



Catholic

St. Margaret Catholic School transitions to temporary campus

Vikings reunited for first time since hurricanes

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — The Vikings at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School are all together again after being separated for several months. The school is one of three in the Diocese of Lake Charles that received significant damage last year from Hurricanes Laura and Delta.

“This principal is very happy to have us all back here together,” the principal said. “Our students, especially our junior high, are really happy to all be back home.”

The transition to the temporary facility on Feb. 22 could not have arrived fast enough.

“My goal ever since we had to split up was to get us all back here together,” the principal said. “Our students, especially our junior high, are really happy to all be back home.”

Students in grades 5-8 had been using the third floor of

Immaculate Conception Cathedral School since Nov. 2, while the PK3-Grade 4 students remained on the original St. Margaret site until the temporary campus was installed.

The 21,000 square-foot complex spans one city block — taking up half of the St. Margaret Catholic Church parking lot — with 25 individual modular buildings strategically placed together to construct four separate structures. Designed by ACSW Architects and constructed by The Patch Group LLC, the complex was supplied and set in place by Trinity Rental Service.

The temporary facility provides an area for 8 junior high classrooms, 12 elementary classrooms, a library, computer room, administration area, and a bus drop-off area. The individual buildings are connected by approximately 2,500 square feet of elevated



Teachers and students adapt to their new surroundings at the temporary campus for St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School. After nearly four months of grade levels learning at two different sites, everyone is finally reunited as a school since Hurricane Laura.

(Photo by Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

walkways and covered awnings to provide cover while walking throughout the complex.

Wicke said it was all hands-on deck for moving day to get the classrooms ready for the 259 students.

“The company that helped assemble the facility volunteered 10 of their employees to come help us move. We also hired a moving company of 10, and St. Louis Catholic High School sent a great deal of students over to volunteer for their service hours,” she said. “With additional help from husbands who volunteered, we were able to move into the school in two days.”

Noting how blessed St. Margaret’s is to have such a dedicated group of parents, Wicke said, “They have buckled up and taken this ride with us and have been very loyal to St. Margaret’s and what we all have been through. The parents have been real troopers.”

The principal also praised the teachers and staff for their dedication through all the challenges, even as far back as the previous school year when COVID-19 abruptly halted in-person learning.

“They have been tremendous through all of the transitions. They really are the backbone to the school,” Wicke said. “They have pushed to keep school open (for face-to-face instruction) and worked hard to make sure when the kids walked back on campus

here that there was some semblance of home to it.”

Wicke said they were able to salvage a lot from St. Margaret school, including lockers from the junior high building and desks for the students, which help provide a familiar atmosphere.

Incorporating regular routines has also added a sense of stability to each school day.

“One of the things we have been able to bring back is our prayer routine,” the principal said. “We have morning announcements and prayer, we pray the Angelus at noon, and then afternoon prayer.”

Another big plus to being on the same campus is the opportunity, as a student body, to walk across the street to the church for Mass on Fridays.

“Our first full Mass celebrated together on March 5 was the most beautiful feeling in the world,” said Wicke. “Father Sam Orsot, parochial vicar of St. Margaret Catholic Church, was great about celebrating Mass for the junior high students on the third floor of ICCS, but it is so nice to have us all back in the same church.”

The response from the teachers has been one of excitement and enthusiasm.

“They believe that St. Margaret will continue to be as strong as it’s ever been since it opened in 1949, even in a temporary facility. They are so excited that we have a place to all be together again,” said

2021 Easter Message from Bishop Provost

On the night of the Easter Vigil, the deacon approaches the bishop following the reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. The deacon faces the bishop and announces to him: “Most Reverend Father, I bring you a message of great joy, the message of Alleluia.” At this point, all stand and the “Alleluia,” which we have not heard since before Ash Wednesday, is sung. Christ is risen! Alleluia!

To whom do we proclaim the “message of great joy,” the song of “Alleluia”? Do our lives even speak to others that we believe in the passage from death to life? St. Peter teaches us, “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Peter 3:15). Do we know that message of hope and are we courageous enough to proclaim it?

