

Catholic students back for 2008-2009 term

LAKE CHARLES – Students in all eight Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles are back in their classrooms fulltime this morning for the 2008-2009 school term.

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School in Jennings opened school first on Wednesday for a half-day session while the remaining seven schools had a half-day of class yesterday.

Mary Ann Moses, superintendent of schools for the Diocese, felt that enrollment would be higher this year.

“We look forward to more students in our school system,” Moses said. “Our total enrollment has increased from last year.”

At the beginning of the 2007-2008 term, 2,707 students were enrolled. That number was an increase of 60 students, system-wide, from the year before.

Schools in the Diocese of

Lake Charles system are St. Louis Catholic High School, Immaculate Conception Cathedral Catholic School, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School, Sacred Heart St. Katharine Drexel Catholic School, all in Lake Charles; St. Theodore’s Holy Family Catholic School, Moss Bluff; Our Lady’s Catholic School, Sulphur; and Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School, Jennings.

“For the beginning of school I have great anticipation and great expectations for the school year in our Catholic schools due to the fact that it’s a starting point to the path of a lifetime of accomplishment and that always excites me.”

Sacred Heart/Saint Katharine Drexel will begin the year fully moved back into their offices/elementary classrooms following several

years of using the former Immaculate Heart of Mary school on Cherry Street. The move was due to the extreme damage done to the building by Hurricane Rita in 2005.

“Sacred Heart will reopen on its main campus,” Moses said. “They are celebrating their 100th year, which is in itself a celebration. They are very excited returning to their original campus. It’s like a new building.”

The students and teachers probably won’t recognize the inside of their building as the interior was stripped to the bare walls and rebuilt with the most up-to-date technology installed.

“The infrastructure of their school has taken on a whole new dimension due to the reconstruction of the building,” she said. “It has allowed them to completely rewire and set up for technology as much as any other school anywhere. The tech-

nology grant received by all our schools from the state, allowed them to be able to put the absolute latest and most up to date equipment into these newly reconstructed classrooms. The school is equipped now and for the future.”

With last spring’s dedication of the new St. Louis Library and Msgr. DeBlanc Multimedia Center, the construction made possible by the school’s Opening Windows Capital Campaign has been completed.

“The new library will be able to better serve the students at St. Louis,” Moses said. “It is very versatile in

its design and very user friendly. It was a crowning touch to all of the efforts of the capital campaign and the major improvements at the school.

“Summer time has always been a time of fast and furious work to spruce up the school for the Fall. Everyone has done things over the summer to improve their campuses.”

Moses looks to the challenges of the new year as one of preparation.

“What I perceive as one of our greatest challenges is that we must prepare our students for a modern world, a world of fast paced, vast

new frontiers of knowledge and opportunity,” she said. “The other thing that makes me such a believer in Catholic schools is that because of these challenges I believe that we, as Catholic schools, are so uniquely prepared, like no other schools, to deal with these challenges.”

“I have extreme confidence that not only will we meet these challenges whatever they may be but that we will meet them and be able to excel in areas,” she continued. “Based on our faith, based on our values, based on who we are, we are prepared for the challenge.”



Rev. Whitney Miller, Secretary for the Ministry of Christian Formation, preaches at the Mass for Catholic school principals and administrative assistants held at Chapel of the Assumption at Saint Charles Center prior to this week’s start of the new school year.

The Bishop’s Golf Classic set Sept. 5

LAKE CHARLES -- The Bishop’s Golf Classic, benefiting seminarian education and the priest retirement fund will be held Friday, September 5 at Gray Plantation golf course. Host sponsors for this inaugural event are Alfred Palma Contractors and Cameron State Bank while Bubba Oustalet and Jeff Davis Bank are presenting sponsors.

The need for funds for the men studying for the priesthood as well as those who have given their lives in the service to the Church is absolutely necessary and the need is increasing.

The four-person scramble will have morning and afternoon shotgun starts. Food and beverages will be provided on the course. Prizes will be awarded and a hole-in-one will win the lucky golfer a car.

Entry fee is \$125 per person and \$500 per team.

Tournament entry forms are available in every parish of the Diocese, area golf courses, and from the Office of Development of the Diocese, 411 Iris Street.

For more information contact Chip Gauthé, Director of Development, 337-439-7400, Extension 307, or at chip.gauthé@lcdioocese.org.

Members of the tournament committee are Robert Piper (474-6814), Bill LeBlanc (540-3543) and Larry Deroussel (794-8339).



Did you know...

St. Paul Church in Elton and Immaculate Conception Church in Maplewood along with St. John the Evangelist Chapel in Lacassine have all faced destruction by fire. St. Paul has actually been destroyed twice, first in 1929. The parish used the former school auditorium, which was remodeled and

used until 1951 when a new church was built and dedicated. That structure was destroyed in 1982. The new St. Paul was built and dedicated in 1984. Immaculate Conception Church was destroyed in 1981 and the new church was dedicated in early 1984. St. John the Evangelist was destroyed by

a fire in May 2003 and the new construction was dedicated in 2005.

Priests from Religious Orders have been very important in the area of what is now the Diocese of Lake Charles. Which Order has had the greatest presence in the area. Find out in our next Catholic Calendar.

Thank you ...

