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Lake Charles, La.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY BISHOP JUDE SPEYRER Bishop Speyrer celebrates 50 years a priest THE DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES July 25, 2003

Dear Bishop Speyrer:

May the grace and peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you as you celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of your ordination to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. I pray that this season of your Golden Jubilee will be a time for giving thanks to God for all the good He has accomplished through your half century of ministry as a priest and bishop in Southwest Louisiana.

It has been my privilege to succeed you as the second Bishop of Lake Charles. I remember well our first conversation after I learned that the Holy Father had appointed me to build on the firm foundation that you laid as the founding spiritual leader of this Local Church. You offered warm words of welcome and spoke with great love and appreciation for the priests and people of Lake Charles. You patiently answered my many questions and generously offered your assistance in everything related to my transition from the Archdiocese of St. Louis and my installation as your successor. Since those hectic days more than two and one half years ago, you have always been available to assist me and offer wise counsel whenever I have called upon you. Your nearly twenty-one years as Bishop of Lake Charles were marked by many outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the well being of this community of faith. However, your foresight in establishing our Retreat House, the Saint Charles Center, is a unique contribution that provides an environment for prayer, reflection.

sion of grace for all of the People of God. The chapel, with its transparent windows, is a serene setting for the celebration of the Eucharist which is at the heart of the life and ministry of every effective priest. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel invites one into the realm of contemplation, entering the Interior Castle of Theresa of Avila, ascending Mt. Carmel with John of the Cross or climbing the Seven Story Mountain with Thomas Merton. It is, of course, a wonderful place to "Waste Time" with Jesus as one would "waste time" in the company of one's dearest friend. I share your hope that the Retreat House will be a source of vocations to the religious life, the diaconate, and the priesthood for our diocese

relaxation and spiritual renewal that enriches the entire diocese and provides an occa-

When you were ordained a priest in 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower was inaugurated as President, scientists James Watson and Francis Crick made the revolutionary discovery of the molecular structure of DNA, Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary were the first people to climb to the top of Mt. Everest, the world's highest mountain, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, convicted of espionage, were executed in Sing Sing prison, Ernest Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize for "The Old Man and the Sea," Cecil B. De Mille's "The Greatest Show on Earth" won the Academy Award, Winston Churchill won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Lucille Ball gave birth to Desi Arnaz, Jr. on the same day the fictional Little Ricky was born on "I Love Lucy," the first <u>Playboy</u> magazine hit the stands with Marilyn Monroe on the cover, James Baldwin's provocative novel, "Go Tell It On The Mountain" was published, and a first class stamp cost three cents! Even though Thurgood Marshall was already gathering materials for his historic Supreme Court case (Brown v. Board of Education) that would rule segregated public schools unconstitutional the following year (1954), even though the yoke of racism, segregation and prejudice was weighing heavily on the shoulders of People of Color in the North h few African-Americans could have imagined the still unfinished socia

revolution that would begin less than a decade later, when the remarkable and exhausted Rosa Parks would refuse to give up her seat on a Birmingham bus. In the Vatican, Pope Pius XII was in the second decade of his long pontificate that began in the midst of the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust and would lay the theological foundation for Blessed John XXIII's "new Pentecost," the great Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) which transformed the Catholic Church. That historic Council spoke of the ministry of priests that in words certainly apply to you, dear Jude. "Priests should occupy their positions of leadership as men who do not seek the things that are their own but the thing's that are Jesus Christ's. They should unite their efforts with those of their people and conduct themselves among them after the example of the Master, who came amongst us 'not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'(Mt. 20:28). Priests have been placed in the midst of their people so that they may lead them all to the unity of charity, loving them with heartfelt affection." (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests.)

1953-2003. Fifty years! How long is that? More than half a human life span. Yet it has passed in a flash! The world and the Church have change so much in those five decades. Yet, both have remained the same. The world needs the good news of Jesus Christ and the Church is charged to proclaim it. And as a good and faithful priest this is what you have done. So many reverent celebrations of the Eucharist, baptisms, first communions, confessions, confirmations, marriages, anointings of the sick, ordinations, Liturgies of Christian Burial, Advents, Christmases, Lents, and Easters. Fifty celebra-

tions of The Church's Year of Grace at the altar of the Lord In my name and in the name of the priests and people of the diocese you nurtured into life, I thank you, Bishop Speyrer, for being an outstanding priest and an irreplaceable member of the Body of Jesus Christ. Happy Golden Anniversary! "Tu es sarcedos in aeternum, secundum ordinem Melchizedek!"

