



## A Good Friday Message from Bishop Provost

*"The wine press I have trodden alone." Isaiah 63:3*

When I was a young priest, the church in which I served had a number of beautiful and historic chalices. One had belonged to a former priest, a Frenchman who had been the son of a wine producer. His chalice was the most unique of all. Made of solid silver, the cup was a wine vat, the stem was a grape press, and the base was a basket of grapes waiting to be pressed. On the base was this inscription from Isaiah: "The wine press I have trodden alone" (Isaiah 63:3).

Loneliness is not a word we associate with Christ. After all, He is supposed to be there for us. We are the ones who are lonely. "Where is God?" we ask when we think that our selfish petitions are not answered. The cross, however, keeps getting in the way of this self-absorption. The cross keeps reminding us that He is there but not in the way we would like to have Him. We make our crucifixes antiseptically clean, not like the gory crosses belonging to our neighbors south of the border. Sometimes we forget the cross entirely or remove the body, inventing a Gospel of prosperity that bears not the slightest resemblance to anything in the Gospel. Perhaps that is why we forget the cross so often and why it would be important for us not to restrict our remembrance of the cross to Good Friday. Jesus expressed loneliness. It was part of His suffering, part of His cross.

What loneliness Jesus must have felt in the Garden of Gethsemane? He knew what was to happen. His disciples would abandon Him. His first chosen apostle would deny Him. Jesus said at that point, "My soul is sorrowful even to death" (Mark 14:34). Can we not identify with that? Haven't our souls been sorrowful to death at times? With the loss of someone we loved, a parent, a spouse, a child, a friend? Think of our brothers and sisters in Haiti and Chile who today face a Good Friday having lost everything and the daunting task of rebuilding. What sorrow our souls feel when we are left alone to fight the world, when everything is crashing in upon us, when it seems as though there is nothing left to hold on to? We always act as though loneliness is a surprise. Loneliness, on the other hand, was no surprise to Jesus.

Isaiah had foretold that the Suffering Servant would dig into the depths of loneliness. The prophet wrote, "He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem" (Isaiah 53:3). His loneliness was worse than that of the elderly whose children do not visit them, or the poor widows and widowers who spend their holidays alone, or the sick with no one to care for them, or the child with no playmates. If we have known that loneliness or seen it in others, then perhaps we can catch a glimpse of what Christ endured, but we must magnify the loss and pain.

Loneliness found its mark and expressed itself on the cross in Jesus' final words. "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" is the eternal question of the cross. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). This is not only our feeling at times. It is Christ's sentiment on the cross.

Then something truly miraculous happens. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" are the opening words of Psalm 22. We must read "the rest of the story." A transformation takes place in that psalm. The final words of the psalm are radically different from the first. The psalm ends with these words: "And I will live for the Lord; my descendants will serve you. The generation to come will be told of the Lord, that they may proclaim to a peo-

ple yet unborn the deliverance you have brought" (Psalm 22:31-32). What a remarkable transformation? A psalm that begins with an outpouring of lonely anguish ends with a triumphant rejoicing. Why? What has taken place?

Nothing less than redemption. We might call it meaning. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah was not left alone in his loneliness. Loneliness has a reason for existing. His loneliness has meaning. He may have been "spurned" and "avoided," but "...it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4). Loneliness exists so that Jesus by His loneliness can transform our loneliness and redeem us. Christ is lonely, so that the loneliness of the human heart can find a home and be redeemed. The Suffering Servant on the cross is actually a redeemer because His sufferings are redeeming. He saves us from sin, which is the ultimate "loneliness," cutting ourselves off from God. His loneliness becomes the means of redeeming others from loneliness. "He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Jesus transforms loneliness. Jesus redeems loneliness. He gives it meaning. Loneliness, like death and everything else that pains the human heart, can never be the same again once Christ takes them to Himself on the cross. On the cross, every suffering of the human heart, mind, and soul is opened to meaning through Christ's redemptive purpose. For this reason, the sacred author of the Letter to the Hebrews can say, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way.... Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Hebrews 4:15, 5:8-9).

