

CATHOLIC CALENDAR



The Diocese of Lake Charles
lcdiocese.org



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

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Several hundred clergy, religious and laity, led in procession by Bishop Glen John Provost and the Blessed Sacrament went from St. Louis Catholic High School to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for an afternoon prayer service with Father Mitch Pacwa, S.J. to conclude the Year of Faith. The photo above shows the worshippers as they proceeded down Broad Street westward to the Cathedral.

Adoration, Eucharistic Procession, and Prayer Service celebrated conclusion of Year of Faith

LAKE CHARLES – The conclusion of the Year of Faith, called for in October 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI, was highlighted in Southwest Louisiana on the Solemnity of Christ the King, with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a Eucharistic Procession, and a Prayer Service in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, including Adoration and Benediction.

The hour-long period of Adoration and silent prayer took place in the Commons of St. Louis Catholic High School and was followed by Bishop Glen John Provost leading the Eucharistic Procession through the streets of the city to the Cathedral. Those who could not make the walk were ferried to the Cathedral on buses. Several hundred people took part in the procession and joined the crowd already in the Cathedral for the 3 p.m. prayer service. Estimates ranged between 600 and 700 participants.

Near the end of the prayer service Bishop Provost led a Prayer of Consecration entrust-

ing the Diocese of Lake Charles to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Father Mitch Pacwa, S.J., the founder and president of Ignatius Productions, was the homilist at the prayer service.

He pointed out that in proclaiming this Year of Faith, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI “called for us to reflect on a number of aspects of faith, and to make it a year of deepening that reflection. He wanted us to take the year to understand the Creed - the content of what we believe - so that it is not merely a set of words that we recognize when we see it.

“Many Catholics recognize the Faith when they see it but all too frequently they do not know how to put that Faith into words, but how to express what they believe and why they believe it,” Father Pacwa continued. “For us Catholics, that is a tremendous life-long challenge. It does not matter how long you live, how many times you read the Bible, or how much you go back to study, there is always more.

“We are called to understand as much of this faith as we can, so that we can learn to speak Catholicism not just recognize it when we see it, but be able to proclaim to a world that is stuck in a lot of ruts and are spinning their wheels,” Father Pacwa said.

He also spoke about the consecration of the Diocese to the Sacred Heart.

“We want to make the act of faith into an act of consecration in which we consecrate ourselves, the Diocese, our families, clergy, religious, everybody to the Sacred Heart and we make a consecration that is about entrusting ourself to God,” he said. “We consecrate our lives to Jesus. Like Mary, we give our lives to Christ. In this consecration moment, let it be as clear and strong a commitment of Faith as the Blessed Virgin Mary lived all the way to her death.”

Bishop Provost led those in attendance in the Prayer of Consecration:

Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God, whom we believe to be really present in the Blessed

Sacrament of the Altar, receive this most profound act of adoration as the desire we have to adore you unceasingly, and in thanksgiving for the sentiments of love which your Sacred Heart has for us in this Sacrament. We cannot better acknowledge them than by offering you all the acts of adoration, resignation, patience, and love which this same Heart has made during its mortal life, and which it continues to make, and which it shall make eternally in Heaven in order that, through it, we may love you, praise you, and adore you worthily as much as it is possible. We, the People of this Diocese of Lake Charles, unite ourselves to this divine offering which you made to your Father, and we consecrate to you our whole beings, praying you to destroy in us all sin, and not to permit that we should be separated from you eternally. Amen.

View a gallery of photographs of all the events on the website of the diocese at: <http://live.lcdiocese.org/resources/image-galleries/view/38.html>.

Gabriel Project continues to expand reach in Diocese

LAKE CHARLES – At least nine church parishes in the Diocese of Lake Charles have become involved with a pregnancy outreach program sponsored through the Office of Family Life and Pro Life of the Diocese known as the Gabriel Project.

Recently, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Jennings became the first church in the Eastern Deanery to begin the ministry. The Very Reverend Anthony Fontenot, pastor of Immaculate Conception and Dean of the Eastern Deanery, said, “The Gabriel Project seeks to save babies and assist women in their needs, both spiritual and material needs.” Just as

the angel Gabriel was sent with a message of great hope, this is what we will strive to do.”

To publicize the ministry in Jennings, a large sign was erected in front of the church. “The sign was made possible through the generosity of Matthews and Son Funeral Home in Jennings,” Father Fontenot said.

Other churches who have provided assistance to mothers-to-be are St. Henry, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, and Our Lady of Good Counsel, all in Lake Charles; St. John Bosco in Westlake, Our Lady of Prompt Succor in Sulphur; St. Pius X Chapel in Ragley; and St. Raphael in

Iowa. Beginning the process to provide such aid are Sacred Heart of Jesus in Lake Charles and St. Joan of Arc in Oberlin.

The goals of the Gabriel Project, which started in 1991 in Corpus Christi, Texas, are to offer hope and support to mothers and fathers during and after pregnancy regardless of the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy; to provide assistance in a confidential and non-judgmental manner; to strengthen families so that children can grow in a nurturing environment; to provide life-affirming support for those facing a difficult or unexpected blessing; to witness to the community a respect and reverence for all human life and to offer the teachings of the Church regarding the gift of life.

The program provides a 24-hour hotline staffed by volunteers as well as spiritual and emotional support for unwed mothers and those facing difficult pregnancies as well as baby items that the



Members of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Jennings and Knights of Columbus Council stand next to a newly erected sign in front of the church announcing the beginning of the Gabriel Project in the Eastern Deanery of the Diocese. Immaculate Conception is the first church on the east side of the Diocese of Lake Charles to provide the pregnancy outreach program for expectant mothers, which strives to provide assistance in a confidential and non-judgmental manner. (Photo by Doris Maricle/American Press)

mother might need.

The sign in front of Immaculate Conception reads: “We, the members of this church community, see in the birth of each baby a fresh expression of God’s unfailing love. For the love of God and each and every one of His children, we offer immediate and practical help to any woman faced

with what might seem to be a crisis pregnancy. The only condition is that the child be allowed to live.”

To make contact with the Gabriel Project for information, call the Diocese of Lake Charles at 337-439-7400, Ext. 317. If at all desired, an assessment is made and a referral provided.

Father Fontenot hopes to see the program expanded to include other churches in the area. “It would be really good if we could all get together and pool our resources,” he said.

In Jennings, Immaculate Conception Church will serve as the distribution site

See GABRIEL PROJECT, Page 4

The next
Catholic Calendar
will be published
Friday, January 24.

PLANTING THE SEED

God's great love shown to us at Christmas

Consider what we celebrate at Christmas. "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). The Eternal Word of God took human flesh, entering our world—in fact, the world of His creation. We repeat these words of the Scriptures almost daily when we recite the Creed. "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man" (Nicene Creed).

Think about this for a moment. God took on human flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary and became a little baby. He was born not in a palace but in a manger. The crib of the Son of God was a trough where animals fed. His earthly mother was a humble—albeit exceptionally graced (Luke 1:28)—virgin from Nazareth. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes (Luke 2:12), a detail often overlooked. Swaddling clothes are long strips of cloth binding an infant to keep them from moving about. Even at His birth, we are reminded that Jesus will be bound when He submits to crucifixion.