We believe that Christ came to deliver us from sin and death. He came to show us an empty tomb. He also came to show us a cross that leads to that empty tomb. He asked us to identify with that cross. The reason for our hope is clear. If we have died to self, we must then strive to live in Christ.

What “message of great joy” do we bring? A faith that witnesses to the reality of truth, regardless of the consequences; a hope that gives us the courage to live our rejection of sin; a love that forgets the self and lives in Christ and for others. As the deacon brought me the “message of great joy,” may we all announce to others the joy of our Christian faith, the reason for our hope. To all of you, I extend blessings for a joyful Easter!

Wicke.

Temporary buildings are nothing new for Devon Melville, the Spanish teacher in her sixth year at St. Margaret. She was a student at South Cameron High School the year of Hurricane Rita in 2005. She said that being separated from her students and other teachers at St. Margaret was hard.

“There was a big disconnect when we were separated on two campuses. St. Margaret is a strong family,” said Melville. “ICCS was so welcoming. They were awesome and hospitable. They really made us feel at home, but when we came back here, that first week was just a sigh of relief. Now that we are all here on this campus, there is an unspoken feeling of knowing there is nothing we can’t do. The possibilities are endless.”

Considering all the challenges everyone has faced — and still is — the school’s spiritual mission statement for this year holds an even deeper meaning.

“Every year, our eighth-graders choose a mission statement for the upcoming school year as their way of leading the school,” explained Wicke.

The mission statement for 2020-2021 is: For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather of power and love and self-control. — 2 Timothy 1:7

“Who would have known that we would have had that year that we have had?” Wicke said. “God has a way of giving us words that speak volumes.”

Even though the school site at St. Margaret is temporary for the time being, one thing that remains permanent is a spirit of perseverance.

“St. Margaret is still a thriving school; it always will be,” said Wicke. “When we are able to get our original campus back the way it needs to be, we will be even better and stronger than we were prior to the hurricanes. In the meantime, St. Margaret Catholic School is here and very much alive.”



The temporary campus for St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School includes 25 individual modular buildings strategically placed together and connected by approximately 2,500 square feet of elevated walkways and covered awnings.

(Photo by Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

Billboard campaign promotes message of life in the womb

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

One woman in the Diocese of Lake Charles is turning to billboarders in response to God’s directions for her to “go bigger” with her pro-life message: Life Is Beautiful From Day One.

Mary Guzzino Wilkinson, a parishioner of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Fenton, has partnered with Louisiana Right to Life to serve as director of the Calcasieu Pro-Life Billboard Campaign. She is seeking other pro-life supporters to join her effort to protect the unborn.

“I prayed about it and asked God, what can I do in my little part of the world to help educate people about this important topic?” she said.

At first, Wilkinson ordered banners to place along the highway, she said, explaining how the project started.

“As I was driving down the interstate one day, I heard God say, ‘go bigger’ just as I was looking at a billboard,” she said.

for the project.

“Louisiana Right to Life was fabulous,” she said. “Ben Clapper, executive director, had never met me before, but he trusted me and agreed to sponsor the campaign as one their projects. My role is earning money to fund the billboards.”

One of the first two locations will be on the north side of Interstate 10 facing east at mile marker 40 (2.2 miles at mile Highway 383) at a cost of \$836 per month. The second billboard, a digital version, will go up at the intersection of Nelson and Sale roads for \$1,680 per month.

Wilkinson said she has already received enough funds to secure the I-10 billboard for a full year.

“I trusted that God would send me the people to help fund the monthly fee for the billboards, and so far, He sent me immediately to people to pay for the I-10 location,” she said. “It will go up on April 15.”

The Nelson/Sale intersection will feature a digital sign with an average of 221,000 views per week, making it the second most viewed Lamar billboard in the area.

Something that sets these billboards apart from other



similar campaigns are powerful images showing different stages of life in the womb.

“The design was totally inspired by the Holy Spirit,” said Wilkinson. “God kept putting a thought in my head that a picture is worth a thousand words, but I still didn’t know ‘what picture?’ Then I remembered seeing an image of someone at a rally holding a banner with pictures of pre-born babies in the uterus. I knew these images were exactly what I needed, so I told God He would have to tell me where to find them.”

