

Church teachings explicit on when life begins

By The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, D.D.
Bishop of Lake Charles

A serious responsibility of a bishop is to insure the purity of teaching in areas of faith and morals (cf. I Timothy 4:16). These teachings must be in conformity with the universal and historic teachings found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and defined by the teaching office of the Catholic Church. The beauty of Catholicism rests in part on its ability to be clear.

Recently there has been high-profile press given to arguments concerning when human life begins. I am concerned about clarity and any misrepresentation of consistent Catholic teaching. My remarks are made in response to numerous questions posed to me by good Catholics in our own Diocese of Lake Charles who are confused by glib citations of patristic authorities, such as St. Augustine, that life begins at some other time than conception.

In response, I would say:

1) St. Augustine, one of our most revered Fathers, lived and wrote almost fifteen hundred years ago; he did not see the world around him with the scientific perspective, as we know it today; as with early writers of this and later peri-

ods, his concern was the nature of the immortal soul and the human being; he approached this question primarily from the perspective of theology and philosophy;

2) To answer a question such as when does life begin, science gives us a quite adequate answer; according to one prominent embryology text, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*, by Keith L. Moore and T.V.N. Persaud (7th Edition; Publ. Saunders, p. 16), "Human development begins at fertilization when a male gamete or sperm (spermatozoon) unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to produce a single cell—a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual"; if he were alive today, St. Augustine would agree, because St. Augustine believed that there was no "disjunction" in what was known by faith and reason (cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1981 ed., vol. 5, p. 808, "St. Augustine" on "Faith and Reason"); life begins at conception; no doubt St. Augustine would have marveled at a uterine ultrasound and what it reveals about a human in the womb;

3) The teaching that life in the womb is sacred has been consistently taught by the Church from the beginning and

is reflected in the opposition of the Church for twenty centuries to abortion; please consult the oldest catechism instruction of the Church, outside the Sacred Scriptures, called the *Didache* or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* from the First Century A.D.; it reads as follows: "Do not kill a fetus by abortion, or commit infanticide" (*Didache*, 2:2); also, noted patristic scholars are in agreement that St. Augustine probably knew the *Didache* and may have used it as a source in writing his own *First Catechetical Instruction*;

4) To say in some way that the Fathers and Doctors of the Church in centuries past taught otherwise than the Church's consistent teaching on the sacredness of life in the womb or that they were not sure when life began is misleading and erroneous; for this reason, the official Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception... Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2270-2271).

Seminary burses now total over \$750,000

LAKE CHARLES - The Diocese of Lake Charles has a total of \$758,036.33 invested to aid in paying for seminarian education expenses. These funds are in the form of 46 seminary burses established by people and organizations for the benefit of the Diocese and its education of future priests.

The recent gift of \$100,000 establishing the Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc Burse was the largest contribution made to begin a burse in the history of the Diocese.

A seminary burse is a permanent fund set aside to provide income for the education of seminarians. The principal of the fund is never spent but invested, with the interest used each year for seminarian education expenses. Since the principal is never touched, this fund is truly a "gift that keeps on giving." Donations made to the fund will continue to support the education of seminarians every year, as long as the Diocese exists.

Seminary burses can be started with any amount of money and gifts may be made to already established burses.

Some of the burses have been established in memory of other highly regarded priests, such as Msgr. Amos Vincent, Father Oris Broussard, Father John Giles and Monsignors Curtis Vidrine and Murphy J. Bernard, as well as Msgr. Jules Daigle, Msgr. Aloysius Van Buijtenen and Msgr. Louis H. Boudreaux.

The Diocese has eight men in various stages of study for the priesthood this year. Those men include Deacon Scott Conner, Pontifical College Josephinum; Jeff Starkovich, Pontifical North American College; Bryan Thompson, Pontifical College Josephinum; David "Doc" Hardey, Jr., Pontifical College Josephinum; Matthew Cormier, St. Joseph

Seminary College; Ruben Villerreal, Catholic University of America; Brandon Jones, St. Joseph Seminary College; and Korey LaVergne, St. Joseph Seminary College.

