

THE CATHOLIC COMMENTATOR

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Publication of Commentator suspended



From the Bishop

Bishop Michael G. Duca

For more than 60 years, our diocesan newspaper, the Catholic Commentator, has reliably and faithfully reported on the parish activities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge and served as an extension of the teaching voice of the bishop to faithful of the diocese.

Today, because of evolving technology, there is no doubt that we all get our news today in many different ways. For many older Catholics we can remember a time when the experience of “keeping up with the news” was quite different.

For myself growing up everyone received their local, national and international news from three major TV stations, a few radio stations and from at least one or two thriving local newspapers. Our local newspapers were often locally owned and had a vested interest in the community.

This is certainly not the case today with news being sourced from hundreds of sites found on TV, social media sites, radio and print (Newspapers and magazines) and available wherever we are 24 hours a day.

Because of these changes I have decided to take some time to consider how I can best communicate with the parishioners of the diocese in this time of such rapid social change. The new situation begs the question of where does our local newspaper fit into this constellation of news? How do we create an effective way to communicate, in our case, to our specific Catholic community and the community at large, with the same effectiveness the Catholic Commentator has provided for more than 60 years?

To consider this question I have decided that at this time of transition, beginning in July, the Commentator will suspend regular publication. This suspension of a regular publication will be temporary, hopefully no more than two months, as we prepare the Catholic Commentator for another 60 years.

For the past 10 years, Richard Meek has served as editor of this important part of church life and made sure, with his faithful staff, that twice a month now we

SEE BISHOP PAGE 13

SPIRITUAL PULSE

St. Francis Hall dedicated at FranU

By Richard Meek

The Catholic Commentator

Guided by Dr. Tina Holland's extraordinary vision, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University has emerged from what one might consider relative obscurity to one of the region's leading academic institutions.

A renaming as well as a comprehensive branding change several years ago gave FranU a new identity allowing the Catholic university to emerge from what was once predominantly a nursing school to an institution offering diverse curriculums and new degree programs.

Even through those mammoth changes, however, Holland, FranU's president who is in her 10th year at the Franciscan-based university, never once wavered from her ambitious goal



St. Francis Hall on the campus of Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University was dedicated on May 30. The new building offers a gathering place to study, socialize and pray. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

to build a center to serve as the university's spiritual hub, student gathering place and a signature to the rest of the city that FranU was no longer a secret.

Nearly two years ago, a dramatic SEE FRANU PAGE 15

DID YOU KNOW

San Damiano cross featured in FranU center

Featuring prominently in the chapel of the new hall at Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady in Baton Rouge, is a giant, two-story high San Damiano cross. The history of the cross dates back to the 12th century, when a young St. Francis, who knelt before the cross in a dilapidated church on the outskirts of Assisi, Italy. While he was praying he received his commission from God to rebuild the Church.

St. Francis first began rebuilding the little chapel. However, that rebuilding would later prefigure a more profound spiritual renewal of the Church throughout Europe, thanks to the work of St. Francis. All Franciscans cherish this cross as the symbol of their mission from God.

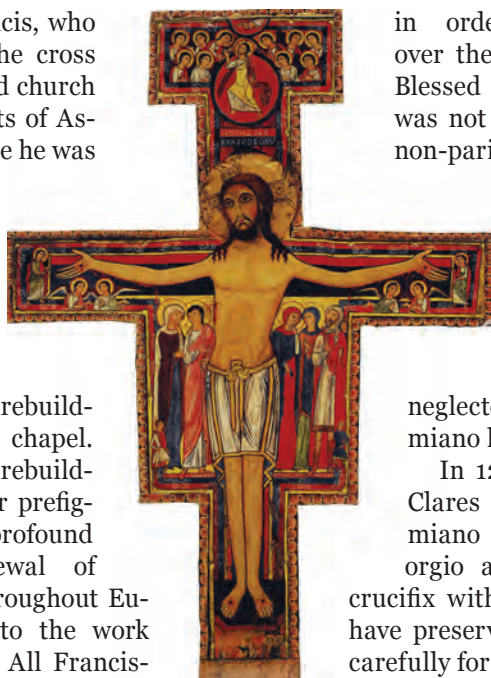
The cross was painted by an unknown artist from the Umbria region, which includes Assisi. There is a strong Syrian influence in the depiction and, according to history, there were Syrian monks

in the area.

The original cross was painted on wood to which cloth had been glued. It is more than six feet high and nearly four feet wide. It was believed to have been painted for San Damiano church in order to hang over the altar as the Blessed Sacrament was not preserved in non-parishes churches of those times, many of which had been abandoned or neglected as San Damiano had been.

In 1257, the Poor Clares left San Damiano for San Giorgio and took the crucifix with them. They have preserved the cross carefully for 700 years.

In the Holy Week of 1957, the San Damiano cross was placed on public view for the first time in the Basilica of St. Clare of Assisi. The cross depicts the Paschal Mystery in one icon: the story of the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.



By Father Chris Decker

Disciples, take up your cross

By Dina Dow

The Mass readings during the 13th and 14th Sundays in Ordinary Time offer timely inspiration to strengthen our call to holiness in gratitude.

Call to holiness (Mt 10:37-42)

We are living missionary disciples from the moment the sacrament of baptism plunges us into the waters of the life and death of Jesus Christ, the door of salvation. St. Paul explains, "Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, we too might live in newness of life" (Rom 6: 3-4).

Thus, we are together, one humanity, in the everyday journey to eternity. Each day we are called to holiness. Since Jesus conquered sin and death for us, we, as disciples, are equipped to conquer the trials and experiences on this journey together. We receive the Lord, in baptism and Eucharist, then GO OUT share his word in mission to form other disciples to follow Jesus and grow in holiness. Some days are challenging, some not. But all days as a disciple Jesus are steeped in opportunities to evangelize.

Herein, the significance of being centered on Christ Jesus is vital for the mission. Many will receive the message of truth, whereas many will reject. The Lord prepares us for this. He teaches, "He who receives you, receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me." In other words, Jesus sends us, as missionary disciples, to continue his mission of proclaiming the kingdom of God, of leading all to him, and thus to the father, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, even the simple act of giving a cup of cold water to another will refresh their physical thirst, as well as their soul, and open the doors for relationship, mercy and love. Be Christ to others. Be a courageous prophet for others. Be a witness of truth for others. Be present to others, that all may be one, as we are one in the body of Christ, the spirit of truth.

Dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (Mt

11:25-30)

St. Paul reminds us in the Letter to the Romans, "We are dwelling places of the Spirit of the Lord. This is the same Holy Spirit who raised our Savior from the dead" (Rom 8:9-13). The Lord, Jesus Christ, whom we are

united to in baptism, unites us with the father and the Holy Spirit, the giver of life. St. Paul pulls us into the reality that if we live according to the Spirit, we will have life. We rejoice in the sharing of life in Christ.

Psalm 145 further unveils God as gracious, merciful, slow to anger, great in kindness, good to all, compassionate, faithful in his words, holy in his works, lifts up the lowly and raises those who bow down. We are called to live our life according to his kingly ways. Sit in prayer with these words: kind, good, meek, compassionate, lifts-up. All lead to peace. Lord, help me emulate your love as we journey to your kingdom.

Guided by the yoke

The Gospel of St. Matthew (Chap. 11) reveals Jesus praising the father. Thus, Jesus issues this invitation, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Mt 11:25-30). Jesus invites us to follow him with childlike trust, to listen to his words and to share then with those we meet. The more we adhere to the word of God, the greater the rest we find in him.

He is grateful for the "little ones" who have been given the wisdom hidden from the self-righteous. They, with childlike faith, trust in the message of Jesus, whereas others cannot seem to grasp it. Further, he states, that if we know him, we will know the father. And just like that, he invites the "weary," which constitutes most of us, to rest as we share his yoke, which is easy and his burden, which is light.