+ Colward N. Braston The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton Second Bishop of Lake Charles

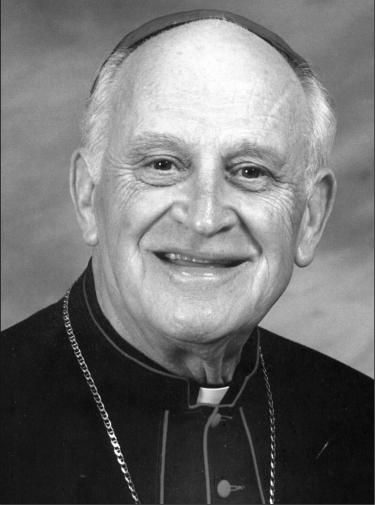
By Truman Stacey • The Most Reverend Jules early as 1861 the area had Church Parish. Thereafter he The Most Reverend Jude B. Jeanmard, DD, of the enough people to support a was assigned as an assistant

Black Cyan Magenta Yellow

Speyrer, DD, Bishop Emeritus Diocese of Lafayette in 1918. of Lake Charles, is a member circle: Bishops who have founded a diocese. This became his destiny on

1961.

Jan. 29, 1980, when the Holy Warren L. Boudreaux, JCD,



The Most Reverend Jude Speyrer

Father announced the forma-

Charles and named the-then

Msgr. Speyrer, Vicar General

Luis Penalver y Cardenas,

DD, of the Spanish diocese of

DD, of the Diocese of Houmation of the Diocese of Lake Thibodaux in 1977. The Most Reverend William B. Friend, DD, of the of the Diocese of Lafayette, to Diocese of Shreveport in

be the Ordinary of the new 1986. Bishop Speyrer grew up in In the 300-year history of the heart of Acadiana, and Louisiana, only six other partook of its life style - genial Bishops can lay claim to that and appreciative of the humor of things, but serious • The Most Reverend Don enough when that was required.

He was born in Leonville in Louisiana and the Floridas in St. Landry Parish on April 14, 1929, one of 12 children born • The Most Reverend to Mr. and Mrs. Antoine Augustus M. Martin of the Speyrer. Leonville was one of Diocese of Natchitoches in the earliest settled portions of the Opelousas District. As

community store owned by chaplain at Our Lady of • The Most Reverend Joseph Camy and Dominique of a small but select Catholic Robert E. Tracy, DD, of the Guilhas. As the community University of Southwestern Diocese of Baton Rouge in grew it gained a wide variety of national origins. In addi-• The Most Reverend tion to the French and Louisiana Register. Acadians, there were Spanish and German elements.

Louisiana.

grew numerous enough to support their own church administrator of Goretti parish, and St. Leo's Parish Elementary and High future Bishop was baptized in classes, and organized and this church by the pastor, the directed a choir of high school Rev. J. B. LaChapelle, and was to spend many Sundays in the same church as an altar boy.

He lived the usual life of a rural family, and enjoyed the company of his siblings. His mother, who lived to see him consecrated as a Bishop, recalled that he was an omnivorous reader, and when he wasn't engaged in chores he could be found with a book. She recalled that as a boy he was also fond of movies and tent shows.

Young Jude decided early in life that his future lay with the Church, and at age 13 he entered St. Joseph Seminary in St. Benedict, LA. He was graduated in 1947 with the associate of arts degree, and then entered Notre Dame Major Seminary in New Orleans

In May of 1949 he received the bachelor arts degree and that September was sent to the North American College in Rome for further studies, transferring to the University of Freiburg in Switzerland in 1950. In December 1952 he received the Sub-Diaconate, followed by the Diaconate in 1953

In May of that year he graduated with a Licentiate in Sacred Theology, and returned to the United States to be ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Lafavette by Bishop Jules B. Jeanmard on July 25, 1953.

His first assignment was an associated pastor in Opelousas at St. Landry

diocese

distinction.

1853.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Bishops of the Province of New claim and mediate God. Orleans as well as ordinaries who have served in the Province and are retired or who now serve in other dioceses have sent their warmest wishes to Bishop Speyrer on the occasion of his **Fiftieth Anniversary of priestly ordination.**) I write to you as you prepare to celebrate 50 years of priestly life and ministry. I thank God for the gift that He has given to you. I thank you for the way in which you have responded to

Him and His people. As founding Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles, you have laid a wonderful foundation. I have special memories of the who will not receive a hundredfold houses and brothers and 20th anniversary of your ordination to the episcopacy and the founding of the Diocese of Lake Charles. I treasure the example of your pastoral ministry, the collaboration that you have offered in Episcopal ministry and most of

all, the fraternal friendship that we share. May God continue to bless you with health, happiness and holiness of life. Fraternally in the Lord, The Most Reverend Alfred C. Hughes

Archbishop of New Orleans

I extend heartiest congratulations on your achievement of 50 years in the priesthood! What a tremendous blessing you have been and are to the people you have served and to all of your brother bishops.

