



## Domestic Church helps couples grow in holiness through marriage

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles  
(Read more at [lcdioocese.org](http://lcdioocese.org))

Praying together as husband and wife can be hard. Some might even say it is awkward. Even married couples who are comfortable sharing their joys and sorrows with God together will admit it can be a challenge unless you are both willing to make it a priority.

David Dawson, director of the Archdiocese of New Orleans Family Life Apostolate, said he and his wife, Kate, assumed being on the same page spiritually would just happen naturally because they wanted it. But it wasn't that simple.

"Everyone says marriage is the path to holiness," said David, "but my wife Kate and I did not feel that way in the beginning. Our marriage felt anything but holy."

This struggle for the Dawsons early on in their 12-year marriage was the catalyst for them to bring Domestic Church to the Diocese of Lake Charles in 2011, at which time they were residents.

Founded in Poland in 1973 with the support and guidance of Pope St. John Paul II, Domestic Church is recognized as an international lay movement for sacramentally married couples to achieve holiness together. Lake Charles is the first English-speaking branch of Domestic Church and has grown to 15 dioceses across the United States including all seven dioceses in Louisiana over the

past eight years.

When they first heard about Domestic Church, David and Kate (now parents to seven children) had only been married about two years, had a 1-year-old, and were expecting their second child.

God would soon make it clear to David through a business trip to Poland that there was an answer to the obstacles he and Kate were facing. "It was there that I met Thomas and Agnes Talaga, who, by far, were the holiest married couple I had ever come across," recalls David.

"What struck me about them was they were not holy in a way that they were never arguing, but there was a deep sense of security and love they had for one another, a deep peace and joy and generosity," David noted. "It was obvious they were very much connected to each other, connected in prayer."

On a second trip to Poland, Thomas and Agnes introduced David to the international coordinators of Domestic Church who agreed to travel with a Polish priest to Lake Charles to begin translating formation materials into English, free of charge.

Learning that St. John Paul II supported the movement was a big plus for David. "Having a great devotion to him and love of his teachings and his understanding of marriage and family, I was very attracted to that," he said.

It wouldn't take long before he came to un-

derstand that Domestic Church would give he and Kate just enough structure and accountability to be able to take advantage of what was already available — basic spiritual practices they were already trying to do, what the Catholic Church offers through the Sacraments, the Scriptures, parish community and through parish priests.

"The more I heard, the more I came to realize this is why God wanted me to go to Poland, to learn about this Domestic Church movement and bring it back to the United States," David said.

Stepping out in faith alone is one thing but praying together as a couple and discerning together has brought about a deeper intimacy between David and Kate, a deeper appreciation and gratitude for one another.

"It is helping us to take real concrete steps and make progress in our own unity and be on the same page with prayer and grow together spiritually," said David.

Blaine and Denise Wyninger, who are serving their first term as the national couple, agree that if you possess a desire to be able to communicate more effectively with your spouse and your children, Domestic Church has tools to help achieve that goal with success.

However, praying together as a couple in a more intimate way was not always the case for the Wyningers, now married 16 years with seven chil-



Blaine Wyninger prays before the Blessed Sacrament with his son, Cael, in the adoration chapel at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church. Praying with family is one of seven promises couples incorporate into their daily lives through the Domestic Church movement to help foster spiritual growth in their families and marriage. Photo courtesy of Amber Griggs

dren, ranging in ages 14 years to 6 months.

"To ask Blaine to want to pray together use to feel awkward," Denise said, but "it's normal now to be able to have that conversation with him."

Couples are introduced to Domestic Church through an evangelization retreat. For Blaine and Denise, parishioners of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church, that was in December of 2012.

Couples are given the opportunity to experience Christ in a new way over several days with a focus on what God is doing in their marriage as they work toward helping each other toward Heaven.

It is during this time that couples learn about the "seven promises" of spiritual growth in the Catholic tradition specific to the vocation of marriage and family. They are: daily individual prayer, daily study of scripture, daily couple prayer, daily family prayer, monthly couple dialogue, Rule of Life, and annual family retreat.

