

Solar panels energize St. Margaret Catholic School

LAKE CHARLES – The idea for an Eagle Scout project has brought St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School to the forefront of solar energy in the state of Louisiana. The recent ribbon cutting ceremony made St. Margaret the first school in the state to have a classroom's energy needs provided through solar energy.

Thomas Breaux, who will soon receive his Eagle Scout award, thought it would be a great idea to benefit his former elementary school and the teacher who energized him and all her students about the subject of science.

"Mrs. (Judy) Reeves had always said she wanted her classroom to be solar powered," Thomas said. A sopho-

more at St. Louis Catholic High School, Thomas, along with his scout-leader father Sam, raised over \$10,000 to see the project to completion.

"I just knew it would make her happy," Thomas continued. "She gave a lot to me and I felt I needed to give something back to her."

Thomas will receive his Eagle Scout award on February 16. He is also thinking about turning the activity into a science fair project.

Mrs. Reeves has taught for 17 years and been the science teacher at St. Margaret for the past 10 years.

She has always spoken strongly to her students about conserving energy and things that can be done to

conserve energy.

"We do many projects dealing with energy awareness and energy conservation, including the renewable sources of energy - solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, and biomass" Reeves said. "I probably mentioned more than one time about how nice it would be to have solar as a sustainable form of energy on our school, never knowing that Thomas would make my dream come true one day."

The panels on the schools roof right over Mrs. Reeves' classroom provide about twice the amount of electricity used by the classroom.

The completion of the project was honored on Wednesday, Oct. 29 with a ribbon cutting at the school with the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, and Lake Charles mayor Randy Roach taking part.

"Thomas wrote over 100 letters to people and organizations spelling out his project and asking them for financial support," Sam said. "Money was received from a number of people, including a grant from Entergy, and also several small fund raisers were held to add additional funds."

Beginning in October 2006, Thomas and his father were brainstorming ideas for his Eagle Scout project and the solar panel concept began to take form. The pair went to Mrs. Brenda Dufrene, school principal, to see what she thought of the idea.

"We went to her and she wanted us to go before the school board," said Sam Breaux. "They needed to be reassured that the project would be done in professional manner and find out just what type of installation was



Members of the St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School help with the installation of solar panels. The project was the brainchild of St. Margaret graduate Thomas Breaux who came up with the idea as part of the process of earning his Eagle Scout award. The school is the first in the State of Louisiana to have solar power. The panels produce twice as much electricity as that needed to operate the school's science classroom and science lab.



Thomas Breaux, a sophomore at St. Louis Catholic High School and graduate of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, flips the switch to begin using the energy produced by the solar panels he and members of the science club of St. Margaret assisted in placing on the roof above the school's science classroom. Breaux came up with the idea as part of his work to become an Eagle Scout.

planned."

"Thomas was involved for a number of years as a student with our science club here at St. Margaret" Dufrene said. She noted that it was not a surprise that Thomas had come up with such an idea.

"I was excited and impressed that Thomas would want to do this kind of project for our school," she continued. "It is exciting for me and for the school that he wanted to endow the school like this."

Once the pair had the approval of the principal and the school board, they still had to meet and reassure Rev. William Miller, pastor

of St. Margaret Church.

"Father Miller also had some experts come to our meeting with him and we answered a great many questions about the project and how the installation would be handled," Sam said.

Thomas and Sam worked with Gulf South Solar of Baton Rouge and with a local electrical contractor, Conner Electric, to make sure that everything was done professionally and safely.

Meters were installed on all the outlets in Mrs. Reeves' classroom to monitor the power consumed by the electrical equipment found in the room, which

doubles as the school's science lab. The monitoring provided the opportunity to change out equipment that was wasting electricity and with the changes more than a 50 percent reduction in energy usage was achieved.

Now, the solar panels provide twice as much electricity needed to power the science classroom.

According to Dufrene, it will take from six to eight months of monitoring the school's electric bill to determine how much the solar panels will decrease utility costs.

