

LIFE THROUGH DEATH

Diocese celebrates the joy of Easter

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

One year after a global pandemic shut down public gatherings during Holy Week and Easter Sunday, churches in the diocese of Baton Rouge opened under guidelines issued by Bishop Michael G. Duca.

The protocols for Holy Week as well as the triduum, which are considered the “holiest three days” of the liturgical year, were similar to what had been issued by the Holy See, according to Episcopal Vicar Father Jamin David.

On Palm Sunday, March 28, processional palms were blessed at the beginning of the ceremony and distributed in some fashion, but no processions from one place to another were allowed.

Holy Thursday’s tradition of washing of the feet also disappeared. Also, the Blessed Sacrament procession remained in the church.

The veneration of the cross Good Friday was held without touching or kissing of the cross, although the faithful were able to venerate the cross by bowing.

Even the Chrism Mass was celebrated one day before its traditional Wednesday of Holy Week date and, for this year only, was moved from St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge to St. George Church in Baton Rouge. In-person attendance was limited to invitation only because of physical distancing regulations.

SEE CHRISM PAGE 16

Bishop Michael G. Duca blesses the oils during the Chrism Mass celebrated March 30 at St. George Church in Baton Rouge. Standing to Bishop Duca’s left is Vicar General Father Tom Ranzino. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator



Man answers ‘Mamma’s’ request to make rosary video

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Charles Barbre teamed up with daughter, Karen Ullo, to record a video on praying the rosary for the simple reason that “Momma (his term of endearment for the Blessed Mother) asked me. And when Momma asks me to do something, I do it.”

Underlying his matter-of-fact answer is his knowledge and belief in the

power of the rosary and Mary’s urgent request to spread the devotion for the salvation of souls.

Barbre, a member of Knights of Columbus Council 9247 of St. Jean Vianney Church in Baton Rouge, has wanted to record a video on the rosary for years but could not find someone to volunteer their skills or talent to do it. Brett Cormier, through his work as state audio visual chairman for the Louisiana State Knights

of Columbus, obtained the equipment for the project. Cormier recorded the presentation and started the editing process, and Catholic Life Television completed it.

Barbre was joined in the video by Ullo, music director at St. Jean Vianney and at the Cypress Springs Mercadian Prayer Center chapel in Baton Rouge.

“She (Karen) is a smart cookie. She knows her liturgy and spirituality.

She was an excellent partner to do the video with,” said Barbre.

Having worked in sports talk radio and television for the past 25 years, Barbre is known by many as “The Rooster,” a nickname given to him by a caller during one show. He is comfortable in front of the camera but even sports “takes a back seat” when it comes to encouraging others to pray the rosary.

SEE ROSARY PAGE 4

DID YOU KNOW



Divine Mercy, Eugeniusz Kazimirowski, 1934

Happy Eastertide!

With the rolling away of the stone from Jesus' tomb and the angel's announcement that he has risen just as he said, we entered Eastertide, or the 50 days of the Easter season. Time to put away the "sack cloth and ashes" and fasting of Lent and feast on a season that itself has many celebrations and ends with one big celebration at Pentecost.

The first notable celebration is Divine Mercy Sunday, also known as the Feast of Divine Mercy, which is the Sunday after Easter and concludes the Octave of Easter. Church parishes in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the world have gathered throughout Lent to sing or pray the novena for this feast.

In the 1930s Jesus appeared to Polish nun St. Faustina Kowalska and asked her to institute a Feast of Divine Mercy in order to let people know that his "ocean of mercy" is greater than any sin.

On April 30, 2000, St. Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina and established Divine Mercy Sunday. On that day, St. John Paul II declared, "This is the happiest day of my life."

There's also the receiving of many sacraments going on during the Easter season. Children, girls looking like little brides and boys like little grooms, receive first Communion and teenagers are sealed

with the Holy Spirit, making this period known as the "season of sacraments."

The lives of the saints also continue to be celebrated. Among them is the feast of St. George on April 23. A martyr, St. George is known by legend as "The Dragon Slayer." St. George School in Baton Rouge calls upon St. George as an intercessor academically and spiritually as well as leader for athletic victories.

The month of May, of course, is dedicated to the Blessed Mother, as a tribute to her purity, faith and love and pointing the way to her son, Jesus.

The 40th day after Easter is the feast of the Ascension commemorating Jesus' ascension into heaven in the presence of his apostles. Jesus promised his followers that he would soon pour out the Holy Spirit on them.

And what better way to end the Easter season than to throw a birthday party! Pentecost commemorates the appearing of the Holy Spirit to the apostles in the upper room as "tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them."

Pentecost is considered "the birthday of the church" during which the apostles, as we are challenged to do today, boldly went out to proclaim the good news and make disciples of all the nations.

Believe

By Dina Dow

Happy Easter!
The celebration of the resurrection of our Lord continues as we journey into the Second Sunday of Easter: Sunday of Divine Mercy and the Third Sunday of Easter. The Mass readings follow the Acts of the Apostles, focusing on the early church; the First Letter of St. John, focusing on the oneness of the church in Christ; and the Gospels of St. John and St. Luke focusing on the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection.

**LIFE-GIVING
FAITH**

Rich in Mercy (Acts 3:13-19; 4:32-35)

Early church life was a community of believers together with "one heart and one mind." They served the community in prayer with mind and body by charity and mercy, giving thanks to God for his everlasting goodness, love and mercy.

The present-day corporal works of mercy were ordinary ways of living to the new Christians, the followers of the Christ, who emulated the same compassion, care, justice and concern as Jesus taught, handed on by the apostles. Indeed, the "way" they followed was the way through the cross to new life in the Resurrection. By the Holy Spirit the leadership of St. Peter turned their eyes and ears to comprehend the magnitude of Christ's Passion, death and resurrection in light of the fathers of faith, each of whom experienced the power of God's mercy. Thus, Jesus came namely to "wipe away" sin and return all to God through his mystical body.

United by Mercy (1 Jn 2:1-5; 5:1-6)

It is the oneness of the faith in Jesus Christ which brings us into the oneness of God and community. St. John's letter encourages the followers, united by God's love, to believe, to avoid sin and to do good by keeping the Ten Commandments, a way to know Jesus. When we know Jesus, we know the commandments and hence we avoid sin and remain in right relationship with God and others. Can it be this easy? By keeping the commandments will we truly come to know Jesus and be united with others?

Yes. The Catechism of the Catholic

Church paragraph 2053 states, "following Jesus Christ involves keeping the commandments. The law has not been abolished, but rather man is invited to rediscover it in the person of his master (Jesus) who is its perfect fulfillment." Again, in

paragraph 2074, "Jesus says: 'I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can

do nothing.'" The fruit referred to in this saying is the holiness of a life made fruitful by union with Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ, partake of his mysteries and keep his commandments, the savior himself comes to love, in us, his father and his brethren, our father and our brethren. His person becomes, through the Spirit, the living and interior rule of our activity. 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.'

We believe in our Lord Jesus, who, by his resurrection, gives us new life. By his love and mercy we must realize we are so deeply loved by God beyond human comprehension. As a response we strive for holiness every day to do good and avoid evil; to love; to be united; to follow the commands of Christ. St. John reiterates, "But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him." And is not that what we live for ... to be perfected in God? To become saints.

Peace of mercy (Jn 20:19-31, Lk 24:35-48)

"Peace be with you."

Spoken by Jesus to the apostles, the first words of our resurrected Lord is an invitation to peace ... calm, ease, quiet, relief, breath, serenity, tranquility, grounded, order ... peace. Yes, there is a storm, yet Jesus offers peace. Peace of mind. Peace of trust. Peace of security. Peace of love. Peace of hope. Peace of faith. Peace of truth. Peace of mercy. It is by his very act of dying to self that we will rise in his merciful peace, life united to God the father and in the Holy Spirit.