My grandfather was a farmer. I have vague memories of him placing a yoke on his mule as he tended the field. I was amazed how the yoke enabled him to easily guide the creature without harm. In fact, my grandfather was

SEE GOSPEL PAGE 13



THE CATHOLIC
COMMENTATOR



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Film chronicles pope's ecological message

By Debbie Shelley

The Catholic Commentator

The documentary "The Letter" captures scenes of wreckage caused by the environmental crisis in the lives and communities thousands of miles away. The film may resonate in ways that hit close to home for residents of Louisiana, which is beleaguered with its own environmental issues.

St. George Church in Baton Rouge recently hosted a community viewing of the documentary.

"The Letter" details Pope Francis' efforts to spread the message of his encyclical "Laudato Si'" at the grassroots level, which is addressed to "every person living on this planet."

"We see what it is happening. And the worse thing is we are getting used to it," the pope said in the documentary.

The film opens with Bilal Seck, of Senegal, looking upon his sea-coast town, which rising seawaters had destroyed and took away job opportunities. He was full of confidence when he and a friend joined in a boat crossing to the Canary Islands but a storm at sea caused their boat to sink.

The scene changes to Pope Francis appearing before the United Nations in 2015. The pontiff told the general assembly that the environment should enjoy the same rights and protections as humanity and expresses concern for persecution of Christians. The documentary indicated the speech was met with mixed reaction.

The film then showed letters from Rome arriving in the hands of five people representing communities of the Indigenious, poverty, youth and science: Odair "Dadá" Borari, a leader in the Novo Lugar community in Brazil; Arouna Kandé of Senegal; Ridhima Pandey, a young climate activist from India; and scientists Greg Asner and Robin Martin come from Hawaii, who developed a tech-

nique to map underwater heat waves that kill coral reefs.

Before speaking with Pope Francis, the representatives spent several days bonding. The meeting with the pope shows laughter and tears.

Afterwards the group traveled to Assisi, home of St. Fran-

coise. Here in Louisiana our coast is quickly disappearing. Consequently, we have our own 'climate nomads,' the NA people living in the Isle de Jean Charles in Terrebonne, who are being resettled.

"We have livelihoods that have been turned upside down as farmers have crops lost from floodings, or families disrupted as people move away because it is risky to rebuild in the same place where the last hurricane hit. We have been present, to help when needed, bringing the light of hope when disasters have hit. But this call is to also act on the solutions, not react; Pope Francis says they will be the ones who will inherit the planet."

Guzeman added, "There is wisdom on the popular movements, there are known facts in science, all hands are needed with the common goal of saving Mother Earth ... including us."

JoDale Ales, who retired with 29 years of experience teaching science at the high school, community college and university level, saw and introduced the students firsthand to the impact of climate change. When she taught biology at St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, she led field trips to the Lafayette wetlands and Turtle Cove in Manchac, as well as Timbalier Island to clean up trash.

Ales is involved with a social justice committee at St. George that had given out information about "Laudato Si." When she learned about the Laudato Si' action plan and the "Letter," she received approval from St. George Pastor Father Paul Y to host the documentary viewing.

Father Yi said, "As a former chemical engineer, I can appreciate the impact of our consumption of material goods on the environment. While technologically and financially well-resourced countries can recover from environmental impacts in a short time, for the people who

live on the edge of poverty, one environmental disaster can adversely affect their livelihood and their survival.

"The Letter" does well to explain that we are to be good stewards of the gift of nature and resources that God has entrusted to us. We are at a crossroads; to choose to be good stewards or to neglect our role in taking care of our home

which God entrusted to us."

Carol Asher, a member of the Social Concerns Committee at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge, became an animator for the Laudato Si' action plan through Pope Francis' online training. As a capstone project for the training, she sponsored a community Laudato Si' walk at City Park last October.

SEE LETTER PAGE 10



"The Letter" is a documentary that shows the devastating impact of the environmental crisis on various countries of the world and the grassroots efforts of Pope Francis to foster care for creation.

cis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

While there, Kandé receives a video call from Seck, his fellow countryman, that a friend did not survive while trying to escape flooding in a rickety boat at home. Undeterred, Kandé tells his companions, "We need to create a strong bond and never break it."

People working to spread the "Laudato Si" message in the Diocese of Baton Rouge hope people here may create an unbreakable bond centered on protecting the planet.

"This is 'our' problem. We all contribute to it, are affected by it, and we are called to act to solve (or mitigate) it," said Sandra Guzman, a professor of biology at Baton Rouge Community College and a parishioner of St. Jude Church in Baton Rouge. "These issues are not just happening on the 'other side of the

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Don't forget prayer when packing for summer vacation

By Debbie Shelley

The Catholic Commentator

Summer offers people additional opportunities to spend time in favorite pursuits, such as “extreme” adventures, touring the sites or leisurely activities.

It likewise provides ways to grow in faith that are unique to this time of year, according to formation directors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Summer is a time to commit to staying spiritually in shape, according to Melanie Richard, director of religious education for K-5 students at St. John the Baptist Church in Zachary.

“I have teenagers and one of my teenagers is very much into sports,” said Richard. “I approach it by equating it to ‘How are you better at sports?’

“I explain to them to become better at your faith, which is something we’re always striving to do, you have to practice. Practice makes perfect.”

She points out that if one misses practice or working out, one gets weaker. It’s the same thing with one’s spiritual life. If a person misses a spiritual workout, that person gets weaker and starts to get de-

conditioned.

She recommends when on vacation keep up daily prayer practices, such as praying first thing in the morning, when brushing your teeth and before going to bed at night.

When traveling, websites such as masstimes.org can help people find churches in the area and their Mass schedules.

“I always stress how important it is to make Mass a priority,” said Richard. “That’s one of the aspects that I enjoy, going to a Mass at a different church whenever we’re traveling; to see what it looks like and to have that new experience.”

Keeping up with the daily Mass readings is also easy through uscgb.org, which also has daily reflection videos.

Another favorite resource for Richard is the Laudate app.

“It’s like the Catholic ‘one stop shop’ I’ve found,” Richard said.

And there’s always the invitation to faith that comes naturally through daily experiences, she noted.

“Every day you’re around people, that’s where you have to recognize Jesus in every single one of us,” said Richard.



Many of the children at Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs spent time engaged in the faith during ICC’s recent vacation Bible school. Pictured at the VBS are Silas O’Bryant, 3, and sister, Penny. Photo provided by Dana David

“We are living temples so anytime you can help another person it’s embodying those acts of corporal works of mercy. Whether it’s being nice to someone, speaking to someone, clothing someone; the opportunity presents itself anytime there’s a physical body there and there’s an opportunity for you to live your faith.”

It’s part of a well-rounded practice to know that you just can’t think about doing something, you have to do it, Richard emphasized.

Whether or not one is perfect in carrying out their summer faith practices, making an intentional effort to do so is rewarding, said Richard.

“It’s more of an intrinsic reward than an extrinsic reward,” pointed out Richard. “You feel better inside after you’ve done those good deeds. It’s being able to reflect and see how much you’ve grown in your faith just by participating in those practices.”

Richard and Amanda Milton, director of Christian faith formation at Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs, urged people to check with their church parishes for summer faith development opportunities.

“At Immaculate Conception, we’re not taking ‘time off’ for the summer,” said Milton. “The beauty of this is that we’re using the time that would normally be put aside for school sports and activities and using that time and energy for our faith.”

She noted ICC’s recent vacation Bible school drew 80 students in kindergarten through fifth grades. There are also water days as a fun way to cool down.

And check with church parishes for activities for teens, such as Camp Ab-

bey, Steubenville conferences, summer mission service projects, etc., Milton stressed.

As with the St. John the Baptist group, the ICC youth attended Steubenville South in Alexandria and providing various service youth service opportunities.





For adults, ICC will have a workshop July 13 on Visio Divina, or reflecting on sacred art pieces as a prayerful meditation; a men’s conference on July 18; and Ministry and Theology Class on July 8 and July 15.

Milton also encouraged people during their leisure time to invite over neighbors and friends whom they don’t have as much opportunity to spend time with during the school year.

“We’re having a barbecue on the patio and we’re having our friends over who are part of our congregation. And of course, we have our own LSU baseball group from the church, and we’re all huddled together talking about the LSU baseball games and scores. That’s our community of faith, you keep that environment going,” she said.

