

CATHOLIC CALENDAR.

A page devoted to local Catholic interests

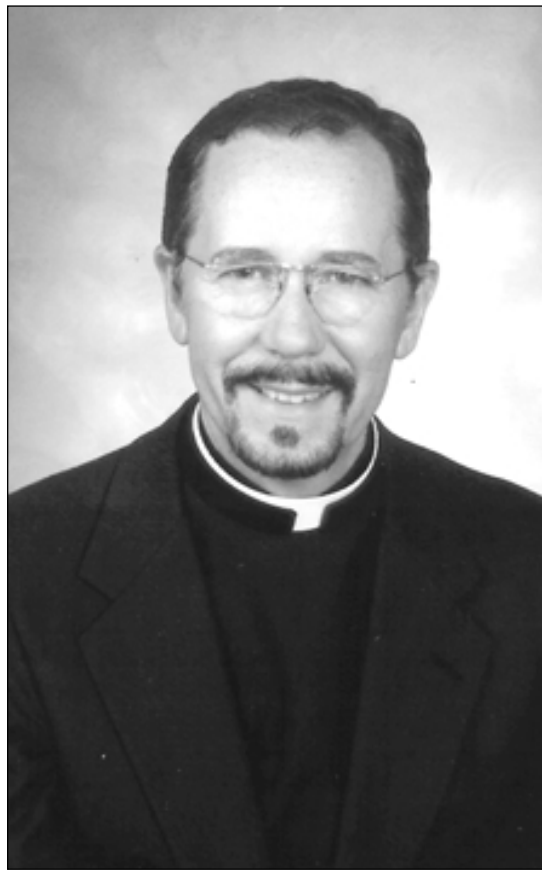
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Internet Address: <http://lcdioocese.org>

Rev. Mr. Marcus M. Johnson



Rev. Mr. Charles H. McMillin

Two to be ordained Saturday, May 18

LAKE CHARLES - The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Bishop of Lake Charles, will ordain the Rev. Mr. Marcus M. Johnson and the Rev. Mr. Charles H. McMillin as priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 18, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

A native of Lake Charles, Deacon Johnson is the son of Milton and Veronica Johnson of Houma, formerly of Lake Charles.

Deacon Johnson graduated from St. Louis High School in 1994 and received his bachelor's degree from St. Joseph's Seminary College in 1998. He completed his theology studies at Notre Dame Seminary in New Or-

leans on May 9.

In the summer of 2000 he completed his Clinical Pastoral Education at Baylor University Medical Center. He served his deacon internship at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish under the direction of Msgr. Ronald Groth.

A native of Roanoke, Deacon McMillin is the son of Rose Coats McMillin of Welsh and the late Earl L. McMillin.

Deacon McMillin graduated from Roanoke High School in 1964 and attended Louisiana Tech and McNeese State University before entering the U. S. Air Force in 1966, being honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant in 1970. He worked

in the business field until January 1997 when he entered Notre Dame Seminary. He completed his theology studies at Notre Dame Seminary on May 9.

In the summer of 2000 he completed his Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Luke's Hospital in Houston. He served his deacon internship at St. Margaret Parish under the direction of Rev. Aubrey V. Guilbeau.

Deacon Johnson will celebrate his first Mass on Sunday, May 19 at 2 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Deacon McMillin will celebrate his first Mass on Sunday, May 19 at 6 p.m. at Our Lady of Seven Dolours Parish in Welsh.

Conversion and Faith in the Christian Life

(Editor's Note: Second of three installments)

Happy Easter! In our Catholic tradition Easter is not simply one Sunday. It is an entire Liturgical Season. This is why we celebrate seven Sundays of Easter until Pentecost Sunday, the Feast of the Holy Spirit on May 19th. Thus, it is completely appropriate for us to keep saying "Happy Easter". Our long Easter Season provides us with the opportunity to explore our Easter faith at a deeper level as we support the newly baptized members of the Church during their Mystagogia (growth in faith). Easter Faith is much more than believing that Jesus Christ was raised to glorified life by God the Father. It is really the whole vital reality of our daily lives as members of the body of Christ, the Church. Easter Faith is a matter of ongoing Conversion.