Mission of mercy (Jn 20:19-31)

It is this invitation to peace where the
SEE GOSPEL PAGE 15



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Cristo Rey's Work Study Program thrives during pandemic

By Richard Meek

The Catholic Commentator

As the coronavirus pandemic crippled businesses and sent students home for virtual learning in March 2020, Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School officials were concerned about the future of the program that is the cornerstone of its educational mission.

When Gov. John Bel Edwards announced a state lockdown March 13, 2020, school officials made the difficult decision to suspend the Corporate Work Study Program, which allows students to spend one day a week working in a business environment, for the remainder of the school year. The work study program is what distinguishes Cristo Rey from other schools and provides students a unique opportunity to augment their classroom education with real life, workplace experiences.

"It was a complete unknown at the time," Cristo Rey president Eric Engemann said. "I remember early on we had made a number of contingencies, working our way through the end of the school year."

One of those discussions centered on the feasibility of students making one final visit to the corporate offices where they had been working but the realization quickly set in that could not happen, Engemann said.

Also unknown was how many businesses, still struggling with the economic challenges presented by the pandemic, would be able to participate in the work study program in 2020-21. Engemann said "we really did not know how it was going to go."

Although some corporate partners did not renew, many new partners came on board, thus creating what amounted to a neutral effect on the program.

"Our focus was on renewals and not so much on new partners but the response we got from the new partners was really remarkable, to be able to add those new jobs and still be able

to serve the students we have," Engemann said.

Additionally, some of those business partners who have been unable to host a student for the school year have continued to support Cristo Rey financially.

"Our corporate partners have been amazing," Engemann said. "Everyone has been affected by

But the enthusiasm remains high among those system employees engaging with Cristo Rey students.

"I don't think there was a question if we were going to do it; I think it was more of figure out what the process was going to be to ensure kids would be in a safe environment," said Joe Bumpus, director of Information Systems for the health system.

He said the health system has participated in the school's corporate work study program since its inception five years ago. Typically, his department will have two students during the school year but this year, it's only one student.

"The students are great, they bring joy to the team, they are there, they want to learn," Bumpus said. "You see someone you can share your passion with. The entire department rallies around the students, they become part of the family and want to be a part of that."

Cristo Rey sophomore Jeffery Azard Jr., in his first year at the school, is grateful for the opportunity to be working in Bumpus' department. Azard said his education in information technology has been broad-based, learning about programming, networking, printers

and even something as simple as the differences between power cords.

"You learn something new every day," Azard said. "I think it can help me in the long run because if I want to do something like this when I get older, I can do it because I learned it in high school."

For Azard, however, the Cristo Rey experience is much more than learning about computers; it has challenged him educationally, pushing him to test his own limits.

He said the excellent grades that he was making a year ago at a public school "were given to me, easy work."

"I wanted to challenge myself and when I first got here, I was impressed," he said. "I was eager

to learn. When I wake up now I think 'let's see what is going to happen today, what kind of stuff am I going to learn today because I'm ready to do it.'

"I'm focused and determined to do what I need to do."

Along with the educational growth, Azard said the work

SEE PARTNERS PAGE 6



"This is not a game, this is an actual job, and I am learning stuff that can benefit me in the long run."

Jeffery Azard Jr.
Cristo Rey sophomore

this and for everyone to jump back in and continue to be a part of this has been special. A lot of Cristo Rey schools nationwide have struggled with the corporate partner issues."

One of those returning was the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System, which operates Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University and Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, both in Baton Rouge, along with other medical and urgent care facilities throughout Louisiana. Although the health system typically has 16 students in the Corporate Work Study Program spread throughout a variety of departments, that number has dropped to six during the current school year.



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ROSARY ▼

From page 1

Barbre began the devotion on a daily basis in 2009, after he re-visited the story of Our Lady of Fatima’s apparitions to the shepherd children at Fatima Portugal.

“I hadn’t read the story since junior high school. I thought I knew it all, but I kept realizing ‘She said that’ and I didn’t realize that and ‘she wants us to do that’ and I didn’t realize that,” Barbre said. “One thing the Blessed Mother said in all of six (Fatima) apparitions was to pray the rosary.

“So I figured she wasn’t coming down here because she was bored and needed something to do, she was coming down to help save our souls.”

He and his wife, Betty, pray the rosary together daily, while traveling in the car, walking the neighborhood, or walking “laps around the house” in inclement weather.

After the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, Barbre was moved to pray the

rosary when he served meals to workers during recovery efforts at the scene of death and destruction.

“It was on my heart that the reason that I was supposed to go to the World Trade Center was to stand at ground zero and pray the rosary, which I was able to do,” said Barbre.

Doctors determined Barbre’s exposure to pollutants at the World Trade Center caused his kidney cancer that has spread to his lungs. He accepts his illness with faith.

“If I knew then what I know now that I would have cancer, I wouldn’t trade a thing,” he said. “What I got out of that is so much more than whatever I am dealing with now.

“When I found out I had cancer, I gave my cancer to the Blessed Mother. I told her it’s hers to do whatever she wants with it. If she wanted me to come home, that’s fine, and if she wanted to keep me around for a while, that’s fine too. She’s in charge.”

He continues his mission to spread the rosary. In addition to his work with the Knights of



Charles Barbre and daughter, Karen Ullo, discuss effective ways to pray the rosary and answer the question, “Why pray the rosary?” during a recording about the devotion. Photo provided by Brett Cormier

Columbus, he has lead a pro-life rosary in front of Delta Women’s Clinic in Baton Rouge and weekly rosaries at his home (which turned into a carport rosary during the COVID-19 pandemic). On the 25th day of each month he also leads an Armada Rosary Prayer Group dedicated to Our Lady of the Most Precious Blood, which involves praying the rosary, litanies and prayers of supplication.

Ullo noted how her parents’ devotion to prayer has been a good model for the family.

“When they started hosting rosary groups in their home several years ago, we were sometimes able to bring the children to pray with them,” she said. “It was easier when they were younger and had less homework than it is now, but my husband and I have tried to let our children see how the rosary shapes our family and leads us closer to God, both through my parents’ example and our own.”

Barbre said many Catholics know about the rosary but many do not pray it daily or at all. In his

video, Barbre gives an overview of how to effectively pray the rosary and addresses the question, “Why pray the rosary?”

“If you understand the ‘why you pray the rosary, what’s in it for you,’ the how of praying the rosary is easy,” said Barbre.

For those who think that the rosary and devotions to the Blessed Mother are worshipping Mary, Barbre said, “They don’t understand, they’ve never looked into it.”

He said the best way to discover the richness of meditating on the mysteries of her son Jesus through the rosary is to “just start.”

“Since my conversion (of praying the rosary daily) in 2009, the Blessed Mother leads me closer to her son,” Barbre said. “It’s as simple as that. She is looking out for my salvation.

“If you pray the rosary every-day, you will be amazed at the blessings that will come to you.”

To view the video, visit kc9247.org and click on the rosary tab and select the Why Pray the Rosary option on the drop-down menu.

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Bishop Duca praises role of CCDBR during difficult year

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

David Aguillard used one simple phase to capsule the past year as he gave his address at the annual Catholic Charities meeting, which was held virtually March 24.

“2020,” the CCDBR executive director said.

“I don’t know what else I can say,” he somberly added. “It was an extremely difficult time. We provided services like we have never before.”

Aguillard also broke down the “incredible trust” placed in the agency to meet the tremendous needs of people struggling in the Baton Rouge area.

“No other agency in the community did the work we did or continues to do as we changed from financial assistance model to more sustained, ongoing support of vulnerable families, especially those in rural areas,” he said. “We could not have done this without our team members, staff, personal commitments, the life of faith and generosity each of you live in your personal lives and at Catholic Charities. I am inspired and thankful to have been a part of

this organization this past year.” He praised CCDBR employees for making the jobs a priority even as many faced their own personal struggles.

“There will never be another year like this year, I hope,” Aguillard said.

During his address, Bishop Michael G. Duca, while expressing his tremendous pride in CCDBR’s response during the pandemic, said although 2020 was difficult, “every year is different” at Catholic Charities.