Praying together with Denise through couple dialogue and couple prayer was a new experience, said Blaine.

"We had never prayed together as spouses where I got to hear my wife's words to God, and she got to hear my words to God, my deepest fears, my deepest concerns," Blaine said.

While the seven promises provide structure to the Domestic Church

movement, Blaine said it is not so structured that it tells you exactly what your prayer life is meant to look like.

"The seven promises are just basic fundamental principles of what we all should be doing, but until we do them, we don't see that," he said.

Denise notes, "When we pray about things together, it's crazy to watch it really happen. It's amazing the power of prayer together."

For couples who are interested in Domestic Church but are convinced that their busy lives just don't have room for daily commitments, David has a message for them: They are not alone.

"Many people want to pray with their spouse and family, they want to take the time to talk with each other about how they are doing as a couple, as a family, but they don't because they don't know how to balance everything," he said.

Domestic Church has a support system providing a monthly evaluation process with group circles to help couples see in what areas they are growing spiritually, and what areas need improvement.

The circle groups, usually between 4-7 couples, meet in the homes of its members to share the joys and sorrows of their journey, to pray together, discuss progress in their spiritual growth, and go over formation materials for the month.

Each circle is also as-

signed a priest who attends the monthly meetings.

The Very Reverend Ruben Buller, who is serving his first year of a four-year term as national chaplain for Domestic Church, said it is inspiring to see couples work together despite all the challenges they face in their own families, with each other, in the workplace, etc.

"These are real people who are really trying to be holy and do what is right," said Father Buller. "In that sense, it's good for me because I hear, listening to them in the busy-ness of their own lives, that they are doing God's will."

"As we talk about our joys and sorrows, our highs and lows as it were, when we begin to walk together as a circle, there is a mutual love and support that everyone gives to each other in their own unique way as married couples, as a priest," he continued. "It's a beautiful thing to walk together."

Father Buller encourages married couples who are serious about helping each other grow in holiness to attend an evangelization retreat. "Domestic Church is good for anyone who is in a sacramental marriage who is willing to make these commitments, which most people strive to do anyway," he said.

## Evangelization retreat planned Feb. 6-9

A Domestic Church Evangelization Retreat for sacramentally married couples will be Thursday, Feb. 6, through Sunday, Feb. 9, at Dry Creek Baptist Camp.

Participation in this retreat offers couples an opportunity to begin or deepen their spiritual journey together. It also serves as an introduction to Domestic Church for those interested in beginning formation in a Domestic Church circle.

Leading the retreat will be Casey and Erin Powell, local coordinators for Domestic Church in the Diocese of Lake Charles. The Powells have been involved with Domestic Church for at least half of their 10-year marriage. They are parishioners of Our Lady of Seven Dolours Catholic Church in Welsh.

"Because of Domestic Church, we are much more equipped in understanding how to approach the Lord with things that come up in our daily lives," said Erin. "Prayer is now something we are much more comfortable doing spontaneously and in different situations as opposed to just nightly prayers or at mealtime."

Casey and Erin, parents to four boys, welcome the structure that helps keep the lines of communication open in their marriage.

"Domestic Church has given us the tools to learn to communicate and pray before we have intense conversations," said Casey. "It has taught us to invite the Holy Spirit in to help make those conversations fruitful."

The retreat begins at 5:30 p.m. Thursday and ends at noon on Sunday. Cost is \$410 per couple. Contact: Casey and Erin Powell at [DomesticChurch.LC@gmail.com](mailto:DomesticChurch.LC@gmail.com), or 337-249-6946 or 337-526-6383. Register online at [DomesticChurchFamilies.com](http://DomesticChurchFamilies.com). Dry Creek Baptist Camp is located at 8237 LA-113, Dry Creek.

## More spring programs at Saint Charles Center

MOSS BLUFF – Events at Saint Charles Center will continue on Tuesday, Jan. 28, with Father Whitney Miller, presenting "Lead, Kindly Light: Meditations, Poems & Prayers of St. John Henry Newman," from 6 to 9 p.m. in Tabor Retreat House.