Reflect on what Christmas is all about. It is not about a Grinch that stole Christmas or Rudolf's red nose, "chestnuts roasting on an open fire" or a performance of the Nutcracker—as entertaining as all of these traditions may be. Christmas is about the Word of God becoming flesh, like us in all things but sin. In this simple truth lies all the mystery of what we remember and celebrate at Christmas.

What great love God has shown us in this moment of Incarnation! The Incarnation is a moment of re-creation. God is remaking the world. He is giving us a new Adam. "The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from

heaven" (I Corinthians 15:47). St. Paul reminds us, "Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one" (I Corinthians 15:49). We must not forget that the name Adam is the identical word in Hebrew used for man. In becoming flesh, God has given us a gift to be remade by sharing in the new-man, conformed fully to the image of Jesus Christ.

God spoke of this image at creation. What did He say? "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:27). Blessed John Paul II reminded us that this implies that man is defined by his relationship with God. Man can never be reduced to the worldly. No other work of God's creation has the dignity of sharing in God's image. Man is the icon of God. "[M]an can neither be understood nor explained in his full depth with the categories taken from the 'world'" (General Audience of September 12, 1979, #4).

We are not beasts—although through sin we at times act like it. We are not machines. We cannot be replaced with robots. Our value is not measured by what we can produce. We are not commodities. We cannot be bought and sold. We have a dignity that comes to us from the will of the Creator, and even though at times we do not live up to that dignity, the



**Bishop
Glen John
Provost**

Creator loves each and every one of us and offers us the gift of being re-created in His Son, Jesus Christ. God created us in His image, male and female He created us and saw that it was all good (Genesis 1:27, 31). When we forget this truth, we are always less than what we are intended to be.

And, now, in the fullness of time, God sends us Himself, clothed in human flesh, because He knows that left to ourselves we will self-destruct. Left to ourselves we will think we are merely animals, machines, to be discarded and thrown away. And this is where too many today find themselves—lost, without meaning, alone and abandoned. God does not want this. God wants to show us what it means to live more fully in His image. So He sends us the perfect image of Himself, the new Adam.

Think about Christmas for a moment. In the midst of all our noisy and busy preparations for the holidays, think about what Christmas means. The Word of God became flesh. He did so for a reason, and the reason is bigger and better than anything that the world can offer. The reason is found in every act of kindness and charity, when we act not as a machine or a beast but with the love and compassion of a child of God, the image of God.

Look to the manger to understand this. The mystery of this image will not be found on a holiday tree or in a sanitized "happy holiday" greeting. It will certainly not be found in the selfish ambition of the world. Instead the mystery is wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, warmed by the breath of a donkey, nursing at the breast of a Virgin—all so mysterious, as mysterious as a God who would create us in His image.

Respect Life Dinner Jan. 14; Abby Johnson to speak

LAKE CHARLES – The inaugural Diocese of Lake Charles Respect Life Dinner, which will aid Rachel's Vineyard, The Gabriel Project, and youth pilgrims to the National March for Life, is Tuesday, Jan. 14, in the Buccaneer Room of the Lake Charles Civic Center.

Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood director, will be the guest speaker.

Doors open at 6 p.m. with Masses starting at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$50 each or \$400 for a table of eight.

Call 337-439-7400 for Caroline Matt, e-mail rachel.vineyard@lcdiocese.org, or caroline.matt@lcdiocese.org for more information.

Respecte la vie will benefit a number of diocesan pro-life ministries, including Rachel's Vineyard and the Gabriel Project as well as

provide for youth pilgrims to the January March for Life in Washington, DC.

Johnson has always had a fierce determination to help women in need. It was this desire that both led her to a career with Planned Parenthood, our nation's largest abortion provider, and caused her to flee the organization and become an outspoken advocate for the pro-life movement.

During her eight years with Planned Parenthood, she quickly rose in the organization's ranks and became a clinic director. She was increasingly disturbed by what she witnessed. Abortion was a product Planned Parenthood was selling, not an unfortunate necessity that they fought to decrease. Still, she loved the women that entered her clinic and her fel-



Abby Johnson

low workers. Despite a growing unrest within her, she stayed on and strove to serve women in crisis.

All of that changed on September 26, 2009 when she assisted with an ultrasound-guided abortion. She

week baby fought, and ultimately lost, its life at the hand of the abortionist. At that moment, the full realization of what abortion was and what she had dedicated her life to washed over her and a dramatic transformation took place.

Desperate and confused, she help and joined a pro-life group. She swore that she would begin to advocate for life in the womb and expose abortion for what it truly is. Planned Parenthood did not take Johnson's exodus sitting down. They are fully aware that the workers that leave are their greatest threat. Instantly, they took action to silence Abby with a gag order and took her to court.

The lawsuit was quickly shown as the sham it was and thrown out of court. The media was, and continues to be, intensely interested in this brave woman's story as well as her continued efforts to advocate for the unborn and help clinic workers escape the abortion industry. She is the author of the nationally best-selling book, *Unplanned*, which chronicles both her experiences within Planned Parenthood and her dramatic exit.

Rachel's Vineyard/Silent No More is a weekend retreat program offered to men and women who have been harmed by the abortion experience. It is a safe place to renew, rebuild and redeem

hearts broken by abortion and the retreats offer a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where women and men can express, release and reconceive painful post-abortion emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing.

The Gabriel Project provides a 24-hour hotline staffed by volunteers as well as spiritual and emotional support for unwed mothers and those facing difficult pregnancies as well as baby items that the mother might need.

For information on Rachel's Vineyard retreats and the Gabriel Project, call 337-439-7400, Ext. 317.

Pope lays out his vision for an evangelical church

(Read more at lcdiocese.org)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- In his first extensive piece of writing as pope, Pope Francis lays out a vision of the Catholic Church dedicated to evangelization in a positive key, with a focus on society's poorest and most vulnerable, including the aged and unborn.

"*Evangelii Gaudium*" ("The Joy of the Gospel"), released by the Vatican Nov. 26, is an apostolic exhortation, one of the most authoritative categories of papal document. Pope Francis' first encyclical, "*Lumen Fidei*," published in July, was mostly the work of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI.)

The pope wrote the new document in response to the October 2012 Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization, but declined to work from a draft provided by synod officials.

Pope Francis' voice is unmistakable in the 50,000-word document's relatively relaxed style -- he writes that an "evangelist must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!" -- and its emphasis on some of his signature themes, including the dangers of economic globalization and "spiritual

worldliness."

The church's message "has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary," he writes. "In this basic core, what shines forth is the beauty of the manifest love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead."

Inspired by Jesus' poverty and concern for the dispossessed during his earthly ministry, Pope Francis calls for a "church which is poor and for the poor."

The poor "have much to teach us," he writes. "We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voices to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them."

Charity is more than mere handout, "it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor," the pope writes. "This means education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free creative, participatory and mutually supportive labor that human

beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives."

Yet he adds that the "worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. ... They need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith."

Pope Francis reiterates his earlier criticisms of "ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation," which he blames for the current financial crisis and attributes to an "idolatry of money."

He emphasizes that the church's concern for the vulnerable extends to "unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us," whose defense is "closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right."

"A human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development," the pope writes, in his strongest statement to date on the subject of abortion. "Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defense of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be."

The pope writes that evangelization entails peacemaking, among other ways through ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. He "humbly" calls on Muslim majority countries to grant religious freedom to Christians.