“You rise to the challenges, whether it’s floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, the difficulty of dealing with the criminal justice system or the challenges in your own person lives.”

“What is unique about this year,” he added, “is for some of it we had to do it separated, quietly in our homes, separated from the ones we love, where we draw

our strength. But the fact that we are able to continue to respond and prosper in this time is not only a testimony to the organizational qualities of this organization but through the spiritual capital and depth, although we had to call upon it this year to make it through. I think that is a blessing.”

He said the daily lives of CCDBR em-

ployees are focused on running into and meeting the challenges of the day. He said the agency’s tremendous response this past year is testimony to the commitment of the organization as well as its team members.

“We may need this year to recharge that spiritual capital we get by coming together,” the bishop said. “We need to heal from that. But at the same time while you are helping others you are often the one who is hurting.”

“The way we help ourselves when we are spiritually challenged is by helping others. The ones who give their life is the one who finds their life.”

He called CCDBR a great gift to the church and the community and commended the agency’s employees for the work they do.

“I am so proud of you,” he said.

Annual award winners from the past two years were also presented, since the 2020 meeting was cancelled because of the pandemic.

Lisa Namikas was chosen as the recipient of the prestigious David Hamilton Volunteer of the Year for 2019 and Laura Holmes was selected for 2020. The award is presented to a volunteer who demon-

strates excellence in service and exemplifies the Catholic Charities mission, values and commitment to the community.

Aguillard said Namikas has logged hundreds of hours since she began to volunteer with the agency’s Refugee Resettlement Program in 2017. Aguillard said Namikas will drive clients hundreds of miles to obtain a green card and has

raised money to buy school supplies, organized CCDBR’s New Americans’ Thanksgiving event, coordinated volunteers and spearheaded the agency’s Virtual ESL summer camp.

“In her ‘off time’ she teaches history at Baton Rouge Community College and two summers ago, she traveled to Africa to help set up an online college program for refugees,” Aguillard said.

Holmes has spent the past decade as a CCDBR volunteer and helps low-income families prepare taxes at no cost. She also keeps CCDBR updated on new tax laws and is passionate about helping families in need and training other volunteers.

Julia Fontenot was selected as the 2019 Gene Dominigue Coworker of the Year winner and Cecilia Perez was chosen as the 2020 recipient.



Julia Fontenot



Cecilia Perez

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Praying the rosary

Q Why should I pray the rosary? Didn't Jesus condemn repetitious prayer when he said "In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words" (Mt 6:7).

A The rosary is a devotion to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. We can never go wrong honoring the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. The rosary is also a powerful weapon against the devil. St. Padre Pio called the rosary beads a weapon of extraordinary power against Satan. Father Gabriel Amorth, the former chief exorcist of the Vatican, once wrote: "One day a colleague of mine heard the devil say during an exorcism 'Every Hail Mary is like a blow on my head. If Christians knew how powerful the rosary was, it would be my end.'" The rosary is a great way to combat the devil.

Yes, Jesus did say "do not babble like the pagans" but he was not condemning repetitive prayer. He was condemning those pagans who



Stump the Deacon
Deacon George Hooper

rambled on in their prayers thinking that they needed to wear down their gods using many words.

When praying the rosary, we should not just repeat the prayers of the rosary (the Our Fathers, the Hail Marys and the Glory Bes). We should meditate on the mysteries of the rosary (the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious events in the life of Jesus and his mother). This is easier "said than done." Many times, my mind wanders and after completing a decade of the rosary I realize that my meditation fell short. I tried, but multi-tasking is difficult for me. However, the Thomas Merton prayer gives me comfort that my rosary was not in vain. Part of that prayer goes like this: "... the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But, I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you." No prayer, no rosary, is ever wasted.

DEACON HOOPER is a deacon assistant at Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs. He can be reached at ghooper@diobr.org.

PARTNERS ▼

From page 3

study program has helped him mature, admitting when he is at his job he is "a bit more focused because this is how a real job is supposed to be."

"This is not a game, this is an actual job, and I am learning stuff that can benefit me in the long run."

He said the health system staff always makes him feel welcome and even eats lunch with them on the days he is there.

"They treat me as an equal," he said. "I have the (corporate) nametag. I feel like I am part of them part of the family."

"That means a lot to me. I am blessed to be here."

Bumpus said his department has developed a curriculum that covers the entire spectrum of technology. Ultimately students progress to the point where they are able to complete work orders sent in by system employees.

"We are all about mis-

sion, all about being respectful. That is part of our core," Bumpus said. "When you talk about Cristo Rey it gives you an opportunity to share your expertise, to give back, to teach someone in your field of study."

"When you hear they graduate and go on to college, it is great to hear. They are part of your life."

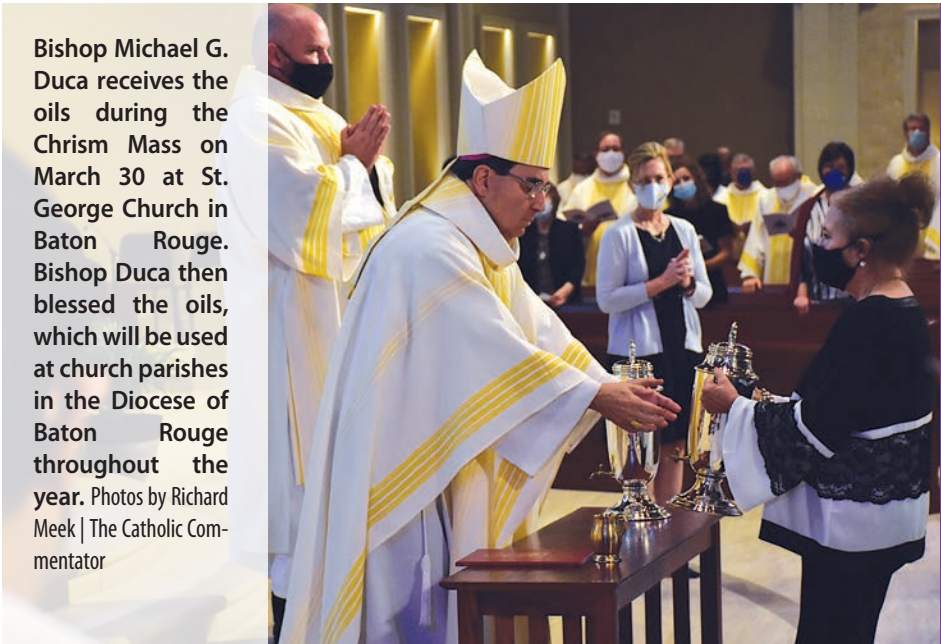
Vice-President of Community Engagement Carissa Graves said this school year has presented unique challenges. Students are transported by school vans to their respective offices but with about 10% of students are still learning remotely, the staff has developed alternative avenues, including students being able to become certified in Excel and other software.

"There are lots of moving parts but we are making sure students are always growing and developing in their workplace skills which is hard to do when they are not at the workplace," Graves said.