In your years of devoted and enlightened service, you have powerfully and effectively ministered Jesus to others. When zealous and effective. You certainly filled your office as you have pronounced the sacred words: "This is my Body, this teacher, pastor and governor. I think that your most important is my Blood; I absolve you from your sins, I anoint you, I baptize talent was in inspiring the priests and making each parish vour, a reading from the Holy Gospel" you have brought heaven understand its challenges and opportunities. to earth, the divine to the human, the infinite to the finite, the perfect to the imperfect and made the Transcendent immanent.

and the Church in ways only God can fully know. You are a ver- the races. The clergy, religious and laypersons of the Diocese itable vessel, instrument and agent of God as you embody, pro- know that they one in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Jude, I take this opportunity to express personal gratitude to you for the marvelous friendship we share. You are always a delight to see and a joy with whom to converse. Your very presence brings a sense of peace, harmony and merriment to all in your company "Peter began to say to him: 'We have given up everything and

followed you.' Jesus said: 'Amen I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children for my sake and for the sake of the gospel sisters and mothers and children, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come."" (Mark 10:29-30.)

Jude, I trust at this milestone occasion, you continue to experience the reward of the priesthood and episcopacy ion accord with Jesus' promise. Ad multos annos.

Yours always in the Good Shepherd, The Most Reverend Robert W. Muench

Bishop of Baton Rouge

I wish to extend my heartiest congratulations on the 50th anniversary of your ordination to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Those years have witnessed an enormous contribution to the Church in the Dioceses of Lafayette and Lake Charles. As the founding Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles you erected the diocesan offices and appointed a staff that was very

The growth in virtue and numbers of the Diocese is a great legacy you have left and I am confident that the present Bishop realizes your extraordinary talent. Among other things, you Your gentle friendly, warm, perceptive way serves Christ have created in the Diocese a very strong bond of unity among

With cordial best wishes and continued prayers for you, I priest in the Church. Thank you for hearing Our Lord's call to candidate, I learned a lot by watching you in your role as many as a great Bishop you preached the Gospel throughout remain. Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Philip M. Hannan President of FOCUS Worldwide Network **Retired Archbishop of New Orleans**

I would like to take this opportunity to offer you my sincere May He continue to bless you in your years of retirement. congratulations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of your With prayers for your good health and for all of God's blessordination to the holy priesthood. ings, I am

As Vicar General during many years of my tenure as the Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, I benefited greatly from your wise advice and assistance. I will always be sincerely grateful for your friendship and for your spirit of deep dedication to the welfare of the Church. As founding Ordinary of the Diocese of Lake Charles your

leadership has been outstanding in overcoming many difficulties, and in providing a solid potential for its future growth and development I pray that Almighty God grant you many years of peace and

contentment in the years of your retirement With best wishes, I remain The Most Reverend Gerard Frey

Retired Bishop of Lafayette

I am pleased to join the chorus of clergy and laity who are expressing congratulations to you on the occasion of your 50th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. It has been my pleasure over the years to serve with you in many ways. I served Mass for you when you were Assistant Pastor at Saint Landry Catholic Church in Opelousas. Later, we were fellow priests in the Diocese of Lafayette, and still later, fellow Bishops of the Province of New Orleans. I have also appreciated your kindness, your patience, your wisdom, and your unfailing dedication to the Church.

Also, I would like to thank you for answering the call to be a

July 25, 2003

Internet Address:http://lcdiocese.org

Wisdom Chapel at the Louisiana, and as the associate editor of The Southwest In 1964 he began his

acquaintance with his future The future Bishops' great- diocese when he was assigned grandfather, Konrad Speyrer, as pastor to Our Lady of the migrated from Speyrer in Lake Parish in Lake Arthur. Germany, and settled in In his new assignment Fr. Speyrer not only nurtured the Catholics of the community spiritual growth of his parishioners, he was also the chief was established in 1897. The Schools. He taught religion

> students. During his Lake Arthur pastorate Fr. Speyrer was initiated into the Knights of Columbus, becoming a member of Lake Arthur Council 3012 in March of 1965. He received the honors of the Fourth Degree as a member of



The newly ordained **Rev. Jude Speyrer**

Msgr. Peeters Assembly in April of 1965. He has maintained his membership in the two organizations to the present day. Throughout his priestly career he has been a convinced supporter of the Knights of Columbus.