To register for events at the Center call (337) 855-1232 or go to [stcharlescenter.com](http://stcharlescenter.com), unless otherwise indicated. The suggested donation is \$20.00 per person for Father Miller's presentation, which has a Friday, Jan. 24 deadline.

He will speak about the Anglican clergyman and leader of the Oxford Movement who eventually undertook the spiritual journey of religious conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. Newman was a preeminent master of the English language and his writings have inspired countless souls throughout the years toward a deeper walk of faith and commitment to Christ.

February will be a busy month at Saint Charles Center, beginning with a Spring Silent Retreat

to be led by Father John Cunningham from Friday, Feb. 7, to Sunday, Feb. 9. Father Cunningham, a native of Natchitoches who was ordained in 1965, will share insights to Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane, Jesus's prayer for His enemies and also the 12 keys to prayer by Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Fr. Cunningham has a great passion for bringing healing, reconciliation and spiritual renewal through the sacrament of Penance to all that he can. The retreat is open to all – men and women, married or single, 16 years or older.

The suggested donation is \$190.00 for a private room, and \$170.00 for a shared room. Scholarship information is available upon request for those needing assistance. Call (855)1232 or go to [stcharlescenter.com](http://stcharlescenter.com) to register.

On Tuesday, Feb. 11, from 6 to 9 p.m., join Sr. Diane Depwe for an Evening of Reflection, "How to Choose Your Battles," which has a suggested donation of \$20 and a regis-

tration deadline of Friday, Feb. 7.

When Jesus walked this earth, He taught the disciples and us how to respond and not react. He had many situations where He was confronted about His teachings and He was able to not take offense and instead walk away. Determining when to take offense and when not to take offense is very difficult. This Evening of Reflection is to aide in the discernment of that process in a healthy way.

Father Miller and Deacon Brian Soileau along with the Center staff will present "St. Valentine's Date Night at the Saint Charles Center" on Feb. 14, from 6 to 9 p.m. Couples are invited to come for Mass at 6 p.m. in the Assumption Chapel followed by a gourmet dinner in Brulet Dining Hall and topped off with festive desserts and enjoyable fellowship. Reservation space will be limited.

For this special event no online registration is available and those who wish to attend must call

the Center to register by the Friday, Jan. 31, deadline. The suggested donation is \$100.00 per couple.

"Unity of The Two: A Weekend Retreat for Married Couples," led by Lloyd and Jan Tate will be Saturday, Feb. 15, and Sunday, Feb. 16.

A retreat for married couples is a time to catch your breath, to reconnect as spouses and to be refreshed in your spiritual journey with the Living God. It is an opportunity to reassess how you are living out your sacramental call and to recommit yourselves to becoming a "unity of the two." There will be time for personal prayer and reflection and for sharing between spouses.

Space will be limited, so all are urged to reserve their attendance as early as possible but no later than Friday, Jan. 31. The suggested donation is \$330 per couple.

A special "bundle deal" is being offered by the Center for those wishing to participate in both the Valentine Date Night and the

"Unity of Two" Couples' Retreat." The suggested cost for the "bundle" is \$375 per couple with a Jan. 31 deadline. To take advantage of this special offer, the Center must be contacted at (337) 855-1232 as it is not available via online registration.

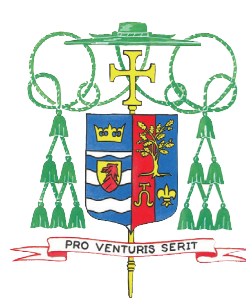
The Rachel's Vineyard Retreat for Healing After Abortion will be led by Father Rommel Tolentino, Marjorie Long and the Diocesan team from Friday, Feb. 21, to Sunday, Feb. 23.

Those struggling with guilt, depression, regret or other difficult emotions from an abortion are not alone and can experience the healing love of Jesus Christ on a Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreat, which combines discussions, spiritual exercises, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a memorial service and a Mass of Entrustment. Participation is strictly confidential, and offers a beautiful opportunity to experience God's love, forgiveness and compassion. The cost is \$225.00 which includes meals, private room with private

bath and all retreat materials. If someone has a financial burden, assistance is available. For more information or registration contact: Rachel's Vineyard of Southwest Louisiana at (337) 439-7400, Ext. 317 or [rachel.vineyard@lcdioocese.org](mailto:rachel.vineyard@lcdioocese.org).