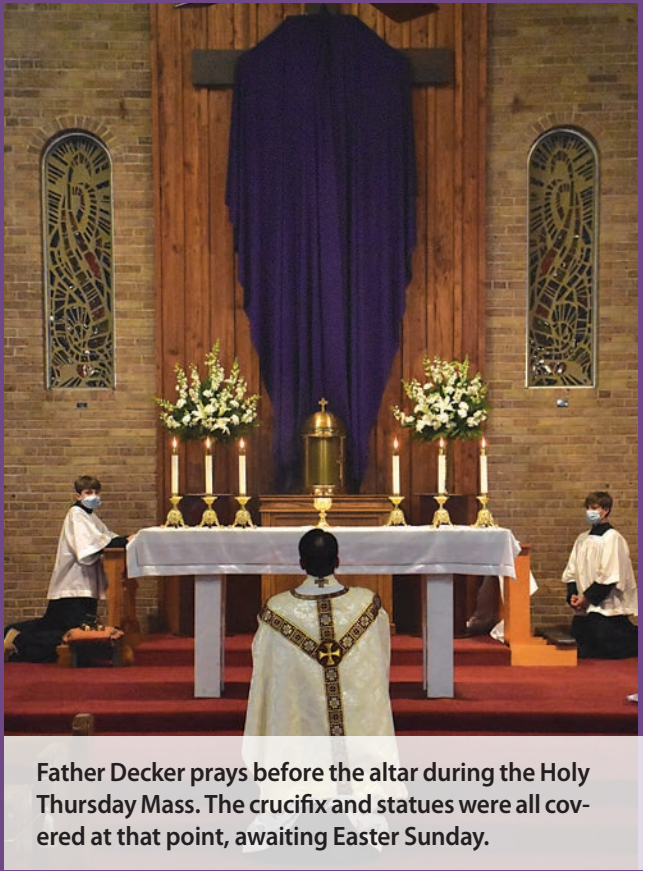
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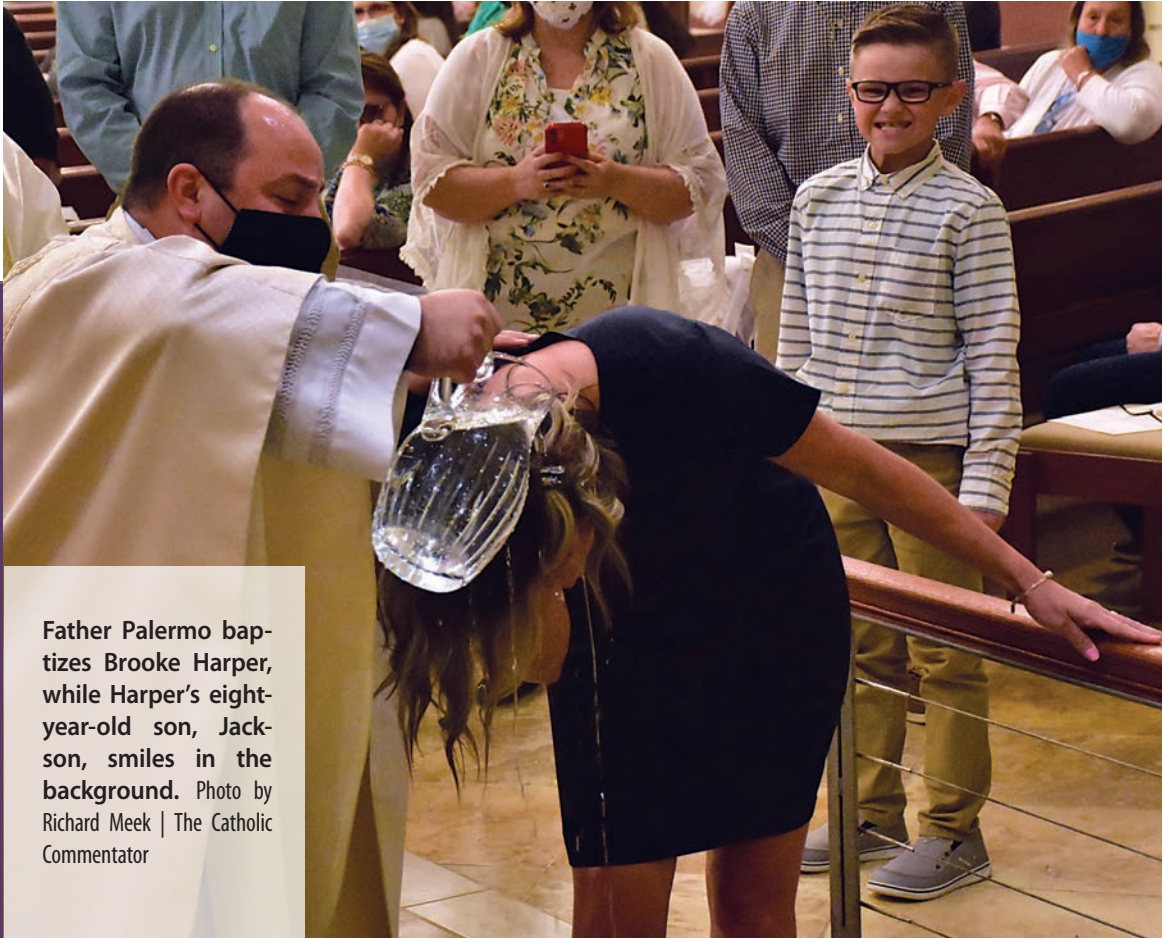
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CHRISM / HOLY THURSDAY MASSES





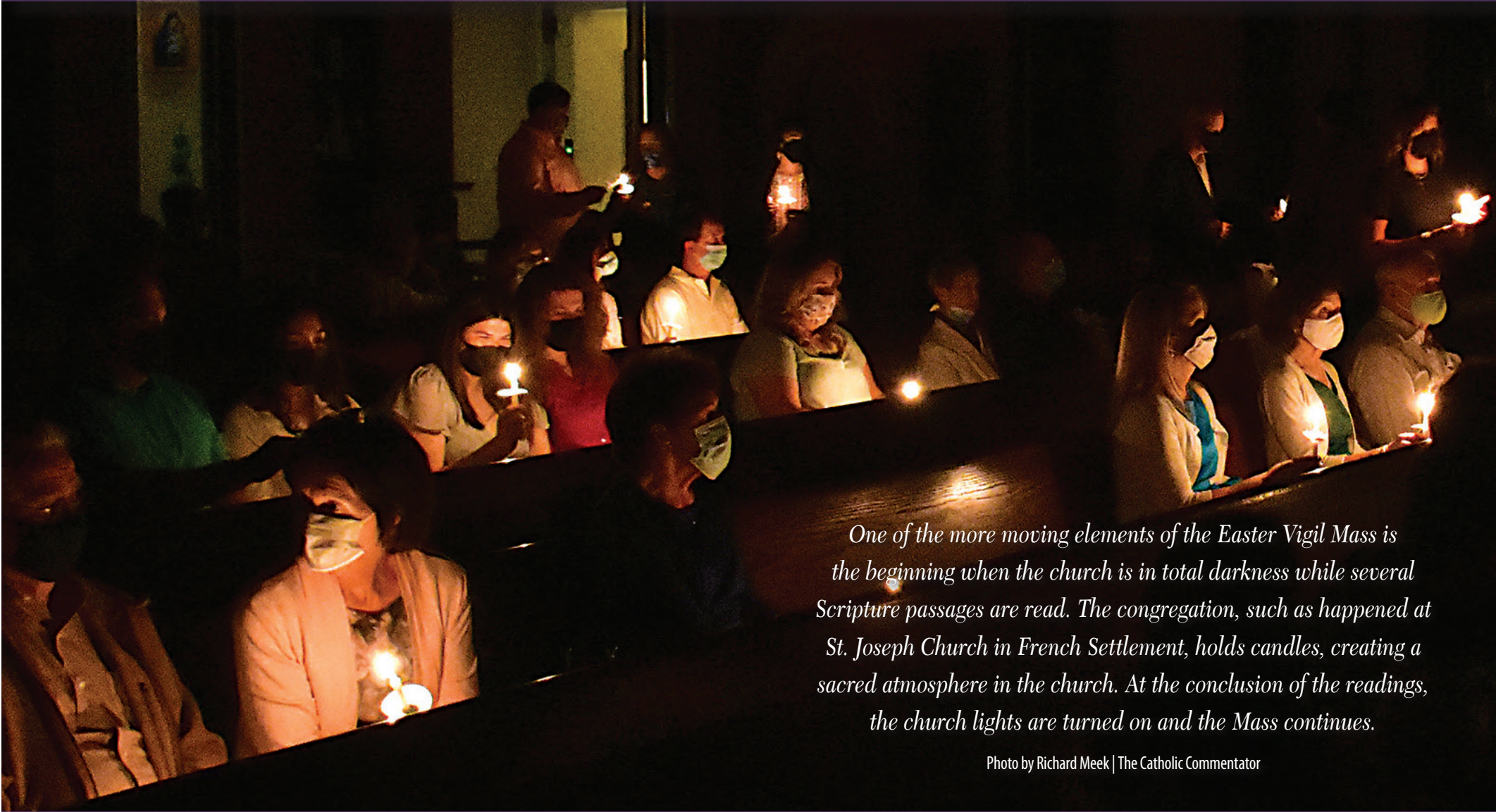
GOOD FRIDAY & EASTER VIGIL 2021

[A] Father Michael Moroney, pastor of St. Alphonsus Church in Greenwell Springs, blesses the Paschal candle during the blessing of the fire and lighting of the Paschal candle at the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Alphonsus Church April 3. Holding the Paschal candle is Deacon Robert Kusch, deacon assistant at St. Alphonsus, and looking on is Linda Amond, coordinator of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and Children at St. Alphonsus. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