Religious Conversion - (God)

Religious conversion comes about as one becomes aware of what might be "holy mystery" in their lives. It is the realization of the religious dimension at the heart of everyday human experience and activity. Religious conversion is a deeply embedded sense of the holy or the sacred. It is a tacit awareness of the absolute meaning, purpose and graciousness of one's own life and the entire universe. A potentially mature Christian may be under the sway of this religious conversion even when he or she is questioning or doubting particular teachings or practices of the Catholic Church. It is possible to be religious in this primal sense and be indifferent to or even in opposition to some aspects of institutional religion. Similarly, it is possible to be an active and seemingly faithful member of institutional religion and be devoid of this primal religious awareness. Church membership does not automatically result in religious conversion. Nor do they automatically constitute faith. Such loyalty, devoid of spiritual vitality, is but the simulation of faith. A grasp of this distinction is very important if we are to understand better our spiritual journey.

As we grow in this deep awareness, we gradually grasp the source of our experience of "holy mystery" as not some impersonal energy or blind force but as an intelligent, loving, even per-

sonal reality. Thus we can speak of God. Through the power of this divine spark at the center of our being, we grasp that life is not so much sound and fury signifying nothing, not a tale told by an idiot.

In spite of the inscrutable paradoxes and seeming tragedies in personal, communal and world history, conversion to God yields the affirmation of meaning a purpose hidden in the middle of life.

Christian Conversion - (Jesus)

Christian conversion consists mainly in the new believers' response to the question Jesus put to Simon and the disciples: "Who are people saying that the son of man is?" In Christian conversion we recognize in the life ministry, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus the presence of the Father's Christ - and thus in Christ you have the sacra-

ment of the encounter with the church.

Ecclesial Conversion - (The Church)

Ecclesial conversion is the turn to community. It is joining with others in hearing the word, breaking bread and blessing the cup. When we are really converted to the church we realize that religion is not just a matter of "Jesus and me. Under the influence of ecclesial conversion we embrace a living tradition, a community and world family in which there are different ministries and the unique ministries of deacons, priests, bishops and the Holy Father. Ecclesial conversion is not so much having faith in the church as it is the response to the empowering Spirit's call to be the church, to assemble as the "ecclesia," the people of God. What we believe in is the Creator Father revealed in the Redeemer Son by the power of the Spirit. If Christ is the sacrament of the encounter with God, then the church is the sacrament of the encounter with Christ, and every Christian is called to be the sacrament of the encounter with the church.

In our day, of course, new members of the Catholic family of faith must be given a special sensitivity to the ecclesial nature of other Christian traditions and the growing movement toward unity. Confidence in the truth of Catholic Christianity should not imply a rejection of all that is good in other traditions. Thus, there is really no sound reason for Catholics to talk about "non-Catholics." After all no one will call them "non-Baptist", "non-Episcopalian" or "a non-Lutheran." Rather than speaking of what they are not, we should speak of what they are - fellow Christians of other traditions.

When we are truly converted to the Church, we too must think of it as an "elevator," a heavenly transport system, that takes us to our "spiritual destination. We cannot crowd into the church the way we crowd into an elevator, indifferent to and even suspicious of those around us. If we do, when we get to the top, the "divine elevator" conductor may well declare: "it was the way you treated one another on the trip up that counted. So, down you go!"



Bishop Edward K. Braxton

ment of the encounter with God, Emmanuel, God with us. Christian conversion, however, is not automatic. It is not the result of attending all the sessions of the parish Christian Initiation program. Christian conversion is not in the main a matter of theological theories about humanity and divinity in Jesus.

