



First Sunday of Lent

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me." Jesus said to him in reply, "It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.'" Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and: 'With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

Luke 4: 1-13

Bishop's Services Appeal reaches 65 percent, 11 parishes over goal

LAKE CHARLES -- Eleven parishes in the Diocese of Lake Charles have already exceeded their goals in the 2003-2004 Bishop's Services Appeal, the annual campaign to raise funds to aid in the operation of the programs and ministries of the Church in Southwest Louisiana.

More than 65 percent of the \$500,000.00 overall goal of the Appeal had been reached as of February 16. Contributions from the 38 church communities of the diocese total \$329,057.16.

Leading the current group is Our Lady Help of Christians Church of Jennings credited with \$20,599.35, or 120 percent of its goal and Our Lady of Seven Dolours of Welsh with \$10,900 in contributions, or 116.2 percent. Others exceeding their targets are St. Joseph, Welsh, \$2,238.00 (105.1 percent); St. Philip Neri, Kinder, \$10,687.00 (104.8 percent); Our Lady Star of the Sea, Cameron, \$3,477.00 (104.7 percent) and Our Lady of Good Counsel, Lake Charles, \$13,559.05 (104.2 percent).

Also, St. Peter the Apostle, Hackberry, \$7,991.50 (103.6 percent); St. Paul, Elton, \$5,257.00 (103.1 percent); Immaculate Conception, Maplewood \$21,411.70 (102.3 percent); St. Joan of Arc, Oberlin, \$6,421.18 (101.3 percent) and St. Mary of the Lake, Big Lake, \$5,209.38 (101.2 percent).

Miss America, Erika Harold to speak at New Life Counseling banquet

LAKE CHARLES -- Erika Harold, Miss America 2003, will be the keynote speaker at the Tuesday, March 23, New Life Counseling, Inc. fundraising banquet to be held in the Lake Charles Civic Center Coliseum. The dinner begins at 7 p.m.

The 24-year old Miss Harold is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Illinois and a three-time member of the National Dean's List. She will attend Harvard Law School beginning the fall of 2004 and she speaks six languages.

"One of my jobs as Miss America is to be a role model to young people and to provide them with my story as an example of how they can achieve positive things

total contributions to date are St. John Vianney, Bell City \$4,261.25; St. Joseph, Elton \$1,112.63; Immaculate Conception, Jennings \$4,959.25; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Jennings \$1,955.00; Our Lady of the Lake, Lake Arthur, \$5,759.00; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Oakdale \$4,031.00 and St. Lawrence, Raymond \$2,991.00.

Additional parishes are St. Charles Borromeo, Fenton \$3,557.00; St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Carlyss, \$5,554.84; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Creole \$4,904.00; Our Lady of LaSalette, DeQuincy \$1,980.00; St. Joseph, DeRidder, \$6,318.17; St. Eugene, Grand Chenier \$1,208.45; St. Raphael, Iowa \$9,919.09; Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Lake Charles \$19,678.53 and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Lake Charles \$7,138.50.

Also, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Lake Charles \$38,260.54; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lake Charles \$2,532.00; St. Henry, Lake Charles \$14,328.00; St. Margaret, Lake Charles \$21,581.11; St. Theodore, Moss Bluff \$11,172.11; Our Lady of LaSalette, Sulphur \$5,862.03; Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Sulphur, \$10,458.00; St. Joseph, Vinton \$6,041.00; St. John Bosco, Westlake \$6,969.00; Christ the King, Lake Charles \$7,300.50 and St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles \$10,473.00.

in their lives," she said. "My personal commitment to abstinence from drugs, sex and alcohol, in my opinion, help me to accomplish my goals."

Miss Harold was a victim of violence, racial discrimination and sexual harassment during her high school years. "You have to know within yourself what you actually want to achieve," she said. "And the, most importantly, you have to be willing to work to achieve it."

For more information on the banquet or to purchase tickets, either separately or tables for eight, contact New Life Counseling Office 474-7003, Marcia Schexnider 515-7009, Marjorie Long 489-2473 or Vangie Ordinario 477-1128.

Here We Are, Lord, Send Us!

(First of two parts)

Do you know what the word aflac means? Aflac! I enjoy watching the "Jim Lehrer News Hour." Often, there is a commercial for a product called AFLAC. It's the commercial with the duck quacking "aflac!" It is an advertisement for insurance. It is very clever. It is designed to make sure you never forget the word aflac. But what does aflac mean? The company behind the ad does not care if you know what the word means. The word itself is all you need to find their product. As a marketing technique it is a very successful use of an acronym.