[B] After the blessing and lighting of the Paschal candle at the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Alphonsus Church in Greenwell Springs on April 3, the candles of the congregation were lit. Peering upon their lit candles are, from left, Camille Provost, Luc Provost, Jolice Provost, holding Lofton Hyde, and Emile Provost. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

[C] Father Jason Palermo, pastor at St. Joseph Church in French Settlement and St. Stephen the Martyr Church in Maurepas, confirmed several new Catholics during the Easter Vigil Mass on April 3 at St. Joseph. Eight new RCIA candidates were confirmed or baptized during the vigil Mass. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

Father Palermo baptizes Brooke Harper, while Harper's eight-year-old son, Jackson, smiles in the background. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator



One of the more moving elements of the Easter Vigil Mass is the beginning when the church is in total darkness while several Scripture passages are read. The congregation, such as happened at St. Joseph Church in French Settlement, holds candles, creating a sacred atmosphere in the church. At the conclusion of the readings, the church lights are turned on and the Mass continues.

Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

Thirty-six people participated in a five-mile Good Friday walk from St. Elizabeth Church in Paincourtville to St. Jules Church in Belle Rose. They prayed the Way of the Cross, with each station positioned in front of a house along U.S. Highway 1, above. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator



[D] On Friday, April 2, Good Friday, neighborhood Stations of the Cross were back again this year to provide a safe option to commemorate the Passion of Jesus for people concerned about COVID-safety issues. Families and friends walked, biked and drove through

a Webb Park neighborhood Stations of the Cross. From left, John and Kathleen Lovretich and Jane Skerkoske pray at the third station, Jesus fall the first time. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

[E] Webb Park neighborhood sponsored Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, April 2, to provide people an alternative way to remember Jesus' Passion. Praying at the eighth station, Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem are family members, from left, back row,

Gretchen Ferachi, Sara Manning Miller, Gayle Hirschey and front row, Anna Catherine Ferachi, Madeleine Ferachi, Andrew Ferachi and Kenny Ferachi. Photo by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator



Father Toni Thomas IMS, pastor at St. Elizabeth and St. Jules, prays at the end of the Good Friday walk. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

CTK students reach out to Cristo Rey for Lent project

By Debbie Shelley

The Catholic Commentator

The hallways of Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School are decked with pennants from colleges all around the United States where students have been accepted, along with various other student achievements and positive messages. It speaks of dreams realized and dreams in the making by the Wolfpack.

On March 24 students from Christ the King Church and Catholic Center at LSU provided Cristo Rey students with goodie bags filled with physical and motivational food for their journey as part of a Lent service project.

Cristo Rey educates students of limited economic means to become successful faith-filled leaders. The school combines a college preparatory education with a corporate work study program. Last year's inaugural graduation celebrated success for the students and school in the midst of many challenges.

CTK exchanged high fives and bumped elbows with the high schoolers during the



CTK students Courtney Hahn, right, and Will Clark give a friendly greeting and goodie bag to Cristo Rey freshman Taylor Hicks. Photos by Debbie Shelley | The Catholic Commentator

distribution to say, "keep going" and "we believe in you."

Amelia Gallagher, CTK campus min-

ister, said with COVID-19 presenting such difficulties, the Lord put it on her heart that making goodie bags would be something that would bring a message of encouragement to the Cristo Rey students.

"What Cristo Rey does is awesome, and this is something we can do to help," said Gallagher.

The students assembled about 165 goodie bags filled with such things as snacks, notebooks and inspirational items personalized to each student and to show them that the Lord loves them and cares about them, according to Gallagher.

"I really enjoyed the school supplies given to us. The tablet in particular I am using it in my classes now," said Cristo Rey freshman Coleman Dupree.

She said CTK parishioners responded generously when asked to contribute

items for the goodie bags.

Courtney Hahn, a freshman and member of the LSU cheerleading squad, comes from Ohio and said she is happy to bring a spark of hope to the Cristo Rey students.

"I'm very blessed that no matter how far I am away from home, I can be a light for others," said Hahn, noting the project had touched her soul as well.

"Through this experience I've been led close to Jesus by the Holy Spirit," Hahn said.

Sophomore Will Clark said he was struggling at the beginning of last semester when he joined the CTK service team and a small Scripture study group whose inspiration is Pier Giorgio Frassati.

He was particularly impacted by an opportunity to serve after Hurricane Laura devastated the Lake Charles area in August.

"Sometimes we worked side by side with the families we were helping," said Clark.

He said his time there taught him a lot about "living in the world of reality" and how the smallest acts of love are important.

Senior Guy Cresson said the opportunity to give words of affirmation, to see the joy on the students' faces and know they had made their day made his own Lenten journey more meaningful.

After the "goodie bag encounter," some Cristo Rey students are eyeing the possibility of attending LSU.

"Thank you for the LSU team taking the time to come out here, and deliver the goodies to us. I felt very loved and appreciated," said freshman R'Corious Lavergne, "It also makes me excited to join the CTK team because I want to go to college at LSU."

Freshman Seth Fields agreed.

"I was a really nice thing for them to do, LSU is now on my radar for college in the future."

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CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS



Will Clark gives a goodie bag to Cristo Rey freshman Samuel Buckley.



Fourteen young men from the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama, recently gathered at St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict for a Come and See weekend. The weekend provides an opportunity for men to learn more about the priesthood. Photo provided by Suzanne Payne | Office of Vocations, Diocese of Baton Rouge

Come and See weekend offers glimpse of seminary

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

They came together on an early March weekend with one eye on the present while casting a discerning eye on the future.

Fourteen young men from the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama, recently gathered for a Come and See weekend at St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict.

Come and See weekends are designed to give men interested in learning more about the priesthood a hands-on look at life as a seminarian, said Father Joshua Johnson, vocations director for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

The weekend is open to high school and college students as well as older men. They spend from Friday night through lunch Sunday participating in prayer, study, worship and fellowship with the seminarians, priests, monks and other men who might be discerning the priesthood.

They also have the opportunity to sit in class with the seminarians while being exposed to every facet of seminary life. Activities also include conferences on seminary life and discernment, as well as Mass, eucharistic adoration and confession.

Retreatants have the opportunity to ask questions, have concerns addressed and private time to spend in prayer with God.

Traditionally retreatants will sleep at the seminary but because of COVID-19 restrictions, during the March 4-7 weekend the 14 men slept at nearby Camp Abbey.

“One of the gifts of spending time at the seminary for the Come and See weekend is found in the friendships that the young men form with other guys in their community who feel called to discern if the priesthood is their path to becoming a saint,” Father Johnson said.

Four “Come and See” weekends are scheduled annually, two at St. Joseph and two at Notre Dame Graduate School of Theology in New Orleans. There is no cost and meals and beds are provided but pillow, towels and personal items must be brought.

Anyone interested in visiting the seminary to discover if God is calling an individual to be a priest is encouraged to reach out to Father Johnson at the vocation’s office so a dialogue about discernment can begin.