Neil Clark, right, president of the Propeller Club of the Ports of Southwest Louisiana, presents a check to Deacon Patrick Lapoint, center, and Rev. Lloyd Nelson, left, to help purchase phone cards for seafarers coming into the Port of Lake Charles allowing them to make contact with their families in the devastated islands of the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan. Deacon Lapoint is the director of the Center and Rev. Nelson represents the Carey Baptist Association, which assists with the Center and its mission to help seafarers coming to Southwest Louisiana.



The 2013 Bishop's Golf Classic raised more than \$32,000 for the Priest Retirement Fund and the Seminarian Education Fund of the Diocese through the help of generous contributions of two special sponsors. Pictured, from left, are James Palma and Alfred Palma of Alfred Palma, LLC, Bishop Glen John Provost, and Glen Bertrand of City Savings Bank. This was the sixth year for the tournament. The 2014 event will take place on Friday, October 3. This year, 38 four-person teams enjoyed a beautiful day of golf and fellowship.

CHRISTMAS OFFICE HOURS

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will close for the Christmas holidays from the end of business on Monday, Dec. 23 through Wednesday, Jan. 1, reopening at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 2.

Abrazando a Cristo mission registration now underway



The 2013 Abrazando a Cristo Missionaries

LAKE CHARLES – Registration for the 2014 *Abrazando a Cristo* mission to Nicaragua is now underway, according to Msgr. Daniel Torres, the program's director.

Catholics who feel called to pray daily, work with the poorest of the poor and be Christ for them, in Nicaragua, should contact Monsignor Torres at 337-439-7400 for a registration packet, or his Administrative Assistant, Ms. Connie Perkins at connie.perkins@lcdiocese.org to have a registration packet e-mailed. The deadline for registration, which entails completion of the form and payment of a \$300 non-refundable deposit, is Jan. 10, 2014, and ensures the registrant one of the 25 seats for the journey.

Next year's trip begins on Saturday, June 28, and returns to Lake Charles, on Sunday, July 6. Cost of the mission retreat is \$1,950.00 per person and includes roundtrip charter bus transportation from Lake Charles to Houston airport, roundtrip air transportation from Houston to Managua, Nicaragua, all meals and lodging, all shirts for the mission, private transportation in Nicaragua for entire stay, and airport fees/taxes, visas, and tips.

According to Msgr. Torres, work will be done at the Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in the Diocese of Matagalpa - three hours northeast of the Managua, the country's capital. "The types of work that will be done for the mission retreat are working on the building of the priest's residence, continued work on the church, painting, Vacation Bible School, a makeshift Medical Clinic, evangelizing the Catholic Faith, and feeding the poor," Msgr. Torres said.

"*Abrazando a Cristo* means "Embracing Christ," Msgr. Torres continued. "This mission program began in the Diocese of Lake Charles after Hurricane Mitch devastated the northern part

of Nicaragua and southern part of Honduras. That storm was categorized as one of the most devastating hurricanes in history, killing thousands."

The mission of the program is "To bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the poor in mind, body, and spirit throughout the world by meeting the needs of safety, shelter, food, medical treatment, and spiritual renewal...To embrace Jesus Christ is to embrace excellence in service to others by committing to the highest Christian, professional, and personal standards to build God's community of believers."

"It is our basic mission to be a sign of Christ's presence and to work side by side with persons from Nicaragua by learning from them, work-

ing with them, and sharing the love of Christ with them," Msgr. Torres said.

The mission's daily routine is structured and focused upon prayer, work, and rest. The daily schedule is as follows: 5:00 a.m., wake up call; 6:00 a.m. Morning Prayer as a Group with breakfast to follow; 6:45 a.m., departure to work sites; Rosary en route; 7:30 a.m., work; noon, lunch; 12:45 p.m., work; 3:45 p.m., finish work with quiet time before the Blessed Sacrament; 5:00 p.m., Depart; 6:30 p.m., Evening Prayer then dinner followed by reflection; 9:00 p.m., Rest.

Daily Mass is celebrated either in the morning at 6 a.m. or in the evening at 7 p.m., depending on the structure and activities of the day.



Vacation Bible School during the 2013 trip



Msgr. Daniel Torres and a friend on the 2013 *Abrazando a Cristo* Mission trip

Christmas Mass Schedule for churches of the Diocese of Lake Charles

Bell City
St. John Vianney
(7120 Highway 14 E.)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m.; 9:30 a.m. (Day)

Big Lake
St. Mary of the Lake
(11054 Highway 384)
4:00 p.m. (Eve)

Carlyss
St. Theresa of the Child Jesus
(4822 Carlyss Drive)
4:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:30 a.m. (Day)

Cameron
Our Lady Star of the Sea
(135 Our Lady Road)
6:00 p.m. (Eve)

Creole
Sacred Heart of Jesus
(5250 West Creole Highway)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

DeQuincy
Our Lady of LaSalette
(203 S. Grand Avenue)
12:00 Midnight (Eve); 10:00 a.m. (Day)

DeRidder
St. Joseph
(1125 Blankenship Drive)
5:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Elizabeth
St. Francis of Rome Chapel
(204 Poplar Street)
8:00 a.m. (Day)

Elton
St. Joseph
(209 N. Washington Street)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:30 a.m. (Day)
St. Paul
(1100 St. Mary Street)
7:00 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Fenton
St. Charles Borromeo
(804 Third Avenue)
6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Grand Chenier
St. Eugene
(5035 Grand Chenier Highway)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:30 a.m. (Day)

Hackberry
St. Peter the Apostle
(1210 Main Street)
4:00 p.m., 12 Midnight (Eve);
9 a.m. (Extraordinary Form) (Day)

Iowa
St. Raphael
(211 S. Thomson Avenue)
5:30 p.m. (Eve); 10:15 a.m. (Day)

Jennings
Immaculate Conception
(705 S. Lake Arthur Avenue)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady Help of Christians
(710 N. State Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 12:00 Midnight (Eve); 8:30 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
(920 S. Broadway)
8:00 p.m. (Eve); 10:30 a.m. (Day)

Johnson Bayou
Our Lady of the Assumption Chapel
(5556 Highway 82)
7:00 p.m. (Eve)

Kinder
St. Philip Neri
(607 Fourth Avenue)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Lacassine
St. John the Evangelist Chapel
(306 Ann Street)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m. (Day)

Lake Arthur
Our Lady of the Lake
(203 Commercial Avenue)
4:30 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Lake Charles
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
(Corner of Kirby and Bilbo Streets)
4:00 p.m., 12 Midnight (Eve);
8:30 a.m. (Day)

Christ the King
(7680 Gulf Highway)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

Immaculate Heart of Mary
(2031 Opelousas Street)
4:00 p.m., 12:00 Midnight (Eve); 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady of Good Counsel
(221 Aqua Drive)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady Queen of Heaven
(3939 Lake Street)
4:00 p.m. (Main Church), 4:15 p.m. (Family Life Center)

6:00 p.m., (Main Church);
12:00 Midnight (Eve);
7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Sacred Heart of Jesus
(1102 Mill Street)
4:30 p.m. (Eve); 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. (Day)

St. Henry
(1021 Eighth Avenue)
4:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m.; (Eve); 8:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.;
12:30 p.m. (Spanish); 5:00 p.m. (Day)

St. Margaret of Scotland
(2500 Enterprise Blvd.)
(NW Corner of Enterprise Blvd & 17th Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 8:30 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. (Day)

St. Martin de Porres
(5326 Elliott Road)
4:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