Whether in Rome, the beach, or the camp this summer, enjoy the opportunity to slow down, enjoy the beauty of your location and then share pictures, experiences and gift trinkets with others when you return. This is a good way to evangelize. And good way to “keep the faith fresh.”

“When you return (to the daily normal routines) you’re fresh and ready to start new, but are also in a different place spiritually because you’re seeing it and interpreting it differently, hopefully deeper,” said Milton.


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Debut album hits joyous note for duo

By Debbie Shelley

The Catholic Commentator

Catholic artists Andrew Ferguson and Sophie Salopek draw upon their vocal skills and prayer experiences to usher listeners into a candid encounter with God.

The two recently returned to Christ the King Center and Student Center in Baton Rouge, where they attended Mass while studying at LSU, to celebrate the release of their first album “Honest.”

Ferguson and Salopek, also known as The Dwell, were involved at CTK in many different ways, including leading worship for campus events, when they came into contact with people from The Vigil Project. The Vigil Project is a community of musical artists formed in 2016 with a common mission to make Catholic music for Catholic prayer.

“(The Vigil Project) started coming around to give Catholic student musicians formation retreats for musicians. I thought ‘This is the coolest thing ever,’” said Ferguson.

He and Salopek developed a relationship with Vigil Project founder Greg Boudreaux and some of the project’s team members.

“Greg started coming out to some of these events we were doing and approached us at different times and said, ‘Hey, I think you guys have a real gift and calling and capacity to do this in a more professional or full-time sense,’” said Ferguson.

“Initially I said, ‘This is the worst idea I’ve ever heard. Absolutely no way.’ And it became apparent over time as the Lord continued to reveal the call to me; that this is exactly what he had for me, where he wanted me to be. And things fell into place.”

Since their involvement with the Vigil Project, Salopek and Ferguson released their first album, “Honest,” as part of the Dwell on May 5. They celebrated with a release concert at Christ the King activity center.

The key features of the album are Ferguson’s and Salopek’s rich vocals.

“When we were writing the album, we weren’t actually intending to release it, so it’s very personal to our own separate prayer lives in different ways. Through different experiences we were inspired to release it, and we prayerfully decided to share this with everyone,” said Salopek.

And through the different prayer life and faith journey experiences featured in the album, people can find that it relates to their own, she added.

“Honest” is a worship album, yet not a worship album, according to Ferguson.

“Our faith as well as our relationship with the Lord doesn’t leave us when we walk out the doors of the church,” Ferguson said. “It follows us into different moments. It follows in our jobs, it follows us



A large group people gathered at Christ the King Church and Student Center in Baton Rouge for a concert celebrating the release of “Honest” by Andrew Ferguson and Sophie Salopek. Photos provided by Sophie Salopek

into the bar when we meet our friends, it follows us to all these places and ‘Honest’ recognizes that.”

When considering the venue for releasing the album, Christ the King was chosen because the prayer experiences featured in their album occurred during their college years.

said, “That was so special to get up on that stage and then look out at a room full of people that had in some way throughout those two years, and really longer, who had been with us through the whole journey.”

“Over the past five years, I have spent countless hours in that activity center



Sophie Salopek and Andrew Ferguson sing featured songs in their album “Honest” at Christ the King and Student Center.

“A lot of that time was spent at Christ the King with those people and in the church. It was also a big part of our own musician formation and being built up and improving as musicians,” Salopek said.

Speaking about the concert Ferguson

playing ping pong with friends, studying and panicking for a test and praying. So much life happened in that particular place,” said Ferguson.

He and Salopek plan to “hit the road” in the fall and perform at universities and Newman Centers.

“The key parts of the albums and the tour is structured so that the show starts in a really fun and energetic way and exciting musically,” said Ferguson. “Then it tapers down to the point where we actually take note about the things we are saying and why.”

“And from that point, the audience has already been struck, has been touched by that transcendental beauty. That’s why I think music is so special because of the way it exemplifies beauty. And beauty, unlike any other transcendental, sneaks past you and a lot of those guards I think many put up.”

A lot of people have their own idea of what truth is, so it’s easy to take a stance against goodness, Ferguson stated.

“A lot of people have been wronged before, and so it’s sometimes hard to trust what is goodness,” said Ferguson. “Beauty sneaks past those things because it doesn’t need to be explained. It is its own end.”

“By that point of the show (slower tempo) we’ve already touched their hearts through music and when we talk together, pray together and sing together (we think about) why are we doing this? What are we saying? It becomes clear that our Lord is trying to pursue us through the ability to sing a song with one another through the relationships that are there in the room.”

“Once we realize that it really draws us up to him.”

And from that point Salopek and Ferguson take it back upwards to that exciting, fun, energetic place.

“But it has a completely new perspective at that point because we realized where that joy comes from. It comes from Jesus giving us a piece of himself. And I think that’s exactly what we want,” Ferguson emphasized.

Knowing from his own college experiences and those of his friends, Ferguson said many people don’t understand that there’s joy in a relationship with Christ in all moments, not just those in within the doors of the church.

The album’s title was written in recognition of the joys and beauties, but sometimes the struggles of what it is to have a relationship with the Lord and pursue it.

“But at the same time it also realizes that through all of those things, through ups and downs there is only one place that is joy. It’s an honest look at ourselves our own prayer lives and an honest look at where true joy come from,” Ferguson said.

To access the music people can use the following links: Spotify: open.spotify.com/album/5Ei8QLHERlwDtp6CIqAvJd?si=IDE249XtQzauHOiZFerwNg

Youtube: “HONEST” – The Vigil Project, Feat. The Dwell

Vigil Project Website (Honest): thevigilproject.com/honest-release

Baptizing infants

Q Why do we baptize infants? Shouldn't we wait and let them make their own decision?

A In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus tells Nicodemus, "no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (Jn 3:5). Even though, at this time in Jesus' ministry, he had not yet instituted the sacrament of baptism, I believe he was referring to it. Others also believe this. According to the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, New Testament, "several observations suggest the verse refers to the sacrament of baptism."

(1) A close link between water and (Holy) Spirit is forged elsewhere in St. John's writings (7:38-39; 1 Jn 5:8). This is most explicit in John 1:33, where the Spirit descends upon Jesus the very moment he is baptized in the waters of the Jordan River. (2) Immediately following this episode Jesus and the disciples begin a baptismal ministry in Judea. (3) Other New Testament passages describe baptism as a sacrament of salvation through the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 6:11; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 3:21).

The Old Testament envisions Yahweh

pouring out his Spirit from above in the messianic age (Is 32:15; Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:28-29). This was depicted as water being poured upon the Israelites to wash away their iniquities and renew their hearts. These prophetic hopes should have prepared Nicodemus to understand the thrust of Jesus' teachings.

The Council of Trent declared in 1547 that John 3:5 refers to baptism. It was said that "water" is no mere metaphor, but a visible sign of the Spirit's "invisible work in the sacrament."

All babies are born with original sin, sin inherited from Adam and Eve because they disobeyed God's commandment. When one is baptized, they are cleansed of that sin; this would include infants. I see this as opening up the

gates to the road which leads to heaven.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "The church does not know of any means other than baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude (heaven); this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit'" (CCC 1257).

The church has never put an age requirement on those available to gain God's graces, and it has always baptized infants. In Matthew 19:14,

Jesus says, "Let the children come to me for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

St. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your

sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39).

Additionally, the book of Acts has several instances where entire households were baptized; any infants in these households would have been baptized.

It is true infants cannot make their own decision to be baptized, but parents must always make decisions that benefit their children. That is why they bring their infants to be baptized and make the promise on their behalf that they will raise the child "in the faith, so that, keeping God's commandments, they may love the Lord and their neighbor as Christ has taught us." Otherwise, "The church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer baptism shortly after birth" (CCC 1250).

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



Stump the Deacon

Deacon George Hooper

THANK YOU

For more than 60 years The Catholic Commentator has continuously published 26 editions a year, bringing the good news of The Diocese of Baton Rouge into your homes.

Through floods, hurricanes and even a worldwide pandemic the Commentator has never missed an issue.