For more information, call 225-336-8778 or email vocations@diobr.org.

VOCATIONS PRAYER

Compassionate Heart of Jesus, graciously listen to our prayers. Give us generous hearts to respond to your call in our lives. Lift up these courageous men Deacon Danny Roussel, Deacon Taylor Sanford, Joseph Bergan, James Vu, Austin Young, Albert Blount, Joseph Bresower, Joshua Zelden and Deacon David Dawson willing to follow after your heart as priests. Help parents and teachers to share the faith and to encourage young people to explore religious vocations. Guide all people, Lord in your ways of compassion, truth and peace, that we may find happiness in fulfilling our vocation. Amen.

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ACROSS

- 1 "...the infant leapt in her ____" (Lk 1:41)
5 Does a car repair job
10 "Hey, buddy"
14 Suffix (zool.)
15 Maladroit
16 Having a sound mind
17 Urges
18 Leg bone
19 Water, to Pedro
20 Sicken
22 Reveals
23 Flags
24 Streetcar
26 Denial
27 "For where your ____ is, there also will your heart be." (Mt 6:21)
31 Prodded
34 Eats
35 The Feast of All Saints is in this month (abbr.)
36 Parody
37 Blended
38 10 cents US
39 "Am ____ your way?"
40 Couches
41 Female fox
42 Sections
44 Catholic newsman Russert
45 Distasteful
46 Avian symbol of the atonement
50 Sermon site
53 Burial ground
54 Brewery device
55 Acute
57 Hindmost part of an animal
58 "____ time..."
59 Student
60 "This ____ sudden!"
61 Conjunction
62 White poplar
63 Spotted

DOWN

- 1 The Duke, a convert to Catholicism
2 Body of salt water
3 Lists
4 Baby's cradle

- 5 Series of petition prayers
6 Single things
7 Parisian infant
8 Center starter
9 RR stop
10 Book of hymns in the Old Testament
11 Narrative of heroic exploits
12 Rebuff
13 Green and Pekoe
21 Old expletive
22 Ovine cries
24 People looked like this to the blind man Jesus cured
25 Spawning area of salmon
27 State in which the Diocese of Dallas is found
28 Windows alternative
29 The Holy See
30 Fifty-fifty
31 Frat letters
32 Migrant farm worker
33 Christ the ____
34 Jubilee number
37 A Franciscan, for example
38 "Nunc ____"
40 Denomination
41 Objectionable
43 Catholic United States Supreme Court justice, Sherman ____
44 Jesus drove the merchants out of this
46 Jeopardy
47 "...we do not ____ praying for you" (Col 1:9)
48 "...and said to her, 'Talitha kum,' which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, ____!'" (Mk 5:41)
49 Thermoplastic yarn
50 Castle's defense
51 "Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false ____.'" (Mt 5:33)
52 Annapolis (abbr.)
53 Headland
55 Mineral spring
56 Central part of a wheel

Solution on page 14

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Go, witness your Easter faith

You will read this column the week after Easter. We all will have gone through Holy Week, which began with Palm Sunday, also called Passion Sunday. This is because Jesus went so quickly from being hailed as the new Messiah to being denounced by the religious leaders of his people and sentenced to torture and death by the Roman Prefect, Pontius Pilate. From Messiah (which he was) to criminal, to crucified, in five short days.

The inspired commentary on this that we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews says: "In the days when he was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and became the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:7-9). The obedience Jesus learned was to trust in God who promised him, and through him us, an eternal life after this one with the father, his son and the Spirit of love that binds them and will bind us to them and each other forever. That was what Holy Week was all about.

The good news, for Jesus and for us, is that Holy Week didn't end on Good Friday. Jesus didn't stay dead. He had to die so that he could rise and show us the ultimate reason for hope in this life. Death is terrifying. It is entirely foreign to our experience of life. We know that it happens to everyone: to our grandparents, parents, siblings, relatives and friends but no one has ever, nor could ever, tell us what it is like.

We all go to sleep, naturally or through trauma or anesthesia but we expect to wake up. If we are lucky enough

to die in bed without too much suffering, what will it be like when the doctor tells us that soon we will never wake up again, not in this life? Well, the First Letter of St. John tells us that "we will be like him" (1 Jn 3:2). In St. John's Gospel we read that after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to the apostles in the upper room and showed the doubting Thomas his body with its wounds from the crucifixion. That passage notes that the doors

were "locked" when Jesus appeared, so the Jesus, who we will be like, will not be exactly like the human being we experience ourselves to be. Our faith in our triune God has many surprises. This will surely be one.

The promise of that kind of resurrection already fulfilled in Jesus Christ is the reason for our Easter joy. There are more things, however, that the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus have to teach us, things that give us hope in this life with its beauty and its pain.

For instance, did you ever wonder why Jesus had to die so young and so painfully? Could it be because some of us meet similar kinds of death? Our newspapers have been filled with recent murders, some of them deliberately cruel. That is not God's doing, it is the will of demented human beings. Maybe God, in sending us his son to die for us so cruelly, wanted us to know that he is always with us. As we all face death of whatever kind, God wants us to be like the good thief on the cross next to Jesus, praying with Jesus, "Into your hands I commend my Spirit." Then, that day we too will be with Jesus in paradise.

On Holy Thursday, the night his Passion began with his arrest, Jesus celebrated the Jewish Passover meal with his disciples. He tells them he has longed

to celebrate this meal with them and then changes, slightly but significantly, the liturgy of that celebration. When it comes time to bless the bread he adds, "This (bread) is my body which will be offered for you." And at the end of the meal, he takes the last cup of wine and says, "This is the cup of my blood which will be poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins."

And then he gives them the command, "Do this in memory of me."

Jesus took elements of the Jewish Passover sacrificial meal and made them sacramental elements of his body and blood to be sacrificed on the cross the following Friday. It is this body and blood that the disciples saw in Christ's appearances after the resurrection. Jesus found a special way to be with us in this life until we die and rise and be with him, the father, son and Holy Spirit forever. Therefore, we as Catholics believe that Jesus is with us, "body and blood, soul and divinity" when we receive the Eucharist in Communion at every Mass in which we participate, in Communion services with previously consecrated hosts and when Communion is brought to the sick and dying.

As Pope Francis often teaches in his homilies and writings, the Eucharist is food for the journey of life. It gives us hope when we are distraught and strength when we are weak. Every Sunday is in a way a little Easter because we celebrate it with Mass. It is a gift we cannot ignore. That is why the church obliges us to attend Sunday Mass when we can possibly make it (or, in times of COVID-19, safely attend). Of course, daily Mass is not only optional but also a wonderful way of thanking God for our

life here and his promise of eternal life with the Trinity. Eucharist is a Greek word for thanks.

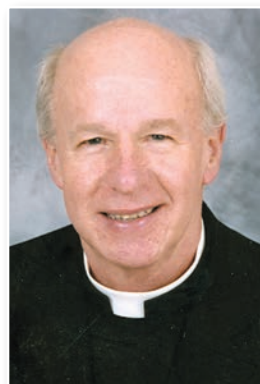
As we remember Jesus' Passion, death and resurrection in the Mass we must also remember that sacraments are more than just thankful worship. Every sacrament is also a commitment to Jesus' way of life. Some of the most

important words of the Mass are the very last ones the priest says. When all Masses were celebrated in Latin in our Roman Rite, those words were very brief: "Ite, missa est!" "GO, IT (the Eucharist) HAS BEEN SENT!" While it could refer to bringing the consecrated Eucharist to the sick, it also was a sort of code for Jesus' great commission to his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28: 19-20).

Every time we celebrate Mass we remember the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. Every time we

look at the cross we should remember the same. This is the culmination of the whole Gospel. We have to take it seriously and spread the message. Like the Jews who were told about the great commandment of love of God in the Old Testament, so too us now: "Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest" (Dt 6: 6-7).

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



Another Perspective
Father John Carville

"Every time we celebrate Mass we remember the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. Every time we look at the cross we should remember the same."