The act of obedience is when we take the sufferings of our hearts and souls and bring them to the cross. This is why a priest chose that quotation from Isaiah for his chalice. He trod the winepress alone with Christ. The chalice that would bear the Blood of Christ, in the representation of the sacrifice of Calvary, would lift up whatever would be his trials. At the cross the sacramental life of the Church assures us of the reality of what it is we believe. There at the foot of the cross we lift up with trembling hands all the weaknesses we can no longer bear. There we bring them, and there at the cross Christ reaches down to take up, as a perfect offering, not only the mess of human weakness but also the one who is weak. The loneliness of human weakness has opened the heart of God's eternal grace and love, and loneliness has crossed the threshold of hope.

*As the cross leads to the Resurrection, may you experience the hope of Easter!*

+Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles

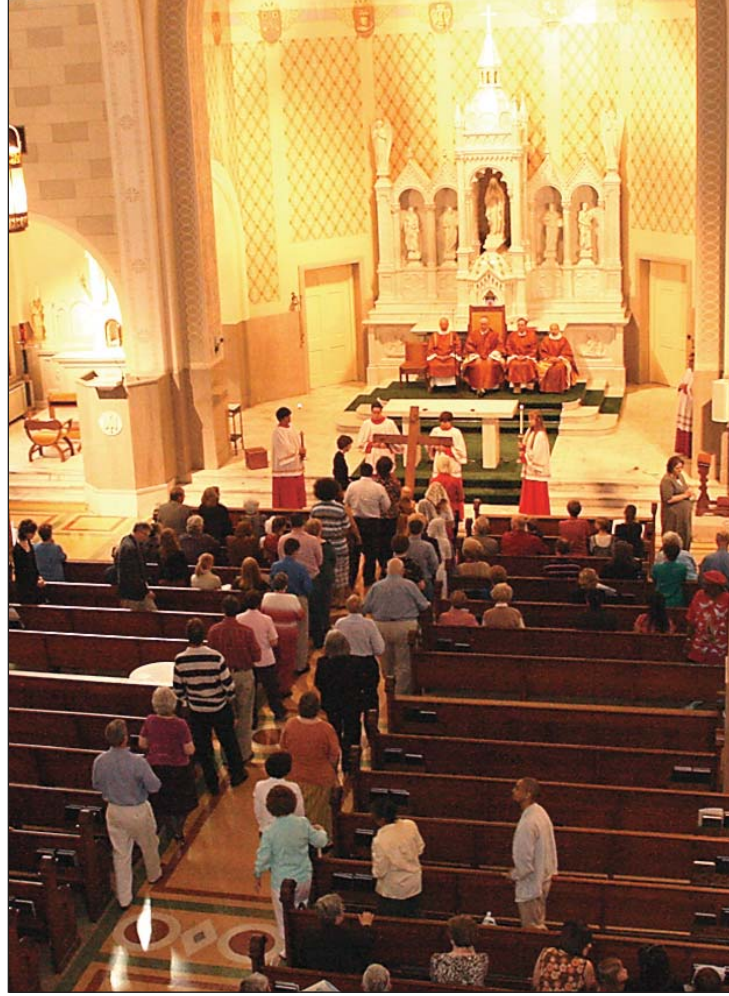
## Seminary, Holy Land collections today and this weekend

LAKE CHARLES -- Support of Christians in the Holy Land and assistance for the educational expenses of the men studying for the priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles are the key to special collections held today Good Friday and this Easter weekend (April 3-4).

Today's Good Friday Collection for the Holy Land helps maintain Christian sites there, provides care for aged religious who spent their lives ministering in the land of Jesus and supports projects that help native Christians remain and thrive in the region.