For more information about making a contribution

to the Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc Seminary Burse, any existing burse, or creating a special burse of your choosing, contact Chip Gauthé at the Office of Development of the Diocese, 337-439-7400, Ext. 307, or by e-mail at chip.gauthé@lcdiocese.org.



Diocese of Lake Charles Seminary Burses

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|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Msgr. Louis Boudreaux | \$6,982.50 |
| Bishop Jeanmard | \$9,276.69 |
| Latrielle Houssiere | \$15,000.00 |
| Charles Houssiere | \$15,000.00 |
| Gelu Houssiere | \$15,000.00 |
| Henry Houssiere | \$15,000.00 |
| Msgr. William J. Teurlings | \$3,092.23 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Houssiere | \$15,000.00 |
| Israel Hebert Family | \$15,000.00 |
| Fr. Moise Hebert | \$2,231.66 |
| Pro Ecclesia | \$5,203.55 |
| Immaculate Conception | \$3,092.23 |
| Saint Joseph | \$1,203.35 |
| Lake Charles Seminary | \$15,000.00 |
| Cure d' Ars | \$3,092.23 |
| Mr. & Mrs. C. Delahoussaye | \$15,000.00 |
| Msgr. Lerschen | \$1,203.35 |
| Saint Theresa | \$5,356.71 |
| Catholic Daughters of the Americas | \$1,666.46 |
| Msgr. Louis Boudreaux | \$15,000.00 |
| Herrington Family | \$15,000.00 |
| Horvath Family | \$12,500.00 |
| Harry Van Tiel Family | \$1,031.96 |
| Habetz-Oustalet-Mitchell Families | \$5,000.00 |
| Msgr. A. Van Buijtenen | \$5,000.00 |
| Msgr. Jules Daigle | \$15,000.00 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Galip Jacobs/Sam Joseph | \$600.00 |
| Msgr. Charles Levasseur | \$70,000.00 |
| Plauche Family | \$4,000.00 |
| Rev. Oscar S Vasquez-Munoz | \$1,429.00 |
| Msgr. Bede Bechel | \$23,652.68 |
| Jeffery Savant | \$2,435.00 |
| Rev. Robert Lee Shreve | \$25,973.33 |
| Bishop Jude Speyrer | \$4,000.00 |
| Our Lady of the Snows/ CDA Court | \$20,200.00 |
| Msgr. Curtis Vidrine | \$28,689.60 |
| Msgr. Murphy Bernard | \$27,476.90 |
| Rev. Alphonse M. Volpe | \$25,122.62 |
| East Deanery Serra Club | \$550.00 |
| Msgr. Charles Dubois | \$9,926.70 |
| Msgr. Amos J. Vincent | \$34,723.21 |
| Rev. Oris A. Broussard | \$27,810.66 |
| Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc | \$157,897.43 |
| Rev. John Giles | \$25,132.21 |
| Rev. Maurice Martineau | \$27,087.40 |
| Truman Stacey | \$10,382.09 |
| Total | \$758,036.33 |



The recent Archbishop James Lyke Conference held in Lafayette drew nearly 700 participants for its four-day run including 11 members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Lake Charles. Some of that group pictured here are, seated from left, Jacque Mathews, Jackie S. Guillory, Sharon Washington, and Gaynell Carrier. Standing, from left, are Rev. Henry Mancuso, Jerrell Mayne, Johathan Druilhet, and Marmal Druilhet. The goals of the conference were to develop and inspire youth spiritually and culturally; to provide participants with spiritually uplifting and unifying knowledge; to provide a culturally rich atmosphere encompassing music, art, ritual and other activities to inspire the spirit; to facilitate an ongoing dialogue involving the African American community and the Catholic Church; to grace the prayer life of God's people through the development of liturgical resources that are rooted in the Black experience and truly Catholic; to teach train and form liturgical ministers; to promote and develop lay ministerial leadership; and to evangelize within the African American community and other communities.

Catholic people called to stand with immigrants

WASHINGTON - In his keynote address to the National Migration Conference recently, Cardinal Roger Mahony said, "A human being's worth is defined by their God-given dignity, not by what papers they carry."

