

The Diocese of Lake Charles Catholic Schools: An Education you can have Faith In

EDITOR'S NOTE: Catholic Schools Week in the Diocese of Lake Charles as well as across the country is celebrated the week of January 28 to February 3. This year's national theme for Catholic Schools Week is "Catholic Schools: The Good News in Education." There are eight Catholic schools in the Diocese, St. Louis Catholic High School, Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Sacred Heart of Jesus/St. Katharine Drexel, St. Margaret of Scotland, all in Lake Charles; St. Theodore Holy Family, in Moss Bluff; Our Lady Immaculate in Jennings; and Our Lady's in Sulphur.)

Choosing a school for a child is one of the most important decisions parents make. From academics and curriculum to school environment and parental involvement, there are many

compelling factors to consider when looking at a school. The Diocese of Lake Charles schools provide an education you can have faith in. Diocesan schools meet the academic needs of students by integrating faith, life and culture in a disciplined and safe environment.

Academics

The Diocese of Lake Charles students perform better academically than their counterparts in public schools. In comparing scores from standardized tests, students from the Diocesan schools scored consistently higher than the national average at every grade level. Statistics also show that Catholic school students are less likely to drop out and are more likely to go on to college. Catholic schools provide smaller classrooms and more personal attention to every student. With a

smaller teacher-to-student ratio, teachers are able to gain insights that enhance the whole learning process

are assured that students receive a strong academic education in an environment structured to have lasting

“Community is at the heart of all Catholic education, not simply as a concept to be taught, but as a reality to be lived...Your students will learn to understand and appreciate the value of community as they experience love, trust and loyalty in your schools and educational programs, and as they learn to treat all persons as brothers and sister created by God and redeemed by Christ.” - His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, Sept. 12, 1987, New Orleans, a speech to elementary, secondary and religious education leaders.

value. For students. Realizing that each child is unique with different learning styles, teachers are able to utilize individualized plans for classroom teaching. Parents

provide a disciplined, safe environment. The Diocese of Lake Charles Catholic Schools provide a disciplined, safe

environment in which students can excel both academically and personally. Self-discipline, responsibility, and self-motivation are among the benefits of an environment that is both nurturing and structured. Catholic schools are able to provide a disciplined environment that fosters responsibility and emphasizes Christian values. Catholic schools also welcome and expect parents to become involved in school programs and daily activities of students. Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Catholic school faculties share this responsibility by providing students with equal opportunities for spiritual, intellectual and social development.

Christian Development

A Catholic school education prepares a child for life.

At a Catholic school, students learn much more than reading, writing and arithmetic. Religious education is an everyday part of the Catholic school curriculum. Classes encourage the discussion of faith and Christian values, focused on the total moral development of each child. Students take what they learn and apply it to everyday life through projects, activities and school clubs that emphasize service and social justice.

There are many compelling reasons beyond the benefits of an excellent education to choose The Diocese of Lake Charles Catholic Schools. Diocesan schools strengthen overall faith of students while they learn Christian values and morals necessary for a full and productive life. Truly an education you can have faith in.



Deacon Patrick LaPoint, right, director of the Seafarers Center at the Port of Lake Charles along with Chad Wright, center, assistant to the director, and Lloyd Nelson, of the Carey Baptist Association, see between 5,000 and 6,000 sailors a year in the Marine Street facility.

Ministry to seafarers quietly does its work

LAKE CHARLES - Many people are aware of the programs and ministries of the Diocese of Lake Charles - whether it's Religious Education, Youth Ministry, the Office of the Tribunal, the Catholic Service Center, or another. They know about them because they have been involved in some way. But, quite possibly, the least known Diocesan ministry happens at the Port of Lake Charles as well as other maritime environs in Southwest Louisiana.

"Most people who have an inkling that there is a ministry to seafarers in ports all over the world, don't realize the extent that that ministry exists right here in Southwest Louisiana," said Deacon Patrick LaPoint, director of the center. "If they do they hear the Port of Lake Charles, they think of the City Docks, located at the end of Shell Beach Drive on Marine Street. We see 100 to 110 ships a month up and down the ship channel."

The Seafarers Center provides aid to thousands of sailors each year.

"We welcome between 5,000 and 6,000 just here in the Center," said LaPoint. "And, we transport probably the same number and not necessarily the same people. We don't just provide help here at the City Docks. On the Lake Charles side of the river we go all the way down Big Lake Road to the LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant and on the west side we go to Bollinger Shipyard in Carlyss."

"Then, they are building another LNG facility in Hackberry so we will cover that one too," he said. "There are 17 facilities and 37 docks that we cover."

The Center provides transportation for sailors from various docking facilities to destinations in the city, mostly for shopping. "Our bus is two years old and it already has 80,000 miles on it," Deacon LaPoint said. "It has only left the area once and that was a trip to Galveston. So those are local miles."

LaPoint, who was ordained to the Diaconate in December 2001 had been named director of the Center in July 2001, originally got involved with the ministry after receiving a phone call that the Center needed rosaries for the sailors, which he made as a hobby.