The Easter weekend Seminary Collection helps provide for funding necessary to pay for the educational expenses of the men studying for the priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles. The cost of educating these nine men is more than \$225,000 for the current school term and increases yearly. The Catholic Church Extension Society and the Committee on the Home Missions are other sources of funding for seminary education and recruitment as well as money from investments, such as the interest earned on seminary burses. Last year the Seminary Collection totaled \$63,031.76 from the Catholic faithful of the 38 parishes of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Currently, the nine seminarians include, Jeff Starkovich (Christ the King Church) Pontifical North American College, Rome; John Huckaby (Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Lake Charles) Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans; Bryan Thompson (Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception), Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio; David Hardey (St. Theodore Church, Moss Bluff), Pontifical Josephinum; Matthew Cormier (Our Lady of LaSalette Church, Sulphur) St. Joseph Seminary College, Covington; Ruben Villarreal (St. Lawrence Church, Raymond) Catholic University of America, Washington, DC; Brandon Jones (St. Henry Church) St. Joseph Seminary College; Corey LaVerne (Our Lady of LaSalette Church, DeQuincy) St. Joseph Seminary College; and Cristian Gonzalez (Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church) St. Joseph Seminary College.



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, will preside at the celebration of the Lord's Passion at 3 p.m. today, Good Friday, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The service begins with the Liturgy of the Word, followed by Veneration of the Cross, with the faithful recognizing the Cross of Christ as our only hope of salvation as shown in the above photographs from 2009. It will conclude with Holy Communion. Bishop Provost will also celebrate the Easter Vigil on Saturday, April 3, beginning at 8 p.m. in the Cathedral. He will celebrate Mass at 9 a.m. in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church on Easter Sunday.



Bishop Jude Speyrer, founding Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles, has been given the first H.E. Chevalier Truman H. Stacey Award for the Promotion of Ecumenism by the Imperial Calcasieu Cadre of the Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem. Members of the Calcasieu Cadre making the presentation were Joe Hill, Leona Smaihall, and Becky Hudson.

## Bishop Speyrer honored by Order of St. Lazarus

LAKE CHARLES -- The first H.E. Chevalier Truman H. Stacey Award for the promotion of Ecumenism given by the Imperial Calcasieu Cadre of the Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem has been awarded to The Most Reverend Jude Speyrer, Bishop-emeritus of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The founding Bishop of the Diocese in 1980, Bishop Speyrer was instrumental in bringing fallen away Catholics back to the church; building up the Diocesan infrastructure, to include a Retreat Center (Saint Charles Center); helping thousands

of the less fortunate in the area, regardless of denomination, with food, clothing, shelter, bills, medicines through Catholic Charities; and building closer ties with other Christian and Jewish communities in Southwest Louisiana.

The Ecumenism Award is named for the most senior member of the Cadre who passed away May 11, 2008. Mr. Stacey was a Knight Grand Cross in the Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem. Truman was very dedicated not only to the Order of St. Lazarus and the Cadre, but also to a number of other

Catholic and Christian orders and organizations. He was very active in the community and did much to help improve the quality of life in Southwest Louisiana. Mr. Stacey set the example as to what it means to be truly Catholic and truly Christian.

Presenting the award to Bishop Speyrer were Col. (USA, Retired) John J. Halloran, Jr., KLJ, Vice President / Secretary; Capt. (USN, Retired) Joe D. Hill, CLJ, Protocol and Ceremonial Officer; Becky Ann Hudson, OLJ, Treasure, and Leona Smaihall, OLJ, a long time friend of the Bishop.