Now, as the Commentator prepares to sunset temporarily while plans are finalized for a new publication to debut later this year, the staff, current and past, would like to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting us into your lives.

You have made our jobs rewarding. You, the people we have encountered and written about for the past six decades, have never failed to spiritually nourish us through your own stories, especially your dedication to the Catholic faith that we all so dearly love.

You have been an inspiration to each and every one of us. Individually, we have been privileged to spend time in the Commentator newsroom, grateful to be a part of the diocese's most impactful communication tool.

As we slip away for a bit, please know that your loyalty to The Catholic Commentator has been appreciated more than we can put into words. Collectively, we feel honored to have served you. The Catholic Commentator is your paper; we just put the words on the page.

Along the way, we hope we have evangelized, educated, informed and perhaps even entertained the Catholic faithful.

God bless and thank you,
The Catholic Commentator staff, past and present

CCR evangelizing through Ambassador program

**Special to
The Catholic Commentator**

When Catholic Community Radio changed its name to Catholic Community Media, the staff realized its need to evangelize throughout all media platforms, according to David Dawson, president of Catholic Community Media.

Dawson said a confusing world brought an increasing number of people to tune into the morning show, "Wake Up!" as well as other local programming offered by EWTN. He added the station saw a need to bring its message of evangelization to individual parishes, schools and other organizations through its Ambassador program.

Dawson remains determined to continue to reach and tell others about the radio station in the local area.

"I believe the best form of advertising any business could have is word of mouth," Dawson said. "When someone approaches me and tells me of a wonderful book or program that had a profound effect on them, I'm inclined to search it out. That's why I believe a grass roots program has the greatest impact. Passion is contagious."

Gaby Smith, director of News and Social Media and host of "Wake Up!" said the program will help more people to learn more about their faith through a medium that is needed and thriving.

"The Ambassador Program gives each person the opportunity to talk about Catholic Community Media through their individual parish," said Smith. "We give the ambassador free bumper stickers, schedules and prayer cards to pass out in their parish."

Ambassadors also help promote events for Catholic Community Media such as their sold-out Catholic Man Night, Pledge Drive and Family Night events.

Ambassadors will also have the opportunity to promote their parish events for free on the radio. Those individuals will have access to book a radio interview on the morning show, "Wake Up!" along with having their event posted on CCM's calendar.

If a person wants to become a Catholic Community Media Ambassador, one can visit catholiccommunityradio.org ambassador and fill out the brief form. A staff member will reach out to them shortly ready to mail the new ambassador free items. When the items run out, Catholic Community Media will send more items to the ambassador for free.

"The purpose is to continue to let people know that Catholic media and radio is here, locally," said Smith.

To learn more about Catholic Community Media, please visit catholiccommunityradio.org.



JUNIOR DIVISION UCA CAMP CHAMPS – The seventh and eighth grade St. Theresa Middle cheerleaders attended UCA camp June 5-8 at LSU. During the four-day camp, the cheerleaders worked with UCA staff to perfect motions and jumps, learn dance choreography and cheers, enhance crowd engagement, attempt advanced stunts and create dynamic routines. The girls were awarded two superior evaluations and placed second on their camp routine, which included a dance and a pyramid with eight different building skills. They also won first place trophies for both their sideline and cheer and took home the title of Overall Game Day Champions in the junior high division. The cheerleaders received an invitation to Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida and an opportunity to perform in the Cheez-it Citrus Bowl. Carrie T., Korie F., Kallie T. and Jordyn B. were selected as All-American Cheerleaders. Jordyn B. and Kyndall L. were both semifinalists in the jump-off contest. Photo provided by Edith Soulier

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Media.org**

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3pm

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tune your heart to the **Truth**

St. Francis Hall is rapidly turning into the spiritual hub at Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University from its massive San Damiano cross to the school's values that greets visitor, the center offers a little something for every visitor. And, of course, St. Francis serves as a daily reminder for students and faculty to reflect on the Franciscan order through their prayer life.



Diocese of Baton Rouge Seminary Scholarship Funds

What is a Seminary Scholarship fund?

A seminary scholarship fund is an invested sum of money, the interest of which is used in perpetuity to help fund the education of men studying for the priesthood.

How does someone establish a fund?

It is simple. A fund may be established and named for anyone you choose – Friend, family, bishop, priest, religious, etc. Anyone can name or establish a fund.

Who do I contact to establish or contribute to a fund?

To create a fund or to make a contribution to an existing fund, please send it to the Vocations and Seminarians Department, P. O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028.

For information, call 225-336-8778.

This is only a partial list of all Seminary Scholarship Funds.

Visit our website at www.diobr.org/vocations for a complete list of Seminary Scholarship Funds.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND CONTRIBUTIONS JULY 2022 THRU MAY 2023

Archbishop Antoine Bland

By: Knights of Columbus #8878	\$2,000.00
By: Knights of Columbus #2047	\$ 250.00
In Memory of: Zachary Charles LeDuff	
By: M/MJames Robert Sr.	\$ 25.00
In Memory of: Joe Webb	
By: M/MJoseph Daigle	\$ 10.00
In Memory of: Craig LaChapelle	
By: M/MJames Robert Sr.	\$ 25.00
In Memory of: Marilyn Lusk	
By: M/MJoseph Daigle	\$ 10.00
In Memory of: Joseph Ira Landry	
By: M/MJoseph Daigle	\$ 10.00
In Memory of: Joseph Ira Landry	
By: Knights of Columbus #8878	\$ 20.00
In Memory of: Joseph Ira Landry	
By: M/MJames Robert Sr.	\$ 25.00
In Memory of: Charles Gremillion	
By: M/MJames Robert Sr.	\$ 25.00
In Memory of: Winans Dearing Lloyd	
By: M/MJames Robert, Sr.	\$ 25.00
In Memory of: Mitchell Bourgeois	
By: M/MJoseph Daigle	\$ 10.00
In Memory of: Grayland Poche	
By: M/MJames Robert	\$ 25.00
In Memory of: Grayland Poche	
By: Knights of Columbus 8878	\$ 20.00
In Memory of: Grayland Poche	
By: M/MJoseph Daigle	\$ 10.00
In Memory of: Earl Jarreau	
By: Knights of Columbus #8878	\$ 20.00
In Memory of: Earl Jarreau	
By: Knights of Columbus #8878	\$ 20.00

In Honor of Louis & Anita Bonfanti

By: Anita Bonfanti	\$ 100.00
By: Anita Bonfanti	\$ 50.00
By: Jason Bonfanti	\$ 200.00

Fr. David M. Chauvin

By: CDA Court St. Phillip #1504	\$ 200.00
In Memory of: Fr. Louis Oubre	
By: St. James Church	\$ 754.00
By: Vacherie-St. Philip Church	\$ 1,282.00

Catholic Daughters of the Americas

By: Court St. John the Baptist #2079	\$ 300.00
By: Court Our Lady of Pompeii #2149	\$ 100.00
By: Court of Our Lady of Pompeii #2149	\$ 100.00
By: Court Marie Pleine De Grace #2713	\$ 100.00
By: Catholic Daughters of the Americas	\$ 1,741.58
By: Court of Our Lady of Pompeii #2149	\$ 100.00

Fr. Maynard E "Tippy" Hurst

\$ 1,568.00	
St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland	
By: Catholic Daughters of St. Margaret #2678	\$ 61.00
By: Catholic Daughters of St. Margaret #2678	\$ 178.00
In Honor of: The birthday of Rev. Jamin David	
By: St. Margaret Ladies Auxiliary	\$ 100.00
In Honor of: The birthday of Rev. Jamin David	
By: St. Margaret Staff	\$ 200.00
In Honor of: Fr. Jamin David	
By: Knights of Columbus #10178	\$ 75.00
In Honor of: Fr. Jamin David	
By: SK Fred Gautier Albany Assembly	\$ 75.00
In Memory of: Leon Anthony Dauterive, Jr.	
By: St. Margaret Catholic Daughters #2678	\$ 183.00
In Memory of: Leon Anthony Dauterive, Jr.	
By: St. Margaret Catholic Daughters #2678	\$ 15.00
In Honor of: Fr. Jamin David & Fr. Paul Gros	
By: Shirley V. Darouse	\$ 200.00
By: Catholic Daughters St. Margaret #2678	\$ 50.00
In Memory of: Marion Breaux Clement	
By: M/MJoseph Daigle	\$ 10.00

Msgr. Leonard Robin

By: Catholic Daughters of the Americas	
Court St. John #1214	\$ 100.00

Fr. Danny Rousse

By: Ronald & Judith Bourgeois	\$ 50.00
By: Marilyn Morvant	\$ 50.00

Bishop Stanley Ott

By: Catholic Daughters of the Americas	
Notre Dame De La Paix #2316	\$ 25.00

Tomorrows Priest

By: Frank & Cheryl Jeanmard	\$ 300.00
In Memory of: Vincent Miranda	
By: Stuart & Vivian Glasco	\$ 50.00
In Memory of: Deceased members of the Ladies Altar	
Society of St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church	
By: The Ladies Altar Society	
of St. Gabriel Church	\$ 500.00

Fr. Clarence Waguespack Jr.