In the life of the Church I generally avoid using acronyms because in our lives of faith words have meaning. We are less likely to reflect on the meaning of our words if we do not say them or hear them. I became dramatically aware of this when I served as a Bishop in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. I met a group of teenagers at the famous Arch. They asked me when I was coming to their parish. I asked, "What parish are you from?" "Cpop," they replied. "Cpop?" "What does that stand for?" Most said they did not know. A few responded, "C POP, Christ Prince of Peace!" I urged them to speak of their parish by its name not an acronym. With one of the best possible names a Catholic community of faith could have, it seemed a shame to refer to it only by

its initials. I suggested that speaking and thinking about the meaning of the words Christ Prince of Peace could be spiritually beneficial.

This is the same reason why I urge people in Lake Charles to speak of Immaculate Conception Cathedral School rather than ICCS; Our Lady of Perpetual Help rather than OLPH; and Our Lady Queen of Heaven rather than OLQH. The words have meaning. Saying the words invites us to reflect on their meaning.

One of the newest Catholic acronyms is RCIA, which stands for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Some have said that this is quite a mouthful and no one has time to say it. After all everyone knows what you mean when you say RCIA. I am not sure that is the case. Even if it is, I still avoid the acronym. I prefer to speak of adult initiation into the community of Jesus Christ, Christian initiation, or initiation into the mystery of Christ. Ideally, Christian initiation involves the whole parish in assisting those who want to put on Christ in preparing for the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

An important aspect of the dynamic process by

which adults are gradually initiated into the Catholic Church is the Rite of Election, the ceremony of calling, the day of embracing ones new name and identity as a follower of Christ. On this day all of the adult candidates for Baptism (the catechumens) and all of those baptized in other Christian traditions who wish to be received into full communion with the Catholic



Bishop Edward K. Braxton

Church gather at the cathedral church to be formally "elected" and "called" by the bishop. Here in our diocese this Rite of Election will take place in the Cathedral on Sunday afternoon February 29. I always look forward to welcoming and greeting these new branches that are being grafted onto the Body of Christ. I ask all who read these words to pray sincerely for them. If they are from your parish I urge you to seek them out and express your support and encouragement.

As we accompany our brothers and sisters to the Easter Sacraments the season of Lent is a powerful reminder that we who have already been initiated into the Mystery of Christ must always renew our own response to our personal call and election. This is the

time for examining our conscience, participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and being faithful to our spiritual disciplines of fasting, almsgiving and prayer. These days in the desert with Christ are not so much about giving up sweets and they are about giving up sin and giving in to the call to love God with our whole being and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

In scripture we have many examples of people responding to God's call and election. Their stories may help us in our fidelity to our vocations. Isaiah the prophet, Paul of Tarsus and Simon Peter are three of the most powerful.

In the 6th chapter of the book of Isaiah the future prophet has a vision of God sitting on a throne like a king surrounded by Seraphim crying out "Holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord!" The doors shook and the temple was filled with smoke. Overcome with fear Isaiah says "Woe is me, I am doomed! I am a man of unclean lips yet my eyes have seen the Lord!" Then a Seraphim touched his mouth with a burning coal from the altar and said "your wickedness is removed, your sin is purged!" Then God asks him, "Whom shall I send to my people?" Isaiah, who had been cowering in fear, accepts his vocation saying "Here I am, Lord send me!"

(To be continued March 12, 2004)

Nonpublic School Students of Year named

LAKE CHARLES - Three students at Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles have named Nonpublic School students of the year for 2004, according to Reverend Mr. Michael Mathews, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Lake Charles. The district competition was held on Friday, January 30, 2004.

The winners are Fifth Grade Student-of-the-Year, Andrew Martin Derouen who attends Immaculate Conception Cathedral Catholic School, Lake Charles; Eighth Grade Student-of-the-Year, Miss Kylie Noelle Deville, who attends Saint Theodore Holy Family Catholic School, Moss Bluff and Twelfth Grade Student-of-the-Year: Miss Allison Claire Usher, who attends Saint Louis Catholic High School, Lake Charles.

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

Every state approved nonpublic school in the Southwest Louisiana district is eligible to enter students in the Competition, Deacon Mathews noted. Winners of the local nonpublic schools competitions held throughout

the state then represent their respective geographic regions in a statewide competition which will be held in New Orleans on Friday, March 19. Winners in New Orleans then compete in the final event held in Baton Rouge in April of each school year.