A person may come to Christ without knowing anything about the great intellectual speculations about the humanity and divinity of Jesus in past centuries. Christian conversion is a personal appropriation of the Easter mystery. Jesus becomes not a stained glass window figure, not a holy card image, not an emasculated statue on a pedestal, not a coherent doctrine, but a living, pulsating, challenging brother and Lord who walks with you and talks with you and tells you that he loves you. Christian conversion is, as St. Paul says, "to put on Christ." It is to answer Jesus' question ("Who are people saying that the son of man is?") with your whole being, "You are Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One." The ability of already initiated members of the faith community to witness to the centrality of Christ in their lives is of critical im-



Fifty percent of CCC appeal stays here

LAKE CHARLES — The annual Catholic Communication Campaign collection will be next weekend, May 18-19, in the Diocese of Lake Charles, according to Morris LeBleu, Director of the Office of Communications.

The generous contributions of parishioners throughout our diocese make possible the work of the Campaign nationally but more importantly 50 percent of the monies contributed in the church parishes of Southwest Louisiana remain here to fund the communication efforts of the diocese.

Your gifts help provide the Catholic Calendar 18 times per year as well as the monthly publication of the Southwest Catholic.

The Sunday morning television program, "Glad Tidings," and the weekly airing of the celebration of 9:30 a.m. Mass from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles are made possible, in part, by gifts to the Catholic Communication Campaign.

(This page paid for by the Diocese of Lake Charles.)

Pope John Paul II appeals for revitalization of 'Reconciliation'

WASHINGTON - Citing Catholics' return to the Sacrament of Penance since the Jubilee Year, Pope John Paul II recently issued an apostolic letter in which he calls for a "vigorous revitalization" of the sacrament and which reiterates existing Church teaching regarding its valid celebration.

"I consider it useful to recall some of the canonical laws in force regarding the celebration of this Sacrament and clarify certain aspects of them ... with a view to a better administration of the Sacrament," Pope John Paul II writes in the letter, titled *Misericordia Dei* (The Mercy of God). "It is a question of ensuring an ever more fruitful, and thus more fruitful, celebration of the gift entrusted to the Church by the Lord Jesus after his Resurrection."

In particular, the Pope notes his concern about those places where individual confessions have been largely replaced with "general" or "communal" absolution.

He instructs bishops to remind confessors that "individual and integral confession and absolution are the sole ordinary means" for reconciliation and that general absolution, except in extraordinary situations, should be avoided.

The exceptions include the imminent danger of death and "grave necessity."

In eight paragraphs, the Pope explains that a "grave

necessity" exists when "in light of the number of penitents a supply of confessors is not readily available to hear the confessions of individuals in an appropriate way within an appropriate time, so that the penitents would be deprived of sacramental grace or Holy Communion for a long time through no fault of their own."

For example, he says, a "grave necessity" can occur in mission areas where a priest is present only once or a few times in a year.

In addition to the extensive language about the necessity for individual confessions in most circumstances, the Pope also offers several general recommendations to accommodate what he calls the faithful's "right to receive personally the sacramental gift."

For example, he advises that "confessors be visibly present at the advertised times," and that parish priests periodically reevaluate the adequacy of their schedules for confessions. In any case, a church or oratory is "the proper place to hear sacramental confessions," although other places may be acceptable for pastoral reasons, according to the letter.

The Pope's apostolic letter, issued *motu proprio* (on his own initiative), was approved April 7 and issued May 2.

Vocation retreat set June 7-9 at Maryhill

PINEVILLE - A vocation retreat, jointly sponsored by the Dioceses of Lake Charles, Alexandria, Baton Rouge and Shreveport, is set for June 7-9 at Maryhill Retreat Center.

This retreat is intended to assist young men, 16 years or older, who are seriously discerning a call to diocesan priesthood.

It invites participants to look at their spiritual journey in light of the Lord Je-

sus' call to a life of personal holiness.

This retreat will help a young man to reflect on and judge how best to respond to God's call to the priesthood.

The Most Rev. Sam Jacobs and Vocation Directors from all four dioceses will be in attendance. The retreat is staffed by seminarians from the four dioceses.

For more information contact your church pastor or call the Vocation Office at 439-7426, Ext. 17.



The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, 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." - Matthew 28: 16-20