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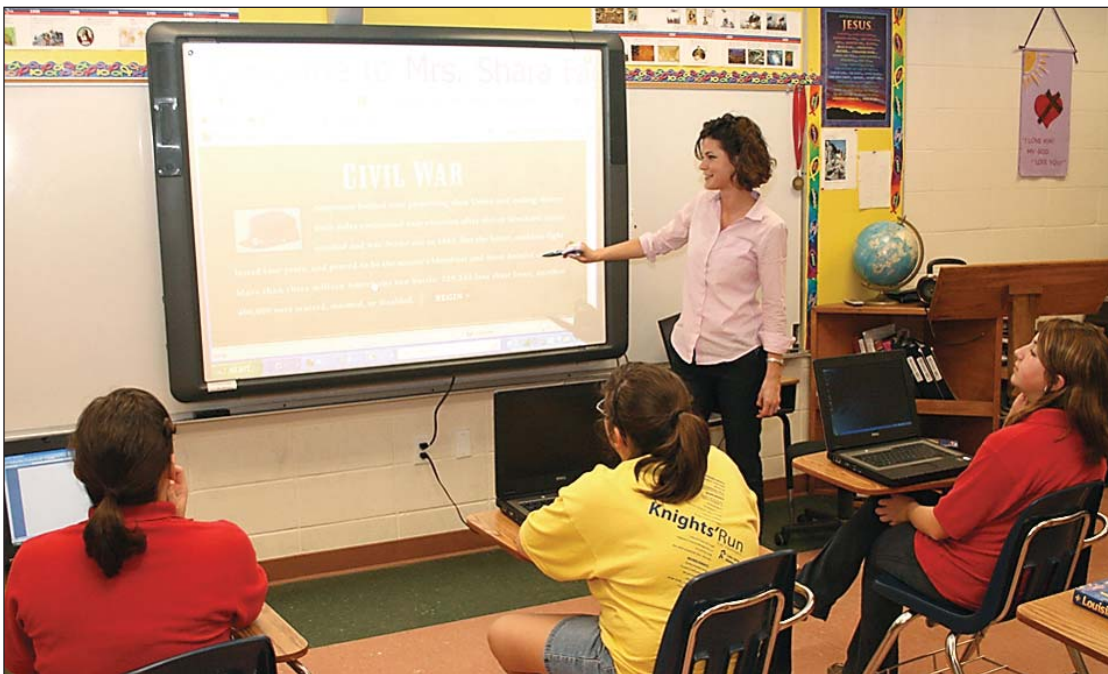
## Technology advances at Holy Family

MOSS BLUFF - Ever more curious students at St. Theodore's Holy Family Catholic School now have more dimensions to discover and galaxies to explore with the addition of six Promethean ActiveBoard+2 Systems in the school paid for through state grant funds.

These technological upgrades make Holy Family School one of only two Catholic schools in the diocese with more than one board, according to Elizabeth Eustis, director of development. The boards, which go far beyond traditional lectures and notes, transparencies and slide-shows, bring a world of knowledge full of amazing sound and color, shape and movement to the students. A Louisiana State Excellence in Education grant, written over last summer and awarded in December, made the boards possible for Holy Family.

Teachers are already implementing new lesson plans integrating the boards into their classes. The range of topics and subjects that can be studied, even interactively, using the boards is limited by only the imagination of the teachers and students.

The new technology was on display recently at an open house for current and prospective students and their parents.



Ms. Shara Fagnant, Holy Family Catholic School's History and Religion teacher, uses one of the six Promethean ActiveBoard+2 System boards at the school. The technology advance was enabled for Holy Family through a Louisiana State Excellence in Education grant awarded last year.



High school juniors and seniors from St. Agnes Academy, St. Pius High School, and St. Thomas High School, all of Houston, spent their spring break in St. Peter the Apostle Parish. It's the second year the schools have used this time to do volunteer work in the parish. The young people helped work on three houses still being rebuilt after Hurricane Ike. The group also spent time in the houses of six homebound families, doing such chores as painting, dusting and cleaning, and working in the yards. In this photo, Bishop Glen John Provost, at top right, celebrated Mass with the students, their chaperones and others in St. Peter the Apostle Church, thanking them for their generous contribution of time and talent.

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles are closed today, April 2, and Easter Monday, April 5. They will reopen next Tuesday, April 6, at 8:30 a.m.

## Did you know...

Our Lady of Good Counsel Church is unique in the Diocese of Lake Charles in that it is the only "personal" parish of the 38 making up the Diocese. While students attending McNeese State University are still members of their own home parishes, they are also considered members of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Over nearly 97 years of existence, one parish of the Diocese has had only nine pastors. Do you know which parish? Find out in our next Catholic Calendar.



As a large crowd looks on Bishop Glen John Provost blesses the St. Joseph Altar of Crossroads Bookstore, which was arrayed in the Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Center on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, March 19. Aiding the Bishop in the service was, at left, Deacon George Carr.

