



Deacon Ed Lavine, right, checks on a measurement with Fr. Roland Vaughn, left, on the grounds of St. Peter the Apostle Church in Hackberry. The spot will be used for a travel trailer that will serve as Fr. Vaughn's residence while the church, rectory, and parish hall undergo rebuilding.



DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

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Dear Friends in Christ,

November is the month of Thanksgiving -- for our country, for our forefathers, for our freedoms, for the precious gift of life. As a community we are grateful for the many people who have come to our rescue, offered their talents to alleviate the destruction of Hurricane Rita, those who have become part of our lives in a special way over the past months. Gratitude -- a word of expressing thanks and a word we live as a grateful community.

Recently I had the opportunity to visit Father Roland Vaughn in Hackberry. In viewing the destruction to the church community there, we spoke about the future involved in rebuilding efforts. Because the church facility literally looked like a tornado had hit, Fr. Vaughn had a temporary space set up in the parish hall to celebrate the Eucharist for the people of his parish. I was reminded that the building provides the space for worship, but it is the people who gather together to celebrate the Eucharist that are God's family. Furthermore, the word "eucharist" means "thanksgiving." We approach the Lord in the Eucharist with a sense of gratitude -- for the past and the memory of the depths of God's love for us in sending His Son Jesus into our world; for the present and how He is with us whenever two or three are gathered in His name; for the future and His ongoing presence through the power of His Spirit to guide us through our life's journey until we are reunited with Him in our heavenly inheritance.

As Msgr. Jace Eskind, Fr. Henry Mancuso, and I left Fr. Vaughn, he thanked us for our visit. My response was to thank him for his presence and ministry to the people of the community in Hackberry, Johnson Bayou and Holly Beach. To see the destroyed areas spoke volumes -- "a picture is worth a thousand words" came to mind. The pictures accompanying this letter tell part of the story. Relief efforts are taking place. Many of you have benefited from outreach efforts. Let us be grateful in word and in action for the goodness of all God's people and when we gather at the Lord's table in the Eucharist, we do so with hearts of gratitude for God's providential care.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Harry D. Greig

Rev. Msgr. Harry D. Greig
Diocesan Administrator

Surviving the Stress of the Storm: Recommendations for Recovery

By Rev. Whitney Miller, Ph.D., LPC

Standard and predictable questions and responses are the topic of conversations these days in almost every grocery store, in line at the pharmacists, and on church parking lots before and after Mass:

- when did you evacuate?
- where did you go?
- when did you come back?
- how's your family and house?

And although many of us now have told and listened to "Rita stories" 100 times or more, in these days of ongoing recovery, it is important to share memories, express feelings, connect in conversations of care and support. The danger we must avoid is to become so occupied in the multiple tasks and extra duties of these busy days of post-storm stress, that we then, could easily slide into depression or shift the emotions outward into aggression.

I'd like to make a couple of quick recommendations for our continued community recovery process. These are nothing new, really, mostly just reminders and tidbits of suggestions for sanity and serenity.

Many years ago at a youth conference I attended, I heard an acronym that has stuck with me ... K.I.S.S., standing for "keep it simple, stupid." It has become a mantra of mine over the past few weeks. When stress elevates, counterbalance with increased opportunities for simplicity. If in the past, the custom has been elaborate Thanksgiving banquets with extended family, days of advance preparations, and all the many details that come with hospitality, consider this year cutting back some. When able to do so, simplify.

A second suggestion would be that all of us breathe deeper, more frequently and with conscious intent. Without even being aware, as tasks increase and

"to do" lists expand, our breathing usually becomes more shallow and quicker. Our bodies don't get the oxygen we need. When possible, take three or four deep and slow breaths. It's like a mini-vacation for the lungs, heart, and mind!

Finally, try to laugh and smile more often. Nothing provides the soul with refreshing sanity more than a good, hearty laugh or an enjoyable smile. Rent a "Three Stooges" video, watch a baby at play, a kitten with a ball of twine or any such simple, yet humorous activities of fun and fascination.

Simplify, breathe, smile, and laugh ... not the kind of elaborate theory that will win any of us a Pulitzer Prize or gain us the Nobel Peace Award, but just might perhaps bring a moment or two of serenity and sanity to these stressful days and weeks ahead.



Shown are some of the 37 students from Xavier High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa who came to Lake Charles to assist with the cleanup in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita. According to Fr. Henry Mancuso, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, the students helped cleanup storm debris at 48 homes during their four-day stay in the area. While here they resided at the St. Katharine Drexel Conference Center at Saint Charles Center.

Aid and support coming to Diocese from all over

LAKE CHARLES -- Aid continues to come into the Diocese of Lake Charles to assist in the rebuilding of destroyed structures and the revitalization of the church communities of Southwest Louisiana.

Work has begun in all the parishes devastated by Hurricane Rita and people from all across the country have answered the call to help in that endeavor.