St. Patrick Hospital Chapel
(524 Dr. Michael DeBakey Drive)
9:00 a.m. (Day)

LeBleu Settlement
St. Joseph Chapel
(2110 Claude Hebert Road)
8:30 a.m. (Day)

Moss Bluff
St. Theodore
(785 Sam Houston Jones Parkway)
4:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Oakdale
Sacred Heart of Jesus
(1208 E. 7th Avenue)
7:00 p.m. (Eve); 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Oberlin
St. Joan of Arc
(110 W. 5th Avenue)
5:00 p.m., 12:00 Midnight (Eve);
9:00 a.m. (Day)

Ragley
St. Pius X Chapel
(16816 Highway 171)
6:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:30 a.m. (Day)

Raymond
St. Lawrence
(5505 Pine Island Highway)
6:30 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m.; 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Sulphur
Immaculate Conception
(2700 Maplewood Drive)
4:00 p.m.; 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)
Our Lady of LaSalette
(602 N. Claiborne Street)
4:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady of Prompt Succor
(1109 Cypress Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 12:00 Midnight (Eve); 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Sweetlake
St. Patrick Chapel
(469 Highway 27)
8:00 a.m. (Day)

Vinton
St. Joseph
(1502 Industrial Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Welsh
Our Lady of Seven Dolors
(209 N. Adams Street)
4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

St. Joseph
(310 N. Sarah Street)
8:30 a.m. (Day)

Westlake
St. John Bosco
(1301 Sampson Street)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Running from the Bears on Jan. 25 at Saint Charles Center

MOSS BLUFF – Saint Charles Center and St. Louis Catholic High School have joined forces for a fun and fundraising event – *Running from the Bears* – from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Jan. 25, on the Center grounds.

Everyone knows that when you wake a bear from his winter slumber, he is not happy. Brave runners will do their best to keep their distance from these menacing “bears” (actually select St. Louis students and faculty on roller skates) along the covered pathways of the Center’s courtyard.

Sponsored runners must be at least 14 years of age to participate.

There will be yummy “Bear Claw” pastries, “bear” gumbo, festive music and a good time for all, according to Father Whitney Miller, director of Saint Charles Center.

Funds realized from the event benefit the Long Term Maintenance Account of the Center and the Send a Saint Financial Assistance Fund. Call the Retreat Center at (337) 855-1232 for more information or check out the St. Louis website for detailed information of the event and to download runner/sponsor registration at www.slchs.org.

Center for Catholic Studies Spring registration ongoing

LAKE CHARLES -- The Center for Catholic Studies, an initiative of the Diocese of Lake Charles, in conjunction with Holy Cross College of New Orleans will offer two undergraduate theology courses in the Spring. The courses, depending on the student’s degree program at McNeese, may transfer as liberal arts credits.

The two courses will be taught beginning Monday, Jan. 27, at the Catholic Student Center, 221 Aqua Drive, in Lake Charles. Each is a three credit hour offering with a January 10 registration deadline.

Theology 101: Fundamentals of Catholicism is a study of the doctrine, liturgy, morals and prayer of the Catholic Church. Deacon Glenn Viau, M.Ed., M.P.S., will teach the course on Mondays, –from 5 to 7:30 p.m.

Theology 290: The Catholic Novel will be taught by Father Ruben Buller, M.Div., on Mondays and Wednesdays

from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. The course will be an exposure to the Catholic mind as it comes through the literary works of Flannery O’Conner, G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, Graham Greene, and Walter Miller Jr. The course will consider three novels and two short stories.

Our Lady of Holy Cross College courses are available for credit or audit and may be taken by college students or any interested lay faithful who meets enrollment requirements. For more information, contact Susan Borgman at the Office of Religious Education of the Diocese of Lake Charles – 337-439-7400, Ext. 309.

Fees are \$225 per course for credit and \$90 if audited. Additionally, for new students taking a course for credit there is a fee of \$15.

Registration forms are available at the Catholic Student Center, the Office of Religious Education at 411 Iris Street, or online at lcdioocese.org by clicking Forms on the Main Menu.



Father Rojo Anthony Koonathan, parochial vicar at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, blesses one of the graves at Highland Cemetery Blessing on All Souls Day. Prayer Koonathan led the prayer service and then blessed graves in the cemetery. Members of Christ the King Catholic Church Choir provided music for the service. It was the 20th year that the cemetery held a prayer service on All Souls Day. A crowd of about 100 filled the mausoleum to pray for their loved ones.



DRAWING NEAR

The Soul’s Worth

It’s always risky to write a column about the “true spirit of Christmas,” if for no other reason than it’s a topic that has been so frequently tackled in recent weeks. More blogs have been circulating, more homilies delivered, and more Hallmark cards purchased proclaiming that December 25th is not merely a day meant for the eating of fat, juicy turkeys or endless hours of rapping over-priced wrapping paper off of presents containing whatever hot, new item the stores were selling this year. We know this to be true: the true spirit of Christmas lies in the miracle of our Savior’s birth. And yet, with the recent advent (no pun intended) of Black Friday sales beginning on the evening of Thanksgiving Day to the late night hours stores open on Christmas Eve itself, there is a consumerist attitude dominating our culture today. The endless preparation for Christmas starts the moment November begins, and doesn’t end until every possible deal is found, every carol is overplayed, and every gift is wrapped perfectly and placed under the decorated tree.

We all know this consumerist attitude exists and we all seem to have a strong dislike of it. But, there we are, standing in the long line waiting to purchase the coveted items we swiped off the shelf. There we stand ready to max out credit cards, ready to get that gift receipt, ready to feed the beast that is materialistic modern America. The worth of Christmas is now seemingly measured in how much money was spent or saved, in the number of gifts being given or received, and in how many likes our posted pictures receive on Facebook and Instagram.

We have to stop and ask ourselves a few challenging questions: What is the true worth of Christmas? What is the real value and benefit of this joyous liturgical season turned consumerist-shopping nightmare? Are we missing the point? I think we can find the answers we seek in the old English carol, “O Holy Night,” a song piped through shopping malls, played repeatedly on radio stations, and sung at the Christmas service everyone (non-regular church goers included) attend. The most poignant words of the entire song come in the third and fourth lines. It’s a phrase that catches us off guard, startling the heart and mind.

“Long lay the world, in sin and error pining... ‘til He appeared, and the soul felt its worth.”

Nestled amongst the lyrical lines that are sung with such beauty and grace, this line is often lost and quickly forgotten. It’s brushed past as the voice raises up to the high note announcing “our dear Savior’s birth” or the proclamation to “all on [the] knees... and hear the angels’ voices...”

But it is this line that defines the entire point of Christmas. But it is this line that defines the entire point of Christmas. Christ brought meaning back to the world, brought value to existence once again, value that had been lost through the sinfulness of humanity and could only be restored with the arrival of the promised Messiah.

In an instant, on a cold night in a little stable in Bethlehem, a child is born that restores the proper order of God’s

good creation. In that moment the earth gained meaning. With the heavy breathing of a tired, sinless woman and the harried scrambling of a skilled, patient carpenter, Jesus – the Word made Flesh dwelling among us – came into this world. There He was: the King of Kings, the perfect Man who would redeem all men. There was probably a soft whimper from time to time and His Mother rocked Him slowly. Wrapped in a piece of cloth, probably nothing more than a simple towel, He was placed ever so gently into a feeding trough.

He had appeared. He had arrived. He had come, and with that arrival, the world – and every soul in it then, now, and to come – found and felt its worth.

