

Bishop Provost's Message for World Day of the Sick

11 February 2009
The Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes
Wednesday

Dearly Beloved of the Diocese of Lake Charles,

As we conclude the 150th Anniversary of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11, 2009, the World Day of the Sick, it would seem appropriate to write to you regarding the Church's consistent effort to serve the ill and suffering among us: "When did we see you ill...and visit you" (Mat 25:39)? It is without question that Catholic Healthcare has been ongoing in one form or another through the centuries.

In the Gospels, we read that Jesus was continually healing the sick in His public ministry. The man full of leprosy in the Gospel of Luke fell prostrate before Jesus saying, "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean." Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do will it. Be made clean" (Lk 5:12, 13). Jesus' heart was moved with compassion for his brothers and sisters who were suffering. As the Mystical Body of Christ (1Cor 12:13), we too should be filled with God's mercy for those of us who suffer due to disease and other illnesses: "If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it" (1 Cor 12:26).

The Church has always devoted herself to providing care, in one form or another, for those who had none. Hospices were created by religious to aid weary travelers. Orphanages and Soup Kitchens were founded to contribute to the well-being of men, women, and children who found themselves with nothing, often not even the love of a family. Hospitals were established to procure immediate medical care for those who were ill and dying. In fact, the first Catholic hospital in the United States was established by the Ursuline sisters in 1728. In the United States, religious women in particular devoted themselves to the care of the sick. The dedication of these religious sisters was instrumental in founding the hospital system we are familiar with today.

"In the early twentieth century, advances in medical knowledge...and the development of new technologies...combined to produce a demand for standardization in both medical education and health care." In response to these advances, Fr. Charles B. Moulinier, SJ began working toward the formation of an association of Catholic hospitals. His efforts, along with the invaluable work of the Sister's of St. Joseph Carondelet, ensured that Catholic health care in the United States would contribute to the growing healthcare needs of the nation. For example, "Between 1884 and 1915, Catholic hospitals nearly tripled some 200 to almost 600."

Currently, "there are Catholic health care systems and facilities present in all 50 states

providing acute care, skilled nursing, and other services including hospice, home health, assisted living and senior housing." Catholic systems also provide a community benefit, which includes charity care, programs and activities such as community health improvement, health professions education and research. They also work with government sponsored programs.

Although there are numerous Catholic health systems, Christus Health Care System would be the most familiar to us in Southwest Louisiana with Christus St. Patrick Hospital being located in Lake Charles. It is part of the vision and goals of this health care system to expand care for the uninsured through social service resources. Concerning charity care, Christus Health System waives charges based on federal poverty guidelines for uninsured patients and they offer discount care for those whose medical expenses will deplete their resources. Nationwide during 2008, Christus Health System alone delivered \$249,998,990 of unpaid Medicare, which, with the community benefit, totaled \$488,628,990. In Southwest Louisiana the total for unpaid Medicare was \$34,625,784; it totaled \$45,417,536 with community benefit.

As Christians, we should seek to be in solidarity with the 47 million people who lack basic healthcare insurance coverage, nine million of whom are children. Our vision for Catholic health care systems is one that promotes the well-being and respect for the dignity of every person. In this worthy endeavor of providing for the well-being of others, we can draw confidently from our long tradition of Catholic Social teaching.

If we first look to Christ our Lord in our daily lives, most importantly in prayer, we will influence and aid the nation in providing physical and spiritual care. "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mat 25:40).

May we respond generously to the call of Christ to love God and neighbor through the virtues of justice and charity. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you and your families, as I remain

Devotedly yours in our Lord,



+Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Lenten Regulations 2009

Every Catholic, even children and older adults, should participate in some way in the spiritual disciplines and penitential practices of Lent in order to go up to Jerusalem with Jesus. These are the regulations for the Church in United States.

•Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. This means that we do not eat meat and we have only one full meal. Concerning the Good Friday fast, the Second Vatican Council teaches: "Let the Easter fast be kept sacred. Let it be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the Resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind."

•The other Fridays of the season of Lent are also days of abstinence from meat. The obligation to abstain from meat binds Catholics 14 years of age and older. The obligation to fast, limiting oneself to one full meal and two lighter meals in the course of the day, binds Catholics from the age of 18 to 59. Those who are younger or older may freely embrace these disciplines. But Lenten disciplines should never endanger your health.

