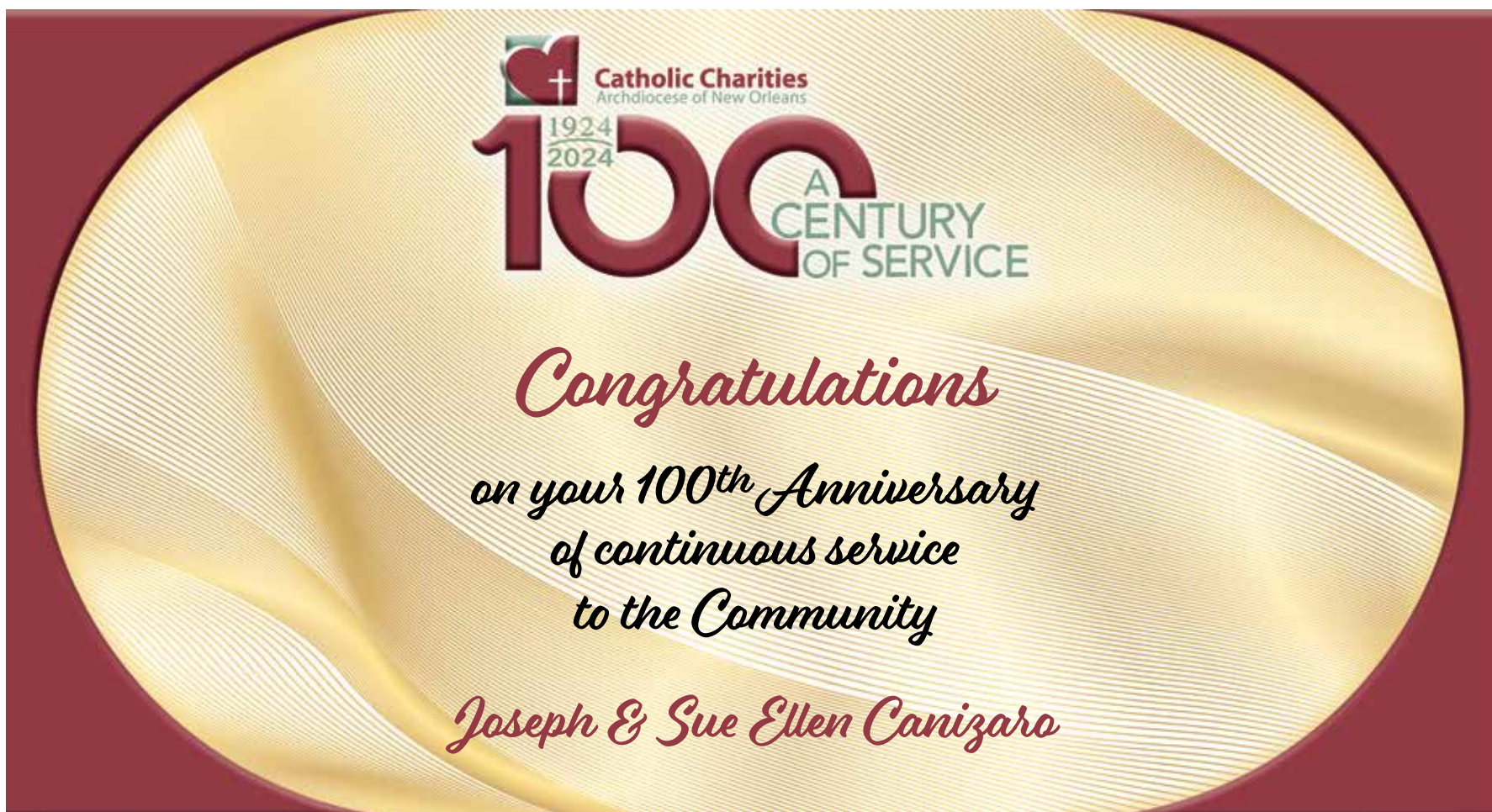
"He said, 'Well, we were hosting "Wheel of Fortune"

here last night, and this is one of the vehicles they were giving away,' and he laughed and said, 'So I'm giving it away,'" Wadge said.

Several hotel guests were able to make it out of town.

When Wadge and Kelly walked back to the Superdome, they could see the streets begin filling with water. They spent the night at Howard

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KATRINA

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Avenue.

"The coolest thing was that as you walked the streets, you could see every star in the heavens," Wadge said. "As we looked out the window, we could see this endless line of military personnel trucks carrying people."

Back inside the Superdome, Wadge recalled Kelly taking out one of his ubiquitous small notepads.