By: St. James Church	\$ 35.00
By: Vacherie-Our Lady of Peace	\$ 1,563.00
By: CDA Notre Dame de la Paix Court # 2316	\$ 100.00
In Memory of: Claire Amedee	
By: Kenneth & Susan Kallaher	\$ 50.00
In Memory of: Claire Amedee	
By: Karen and Donald Savoie	\$ 50.00

LETTER ▼

From page 3

She noted the tenants and goals of "Laudato Si'" are response to the cry of the poor; response to the cry of the earth; ecological economics; adoption of sustainable lifestyles; ecological education; ecological spirituality; and community resilience and empowerment.

She pointed the action plan contains practical steps that can be taken by families, communities, local, state, federal and educational communities.

"We are all brothers and sisters in handing the gift of this earth from the Lord Jesus Christ to the next generation – hopefully better than we found it," said Asher.

People from various faith denominations attended the St. George documentary, creating ecumenical ties in caring for creation.

"Ultimately, caring for creation is a spiritual calling," said Father Tommy Dillon, rector of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge.

St. Margaret's became involved with the "Laudato Si'" movement and the documentary showing due to a longtime friendship with St. George's Director of Adult Faith Formation, Karen Fawley.

"We are called to be good stewards of the earth and protect and preserve the natural world God has given us. By watching this documentary and taking responsibility for our actions, we can work towards a healthier, more sustainable future for God's creation," said Father Dillon. "St. Margaret's involvement with the 'Laudato Si' movement and viewing the documentary manifests the church's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable living. Through its participation in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana's Environmental Commission and other initiatives, St. Margaret's seeks to promote awareness of environmental issues and encourage its members to take action to protect and preserve God's creation."

For more information about "The Letter" and the "Laudato Si'" movement, visit laudatosi.org.



ST. JOSEPH CATHEDRAL EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION – The Diocese of Baton Rouge continued its observance of the three-year Eucharistic Revival on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi Sunday, June 11 with a Solemn Mass and Eucharistic procession at St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge. At the conclusion of Mass, Bishop Michael G. Duca carried a monstrance containing the Sacred Body of Christ in the form of a consecrated host and led the faithful in a formal procession around Cathedral Square. The procession ended in the cathedral with Benediction and the Divine Praises. Photos by Nicole Jones | Digital Media Manager Diocese of Baton Rouge



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- ACROSS**

1 City that was the home of Abram

6 Bit of pond vegetation

10 Timber wolf

14 She was in Wonderland

15 Sharp

16 Scat queen

17 Scavenges

18 Suspend

19 Entrance

20 Jack's Soviet counterpart

22 Diabolically cruel

24 Lubricates

26 "Strange Magic" rock grp.

27 Winding shape

28 Wide straits

32 Idiot

34 Multi-volume reference bk.

35 Free and undeserved gift of God

37 Dull

41 Scheme

43 Beef cut

45 Strange (comb.)

46 Mr. Fudd

48 City destroyed in Genesis

50 Cover

51 Polish place

53 Sure

55 Armed ser. mail service

58 Plant part

60 Five virgins in Matthew 25

61 Stole

64 Banded anteater

68 Repeat

69 Baking chamber

71 Room

72 Road to the Colosseum

73 Heap

74 Best of a group

75 Alley

76 Femme's pronoun

77 Patron saint of headache suffers
- 2 To him, to Pierre

3 Skating arena

4 Paul VI's "A Call to ____"

5 Like some dolls

6 Egyptian spirit of the dead

7 Foliage unit

8 Desert spirit

9 First name of John XXIII

10 "____ Kindly Light"

11 Any Beatles song, now

12 Utter joy

13 Vows

21 On one's toes

23 Shem's father

25 Thick slices

28 Long cloak-like vestment

29 An afterlife

30 Father of Cain

31 Ladle

33 What Jesus called Herod

36 Equip

38 He is in Jesus' genealogy in Luke

39 Sch. of higher learning

40 Method

42 Peter cast one out

44 Reddish dye

47 Biblical epic starring Burton and Mature (with "The")

49 Abused

52 St. Benedict is the patron saint of this continent

54 Worship place in Jerusalem

55 The feast of St. Catherine of Siena is in this month

56 Someone tried to destroy this in 1972

57 Ancient

59 29D is his realm

62 At the bow of a vessel

63 Vale

65 ____ du soleil

66 Globe opening

67 Golf mounds

70 Born

Solution on page 14

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A decade of great memories

Ten years ago I walked into the Diocese of Baton Rouge overflowing with enthusiasm sprinkled in with a smidge of anxiety.

I was thrilled, albeit humbled, to be handed the reins by former editor and much beloved Laura Deavers. I understood and embraced the challenging task of maintaining the standard she had set for more than 30 years.

And I also wondered how someone with such an annoying N'Awlins accent would be received.

Fortunately, the concerns were unwarranted.

From the "villas" of the bayou parishes to the Tri-Parishes in the west, from the inner city of Baton Rouge to the rural parishes dotting the eastern landscape, I was blessed to meet so many wonderful people. Every church I visited, every event I covered, I was always heartened by the welcome doors that had been swung wide open.

The past decade has been nothing short of exhilarating, delivering the news of the diocese as well as spiritually inspiring stories and commentaries into your homes every two weeks. It was a responsibility I took seriously.

But it's with a sense of sadness to announce this is my final column with The Commentator. To paraphrase Bishop Michael G. Duca during the recent Ordination Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral, he warned the new priests that they probably had expectations and plans for their ministry. With a chuckle, he said to be prepared that those same plans will take many unexpected twists and turns during the course of their ministerial careers.

We have our plans and God has his own plan. Guess who wins?

That is why patience and trust in the Lord is so necessary in our daily lives, and so critical to me personally at this unexpected crossroad in my life.

On page 1, Bishop Duca announced publication of The Catholic Commem-

tator will be suspended July 1 as the diocese finalizes a new format. Discernment for the new publication began nearly two years ago, and I have been privileged to have been a part of that process.

Stay tuned for updates.

So I leave with a deep sense of pride and gratefulness, humbled by the relationships that have been formed with so many amazing people. From the pulpits to the classrooms, from the parish fairs to dedications of new and renovated churches, from covering floods to hurricanes, the people of the diocese have been unwavering in their support and generosity. Words cannot adequately express my appreciation.

As I stumble toward the exit door, there are several people I need to thank publicly for helping make the past 10 years such a joy, beginning with Bishop Emeritus Robert W. Muench, who took a quantum leap of faith when he gave the nod to bringing me aboard. My relationship with Bishop Muench extends back many years when I was scribing for the Clarion Herald and he was still a monsignor for the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Bishop Muench, I appreciate all that you have done for me and for your kindness and your support.

And speaking of bosses, to Bishop Duca I thank you for your encouragement and your willingness to allow me to present my input.

I've repeatedly said to anyone who would listen that the diocese is blessed to collectively have the greatest group of priests I've been around, and that includes an archdiocese and two dioceses. Each of you bring your own special gifts that you generously share with your

congregations.

