

Help from the far North came to SW Louisiana

By Brandon (Bucky) Rapp

I am a student from St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. In January a group of nine students plus our pastor, Fr. Kevin Anderson were given an opportunity to spend our winter break helping the citizens of Lake Charles clean up some of the debris caused by Hurricane Rita. We traveled 24 hours each way to make the journey. We arrived in Lake Charles late at night on Wednesday night January 11 so we were unable to see any of the damage until morning. The Catholic Retreat Center where we were fortunate enough to stay at was an excellent home away from home.

The first morning we got up early and drove to Sacred Heart Church in Lake Charles. On the way we were given a taste of what the hurricane had done. We noticed entire neighborhoods lined with blue tarps and there was not a single fence that remained intact. It seemed as though some houses suffered tremendous amounts of water damage and were missing roofs while neigh-

boring houses seemed to be left unscathed. We later learned that the houses seemingly untouched by the disaster actually experienced large amounts of water damage on the inside. As we drove further we noticed the fallen trees and debris that covered residents' yards and in some cases entire forests had been blown over by the hurricane's powerful winds.

For us, being able to actually see the devastation suffered by this community was humbling, and in lower Cameron Parish, overwhelming. The images that the media portrayed on television became real to us and we realized how much work and money will be needed to get the community back on its feet. We hope and pray that our efforts have brought hope to the Lake Charles community and surrounding areas that they are not in this alone.

The residents of Lake Charles, despite the damage and loss they experienced, were very hospitable. We learned the true meaning of Southern Hospitality while

we were in the community and it seemed as though we were given much more than we were able to give. Father Henry Mancuso was gracious enough to tend to our injuries and bring two of us to the doctor. We were fine but also grateful for his kindness. Harold and Sheryl Nixon, along with Elizabeth, Zack and Jake, were wonderful people and were very kind to us. A special thanks to Miss Nettie Fontenot who cooked us some excellent Cajun food.

It was simply amazing and inspiring to see that all of those who have lost so much have kept such a strong relationship with God. Hurricane Rita seems to have brought a renewed and stronger sense of community for the Lake Charles area and faith in God will only strengthen that bond. No matter who we talked to, even those in lower Cameron Parish, who came home to a hole in the sand, would say that they are blessed to be alive and healthy. Everything in life can be taken

away in a single moment but God remains with us through the worst of times and the best of times. He called each of us who went on the service trip to act as His hands and

feet, and to bring hope to the people who have lost so much by letting them know that they are not alone in their struggle. We are all in this together through Christ.

We can only hope and pray that our efforts to help those people in need will have made a difference, and that God remains in each of their hearts.



Students from St. Cloud (Minn.) University are shown with Fr. Kevin Anderson, left, at Sacred Heart of Jesus/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School. The group of nine young people from the Newman Club at St. Cloud, Ruth Knowles, Becca Nieters, Joey Jackson, Amy Imdieke, Jackie St. Aubin, Amber Kerstein, Kevin Justin, Kelly Kramer, and Bucky Rapp, visited the Diocese in January to aid in the cleanup from Hurricane Rita. They worked in Lake Charles as well as in lower Cameron Parish.



Jettie Greene at work in the offices of the Catholic Service Center of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

CATHOLIC SERVICE CENTER

Jettie Greene named Social Outreach Manager

LAKE CHARLES – Jettie Greene has been named Manager of Social Outreach for the Catholic Service Center of the Diocese of Lake Charles. Mrs. Greene takes over the position from Ruth Simien, who retired after more than 20 years of service to the Diocese.

Greene, a native of Houston, Texas, earned a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Texas Southern Uni-

versity in 1981, and a Masters Degree in Behavioral Science from the University of Houston-Clear Lake in 1998. She also holds a Vocational Office Education Certificate, a School Administration Certificate and a Criminal Justice Certificate (Education). She was a member of the Psi Chi National Honor Society (Psychology) while in college and is a member of the Alpha Kappa

Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Greene taught five years at Lee High School in Houston and a year at Angleton High School. She served as a Small Learning Community Coordinator and Title I Coordinator while being honored as the 2002-2003 Teacher of the Year at Lee High School. In 2004 she took part in the Houston Teachers Institute in the Criminal Justice Curriculum

having her work published.

She worked as a Project Reintegration of Offenders Specialist for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice as well as a Parole Officer and has five years of experience with the Texas Employment Commission as an Employment Interviewer and Tax Auditor.

Greene and her husband, Calvin, have one son, Calvin II.

Nonpublic School Students of the Year named for SW Louisiana

LAKE CHARLES – The results of the 2006 Students of the Year in the Southwest Louisiana district competition for nonpublic schools have been announced by Reverend Mr. Michael Mathews, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Lake Charles. Students-of-the-Year in the Southwest Louisiana District Competition were Julia Marie Falgoust, Saint Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, Lake Charles. Fifth Grade; Jillian Elizabeth Duhon, Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School, Jennings, Eighth Grade, and Lindsey Chretien, St. Louis Catholic High School, Twelfth Grade.