## La. Bishops disappointed with healthcare passage

The Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans, issues the following statement on behalf of the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops addressing the recent passage of Health Care Reform:

"The Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops expresses its disappointment in the passage of health care reform as approved jointly by Congress and signed into law by President Obama. Our hope was that Congress would redesign the bill, ensuring that federal funding for abortion was eliminated, while strengthening the conscience clause so that medical care provided in Catholic hospitals would not be affected. This did not occur. We are also saddened that some members within our Catholic family, including the Catholic Health Association, took a position that, in our judgment, will neither promote the good of society nor help us live out the mandate of Christ. While such an entity may appear to represent Catholic belief, they are not the voice of Catholic teaching.

We convey our thanks and our heartfelt admiration for all those members of Congress who stood strongly on their principles. To do so was courageous and provided one with an example of standing solidly for the values espoused by Jesus and the church, in spite of personal criticism. We are especially grateful that all members of our Louisiana Congressional delegation voted against this bill.

Many questions remain concerning the executive order that President Obama has promised to sign. It is important to note that an executive order can be changed with the stroke of a pen, and as many legal experts have asserted, the language of a law will take precedence over anything contained within an executive order in the case of a court challenge. If the case would ultimately be brought to the U.S. Supreme Court, it is uncertain how the justices would vote in defending innocent human life. This new law stands to encourage even more abortions in the future, and signals that we as Catholic bishops will have to take a very close look at Catholic health care.

Please join us in prayer that we may courageously stand for Gospel values and encourage a culture of life within the United States. God bless America."

The Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans

The Most Rev. Sam G. Jacobs, Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux

The Most Rev. Michael Jarrell, Bishop of Lafayette

The Most Rev. Robert W. Muench, Bishop of Baton Rouge

The Most Rev. Ronald P. Herzog, Bishop of Alexandria

The Most Rev. Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles

The Most Rev. Michael G. Duca, Bishop of Shreveport

The Most Rev. Shelton J. Fabre, Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans

## April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

LAKE CHARLES - April has been designated Child Abuse Prevention Month by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection, according to Mrs. Bernell Ezell, director of the diocesan office.

"A number of resources have been made available for use at the parish level during April," Mrs. Ezell said. "These include bulletin announcements, articles, liturgy guides in both Spanish and English, and various prayers and blessings."

Resources are available at [uscbb.org/ocyp/april\\_cap\\_month\\_2010.shtml](http://uscbb.org/ocyp/april_cap_month_2010.shtml)

The Catholic Church has done more to protect children than almost any other organization in the United States, according to Mrs. Ezell.

Safe Environment training

is taking place in all 194 dioceses/eparchies of the country and more than 2 million adults have been trained to recognize the behavior of offenders and what to do about it. Background checks are conducted on Church personnel who have contact with children, with over 2 million volunteers and employees; including 52,000 clerics and 6,205 candidates for ordination having had their backgrounds evaluated.

In addition all dioceses/eparchies have Codes of Conduct spelling out what is acceptable behavior. This serves to let people know what can and cannot be done as well as letting others know what behavior can be expected. It encourages the reporting of suspicious behavior.

## Diocesan Briefs.....

### Mass for Special Needs April 11

LAKE CHARLES - A Mass for Individuals with Special Needs and their families and friends will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Sunday, April 11, in the Commons of St. Louis Catholic High School by Rev. Whitney Miller.

People of all faith traditions are welcome. For more information call Karen at 478-0243 or Shari at 478-0043.

### Safe Environment Training April 19

LAKE CHARLES - A Safe Environment Initial Training Session will be conducted by the Office of Child and Youth Protection at 6 p.m. on Monday, April 19, in the Assembly Room of the Chancery of the Diocese of Lake Charles, 414 Iris Street.

Those who attend should use the east side entrance. Contact Mrs. Bernell Ezell at 337-439-7400, Ext. 305 for information and to register.

### Local participant in National Geographic Bee

MOSS BLUFF - St. Theodore's Holy Family Catholic School eighth grader Ian Gaughan will represent the school at the state level of the National Geographic Bee next Friday, April 9, in Baton Rouge.