Just as the bishop understands his role as shepherd to the diocese, you guys understand your roles as shepherds to each of your own parishes.

Parishioners should take a moment on Sundays to thank their pastors and parochial vicars for being their spiritual leaders, their beacons of faith in a world where organized religion continues to recede.

Of course there are far too many priests to list and with advanced apologies to those I miss, but a few of the many that have made a difference in my life include Vicar General Father Jamin David, the diocese's top priest, for his counsel and who talked me off the cliff when needed; Father Josh Johnson, a dynamic priest whose vast ministerial talents are renowned na-

tionwide and a person when looking into his eyes one can see the Holy Spirit that fills his heart; Father Michael Alello, a priest of the people, immensely popular, a gifted homilist, unprecedented fundraiser, the greatest sock collection in the diocese and perhaps the only clergy member in the diocese to have participated in two Ironman competitions; Father Paul Counce, a man of immense intelligence and though we occasional crossed swords always guided me to looking at issues through a different prism; Father Jeff Bayhi, whose faith is an inspiration to so many and one of those rare individuals that after a conversation with him your life is better.

And to all young priests, I strongly encourage you to model your own ministerial lives following the examples of Father Matt Lorrain, Father David Allen, Father Matthew Graham and Father Tom Ranzino, who exemplify what every

parish priest should be.

Father Trey Nelson and Father Jerry Martin, may your drives be long and your putts short.

Finally, and the tears are already dampening the keyboard, I give a special thanks to my wonderful staff. During the past 10 years we have been through what no staff should be forced to endure, including the death of one of our members, two staff members losing children, one staff member surviving what could have been a life-threatening illness, another losing a home in 2016, two separate layoffs that stripped a third of our colleagues and an unprecedented worldwide pandemic.

But through it all they never doubted when others did, their dedication and commitment to publishing the best product possible never flickered. As a result, The Commentator has been fortunate to have won Newspaper of the Year and two General Excellence awards through the Louisiana Press Association, unheard of for a religious publication competing with secular publications.

To Wanda Koch, Lisa Disney, Debbie Shelley, Nicole Latiolais, Bonny Van, Penny Saia, Rachelle Smith and Barbara Chenevert, who was taken from us far too young, I say thank you. I had the easiest job in the world; just get out of the way and let everyone do what they do best.

We hope we made you, our loyal readers, proud.

I do not believe in goodbyes, so I say to parishioners in every corner of the diocese thank you again for bringing such joy into my life, for allowing our little publication into your living rooms 26 times a year and may the Holy Spirit and the love of Mary fill your hearts.

MEEK is the outgoing editor of *The Catholic Commentator* and can be reached at rsmjr@aol.com.



Wandering Catholic
Richard Meek

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PRAY FOR US

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

July 6 Rev. James Singarayar HGN
Dcn. Steven C. Gonzales
Br. Marcus Turcotte SC
July 7 Rev. Philip F. Spano
Dcn. Richard H. Grant
Sr. Frances Carol Gonsoulin CSJ
July 8 Rev. Robert F. Stine
Dcn. Ed Hanks
Br. Edward Violet SM
July 9 Rev. Tomi Thomas
Dcn. Ronald J. Hebert
Sr. Raquel of Holy Spirit Gutierrez HMSS
July 10 Rev. Frank M. Uter
Dcn. Clayton A. Hollier

Br. James Burns SC
July 11 Rev. Babu N. Vareeth IMS
Dcn. George Hooper
Sr. Joan Hartlaub CSJ
July 12 Rev. John M. Vu
Dcn. Glenn Hymel
Br. William Cawley SC
July 13 Rev. Miles D. Walsh
Dcn. Micheal J. (Shelley) Joseph
Sr. Mary Anne Hebert CSJ
July 14 Rev. John Timothy Watson
Dcn. John A. Jung Jr.
Br. Roland Champagne SC
July 15 Rev. Ju Hyung (Paul) Yi

Dcn. Robert J. Kusich
Sr. Anna Hoang ICM
July 16 Rev. Gerard F. Young
Dcn. Chris Landry
Br. Robert Croteau SC
July 17 Rev. Kevin Zubele CSsR
Dcn. Albert Levy III
Sr. Anija Jacob CMC
July 18 Most Rev. Michael G. Duca
Dcn. James A. Little
Br. Ramon Daunis SC
July 19 Most Rev. Robert W. Muench
Dcn. Robert McDonner
Sr. M. John Janet MC

Valuable lesson in love language

My best friend mentioned recently that she tried a little something with her children in an effort to connect more with them individually.

The kids, on their own, or facilitated by her, took the five love languages quiz. There is one designed especially for children. She said the knowledge allowed her to be intentional with her “mom” time, and it was meaningful.

She quickly saw positive changes. We all know it as a fruitful tool for a couple but this perspective was exciting. I wanted to try it too. Summer is approaching and we will have an abundance of opportunities to be with each other.

I already know the baby’s love language. It’s snacks and rubbing the back of my arm when my skin is cold. I simply needed to find out how the big three received love best.

To my surprise, we received two “quality time” and one “acts of service.” Those languages are not my husband’s nor mine. All I have to do is hold my guy’s hand and he feels love so this caused me to think and plan.

My oldest was out of school early because of being exempt from finals so I wanted to make her feel special and be mindful of her quiz results. She asked to put a semi-permanent color in her hair because school was over, so I thought let’s do it together. I haven’t colored my hair in many years and it has a growing number of unruly white ones, so I was ok getting rid of those to spend some time with my girl.

One Saturday morning in late May, we covered her head in an auburn paste while laughing and playing. It came out so well. We both loved it.

I needed to start lunch, so I got the pot to its simmer point then it was my turn. I set the cream and activator just right, apply, and then it’s “set” time but I didn’t set the time. I stirred gravy, put the rice to steam, peeled cucumbers and cut up a cantaloupe before I realized I never set a timer. I thought to myself, “That feels like 25 minutes. Let me quickly rinse this out before we eat.”

After the water runs from indigo to clear, I towel dry it and I immediately feel refreshed and younger. I’m cool again, y’all. Our event together satiated my girls’ love language, and I had fun too. We all ate, spent time in the house and then got ready to attend vigil Mass.

After Mass, we are talking with our friends in the beautiful sunshine and I hear a gasp accompanied by wide eyes and a hand over mouth, “Oh, Momma! Your hair!” All the white ones are now royal blue. My heart drops and all confidence is crushed when I realized

I didn’t leave it for the full 25 minutes and the black didn’t set in. My face must have been horrified because all the teenage girls in the parking lot rushed over to try and comfort me. “It’s a beautiful blue like the Blessed Mother, Mrs. Ellen.” Another one says, “It’s cool mom hair” and then, “It’s summer hair. It looks fun.”

Right away I wanted to give each a dollar bill like my Mamaw would do when I tried to make her feel bet-

ter but then I just soaked in the feeling of humility and smiled. Yes, I was embarrassed for a couple of seconds and even wanted to bring in their moms and laugh about it and overcompensate with humor per my usual defense mechanism but the Lord said to just take it. I even tried to reply with something witty about Mary’s mantle but I couldn’t get it out.

I also, for a second, sulked at the idea of not having the time to do anything properly because of being pulled in so many ways as a momma.

You see between praying the litany of humility and also working out my struggles with vanity alongside our Lord, I’m bound to get opportunities to practice it and also chances to realize that I veered off that course a bit. I’m so thankful he is gentle with the reminders. I continued to cut up with the girls and soak up their compassion because “words of affirmation” is my love language and the Lord knows how to properly lace a lesson. I learned to practice a virtue a little but I was also consoled by sweet young women.

It’s funny how you worry about how girls will react when another one needs to be lifted. I received firsthand the outpouring of charity from them and I’m humbled to be able to recognize it.

I highly recommend giving your children the love languages quiz. Your plans to spend time or execute their results may not work out as you’d like (actually, they won’t at all because the Lord is the best comedian), but the resolution will manifest in some way, and I pray that it is heartfelt, filled with laughter and saturated with the presence of Jesus.