In 1969 he became the founding pastor of Our Lady of Peach Parish in Lafayette, and in 1970 he was invested as a Chaplain to His Holiness by Pope Paul VI.



Deacon Jude Speyrer

In 1974 Msgr. Speyrer was called to duty in the Diocese of Lafayette Chancery, and - in succession was Chancellor, Vicar General, Vicar for the Lafayette Deanery and Chairman of the Council of Vicars.

On January 29, 1980, came the call from the Holy Father, which elevated him as a suc-

cessor to the Apostles. His experience had formed him well for this new task. He had served in a large church parish in Opelousas, and as pastor in a small parish in Lake Arthur, where he learned the workings of an elementary and high school. As founding Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Peace Parish he carried out the task of uniting former black and white parishes.

In the Diocese of Lafayette Chancery he had worked with detention centers, hospitals and nursing homes, and had served on finance and building commissions. His experience as chaplain at the University of Southwestern Louisiana had given him a unique insight into the lives of college students.

During his 20 years of shepherding the people of Southwest Louisiana, Bishop Speyrer devoted himself without a stint to his flock, but a

few high points might be listed • On Sept. 9, 1980, the Feast of St. Peter Claver, the Bishop

named St. Peter Claver the

patron of the diocese. • He inaugurated Glad diocesan television program, first aired on Oct. 5, 1980. • On Aug. 1, 1982, he partic- Moss Bluff.

ipated in the celebration of 100 years of Catholic educa- year millennium pilgrimage the St. George Emblem. tion in Lake Charles.

Catholic Calendar page monthly basis, finishing as the appeared in the Lake Charles American Press, and has appeared twice monthly since that date. • In 1983 Bishop Speyrer

established the first new parish in the Diocese at St. Charles Borromeo in Fenton, and dedicated the first new chapel in the Diocese in Dry Creek at St. Jude Chapel. • On April 25, 1985, the

offices of the chancery were moved into new quarters at 414 Iris Street, the building being a gift from Calcasieu



A hard-studying seminarian

Council 1207 of the Knights of Columbus. • In Nov. of 1986 the first issue of The Southwest Catholic, the diocese's month-

newspaper, came off the • The Seafarers Center at the Port of Lake Charles was

dedicated on Jan. 15, 1987. • In April of 1988. Bishop Speyrer made his first ad limina visit to the Holy Father in

• In July of 1989 Father Sam G. Jacobs, the diocese's Director of Vocations was appointed Bishop of Alexandria.

• In Jan. of 1995 the George. Apostolic Nuncio, the Most Tidings, the Sunday-morning Rev. Agostino Cacciavillan dedicated the newly con- for his services. structed St. Charles Center in

• In Jan. of 1997 a threewas made to each of the 36 • On Oct. 15, 1982, the first churches in the diocese on a



new millennium dawned.

• In June of 1998 the diocese purchased a building at 411 Iris Street and used it to unite all of the diocesan offices on that street.

• On Dec. 31, 1999, a Night Watch ceremony was held in the cathedral and four other churches to usher in the new millennium

• On Jan. 28, 2000, the 20th anniversary of the diocese was celebrated by a reception and by the publication of **The** Visible Church, a history of the church parishes of the diocese

During his 20 years as the head of the diocese Bishop Speyrer has been singled out or a number of honors by the Knightly Orders. In Aug. of 1980 he was invested as a Knight Commander of the Order of the Fleur de Lis, and in October of 1981 he became a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. In 1994 he was invested as an Ecclesiastical of Merit. Knight Commander of Grace in

A number of other organi-

zations have recognized him 1982 -- The National Catholic Committee on Scouting presented him with

1985 -- Msgr. Cramers Peeters Assembly of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus named him its "Clergyman of the Year." 1988 -- District VI of the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver selected him as its Knight of the Year. 1989 -- The Lake Charles Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews presented him with its Ecumenical Service Award. 1990 -- The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus named

the Year." Council of the Boy Scouts of

him the diocese's "Citizen of

Boy Scouts of America with its annual "Distinguished Citizen Award" dinner. 2001 -- The Diocese of Lake Charles' St. Vincent de Paul Humanitarian Award. 2001 -- The Gold Palm of Jerusalem from the

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. 2001 -- The first annual Clergy Leadership Award from the Pontifical Knights of the diocese. 2001 -- Medal Commendation form the Supreme Knights of the Knights of Columbus.