Letters to the Editor

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PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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Br. Edward Violet SM

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Dcn. Ricky A. Patterson
Sr. Evelyn Mee CSJ

Apr. 17 Rev. Denis O. Edwugha
Dcn. Minos J. Ponville Jr.
Br. James Burns SC

Apr. 18 Rev. Carl Evans SC
Dcn. Curles P. Reeson Jr.
Sr. Ann Catherine Nguyen ICM

Apr. 19 Rev. Michael French SJ
Dcn. Mark Reynaud

Apr. 20 Br. William Cawley SC
Rev. Michael Galea
Dcn. Alfred J. Ricard Jr.
Sr. Hong Vuong Quy Nguyen ICM

Apr. 21 Rev. Henry W. Gautreau Jr.
Dcn. Gabriel Rico

Apr. 22 Br. Roland Champagne SC
Rev. Matthew J. Graham
Dcn. Thomas M. Robinson
Sr. Huong Thi Nguyen ICM

Apr. 23 Rev. Timothy Grimes
Dcn. Danny Roussel
Br. Robert Croteau SC

Apr. 24 Rev. Paul A. Gros

Apr. 25 Dcn. Mauricio Salazar OP
Sr. Lan Thi Nguyen ICM
Rev. Eriv V. Gyan

Apr. 26 Dcn. Eliazar Salinas Jr.
Br. Ramon Daunis SC
Rev. Ryan Hallford

Apr. 27 Dcn. Mario (Sam) Sammartino
Sr. The Thi Nguyen ICM
Rev. Patrick Healy SSJ
Dcn. Taylor Sanford

Apr. 28 Br. Alan Drain SC
Rev. Ray Hebert SC
Dcn. Joseph M. Scimeca
Sr. Mary Noel OP

The cosmic dimension of the Resurrection

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was once asked by a critic: "What are you trying to do? Why all this talk about atoms and molecules when you are speaking about Jesus Christ?" His answer: "I am trying to formulate a Christology large enough to incorporate Christ because Christ is not just an anthropological event but a cosmic phenomenon as well."

In essence, what he is saying is that Christ did not come just to save human beings; he came to save the earth as well.

That insight is particularly relevant when we try to understand all that is implied in the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was raised from death to life. A body is a physical reality so when it raised up as a body (and not just as a soul) there is something in that which is more than merely spiritual and psychological. There is something radically physical in this. When a dead body is raised to new life, atoms and molecules are being rearranged. The resurrection is about more than something changing inside of human consciousness.

The Resurrection is the basis for human hope, surely; without it, we could not hope for any future that includes anything beyond the rather asphyxiating limits of this life. In the resurrection of Jesus, we are given a new future, one beyond our life here. However, the Resurrection also gives a new future to the earth, our physical planet. Christ came to save the earth, not just the persons living on it. His resurrection ensures a new future for the earth as well as for its inhabitants.

The earth, like ourselves, needs saving. From what?

For what?

In a proper Christian understanding of things, the earth is not just a stage for human beings, a thing with no value in itself, apart from us. Like humanity, it too is God's work of art, God's child. Indeed, the physical earth is our mother, the matrix from which we all spring. In the end, we are not apart from the natural world; rather we are that part of the natural world that has become conscious of itself. We do not stand apart from the earth, and it does not exist simply for our benefit, like a stage for the actor, to be abandoned once the play is over. Physical creation has value in itself, independent of us. We need to recognize that and not only to practice better eco-ethics so that the earth can continue to provide air, water and food for future generations of human beings. We need to recognize the intrinsic value of the earth. It is also God's work of art, is our biological mother, and it is destined to share eternity with us.

Moreover, like us, it is also subject to decay. It too is time-bound, mortal and dying. Outside of an intervention from the outside, it has no future. Science has long taught the law of entropy. Put simply, that law states that the energy in our universe is running down, the sun is burning out. The years our earth has before it, like our own days, are numbered, counted, finite. It will take millions of years, but finitude is finitude. There will be an end to the earth, as we know it, just as there will be an end to each of us as we live now. Outside of some re-creation from the outside, both the earth and the humans living on it have no future.

St. Paul teaches this explicitly in the Epistle to the

Romans where he tells us that creation, the physical cosmos, is subject to futility, and that it is groaning and longing to be set free to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God. St. Paul assures us that the earth will enjoy the same future as human beings, resurrection, transformation beyond our present imagination, an eternal future.

How will the earth be transformed? It will be transformed in the same way we are, through resurrection. The Resurrection brings into our world, spiritually and physically, a new power, a new arrangement of things, a new hope, something so radical (and physical) that it can only be compared to what happened at the initial creation when the atoms and the molecules of this universe were created out of nothingness by God. In that initial creation, nature was formed and its reality and laws shaped everything from then until the resurrection of Jesus.

However, in the Resurrection, something new happened that touched every aspect of the universe, from the soul and psyche inside every man and woman to the inner core of every atom and molecule. It is no accident that the world measures time by that event. We are in the year 2021 since that radical re-creation happened.

The Resurrection was not only spiritual. In it, the physical atoms of the universe were rearranged. Teilhard was right. We need a vision wide enough to incorporate the cosmic dimension of Christ. The Resurrection is about people, and the planet.

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.



In Exile

Father Ron Rolheiser



Guest Columnist

Father Fred Kammer

Analyzing the American Rescue Plan Act

law on lower-income individuals and families. First, lower-income families have suffered the most from the pandemic-devastated economy. Second, lower-income families will benefit more from the Rescue Plan because more benefits are targeted on those at the bottom of our economy. Third, there is a special concern in Catholic social thought for those who are the poor and marginalized in any society.

The Urban Institute has analyzed four components of the Rescue Plan which together have a demonstrable impact on the projected poverty rate for 2021 and on the racial disparities of poverty in this country. The four provisions are: (1) extension for 25 weeks through Sept. 6 of the pandemic-related unemployment insurance benefits; (2) extension for three months until Sept. 30 of higher Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly

the Food Stamp Program); (3) one-time \$1,400 direct recovery payments to individuals, \$2,800 to married couples, and \$1,400 for each dependent; and (4) provision of monthly advance payments beginning in July 2021 of the increased child tax credit for the 2021 tax year. The second half would be paid monthly in 2022.

Without these new benefits, the projected level of U.S. poverty for 2021 under what is called the Supplemental Poverty Rate is 13.7%. The combined effect of these four provisions alone is to reduce the poverty level by more than a third to 8.7%. This would reduce the number of people living in poverty by 16 million people, from 44 million to 28 million.

In terms of racial disparities, these four provisions combined would reduce the poverty rates as follows: for Black, non-Hispanic people by 42%, from 18.1% to 10.5%; for Hispanic people by

39%, from 21.9% to 13.3%; for white, non-Hispanic people by 34%, from 9.6% to 6.4%.

Many other provisions of the new law will benefit lower-income families, as well as others. There are improvements and increased funding for WIC, energy assistance, water bills, COVID-19 relief, vaccinations, school and child care reopenings, state and local governments, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Head Start, the Community Development Block Grant, Medicaid expansion and premium assistance under the Affordable Care Act.

The sponsors of the \$1.9 trillion law project that the combined effect will be a strong stimulus to the economy, in addition to all the targeted effects for low-income families and particular people, programs and state and local government services.

Concerns about the law include: the complete absence of

Republican congressional support, elimination of a minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour as well as any moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, exclusion of undocumented people from most benefits, failure to include the long-established, bipartisan Hyde Amendment language to prevent federal funding of abortions and the temporary status of many improvements. In addition, despite the four highlighted programs which reduce poverty, there still will be tens of millions of Americans living in poverty this year.

FATHER KAMMER is a Jesuit priest, attorney and director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute who also served as executive director of Catholic Community Services of the Diocese of Baton Rouge from 1984-89. This column is reprinted with permission from the Jesuit Social Research Institute, Loyola University, New Orleans.

