

Students from Sacred Heart of Jesus/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School offered their interpretive reading of a selection from Douglas Wood entitled "Old Turtle." The students portrayal at last week's Social Justice Paraliturg held at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church noted that we are called to cherish every living thing and to care for the Earth, Sea, and Air for God's fingerprints are on each of us and in the beauty of all the Earth. According to the students, we are called to celebrate God's all inclusive Presence and to listen to the wisdom in us, through us and around us.

## Social justice theme of annual paraliturg

SULPHUR -- Fourth and fifth grade students from the seven Catholic elementary schools of the Diocese of Lake Charles, along with their counterparts from Bishop Noland Episcopal Day School, took part in the seventh Social Justice Paraliturg at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church.

Hosted by Our Lady's School, the event had the young people praying together, listening to the word of God, singing, performing interpretive readings, and acting out themed plays, all dealing with the social teachings of the Church.

The creative event is hosted each year by a different Catholic School. The Episcopal Day School joined in three years ago, according to Denise Donahoe, Director of the Office of Religious Education of the Diocese.

The theme of this year's event was "Gathered in Love, United Through Justice, We Are One Sacred Community." The Rev. Joe Gosselin, M.S., pastor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, presided.

Catholic Social teaching revolves around seven key themes - 1) the life and dignity of the human person, 2) call to family, community and participation, 3) rights and responsibilities, 4) preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, 5) the dignity of work and the rights of the workers, 6) solidarity,

and 7) care for God's creation.

These themes were brought forth by the United States Bishops in their 1998 document, "Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions."

The document is a response to the urgent need in this country to strengthen our commitment to share the social teachings of the Catholic Church tradition at every level of Catholic education and faith formation. It reminds us that the social teachings of the Catholic Church are a central and essential element of our faith. These teachings are based on and are inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity. They aim to instill the common good - the social structures and conditions that assure all people basic human dignity and allow them to fulfill

their human potential

In 1999, Bishop Jude Speyrer formed a Diocesan Task Force for Social Justice Education to study the document and recommend concrete goals and objectives to respond to the challenges. The task force developed a continuous program of social justice education on three goals; each implemented in consecutive years. Those goals are respect for the human person, respect for the human person in the community, and respect for the human community in the global order.

This year's event, coordinated by Mrs. Tanya France, brought to a culmination of social justice education in the schools focusing on respecting one another in the community. Next year's event will be hosted by Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School.

### Abrazando Cristo mission trip set June 27-July 4

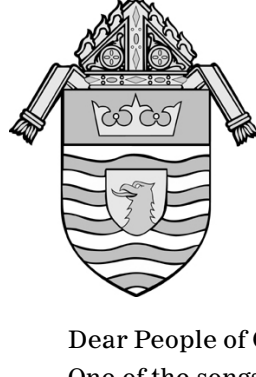
DERIDDER - The 2007 Abrazando Cristo mission trip to Managua, Nicaragua will be June 27 through July 4, according to the Rev. Daniel Torres, pastor of St. Joseph Church and Director of Abrazando Cristo.

The cost of the trip is \$1,500 per person. The tour price includes all bus transportation, roundtrip airfare from Houston, motel, food,

tips and a shirt.

"If you have always wanted to visit the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, see the face of Christ, and pray, cry, work, sing, laugh and grow with God, then this is the trip for you," Father Torres said.

For more information or to register call Father Torres at St. Joseph Church, 337-463-6878.



## DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

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Dear People of God,

One of the songs we sing during the Lenten season is The Glory of These Forty Days. The words of the first verse include: "For Christ Himself has fasted and has prayed."

This Sunday, the First Sunday of Lent, our Gospel reading focuses on Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit following His baptism, being led into the desert where he fasted and prayed. You and I are on a journey through these forty days of Lent. We are invited to fast - to empty ourselves and to be disposed to God; and to pray - to seek guidance and enlightenment. During this period we will be TESTED as Jesus was tempted by the devil during His time in the desert. We usually perceive temptation as a negative force pulling us away from God. However, I would like to suggest that our faith being tested can be seen as a strengthening of our belief. Where our heart is, that is where our faith is. If we are rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ and we are committed to seeking God's will for our lives, then when times of temptation occur, they can be seen as opportunities to re-dedicate ourselves to God and what He wants from us.

Prayer and fasting are our resolve to strengthen our relationship with God. Each day during this Lenten journey we re-commit ourselves to drawing closer to God. What is God's invitation to you this Lenten season? We cannot respond to God, put into action our faith, unless we are enlightened by what He wants for us. PRAYER becomes that opportunity to LISTEN to God; FASTING "empties" us physically to realize how the Lord "fills" us with His blessings, with a direction in our lives, with guidance when we are open to His will for us.

I pray that this Lent will find each of us growing in our relationship with our loving God who gave His life for us. May God bless you with His grace along this journey.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

Rev. Msgr. Harry D. Greig

Diocesan Administrator



Kathy Owen, left, Director of the Office of Family Life and Pro Life for the Diocese of Lake Charles; Evangeline Ordinario, center, president of the board of New Life Counseling, Inc. and Bobbie LeBlanc, secretary of the Office of Family Life and Pro-Life handed out candles at the recent candlelight prayer service held in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on the 34th anniversary of the Roe v Wade Supreme Court decision making abortion legal. More than 44,000,000 babies have been killed through abortion since the 1973 decision.

# Tribunal resolves questions of marriages' validity

LAKE CHARLES - One of the most active ministries of the Diocese of Lake Charles is the Tribunal. It is the court that resolves questions about marriage situations, according to Msgr. Jace Eskind, Judicial Vicar.