Deacon Mathews said, "We are very proud of these children and their accomplishments in academics, leadership, and service. We are extremely honored to have these three magnificent young people represent our region in the nonpublic schools competition in New Orleans in March."

Students represented their schools at the district level were Fifth Grade: Jon-Marie Ivy Guillory, Sacred Heart of Jesus/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School; Jessica White Cooper, Saint Theodore Holy

Family Catholic School; Jacob Colton Perritt, Our Lady's Catholic School; Erica Lee David, Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School; Carmen Marie Hawkins, Saint Margaret of Scotland Catholic School; and Laura Lee Sonnier, Bethel Christian School.

Eighth Grade: Jonathan Arthur Primeaux, Saint Margaret of Scotland Catholic School; Leonard Charles Harmon, Sacred Heart of Jesus/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School; Mallory Jane Robicheaux, Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School; Victoria Leigh Sercovich, Our Lady's Catholic School; and Kwynn Michelle Biggs, Immaculate Conception Cathedral Catholic School.

Twelfth Grade: David Cushman Restucher, Bethel Christian School.

Cardinal Meisner responds to letter questioning Communion for others

COLOGNE, Germany - The decision not to allow those not of the Catholic faith to receive Communion is not a whim of the Pope or the bishops, says a German cardinal.

"The Eucharist is not a magic practice, which would dispense us from the need for reconciliation among Christians," said Cardinal Joachim Meisner, archbishop of Cologne. "This does not mean that the grace of God does not assist man, but only that he take it seriously."

"In the first place, in the realm of the ecumenical dialogue we must really remove all the differences that separate us," the cardinal said. "Only afterward we will be able to give ourselves the gift of the special Eucharistic Communion."

The cardinal expressed the position of the Church, in regard to a letter published Feb. 11 in the Web page of the Cologne Archdiocese, which requested the introduction of Communion open to those not of the Catholic faith.

"The Eucharist must not be of necessity the sign of a unity achieved, but much more -- because as a sacrament it can also lead to unity," stated the letter sent to Cardinal Meisner.

In his reply, the cardinal

acknowledges that he experiences "opposing sentiments" when he reads such a letter.

On the one hand, he expresses his satisfaction in seeing "the ecumenical commitment and desire for Christian unity" that the author shows.

On the other, he admits feeling "surprised" before yet another proof "of the visible lack of knowledge of the Catholic faith."

"The statements of the Synod of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland on the understanding of Communion have contributed to this disorientation, in which they request that Catholics allow Communion for faithful of the Reformation," the cardinal said.

The cardinal also mentions the confusion created by two priests who distributed Communion to non-Catholics during a Mass at the Ecumenical Ecclesial Days ("Ökumenischer Kirchentag"), held in Berlin last May 28-June 1.

When it comes to judging these events, the cardinal said "in reality, both priests, by acting according to their own opinion, against ecclesial law and established agreements, have not promoted ecclesial communion, but rather feigned it."

The archbishop of Cologne confirmed that "the Church, from its origins, has been firmly convinced that the common celebration of the Eucharist represents the culmination of ecclesial life," and that the Second Vatican Council proclaimed the Eucharistic sacrifice as "source and culmination of the whole of Christian life."

The cardinal explained an exception to the rule. That exception was expressed by John Paul II in No. 45 of the encyclical "Ecclesia de Eucharistia": to administer the sacrament of

Communion "under special circumstances, to individual persons belonging to Churches or Ecclesial Communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church."

"In this case, in fact," the encyclical states, "the intention is to meet a grave spiritual need for the eternal salvation of an individual believer, not to bring about an intercommunion which remains impossible until the visible bonds of ecclesial communion are fully re-established."

Canonization of six scheduled May 16

VATICAN - Pope John Paul II will preside at the canonization of six new saints on May 16.

At an ordinary consistory on February 19, held in the Clementine Hall of the apostolic palace, the Holy Father approved decrees authorizing the canonization of Gianna Beretta Molla (1922-1962), a physician and mother who refused cancer treatment in order to save the life of her unborn child. Don Luigi Orione (1872-1940), an Italian priest who was active in Educating youngsters and

serving the poor; he was the founder of the Little Work of Divine Providence. Nimatullah al-Hardini (1808-1858), a Lebanese Maronite priest. Annibale Maria di Francia (1851-1927), an Italian priest and founder of the Rogationist order. Jose Manyanet y Vives (1833-1901), Spanish priest and founder of the Sons of the Most Holy Family. Paola Elisabetta better known by her given name of Costanza Cerioli, a widow and founder of the Institute of Religious of the Holy Family.

(This page paid for by the Diocese of Lake Charles.)