"We believe it will make a difference though," Dufrene said.

Office of Black Catholics sets Day of Reflection

LAKE CHARLES – The Office of Black Catholic Ministry of the Diocese of Lake Charles will sponsor a Day of Reflection and Action for African American Catholics on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at St. Louis Catholic High School.

A follow-up gathering from the National Black Catholic Congress X in 2007, the morning will allow those attending to reflect and propose action steps on the eight National Black Catholic Congress principles of Spirituality, Parish Life,

Catholic Education, Youth and Young Adults, Social Justice, Africa, Racism and HIV/AIDS.

Black Catholics from throughout the Diocese are invited to attend the Day of Reflection so that they may go back to the respective parishes and plan individual action steps on a given principle which can be implemented in their own faith community.

For information please contact Deacon Edward Lavine at 439-7436.



In the left photo, Judges Guy Bradberry, left, and Kent Savoie, right, walk into the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for the Red Mass celebrated by Bishop Glen John Provost, at right, preceded by Rev. Derek Covert, the Master of Ceremonies for the Liturgy held Oct. 13.



Meals with Bishop Provost scheduled

LAKE CHARLES – Future dates for meals with Bishop Glen John Provost have been scheduled for various groups in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The next Women's Prayer Luncheon with Bishop Provost will be held at 12 noon Tuesday, Dec. 2, in the Buccaneer Room of the Lake Charles Civic Center.

Women who wish to attend are asked to send their check for \$10 to Ms. Esther Gallardo, 612 Alamo Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601 to register. Please make the check out to the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The next two Men's First Friday Prayer Breakfast with Bishop Glen John Provost will be held Dec. 5 and Feb. 6 in Ave Maria Hall of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception office building, located at the corner of Bilbo and Kirby streets. First Friday Mass will be celebrated on each day for all that wish to attend at 6:30 a.m. in the Cathedral and the men's breakfast will begin at 7 a.m. There will be no Breakfast in January.

Men are asked to call 439-7400 to register for the breakfasts.

40 Hours Devotion sites announced for Nov., Dec.

LAKE CHARLES -- Churches in the Diocese of Lake Charles will continue to host 40 Hours Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament promoting vocations to the priesthood and the religious life in the Diocese of Lake Charles during the remainder of November and into December.

The Devotion will be held at St. Joseph Church in Deridder from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 24-26.

December hosts will be in the Eastern Deanery of the Diocese beginning with Our Lady of the Lake in Lake

Arthur, from Sunday, Nov. 30 through Saturday, Dec. 6. St. Lawrence Church in Raymond will be the host of the Devotion from 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 8 through 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10.

The parishes of St. Charles Borromeo in Fenton and St. John Vianney in Bell City along with the chapel of St. John the Evangelist in Lacassine will be the sites beginning Sunday, Dec. 14 through Saturday, Dec. 20.

Forty Hours Devotion will not be held from Friday, Dec. 21 through Saturday, Jan. 3.



Bishop Glen John Provost prepares to read the opening prayer at the annual Memorial Mass for deceased members of the Companions of Honor. Priests concelebrating were, from left, Rev. Archimandrite Herbert J. May, Rev. Whitney G. Miller, and Msgr. James Gaddy. Serving the Bishop was Deacon Wayne Chapman.

Did you know...

With the establishment of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Lake Charles on Oct. 15, 1919, the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers took responsibility for the leadership of the faith community. To that time the spiritual needs of the African American community were seen to by the priests of Immaculate Conception Church. Masses were celebrated in the school house which actually preceded the building of the first church in 1920. The Holy Ghost Fathers served the community until 1989, followed by the Society of the Divine Word until 1999. In that year, Rev. Henry Mancuso became the first diocesan priest to shepherd the parish, a post he continues to this day.

During the years of World War II two parishes were established in Southwest Louisiana. Do you know which they were? Find out in our next Catholic Calendar.