



The photos above provide stark contrast of what the statue of St. Eugene looked before the refurbishing, left, and its appearance after the work was done, right.

St. Eugene statue back home and refinished

GRAND CHENIER – “Everything happens for a reason,” said Jules Lognion. Lognion, the construction superintendent in charge of the rebuilding at St. Eugene Catholic Church, as he looked upon the statue of the parish’s namesake standing against the wall of the church. The newly painted statue, along with its new left hand and the shepherd’s staff that the hand holds, are all courtesy of Lognion’s skill and talent as a wood carver.

The statue had been lost when Hurricane Rita’s storm surge devastated the church. The surge carried the statue away and it was eventually found near Lake Arthur.

“I had heard about the statue and thought it was quite interesting,” Lognion said.

Lognion, who retired about four years ago after working 32 years for Charles Miller Construction, the company hired to rebuild the church of St. Eugene, a small but hardy faith community located in the extreme southeastern corner of Cameron parish, expressed lifelong interests in drawing and painting.

“I was always drawing as a youth,” he said. Lognion has done a number of oil paintings of wildlife scenes and began working with woodcarving following his retirement. He was drawn out of retirement when the construction company needed experienced hands to oversee some of its projects and he came to St. Eugene to supervise the work there.

“I have done about 10 duck decoys and some fish,” he said. He was intrigued when he saw the statue, remembered the story of its journey and recovery. “I thought to myself, I can build a new hand. I shaped it from a piece of wood with a band saw and then did the work with a stone instead of a knife,” he said. He also cut out a crook for the staff

and then did the finishing work before attached it to a broomstick.

The wooden statue, imported from Italy early in the history of St. Eugene, had lost its left hand during its journey through the marsh as well as the shepherd’s staff the hand was holding.

The church’s pastor, Father Vincent Vadakkedath currently in residence at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish, had identified the statue. “When it was first found they thought it might be St. Patrick but when I saw it I knew it was our St. Eugene,” Father Vadakkedath said. “We knew that someone would have to fix it but I took up Mr. Lognion on his offer to do the job.”

“He has done a magnificent job,” Father Vadakkedath continued. “It really looks real. It was a marvelous gesture on his part to do it free of charge. He even thanked me for giving him the chance to do it.”

The job was a labor of love for Lognion, who said, “everyone has been so nice to me here on the job, especially members of the parish who come around almost every day to check out the pace of work on the church. When people are that way it just makes you want to do something nice for them. Father Vincent is such a nice man, I really like him.”

Even though St. Eugene has returned home Father Vadakkedath is still missing another Italian wooden statue, one of the Madonna and Child.

“We don’t know where it is,” he said. “It could still be out in the marsh somewhere and it, like St. Eugene, was very expensive.”

According to Father Vadakkedath, his parishioners are “really excited about the work on the church.”

“I am excited too,” he said.

Class helps students with exceptionalities develop

LAKE CHARLES - At St. Louis Catholic High School it would be easy to get lost in ACT scores, minimum grade requirements, and other regular education stresses. However, a new program at St. Louis Catholic focuses on developing vocational and daily living skills in the lives of students with special needs.

The Special Needs Program has been created for students with mild to moderate exceptionalities. “Unlike other programs, the courses are offered in a flexible, non-traditional format,” Bill Simon, principal, said. “They take place in a smaller class environment promoting interaction between the students and teachers. It’s terrific!”

The Vocational and Life Skills components of the program focus on career exploration, independence in

daily living activities, and the attainment of practical academic skills. The program provides guest speakers, community tours, collaborative classroom experiences, and student-run businesses in an effort to focus on active involvement in natural contexts, emphasizing meaning and relevance while reinforcing classroom learning.

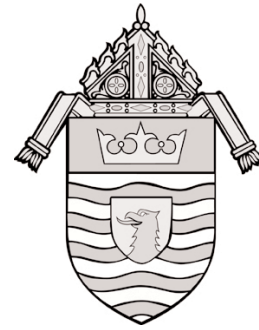
“The development of a full education, one that will serve the students in the profession they choose to follow, is what I strive to provide for them,” said teacher Becky White. The goal of the four-year program is for the students to work and live independently. They will walk with regular education students upon graduation and be awarded a Certificate of Achievement at the end of their high school experience.

“It is a great pleasure to go into the class every week and see the growth in the students,” said Deacon Glen Viau. “It is a joy to have them as part of our school community.”

Pray for vocations Jan. 14

LAKE CHARLES – The Office of Vocations of the Diocese of Lake Charles will host a Benediction Prayer Service at 3 p.m. on Sunday, January 14, the National Day of Prayer for Vocations in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles, according to the Rev. Daniel Torres, Director of Vocations for the Diocese.

For more information contact Fr. Torres at 337-463-6878.