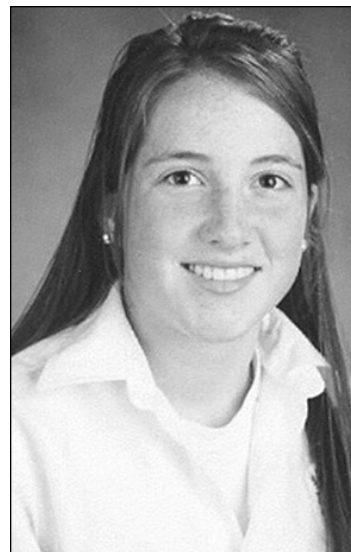
Deacon Mathews said, "The nonpublic schools' of Southwest Louisiana select their Students of the Year at this time each year. The Southwest regional competition includes all state approved nonpublic schools in a geographic region which corresponds to the boundaries of the Diocese of Lake Charles, including Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis civil parishes. For many years the State Department of Education has requested that the Louisiana Catholic dioceses conduct



Julia Falgoust

the nonpublic schools competitions in their regions of the state.

"Each year the competition is a delightfully invigorating event. The adults involved as organizers and judges get to meet these exceptionally gifted and accomplished young ladies and gentlemen who were chosen by their respective schools as Students of the Year and represent their schools at this local competition." Deacon Mathews explained that every state approved nonpublic school in the Southwest Louisiana district is eli-



Jillian Duhon

gible to enter students in the competition. Schools may enter students for the Students of the Year competition at three grade levels: fifth grade, eighth grade, and twelfth grade.

"We are very proud of these children and their accomplishments in academics, leadership, and service," Deacon Mathews said, "The judges were particularly challenged when it came to making their final choices because all of the young people who represented their schools in the competition were such exemplary stu-



Lindsey Chretien

dents. We are extremely honored to have these three magnificent young people represent our region in the nonpublic schools competition in Harahan on March 10."

Deacon Mathews also recognized the other students who represented their schools at the district competition held in Lake Charles, Louisiana: Fifth Grade Students of the Year in their schools: Destinee Delahoussaye, Sacred Heart of Jesus/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School; Maggie Mott, Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School; Jacqueline Denise Perry, Our Lady's Catholic School; Mason Vaughn Sarver, Immaculate Conception Cathedral Catholic School; Kimberly Soileau, Saint Theodore's Holy Family Catholic School; and Russ Kyle Sonnier, Bethel Christian School. Eighth Grade Students of the Year in their schools: Ariel Sacole Deville, Sacred Heart of Jesus/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School; Claire Renee Mosley, Our Lady's Catholic School; Julie Catherine Vaughan, Immaculate Conception Cathedral Catholic School; and Hannah Aileen Vidrine, Saint Margaret of Scotland Catholic School.



Msgr. Harry D. Greig, Diocesan Administrator, received Catechumens and Candidates in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults from parishes of the Diocese on Sunday, March 5, at the annual Rite of Election celebrated in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles.

God is Love

By Fr. Frank Pavone
National Director,
Priests for Life

On Christmas Day of 2005, Pope Benedict XVI issued his first encyclical letter, "God is Love." The letter clarifies the Christian meaning of the word "love," stressing that it is not a mere sentiment, but rather has a content and a specific shape, found in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God. Love, furthermore, constitutes a concrete program of action on the part of the whole Church, and is as essential to the Church as are the Word and Sacraments.

What implications does a teaching like this encyclical have for the pro-life movement?

The encyclical implies that the pro-life movement is at the heart of the response that the Christian and the whole Church make to God himself. The Pope points out that "to say that we love God becomes a lie if we are closed to our neighbor" (n. 16). The pro-life movement is all about love for our neighbor in the womb. This love, furthermore, is self-sacrificing. The encyclical notes, "Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice" (n. 6).

In the best sense of the word, every pregnancy is a "crisis pregnancy," that is, a moment in which we must choose to grow, with all the pain which that entails. The mother with child must be "stretched" physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

The encyclical says, "Purification and growth in maturity are called for; and these also pass through the path of renunciation" (n. 5). The child changes the mother forever, and in giving herself to her child she finds her more mature self.

Our pro-life commitment is also Eucharistic, because union with Christ means union with all our brothers and sisters, including the unborn. The Pope states: "Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, his own" (n. 14). Notice that the Pope refers to union not only with "those who have become" the Lord's, but with all "who will become his own." This includes the unborn, who share the same humanity that we and Christ share.

The Pope also points out that while their roles are distinct, the Church must work alongside the State in bringing about a just society. The Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper" (n.28).

In short, "God is Love" reinforces "The Gospel of Life," because "the Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel" (EV, n.2).