Father Miller and Deacon Soileau will present "Our Call to Lenten Grace" Ash Wednesday Evening of Reflection on Wednesday, Feb. 26, from 6 to 9 p.m. This Ash Wednesday program will consist of Eucharist and the Distribution of Ashes, a simple supper, and a presentation. Beginning at 6 p.m. in the Assumption Chapel, Fr. Miller will preside and preach the homily at the Mass, followed by a simple supper in Brulet Dining Hall, and a presentation on Lenten Spirituality by Deacon Soileau in Brulet Conference Room. There will be no cost for the evening, but a free will offering will be accepted. To register please call (337) 855-1232, by Friday, Feb. 21.

# Calendar



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles

January 24, 2020

## Catholic Schools Week Jan. 26-Feb. 1; CSW Mass on Wednesday, Jan. 29

LAKE CHARLES – Bishop Glen John Provost will be the celebrant of the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 29.

Eighth-graders from Catholic schools in the diocese will join senior students from St. Louis Catholic High School for the liturgy.

There are seven Catholic schools in the Diocese: St. Louis Catholic High School, Immaculate Conception Cathedral School (ICCS), Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, all in Lake Charles; St. Theodore Holy Family Catholic School in Moss Bluff; Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School in Jennings; and Our Lady's Catholic School in Sulphur.

Lead administrators of the Catholic schools are Mia Orgeron, St. Louis; Christi Jarreau, ICCS; Dr. David Dubois, Our Lady Immaculate; Trevor Donnelly, Our Lady Queen of Heaven; Linda Portie, Our

Lady's School; Wendy Wicke, St. Margaret; and Charlotte Kohlenberg, Holy Family. Kimberlee Gazzolo is the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration, since 1974, of Catholic education in the United States. Starting Sunday, January 26, it continues through Saturday, February 1.

Schools typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to the Church, our communities and our nation.

Daily themes for the week are: Sunday – Celebrating Your Parish; Monday – Celebrating Your Community; Tuesday – Celebrating Your Students; Wednesday – Celebrating This Nation; Thursday – Celebrating Vocations; Friday – Celebrating Faculty,



**Catholic Schools**  
Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.

Staff and Volunteers; and Saturday – Celebrating Families. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities and our nation.

Open houses are scheduled at Holy Family from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 30; ICCS at 4:30 p.m. Wed., Jan.

29, in the school gym; at Our Lady's School on Tuesday, Jan. 28, beginning at 6 p.m.; and at St. Margaret on Monday, Jan. 27, from 6 to 8 p.m. as well as on Tuesday, Jan. 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Contact schools for information on other specific events during the week, either by telephone or at their website.

## The Lodge at Camp Karol nears completion; Dedication April 25

MOSS BLUFF – The completion of construction of The Lodge at Camp Karol is anticipated near the end of January. Opening day festivities, the Blessing and dedication by Bishop Glen John Provost, set for Saturday, April 25, begins at 10 a.m.

Upon the finish of work, office furniture, kitchen supplies, janitorial, equipment, chapel furnishings and liturgical supplies, tables, chairs and lobby furniture will be placed in the building.

The continuation of the Phase II campaign of the Camp Karol Project stands at \$565,783 of the \$875,000 goal. Funding from Phase II was to be used for folding chairs (200); folding tables (20); folding rolling dining room tables (12); office desks (2); conference room table and chairs; lobby furnishings; sound system; kitchen and dining sup-

plies, landscaping, chapel liturgical supplies; bungalows, construction of boardwalk to Bear Island; clearing of Bear Island; a ropes course; sports fields; wharves and canoes.

The first six bungalows are now under construction and, according to Deacon Brian Soileau, could be completed by May or June.

Anyone interested in volunteering to be part of the Camp Karol Training and Development Committee and who wish to find out more about making a contribution to Phase II, should contact Deacon Soileau at 337-855-1232, e-mail: [brian.soileau@lcdioocese.org](mailto:brian.soileau@lcdioocese.org), or go to <https://stcharlescenter.com>.