Recognizing the general negative feelings toward immigrants, refugees, and newcomers, Cardinal Mahony described these times as a "dark moment in our nation's history" and challenged all Americans not to scapegoat immigrants for many of the challenges facing our country.

The Rev. Henry Mancuso, Secretary for Pastoral Services for the Diocese of Lake Charles, was one of eight representatives from Louisiana in a total of 700 who attended the four-day conference, which was sponsored

by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities USA, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., and the Migration Relief Services.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States have called for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, which balances a nation's right to protect its borders and the right of all people to seek a place to live in which they can provide for their families while living without fear. It is often thought that the Bishops support an "amnesty plan"; but this is not true, according to Father Mancuso.

In their proposals, leaders of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have called for a "path to earned citizenship", especially for the 12 million un-

documented people already within our borders. To earn citizenship, undocumented men and women would need to pay a penalty for entering the United States without permission, apply for Social Security, pay taxes, and to enroll in English classes.

Conference participants were given Biblical reminders of Abraham leaving his homeland under God's command to found a new nation. God brought the Hebrew Community from bondage in Egypt to a "promised land". Mary and Joseph were asylum seekers in Egypt because they feared for the safety of their child Jesus. We are a nation of immigrants who have been regularly renewed by newcomers to our shores.

Bishop's Golf Classic now set for Sept. 19

LAKE CHARLES -- The Bishop's Golf Classic, benefiting seminarian education and the priest retirement fund originally scheduled for Friday, September 5 at Gray Plantation golf course, will now be played Friday, Sept. 19 due to the passage of Hurricane Gustav.

Host sponsors for this inaugural event are Alfred Palma Contractors and Cameron State Bank while Bubba Oustalet and Jeff Davis Bank are presenting sponsors.

Banner sponsors include Calcasieu Mechanical Contractors, Cathedral Outreach, Crossroads Bookstore, Kenny Fuselier and Company, Lake Charles Rubber and Gasket, Navarra's Jewelers, Russell J. Stutes Construction, S & M Bargain City, Villa Maria Retirement Center, Adlink, and Christy Drum Ammons, D.D.S.

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. Eight men are studying for the

priesthood for the Diocese and an increase in that number in the years ahead seen which would cost even more money. More than \$250,000 will be paid for the education and training of this group this year.

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, at 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@lcdiocese.org.

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

Did you know...

Many orders of religious men and women have served in the area of what is now the Diocese of Lake Charles over the years. Religious sisters who played roles in the history of the Church Southwest Louisiana include Sisters Marianites of the Holy Cross, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Congregation of Divine Providence, Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic, Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters of the Eucharistic Covenant, Sisters of Emanuel and Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. Men religious who have served the community include Holy Ghost Fathers, Divine Word Missionaries, Conventual Franciscans, Benedictine Monks, Hermits of Good News, Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, Jesuit Fathers and Brothers, Christian Brothers and LaSalette Brothers.

Each of the three Bishops of the Diocese of Lake Charles has had a motto emblazoned on his coat of arms. Bishop Speyrer's was "To bring Glad Tidings," Bishop Edward K. Braxton was "Gaudium et Spes." Do you know Bishop Glen John Provost's motto and its English translation? Find out in the next Catholic Calendar.



Deacons, their wives and members of their families attended Mass on Monday, August 11, in celebration of the Feast of St. Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr, their patron. The Most Reverend Glen John Provost was the celebrant of the liturgy held at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Raymond. The deacons were honored by the parish of St. Lawrence with a meal following the Mass in the parish hall.

Men's breakfast, women's luncheon dates announced

LAKE CHARLES - September's First Friday Men's Prayer Breakfast with Bishop Provost was cancelled due to Hurricane Gustav.

The next breakfast will be Friday, Oct. 3 at 7 a.m. in Ave Maria Hall. Call 439-7400 to

register your attendance.

The inaugural Women's Prayer Luncheon with the Bishop, which was to have been Sept. 2 will now be Nov. 4. Women planning to attend should call 439-7400 to register.