Jesus Christ brought to the world the purpose of life: to know, love, and serve the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – the God who keeps His promises. He revealed the God of power, making the blind see and the lame walk. He taught man the Truth that satisfies the heart and mind as He gave them His way of life. He showed man the God of redemption and mercy as He stretched His arms across wooden beams and suffered unbearable pain.

It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who brought the world its worth. There is no other point to Jesus: this was His purpose, His task, His mission – to provide for all of us a startling look at the reason for humanity’s existence. While we may think our life’s purpose is to watch our bank accounts grow, our cars get faster, our homes get larger, our friends become more numerous, our earthly possessions become more extravagant... Christ breaks through and shines light on the true meaning of our existence: to know Him, serve Him, love Him, and share Him with the world. It is only when we recognize this purpose of Christ’s existence that we come to understand something about our own: that we are meant for Him just as He is meant for us, and it is only in a relationship with Him that we will find true value and merit in any area of our life.

This Christmas we will be surrounded by decorated evergreen trees with shiny boxes placed underneath. Kids will delight in their presents and families will gather around tables telling stories and reminiscing about the lives they share together. Carols will be sung, gifts will be given and received, food will be eaten, memories will be made... In the moments of this Christmas season, I encourage you to pause from time to time and remember that Christ has appeared. Jesus Christ has arrived, bringing with Him the purpose and point of our lives. He has brought worth to our souls, and that is something to be merry about indeed.

Katie Prejean is a Catholic youth minister and teacher at St. Louis Catholic High School.



Katie Prejean

Spring events schedule set at Saint Charles Center

MOSS BLUFF – The Spring 2014 event schedule has been announced for Saint Charles Center.

Sister Diane Depwe will present “Isaiah 9: God’s Wake-up Call to America” on Tuesday, Jan. 14 from 6– 9 p.m. in Tabor Retreat House. To register call the

Center at 337-855-1232 or go to stcharlescenter.com. Suggested donation is \$20.00 per person. The deadline to register is Friday, Jan. 10.

“Communicating with Care: How to Speak and Listen More Effectively” with Fr. Whitney Miller is set for 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 24. Call 337- 855-1232 or go to register. Suggested donation is \$20.00 per person with a registration deadline of Monday, January 20.

February events will include the Engaged Encounter Weekend from Friday, Feb. 7 through Sunday, Feb. 9. More about this weekend experience can be obtained by calling Mr. and Mrs. Paul Trahan at 337-898-9257. The suggested donation is \$190.00 per couple.

The Annual Preached Retreat for St. Pius X Chapel in Ragley will be led by Fr. Whitney Miller and Fr. Scott DesOrmeaux from Friday, February 14 to Sunday, Feb. 16. Call 337-855-1232 to register or go to stcharlescenter.com. The suggested donation is \$180.00 for a private room, and \$160.00 each for a shared room.

“Song of Songs,” a program with Sr. Diane Depwe is Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 6 to 9 p.m. Call 337-855-1232 to register or go to stcharlescenter.com. The suggested donation is \$20.00 per person. Registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 14 “Praying Together as a Couple 101,” an Evening of Reflection, will be led by Keith and Deborah Faul on Tuesday, Feb. 25 from 6 to 9 p.m. Call 337-855-1232 to register or visit stcharlescenter.com. Friday, Feb. 21 is the registration deadline. The suggested donation is \$40.00 per couple. Scholarship information is available upon request for those in need of assistance.

A Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat - Healing After Abortion will be led by Fr. Nathan Long, Margie Long and the Diocesan team from Friday, Feb. 28 through Sunday, March 2. Participation in this retreat is strictly confidential and offers a beautiful opportunity to experience God’s love, forgiveness and compassion. The cost is \$210.00 for meals, private room with private bath and all retreat materials. For those with financial burdens, assistance is available. For more information or registration contact: Rachel’s Vineyard of Southwest Louisiana at 337-439-7400, Ext. 317 or e-mail rachels.vineyard@lcdioocese.org.

Fathers Whitney Miller and Don Piraro will lead “Our Call to Lenten Grace,” an Ash Wednesday Evening of Reflection from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5. This Ash Wednesday program will consist of Holy Mass and the Distribution of Ashes, a simple supper and a presentation on Lenten spirituality. There will be no cost for the evening, but a free-will offering will be accepted. Funds realized will benefit the Long Term Maintenance Account for the Center. Call 337-855-1232 to register.

This retreat program - “Simon Peter’s Continued Conversion Story” – will be led by Sr. Diane Depwe on Tuesday, March 11 from 6 to 9 p.m. Call 337-855-1232 or go to stcharlescenter.com. The suggested donation is \$20.00 per person with a Friday, March 7 deadline to register.

The “Spiritual Book Club,” facilitated by Fr. Don Piraro is Tuesday, March 11 from 6 to 9 p.m. The spring selection is “Gateway to Hope: An Exploration of Failure” by Maria Boulding, O.S.B. Call 337-855-1232 to register or go to stcharlescenter.com. The suggested donation is \$20.00 per person with a Friday, March 7 registration deadline.

A Lenten Mini-Mission, 2014 - “To Know Scripture Is To Know Jesus” with Mike VanVranken is Tuesday, March 18 and Wednesday, March 19 from 6 to 9 p.m. each day. Call 337-855-1232 to register or visit stcharlescenter.com. There is a suggested donation will be \$20.00 per person for each evening of the Lenten Mini-Mission. Registration is requested by Friday, March 14.

Fr. Whitney Miller will lead “From Reflections with Thomas Merton” on Tuesday, March 25 from 6 to 9 p.m. and will focus on a random sampling of Merton’s work. Call 337-855-1232 to register or visit stcharlescenter.com. There is a registration deadline of Friday, March 21. The suggested donation is \$20.00 per person.

Lenten Private Directed Retreats will be directed by Fr. Whitney Miller, Fr. Don Piraro, Judy Savoie and Gloria Villegas from Monday, March 31 through Sunday, April 6. Retreatants may choose to do three or five day retreats. For more information or to register, call the Center at 337-855-1232. Online registration is not available for this retreat program. The suggested donation is \$265.00 for three days, and \$440.00 for five days. Scholarship information is available upon request for those in need of assistance.

A Lenten Introduction to the Directed Retreat will be provided by the same quartet of directors from Friday, April 4 to Sunday, April 6. The directed retreat is prayerful silence and tailored to the individual needs of the retreatant. This week-

end introduction helps the retreatant learn the prayer technique and prepares the person for a longer retreat. Call 337-855-1232 to register as online is not available for this retreat. The suggested donation is \$265.00 per person and scholarship information is available upon request for those in need of assistance.

Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church sponsors the Women’s Lenten Silent Retreat from Friday, April 11 through Sunday, April 13. Though sponsored by Our Lady Queen of Heaven this silent retreat is open to any and all women who choose to participate. The theme for this year’s event is “The Last Week- a Day-by-Day Account,” and uses the Gospel of Mark as a guide. Presentations will be led by Sister Barbara Breaud, O Carm and prayer experiences will be led by Sister Terry Falco, RSM. The suggested donation is \$190.00 for a private room and \$170.00 each for shared accommodations. There is a suggested \$75.00 donation for commuters. Contact Elaine Trahan at 337-474-0178 or the Center at 337-855-1232 or go to stcharlescenter.com for registration. Scholarship information is available upon request for those in need of assistance.