Wilkinson said God woke her up one night and told her to Google “soul at conception.” Upon doing so,

American Heritage — a company that makes banners — popped up with various images of different stages of life in the womb.

“These images are what God wants people to see to impact their minds, hopefully, their hearts,” she said. At the Nelson/Sale location, Wilkinson said she is hoping to target a high-traffic area of students, from the young all the way through college age. “My hope is that the images start conversations about life from the beginning of conception,” she continued.

“My goal is to get 200 people to commit to \$10 a month to fund the digital billboard,” said Wilkinson. “I know ev-

eryone is in a bind right now, but I just feel like I must go forward with the project. This is a message that God wants shared now.”

Wilkinson said if she collects in excess of her goal, other billboards will be added throughout Calcasieu Parish. All donations are tax deductible.

“We are always going to be fighting the abortion laws, but I am coming at this effort with a goal of changing people’s minds about when life begins,” she said. “Hopefully, this campaign will educate people enough to slow down the demand for abortions. My prayer is that someone from out of state drives through

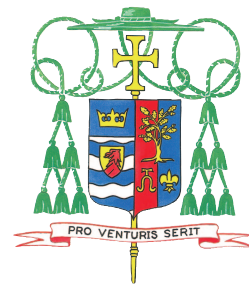
and, after seeing one of the billboards, is inspired to do something similar in their area.”

There are two ways to donate to the Calcasieu Pro-Life Billboard Campaign: online at www.CalcasieuProLife.com, and by mailing a check made payable to Louisiana Right to Life, 200 Robert E. Lee Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70124; please put “Calcasieu Billboards” on the memo line. Contributions can be set up monthly or for a one-time donation. Any amount is appreciated.

For more information, contact Mary Wilkinson at mgwilkinson7@gmail.com or 337-526-4015.



Calendar



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

April 2, 2021

Tree dedication part of Legion of Mary centenary celebration

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

To mark the Centenary Year of the founding of the Legion of Mary, a tree dedication ceremony is planned for 10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 17, in the prayer garden of Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church, 602 N. Claiborne Street in Sulphur. The event precedes the main celebration of the 100th Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving on Tuesday, Sept. 7, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

Founded in Dublin, Ireland on Sept. 7, 1921, the Legion of Mary — a lay apostolic international association of men, women, and youth — has had a presence in the Diocese of Lake Charles for more than 25 years. Members serve the Catholic Church on a voluntary basis carrying out weekly apostolic work in the spirit of faith and in union with Mary Immaculate.

“We decided to plant a tree as a loving gratitude to the legacy of the many people who have been a part of this organization, as well as a way of hope for the growth of the Legion of Mary,” said Kitty Roberts, president of the Most Holy Rosary Curia in

the Diocese.

“There are people who are second- and third-generation members, so the thought is that a tree will serve as a spiritual landmark not only now, but for future generations of members,” Roberts continued.

Members chose to plant a Southern Magnolia tree because of its everlasting qualities and symbolism to purity.

“Like the Blessed Mothers’ love for us is everlasting, the foliage of the Magnolia tree is ever green,” Roberts noted. “The beautiful white flower reminds us of her purity; a virtue Legion of Mary members strive to live out in their daily lives.”

Parishes with a Legion of Mary praesidium (basic unit at each church parish) in the Diocese of Lake Charles include Our Lady of LaSalette and Our Lady of Prompt Succor, both in Sulphur; Our Lady of LaSalette in DeQuincy; St. Theresa of the Child Jesus in Carlyss; and Our Lady Help of Christians in Jennings.

Roberts said the prayer garden at Our Lady of LaSalette in Sulphur was chosen as the location to plant the tree since the church has served as the location of Cu-

ria meetings for the past 25 years. The Curia consists of the officers from the various praesidia and is appointed by the Diocese, along with a spiritual director. Father Andrews Kollannoor, M.S., is the spiritual director for the Most Holy Rosary Curia.