ELDRIDGE is a Catholic mom living in the Diocese of Baton Rouge facing the same challenges all families face.



Raising Rascals for Jesus

Ellen Eldridge

BISHOP ▼

From page 1

receive a paper that keeps the faithful of the diocese informed of church life and teaching from around the whole diocese. Richard is retiring from the paper and we are now in search of a new editor. This is sad news for the diocese but it provides Richard the opportunity to take on different challenges and we wish him well in his new endeavors.

During the interim, Commentator associate editor Debbie Shelley will post two stories a week to the paper’s website at news.diobr.org.

While our search for a new editor for the Commentator continues, I am still committed to a printed Catholic Commentator so I hope this short break will allow us time to make The Commentator even more effective in the years to come. I pray the Holy Spirit will guide this good work.

GOSPEL ▼

From page 2

working harder to guide it. The results were straight lines and turned up soil ripe for sowing the seeds and planting strawberries.

Jesus asks us to take up his yoke, which will not only be easy but will be guided by him. When we attempt to steer ourselves without the guiding hands of Jesus, we become lost, unrested and exhausted. Let us be guided by the strong hands of Jesus as he gently leads us on his path.

Gratitude

“Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord!” (Ps 89). A pressing virtue of a disciple is gratitude. We are grateful for the sunrise, but are we truly grateful to the one who causes the sun to rise? Gratitude for God’s goodness is more powerful than the sun’s energy.

Conditions for discipleship extend beyond the reason of the world. For to be Christ-like is to radially love beyond human comprehension. Holiness is what we become amidst the persecutions and joys of the day. The dichotomy is a reality.

How can we grow in holiness? First of all, we ask for it. Second, we seek it in the ordinary things of each day. St. Therese of Lisieux realized that everything she accomplished was ultimately because of God’s unbounded love. The mindset of simplicity actually allows more freedom to grow in holiness. Knowing God loves us will build our confidence as disciples. We trust in his goodness and care. Be strong. Be courageous. Be holy. Keep it simple. Be a life-giving disciple.

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

Mission Statement

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

Elayne Hunt Correctional Center Visitation Program—The Parole Project and Frederick Douglass Project have partnered for a visitation program at Elayne Hunt Correctional Center in St. Gabriel. There will be structured meetings and conversations between incarcerated and people from society at large. Individuals and groups of up to 20 people are accepted. Visits are held twice monthly from 12 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. at Elayne Hunt Correctional. For information or to schedule a visit, call Matthew Pineda at 985-707-3466 or email matthew@theparoleproject.org or call Christi Cheramie at 225-428-1016 or email Christi@theparoleproject.org.

Immaculate Conception Events—Immaculate Conception Church, 865 Hatchell Lane, Denham Springs, will host the following events: A Bible Study, “Lectio Eucharist, Discovering the Mass in the Bible,” Wednesdays, July 5 – Sept. 6, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the Main Hall; Ministry & Theology course on spiritual life, Saturday, July 8 and Saturday, July 15, 8 a.m. – noon, in Room 101 of the ICC Faith Formation Center, to register visit learnat.diobr.org/product/mat-i-the-spiritual-life-iccds-july-8-15-2023/; Men of the Word Men’s Conference for men ages 18 and older, Tuesday, July 18, 6 – 9 p.m., beginning with Mass in the church, RSVP by Friday, July 14 at icc-msh.org or call 225-665-5926; Visio Divina Workshop on prayer meditation using sacred art, Thursday, July 13, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., at the ICC Main Hall, free, but register online at icc-msh.org. For more information, email amilton@icc-msh.org.

St. Sharbel Catholic Parish Fundraisers—St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Parish has purchased a property and building at 18768 Jefferson Hwy., Baton Rouge to be converted into a church. The 6,000 square-foot facility will have a 220-person sanctuary and a 120-person reception hall as well as a kitchen and classrooms. The parish is raising funds for renovations through three events: a football season tickets raffle available at sharbel.org/LSU, a benefit banquet on Sunday, Aug. 13 at White Oak Estates, 17660 George O’Neal Road, Baton Rouge, with tickets available at sharbel.org/WhiteOak and a Lebanese festival Saturday, Oct. 14 with information at sharbel.org/festival.

Corpus Christi processes along the bayous

By Robin Landry

Special to The Catholic Commentator

Three years ago, St. Elizabeth Church in Paincourtville and St. Jules Church in Belle Rose began under the direction of Father Tomi Thomas, what has since become an annual tradition, a Corpus Christi procession to celebrate the solemnity of the most holy body and blood of Christ.

Father Thomas’ vision was to bring the Lord to the people where they live with the primary purpose being to focus our attention on the Eucharist.

In the first two years, the Blessed Sacrament went to homes and neighborhoods in the church by caravan where many gathered to experience the presence of our Lord. The locations were predetermined and advertised so that as many people could have the opportunity to take part in adoration and benediction at each site.

The first two years there were seven and nine locations respectively. Neighborhoods and families prepared for the anticipated arrival of the Blessed Sacrament; altars were prepared, flowers were placed, people assembled, musicians sang and those who attended experienced the solemn arrival of the body and blood of Christ along with adoration and benediction.

This year’s procession took on a much different look as the Blessed Sacrament was transported by vehicle to every church in Assumption Civil Parish and ended at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Donaldsonville. The route this year began in Pierre Part at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Pierre Part at 3 p.m.

From there, the procession traveled

to St. Elizabeth, then on to the churches of St. Benedict the Moor Church in Bertrandville, St. Anne in Napoleonville, St. Philomena in Labadieville, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Plattenville, St. Augustine in Klotzville, St. Jules in Belle Rose, and finally, the last stop, St. Catherine of Siena. The priests from the churches who took part in the procession include Father Al Davidson (St. Joseph), Father Eddie Martin (St. Philomena), Father Andrew Toyinbo, Father Raphael Asika, and Father Thomas and Deacons Ehren Oschwald and Ed Gauthreaux.

At each stop, the rosary was recited 20 minutes prior to the arrival of the Blessed Sacrament followed by adoration and then benediction. Each priest from the church to where the Eucharist was to travel met at the previous church, then processed to his church embracing the monsternace in an open Jeep with a police escort followed by a caravan of ten vehicles that made their way to the next location. Many who took part this year were new to this experience of having the Lord brought to the churches throughout the civil parish. Some took part at only one church, but several of the participants traveled to multiple churches to partake in the celebration.

Those who took part in the procession, whether it was at one location or multiple, all agreed that it was a wonderful experience and felt the true presence of our Lord.

Anna Mabile, who lives in Pierre Part, took part at St. Joseph the Worker said, “The Corpus Christi procession was truly a faith-filled experience. What a blessing it was to honor our Lord with prayer and then witness him

traveling to each church in our deanery! I believe it was a day of spiritual unity for our Catholic communities.” As the procession passed through the parish, residents could be seen kneeling in their yards to honor our Lord.

Jerilyn Williams, who traveled to various locations of the route had this to say, “Initially, I had only planned to travel from St. Benedict the Moor to St. Anne, but I felt like I had to follow him further. The presence of the Lord was so strongly felt at each church I entered that I had to continue to the next stop. Before I knew it, I was at the end of the procession and the whole procession seemed like only minutes had passed. It was truly a blessed spiritual experience. One I cherish deep in my heart.”

For Charlie Bailey, a parishioner of St. Anne, the procession had a profound effect.

“For me this procession was the literal taking out of the walls of the Church our God and our faith and bringing him out into the world!” Bailey said. “This is what we are called to do after each, and every eucharistic feast and we did it not in an invisible way but in a visible way. I hope that the hearts that encountered Jesus in this way can be impacted. That is my prayer and takeaway.”

Father Raphael Asika, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena, processed with the Blessed Lord from St. Jules to the end of the procession. Having participated in the procession for the first time, he stated, “For my parishioners, procession and benediction was a way of giving public witness to their faith and a source of unity among all parishes.”

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Anyone with knowledge of the whereabouts of Monique Lisette Meyer (née Landry) is asked to contact the Tribunal at tribunal@diobr.org or 225-336-8755.