Fr. Whitney Miller and Fr. Don Piraro will lead Good Friday Meditations on Friday, April 18 from 11:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. Participant can honor these holy hours of quiet spirit and solemn reflection throughout one of the most sacred days of the liturgical year by spending some time in prayer. Attendees should bring their own lunch and beverage, if so desired. There is no fee for this event but pre-registration is appreciated by calling 337-855-1232.

Join Sr. Diane Depwe on Tuesday, April 22 from 6 to 9 p.m. for “Understanding Our Mass Liturgy.” To register, call 337-855-1232 or go to stcharlescenter.com by Friday, April 18. The suggested donation is \$20.00 per person.

Two events in May close out the Center’s Spring schedule with “Embracing Our Blessed Mother” led by Patricia Dawsey Fox on Tuesday, May 6 from 6 to 9 p.m. and Sr. Diane Depwe leading “Pope Francis and the Blessed Virgin Mary’s

Apparitions” on Tuesday, May 20 from 6 to 9 p.m. Registration may be accomplished by calling 855-1232 or at stcharlescenter.com. Deadlines to register are Friday, May 2 for the former program and Friday, May 16 for the latter.

The suggested donation for each is \$20.00.

A full and complete explanation of each of the Center’s programs can be found <http://live.lcdioocese.org/retreats/saint-charles-center.html>.

Torch Relay ran through the Diocese

LAKE CHARLES – The annual *International Run Carrera Antorcha Guadalupeana Mexico-New York Torch Race* came through the Diocese of Lake Charles on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 9-10.

On Saturday, the relay arrived from Texas and moved down U.S. 90 through Vinton, Sulphur, Westlake and into Lake Charles.

Volunteer runners carried the Holy Fire, which began its trip to St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. The race ended last week as the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe was celebrated with Mass in St. Patrick's. Bishop Glen John Provost celebrated Our Lady's Feast Day with Mass at St. Henry Catholic Church last week.

Large images of Our Lady and St. Juan Diego accompanied the runners on their journey.

Saturday afternoon the relay stopped at St. Henry Church to overnight. Father D.B. Thompson, co-chaplain of Hispanic Ministry, celebrated Mass in Spanish on Sunday before the relay recommenced its trek down Broad Street to U.S. 90 and continuing through Iowa, Lacassine, Welsh, and Roanoke to Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Jennings.

The torch and images remained at Immaculate Conception overnight Sunday, leaving the Diocese on Monday on its way to New York.

A photo gallery is available on the website of the Diocese – lcediocese.org.



The annual *International Run Carrera Antorcha Guadalupeana Mexico-New York Torch Race* made its way through the Diocese of Lake Charles on Nov. 9-10. At top left, one of the volunteer runners carries the Holy Fire down U.S. 90 enroute to Sulphur. At top right, Father D. B. Thompson, co-chaplain of Hispanic Ministry, transfers the Holy Fire to a large candle for its Saturday overnight stay at St. Henry Catholic Church. In the bottom left photo, runners continued their journey over Highway 90 toward Jennings for its stopover at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. In the bottom right photo, runners place the large image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the sanctuary of Immaculate Conception Church.

South African cardinal says iconic Mandela had touch of humanity

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (CNS) -- Nelson Mandela, who led the struggle to replace South Africa's apartheid regime with a multiracial democracy, died Dec. 5 at his home in Johannesburg.

Mandela, 95, became the country's first black president in 1994. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

One of the world's most revered statesmen, Mandela had a touch of humanity rarely seen in political leaders, said Cardinal Wilfrid Napier of Durban, South Africa, in an interview with Catholic News Service earlier this year.

Cardinal Napier represented the South African Catholic Church in discussions between Mandela and church leaders beginning in 1990, following Mandela's release after 27 years in prison, until he retired from public life in 2004.

Cardinal Napier said he came to treasure Mandela through regular meetings church leaders had with his African National Congress in the transition from apartheid to democracy.

"I always felt we should introduce ourselves to him again, but it was never necessary," said the cardinal, who was president of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference from 1987 to 1994.

Mandela "remembered names and faces and always gave us a hearty welcome," he said.

"I came to realize that if he had met someone he had no trouble remembering their names or where they were from. To him, people mattered because of who they were, not the position they held," he said. "That's what I really treasure about the man."

Negotiations between Mandela and South Africa's apartheid regime began in 1989 while he was still imprisoned. The late Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban told Catholic News Service at the time that he was "astonished" to hear that the notoriously intransigent former President P.W. Botha had approached Mandela to discuss negotiating an end to the armed struggle against apartheid.

The negotiations were fraught with difficulties, and Mandela frequently called on the country's church leaders to help overcome the deadlocks, Cardinal Napier said.

"When there was a problem, Mandela would say exactly how he saw the problem," he said, noting that the South African leader was a "direct man and it was easy to engage with him."

Mandela's humility and self-deprecating sense of humor were other qualities Cardinal Napier said he valued.

In February 2001, when Cardinal Napier was inducted into the College of Cardinals by Pope John Paul II, Mandela was in Mozambique.

"He tracked me down to St. Peter's to congratulate me. He said, 'Archbishop Napier, how wonderful that you've been promoted to this esteemed position and you still have time for all of us back home.' I called him Mr. Mandela and he said, 'No, it's Madiba.' He wished me luck and asked me to pass on his greetings to everyone there."

Mandela, who was born in 1918 into the Xhosa-speaking Thembu people in a village in South Africa's Eastern Cape province, was often called by his clan name 'Madiba.'

Cardinal Napier recalled a 1991 meeting at retired Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Cape Town office, where church leaders and liberation movement leaders were introducing themselves to each other.

"I could see Mandela quite clearly from where I was seated, and when the Methodist bishop's turn came to introduce himself Mandela said, 'That's my bishop.' He's the only political leader I've known who's ... allowed himself to be defined in terms of his faith, not just in terms of political allegiance," the cardinal said.

After serving one term in office, Mandela became a high-profile ambassador for South Africa and helped with peace negotiations in other African countries.

Mandela was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2001 and, three years later, at the age of 85, retired from public life. He made rare public appearances after that, but helped to secure

Rosie Richards named "Distinguished Catholic of the Year" by KPC #168

LAKE CHARLES – Mrs. Rosie Richards, a member of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings and Director of the Caring Hands Outreach Center, was named the "Distinguished Catholic of the Year" by St. Peter Claver Court and Council #168, at the 2013 Sapphire and Ice Gala.

Proceeds from the event support educational expenses for college-level seminarians studying for the priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles and the St. Henry Catholic Church Building Bridges Capital Campaign. Prayers from the parishes of the Diocese provide nominations for the award and a special committee makes the final choice.

Msgr. Daniel Torres, pastor of St. Henry Catholic Church and Vicar General of the Diocese, thanked the members of Knights of Peter Claver Council #168 for their dedication to the parish and the diocese with their response to the call of helping educate future priests and help build an educational facility at St. Henry for all ages and cultural backgrounds.

The also remembered the late Sandra Mason, who provided the impetus to begin the Sapphire and Ice Banquet a number of years ago. "I am grateful to Sandy for her vision which began this great endeavor," Msgr. Torres said.

This year's award winner has portrayed the love of Christ in helping the poor, much like St. Peter Claver," Msgr. Torres said. "She is a

mother, grandmother, a lector in her Church parish, a member of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and the director of the outreach center. She is responsible for all the activities of this very active facility, monitoring volunteers, administering daily operations, interviewing applicants and overseeing the thrift store.