“The Legion of Mary is about each member’s own personal growth and what we do in order to imitate Mary’s virtues,” said Roberts. “A tree serves as a symbol of growth, a symbol of joy. That’s what we want in our faith.”

Roberts said the Legion of Mary wants to recognize as many members — past and present — as possible at the tree dedication ceremony. If there is anyone who knows someone who was involved at one time, they are encouraged to contact her at 337-496-9193.



Bishop Announces Observances for “Year of St. Joseph”



Whereas on December 8, 1870, Pope Pius IX declared Saint Joseph Patron of the Universal Church, stating:

... when in these most troublesome times the Church is beset by enemies on every side and is weighed down by calamities so heavy that ungodly men assert that the gates of hell have at length prevailed against her, the venerable prelates of the whole Catholic world have presented to the Sovereign Pontiff their own petitions and those of the faithful committed to their charge, praying that he would deign to constitute St. Joseph Patron of the Church ... (*Quemadmodum Deus*);

Whereas on December 8, 2020, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, His Holiness Pope Francis declared the Year of Saint Joseph (December 8, 2020 – December 8, 2021);

Whereas “All the faithful will thus have the opportunity to commit themselves, with prayer and good works, to obtain, with the help of St. Joseph, head of the heavenly Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today” (decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, 8 December 2020); and

Whereas Wednesday is the customary day of devotion for Saint Joseph;

His Excellency

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost

Bishop of Lake Charles

DECREES

that on the first Wednesday of each month of the Year of Saint Joseph, the faithful of the Diocese of Lake Charles may receive a partial indulgence by making a pilgrimage to any of the parish churches dedicated to Saint Joseph within the Diocese of Lake Charles (DeRidder, Elton, Vinton, and Welsh), while observing the normal conditions for the reception of a partial indulgence, by means of which part of the temporal punishment due sin is remitted;

that when not in privileged season or impeded by memorials, feasts, or solemnities, the priests of the Diocese are encouraged to celebrate, on these same Wednesdays, a Votive Mass of Saint Joseph, and are further encouraged, particularly during this year, to foster parish devotion to this Patron of the Universal Church by means of the Litany of Saint Joseph, Saint Joseph Altars, and other suitable devotions;

Given at Lake Charles on day 19 of March in the year of our Lord 2021, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles



Very Rev. Ruben Villarreal
Vice-Chancellor

Texas students help Diocese with hurricane recovery efforts

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

A group of high school students from The Highlands School in Irving, Texas chose to be the hands and feet of Christ over their recent spring break, helping many still trying to pick up the pieces from last year’s back-to-back hurricanes in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Father Adam Zettel, chaplain for the Regnum Christi (Latin for “Kingdom of Christ”) school, stressed the importance of doing missionary work.

“One of the main aspects of our charism is forming apostles to change the world,” said Father Zettel, a priest for the Legionaries of Christ in the Diocese of Dallas. “We are constantly organizing missions with a desire that students who go through our formation will finish high school as people who possess a drive to change the world, to do good, and to evangelize.”

In addition to Father Zettel, the mission included 37 volunteers — 17 girls, 10 boys, and 10 adult chaperones — divided into several teams to be of service to others during their visit March 13-18.

“Catholic Charities put us in touch with individual homeowners,” Father Zettel said. “One was for a man who isn’t physically able to take care of his yard, which was still a disaster nearly seven months later. We pulled up trees and picked up branches. Another elderly family needed a wheelchair ramp, so a team spent all day and part of another building that.”

Other projects over their six-day mission included building a fence for a Sulphur homeowner, gutting a house in Jennings, serving lunches at Abraham’s Tent, bagging groceries at Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, and cleaning debris out of the diocese’s Chancery administration building.

This was the first mission experience for Basilio Rosales, an 11th-grade student at The Highlands, who admits thinking the trip was not



Building a wheelchair ramp was one of the several projects a team of students from Irving, Texas, completed on their spring break while helping with hurricane recovery in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

something for him when Father Zettel first mentioned it.