"I brought them some, they gave me a tour of the place, they told me what they did and I never left," he

said. "That was in 1997."

The work continues to be done with a group of loyal volunteers and a recently hired part-time assistant.

"Chad Wright was hired on a part-time basis and plus, he still volunteers," LaPoint said. "There are just more hours of work than the money available. We pay half of Father Richard's salary (Rev. Richard Adiukwu, the associate pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception). He is the port chaplain. Everyone else is a volunteer."

"We have Lloyd Nelson and Capt. Bill McFatter, both from the Carey Baptist Association," he continued. "There is also Bill Bourgeois, who handles the daytime from 10 to 1, four days a week, and then Matthew Duplantis, and Mandy Robicheaux who helps us with bagging of rosaries and the gift bag program. James and Evelyn Dodd, who do our decorations and support us with other things we need, come over quite regularly."

"But, we could definitely use a lot more volunteers," Deacon LaPoint noted. "Volunteers, particularly at night are hard to get. We could always use magazines and books along with toiletries for our gift bag program." Anyone interested in finding out more should call him at the Center, 436-1315. The Center, open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily, can use many things, according to LaPoint.

"We aren't here all the time," he said. "So call before you come because we may be out visiting ships. We will show you around and explain the ministry."

Providing aid to the seafarers that utilize the Center is an ecumenical effort as LaPoint is aided greatly by the Carey Baptist Association.

"They have been here for many years," LaPoint said. "Lloyd Nelson is a minister and is appointed by the Carey Baptist Association. Captain Bill has been here for what seems like 'forever.' He is a big asset to us, works two nights a week. You can count on him."

LaPoint sees the ministry growing even more with construction projects along the ship channel and in lower Cameron Parish.

"I know that when the other LNG facility opens up in Hackberry we are going to really have to have two vehicles, although it would be great to have two right now," he said. "Then they are look-

ing to build an LNG facility in Cameron which would add a lot of miles."

The new plants would add about 400 ships a year to visitors rolls. The Cameron facility is probably five years away, still in the permit stage, according to LaPoint.

Bringing the Mass to the men on the ships is also important, even though the Center has a Chapel

"We try to get as many Masses on the vessels as we can," LaPoint said. "You can schedule a Mass in the Chapel when they get off work in the evening but everyone has more of a chance to attend when it is on the ship."

"If they come to the center, the chances of them attending a mass is just less. It is not that their devotion is not strong, but they have not talked with home for a while and that telephone really appeals to them."

Vessels can be in port from just overnight to perhaps three to five days, depending on their cargo.

LaPoint and his volunteers also lend a kind ear to the seafarers.

"We play advocate if they have problems on the ships," he said. "We are the first ones they will tell. We then contact the proper authorities and they handle it from there. But the centers are the first to know."

Complaints might range from pay being withheld by the company or ill treatment by the master of the vessel or unsafe conditions not being repaired on the ships.

"Since I have been here we have assisted men on 17 ships with getting paid, which is a big part," LaPoint said.

LaPoint also works on a national level in the ministry as a member of the Executive Board of the Apostleship of the Sea, U.S.A. He is currently serving a two-year term as treasurer of the group.

Prayer for vocations Sunday

LAKE CHARLES - A Benediction Prayer Service will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 14, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception to celebrate National Day of Prayer for Vocations. The event is sponsored by the Office of Vocations of the Diocese of Lake Charles, according to the Rev. Daniel Torres, Director of Vocations.

Children of local inmates had merrier Christmas

LAKE CHARLES - Like many people Deacon Edward Lavine spent the days before Christmas 2006 hurriedly searching the stores for presents. Not looking for gifts for his family or friends though, the Deacon, who is Director of Pastoral Services for the Diocese of Lake Charles, was seeking gifts for the children of inmates incarcerated in the Calcasieu Parish Jail.

This is the third year that Deacon Lavine has helped

round up gifts for the children of parents who have been locked up after the deadline for Angel Tree program, which also helps with such gifts, passes.

This year Deacon Lavine received \$2,440 from a number of benefactors to aid in the purchase of 16 bicycles, toys, and gift cards.

Organizations and individuals helping out this year included Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church, Sulphur; Truman Stacey; St.

Henry Catholic Church St. Vincent de Paul, Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church St. Vincent de Paul; and Joe Stoma.

Others were Mr. and Mrs. Troy Abshire, Sr., Sacred Heart of Jesus Outreach, Lake Charles; Immaculate Conception Cathedral Outreach; Dr. and Mrs. Erwin Engert; In Our Company, Immaculate Conception Cathedral; Rev. Leona Benoit, Chaplain Willie Brown and Mrs. Joe House.



Standing among some of the Christmas gifts provided for the children of inmates in the Calcasieu Parish jail are, from left, Diocese of Lake Charles Director of Pastoral Services Deacon Edward Lavine, Warden Jeffery Miller, Chaplain Willie Brown, and Deputy Michael Cuba.