"She is also instrumental in the youth programs at her church," Msgr. Torres continued. "She is constant contact with the area churches in Jennings to make sure Caring Hands has the means to help the disadvantaged. Her humility and compassion in

conducting all of these functions is to be commended greatly."

Monsignor spoke of St. Peter Claver, the Jesuit priest who spent his life working to provide physically and spiritually for the African slaves who docked at Cartagena, Colombia.

"I cannot imagine what was in his mind and heart as he stood on the shores," Msgr. Torres said. "My reflection only brings me to see that what was in his heart was Jesus Christ. His love and conviction for Christ radiated hope to the children he was called to be with in the plantations of Colombia.

"He was Christ to the slaves," Msgr. Torres continued. "He was love to the slaves. He was Hope to the slaves. His spirit enriches us this day by the men and women dedicated to stand up proudly and profess their faith in the Catholic Church."

By the end of his life, St. Peter Claver had personally baptized more than 300,000 slaves. He not only worked to aid the slaves in their plight but also worked with the poor of the city of Cartagena and spent much time in fasting and other penances for himself and for the people of the city.



Mrs. Rosie Richards accepts the "Distinguished Catholic of the Year" award from Bishop Glen John Provost. The award is given by the Knights of Peter Claver Court and Council #168 of St. Henry Catholic Church. Pictured, at left, are Lady Dolores Beaco, Lady Brenda Riggs, Lady Veronica Cox, and Lady Connie Lemelle. Center is Mrs. Richards and Bishop Provost while at right are Sir Knight Paul Jones, Sir Knight Frederick Lemelle, and Father D.B. Thompson, Parochial Vicar of St. Henry Catholic Church.

Did you know...

Pope John Paul I served only 33 calendar days in 1978, tying him with Pope Benedict V in 964, but the shortest reign of a Supreme Pontiff was that of Pope Urban VII - 13 days. He was elected on September 15, 1590 and died on September 27, before his consecration. Pope Boniface VI, in April 896, served as Pope for 16 days. Historically, the average length of a Papal reign has been slightly more than seven years.

Pope Francis was the first to take that name but do you know what name has been chosen more times than any other by a newly elected Pope? Find out in our next Catholic Calendar - January 24.



Father D.B. Thompson celebrates the Extraordinary Form of the Liturgy in Latin for the repose of the soul of Bishop Jude Speyrer. At his left is Father Nathan Long, who acted as deacon, while at his right is Father Jacob S. Conner, who acted as sub-deacon. In the center of the aisle is a catafalque representing the coffin of the late beloved bishop.

Requiem High Mass celebrated for the repose of Bishop Speyrer's soul

OBERLIN -- Rev. D.B. Thompson celebrated a Requiem High Mass in the Extraordinary Form with prayers for the repose of the soul of the late Bishop Jude Speyrer, who died July 21, in St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church on Monday, Nov. 4.

"When the Most Reverend Jude Speyrer, our first Bishop, came to the end of his earthly days, our Diocese marked a significant milestone," said Father Thompson. "The death of the founding Bishop of a Diocese is the end of an era and we will always be grateful for his courage and generous priestly service."

"When Father Roland Vaughn, who knew Bishop Speyrer well, commented that the Bishop had an affection for the Roman Rite in its more ancient form, we knew that it would be right to mark this transition by a Solemn Mass for the repose of his soul, which can include the absolutions at the catafalque" Father Thompson continued. "This liturgical item, the catafalque, represents the coffin of the deceased and becomes a focal point for the prayers of intercession offered by the Church and which may be repeated often. May God grant

that, one day, the prayers we are offering for the purification of the soul of our first Bishop be returned by his intercession for us before the Throne of God."

"By the prayers of the Holy Church, and by the salvific Sacrifice [of the Mass], and by the alms which are given for their souls, there is no doubt that the dead are helped, so that the Lord

might deal more mercifully with them than their sins would deserve." (Sermon 172:2) "These words of St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo and a Doctor of the Church, remind us why we pray for the faithfully departed," Father Thompson said. "As the Catechism explains, Christians who die in the state of grace but with remaining attachments to anything less than God that have not been

purified by suffering in this life, "undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven". Indeed, since the souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves, but are being purified from their selfishness and disordered love, they must learn to radically depend on others, particularly on the charity of their brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ on Earth"

Pope to set up advisory commission on abuse

(Read more at <http://live.lcdiocese.org/christian-formation-home.html>)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis accepted a proposal to set up a special commission on the sexual abuse of children, which will advise him on ways to prevent abuse and provide pastoral care for victims and their families.

Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, a member of the pope's advisory Council of Cardinals, announced the decision at a Vatican briefing for reporters Dec. 5, during a break in the council's meetings with the pope.

The cardinal said the new commission would continue the work of Pope Benedict XVI against clerical sex abuse, and that among its tasks would be to "study the present programs in place for the protection of children, and to come up with suggestions for new initiatives" by the Vatican, in collaboration with national bishops' conferences and religious orders around the

world.

According to the Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Pope Francis heard the proposal on the afternoon of Dec. 4, during the second of three days of meetings with his 8-member Council of Cardinals, and announced his decision to the council the following morning.

The council, which the pope formally established in September to advise him on church governance and reform of the Vatican bureaucracy, was holding its second round of meetings, following an initial three-day session in October.

Cardinal O'Malley said the new sex abuse commission would be of international composition, consisting perhaps of 12 members, including lay people, members of religious orders and priests. The members will be persons with "competence in the safety of children and relations with victims."

In Philippines, a fine line between Advent, Christmas

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) -- In the Philippines, the Christmas season starts in September, but the final nine days of Advent have special meaning. "Generally in the Filipino culture ... when the 'ber' months come, September, October, November, there are already Christmas decorations," said Father Carmelo Arada Jr. There are already Christmas carols in the malls.

At first glance, it appears Advent is skipped over altogether. Instead, Father Arada told Catholic News Service, the season of waiting for Filipinos really starts Dec. 16, the nine days before Christmas, known as Simbang Gabi. Father Arada, an assistant commissioner on formation at the Manila Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission, said it would appear that Filipinos "take for granted" the four weeks before Christmas, called Advent.

The Catholic tradition is to observe this period before

Jesus' birth in penitence, which includes certain practices like the Gloria not being sung during Mass. Priests liken it to a sort of shortened Lent, except it anticipates a joyful occurrence.

Father Arada said in the 17th century, under Spanish colonial rule, the church allowed the Philippines to have a more celebratory observance of Advent during this nine-day period.

"Even during Sundays of Advent when it is Simbang Gabi, we can sing the Gloria, we can wear white vestments," he said. "And I think even in the 17th century, carols were sung during these nine days."

Father Arada said Filipinos believe their wishes will be granted if they complete the nine straight days of Mass, which can be attended at the start of the day or in the early evening. He said the Masses were originally celebrated in honor of Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus.

VIEW FROM ROME

Pope surrounded by predecessors' legacies

If Pope Francis makes so many headlines in the States and elsewhere, he certainly dominates much of the view from Rome. Seen from Rome, the pope is set against a very particular backdrop. He is in many ways surrounded by the legacies of his predecessors. Some of them built much of the city itself; others have significantly shaped the way papal ministry is carried out, and all of them have contributed a different face to the papacy, a different way of realizing the diverse responsibilities of this ancient office.

