

Reflections on the ultimate gift of God's love - Jesus Christ

BY MONSIGNOR HARRY D. GREIG
Administrator, Diocese of Lake Charles
 GOOD FRIDAY is the day the Church commemorates the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Why did Jesus have to die? He chose to die to free mankind (you and I) from sin. The church in our Good Friday Liturgy takes us through four stages of uniting ourselves with the sacrifice of Jesus.
 Firstly, we listen to God's Word. Particularly in St. John's Gospel account of Our Lord's Passion, we become aware once again of the depth of love revealed in Christ's sufferings. Secondly, we respond to this love through prayer/intercessions for the entire world. We pray that the love of Jesus may live in the hearts of all people and nations. Thirdly, we long to share the love of Jesus as we venerate the Cross which is the sign that shows the extent of God's love for us and how He saved the world. Finally, there is Communion. While Good Friday is the only day throughout the year when the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is not celebrated, we do share in the fruit of Jesus' sacrifice by receiving the Body of Christ in Communion reserved from the Holy Thursday Eucharist. Jesus died to make us one, to unite us, and we are made one in communion with Him and with one another. "This is my body given for you," Jesus says to each of us.
 The death of Jesus is not the end of His

life with us. WE ARE RESURRECTED PEOPLE! As we celebrate this EASTER, we focus on the central mystery of our faith: JESUS CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD.
 We subscribe to our local newspaper to be informed of the news happening in our local community, in our nation, and throughout the world. The writers of articles will sometimes quote "eye witness" accounts of what has happened by people who experienced the event or saw what happened. In Sacred Scripture, Mary Magdalene is the first "eye witness" to reach the tomb. She discovers that the stone is rolled away and first interprets the empty tomb as meaning that Jesus' body has been stolen. Next arrive Peter and the Beloved Disciple, John. They see the empty tomb with the clothes lying on the ground. We are told that the Beloved Disciple sees more than discarded clothing; he sees with the eyes of faith and believes that the Lord is Risen!
 Scripture records that in the months after Jesus' resurrection He appeared to His followers: They recognized him "in the breaking of the bread," in His instructions, in His easing their tensions and anxieties. The scripture passage where Jesus invites doubting Thomas to place his hands in Jesus' side, to feel His wounds, is one that evokes the words, "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." The testimony of the early

followers of Jesus Christ inspire us in our faith because they testify to us from the authority of their own experience. If we do not believe in the resurrection then our Christian faith is without meaning.
 I had the privilege of living in Rome for several years. One of the most beautiful experiences to witness was Easter Sunday in St. Peter's Square. At the celebration of the Eucharist with the Holy Father, there were over 200,000 people from throughout the world gathered in prayer. They witnessed their universal faith in Jesus Christ. At the end of the outdoor Mass, the Pope would ascend the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to give greetings in the various languages spoken throughout the world. The crowds would cheer as the Holy Father wished world peace in their language. We had gathered from diverse cultures, different languages, varied backgrounds, yet with one faith, one belief in Jesus Christ who had died for our sins and who had risen from the dead to share eternal life with us. This gathering was a testimony of Christians today that their faith in Jesus Christ is "one, holy, catholic and apostolic." We cannot underestimate the strength of two thousand years of continual Church teaching, scriptural study and reflection, and traditions experienced by believers in the presence of the risen Lord.

How do I grow in my faith in the risen Lord? First, faith is a gift from God. I do not merit or deserve it; it is freely given to me from a God who loves me. Second, God comes to me through the gift of the Holy Spirit. I first received this gift in Baptism. Each year at the Easter celebration I renew my baptismal promises and commitment to the presence of the risen Lord in my life. A third way in which I personally continue to grow in my faith commitment is prayer. Prayer is an opportunity not only to speak to God, but to listen to Him, to reflect on His word in Scripture, to discern the direction in the church in the celebration of the sacraments. The sacraments enable me to encounter Jesus, to receive his grace to live my life, and to profess my faith with the believing community.
 In the end, the testimony of others is only a basis for us to make a personal act of faith. Certainly as children growing up, we embraced the values and faith of our parents. However, there comes a time when each of us "own" the faith for ourselves, when we "see" the Lord in our lives, when we "testify" to our belief in the risen Lord. As we witness to our personal faith within the believing community, we echo the words proclaimed in the liturgy of this Easter - "This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad!"