"In typical Jim Kelly fashion, he said, 'OK, let's start thinking about what we're going to have to do once the hurricane has passed,'" Wadge recalled.

Will never forget Edith

At some point, Kelly heard about frail elderly patients being kept on one of the concourses at the Louis Armstrong International Airport with hopes of transporting them to the Pete Maravich Center in Baton Rouge, where medical facilities had been set up. With the assistance of some college students, Kelly commandeered two yellow school buses and talked his way past soldiers onto the tarmac and made his way to the concourse, where behind a curtain the frailest patients were being kept on stretchers.

"There were a whole bunch of people who were too frail or too old to even get on the bus," Kelly said. "There must have been a dozen people,

and there was a nurse and a doctor checking on them. They were wrapped in green blankets with their names on a piece of tape.

"What else could I do? I got on my knees and did what a grandchild would do," Kelly said. "I stroked Meredith's hair and said, 'Meredith. You know, it's a miracle. You've had such a great life. God is so proud of you.' I went from body to body, and in most cases, there was no response, maybe a smile.

"And then I got to Edith, and I did the same thing. After I finished talking, I blessed Edith on the forehead. I could see Edith trying to push her hands out, and I said, 'No, no, no. You don't need to do that.' She pushed the blankets back, took her hand and she blessed me. And then, I knew we were going to be OK."

Serving while 'wounded'

Wadge continues to be amazed at the response of so many first responders, CCANO staff members and volunteers in the midst of Katrina and in the years of rebuilding that followed it.

"I just remember how people rallied," Wadge said. "Just from the Catholic Charities perspective, the staff rallied and looked out for each other and were wounded first responders, all at the same time. We say, 'We're not first responders, we're forever responders,' and that's the role of the church."

In the months after Katrina, Wadge would lead bus tours of volunteers and residents into the Lower Ninth Ward to show the extent of the damage. As the bus stopped at the levee breach and the passengers disembarked, they were handed a paper containing the names of the more than 1,500 people who died in Katrina.

"We didn't want to just say, 'And 1,500 people died,'" Wadge said. "Actually, if you think about all the related heart attacks, it was probably over 2,000. We would have a prayer, and we would look at the names."

Every victim has a name

One man came up to Wadge to inform him that his uncle's name was not on the list, and Wadge asked him to tell his story.

"Well, he was in his 80s and when he got back to his house, he thought he was going to be able to rebuild it, and he died of a heart attack inside his house," the man said.

"There are so many stories like that," Wadge said.

Wadge said CCANO learned quickly how to pivot and get people the help they needed immediately.

"Because of the broad shoulders of the church, we could develop programs and bring assets to the table pretty quickly," Wadge said. "The church could work faster than the government. I think that's pretty remarkable. We started programs like Op-

eration Helping Hands – the whole rebuilding program.

"We were all going through it together. It's a tragedy when you have some violent crime that affects a particular family, but everybody had their Katrina experience."

Nimble decision-making

Kelly said the ability to be nimble and respond highlighted CCANO's works after Katrina. CCANO joined with Providence Community Housing to develop several swaths of the city with affordable and quality housing. It also opened the first domestic violence shelter in the state.

"Katrina is a great example to say that wherever there was a need, Catholic Charities was there or could be there overnight," Kelly said. "Whether it's an oil spill or a natural disaster. Whether you go back to 1727 with the Ursulines – hospital care, housing, charities, education – we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us.

"It was natural for us to start a Providence Community Housing. We needed to create an entity that could do housing so that everybody who wanted to come home could come home. That was our goal. It wasn't a matter of saying, 'Oh no, the poor shouldn't be able to come home.'"

The thousands of volunteers who came to rebuild New Orleans through Operation Helping Hands came

because of the partnerships CCANO had with Catholic Charities USA and with dioceses across the country.

"And they came, week after week after week," Kelly said. "It was an example of one plus one becoming five. What we saw with Catholic Charities all the time was this: God blessed the desires of the heart."

So many stepped up

In the midst of the spiritual synergy after Katrina, Kelly said he remains overwhelmed by the generosity of so many people. Among them were two Catholic business executives with a history of philanthropy.

"We're setting up shop (in Baton Rouge) after Katrina and somehow (the executive) gets through, and he says, 'I'm going to send you \$300,000 and I'll get my brother to match that,'" Kelly said. "I said, 'That would be just great. How do you want me to spend it?' And he says, 'I'm not worried about that. And three days later, he calls me back and says, 'I'm going to send you a million and my brother's going to match.' Just go do good work."

"There's a part of Catholic Charities that is different. We have these humble givers, and we have a whole bunch of people praying for our work and the people we're serving. That's the foundation of the Catholic Charities. It's prayer."