This backdrop gives context to the words and actions of Pope Francis. It is the environment in which his papal activity finds meaning. From this perspective, one can appreciate the great novelty of Pope Francis, but one can also appreciate the great continuity that he maintains with what has gone before him.

This continuity is seen in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), which

draws deeply from the thought of Blessed Pope John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and other popes. These great pontiffs have helped to shape the thought of Pope Francis, especially as regards one of his central themes: the Church's missionary nature. Even in his desire for practical reform, Pope Francis stands in long line of reformer-popes. In this regard, Pope John XXIII comes to mind. His call to reform led to the Second Vatican Council and to significant changes in the daily life of the Church.

Within this papal backdrop, Pope Francis also comes to the fore as distinct from his predecessors. For example, he communicates differently than previous popes. He is very anecdotal and, at times, amazing in his ability to make profound theological and spiritual truths understood instantly by nearly everyone. What is



Ruben Villarreal

interesting, however, is that this seems to say more about his listeners than about him or his message. Globally, it appears that such a form of communicating has become the one understood by most. This reflects something of the current state of the world, and makes it easier to understand how the same message, coming from the mouths of other popes, went unheard.

Similarly, one sees the world reflected in the great enthusiasm that has accompanied Pope Francis' calls for reform in economic and governmental institutions. People have lost faith in these structures. In societies around the world, many see a necessity for change, but

few see possibilities for moving forward. Instead, people grow restless. Pope Francis has given voice to this frustration, and in keeping with his predecessors, he speaks as one ready to move forward, and he challenges the world not merely to look for new solutions to old problems, but to gain fresh perspective by rediscovering what really matters.

People sense a true reformer in Pope Francis, for they sense a man of faith and of hope that there is another way for the Church and for the world. In this, he brings something of the message of Christmas: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10-11).

Ruben Villarreal is a seminarian of the Diocese of Lake Charles studying at the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

Diocesan Briefs.....

Solemn Pontifical Mass set for Dec. 30

SULPHUR -- Bishop Glen John Provost will celebrate a Solemn Pontifical Mass in the Extraordinary Form at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 30, - the Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas - in Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church.

Following the Mass, a reception will be held in the Father Egidio Vecchio Parish Hall.

Mass, Adoration For Healing on First Thursdays

HACKBERRY -- Mass and Adoration for Healing is held on the First Thursday of each month at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church with Father Rommel Tolentino as the celebrant. The next Mass is on Thursday, Jan. 2, according to Father Tolentino.

It begins at 5:30 p.m. with Confessions, a Rosary, and Chapel of Divine Mercy. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is at 6 p.m. followed by Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration with prayers for healing and deliverance, ending with Benediction.

Prayer breakfast in January

LAKE CHARLES -- The next Men's Prayer Breakfast with Bishop Glen John Provost is Friday, Jan.13 in Ave Maria Hall on the corner of Kirby and Bilbo streets.

The breakfast is preceded by 6:30 a.m. Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The women's prayer luncheon with the Bishop will recommence on Wednesday, February 5.

Women should send a check for \$15, payable to the Diocese of Lake Charles, to Ms. Esther Gallardo, 612 Alamo Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601, and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Domestic Church movement in Diocese

LAKE CHARLES -- The Domestic Church is an officially recognized lay movement for Catholic married couples that provides lifelong formation for growing in holiness together with your spouse.

It is a beautiful, simple movement that began in Poland with the help of Blessed John Paul II, and has quickly spread around the world, according to David Dawson, Director of Marriage and Family Life of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

For more information about the next Domestic Church retreat call 337-439-7400, Ext. 313 or go to www.domesticchurch-families.com.

March for Life Pilgrimage for youth

LAKE CHARLES -- The Diocese of Lake Charles is sponsoring a youth pilgrimage to Washington, DC for the annual March for Life on the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.

One of the most spiritually fruitful and educational experiences of the year, the pilgrims will join over 300,000 others in standing for the dignity of all human life. The pilgrimage will depart on Saturday, Jan. 18 and return Thursday, Jan. 23.

For more information or to register, contact your parish's youth minister, or Milissa Thibodeaux at 337-439-7400, or e-mail milissa.thibodeaux@lcdiocese.org.

Natural Family Planning Training

LAKE CHARLES -- The incredible gift of Natural Family Planning is now available in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Three instructors certified in the Creighton Model Fertility(Care) System work with the Diocese and Dr. David Darbonne.

For more information about training in the Creighton Method of Natural Family Planning or to schedule training contact Bonnie Kron at 337-377-7953; Laura Hobgood at 338-480-1280; Bonnie Kron at Jackie Stewart at 337-540-8959 or the office of Dr. Darbonne at 337-474-3883.

"Holy Hour to Discern Vocation"

JENNINGS -- The next "Holy Hour to Discern My Vocation, a ministry of "VOCARE" and the Office of Vocations, will be Sunday, Feb. 2, at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the church.

The program is designed for young men age 15 and older seeking to know God's will in their lives and intended to give them a united effort of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

The hour of adoration is followed by refreshments and fraternity.

Forty Hours Devotion schedule

LAKE CHARLES -- Forty Hours Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, praying for an increase in vocations to the priesthood in the Diocese of Lake Charles, will be in the Central Deanery in January.

Sites and dates are St. Henry Catholic Church from Jan. 6-10, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Jan. 20-24 Christ the King Catholic Church and St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church (at Christ the King) Tuesday through Thursday - 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday - noon to 5 p.m.; and at St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff from 6:15 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 27, to 10 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 28.

Crowning Rite streaming on website

LAKE CHARLES -- A streaming video of the August 22 Liturgy and Crowning Rite of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, located in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, is available for viewing on the website of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the Pope's Ambassador to the United States and Papal Nuncio, presided at the Crowning Rite during Mass celebrated by Bishop Glen John Provost and attended by 11 other Bishops from Louisiana, Texas, and Illinois.

View the 105-minute production at <http://live.lcdiocese.org/video-specials.html>.

"Come, Follow Me" retreat

BATON ROUGE -- The Diocese of Lake Charles joins with the Dioceses of Baton Rouge and Lafayette to hold the annual "Come, Follow Me" retreat, this year held at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center on the campus of The Catholic Life Center of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

The retreat, for men 16 years and older discerning a vocation to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ, is slated for Friday, Feb. 7 to Sunday, Feb. 9. For more information and/or to register contact: Fr. Marcus Johnson, Vocation Recruiter, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 2031 Opelousas Street, Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601, call 337-436-8093, or e-mail marcus.johnson@lcdiocese.org.

St. Louis Catholic registration dates

LAKE CHARLES -- St. Louis Catholic High School is open for incoming ninth grade registration daily from Monday, Jan. 13 through Friday, Jan. 24, 2014 during office hours - 7:30 a.m. until 3:15 p.m.

Admission folders and applications are available in the front office. Non-support school students may register during this time, but support school students receive priority during the two-week registration period. In addition, families wishing to apply for subsidy must obtain their pastor's signature on the actual application before registering.

Returning student online registration is Monday, Feb. 3 through Friday, Feb. 14, and new/transfer tenth through twelfth grade student registration is Monday, Feb.10 through Wednesday, Feb. 19. In order to schedule classes for next school year, the student must be registered and the \$500 registration fee paid. Contact Geneva Breaux at 337-436-7275, Ext. 244 or email gbreaux@slchs.org for information.