The Catholic Service Center now resides in this building, located at 1112 Bilbo Street. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Center provides assistance to those in need without regard to race, religious or political affiliation.

Catholic Service Center moves to new location

LAKE CHARLES - The offices of the Catholic Service Center of the Diocese of Lake Charles, which also houses the Hurricane Rita-related Relief Effort of Catholic Social Services (RECSS), has moved to 1112 Bilbo Street, according to Msgr. Harry D. Greig, Diocesan Administrator.
 The Service Center, which had been located at 2333 East Broad Street prior to Hurricane Rita, was moved to 416 Iris Street after the storm damaged its building beyond repair. All services were transferred to the building housing the Catholic Deaf Center, next to the diocesan Pastoral Center, which was also badly damaged by the storm. Work on the rehabilitation of the Pastoral Center has also begun.

needy and expand that aid into other areas of the Diocese by organizing and supporting outreach programs in the church parishes," Deacon Lavine said.
 "Under our normal aid process we can assist people facing a crisis with utility payment to prevent service cutoff and rent or mortgage payment to prevent eviction," Deacon Lavine continued. "Utilities are defined as electric, water, natural gas,

or propane. Also, we may not be able to provide the total amount due on the utility bill or for the rent or mortgage payment. We are able to help in those ways once every 18 months per household."
 The Center can also provide food distribution through its food pantry and with the cost of life sustaining medical prescriptions. These services are available to eligible households twice a year, according to Deacon Lavine.

Volunteer needed

Deacon Lavine is looking for a "volunteer" to assist the Relief Effort of Catholic Social Services (RECSS).
 "We have need for someone who can give us a couple of hours a day on three or four days a week to help with the warehouse," Deacon Lavine said. "The person should be familiar with spreadsheet software and would help us maintain the inventory of goods in the warehouse so that we know what we have and keep up with what is going out to those in need in our area."
 The RECSS program has been the recipient of an outpouring of humanitarian aid from many different sources since the Hurricane, much of which has been given out to church organizations as well as public service groups, in Calcasieu and Cameron parishes.

Other services provided through the Center, through an appointments only process, are voter registration applications, enrollment center for Medicaid applicants, assistance in completing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security forms, as a referral agency to other community services and offering support services for homeless clients and fire victims.
 The RECSS interviews for those people with previously scheduled appointments who have been devastated by Hurricane Rita in Calcasieu and Cameron parishes will also continue to take place at the 1112 Bilbo Street office. New appointments are currently not being taken but information can be obtained in person during business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Computer company gift helps school students use Internet

LAKE CHARLES - Teachers and students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade at Sacred Heart/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School are able to utilize the World Wide Web at their temporary campus thanks to the largesse of a computer company.
 The worldwide computer corporation 3Com, located in Marlborough, Massachusetts, at the request of the Diocese of Lake Charles, made available 30 wireless USB adapters to help the school. Serious damage from Hurricane Rita forced the pre-K through fifth grade to evacuate their classrooms at the school on the corner of Louisiana Avenue and Mill Street. These classes are now being held in the former Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School, located on North Cherry Street. The sixth, seventh and eighth grade classrooms were able to remain at the mid-city campus.
 When the lower grades moved into their new digs, they had no Internet connection in the classrooms. The cost of wiring each classroom with DSL, as the school had at the Mill Street site would have been too costly and, since these classes would be back at their original site when rebuilding was complete, poor stewardship of the school's resources. The Development office of the Diocese, headed by Ms. Kyra Randall, made a request of 3Com to help the hurricane ravaged school community maintain its connection with the Internet for educational purposes.
 The school's office at the cherry street site is a trailer where Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, the principal, and her staff work. It has been hard wired with a DSL line and the computers in each classroom are hooked in a wireless manner to the of-