2001 -- The Pope John XXIII Award for Ecumenism from the Louisiana District of the Fourth Degree of Knights of Columbus. 2001 -- The Award of Honor

from the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St. 1990 -- The Calcasieu Area George for spiritual and



The newly ordained Father Speyrer poses with his mother, Emelie Speyrer at a reception following the ordination on July 25, 1953.

America presented him with the Silver Beaver emblem.

1992 -- The National Council of the Knights of Peter Claver conferred upon him its National Gold Medal

1999 -- He was honored the Sacred Military with a testimonial banquet by Constantinian Order of St. the Calcasieu Area Council of

moral leadership. Through his leadership and dedication the Diocese of Lake Charles has developed into an agency of moral support and spiritual growth for its 100,000 Catholics, and a vehicle for unity, support and development for all of Southwest Louisiana



service and for answering that call with generosity and dedication. You have been a gift to the Church and I am happy to add father figure, a man of vision. You were gentle but firm, when my name to the list of those who have appreciated your work and benefited from it. You have helped me to grow as a priest and as a bishop and I appreciate that very much. The Lord has blessed you in your years as priest and bishop.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord, The Most Reverend Michael Jarrell

Bishop of Lafayette

I congratulate you on the occasion of your 50th Anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. You have served the Church in Louisiana generously and for a long time. I have enjoyed in a particular way the years we

have been in association as brother bishops. I remember well your ordination to the order of bishop in April 1980. May our Divine Savior continue to shower many blessings upon you. I pray that the days to come will be very happy ones.

Fraternally in Christ, The Most Reverend William B. Friend

Bishop of Shreveport

Congratulations on your 50th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood! I was a young seminarian, just completing my sophomore year at Immaculata, when you were ordained. Since then, much has transpired in both of our lives. I thank you for being the inspiration you have been over the years for

me, as a priest and then as a bishop. I thank God for the opportunities you have provided me in your role as Bishop of Lake Charles. You were always open, understanding, challenging and supportive of me. Not knowing that one day you would submit my name as a possible Episcopal needed. You laid a strong foundation and charted a steady course as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles. I have so many fond memories of our relationship as a priest to his bishop. You impacted my life in ways you will never know.

Some of the things I observed in your pastoral ministry I have tried to reflect in my own now as a bishop. I cannot begin to thank you for all you have done and meant to me over the years. I look forward to celebrating with you on July 25, 2003. I pray that God will give you many more years to enjoy those

things that fill your life in these years of retirement. May the blessings promised in eternity be experienced by you in a beginning way now of time. Ad multos Annos!

- With personal good wishes, I remain Sincerely yours in the Lord
- The Most Reverend Sam G. Jacobs Bishop of Alexandria

It has come to my attention that on July 25, 2003, you will celebrate the 50th anniversary of your ordination to the priesthood. I hasten to add my voice to the voices of so many who will express congratulations to you on this most auspicious occa-

It has been said, and rightly so, that to be a priest is no small thing. To be a priest for one year is a great event and to be a priest for 50 years is cause for a great celebration and jubilee and, dear Bishop Speyrer, you have been a great priest. In the Diocese of Lafayette you labored so beautifully with all people of different races and cultures. You make you mark among them and you walked with them as a brother and leader. Then when you were named as the first Bishop of the beautiful Diocese of Lake Charles you continued that priestly ministry as you exercised your office of Bishop. You stood ready to assist so

Shepherd of the Diocese. Your were a good shepherd, a good the Diocese of Lake Charles and so many came to know and love the name of Jesus Christ. The Cure' d'Ars once said that if we ever understood the priesthood we would die, not so much from fear but out of love. Your have lived the beauty of this priesthood in a loving way for 50 years.

On a more personal note I recall when I was named Bishop of Lafayette your personal kindness extended tome on every single occasion. I take this opportunity, Bishop Speyrer, to thank you for extending yourself to me who had come from upstate New York, to Louisiana, to exercise my ministry as Bishop. You were very kind.

It is my hope and prayer that Our Lord will continue to bless you with many years of good health and that you will continue to grow and grow in love for Jesus Christ. With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ, The Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D. D.

Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

I join you, your family and friends, and the people of the Diocese of Lake Charles in praising and thanking God for what God has accomplished through your ministry as a priest for these 50 God blest years. One of God's great gifts to me has been to share our ministry

as bishops here in Louisiana. Your contributions to the Louisiana Catholic Conference

have truly been outstanding. The people or our native Province have benefited from your vision and leadership. I have been blest to have you as a good friend and colleague in our ministry as bishops.

Ad multos annos! Fraternally in Our Lord

The Most Reverend Francis B. Schulte Former Archbishop of New Orleans