The Judicial Vicar is the person designated by the Bishop to oversee the operation of the tribunal. Serving as adjutant Judicial Vicar is the Rev. Bert Borel. Both Msgr. Eskind and Fr. Borel are also judges. The Rev. James Doyle serves as the Defender of the Bond and Bonnie Landry is a Judge.

Fathers Eskind and Borel as well as Landry hold Licentiate in Canon Law from St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada as well as Masters Degrees from the University of Ottawa in Canon Law. Bishop Jude Speyrer dispatched the trio to Canada in 1996 to study and they graduated with the double degrees in 1998.

Landry recently returned to Lake Charles after working for the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux's Tribunal. She will be full-time in the office, according to Msgr. Eskind. Both Msgr. Eskind and Father Borel are pastors of parishes, Msgr. Eskind at St. John Bosco in Westlake and Fr. Borel at St. John Vianney in Bell City.

"Bonnie will handle day to day running of the office," Msgr. Eskind said. "She will be the fulltime person in the office, in addition to Debbie Foreman (the secretary and Notary for the office) because Father Bert and I are kind of split as to time."

During 2006, the Tribunal completed 78 cases, according to the annual report of the office. It began the year with 133 active cases, added 59 new cases during the year, and ended the year with 119 active cases.

The Tribunal sees many different types of cases, according to Msgr. Eskind.

Every case is reviewed by a judge and just like in any court there are players who could be likened to prosecutors (Defender of the Bond) and defense attorneys (Advocates).

"The validity of the marriage is on trial," Msgr. Eskind said. "Father Doyle serves as the Defender of the Bond. His job is to uphold the marital bond. He points out all the reasons that the marriage is valid from the beginning. The advocates work on behalf of the parties. Their job is to point out all the reasons why the marriage should be declared invalid. It is the judge who reviews this and then makes the decision based on the evidence and those reports."

From the church's standpoint every marriage is considered valid until proven otherwise, Msgr. Eskind noted.

"The presumption is, if two people stood, especially when you are dealing with Catholics, before a priest and they pronounced their vows and there were two witnesses, the marriage is presumed to be valid," he said. "The evidence presented to the tribunal has to overturn that presumption. In the case of non-Catholics, if you have two people who were baptized into any religion, that becomes a sacramental bond, no matter who marries them. The presumption again is it is a valid marriage and the evidence must show otherwise."

Such a situation is what is termed a "formal case" and requires a full investigation. The validity in some cases that come to the Tribunal is easier to determine.

"There are different types of cases and I think this is where a lot of people get a little confused," Msgr. Eskind continued. "We have what is known as 'lack of form' cases, where a Catholic party marries somebody by a justice of the peace or in another Church without the proper permissions. Basically, the form of marriage for Catholics is to another Catholic in the presence of a priest and two witnesses. When that doesn't happen

then that marriage lacks the form. We also have what is known as defective form, where the form took place - like maybe they got married in the Catholic Church or they got married in another Church with the proper permissions but there was something that wasn't done properly in that form - such as one of the parties was not baptized and they didn't get the proper dispensation.

"Such cases are easier to work with and they are quicker as opposed to the formal case which takes a longer time. I think people kind of get confused by some of that because they think well "so and so" got their annulment in two weeks whereas it takes me two years and they don't understand the difference."

According to Msgr. Eskind, the cases have a certain process they follow.

"A lot of it depends on timely responses and the quality of the responses," he said. "Sometimes if you need more information, it means that you have to call people in and interview them. All those things take time because you would then have to transcribe the interview. The gathering of information can take a while. All formal cases that are heard on "psychological grounds," and that would be lack of discretion of judgement or some incapacity on the part of one or both parties to assume marriage or to live out marriage, have to be reviewed by a psychological expert and so even that takes time and slows up the process."

Even after a case has been decided on the Diocesan level, the process is not complete.

"Every formal case that receives an affirmative decision in Lake Charles has a mandatory appeal to our "second instance" court, which is the court of appeal in New Orleans," Msgr. Eskind said. "They review our findings and decide if they concur with our decision or if they reach a different decision. Also, if we give a case a negative decision here it can be appealed to the New Orleans court. All cases can always be appealed to Rome. In order for the decision

to become effective, there have to be two concurring decisions. If we give it an affirmative in Lake Charles and New Orleans gives it an affirmative, then it's affirmative. If we give it an affirmative and New Orleans gives it a negative then it has to go to Rome for a third decision. The two decisions that agree, that's the binding decision."

Those who need of an annulment or would like to know more, should contact their pastor or the parish staff. A parish priest or in some instances a deacon or a lay associate will help the person fill out the forms and answer questions about the process.

"Cases are submitted on behalf of people," Msgr. Eskind said. "They are submitted on the local level (the parish) and then they are submitted to the tribunal by the parish on the person's behalf."

There is a cost associated with the annulment process but Msgr. Eskind cautions that the money only helps to defray some of the expenses involved in the process.

"The cost is \$350 but we estimate that some cases can take as much as \$700 to \$800, when you look at the postage involved in the required contact between all the parties and the amount we spend on fees to the psychological expert," he said. "Just the cost in reproducing testimony can be large. There is also a fee to have the appeal in New Orleans."

"Many people are under the impression that they paying for their annulment but they are not," Msgr. Eskind said. "They are really helping to pay for the cost of conducting the investigation. If a person can not pay, all it takes is a letter from their pastor and the case is heard *pro bono* and the diocese absorbs the cost."

Msgr. Eskind noted that anyone seeking additional information can go to the Diocese of Lake Charles website ([lcdioocese.org](http://lcdioocese.org)). "Just click on the Resources button," he said.