The competition will be held at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Winners from each state and territory will advance to the national competition scheduled for May 25-26 at the National Geographic Society Headquarters in Washington, DC.

### Bishop to continue presentations

LAKE CHARLES - Bishop Glen John Provost will continue his presentations on the Book of Revelation in May, with the Women's Luncheon on Tuesday, May 4 and the Men's Prayer Breakfast on Friday, May 14.

The luncheon will be held in the Lake Charles Civic Center and tickets may be purchased by sending a check in the amount of \$10, payable to the Diocese of Lake Charles, to Ms. Esther Gallardo, 612 Alamo Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Men may register for the breakfast to be held in Ave Maria

Hall of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception offices by calling 337-439-7400.

Bishop Provost will celebrate Mass in the Cathedral prior to the breakfast beginning at 6:30 a.m.

### Abrazando Cristo Mission raffle tickets available

LAKE CHARLES - The annual fundraising raffle for the Abrazando Cristo Mission Program has now begun with the selling of raffle tickets for the top prize of \$5,000.

Second prize is \$1,000 while third prize is \$500. The drawing for the prizes will be Sunday, June 20 at 2 p.m. in the St. Henry Community Center, 1021 Eighth Avenue.

Tickets are \$100 each and may be purchased by sending a check to Rev. Daniel Torres, Abrazando Cristo Mission Program, 414 Iris Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601. Your raffle ticket will be mailed back to you. Only 500 tickets will be sold.

Proceeds from the raffle benefit the mission program by purchasing medicines, food, bibles and aid in the completion of construction of the Church of St. John the Baptist in the Diocese of Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

### Icon painting retreat at Saint Charles Center

MOSS BLUFF - A basic and intermediate retreat/workshop in icon painting will be held July 12-18 at Tabor Retreat House of Saint Charles Center. Father Mefodii of the Skete of Maximus the Confessor Monastery of Palmyra, Virginia, will be the instructor.

During the six-day retreat/workshop, the participants are introduced to the practical and the theoretical aspects of the iconographic tradition. In addition to the technical instruction, the participants will learn the iconographic symbolism and the theological base of each step of the icon-writing process.

The final day to register for the program, which is limited to 18 participants, is May 15. The suggested donation for this program is \$915 per person for a single room and \$855 per person for double occupancy. This donation includes all art supplies and other expenses. A deposit \$105 is due upon registration. Call 337-855-1232 to register.

### "Cash Knight Trois" April 11

LAKE CHARLES - St. Margaret Council 3208 Knights of Columbus Council will host its "Cash Knight Trois" on Sunday, April 11 in the Knights of Columbus Hall at 1500 18th Street.

Tickets, available from any Knight of Council 3208, are \$25 each and include the chance to win a first prize of \$1,000 and a second prize of \$500 in addition to drinks, a meal, and a chance for door prizes. There will also be a "split the pot" ticket sale in addition to silent and live auctions.

Only 200 tickets will be available. For further information contact Albert Duplantis at 337-912-0069 or Mike Sedotal at 337-477-0911.

### Benefit golf tournament scheduled

LAKE CHARLES - The annual Johnnie Thibodeaux, Jr. golf tournament will be held Saturday, June 5 at the Mallard Cove Golf Course.

The tournament, which benefits the foundation established in the name of the late Barbe High School and LSU baseball player who lost his life in an automobile accident in 2005, provides assistance to the San Cristobal Boys Home in Managua, Nicaragua. The home is also a project of the Abrazando Cristo Mission Program.

Call Johnnie or Susan Thibodeaux at 337-478-4095 for more information.

### Holy Family students honored

MOSS BLUFF - St. Theodore Holy Family Catholic School students, fifthgrader Abby Sonnier and second grader Gavin Trafford each placed in the American Legion's American Contest.

Sonnier captured first place for an essay on "How to show my Americanism on Memorial Day" while Trafford grabbed third place in the drawing and coloring of the American Flag contest. Both students received their awards at the March 23 Awards Ceremony. Entries were submitted in November 2009.

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