•The Fridays of the year outside of Lent are also days of penance. Abstaining from meat is the traditional way of observing these days of penance. However, each person is free to replace the traditional abstinence from meat with some other practice of voluntary self-denial or personal penance. It is obvious that abstaining from meat is meaningless for vegetarians, who must choose some other form of abstinence. It is equally obvious that replacing meat with a gourmet seafood meal is not in keeping with the spirit of Lent. Abstaining from meat may

be replaced on Fridays during the year with abstaining from some other food. It may also be replaced with time spent reading and studying the Scriptures, special prayers, such as the rosary or visits to the Blessed Sacrament, acts of thoughtfulness and charity to those in need, or acts of personal witness to one's faith, such as teaching a religion class or speaking out on the sinfulness of abortion, euthanasia, racism, and other social evils.

•While the season of Lent is the primary period of Catholic penitential practices, these regulations are not intended to limit the occasions for Christian penance. The practice of spiritual discipline is always appropriate during periods of special need for the individual and the larger community. Parishes, for example, may undertake such disciplines as a part of their communal prayer for vocations or the eradication of a problem in the community.

The Catholic faithful should be reminded of the teaching of Pope Paul VI concerning the seriousness of being faithful to Lenten disciplines. He said that the obligation to follow these disciplines in solidarity with the Church is a serious one. However, Catholics should not become scrupulous in this regard. Failure to observe individual days of penance is not considered a serious matter. However, the faithful should look for ways to do more rather than less. Fast and abstinence on the days prescribed, and works of religion and charity on the Fridays outside Lent, should be considered a minimal response to the call of Jesus to go up to Jerusalem with Him in order that we might experience true Christian conversion in our lives.



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, middle, accepts a check for \$2,424.07 from John Halloran, Diocesan Coordinator for the Fourth Degree District of Louisiana for the group's annual Excellence in Religious Education program in the Diocese. Pictured from left are Harry Jones, Faithful Navigator Father Veillard Assembly #2087 of Sulphur, Fred Fluitt, former Master of the State of Louisiana; Bishop Provost, Halloran, Darryl Fontenot, Faithful Navigator of Father James J. Shahrigan Assembly #2182 of DeRidder and Rodney Duplechin, Faithful Navigator of Msgr. Cramers Assembly #320 of Lake Charles. The annual grant is given to aid in the continuing education and training of diocesan religious education instructors through the Adult Education component of the Office of Religious Education.

Cameron churches rebuilding

LAKE CHARLES - The rebuilding of the Catholic churches in Cameron Parish continues at a steady pace, according to reports from the pastors of those faith communities.

Bishop Glen John Provost has noted that "progress has been facilitated by timely donations from generous donors, insurance, and the hard work of parish and diocesan workers, both volunteer and staff."

St. Eugene Church in Grand Chenier has been fully restored and Masses have been celebrated there since Jan. 4, the Feast of the Epiphany.

Bishop Provost celebrated the Vigil Mass at St. Eugene on Saturday, Jan. 31. Work on the hall and rectory continue at St. Eugene with a hoped-for completion in March or April, according to Rev. Vincent Vadakkedath.

At Sacred Heart of Jesus in Creole and Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cameron, the repair and reconstruction

forced by last September's Hurricane Ike continues.

Rev. Joseph McGrath, the pastor of Sacred Heart and the administrator of Our Lady Star of the Sea, looks with hope to soon being back in both churches.

"We have been told by the contractor that Star of the Sea should be ready by Feb. 15," Father McGrath said.

At Sacred Heart, a June completion of the church is anticipated. Father McGrath believes that once Our Lady Star of the Sea is available many of the Sacred Heart parishioners will avail themselves of the weekend Mass schedule rather than driving north to St. Patrick Chapel in Sweetlake.

The see church of St. Patrick Chapel, St. Mary of the Lake in Big Lake, has also completed its church building refurbishment after Ike's floodwater damaged the church and all of the other buildings of the physical plant, which had also been ravaged by Hurricane Rita.

Msgr. Harry D. Greig, pastor of St. Mary of the Lake celebrated the 10 a.m. Mass Sunday, Feb. 1, in the church for the first time since the storm.

Work continues at St. Peter the Apostle in Hackberry. Masses are still being celebrated in the hall while the parish office building, education classrooms, and the Church are being repaired.

The church office, which had been nearly complete before Ike's passage, should be ready soon.