“The more I thought about it and seeing other people so excited to help people, I thought, ‘How would my spring break be fruitful for me by staying home and not doing anything,’ so I decided to spend my time doing something for others,” Rosales said. “We are taught to let Christ shine through us, so that’s something we are trying to do here.”

Participating in a mission wasn’t new for Mounika Bollinini and Maya Flores, also 11th-graders, but it was the first time for them to assist in their neighboring state of Louisiana.

“I had heard about Hurricane Laura, but I did not realize the extent of the damage until I arrived,” said Flores. “It was a good opportunity to come and help others instead of just sitting around my house during spring break.”

Bollinini said she had never seen communities directly affected by a hurricane and

liked the idea of being able to help people in another state.

“When I saw all the damage (on the news), I knew we had a lot to offer, and I was very capable of doing the work,” she said.

Accepting the challenge as a first-timer, 9th-grader Gianni Guez made the choice to use his “young self” to sacrifice for older people.

“Being able to sacrifice for others is a great feeling,” said Guez, who has this message for other young people faced with a similar opportunity: “You only live once. If you love Christ, and you love helping people, and you want to travel, just do it,” Guez said. “It’s perfect for teenagers.”

The mission trip wrapped up with a visit to the Shrine of Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cameron before the group headed back to Texas on March 18.

Holy Week continues

LAKE CHARLES - The Most Reverend Glen John Provost will continue the celebration of Holy Week with the Good Friday liturgy, and on Saturday, April 3, with the Easter Vigil in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The Commemoration of the Lord’s Passion will begin today at 3 p.m. with the Liturgy of the Word, followed by Veneration of the Cross, with the faithful recognizing the “Cross of Christ” as their only hope of salvation. The celebration concludes with Holy Communion and a silent withdrawal from the Cathedral.

The Easter Vigil will begin at 8 p.m. at the Cathedral with the Service of Light outside the church.

Cathedral Mass times for Easter Sunday, April 4, are 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:15 a.m., with Mass in the Extraordinary Form at 5:00 p.m.

Diocesan offices remain closed today and Easter Monday, April 5, reopening for regular hours - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - on Tuesday, April 6.

Institute for Black Catholic Studies summer session June 27-July 16

NEW ORLEANS — The 42nd session of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies (IBCS), a graduate theology program and school of pastoral ministry that meets each summer, will convene Sunday, June 27 through Friday, July 16, 2021, at Xavier University of Louisiana. The theme is “Holy Spirit, Breathe on Me!”

Due to the public health emergency presented by COVID-19, this year’s session — classes and Community Life — will be conducted for a second year online, according to Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, director of the Institute. The virtual format will offer an opportunity for first-timers to get a taste of the Institute life at Xavier without having to make the trip to New Orleans.

The IBCS staff consists of Program Specialist Dana Lockett and Bellow, along with Dr. C. Vanessa White, Associate Director for the Master of Theology (Th.M.) Degree Program; and Dr. Eva Lumas, S.S.S., Associate Director for Continuing Education & Enrichment (C&E) Programs.

Courses uphold Catholic tradition in the context of contemporary Black experience. IBCS community life provides the chance to practice together what is learned in the classroom.

Established in 1980 in New Orleans on the campus of Xavier University of Louisiana, the IBCS is dedicated to academic learning, prayer, worship and community-building.

The Th.M. program forms students for theologically and culturally competent service as ordained, religious or lay ecclesial ministers in the Black community and church.

C&E programs provide lifelong learning and spiritual formation for pastoral leaders, clergy, religious, administrators, teachers and others who minister with Black communities or serve in multi-cultural settings.

For more information on the Institute and classes, visit <https://www.xula.edu/ibcs>. Questions may be directed to Dana Lockett at 504-520-7691 or email ibcs@xula.edu.

To access the 2021 IBCS applications, visit <https://gradapply.xula.edu/apply>. New degree students select First-time users to create an account; current degree students select Readmit Students in Graduate Programs. All C&E students select Institute for Black Catholic Studies Continuing Education Program.

For questions on the application process, contact the Office of Graduate Programs at 504-520-7487 or email ogp@xula.edu.