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Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans

100
CENTURY
OF SERVICE

2008

Catholic Charities teams with Providence Community Housing to accelerate new housing starts in the Tremé neighborhood and elsewhere.

2009

The cleared site of the Lafitte public housing development is transformed in 18 months into affordable and mixed-income housing through Providence Community Housing, a close partner with Catholic Charities.

2010

After an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, BP makes a \$6.7 million grant to Catholic Charities for direct assistance such as gift cards to grocery stores, case management and counseling.

2011

Catholic Charities case workers lead an emergency effort at Ascension of Our Lord after Hurricane Isaac sends floodwaters into nearly 7,000 LaPlace homes.

2012

Operation Helping Hands celebrates its 200th home restored after Hurricane Katrina.

SMITH

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the poor and vulnerable to foster a more just society” – reflects how she feels.

“I provide assistance to the most vulnerable in our community,” she said. “It is a rewarding and unique experience for me.”

Smith mentioned a young mom with children whom she

assisted getting a high utility bill paid through Total Community Action.

“It’s a blessing to be able to find solutions for those in need,” Smith said. “I get such joy, knowing this mom won’t have her utilities disconnected or her children sitting in the dark because I found a resource for her need.”

Through discussions with Catholic Charities’ colleagues,

she’s discovered that all employees, no matter their faith or circumstance, know that the crux of their mission is putting people first, especially helping the most vulnerable who don’t always have the resources to make the best decision.

“It has strengthened my faith seeing all the opportunities at Catholic Charities to help people, knowing that I am making a real change in

someone’s life.”

Reflecting on her work history, Smith knows God has a way of leading everyone to their destiny and what he wants us to do in our lifetime.

“This is where he wants me to be,” Smith said. “I am fulfilling the mission of Catholic Charities, and I am blessed to be a blessing.”

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Mary Smith accepts a proclamation for helping a client from New Orleans City Councilman Oliver Thomas.



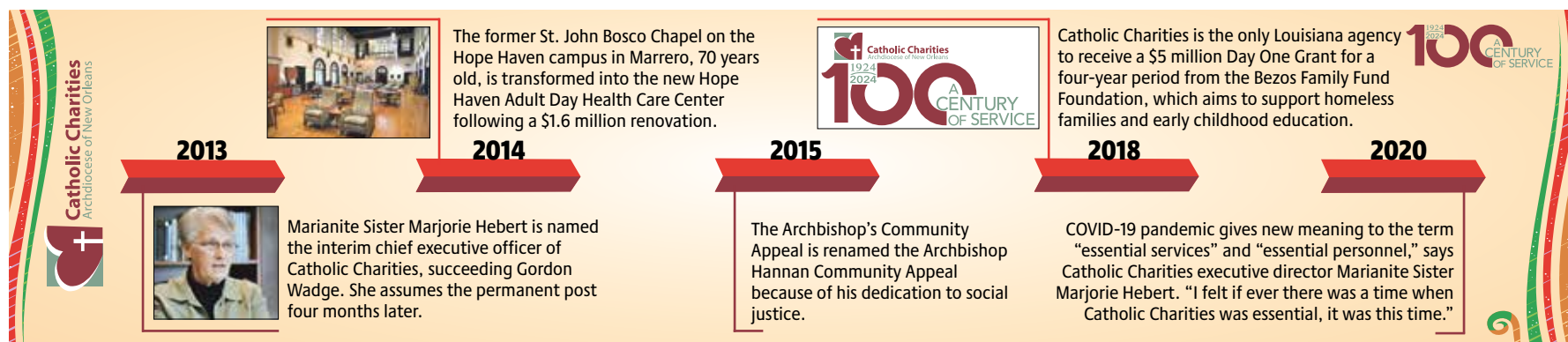
The Very Rev. Joshua J. Rodrigue and the faculty, staff, and seminarians of Notre Dame Seminary congratulate

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

as it celebrates 100 years of caring for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of those they serve.

The Notre Dame Seminary Community offers you prayerful best wishes as you continue your mission.

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**Marianite Sister
Marjorie Hebert**

**Archbishop
Gregory M. Aymond**

A hundred years of boundless love. A century of service. Today, we celebrate a remarkable milestone - the Centennial of Catholic Charities.

Their unwavering dedication to serve, to heal and to uplift the most vulnerable and disadvantaged among us is a profound demonstration of faith in action. If the founding men and women were not impelled to begin Catholic Charities a century ago, the void of compassion & care would be so detrimental to the life of the community in Louisiana that I would be compelled to create it myself.

Congratulations!

+ [Signature]



Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans

100
1924
2024
A CENTURY
OF SERVICE