Mass is now being celebrated at noon on Sundays for the Catholic faithful of Our Lady of the Assumption Chapel in Johnson Bayou in the Community Center located on Highway 82.

According to Rev. Rommel Tolentino, the pastor about 15 Catholic families are back in the Johnson Bayou area.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Read more about the restoration of the churches in Cameron Parish at lcdiocese.org.)

Did you know...

On Thursday, January 29, 1980, the announcement was made of the founding of the Diocese of Lake Charles along with the naming of then Msgr. Jude Speyrer of the Diocese of Lafayette as its founding Bishop. The establishment of the new Diocese in Southwest Louisiana came following a study initiated by Pope Paul VI through his U.S. delegate Archbishop Jean Jadot, who died recently at age 99, and facilitated by Msgr. Clemente Faccani, now the Apostolic Nuncio Emeritus to Kenya.

At its founding, the Diocese of Lake Charles had 29 active diocesan priests, 23 religious order priests, seven permanent deacons and 52 religious sisters. Do you know what those numbers are today? Find out in our next Catholic Calendar.

A "Did You Know?" Correction

The "Did You Know..." segment of the January 16 Catholic Calendar contained incorrect information regarding the location of office of the Bishop in the early years of the Diocese. Following its establishment Bishop Jude Speyrer had space in the offices of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception not at St. Margaret of Scotland. Initially, the move to the Weber Building included only a portion of one floor, encompassing the Bishop's office and several others. It was only later that the entire fifth floor of the building was used by diocesan offices and the Bishop and other administrative offices moved to 414 Iris Street.

Diocesan Briefs

Forty Hours Devotion

LAKE CHARLES - Forty Hours Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament to promote vocations to the priesthood and the religious life here in the Diocese of Lake Charles will be held in the Western Deanery during the month of February.

St. Joseph Church in DeRidder will take part in the Devotion during its regular schedule of Adoration from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. from Monday, Feb. 9 through Friday, Feb. 13.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor in Sulphur will be the host for the Devotion from Sunday, Feb. 16 to Friday, Feb. 20. The hours of Adoration at the church are from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Devotion will begin at 8 a.m. Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25 and continue for 40 hours until 12 midnight Feb. 26 at St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Church in Carlyss.

In March the Devotion will transfer to the Eastern Deanery beginning March 2-6 at St. Joan of Arc in Oberlin. Forty Hours Devotion will begin at 11 a.m. on March 8 at St. Philip Neri Church in Kinder, continuing for 40 straight hours.

Our Lady Help of Christians in Jennings will host the Devotion on March 16-20 while Immaculate Conception Church in Jennings begins the Devotion at noon on March 22 continuing for 40 hours. The final stop in the month will be at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Jennings on March 24.

March breakfast, luncheon with Bishop set

LAKE CHARLES - Bishop Glen John Provost will continue with his Women's Prayer Luncheon and the First Friday Men's Prayer Breakfast in the month of March.

The Women's Prayer Luncheon will be at noon Tuesday, March 3, in the Lake Charles Civic Center while the Men's First Friday Prayer Breakfast will be March 6 in Ave Maria Hall of the Cathedral Office Building, located at the corner of Kirby and Bilbo streets, at 7 a.m. following the 6:30 a.m. Mass in the Cathedral.

Women who wish to attend the luncheon are asked to send a check for \$10 to Ms. Esther Gallardo, 612 Alamo Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601 to register. Please make the check payable to the Diocese of Lake Charles. They are also asked include a self-addressed, stamped envelope so their admission ticket may be mailed back to them.

Men should call 439-7400 to register for the breakfast.

Reunion 2009: Rise Up and Witness

LAKE CHARLES -- Plans are being finalized for Reunion 2009: Rise Up and Witness, a day for adults and young adults Saturday, May 23.

The day, which is being hosted by the Secretariat for Christian Formation of the Diocese of Lake Charles, will feature Steve Angrisano and Christopher West.

Flyers and promotional materials along with ticket information will be available soon.



Parishioners of St. Eugene Catholic Church in Grand Chenier pray the Rosary prior to celebration of the Mass by Bishop Glen John Provost on Saturday, Jan. 31. The Church has been completely restored following Hurricane Ike while work on the rectory and hall to repair the damage done by Hurricane Rita continues.

(This page paid for by the Diocese of Lake Charles.)