Last week 37 students and 10 adult chaperones from Xavier High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa traveled to Lake Charles for a four-day stint cleaning up the debris from 48 homes. Father Henry Mancuso and his staff at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church helped the group, which stayed at the Saint

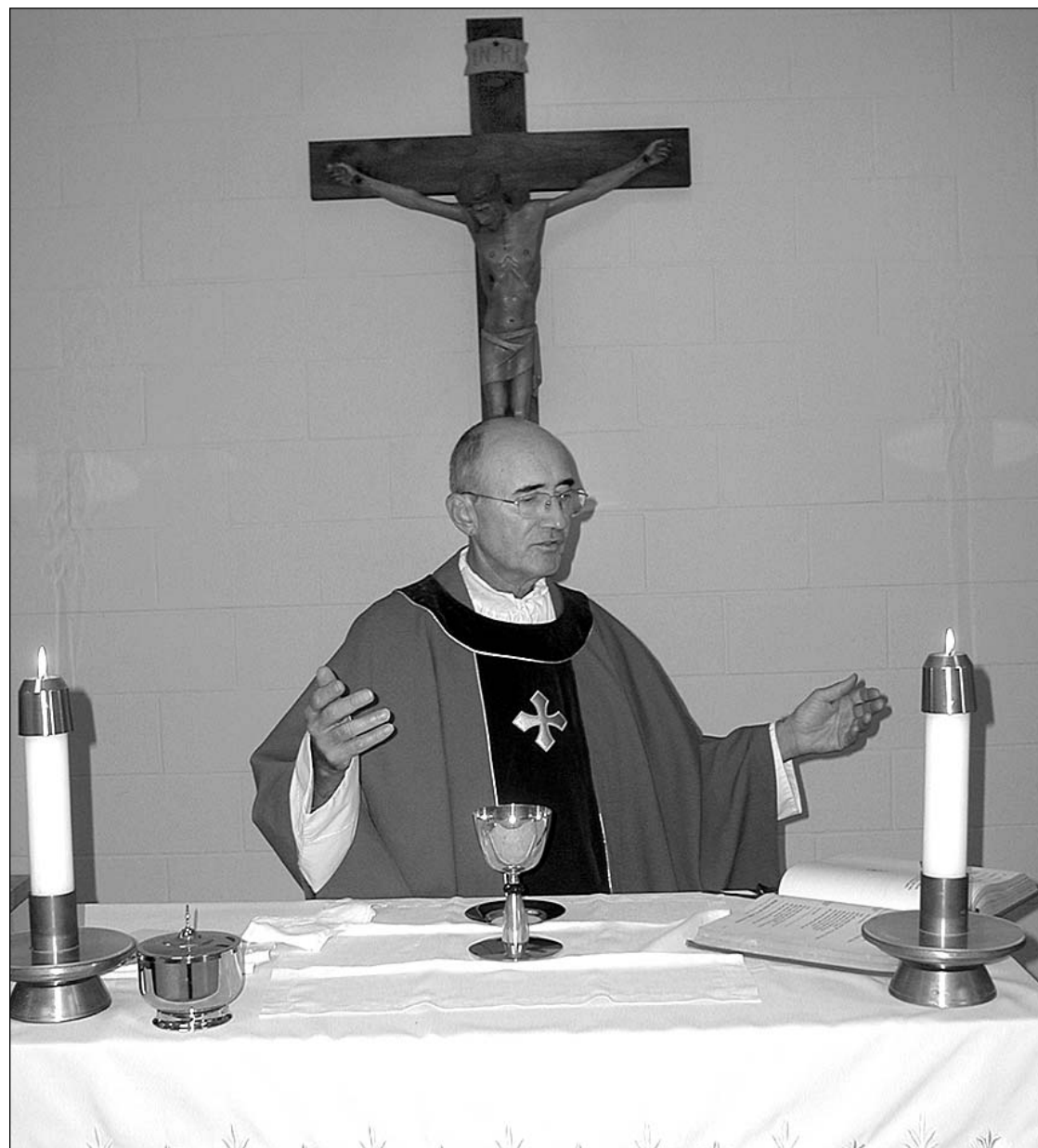
Katharine Drexel Conference Center at Saint Charles Center.

Many churches and organizations have provided aid. According to Father Mancuso, in addition to the help from the youth from Xavier High School, assistance has come from Assumption Church in Beloit, Wis.; St. Joseph Church in Baraboo, Wis. Sacred Heart Church in Reedsburg, Wis.; St. Sabina Church in Chicago; and Sacred Heart Church in Broussard, La.

With the churches of St. Eugene (Grand Chenier), Sacred Heart of Jesus (Creole), Our Lady Star of the Sea (Cameron), St. Peter the Apostle (Hackberry), and St. Mary of the Lake (Big Lake) devastated along with the

chapels of Immaculate Conception (Grand Chenier); St. Rose of Lima (Creole); Holy Trinity (Holly Beach) and Our Lady of the Assumption (Grand Chenier) destroyed or unusable, work has begun to provide spiritual and temporal aid to the residents of lower Cameron Parish. The Rev. Joseph McGrath, pastor of Sacred Heart in Creole, will be in residence at St. Patrick Chapel in Sweetlake and minister to the coastal area.

Two trailers, one to serve as a residence and the other as an office, will be placed on the property at St. Patrick. A similar plan is being enacted on the western side of the Diocese at St. Peter the Apostle in Hackberry, where Fr. Roland Vaughn is pastor.



Rev. Roland Vaughn, the pastor of St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Hackberry, celebrates Mass in the parish hall following the devastation of the Church by a tornado spawned by Hurricane Rita. The hall was also damaged but not enough to make it unsafe for a variety of community uses.



One of the 23 pallets of relief supplies provided by Second Harvest on Monday, Nov. 7, is put into place under the watchful eye of Deacon Ed Lavine, left, Director of Catholic Social Services for the Diocese. Nearly 30,000 pounds of supplies, including food, paper products, water and personal hygiene items were in the weekly delivery. The items are distributed by Deacon Lavine and volunteers to churches and relief centers in the Diocese.