Organizations that would like information about scheduling an event at Camp Karol should also contact Deacon Soileau.

## Stella Maris Seafarers Center

Diocese of Lake Charles

### Center acquires new van through grant



Raymond Fontenot, Associate Director of the Stella Maris Seafarers Center of the Diocese of Lake Charles, stands with a new van that the Center acquired through a grant of \$37,366.00 from the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) Seafarers' Trust. The Center transports about 5,600 seafarers per year from various dockages and drives about 35,300 miles annually, using the van and a small passenger bus. The ministry is so dependent on transportation because most of the seafarers would not be able to get out of the facilities without the assistance of the Center because of time constraints and the cost of other transportation. Staff and volunteers escort seafarers through secure facilities from the approximately 950 vessels that visit docks along the Calcasieu Ship Channel and other locations.

## Diocesan Briefs.....

### Holy Land Pilgrimage in 2020

ALEXANDRIA – The Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Southeastern Lieutenancy, is offering a pilgrimage to the Holy Land for the period of September 22 to October 2, 2020.

The trip departs Newark, NJ, non-stop to Tel Aviv, and includes first class hotels, private motor coach transportation, breakfast, dinner and all fees and taxes. Upon arrival in Tel Aviv, guest will be met by a local guide who will be the leader throughout the trip. Cost for the pilgrimage is \$3,673.00 per person, double occupancy.

The Very Reverend Ruben Buller will be the priest leader for this pilgrimage and Mass will be said daily. A copy of the brochure covering the pilgrimage is available either by email or "hard copy" by contacting Roz or Pierre Allemond, Lieutenancy Pilgrimage Coordinators, at 318-452-6443 or e-mail at [eohsjalexandria@gmail.com](mailto:eohsjalexandria@gmail.com) with name, address, and telephone number.

You can also view details at [sleohs.com](http://sleohs.com), and at the programs dropdown, click pilgrimages. This tour is already half-filled and limited to 45 individuals. In order to be considered, one must submit the application and \$300 deposit. This pilgrimage is offered on a first come, first served basis and is being marketed nationwide.

### Special Needs Mass Jan. 26

LAKE CHARLES – A Mass for Individuals with Special Needs and their families and friends will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Sunday, January 26, in St. Louis Catholic High School.

The Mass is offered as an opportunity for all to worship despite difficulty, frustration and without embarrassment.

### Popcorn Balls, BBQ dinner sales

LAKE CHARLES – The St. Henry Catholic Church Altar Society will hold a "popcorn ball" sale on Thursday and Friday, Feb. 6-7, while St. Henry Knights of Columbus #5022 will offer BBQ dinners on Saturday, Feb. 8, both in the St. Henry Community Center behind the church, located at 1021 Eighth Avenue.

The "popcorn ball" sale begins at 9 a.m. each day and continues until stock is sold out. They are guaranteed when preordered and may be ordered, at \$3 each, by calling 337-912-2185 or 337-436-7223.

The dinners, either a half chicken or pork steak or ribs, are \$10.00 each, and will be sold from 8 a.m. until sold out on Saturday. Dinners include rice dressing, pork and beans, and potato salad.

For more information or to preorder, call 337-499-9226, 337-912-2185, or 337-436-7223.

### Bishop resumes breakfast, luncheon presentations

LAKE CHARLES – Bishop Glen John Provost's monthly presentations at the Men's Prayer Breakfast and the Ladies Luncheon will resume in February, on Friday, Feb. 7, for the former and Wednesday, Feb. 12, for the latter.

Both events are held in the Ave Maria Hall of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Office Complex on the southeast corner of Kirby and Bilbo streets.

The breakfast is preceded by the celebration of Mass in the Cathedral, beginning at 6:30 a.m. with the Bishop's teaching following at 7 a.m. Men should register by calling 337-439-7400.