On March 11 President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act as a multi-faceted response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread economic dislocation which it has caused.

There are so many provisions in the \$1.9 trillion-dollar law that a short treatment like this cannot possibly cover them all. For three primary reasons, I am focusing on the impact of the



STATIONS OF THE CROSS – Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge first-grade students recently followed the outdoor Stations of the Cross in the St. Joseph Hall Courtyard. Photo by Wendy Milam | Sacred Heart of Jesus School



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Anyone with knowledge of the where-
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336-8755.

HELP WANTED

In sales employment advertisements, the
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St. Ann Church in Morganza is in need
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Information session for spiritual direction internship program

The Archdiocese of New Orleans Spirituality Center and the Diocese of Baton Rouge began a joint partnership to create a Program of Formation for Spiritual Direction in Baton Rouge.

The first Baton Rouge cohort will start in August 2022.

There will be an information ses-

sion offered via Zoom on May 4 at 6:30 p.m. to learn in more detail about the prerequisites, the scope of the formation program and the expected timeline of when the program will begin.

To register for this information session please email Father Paul Gros at pgros@diobr.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

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HELP WANTED



St. George Catholic School



**Seeks a Full-Time Pre-K Instructor
for the 2021-2022 School Year**

JOB SUMMARY

The Pre-K teacher is responsible for:

- Supporting and upholding the philosophy of Catholic education and the mission of the school.
- Acting as a witness to Gospel values by modeling the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Developing and implementing effective lesson plans reflecting curriculum goals.
- Providing creative, hands-on methods of learning through a variety of educational techniques.
- Implementing total classroom management, including effective parent communication plan.

**Please send resume and cover letter to:
angele.fontenot@sgschoolbr.org**

FOR SALE

Single Cemetery plot in Resthaven's Garden of Prayer in Baton Rouge. \$3900. Call 225-384-0070.

Greenoaks Memorial. 4 plots in Garden of Crucifix \$9000; \$5000 for 2 plots. Call 786-271-3476 or 305-761-8675.

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Two Cemetery plots in front Resthaven's Crucifix Garden. \$3500 each. Call 225-806-3084.

Hillcrest Cemetery Groom Rd Baker LA. Six plots in a row. \$1700 each in sets of 2. Or all 6 for \$1600 each. Call 225-683-3518

GOSPEL ▼

From page 2

apostles, frightened and fearful, witness Jesus resurrected as he breathes on them the Holy Spirit. Immediately following, Jesus ordains them to his mission of mercy the forgiveness of sins. All but one were present: St. Thomas. Where was he? We do not know. But we do know he did not believe their testimony of an encounter with the risen Lord and insisted on physical evidence to touch. How many times do we proclaim Jesus as resurrected only to be met with a demand of physical proof, to see so as to believe?

God's abundant mercy grants St. Thomas to not only see, but to touch Jesus' hands and side. Stop for a moment and ponder this passage, "Now a week later his disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving but believe.'" Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (Jn 20:24-29). Imagine yourself placing your finger in the nail-marks on Jesus' hands and where the spear pierced his side? What is this like? We will, God willing, see the same upon our death. What will this be like?

Resurrection catechesis (Lk 24:35-48)

The most amazing movement of Jesus' days on earth after the resurrection and before his ascension is that he continued to catechize, to teach, to form, to echo the faith into the apostles and early disciples in order to equip them for mission. St. Luke's Gospel in Chapter 24, verse 35, picks up at the end of the "Road to Emmaus." Having run back to Jerusalem after walking and learning from

Jesus, whom they did not recognize on their journey, "the two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread." Suddenly Jesus appears in their midst, startling and terrifying them. Can you imagine? Yet, Jesus knew their hearts and questions. He assured them it was him, flesh and all, able to eat. Again, peace in the midst of the angst.

Then (here it comes), "he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them 'thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things' (Lk 24:45-48). What a Scripture study! Imagine Jesus, resurrected, teaching how his life fulfilled sacred Scripture, covenants and all that the prophets spoke of. To have been there must have been an awakening for all.

But wait, we have this awakening! We have the ability to understand the Scriptures! For we too have the breath of God in us, with us, around us. We have the power of the Holy Spirit in us (baptism), with us (confirmation), around us. We have Jesus, resurrected, in us (Eucharist/body, blood, soul divinity), with us (baptism), around us (community) thus the ability to comprehend most of what God truly desires in order for us to know, to love and to serve him. To bear witness of this truth. THE TRUTH. But we must believe him. Believe it. Live it. Fight for it. Behold it. Die for it. For by his life, love, mercy, cross, passion and resurrection we receive Jesus' peace. And we, as missionary disciples, are called to proclaim, to testify, to live and to die in God's bountiful, merciful, peace. JMJ

St. Joseph, merciful protector of the Savior of the world, pray for us.

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

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CHRISM ▼

From page 1

But here the healing oil of God's constant presence flowed. With a stunning back-

drop of light interplaying off the gold and green panels of the stained-glass window above the altar and shimmering of the red and white cloths draped from the side of Jesus on the

altar's crucifix, attendees were reminded of God's mercy.

Bishop Duca was joined by the priests, deacons and lay representatives of the diocese's church parishes for the blessing and distribution of oils.

Bishop Duca blessed three oils – the oil of catechumens (oleum catechumenorum or oleum sanctorum), the oil of the infirm (oleum infirmorum) and holy chrism (sacrum chrism) – which will be used in the administration of the sacraments throughout the year.

The priests' presence also manifested their unity with the bishop and the church.

Referring to the Gospel readings of the day from St. Luke 4, the bishop noted in his homily that in the temple of Nazareth Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring

glad tidings to the poor.

"He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

"After rolling up the scroll, Jesus handed it back to the attendant and sat down and said, 'Today this Scripture passage is

were "going to be a priest." He added even today many young seminarians believe they are "going to save the church" through their service. But quickly they learn the priesthood is not at all like they thought it would be.

But like the apostles, God calls them to leave everything behind and to follow him.

"That's part of the priesthood, dying to self. We don't run from it, we embrace it," said the bishop.

Following Christ leaves them "free to love and free to embrace his mission," according to the bishop.

At the conclusion of Mass, the recessional hymn "Church of God Elect and Glorious" played as people left the church, warmly greeting pastors and appearing fortified to journey with Jesus through his Passion in the triduum until it reaches its high point at the Easter Vigil.

"That's part of the priesthood, dying to self. We don't run from it, we embrace it."

Bishop Michael G. Duca

fulfilled in your hearing.' "

Addressing the priests, the bishops noted how Jesus spoke with confidence that was not simply the authority of power or embracing a vocation.

He said as many priests approach their ordination, they have a confidence because they



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Easter Sunday is Just the Beginning of the Easter Season



During the Easter Season, we are reminded of the sacrifice He made and of those who followed in His footsteps so long ago. For them, weakness and doubt became unshakeable faith. They went forward – even unto death – in their roles as disciples, continuing His ministry on earth.

As modern day disciples, our challenge is so great today because of the pandemic. We are called to transform God's blessings into a visible sign of His presence in these difficult times. We are His physical body on earth, and everything we do can be a reflection of His love. Our journey through life is not always easy. Sometimes the road is steep, and there is no way of knowing what waits for us. Regardless of the path we take, Jesus is always with us.



When He said, "For I was hungry and you gave me food..." He was speaking across time and space to all of us. At St. Vincent de Paul, we can see His face in every person who waits in line for our daily meal, in the faces of the homeless who come to us for shelter and those who hope that our pharmacy can ease their suffering. When we help someone in need during these challenging times, we are extending His hand to them.

This year, our goal is to serve over 220,000 meals, provide 30,000 guest nights of shelter and fill over \$1 million worth of prescription medication. Please consider making a gift to Christ's ministry to the poor.

You can feed the hungry, provide shelter to the homeless, or fill prescriptions for the needy during these challenging times.

Give online at: www.svdpr.org or mail your gift to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Cut out and send in with your financial gift.

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