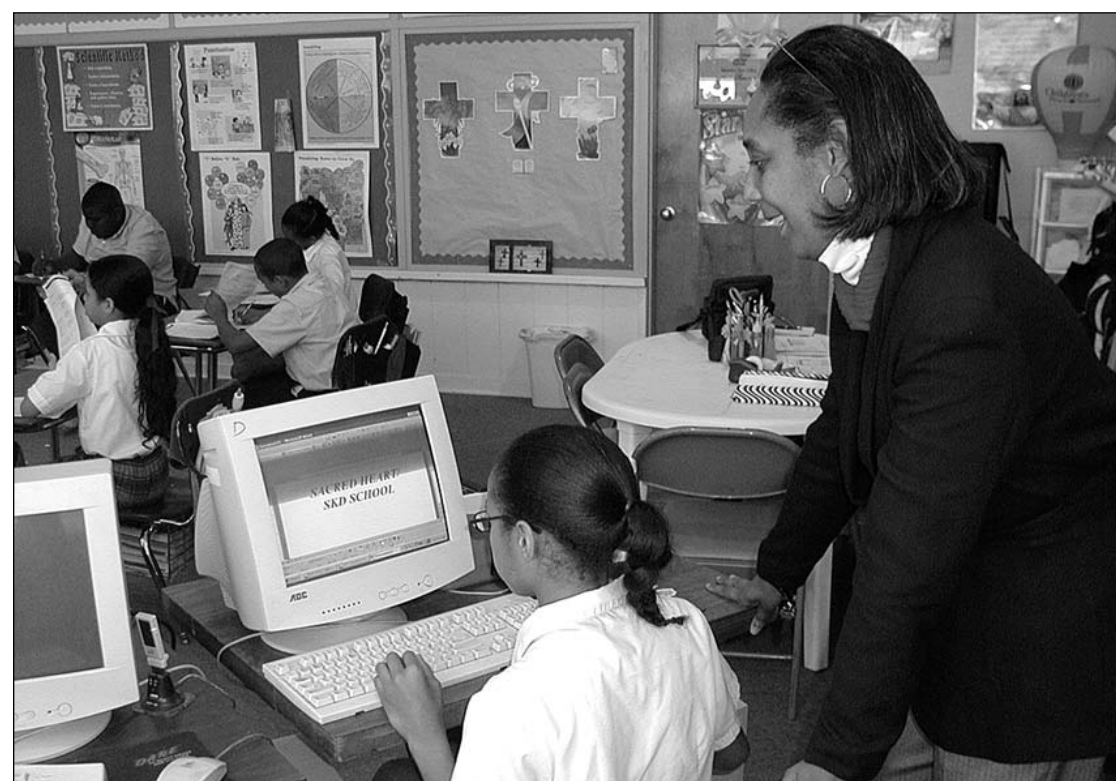
fice.
 "Even the little ones (in Pre-K) are able to incorporate the Internet," Bellow said. "The children can learn so much on the Internet, even researching for class projects, such as social studies and science fairs. We are able to access education web sites. Some students who are more advanced can be moved to do more advanced work because of the access to the Internet. Our fourth graders are even setting up a pen pal network. The computer use is almost a daily part of classroom instruction."
 A prime example of how students can use the internet to advance their knowledge of the world around them came to light recently when some students found some birds had made a nest on the ground, replete with four eggs.
 "They went on line to find out what kind of birds were nesting on the ground," Bellow said. "They even asked the maintenance staff to put up stakes around the nest to protect it when they mowed the grass." The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries was even contacted about their find, which it turns out were killdeers - *Charadrius vociferus*.
 The students anxiously awaited the bird's joyous event, the hatching of the eggs and the continuation of the miracle of life. When the students returned to class on Monday April 3, they were greeted by new additions to the bird family, four killdeer chicks.

Msgr. Greig will officiate at Holy Week services
 LAKE CHARLES - Reverend Monsignor Harry D. Greig, Administrator of the Diocese of Lake Charles, will officiate at Good Friday's Veneration of the Cross, today at 3 p.m. in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. He will also celebrate the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, April 15, at 8 p.m. in the Cathedral.
 Easter Sunday masses at the Cathedral will be at their normal times, 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Diocesan offices closed

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be closed today, Good Friday, April 14, 2006 and Easter Monday, April 17, 2006. Offices will reopen at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 18, 2006.

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



Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, Sacred Heart/Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School principal, right, watches as the school's fifth grade Student of the Year Destinee Delahoussaye, left, works on the computer. Delahoussaye and the other students at Sacred Heart/Saint Katharine Drexel can use the Internet in their classrooms because of wireless USB adapters, like the one at left near the mouse, which were gifts from 3Com, a worldwide computer company.