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Dear Friends of God,

Joy to the world! For a Savior has been born for us: He is Christ the Lord! As we rejoice in the birthday of Jesus, we recall once again the events of that first Christmas night. The Virgin Mary came with her husband, Joseph, to Bethlehem and there gave birth to her child. We proclaim this central mystery of our faith – the Incarnation – that out of love for us, God gave us His only Son.

We have all experienced holding a newborn baby in our arms. The miracle of life shared in the gift of each birth is awesome. The love of the parents as they welcome their child home is a reminder of the gratitude to God that is theirs and that their lives will be forever changed.

We believe that with the birth of Jesus we have been and are forever changed. Once again, we have HOPE for a better world – that mankind will be open to God’s grace drawing us closer to one another. We trust God’s gift of PEACE – a peace that comes from within and is shared with others. We gift one another with LOVE – symbolized in the time we share with others, the preparations we make to celebrate the day with family and friends, and the gifts we make or buy which are reminders of the love extended by the giver to the one gifted.

Our world will be different to the extent that we are changed or transformed by “God among us.” Will this Christmas Day come and go as just another day? As we celebrate this special day, I pray that we will allow Jesus to reveal Himself and what He wants from us as He comes again into our lives – like Mary, we can “treasure all these things and ponder them in our hearts.”

May Jesus come to you this Christmas with the gift of love, the blessing of hope, and the promise of peace.

In Jesus, Our Savior,

Harry D. Greig

Rev. Msgr. Harry D. Greig
Diocesan Administrator



The Rev. Msgr. Harry D. Greig, Diocesan Administrator, led the opening prayer at the Day of Reflection held on Dec. 9 in preparation for the National Black Catholic Congress X to be held next year in Buffalo, NY. Nearly 200 participated in the Day of Reflection.

Preparations begin for Black Catholic Congress X in 2007

LAKE CHARLES – The National Black Catholic Congress X will be held in Buffalo, NY, on July 12-15 next year. A crowd of 181 people came together on Saturday, Dec. 9, at St. Louis Catholic High School to discuss and review the eight core principles that came out of Congress IX in 2002 and begin preparations for Congress X, according to Deacon Edward Lavine, Director of the Office of Black Catholics.

“We came together to pray and we heard Msgr. Harry Greig give a wonderful reflection,” Deacon Lavine said. “He told us that during that second weekend of Advent we were called to be heralds of the Gospel, we were called to be good examples.”

The eight principles – Spirituality, Parish Life, Youth and Young Adults, Catholic Education, Social Justice, Racism, Africa and HIV/AIDS – were discussed in eight different smaller groups. Each principle was discussed within a Sacramental vision, according to Deacon Lavine.

One of the concerns arising from the groups, Deacon Lavine noted, was the fact of African American parishes being served by other than African American priests.

“We have been very pleased with the priests who are serving in our communities,” Deacon Lavine said. “We have priests who are inspiring to our African Amer-

ican communities, priests who have been in the forefront on community issues.”

From the discussion group on Africa as well as Youth and Young Adults, Deacon Lavine noted that the idea of exchange programs for our youth going to Africa and having African youth come to our country.

“We also thought of such exchanges within our own parishes,” Deacon Lavine said. “We already have pulp exchanges, where priests will preach at one another’s churches. We look to extend ourselves by visiting other church communities.”

All of the ideas that came out of the discussion groups will be forward to the Office of the National Black Catholic Congress in Baltimore, Md., to aid in the de-

velopment the program for Congress X, Deacon Lavine noted.

“I would like to thank everyone who participated in the preparation for our Day of Reflection, to those who facilitated the various groups, and to the many people who came to the event,” Deacon Lavine said.

Facilitators for the discussions were Rev. Timothy Goodly, Spirituality; Rev. Msgr. Ronald Groth, Parish Life; Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, Catholic Education; Rev. Richard Adiukwu, Africa; Richard Wilson, Racism; Rev. Henry Mancuso, Ph.D., Social Justice; Mrs. Milissa Thibodeaux, Youth and Young Adults; and Dr. Susan Jones, HIV/AIDS.

Liturgy Formation Day slated Jan. 13

LAKE CHARLES – The Rev. Edward Foley, Cap. will be the keynote speaker at the Fifth Annual Liturgy Formation Day on to be held on Saturday, Jan. 13. The day will begin at 8:45 a.m. and continue until noon at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church, 3939 Lake Street. This year’s program is entitled, “*Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*” – “*We Pray As We Believe*.”

The Liturgy Formation Day is held yearly to provide continuing formation for liturgical ministers including the clergy, extraordinary ministers of communion, lectors, music ministers, ministers of hospitality, and ushers, though all interested persons are invited to attend. There is no fee, but to prepare efficiently, registration is required. Call Mary Beth Conner at 337-439-4585 for more information.

The next Catholic Calendar will be published on January 12, 2007.