Cost of the luncheon is \$15.00 per person and reservations should be made before each luncheon by sending a check, payable to the Diocese of Lake Charles, to Victoria Walter, 411 Iris St., Lake Charles, LA 70601. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should also be sent in order to return the luncheon ticket in time for the event. The deadline for reservations is the Friday prior to the luncheon and all are asked to arrive by 11:30 a.m.

Remaining breakfast dates are March 6, April 3, and May 8 with luncheons scheduled on March 4, April 1, and May 6.

### Women's D.E.E.P. Retreat set

MOSS BLUFF – The first Women's Discipleship, Eucharist, Evangelization, and Prayer (D.E.E.P.) Retreat will be held at Saint Charles Center on Tuesday through Thursday, March 24-26.

The retreat is designed to guide women who have attended an A.C.T.S. retreat to go deeper in their faith walk and renew themselves spiritually.

Contact Linda Daigle for more information about the retreat and team registration at [lindaigle.deep@yahoo.com](mailto:lindaigle.deep@yahoo.com) or call 337-802-3496.

### "Spot of Grace" retreat April 3-5

MOSS BLUFF – Sr. Camille Martinez, SEC will conduct the Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church Women's Lenten Silent Retreat - "Spot of Grace" - over the Palm Sunday weekend, April 3-5, at Tabor Retreat House of Saint Charles Center.

Cost for a private room is \$225.00 while a shared room is \$205.00. Scholarships available upon request for those in need of assistance.

To register contact Andrea Blanchard at 474-1788 or 794-9679.

### Clergy cookoff fundraiser April 18

LAKE CHARLES – The Diocese of Lake Charles Office of Pro-Life will present its third annual Clergy Cook-off on Saturday, April 18, at Prien Lake Park, according to Rickard New-

man, Director of Pro-Life and Family Life.

The fundraiser will support pro-life ministries in the diocese including Rachel's Vineyard, which will continue to help people heal from the wounds of abortion, and Grief to Grace, for anyone who has suffered from different forms of abuse.

The cook-off will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with tasting from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Individual tickets for tasting are \$60 each (children under 12 are free) and the Trinity Package (\$600) offers eight tickets for tasting, a signed thank you from Bishop Glen John Provost, and "Long Time, No Sheen," a book of jokes by the Venerable Bishop Fulton Sheen. There will be live entertainment, door prizes and children's games.

Those participating in the tasting serve as judges and determine the winning dish and team and the winner receiving a \$500.00 donation to the parish.

To sign up or for more information contact Marjorie Long at 337-439-7400, Ext. 317 or [marjorie.long@lcdioocese.org](mailto:marjorie.long@lcdioocese.org).

### "Grief to Grace" retreat May 13-17

LAKE CHARLES – Registration for the next Grief to Grace retreat experience being offered by the Office of Family Life of the Diocese of Lake Charles, has opened according to Marjorie Long, site leader.

The retreat will be held May 13-17 at Tabor Retreat House of Saint Charles Center.

The cost is \$1,500.00, which includes a private room, meals and all materials. Scholarship assistance is available upon request for those in need of partial aid.

All inquiries are confidential. To register, call (337) 489-2473 or at [griefftogracelouisiana@lcdioocese.org](mailto:griefftogracelouisiana@lcdioocese.org).

### Pilgrimage to Alpine Europe, Oberammergau Passion Play

LAKE CHARLES - Fr. Rommel Tolentino will lead an 11-day pilgrimage to Germany, Switzerland, and Austria June 15-25.

Visit medieval Heidelberg, cruise the Rhine River, enjoy stunning scenery of Lake Lucerne, travel to picturesque Innsbruck in the heart of the Austrian Alps, tour Mozart's and the "Sound of Music" city of Salzburg, pray in the shrines of the Black Madonna in Einsiedeln and Altötting, see the fairy tale like Neuschwanstein castle, visit the Bavarian capital of Munich, and experience the once-in-a-decade Oberammergau Passion Play. Cost is \$3,999 per person with round trip air from Houston, including first class hotels, double occupancy, two meals a day, sightseeing, daily Mass, airport taxes, fuel surcharges, Passion Play package and trip protection plan.

Tickets are limited. For more information or to request a brochure, call 337-436-7251.