See
Puzzle
on
Page 11.

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Bishop Michael G. Duca, shares a light moment with FranU President Dr. Tina Holland following the blessing of St. Francis Hall on May 30. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

FRANU ▼

From page 1

first step was when Holland helped turn the spade during a ground-breaking ceremony for St. Francis Hall.

Recently, with tears occasionally rinsing her eyes, Holland watched as Bishop Michael G. Duca blessed the chapel at St. Francis Hall, authoring the latest chapter in FranU's successful history. The dream had come full circle.

Holland said the dedication marked the end of what was a "pretty long struggle" but quickly pointed out, "Now it's just beginning."

"A distinctly Catholic institution, something that is the reason why I got into the work," she said. "Catholic higher education is the work of the church and this is what it is all about."

"It's all going to be great from here out," she added. "Everything goes around this. We are good to go now."

During his homily, delivered under a stunning San Damiano cross that is the centerpiece of the new hall but in reality the entire urban campus, Bishop Duca noted that after the 40 days of rains had stopped and the sun had finally broken through, Noah's first inclination was to construct an altar. First and foremost, the bishop explained, was Noah's understanding to give thanks and to praise God.

"We have an altar here (in the chapel), and that's an important thing," he said. "It is the maturing of the ministry; it is the maturing of the Catholic university. And brings us to a kind of completion of a Catholic university that reminds us that Christ is at the center."

The 75,000 square-foot building has been designed to meet the academic and student development needs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The hall includes a library, social space, study space, a grab-and-go lunch area, administrative offices, chapel, green space and design-

nated parking areas, which has been met with delight by students and faculty.

Critical to the new building is 19,000 square feet of simulation space, nearly four times the previous square footage dedicated to simulation.

The building features "mini hospital" floors dedicated to intake and outtake. Near the lunch area are two doors leading an area that is set up much like an actual hospital.

The building also includes a home health care area.

Simulated mannequins allow students to work hands-on in their respective disciplines. The technically advanced mannequins simulate human reactions in various procedures so the students will learn how to address those symptoms in real time.

Holland said when she took the job it was with the understanding that one day such a building would be completed. Admittedly, it has exceeded her own lofty expectations.

"I didn't expect it to be as meaningful as it is, personally meaningful as well as meaningful for the church," she said. "We are instruments of God. I am just doing my job. I know that sounds trite but you have a charge and you do it."

"And you just pray you will do your best work."

Holland acknowledged FranU had always been a wonderful ministry long before she arrived but it was "kept under a bushel."

"God said you have to let your light shine," she said. "And that is what I was hired to do."

"We just kind of lifted off the bush and let the light shine"

Bishop Duca said St. Francis Hall sac-rileges everything the university does. He said it brings Christ to the center, bringing the tradition of St. Francis to the university.

"All that we do here is sacred," he said. "The altar grounds us."



MANNA'S HELPERS – Baton Rouge area members of the Knights of Peter Claver, Meritorious Fourth Degree Ladies of Grace-Constance Butler Chapter #9, were "Manna Helpers" on May 30. They provided and served the evening meal for 25 diners at the St. Vincent de Paul dining room. Pictured, from left, are Velita Benjamin, Carla Lewis, Lorena Williams, Delores Price, Hattie Carney, Mary Murray, Debbie Fines-James and Lorraine Colbert. Photo provided by Carla Lewis



Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools

STATEMENT OF POLICY

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

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in the schools of the Diocese shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity except as permitted under said Title IX.

Finally, the schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have adopted and will implement the imperatives of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as amended, and will inform parents and students of their rights under this amendment to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The above stated policy applies to the following schools and institutions of the Diocese:

Ascension Diocesan Regional School
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Catholic High School (Baton Rouge)
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Holy Family School
Holy Ghost School
Mater Dolorosa School
Most Blessed Sacrament School
Our Lady of Mercy School
Redemptorist St. Gerard School
Sacred Heart of Jesus School
St. Aloysius School
St. Alphonsus School
St. John Primary & St. Theresa Middle School – EA/EI Partnership

St. Elizabeth Interparochial School
St. Francis Xavier School
St. George School
St. Jean Vianney School
St. John the Evangelist School
St. Joseph School
St. Joseph's Academy
St. Jude the Apostle School
St. Michael the Archangel Diocesan Regional High School
St. Peter Chanel Interparochial School
St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School
St. Thomas More School

Sign

Dr. Pattie Davis
Dr. Pattie Davis

'All are Welcome' at sensory friendly Mass

By Angela G. Lorio

Special to The Catholic Commentator

The second sensory friendly Mass hosted by the "All are Welcome" ministry of the Diocese of Baton Rouge was celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, May 28, at St. George Church in Baton Rouge. St. George pastor Father Paul Yi was celebrant.

Adults and children who have special needs were invited to come with their families. There were about 200 present who gathered as the body of Christ.

The main lights remained off and there was no traditional ringing of bells or musical instruments or choir, only Father Yi softly singing acapella.

Children and adults of all abilities attended with their families just as they are, with freedom from anxiety as some spontaneous noises and movement occurred. They were all among

other families walking the same journey who were unfettered by any Mass disruption.

The goals of this ministry are to spread compassion, awareness and education so every parish in the diocese can grow towards putting into action measures so all families are invited and feel welcome to participate in full parish life regardless of ability.

The responses of the Mass attendees were positive.

Amanda, who read the psalm and

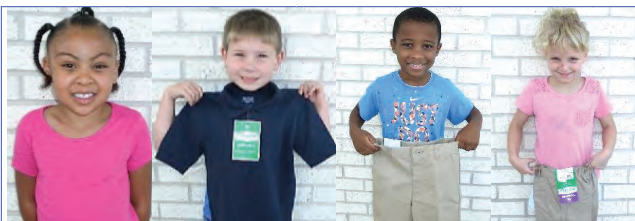
second reading, is neurodivergent herself and two of her three children have special needs. She said, "This Mass is an amazing springboard into more inclusivity and representation throughout the diocese and in Catholicism in general. The work is just beginning but the Holy Spirit is moving and the men and women of the diocese are following the call."

To learn more about upcoming events related to this ministry visit diobr.org/special-needs.

Pictured below, from left, are Father Paul Yi, who celebrated Mass and gave an anointed Pentecost homily which hit home for many families present; John Paul, who has cerebral palsy and is developmentally delayed; and Blair Ann, who has Autism. Immediately following the Mass, Blair Ann received the sacrament of confirmation.



Pictured right, at the St. George's sensory friends, Mass are, from left, St. George parochial vicar Father Bernard Banares, St. George Pastor, Father Paul Paul Yi, Deacon Randall Waguespack, director of the Office of Life, Peace and Justice of the Diocese of Baton Rouge; Meg and Katie, ushered by her father, John. Photos provided by Angela G. Lorio



A Special Moment In Time

Look at the beautiful faces and the smiles of the children on this page. It's impossible to capture the essence of who they are - their innocence, their personalities, hopes and fears - but the camera has recorded a special moment in time, a brief period of distraction from the problems of poverty. These photos were taken in the midst of selecting new school uniforms at St. Vincent de Paul. Before coming to us, these children - Aimee, Cade, Jay, and Annie - and so many others - were afraid they would have to suffer the embarrassment of beginning the school year without the proper attire.

In today's difficult economy, low-income families are struggling just to keep their heads above water. These families are engaged in a desperate struggle to keep up with rising food, rent and utility costs, and school uniforms for growing children are at the bottom of the list.

This year, the demand for uniforms is greater than ever. Because of the economy, financial donations are at the lowest level they have been in years, and we really need your help. The two uniforms we give to each needy child cost only \$24.00 - a small price to pay for a child's self-esteem. Our Uniforms for Kids effort will help needy children in 12 parishes.

Join us in helping children like Aimee, Cade, Jay and Annie by sending a financial gift using the form below or by giving online at svdpbr.org. How many children can you help?

-----Clip and send in your Uniforms for Kids Donation Form-----

Yes, I would like to help clothe needy school children.

Please find enclosed my gift of \$ _____.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please mark the parish where you would like to direct your help.

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