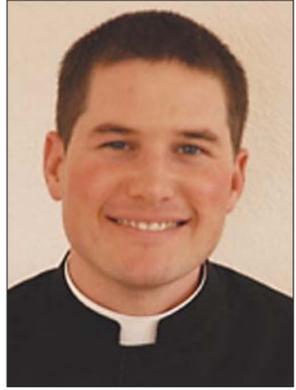
for your generosity to the Bishop’s Services Appeal for 2007-2008. Your financial gifts have made it possible for a number programs and ministries of the Diocese of Lake Charles to operate more effectively during the year. Ministries supported in part by the Bishop’s Services Appeal are Catholic Education, Youth Ministry, Vocations/Seminarians, Catholic Charities, Family Life, Seafarers Center, Diocesan Counseling Services, Evangelization, Communications, and Saint Charles Center. We hope you will consider continuing your unselfish support of these programs and ministries of the Diocese of Lake Charles in the year ahead.

An “Altar-ed” Existence

By the Reverend Deacon J. Scott Conner

On May 10th of this year I experienced a significant change in my life. On that day, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, ordained me to the Sacred Order of Deacon. Through the laying on of his hands, I was made a Deacon of the Holy Catholic Church, receiving the obligation to participate in the Church’s life and mission a new way by proclaiming the Gospel at Holy Mass; preaching homilies; assisting the Bishop or a Priest at the altar; presiding at public prayer, such as baptisms, marriages, funerals; committing to prayer and study; and of course, the ministry of charity. These activities will prepare me for ordination to the Sacred Order of Priesthood, which I hope to receive within the year.

Since entering formation for the Priesthood, I have discovered that many have questions about what influences a man to a priestly vocation. There are, of course, as many answers as there are men. In my case, though, I know that the activities and experiences from my childhood and adolescence played an essential role in bringing me to where I am today. Yet, when I recount some of these to whoever may be asking about my past experiences, they tend to become fascinated when I tell them that I used to rodeo. Usually I see a curious expression on their faces, and



Deacon J. Scott Conner

then find that they want me to tell them all about “the rodeo”.

Before I can really get very far into my explanation, though, my questioners often break in with this question first: “What was it like riding bulls?” Having some fun, I might reply: “Well, growing up I wasn’t always the most prudent of individuals, but I did at least have some common sense. So, I never rode bulls.” (Since only the brave receive glory, I suspect that this may be why bull riders come to mind first when rodeo is mentioned.)

The primary event that I participated in, which is much more “human friendly” than bull riding, is called tie-down calf roping. For those who have ever watched a rodeo, this is the event where the cowboy ropes the calf, dismounts from the horse, runs to the calf, “flanks” (that is, throws down) the calf, and then ties

three of its legs together.

In rodeo there are “timed events” and “judged events”. In timed events, the winner is determined by the fastest time. Examples of timed events are tie-down roping, team roping, barrel racing, etc. In judged events, conversely, competitors are not ranked according to time but score. In judged events, such as bull riding, bare-back riding, and saddle-bronc riding, the animal and the rider each receive a score according to how well they perform. The winner is the one with the highest aggregate score.

I began roping, I tell my interlocutors, at about eleven. It all started when my dad became interested in roping, and as is the case with most fathers and sons, my other siblings and I adopted a similar interest. (I will leave it to the fathers reading this to consider how their interests may affect their children.) Initially my involvement in roping was unfocused. Success was not the primary aim. I supposed that I merely enjoyed being around the gang, doing things together. But later, perhaps a few years before entering high school, I developed a more intense passion for roping. For me, this was my football or baseball practice. Fortunately, we were blessed with wonderful parents who sacrificed their time and resources for their children. Because of their generosity and support, each afternoon we could spend several hours practicing roping and riding.



“Cowboy” Scott Conner participated in tie-down calf roping during his rodeo days. Here, he has roped the calf, is dismounting before he runs to the calf, throws it down, and then ties three of its legs together in the timed event.

We always had specific goals in mind when we practiced. The first was improvement. Rodeo is just like any other sport. To be successful a few things are necessary: dedication; a certain degree of athleticism; the elimination of mistakes; and finally, be a little lucky. So our labors were always focused on honing our talents. To be perfectly frank, even though we enjoyed roping itself, no one really does anything to lose. The same was true for us, traveling to rodeos and winning was always the ultimate goal.

When I think back on our rodeo years, I now realize that I never fully appreciated the places they took us, and for the experience it gave me. We went as far as from south Florida to northern Wyoming, and from South Carolina to west Texas, and everywhere else in between. Rodeo gave us many exceptional travel opportunities and allowed us to make acquaintances with many people from through-

out the United States. Occasionally I had a few little successes here and there, though at the time I was never satisfied with these. Looking back now, I have learned to be more appreciative, for those days were truly a gift. It’s easy to see how the experience and virtue I gained through my involvement with rodeo and roping calves prepared me for the many challenges that come along in life, and have helped me become the man I am today.

When I am visiting with people about my rodeo experiences, I have come to think that what they are really asking me to do is to help connect the dots. For the real question is essentially this: How does one go from the rodeo arena to the altar of God? It would of course take another article to explain this adequately. Suffice to say, that roping taught me a lot about discipline, personal responsibility and accountability, stewardship of

creation, and sacrifice. These have gone a long way in helping me discern a priestly vocation.

The days and years when I roped calves and rode horses were indeed very meaningful, full of highs and lows, bumps and bruises. Eventually, though, after making time for serious personal reflection, I could see that through these experiences God was calling me to “follow Him” as a priest. In the years since, there has been a transformation: a roper of calves has become a fisher of men. If the time ahead is anything like what came before, I know that on the one hand it will be a wild ride, but on the other, it will be the ride of my life.

May God bless you. Please pray for me as I continue my formation in preparation for the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.